

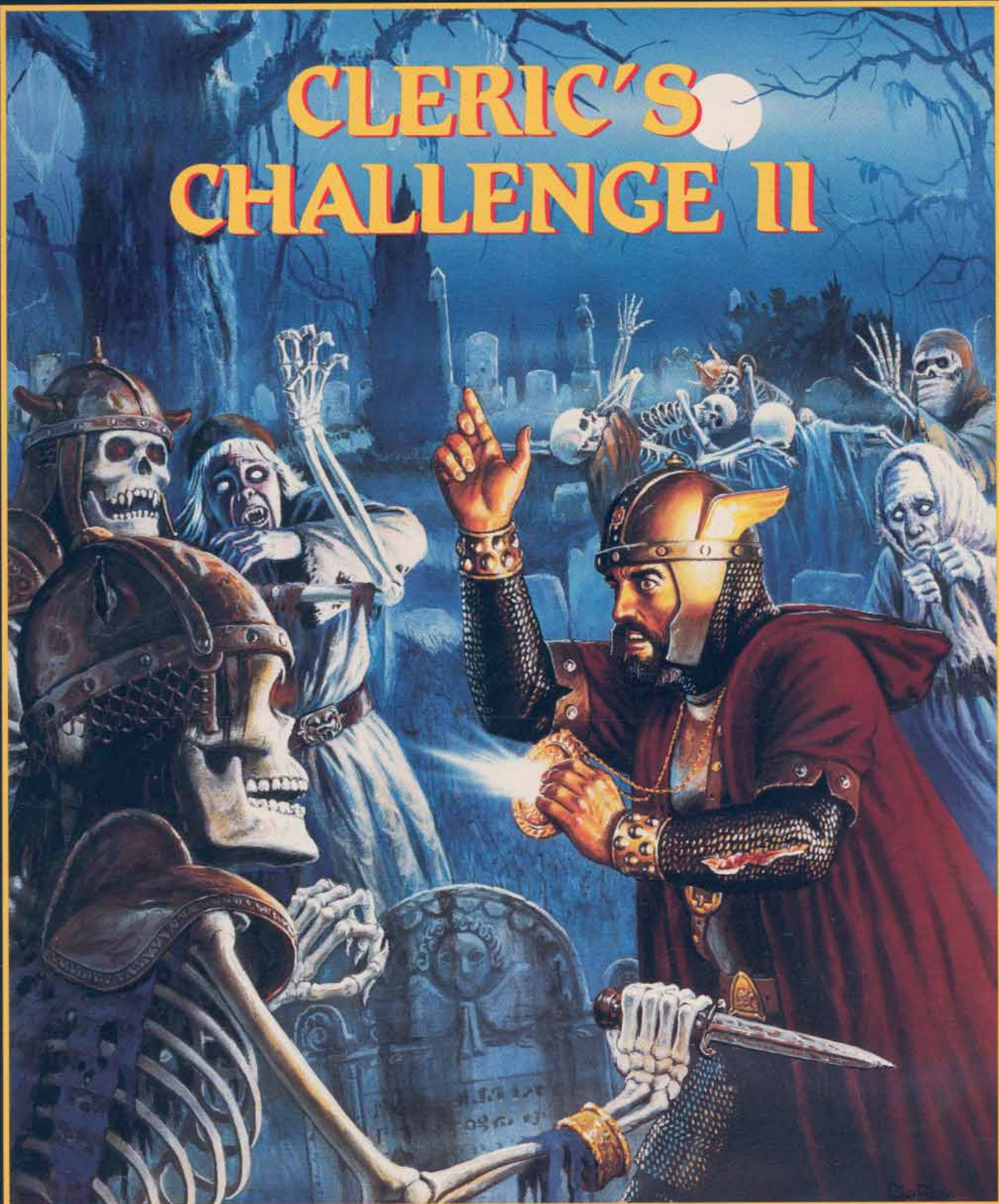


Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Official Game Adventure

For one cleric player character, level 4-6

CLERIC'S CHALLENGE II



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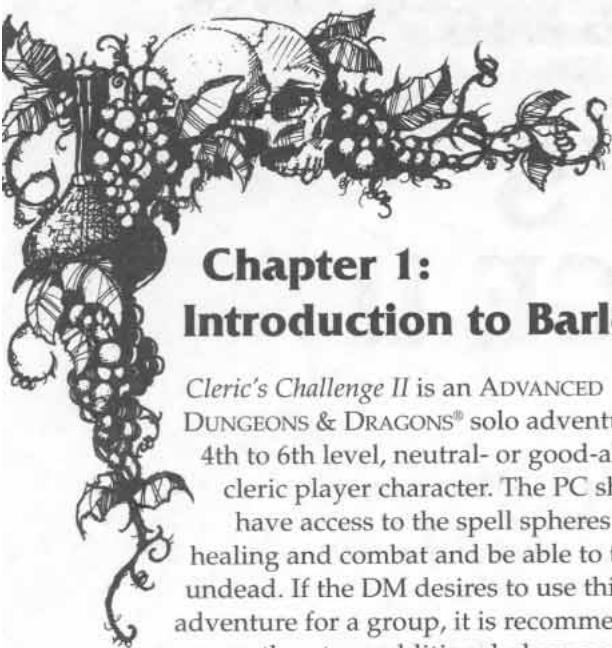
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Chapter 1: Introduction to Barlox

Cleric's Challenge II is an **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** solo adventure for a 4th to 6th level, neutral- or good-aligned cleric player character. The PC should have access to the spell spheres of healing and combat and be able to turn undead. If the DM desires to use this adventure for a group, it is recommended that no more than two additional players participate in the roles of the low-level priest or warrior class NPCs found in the text.

Whenever the expression "the cleric" is used in the text, it refers to the cleric player character. Although this quest can be accomplished equally well with a female PC, the masculine pronouns he, his, and him are used for convenience's sake.

Cleric's Challenge II takes place in the village of Barlox, which can be set in any game world of the DM's choosing, in an environment suitable for growing grapes. Wherever the DM places Barlox, it should be at least five days' ride away from any local lord that could be called upon to render aid. The PC's goal is to save Barlox from the undead by his own devices, not to call in Baron Appleby's cavalry!

Barlox is terrorized by an unusual mummy created by an evil deity. To successfully complete the adventure, the PC needs to defeat the mummy and its undead minions. Although combat will neutralize the lesser undead, it merely disables the mummy temporarily. To destroy it, the cleric must discover and use a special holy formula. Not only are the lives and livelihoods of the villagers at stake, but so is the PC's church's tenuous foothold in the community.

This chapter describes the town of Barlox and the history of the evil plaguing the region. Several key areas of the town and NPCs are

described so that the DM can react appropriately to the cleric's investigations. Chapter 2 details planned encounters. Chapter 3 provides the specifics on the mummy's lair, and Chapter 4 suggests ways to wrap up the adventure once the mummy has been laid to rest.

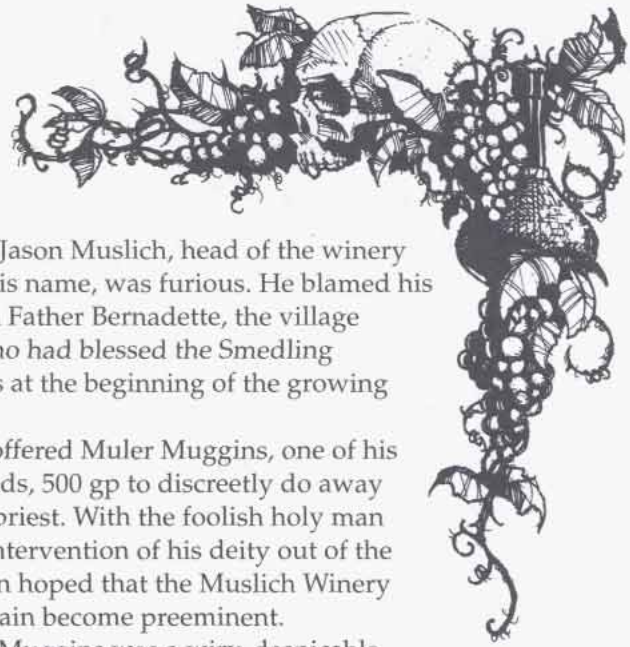
The Vintners' Community of Barlox

The sunny, warm region where Barlox is nestled is known for its fine vineyards and wineries. There are about 170 people residing in this fertile river valley. Almost all of the populace tends the grape fields or works in one of the four wineries around town. Most of the people are honest and satisfied with their lives. The last of the area's monsters were exterminated about 50 years ago, and Barlox is far from the borders of neighboring countries. The few bandits and outlaws who have skulked near the town have been hunted down by the local constable or the village's liege-lord, Baron Appleby, whose keep is five days' ride away. Aside from the occasional sighting of a bear or a wolf, there is little apparent danger in this area.

Trade

The community is devoted to the grape cultivation and winery industries. The four vintner families are the Smedlings, the Musliches, the Tietons, and the Depardos. The villagers are proud to work for them, and each wears the family crest of their employer embroidered upon their breast pockets (depicted on the area map on the inside cover).

Each year, the wineries compete to have their vintage recognized as the best in the land by Baron Appleby. Not only is honor involved, but their annual profits as well: the premier vintage commands three times the standard market value, and the second-place wine is worth twice the usual price.



The Smedling and Muslich families have been in fierce competition for many years. Fifty years ago, when the baron's annual contest began, the Muslich family won. They held their esteemed title for 40 years. A decade ago, the Smedlings implemented a new fertilizer. The quality of their grapes improved, and their wines surpassed all others for nine years. In the latest competition, the Musliches have recaptured the honor just prior to the PC's arrival.

Due to its reputation for producing fine vintages, Barlox is visited by many merchants and teamsters anxious to trade. The town has a mayor and a constable, but aside from keeping the main road in repair and calming the occasional ill-tempered wagon driver, few governmental and law-enforcement issues trouble this prosperous community.

Barlox's Tragedies

Barlox has not always been tranquil. Ten years ago, its sole temple (devoted to the PC's deity) burned to the ground one night. Only one set of charred bones was found, presumably those of either the village priest, Father Bernadette, or his wife, Hilda. Judging from their size, they appeared to be Hilda's. Disturbed, the constable ordered a search of the surrounding area. Not even the investigation by Baron Appleby himself produced any other bodies, so it was assumed that both died in the tragic fire.

Unknown to most of the villagers, the priest had been killed by a rogue in the hire of the Muslich winery. The temple had been burned to discourage a search for the priest's body, which had been hidden elsewhere.

The trouble started when the Smedling Winery was recognized for the first time as the best in the land. For the previous 40 years, the Muslich Winery (the largest in Barlox) had won

that title. Jason Muslich, head of the winery bearing his name, was furious. He blamed his loss upon Father Bernadette, the village priest, who had blessed the Smedling vineyards at the beginning of the growing season.

Jason offered Muler Muggins, one of his hired hands, 500 gp to discreetly do away with the priest. With the foolish holy man and the intervention of his deity out of the way, Jason hoped that the Muslich Winery would again become preeminent.

Muler Muggins was a wiry, despicable character whom everyone in town (except Jason Muslich) disliked. His long, greasy, black hair, pug nose, and crooked teeth seemed to match his foul personality. He was sneaky, ill-tempered, and had no love for the temple or Father Bernadette. In fact, he despised the priest's efforts to convert him to his faith. Had he not been hired to assassinate him, Muler might have killed the priest anyway.

Muler persuaded the town drunkard, Old Man Riggins, to become his accomplice. One night, as Father Bernadette was returning home from a chess game, the old sop accosted him for a few silvers for a cup of wine. When the priest began to lecture Riggins about his heavy drinking, Muler clubbed him into unconsciousness from behind.

Muler sneaked into the Smedling winery basement. He hauled the body past dozens of huge wine casks and up a ladder to the top of a corner vat. Muler pried open its top and tossed in the priest. As Father Bernadette came to, he recognized Muler. He tried to cry out, but his mouth filled with the aging brew and he choked. Muler quickly replaced the top on the cask and sat on it. The trapped priest beat upon the cover and struggled for breath, but he could not escape the deep, airless vat. He drowned and sank to the bottom of the cask.

After the deed was done, Muler sealed the



cask and went to the temple. He broke in, doused the church in oil and put it to the torch. As it burned to the ground, Muler believed he had committed the perfect crime. If Bernadette's body was found, everyone would suspect that the Smedlings were responsible for the fire and murders. No one could point the finger at either him or his employer, Jason Muslich.

Muler Muggins did not know that the cask that held the corpse was to be left untouched for 15 years to ferment into a rare, supreme brandy. The Smedlings had discovered an arcane book on this beverage, and the unique formula called for a lengthy aging process, far longer than that of ordinary wine.

The entire village of Barlox was upset by the death of their parish priest. Baron Appleby was asked to investigate. His men found nothing, however, and the fire was proclaimed accidental. To the dismay of Jason Muslich,

Smedling wine continued to be recognized as the best despite his grisly crime.

Although Jason was disappointed, he paid Muler Muggins anyway. The rogue left the Muslich Winery's employ to become a freelance assassin. Although he was gone from time to time pursuing his illicit career, he kept a residence in town. He even took a wife, a simple-minded woman who overlooked many of Muler's less savory habits. He often wondered why the Smedlings never discovered the body but eventually concluded that it had dissolved. Little did he suspect that had been preserved in the highly alcoholic brandy.

Two years ago, the PC's church sent a missionary, Father Dominic, and his wife, Joanna, to re-establish the temple in Barlox. Reports received by the High Matriarch of the church have been mixed. On the positive side, Dominic has been able to secure enough donations and voluntary labor to erect a temple and parsonage next to the original site. However, at least half of Barlox's inhabitants do not worship there, even though it is the small village's only temple. The High Matriarch has decided to send one of its proven clerics (the PC) to Barlox, to see what the problems are and to report back with recommendations.

The High Matriarch does not know that a horrible evil has been unleashed on the village. The most recent annual contest to determine the best wine has just concluded, and, after losing for so long, the Musliches have recaptured the title. After the announcement was made and the baron departed, Beufurt Smedling, head of the Smedling Winery, wandered in an angry daze, furious that his winery's carefully cultivated reputation had been marred by the Musliches' victory. Down in the underground cellar of the winery, he cried bitterly, pounding his fist into the side of a large corner cask. Ignoring the teachings of the church, Beufurt prayed for calamity to strike the Muslich Winery. His

prayer was heard by a dark, evil deity (DM's choice) that seized the opportunity to create disruption in the small community and to attract ardent worshippers.

After Beufurt left the cellar, all was quiet. When evening fell, the brandy cask he had struck stirred. Later that night, the top was wrenched open. The preserved body of the long-lost Father Bernadette, discolored, smelly, and dripping with brandy, climbed out.

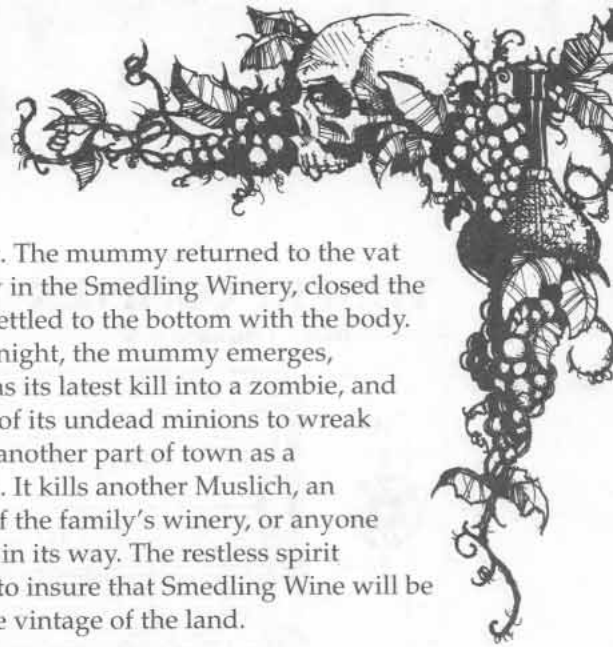
The avenging mummy went to the graveyard, exhumed Hilda's remains, and animated them to become a guardian for its lair. On the next two nights, it quietly killed two Muslich workers and turned them into zombies.

On the fourth night, the mummy burst into Muler Muggins's home. Muler had developed good fighting skills as a hired killer, but he was no match for the enraged undead. It grabbed him by the throat, drowned him in his own bathtub, and dragged his body away. Muler's wife, Missy, witnessed the violent attack and was paralyzed with fright. The following afternoon, she was found catatonic in a corner, curled into a fetal position.

The constable was summoned to investigate. He was already on the case of the missing Muslich workers and had heard that Muggins once worked for Muslich Winery. He figured that there was a connection, so he went to the winery that evening. As he spoke with Jason Muslich, the door to the living room burst open and in strode Father Bernadette's mummy. The sheriff drew his blade, but the creature ignored his slashes and slammed him against the wall, knocking him senseless. It dragged Jason screaming and kicking to the barn. It turned him upside-down in a rain barrel until the winemaker drowned. Members of the Muslich clan who heard the ruckus arrived in time to see the monster disappearing into the shadows of the vineyards, carrying the corpse over its shoulders. They pursued the killer but soon lost

track of it. The mummy returned to the vat of brandy in the Smedling Winery, closed the lid, and settled to the bottom with the body.

Every night, the mummy emerges, transforms its latest kill into a zombie, and sends all of its undead minions to wreak havoc in another part of town as a diversion. It kills another Muslich, an affiliate of the family's winery, or anyone who gets in its way. The restless spirit murders to insure that Smedling Wine will be the choice vintage of the land.



Key Places and Nonplayer Characters



1. The Muslich Winery:

The Muslich Winery is similar to the other three in Barlox. It consists of two farmhouses, a barn, a large winery, and an equipment

shed. The layout of these buildings is shown on Map 1 and should be used as a template for all farm/winery complexes. No interior map of any of these buildings is necessary except for the Smedling Winery depicted in Chapter 4.

a. Farmhouse: This is a wooden two-story building. On the first floor are a living room, a kitchen, and a dining room, all very large. The upper floor has enough bedrooms for the clan leader, his wife, and minor children.

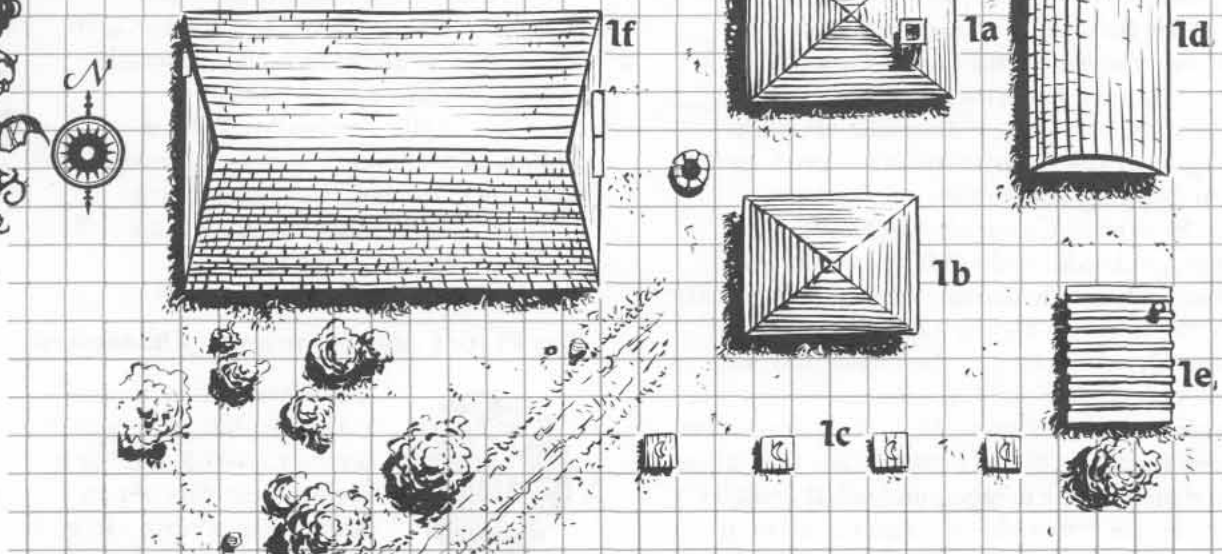
b. Small Farmhouse: The secondary home is similar to the farmhouse, but smaller. It has a small living room and bedrooms for everyone in the family who does not live in the large farmhouse. There is no kitchen or dining area, since the whole family eats all meals in the large farmhouse when not out in the fields.

c. Outhouses: Typically, there is one outhouse for every six members of the family. These are within easy walking distance, but far enough away so that the smell is not bothersome. They are located nowhere near the river or a well.



WINERY COMPLEX

Scale 1 Square = 5'



d. Barn: Plough horses, a few light riding horses, and milk cows are sheltered in the barn at night. It is a typical barn with water troughs, places for feeding, straw, and tack for the animals. Usually, there is a cat or two prowling around, looking for mice.

e. Equipment Shack: Plows, carriages, carts, and other large implements are kept here.

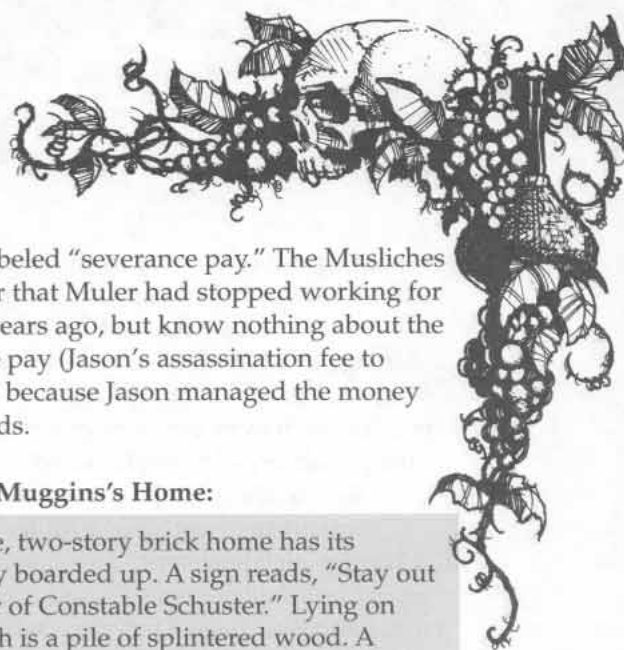
f. Winery: The large warehouse has wine presses, barrels, vats, and herbs for preserving and enhancing the taste of the wine. It is locked at night. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of a winery.

The Muslich family has 16 members left after Jason's disappearance. These include Merribell, Jason's wife, his three adult sons, their wives, Jason's younger brother, Ansel, and eight children of various ages. One of them is Jason Muslich II, a blonde, fair-skinned 16-year-old, named after his grandfather. He will be a victim

in "The Slain Lover" in Chapter 3. Other Muslich NPC names may be selected by the DM. All are 0 level NPCs with no better than AC 10 and 4 hp. They own no weapons except daggers, clubs, and farm implements (hoes, pitchforks, etc).

Initially, none of the Musliches will want to help the cleric. They distrust priests of the cleric's faith and believe that the monster will be back. They stay close to home to defend themselves. If the PC does something to win their trust, they will provide some information.

The entire household is in despair at the loss of their family leader. The PC can learn that Jason was a strong-willed individual who had worked hard to develop a breed of grapes that would win the baron's award for the Muslich Winery. The family wonders if Jason's slaughter by the hideous monster is connected to their recent victory.



Only Merribell saw Jason's murder, and she breaks down in tears when she thinks about it. She did not recognize the monster and describes it as "a brown reeking man-thing that dragged off poor Jason. When the constable tried to stop it, the thing struck him with one arm and knocked him senseless!"

The adult males were in their beds when this attack occurred and only caught a glimpse of the creature. They found Constable Schuster knocked out and took him to Father Dominic for healing (although his efforts have been unsuccessful, as the cleric will discover in "A Priest in Need," Event 3, Chapter 2).

The Musliches suspect that the Smedlings were involved in this attack. There has been bad blood between the two houses ever since the Smedlings allegedly cheated 10 years ago.

If the PC asks how the Smedlings cheated, the Musliches explain that Father Bernadette blessed the Smedling vineyards that year, and Jason felt that it was unfair. The feud worsened when Father Bernadette and his wife perished in a fire a few days later. The Smedlings accused them of involvement, but the Musliches claimed themselves innocent, law-abiding folks. The priest's supposed fiery death unnerved all but Jason, who had calmly remarked, "Well, however it happened, I'm sure he got what he deserved, the meddling priest!"

Items of interest around the household include the broken front door, which looks as if a battering ram knocked it in, and the barrel Jason was drowned in. If the PC searches the vineyards, he finds tracks that lead to the east but soon disappear in the rocky soil. The Musliches do not own any tracking dogs. In fact, the only dogs in the area are owned by the Depardos (area 10).

The farmhouse has a study with ledgers recording business transactions of the last 50 years. If the PC reads the book of a decade ago, he sees a payment by Jason to Muler Muggins of

500 gp, labeled "severance pay." The Musliches remember that Muler had stopped working for them 10 years ago, but know nothing about the severance pay (Jason's assassination fee to Muggins) because Jason managed the money and records.

2. Muler Muggins's Home:

A fine, two-story brick home has its doorway boarded up. A sign reads, "Stay out by order of Constable Schuster." Lying on the porch is a pile of splintered wood. A shattered board has a door handle attached to it.

The PC can easily determine that the pieces of wood are the remains of the door. The frame is also damaged, as if something large and powerful battered its way inside.

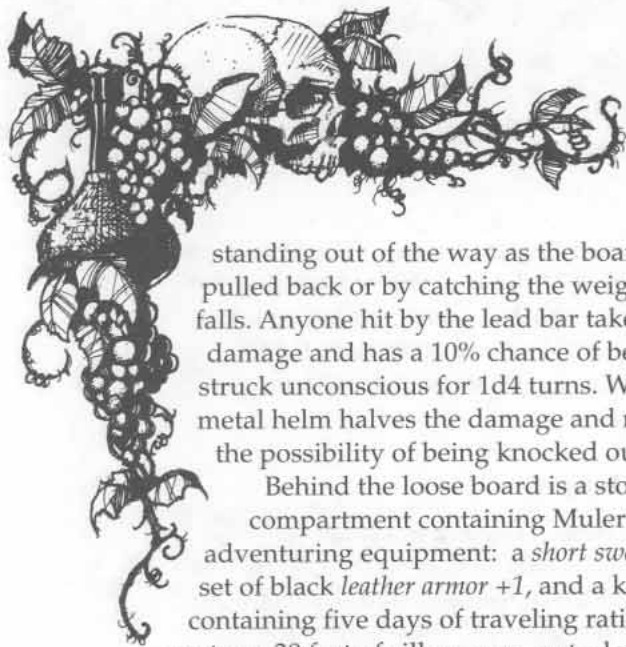
If the PC ignores the sign and enters the house, he sees that the living room has been ransacked. Heavy items of furniture are scattered everywhere.

Underneath the sofa is a *dagger* +3 that Muler used to defend himself with. Close examination of the blade reveals a few faint, dried, amber stains, which are from the mummy's brandy-logged body.

The bathtub on the first floor was not emptied after the murder. The water has a slight brownish tinge, noticeable in good light if the cleric makes a successful Intelligence check.

The rest of the home appears extremely comfortable for someone who retired from the fields 10 years ago. The Muggins's clothing and boots are of very fine quality, and the elegant furnishings are valuable.

Find traps alerts the PC to a wall board in the bedroom closet on the second floor. Moving it causes a 15 lb. lead bar to plummet from a 6-in.-diameter hole in the ceiling onto the head of whoever stands below it. The hole is obvious if someone looks up. The trap can be avoided by



standing out of the way as the board is pulled back or by catching the weight as it falls. Anyone hit by the lead bar takes 2d4 damage and has a 10% chance of being struck unconscious for 1d4 turns. Wearing a metal helm halves the damage and nullifies the possibility of being knocked out.

Behind the loose board is a storage compartment containing Muler's adventuring equipment: a *short sword +1*, a set of black *leather armor +1*, and a knapsack containing five days of traveling rations, a canteen, 30 feet of silken rope, a steel wire garotte, a set of thieves' tools, and a bag of caltrops. In a separate bag next to the knapsack is a belt with a pouch containing 20 lead bullets and a soft, doeskin *sling +1*. Yet another sack contains 20 pp, 420 gp, and five rubies (each worth 1000 gp).

There is a small diary that Muler Muggins started the day he became a killer for hire. It recounts various jobs that Muler did over the last ten years, who hired him, and all the gory details. While all of this information would be of interest to Baron Appleby, only the first entry has any bearing on this adventure. The DM should give the player Handout #1.

Muler kept his diary believing that if one of his employers killed him, the journal could be found and used by the authorities to avenge him. Muler did not have wits to see that the same document could send him to the gallows.

3. The General Store:

A neatly painted sign on this single-story wooden building proclaims it to be "Goodfellow Merchandise." In the windows are displays of plows, hoes, lanterns, and other farm equipment.

Rollins Goodfellow, the mayor, whom the PC meets when he first arrives in Barlox (see "A

Priest in Need" in Chapter 2), runs the only store in town. He is a short, plump fellow whose mousy brown hair has begun to thin. His establishment sells ordinary items appropriate to a rural setting. While there are some items useful to adventurers (like rope, lanterns, oil, etc), he does not stock anything that is only for adventuring (thieves' tools, caltrops, grapnels, etc). The sole weapons available are daggers, sling bullets, and slings (used by villagers to hunt rabbits). Goodfellow also carries wine from each of the four wineries. Depardo wine sells for 1 sp per bottle, Tieton for 3 sp, Smedling for 6 sp, and Muslich for 9 sp.

The mayor is nervous when questioned about what has been happening in town. He wrings his hands and breaks out in a sweat when questioned. He is not guilty, but has been startled by recent events.

Rollins remembers the horrible night 10 years ago when Father Bernadette's church burned to the ground. He recalls that the priest was a good friend of Yorg Tieton (area 11) and played chess with him every week. He believes that the priest was not on good terms with the Musliches and the Depardos, for neither family worshipped at the church. The situation worsened when Father Bernadette blessed the Smedling's vineyards and their wine was judged the best that year.

Rollins Goodfellow will encourage the PC to seek out and destroy whatever has cursed his town, but he has no desire to join in any monster-hunt. Every night he bars his door and sleeps with his covers pulled over his head.

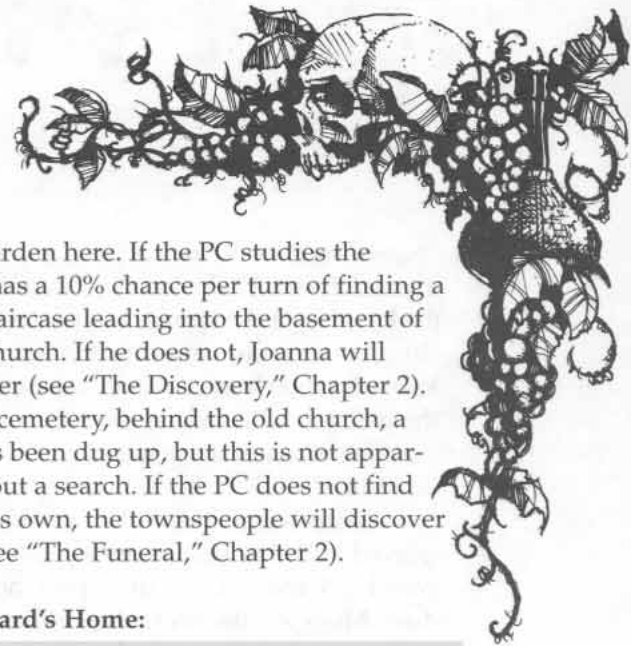
4. Church and Parsonage:

A single-story wooden church and an adjoining small house is next to the Barlox River. To the west of it lie charred ruins, and behind them is a graveyard. Above the door of the church is a carved symbol of your deity.

The church is a recent addition to the community, built with the voluntary labor of the villagers over the past year. Inside it are pews for about 100 people and a simple altar with a plain silver bowl. This bowl is magical, and can create 10 vials of holy water per day. Father Bernadette's mummy will strike here during the PC's visit (See "Attack Against the Helpless," Event 7, Chapter 2).

Next to the church is a quaint, one-bedroom parsonage where Father Dominic and his wife, Joanna, reside. Currently, they nurse Missy Muggins, who remains dumbstruck. Joanna is a pleasant-looking, auburn-haired lady. She is a pious, charitable, tender soul. She had always worried about Missy, who was married to "that foul Muler Muggins."

On the other side of the church is a scorched area with a few old blackened timbers still on the ground. These are the ruins of the first temple. Joanna is planting a vegetable and



flower garden here. If the PC studies the area, he has a 10% chance per turn of finding a buried staircase leading into the basement of the old church. If he does not, Joanna will find it later (see "The Discovery," Chapter 2).

In the cemetery, behind the old church, a grave has been dug up, but this is not apparent without a search. If the PC does not find this on his own, the townspeople will discover it later (see "The Funeral," Chapter 2).

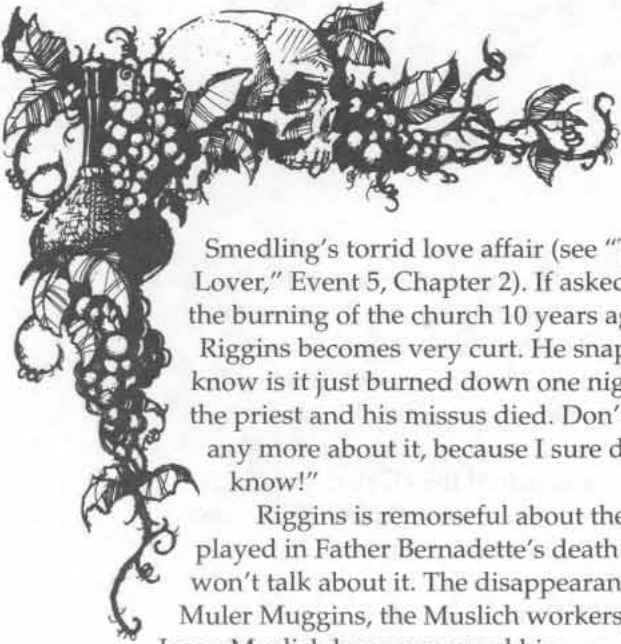
5. Drunkard's Home:

Most of the homes in the village have seemed tidy and bright, but this one has grimy windows, a trash-strewn yard, and reeks of old wine. A cat crouches in the shadowed windowsill.

This dilapidated dwelling belongs to the town drunk, Old Man Riggins. He is 80 years old and has lived in Barlox since he lost his right leg in a war 60 years ago. A few years after moving here, his wife left him. He has drunk his life away on the modest pension provided by the King. The old sot can always be found at home in the morning and early afternoon, sleeping off the previous day's debauchery. At midafternoon, he staggers to the Grapeshot Tavern and stays there until closing at midnight.

The home has two rooms, a bedroom and a living room/kitchen. Everything inside is filthy and unkempt. The place reeks of wine and other unsavory smells, the result of chronic alcoholism. The cat, Sasha, is the old man's only close companion.

Although repulsive and foul-mouthed, Riggins can be quite talkative, especially if plied with free drink. He can tell tall tales and gossip about anything and everyone in town. He knows all about the Smedling-Muslich rivalry and is aware of Jason Muslich II's and Patrikia



Smedling's torrid love affair (see "The Slain Lover," Event 5, Chapter 2). If asked about the burning of the church 10 years ago, Riggins becomes very curt. He snaps, "All I know is it just burned down one night and the priest and his missus died. Don't ask me any more about it, because I sure don't know!"

Riggins is remorseful about the role he played in Father Bernadette's death but won't talk about it. The disappearances of Muler Muggins, the Muslich workers, and Jason Muslich have unnerved him.

For more information on Old Man Riggins, see "The Demise of Old Man Riggins" in Chapter 2.

Old Man Riggins: AL N (evil tendencies); AC 10; MV 4 (due to using crutches); F1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 9, C 9, I 9, W 9, Ch 7; ML 10; dagger.

6. Grapeshot Tavern:

A creaking wooden sign outside this establishment depicts a shot glass filled with red wine. Above this picture are the words "Grapeshot Inn." Looking through the streetside window to this one-story wooden building, you can see a tall, stout fellow cleaning glasses behind a bar. There are a few tables and chairs inside, a dartboard on the wall, and the faint odor of wine.

The owner and bartender is Reggie Salthorse, a 55-year-old retired mariner. He has thick, gray hair and eyes and a wide, muscular build. He quit sailing about 9 years ago and decided to set up a tavern far from the ocean. It proved to be a good investment, for he makes enough to live comfortably from the merchants, teamsters, and occasional travellers that visit town.

Reggie is a likable fellow and will speak

with the PC readily. He knows all about the Muslich-Smedling rivalry, having heard enough of it from his best customer, Old Man Riggins.

He experienced something strange a few years ago. In mid-autumn, a band of gypsies came to Barlox. On a whim, he went to their camp and had his palm read. He remembers that the old fortune teller told him, "A good business you will have, Reggie Salthorse, but 'ware the day that the dead swim from their graves, for soon you may lose your best customer." Reggie recounted this to Old Man Riggins, who "usually likes a good joke," but the old drunk didn't think it was funny.

The innkeeper has three spartan rooms he rents for 10 sp each per night. Each room has a bunkbed, nightpan and candle. Meals are plain country fare: oatmeal for breakfast, beef and potatoes for lunch, and stewed lamb or chicken with vegetables for supper. Salthorse keeps a full assortment of wines from each of the four wineries in stock. Prices are the same charged by the General Store (1 sp for Depardo wine, 3 sp for Tieton, 6 sp for Smedling, and 9 sp for Muslich).

Old Man Riggins can always be found in The Grapeshot Tavern from the midafternoon until closing. Usually, several winery workers visit at night to drink, play darts, and socialize, but the bar has had few patrons lately. Reggie will be glad to have customers.

If the PC has a good idea of where the monster is and how to deal with it, he can convince the bartender to lend a hand with some cajoling and a successful Charisma check. Reggie has a deep, abiding hatred for the undead because he lost one of his best shipmates to a pack of lacedons years ago. However, he wants to be sure that any attack will be successful. The PC must describe a viable-sounding plan.

Reggie Salthorse, Innkeeper: AL CG; AC 7; MV 12; F3; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; SA weapon specialization; S 16 D 15, C 14, I 9, W 12, Ch 10; ML 15; belaying pin.

7. Sheriff's Home: Constable Tom Schuster and his wife, Marinda, live here. Tom is the only full-time public employee in Barlox, and he takes his job seriously. He patrols the area constantly and has captured bandits and outlaws that have wandered into the vicinity twice. He is 28 years old, 6' tall, weighs 210 pounds, and has straight brown hair and a small moustache. He is a calm man with a strong sense of justice.

When the PC first encounters the constable, he will be incapacitated (see "A Priest in Need," Event 3, Chapter 2). If cured, Schuster will be very grateful and become a devout follower of the PC's religion. He will also actively help the PC in his investigation.

Constable Schuster has lived in Barlox for five years. He knows only what he has heard about what happened ten years ago.

Constable Schuster, Sheriff: AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; F2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA weapon specialization; S 17, D 15, C 12, I 14, W 15, Ch 12; ML 14; short sword, longbow, 20 arrows.

8. Barlox River: This 50-foot-wide river becomes 30 feet deep at midstream and has trout and freshwater catfish living in it. It flows swiftly to the south. In town, there is a wooden bridge 10 feet above the water, and it has several supporting crossbeams and posts underneath it. The body of Jason Muslich II will be found here later in the adventure (see "The Slain Lover," Chapter 3).

9. Workers' Homes: Most of the townspeople work for one of the four vintner families in the

area, either in the fields or in the wineries. Their homes are rough, two-room buildings with a bedroom and a living room/kitchen. They are occupied by 1-2 adults and 0-5 children. Outside each home is a small vegetable plot, and a few families have managed to buy a cow, pig, or some chickens.

The workers rise at dawn and go to work about an hour afterward. They generally return at dusk. Their shirts or blouses have the embroidered symbols of the wineries they work for emblazoned on their breast pockets. None of them know much about what is going on, although there are several rumors (see table), and the rivalry among the workers is on a much friendlier level than among the winery families themselves.

10. Depardo Winery:

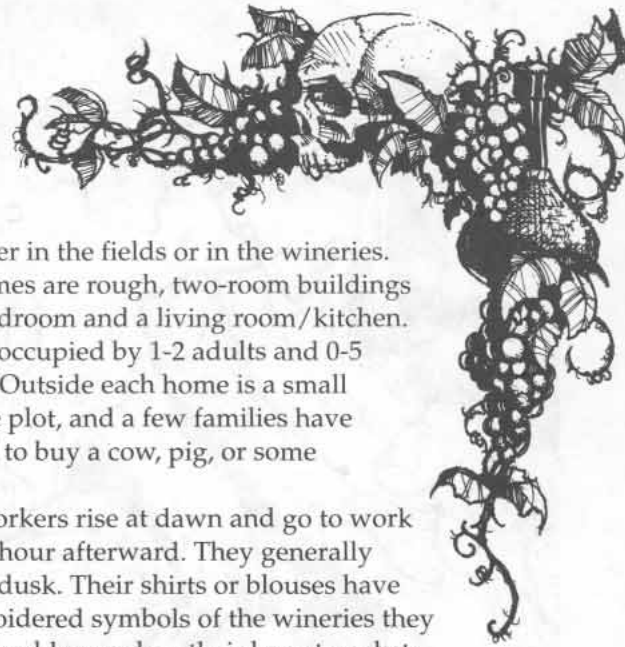
A pot-hole ridden path leads past struggling vineyards to a fenced-in area of run-down buildings. A poorly scrawled sign by the main road states: "Guard Dogs. Stay out unless you have business. This Means YOU."



This is the most decrepit of Barlox's wineries. The acreage owned by Rolando Depardo has poor soil, and he can not seriously compete in the annual competition. He does produce a hardy, but substandard wine. He always lands the contract to provide wine to Baron Appleby's soldiers because he is the lowest bidder.

The Depardo clan is strangely proud of their last-place status. They keep to themselves and prefer no snooping or interference from outsiders, especially clerics.

Anyone who goes to the Depardo compound is soon met by four stout war dogs that bound





over to the split-rail fence and bark fiercely. If the PC casts *Speak with animals* and makes a successful Charisma check, he should be allowed to role-play his way past the dogs by talking to the largest of the four. Another way to evade the dogs is to cast *charm mammal* successfully on the pack leader.

The dogs have been trained to allow access to anyone wearing a Depardo winery shirt, so the PC may pass if he borrows one from a worker and wears it.

Two rounds after the dogs start barking, Rolando appears and tells the cleric to get off of his property. He is about 5'9" tall, weighs about 200 lbs, and looks scruffy and unshaven. Rolando and his family want nothing to do with the current troubles and won't hire out their dogs for tracking. If the PC does not leave after a few minutes, Rolando orders the dogs to "get him out of here." The dogs jump the fence and advance menacingly. If the PC slowly backs off, the dogs will follow him back to the fence. If he runs, he is chased, with the dogs nipping at his heels and Rolando's laughter ringing in his ears. If attacked, the dogs defend themselves, and Rolando calls for his brothers to help. The Depardo brothers are all armed with pitchforks (dmg 1d4).

Two of these dogs will become victims of Father Bernadette's mummy. See "Disappearing Dogs" in Chapter 2.

Besides Rolando, other key occupants of the household include his wife Bessia, his two ugly brothers, Geraldo and Rivero (6 hp each), their wives, Sindeea and Eurana, and 15 children (five to each couple). All are 0 level humans and AC 10.

Guard Dogs (4): INT 4; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2, hp 18, 15, 14 (x2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 10; XP 65; MM/57.

11. The Tieton Winery:



Yorg Tieton and his family own the winery that has consistently come in third place. They produce a good, solid vintage and make a comfortable living, but have

not mastered the secrets of winemaking that the Musliches and Smedlings have.

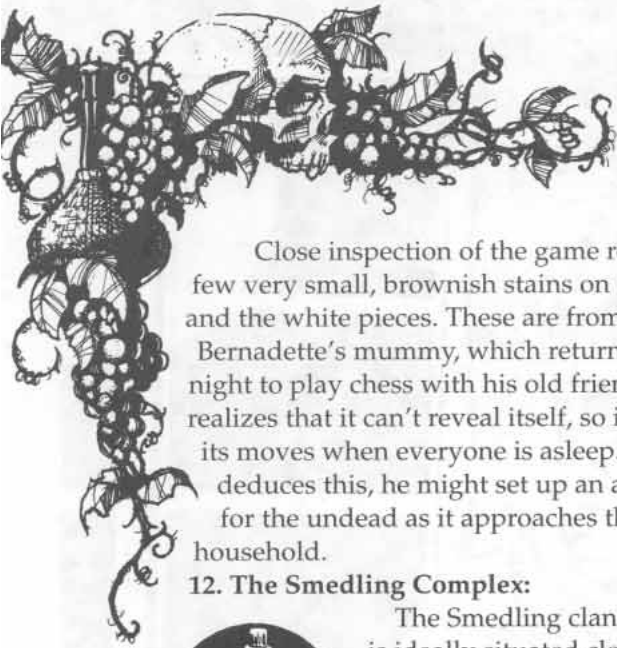
Twenty people live at the Tieton farmhouse, and like the other inhabitants of Barlox, they are 0 level humans with 1d6 hp.

Except for Old Man Riggins, Yorg is the oldest inhabitant of Barlox. He is 70 years old, with a ready smile and twinkle in his eye. The PC will be warmly greeted by the household and offered a fine country meal for his selfless efforts to save the community. The Tietons are devout members of the church and feel honored to host a cleric of high standing.

Yorg remembers when Father Bernadette died in the fire 10 years ago and that everyone suspected the Musliches were involved. He mourns the passing of the priest. He and Bernadette were best friends and often played chess in the evening. Since the priest was last seen in his home on the night of the fire, Yorg himself was under suspicion.

The Mystery Chess Game: In the living room is a chessboard, set as if in mid-game. If asked about it, Yorg says that he and his oldest son, Remingar, are playing a game, each making one move per day. If mentioned during dinner, or if the PC questions Remingar about it, the son denies having a game with his father. He states that although they have done this in the past, the current game is one that Yorg is playing against himself. Yorg denies playing a solitaire game. He explains that it started when he found the chessboard set up and the first move made several mornings ago. He admits, however, that he has not seen his son playing.





Close inspection of the game reveals a few very small, brownish stains on the board and the white pieces. These are from Father Bernadette's mummy, which returns every night to play chess with his old friend. It realizes that it can't reveal itself, so it makes its moves when everyone is asleep. If the PC deduces this, he might set up an ambush for the undead as it approaches the Tieton household.

12. The Smedling Complex:



The Smedling clan's holding is ideally situated close to the river. The grapes look healthy and plump. The secret to the Smedlings' success has been the use of a fertilizer developed by an alchemist

from a nearby town. Combined with the sunshine, the nearby water supply, and careful tending, the Smedlings have been able, until recently, to produce the best wine in the area for the past nine years.

Beufurt Smedling is the clan leader and he is 49 years old. He has no gray in his black hair or beard, and his eyes are still a vivid blue. He is 5'10" tall, weighs about 180 lbs, and looks very strong (18/02 Strength). Beufurt believes that Father Bernadette was murdered by the Musliches many years ago, but he has no proof. His goal is to win back the tradition he started nine years ago: producing Barlox's best wine. He is mortified that the Musliches have wrested the title away from him this year. He can't figure out how they did it, but he is sure they cheated somehow.

Beufurt Smedling, Farmer: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 18/02; D 16, C 13, I 13, W 10, Ch 12; ML 14; long sword.

Beufurt left home in his youth to become a soldier in the king's army. He rose to the rank of

corporal before deciding not to reenlist. For his service, the king allowed him to keep his long sword. He is also proficient with a spear and a dagger.

The Smedlings cordially greet the PC and earnestly hope that he can get to the bottom of the mysterious, chilling events. Because of their rivalry with the Musliches, the Smedlings hope that a neutral party (the PC) will clear up any suspicion of them.

Everyone in the Smedling household denies any involvement with the evil events in town or the burning of the temple. They do not mourn Jason's passing, since he publicly accused them of cheating the first year that the Smedlings were awarded the prize contract.

In the farmhouse living room is a portrait of a young Father Bernadette, drawn 10 years before his disappearance. If the PC has encountered the mummy, or if he sees the picture and then the creature, he will notice the resemblance if he makes a successful Intelligence check at a -3 penalty due to the severe discoloration of and difference in age of the undead.

Twelve other Smedlings live on the premises. All are 0 level humans, AC 10, with 1d6 hp. The DM may select names for them, but one is Patrikia, Beufurt's daughter, who is one of the victims in "The Deserted Lover" in Chapter 2.

If the PC enters the Smedling Winery building, the DM should use the description in Chapter 3.

Village Rumors

The PC may wish to question some ordinary villagers. The DM can play these encounters by ear, select an appropriate rumor, or choose one randomly by rolling a d10.

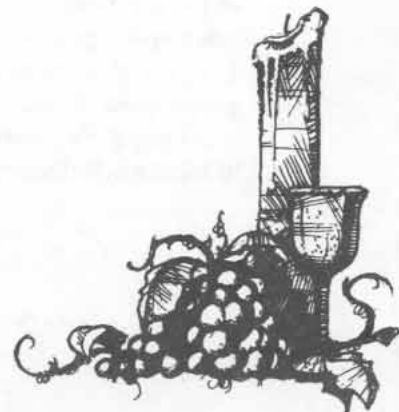
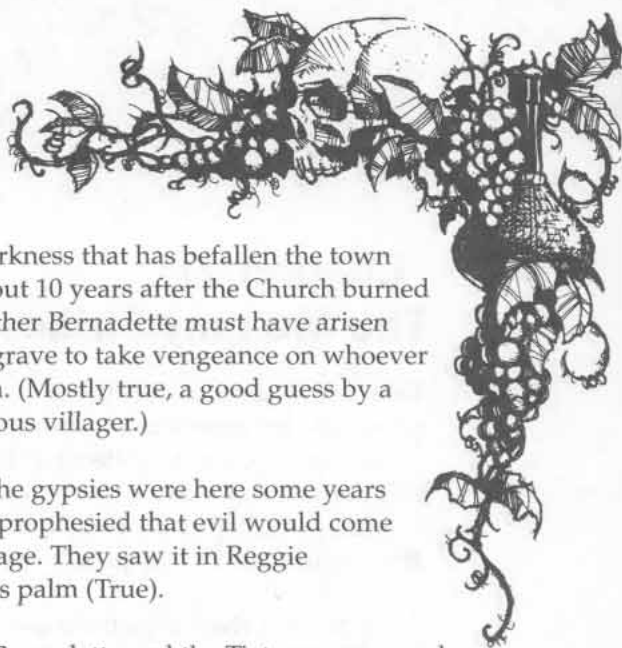
The rumors can also be used as devices to move the adventure along if the PC seems at a standstill. It might be necessary to do this with

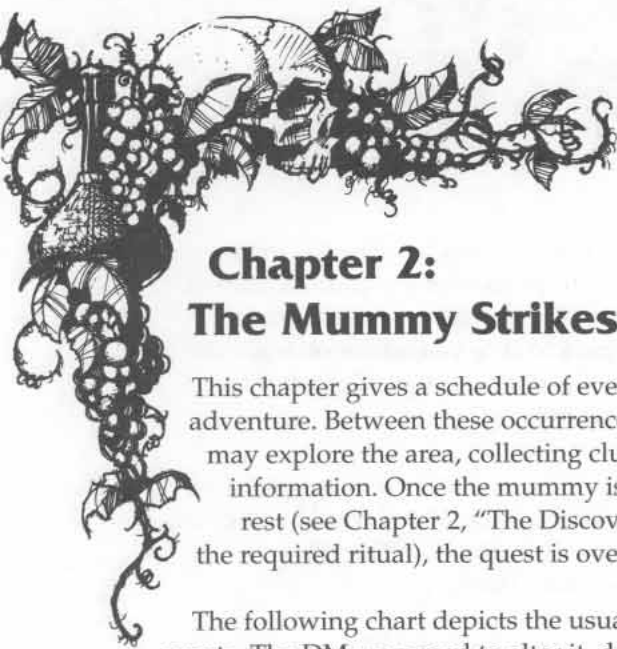
a shy player. The DM can have a villager interested in the PC's investigation approach him and give the information after some role-playing. This should be done as subtly as possible so that the solution is not spoon-fed to the player.

1. A tanar'ri that has come to the village slays all who cross its path (False).
2. The church has fallen into disfavor with its god, who is exacting his vengeance on everyone in Barlox (False).
3. Muler Muggins left town every three months or so and was secretive about what he did on his excursions. After his last trip, he brought back a powerfully enchanted relic that is the cause of people disappearing. (He was secretive about his career, but his magic items have nothing to do with the problems at hand.)
4. The Depardos never want anyone near their property and own mean dogs. They are planning to take over the whole winery industry in Barlox and have created a monster to kill off the competition. (The family isolates itself and keeps guard dogs, but do not plot against the other vintners.)
5. The Smedlings have discovered the love affair between young Jason Muslich II and Patrikia Smedling. To defend their daughter's honor, the Smedlings have created a monster to kill all the Musliches. (The two young people are having an affair, but the rest is false.)
6. Barnabee Crickens (one of the villagers) saw the monster rise out of the river. It must live there. (Crickens saw the mummy come out of the river one night, but it does not live there.)

7. The darkness that has befallen the town began about 10 years after the Church burned down. Father Bernadette must have arisen from the grave to take vengeance on whoever killed him. (Mostly true, a good guess by a superstitious villager.)

8. When the gypsies were here some years ago, they prophesied that evil would come to the village. They saw it in Reggie Salthorse's palm (True).
9. Father Bernadette and the Tietons were good friends. They're acting awfully innocent. I bet they have something to do with this. (Although they were the priest's friends, they are innocent of any wrongdoing.)
10. If anyone knows what happened 10 years ago, it's Old Man Riggins. He knows everything. Strange that he won't talk about it (True).





Chapter 2: The Mummy Strikes

This chapter gives a schedule of events for the adventure. Between these occurrences, the PC may explore the area, collecting clues and information. Once the mummy is laid to rest (see Chapter 2, "The Discovery," for the required ritual), the quest is over.

The following chart depicts the usual order of events. The DM may need to alter it, depending on the PC's progress.

Day 1:

Event 1. The PC receives his mission from the High Matriarch of his church.

Days 2-5:

Travel to Barlox.

Day 6:

Arrival in Barlox. The PC encounters zombies on the outskirts of town (Event 2). In town, he encounters the village priest, who begs for help in curing the constable (Event 3).

Day 7:

If someone has been killed by the mummy or its minions, a funeral is held (Event 4).

In the evening, Jason Muslich II is slain by the mummy, and Patrikia Smedling is infected with the mummy's disease (Event 5).

Day 8:

In the morning, Patrikia Smedling staggers into town and requires curing (Event 5, continued).

In the afternoon, the Muslich winery workers go on strike (Event 6).

At night, the mummy attacks Missy Muggins in the church (Event 7).

Day 9:

In the afternoon, Joanna, wife of Father Dominic, discovers hidden passage into the basement of the old, burned-down church (Event 8).

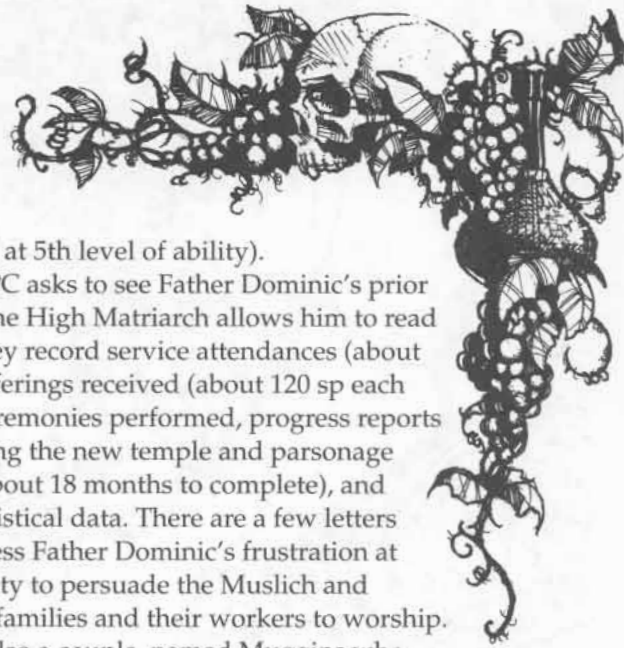
In the evening, the mummy breaks into Old Man Riggins home, who dies of fright (Event 9).

Day 10:

In the evening, the mummy attacks and takes two of the Depardo family's dogs. The Depardos ask the PC to help rescue them (Event 10).

After these events and a thorough investigation, the PC should have all the clues necessary to defeat the mummy. An astute (or lucky) player may deduce what is going on earlier and move against the mummy prior to the occurrence of the timed events. This shortcut is fine, as long as the holy formula discovered in Event 8 is used. Otherwise, the mummy rises from its grave and continues to terrorize Barlox.

Once the mummy has been laid to rest, the DM should proceed to Chapter 4 and conclude the adventure.



Event 1: The Mission

The PC is summoned to the private office of the High Matriarch of his church. This summons can be in any large city in the DM's campaign with large temple of the PC's deity. Upon the PC's arrival, the High Matriarch says:

Brother (Sister) _____, we have been pleased with the work you have done on behalf of the church. I was particularly impressed by (the PC's most recent accomplishment). Your exploits have amply demonstrated that you are destined for even greater responsibilities. Now, not every mission of the church is fraught with danger, and I have a somewhat more peaceful assignment for you.

Ten years ago, we had a temple in the small village of Barlox, but it was destroyed in an accidental fire. The priest, Father Bernadette, and his wife, Hilda, tragically perished in the flames. It was not until two years ago that we were able to send our esteemed brother, Father Dominic, to re-establish the church's presence there. He has rebuilt the small sanctuary in the town, but has had difficulties getting many of the townspeople to worship. I need you, _____, to go to Barlox, meet with Dominic, get to know the townspeople, help in any way you can, and report back to me on what you believe the problems are and what the church should do. I expect you to return with your report in thirty days.

If the cleric desires any assistance from the High Matriarch, ordinary equipment and two vials of holy water will be provided, along with a medium riding horse with saddle and tack. If the cleric is less than 5th level, the DM may have the priestess give him a scroll with three *cure disease*, one *prayer*, and two *cure light wounds*

spells (all at 5th level of ability).

If the PC asks to see Father Dominic's prior reports, the High Matriarch allows him to read them. They record service attendances (about 45-60), offerings received (about 120 sp each week), ceremonies performed, progress reports on building the new temple and parsonage (it took about 18 months to complete), and other statistical data. There are a few letters that express Father Dominic's frustration at his inability to persuade the Muslich and Depardo families and their workers to worship. There is also a couple named Muggins who refuse to come to church.

Other than what is revealed from the letters, the High Matriarch knows little of Barlox, except that it produces the region's finest wines. She adds, almost as an afterthought, that the PC's visit to Barlox is unannounced and will surprise Father Dominic.

Event 2: The Welcoming Committee

The trip to Barlox should be uneventful, unless the DM wants to add combat or role-playing encounters appropriate to the PC's level. The village is five days' ride away and in a region that is peaceful and free of monsters and predators.

This occurrence assumes that the PC approaches Barlox a few hours after sunset on the last day of his journey. If the PC decides not to travel at night, the DM may ignore this event or have the zombies attack the PC at his campsite.

You are on the outskirts of the small hamlet of Barlox. In the moonlight, you see vineyards with plump grapes ready for harvest. You have also seen a few paths off the road, with signs marking the way to farm estates. Ahead, you can just make out the twinkling lights of the small village. Suddenly, three dark figures stagger out of



the shadowy vineyards and lurch toward you. They moan horribly and their eyes are vacant. They reek of strong, sickly-sweet wine.

These zombies were the first three victims of the mummy. Two were Muslich vineyard workers and are fully clothed. The third wears only underwear and is the animated corpse of Muler Muggins. The mummy does not know that the PC is coming to town and this encounter is coincidental.

The zombies have been sent by the mummy to cause a diversion so that it can go to the Muslich household and kill Jason Muslich without interference. Fire attacks against the zombies cause an extra 1 hp damage per round because they have been soaking in the huge vat

of brandy that is Father Bernadette's tomb. Turning the zombies will work if the PC makes his roll (automatic for a 5th or 6th level cleric). Muler Muggins' zombie will do its best to escape.

If the PC defeats the zombies in combat, he may have their bodies identified by the villagers, and he may cast *Speak with Dead* on the corpses. The two farm workers were out at night and were grabbed by "the brown man." Muler Muggins was slain while preparing to bathe. If asked who killed him, Muler exclaims, "Bernadette has returned, that meddling priest!" If asked where Bernadette is, Muler cryptically replies, "Where I drowned him in the first place."

Any zombies turned by the PC flee into the vineyards. Their footprints disappear in the rocky soil. These undead reappear on subsequent nights somewhere in

Barlox (DM's choice) to divert the PC and other villagers away from the mummy's attacks.

Zombies (3): INT Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 14, 12, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SD Immune to sleep, hold, death magic, poisons, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML Special (attack until destroyed or turned); XP 65; MM/373.

Event 3: A Priest in Need

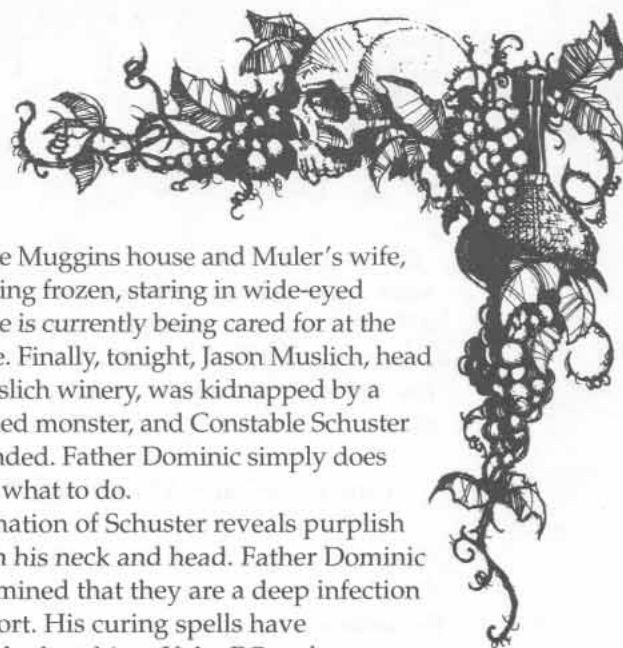
After the encounter with the zombies, the PC should continue into town. When he reaches the home of Constable Schuster (area 7), he encounters Father Dominic:

Suddenly, a haggard priest emerges from one of the homes and rushes toward you. He implores, "Stranger, please help me. Do you have powers to heal? Our constable suffers from an illness that I cannot cure!"

This priest is Father Dominic, the priest whom the PC has been sent to visit. He is 5'7" tall, has a medium build, brown hair and eyes, and a soft, kind face.

Once the PC identifies himself, Father Dominic sighs in relief and gives thanks for the opportune arrival of a higher-level cleric of his church. He leads the PC into the home, where the sheriff lies unconscious in his bed. A woman, apparently the sheriff's wife, stands nearby, wringing her hands. Another man, a short fellow dressed in a shopkeeper's apron (the mayor), is trying to comfort her.

Father Dominic is overwhelmed. In just three days, his peaceful missionary assignment has escalated into one that has taxed his resources. Three of the villagers have disappeared. Two are workers of the Muslich winery and the third is Muler Muggins, who he could never get to attend church. Then, the sheriff discovered the bashed-in



door of the Muggins house and Muler's wife, Missy, sitting frozen, staring in wide-eyed horror. She is currently being cared for at the parsonage. Finally, tonight, Jason Muslich, head of the Muslich winery, was kidnapped by a brown-hued monster, and Constable Schuster was wounded. Father Dominic simply does not know what to do.

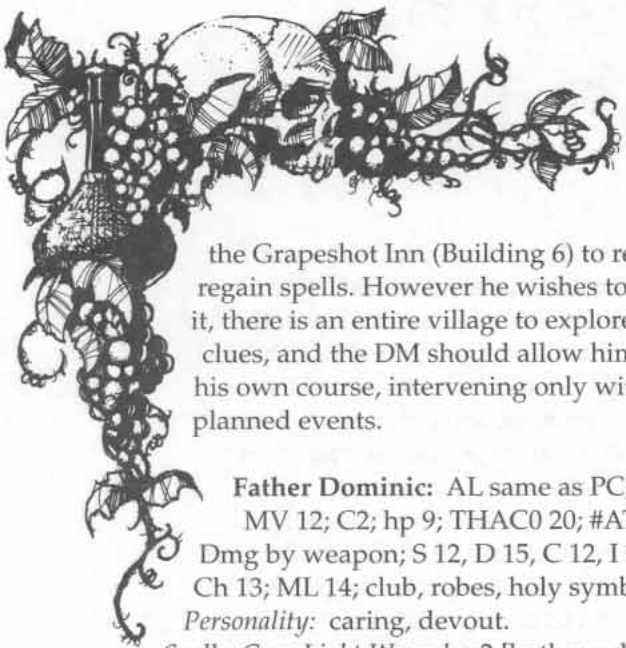
Examination of Schuster reveals purplish bruises on his neck and head. Father Dominic has determined that they are a deep infection of some sort. His curing spells have accomplished nothing. If the PC makes a successful healing nonweapon proficiency check, he learns that Father Dominic's diagnosis is correct. *Cure disease* and *neutralize poison* are effective treatments, but Schuster will be weak and incoherent for 12 hours. *Slow poison* stops the progress of the affliction but does not cure it. If nothing is done in 12 hours, the illness will kill the constable.

Schuster's wife, Marinda, is frantic and bursts into tears intermittently. She has no idea of what did this to her husband and no information. Marinda is 0 level, AC 10, AL NG, with 5 hp.

The other gentleman is Rollins Goodfellow, the mayor. Rollins runs the general store (Building 3). He is concerned about the villagers' disappearances and the appearance of a monster in the village. Mayor Goodfellow was about to send a messenger to ask the liege-lord for assistance, but is thrilled that a cleric of high standing has arrived. He assures the PC that Baron Appleby is a most generous and pious nobleman and will certainly reward the church well.

The PC may ask Goodfellow to help identify the bodies of the zombies that attacked him on the outskirts of town (if they were destroyed). The mayor will appoint several villagers to help him to inform and to console the families of the deceased.

The PC may wish to investigate or to go to



the Grapeshot Inn (Building 6) to rest and regain spells. However he wishes to go about it, there is an entire village to explore for clues, and the DM should allow him to chart his own course, intervening only with planned events.

Father Dominic: AL same as PC; AC 9; MV 12; C2; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 12, D 15, C 12, I 15, W 15, Ch 13; ML 14; club, robes, holy symbol.

Personality: caring, devout.

Spells: Cure Light Wounds x2 [both used], Light.

Event 4: The Funeral

The DM should use this event after a villager has been slain. It could occur early in the adventure if the PC destroys the zombies in the initial scene, or it can be used later for other victims.



Father Dominic approaches the PC and requests that he conduct the funeral for the deceased. The townsfolk are upset, and it might comfort them that a high-level cleric of the church is there to hold the service.

The player should not be discouraged from role-playing this as much as he wishes. The PC may want to meet with the deceased's family to prepare an appropriate, comforting eulogy. The DM should go with the flow and have the PC make a Charisma check at the end of the ceremony. Success indicates that the service comforted the bereaved. Failure means that people will not be cooperative in his further investigations.

If the graveyard has not been examined, a revealing event occurs when the body is taken there for burial. Right after the final prayer is said and the deceased is laid into the grave, one of the villagers exclaims, "Hey! Look over there!" The townsfolk rush over to a plot on the edge of the cemetery. A grave has been dug up. The headstone reads that it was the resting place of Father Bernadette and Hilda (although only Hilda's remains were buried). The villagers mumble that evil has come to Barlox, make superstitious signs that they think ward off tanar'ri, and hurry off to their homes.

Unknown to all, Father Bernadette's mummy came here on the first night that it was active, exhumed its wife's remains, and animated the charred bones as a skeleton that guards the cask of brandy serving as its lair. A thorough investigation reveals nothing further than that the grave has been opened and the remains are gone.

Event 5: The Slain Lover

On the evening after the PC's arrival, Jason Muslich II, the oldest grandson of the Muslich clan, meets with his true love, Patrikia Smedling, at the bend of the Barlox River north of town. The young couple (both are in their late

teens) is convinced that the evil in Barlox is associated with the Muslich Winery. They plan to elope and leave the area forever. When they meet, they encounter Father Bernadette's mummy, out on its nightly prow. When it sees the Muslich symbol on Jason's shirt, it rushes over, knocks Patrikia aside, and plunges into the river with Jason, dragging him down to a watery death.

The next morning, Patrikia stumbles into town dirty and bruised. She collapses in the street, and the PC is summoned. Patrikia is in shock and mumbles nonsensical statements such as, "Why would Father do this? He was always so nice. Jason was a good boy. He wouldn't hurt me."

Patrikia is suffering from the same disease that afflicted the sheriff, and if not treated, she will die. She sounds childlike but is actually dangerously intoxicated. She smells like strong liquor (just like the zombies on the first night). The DM should emphasize the deadly peril of the young lady's situation. Once cured, she is taken home by concerned members of her family. Patrikia's father, Beufurt, will hotly deny any wrongdoing if Patrikia's remarks about her "Father" are mentioned.

If the PC visits her after her recovery (12 hours later), he discovers that her reference to "Father" was not to her own father, but to Father Bernadette, whom she remembered from church classes he taught years ago.

An hour after Patrikia appears in town, a villager discovers Jason Muslich II's body washed up against the support beams of the bridge. Father Bernadette's mummy drowned him in the river, but lost Jason's body in the swift current. If the PC has not conducted a funeral yet (see Event 4), Father Dominic will ask him to do so now.

Event 6: The Workers' Rebellion

In the late afternoon, after Jason II's corpse is found, one of the Muslich clan comes riding helter-skelter down the road, looking for the PC.

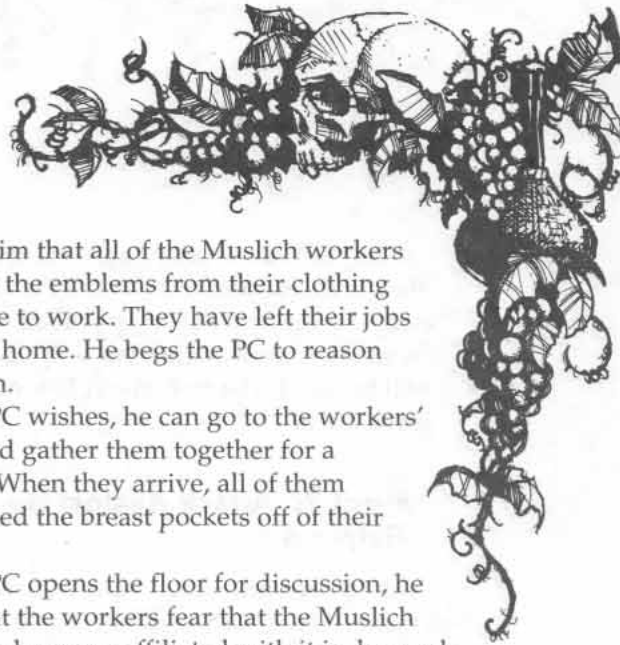
He tells him that all of the Muslich workers have torn the emblems from their clothing and refuse to work. They have left their jobs and gone home. He begs the PC to reason with them.

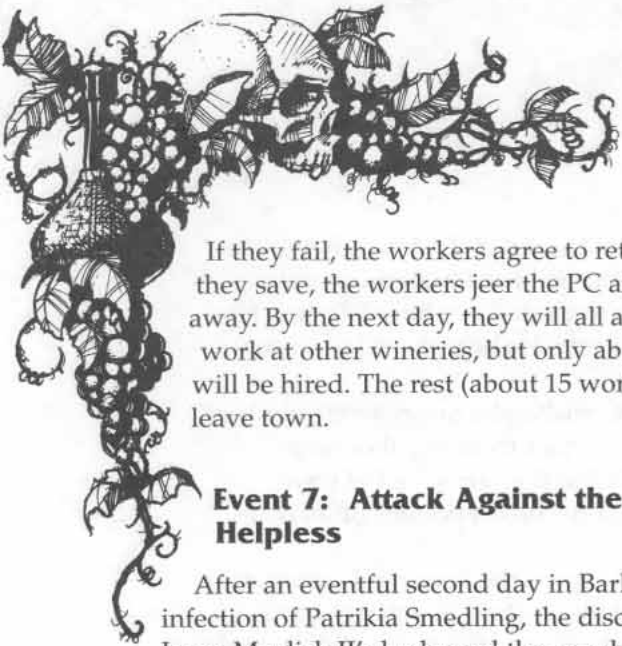
If the PC wishes, he can go to the workers' homes and gather them together for a meeting. When they arrive, all of them have ripped the breast pockets off of their shirts.

If the PC opens the floor for discussion, he learns that the workers fear that the Muslich winery and anyone affiliated with it is doomed to a violent death. They are well aware that two of their fellow workers disappeared. They also have heard the story of how their employer, Jason Muslich, was carried off by some hideous monster (and grossly distorted rumors of its appearance). The news of young Jason's body washing up at the bridge this morning has panicked the workers. They are convinced that working for the Musliches is dangerous. Some secretly believe that the Muslich winery should be destroyed.

The PC can attempt to quiet the crowd and get them back to work. Pointing out that the monster also took Muler Muggins, who is not an employee or family member, gets nowhere. An old-timer will shout out, "Yeah, but about 10 years ago, he worked in the Muslich fields right alongside me!" At this the crowd murmurs angrily. Noting that the sheriff and Patrikia Smedling were also attacked is also ineffective. The crowd wants some assurance that the PC will do everything he can to end the evil plaguing Barlox.

A clever PC may use an *enthrall* spell. Most of the Muslich workers, following the example of their employer, do not worship at the temple and receive a +2 bonus to their saving throw. If the PC uses convincing arguments to persuade the crowd, the bonus should only be +1. The DM should make one roll for all of the strikers.





If they fail, the workers agree to return. If they save, the workers jeer the PC and storm away. By the next day, they will all apply to work at other wineries, but only about half will be hired. The rest (about 15 workers) will leave town.

Event 7: Attack Against the Helpless

After an eventful second day in Barlox (the infection of Patrikia Smedling, the discovery of Jason Muslich II's body, and the unruly workers), the PC should feel exhausted. That night, Father Dominic invites him to dinner at his home and to join his family in evening prayers. If the PC accepts, the town priest and his wife prepare a fine supper of fried chicken, green beans, and boiled potatoes, accompanied by a bottle of Tieton wine. They eat in the small parsonage adjoining the church, and it is a

somber meal. Father Dominic is perplexed by the troubling situation in Barlox. He looks to the PC for guidance. Missy Muggins, Muler's wife, is still under the care of his wife Joanna, and she sits numbly at the table. Joanna has to cut up her food and feed her.

Following dinner, all move into the church for their evening prayers. The PC is asked to lead them. As Father Dominic, Joanna, and Missy kneel at the altar (Joanna has to help her to her knees) and the PC utters his first praises, the following happens:

As you begin to humbly pray for the divine inspiration and wisdom you need to save the people of Barlox from their calamity, there is a crash of breaking glass and a heavy thud on the floor. A stained-glass window has been shattered, and rising from the floor is a tall, snarling, brown man with glowing yellow eyes.



The PC should roll for surprise, then make a saving throw vs. spell or become paralyzed with fright for 1d4 rounds.

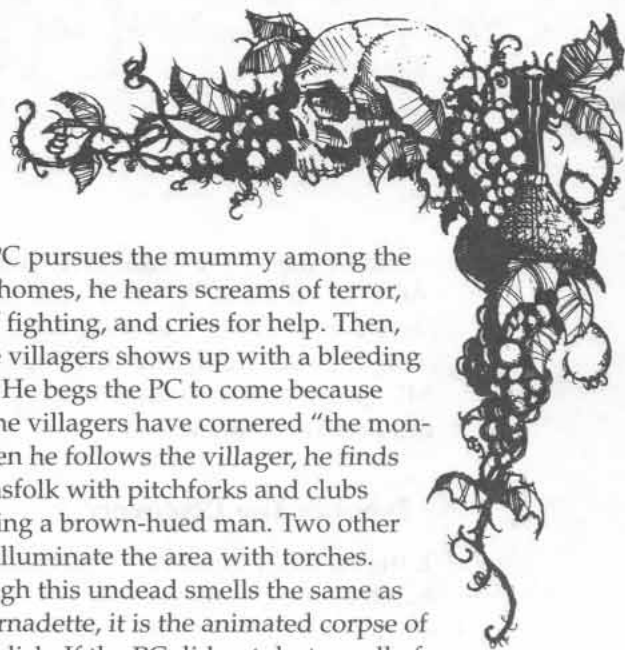
If he is human, he gets a +2 bonus to his save. Should he be unable to react immediately, read the following:

Father Dominic utters an oath and presents his holy symbol strongly, but the monster snatches it out of his hand and twists it like an old piece of tin. It tosses the wrecked symbol aside and backhands your fellow priest against the wall. As he sags to the floor, the priest's wife screams in terror, but seems transfixed where she stands. Missy Muggins still kneels at the altar, seemingly unaware of what is happening.

Your heart is pounding as if it is about to burst from your chest. Never have you felt such terror! Your feet seem glued to the floor. The creature, which exudes a sickeningly sweet aroma of strong spirits, briefly glances at you, but stalks right over to Missy Muggins.

If the PC makes his saving throw, he can engage the mummy in combat or attempt to turn it. Successful turning results in the undead fleeing into the night. Whether the PC attacks or stands frozen, he will be ignored as the mummy pushes its way toward Missy Muggins. Read the following boxed text:

The creature grabs Missy by the back of her neck and drags her over to the altar. It plunges her face into the silver bowl, and water splashes out. You hear the monster suddenly give a sickening, gurgling bellow. It releases Missy, who slumps to the floor. It holds up its smoking, dissolving hand. Still howling, it runs out the door into the night.

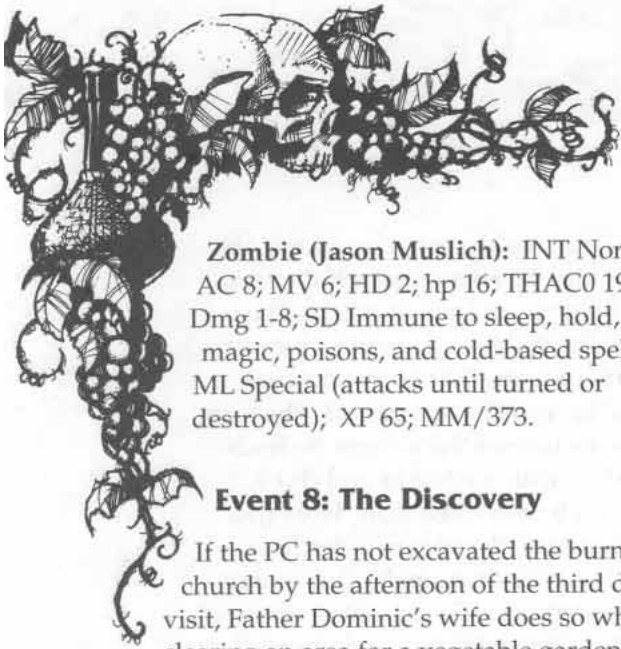


If the PC pursues the mummy among the workers' homes, he hears screams of terror, sounds of fighting, and cries for help. Then, one of the villagers shows up with a bleeding forehead. He begs the PC to come because some of the villagers have cornered "the monster." When he follows the villager, he finds four townsfolk with pitchforks and clubs surrounding a brown-hued man. Two other villagers illuminate the area with torches.

Although this undead smells the same as Father Bernadette, it is the animated corpse of Jason Muslich. If the PC did not destroy all of the zombies in Event 1, they are also present and cornered. Father Bernadette's mummy sent the zombie into the workers' quarters to draw attention away from itself while it attempted to drown Missy Muggins, the wife of his killer.

Turning the surrounded zombie has little effect. It does not attack the PC, but it continues to fight the villagers. Once defeated, a *Speak with Dead* spell reveals that Jason was killed by "that meddling priest." If asked where he was kept, Jason says "in the worst cask of wine I have ever smelled." The PC should be careful about casting this spell in front of the superstitious villagers. It will make them suspicious of the church and leery of the PC.

Once the PC returns to the temple, he finds Father Dominic severely wounded (down to 1 hp) but undiseased. Missy Muggins is alive, but infected. The telltale purple bruises appear on the back of her neck. She still sits in a trance on the floor. Once *Cure Disease* or *Neutralize Poison* is cast upon her, she recovers 12 hours later and has a 50% chance of snapping out of her shock. At that time, she remembers how the undead burst into her home when Muler was about to take a bath. Muler fought it with a knife, and the monster took him to the bathroom, drowned him in the bathtub, and walked out with his body slung over its shoulder like a sack of potatoes.



Zombie (Jason Muslich): INT Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD Immune to sleep, hold, death magic, poisons, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML Special (attacks until turned or destroyed); XP 65; MM/373.

Event 8: The Discovery

If the PC has not excavated the burned-out church by the afternoon of the third day of his visit, Father Dominic's wife does so while clearing an area for a vegetable garden. She is turning the scorched earth with a spade when she hits something of solid oak. Soon, she uncovers a thick, iron-bound trap door that was not consumed by flame with the wooden flooring. She calls for the PC and her husband. If the PC is away, Father Dominic has Constable Schuster or Mayor Goodfellow fetch him.

When the trap door is opened, it reveals a narrow, sooty, stone stairway leading down to a iron-bound wooden door. It opens outward, is unlocked, and is trapped. If the PC casts *detect magic* or *find traps*, he discovers a magical trap. A successful *dispel magic* (vs. 6th level) will disarm the *fire trap* spell that Father Bernadette placed on the door long ago. Opening the door without disenchanting it causes the spell to discharge, inflicting 1d4+6 points of damage (halved if a save vs. spell is successful) to anyone within 5 feet of the door.

After the door has been opened, the DM should read the following:

You see a room that remains undamaged by fire, despite its lingering, smoky smell. In it is a stout, wooden desk with a hooded lantern, quill pen, and inkwell resting on top. A comfortable, padded chair is right behind the desk. Next to the desk is a sturdy, oaken chest secured with a large padlock.

The hooded lantern can be opened to reveal that a *continual light* spell has been cast within. The quill pen is usable but will crack after a few pages of writing due to age. The inkwell is dried up.

Searching through the desk, the PC finds a large book and a key. The book is a long treatise on the undead written by Father Bernadette. It catalogues skeletons, zombies, ghouls, ghosts, shadows, wights, and wraiths. A final passage is a short essay on undead brought to life by evil deities and instructions for their destruction. The DM should give the player Handout #2.

The key unlocks the chest, but it is protected by a *glyph of warding* that does 6d4 points of fire damage to anyone other than Father Bernadette who opens the chest (save vs. spells for half damage). The glyph can be detected and dispelled in the same manner as the *fire trap* on the door. Inside the chest are a golden



holy symbol (which Father Bernadette wore only on special occasions, value 150 gp), a *mace +1*, a pouch containing 66 gp and 98 sp, two *potions of healing*, and a scroll with the following spells, all at the 9th level of ability: *cure disease*, *protection from fire*, *prayer*, *divination*, and *flame strike*.

Collecting the ingredients for the formula to lay the monster to rest (see Handout 2) should be moderately difficult. Holy water is not a problem, since the bowl in Father Dominic's sanctuary creates 10 vials of holy water per day. Finding something that Father Bernadette loved is easy, too. Either a chess piece from the Tieton household or the golden holy symbol in the chest will suffice. Finding something that he disliked takes a little investigation. If asked, Yorg Tieton recalls well that Father Bernadette could not abide the taste of Depardo wine. Old Man Riggins, with a lot of prodding (and some free glasses of Muslich wine) can also provide this information.

Finally, the formula advises the reader that "A strong prayer must be said...." and "...a sign will be given." To empower the ingredients, a *prayer* must be cast. Once this occurs, the mixture starts smoking. All solid ingredients disappear (the sign). The formula becomes as clear as pure water and minty-smelling. It tastes that way, too, and does no harm to anyone who drinks it.

Event 9: The Demise of Old Man Riggins

After midnight on the third evening, villagers run to find the PC. They heard a booming crash and a scream at Old Man Riggins's house. When they looked outside, they saw the "brown monster-man" scurrying away in the shadows. They are afraid to go in Riggins's house, and beg the PC to investigate.

When he arrives, he finds the door smashed

in, just like the Muggins and Muslich homes. Riggins is dead in his bed, dressed only in his nightshirt and cap. His face is frozen in abject terror. Examination of the body reveals brown, damp, winey-smelling stains on the front of his nightshirt, just above the heart, and on one of his wrists.

When the mummy entered, Riggins saw him in the glow of the candle at his bedside, screamed, and died of a heart attack. The stain on the nightshirt is from the mummy listening for Riggins's heartbeat. The wetness on the wrist is from the mummy feeling for Riggins's pulse. When it was satisfied that Riggins was dead, it left. The undead did not take Riggins's body, since the old man was missing a leg and would make a poor zombie servant.

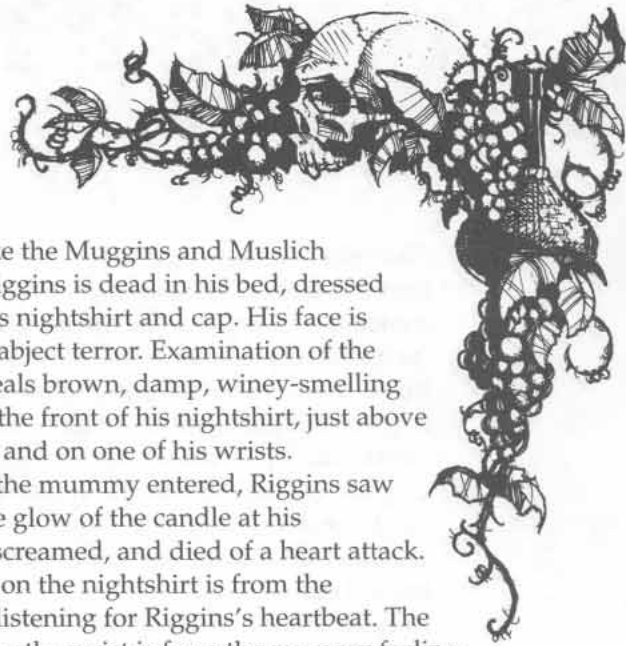
If the PC searches the house, he finds in a nightstand a letter that Riggins drafted to Baron Appleby years ago. The old drunk had second thoughts and never sent it. The DM should give the Cleric Handout #3. Bernadette's mummy knew that Riggins was an accessory and came to wreak its vengeance.

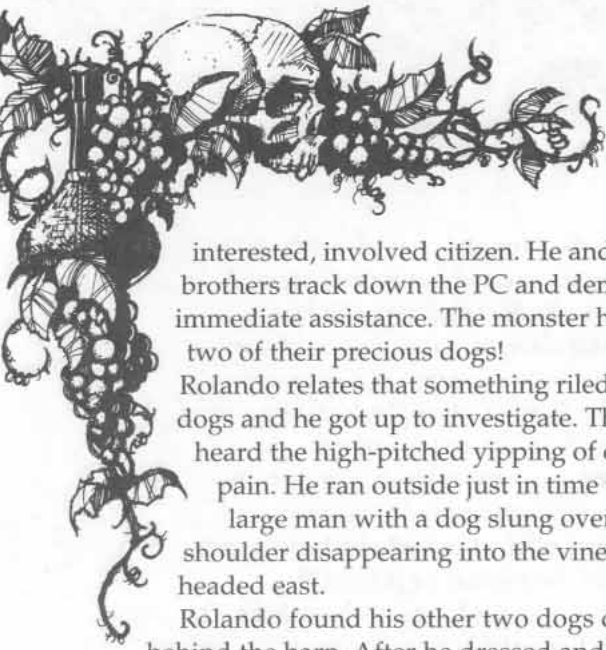
A PC who uses *speak with dead* on Riggins's body is rewarded with the rattly voice of the old man saying, "It was him, Father Bernadette, come back, just like the old gypsy woman told Reggie!"

Further searching of the room reveals the old man's terrified cat, cowering under the bed. If someone tries to coax it out, it bolts for the door and into the night, never to be seen again. *Charm mammal* or *speak with animals* could calm it before it flees, but the cat knows very little ("Big brown stinky man come in yowling, Riggins yowl too, and I hid!").

Event 10: Disappearing Dogs

On the fourth night of the PC's visit to Barlox, Rolando Depardo suddenly becomes an





interested, involved citizen. He and his two brothers track down the PC and demand his immediate assistance. The monster has taken two of their precious dogs!

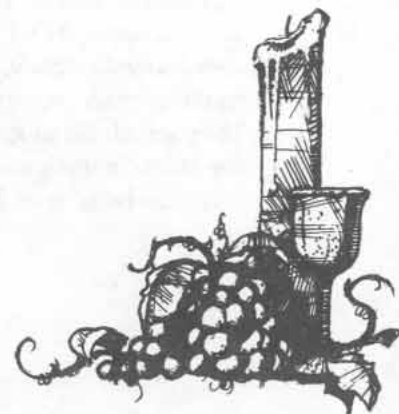
Rolando relates that something riled up his dogs and he got up to investigate. Then, he heard the high-pitched yipping of dogs in pain. He ran outside just in time to see a large man with a dog slung over each shoulder disappearing into the vineyards, headed east.

Rolando found his other two dogs cringing behind the barn. After he dressed and armed himself (Rolando and his brothers all carry pitchforks and pruning knives), he tried to get the other two dogs to track the beast down. They refuse to budge from the property. Rolando pleads, "Please, ya gotta do something! I'll help ya get this thing, because he took Old Blue and Growler, and he's gonna pay — big time!" His two brothers grimly nod in agreement and mutter, "You got dat right, Rolando!"

The Depardos' whimpering dogs, grateful to hear a soothing voice, will only save on a natural 20 against a *charm mammal* spell. To convince them to track the mummy, however, requires a successful Charisma check (one per dog). If effective, the dogs set out with the PC, the fuming Depardos, and anyone else the PC brings along.

The trail is followed to the Barlox River. After crossing the river, the dogs have to retrace the scent, but since it is so pungent, each has a 60% chance of picking it up again. They can follow the odor all the way to the Smedling Winery, where the mummy is laired.

Since the trail has been heading directly toward the Smedling Winery anyway, the PC may deduce the lair's location, even if the dogs fail. A kind DM may have an NPC point this out if the player is confused.



Chapter 3: The Smedling Winery

Sooner or later, the PC and his allies should explore the Smedling Winery, as a result of clues gathered during the investigation, the use of the Depardo dogs in tracking the mummy, or searching the winery on a hunch. The Smedlings will not object to the PC's presence. They are anxious to prove their innocence and will even give him a guided tour, if he desires it.

1. The Ground Floor: During the day, about a dozen workers labor here. Grapes are dumped into large vats, where workers stomp on them to squeeze out the juice. It flows through screens at the vats' bottoms and down tubes leading to the basement. On that level, workers move the tubes to pour the juice into casks, where it ferments into wine.

After aging, the wine is poured from the huge casks into smaller kegs and hauled up an elevator of ropes and pulleys. It is then securely corked in bottles at tables on the southern and western ends of the building.

On the northern end of the ground floor are boxes containing jars of spices for the wines, bottles, and other supplies. There are also some small carts for moving barrels and supplies. On this end of the building is a window with an open latch. Since the doors are secured with padlocks at night, the mummy enters and leaves the building each night through this window. Careful examination reveals dried, brownish drops on the pane and on the boxes underneath it.

Dogs are unable to track inside the winery. There are too many potent, winery smells that overwhelm the mummy's distinct odor.

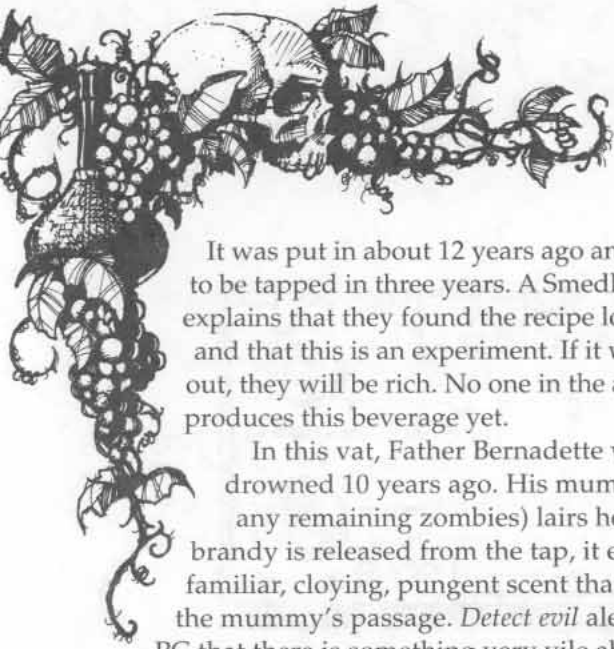
A stairway leads down to the basement.



2. Basement: If one of the Smedlings is giving a tour of this level, the PC and his followers will be warned to be very careful with torches and other fire sources here. One of the storage casks has a high alcohol content and is extremely flammable. If the PC found the magical lantern in the ruins of the old church, this is a good time to use it.

On this level are enormous wooden casks about 15 feet tall and about 8 feet in diameter. Tubes come out of the ceiling from the collection vats on the upper floor and can be guided to any of the casks in the basement. Each cask has a tap at the bottom and a label that shows the type of wine, when it went into the vat, and when it is due to be bottled. There are several ladders that the winery workers use to guide the pipes into the casks and to inspect them for damage.

The cask in the northwestern corner has a sign that indicates that it is not wine, but brandy



It was put in about 12 years ago and is due to be tapped in three years. A Smedling explains that they found the recipe long ago and that this is an experiment. If it works out, they will be rich. No one in the area produces this beverage yet.

In this vat, Father Bernadette was drowned 10 years ago. His mummy (and any remaining zombies) lairs here. If brandy is released from the tap, it emits the familiar, cloying, pungent scent that marks the mummy's passage. *Detect evil* alerts the PC that there is something very vile about the cask.

Hiding in the shadows behind this vat is a skeleton of blackened bones. They are Hilda's remains, animated by the mummy to serve as a guard for the cask.

If someone tries to destroy the cask or starts to climb a ladder to the top, the following happens:

Suddenly, a clicking sound clatters around the huge cask. You see a skeleton of blackened bones advancing quickly toward you with clutching fingers. Above, you hear the groaning of wood, as if something is lifting the vat lid from the inside!

If the PC and his companions have been taking precautions or are suspicious of the area, they should not be required to roll for surprise. On the first round, the skeleton attacks and continues until destroyed. During subsequent rounds, Father Bernadette's mummy and its remaining zombie servants climb out of the cask and drop down on top of the PC and his allies.

If the PC attempts to turn the skeleton, he destroys it (if he is 6th level or higher) or the turning has no effect because the skeleton has nowhere to run.

If the PC wins the initiative, he may be able to throw the special formula (see Handout #2) into the vat while the mummy is still inside, causing the mummy to wail and shriek in smoking, sizzling agony. After three rounds of helpless thrashing, it will be destroyed. The same happens if the PC drops the potion inside the cask at night and the mummy climbs in upon its return. The zombies, however, are unaffected by the formula. They attack until destroyed or the mummy's dissolution.

The PC can also uncork the formula and splash it on the mummy. He must hit AC 3 to strike and destroy it.

It must also be remembered that the brandy is a fire hazard. From the smallest spark, the liquor and its cask become a roaring inferno, which spreads to other barrels and rises to the ceiling's support beams. Once ignited, there is a 10% chance (cumulative with each round) that a fire



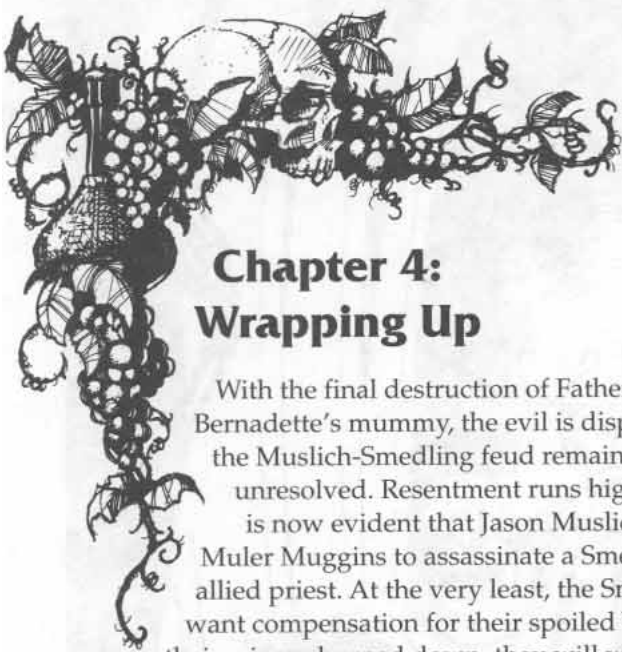
will spread out of control and a 5% chance (cumulative per round) that the brandy will explode, causing 10d6 damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage) to all within 15 feet. The PC and anyone with him need to escape within 4 rounds or die of smoke inhalation.

If not destroyed by the holy formula, the mummy will escape. It still wears Father Bernadette's *ring of fire resistance*, rendering it invulnerable to normal fire. If the winery is burned down, the mummy will find another tomb, starting with the wine casks of its good friend, Yorg Tieton. Any zombie servants remaining will be left behind to cover the mummy's retreat.

Skeleton (1): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD edged and piercing weapons inflict 1/2 dmg, immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65; MM/315.

Zombie Dogs (2): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 14, 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD Immune to sleep, hold, death magic, poisons, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65. The dogs, all dripping with brandy, should only be used if the "Disappearing Dogs" event in Chapter 2 occurred.





Chapter 4: Wrapping Up

With the final destruction of Father Bernadette's mummy, the evil is dispelled, but the Muslich-Smedling feud remains unresolved. Resentment runs high, since it is now evident that Jason Muslich hired Muler Muggins to assassinate a Smedling-allied priest. At the very least, the Smedlings want compensation for their spoiled brandy. If their winery burned down, they will want the Musliches to pay for it, too. Other townspeople, such as Yorg Tieton, who lost his best friend, and Reggie Salthorse, who lost his best customer, do not feel kindly disposed toward the Musliches, either.

The PC should try to mediate an agreement between the aggrieved parties. This negotiation is a real role-playing challenge for the DM, who must play the parts of the Musliches, Smedlings, and others. If the PC suggests any reasonable middle ground, then the DM should allow it to happen.

Because of all the ill-will among the villagers, Father Dominic asks the PC to conduct a final church service to give thanks for the destruction of the undead. He recommends a sermon on the evils of unhealthy competition. Since the PC played a key role in destroying the monster, everyone in town attends. The DM should allow the player to role-play this service as he wishes.

At the end of the sermon, the PC rolls a Charisma check (+3 bonus if he used *enthrall*). If successful, all of the winery families agree to bury the hatchet. They even agree to form a cooperative to obtain the best prices for their products.

If the check succeeds by 5 or more, Beufurt Smedling remembers his evil prayer and is overwhelmed with remorse. He approaches the PC privately and confesses his sin. He offers to

atone by serving the church for five years. The PC can take him back to the High Matriarch to determine whether this is appropriate penance. If he does, she will agree to the offer and assign Beufurt to be an NPC bodyguard to the PC.

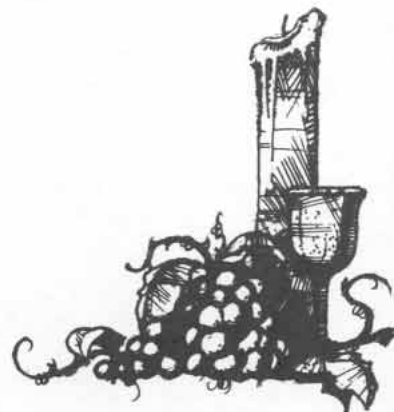
Putting the mummy to rest and ending the feud has great benefits for the Church. Baron Appleby makes a 1,500 gp donation to the church for the PC's heroic efforts. All four winery families and their workers have greater faith in the church's deity and start attending Father Dominic's services regularly. As the cleric leaves, the townspeople (even the Depardos) are already making plans with the village priest to expand the sanctuary and parsonage.

The cleric should receive a story award of 6,000 XP for defeating the mummy, in addition to any bonuses the DM wishes to give for good role-playing.

Cleric's Challenge II has many possibilities for follow-up adventures. If Muler Muggins' diary was found, the DM could expand it to reveal all the assassinations Muler performed and the identities of his employers. Baron Appleby would be very interested in learning the details. He could commission the PC to track down those who hired Muler.

Some of Muler's victims could have been other clerics of the church. In this case, the High Matriarch could assign the PC to a new mission.

Beufurt Smedling started the problems in Barlox with his woeful prayer, and an evil deity answered it. That heinous god is frustrated that its plan to wreak havoc in Barlox has been thwarted. It will want revenge upon the meddling PC, but that is another adventure for another time.



Father Bernadette's Mummy

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Village of Barlox
FREQUENCY:	Unique
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Very High (16)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	6 (48 hit points)
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1-12/1-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Fear, Disease
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See Below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	20%
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	5,000



Father Bernadette's mummy is an undead creature created by an evil deity in response to a prayer by a frustrated villager. Its purpose is to cause calamity to the Muslich winery of Barlox.

The body of the monster was Father Bernadette, a cleric murdered by an agent of the Muslich family. Although undead, the mummy recalls much of its natural life, such as the layout of the village, its murderer, and who its friends and enemies were.

It retains the appearance it had in life, a 6' tall man, but several features have changed. Because its tomb is a huge vat of brandy, it exudes a sickly-sweet liquor odor and its skin is amber-stained. Unlike most mummies, it is not wrapped in bandages. It wears the clothing it wore on the day Father Bernadette was murdered: clerical robes, sandals, and a holy symbol (which does not harm it).

Combat: This mummy is extremely powerful. Its two attacks each cause 1d12 hp damage. It recalls its sinking, choking death in the brandy cask, and it exacts poetic justice by drowning its victims. Anything handy will work: a bathtub, stream, rain barrel, pot of soup, etc. If nothing is available, it will try to drag the victim to the river.

The mummy's touch causes an unusual disease: it transmutes the victim's blood into alcohol. Anyone struck by the creature is entitled to a saving throw vs poison. Failure indicates that the person is infected and falls into a drunken stupor. Symptoms include purplish bruises, a cloying scent of strong, sweet wine, and sluggish, slurred speech. If a *cure disease* or *neutralize poison* spell is not administered within 12 hours, the victim dies.

Like other mummies, Father Bernadette's mummy causes such terror that creatures viewing it must make a saving throw vs. spell or become paralyzed with fright for 1d4 rounds. For every six creatures present, the saving

throw is improved by +1. Humans get an additional +2 bonus to their saving throws. After slaying a victim, Father Bernadette's mummy can cast *animate dead* to create a skeleton or zombie once per day.

Like other mummies, this one can only be harmed by magical weapons, which inflict only half damage. Mind-affecting spells, cold, poison, and paralyzation have no effect. Normal fire is also ineffectual, for it wears a *ring of fire resistance*. Even when reduced to 0 hp, its spirit is still restless. It regenerates and reemerges from its tomb to continue its mission. The only way to destroy it is by use of a special holy formula.

Tactics: The mummy typically strikes between 10 PM and 5 AM, and it will always attack someone who was involved in Father Bernadette's murder. Before it strikes, it sends out its zombies to create a diversion. After its attack, it escapes through the vineyards with its victim's corpse. Where others are slowed to half speed, the mummy moves at its full speed (9') around the grape fields. It always picks the rockiest ground it can find and leaves no tracks. If out of sight for more than 2 rounds, it has a 70% chance of remaining hidden in shadows (although its smell might give it away). Being undead, it is invisible to infravision.

Once the mummy reaches the Barlox river, it dives in and swims downstream underwater, reemerges later, and makes its way back to its tomb. This removes some of its brandy scent, often foiling the keen noses of tracking dogs.

Habitat/Society: Father Bernadette was drowned in a huge cask of brandy in the Smedling Winery, and it has entombed itself there. The skeleton of Father Bernadette's wife guards this cask. Any zombies it has animated also dwell there. If wounded, it can regenerate 6 hp a day in its tomb after 12 hours of rest.

Player Handouts:

Handout #1 (Found in Muler Muggins' closet, Area 2 of Barlox):

The first page of Muler Muggins' Diary, dated 10 years previous:

Hee, hee! The priest is dead! Nice of Mr. Muslich to ask me to do it, and he gave me 500 gp! Hah, with that much gold, I sure don't have to work in the vineyards for coppers a day any more! Father Bernadette won't be blessing anyone's fields for a long time now. Oh it was so neat to hear him pound away and beg to be released before he drowned. And oh the church blazed away! It sure will be interesting to see the reaction when they finally find his body! I like this work. I like it a lot. Perhaps others need this kind of service. Tomorrow I think I will head to the city and see. I have a good feeling about this.

Handout #2: Excerpt from the Book of Father Bernadette

Heretofore, I have described horrid forms of the dreaded undead that arise, and I have discussed how they may be defeated. However, there seem to be many exceptions to the rule. Tales of undefeatable skeletons are chronicled in seminary libraries, and rumors of ghouls that paralyze even the most lighthearted and carefree elves are whispered in the alehouses.

I conclude that these unusual undead are created not through the creative powers of evil priests, nor the innate powers of the undead themselves, but instead by and directly under the powers of diabolical gods for some unholy purpose on this plane. Such creatures can not be dealt with by normal means.

After much prayer and meditation, I conclude that only a special formula can be used to destroy these abominations. They all lair in a special spot, connected in some way to their natural lives. It is this vile den that must be sanctified and transformed into a holy trap that will destroy the undead when it enters it. Research is the key to preparing the formula for purging the evil. The undead uses a body that was living. When alive, what did that person loathe? Take a symbol or an ingredient of his hatred and put it in a vessel. What did that person love and adore? Take a symbol or an ingredient of love and place it into the same vessel. Next, use no less than two vials of the water of Holy Mother Church and pour it upon the ingredients of love and hate. A strong prayer must be spoken over the mixture. If potent enough, a sign will be given that the potion is complete.

Finally, you must find the lair and purify it with the solution. For 12 hours, the place will remain pure. Upon entering the sanctified lair, the creature will be destroyed forever.

Praying to my deity has granted me this insight. I hope I never have the opportunity to try it.

Handout #3: Found in the nightstand of Old Man Riggins (Building #5).

It is dated 9 years ago.

Village of Barlox

Sire:

I am a foolish old man who served long ago in the King's Army. I lost a leg in the Great Oro Wars and received a fair pension, but my life was ruined. Shamefully, I was bitter at my loss and drowned myself in bottles of wine every day.

Little have I gained in my liquor-sodden life: a wretched cottage and a cat, Sasha, who keeps me company. When your men come to get me, please make sure that Sasha gets a good home.

Yes, Sire, your men should apprehend me because a year ago I was an accomplice to a horrible crime which you yourself investigated. You may recall that just after you judged the best wine last year, our church burned to the ground and Father Bernadette was presumed to have died in its ruins. I know what happened.

On the night that it burned, I had exhausted my pension for that month and was out in the street. I hoped that someone would take pity on a veteran of the war and buy me a bottle to warm a cold, lonely night. Muler Muggins, then a farm worker for the Muslich Winery, approached me and asked me if I liked Father Bernadette. I did not because that meddling priest was always trying to get me to stop drinking. Muler then asked if I would care to earn enough for several bottles of wine. Of course, desperate for a drink, I agreed.

He took me to the trail that leads to the Teton Winery and told me that all I had to do was wait for Father Bernadette to come along. When he arrived, I was to approach him and beg him for a few silvers. Muler disappeared into the vineyards and waited. Sure enough, the priest came walking along and I did as Muler had asked. Father Bernadette started to scold me about my drinking (if I'd only listened to him!), Muler sneaked out of the vineyards and clabbed the priest from behind.

Muler threw me a sack of five gold coins, thanked me, and told me never, ever to say what had happened if I knew what was good for me. Then, he threw the unconscious body over his wiry shoulders and left me standing there.

I was trembling with joy that I could finally have a drink. I went back into town and bought several bottles. I rested on the banks of the river and enjoyed myself. After two bottles, I took what proved to be a short nap, for later I was awakened by cries of "Fire!" I watched blearily as villagers tried their best to put out a roaring fire that was consuming the church, but I was unable to help, feeling a little weal at that point.

Later, I heard that both Father Bernadette and his wife perished in the flames. I approached Muler about this, and told him that I had no idea he was going to burn the church, but he has just looked at me and called me an old fool drunk (which I am). He also told me that if I spread crazy stories around, I wouldn't live to regret it. He made a point of tapping a newly bought dagger he was wearing.

In the year since the burning, Muler has not worked one day for the Musliches, and he is building a fine house for himself and that dimwit that he married. I feel that he is up to more mischief.

Long have I pondered what happened that night, and no longer can I live with this on my conscience. Send your knights to take me into custody, along with Muler Muggins, because we caused the fire last year and killed Father Bernadette and his wife.

Your humble servant,

Homer Riggins

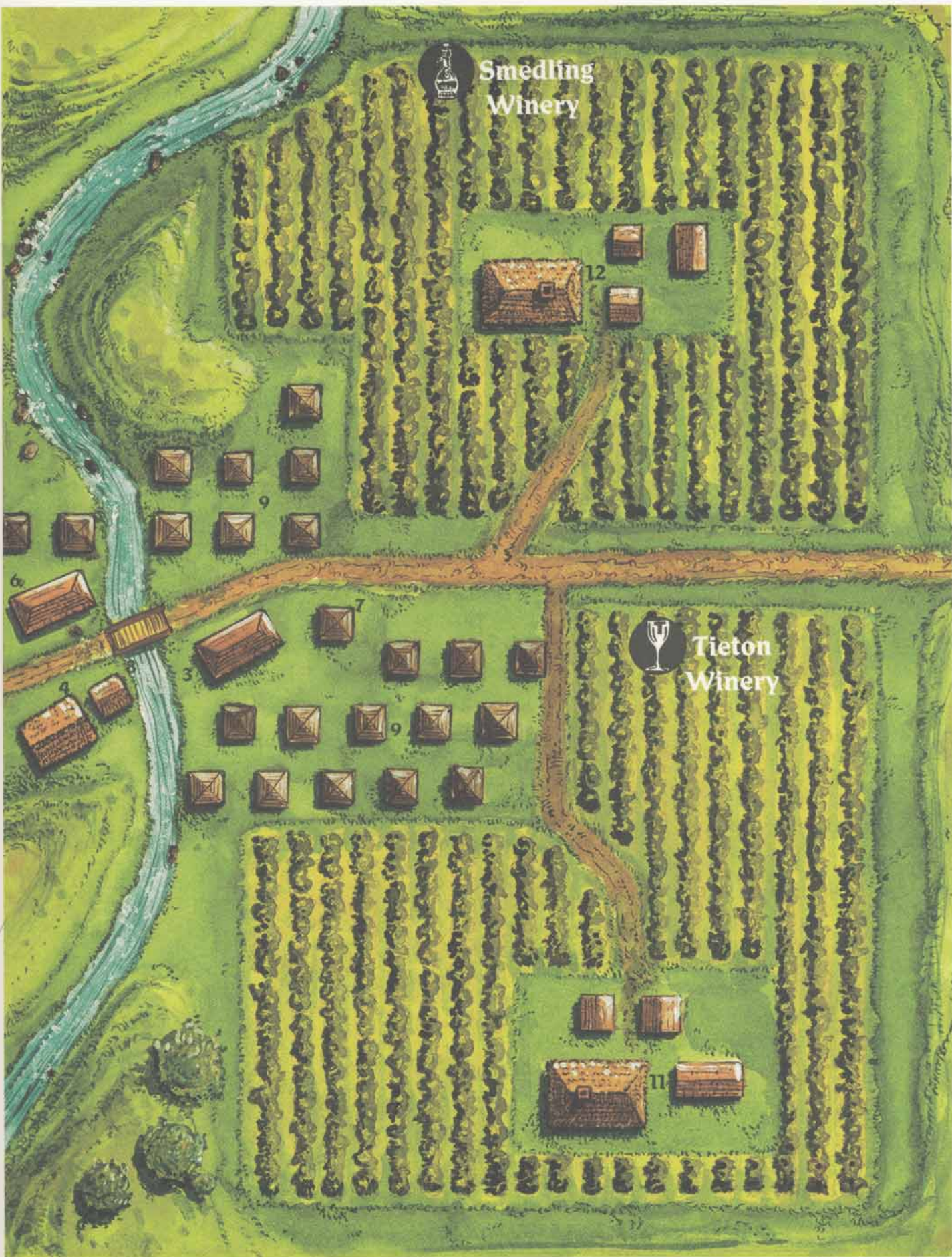
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by Paul F. Culotta

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