

Mansion of Madness

from The Tome Show (www.thetomeshow.com)

Hook: The party has somehow gained the attention of Lord and Lady Hesper, who own an estate just outside of town. Perhaps the party's recent adventures have made them heroes of the community and the Lord and Lady would like to show their appreciation. Maybe the PCs are new to town, but a well armed and/or exotic group like the party have gained some attention and the Lord and Lady like to make a show to the rest of the town, so they quickly invited them to the manor for the coming holiday.

Read the following to begin the adventure:

Tradition states that all who wish to survive to the next Feast of the Dead should stay indoors and celebrate from the dusk until dawn. Being outdoors after dark is a sure way to bring doom upon yourself. The Lord and Lady Hesper have found it in their hearts to invite the PCs into their home for safety and celebration.

You arrive and are shown into the home by the manservant, Kre'in, a goliath of a man...actually, a goliath of a goliath, but a gentle giant by all evidence. You are escorted to the formal entertaining room full of plush seating, a stocked bar, and lavish portraits and tapestries.

After a few minutes the Lord and Lady Hesper enter the room in their finest mourning attire along with Gral Hesper, their only child and the Ladies Glora and Tira Forgal, friends of the family. The evening is proceeding in as normal a sort of fashion as you might expect, although perhaps a bit dull. There is fabulous food, prepared by Kre'in, you're told. There are stories told, and remembrances of the dead. The party is asked to participate and share any losses they've had. Who have you lost? What did they mean to you?

Give the players a chance to get settled in, get comfortable, and encourage them all to share their stories. It could be a good chance to get in some good role-playing and reveal some of the characters' background, or acknowledge recent losses in the party.

Just after the players seem to be getting set into the rhythm of things suddenly interrupt whoever is talking with the following.

NPC Personalities

- Lord Hesper** - aloof and confident to all outward appearances.
- Lady Hesper** - quickly excitable and free to share her thoughts with others.
- Gral Hesper** - the Hesper son is quick to bond to others from outside his social level.
- Kre'in** - quick to help, kind hearted, only wants to help others. Quiet and gentle giant.
- Glora Forgal** - shows her power through seduction.
- Tira Forgal** - a screamer. Likely to run in circles and draw lots of attention.

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Suddenly the lanterns and candles go out and the wind picks up to a gale force howl. The howl is then followed by a thud at the window pane. Then another. As Kre'in re-lights the lanterns allowing you to take a closer look, when you notice that there is some sort of...shadow-thing, a creature at the windows, at all all of the windows, now. Banging, scratching, trying to get in. You can feel their hatred and hunger from here.

The Lady Hesper calls out, "It's the wraiths! Their after us."

"My dear," her husband calls out reassuringly, "we are safe from the scourge so long as we stay indoors, just like any other year.

But when everyone looks around you notice that Glora Forgal is missing.

THE SNAGGING:

The shadows occasionally reach out and try to grab people from the group and once they are completely engulfed they disappear until the final encounter.

During rests and role-playing situations, or whenever the DM wants to crank up the tension, ask the PCs to make a Perception check (DC 15). Anyone who succeeds is able to make a secondary check to try and stop the Snagging.

Religion (DC 15) - call on the power of the gods to stop the spirits

Athletics (DC 20) - grab the target and pull

Arcana (DC 20) - use your magical skills to try to expel the spirits

Success: If the party has 6 successes before 3 failures they stop the target from being taken.

Failure: If 3 failures occur before 6 successes or someone attempts a 3rd skill check (indicating it's been 3 rounds) then the target is lost and replaced by a Feast Night Shadow creature of their vague likeness.

The shadows take characters in the following order: Lord Hesper, Tira Forgal, Gral Hesper, Lady Hesper, Kre'in, the PCs themselves.

The NPCs beg the party to save them but are complete non-combatants. They can answer questions but that's about it.

What you can learn from the Lord and Lady Hesper:

- The Feast Night Wraiths appear every year for as long as anyone remembers, no one knows why.
- So long as people stay indoors they are safe.
- Those who go outdoors often die.
- Those who survive going outdoor always end up dead within a few weeks.
- This mansion has always been hit harder than the rest of the town, but has always been safe inside.
- The Hespers have owned the place for years but only started living there a few months ago.
- The family hadn't lived there for so long after their great uncle went mad, he was known to be a powerful wizard **who never left his study** unless he was forced to.

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Feast Night Wraith		Level 7 Elite Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (undead, shadow)		XP 600
HP 136; Bloodied 68		Initiative +11
AC 21; Fortitude 19; Reflex 20; Will 18		Perception +9
Speed 6, fly 8, phasing 8		Darkvision
Immune fear, poison, disease; Resist 10 necrotic, 5 cold; Vulnerability 5 radiant		
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		
Traits		
Combat Advantage		
The wraith deals 1d8 extra damage against any creature currently taking ongoing necrotic damage.		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Rake (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: The wraith shifts up to 2 squares before or after the attack; +12 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
† Slashing Step (weapon) • At-Will		
Effect: The wraith makes two rake attacks, shifting 1 square before each attack and after the second attack.		
⚡ Swirling Claws of Destruction • Recharge ☼ ii		
Attack: Close burst 1; +10 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the wraith shifts 3 squares after the attacks.		
Minor Actions		
⤴ Blackfire • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10; +11 vs. Reflex		
Hit: Until the end of the wraith's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment, and is considered to be taking ongoing necrotic damage.		
Triggered Actions		
Sly Setup • At-Will		
Trigger: The Feast Night Wraith is hit with a melee attack.		
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The wraith shifts 1 square, and the triggering enemy grants combat advantage to the wraith until the end of his next turn.		
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 22 (+9)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil Languages Common, Deep Speech		

AREAS OF INTEREST:

Secret Passageways

These can be found with a Perception (DC 20) check and can be placed by the DM in any room where they feel it is needed and can lead anywhere the DM needs it to go. Inside these passages are a great place to have a Snagging occur.

The Study

Here in the study a Perception (DC 20) reveals a hidden compartment that contains the notes and journals of Uncle Hesper. By studying these notes the party can learn that he had found an ancient book that contained

rituals about the dead. It seems that Uncle Hesper was overcome with grief when his wife, Glorda, died and he spent all his time studying in hopes that he could find a way to bring her back from the dead. The last entry indicates that he found a way.

The Bedroom

Here in the bedroom the PCs can find Aunt Glorda's letters hidden under a mattress. They indicate that Aunt Hesper was a very religious woman who thought highly of the community. With a Religion or Arcana check (DC 20) the PCs can learn that if Uncle Hesper's ritual would be exceedingly dangerous if her soul was unwilling to return and her desire to protect the community could be the cause of the Feast Night Wraiths.

The Basement

Here in the basement the PCs can find evidence of a layout that included something in the center of the room as well as rings where chains may have been attached before. This will give the players a hint about the layout of the final encounter.

The Phantom Room

This room moves randomly about the house and the DM should feel free to use it at any time or disregard it as they see fit.

As you enter this room someone mentions that they've never seen this place in the mansion before. The room is dark with a small amount of light coming up through metal grating that makes up the floor. Hundreds of chains hang from the ceiling dangling occasionally knocking together in an eerie clinking. The ceiling itself is in utter darkness.

If the PCs move more than 10 feet past the door. The chains follow the rules of the

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snagging and will attack the NPCs first. If they are successful in pulling one of the NPCs into the shadows they will immediately deactivate.

The room is empty aside from the chains. If the party leaves the room and decides to reenter or looks back they see that the room has vanished and in its place an ordinary bedroom has appeared.

Possessed Chains

Perception (DC 15) to notice that there are small green glowing runes scrawled all over the chains.

Arcana (DC 20) allows a PC to realize that the chains are likely to be dangerous or even animate in nature.

Initiative +2

Trigger: When an enemy enters within 2 squares of the room the chains attack that creature, but as an immediate reaction instead of a standard action. Then roll for the statue's initiative. It acts each round on that turn, until no creature is within its trigger area or a creature is captured by the Snagging.

Attack * Necrotic

Immediate Reaction Melee 5
or Standard Action

Target: One creature

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage.

Special: The chains can have only two creatures restrained at one time, and if two are restrained, it cannot make another attack until it releases a creature or a creature escapes. The statue can release a creature from being restrained at any time with a free action.

Once a creature is grabbed the chains begin "The Snagging". Follow the rules described on page 2 of this adventure.

Level 6 Blaster

XP 450

The chains have AC 10, Reflex 10, Fortitude 28, and hp 200. When it is reduced to 0 hit points, the trap is destroyed.

The Parlor

The parlor is a large room ornately decorated with paintings and a number of leather and suede couches. At the far wall there is a large drawing desk and next to it is a liquor cabinet. To the left of the entry door there is a fire place that sits unlit. The room is illuminated by a large chandelier which is tied to the wall in four different locations. On the desk there is a large stack of papers and letters.

If Lord or Lady Hesper or Kre'in are still present they will likely point out that two of the more prominent paintings are of their great uncle and his wife Glorda Hesper.

Someone looking around the room is also likely to notice that one of the paintings on the wall seems to be watching the PCs.

Terrain:

The Chandelier can be dropped from the ceiling by destroying any two of the four anchor ropes. The ropes have 10hp and an AC 16. The falling chandelier is a burst 2 attack +11 vs Reflex. It deals 2d8 + 8 damage and any knocks the target prone.

The liquor cabinet can be knocked over and set on fire creating a blast three attack: +9 vs Reflex. It deals 1d6 +4 fire damage and an additional 5 ongoing fire damage save ends.

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Possessed Painting

A seemingly normal painting is hung on the wall, but the more you look at it, the more you spot strange details. The shapes themselves start to twist into horrid monstrosities that reach out from the mural, lashing at your sanity.

Perception

DC 19: A character more than 10 squares away sees that the images in the painting twist and writhe. Something is definitely strange about the painting.

Arcana

DC 28: The character identifies the painting as being possessed and knows the risks of getting too close to it.

Trigger

The trap is triggered when an enemy ends its turn within 2 squares of the painting. The trap's psychic attack then lashes out at the creature in an attempt to snare and devour its sanity.

Attack * Psychic

Opportunity Action

Ranged 5

Target: The closest NPC if none remain the creature that triggered the trap

Attack: +9 vs. Will

Hit: 1d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target's sanity is entrapped within the painting. While the target's sanity is entrapped, the target is subjected to the rules of The Snagging on page 2 of this adventure.

The painting will continue to attempt to trap creatures until there is nothing within range or it successfully pulls one creature into the darkness.

Man Eating Couch.

Sitting on this couch causes it to spring to life. The back of the couch where the vertical cushions meet the horizontal cushions open

up to show a wicked mouth full of teeth. Any creature sitting on the couch is at risk of being devoured alive.

Perception

DC 25: The character notices that the couch moved just a very slight amount.

DC 30: The character realizes that the couch has a small tooth protruding from it, and is somehow attached to it.

Trigger: The trap attacks any creature that enters the square directly in front of it or sits on it. If a creature is trapped inside the couch, the trap does not attack.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee 1

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: A Medium or smaller target is grabbed and pulled into the couch, taking 1d6 + 4 damage and ongoing 5 damage. Other creatures lose line of sight to the target, and the target loses line of sight to everything outside the iron maiden.

A Large or bigger target is grabbed and takes 1d6 + 4 damage and ongoing 5 damage.

Any creature grabbed by the couch is subject to The Snagging detailed on page 2 of this adventure.

THE FINAL ENCOUNTER:

After the party has either visited all of the areas of interest, or sooner if your session is running out of time, the party sees one of the shadows moving. Upon closer investigation it is near a secret door in the wall (any first floor or basement wall will do).

This opens up to a tunnel that leads under the town to a primordial cave. Inside are the arcane sigils and the dead body of the great

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uncle Hesper. There are Feast Night Wraiths that surround the room creating a shrinking ring of death. In the center, however, is an ancient scroll on a pedestal. This is both the key to stopping the Feast Night Horror and the cause of it. Uncle Hesper started a ritual decades ago but died before he could finish it. Also in the cave are dozens of other bodies, seemingly drained of their life, and those people who were taken by the Snagging. If the party can end the ritual the nightmare can finally end. Snagged characters can be freed with a DC 15 Athletics, Arcana, Religion, or Thievery check.

The party may begin the ritual but when they do so the wall of shadows gets smaller and smaller (one square each round). Ending the ritual requires at 4 Arcana or Religion checks (DC 15). But on the second successful check a returned mockery of life, Aunt Glorda Hesper, appears, dropping from the ceiling as a massive bloated woman of rotting flesh and a black fog that rolls from her nostrils.

If the party destroys Aunt Glorda and the scroll they will have ended the curse and the wall of shadows disappears.

Written and designed by Jeff Greiner and Thadeous Cooper for The Tome Show (<http://www.thetomeshow.com>). Episode 155 of the podcast includes discussion of the design of this adventure as well as advice on running it.

Aunt Glorda Hesper		Level 8 Solo Brute
Large natural animate (undead)		XP 1,750
HP 380; Bloodied 190		Initiative +4
AC 20; Fortitude 24; Reflex 17; Will 17		Perception +4
Speed 5 can't shift		Darkvision
Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2		
Traits		
☠ Breath of Black Fog • Aura 1		
Any creature starting it's turn in the aura or entering the aura take 5 necrotic damage.		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Slam • At-Will		
Attack: +11 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.		
Effect: Reach 2.		
⊕ Rampage • Recharge ☞ ☞ ☞		
Effect: Aunt Glorda moves its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. When it enters a creature's space, Aunt Glorda makes a slam attack against that creature.		
⊕ Double Fisted Smash • Recharge ☞		
Effect: 4d8 + 6 damage.		
Free Actions		
⊕ Berserk Attack • At-Will		
Effect: Aunt Glorda makes a slam attack against two random enemies within its reach.		
Triggered Actions		
Endurance of Undeath • At-Will		
Trigger: Aunt Glorda is effected by a condition.		
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Aunt Glorda makes a saving throw immediately to end the condition.		
Str 20 (+9)	Dex 11 (+4)	Wis 11 (+4)
Con 23 (+10)	Int 11 (+4)	Cha 11 (+4)
Alignment unaligned		Languages —

Feast Night Wraith Minion		Level 7 Minion Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (undead, shadow)		XP 75
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		Initiative +11
AC 21; Fortitude 19; Reflex 20; Will 18		Perception +9
Speed 6, fly 2, phasing 2		Darkvision
Immune fear, poison, disease; Resist 5 necrotic, cold; Vulnerability radiant		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Rake (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: The wraith shifts up to 2 squares before or after the attack; +12 vs. AC		
Hit: 8 damage.		
⊕ Slashing Step (weapon) • At-Will		
Effect: The wraith makes two rake attacks, shifting 1 square before each attack and after the second attack.		
Triggered Actions		
Sly Setup • At-Will		
Trigger: A melee attack hits.		
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The wraith shifts 1 square, and the triggering enemy grants combat advantage to the wraith until the end of his next turn.		
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 22 (+9)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 10 (+3)	Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment evil		Languages Common, Deep Speech