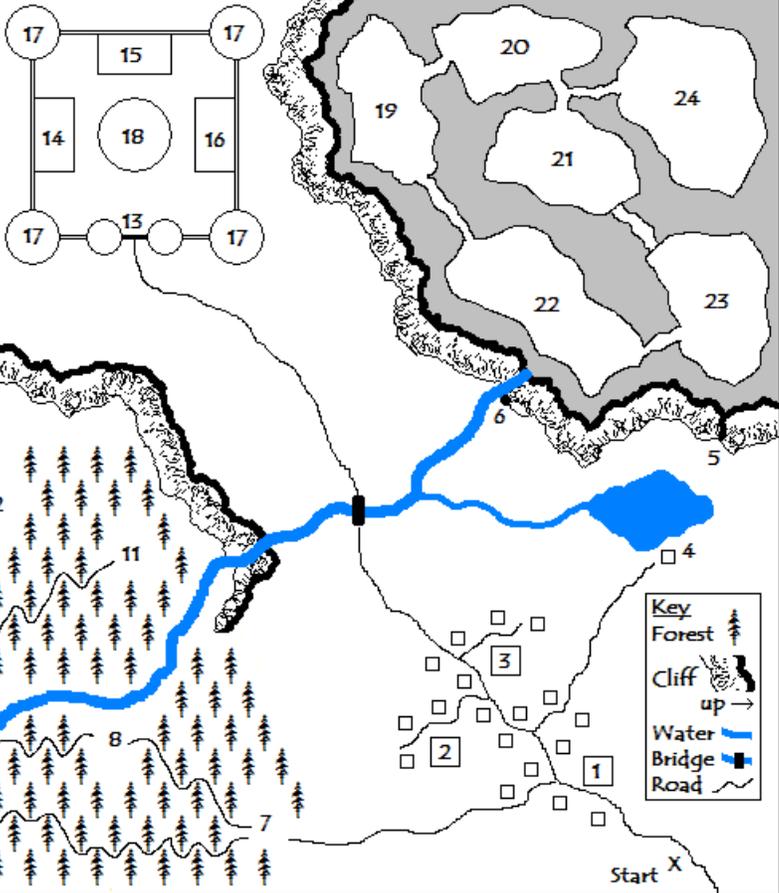


Terror in Shadowcliff Vale
by Joe Pruitt



Terror in Shadowcliff Vale
by Joe Pruitt

The PCs are on the road through Shadowcliff Vale when they meet a traveler leaving the village. He tells them that nothing has been heard from the lord of Shadowcliff or anyone else from the castle in over a week, nor have the gates even been opened in that time. The villagers are worried, and both the goblins of the forest and wild beasts have begun venturing closer and closer to the village. He suggests that they use caution if they continue toward the village, and to stop at the tavern if they wish to learn further.

At the tavern, the traveler's story is confirmed a week ago the sounds of battle could be heard inside the castle, and there has been no word from anyone inside since. The mayor tells the PCs that without the protection of castle and the lord and his men, the entire valley could be overrun by goblins, monstrous beasts, or worse. He offers 100 gold if they will investigate and learn what has happened.

The Real Story: A week ago, while excavating a new area in the lord's family crypt beneath the Chapel, workers accidentally dug into caves inhabited by a cult of necromancers who had been driven into hiding. Fearing they were under attack, the cultists summoned their undead forces and prepared to defend themselves. When they realized it was an accident, not an attack, they took advantage of the situation and used the new entrance to attack the castle. The lord and his men were caught by surprise, slain, and now the cultists are planning their next move.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

TT=Treasure Type

Comments welcome: josephpruitt@hotmail.com

THE VILLAGE (SE)

A place where the PCs can rest and resupply in safety-for now.

- 1. Inn/Tavern:** The PCs may rent a room here to rest between excursions. For every round of drinks they buy, they have a 50% chance of learning one random rumor (below).
- 2. Temple:** The PCs may obtain healing from the clerics here for a small tithe.
- 3. General Store:** The PCs may buy any mundane items here at normal cost.
- 4. Hermit:** Former cultist. Will tell the PCs about either (roll to see which) the Natural Stairs (5) or the Waterfall Cave (6) if they kill the monster in the lake (giant crocodile) that has been eating his sheep at night.
- 5. Natural Stairs:** Natural stairway in the mountainside. Attacked by 2 rocs during the climb. If a PC is hit, they have a 10% chance of falling 1D6x10 ft back to the ground. Leads to an opening in the ceiling of 23, which the PCs can descend into with a rope.
- 6. Waterfall Cave:** A cave behind a waterfall is home to 4 lizard men exiled from their tribe (TT-2). Connects to 22.

THE FOREST (SW)

A wild, dangerous place inhabited by goblins, and worse

- 7. Dead Soldiers:** The PCs find 2 dead soldiers from the castle (Scale, Polearm, TT-1), slain by goblin arrows.
- 8. Wolf's Lair:** A 2-headed wolf lives in a cave by the river (TT-2,4)
- 9. Goblin Trap:** Goblins set a pit trap to catch the two-headed wolf from 8. 50% chance (modified by appropriate attribute) for each PC to fall in. 1D4 rounds for any PCs who fall in to get out (half that if they use a rope). 5 goblins (Spear, TT-1) arrive to check the pit in 2D4 rounds.
- 10. Magic Pool:** A pool of water in a natural rock basin heals for good/lawful creatures, restoring up to half their health. Works once a day per character.
- 11. Witch's Hut:** A friendly witch who sells magic potions (unless attacked, in which case she summons bats; TT-4).
- 12. Goblin Camp:** 8 goblins (spears and bows), 3 wolves, 1 ogre (mace). The body of a dead knight (Runesword: +50% damage, Amulet: opens castle gates) from the castle is here. (TT-2)

THE CASTLE (NW)

Overrun by undead and their necromancer masters

- 13. Gatehouse:** Gates are sealed unless PCs have Knight's Amulet (12). Inside is a log book which explains the gates were magically sealed to keep "the evil" from escaping. After reading this, a zombie guard enters and attacks.
- 14. Stable (front):** 3 horses, dead from starvation. **Kennels (rear):** 6 hounds, 1D6 still alive and starving, will attack.
- 15. Kitchen:** Cultist and 2 skeletons searching the kitchens (Mace, TT-1).
- 16. Chapel:** 3 vials of holy water and silver mace (x2 damage vs undead) in chest. 3 zombie workers in tombs below. After zombies are defeated, a priest's spirit will appear and tell "Real Story"(above). Connects to 19
- 17. Watchtower:** 1D4 zombie guards in each, 25% chance of finding silver spear in each tower (x2 damage vs undead).
- 18. Keep:** Basement-Storage (TT-2,4), 2 Cultists (Mace); 1st floor-Hall, 3 spectral knights (Chain, sword); 2nd floor-Lord's chambers (TT-3,4), Lord/Wight (Plate, Golden Saber: 2 attacks/round)

THE CAVES (NE)

Home of the necromancers responsible for current crisis, and other creatures.

- 19. Crystal Cave:** Entrance to Cultists' lair. 2 cultists (Shield, Club) and 4 skeletons stand guard. Poison dart trap in tunnel to 20. Connects to 16.
- 20. Cultists' Quarters:** 6 cultists (Mace) and 4 zombie servants (TT-2).
- 21. Cultists' Storeroom:** Guarded by 2 Shadows (TT-2,4) in chest with poison needle trap. Secret door to 23.
- 22. Spider Cave:** Inhabited by 4 giant spiders (TT-2). Body of elf with magic bow (bonus to hit). Connects to 6.
- 23. Dragon's Lair:** The cultists stole the dragon's hatchling to create an undead guardian (in 24). The dragon is understandably angry and will seek revenge on any humans or demihumans it encounters (TT-3,4). Secret door to 21 (used by cultists), and can be reached by way of 5.
- 24. Evil Temple:** Unholy chamber of worship. 2 cultists (Scale, mace), High Priest (Skull Staff: summon 1d6 skeletons once per day), 2 zombies, undead dragon (small); (TT-3)

Tavern Rumors (1D6): 1-The hermit who lives by the lake may know something about what is going on (T); 2-A troll lives under the bridge on the way to the castle (F); 3-A dragon has been seen flying over the mountains (I); 4-The priest has been seen sneaking around at night (T-Red Herring, he's romancing the innkeeper's daughter); 5-A witch in the forest performs human sacrifices (F, she's friendly); 6-A knight from the castle went missing in the forest while hunting goblins (I)

Random Encounters (1D6) 25% chance of random encounter when traveling from the village to 5, 6, 7, or 13, or when traveling between any numbered forest areas, or when resting in the wilderness : 1-Wolves (1D4); 2-Elves hunting goblins (1D4); 3-Goblins (1D6); 4-Bats (1D10); 5-Ogres (1D4); 6-Lizard Men (1D4)

Treasure Type (TT): 1-1D6 GP; 2-1D6x10 GP; 3-1D6x100 GP; 4-random magic item

The castle is retaken, the cultists defeated. What happens next? Who will protect Shadowcliff Vale with the lord and his men slain? That is a tale for another day.