

Tales of the House of Lament

The finder of this fragment of the Madrigorian is Shawn M. Witzki, however he disappeared shortly after handing this document over to a scholar..... The accounts of events inside the House of Lament are said to come from an individual who miraculously escaped from the house - though how is unknown.

Noncombat Encounters

The wind blows through the parlor chimney, causing a low moan.

Soft creaks and groans are heard -- very much like the sounds of an old house settling.

A branch taps at the ballroom window (asynchronously, of course).

A draft creates a sudden pool of cold in a doorway.

The characters note that a storm is developing, darkening the already dreary sky above the house.

A branch scrapes at the dining hall window like a claw.

Floorboards creak overhead as if someone were stepping on them, yet a thin layer of undisturbed dust is present if investigated.

A draft catches the rocking chair in a child's room and sets it in motion.

A woman is heard crying in the black suite, but the crying stops when the door is opened.

The storm breaks and the rain begins, pattering against the windows.

A draft opens a poorly latched closet door, which creaks ominously on old hinges.

Objects and furniture change locations slightly while the characters' attention is directed elsewhere.

Fleeting glimpses of motion are seen out of the corners of the characters' eyes as they explore darkened hallways.

The rumble of nearby thunder shakes the house ever so slightly.

The eyes of the gallery portraits seem to follow the characters (a tried but true technique).

Doors open and shut of their own accord, occasionally locking and unlocking as well.

Whispering murmurs are heard in the dark.

The cutlery from the kitchen comes up missing.

The wind whistles in and out of the chimneys like the sounds of breathing.

Torches alight and extinguish of their own accord.

Two feral red gleams of light are glimpsed in a dark hallway, but they quickly vanish.

A woman's screams echo crazily through the tower.

Deep furrows are found in the entrance doors, apparently made by claws.

The characters' reflections in mirrors distort and become ominous -- mouth corners pull up slightly and eyebrows arch to give the appearance of a leer, etc. The effects intensify the longer a mirror is looked at, but disappear if they turn their attention away (continued viewing will cause the effects to reappear, of course).

The character marked by the house sees Mara's reflection instead of his own, and she reaches out plaintively to him for help, mouthing soundless words as she does so (character's who can read lips will note that she is asking him to release her from her torment).

The characters discover the missing cutlery -- a knife pierces the pillow of each bed upstairs.

Monstrous footprints leave a trail in the dust.

A mist seeps up from the floorboards, putting the characters to sleep.

The characters unmarked by the house dream of the gallows and later see a frayed rope noose dangling from the dining hall chandelier.

The character marked by the house dreams of Mara's history, as described in *Darklords*. This character will appear to grow older by the hour.

The characters become separated when they are alone (refer to the "holding hands" idea in *Darklords* if it's appropriate).

A note in elegant script appears on the desk in the library. It reads " will be coming home soon." The ink is a deep red and the quill lying beside the note smells of blood.

A phantom pounds on the doors at night, as described in *Darklords* (p52).

Stairs warp and twist underfoot.

The nymph spindles on the foyer staircase leer and reach for the characters' ankles.

Violins play a lonesome waltz in the ballroom of their own accord.

"Mara is lonely" is scrawled in fresh blood on the ballroom wall. The letters drip slowly down the wall and there is a large pool of fresh blood where the wall meets the floor.

" must die" is scrawled in fresh blood on the foyer floor.

Bear in mind that the exact location of many of these noncombat encounters can be altered to suit your particular party's exploratory pattern. I give you what worked for me. Note also that many of these encounters can be repeated (and in many cases should be) -- just don't get the players immune to them. Make the house as eerie as possible -- worse as night falls and the storm intensifies.

Combat Encounters

The following combat encounters are in no particular order, and the size and strength of the opposing force should depend on the relative strength of the characters. Use these whenever the characters are feeling a bit too at ease.

The busts in the gallery grow arms, legs, and wings, becoming GARGOYLES.

Empty suits of armor in the ballroom become animated by STEEL SHADOWS (qv The Ruins of

Undermountain -- a Forgotten Realms boxed set). *Alternatively, they could be DOOMGUARDS.*)

CARPET SNAKES (qv Greyhawk Ruins) arise from a bedroom rug and attack.

A hypnotic tapestry in the game room (depicting the hunt, of course) comes to life, releasing HELLHOUNDS.

Lightning from the storm briefly illuminates the servant's day room in a brilliant flash, causing SHADOWS to scurry about.

A moaning emanates from a closet near the foyer, where CLOAKERS (qv Forgotten Realms Appendix) dwell amongst old garments.

The chandelier in the foyer crashes to the ground, and GIANT SKELETONS (qv Ravenloft Appendix) emerge from the wreckage in a burst of flame. The creatures wield oddly shaped spears constructed from fused chandelier pieces.

Jars of murky liquid in the cellar contain CRAWLING CLAWS (qv Forgotten Realms Appendix), which break free to attack the characters.

WRAITHS dwell in the cellar.

The walls ooze dark red blood and a BLOOD ELEMENTAL (qv Ravenloft Appendix) rises from the mess.

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