

# THE STORM SHELTER'S LOCKET

BY RYAN LANEY

An unspecified object lies in the basement of an old abandoned storm shelter. You've been hired by a soft-spoken yet battleworn old man to help him safely reach the object's location, and for a good price.

As a DM, expect to add your personal flair for dread and horror when describing the rooms. Rank smells, putrid mold, and an overall sense of danger runs deep in the shelter. The random encounters can be added anywhere as seen fit, with the only scripted encounter being in the last 2 rooms.

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This scenario features:

Medicine  Survival  Constitution

And is particularly well-suited for:

Clerics  Paladins  Dwarves

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## BACKGROUND

Before beginning this scenario, you'll need to set up a location for the Old Haugen Farm and create a place where the old man Bertholme meets and hires the party. Once your team has been created, read the following:

*“Bertholme leans on his worn walking stick, staring you in the eye, his face showing signs of not having lived an easy life. A permanent frown rests beneath dull eyes and a few aged scars. He shuffles his heavy leather clothing*

*briefly and says ‘Thank you for offering to help me with this task. There’s something I expect to find at the bottom of the storm shelter of the old Haugen Farm, but I’m almost certain that a man of my age and condition would die trying to find it alone. The farmstead has been abandoned for years – that is, abandoned by humans. I’ve heard a few accounts of the strange creatures that lurk there now, but I’m sure a young and venerable group like yourselves could help me out.’*

*Bertholme hands you 50 gold, with the promise that there is more to come at the end of the mission. He says a brief prayer to himself under his breath, and you take off towards the Haugen Farm.”*

At this point you can either role-play how to get to the Haugen Farm, or simply fast-track it and start the adventure right there.

Bertholme will follow the party into the storm shelter, though he's able to stay back and handle himself just fine. The players should never need to guard or help him in any way.

## LUNG ROT

Throughout this adventure the party will be subjected to **Lung Rot**, a condition that may be contracted and intensified by exposure to the mold and stagnant water prevalent in many rooms. Whenever the party enters a room with Lung Rot marked with this sentence:

**[Lung Rot, DC 6 CON]**

they must succeed at a DC 6 CON save (even if they've already passed through the room

before) or have their Lung Rot level increased by 1.

0	No sign of Lung Rot on the person.
1	Disadvantage on all Ability Checks.
2	Disadvantage on Saving Throws and Attack Rolls.
3	Max HP reduced by 10.
4	Speed reduced to 0.

Spells such as **Protection from Poison** and **Lesser Restoration** may be used to reduce a character's Lung Rot severity back to zero, or a dose of **Willow's Mark**, an antitoxin that can be found in some rooms. Depending on the class makeup of the party and the number of failed saves made as the adventure goes, it's up to you as the DM how easily available the vials of **Willow's Mark** are.

## I. THE STORM SHELTER ENTRANCE

*"As you approach the farm, it's obvious that nothing has been used here for years. Rusted ox-plows, burned-down trees, and decaying panels on the house send a chill of uncertainty through your bones. The storm shelter's entrance lies about 40ft from the house, marked by an obvious mound of dirt with a large metal door slanted at a sharp angle. Bertholme stares at the farm with an expression of remembrance and longing."*

The hinges on the door to the storm shelter are rusted tight, and require a DC 15 STR check to pop open. If one person cannot open

it alone, others may join in to pry the door open.

Upon opening the door, an intense odor of mold and humidity seeps out. There are no natural lights inside the cellar, so someone will need to provide one. A steep staircase descends into the earth as the scent of wet mildew intensifies.

## II. THE WET CORRIDORS

*"You enter a room with natural dirt walls held up by wooden slats. The stone floor is slightly wet, making the sounds of small puddles splashing with every pace. There are no signs of proper drainage anywhere. Along the walls are a handful of barrels and cases. Based on the smell coming from them, they likely held fresh grain years ago."*

*The smell of decay in the air gives you cause for concern."*

### [Lung Rot, DC 6 CON]

You are welcome to describe this corridor with as many features as you like, and whatever size you like. If anyone attempts to break open one of the barrels/cases, they will find a mass of cockroaches spilling out of it, feasting on whatever grain might still be edible inside.

Ultimately there are two paths to take, left or right. A high **Perception** check on the walls will reveal an unusual pattern indented in the hard dirt, and a high **Survival** check (which you may need to prompt) reveals that it is definitely the mark of a creature that tends to travel along walls, often feeding on algae, mold, and similar substances.

### III. WE'RE NOT ALONE...

*"You follow the strange patterns on the wall into a chamber covered in green and white algae. The shallow pool of water from the previous room persists in here, along with an even stronger scent of mildew. Unusually large patches of white mold are stuck to portions of the walls.*

*Chairs and simple cots line the walls. In the middle of the room is a large open stove filled with damp, wet ash. It clearly hasn't been used in years. On the far side of the room you see another thin passageway."*

#### **[Lung Rot, DC 6 CON]**

A successful **Survival** check (DC 15) reveals that the white mildew is actually material from spider webs. The large patches of mold are actually spider eggs encased in webbing and mold. As the group walks further into the room, they are immediately attacked by giant spiders from all sides.

**2 Giant Spiders** (MM, p.328)  
**3 Giant Wolf Spiders** (MM, p.330)

If any player rolls a critical failure in this room, you may choose to have them accidentally break open one of the egg pouches along the walls, releasing another **Giant Wolf Spider** or simple **Spiders** (MM, p.337).

### IV. HOBBY ROOM

*"You walk through a short corridor into a room lined with several tables and shelves. Books, painting supplies, simple toys, and a*

*handful of tools used for woodcarving are laid about. The wood is rotted and useless, and the books smell like wet hair.*

*Bertholme seems very interested in this room, searching through desk drawers and cabinets slowly, yet very intently."*

This is a simple hobby room used to pass the time in the event of people being hidden down here for multiple days. The books on the shelves are barely readable, as the ink is runny and blotchy due to the humidity. The players may choose to search for anything of value, and the **Key** needed to access room 6 may be hidden in here. You as the DM may choose to hide potions or vials of **Willow's Mark** in here as well.

Eventually Bertholme seems defeated, not being able to find what he's looking for here.

### V. STOREHOUSE & PERFUMES

*"You enter a small room with 3 tall shelves made of wood and glass. Bottles and vials are spread among them covered in dust, many with names like Dawn Meadow, Wickerbrush, and Rose of May, indicating some kind of perfume or fragrance is held inside. There are also many bottles of pickled vegetables and fruit preserves, though they look much too old to eat safely.*

*One shelf holds several bottles that are noticeably different in design compared to the perfume bottles. They are also completely unlabeled."*

You may choose to hide **Willow's Mark** in here among the bottles on the shelf.

If a player opens one of the unlabeled bottles, a purple and black vapor pours out of it like a thick mist, and immediately flows out of the room as if on its own will.

## VI. VINES OF STONE

*"You walk down a narrow stairway into an even more humid room. The walls are more cleanly cut than in the rooms behind you, and many of the wooden slats are newer and from a different type of tree.*

*About 20ft down, you enter a wide room with a 12ft tall ceiling. The smell of heavy vegetation and decay wraps around you. Dark green vines hang from the ceiling, though several of these vines appear to be solid gray stone. You look down at your feet to notice the shallow pool of water is in this room too, though heavily absorbed into the soft moss covering the ground.*

*Mounds of vines ranging in height from 1-3ft tall are scattered around the room. Most of the walls are covered in thick, wet moss."*

### **[Lung Rot, DC 6 CON]**

This room should be drawn as the largest room seen yet. If a player attempts to search one of the mounds of vines, they find a scattering of non-human bones inside. It appears that the vines are practically eating whatever the creature there used to be.

The vines here are too water-logged to burn.

Under conditions seen fit by you as the DM, the party may awaken the myconids in the undergrowth to attack them.

**2 Myconid Sovereign (MM, p.232)**

If players investigate the north wall, they find a hidden passage behind the thick vines and moss leading to room 7. A puff of purple mist escapes from the moss when it's cut open, allowing the players a chance to avoid entering.

## VII. MIST & MYSTERY

*"You cut open the heavy vegetation, releasing a puff of strange purple mist. Behind the thick moss you enter a small crawl space 4ft tall that goes for at least 20 ft. As you continue through the passage, the purple mist gets thicker and thicker.*

*You stand tall again in a room with no discernible dimensions. The thick purple and black mist limits your vision to only 5ft in front of you, even with the strongest of torches or lights."*

When drawing this map, don't draw any walls besides the one with the crawl space attached to it, as the size of this room is unknown.

Occasionally the mist will seem to materialize into a human-like shape making a "come this way" gesture with its vapor hand. Players must make a DC 10 CHA save or be charmed by the mist. There is no larger purpose for this room, though it is a good place to somehow hide the **Key** to room 8 if the players have not already found it. Alternatively, they may need to backtrack to room 4, the Hobby Room.

## VIII. HORROR IN THE CEILING

*[A Key is required to enter this room.]*

*"You enter a room much less humid than where you came from, yet a few vines still line the walls. Bottles of perfume are scattered on the ground, each one with the top removed and clearly empty. A series of small gutters in the corners of the room seem to be siphoning the stagnant water on the floor into a drain pipe."*

### **[Lung Rot, DC 6 CON]**

There is nothing drastically notable about this room, so you as the DM are welcome to add unique features. If a player investigates the ceiling, they see the nearly-mummified body of a large wolf-like creature strapped to the ceiling by vines and spider webs. It appears to be completely drained of blood.

You may choose to add an encounter of your choice in this room to lengthen the adventure.

## **VII. VAMPIRE ONSLAUGHT**

*"A seemingly normal sleeping room opens before you. Normal, that is, except for the heavy decay of the wood furniture and the strong scent of dried blood. A dark-haired woman stands at the end of the room leaning over a table of books and small bottles. She turns around, stares you in the eye and loudly proclaims 'Ah, it's rare that my fodder comes right to me!' in a delightfully happy yet insidious tone. 'Wake up!' she screams aloud to no one in particular, as more creatures burst forth from the beds and walls bearing wicked, fanged smiles."*

Immediately the creature leaps towards the party, summoning her vampiric minions alongside her.

**1 Vampire Spawn** (MM, p.298)  
**1d4 Vampire Minions** (use the stat block for Zombie from MM, p.316)

This is the final encounter of the adventure. Let the players give it everything they've got!

## **EPILOGUE**

*"Bertholme walks into the room as though the entire fight with the vampires had never happened, his eyes fixated on a bookshelf near a bed. He walks with purpose, even in his old age. Bertholme pulls his right hand out from under his heavy leather coat and aims it directly for a book with a distinct dark green binding and the text 'Darmoll's Book of Childrens' Rhymes' written on it. As Bertholme opens the book, you see that the middle pages have been hollowed out to form a secret compartment. He leans his walking stick against the bookshelf and reaches his opposite hand inside the book to pull out a small silver locket which he opens after a brief struggle with the old latch.*

*Bertholme stares at the picture inside the locket as a smile slowly forms across his face for the first time in what you assume to be months, maybe years.*

*'Th- thank you...' he says sincerely, wiping a tear from his cheek. He closes the locket, places it inside his coat, and pulls out a pouch of coins. He regains his walking stick, places the coin pouch in your hands, and makes his way back to the entrance of the shelter as though he'd never met any of you."*

The coin pouch contains 70g. The players are not intended to know what is inside the locket.

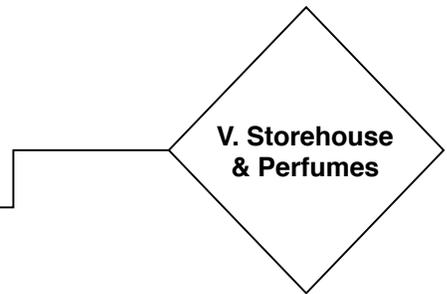
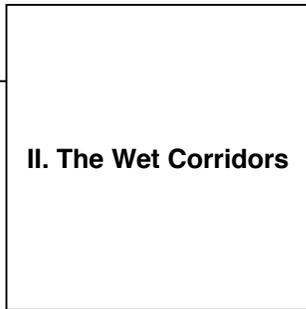
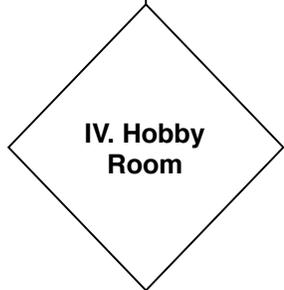
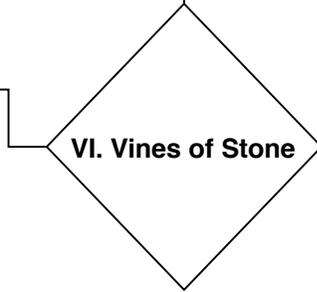
If you'd like to continue this adventure, consider having Bertholme contact the party several days later saying that he has an old friend several towns away who needs similar assistance with a vampire infestation.

# The Storm Shelter's Locket [map]

The storm shelter of a once-thriving farmhouse  
now home to an air of blood and decay.



IX. Vampire Onslaught



## Drawing This Map

The storm shelter near the old Haugen farmhouse is constructed with simple wooden support structures in primarily hard dirt walls. The rooms are decently well-furnished (*though falling apart*), and most rooms feature wooden slats along the walls to prevent cave-ins. Most passages are fairly squared-off and straight. Stairwells may be straight or spiral.



A slim metal key is required to access room 6. This key can be hidden among the mist in room 5a, among the shelves in room 4, or somewhere simpler as needed.