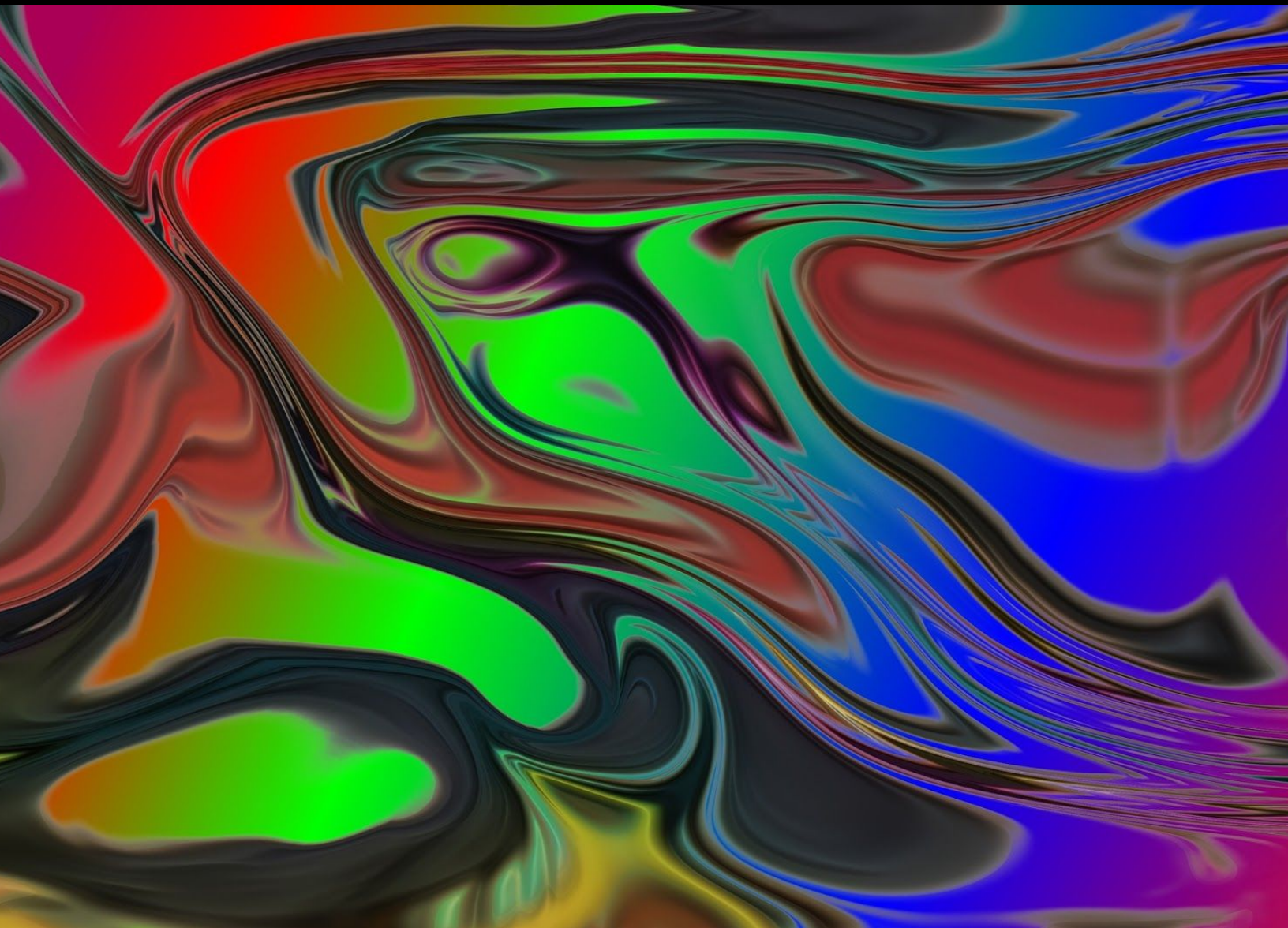


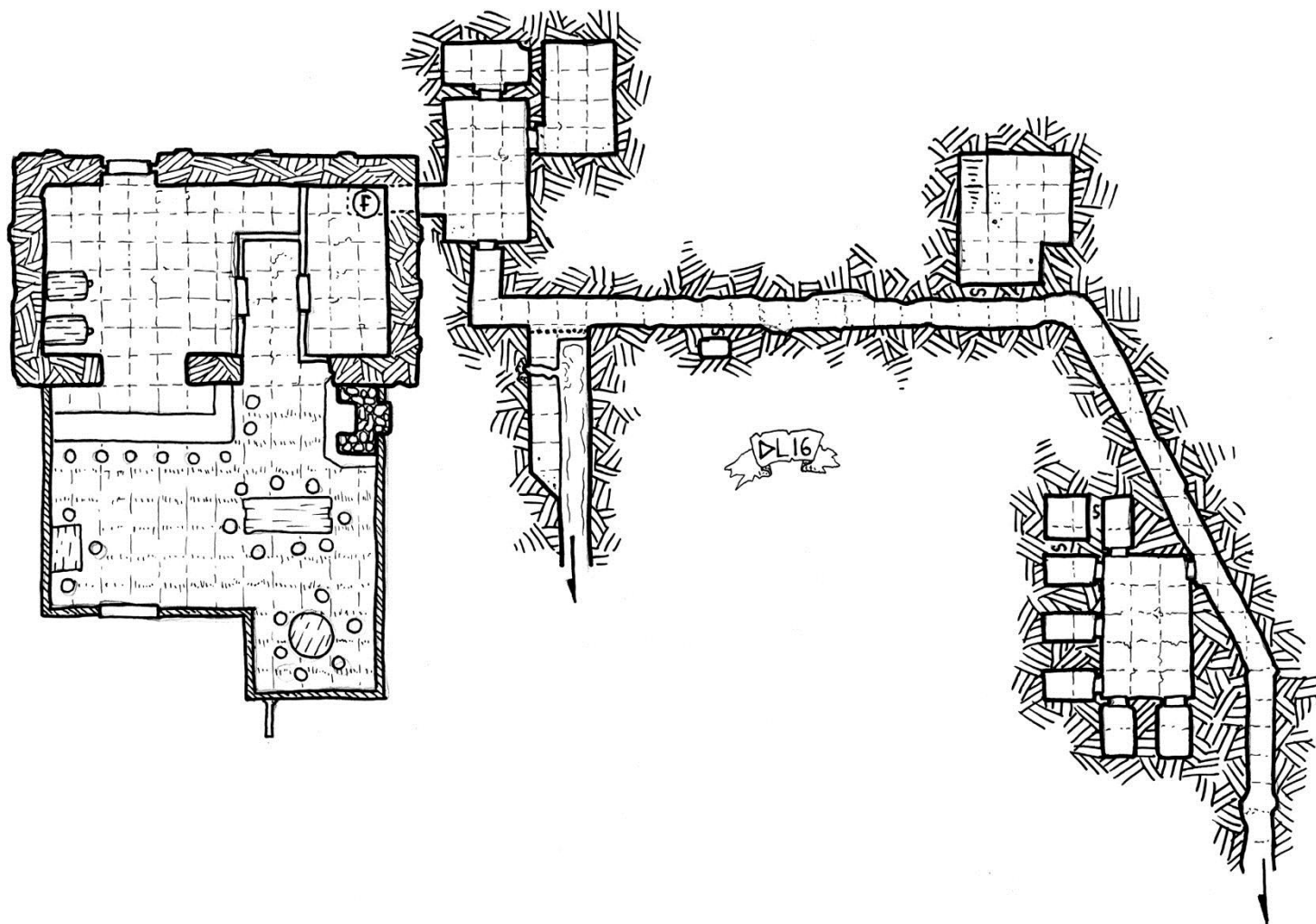
Curse of the Gumdrop Ooze



An adventure site for three to five characters
of levels 1-4 by Tim Bannock

Includes monsters created by Matt Butler
from *The Hag's Hexes*





Curse of the Gumdrop Ooze

An encounter by Tim Bannock using **monsters provided by** Matt Butler for the forthcoming release *The Hag's Hexes*

Adventure Setup

This adventure is for 3-5 characters of levels 3-4.

The party happens upon a roadside tavern, ringed by a few small cottages.

General Features of the Tavern

Doors & Windows. All outer and inner doors, and all windows are closed and shuttered, where appropriate. No doors are locked unless otherwise stated. Those that are can be opened with a DC 13 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check or can be busted open with a DC 17 Strength check.

Walls & Ceilings. The front (common) room of the tavern has stout wooden walls, while the rest of it is four-foot-thick stone. The ceiling on the ground floor is 15 feet tall, while that in the cellars is 10 feet tall unless noted otherwise in a specific area description.

Savor the Flavor

Read or paraphrase the following text:

The party has come to an abandoned roadside tavern; by all appearances, it and the few surrounding houses have been uninhabited for several years. Strangely, the smell of baked goods occasional wafts by on the wind, and most of the homes appear to have been torn apart by a pack of savage humanoids, though they have left little but wreckage as a sign of their wake. Strange noises within the tavern draw their attention, but as they approach, there is a dark pool of swirling colors a few feet before the tavern's front door.

That ain't no pond! It's a licorice **gumdrop ooze** (see New Monsters)! This creature is agitated but lies in wait, hoping to chow on any living being that comes by. It has long lost contact with the candy hag that created it, and thus it now wallows in this little roadside village, having already eaten or driven out the former inhabitants...well, except for the ones that have become cruls when they foolishly consumed a few other licorice gumdrop oozes that plagued their town.

Tactics, Obstacles & Hazards

The gumdrop ooze waits for creatures to get close enough to be paralyzed by its aroma, and then immediately goes after anyone affected to chow down on them! If it is brought to half of its hit points or fewer, it will drop anyone it is currently engulfing and use its Amorphous ability to slip through the door into the tavern.

The nearby homes – mostly one- or two-room affairs with minimal furnishings – can easily provide three quarters or full cover. There are cook pots, wooden slat cots, and some typical kitchen utensils made of copper or iron.

Development

If the party explores the cottages at length, they will find a trapdoor in one of them leading to the stairway in Secret Room 2 (in the Cellar; see below). Finding this trapdoor requires a DC 15

Intelligence (Investigation) check. Failing this roll means they've alerted the couatl in that area of their presence, causing the creature to attempt to learn about them through *scrying* and – if they linger in the area – through the *dream* spell.

Crul Smash!

Once the party enters the tavern, they find they place pretty banged up, but otherwise like it was abandoned in great haste, as opposed to cleared out methodically as the folks who operated it left. And it's immediately apparent what's been creating all that noise...

There are two **cruls** (see New Monsters), one in the front room and one in the room behind the bar. They walk about listlessly, occasionally batting at random objects out of frustration with their plight, for they cannot find the candy hag that ultimately led to their cursed state in order to serve her.

Tactics, Obstacles & Hazards

The chairs and tables can provide half cover. The tables can be turned on their sides, providing three quarters cover. The bar also provides three quarters cover.

The kegs in the room behind the bar only have the dregs of some long-skunked ale, so they can be rolled about or used for half cover. Picking up and moving a keg is an action. Rolling one at a creature is also an action. Any creatures in a 15 foot line of such an attack must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone. On a successful save, they take only half damage, and are not knocked prone.

The Cellar

A trapdoor (marked 'f' on the map) leads to a ladder that descends about ten feet into a cellar. This was used for additional storage of maintenance supplies, a wine cellar, and perhaps some illicit activities, though there are little signs of anything down here now.

Although, there are certainly are things down here...

Storage Rooms

The northwestern-most two rooms (off of the room that connects to the trapdoor corridor) are closed and locked. One contains the remains of a halfling that presumably perished of injuries and lack of sustenance, hiding from the monsters. The other is a wine cellar that holds several bottles of various wines, in mostly delicious vintages. 1d20 bottles can be salvaged, each worth 1d10x10 gold pieces.

The Hallway

Two more **cruls** patrol this long hallway, and kill whatever they come across. They don't tend to range beyond the northern secret door, for they've been taught to fear the new guests there...

Portcullis and Stream

A portcullis leads to an underground waterway that likely connected to a well or ancient sewers. Another licorice **gumdrop ooze** can be found in the water, but it will only attack folks that disturb it...or who wander by unawares that it can use its Amorphous ability to slip through the portcullis grates and attack from behind.

The portcullis is rusted in place; a nearby lever system does nothing. It can be forced open with a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check, or busted out completely with a DC 18 Strength check.

Two Secret Rooms

There are two rooms that branch off of the main corridor, concealed behind secret doors. These can be detected by a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 14 or better.

Room 1. The first, smaller room is empty.

Room 2. The second, larger room (on the northeastern side) has a damaged **couatl** named Feathersquall. It is at half hit points, and cannot fly due to a broken wing. Once healed to its full hit points, its wing heals as well.

It is indifferent, but if the party can befriend it by healing it or with a DC 10 social interaction roll (see Social Interaction in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), it will be happy to help and even relay what little it knows: there was a candy hag active in the area a few years ago, and it caused havoc on the roadside rest stop, eventually running everyone it didn't eat out of town, or turning them into the creatures seen here. Recently – as in, just a couple days ago – a snooty mage and his minions have arrived, attempting to study the hag's creations. Feathersquall doesn't trust the mage and thus has remained hidden from him and his people, and the couatl is beginning to think they have evil designs based on some *scrying* and a few late-night visits to the mage's mind via *dream*.

The stairway in this room leads up into one of the cottages.

Secret Brothel

The rooms in the southeastern section of the cellars were used as a secret brothel. There are wooden cots, soiled mattresses, squat stove ovens, and random scraps of clothing or utensils strewn about. An evil **mage** (Loquist) and his **imp** familiar lair here temporarily, attempting to study the strange creatures. He has two **guards** and 3 **goblins** traveling with him for protection.

Continuing the Adventure

Deciding on how you want to portray the potential interactions between Feathersquall and Loquist, and determining Loquist's larger motives can lead to a lot of adventure ideas. Here's a few:

Feathersquall, The Guardian. Feathersquall was summoned by a priest of the village and tasked with guarding the children of the town while the priest tried to figure out how to save them...because the children were turned into candy morsels by the hag before she was run out of town! The children have been transformed into *candy figures* (see below), and need to be cured. Transporting them to a archpriest of a nearby city or seeking out some magical item

that will restore them becomes the next quest the party undertakes.

Loquist, Enemy of My Enemy. Loquist's ties to local political groups or perhaps a Faction means that – despite his evil alignment – he has a similar goal as the adventurers: to track down and eliminate the threat the candy hag poses to the region. If there's a fight, he will quickly have his men stand down should any be defeated, and attempt to negotiate an alliance with folks who clearly seem to be more skilled than the "buffoons" he's got in his employ currently. Tracking the hag down and defeating her, of course, is an entirely separate adventure! (Summary candy hag stats do appear at the end of this document should you go that route.)

Candy Figures

Wondrous item, rare; minor

These small candies are about 6 inches tall, but the size varies a little from figure to figure. They all appear to be molded to resemble small children. Any character that succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes with horror that these are the missing children magically transformed by a candy hag's infernal power. The children are alive, just trapped, and can be freed with a successful *dispel magic* spell against the candy hag's spell save DC. Eating a candy figure kills the child. Interestingly, these figures can be targeted by the *speak with dead* spell, and can communicate normally through that, even though they are not dead.

Scaling the Encounters

Cruls and gumdrop oozes are Challenge 4 creatures. You can simply drop one of each from each encounter area and this adventure will be a fine challenge for 2nd or 3rd level characters. Halve these creatures' hit points and damage and they should be an appropriate challenge for 1st level characters.

Loquist and his crew are a much bigger threat if combat ensues; Loquist's spells aren't geared towards combat, but he's still tough, and can escape very easily from lower-level characters.

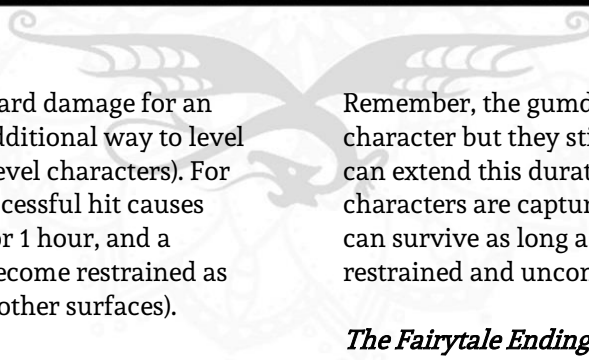
Consider cutting his hit points to 25 and removing his 4th and 5th level spells to make him a challenge for 2nd or 3rd level characters. To make him and his minions appropriate for 1st level characters, halve his hit points, cut all but his cantrips, and reduce his minions to 2 goblins and 1 guard (plus 1 guard for each character beyond five in the adventurer's party).

Family-Friendly Fun!

Gumdrop oozes and candy critters make for great fodder to run with kids...but this adventure's kinda bleak for that, ain't it? A town of folks who've likely been dissolved, run off, or turned into mad, candy-coated undead – oh, and a secret brothel – aren't exactly kid-friendly topics. Here are some changes you can make to the adventure and run it with folks of nearly age!

Framing the Adventure. First, consider re-framing the adventure hook. To make it kid-friendly, consider having the adventurers approached by adults from the village who tell them their children have been suckered into eating candy that transformed them, allowing Loquist (or a candy hag) to capture them, with plans to eat them (see *candy figures*, above). Even some of the adults who ate the candy transformed into minions of the villain – the cruls and gumdrop oozes. The party's goal is to go into the village, save the adults and kids, and arrest the villain. (The fact that you're teaching the kids not to take candy from a stranger because it might transform them into something awful isn't a bad lesson at all, right?)

Achilles' Heel. The monsters in this adventure can be given a simple weakness that makes them more easily defeated (this works for scaling the adventure for lower-level characters, too): they are highly susceptible to water! Dousing them in a waterskin's worth of liquid makes the sugar in them run and become gooeey. For cruls, this causes them to gain levels of exhaustion: each successful hit from a water source adds a level of exhaustion (simply have the players roll to attack as if with an improvised ranged weapon, and even consider



allowing it to deal the standard damage for an improvised weapon as an additional way to level the playing field for lower-level characters). For gumdrop oozes, the first successful hit causes them to become poisoned for 1 hour, and a second hit causes them to become restrained as they stick to the ground (or other surfaces).

No-Kill Defeats. If you want to refrain from an adventure full of mercy-kills and possible character deaths, have any defeat of the monsters – especially if water is employed against them – turn the creature back to the human it once was. Similarly, when the monsters defeat a player character, they simply toss them in the first of the two secret rooms in the basement area, unconscious. They hope to feed that character candy that will turn them into a *candy figure*, or perhaps a gumdrop ooze or crul.

Remember, the gumdrop oozes can engulf a character but they still have air for a time. You can extend this duration, basically making it so characters are captured by gumdrop oozes and can survive as long as you want while still restrained and unconscious within the ooze.

The Fairytale Ending. Whether you use Loquist as the final enemy – scaled down or not – or go with the candy hag, arresting it and bringing it back to civilization to face prison time at the hands of local authorities (a king or queen with magical powers, no doubt) is the only way to ensure that the villain will cure the kids who've been turned into *candy figures*. The villain realizes the error of its ways, or its evil alignment is altered toward good by the power of the king or queen's Scepter of Nobility or Mirror of Internal Reflection.

New Monsters

The following new monsters appear in this supplement, and were created by DMsGuild author Matt Butler for the forthcoming release *The Hag's Hexes*. These are abbreviated stat blocks, and are from the first draft of the monsters; they – along with their Candy Hag masters – will be fully developed and appear in *The Hag's Hexes*, coming soon!

Crul

Medium undead, neutral evil
AC 17; **HP** 127 (12d12+12); **Spd** 30 ft

STR 21 (+5), **DEX** 14 (+2), **CON** 13 (+1), **INT** 6 (-2), **WIS** 5 (-3), **CHA** 10 (+0)

Senses passive perception 10

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion

Languages understands Common, but cannot speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the crul to 0 hit points, it must make a constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the crul drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crul makes two fist attacks or one howl per round.

Rock Candy Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage

Earsplitting Howl. The crul unleashes a howl so terrifyingly loud it causes every creature, who is not a crul, within 60 ft. to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 12 (4d6) sonic damage and becomes frightened for one round. On a success, the creature only takes half the damage and becomes immune to the howl's effects for 24 hours.

"The creatures stand 7 feet tall, even while hunched over, and have unusually large forearms coated in thick layers of silver rock candy. As soon as their bulbous chocolate eyes spy you at the foot of the hill, they begin jogging toward you, howling like a pack of rabid timber wolves. When they get within 30 feet of you, they begin slamming their large fists together menacingly, spraying shards of sugar on their oily licorice skin."

The crul are the sad result of a devastating curse. When a creature consumes the remains of a licorice flavored gumdrop ooze, they suffer the Curse of the Crul. Any creature who does not get the curse removed before their death rises as a crul 1d4 days later. Their fate is obvious to anyone nearby as their dead body becomes encased in a crimson colored cocoon of rock candy.

While in the cocoon, they grow licorice skin in place of their own rotting flesh and form huge deposits of rock candy around their fists and forearms. When they rise a few days later they erupt from their cocoon like blood thirsty butterflies, ready to devour anything in their paths, but anxious to find their masters. Every crul feels an intense need to serve the candy hag that cursed it and will seek her out regardless of the distance.

Once a crul is reunited with its candy hag, it will serve as a loyal servant and protector. Often you can find these hulking abominations carrying cups of bile to their mistresses or throwing some unfortunate soul into the oven. Regardless of the task, a crul will carry it out with a terrifying smile and an unsettling howl.

Gumdrop Ooze

Large candy construct, neutral evil

AC 7; **HP** 96 (12d10+30); **Speed** 30 ft, climb 30 ft

STR 18 (+4), **DEX** 7 (-2), **CON** 17 (+3), **INT** 4 (-3), **WIS** 6 (-2), **CHA** 13 (+1)

Senses blindsight 60 ft.

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Languages n/a

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amorphous. The gumdrop ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. The gumdrop ooze can't use this ability if it is currently engulfing a creature. If it chooses to do so, it must leave the creature behind in a space of its choice within 5 feet of the ooze.

Spider Climb. The gumdrop ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Intoxicating Aroma. Any creature within 30 ft. of the gumdrop ooze must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for the next three rounds. The creature can attempt the save again at the start of its turn, ending the paralysis on a success. Any creature that succeeds the save becomes immune to the paralysis for 24 hours.

Flavor Blasted. There are five primary flavors of gumdrop ooze; cherry, grape, orange, lemon, and licorice. Each of these flavors endows the consumer with a special ability, but curses them as well. This particular gumdrop ooze is licorice flavored, causing the consumer's Hit Point maximum to increase by 12, but they suffer from the Curse of the Crul (see sidebar).

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) slashing damage from the sugar crystals.

Engulf. The gumdrop ooze moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter large or smaller creature's spaces. Whenever the ooze enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the ooze. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, the ooze enters the creature's space, the creature takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage, and is engulfed. The engulfed creature has 1d10 minutes of oxygen thanks to the few pockets of air trapped inside, is restrained, and takes 1 point of Strength damage at the start of each of the ooze's turns. When the ooze moves, the engulfed creature moves with it.

An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the ooze.

REACTIONS

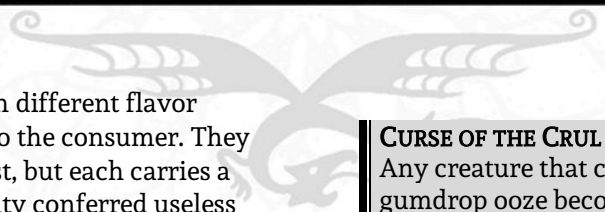
Split. When a gumdrop ooze that is medium is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new gumdrop oozes if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new gumdrop ooze has hit points equal to half the original gumdrop ooze's, rounded down. New gumdrop oozes are one size smaller than the original gumdrop ooze.

"You see a strangely multicolored pond directly in your path. You see swirls of black, purple, and red that seem to merge and separate in random patterns. As you approach, the pool seems to quiet for a second. The colors begin to separate and flow lazily out the pond toward you. You try to stay calm and take in their movement, a combination of falling and sliding that leads you to believe these aren't liquids, but large oozes. As they approach, you try to signal your compatriots to back off, but a sweet candy smell fills your head and you find you can't speak. In fact, you can't move at all. That's when you notice the terrifyingly large shards of sugar

imbedded in the gummies like maces made of broken glass."

The gumdrop ooze is a special confection created by a candy hag. Primarily they're used as enforcers or body guards, but they can also be used for kidnapping. Unlike other oozes, the gumdrop ooze is filled with air bubbles that can provide adequate breathing room for short trips making them ideal for transporting victims.

The gummy, ooze-like material that makes up the body of a gumdrop ooze secretes a paralyzing neurotoxin that renders its victims



immobile. In addition, each different flavor imparts a different effect to the consumer. They may seem beneficial at first, but each carries a curse that renders the ability conferred useless at best or extremely detrimental at worst.

Gummy oozes like to stay close to their creators and behave like loyal hounds when in their company. Whenever a gum-drop ooze travels outside of the range of its mother's *telepathy*, it begins to become very anxious and upset. If it cannot reestablish contact within 1 hour, it will begin to become aggressive and violent. While in this state, the gumdrop ooze will attack anything it can see and consume it, including other candy creations. In fact, it's not uncommon to find chunks of gingerbread floating inside an especially large gumdrop ooze.

CURSE OF THE CRUL

Any creature that consumes a licorice gumdrop ooze becomes subject to the curse of the crul. The consumer adds 12 HP to its HP maximum and suffers no ill effects.

However, should the consumer ever drop to 0 HP, they will die instantly and a rock candy cocoon will form around their corpse. After 1d4 days the consumer will rise as a crul, a new monster detailed in Appendix 1. This curse is permanent, but can be removed with a remove curse spell as long as the consumer is still alive.

Candy Hag

Medium fey, neutral evil

AC 18 (candy shell) or 15 (natural armor), **HP** 97, **Spd** 30 ft.

STR 17 (+3), **DEX** 16 (+3), **CON** 19 (+4), **INT** 18 (+4), **WIS** 19 (+4), **CHA** 21 (+5)

Skills Deception +7, Perception +6, Persuasion +7, Sleight of Hand +5

Damage Immunities piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive perception 14

Languages all mortal languages, Abyssal, Infernal; Telepathy 1 mile

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Candy Coated. The hag hides her hideous form behind a thick candy shell. This shell repels piercing and slashing damage, but can be shattered with 40 points of bludgeoning or force damage. If the shell is destroyed, the candy hag loses her immunity to piercing and slashing damage, and her armor class is reduced to 15, reflecting her natural armor.

Innate Spellcasting. The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: detect magic, magic missile, web (candy floss)

3/day: charm person, expeditious retreat, scorching ray, shield, spider climb, witch bolt

Magic Resistance. The hag has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Subtle Suggestion. The hag has the ability to speak telepathically with any mortal or fey creature within one mile of it without the creature's knowledge. Her voice is an almost exact copy of the creature's own inner monologue and is only detectable with a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Thorned Spatula. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d8) bludgeoning damage + 4 (1d8) piercing damage

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d8) slashing damage

The definition of a two-faced creature, the sugarcoated candy hag prefers to build her sickly sweet gingerbread cottage in a dark forest close to a human or dwarf settlement. Once completed, and her mystical oven of souls installed, the candy hag gets straight to work making diabolical confectionary creations to entice the townsfolk. Outwardly she appears kind, courteous, and compassionate, but underneath her candy coating lurks a hideous beast ravenous for the flesh of a corrupted innocent.

The candy hag's true form is rarely glimpsed, and few have ever lived to describe it. Lurking underneath her candy coating is a rotting corpse-like figure whose mouth has been torn into a terrifying shark smile. When alone, she will shed her candy shell and revel in her ugliness. She takes great pride in her papery thin skin the color of expired chocolate and her numerous puss spewing boils.

When hunting, the candy hag takes a much different approach from her sisters. Most hags are content to wait for their prey to come to them, but the candy hag suffers from a ravenous hunger. If she goes too long without a mortal morsel she'll begin to become self-destructive and violent. This doesn't happen immediately and may take as long as a century, but eventually a hungry candy hag will need to feed or risk losing her ability to produce her candy floss and make her sugar frosted minions.

The candy hag can feed on any mortal flesh regardless of age, race, or alignment, but prefers the delicate flesh of young human and dwarven children. She will forgo other opportunities to feed and even work with mortal creatures if the end result is a mortal child to eat. However, since the candy hag is a connoisseur, she would never think to consume one raw. Instead, she prefers to cook them in her oven of souls.

Summary Stat Blocks

Feathersquall

Medium celestial, LG; 1100 XP

AC 19, **HP** 97, **Spd** 30/fly 90

STR +3, **DEX** +5, **CON** +3*, **INT** +4, **WIS** +5*, **CHA** +4*;
Saves +2

Truesight 120; **Telepathy** 120

Damage Resist Radiant, **Immune** Psychic; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Innate Spellcasting. Cha (spell save DC 14).

- ❖ At will: detect evil and good, detect magic, detect thoughts
- ❖ 3/day each: bless, create food and water, cure wounds, lesser restoration, protection from poison, sanctuary, shield
- ❖ 1/day each: dream, greater restoration, scrying

Magic Weapons. The couatl's weapon attacks are magical.

Shielded Mind. The couatl is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense its emotions, read its thoughts, or detect its location.

Bite. MWA+8, Dmg 8 (1d6 + 5) P, and target must succeed on a DC 13 Con save or poisoned 24 hours. Until poison ends, target unconscious. Another creature can use an action to shake the target awake.

Constrict. MWA+6, reach 10 (one Medium or smaller creature); Dmg 10 (2d6 + 3) B, and target grappled (escape DC 15). Until grapple ends, target restrained, and couatl can't constrict another target.

Change Shape. The couatl magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating $\leq$ its own, or back into true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the couatl's choice). In a new form, the couatl retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, Dexterity, and other actions are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any statistics and capabilities (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. If the new form has a bite attack, the couatl can use its bite in that form.

Personality traits. Loquacious, meek, world-weary

Goals. Feathersquall's here to protect something, but it won't divulge what. That is a plot hook for DMs to use and abuse to their heart's content!

Loquist

Medium humanoid (human), LE; 2300 XP

AC 12 (15 With Mage Armor), **HP** 40, **Spd** 30

STR -1, **DEX** +2, **CON** +0, **INT** +3*, **WIS** +1*, **CHA** +0;
Saves +3

Arcana +6, **History** +6

Spellcasting. 9th level; Int (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit). Wizard spells:

- ❖ Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation
- ❖ 1st level (4 slots): detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield
- ❖ 2nd level (3 slots): misty step, suggestion
- ❖ 3rd level (3 slots): blink, counterspell, fly
- ❖ 4th level (3 slots): greater invisibility, otiluke's resilient sphere
- ❖ 5th level (1 slot): *passwall*

Dagger. M or RWA+5, Rng 20/60; Dmg 4 (1d4 + 2) P.

Personality traits. Adroit, formal, inquisitive

Goals. Loquist is highly curious about the candy hag that created the creatures found in this village. He has no interest in combat, and will use his magic to flee at the first sign of combat...but he does not forget a slight, and will certainly hound anyone that openly attacks him.

Using Loquist. Loquist is the kind of character you can use as a recurring villain, because he sees himself as an upstanding citizen, but his curiosity and greed makes him an "ends justify the means" sort of person, and that's why he's more than happy to employ fiends (the imp), sellswords (the guards), and goblins as his minions. If your adventures occur near a major city, Loquist almost certainly has some sort of title or Faction allegiances of standing there, and thus he may have political clout as well as his magical abilities.

As a combatant, he and his minions are a dire threat to 3rd or 4th level characters, so don't entertain combat lightly!

Guards

Medium humanoid (human or half-elf), NE; 25 XP
AC 16, **HP** 11, **Spd** 30
STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, INT +0, WIS +0, CHA +0
Perception +2 (passive 12)

Spear. M or RWA+3, Rng 20/60; Dmg 4 (1d6 + 1) P, or 5 (1d8 + 1) P if used with two hands as melee attack.

The guards traveling with Loquist are mercenary sellswords from the local region. They are only as loyal as the money they receive, so if they are abandoned by Loquist or a fight turns bad for them (a single guard is defeated), they are likely to surrender unless their opponents seem bloodthirsty, in which case they will flee if possible, and fight to the death if they know they can't run.

Goblins

Small humanoid, NE; 50 XP
AC 15, **HP** 7, **Spd** 30
STR -1, DEX +2, CON +0, INT +0, WIS -1, CHA -1
Stealth +6; Darkvision 60

Nimble Escape. The goblin can Disengage or Hide as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Scimitar. MWA+4; Dmg 5 (1d6 + 2) S

Shortbow. RWA+4, Rng 80/320; Dmg 5 (1d6 + 2) P

These particular goblins are savage and bloodthirsty. They'll fight to the death just for the pleasure of it, which is unusual for their kind. Notably, they are slightly taller and bulkier than the typical goblin specimen.

Imp Naseerus

Tiny fiend, LE; 200 XP
AC 13, **HP** 10, **Spd** 20, fly 40
STR -2, DEX +3, CON +1, INT +0, WIS +1, CHA +2
Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5;
Darkvision 120 (Magical darkness doesn't impede the imp's darkvision)

Damage Resist Cold; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks that aren't Silvered;
Immune Fire, Poison
Condition Immune Poisoned

Shapechanger. The imp can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a rat (speed 20), a raven (20, fly 60), or a spider (20, climb 20), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Magic Resistance. The imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sting (Bite in Beast Form). MWA+5, Dmg 5 (1d4 + 3) P, and target must make DC 11 Con save, taking 10 (3d6) poison on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Invisibility. The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

Imp Naseerus (yes, that's his full name) is a fiend bound to Loquist by some magical pact. Though the imp chafes under this arrangement, it will not perform any action or give away any information that it doesn't think Loquist would be amenable to. That said, if it's abandoned by Loquist, it will be happy to barter for its survival, though its primary goal will be to seek out and rejoin Loquist at the earliest opportunity.



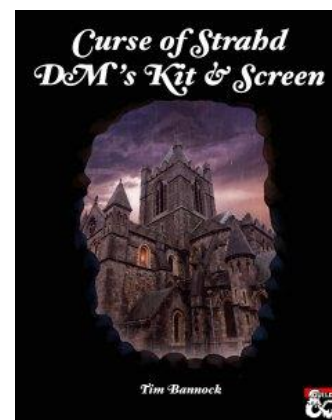
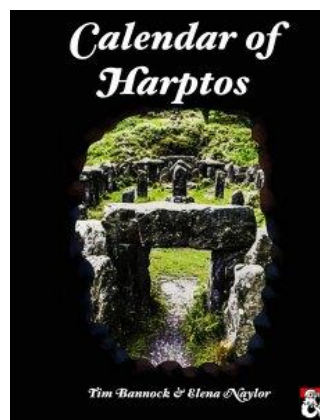
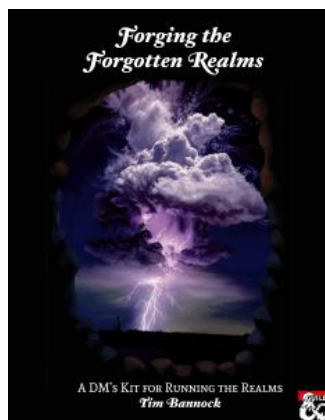
Tim Bannock

Tim Bannock is an RPG enthusiast since 1985. He got his start in the RPG industry as a game reviewer, then an editor and playtester working with Inkwell Ideas and several indie publishers. He now designs, writes, and handles project management for releases on the Dungeon Masters Guild and the Cortex Plus Creator Studio through DriveThruRPG. He hopes to soon publish products for the Pugmire community and some OSR games. His other works include the platinum best selling [Old School Hacks Vol 1: Hexcrawling - Wilderness Exploration and Random Encounters](#) and the three-dungeon-level, full-length adventure [Modrons, Mephits & Mayhem](#). Twitter: @timbannock

Matt Butler

Matt Butler has been playing D&D for over 10 years, but only recently began creating supplements for the Dungeon Master's Guild. He started his writing career with a series of short stories, one of which, Footsteps in the Darkness, won 4th place in the Fish Publishing Flash Fiction Contest. He then began writing his epic fantasy novel, Abyssal Tides, set in a mirror of our world beset by an invasion of hyper-advanced creatures from the sea. When he's not hard at work writing Abyssal Tides, he spends his time creating supplements for the Dungeon Master's Guild. His debut title, [The Library of Biblius](#), is now a copper bestseller. His other works include; Lady Sepa and the Soul Weeper, Curse of the Gumdrop Ooze, and the forthcoming sourcebook Surviving the Feywild, a Guide. Twitter: @Mattsconfused

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