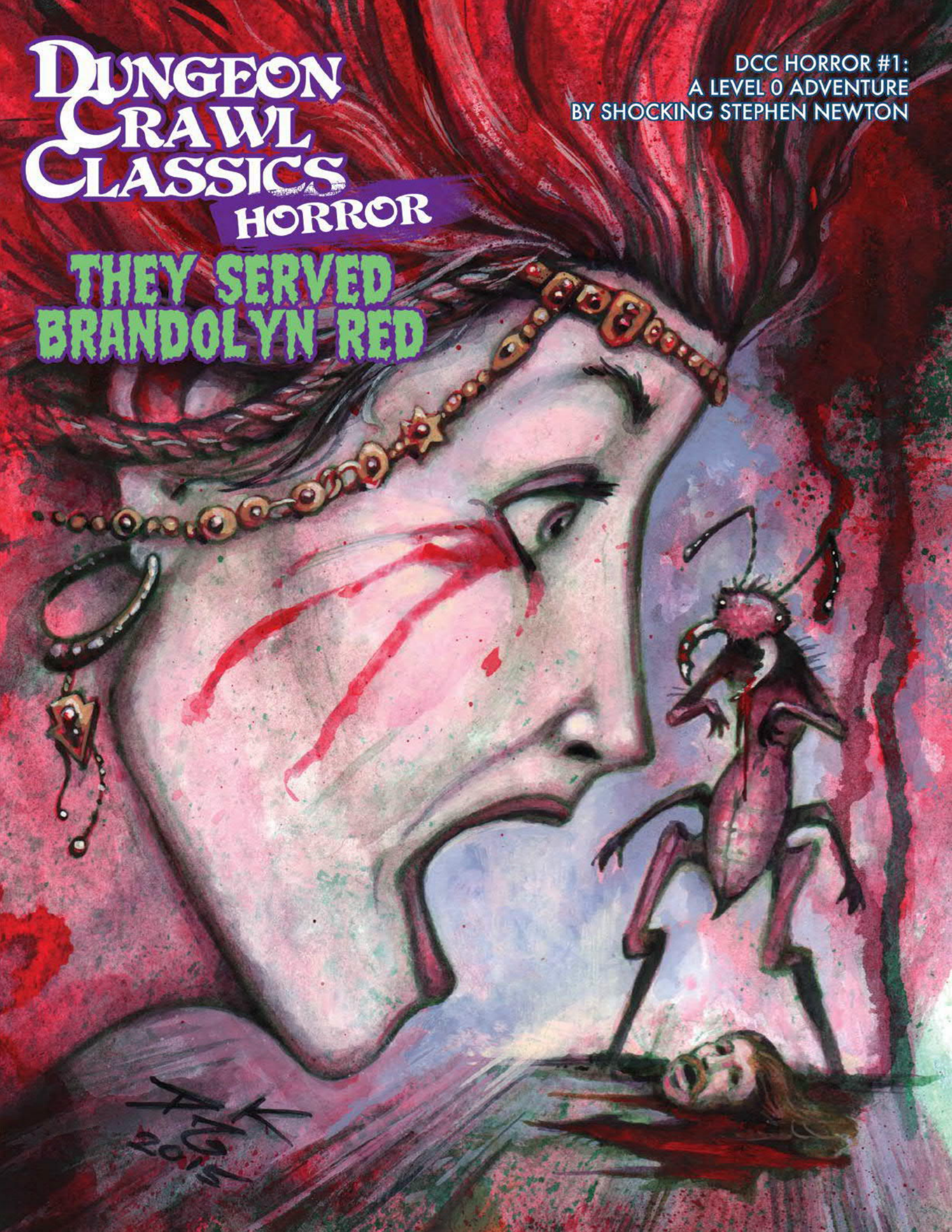


DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

HORROR

THEY SERVED BRANDOLYN RED

DCC HORROR #1:
A LEVEL 0 ADVENTURE
BY SHOCKING STEPHEN NEWTON



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Special Thanks: Jen Brinkman, James D. Newton, Amanda Rajchel.

This module is dedicated to Michael T. Frezzo. Sadly, my friend, your work here is done.

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INTRODUCTION



hey Served Brandolyn Red is designed for 8-14 0-level characters, but can be easily adapted for use with 1st-level characters. The adventure can be played as a straight “we must find the creatures who attacked us and slay them!” style game, or as a more investigatory “who or what is behind this evil?” type game. Judges who wish to run in the latter style are encouraged to flesh out the NPCs and locations in the village of Portnelle.

It is recommended that at least two of the PCs are elves.



BACKGROUND



bout 150 years ago, the elven artisan Lotrin Whitegrass, despite being betrothed to elven nobility, fell in love with the young, beautiful, and also-married human Brandolyn Vintner. Brandolyn, wife of the successful vigneron and wine maker Gage Vintner, attempted to keep the affair a secret but was eventually discovered by her husband. Enraged at her deception—and appalled at the thought of his wife coupling with an elf—Gage overpowered Brandolyn, and crushed her to death in his wine press.

Insane with jealousy and murderous guilt, Gage then mixed the pulp and blood of his freshly-pressed wife with prized grapes creating “Brandolyn Red”, a wine which became known as his finest vintage. People lucky enough to sample it—obviously unaware of its macabre ingredients—lauded its complex character and some whispered rumors it had magical properties. A bottle of Brandolyn Red is considered a rare and valuable prize and sought by merchants across the entire region who pay up to 30 gp a bottle.

Gage later told his family and others that his young wife died in tragic accident and entombed her in his family crypt on his property at Longbow Vineyard. Her lover, Lotrin Whitegrass, became distraught and withdrawn, but did not dare to go public with his grief lest his infidelity be discovered, which would risk banishment from the elven community and losing his dowry.

The decades passed and Gage Vintner eventually died with his murderous secret intact, but forbidden love, murder, and treachery have a strange way of resurfacing, demanding their malfeasance not be forgotten. Over a century after his death, Gage’s crypt was violated by Samhain the Corpse Harvester, a semi-sentient subterranean parasite that burrows into coffins and crypts and agglutinates limbs from corpses to form its own mass. Disturbing Gage’s evil bones ignited a spiritual conflagration, tearing the ethereal fabric that separates the living and the dead. Gage’s spirit began manipulating Samhain to inflict more spiteful destruction, thereby awakening Brandolyn’s soul, somehow still trapped in the device where her life was snuffed out.

Evil, fate, and karma are patient lovers. And, thus, Samhain’s awakenings of Gage and Brandolyn’s spirits has coincided with the wedding of Lotrin’s daughter, Nala. Celebrating before the event itself, Frezzo Leddy, younger brother to the excited groom Hort Leddy, innocently sneaked a sample of Brandolyn Red which was to be used in the wedding ceremony. The haunted elements of the wine’s ingredients catalyzed Frezzo’s desires and insecurities making him susceptible to Gage/Samhain’s charm, setting off a macabre chain of events which will soon take many of the PC’s lives as collateral damage.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

Location	Type	Encounter
A	C	Ravens Ant Men
1-4	C	Popping Stingers
1-5	C	Zombigator
1-6b	T	Stair collapse
1-6b	C	Living Stain
1-7	C	Ghost Brandolyn, Animated Tool Swarm
1-9	C	Cave Centipede
1-10	T/P	Gourd Puppet, Seedling Swarm
1-11	T	Outside the Mound
2-4	C	Ant Men Soldiers
2-5	C	Ant Men Drones, Ant Pupae
2-6	C	Samhain Corpse Harvester, Frezzo, Gourd Puppet

PLAYER OPTION: FAMILY BACKGROUND

The hand of fate is mysterious and often cruel. Several of the encounters in the adventure are personalized to PCs based on their ancestral relationships with some of the NPCs—sometimes to their peril. Before reading the Player Start text, the judge should hand out the Family Backgrounds which contain rumors which have passed down through the generations (not all of which are true). To assign: all Elven PCs in the party become related to the Whitegrass family, and then starting clockwise from the judge, assign one of the background sheets *per player* until each background has been distributed.

PLAYER START

The PCs begin the adventure as guests at a noble wedding. The PCs are unarmed and unequipped as they are attired in their peasant formal wear. Generous judges may select a few PCs potentially armed based on their Luck scores or if their occupation dictates such instruments are appropriate for a wedding (i.e., minstrels, jesters, etc.). Note that there is no map for this starting encounter.

Area A – The Wedding Green: *It is a gray, autumn afternoon in the village of Portnelle, but the residents are excited and festive. After years of petty feuding, two of the town's most prominent and influential families – the Leddys and the Whitegrass – are finally making peace as the young noble, Master Hort Leddy, takes the elven beauty Lady Nala Whitegrass's hand in marriage. The entire town is in attendance and you all find your eyes moist with tears of joy, as the lanky Father Geralt orates in a booming voice, "And as they consume this wine symbolizing their spirit, may Lady Nala and Master Hort become one, whereby only death itself may come between them!"*

The young couple gives each other a loving kiss and begins drinking from two ornate wine goblets.

Cheers erupt from the crowd! The newlyweds look at each other blissfully before you notice Lady Nala start to cough and sputter. She drops her cup where it smashes, spilling its dark contents across the ground. Suddenly, creatures resembling ants the size of men burst up from the earth, and all around you the joyful cheers begin transforming into screams.

To your left, you see farmer Toto's bald, sunburned head get clamped between the mandibles of one of the creatures, and with a revolting "pop" it explodes like a rotted pumpkin, splattering those around him with skull and blood. You're horrified to see more of the creatures skittering through the crowd decapitating and disemboweling guests indiscriminately.

Turning back to the newlyweds, you see one of the beasts grip Master Hort's neck between its mandibles! Father Geralt desperately pummels the ant-man with his fists, but with a sickening crunch, the beast clamps its pincers tightly together, popping the young nobleman's head savagely from his torso before scampering back into the forest with its bloody prize in its clutches.

As you reach down for your dagger, your hand finds only an empty scabbard as you now remember how weapons were banned from the ceremony. Panic grips the crowd, as the chittering beasts continue to rip through the wedding courtyard.

Unarmed PCs will likely spend their first round foraging for potential weapons. Judges are encouraged to have players improvise weapons they might find at a wedding ceremony. Ideas include: clubs fashioned from pews or a juggler's pins, iron candlesticks, cutlery, festive flag poles (as spears), meat-carving knives, oil flasks from the fire-breather, sword-swallowers with blunted weapons, minstrels with lutes that can be fashioned into garrotes, etc. All makeshift weapons inflict either 1d4 or 1d6 damage at the judge's discretion.

Ant Men, Soldier (half number of PCs): Init +1; Atk mandible bite +0 melee (1d4) or *acid squirt* +1 missile fire (range 20', 1d5); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP acid squirt, decapitate victim on 19-20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Acid Squirt: The discharge of the ant man's *acid squirt* attack smells like sulfur (i.e., rotten eggs).

Upon their death, the ant man corpse leaks a mostly harmless acid that smells like garlic; if touched, it mildly irritates the skin, but otherwise causes no damage (the sulfur and garlic smells are clues to navigating the mound in area 1-11).

AFTER THE ATTACK

As things settle down after the attack, the PCs witness the following:

- Frezzo Leddy rushes up to you with hysteria in his eyes. "His head has been taken! For the love of Choranus, those *things* took my brother's head!"
- A strong human voice, booms out, "This was *YOUR* doing!" You see Sir Heddrick Leddy, town noble and father of the groom, stab an accusatory finger at Lorumund Whitegrass, the bride's uncle. "You never approved of the marriage and now these elven-conjured insect fiend's have taken my son's head! You and your kind will pay!" "Liar!", retorts Lorumund accompanied by a highly offensive derogatory term elves rarely call humans to their face. "It was *YOU* who tried to poison Lady Nala! I will make your puny human lifespan even shorter if you do not retract your accusation!" A scuffle then briefly breaks out between Sir Heddrick and Lorumund before the family members can pull them apart.

If investigated, the PCs will discover that the wine being used in the ceremony was a rare bottle of Brandolyn Red, provided by the Leddy family.



THE VILLAGE OF PORTNELLE

Tension between the noble families of Leddy and Whitegrass has always been high, but the town had hoped the marriage would usher in a generation of tranquil prosperity, but those hopes are quickly eroding. Between the NPCs and the family background rumors, the PCs should have significant motivation for tracking the ant men back to their lair. For a simpler game, the PCs can simply follow the trail of blood from Hort's severed head back to Longbow Vineyards.

WEDDING GUESTS

The following are a few prominent NPCs the PCs can interact with to gain clues about who or what is behind the attack and provide adventure hooks to investigate the winery.

Groom's side

- **Master Hort Leddy**—now decapitated, Master Hort is remembered as a friendly youth with no enemies. As a young noble, he enjoyed falconry and archery. Everyone knows that despite the tension it caused their two families, Hort loved Nala very much.
- **Sir Heddrick Leddy**—Groom's father. A knight who made a name for himself during the War of the Three Brothers, he is mistrustful of the elves and thirsts for vengeance. He is certain the attack was orchestrated by Lotrin Whitegrass to get out of paying the dowry and will be gathering his war party to attack the Whitegrass estate within a week. In the meantime, he insists that the stoutest amongst the villagers—and certainly any fellow Leddy family members—follow the creatures back to their lair to retrieve the head of his son for a proper burial. Great reward will be paid for the return of his son's remains!
- **Lady Wichaela Leddy**—Groom's mother. A woman of few words, but has a keen, sharp mind. She is not as convinced the elves were behind the attack, but will only admit this to members of the Leddy family, and never while Sir Heddrick or Frezzo are within earshot.
- **Master Frezzo Leddy**—Groom's younger brother. Pompous and delirious with anger! He insists that any Leddys uphold family honor by retrieving the head of his brother.

Bride's Side

- **Nala Whitegrass**—The bride. She has narrowly survived the attack and keeps slipping in and out of coherency. She is in shock and only whimpers repeatedly in elven "Oh my poor, sweet, Hort."
- **Lotrin Whitegrass**—Bride's father. Quiet and emotionally despondent, he frets over the welfare of his daughter. He is also still nursing a deep secret grief (the loss of his true love, Brandolyn Vintner) and will weep a milky elven tear as this attack has reminded him of her passing. At the site of Lotrin's grief, any PC related to the Dragontear family will inexplicably feel a deep sorrow and know that they've been called upon by a greater power to help Lotrin somehow. Lotrin will look

confused and a bit frightened by this news, but remains tight-lipped about what it may mean. He will curiously offer a reward for the return of Hort's remains or, suspiciously, any other remains they may find. He also offers a significant reward for any bottles of Brandolyn Red the PCs may find as part of their investigation.

- **Lorumund Whitegrass**—Bride's Uncle. Lorumund is disgusted by the pairing of elf and human. "It's a blessing he's been killed! Can you imagine the abomination their offspring would have produced? A half-human/half-elf monstrosity... a freak of nature!" Bigotry aside, he insists he had nothing to do with the ant man attack, and requests you bring back evidence of who or what is truly responsible to clear the family's reputation.

Other Townspeople

- **Father Geralt**—A servant of Choranus, he is deeply troubled by this turn of events. He will offer to heal any wounded PCs and will lay on hands 1d3 times before crying out that Choranus is displeased that he did not do more to stop the attackers and must now go cleanse away his sins by bathing in a barrel of human hair.

Treasure: Sneaky PCs may attempt to steal something from the gift table, but risk facing the ire of both the powerful Leddy and Whitegrass families if caught. A DC 10 *pick pocket* (remember PCs other than Thieves use d10 Action Die for this roll) indicates success. Wedding gifts which can be pilfered include: fancy dagger, 15 gp gem, a beautiful mithral chain worth 10 gp, a longbow, or a bottle of Brandolyn Red (30 gp). All of these items will be recognized as stolen goods if sold within town. A "fence" will give PCs half price for each item.

THE VINEYARD

Area 1-1 - Entrance to the Vineyard: *As you travel further from Portnelle, the path becomes overgrown with weeds, thistles, and dead sage. The trees eventually thin out, giving way to row upon row of withered vines that once flourished in the abandoned Longbow Vineyards.*

An ancient path leads through the middle of the vineyards towards a collection of decrepit buildings, and a smaller path leads deeper into dark and tangled fields of brambles which you can only imagine once served as the grape vines.

Area 1-2 The Grape Vines: *Perhaps once, long ago, the twisted rows of grape vines were manicured and cultivated by the vineyard workers, but now only a tangled mass of thick vines pregnant with tumorous growths of dark, heavy fruit remains.*

Movement through the grapevines is slowed to 15' unless the PCs have a machete or other tool to help them clear their way through the brambles.

The grapes are tart, loaded with antioxidants, and safe to eat. PCs who eat a handful make a Luck check—success rewards the PC with 2 temporary hit points for 1d8 hours (maximum 2 hp per day). These hp are the first to be absorbed in combat.

DRINKING BRANDOLYN RED

If the PCs consume a serving of Brandolyn Red (4 servings per bottle), they will immediately consider it the most succulent wine ever tasted, and then experience one of the following random effects:

1. Imbued with 1d3 temporary hit points.
2. Absorb supernatural grief; DC 14 Will check or weep for 1d8 rounds from intense sorrow.
3. In a snooty voice the PC exclaims, "Exquisite! Tastes like rich berries, chocolates, and endless sorrow. Such a sweet body with a bitter finish. Would pair perfectly with bugbear or unicorn meat!"
4. PC experiences a vision of an elf man and human female coupling in a beautiful vineyard, while a hidden man, grizzled and enraged, peers at them from afar.
5. The PC releases a long and horrific belch, during which a demonic voice can be heard, "She will not rest until her bones are returned to him..."

Area 1-3 – The Statue Of Ildavir: *The path opens into a clearing which is dominated by an ancient, 10 foot tall statue. The statue is almost completely covered in vines, and is carved to resemble a tree trunk which transforms into the torso of a woman extending her arms upwards. Her compassionate eyes look down upon you.*

The statue is a carving of Ildavir, Goddess of Nature. PCs with a background occupation of elven sage, fortune teller, grave digger, gypsy, minstrel, cleric, or any PC with a Vintner family background, will immediately recognize the goddess. Otherwise, a DC 15 Personality or Intelligence or Luck check is required to identify the statue.

PCs may respectfully pay reverence to seek or beg Ildavir's assistance. If a DC 15 Personality check is successful, the PC is granted the one-time ability to cast *blessing*, *protection from evil*, or *word of command* using a d16 Action Die + Personality modifier. If a PC is granted this blessing, they will hear an angelic voice whisper, "Beware! Samhain has perturbed the bones of a great evil, and must be put down."

Area 1-4 – Popping Stingers: *As you continue to claw your way through the thick brambles, you notice the remains of a large creature – perhaps a deer or one of those giant beaver-bear creatures you've heard about – blocking the path. It appears desiccated and its skeletal bones peek through parts of its withered flesh.*

If PCs examine the surrounding vines read or paraphrase:

Some of the grapes growing in this row look slightly darker than the others you've seen. Perhaps they're a different variety?

After the PCs spend two rounds in the area, the popping stingers begin their attack. Note: certain occupations (alchemist, farmer, elven forester) may recognize the danger of the

stingers providing +2 to their Init rolls.

Popping Stinger: Init +5; Atk sleep gas which smells of rotten fruit (DC 12 Fort save or "medical sleep" for 1d4 hours) followed by entangling vine tentacle +1 melee (1d3); AC 11; HD 3d8; hp 10; MV 20'; Act 3d20; SP entangling vines, vulnerable to fire; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Upon a successful hit, the popping stingers ensnare the PC in an entangling grasp. PCs must make a successful opposed Strength check (Str +1) to pull free. Failure indicates the PC takes an additional 1 hp of damage for each round ensnared by the popping stingers and suffer a -2 attack penalty.

Area 1-5 – Irrigation Pond: *A pond with foul, stagnant water lays stinking before you like a cancer festering in the earth. Several shallow troughs, once used for irrigation but now crowded with detritus, finger their way out towards the crowded vine fields.*

An occasional air bubble burps open atop the algae-covered pool releasing nature's flatulence. And while the water is indeed murky, you can just make out something shiny at the bottom of the pond.

The bloated corpse of Portnelle's tanner Voelkner Black lies at the bottom of the pond, and the shiny object is a helmet still affixed to his pruned head. Frezzo killed Voelkner as a down payment to Samhain. If the PCs pull the body from the water they will discover a zombigator still slowly gnawing on the corpse which will turn and attack once disturbed.

Zombigator: Init -1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d8); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 12; MV 20', swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead; SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N.

Voelkner's torso has been gnawed off by the zombigator, but his top half still has a helmet and semi-usable suit of hide armor. PCs examining the corpse will realize Voelkner was not killed by the zombigator, but by an extravagant dagger (15 gp) still lodged in his back with the Leddy family seal embedded in its hilt. There is also a large crowbar at the bottom of the pond which Frezzo threw into the pool in frustration after failing to move the stone at area 1-8.

Area 1-6A – Abandoned House: *If walls could talk, you're certain this decrepit structure would tell a sorrowful tale. The few remaining beams of this long-abandoned single-story home are gray and rotting, with gaping holes in the walls where planks once stood. The house appears not to have been inhabited for decades and all the furniture was looted long ago. The only thing still standing is the brick fireplace.*

A rickety staircase leads downward towards a natural, earthen cellar.

PCs with background occupations that specialize in reading people's emotions (confidence artist, fortune teller, gambler, gypsy, healer, minstrel, or shaman) will "feel a presence" of a spirit conflicted with great love and great anger, and that its energy is still somewhere nearby.

Hidden under a loose brick in the fireplace is stack of old parchments—love letters written from Lotrin Whitegrass to Brandolyn Vintner. Reading the letters it becomes clear that Lotrin and Brandolyn were engaged in an extra-marital affair, and Lotrin was willing to "end his marriage even if it

draws the ire of the King of Elfland for my remaining centuries." Also inside the cache is a gift he gave her: a gold broach with Lotrin's cameo inside worth 10 gp.

The staircase is not entirely safe; see area 1-6B.

Area 1-6B – Wine Cellar: A set of ancient, dust-covered, wooden stairs lead 15 feet downwards into a dark, cobweb-filled earthen cellar.

The wooden staircase has rotted over time, and show recent footprints in the dust. All PCs with a Luck of 8 or lower will fall through the stairs towards the cellar below. Falling PCs must then make a Reflex save: 4 or less, 2d3 hp damage; 5-7 1d3 hp damage; 8-11 takes 1 hp damage; 12 or higher, no damage.

Once in the cellar:

The air of the natural earthen cellar has a pungent, vinegary odor which stings your eyes and labors your breathing.

Shelves on the near wall contain a few ceramic jugs. On the far wall, the earth is marred with strange claw marks. You also notice near the far wall that the ground is stained red from years of wine being spilled, and is in fact still damp.

Searching the nearby shelves reveals 1d5 ceramic jugs of wine – tasty and valuable (5 gp) – but not Brandolyn Red.

Searching the scratched wall reveals a hidden cache which contains a bottle of Brandolyn Red (30 gp) and an ornate silver goblet with the Vintner family crest worth 15 gp. However, searching this area puts the PCs in range of the Living Stain, a sentient mixture of wine sediment and malevolent spirit spawned from the recent hauntings.

Living Stain: Init +6; Atk crush +2 melee (1d4 + suffocation); AC 11; HD 2d8 per 5' square; hp 10; MV 5', climb 5'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, half damage from non-piercing or non-slicing weapons; SV Fort +3, Ref -6, Will -6; AL N.

Crushed victims may attempt an opposed Strength check to free themselves (vs. Living Stain's +3 Str). Crushed PCs must make a DC 12 Fort save or suffocate taking 1d6 temporary stamina damage. Ornery judges may also want to distribute some of the damage the Living Stain receives to any victim within its clutches.

As the Living Stain attacks, it morphs itself into a face whose features look eerily similar to PCs with Vintner heritage. The PCs will hear a crazed, and yet disturbingly familiar voice repeating during the attack, "You would lay with an elf!"

Area 1-7 – The Winery: Keep careful track which PCs enter the area, and which linger outside, because in two rounds, Ghost Brandolyn will begin her shenanigans. Read the following once the first PC enters:

You immediately feel unsettled as you enter this long-abandoned wine-making facility. Rotted tables, broken flasks, and an assortment of bottling equipment litters the area. Three large clay containers – dolia – that once held prized and valuable wine, are half buried in the dirt.

A large wine press dominates the workshop. The contraption consists of a huge stone wheel that rolls in a circular stone trough. The wheel is turned by a stout wooden beam. Even after all these years, the floor around the basin is worn smooth from the feet of those who once labored here crushing fruit.

While most of the area is dusty and cobwebbed, the wheel itself is stained with a fresh dark red liquid. Someone has painted the face of a human woman – beautiful, but anguished – onto the stone. Tears resembling blood drip down her crying face and collect in the basin below.

Show Player Handout B - The Wine Press

The spirit of Brandolyn Vintner (nee Dragontear) now haunts the wine press where she was murdered by her husband over a century ago. Allow characters two rounds to examine the area, and then the haunting sequence begins:

Round 1 (Top of the initiative order):

- The painted face on the stone opens its eyes, briefly examines the characters, and then unleashes its *unearthly* scream (see below). All doors and windows in the barn suddenly slam shut (DC 20 strength to open, or hack door down with 15 hp damage).
- Ghost Brandolyn determines her *targeted victim* (see below), selecting the first PC that satisfies this criteria: any PC related to her late husband (i.e., a Vintner family relative), any PC descended from the Leddy family, or finally, the PC with the lowest Luck.
- Ghost Brandolyn conjures the *animated tool swarm*, forcing all the rusted equipment in the barn to attack the PCs. The animated tools in the shed do not attack Brandolyn's *targeted victim* nor PCs under the influence of her *forced will* power (see below).

Round 2 (On Ghost Brandolyn's initiative order):

- The ancient wheel of the wine press starts to turn by unseen hands. As the great wheel grinds, dark red blood from an unknown source begins filling the basin. At the sight of the blood, a PC (probably Vintner-related) chosen at random has a moment of clarity and cries out, "By the gods! The secret ingredient in Brandolyn Red was Brandolyn's crushed head! He crushed her head!"
- Ghost Brandolyn possesses 1d2+2 PCs using *forced will*. Possessed PCs suddenly realize that Ghost Brandolyn wants her mortal bones returned to her lover Lotrin Whitegrass, but before that can happen, "The bloody work of revenge must be done!" The possessed PCs will attempt to grab Brandolyn's *targeted victim* and force them into the wine press to crush their head beneath the great stone just as Brandolyn was killed by her husband. Possessed PCs must make 2 simultaneous successful Strength checks vs. the *targeted victim* – if the targeted PC fails 2 simultaneous strength checks, they take 10d10 head-crushing damage when their noggin is forced beneath the wheel.

Low-level characters are no match for Ghost Brandolyn; as a vengeful spirit haunting the place of her mortal death, she



is simply too powerful. She can, however, be temporarily placated and the implements of her destruction may be undetermined by one of the following means:

- If either Brandolyn's *targeted victim*, or 3 other PCs, are killed within the room, she will rest for 1d4 hours.
- Pouring a bottle of Brandolyn Red into the wine press distracts Brandolyn with the scent and memories of her mortal self for 3d4 rounds.
- PCs descended from the Whitegrass family may attempt to communicate with her spirit. These PCs who successfully make an opposed Personality check vs. Ghost Brandolyn (+3 Personality check) will calm her for 1d3 rounds as she becomes smitten by the resemblance of her former lover Lotrin Whitegrass.
- A successful DC 15 Personality check accompanied with an extremely sympathetic act carried out by the PC that the judge deems worthy (calling upon Ildavir's aid with the promise of great sacrifice, showing a great act of love by sacrificing themselves in place of the targeted PC, etc.) distracts her for 2d4 rounds.
- Casting *holy sanctuary* will make a cleric invisible to Ghost Brandolyn.
- Disabling the wine press (see below)

Ghost Brandolyn's spirit can be permanently put to rest by returning her bones to the arms of her illicit lover, Lotrin Whitegrass.

Ghost Brandolyn: Init +2; Atk special; AC 10; HD 2d12; hp 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, immune to non-magical weapons, spell-like abilities: *target victim*, *unearthly scream*, *forced will*, *animate objects*; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

Unearthly scream: DC 12 Will save or suffer from fright; all attack and save rolls at -2 for 1d3 rounds.

Targeted Victim: The targeted PC will feel the icy, ethereal fingers of Ghost Brandolyn grip them, and will be subject

to terror: DC 17 Will save or be paralyzed with terror for 1d6+1 rounds.

Forced Will: 1d2+2 targets must make DC 15 Will save to resist, otherwise they fall under the control of Ghost Brandolyn for 1d3+2 rounds. *Forced will* is similar to *charm person*, but in this instance the PCs body is being controlled but their mind is aware of their actions.

Animate Tool Swarm: Ghost Brandolyn can use telekinesis to attack un-possessed PCs with mundane tools.

Note: PCs who encounter Ghost Brandolyn – and live to tell about it – will be eligible to learn *charm person* (due to its similar to *forced will*) spell if they become spellcasters in the future.

Animated Tool Swarm (flying shovel, trowel, bung hammer, etc.): Init +0; Atk swarming bash +1 melee (1 hp); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 7; MV fly 30'; Act special; SP attack all targets within 20' x 20' space, half

damage from non-area attacks, immune to mind-controlling spells; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -3; AL N.

The Wine Press: Another option to thwart Ghost Brandolyn is to disable the wine press before she can use it to pulverize a PC. The wine press can be destroyed by inflicting 12 hp of damage, or by somehow jamming it to prevent it from moving. PCs wedging mundane objects into the device must make a DC 15 Luck check to jam the device for 1d3 rounds (failure results in wine press not becoming jammed and object is destroyed). If the haunted press is disabled, Ghost Brandolyn will conjure another animated tool swarm to attack the party and then dissipate for 2d4 hours. Players leaving and returning after that time will find the wine press mysteriously repaired.

Three large clay dolia hold barely drinkable wine (2gp per dolium). The dolia are very large and heavy (6 feet in height) but if the PCs can figure out a way to move them, they are worth 20 gp each.

Area 1-8 - Wine Storage Entrance: Behind the barn, an enormous stone, 10 feet in diameter, blocks the entrance to a cavern. Recent footprints are clearly visible in the soft dirt before the great stone. There are fresh scratches around the stone's edges, and the dirt around the base looks recently disturbed.

Dwarves examining the area recognize that someone attempted to gain entry by moving the stone with a crude tool, but was unsuccessful. A successful DC 18 Strength check is required to move the stone, and up to two PCs can assist adding their strength bonus to the roll. PCs utilizing some sort of lever (like using the crowbar from area 1-5 gain a +2 bonus to their roll.

Area 1-9 - The Wine Cave: The air in this dank cavern smells thick and ripe from fermenting fruit. Several wine barrels line the walls, and several dolia still remain half buried in the earth. A few of the barrels have cracked and leaked their contents onto the ground, but a few are still intact.

LONGBOW VINEYARDS

1-1
1-2
1-5
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1-4
1-7
1-8
1-9
1-11B
1-6A
1-6B
1-11A
TO 2-1A
TO 1-10
TO 1-11B
TO 2-1B
2-6
2-5
2-4
2-2
2-3
2-1A
2-1B
UNDERGROUND

5202A

Towards the back of the cave is a large earthen mound.

Three of the barrels are cracked and dry, but 6 are still intact and each is worth 25 gp to a merchant or trader. One of the dolia is labeled "Brandolyn Red" and is actually worth 75 gp to a merchant and twice that amount to Lotrin Whitegrass.

A pair of cave centipedes has made one of the empty barrels their home and will attack if the barrels are searched.

Cave Centipedes (2): Init +0, Atk bite +1 melee (1d4 + poison); AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4, 3; MV 25', climb 25'; Act 1d20; SP poison (DC 8 Fort save or death); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

The earthen mound in the back of the cave is similar to the one in area 1-11 – see that area for description.

Area 1-10 – The Vintner Family Mausoleum: From outside the mausoleum:

A modest stone structure with a single, rust-covered, iron door squats alone within tall grass. A plaque above the door reads "Vintner" in an ancient stylized script. Given the grime and vines spread across its faded surface, you surmise no one has entered this structure in decades.

Inside the mausoleum are four sealed crypts—2 stacked on either wall—with tarnished, copper plates as markers. The crypts can be opened with a DC 12 Strength check or by inflicting 10 hp of bludgeoning damage.

- Top Left—"Brandolyn Vintner: Wife of Gage Vintner. Taken too soon." The exterior of this crypt is mysteriously covered in frost. When it is first touched the message "Reunite us" is drawn into the frost as if scratched by an invisible hand. Inside are the mangled, skeletal remains of Brandolyn; her head is missing and the neck bones and shoulders look crushed.
- Bottom Left—"Gage Vintner: Devoted Husband, Wine-maker, and Craftsman." Crypt is empty and the bottom has been tunneled into from below. A hazardous vertical shaft now descends 15' to area northeast of area 2-2. Climbing down the shaft requires a DC 8 Agility check, with failure resulting in 1d6 damage. Characters with a Luck or Agility score of 7 or less always fall.
- Top Right—"Heinrik Vintner: Slayer of the Ant Man Hoard, Hero of Portnelle." Crypt contains Heinrik's intact skeletal remains dressed in funeral finery including 12 gp worth of jewelry and a plain but functional long-sword.
- Bottom Right—"Magrite Vintner: Wife of Heinrik Vintner. Beauty beyond parallel." When this crypt is opened, her remains will animate into a gourd puppet, a creature whose muscles are reconstituted by thousands of seedlings that manipulate the cadavers' remaining flesh and bones to attack.

Magrite Vintner, Gourd Puppet: Init -1; Atk claw +1 melee (1d5); AC 9; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 25'; Act 1d10; SP un-dead traits, transforms to seedling swarm upon 0 hp; SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will -2; AL C.



When gourd puppet reaches ≤ 0 hp, it loses its structural integrity forcing the seedlings to attack as a ravenous swarm.

Seedling Swarm: Init +2; Atk swarming bite +0 melee (1 hp); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 6; MV 25'; Act 1d10; SP bite the feet of all targets within 10' x 10' space, half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will -2; AL C.

Area 1-11A Or B – Earthened Mound: *Tracks of the insect men cover the surrounding area and lead into a large mound of soft earth approximately 40 feet in diameter and rising 20 feet in height. Eight different paths made by strange claw marks wind their way up the hill, crisscrossing over each other until reaching the summit. The entire area has a very strong odor of sulfur with a slight tinge of garlic.*

There are eight trails in all; six of them are trapped with acid-bladder mines. Two of the paths smell like garlic (path 4 and 7), while the other 6 smell like sulfur (1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8). Characters can smell the tracks to attempt to determine which path is safe (DC 10 Intelligence check with a +2 bonus to PCs with background occupations that work with food such as cheesemakers, butchers, mushroom-farmers, etc). Success indicates the PC can differentiate the scent of the trail (sulfur vs. garlic) where failure indicates merely "a tart smell."

Choosing the path: For those PCs who fail to distinguish the scents, or just randomly pick a path, use the following formula to determine which path is selected. If the PC's Luck score is 8 or lower, they will select a trapped path. PCs whose Luck score is 14 or greater automatically choose a safe path. All other characters must roll a d8—if the result is "4" or "7", then they have randomly chosen a safe path.

Each trapped path has 2 bladders, but each PC walking up a trapped path only needs to make one save. PCs must make a DC 14 Reflex save or take 1d3 acid damage when they step on an acid bladder planted by the ant men.

Note: PCs that attempt to climb the hill by *avoiding* the paths altogether must make a DC 14 Agility check to make it to the top. Success indicates they reach the summit avoiding both

safe and trapped trails. Failure indicates they slip and start rolling down the hill, rolling across a trail as they do so (use algorithm above to determine which type) and must also make a Luck check or permanently lose 1 piece of equipment or weapon that falls from their person and somehow gets lost in the cascade of soft dirt.

Once they reach the top of the burrow:

From the top of the small, cone-shaped hill, you see a narrow passage leading downwards into the earth. Shallow impressions in the soil made by insectoid feet along with a few drops of blood trailing downward portend grim discoveries below.

Descending down leads downwards towards area 2-1A or 2-1B (see map).

Area 2-1 – Inside The Burrow: After descending down from area 1-10 or 1-11A-B:

The vertical tunnel descends fifteen feet down before eventually opening into a cramped, earthen burrow. The pungent, acrid smell of the insect-men's trail makes your eyes water. As you wipe your eyes, you nervously realize the constricted tunnel will force many of you to go single file.

The narrow passages force any man-sized or larger creatures to travel single file; elves and halflings can travel in pairs.

Area 2-2 – How Rumors Get Started: *The skeletal corpse of a long-dead human lays crumbled and forgotten against the wall the passage. The legs have been severed from the body and are nowhere to be seen.*

The corpse is Bubü, a female thief secretly paid by Lotrin decades ago to retrieve Brandolyn's bones, who was killed when she attempted to open the crypt. Her legs have since been assimilated into Samhain. Leather armor, a short sword, and thieves' tools can be looted from the body, as well as a pouch containing 5 gp clearly marked with the Whitegrass family crest.

Area 2-3 – Cocoons: *This chamber contains eight translucent, cylindrical pods, each about 5 feet in height and 2 feet in diameter at their widest point. As you approach them with your light source, you see they're made of some sort of waxy material, and each pod contains something vaguely humanoid in shape.*

The cocoons contain desiccated bodies recently kidnapped from Portnelle to be used as food for the ant queen. At the judge's discretion, some of bodies may still be barely alive and can be used as replacement 0-level characters.

Area 2-4 – Burrow Chokepoint: Three ant men soldiers have setup an ambush from the higher ground in the northern tunnel. The ant men gain surprise and receive an additional +1 bonus to their attack rolls while they remain on the higher ground.

Ant Men, Soldier (3): Init +1; Atk mandible bite +0 melee (1d4) or acid squirt +1 missile fire (range 20', 1d5); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 4 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP acid squirt, decapitate victim on 19-20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Area 2-5 – Chamber of the Ant Queen: *With a mix-*

ture of caution, tension, and fear, you approach the largest cavern thus far encountered. You realize that this is the chamber of the ant queen and it is – not surprisingly – bustling with activity as several ant men drones scurry about.

The ant queen herself, however, seems to have undergone some horrific trauma as the creature's head has been removed from its body leaving sickly trails of ichor still pumping from its thorax. The ant men drones are attempting to revive her by popping open mucous-covered pupae eggs and blithely attempting to attach the younglings onto the bleeding stump where the queen's head once was.

Samhain has recently killed the ant queen as he no longer has use for her. The ant men drones are futilely attempting to revive their queen by jamming pupae into the queen's wound. For each round spent in the chamber, the ant men free 2 more pupae. The drones will not attack unless provoked or prevented from doing their work. After 2 rounds, the hungry pupae attack the players looking for nourishment. As their acid glands are not fully mature, the pupae are incredibly flammable.

The queen's head is nowhere to be found, but it's easy to follow a trail of stinking ant goo to area 2-6.

PCs searching the pile of eggs will find a human scalp whose hair looks disturbingly similar to Hort Leddy's – worth 10 gp to the Leddy family.

Ant Man Drones (3): Init +0; Atk mandible bite melee (1d6); AC 11; HD 1d8-1; hp 3 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -1; AL N.

Ant Pupae (5): Init -1; Atk bite melee (1d2); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 2 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP flammable (if they come in contact with flame they explode for 1d8 fire damage); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; AL N.

Area 2-6 – Lair of Samhain: *Cautiously, you descend deeper into the cavern. As your eyes adjust to the light, you suddenly feel your urine freeze in your bladder as you come face-to-face with a horrific amalgamation of withered gray body parts grotesquely fused together. It's clear to you now that limbs collected from the crypts and corpses of others have been harvested and somehow assimilated into this creature giving it mass. Indeed, you see Hort's lifeless – as well as scalpless – head bulging from the creature's girth like a ripe hemorrhoid.*

While it has no working eyes that you can see, the creature nonetheless appears aware of your presence, as it lifts its bulbous mass on a collection of legs and flails lifeless arms in your direction.

But before you can draw your weapons to defend yourself, you see Frezzo emerge from behind the corpse harvester. He is still clothed in soiled wedding attire and his eyes appear glassy and crazed. He licks his lips disturbingly and turns to the creature and says, "Behold, great Samhain, here are the souls I promised! My payment for your assistance murdering Hort is satisfied!"

For years, Samhain have been manipulating the ant men to burrow into graves to collect body parts of corpses to meld into its own gelatinous mass. Agglutinating Gage Vintner's evil bones has given it supernatural abilities. PCs examining



the abomination notice that in addition to Hort's scalps head (it was accidentally torn off during transport), the still bleeding crown of the ant queen has also been assimilated.

To defend itself, Samhain will animate a gourd puppet out of the bones of Gage (and potentially others) using bodies harvested from the crypts above. Judges should feel free to add additional gourd puppets based on the strength of the party to make this final battle interesting and memorable. Samhain will also use its *charm person* to try to convert PCs to allies, similar to how it has charmed Frezzo.

Samhain, The Corpse Harvester: Init +1; Atk arm clubs +3 melee (1d6+1) AC 13; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 20; Act 2d20; SP *charm person* spell (+3 to spell check); SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C.

Frezzo, Obsessed Brother-in-Law: Init +0; Atk short sword +1 melee (1d6+1) AC 11; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; AL C.

Gage Vintner, Gourd Puppet: Init -1, Atk claw +1 melee (1d5); AC 9; HD 2d6; hp 8; MV 25'; Act 1d10; SP un-dead, transforms to seedling swarm upon 0 hp; SV Fort +1, Ref -2, Will -2; AL C.

When gourd puppet reaches <= 0 hp, it loses its structural integrity forcing the seedlings to attack as a ravenous swarm.

Seedling Swarm: Init +2, Atk swarming bite +0 melee (1 hp); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 6; MV 25'; Act 1d10; SP bite the feet of all targets within 10' x 10' space, half damage from non-area attacks; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will -2; AL C.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Frezzo: If Frezzo still lives when Samhain is destroyed, his possession will be dispelled, and he will go into a deep depression over the shame of his past actions. Unless closely monitored, he will commit suicide two nights later.

Lotrin Whitegrass: Lotrin will pay 60 gp for the mortal remains of Brandolyn, and pay for any bottles of Brandolyn Red that are recovered from the adventure. He will then try to recruit the players to go on a quest to seek out the necromancer Madrog. It has been whispered that Madrog knows forbidden magic which can bring the dead back to life using even the smallest samples of blood. Lotrin is convinced this wine may be his chance to resurrect his long-dead love. If the PCs refuse he will actually wait until they rest for the night, follow them to their rooms, and then use a *sleep* spell to steal any remains from their possession. If Brandolyn's bones are returned to Lotrin, the descendants of the Dragontear family will feel a great weight lifted from their soul as Ghost Brandolyn is put to rest and all surviving PCs gain one point of Luck. (Note: Lotrin's machinations to resurrect his dead lover Brandolyn are continued in the DCC RPG adventure, *The Corpse That Love Built*.)

Lorumund Whitegrass: If the PCs go public about discovering the affair between Lotrin and Brandolyn, Lorumund will be disgusted that his brother fornicated with a human and will implore the PCs to sneak into the mysterious Elven sanctuary of Whitegrass Estate to search for clues regarding the disappearance of Lotrin's missing wife Dorthala which now, in hindsight, seems suspicious.

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Family Backgrounds Handouts

Whitegrass Family Background

You are distant cousins to the bride, Nala Whitegrass. Your elven relatives have all been tense as the wedding approaches.

- There are some that fear the King of Elfland does not want this mixed race marriage to occur! The grace of elves was never meant to mix with dirty, feral, humans.
- There is a dark family secret that Lotrin Whitegrass would pay a reward for the retrieval of the bones of Brandolyn Vintner – a human that lived and died over a century ago. The rumor states he wants to use her bones as an ingredient for a potion he's working on.
- Nala's mother – Dorthala Whitegrass – disappeared over a century ago under mysterious circumstances. Lotrin has been despondent and withdrawn ever since.

Leddy Family Background

You are distant cousins to the groom, Hort Leddy. Your family is one of the most prestigious in Portnelle, even if your current occupation is not.

- The Whitegrass family never approved of the marriage of your cousin Hort to the elf Nala!
- Frezzo idolizes his brother. He became withdrawn after learning that his brother was going to get married.
- Sir Heddrick Leddy made a statement that Nala's dowry was not sufficient enough given the prestige of the family she's marrying into.

Dragontear Family Background

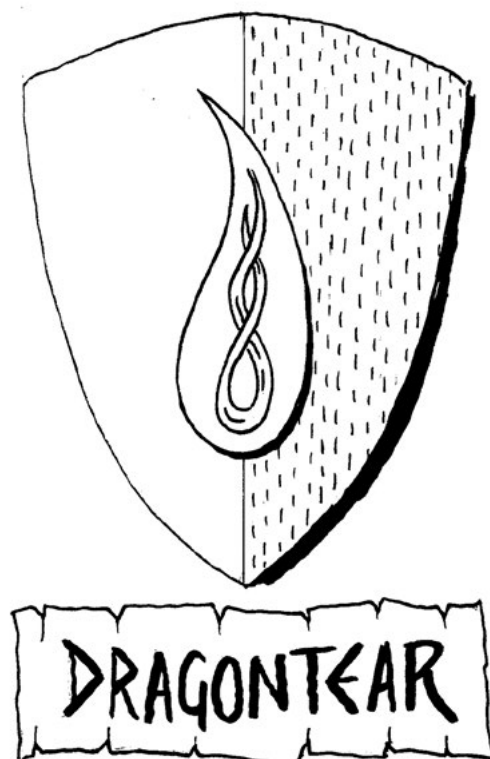
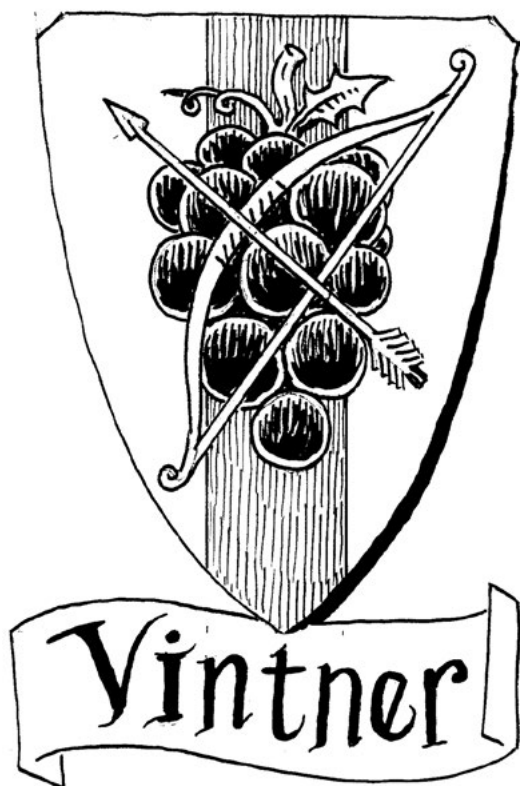
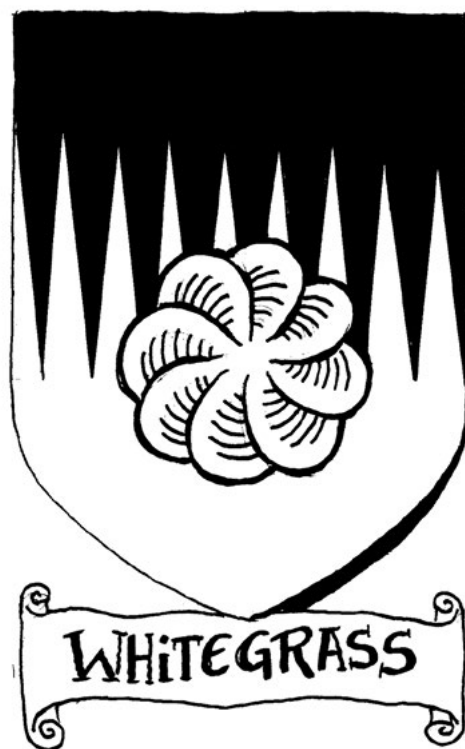
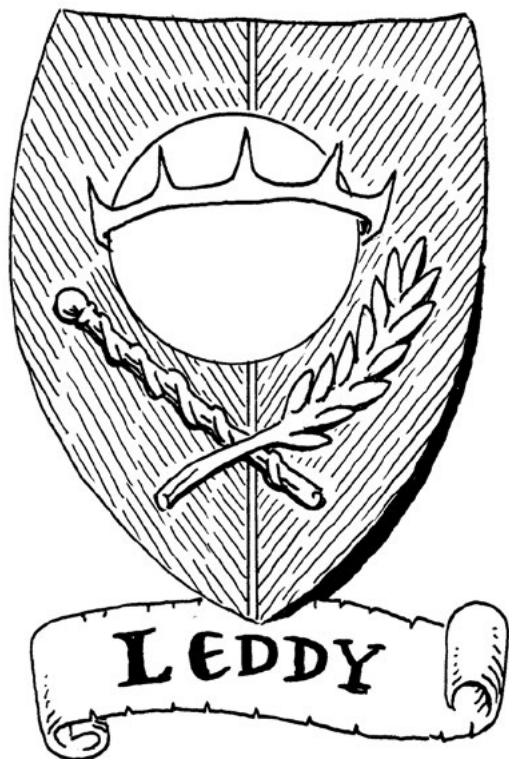
Your family has always lived modestly. At one point there were rumors of inheriting a large sum of money from the Vintner family, but it never came to pass.

- About 150 years ago, a Dragontear girl named Brandolyn married into the Vintner family. There was in-family acrimony when there was no inheritance after her death.
- One family claim-to-fame is that the famous wine Brandolyn Red is named after this same girl!
- There's an old family rumor that one of the old, creepy elves would pay money for one of Brandolyn's bones – supposedly to satisfy an evil elven demon's request.

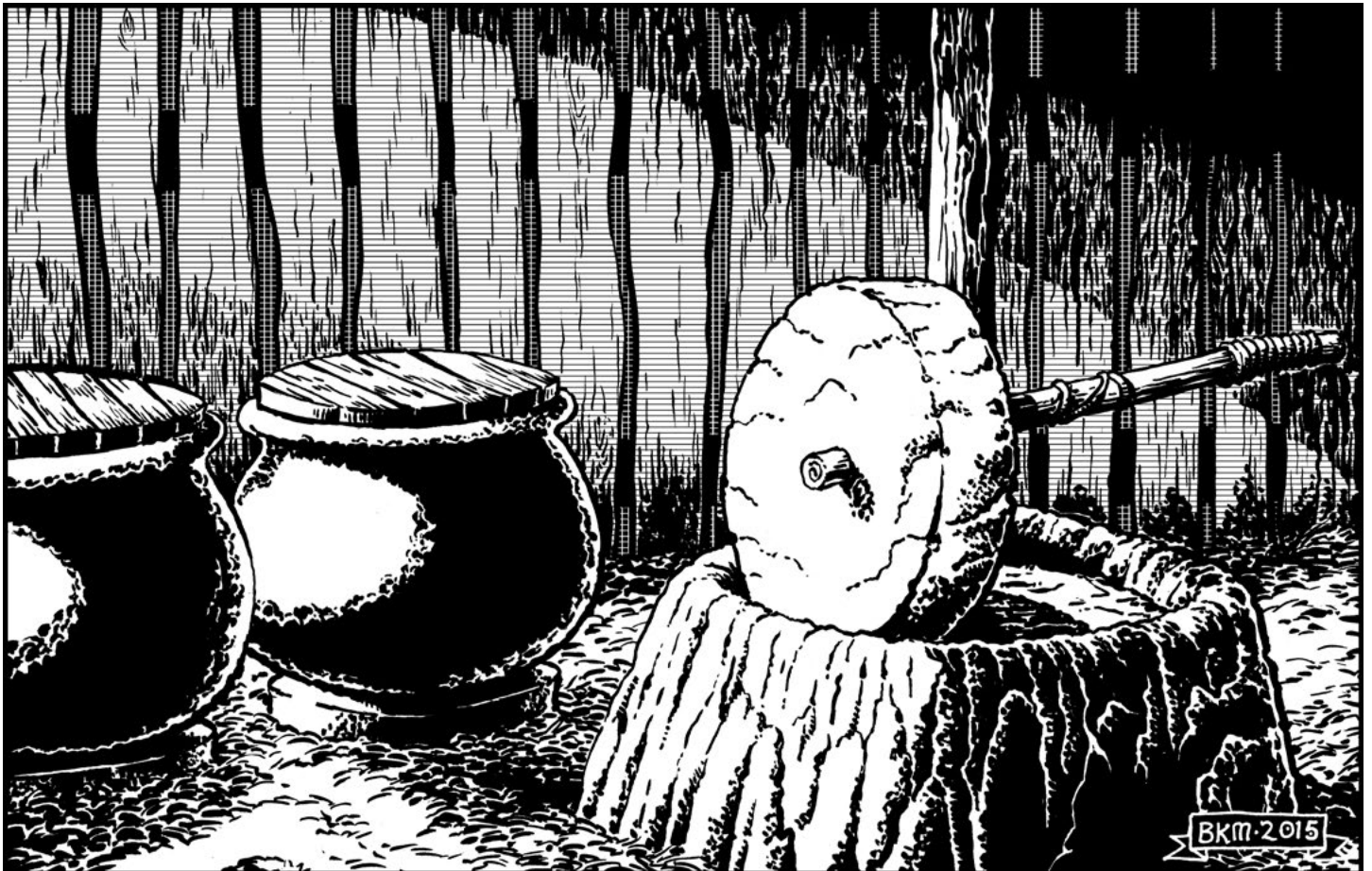
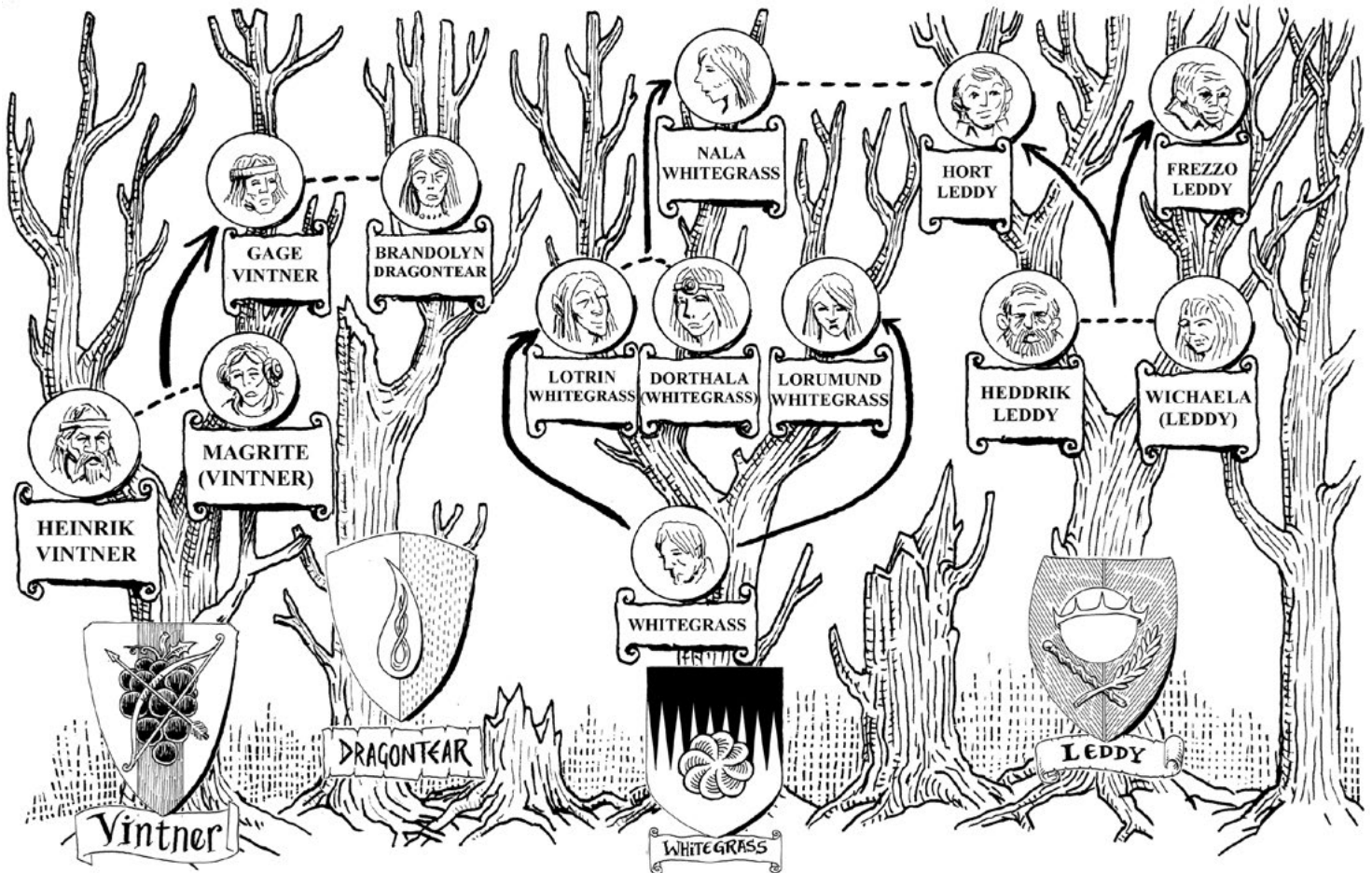
Vintner Family Background

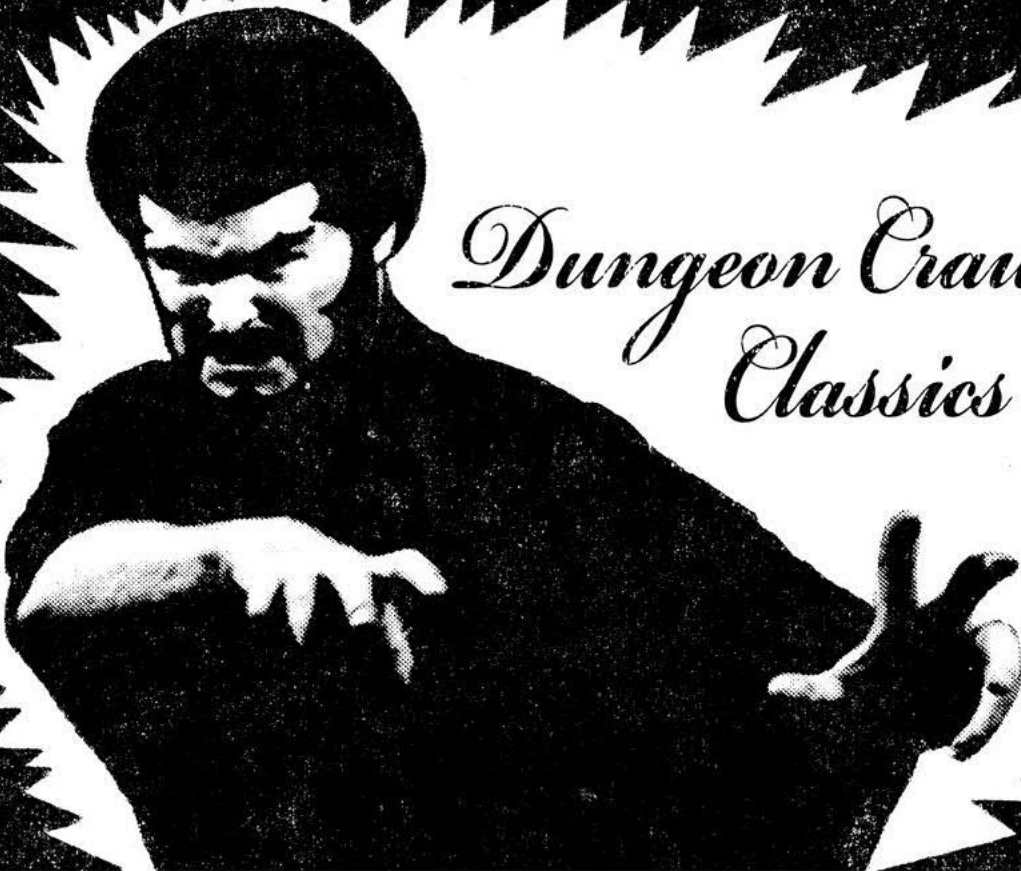
Your family was once considered prominent, but fell into poverty after a catastrophe at the family-owned Longbow Vineyard. It's not unusual to hear jokes made in town at your expense.

- A Vintner ancestor is famous for quelling an ant man invasion 200 years ago, and then establishing the once-famous Longbow Vineyards on the site of the attack. Its most famous wine was Brandolyn Red.
- It is rumored that Gage Vintner, the man who crafted Brandolyn Red, included a magical ingredient in the wine, explaining why it is so coveted.
- Gage Vintner became a recluse after his wife Brandolyn died in a freak accident when she drowned in a pond in the vineyard



Player Handout A





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