

The Witch of the Well

By Daniel O'Donnell

1. The Belfry

Legend has it that ringing the bell here will drive the dark spirits from the valley. Unfortunately, the bell chamber is empty (see The Chapel).

The Belfry is inhabited by a number of owls, and the floor is covered by snail shells which crunch underfoot.

These are fed to the owls by The Witch who plucks them from her mandrake field.

2. The Field

The fairly ordinary looking plants in this field are in fact Mandrakes cultivated by The Witch. While usually passive, if one is uprooted its shrieks will provoke the other Mandrakes to rise up in defense.

If The Witch is sorely pressed, she can command the Mandrakes to attack an enemy.

The Scarecrow is for frightening birds.

3. The Hollow House

This derelict farmhouse is full of mouse holes and porcelain dolls, and the sound of scratching is frequent. If carefully searched, characters will discover that one of the dolls is in fact a tiny mummified goblin-like creature dressed in doll's clothing - a clue to the farmhouse's terrible secret.

Small fey creatures inhabit the hollow walls and underfloor spaces. They will observe intruders from their hiding places, and, if presented with a vulnerable target, will swarm out to attack.

If the creatures manage to kill their chosen victim, they will dismember the corpse in seconds and conceal the parts - the walls of the house are filled with human hair and bones.

If the creatures hear or see anything of interest, they will send some of their number to crawl down the winding tunnels beneath the house and inform The Witch.

4. The Witch in the Well

Down a small tunnel concealed at the bottom of the well is a hidden grotto inhabited by a grotesque hag.

She doesn't usually bother travellers on the path, but will murder trespassers when the mood takes her, using her spies to inform her of an opportune moment to strike.

In addition to her repertoire of hexes, The Witch can conjure a mist that will disorient and turn around anyone attempting to leave the valley. She can also turn herself into a great antlered owl-like demon with a leering grin quite separate from its beak. While in this form, she is vulnerable to silver.

The Witch's familiar, Elemanzer, has a black cat's head and a long, furry, snake-like body. He usually skulks around the valley, acting as the Witch's eyes and ears.

If Elemanzer is spotted, he will pretend to be a benevolent creature and tell characters that the farm's well is able to grant wishes. If the PCs attempt to navigate the well, The Witch and Elemanzer will take advantage of the party's separation to ambush them, cutting ropes if possible.

5. The Spoon Tree

Local superstition holds that travellers passing through the valley should hang a spoon in the oak tree by the clapper bridge to ensure safe passage. Thousands of spoons hang in the branches and jangle in the wind. They vary in size and material, from small silver spoons to large wooden ladles. Some are carved into ominous shapes.

Thieves looking to steal the more valuable specimens might be noticed by Elemanzer (See The Witch in the Well). While the Witch doesn't pay the superstition much notice, she doesn't regard looters with kindness.

6. The Chapel

In the centre of the chapel is an unusual bronze font, clasped by sculptures of demonic creatures. This font is in fact the bell originally contained within the belfry.

Characters attempting to free the bell from its pedestal will need to break the stone fingers of the carvings. If this happens, the stone will crumble to reveal the emaciated imps encased within. They have been bound by The Witch to keep the bell within the chapel, and will attempt to do so to the best of their abilities.

Several stained-glass windows in the chapel depict hellish scenes of torment. One incongruously features a mob of peasants pelting owls with silver coins.

