

ANCIENT EVIL IN OAKVALE

By Shane R Collins

Hook: The adventurers are asked to investigate strange noises heard in a local village

1 - Guardhouse: *A roasted pig burns over the hearth. On a small table are cards for a game in progress. The only sign of something awry is a clay tankard of ale smashed on the ground. Racks of weapons and scale armor line the walls. Bunk beds stand at the far wall, a chest at the foot of one stack.* The adventurers may hear whispers from the roasting pig. (The racks contain spears, short swords, short bows, arrows, and daggers. The chest contains 2x Alchemists Fire.

DC 15 – Beneath a loose floorboard is a silver dagger and a bottle of poison.)

2 - Sir Chadwick's Estate: *The estate's main door is open, creaking in the wind. Inside, papers flutter across the receiving room. In the main bedchamber, Sir Chadwick's bloated body sits upright in his desk chair. On the bed is a small pile of his lady's jewelry.* (Pearl Necklace 500GP, Emerald Earrings 150GP, On desk is house Chadwick signet ring.)

3 - Temple: *The temples stained glass windows, depicting heroic battles, cast an eerie glow inside the temple. An altar beckons for donations from the reverent.*

4 - Tonya's Taxidermy: *Dozens of stuffed beasts, towering black bears, mounted raccoons, and outstretched hawks glare at the party as they enter. Some may be drones*

6 - House of Biscuits: *The smell of fresh baked bread is the first reassuring sign they've seen. Flour dusts the floor and crusty loaves of bread fill a glass display case. The party may hear a sound from the clay oven. If they open its door, they find the baker's head inside.*

8 - Worn Statue: *As you approach the weather-worn statue in the village center, you see a dead body – bloated and purple veined – motionless. (Body contains parchment with "it's coming for us all" scrawled on it.)*

10 - Peter's Provisions: When the party approaches the store front, a lantern shatters inside throws and the building becomes an inferno.

12 - Village Homes: See table

Sewers: *The sewers smell like you'd expect. The tips of roots poke through the gravel ceiling. Sludge creeps along the crudely dug channel.* The sewers are conspicuously void of rats. There is also a treasure pile (500GP, Potion of Invisibility, Potion of Healing, and an Ivory Chess Set worth 150GP).

What is the Ancient Evil?

An ancient, shapeshifting monster that resembles crude oil. It absorbs and dissolves living organisms, gaining their memories. The monster sends portions of itself out to kill, feed, and return to the nucleus. These drones can take the shape of any creature its victims have seen or dreamed. The monster may lie dormant for centuries before devouring a town. The monster's weakness is its ego. It wants to be worshipped. The creature is resistant to most attacks but is vulnerable to fire. Destroying drones does little: its nucleus must be destroyed to kill it.

Roleplaying the Monster

It moves through town via the sewer system and it will only leave if its ego is tested or if it thinks the players will worship it. The monster kills villagers and leaves their bodies through town to be consumed later. Bodies the party discovers may vanish. The monster may amuse itself by killing a member of the party, assuming their identity, and rejoining the party. **Playing Drones:** Though they may assume any form, drones appear dirty, grimy, have oily black eyes, speak without moving its mouth, or speak in a voice that changes mid sentence. When attacking, drones can make only any physical attacks of the creatures they assume. Drones can also split open and attack with a black tentacle that is +5 to hit and does 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage and does an additional 1d6 poison damage.

Events

~ A woman shrieks outside; the party finds nothing when they search.

~ The sound of music and a party from the tavern breaks the silence but ends if the adventurers open the door. "Slayton Black The Immortal Enemy" is written in blood on the floor.

~ A thunderstorm and torrential downpour forces the party indoors.

~ The party contacts a drone villager that may either attack or attempt to join the party to learn more about them.

~ Climax: a bell tolls at the temple. Villager drones fill the pews turn to stare silently at the party. They merge with the nucleus to create its true form. Will the party worship the monster, swear to spread the gospel, or try to destroy it?

House Loot

- 1- 1d4 drones
- 2 – Pile of trinkets, belts, rings, coppers, glass eyes, and gold teeth
- 3 – "Slayton Black, the Immortal Enemy" scrawled in blood
- 4 – Footsteps or whispers coming from an undetectable source
- 5 – Music box that begins playing
- 6 – 1d4 flasks of oil
- 7 – Scroll of fireball
- 8 – Whispers coming from a cauldron of black ooze
- 9 – A dead adventurer, short bow, arrows embedded in wall
- 10 – Barricaded from inside, furniture pushed against door
- 11 – Healing potion
- 12 – DC 15 Find "Spellweaver" weapon that does additional 1d4 fire damage hidden in panel of wall.

5 – The Forge: *Scraps of metal, iron bars, and half-completed projects cover anvils and workbenches. The furnace still burns hot.*

7 – Drunken Dragon Tavern:

The thick trunk of an oak grows within the tavern, the bar built around it.

9 - Mara's Bookshelf: *Scrolls, leather-bound-tomes, and handwritten journals of poetry crowd every conceivable surface. A DC13Perception check if they're looking for it and DC20 if they're not, the party finds "The Immortal Enemy."*

11 – Oatmeal Inn: *A plate of oatmeal cookies sits at the front desk, a "Have a nice day," note beside it.*

The dining room table is laden with plates for a dinner that was never served. A stair case leads to the second floor and four guest rooms. Use loot tables for the rooms. The party may hear movement or a crash upstairs with no source. (DC15Perception check reveals a leather pouch containing three diamonds(100GP each) in the desk drawer's false bottom.)

The Immortal Enemy

Written by Slayton Black, this book describes the theory of an ancient monster responsible for numerous mass vanishings throughout history. If the PCs spend at least two hours reading it, they will learn that the monster absorbs memories from its pray, can take any shape, can detach drones to do its bidding, and that likely the only way to destroy it is to attack it in its full form.

Drone Shape

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| 1 – Giant Moth | 5 – Swarm of Rats |
| 2 – Giant Spider | 6 – Giant Snake |
| 3 – Mastiff | 7 – Cow |
| 4 – Villager | 8 – Bear |

Body Loot

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|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 – 2d6 Coppers | 5 – Potion of Healing |
| 2 – 2d6 Silvers | 6 – A moth emerges from the victims mouth |
| 3 – Nothing | 7 – Silver ring |
| 4 – Dagger | 8 – Handaxe |

