

THE BUTCHER OF ALCROSS



AN ADVENTURE FOR
4TH LEVEL CHARACTERS



THE BUTCHER OF ALCROSS

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3	Exploring the Property	8
Adventure Background	3	The Northern Pasture	8
Adventure Synopsis	3	The House	9
Running the Adventure	3	The Sheep Shelter	10
The Storm	4	The Well	10
Finding Shelter	4	The Graves	10
Leaving the Area	4	Events	11
The Williams House	5	An Unexpected Visitor	11
A Warm Welcome	5	The Maid of the Moors	12
The Missing Daughter	6		
Attacking the Williamses	8	Appendix: New Monsters	14

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The Butcher of Alcross is a short adventure suitable for characters of levels 3 or 4. You can run this module any time the PCs happen to be traveling on a lonely moorland road—for example, after the characters visit the ruins of Kennmouth in the Chapel on the Cliffs, on the road between Alcross and Hather Bay.

Adventure Background

Over a century ago, the Williams family built themselves a house on the moors. They were hill farmers, whose sheep grazed the meadows near their home. The family prospered until one day, their daughter, Helen, had the misfortune of encountering a murderous vagabond out on the moors. He killed her for the sake of the silver necklace she wore, and threw her body down a well, where her horrified family discovered it the next day.

Helen's father was overwhelmed by grief after her death. He transformed their house into a shrine to his daughter's memory, keeping her embalmed corpse on

display in an open coffin, while he searched obsessively for some way to restore her to life. His obsession led him in ever-darker directions until he finally used a combination of alchemical medicine and magic from an ancient civilization to reanimate his daughter's corpse. Unfortunately, the resulting creature bore little resemblance to the young woman that Helen had been before her death. It killed the rest of the Williams family and then fled back to the last place it remembered from its previous life: the well from which its body was originally retrieved. The creature has been hiding down there ever since, only occasionally creeping forth to roam the moors at night, and fleeing from all human contact.

Today, the Williams house lies in ruins, but the ghosts of those who died there also haunt it. When their spirits take an interest in the people who approach the farm, those people don't see it as the broken shell it really is. They instead see it as it was before the tragedies that befell it—a seemingly ordinary house, with a seemingly ordinary family living within it.

The ghosts will find the PCs very interesting indeed...

In your Game World

A few places and names are mentioned in the adventure, but everything has intentionally been left vague so that you may easily adapt this module to whichever game world you play in. These are the ones that appear in the adventure:

Alcross. Alcross is a small fishing village in the middle of the moors. One of the main protagonists of the story, Red Tom, comes from Alcross.

Hather Bay. Hather Bay is a bustling little port town and a regional trade hub. The adventure normally takes place between Alcross and Hather Bay.

Kennmouth. Kennmouth is located about twenty miles away from Alcross. When the Williamses were alive, Kennmouth was a thriving fishing village, but it's now a haunted village. If the PCs talk about Kennmouth with the Williamses, they might realize that the farmers are unaware that Kennmouth is now abandoned.

Lord Moorfield Cross. Lord Moorfield Cross is the lord of Hather Bay and the person in charge of protecting the region, including Alcross and the moorland road the PCs are traveling on. John Williams briefly mentions Lord Moorfield Cross while talking to the adventurers.

Adventure Synopsis

The Butcher of Alcross is, essentially, a ghost story. The PCs will encounter an isolated house and the seemingly normal family that live there. A series of increasingly unusual events will follow, alerting the PCs to the fact that something strange and threatening is occurring. As the characters explore the house and its surroundings, they'll discover what happened to Helen and eventually meet the Maid of the Moors.

Running the Adventure

When preparing to GM this adventure, several tools can help you start strong and run it smoothly.

Roleplaying

The adventure lists the information that the NPCs know as bullet points for your convenience, but feel free to roleplay the interactions if you wish to, and reveal what the NPCs know as part of a conversation.

Monster Statistics

The statistics of the all monsters and NPCs that appear in this adventure can be found in the SRD or in "Appendix: New Monsters." Except when otherwise specified, all NPCs are **commoners**.

The Butcher of Alcross

This adventure is a series of events that will draw the PCs to the various parts of the Williams farm, giving them the opportunity to discover what happened to Helen before their final confrontation with her. These events normally occur in a predetermined sequence, but there isn't anything stopping the characters from wandering about the Williams farm. You should be ready to improvise and adapt the sequence to the PCs' actions.

The Storm

As the characters approach within a mile of the Williams house, the spirits inhabiting its ruins attempt to draw them in. The first symptom of this is a dramatic worsening of the local weather, as the ghosts call down heavy mist and rain to encourage these interesting visitors to take shelter within their home. Freezing rain starts to pour down upon the party, soaking them to the skin, while the fog grows so thick that visibility sinks to less than one hundred and fifty feet.

Finding Shelter

After enduring this terrible weather for almost a mile, the PCs discern lights up ahead, shining through the fog: their first glimpse of the Williams house. Read or paraphrase the following:

Teeth chattering with cold, you stumble forward through the freezing rain and mist which has engulfed you. Up ahead, you can glimpse lights shining through the fog; as you advance toward them, you see the outlines of a substantial farmhouse looming up on the hillside ahead, its windows glowing with firelight. Figures stand silhouetted in the windows, apparently peering out into the terrible weather, as though waiting for someone to emerge from the fog...

As the PCs come closer, they see that the figures peering from the windows are a middle-aged man and woman, dressed in plain woolen clothes. As soon as they spot the PCs, the couple starts calling out to them, encouraging them to come inside the house and take shelter from the weather. Moments later, an anxious-looking young man opens the front door, revealing

a cheerful fire burning in the hearth and an elderly woman warming her hands by its side. It all looks very bright and welcoming, and highly preferable to remaining in the freezing rain and fog outside.

Leaving the Area

If the PCs simply try to leave the area, then the ghosts use their power over the weather to force the characters to stay. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you continue past the farm, the weather suddenly worsens. The temperature has dropped drastically, and you feel the cold burning your skin underneath your coat and clothes. You had heard stories of how cold it could get on the moors, but none of them prepared you for this.



If the characters continue in spite of the weather, they take 1d6 cold damage after a minute in the rain. If they simply carry on going, it gets even colder. They take an additional 2d6 cold damage one minute later. If even this doesn't deter them, then describe how the fog in front of them becomes almost like a solid wall of mist and ice. They take another 3d6 cold damage before bursting out of the fog; the PCs then find themselves standing on a hillside a mile from the house (the adventure ends).

PCs may worry that they will take as much damage going back as they did heading out, but the damage stops as soon as any PC starts heading back toward the house. The supernatural cold is felt only by those trying to leave.

The Williams House

This part of the adventure is an introduction to what's coming next. The ghosts of the Williams family invite the characters into their house to warm up by the fireplace and have a bowl of broth. The purpose of this part is to build up a sense of normality while at the same time giving hints that something is off. The more you can play up the initial normality of the Williams house and the escalating sense of wrongness that replaces it, the more effective the adventure will be!

A Warm Welcome

When the adventurers enter the Williams farm, the family tries to help them recover from the awful weather outside.

The Girl in the Mist

When the PCs are about to enter the house, one of them notices the Maid of the Moors in the fog outside. Read or paraphrase the text below.

As you're about to enter the house, you see a figure moving swiftly through the fog outside. You catch a momentary glimpse of a wild-eyed girl in ragged clothes before she runs off and vanishes in the surrounding fog.

The girl whom the PCs see is Helen, the Maid of the Moors (see "Appendix: New Monsters"). She woke up when the characters approached her house, and she came to see who disturbed her rest. The fog around the house is too thick to pursue her, and any attempt to track her fails because of her Ghost Step ability.

Illusion Breakdown

Nothing in the Williams house is real. Everything is just a memory of how the house used to be, conjured by the ghosts who haunt it. In reality, the house is just a roofless ruin, exposed to the wind and rain. While the illusion is convincing, it is not quite perfect, as the ghosts cannot quite repress their memory of what really happened here.

Every now and then, the illusion fails for a brief moment, and one of the PCs gets a glimpse of what the house really looks like, as determined on the table below.

d10 Illusion Breakdown

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | A PC notices that an empty coffin is lying open in the corner of the room. The family will insist that there is no coffin, and all the other PCs just see a couple of empty crates. |
| 3-4 | A PC notices that the walls of the room are covered in dozens of drawings and paintings, all depicting a pale young woman from different angles. The family will insist that there are no drawings, and the walls look bare to all the other PCs. |
| 5-6 | A PC suddenly feels cold and wet, as though the rain were still falling on them even though they are inside. The family will insist that the room is warm and dry, and none of the other PCs will be able to feel the rain. |
| 7-8 | A PC notices masses of ugly purple bruising around the necks of all four family members, as though someone had tried to strangle them. The family will insist that they have no such bruises, and none of the other PCs will be able to see them. |
| 9-10 | A PC notices that a table stands against one wall of the room, covered in surgical tools: scalpels, mortuary knives, bone saws, and so on. The family will insist that they are just ordinary cutlery, which is exactly what all the other PCs will perceive them to be. |

Entering the House

When the characters enter the house, read or paraphrase the following:

From within, the house looks like the comfortable, well-furnished house of a prosperous farming family. A fire is crackling cheerily in the fireplace, and an inviting smell wafts from the bubbling pot of broth cooking over it. A single large room on the ground floor serves as the combination of a kitchen, a dining, and a living area. As soon as you enter, the four people within rush to offer you blankets, bowls of broth, and seats by the fire.

Once the PCs are comfortable, roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the “Illusion Breakdown” sidebar on page 5).

The Family

Once the PCs are in the house, you should give them some time to interact with the Williamses. The family consists of John (Helen’s father, 39), Eleanor (Helen’s mother, 36), Martin (Helen’s younger brother, 17), and Susan (Eleanor’s mother and Helen’s grandmother, 61).

On a subconscious level, the ghosts know that they are dead and have brought the PCs here in the hope that the characters might help them find peace at last; but consciously, they all believe themselves to be ordinary living people. As long as the PCs talk only about commonplace subjects—food, farming, the weather, and so on—the family will be able to maintain a pretense of normality.

If asked about wider matters, however, it will become clear that their knowledge is a hundred years out of date. They seem to believe that the king is the current ruler’s great-grandfather; they maintain that Kennmouth is a thriving village rather than a haunted ruin, and so on. PCs who contradict them on these topics will be greeted with incredulous laughter and blank denials—the same reactions that PCs will receive if they ask about any of the things that the illusion breakdowns reveal. Under no circumstances will the PCs be able to get any member of the family to admit that they are wrong about anything, or that there is anything strange about the situation. The first time a PC catches one of them in some obvious factual error or falsehood, make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the “Illusion Breakdown” sidebar on page 5).

Designing Anachronisms

When preparing the adventure, you should spend some time imagining a few anachronisms that might come up during a conversation with the Williams family. You can find below examples that can help the PCs understand that the Williamses are still living the in past.

Events. The Williamses might inquire about “recent” events, such as the sacking of Alcross by orcs, a war against a foreign country, or a dragon attack on Hather Bay, all of which occurred about one hundred years ago.

Fashion. The Williamses might make comments about the PCs wearing the latest fashion trend, even though they’re wearing outdated clothing.

People. The Williamses might talk about long-dead rulers, adventurers, or famous people as though they were still alive.

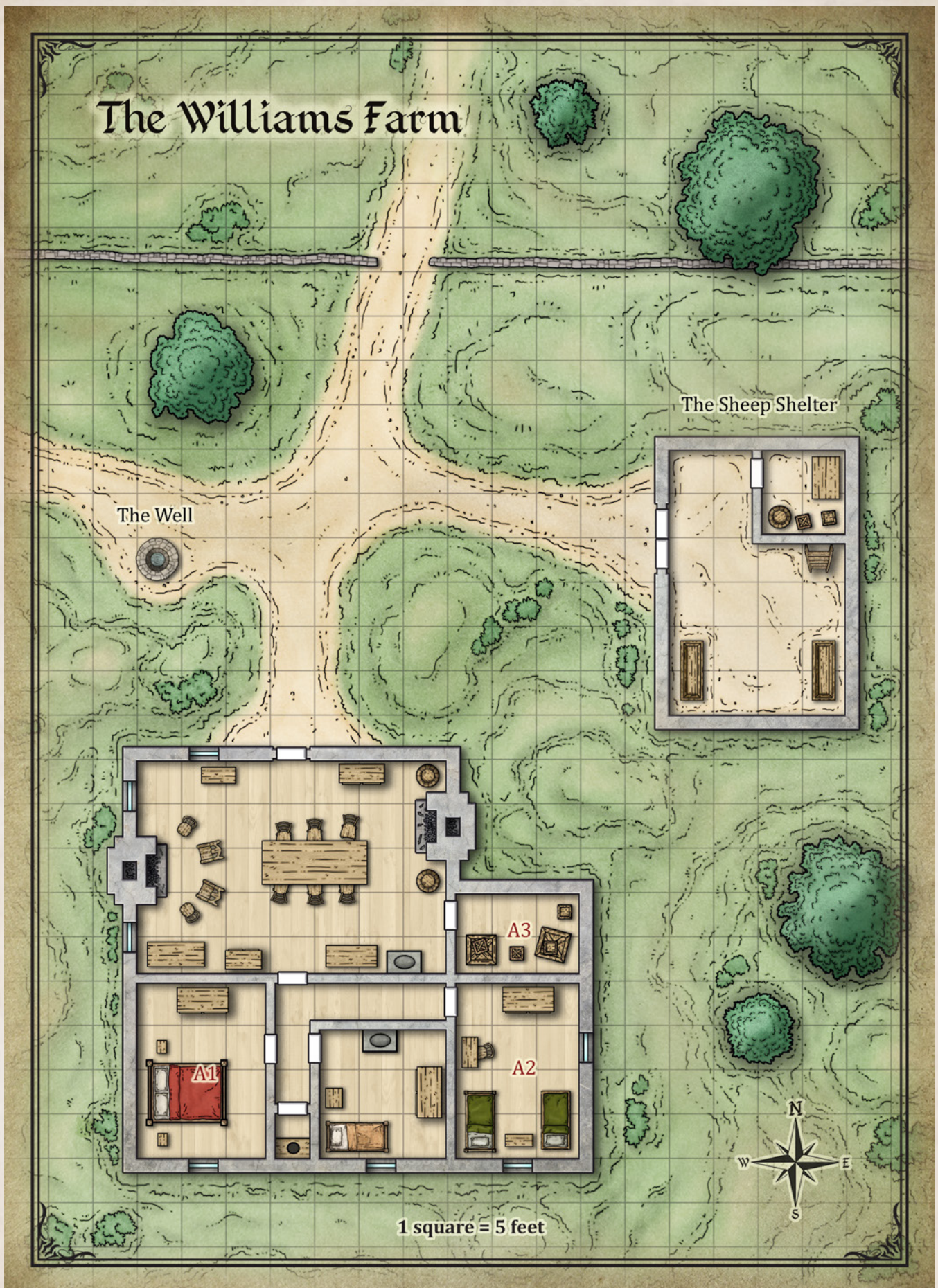
Places. Places change over time. New villages and buildings are built and others are destroyed. The Williamses might not be aware that Kennmouth lies in ruins or that there’s a monastery two miles away from their farm.

The Missing Daughter

When you feel you have done a sufficiently good job at setting the mood and you’re ready to begin the adventure proper, read or paraphrase the text below.

While Eleanor and Susan have been nothing but friendly and welcoming, you can’t say the same about Eleanor’s husband, John. Ever since you arrived, the farmer has been peering anxiously through the windows, as if waiting for someone. When he realizes that you are staring at him, he looks at you with a wan smile, and says “I apologize for being such a poor host. My daughter, Helen, still hasn’t returned from tending our flocks up on the hill. I can’t feel safe until she’s back home without harm. Red Tom is still out there, after all...” A flash of lightning suddenly illuminates the room, followed by roaring thunder.

When John finishes his sentence, roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the “Illusion Breakdown” sidebar on page 5).



Talking to John

If the PCs ask John about Red Tom, he tells them the following:

- † About a month ago, a man from Alcross by the name of Tom Blakenworth brutally murdered a woman and her three children.
- † Rumors say that Tom believed the woman had jewels hidden on her farm, and that he tortured her children until she gave up the location of her valuables.
- † Lord Moorfield Cross sent his knights to hunt him down, but they still haven't managed to find him.

Noticing the Anachronism. Tom Blakenworth—aka Red Tom, lived over a hundred years ago. For months, he murdered people in the moors, looking for jewels for his collection. One day, he just stopped attacking people. Nobody knows what happened to him. If the PCs succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (History) check, they remember the story of Red Tom, and know that it's over one hundred years old.

Development

If the PCs decide to go out to search for Helen, the family tell them that she was tending their sheep in the northern pasture, and suggest looking for her there (see "The Northern Pasture" below); otherwise, Roland Kerr comes to pay the Williamses a visit (see "An Unexpected Visitor" on page 11).

Attacking the Williamses

If the PCs attack the family, treat them as **undead commoners** (SRD; see the "Undead NPCs Template" in "Appendix: New Monsters"). They respond to violence by screaming and fleeing, but the next time the PCs enter the room, the whole family will be sitting there as though nothing had happened, and will blankly deny that any violence took place. Even if the PCs injure or kill them, they will find them all alive and well the next time they enter the room. All their wounds and all the bloodstains in the room will have vanished, and the family will seemingly lack any memory of their own violent deaths.

Each time the PCs reenter the room to find that their violence has been erased or forgotten, however, make an additional roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the "Illusion Breakdown" sidebar on page 5).

Exploring the Property

You can find below what the PCs find if they decide to explore the Williams farm and its surroundings.

The Northern Pasture

The PCs may leave the house to search for Helen in the northern pasture after talking to John (see "the Missing Daughter" on page 6), or go there because they believe something is amiss. If the adventurers decide to go north, read or paraphrase the following:

After a short exploration of the northern pasture, it becomes clear that the grass hasn't been grazed for years, perhaps even for decades. There are no fences and no sheep, although you can occasionally see old animal bones sticking out of the grass, slick with frost.

The Ford Siblings

After 1d20 minutes of searching, the PCs glimpse two figures in the fog, standing apparently motionless. These are the animated corpses of Isaac and Antonia Ford, a brother-and-sister mercenary duo whom the ghosts of the Williams family lured in thirty years back, and whose necks Helen subsequently snapped. Now, like Red Tom and Roland, they awaken whenever the ghosts do.

Isaac and Antonia (see "Monster Statistics" below) wear the ragged remains of their chainmail; their heads hang at ghastly angles from their obviously broken necks, and they draw their swords and attack as soon as the PCs approach. If the PCs flee back to the house then they will follow, attacking the characters and family members indiscriminately.

Monster Statistics. Isaac and Antonia are undead berserkers (SRD), except that they are armed with longswords that they wield with both hands (1d10+3 slashing damage).

Treasure. The two undead have 15 gp in their pockets. Antonia also has a ragged mercenary contract, signed by the now-dead father of the local lord, and Isaac has a jeweled dagger in his boot, worth 200 gp.

Searching the Pasture

After an hour or two of searching for Helen, it should become clear to the PCs that they won't find the girl in the fog. If the characters stay away from the house for too long, the ghosts of the Williams family (unconsciously) call them back by lowering the outside temperature. The PCs take 1d6 cold damage for every 10 minutes they spend in the freezing fog and rain.

Returning to the Williams House

When the PCs return from their expedition in the northern pasture, the Williams family is waiting for them anxiously, and John asks the characters whether they have found Helen or not. They then give the adventurers blankets to dry themselves, and John goes back to staring out the window.

If the PCs haven't killed Red Tom yet (see "The Sheep Shelter" on page 10), one of the PCs hears a loud moaning and crashing noise coming from the shelter outside. Helen's murderer is locked up there. He's constantly banging on the door, trying to break free, but the illusion the ghosts are creating is muffling the noise. As with other illusion breakdown effects, only one of the PCs hears the banging, and the family insists that there is no noise. If the PCs already killed Red Tom, you should have Helen visit them instead (see "The Maid of the Moors" on page 12).

The House

Once the PCs realize that something strange is afoot, they may search the house for clues. The Williams family will object to this, and will be particularly vocal about preventing the PCs from going into Helen's room, although they won't actually resort to violence to stop them. The house appears entirely normal, aside from three locations: the main bedroom, Helen's room, and the larder.

A1. The Main Bedroom

This bedroom, which belongs to John and Eleanor, smells strongly of embalming fluid. On a bedside table rests an open book, filled with what look like transcriptions of ancient glyphs from a long forgotten civilization. These symbols shift and blur when you look at them, as though you were looking at a hazy memory of a book rather than an actual page.

If the characters ask the family why the room reeks of embalming fluid or what the book is, they insist that they can't smell anything strange in the room, and that the book is just a popular religious tract.

Make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the "Illusion Breakdown" sidebar on page 5) when the PCs return to the main room after visiting this area.

A2. Helen's Room

There are two small beds in this room. One of them is neatly made, but the other is covered in bloodstains, and the blankets are soaking wet. A cracked mirror hangs on the wall; when you look into it, you see a roofless, rain-soaked ruin instead of the warm, comfortable house you are in.

Helen and her grandmother, Susan, used to share this bedroom. Any member of the family reflected in the glass of the mirror looks like a decayed walking corpse. If the characters ask about the bed or about the mirror, the family will insist that Helen's bed is just a bit damp, and will refuse to admit that there is anything strange about the mirror or that there are any bloodstains on the bed.

Make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the "Illusion Breakdown" sidebar on page 5) when the PCs return to the main room after visiting this area.



A3. The Larder

The larder is full of earthenware jars, but instead of containing food or drink, these are all filled to the brim with sawdust. As soon as one of the jars is opened, the larder fills with the sound of a man weeping inconsolably, which persists for as long as any PC remains in the room. The family will insist that they can't hear anything unusual, and that the jars are full of grain and foodstuffs.

Make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the "Illusion Breakdown" sidebar on page 5) once one or more characters has heard the weeping.

The Sheep Shelter

The door to the sheep shelter is barred from the outside. Once the PCs are within 10 feet of the door, they all hear something loudly moaning and thumping around inside the sheep shelter. (The family, naturally, claim that they can't hear anything.)

Opening the Door

If the bar is lifted, read or paraphrase the following:

The door suddenly flies open, and a horrific figure bursts out. You see the animated corpse of a man with ragged traveling clothes hanging loosely over his gray flesh and a gaping hole in his chest where his heart should be. In his right hand he holds a hatchet, which he frenziedly swings at you. From his left hand dangles a silver necklace, and as he fights he waves it about frantically, howling, "I don't want it! I don't want it anymore! I want to give it back to her! I want to give it back!"

This is the animated corpse of **Red Tom** (see "Monster Statistics" below), the man who murdered Helen. Months later, he made the mistake of returning to the scene of his crime, and Helen killed him. The shelter has been his tomb for most of the last century, and smells powerfully of death.

If any members of the family witness Tom's attack, they flee, shrieking with terror. Once the fighting ends, however, they will simply deny that it ever happened, even if one or more of them was injured or killed during his attack.

Monster Statistics. Red Tom is a wight (SRD), except that his only weapon is his hatchet (1d6+2 slashing damage). His armor class also comes from his supernaturally strong skin instead of a studded leather armor.

Treasure. The necklace that Tom is holding is the one he murdered Helen for. It is worth 50 gp. The PCs also find multiple silver rings, chains, bracelets, and earrings in his pockets worth 500 gp in total.

Returning to the House

When the PCs return to the house after defeating Red Tom, make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the "Illusion Breakdown" sidebar on page 5). If the adventurers have searched the northern pasture or defeated the unexpected visitor (see "The Northern Pasture" and "An Unexpected Visitor" on pages 8 and 11), then now would be a good time to run "The Maiden of the Moors" event (see page 12).

The Well

This once solidly-built well is now little more than a circle of stones around a deep hole; its rope and covering have long since rotted away. When the PCs neared the Williams farm, the remains of Helen awakened along with the other ghosts. She crawled out of the well and is now lurking around the house, in the fog.

The well shaft is only wide enough to accommodate a single human body. There isn't anything at the bottom of the well, other than an old, muddled doll, floating at the surface of the water.

Inspecting the Well Shaft. A character who takes a careful look at the well shaft can make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice faint marks on the walls of the well, suggesting that something has recently climbed out of it.

The Graves

This nondescript mound of earth is where the bodies of the Williams family were buried by the people who found them, after Helen killed them all. The wooden grave marker has long since rotted away, and it now looks like any other random lump of soil. PCs are unlikely to find the grave unless Helen leads them to it.

If the PCs dig up the mound, they find four human skeletons buried beneath it, in a single shallow grave. The wedding rings that two of them wear are identical to those worn by John and Eleanor Williams, whose bones these are. Especially greedy PCs may steal these rings. They are worth 20 gp each.

Once the PCs have seen the bones of the Williams family, their ghosts will lose all power to deceive them, and their illusion will break down entirely. From this

point on, the house will appear to be the uninhabited ruin that it truly is. The fog will start to clear, and the characters won't see the family again.

Putting the Spirits to Rest

If the PCs are with Helen when they find the bones, she looks at the remains for a long time, lost in thought. Finally, she tells the PCs that she would like to be buried with her family. If they agree to this, she spits out the copper ring that her father used to animate her (*a ring of resistance [fire]*; see “The Maid of the Moors” on page 12), telling them that they are free to keep it. A few minutes later, life leaves her and she sinks to the ground, just an embalmed corpse full of sawdust. Neither she nor the ghosts of her family are ever seen again.

If the PCs instead encourage her to live on and to make use of the second life she has been given, she says that she needs some time alone and wanders away over the moors. Her family finally finds peace, but perhaps the PCs will meet her again, one day...

Story Award. Award the characters 1,800 XP for putting Helen and her family to rest. If the PCs encouraged the girl to live, award them 3,600 XP instead.

Events

You can find below the events that occur while the PCs are at the Williams farm.

An Unexpected Visitor

At the beginning of the adventure, Helen's father, John, is looking out a window, waiting for her to come back. He then tells the characters that his daughter is missing. If the adventurers don't take the hint and don't go looking for her, then you should run this event instead. Read or paraphrase the text below.

You're comfortably seated by the hearth, waiting for the bad weather to pass. You suddenly hear voices outside, carried by the wind: "Helen! Pull her up! Pull her out of there! Bring her back!" Moments later, you hear a loud knocking at the front door. Eleanor stands up, her face filled with joy, and rushes to open the door. Her scream of horror makes you jump out of your seat. As her numb hand drops from the handle, the door swings open, revealing a pale, gaunt figure silhouetted. It wears a tattered cleric's robe, and its skin and clothes alike are caked with white frost.

The figure on the doorstep is the animated corpse of **Roland Kerr** (see “Monster Statistics” below), an unfortunate cleric who happened to walk past the Williams house a few decades after the deaths of the family. The ghosts lured him in, hoping that he could lay them to rest. When he realized he was dealing with unquiet spirits, he tried to flee, and ended up freezing to death in the fog outside. Now, whenever the ghosts stir from their slumber, Roland does as well.

The cleric blames the Williams family for his death and attacks them furiously, while they plead with the PCs to defend them from this horrible frozen monster. Because of Roland's hatred for the farmers, any damage he does is not forgotten, and family members he “kills” appear to stay dead. If the PCs don't intervene, he will “kill” the whole family and then wander back off into the night, leaving the PCs with their frozen corpses. The Williamses are only temporarily “dead” (for the duration of the adventure), and the weather outside will not improve until they put Helen to rest.

Once Roland has either left or been destroyed, make a roll on the **Illusion Breakdown Table** (see the “Illusion Breakdown” sidebar on page 5).

Monster Statistics. Roland has the statistics of an undead veteran (SRD), except that he carries a morningstar (1d8 + 3 piercing damage) instead of a longsword. His armor class also comes from his supernaturally tough skin instead of splint armor.

Treasure. If Roland is killed, searching his body will reveal that he wears a jeweled holy symbol around his neck worth 300 gp. He also has some old letters in his pocket, addressed to a long-dead priest and dated more than seventy years ago.

The Thumping Noise

If the PCs haven't killed Red Tom yet (see “The Sheep Shelter” on page 10), one of the PCs hears a loud moaning and crashing noise coming from the sheep shelter outside, after they defeat Roland. Helen's murderer is locked up there. He's constantly banging on the door, trying to break free, but the illusion the ghosts are creating is muffling the noise. As with other illusion breakdown effects, only one of the PCs hears the banging, and the family insists that there is no noise. If the PCs already killed Red Tom, you should have Helen visit them (see “The Maid of the Moors” on page 12).

The Maid of the Moors

Helen woke up shortly before the PCs arrived at the Williams farm, and is now hiding in the fog. At first, the girl is curious and spies on the characters from afar. However, once the fantasy world of the ghosts begins to disintegrate, Helen comes out of hiding and approaches the house. Whenever you feel the characters have discovered enough about what is going on in the Williams house, read or paraphrase the following:

A flash of lightning suddenly illuminates the courtyard in front of the house. Through the window, you briefly see the silhouette of a young girl standing in the rain. She's unusually pale, with ragged clothes and wild eyes, her long hair wet and dripping. When you look through the window again, the maid has disappeared. You are then startled by a loud banging noise. Someone or something is hammering on the door, beating on it so hard that the wood starts to splinter.

The PCs only have a couple of rounds before Helen bashes down the door. The characters can use these two rounds to prepare for the fight to come if they wish to do so. Once the time is up, read or paraphrase the text below.

The door abruptly bursts open. A young girl, no more than eighteen years of age, is standing on the doorstep. She reeks of embalming fluid, and she has odd glyphs tattooed on the backs of her hands.

Helen is angry and confused. If the ghosts are still “alive” they will rush out to her, babbling about how glad they are to see her and begging her to come inside, where it’s warm. Helen, however, simply ignores them, focusing instead on the PCs. Her memory is a jumble of fragments. She dimly recalls lying at the bottom of the well, and seeing the Williams family lying dead at her feet, although she doesn’t remember that she killed them. In a voice rough from disuse, she will demand to know what is going on, and why her rest has been disturbed.

Identifying the Glyphs. The PCs can make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) to know that the glyphs on Helen’s hands are draconic symbols meaning “life” and “death”.

Talking to the Maid

Interacting with the maid should be a very tense scene. Helen’s not big—she was only eighteen when she died—but she’s very intimidating, and is clearly only just managing to restrain her fury.

By this point, the PCs should have roughly deduced what is going on. They should have learned that Helen and the Williams family are actually long dead, that Helen died before they did, and that her parents somehow brought her back to “life” using surgery and some sort of ancient magic. If the adventurers give her some kind of story that allows her to make sense of what has happened to her, and especially if they return her necklace to her, Helen’s mind will begin to clear, and she will lead the PCs to the grave of the Williams family (see “The Graves” on page 10). Otherwise, she will grow more and more frustrated until she finally attacks.

Fighting Helen

If the PCs fail to calm down the **Maid of the Moors** (Appendix), she attacks them with all her fury. If injured, she bleeds sawdust instead of blood.

If the PCs kill Helen, her body falls apart into a heap of sawdust and embalmed flesh. Any remaining ghosts scream with grief and then disappear, forever. The house becomes, very obviously, an empty, uninhabited, rain-soaked ruin. A few minutes later it collapses in on itself, leaving nothing but a heap of stones. The fog begins to clear shortly afterwards, leaving the PCs free to leave.

Treasure. Characters searching Helen’s body will find a worn copper ring amidst the sawdust, marked with ancient glyphs. It was this item, stolen from a nearby barrow-mound, which John used to anchor the spell which reanimated her body. Learning how to use it in this way would take years of study, but if worn it functions as a *ring of resistance [fire]*.

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Appendix: New Monsters

This appendix contains statistics for new monsters that appear in the adventure.

THE MAID OF THE MOORS

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural)
Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Berserk. At the beginning of each of Helen's turns, roll a d6. On a 6, Helen goes berserk until none of her opponents are in sight or until she is slain. While berserk, Helen has advantage on her attack rolls, but attack rolls against her are made with advantage.

Ghost Step. Helen does not make any noise when walking, nor does she leave any footsteps. Any attempts to track or detect Helen by sound automatically fail.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Helen makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled until the grapple ends (escape DC 15).

Strangle. Helen can strangle a Medium or smaller creature she is grappling. The target takes 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or half as much on a successful DC 15 Strength saving throw. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, Helen kills the target by snapping its neck in two.

Helen Williams was only eighteen years old when Red Tom brutally murdered her for the sake of a silver necklace. Her parents couldn't accept her death and used a combination of alchemical medicine and ancient magic to bring her back to life. The result of their experimentation wasn't quite what they expected. Helen became the **Maid of the Moors**, a tormented spirit, quick to anger and longing for eternal rest.

UNDEAD NPCs TEMPLATE

Most of the creatures in this side trek are ghosts, and have the undead NPC template. These are normal non-player characters from the SRD with a few changes described below.

Type. The undead NPC's type changes from humanoid to undead, and it no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep.

Damage Immunities. The undead NPC has immunity to poison. It also retains any immunities it had prior to becoming an undead NPC.

Condition Immunities. The undead NPC can't be poisoned. It also doesn't suffer from exhaustion.

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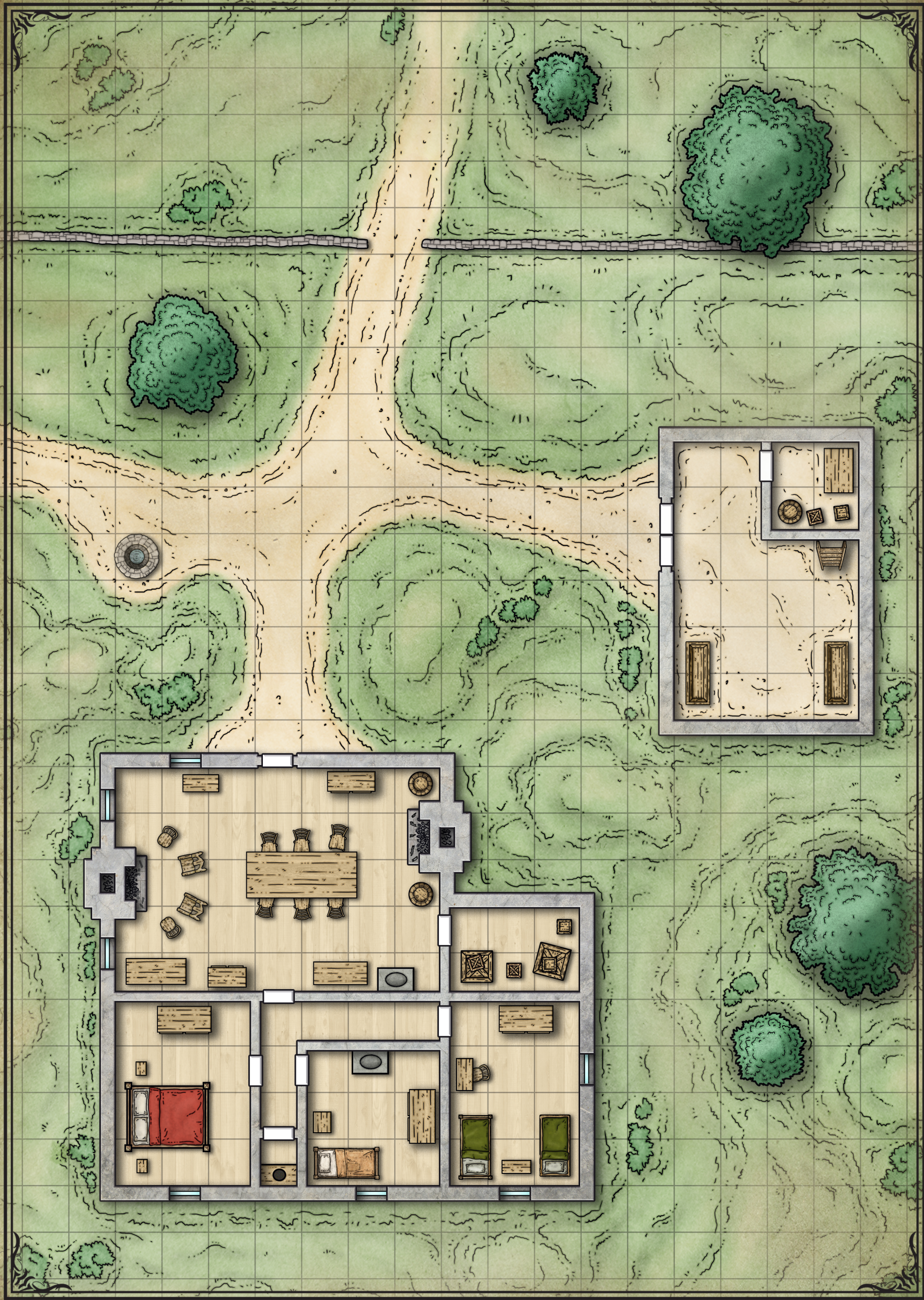
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The Williams Farm

The Well

The Sheep Shelter



1 square = 5 feet

