



presents

◆ ABSOLUTE ◆
ADVENTURES

H O R R O R

AT

MISTY
MEADOWS

SOMETHING STIRS WITHIN THE FOG

MICHAEL
BARKER

MATT
CLICK

JAMES
KEARNEY

TIM
KEARNEY

ABSOLUTE ADVENTURES: HORROR AT MISTY MEADOWS

Writing and Editing: James Kearney
Tim Kearney
Michael Barker
Matt Click

Layout: Matt Click

Design: Tim Kearney

Art: Jake Perez

Cartography: Joe & Sarah Bilton – Heroic Maps

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Absolute Adventures: Horror at Misty Meadows is an atmospheric fantasy horror adventure involving a cursed town, haunted tar pits, and a buried secret. This adventure is designed to challenge a party of mid-to-high-level adventurers and is suitable for use with your favorite fantasy roleplaying game and campaign setting.



Absolute Tabletop, LLC
PO Box 2493
Moriarty, NM 87035
www.AbsoluteTabletop.com

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A WORD ABOUT THIS ADVENTURE

Absolute Adventures: Horror at Misty Meadows is an atmospheric fantasy horror adventure designed for use with your favorite roleplaying game and campaign setting. It is designed for four to five characters of mid-to-high level. We won't lie to you: this is a difficult adventure. The challenges that the players will face are dangerous on their own – but they are downright deadly in succession. This lethality is by design, and intended to tax players, stretching them to their limits. If they use their wits and stick together, who knows – with a little luck, they just might prevail!

Or they might just die horribly – that's okay too.

While the themes of horror are tangible throughout this supplement, the adventure stays within the bounds of PG-13 in terms of violence, gore, and other elements of horror.

Absolute Adventures: Horror at Misty Meadows also includes high-quality maps of the mining town of Misty Meadows, as well as the nearby tar pits and gold mines. These maps were lovingly crafted by our good friends Joe and Sarah Bilton at Heroic Maps. They did an amazing job bringing Misty Meadows and the surrounding environment to life, and we couldn't be happier counting them as production partners. If you would like the full-size, printable maps to use while running Horror at Misty Meadows, they can be purchased from [Heroic Maps on DriveThruRPG](#).

We set out to make Horror at Misty Meadows feel scary. But more than that, we wanted to take a different path to get there. Not only have we tried to incorporate classic horror themes into the module, but we've also worked hard to find fresh ways to evoke them. We strived to strike a balance between the expected and the unexpected, and tried to join them together to create something that made chilling sense. If we've done our job right, Horror at Misty Meadows should feel eerily familiar – but still surprise you.

Go forth, brave adventurers – find your destiny, good or ill, waiting in the darkness below Misty Meadows...



WELCOME TO MISTY MEADOWS

THE FOG OF MISTY MEADOWS

The gold-mining town of Misty Meadows is named for the perpetual mist that veils it. This phenomenon has never fully been explained. Some locals say it's a magical fog, others call it a gift from the earth itself, and many believe the fog stems from the nearby tar pits to the west or Saltbreath Bay to the southeast. But no matter its origin, the fog has always been considered good luck by the residents of Misty Meadows.

Until now.

As of late, the thin veil of mist has accumulated, becoming thicker and more obtrusive, and with the fog came a series of odd, unsettling occurrences. Now the town of Misty Meadows is mysteriously empty, and the fog is thicker than ever. But regional rumors say something dark dwells in the mines of Misty Meadows – something ancient, sinister, and patient...

THE TAR PITS

West of Misty Meadows sprawls a cluster of viscous tar pits, famed for the strange creatures preserved in their inky depths. In an effort to maintain the gold mines that reside across the pits, the citizens built a series of bridges to aid in its crossing. For years, the people of Misty Meadows have crossed the pits to work in the mines, but recently the tar has begun to boil and churn, seeping up from the ground like blood from a wound. Unbeknownst to the townsfolk of Misty Meadows, a vile entity has slumbered in the black depths of the tar pits, waiting for the right moment to exert its will over the land. That moment, unfortunately, has come...



THE LICH IN THE PIT

Centuries before the founding of Misty Meadows, the lich known as Vorgul Drakus was a powerful force of evil. The heroes of the realm, unable to find and destroy Drakus' phylactery, battled against the lich and his forces for many years. At the cost of many lives, the heroes finally subdued Drakus, imprisoning him in an iron coffin bound with heavy chains, and dumped him into the tar pits. As the years fell away and the heroes aged and died, the lich known as Vorgul Drakus was forgotten. For centuries of silence and blackness, Drakus waited. As the town of Misty Meadows was built and expanded over several generations, Drakus waited. As the mines brought security and prosperity to the town, Drakus waited.

But now, Drakus waits no longer.

THE CRYSTALS

Over the centuries of his imprisonment, Vorgul Drakus' necromantic essence soaked into the tar pits as his body dissolved and regenerated again and again. Eventually, the tar became a boiling stew made up of Vorgul Drakus himself. The tar, more volatile and deadly than ever, began boiling over, seeping up through the earth and into the gold mines. As it cooled, the tar formed tiny, purple crystals in the damp caverns of the gold mines of Misty Meadows.

The crystals have since grown in number, and in power, and now fill the mines. This is the closest Vorgul Drakus has come to attaining physical form in almost a millennium. And every moment, the small and luminous extensions of the lich himself grow and extend, slowly reaching out for those Vorgul Drakus might ensnare in his plans for resurrection.

Vorgul Drakus must rise from the tar pits – and he will use the townsfolk of Misty Meadows to do so. He exerts his will through the crystals and draws ever closer to once again clutching the realm in his skeletal grip – that is, unless someone stands in his way...

PART I: THE WOODS

The adventure begins as many scary stories do – in a dark forest on a stormy night.

You've been trudging down an old, unmaintained road for hours. The pounding of the rain on the forest canopy above is deafening. The rain drips from the dense branches and foliage, and your boots sink into the mud with every step. No animals roam here; no birds flit from tree to tree. There are no signs of life, save for the flora that surrounds you, which gives off a potent, earthy smell. Your party has been trekking through these woods all day, and now that night is falling, the road and the forest around you becomes increasingly difficult to see.

Suddenly, the rain stops. The haunting silence that follows is unnatural, and soon enough, you see a strange light approaching in the distance, bobbing eerily up and down as it gets closer...

THE DEAD THING IN THE MIST

As the strange light gets closer to the adventurers, they realize it is a lantern, attached to the helmet of a shambling man with rotting skin hanging off his bones. Tar drips from the horrid creature as it drags a dismembered arm, which itself is clutching a rusted pickaxe. The **TAR ZOMBIE** says nothing as it lunges out of the fog, swinging the arm (and the pickaxe) over its head.

The undead creature isn't particularly strong, but the mud presents a unique obstacle and counts as difficult terrain. There is plenty of foliage for ranged combatants to seek cover.

Upon defeating the rotting creature, investigative adventurers will find that it is clearly a zombie. He shambled away from the nearby mining town of Misty Meadows, which the adventurers might surmise based on the zombie's belongings:

- A miner's lantern – a rudimentary head lamp, consisting of a shoddy metal helmet with a small oil lamp attached to the front. When the wick is lit, the miner lantern sheds light in a 30-foot cone and leaves the wearer's hands free.
- A small satchel, filled with worn copper pieces. The words "Misty Meadows" are engraved on the coins. Most traveled adventurers will know that Misty Meadows is a nearby town, but a successful DC 15 Arcana check will reveal some of the village's history: Misty

Meadows gets its namesake from the cloud of fog that surrounds it year round. While it is usually just a minor haze, some of the locals believe it is a magical fog. This is most likely just a superstitious rumor.

- A rusted iron pickaxe, engraved with the words, "M. M. Gold." A DC 14 History check reveals that the town of Misty Meadows persists off of gold gathered from the nearby mines.

With the help of clearer weather, along with the zombie's helmet, the road is now a bit easier to spot in the forest. Following it further will lead the adventurers to the town of Misty Meadows...



PART II: MISTY MEADOWS

A TOWN ABANDONED

As the adventurers approach the town of Misty Meadows, the air gets progressively thicker and more humid. Small swirls of mist float on the air – the famed fog, and Misty Meadows’ namesake. As they reach the forest’s edge, the town proper comes into view.

The adventurers can just make out the pitched rooftops through the thick mist, and a broken roadside sign hanging by one corner. It reads: “–lcome to Misty Meadows. Stay the night!” Perhaps the only thing eerier than the mist is the overwhelming quiet. No signs of life emanate from the town. Misty Meadows has seemingly been abandoned. A faintly noxious, acrid smell hangs on the air, stemming from the tar pits to the west.

Navigating through Misty Meadows proves to be quite the chore. The fog is thick as porridge, and the adventurers must stick together to avoid getting lost. The three primary points of interest are listed below, and are reached at random. Using dice (or another mechanic of your choosing) determine which location the characters find first.

1. OLD PILSUN’S TAVERN

You hear a strange creaking noise coming from the left. Upon investigation, its source is a swinging sign, dangling from a building’s overhang. It reads, “Old Pilsun’s Tavern.” A golden mug of ale is carved into the sign.

Stepping in from the fog, the adventurers find themselves in a simple tavern. Six tables crowd a common area, and a hefty wooden bar takes up most of the far wall. Its golden paint has become worn and chipped in many places.

The tavern itself looks untouched. Mugs of flat ale and coagulated milk sit about the room, as if the place was abandoned all at once. There is no sign of struggle.

The mining town of Misty Meadows. Inside the town proper, the adventurers find Old Pilsun’s Tavern, the Claxton family home, and a shop owned by the town’s butcher, Leroy.



There are some notable things to find inside:

- A coinpurse containing nine silver pieces and four coppers sits behind the bar.
- A dusty skull hangs above the cold hearth on the western wall. A successful Nature check (DC 10) reveals the skull to be reptilian in nature. With a 15 on the check, they know this to be a velociraptor skull. A successful DC 20 History check reveals that many thousands of years ago, large reptilian beasts such as velociraptors and other dinosaurs were very common to this region.
- There is a small storeroom in the back of the tavern, but it has been completely emptied.

PART II: MISTY MEADOWS

2. THE CLAXTON HOUSE

You find yourself at the front steps of a simple, squat house. So simple, in fact, that there would be nothing drawing you to it whatsoever, were it not for the sound you just heard coming from inside. It was almost inaudible, but for a moment, you swear you heard quick footsteps on hardwood.

There was definitely something moving in this house, but there are no living things to be found if the adventurers venture inside. There are obvious signs of a struggle here. The dining table has been overturned, along with two chairs, one of which is missing a leg.

Inside, the adventurers find the body of a grown man, facedown on the floor of the kitchen. He is blue in the face, and some of the flesh has rotted off of his bones.

A successful Investigation or Medicine check (DC 10) reveals the cause of death: a deep puncture in his chest insinuates he was stabbed with something rough and jagged. He has been dead for almost a week. A more successful Investigation or Medicine check (DC 16) reveals large splinters inside the wound, matching the wood of the overturned chairs. The adventurers also find what looks like dried tar on the bottom of the man's boots, similar to the tar dripping from the zombie on the road.

With a successful Perception check (DC 15), the adventurers find dried blood and footprints in the dust, leading toward the center of the room before immediately stopping beneath a hatch in the wooden ceiling.

After a while, the adventurers hear a creaking sound coming from the ceiling. There's someone upstairs...

In the attic, the adventurers find young Lily Claxton. She is in her pre-teens, but has seen far more than she should have at such a young age. She has been hiding in Misty Meadows for over a week, attempting to survive while avoiding (or dispatching) the undead that are lurking about. While her features might have once been cherubic, she now appears gaunt and primal. Her dark hair hangs in her face, covering her left eye. Her right eye is wild as the adventurers approach her. She says little, despite being happy to see other people in the town.

She will not attack the adventurers so long as she knows they are not zombies, and instead, might offer to help them. Here are a few things the adventurers might learn from Lily Claxton:

- Lily has been surviving off of the leftovers in the town for over a week and has compiled a stash of goods in the attic she now calls home. Notably, a large quantity of goods obtained from the nearby Pilsun's Tavern.
- The entire town was abandoned all at once, as if the townsfolk came under some sort of spell. Lily was out with her friend Molly, foraging for sweet berries in the woods, when it happened. She believes this is why she was unaffected. If asked where her friend is now, she will simply point out the window, at a recent grave dug in her backyard.
- The population of the town walked in the direction of the nearby tar pits. Lily believes the pits have grown more evil as of late, always churning and bubbling.
- Lily had to kill her own father (the body on the floor downstairs). She can't seem to bring herself to bury him though. She might ask the adventurers for help.

PART II: MISTY MEADOWS

- Lily's brother, Jarrich, has been missing since the event. He works as a miner in the gold mines. She asks the adventurers to keep an eye out for him if they decide to head towards the tar pits. She describes him as bald and tall.
- The gold mines are a short walk from Misty Meadows, out beyond the tar pits. Many of the men and women of Misty Meadows make a living working the mines.
- The adventurers can try to convince Lily to lead them to the tar pits (DC 12 Persuasion check). She will go no further than the pits, however, out of fear of becoming like her father.

Lily holds onto a small strand of hope for her town. She will not leave until it is absolutely necessary. Especially not now that people have come to save Misty Meadows.



PART II: MISTY MEADOWS

3. LEROY'S BUTCHER SHOP

A bloody meat cleaver sways from the overhang of this building, and a sign on the wall reads: "Leroy's Butcher Shop."

The butcher shop has become a haven for flies, feasting on the putrid meats. Other than that (and the disgusting smell), there are a few items of note:

- A row of assorted knives and cleavers hangs above the counter near the far wall.
- A bag of expensive salts can be found with a successful Perception check (DC 16), hidden underneath one of the kitchen floorboards

After searching the shop, the adventurers hear a groaning sound emanating from the back room of the shop – a sound they now find oddly familiar.

Leroy, the town butcher, died three days ago. Which is why it is eerie to see him walking into the

shop right now, clutching a large meat cleaver in each hand.

Through a cloud of flies, Leroy stands eerily still. A leather satchel around his neck glows from within, and bathes him in purple light. His apron is covered in blood – some old, some fresh. He stalks toward you with unexpected power, wielding a meat cleaver over his head murderously.

There are a few interesting items Leroy has on him:

- Two large cleavers, freshly sharpened.
- A bloody apron.
- A worn map of Misty Meadows and the surrounding area, revealing the tar pits to the west of town.
- A small leather pouch. Inside, the adventurers can find some strange, glowing purple crystals.

CRYSTAL EFFECTS

The purple crystals react strangely when handled. If an adventurer touches the crystals with bare skin, roll a D6 or choose an option from the following list:

1. A strange sense of unease washes over you. Whispers seem to emanate from the shadows.
2. A jolt races through your body, numbing you. Suffer 1 necrotic damage.
3. In an instant, all of the strength leaves your body. Gain 1 point of exhaustion.
4. Bile burns in your throat and your stomach knots itself. You are sickened for 1d10 minutes.
5. A horrific purple skull, reptilian in nature and dripping with tar, looms out of the darkness. None of your companions see it. You are frightened for 1d10 minutes.
6. A grating voice whispers, "Sleep, child," and darkness closes around you. You are unconscious for 1d10 minutes.

PART III: THE TAR PITS

THE BLACK PITS OF MISTY MEADOWS

As you leave the foggy confines of town and trudge westward, the faintly noxious smell of the tar pits grows stronger. Through a copse of gnarled trees and brittle shrubs, you come upon the bubbling, viscous tar pits of Misty Meadows.

The miners of Misty Meadows cross the tar pits by way of rickety wooden bridges daily in their journey to the gold mines. But the pits are eerily quiet night now – the silence broken only by black bubbles bursting as the pits boil over. Acid steam rises from the pits, creating a thick fog that impedes visibility. Strange bones protrude from the inky tar, and an overturned cart blocks a portion of the dirt path. If the adventurers inspect the cart, they find bloodstains and several miner lanterns, and also discover that large bites have been taken out of the cart.

With the strange happenings in Misty Meadows, the tar pits have developed necrotic properties, and undead creatures have risen from their inky depths. If an adventurer comes into contact with the boiling tar, they must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d8) acid damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. In addition, at the start of each of the adventurer's turns, they take an additional 2 (1d4) acid damage as the sticky tar continues to burn their flesh. As long as they aren't submerged, they may use a standard action to scrape the tar from their body to end this ongoing damage.

The tar pits are generally 10 feet deep. If an adventurer falls into the tar, in addition to the damage described above, they sink 1d4 feet and become restrained. At the start of each of the adventurer's turns, they sink another 1d4 feet. As long as the adventurer isn't totally submerged in the tar, they can attempt to escape by succeeding on a Strength check, the DC of which is 12 plus the number of feet the adventurer has already

The tar pits are supposedly the resting place of prehistoric reptiles, and are traversed daily via bridges by the miners of Misty Meadows.



sunk into the tar. If the adventurer becomes totally submerged, they can no longer breathe, and may suffocate. An adventurer can attempt to help one of their companions out of the tar pit by succeeding on a Strength check, the DC of which is 6 plus the number of feet the adventurer has sunk into the tar.

A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED TAR

In order to reach the other side of the tar pits, the adventurers must cross several rickety wooden bridges. With the tar pits boiling over, the bridges have become more precarious and brittle than ever. If more than one adventurer steps onto a bridge at one time, there is a 40 percent chance the rotted boards will give way, dumping them into the pit. They must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or find themselves knee-deep in the boiling tar (see the above rules for tar damage and sinking).

Map © Heroic Maps, used here with permission. To purchase a printable, full resolution version of this map, [click here](#).

PART III: THE TAR PITS

JURASSIC TAR

As you make your way across the rickety bridges, you become aware of a sudden stillness. The tar splits, and an enormous, reptilian skull emerges, its jaw only half attached. Covered in smoldering tar, the skeletal form of a 20-foot-tall, zombified Tyrannosaurus Rex turns toward you. Rotting flesh hangs from it in layers. Tar belches forth as it roars and draws back to strike.

By far the greatest threats awaiting the adventurers in the tar pits are the **TAR ZOMBIE RAPTORS** and the **TAR ZOMBIE T-REX**. These primordial creatures have been preserved in the bubbling tar, and have recently awoken thanks to the vile will of Vorgal Drakus. They are putrid, half-rotted creatures, covered in thick tar with necrotic flesh hanging off their bones and white-hot rage burning in their hollow eye sockets. They attack

the adventurers without hesitation.

The T-Rex and Raptors attack separately (or together if you're trying to end the adventure prematurely). The T-Rex rises from one of the pits, covered in black, viscous tar. Its mobility is hampered, but it utilizes its superior reach, lunging forward and attempting to snatch nearby adventurers in its jaws to drag them into the boiling tar. If the adventurers are crossing one of the pits, the T-Rex uses its action to smash the bridge beneath their feet (DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the tar). If the adventurers move out of the T-Rex's reach, it will use its breath weapon rather than give chase.

The four Raptors attack, pack-style, from the surrounding trees. They flank the adventurers on two sides, attempting to corner them or drive them into the tar pits. Unlike the T-Rex, the Raptors are quick and agile, leaping over the tar pits to pounce on the adventurers and rip them apart. The adventurers should be wary – the raptors have viciously sharp claws on their feet.

TAR ZOMBIE ADVENTURERS

If an adventurer dies while submerged or covered in the tar from the pits, they will rise as a zombie in 1d4 rounds, flesh melting off their bones and hate burning in their eyes. Use the **TAR ZOMBIE** statblock to represent this creature, though feel free to adjust their weapons and armor to more closely match the deceased adventurer. If they die submerged in the tar, they will lunge out of the pit and attempt to grapple and drag their companions into the tar with them.



PART IV: THE MINES

PATH TO THE CRYSTAL CAVES

Leaving the tar pits at your back, you trek down a well-used dirt path. Through dense, tangled woods and scraping shrubs, you come upon the mouth of the mines of Misty Meadows, yawning open like the maw of a great beast.

The dirt path leading to the mines is covered in a scrambled mess of fresh, runic gouges. Recently carved into the earth, these deep markings in the dirt have an archaic and vile appearance. Upon making eye contact with the vile runes, the adventurers must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 11) or take 4 (1d8) psychic damage, and a feeling of dread strikes them. If they succeed, they take no damage but recall a deeply troubling memory.

ENTERING THE MINES

As the adventurers step into the mines, an eerie, purplish glow bathes the walls and floor. A sickening, low-pitched hum drones almost imperceptibly. Both the glow and the hum seem to be emanating from strange, purple crystals that

grow along the walls and floor in jagged clusters.

The mine's entrance eventually dead-ends into a jagged stone wall littered with alien-looking markings. Closer inspection shows that these gouges have been burned into the wall using the tar from the pits. Each adventurer must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or come under the influence of the glyphs. The glyphs are not in total control, just very suggestive, and trustworthy.

The following rooms are illusory. Adventurers who succeed on the Wisdom saving throw, or who begin to suspect the facade and succeed on a DC 18 Insight check, realize it's not real – otherwise, the experience seems strange, but convincing. This sequence occurs whether the players are aware of it or not, but the Wisdom saves allow them to respond and react cognitively.

The experience represents the adventurers being captivated by the glyphs, which are slowly digging deeper and deeper into their psyche, represented by doors. This acts as a kind of security system to make sure that no one can enter the mine easily without first falling under the influence of the evil energies present here.

MORE CRYSTAL EFFECTS

The power of the crystals is even more potent inside the mines. If you want to add an eldritch horror twist, roll a D6 or choose an option from the following list:

1. The secret to being rich is to purge the world of non-valuable things. You get rid of all the junk you can find. By eating it.
2. It is very important that you remove your teeth and tongue immediately. Everyone else's too. For their safety.
3. You can't imagine why someone wouldn't want their eyes removed.
4. It's high time you start replacing your bones with anything else you can find. Everyone else's bones too.
5. You see the flaw in how weak your blood is. But the blood of others is strong, and they're selfishly keeping it from you. Get them to share.
6. You understand the cosmic concept of Unhands, and after removing your own, you need to evangelize other creatures by removing theirs. You do this to save them, because they need you.

PART IV: THE MINES

THE FIRST INFILTRATION

The glyphs become readable to all, but begin to impose their will on any who failed their Wisdom saving throw. It's an easy pattern to follow, and reminds them of a form of basic common. The glyphs clearly form a riddle:

*As I was on my way to Misty Meadows
I met a coven of seven widows
Each widow's sack had seven rats
Each sack of rats had one dead cat
Each stone-dead cat had twenty flies
All sets of flies had two red eyes
How many were going to Misty Meadows?
Speak the answer*

The answer is one. "I" was going to Misty Meadows.

The longer the adventurers stare at the riddle, the better. The purpose of the riddle is to hold the adventurers' attention while the glyphs infiltrate their minds. Once a satisfactory answer is spoken aloud, an entryway becomes evident in the adventurers' peripheral vision that they didn't quite see before. Speaking the riddle's answer has obviously revealed a hidden doorway to venture deeper into the mines.

THE SECOND INFILTRATION

When the adventurers approach the newly revealed doorway, they find a faint purple field acting as a translucent door. Upon inspection, the adventurers notice a pickaxe leaning against this translucent door, as if it were totally solid. However, the purple crystals growing from the floor and walls seem to be passing through it seamlessly at various points. Another mass of glyphs is scrawled above the door.

*To pass this vigilant, glowing sentry
But one substance can grant you entry*

The answer is that the adventurers need to be holding a purple crystal to make it through the force field.

The adventurers need to physically possess a crystal to pass through the door. It must be touching their skin (see the crystal roll table on page 9 for the magical effects that might occur). If they attempt to pass through the doorway without a crystal, they find the translucent door solid and impassable.

THE THIRD INFILTRATION

When the adventurers walk through the translucent purple door in possession of a crystal, there is a flash of purple-white light. They are now standing in a very large room that looks strangely familiar to them. On the northern wall of the room is an enormous, crystal door. The room's shape is hard to place, as darkness borders the periphery in every direction. If the adventurers try to go into the darkness in any direction, they find themselves walking blindly for a few minutes, and then emerging from the other side of the same room, standing before the door yet again. About four feet from the bottom of the door is a set of keyholes of various shapes, one for each adventurer. The keyholes are clearly linked to locking mechanisms that are keeping the door closed. At this point, the adventurers hear a faint, rasping whisper that says:

*Focus intently, and you will see
Imagine your crystal to be the key*

If the adventurers focus on their crystals, they find that they've taken the shapes of jagged keys. All of the keys need to be placed in the keyholes at once for the door to begin to unlock. Once the adventurers all put their keys into the holes, they hear the whisper again. It says one word: "Push."

PART IV: THE MINES

When the adventurers push the crystal keys into the door, they hear a marked crunch, and blood begins to run from the locks, pooling at their feet. The door opens, and the adventurers see a flash of an iron coffin, burning in tar. In their vision the coffin opens, and a scarred, tar-covered lich screams and reaches for them.

Then, in an instant, the adventurers come to. They are all standing right where they began, staring at the glyphs. The only difference is that now, they're each clutching a crystal in their hands tight enough to draw blood.

Though shaken, they can now clearly see the entryway into the main portion of the mine.

Blackness surrounds you entirely. Fifteen feet in front of you a single, tiny glowing orb appears, fiery and purple. Then a second. Then ten more, then twenty more, all in pairs. You realize that these glowing purple orbs are the eyes of a great deal of people. As their glowing eyes continue to open, the room becomes more and more illuminated, revealing their tragic state.

THE MISSING OF MISTY MEADOWS

The townsfolk of Misty Meadows are gaunt and, covered in blood. Their hands and feet are blistered beyond recognition. Each of their faces is emotionless. At least 40 townsfolk surround the adventurers with glowing, purple eyes, but they do not move to attack. They are entirely docile as their jaws slacken open unnaturally. In a terrible whisper, all 40 of them say in unison, "He is waiting for you."

At that moment, the crowd parts, revealing the entryway to an ominously glowing room.

If the adventurers try to talk the villagers, they will not reply. If the adventurers decide to attack the villagers, they will be met with no resistance, they will simply fall dead to the floor as the rest will continue to stand and stare.

MADNESS IN THE FLESH

After passing the vacant-minded townsfolk, the adventurers finally come upon an entryway to a room bathed in sickening, purple light. The low, droning hum knots the stomachs of the heroes as they approach. The room is a sight unlike anything else. The floor of this place is solid crystal, impossibly smooth. This concentration of crystal, more so than any other crystals in the mine, are eerily luminescent, and the light is piercing.

The room before you is almost incomprehensible in its construction. The floor is a sheet of thin crystal, with a lake of boiling tar churning beneath it. Seated upon a makeshift throne is a gaunt, haggard man with crystals protruding from his body. In the center of all of this, a foreign-looking skull levitates slowly.



Jarrich Claxton, Lichfiend

PART IV: THE MINES

In the center of the room, an oblong skull levitates, ebbing and flowing with the dreadful hum that fills the room. The adventurers might recognize this skull as a velociraptor skull, similar to the one mounted over the hearth in Old Pilsun's Tavern.

The crystal floor is relatively thin, and beneath it, a lake of tar boils and churns, appearing dark purple through the colored crystal. This is the same viscous tar bubbling up in the tar pits en route to the mines.

Seated upon a makeshift throne of jutting purple crystals is a gaunt, haggard young man, his eyes hollow sockets of darkness. He caresses the purple crystal skull as he notes the arrival of the adventurers. This is Jarrich, Lily's brother, who has fallen under the influence of the lich Vorgal Drakus.

The same glowing purple crystals erupting from the walls and floor of the mines protrude from Jarrich's body, splitting his skin with the potent presence of Drakus.

Jarrich is a **LICHFIEND**, a physical aspect of a lich who serves unceasingly. He does not actively engage the adventurers in conversation, merely enacts Drakus' will through violence. However, if the adventurers ask questions of the horrid creature, he will respond in a rasping whisper that seems to emanate from elsewhere – the voice of Vorgal Drakus. Drakus makes no effort to conceal his plans – he may tell the adventurers everything before eviscerating them: that he means to gather power by sacrificing the souls of the townsfolk to his new phylactery, and rise from the tar pits more powerful than ever. The kingdoms will tremble at his coming. If the adventurers mean to halt Drakus' resurrection, the lichfiend will do anything to stop them. Inevitably, combat ensues.



The fight occurs on a sheet of solid crystal. This crystal is smooth and slick, and counts as difficult terrain. If the adventurers attempt anything beyond basic movement, they must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Once the lichfiend has fewer than half of his total hit points, he will use his Amorphous Gait to teleport into the center of the room. He kneels and prays aloud to Vorgal Drakus, pleading for aid. When he does so, the crystal floor shatters into dozens of pieces that float on the lake of boiling tar. The adventurers must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the tar when this occurs. The adventurers can still move through the room, but maintaining balance on the floating crystal shards is difficult. When moving more than

5 feet, the adventurer must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity check or fall into the tar. The lichfiend floats in the air, sparing him from these effects.

Once the lichfiend has fewer than a quarter of his total hit points, he stops fighting momentarily, holding his head in his hands. "No more," he screams. "No more, please. Just let me die." Drakus then regains control of his thrall and resumes the fight, refusing to retreat until either the lichfiend or the adventurers are destroyed. At this point, the lichfiend can make use of his Madness Unto Death ability to attack twice with his claws.

If any of the adventurers attempt to damage or destroy the purple crystal skull (which is Drakus' new phylactery), the lichfiend will focus its attention solely on them. The skull has an AC of 10, 50 HP, and is resistant to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical sources. If the phylactery is destroyed, the fight ends immediately as the lichfiend screams its last

PART IV: THE MINES

and shatters every nearby crystal. The adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (2d10) slashing damage from the exploding crystals.

With the phylactery destroyed, Jarrich unfortunately dies as he is severed from Drakus' influence. The townsfolk in the previous room, however, are alive and confused – they have no memory of the last week, beyond darkness and strange whispers. They are malnourished and dehydrated, but otherwise unharmed. They are grateful to the adventurers, and wish to retake Misty Meadows from the darkness that has overrun it.

Outside, the fog begins to dwindle as the will of Vorgal Drakus fades from Misty Meadows. His influence, at least for now, will no longer plague the people of this town. The Lich in the Pit, once again, slumbers and waits...



PHASE 1



PHASE 2

ALTERNATE ENDINGS

Looking for something a little more horrific to end the session? Try one of these...

COSMIC HORROR ENDING

The adventurers continue to fight the lichfiend, and Vorgal Drakus rises in the form of an eldritch beast of caustic tar and unhinged fury. Tentacles emerge from the tar pit beneath the floor and begin dragging the adventurers under. A cold laugh resounds in their minds as Drakus claims victory. "Join me in the darkness," Drakus whispers... Let the adventurers describe their final moments as they descend into the blackness.

TWIST ENDING

The adventurers defeat the lichfiend, and destroy the crystal skull phylactery. Drakus' influence fades, and all is well in Misty Meadows. The fog recedes, and things slowly start to go back to normal. Unfortunately, Lily is missing. "Such a sad

thing," the townsfolk say. "She must have been taken by the dead. Poor Lily."

Far from Misty Meadows, over many hills, and many roads, over miles of forest, we come to a nearby cave. In the cave sits a frightened little girl, clutching a lantern. She's huddled in a corner. She's holding what looks like a small piece of white chalk. It's Lily Claxton. She sets the lantern down and begins etching horrific glyphs on the cave wall – the same runes that ensnared the minds of the adventurers at Misty Meadows. The hair covering her left eye falls aside, revealing a hollow, empty socket. "Don't worry, Mr. Drakus," she whispers to the darkness. "We'll try again."

A MONSTROUS TWIST

As Lily smiles, her face stretches into a grin that's too wide for her small, pale face. Her mouth is full of razor sharp, crystalline teeth, and her hollow eye socket begins to glow a faint purple.



MONSTERS OF MISTY MEADOWS

TAR ZOMBIE

Medium Undead, neutral evil

Challenge 1/4
(50 xp)

Armor Class 8 Hit Points 21 Speed 20 ft.

ABILITY SCORES

STR 13 (+1) **DEX** 6 (-2) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 3 (-4) **WIS** 6 (-2) **CHA** 5 (-3)

STATISTICS

Saving Throws: Wisdom +0
Damage Immunities: acid, poison
Condition Immunities: poisoned
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages: Understands Common but can't speak

FEATURES & ABILITIES

Unending Servitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead, kept standing by the vile essence of Vorgul Drakus that infests Misty Meadows. Once the zombie falls to 0 hit points a second time, it does not rise again.

ACTIONS

Pickaxe. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage, plus 2 (1d4) acid damage from the tar.

LEROY THE BUTCHER

Medium Undead, neutral evil

Challenge 1
(225 xp)

Armor Class 10 Hit Points 24 Speed 20 ft.

ABILITY SCORES

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 6 (-2) **CON** 18 (+4) **INT** 3 (-4) **WIS** 6 (-2) **CHA** 5 (-3)

STATISTICS

Saving Throws: Wisdom +0
Damage Immunities: acid, poison
Condition Immunities: poisoned
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages: Understands Common but can't speak

FEATURES & ABILITIES

Unending Servitude. If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead, kept standing by the vile essence of Vorgul Drakus that infests Misty Meadows. Once the zombie falls to 0 hit points a second time, it does not rise again.

Crystal Servant. It's unclear how long Leroy has been holding the satchel of crystals around his neck, but they have made him unnaturally strong and resilient.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Leroy makes two melee attacks, one with each cleaver.

Cleaver. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8+4) slashing damage.



TAR ZOMBIE ADVENTURERS

If an adventurer dies while submerged or covered in the tar from the pits, they will rise as a zombie in 1d4 rounds, flesh melting off their bones and hate burning in their eyes. Use the TAR ZOMBIE statblock to represent this creature, though feel free to adjust their weapons and armor to more closely match the deceased adventurer. If they die submerged in the tar, they will lunge out of the pit and attempt to grapple and drag their companions into the tar with them.

MONSTERS OF MISTY MEADOWS

TAR ZOMBIE RAPTOR

Medium Undead Beast, neutral evil

Challenge 2
(450 xp)

Armor Class 15 Hit Points 18 Speed 50 ft.

ABILITY SCORES

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 18 (+4) **CON** 13 (+1) **INT** 2 (-4) **WIS** 15 (+2) **CHA** 2 (-4)

STATISTICS

Saving Throws: Strength +4, Dexterity +6
Damage Immunities: acid, poison
Condition Immunities: poisoned
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages: –

FEATURES & ABILITIES

Pounce. If the Tar Zombie Raptor moves at least 30 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the Tar Zombie Raptor can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d6+2) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d8+2) slashing damage.

TAR ZOMBIE T-REX

Huge Undead Beast, neutral evil

Challenge 3
(700 xp)

Armor Class 16 Hit Points 59 Speed 10 ft.

ABILITY SCORES

STR 22 (+6) **DEX** 9 (-1) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 2 (-4) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 2 (-4)

STATISTICS

Saving Throws: Strength +9, Constitution +6
Damage Immunities: acid, poison
Condition Immunities: poisoned
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages: –

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Tar Zombie T-Rex makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10+6) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Tar Zombie T-Rex can't bite another target.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the Tar Zombie T-Rex. Hit: 14 (2d8+6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Tar Breath (Recharge 5–6). The Tar Zombie T-Rex vomits caustic tar in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (3d6) acid damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the Tar Zombie T-Rex has a creature grappled, that creature automatically fails the save, but is no longer grappled.



MONSTERS OF MISTY MEADOWS

THE LICHFIEND

A lichfiend is a creature that has given its life, voluntarily or otherwise, to serve a lich in undeath. Found to be more valuable as a servant than as a vessel to feed the lich's phylactery, the lichfiend is an unceasingly loyal thrall. The lichfiend serves its lich at any cost, having no interest in anything other than the well-being and satiation of its vile master. A lichfiend is a fetid-looking humanoid that appears entirely emaciated. Its eyes are typically gone from its skull, leaving dead, empty sockets.

In the Service of Madness. No creature decides to become enslaved by a lich lightly. It is also costly for a lich to expend its precious power to create such a creature, so the lichfiend's skills, abilities, knowledge, and service must be invaluable. It is not entirely clear what it takes to create a lichfiend, though pain and loss are certainly key factors.

Vile Namesake. It is common for the lichfiend to be referred to as an aspect of his lord. Such as the Aspect of Vargal Drakus, or the Aspect of Sung Qin Long.

Guardian of the Phylactery. A lichfiend is ever vigilant of its masters phylactery, and is keen to feed it soul sacrifices. Since the lich must periodically feed souls to its phylactery to sustain itself, the lichfiend is almost always consumed with this task.

Brutal and Physical. Not often having the arcane bent of their masters, lichfiends are almost always visceral, physically violent creatures of great physical strength. They favor frenzied beatings with their limbs rather than using weapons or spells in a fight.

Vessels of Necrotic Power. In almost every case, lichfiends are imbued with a portion of undying power from their masters. This gives them unnatural and haunting abilities beyond more common undead creatures.

Undead Nature. A lichfiend doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

JARRICH CLAXTON

Medium Undead, neutral evil

Challenge 5

(1,800 xp)

Hit Points 58 **Armor Class** 17

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

ABILITY SCORES

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)	17 (+3)

STATISTICS

Saving Throws: Strength +6, Dexterity +4

Skills: Perception +1

Damage Resistances: fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

Damage Immunities: acid, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities: charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses: Blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: Common

FEATURES & ABILITIES

Stench of the Sane. The lichfiend can magically sense the presence of intelligent living creatures up to 5 miles away. It knows the general direction of the creatures, but not their exact locations. As a result, the lichfiend cannot be surprised by living creatures.

Amorphous Gait. As a bonus action, the lichfiend can instantly implode into a plume of black and purple smoke and teleport up to 60 feet into an unoccupied space it can see.

Madness Unto Death. At the start of its turn, if the lichfiend has fewer than a quarter of its total hit points, it may choose to make two attacks as a standard action, rather than one.

ACTIONS

Frenzied Beating. Melee Magic Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (3d6 + 2) necrotic damage, plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Revelation of the Lich (1/Day). As an action, the lichfiend can channel the full evil and malice of its creator and release it at once. This ability has no effect on constructs or undead. All other creatures within 30 feet of the lichfiend must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, the creature takes 9 (3d6) psychic damage.





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HORROR AT MISTY MEADOWS

By James Kearney, Tim Kearney, Michael Barker, Matt Click

The trees creak in the noxious breeze. The heavy fog clings to your cloak, chilling you to the bone. A faint moan echoes through the wood, and a light appears in the distance, bobbing up and down, drawing closer and closer...

Absolute Adventures: Horror at Misty Meadows is a dangerous and horrifying experience for a party of adventurers of mid-to-high level. From the terrors that await your players in the ever-thickening fog pervading the town, to what's boiling at the bottom of the tar pits, many adventurers may never see what awaits in the caves of this mining town...

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