

MAGE'S MALEVOLENT MANSION

AN ADVENTUREAWEK.COM MINI-DUNGEON BY COLIN STRICKLIN



INTRODUCTION

Some magics were never meant to be permanent. The spell magnificent mansion is one of these. Built upon a confluence of ley lines, the Malevolent Mansion has served as the site of mage's convocations for nearly eight centuries. Unfortunately, the mansion's magic has become erratic with age. Now a cabal of powerful sorcerers has hired the adventurers to do a little housekeeping. Their task? To beat the mages' traditional meeting place into submission before the cabal's annual gathering.

STAFFING PROBLEMS

For the better part of a millennium, the usual crew of harmless magnificent mansion servants performed their duties faithfully. Suffering from a dramatically extended lifespan, these 100 conjured creatures have become far less harmless over time. They've learned to reshape their corporeal forms into monstrous configurations, and are prepared to forcefully demand their workers' rights.

HOSTILE NEGOTIATIONS

Overworked and underpaid, the staff of the Malevolent Mansion alternate between reasoning with the characters and attacking them. Throughout the adventure, these quarrelsome creatures invite the party further into the mansion to "inspect our deplorable working conditions."

The servants spend most of their time as an invisible, incorporeal presence. In this form, they are little more than disembodied voices. When the staff manifest to attack, they retain the personality of 100 irate domestic laborers regardless of form. These attacks are not tied to any one location in the mansion, but occur whenever the staff take offense to the party's actions.

The staff take one round to manifest, and attempt to ambush the party as best they can (Dexterity [Stealth] +1). They may disincorporate as a bonus action, or as a reaction after taking at least 150 damage in their current form. Appropriate encounters include but are not limited to:

- 2 guardian nagas
- 1 young red dragon and 1 young gold dragon
- 50 thugs
- 3 giant apes
- 1 androsphinx
- 2 behirs
- 3 vrocks and 1 treant
- 1 archmage, 4 mages, and 1 unicorn

THE "DIPLOMATIC" SOLUTION

Keep a tally of all damage dealt to the staff. Defeating them "the hard way" requires 1,100 damage to their collective manifestations. (Damage from AoE attacks is only counted once.) Fortunately, there is an easier way to end negotiations.

The staff are hostile at first, and cannot be reasoned with. As they take damage, a growing number of staff urge the rest to settle, as reflected by the decreasing DCs below. Succeeding at a single Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check does not end the adventure. Rather, it adds an effective +100 damage to the running damage tally as the staff revise their list of demands. By the final damage threshold, the staff accede to any diplomatic overture.

- 0 - 100 Damage; DC N/A
- 101 - 250 Damage; DC 35
- 251 - 400 Damage; DC 30
- 401 - 550 Damage; DC 25
- 551 - 700 Damage; DC 15
- 701+ Damage, DC Automatic

1. THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

When the characters enter the Malevolent Mansion, all 100 servants line the entryway and surrounding halls. They invite the adventurers to sit at the conference table in **Area 1a** before angrily make their demands, coalescing into their first monstrous form and attacking.

The entirety of **Area 1a** is subject to a zone of truth effect. Anyone who sits at the negotiating table in **Area 1a** has their likeness projected onto one of the golden statues in **Area 1b** or **Area 1c**.

2. THE QUIET HALL

While the table in **Area 1a** is designed for official proceedings, this shadowy corridor was made for more clandestine conferences. Creatures standing in the hall are able to understand one another perfectly, but no sound emerges from the hall. That makes this hallway the only place in the mansion where the ubiquitous staff cannot overhear the characters' plans and conversations.

3. PROTOTYPING LAB

Collaborative projects from past mages' convocations lie upon the tables here: 1d3 *feather tokens*, a *necklace of fireballs*, and one flask of *oil of slipperiness*. Note that these objects dissipate into smoke if removed from the mansion, as do the many reagents that fill the cupboards. Ability checks made to craft items are made with advantage in this room. If the materials come from outside the mansion, crafted objects do not disappear once removed.

4. REAGENT STORAGE

Brought in by generations of sorcerers, this room contains real-world versions of the reagents found in **Area 3**. There are enough raw materials to reduce the cost of any one commissioned magic item by half.

5. COAT CHECK

Various forgotten robes of famous wizards lie in this chamber. They are all fashionable. One is an indignant medium-sized *cloak* waiting for the return of its master. It is not hostile, and is willing to answer questions about the mansion, providing advantage on the party's next Charisma check to influence the staff.

6. BOOK EXCHANGE

While the staff complain of being forced to copy dull formulae, this room is a wizard's dream. It contains 1d4-1 spells of each wizard spell level from 5-8. There are also a number of detailed natural history tomes, explaining how the staff learned their many forms. Druids may learn 1d3 new forms by studying these works.

7. HOST'S QUARTERS

Though the mansion's creator is long dead, it is possible to gain a limited connection to the Malevolent Mansion by sleeping in this bed. If a character manages to fall asleep here, they gain a rudimentary understanding of the mansion's current floorplan and special properties.

8. AMBUSH HALLWAY

This hallway is dark and quiet. A perfect place to stage an ambush from one or more of the neighboring rooms.

9. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

All 100 of them have to share. The indignity!

10. DINING ROOM

The staff attempt to turn on the charm in this room. They appear in humanoid forms before the adventurers, carrying a piping hot dinner. Characters who partake are affected as per a *philter of love*.

11. LOUNGE

The steaming mugs of mulled wine in this room are lined with a unique version of *potion of mind reading*. All creatures within 10' must succeed on a DC 13 *Wisdom saving throw* to *not* hear the drinker's surface thoughts.

12. KITCHEN

Another sore point for the staff, the kitchen is the site of much of their drudgery. The staff ask the characters to participate in a little role play: "We will behave as the Sorcerous Cabal, and you try to keep up with demands. You tell us if that's fair!"

13. SPARE ROOM

If the staff transform into a creature or size huge or larger, they cannot exit this cramped room. They instead reach out of the door and through the two-way fireplace to attack.

14. STORAGE

The Grand Magus who hired the adventurers left her *staff of power* here, dropped as she was chased off by her one-time servants. She's asked the adventurers to retrieve it, and given them leave to use its power to complete their mission.

15. STAFF DIRECTORY

This sphere of blackness and floating text was designed as a manual way to alter the form of the staff. The staff now control it, and the adventurers cannot pencil in any alterations. That said, reading the directory and watching it change can allow the party to anticipate the staff's next form.

