

WEIRD FRONTIERS

ROLE PLAYING GAME

NEST OF SNAKES

A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE

BY MICHAEL CURTIS



COMPATIBLE WITH

DCC RPG



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NEST OF SNAKES

A 3RD LEVEL ADVENTURE

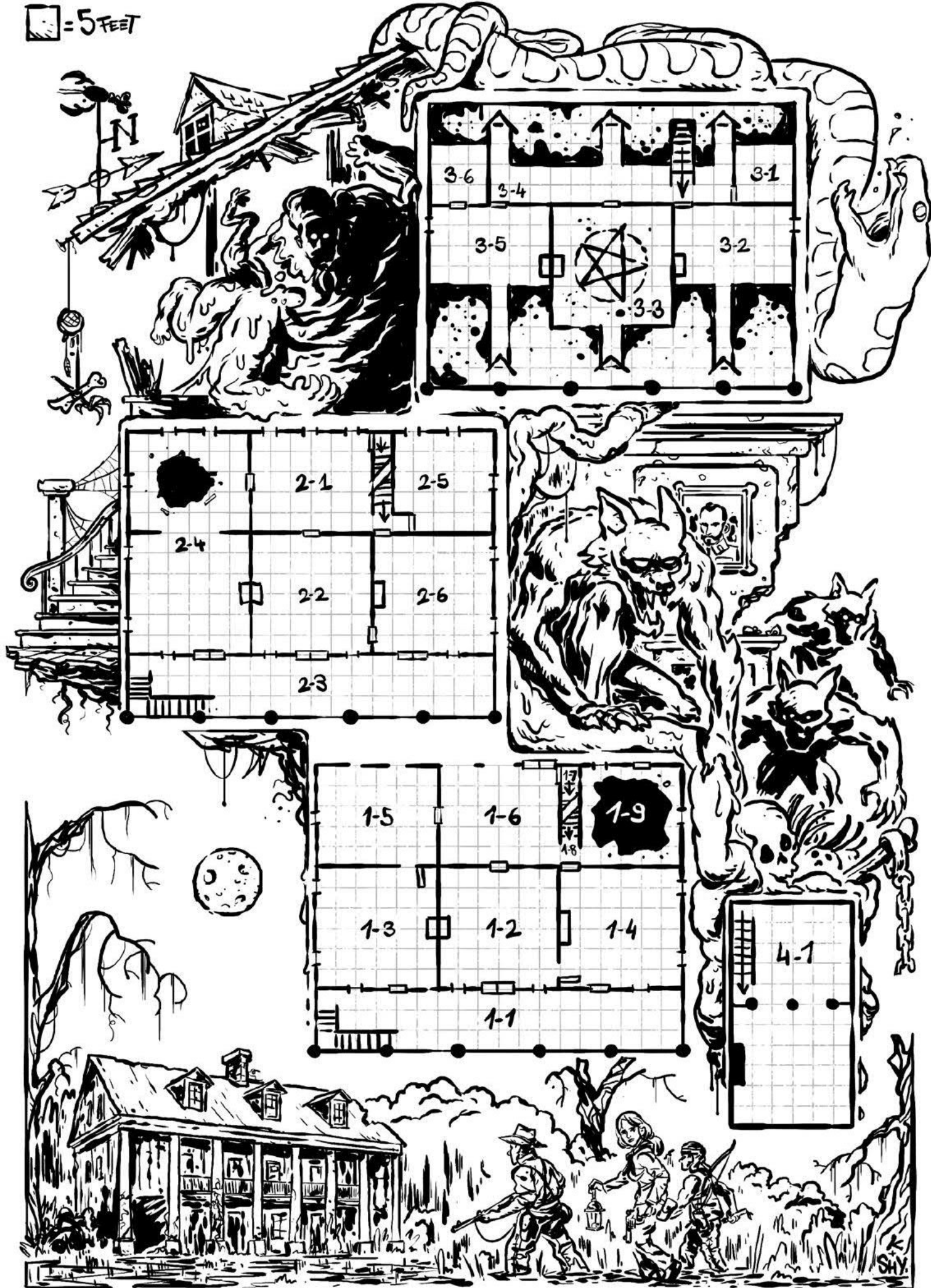
BY

MICHAEL CURTIS

Nest of Snakes is an adventure for the Weird Frontiers role-playing game and is designed to be played with a group of four to six 3rd level characters. The adventure concerns a debased family of French aristocracy dwelling in a dilapidated plantation manor in the swamps of Louisiana. The family's depraved occult practices and their long isolation have transformed them into a clan of rougarou—a creature that shares traits with both werewolves and vampires. The family estate harbors both terrors and treasures for the party brave and dedicated enough to survive this metaphorical serpents' nest.



□ = 5 FEET



BACKGROUND

The LaRoux have a bloodline of French aristocracy with roots stretching back to the Middle Ages. They were rich in land, wealth, and prestige, and navigated the courtly intrigues of pre-Revolutionary France with aplomb. Despite their renown and wealth, dark rumors hung about the LaRoux: whispered tales of black magic, blood drinking, cannibalism, and other, more lascivious hints at what went on behind the walls of their chateaus.

Perhaps through mystical channels or sheer happenstance, the LaRoux family foresaw the events of 1789 and made secretive arrangements to depart France for more accommodating climes. When the Revolution erupted and so many of the country's nobility saw their demise under the kiss of Madame Guillotine, the LaRoux were safely aboard the ship of notorious pirate, Jacques LaMort, bound for the port of New Orleans along with all their portable riches and servants.

The family settled in New Orleans and immediately began to accrue new wealth and status in the city, but the rumors of their sinful behavior and predilections followed them to the Americas. The LaRoux, seeking both a respite from the city and a place to keep their family practices away from prying eyes, purchased a large swath of land along the border of the Snakewater Bayou in the Atchafalaya Swamp. There, the LaRoux built the magnificent plantation they named "Tall Shadows" and set about the business of sugarcane and cotton production.

The LaRoux remained aloof from Creole society, except to occasionally marry off a son or daughter. These weddings were always held with great pomp and ceremony at Tall Shadows, where visitors were awestruck by the grandeur of the plantation. The LaRoux fortune continued to grow, but not all the rumors that spread around the Snakewater were inspired solely by jealousy. It was remarked that the plantation bought more slaves than any other of equal size, and tales of high mortality rates among the LaRoux's slaves were a common topic of gossip in both tavern and ballroom.

It's not known exactly when the LaRoux became something other than human, but by 1831, when the Great Barbados Hurricane lay waste to the Gulf Coast, the secretive family had fully removed themselves from outside society. The storm rocked Tall Shadows, changed the course of the bayou, damaged the plantation house and outbuildings, and decimated the LaRoux's fields. Many slaves escaped from the plantation in the wake of the storm, bringing with them stories of monstrous visits in the night by the LaRoux who'd drink the blood and eat the flesh of their servants. The LaRoux had become rougarou, shapeshifters and blood-drinkers, who practiced witchcraft and bargained with the rulers of Hell.

No LaRoux has been seen since the storm, and in the intervening four decades, Tall Shadows has been left to rot and is slowly being reclaimed by Snakewater Bayou. Now, rumors of a forgotten fortune reach the ears of adventurers and treasure hunters along the Western frontier, and the fate of the LaRoux clan is about to be revealed. ...

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs discover the existence of Tall Shadows, the LaRoux, and the suspicions about the debased clan's forgotten wealth when they discover a collection of papers consisting of pages torn from journals, written letters, and newspaper clippings. How they discover this cache is left to the judge's devising. They might be found among the belongings of a just-slain owlhoot (outlaw), in a satchel overlooked in the wake of a deadly raid, won at a poker table where the stakes are weird, or any other means that serves the campaign. If the group has played Death Crawls West, the papers might be among the belongings of Claude Boulet, given his New Orleans roots.

The bundle is tied together with ordinary string, and many of the pages are weathered and stained. Even a cursory examination of the pages reveals the names LaRoux, Tall Shadows, Louisiana, New Orleans, and Snakewater Bayou appear throughout the bundle, sometimes written, other times in newsprint.



A thorough reading of the papers uncovers most of the story as described in the background, albeit often reported third-hand and with whatever errors and discrepancies the judge wishes to introduce.

The PCs should not learn that the LaRoux are: (a) no longer human, and (b) still occupying the ruins of Tall Shadows. Instead, allow them to learn of the LaRoux's supposed wealth, lost to the Bayou in the wake of the storm, and let them discover the truth of Tall Shadows for themselves.

Reading the pages provides enough information for the characters to locate Tall Shadows and gain some idea of the LaRoux's lost wealth. Since the judge knows their players better than this author, the nature of the LaRoux's riches is left undefined. Some parties may be motivated by gold coins spirited away from pre-Revolutionary France, while others might seek moldy occult tomes or even medieval relics that the LaRoux are said to have owned.

Judge's Note: If you're the kind of judge who loves spicing up their games with handouts, props, and other tactile play aids, the collection of papers is the perfect opportunity to do so. Drop a sheaf of aged papers containing all the information you want the party to have onto the table, then sit back and let them pour over the materials until they come to a consensus of what to do with it.

Assuming the PCs decide to seek out the ruins of Tall Shadows and do a little treasure hunting, they must head to the Atchafalaya Swamp, roughly forty miles east of Vermilionville (present day Lafayette). No railroad runs through tiny Vermilionville at this time, so the party will likely have to make their way to the swamp by a variety of means depending on their location when the LaRoux papers are discovered. The journey can be played out or hand-waved as the judge desires. At some point, they will manage to track down some old Creole or Cajun who can put them on the trail to where Tall Shadows stood in its heyday.

All paragraphs that appear in *italics* are meant to be read aloud or paraphrased by the judge to the players. All firearms listed in Stat blocks use the 'simplified' firearm rules from the *Weird Frontiers* core book.

TALL SHADOWS

"Tall Shadows" is the name the LaRoux gave to their magnificent plantation home, but locals used the term in reference to the plantation itself. Tall Shadows has seen better days when the PCs arrive; the characters must hack a path between moss-covered cypress trees and must wade through the dank ponds and tea-colored rivers that are reclaiming the LaRoux's lands since the storm of '31. Read the following when the group reaches the plantation:

The air is humid and hot as you emerge from the young growths of cypress trees sprouting from the sodden lands of the bayou. Mosquitos hum in the air about you, and the sun feels cruel on your necks and faces. Not even a whisper of a breeze disturbs the air to cool you. It's as if the swamp itself is holding its breath.

Before you stretch the remains of what was once a rich plantation. The outlying fields are now home to tangled underbrush and thirty-year-old cypress and tupelo trees are slowly reclaiming the once-tilled lands for the bayou. The roofs of a cluster of outbuildings, now collapsed and nearly entirely underwater, rise above the waters to the southwest, some 50' or more away from dry ground.

Your eyes are drawn to the plantation house itself. It must have been the envy of all in its heyday, a three-story brick masterpiece, fronted by six stout columns, a porch, and a balcony with solid chimneys thrusting from its roof.

Time and the bayou have had its way with the plantation house. What was once a well-manicured lawn and back garden is now drowned by the Snakewater Bayou. The manor's ground floor stands inundated by the dark waters of the swamp, and stands of reeds and waterlilies sway where once rose gardens grew.





Many of the windows are hidden behind closed shutters, and the few that aren't are rimmed in jagged broken glass.

Aside from the buzzing of mosquitoes and the croaking of frogs, the plantation is silent, as if awaiting your next move.

THE LAROUX

The LaRoux family currently occupying Tall Shadows are the three most recent generations of the clan and entirely under the rougarou curse (see more on that below). They prey on swamp folk, lonely travelers, and when times are hard, the deer, gators, and bears that live in the bayou.

Solitude has bred contempt within the LaRoux, and the residents dwell apart from one another, only socializing when necessary for the most part. The younger generation (André, Céleste, and Simon) have little love for their parents (André least of all), while Père (father) and Mère (mother) fear or despise their older kinfolk (Grand-père and Grand-mère). The LaRoux will only cooperate if Tall Shadows itself is endangered, putting aside their mutual dislike to

Judge's Note: "Tall Shadows," the plantation house, is based on a real plantation, Shadows-on-the-Teche, in New Iberia, Louisiana. A web search will turn up a number of useful photographs and even floorplans for judges wishing to build a better visualization of the LaRoux estate.

preserve their family home. This is the LaRoux's great weakness, and a cautious group of PCs can take the clan apart, member by member, if they're careful not to turn all the rougarou against them at once.

ROUGAROU

The rougarou is a force of evil; some say they have origins in the bowels of Hell, but little is known for certain about them. A mixture of lycanthrope, vampire, and witch, the rougarou dwell on the outskirts of society, free to satiate their bestial urges away from prying eyes. They crave human flesh and blood and prey upon solitary travelers, outlying farms and homesteads, and whatever opportunity presents itself.

The rougarou curse, once it has taken hold of a bloodline and endured for three or more generations, manifests differently in each member of the bloodline. Some of the LaRoux are more animal than human, while others subsist on the blood of the living. Others are not human at all. This makes the rougarou an unpredictable foe, and the judge can easily give one of these monsters any powers or abilities they choose—particularly if the PCs ever become too complacent with what they're facing.

THE PLANTATION

Tall Shadows is in a state of decay and is slowly sinking back into the bayou. From the outside, it appears abandoned and forlorn, living up to the rumors that it is empty and that a forgotten fortune awaits inside. Only one of those rumors is correct, and the LaRoux aren't about to give up their riches without a fight.

The plantation was the site of terrible atrocities in the years before the Seven Days of Night. In the wake of the supernatural awakening that occurred, the evils and terrors that happened at the plantation have remained. Although this malignant aura is invisible to the naked eye, anyone stepping sideways into the spirit realm clearly sees the taint that plagues the plantation. In the spirit world, the hurricane of 1831 is still

underway and the area around the plantation is whipped by howling winds and ectoplasmic debris. It is impossible to approach the building in the spirit world, and any attempts to do so threaten to sweep those in the Near away.

A DC 15 Willpower save must be made to even walk against the spiritual hurricane, with a failure indicating no progress is made. On a natural 1, they are blown off into the Far of the spirit world and may reappear elsewhere at the judge's discretion (or may need to be rescued by allies from a grim fate).

A successful Willpower save allows the creature to move at half their speed against the wind for 1 round before they must repeat the save. All spirits in the vicinity have been whisked away by the winds, leaving no witnesses to question.

EVENT - THE SLITHERING SIBLING

This encounter is a moveable one, able to occur nearly anywhere inside Tall Shadows. The judge should feel free to spring it whenever the action slows down or immediately after a fight when the group is just breathing a sigh of relief—and has perhaps expended a lot of resources and is feeling hard pressed.

The youngest LaRoux sibling, Simon, is a shapechanger like his kin. However, his strain of the rougarou curse manifested in a different manner: he takes the form of a large serpent resembling a 10' long cottonmouth snake. It is in this form that Simon moves around the plantation house, slithering up and down chimneys, crawling across rooftops, sliding down drain pipes, and otherwise going everywhere. This makes him the perfect ambush predator. Simon also has a knack for training gators and always keeps at least two monstrous specimens by his side. When Simon strikes, the judge should read or paraphrase the following:

A sudden motion out of the corner of your eye snaps you to alertness. There is a flash of a brown, scale-covered form the size of a log, a gaping mouth white as a sheet, and long fangs as sharp as knives. It is upon you faster than you thought possible!



The two gators will harass the PCs by going after their horses first (if they're mounted), throwing their riders into the swamp (-1d to all physical actions as the swamp-muck limits mobility) where they are much easier prey for the gators.

Gator (2): Init -3; Atk bite +4 melee (3d4); AC 13; HD 2d8; hp 16; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage, amphibious, grapple; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -2; Path WtL.

Camouflage: The creature gains a +2 bonus on any stealth, hide, or similar checks.

Grapple: On a successful bite, an alligator automatically grabs the victim unless they make a DC 10 Reflex save. The alligator then attempts to pull its victim below water (contested Strength vs. gator Strength +5) and inflicts an automatic 2d4 damage per round unless slain or the victim is freed (a Strength check at DC 15 can be made each round after being pulled under).



When Simon strikes, allow the PC with the highest Intelligence to make an opposed ability check: Intelligence vs. Simon's stealth (+10 to his roll). If Simon rolls higher, his first attack is made with a +1d bonus.

Simon LaRoux: Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (1d10 plus poison); AC 15; HD 6d8; hp 32; MV 30', Swim 40', or climb 20'; Act 2d20; SP regenerates 8 hp per round, stealthy (+10 to all stealth-related checks), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic), poisonous (DC 15 Fort save—if failed, target takes an addition 1d8 damage and suffers a -1d penalty to all attacks, saves, spell, and skill checks, then begins to lose 1d4 Stamina points every hour the poison is untreated, dying at 0 Stamina); SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; Path PoD +3.

Simon is impetuous, but not stupid. If reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, he attempts to flee, submerging and using the murky depths of the swamp if possible. He eventually flees to the roof, where he licks his wounds and may choose to escape Tall Shadows entirely. Simon will then seek to avenge his family at a later date, making him a perfect coda to the adventure or as a springboard for a new adventure...

If slain, Simon returns to his natural form: an 11-year-old boy with angelic features, dark hair and eyes, and is dressed in a Fauntleroy suit.

FIRST FLOOR

Unless otherwise noted, all doors and windows inside the house are closed and locked or barred from inside the room. Picking the locks on doors requires a DC 10 Agility check with a thin tool, while breaking them down is done with a DC 15 Strength check. The windows cannot be picked, but can be broken open with a tool or weapon and a successful DC 12 Strength check. Any Strength check, regardless of success or failure, makes noise—alerting anyone in the adjacent room(s) of the party's presence and gives them time to prepare for the intruders.

Area 1-1—Front Porch: *Six once-white pillars rise from the murky bayou waters to hold the eaves of the roof and a second-story balcony aloft. Two doors, a set of double doors, and four windows pierce the plantation house's brick walls, but only gloom is visible through their broken panes and ajar portals. A rickety-looking staircase leads up to the second-story balcony at the south end of the porch. Judging from the water lapping at the bottom of the tall shattered windows, the ground floor of the plantation manor is inundated with two or more feet of dark water.*

The storm of 1831 altered the course of the Snakewater Bayou and flooded the plantation. Two-and-a-half feet of water cover the ground immediately around the house, flooding the porch and ground floor of the building. The ground beneath the water is muddy, filled with debris both natural and man-made, and can be treacherous to navigate.

Each PC must make a Luck check when they reach the porch. On a failed check, they'll encounter difficulty at some point while exploring the flooded section of the plantation unless they immediately head for the dry upper floors. The judge should make a note of who failed their check, then introduce a mishap at some dramatically appropriate moment during the adventure.

Some possible consequences of a failed Luck check might include:

- Slipping and falling prone at an inopportune moment, such as when being attacked by an adversary.
- Automatically falling down the stairs in area 1-8 or into the cellar through the floor in area 1-9.
- Treading on a hidden cottonmouth and being attacked [Init +1; Atk bite +1 melee (1 damage plus DC 10 Fort save—2d6 damage plus 1d5 Stamina loss on failed save); AC 10; 1HD; hp 2, MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP poison; SV Fort +0, REF +0, WILL +0; Path WtL.

- A stumble results in the PC's gun being soaked, possibly automatically causing a firearm to misfire. The firearm automatically misfires as if an ace or an eight was drawn from the gun deck. This happens each time the weapon is fired until the gun is cleaned.

A group that quickly moves through the house and onto the drier stories might escape their bad Luck. In this case, ignore any further failed Luck check consequences.

The doors are unlocked, and the windows can easily be climbed through, although the windows will dislodge loose shards of glass and possibly announce the party's presence if the LaRoux are not yet aware of their presence.

The stairway at the south end of the porch looks to be in poor condition, and it is. It may support a single person at a time if that person succeeds on a Luck check made with a d24, but two or more PCs climbing the stairs at once causes it to collapse. Anyone on the collapsing stairs must succeed on a DC 11 Reflex save or take 1d6+1 damage. The collapse of the stairs automatically alerts all the LaRoux on the second floor that intruders are about, and they prepare to deal with them, each in their own way.

Area 1-2—Drawing Room: *Bits of old, broken furniture and lily pads float on the waters covering the floor of this 30' x 30' room. A brick fireplace, surrounded by peeling plaster gone green with algae and moss, is set into the south wall. A closed door, swollen by water, stands in the center of the west wall in between a pair of collapsed, empty bookcases built into the wooden paneling on each side. An open door exits the room to the north. A moss-covered chandelier hangs crookedly from the ceiling 12' overhead.*

Once a fine drawing room, this space is now largely bare except for bits of broken wood furnishings and the stray waterlogged book written in French.

The door to area 1-6 is swollen shut and requires a DC 18 Strength check to open. Whether the check fails or succeeds, the effort alerts the occupants of areas 4-1 and 2-4 that intruders are inside Tall Shadows.





Area 1-3—Sewing Room: *Water covers the floor of this 20' square room, and bits of driftwood and busted furniture float atop it among the swamp scum. Broken windows look out from both the south and east walls, jagged bits of glass still rimming their frames. A brick fireplace is set in the north wall surrounded by plaster sloughing off the boards beneath it. The remaining walls are covered with wallpaper whose pattern is buried beneath a layer of scum and dirt. An open door is set into the west wall near the room's northwest corner, and an ajar set of French doors leads outside to the east.*

This room is now occupied by a gator floating just beneath the surface.

Gator(3): Init -3; Atk bite +4 melee (3d4); AC 13;

HD 2d8; hp 16; MV 20' or swim 40'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage, amphibious, grapple; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will -2; Path WtL.

Camouflage: The creature gains a +2 bonus on any stealth, hide, or similar checks.

Grapple: On a successful bite, an alligator automatically grabs the victim unless they make a DC 10 Reflex save. The alligator then attempts to pull its victim below water (contested PC Strength vs. Strength +5) and inflicts an automatic 2d4 damage per round unless slain or the victim is freed (Strength check DC 15 can be made each round after being pulled under).

The LaRoux feed the gator the occasional left-over from their own meals to whet its taste for human flesh and encourage it to hang around the plantation. The animal has learned not to bother Grand-père in area 4-I.

Area 1-4—Dining Room: *The brick walls of this room are visible behind a thin veil of rotting plaster and yellow-green swamp scum. A waterlogged dining table, once suitable for seating up to eight, is jammed in the northwest corner of the room, its mud-covered top visible a foot above the dark water that inundates this former dining room. A brick fireplace bearing a rotted wood overmantle is set in the south wall. Vine creepers dangle from inside the chimney, swaying slightly in the marshy water.*

This former dining room bears a hidden danger: the creepers are a form of swamp vine given a dark thirst for life by their cultivator, Céleste LaRoux (see area 2-6). The creepers usually feed on swamp animals swimming in the bayou's waters, but they will dine on larger meals if they come into reach.

A net of vine fills a portion of the room extending out from the fireplace and covers a good 10' radius. Anyone wading into this area of the room must make a DC 14 Reflex save or be entangled by the murderous vines. Entangled prey must also make an opposed Strength check against the creepers (who have a +4 bonus); if failed, the entangled creature is dragged underwater and faces additional danger. The creepers can entangle up to four man-sized targets at once.

The creepers drain vitality, automatically syphoning 1d6 hit points each round from an entangled creature. The drowning rules from the core book are here for easy reference:

Characters can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Stamina score before suffering from the effects of drowning or suffocating. Characters suffer a d3 of Stamina damage on the first round they can no longer hold their breath, followed by an additional cumulative +1d of damage each additional round. Characters reaching zero Stamina die from lack of oxygen and drown. Ability points lost in this way heal at a rate of 1d4 per hour once they are no longer drowning.

A creature can escape from the vines if they or an ally passes a DC 13 Strength check, breaking them free from the creepers. A target can also be freed by cutting through the tendrils (AC 9, 10 hp), but only slashing weapons damage the vines. Lastly, dealing 20 or more points of fire damage to the exposed creepers in the fireplace causes the entire network of vines to withdraw back up the chimney, freeing all targets entangled by them. Physically attacking the vines in the chimney frees one target for every 10 points of damage dealt to the creepers.



Anyone searching beneath the waters of this room and succeeding on a Luck check discovers a heavy, waterlogged wooden case containing the LaRoux family dinnerware. This 60 piece set of silverware is worth \$100.

Area 1-5—Servant's Quarters: *A section of this water-inundated room's ceiling has collapsed, revealing a roughly 10-foot-wide section of rotten beams and jagged-edged floorboards above. The battered and broken remains of a pair of narrow beds, along with debris fallen from above, bob in the scum-covered swamp water. Broken windows are set in the south and west walls. An open door stands in the east wall and a closed door is set in the north. An open room or other space is visible above through the collapsed ceiling, but is difficult to discern what it might be from below.*

This room was once the living space for the plantation's house slaves, a luxurious abode compared to their counterparts in the fields outside. All the simple furnishings and personal belongings here have long since rotted or washed away.

If the LaRoux are aware of intruders, André LaRoux is on alert in the room above (see area 2-4). If he hears what sounds like someone attempting to climb or be lifted up to look through the hole in the ceiling, he grabs a box of his snakes and dumps it on top of anyone directly beneath the hole. The box contains four large cottonmouths that are very testy at being unceremoniously dumped out and attack anyone they can strike at.

Snakewater Bayou cottonmouths (4): Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5-1 plus poison); AC 14 (17 vs. firearms); HD 2d6 + 2; hp 10 each; MV 40' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP poisonous (DC 15 Fort save—if failed, target suffers -1d penalty to all attacks, saves, spell and skill checks and begins losing 1 Stamina point every hour the poison is untreated, dying at 0 Stamina), sinuous (+4 bonus to AC vs. firearms); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Path WtL.

If a target is poisoned, an ally can attempt to suck the poison from the wound within 3 rounds. Doing so requires a DC 10 Intelligence check, using a d10 if the character's background lacks any degree of medicinal training or a d20 if it does.

On a success, the process requires two rounds to perform but treats the poison. On a failure, the poison has entered the bloodstream fully and no further efforts to draw out the poison in this way can be made. If the skill roll is a natural "1" the would-be aider poisons themselves and must make a DC 15 Fortitude save as if being bit.

André LaRoux: Init +5; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8+2) or claw +6 (1d6 + 4) or heavy pistol + 3 ranged (1d10, ROF 2, Load 6, Reload 3, Range 10/20/60); AC 16; HD 8d10; hp 52; MV 30' or leap 20'; Act 2d20; SP regenerates 10 hp per round, climber (+10 to all climb checks), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Path PoD +3.

André LaRoux resembles a wolf-human hybrid standing 9' tall and dressed in tattered finery of a bygone age. His fur is nearly ebony in coloration.

André's feet are bare, revealing taloned paws capable of astonishing leaps and gaining footholds on all but the slipperiest surfaces. André wears a black sash around his waist in which he keeps his revolver, the pistol's trigger guard has been sawn away to accommodate his thick, clawed fingers.

André is rougarou through and through—if slain, his corpse retains its hybrid form instead of returning to human shape.

See area 2-4 for more information on André and the room in which he dwells.





André LaRoux remains in area 2-4 but can reach down and attack anyone directly under the exposed section of ceiling or any who attempt to climb into the room above. Due to his large size and clawed feet, André can reach targets within 10' of the hole in the ceiling, allowing him to claw or shoot enemies below, but not bite them. This is a surprise attack action, and he will successfully pull up a victim with a successful opposed Strength roll (André has a +4 Strength).

Area 1-6—Salon: *A trio of French doors were fitted into the west wall of this room, perhaps once providing a stunning view of the bayou outside when open. Now, only a single set of doors remain; the other entrances are wide open, giving entrance to the swarms of insects buzzing about the room. The walls are covered with mud and swamp scum, and the room is flooded as elsewhere on this level. A small troop of frogs swim about the room or are perched on pieces of floating debris, snatching insects out of the air with flicks of their sticky tongues. Single doors are present in the north, south, and east walls, and an open archway in the north wall connects to a flight of upward-climbing stairs.*

If a PC happens to look up: The ceiling here bears a curious decoration of interlocking lines forming strange angles, angles that seem to make the eyes water when looked upon.

The frogs are ordinary animals and quickly hop or swim out of the party's way if the PCs enter the room. The ceiling, however, is another story.

This room has been witch-warded by Mère LaRoux, the painted lines on the ceiling a blasphemous warning in the language of Hell. It only affects creatures with souls, allowing both natural animals and the LaRoux family (who sold their souls for power long ago) to pass through this room without harm. The infernal flames don't ignite materials such as wood or brick, leaving them untouched. A successful DC 15 Intelligence check by a character possessing occult knowledge identifies the design as Hellish in origin and most likely hazardous in nature.

A soul-owning creature who enters the room must succeed on a DC 12 Willpower save or spontaneously catch fire with the flames of Hell. These flames cannot be put out with mere water, but even a splash of holy water instantly extinguishes them, as will a divine healing result that restores 4 dice of damage. The flames will also go out if an affected target flees more than 60' from the boundaries of this room.

Anyone burning with hellfire suffers 1d4 damage each round until the fires are put out or they are reduced to zero hit points. A creature slain by hellfire is incinerated, and no roll the body check is allowed. All their possessions are burned up as well.

Hellfire is a danger to live ammunition and can cause gunpowder to cook off, exploding on the body of the person carrying it. There is a 1-in-6 cumulative chance each round (1 in 6 chance on round one, 2 in 6 on round two, etc.) that a hellfire-engulfed target will have 1d4 cartridges explode, inflicting an additional 1d6 points of damage for each cartridge that 'cooks' off.

Hellfire is extremely painful, and a burning creature must succeed on a DC 10 Willpower save to perform any action other than move or scream (such as removing an ammunition-laden gun belt about to cook off).

The witch-ward can be neutralized by simply breaking up the pattern (throwing sticky mud onto the design, for example [judge should call for a Luck check to be successful with this]) or through the use of magic-negating spells or similar effects.

Area 1-7—Interior Stairs: A flight of warped wooden stairs rises out of the dark water to ascend up to the second floor of the plantation house. Swamp scum and mud cover the lower steps.

The warped steps creak and groan abysmally if any weight is placed upon them, making climbing them stealthily difficult. PCs wishing to ascend the stairs soundlessly must succeed on a DC 15 Agility check with a -1d penalty. If the check fails, the groaning stairs alert the occupants of rooms 2-2 and 2-4 above that someone is approaching the second floor.



Anyone examining the mud- and scum-covered lower steps and succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence check notices a faint footprint in the muck. It resembled a large animal's track, like an oversized wolf or dog, measuring about 11 inches in length—a hint at what awaits above.

Area 1-8—Cellar Stairs: *A short space, perhaps a storage cubby, is located here. It is filled with dark water. From the angled nature of the ceiling, it appears that this space is located beneath a flight of stairs accessed somewhere else in the house.*

Although this appears to be a storage space or cubbyhole, it is actually a set of stairs leading down to the cellar beneath the building. The stairs are completely underwater, and unless the floor is carefully prodded or similar caution is taken, anyone stepping into the space plunges underwater, if only momentarily. The submerged must make a Luck check. On a failed check, any firearms they carry automatically misfire until the weapon is cleaned (as described in area 1-1 above).

Area 1-9—Kitchen: *A length of rusty iron piping protruding from the north wall suggests this room once contained a stove, making it the plantation's kitchen. Warped wooden cabinets hang on the west and south walls, and a closed door leading outside is set into the room's west wall. Two interior doors exit the room, one to the south and one to the east, with a small cubby at ground level next to the south door. As elsewhere, the floor is obscured beneath 2 ½ feet of murky, brown water. Aside from the cabinets and the broken-off stove pipe, the room appears empty of furnishings.*

The floor of this room has rotted away, turning the entire space into a water-filled pit trap. Anyone venturing into the room must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid plunging through the missing floor and into the cellar (area 4-1) below. Doing so immediately alerts Grand-père who attacks, trying to drag the unlucky victims beneath the water.

Note that anyone falling through the floor and being submerged may have difficulty with firearms. See area 1-1 for details.

The cabinets contain only cracked and scum-covered plates and drinking glasses.

SECOND FLOOR

Area 2-1—Library: *The walls of this room, surprisingly in good repair given the ruin of the rest of the house, are lined with bookshelves. Old tanned-leather tomes reside on the shelves, and a broad, flat desk rests in the middle of the room atop a dark-green carpet. Three grimy windows in the westwall overlook the flooded bayou outside the house, and a quartet of doors depart the room, two to the east, one to the north, and one to the south. A set of stairs in the northeast corner descends below, while a second set in the northwest corner ascends into the darkness above. The room smells like old leather and paper, with a faint odor of decay and ancient blood.*

This room is the pride of the LaRoux clan and they keep it in good repair despite other dilapidations. Most of the tomes are old texts, some dating back to the Middle Ages, and are predominately in Latin, Old French, and French. Almost all are books on ordinary subjects such as math, history, and philosophy, but one section contains darker tomes (see below).

Unless the PCs made it onto this level without attracting notice, Père and Mère LaRoux are watching the party through a peephole in the eastern door. When they deem it most advantageous, the pair attacks the group using a mixture of physical combat and witchcraft. Père LaRoux leaps into the room, rending opponents with his claws, while Mère LaRoux works magic from her bedroom. See area 2-2 for their stats.

One section of the bookcase in the west wall is actually a row of false books. A DC 13 Intelligence check notices the obfuscation. If the false books are removed, a trio of fat tomes bound in black leather, decorated with tarnished silver flourishes, and reeking of death and spilled blood, are discovered in the space behind them.



(The non-magical books here are rare finds and would fetch \$10 each—have a PC that notes their worth roll 1d10 to determine how many of these books are in good condition.) If Père and Mère LaRoux have not yet attacked, they immediately do so when this hidden space is discovered.

The three books are works of darkest witchcraft, handed down through the LaRoux family since the Middle Ages. Deciphering the cryptic, obscene Latin text and grisly illustrations takes one month per book, upon which time the reader can comprehend their contents but automatically suffers a single, random Greater Corruption effect. The contents of the books are as follows:

- **Book #1:** A spellbook containing 2d4 spells of 1st through 3rd level chosen by the judge. These spells should be the most evil, harmful, or disgusting incantations the judge desires.
- **Book #2:** Explains the means to create a witchward on a living creature. It requires special components to enact (see area 3-3).
- **Book #3:** A grimoire bearing the name of 13 of the most heinous devils of Hell (or a single Elder god) and the means to summon them to Earth. The identities, the means of summoning them, and the ramifications of doing so are left to the individual judge to determine, but suffice to say, anyone calling up something they may not be able to put down deserves exactly what they get. A judge might call for an immediate roll on a corruption chart (to what degree is up to the judge) for willingly reading the spells.

The room contains nothing else of interest.

Area 2-2—Père and Mère LaRoux's Bedroom:

A lavish bedchamber bearing a four-poster bed covered in gauzy bone-colored lace rests against the north wall across from a gorgeous marble fireplace. Two shuttered windows are set in the east wall on either side of a set of closed double doors. A large wardrobe, its wooden doors inscribed with some heraldry design, stands in the northwest corner beside the bed. A woman's dressing table is in the southwest corner of the room and bears a gilded framed mirror.

These are the private quarters of the family's father and mother, the son-in-law and daughter of Grand-père LaRoux (see area 4-1). They are home when the party enters the plantation house and, if they detect their presence, they prepare to ambush them in area 2-1 as described above.

Peepholes in both the east and west doors of this room allow the pair to observe events in areas 2-1 and 2-3. Both doors are locked (DC 10 Agility check with a tool to pick the lock or a DC 15 Strength check to force it open) if the two LaRoux family members are expecting trouble. If intruders enter this room from the balcony outside, Père LaRoux engages them in melee combat while Mère LaRoux works her witchcraft and her pistol at range.

Père LaRoux: Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d3) or claw +5 (1d6); AC 14; HD 4d10; hp 30; MV 30' or leap 20'; Act 1d20; SP improved critical range (19-20), rend (automatic double damage on a critical hit with claws, plus gains a free second claw attack against the same target), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Path PoD.

Père LaRoux is a towering 7' tall mass of muscle and hair with the head and legs of a wolf, but the body of a man. He dresses in torn finery, stained with mud and blood, over his black fur-covered body. His eyes glow red in dim light and his fingers are talons ending in serrated claws. Like his eldest son, Père is thoroughly rougarou and retains his hybrid form even in death.



Mère LaRoux: Init +4; Atk (2)light pistols + 3 ranged (1d8, ROF 2, Load 6, Reload 3, Range 10/20/60); AC 14; HD 6d10; hp 43; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP regenerates 10 hp per round, witchcraft (see below), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic), hybrid form; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; Path PoD +1d.

In wolf/human hybrid form: Gains the following: bite +3 melee (1d7+3) or claw +5 (1d6+3); MV 30' or leap 20', and SP improved critical range (19-20), rend (automatic double damage on a critical hit with claws, plus gains a free second claw attack against the same target).

Witchcraft: Mère LaRoux can work witchcraft with the following spell-like effects:

- As a **ricochet** spell(1st level occultist spell) with a spell check of **14-17**. This is the first spell she casts.
- **Hot lead:** Mère makes a spell check using 1d24+6. On a result of **12+**, she or Père gains protection against bullets—which melt when striking their targets. The attacker rolls damage as if the attack succeeded, and the judge reduces the protection by that many points (e.g. on a spell check of 17, up to 17 points of damage is absorbed before bullets can injure the protected creature). Any damage beyond the total of the spell check result affects the target normally. This spell affects even magical bullets, such as those fired by a gunslinger. Mère can only successfully cast this spell once per day and will most likely attempt to cast it on Père before he starts combat if possible.
- **Thunderclap:** All enemies in a 20' radius must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or be knocked prone. Prone targets must also make a Luck check, dropping their weapon or other held objects on a failed check. Mère can cast this twice per day.
- **Witchfire:** A single target within 60' suffers 1d8+2 damage as an eerie green fire strikes them. A successful DC 11 Reflex save avoids catching fire. Witchfire only affects living creatures and cannot kindle natural flames or fire. Mère can use this spell as often as she desires.
- **Drain Life:** A single target within 30' must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 damage. Mère LaRoux gains or heals a number of hit points equal to the damage inflicted. This spell can take her above her maximum hit point total. Hit points above her maximum remain for one hour or until sunrise, whichever comes first. Mère can cast this three times per day. She can also cast it, transferring all gained hit points to Père instead of herself, once per day—which counts against her 3/day limit.
- **Swarm of Crawdads:** A crawling mass of tiny crawdads of infernal origin appears at a point Mère LaRoux can see within 100'. The swarm immediately attacks all targets in that area. See below for stats:

Swarm of Crawdads: Init +0; Atk swarming claw pinches +1 melee (1d3 plus annoyance); AC 11; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 20'; Act special; SP pinch all targets within a 20' x 20' space without needing an attack roll, half damage from non-area attacks, annoyance (-1d penalty to all attacks, spell checks, ability checks, and saving throws while within the swarm); SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will -2; Path PoD.



Mère LaRoux is a zaftig woman in her late 40s with dark hair and eyes, both flecked with gray. She wears the garb of a wealthy plantation matron, still kept in good repair despite the ruin of her home. She speaks only French, but understands almost a dozen other languages. She carries a light pistol when she expects trouble, but uses her witchcraft whenever possible. Although capable of shapeshifting into a wolf/human hybrid form, she finds such displays uncouth and will only do so if Père is slain. She returns to human form if killed.

The dressing table contains a typical collection of women's cosmetics and grooming implements. The drawer also contains a single iron key. This opens the family vault (see area 3-6).

The wardrobe contains a mixture of old men's and women's clothing in styles from the last century. A strongbox on the bottom of the wardrobe contains \$300 in gold coins and paper money, along with a jewelry box holding \$250 worth of Mère LaRoux's family jewels.

Area 2-3—Balcony: *A 15' wide balcony runs along the eastern side of the plantation house, accessible by a staircase in the southeast corner. A pair of decrepit and rotted wooden rocking chairs are the balcony's only decorations. Shuttered windows and closed doors line the east side of the house, leading from the balcony into the plantation proper. Spanish moss clings to eaves, drooping down to partly obscure the ceiling and roof edges. Some sort of pale mass is affixed to the eaves of the house near the middle of the balcony, suspended 12' feet overhead.*

The pale mass is the rotted corpse of a young man, a Cajun youth the LaRoux took in the night and worked witchcraft over. The body now protects their home. The corpse's abdomen has burst and its entrails unspooled across the balcony's ceiling like a spider web of grisly sausage. The entrails are both animate and tipped with the jaws of baby alligators, making them a ghastly defense mechanism. They can reach any creature in a 15' radius centered on the body.

Un-dead entrails: Init +6; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4+2) or strangle +3 melee (1d4); AC 13; HD 6d8; hp 37; MV 20'; Act 6d20; SP strangle (DC 12 Strength check to escape, otherwise automatic 1d4 damage each round), takes double-damage from fire, immune to mind-affecting magic; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; Path PoD +2.

Up to six of the entrails can attack each round, dividing their action dice up among available targets. The entrails lose 1 action die for each creature being strangled, but the subject automatically suffers 1d4 damage each round until the stranglehold is escaped.

The doors and windows leading inside the house from this area are all closed and locked or barred from inside. Picking the locks on the doors requires a DC 10 Agility check with a thin tool, while breaking them down is done with a DC 15 Strength check. The windows cannot be picked, but can be broken open with a tool or weapon and a successful DC 12 Strength check. Any Strength check regardless of success or failure makes noise, alerting anyone in the adjacent room inside the house of the party's presence and giving them time to prepare to deal with intruders.

Area 2-4—Ballroom: *A large long room bearing a beautiful chandelier of cut glass and a parquet floor of great craftsmanship occupies this part of the house. However, the room has seen better days. Wisps of grey moss hang from the chandelier, and a large hole pierces the floor towards the west end of the room. The room's shuttered windows keep the chamber dim even during daylight hours, and it's difficult to make out what exactly the stacked objects piled at the chamber's west end are. The smell of animal and swamp hangs heavy in the air.*

Once the plantation's grand audience chamber and ballroom, this space is slowly collapsing. It is occupied by André LaRoux, who dwells here with his collection of serpents. There are three open-topped wooden boxes, each containing four Snakewater Bayou cottonmouths. André will hurl a box at a target within 15' if possible, releasing the serpents into the fight.





Torres 21

André LaRoux: Init +5; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8+2) or claw +6 (1d6+4) or heavy pistol +3 ranged (1d10, ROF 2, Load 6, Reload 3, Range 10/20/60); AC 16; HD 8d10; hp 52; MV 30' or leap 20'; Act 2d20; SP regenerate 10 hp per round, climber (+10 to all climb checks); takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Path PoD +3.

André LaRoux resembles a wolf-human hybrid standing 9' tall and dressed in tattered finery of a bygone age. His fur is nearly ebony in coloration. André's feet are bare, revealing taloned paws capable of astonishing leaps and gaining footholds on all but the slipperiest surfaces. André wears a black sash around his waist in which he keeps his revolver, the pistol's trigger guard has been sawn away to accommodate his thick, clawed fingers.

André is rougarou through and through—if slain, his corpse retains its hybrid form instead of returning to human shape.

André, the eldest LaRoux child, hates his father, Père LaRoux, and yearns for the older man's demise. If the party somehow gets André to converse with them, he might go to any lengths to get them to murder his father so that he can take his place as the nominal leader of the LaRoux family. André will promise much, but deliver little.

If pressed to attack the PCs, André's first tactic after hurling the snake boxes will be to rush a character, attempting to knock them both through the hole in the floor and down to the first level (taking 2d6 in fall damage with André landing on top of the now prone character). A character attacked in this way may make either: a Reflex save with a DC vs. André's attack check to leap out of the way or an opposed Strength check (André has a +3 to his Strength) to break the grapple before being dropped through the hole.

Snakewater Bayou Cottonmouths (4 per box): Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5-1 plus poison); AC 14 (17 vs. firearms); HD 2d6 + 2; hp 10 each; MV 40' or swim 20'; Act 1d20; SP poisonous (DC 15 Fort save—if failed, target suffers -1d penalty to all attacks, saves, spell and skill checks and begins losing 1 Stamina point every hour the poison is untreated, dying at 0 Stamina); sinuous (+4 bonus to AC vs. firearms); SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Path WtL.

In the southeast corner of the room, André has made a small nook which contains an iron bed frame covered with animal pelts as well as four chests holding old clothes, china, common books, and other household supplies kept in storage here. A gun belt with 15 cartridges (.36 caliber) hangs from one of the bedposts.

Under the bed is a small box holding André's personal possessions, including a wallet with \$20 in Confederate currency, a silver pocket watch worth \$15, and a Bowie knife with a gold-inlaid bone hilt worth \$40. Fifty cartridges for his light pistol (.36 caliber) are also present.

Area 2-5—Bath: *A large copper bathtub rests in the corner of this room, half obscured by a silk folding screen bearing motifs from the Far East. Flies buzz about the room, clearly drawn by the presence of the corpse of a naked man hanging upside down over the tub. The body is extremely pale, its flesh stained by the blood that drips from multiple incisions on its form into the tub below.*

The bathroom is normal, if in poor repair, aside from the exsanguinated body. This unlucky fellow was taken and drained in order to feed both Céleste and Grand-mère LaRoux (see below). The blood in the tub is still fresh and might be useful in dealing with Grand-mère in area 3-5.



Area 2-6—Céleste's Bedroom: *A marble fireplace, dingy with age and neglect, is set into the south wall of this room. Faded floral wallpaper covers the walls, and a narrow bed and nightstand with a pitcher on it rests against the north wall, set between two shuttered windows. The floor is bare wood and stained with dried gore. A half-dozen potted plants are situated around the fireplace. They have vine-like tendrils which grow into the heath and vanish up the chimney.*

There is a 50% chance Céleste LaRoux is here. If so, add the following:

A young woman with long, dark hair and a petite nose hovers a foot off the floor near the end of the bed. She is dressed in a gown once white, but now stained crimson and black by blood. A swarm of floating, snake-like objects, each seemingly composed of liquid blood, swirl about her body like pets craving attention. Sharp fangs protrude from between her thin lips, and her chin is wet with blood.

Céleste LaRoux is the middle child of the family, and the rougarou curse has manifested in her with its vampiric nature dominant. She still appears human, but her command of witchcraft and her own supernatural powers is formidable.

Céleste is curious about the party as Tall Shadows seldom has (willing) visitors. If the party doesn't immediately start shooting, she asks who they are, displaying all the good manners and graces of a Creole lady and scion of plantation aristocracy. Céleste answers little about herself or Tall Shadows and its inhabitants, seeming to mishear inquiries into such matters or replying with questions of her own.

The party can keep her talking so long as the PC doing the majority of the communication (or the PC with the lowest Personality if all the group is involved) succeeds in a DC 11 Personality check every minute. Once failed, Céleste becomes bored with the intruders and decides they'd make better dinner than dinner guests.

Céleste LaRoux: Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+2); AC 17; HD 6d10; hp 45; MV 30' or fly 40'; Act 2d20; SP vampiric healing (recovers hit points equal to damage inflicted by a successful bite attack), turn to mist (2/day—becomes insubstantial and immune to all damage save from magical weapons and spells, fly at 40' speed, cannot attack or cast spells in this form), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic), command blood serpents (see below), witchcraft (spell check 1d20+6); SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Path PoD +1d.

Céleste LaRoux can work witchcraft with the following spell-like effects:

- **Charm Plants:** With a successful spell check against a DC of 12, Céleste commands a number of plants with combined HD up to 6 to act as she wishes. She uses this to turn the creepers in the chimney against the party if they've not already been dealt with. See area 1-4 for more details on the plants.
- **Spit Witch Fang:** As the lead spitter spell (new 1st level occultist spell, see **Appendix**) but manifests as glowing green phantasmic fangs she spits from her mouth. Make spell check as normal.
- **Reap the Whirlwind:** Conjures a swirling maelstrom filled with rusty fragments of iron, broken bones, and other harmful substances. All in a 20' diameter up to 60' away must make a DC 16 Reflex save, taking 3d6 damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. No spell check required. Can be used once per day.
- **Immobilize:** A single target within 30' who Céleste can see must succeed on a Willpower save vs. her spell check or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 rounds. Killing Céleste or causing her to take mist form ends the paralysis. Make spell check as normal. Can be used up to three times per day regardless of spell check result.





Blood Serpent (5):

Init +1; Atk bite + 2 melee (1d5); AC 13; HD 1d6; hp 5 each; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP immune to piercing attacks and mind-affecting magic; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; Path PoD +1.

Using a combination of her witchcraft and vampiric powers, Céleste has conjured up five blood serpents—animate splashes of blood capable of defending her. If Céleste isn't present, the room contains only the potted plants. If the party hasn't dealt with them, there is a cumulative 1 in 6 chance each minute that a living creature other than Céleste remains in this room that the plants draw their tendrils up from the chimney and attack as described in area 1-4. Otherwise, they remain inert.

The room contains all the accoutrements and personal belongings appropriate for a young Creole woman, including a jewelry box containing \$200 worth of baubles. A clay pitcher filled with semi-coagulated blood rests on a nightstand beside the bed. This might prove useful when dealing with Grand-mère LaRoux (see area 3-5).

ATTIC

Area 3-1—Screaming Skulls: *A windowless room stands beyond the door here. The room is mostly empty; a set of shelves hangs on the north wall, and a lectern bearing old papers faces it. On the shelves are a dozen human heads in various states of decay, ranging from bare bone to rancid, rotting flesh.*

The LaRoux family keeps the heads of their dead, burying their bodies or depositing them in the bayou as they are moved to. The purpose of this grim practice is to allow the living LaRoux to benefit from the wisdom of their dead ancestors, almost all of whom are now interred in Hell or another terrible dimension.

The papers on the lectern are an ancient formula written in Latin that, when read aloud by the magically inclined, can temporarily contact the dead. However, this particular formula only works when spoken by those of the LaRoux bloodline. Anyone else attempting to read the formula (which must be done in the presence of the skulls to have any effect) must succeed on a DC 15 spell check. On a failure, nothing happens. On a success, the skulls begin howling and shrieking, many of them berating and cursing everyone present in the room. Witnessing this triggers a DC 13 Grit check. The skulls continue their cacophony for as long as people are present in this room, providing nothing but a litany of screams and insults (which alerts Céleste if she's in area 3-3 of intruders).

Due to their souls being already interred in Hell, the class abilities of a calavera or a sin-eater have no effect on the dead LaRoux.

The skulls have no monetary value, but, at the judge's discretion, might have some occult use or prove useful in another way. [Example: The skulls have a connection to the spirit world, and any yes or no question posed to a skull with a sacrifice of 1d3 temporary ability points will get you an answer.]

Area 3-2—Simon's Room: *A short, narrow bed bare of bedclothes squats in the corner of this room. An unlit kerosene lamp rests on a chest across from the bed, and the floor is covered with curiously translucent, pallid-yellow strips. Shuttered windows pierce the north and east walls. The air is close and fetid, as if something has died behind the walls of this chamber.*

This is Simon LaRoux's room, but he is never encountered here (see **Event: The Slithering Sibling**). The strange strips on the floor are discarded snakeskins; the most recently shed measures nearly 10' in length and 2' around. The bed is dirty and has small bits of flaky snakeskin dusted across it.

The chest contains an array of moth-eaten children's clothing, some of it dating back to the previous century. The foul odor is stronger when the box is open. Beneath the clothing is the rotted corpse of an eight-year-old Cajun girl, her features discolored by toxins—one of Simon's victims from his nocturnal hunts in the swamps outside Tall Shadows.

Area 3-3—Sanctum: *A dark room resides here at the top of the house, its walls painted black as night. The smell of brimstone and spilled blood hangs heavy in the air, and a painted pentagram in silver adorns the floor. Black stubs of candles mark each point of the star-shaped symbol. A side table near the door bears bowls and pitchers of once-fine bone china, now stained nearly black with old blood. A table against the north wall holds a collection of jars, bones, and other macabre objects.*

If Céleste LaRoux wasn't encountered in her room (2-6), she is here, pouring fresh blood from a pitcher into one of the bowls. It's feeding time from Grand-mère. See area 2-6 for Céleste's stats. Unlike when encountered in her room, Céleste treats intruders on this level as a direct threat to Grand-mère. She does not pause to speak, instead attacking with her magic, bite, and the blood serpents.

Among the pitchers and bowls of blood is a simple iron key. This unlocks the door at area 3-4.



The table by the north wall bears an inventory of foul arcane ingredients including cat bones, rats' blood, infant fingers, and a pale white substance that smells of brimstone (demon seed). These materials are used to enact a witch-ward on a living creature which lasts for 13 days. Creating a witch-ward requires the proper knowledge (found in Book #2 in area 2-1) and a spell check of 15+. Mère LaRoux regularly witch-wards the family despite their isolationist tendencies, still willing to protect her kin from danger. There are enough ingredients present to cast three witch-wards before running out.

Area 3-4—Locked Door: *A stout door with a bolt secured by a padlock set into the door is here. There is a curious smell in the air near the door, an earthy smell touched with decay, like something found under a rock and best left alone.*

The lock can be opened with either the key found in the sanctum room (area 3-3) or with a successful DC 11 Agility check made with a thin tool to pick the lock.

Area 3-5—Grand-mère's Room: *This attic room is gloomy with shadows; patches of darkness crouch beneath the sloping eaves like assassins. A fireplace, its hearth bricked up, stands on the north wall. A single window, boarded from the outside, is set into the east wall. Before it is a rocking chair occupied by a white-haired figure, its face turned towards the barred window as if seeing through the wood-covered glass. It appears to be dressed in a moth-eaten gown, once brilliant white, but now the color of old bone. Something slithers around the base of the chair, scintillating slightly in the dark like a jellyfish in the moonlight.*

The LaRoux's keep their eldest living female member secured in this attic room for their own protection. Grand-mère has spent more than 80 years plumbing the depths of witchcraft's blackest paths, and the experience has changed her. She is a terrible menace to all life. She no longer possesses anything one would call morality or sanity, yet the Creole respect for their elders and the LaRoux's fear of her have kept her alive but imprisoned in Tall Shadows.

Making matters worse, Grand-mère is served by her familiar, something she pulled from the Outer Dark long ago, a thing not meant to dwell in this world. It loves Grand-mère dearly in its own way and is a capable guardian of the old woman.

As soon as someone enters the room, the figure in the chair begins to sniff the air and wheeze. This is Grand-mère smelling non-LaRoux blood in her something she pulled from the Outer Dark long ago, a thing not meant to dwell in this world. It loves Grand-mère dearly in its own way and is a capable guardian of the old woman.

As soon as someone enters the room, the figure in the chair begins to sniff the air and wheeze. This is Grand-mère smelling non-LaRoux blood in her presence. A primordial desire to defend her territory causes her to rise and engage the party in battle. However, if the party has a quart or more of fresh blood with them, Grand-mère must succeed on a DC 12 Willpower save or be drawn to the blood. She pursues the blood until she can drink it, consuming it over 1d6+2 rounds (taking all her available actions for each of those rounds). During this time, she and her familiar ignore the party unless attacked or spells are cast at them. This may allow the party to pilfer the LaRoux vault without a fight.

If a fight breaks out, Grand-mère and her familiar attack to kill and will not rest until the intruders are slain or they are.

Grand-mère resembles a 90-year-old woman dressed in ancient finery. All illusions of her normality end when she begins to move and her flesh takes on an elastic, semi-translucent appearance. Her mouth opens like that of a terrible serpent howling in anguish, and her limbs are shed like a bad habit, only to begin moving with a horrible life of their own.

Once Grand-mère is riled, there is little that will restrain her. A party that flees and locks the door to her room behind them only delays Grand-mère for 1d3 rounds before she and/or her familiar bash through it and pursue them.



Grand-mère LaRoux: Init +3; Atk shed limb + 3 melee (1d5); AC 15; HD 7d10; hp 55; MV 30'; Act (X)d20*; SP regenerate 10 hp per round, shed limb, witchcraft (see below), immune to [cold, fire, and piercing weapons], takes half damage from all other non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; Path PoD +1d.

Shed limb: Grand-mère's physical form isn't quite solid anymore and possesses a gelatinous quality. She can shed her arms which thump to the ground making squishing noises as it crawls towards perceived threats. Witnessing this for the first time forces all seeing it to make a DC 10 Grit check.

*Another gelatinous limb grows to replace the shed appendage almost immediately. Grand-mère can shed one limb each round, granting each limb 1 action die it can use to physically attack enemies. She can shed up to a total of six limbs, each with a speed of 20', AC 10, and 12 hit points. It otherwise uses Grand-mère's stats as above. Shed limbs cannot perform witchcraft. Shed limbs cannot perform witchcraft but each inflicts d5 damage and can attach to a character, attempting to reach their throat. Characters suffer a -2 to all action rolls (cumulative) per round unless a full round action is spent pulling the limb free.

Witchcraft: Grand-mère LaRoux can work witchcraft with the following spell-like effects:

- **Howl:** All enemies in a 20' radius must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or suffer 2d8 damage from an eldritch cold that fills the room as if Grand-mère's scream had torn a rift into space itself. Grand-mère can do this twice a day.
- **Witchfire:** A single target within 60' suffers 1d8+2 damage as an eerie green fire strikes them. A successful DC 11 Reflex save avoids catching fire. Witchfire only affects living creatures and cannot kindle natural flames or fire. Grand-mère can use this spell as often as she desires.
- **Hot Lead:** Grand-mère makes a spell check using 1d24+6. On a result of 12+, Grand-mère (or Père) gains protection against bullets—which melt when striking their targets. The attacker rolls damage as if the attack succeeded, and the judge reduces the protection by that many points (e.g. on a spell check of 17, up to 17 points of damage is absorbed before bullets can injure the protected creature). Any damage beyond the total of her spell check amount affects the target normally. This spell affects even magical bullets, such as those fired by a gunslinger. Grand-mère can only successfully cast this spell once per day.
- **Drain Life:** A single target within 30' must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 damage. Grand-mère LaRoux gains or heals a number of hit points equal to the damage inflicted. This spell can take her above her maximum hit point total. Hit points above her maximum remain for 1 hour or until sunrise, whichever comes first. Grand-mère can cast this once per day.

Grand-mère's Familiar: Init -1; Atk pseudopod lash +3 melee (1d6+1); AC 10; HD 4d8; hp 20; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP infravision 120', see invisible 60', immune to [cold, fire, and piercing weapons], doom aura (DC 10 Will save or suffer -1d penalty to all actions for 1 round), immune to mind-control magic; SV Fort +10, Ref -2, Will +0; Path PoD.

Anyone seeing the familiar for the first time must make a DC 12 Grit check.

Doom aura: The familiar can exude an aura of despair and doom by spending an action die to do so. All creatures in a 15' radius around the familiar must succeed on a DC 12 Willpower save or suffer a -1d penalty to all their attacks, saves, skill checks, and spell checks for 1d4+2 rounds. A successful save makes the target immune to further doom aura emanations for 24 hours.

Grand-mère's familiar resembles an ungodly hybrid of jellyfish, fungus, and possum. Swirling colors swim through its translucent body, and it pulls itself across the floor by extending a glistening pseudopod that ends in a tiny hand. It has no visible eyes, ears, or mouth, yet emits a constant soft gibbering and can see clearly in the darkest night.

Area 3-6—LaRoux Family Vault: *An iron door with inset keyhole stands in the western brick wall of this drab attic chamber.*

The door is locked and formidable (requires a successful DC 16 Agility check made with a thin tool to pick the lock or more radical methods such as a stick or three of dynamite). And, of course, Grand-mère LaRoux makes a formidable security measure against thieves. If both are overcome, the small chamber beyond contains the LaRoux fortune.

The trove contains:

- Three medieval French tapestries worth \$500 each to collectors.
- Ten paintings, each worth 1d10×10 dollars.

- Six objects d'art made of gold and of Aztec origin. Each is worth \$150.
- A strongbox containing \$500 in mixed coins and paper currency.
- Optional: If the judge has used the lure of occult knowledge or magical artifacts to kick off this adventure, the object the party seeks is also located in the vault.

CELLAR

Area 4-1—Cellar: *A water-filled space appears to be located beneath the house, but due to the darkness of the water, it is impossible to determine its size or what it might contain.*

Tall Shadows is a rarity in that it possesses a small brick-lined cellar. Before the great storm, this subterranean space was above the water table (barely), but with the change of the bayou's course, it is now completely submerged. The ceiling here appears to be low, being a mere 6' high—but that's just the space from the surface of the water to the ceiling. The water fills a space 8' deep.

The tea-dark water makes it impossible to see anything beneath its surface, and even magical light only illuminates opaque, brown water filled with organic debris. Mud covers the floor and is stirred up by any motion in the water, further occluding vision. Anyone underwater is considered blind (+2 bonus to hit by non-blinded attackers and suffers a -2d penalty to their own attacks).

The cellar is home to Grand-père LaRoux, the oldest of the clan. Almost all traces of his humanity have been lost to the rougarou curse, and he no longer needs to breathe. He sleeps in the flooded cellar, preferring its watery gloom.

Grand-père LaRoux resembles a water-logged corpse: his skin is wrinkled and ash-gray, stained with liver spots. His hair is gone and his lips are bloated like fattened leeches. His eyes are mostly iris with just slivers of white showing at the edge. His nose is rotted away, giving his face a skull-like appearance. He dresses in the tattered remnants of once-fine French garments which are now coated with swamp scum.

Grand-père LaRoux: Init +6; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8+2 plus affliction) or claw +6 (1d5+2); AC 14; HD 8d10; hp 63; MV 30' or swim 30'; Act 2d20; SP regenerate 10 hp per round, unnatural bite (DC 13 Fort save or suffer an affliction—see below), takes half damage from non-magical or non-silver weapons, witch-warded (+1d bonus to all saves vs. magic), grapple (+4 bonus); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +6; Path PoD +1d.

Affliction/Unnatural bite: As patriarch, Grand-père has labored under the rougarou curse the longest. As such, its malignant power is widespread throughout his body, like a horrible virus. His bite is particularly infectious and anyone struck by his bite attack must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or suffer an affliction. The affliction is determined randomly by rolling on the table below (roll modified by the inverse of the PC's Luck modifier, i.e. a -1 Luck penalty becomes a +1 modifier to the die roll).

Grapple: Grand-père prefers to grab his victims and drag them under the water, drowning them like a gator before feasting on them. If he succeeds on a grapple check while in the flooded cellar, the victim is pulled under and begins to drown (reference area 1-4 for drowning rules) unless they can break the grapple.

As Grand-père no longer has the need to breathe, he can hold a victim beneath the water indefinitely. Grappled victims will also be gnawed on, and Grand-père is automatically successful with the attack each round.

ROUGAROU BITE AFFLICTION

D10 Roll	Affliction
1 or less	Vicious bite. Victim suffers an additional 1d4 points of damage.
2-3	Painful Infection. Victim takes an additional 1d6 damage and temporarily loses 1 point of Agility.
4-5	Blood Poisoning. Victim takes an additional 2d4 damage and temporarily loses 2 points of Agility.
6-7	Blood Drain. Victim suffers 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage from blood loss.
8-9	System Shock. The victim is paralyzed. If the victim is underwater, they begin drowning in 1d4 rounds (characters do not get a chance to hold their breath).
10+	Rougarou curse. Grand-père passes along the rougarou curse and the victim will become a rougarou in the next 3d7 days unless the curse is broken. The means of breaking the curse is left to the judge, but should be an adventure unto itself. If the curse is not lifted before the time elapses, the PC transforms into a newborn rougarou and becomes an NPC.

The cellar contains water-logged crates and barrels that now only hold the decayed sludge of their former organic contents. There is also a tremendous, rusting, cast-iron stove, the interior of which serves as Grand-père's resting place, but contains nothing of interest. Anyone feeling around the bottom of the cellar may make a Luck check with a d30.

On a success, they find a locked and rusted iron strongbox (a successful DC 13 Agility check using some slim tool picks the lock) holding 500 Louis d'or gold coins worth \$250.

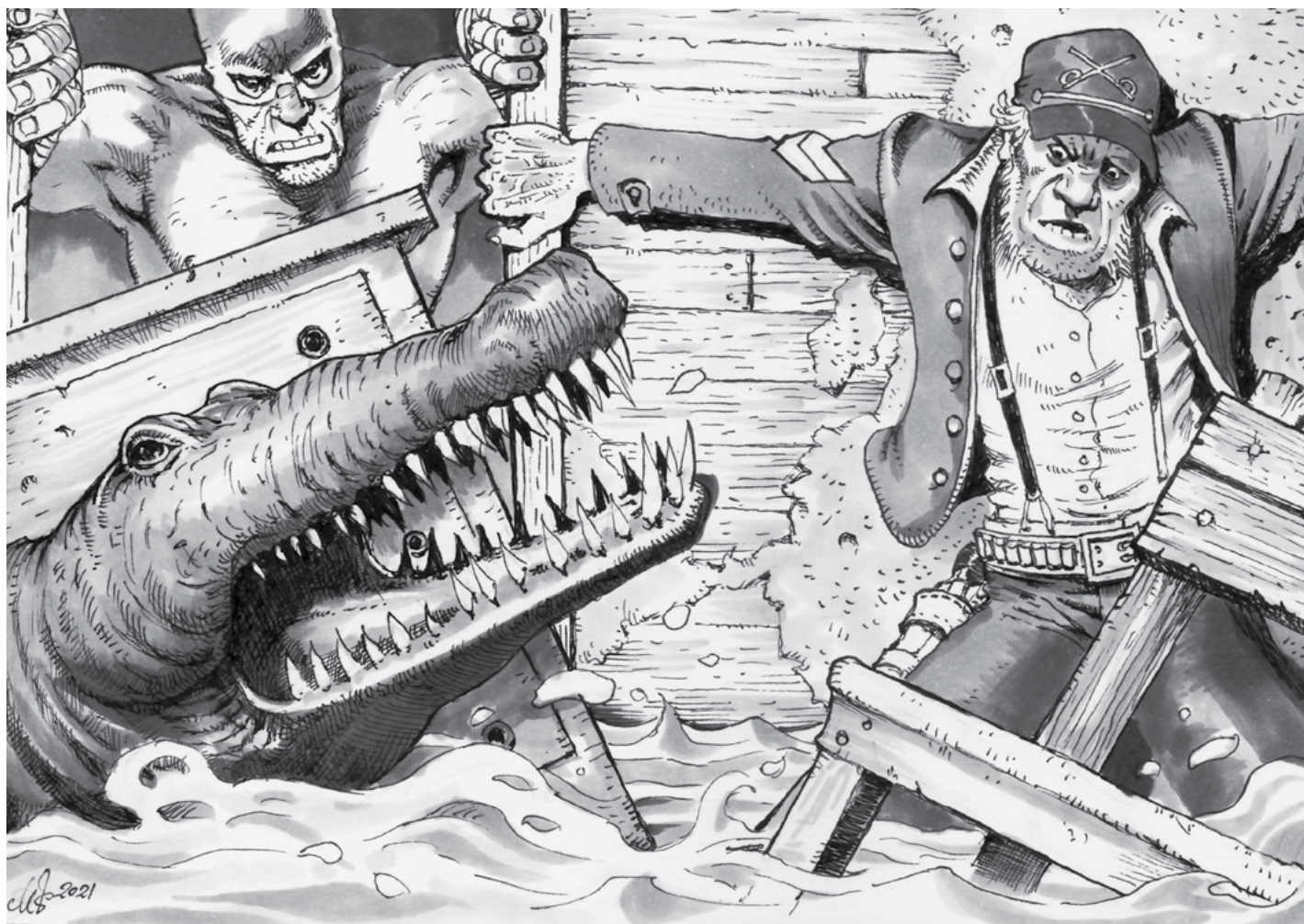


ENDING THE ADVENTURE

A successful raid on Tall Shadows that leaves the LaRoux clan dead results in Providence taking a renewed interest in the party's well-being. Each character gains 1 point of Luck as a result of ending this lingering evil in the bayou in addition to whatever monetary rewards the PCs recover from the decaying plantation.

Leaving LaRoux survivors behind, however, is bound to make life interesting for the player characters. The LaRoux's pride won't allow them to forgive the PCs for their assault on the family holdings and slain kin need avenging—even if they weren't particularly well-liked in life. The LaRoux survivors will likely begin by hiring owlhoots (outlaws) and bounty hunters to bushwhack the PCs. They can afford to hire disposable agents to use against the group. If the PCs overcome an ambush or three, the surviving LaRoux will take a more direct, but insidious, hand.

They'll strike those near and dear to the PCs first, attacking their homes and kin as the characters did to them with the intent of luring the adventurers into an ambush—an ambush that will likely end in a climactic battle where only the PCs or the LaRoux will emerge alive. What else could one expect in the world of Weird Frontiers?



APPENDIX

LEAD SPITTER (OCCULTIST 1ST LEVEL SPELL)

Level: 1 **Range:** Variable **Duration:** Varies **Casting Time:** 1 round **Save:** See below

General: The caster places a bullet in their mouth as the component for the spell as a free action, and when the spell is cast, arcane bullet(s) are spit out in much the same fashion as a gun fires a bullet.

Manifestation: Roll 1d3: **(1)** the bullet streaks out of the caster's mouth with a flash and bang, similar to a normal firearm; **(2)** the mouth of the caster temporarily morphs, taking on the form of a fleshy gun barrel, giving a comical appearance; **(3)** the lips of the caster burn away for the duration of the round, while bullets shoot out and accompanying spittle sizzles from contact with hot lead.

Corruption: Roll 1d3: **(1)** caster's saliva turns permanently black, always staining the corners of their mouth and gums—caster suffers a -1 to all interaction rolls; **(2)** black smoke emanates from the mouth while talking, garnering strange looks from those conversing with the caster—caster suffers a -1 to all interaction rolls; **(3)** caster's teeth change to resemble bullets; each time the spell is cast, 1d2 teeth are permanently changed to resemble a bullet.

Misfire: Roll 1d4: **(1)** the bullet fizzles and sparks in the mouth doing 1 point of damage to the caster; **(2)** the bullet becomes hot like a red coal doing 1d3 points of damage to the caster; **(3)** the bullet explodes in front of the caster, covering the caster's face in soot, and all actions are -2 for 1d3 rounds; **(4)** the caster swallows the bullet doing 1d6 damage to themselves and all actions are -2 for 1d4+1 rounds.

1 OR LOWER	Lost, failure, and worse! Roll 1d6 modified by Luck: (0 or lower) major corruption + misfire; (1-2) corruption; (3+) misfire.
2-11	Lost. Failure.
12-13	The caster spits out a bullet with a range of 25/50/75. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target, and caster uses their Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Successful attacks inflict 1d8+CL damage. Critical strikes are treated normally; however, fumbles are ignored and no gun deck is used during casting.
14-17	The caster spits out up to two bullets with a range of 25/50/75. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target, and caster uses their Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Each bullet inflicts 1d12 damage. Critical strikes are treated normally; however, fumbles are ignored and no Gun deck is used during casting.
18-19	The caster spits out up to three bullets with a range of 35/70/140. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target, and caster uses their Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Each bullet inflicts 1d12 damage. Critical strikes are treated normally; however, fumbles are ignored and no Gun deck is used during casting.
20-23	The caster spits out up to four bullets with a range of 35/70/140. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target, and caster uses their Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Each bullet inflicts 2d6 damage. Critical strikes are treated normally; however, fumbles are ignored and no Gun deck is used during casting.

24-27	The caster spits out up to four bullets with a range of 35/70/140. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target, and caster uses their Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Each bullet inflicts 1d10 damage and has a secondary effect of knocking targets prone unless a DC 12 Reflex save can be passed. Critical strikes are treated normally; however, fumbles are ignored and no Gun deck is used during casting.
28-29	The caster sprays a 20' area within 60' with hot lead. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike target(s), and caster uses Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Attacks are made against a straight AC 10 unless targets benefit from magical protection. Targets caught in the area of effect must pass a DC 16 Reflex save to avoid suffering 4d8 + CL damage and are knocked prone. Successfully passing the Reflex save reduces damage by half, and targets are not knocked prone.
30+	For the next 1d4 rounds, the caster makes 2d4 ranged shots each round while remaining stationary, as bullets fire automatically from their mouth. A ranged attack must be made to successfully strike the target(s), and caster uses Intelligence modifier + CL instead of Agility modifiers. Each attack may be made at the same or different targets. Targets struck suffer 1d8 + CL damage per bullet. Ranged attacks may result in critical hits, but do not fumble nor are draws made from the Gun deck.



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