



A d20 Modern Instant Action Adventure

Mischief Night

Requires the use of the d20 Modern™ Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

D20 MODERN



Introduction

This scenario takes place on the night before Halloween, Mischief Night. It can be placed in virtually any relatively remote or deserted city street, sometime after the sun goes down.

The city has long been plagued by various pranks on the night before Halloween, but these pranks are generally mostly harmless. Use of toilet paper or bags filled with dog excrement is common in these pranks, and they rarely put anyone in any kind of physical danger. Tonight, however, a local group of hooligans has taken it upon themselves to outdo the other pranksters of Mischief Night, and their idea of fun is potentially deadly.

While walking by a boarded-up storefront, the PCs are knocked prone by a loud explosion, and the storefront erupts in flames. Laughter can be heard from the other side of the street, as a group of punks approaching the PCs decides that they might be able to get more than a laugh out of tonight's revelries. Once the PCs have dealt with the punks, they must decide whether or not they want to enter the burning building and search the apartments above for survivors, or whether they simply want to call the authorities and detain the punks until they arrive.

This scenario is designed for low- to mid-level characters, but the section entitled "Heightened Action" includes guidelines for scaling the challenge upward.

The violence ensues (EL 5)

As the PCs walk down the deserted street, paraphrase or read aloud the following text:

Few Halloween decorations can be seen in this part of town, but that doesn't stop the darkened streets from carrying a sense of dread and foreboding. As you walk past vacant apartment buildings and boarded-up shops, you can't help but feel incredibly alone, and yet incredibly vulnerable.



Written by Brian Engard

Suddenly, an explosion to your left pushes you through the air, threatening to knock you from your feet. One of the boarded-up storefronts has erupted into flames, the heat playing a sharp contrast with the chill of the night.

At this point, each of the PCs is entitled to a Reflex save (*DC 10*) in order to remain standing; those who fail the save are knocked prone. In addition, allow each PC either a Spot check (*DC 12*) or a Listen check (*DC 14*) to notice the approaching thugs. Those who notice them may act during the surprise round, while those who do not are too distracted by the fire to notice their attackers quickly enough to react immediately. Some PCs may wish to use the surprise round to stand up from their prone position. Before the surprise round starts, assuming any PCs have noticed the approaching punks, read or paraphrase the following:

Four figures approach from the gloom at the edge of the area that the fire now illuminates. Three of the figures seem to be wearing brass knuckles, while the fourth—presumably the leader—brandishes a crowbar. The leader leers toward you and speaks to his companions:

"Look what we got here, boys. Some fishies fell in our trap. Let's see if these fishies got anything good on 'em, huh?"

With that, the four attack.

Tactics

The word 'tactics' is not one that is in the normal repertoire of the group that attacks the PCs. They are not willing to die for their bit of fun, or for whatever valuables the PCs may have. That said, however, the leader—Clancy—rules his gang with an iron fist. His cronies are more afraid of him than they are of the PCs, and they will only turn tail and run under two conditions. The first is if Clancy, himself, either runs away or is defeated, while the second is if two of their number are rendered unconscious or dead. For Clancy's part, he will fight until he has one third or fewer hit points left, at which point he will turn tail and run.

The crew's primary objective in attacking the PCs is simple, malicious fun, though they justify it by saying that they want whatever valuables the PCs have. As such, their only real preference in targets is whoever looks like the easiest mark, especially if that character looks like he might have some money or valuables on him. At any rate, they are certainly not opposed to ganging up on a single target, or to attacking a prone or otherwise defenseless victim. A favorite tactic is for one of the thugs to hold a victim while the others lay into him.

The Burning Building (EL 6)

Once the fight is over, any PCs still conscious are entitled to make a Listen check (*DC 12*) in order to hear what sounds like someone screaming within the burning building. There is, indeed, someone trapped within, a tenant of one of the apartments above the boarded-up store. The best way to get inside is through the door at street-level, though the door is locked. It

can be knocked down (*Strength check, DC 20*), or the lock can be picked (*Disable Device, DC 15*). Once the door is opened or otherwise removed from the picture, the PCs are free to dash up the stairs and try to locate the source of the screaming; doing so is easy enough if a PC simply stops and listens for at least one round in order to pinpoint the direction of the sound. The door to the occupied apartment is unlocked, but the person within—a man named Henry—is in a wheelchair. PCs who are willing to are welcome to carry Henry down the stairs to safety; he will not struggle.

Now, all of this assumes that the PCs do not succumb to smoke inhalation, heat, or the flames, themselves. Each round that the PCs remain within the burning building, they must make a Constitution check (*DC 10, +1 per previous check*). Failure indicates that the PC chokes for the entire round; choking for two consecutive rounds inflicts 1d6 points of damage. Note also that, after the first five rounds within the building, PCs must make a Reflex save (*DC 12*) in order to avoid catching on fire (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, page 213, for rules on catching on fire*). After the first save, the next save must be made in another three rounds, with a DC of 13. After this it is two rounds, with a DC of 14. If the PCs are still within the building at this point, they must make a save every round at a DC of 15 in order to avoid catching on fire, as the flames quickly engulf the building.

Rewards

Besides the standard experience point rewards for the two encounters (*ELs 5 and 6, respectively*), if the PCs wait for the authorities (*or call them*) and answer their questions, they will probably gain the goodwill of the police and fire department at the very least, which can be a valuable commodity in the big city. If you feel it necessary, you can also feel free to give the PCs a Wealth reward of +8, to split amongst themselves; whether this is a reward for the capture of the gang or cash found on the thugs is a matter left up to you, the Gamemaster.

The Antagonists

Clancy, Gang Leader (*Strong Ordinary 1/Charismatic Ordinary 2*): CR 2; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+1 plus 2d6+2; hp 14; Mas 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+1 *Dex*, +2 *Class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2 *nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, *crowbar*); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2 *nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +4 melee (1d6+2/19-20, *crowbar*), or +2 ranged (2d4, *Skorpion*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL self, evil; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Disable Device, Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +3, Disable Device +5, Intimidate +7, Jump +3, Knowledge (*current events*) +3, Knowledge (*street-wise*) +4, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Double Tap, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Leather jacket, Skorpion (.32 machine pistol), 50 rounds of .32 ammunition, crowbar.

Jeff, Antoine, and Beck, Thugs (*Fast Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1*): CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+2 plus 1d10+2; hp 17; Mas 14; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+2 *Dex*, +4 *class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +0; Grap +1; Atk +3 (*1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +2 melee (*1d4+2, brass knuckles*); Full Atk +3 melee (*1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +2 melee (*1d4+2, brass knuckles*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Clancy, self; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Knowledge [streetwise], Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Drive +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (*streetwise*) +2, Move Silently +4, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +4, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Improved Initiative, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Possessions: Leather jacket, brass knuckles.

Heightened Action

The encounter detailed above is meant for low- to mid-level characters, up to a maximum of about 6th level. In order to make the encounter more challenging for a group of higher-level characters, there are a few things that can be done. In order to make the secondary, optional encounter in the burning building more challenging, consider increasing the DCs of the saves required to avoid catching on fire. You could, for example, start the saves at a DC of 15 and increase them from there, and even increase the frequency of saves to the point of requiring them every round from the start. Doing so would likely increase the EL of that encounter by anywhere from 1 to 5 points, depending on the frequency and difficulty of the save. You could also include more innocents to rescue, thereby requiring the PCs to split up or to remain in the burning building for a longer period of time.

As for the primary encounter, all that really needs to be done in order to make it more challenging is to increase the levels of the antagonists. Below are presented two higher-level versions of each antagonist, in order to increase the difficulty of this encounter. Using the first set of antagonists increases the EL of the encounter to 9, while the second set of antagonists carries an EL of 13. Feel free to give a higher Wealth reward if either of these two sets of villains is used.

Clancy, Gang Leader (*Strong Ordinary 3/Charismatic Ordinary 4*): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3 plus 4d6+4; hp 31; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+1 *Dex*, +3 *Class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +5; Grap +7; Atk +8 melee (*1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike*),

or +7 melee (*1d6+2/19-20, crowbar*); Full Atk +8 melee (*1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +7 melee (*1d6+2/19-20, crowbar*), or +5 ranged (*2d4, Skorpion*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL self, evil; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +3; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Disable Device, Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Bluff +11, Climb +4, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +11, Jump +4, Knowledge (*current events*) +7, Knowledge (*streetwise*) +8, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +10, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Double Tap, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Leather jacket, Skorpion (.32 machine pistol), 50 rounds of .32 ammunition, crowbar.

Jeff, Antoine, and Beck, Thugs (*Fast Ordinary 3/Tough Ordinary 3*): CR 5; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+6 plus 3d10+6; hp 42; Mas 14; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+3 *Dex*, +6 *class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +8 (*1d8+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +6 melee (*1d4+2, brass knuckles*); Full Atk +8 melee (*1d8+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +6 melee (*1d4+2, brass knuckles*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Clancy, self; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Knowledge [streetwise], Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Drive +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (*streetwise*) +4, Move Silently +7, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Improved Brawl, Improved Initiative, Knockout Punch, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Possessions: Leather jacket, brass knuckles.

Clancy, Gang Leader (*Strong Ordinary 5/Charismatic Ordinary 6*): CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 5d8+5 plus 6d6+6; hp 53; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+2 *Dex*, +5 *Class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +8; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee (*1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +10 melee (*1d6+2/19-20, crowbar*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (*1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike*), or +10/+5 melee (*1d6+2/19-20, crowbar*), or +8/+3 ranged (*2d4, Skorpion*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; AL self, evil; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Disable Device, Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Bluff +13, Climb +6, Disable Device +11, Intimidate +13, Jump +6, Knowledge (*current events*) +9, Knowledge (*streetwise*) +10, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +13, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Double Tap, Frightful Presence, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Possessions: Leather jacket, Skorpion (.32 machine pistol), 50 rounds of .32 ammunition, crowbar.

Jeff, Antoine, and Beck, Thugs (*Fast Ordinary 5/Tough Ordinary 5*): CR 9; Medium-size human; HD 5d8+10 plus 5d10+10; hp 68; Mas 17; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 21, flat-footed 19 (+3 *Dex*, +8 *class*, +1 *leather jacket*); BAB +6; Grap +8; Atk +11 (1d8+2 *nonlethal*, *unarmed strike*), or +9 melee (1d4+3, *brass knuckles*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+2 *nonlethal*, *unarmed strike*), or +9/+4 melee (1d4+3, *brass knuckles*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL Clancy, self; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (*bonus class skills: Knowledge [streetwise], Sleight of Hand*).

Skills: Drive +9, Hide +9, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (*streetwise*) +6, Move Silently +9, Read/Write English, Sleight of Hand +9, Speak English.

Feats: Brawl, Improved Brawl, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Knockout Punch, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Possessions: Leather jacket, brass knuckles.

sidebar: A Touch of Shadow

Some GMs may want to make this more than a simple, mundane encounter with a bunch of thugs. To that end, consider the following suggestions for adding a supernatural element to this encounter.

If you want to increase the supernatural presence in this encounter without making it too dark, you could make Clancy and his gang into a band of gnolls (*d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, page 238). Doing so would impart the following changes to each antagonist:

- +1 CR
- 2d8 additional Hit Dice (8 hp)
- +1 natural armor bonus to AC
- +1 BAB
- +2 base Fortitude save
- +4 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma
- Bonus Skills: Listen 3 ranks, Read/Write Gnoll, Speak Gnoll, Spot 3 ranks
- Darkvision 60 feet

On the other hand, you may want to make this encounter significantly darker, with a more menacing supernatural element. In this case, you might consider applying the ghoul template to one or all antagonists (*d20 Menace Manual*, page 48), though this will increase each antagonist's CR by 2 rather than 1.

sidebar: mind games

If you are interested in a game focusing more on psionics or extra-terrestrial activity, consider making Clancy, or perhaps all four thugs, the thralls and hosts of puppeteers (*d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, page 253). Doing so would increase the CR of any possessed antagonist by 1, and would impart the following changes upon him:

- Psionics: 3/day – brain lock, lesser domination, as an 8th-level Telepath
- Blindsight 60 feet
- Immunity to mind-influencing effects
- Massive Damage threshold increases by +5
- +4 to Listen and Spot checks

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