



THE HOUND OF CABELL MANOR

A THIRD-LEVEL ADVENTURE
USING D&D 5E BASIC RULES.

WHAT IS THIS ADVENTURE?

This third-level adventure is designed for D&D veterans and complete beginners alike. It only uses rules, items, monsters and concepts found in the free basic ruleset that can be downloaded from the Wizards of the Coast website.

That means that you and your friends can play this without having to buy anything other than snacks, drinks and maybe some dice - though even these can be replaced by the many free Dice Roller apps available for phones and tablets.

HOW DO I PLAY?

The basic rules of Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition can be downloaded at dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/basicrules

SUMMARY

A fearsome hound has been seen prowling the mist-soaked moors surrounding Cabell Manor, but what is the foul beast searching for? Is there any truth to the rumors tying the family to an ancient devilish evil, or is it just a local superstition?

If they want to solve the mystery our adventurers will need to keep their wits just as sharp as their swords...



THE ROAD TO CABELL MANOR

There are several ways to start the adventure. The easiest and most direct is to have the party receive a letter from Katrin and Athon Cabell, saying that they have been plagued by a monstrous hound and have heard that there were reliable adventurers in the area. They ask that the party head to Cabell Manor, just north of Beechburton, as soon as they can. In return for aid they promise a substantial reward.

Otherwise it is possible to have them hear of the Cabells' plight from friendly merchants or innkeepers that know that the family is in need of help.

An organic - if complicated - way to set it up would be to have the adventurers be passing through the village of Beechburton at night and see the indistinct form of a terrible hound padding its way across the moors. From there they can ask questions of locals and learn that the family would appreciate the aid of some sturdy warriors.

BEECHBURTON

A small, sleepy village with a few hundred residents, Beechburton seems the very definition of ordinary. The residents are mostly human, with a scattering of the other more common races here and there.

The local inn is named Doyle's and lies in the central square. Its low-ceilinged rooms are filled with the comforting smell of woodsmoke and cider, and no matter the time of day it will be filled with old farmers. The innkeeper is a large human man named Doyle, who is generally friendly and willing to help travellers out with directions, local gossip and a plate of hot food.

All the residents of Beechburton know some form of the legend of Cabell Manor (see *The Legend*), possibly with some fanciful embellishments, and are more than happy to share it. They will also quietly gossip about the uncanny luck that the Cabells seem to have when it comes to business and the house - such as stumbling across a buried chest of gold when they were almost bankrupted when a mine they owned stopped producing, or a business rival dropping dead of an unexpected heart attack.

In general, the locals believe Katrin and Athon to be decent people, but don't trust them or their family history.

APPROACHING THE MANOR

You walk along a narrow if well-worn road for three or four miles, slowly climbing up into the moorland overlooking Beechburton. Even though the mid-afternoon sun is shining

overhead, wisps of mist still drift among the bushes and in places you can see the reeds and pea-green tufts that show where scrub gives way to bog.

The rolling hills and lack of trees means that you see Cabell Manor long before you reach its grounds. Slate-grey and imposing, the manor juts up from the land like a gravestone, with the only other building in sight a low stone construction that squats a half-mile or so off the track.

The design is incredibly grand and it looks well-maintained, though as you draw closer you notice that the windows on the ground floor all appear to be covered with heavy shutters.

A tall iron fence topped with sharp points surrounds the manor, and once the road was guarded by a set of heavy doors. However, these now lie torn and twisted on the verge, and as you pass you notice that they appear to be scorched in places. Indeed, the large double-doors at the front of the building are also blackened and covered in countless deep scratches, as are the shutters around them.

The Cabell family are resting inside the manor and will not notice any adventurers investigating the grounds unless they are exceptionally loud.

Adventurers looking at the gates can make attempt a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check to work out that they were at least partially melted by something incredibly hot, but were also ripped open - an act that would require considerable strength.

Those looking for signs of what caused the damage can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check to spot a set of large paw-prints scorched into the grass just off the road. A Wisdom (Perception) check of 17 or more will also allow them to smell faint traces of sulphur in the area.

As well as the large front door there are small doors to the west and northern sides of the manor. Knocking on any of these will attract **Athon Cabell**, who asks the adventurers to identify themselves before he opens the door.

Athon is a tall, thin human with prominent cheekbones and untidy jet-black hair. His dark suit is rumpled and he has obvious bags under his eyes, as well as a few days or stubble on his chin. When he first opens the door he holds a drawn rapier, but he puts this away once he is sure the adventurers mean no harm.

After checking that the party is here to help he will lead them through a wood-panelled passageway and lead them into a the study - a well-sized room with bookshelves running along one wall and a large fireplace taking up much of another. A short human woman with bright blonde hair sits

on a couch, holding a sleeping infant of maybe 18 months. She wears dark trousers and a white blouse, and also carries a rapier at her side. Athon introduces her as his wife, **Katrin**, while the infant is their son, **Henry**.

After making introductions, Athon will call for the housekeeper - a Halfling woman named **Berry Stappell** - to fetch tea and some food for the party, and then explain that:

- One week ago a tall, shadowy figure turned up at their front door claiming to be a devil who had made a deal with one of Athon's ancestors. She presented a contract that she claimed allowed her to take ownership of Henry.

- The Cabells naturally didn't believe her and slammed the door in her face.

- Every night since then the house has been besieged by a vast hound that is wreathed in fire and shadows.

- It has torn open the gate and pawed at the doors and shutters, but has not yet managed to make its way inside.

- The assaults start at dusk and last until dawn with the hound appearing to materialise out of the mists.

- They have not dared to fight the monster. While both Athon and Katrin can fence reasonably well, they dare not battle the hound alone while there are other options available.

- Athon will recount the legend (see ***The Legend***). He has no idea whether or not it is real, but he hopes that killing the beast will make the problem go away.

THE LEGEND

"The story starts with my ancestor, Richard Cabell, who built this manor house some 400 years ago. He poured his heart and soul into this place; it took years and years to build and all-but bankrupted him. As soon as it was completed he made some bad business deals that left him on the verge of losing it.

"According to the legend, Richard made a deal with dark forces in order to keep hold of this place and ensure it would never leave the family. In return he pledged to give up the life of a Cabell, one every century. People say Richard allowed his own son to be dragged into the family tomb by a foul Hellhound.

"Of course, I never believed the story. When my father told me about it I thought he was trying to scare me. But now... I worry there may have been truth in it after all."

A HELLISH HOUSEKEEPER

Shortly before the adventurers arrived the housekeeper, Berry, was attacked by a devil named **Yeth** - the same devil that offered Richard Cabell the contract that has landed the family with their current problems. Yeth charmed the Halfling woman and then murdered her, dumping her body on the moors.

She knows of the Cabell's plans to hire adventurers and was hoping to abduct Henry before any arrived.

The fiend is keen to avoid being discovered before her plan is complete, and is knowledgeable enough to realise that spending too much time around Paladins and Clerics could be dangerous. As such she will go out of her way to avoid them.

- If asked about the stone building off the track Athon will reveal it is the family tomb.
- If the adventurers destroy the hound and end the attacks the Cabell's promise to pay them 100gp apiece. If pushed, they will bump this up to 125gp apiece.

Katrin will be more than happy to give the adventurers a tour of the manor while Athon takes care of Henry. It's a beautiful old manor and in excellent condition, with several large bedrooms and lounges but nothing remarkable. They used to have several servants working for them, but when the attacks started all of them except for Berry left.

The walls are lined with portraits, including one showing a rather unpleasant-looking man stood in front of the manor with a smug look on his face. Katrin will confirm that the subject of the painting is Richard Cabell, and an adventurer who takes a close look will notice that the year the portrait was painted is written beneath the artist's signature - exactly 400 years ago.

PREPARATIONS

The adventurers will have an hour or so to prepare before sundown. Exactly how they spend this time will vary from party to party, but the Cabells are more than happy to help them put together a plan.

There is not much cover that can be used to set an ambush, but the family have a coach that can be dragged out into the yard and used as a hiding spot if the adventurers are looking for one.

As the sun begins to dip below the horizon, the Athon retires to the study with Henry while Katrin promises to help

the adventurers by firing a crossbow from a window on the upper floor - though she will wait with her husband if they insist she stay safe and out of the way.

NIGHTFALL

As the sun begins to set the mist starts to gather in thicker and thicker strands until it fills the air with writhing, twisting shapes and shadows. As the very last rays of light disappear behind the moors, a patch of drifting whiteness seems to billow outwards and suddenly a fierce howl fills the air.

Out of the shadows steps a huge dog, wreathed in flickering fire that fills the mist with a dirty orange glow. Behind it, four smaller shapes seem to coalesce from the darkness itself, smaller versions of the hound but no less fierce for it.

Slowly, the pack begins to pad its way towards the manor house...

The manor is being attacked by a **Hell Hound** (*DM's Basic Rules p32*) and four **Mist Hounds** (use the statistics of **Mastiffs** [*DM's Basic Rules p35*]). They approach cautiously, with the aim of battering the front door, and attack any adventurers as soon as they see them.

Once combat begins the hounds will try and use their speed to leap on an isolated adventurer and bring them down. The Hell Hound will save its Fire breath until it can get a good shot on multiple targets lined up.

While the creature could probably tear its way into the house or burn it down with its Fire breath, it knows that damaging the manor too much could invalidate the contract between Yeth and the Cabell Family.

If Katrin is aiding with the battle she will fire a crossbow bolt each round at Initiative count 20. She makes the attack against the target closest to the house, with a +4 to hit and dealing 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Keep track of the the number of rounds that have passed. After the fifth round, if the Hell Hound is still alive a sharp whistle will ring out across the moorland and the beast will retreat towards Cabell's Tomb as fast as it can while the Mist Hounds dissolve back into nothingness.

Note that if the players come up with an innovative plan that allows them to make the encounter much easier (such as an ambush or traps), don't feel that you need to add in more enemies or redress the balance somehow. Excellent ideas should be rewarded!

BERRY'S BETRAYAL

While the adventurers were distracted by the battle Yeth attacked Athon (and Katrin if she was with her husband), knocking him unconscious with a silver tea tray and escaping through a window with the infant Henry.

She immediately sets out for Cabell's Tomb, sneaking through the shadows and the mist. This offers excellent cover, but adventurers outside who are actively searching the mists and able to make a DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot a figure moving in the direction of the tomb.

If Katrin was participating in the battle she will scream upon finding her unconscious husband and the open window, calling for help from the adventurers.

Waking Athon, and potentially Katrin, requires a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The last thing they remember is Berry bringing in some tea and then being hit hard across the back of their head.

Tracking Berry's trail across the moors requires a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check. Where it meets the fence the iron bars have been bent enough to allow a small creature to fit through. From there it heads in the direction of the tomb, though the information in the legend should be enough to give the adventurers a good idea of where Henry has been taken.

Katrin will stay behind to take care of Athon, who is too injured to head out onto the moors.

CABELL'S TOMB

The grey stone of the Cabell family tomb looms out of the mist like an iceberg.

Roughly constructed, the only sign of ornamentation you can see is the word CABELL engraved deeply over the huge door.

That slab-like door is ajar, and through the gap you can see the flickering light of a flame...



The overground portion of the tomb consists of a single room, which is mostly empty save for a pair of torches set in sconces and a staircase that leads underground.

If the **Hell Hound** escaped the earlier battle it is waiting behind the door, preparing to ambush the first creature to enter. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will allow an adventurer to make out the beast's low growling before they open the door. Any **Mist Hounds** that survived will be summoned from the mists outside and join the attack.

The creatures will not have recovered any damage taken in the earlier battle and may well be showing signs of damage. However, the Hell Hound will have recharged its Fire Breath power and uses it at the first opportunity.

If the Hell Hound was defeated then neither it or the Mist Hounds will return.

CABELL'S TOMB



The tomb is around 30 ft. below the surface and as the adventurers descend the stairs they will be able to hear the cries of the infant Henry.

The steep passage opens out into a large chamber with an arched roof. Stone sarcophagi etched with the names of Cabells long dead line the walls and the smell of ancient death hangs in the air as thickly as the fog does up on the moors.

At the back of the room the figure of a Halfling woman is scratching away at the wall with a stick of chalk, drawing bizarre runes and sigils that seem to twist and writhe under your gaze. Henry, still swaddled in his blanket, lies beside her and wails.

Yeth, still in the form of Berry, is busy creating the arcane gate that will allow her to take Henry into the Nine Hells and claim ownership of the infant's soul forever.

She's distracted, but is aware that the adventurers are probably on their way and is not completely ignoring her surroundings. Sneaking up on her requires an adventurer to make a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Once she notices the presence of the adventurers Yeth will transform into her fiendish form, becoming taller and sprouting batlike wings from her back while her skin darkens to a shade of deep crimson. If attacked she will fight back, but prefers to try and talk her way out of the danger.

Yeth will point out - quite correctly - that killing her on the material plane is only a temporary solution, as she will simply return to the Nine Hells and launch another scheme to abduct Henry. She promises that the next time she will be much less subtle.

She will also produce the contract signed by Richard Cabell, which gives her the right to take a family member of her choice for as long as Cabell Manor exists and is in the family's possession. The only way to get rid of her is to allow her to take Henry or break the contract, which will require the entire family to forfeit their souls.

Yeth is happy for the adventurers to examine the contract and is smugly assured that they will not be able to find a loophole. Should they attempt to destroy it, the paper will magically restore itself within a matter of seconds.

YETH

Medium Fiend (shapechanger), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 35 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non-magical or non-silvered weapons

Skills Deception +8, Insight +5, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. Yeth can use her action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid. Without wings she loses her flying speed, but other than that her statistics are the same in each form. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Mist Walker. While in heavy mist or fog, Yeth can use a Move Action to teleport to any unoccupied location within 60 ft. She can also see through mist and fog as though it is not there.

Innate Spellcasting. Yeth's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *Charm person*, *command*, *fog cloud*

1/day: *Plane shift (self only)*

ACTIONS

Multiattack: Yeth makes two attacks.

Unarmed strike: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage, or bludgeoning damage if not in fiendish form.

Naturally, however, there are loopholes that will allow the Cabells to get out of the deal without giving up their son or their souls. See Breaking the Contract for details.

In the event that combat breaks out, Yeth will quickly drop Henry's bundle into a nearby open - and thankfully unused - sarcophagus and then cast *Fog Cloud*. While the fog is present she will use her *Mist Walker* power to move about the

THE CONTRACT

The text of the contract between Richard Cabell and Yeth is reproduced below. This is also produced on a separate sheet which can be printed and shown to players.

This contract sets out the terms of a deal made between Richard Cabell, acting in his role as head of the Cabell family, and the Devil known on the material plane as Yeth.

Yeth shall ensure that the residence commonly known as Cabell Manor, located three and a half miles north of Beechburton, remains in possession of the Cabell Family, which is defined as a family unit containing the legal heir of Richard Cabell, for as long as it exists.

Yeth shall ensure that the Cabell Family does not lose possession of the house due to financial or legal hardships. These include it being rendered as an unsuitable dwelling due to lack of maintenance and/or repairs.

While this contract remains in place, any attempt for the Cabell Family to sell or otherwise move out of the Cabell Manor shall be considered a breach of contract.

In return for this service, while Cabell Manor exists as a recognisable dwelling Yeth is entitled to transport one member of the Cabell Family, as defined above, into the Nine Hells on the date shown on this contract and at an interval of every 100 years from that date. Yeth is considered to be the legal owner of her chosen family member from the moment it is transported into the Nine Hells.

Any breach of this contract shall result in the breaching party having their immortal soul(s) confiscated by Asmodeus, Lord of the Nine Hells.

Richard Cabell

Yeth

tomb and then transform herself as adventurers, confusing them and allowing her to land surprise attacks.

Should the adventurers leave Yeth alone with Henry she will resume the ritual to open a portal to the Nine Hells. Casting it fully will take her ten minutes.

BREAKING THE CONTRACT

Though Yeth was careful when she drew up her contract 400 years ago, there are some potential loopholes.

- As with all contracts, the deal between the Cabells and Yeth cannot be broken by obvious misinterpretations or manipulating language. For example, the contract is very clear which building it refers to, and as such cannot be escaped by changing the name of Cabell Manor.
- The contract only applies for as long as Cabell Manor exists, so the most obvious way to break it is to destroy the manor. This can be accomplished by burning it down or simply demolishing it with magic or raw strength.
- Should the players come up with another plausible-sounding loophole, allow them to use it even if it doesn't hold up to particularly intense scrutiny.
- If Yeth becomes aware that the adventurers have worked out a way to break the contract she will immediately attack them.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure can conclude in a number of ways, depending on how the party chooses to deal with Yeth and the contract, and may require some improvisation.

If the party realises that destroying the manor breaks the contract: Once they've explained the plan the Cabells will gladly help the adventurers to find kindling, oil, etc. Their main priority is to save Henry and will give little thought to their property or business. The moment that the roof collapses and the manor is rendered uninhabitable the contract will be void and the Cabell curse broken.

If the party finds another plausible loophole in the contract: The Cabells will go along with any plan that doesn't involve committing obviously evil deeds.

Should Yeth not have been defeated earlier she will realise when the contract is broken and will fly out of the tomb to launch a furious, vengeful attack. This time she won't bother to talk, but will simply try and kill the adventurers.

If they have not worked out a plausible way to break the contract: Katrin will realise that Henry will not be safe while

he remains part of the Cabell family. Therefore, the only way to save him is to give him up for adoption. Weeping, she will ask for the adventurers to give the infant into the care of the priest of Pelor in Beechburton. Once the party leaves they plan to drink poison to deny Yeth the chance to take either of them.

In any case, so long as the Hell Hound has been defeated and Henry not taken to the Nine Hells the Cabells will pay the party the amount promised. If they destroyed the house before being paid Athon will provide a promissory note that will allow them to withdraw the gold from a small bank in Beechburton.

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Yeth