

Shadows over
VATHAK

DANCE WITH THE DEVIL WE KNOW

5TH EDITION HORROR

It's an all Night Dance Party at the Silver Hoof Tavern in
Shadows over Vathak Horror Roleplaying Game

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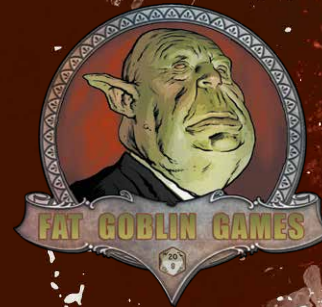
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Dance With The Devil We Know is intended for 4 players with an average party level of 6.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Dance With The Devil We Know is an adventure intended for a party of 6th-level characters. The scenario takes place in a large town or city. It involves the mayor, his daughters, and creatures that dance all night. It also involves an infestation that threatens the land.

The adventure starts with a rival for the Whiskey Wraith tavern opening up an all-night upscale bar called the Silver Hoof, where dancing is rampant. The patrons often dance until sunrise and ignore their lives for most of the next day. Patrons of the Silver Hoof tend to be upper class, and spend exorbitant amounts of money there. Though the laziness of the upper class has yet to affect the local economy, it is only a matter of time before they spend away enough coin to bankrupt the town.

The mayor, who has so far avoided the call of the Silver Hoof, has summoned the party to investigate it. He asks them to start at the Whiskey Wraith tavern, so that the party can ask questions in relative safety. He not only suspects some supernatural interference from the Silver Hoof; he is also concerned about his daughters, who have become enthralled with nightly dancing.

ADVENTURE LOCATION

This scenario can be placed in any large town to large metropolis. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work within your campaign.

This adventure fits in best with the grim setting of Shadows over Vathak, and could be placed in a number of its towns or cities.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

As the Gamemaster, you must decide how best to involve the players. The easiest method is for them to simply be travelling through when they get swept into the events of the adventure. Feel free to use the following plot hooks if you need additional ideas on how to get the party involved.

- A character who has ties to the Whiskey Wraith tavern may have a reason to get involved, as the Silver Hoof has proven to be stiff competition, taking former wealthy patrons that might otherwise have spent coin at the Whiskey Wraith.
- The church of the One True God could be involved and ask the group to complete the job on their behalf. It is likely that a powerful local authority owes the mayor a favor, and the mayor is calling it in. This, as well as the idea that supernatural creatures are preying on the wealthy, gives the Church of the One True God two reasons to intervene.
- The mayor may have an item that the party needs for its quest. The mayor makes it known that he will give nearly anything for the safety of his daughters, making it a priority to bring them back alive.
- A friend or loved one of a party member may have become tangled in the dancing and festivities of the Silver Hoof, and may require rescuing along with the mayor's daughters. In this case, one last letter from said loved one may offer clues on the nature of the dancing that happens at the Silver Hoof.

SHADOWS OVER VATHAK

Welcome to the world of Shadows over Vathak, a realm of dwindling hope and despair. As players, your characters fight to survive in a land threatened with destruction by the rise of the ancient and evil Old Ones and their spawn. Your characters may represent points of light in the darkness or give in to wicked temptations. Most will fall somewhere in between — survivors struggling to eke out another day. Though the followers of the One True God speak of divine providence while battling the Old Ones, the sins of the Church often rival those of their enemies. In the world of Vathak, your character's perceptions of heroes and villains is a thin line drawn by their own personal morality and, of course, determined by the victor.

This adventure is set in the dark fantasy world of Vathak. As such there are references to the history, characters, and locations of that world. However, with a little bit of alteration, these adventures can be suited for any horror themed 5th edition game.

If you are new to Shadows over Vathak, make sure you join our [Patreon](#) and receive a free copy of the *Explorer's Guide to Vathak*.

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, it is recommended that you have copies of the 5th Edition core rulebooks.

In this adventure you might come across spells, abilities, creatures, magic items, and other references to content from these corebooks. When this happens that item will appear in bold/red text, like this:

“The **goblins** are waiting to attack the caravan as it comes around the steep bend.”

If the content is new (such as monsters or equipment) and not included in one of the corebooks, we will make note of the source or include the item in an appendix to the adventure.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following are a collection of common abbreviations that might be used in this adventure.

AC	Armor Class	GP	Gold pieces
CE	Chaotic Evil	HP	Hit Points
CG	Chaotic Good	LE	Lawful Evil
CN	Chaotic Neutral	LG	Lawful Good
cp	Copper pieces	LN	Lawful Neutral
CR	Challenge Rating	N or TN	Neutral, or True Neutral
d%	Two d10s die one as the 10s the other as the 1s	NE	Neutral Evil
d10	A die of 10 sides	NG	Neutral Good
d12	A die of 12 sides	NPC	Non-Player Character
d20	A die of 20 sides	PC	Player Character
d4	A die of 4 sides	pp	Platinum pieces
d6	A die of 6 sides	sp	Silver Pieces
d8	A die of 8 sides	Stats	The statistical representation of a character
DC	Difficulty Class	XP	Experience Points
EL	Encounter Level		
EP	Electrum Pieces		
GM	Game Master		



BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Your journey begins at the Whiskey Wraith tavern, where you seek information. Sent by the mayor, he implored you to ask around about a new establishment called the Silver Hoof. You are here to discern if his daughters are in danger from being swept up in the dancing craze. The Whiskey Wraith is quiet, due to the raucous activity at the Silver Hoof having taken half of its usual patrons. Every so often, you can hear a loud cheer from the nearby Silver Horn.

The party meets with Vincent, the mayor's assistant, at the Whiskey Wraith. Vincent lets the group know that the Silver Hoof has been the focus of speculation. Those who go stay until the sun rises. Attempts to restrict the Silver Hoof's hours from being disruptive have fallen on deaf ears, as enough of the town gentry is involved in the festivities to resist efforts to change it. Vincent asks the group to go to the Silver Hoof a little after sunrise, hoping that it may be the best time to enter unnoticed. The mayor has given Vincent the authority to pay 500 gp to each party member. If the party needs an item, that can be part of the negotiation as well, and is easily agreed upon.

Once the group has decided to go to the Silver Hoof at the appointed time, they can make arrangements to wake early and approach the strange house of festivities.

AT THE SILVER HOOF

Upon entering the Silver Hoof, the group notices that it is pitch dark. All the windows are covered with thick curtains. With the lighting of a torch, or for those who have darkvision, the main room appears to be a mess, with tables and chairs knocked over, plenty of steins on the floor still dribbling out their remaining contents, and the general debris of the merriment that took place the night before.

However, within minutes of being inside of the main room, it begins to magically clean itself. Brooms animate, tables and chairs set themselves right, and wash rags sop up any drink puddles. Discarded mugs or dishware float around, going first to get washed, then to be put away. At this point, the door locks itself, and any creature inside of the main room must

make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be hurt by the movement of all the furniture and dishware, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

The party must only make this saving throw once before being able to leave the room or find a safe corner if they wish to stay. This movement creates so much noise that the party does not need to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check to go unnoticed so far. There is a stairway up, a door to the kitchen, and a stairway to the basement.

UPSTAIRS

The upstairs is nominally where patrons stay the night, but it is littered with bodies. A door separates the stairwell from the hallway leading to each room. Doors to rooms are open, and there are at least a dozen people strewn about. If inspected, the bodies appear to be alive, but out cold from merriment and strong liquid spirits. If roused, a given person does nothing more than to mutter in their sleep and turn over. If the party decides to head back downstairs, or if they venture further, 2d4+2 bodies rise, as if controlled by an unseen force. The door to the stairwell also shuts and locks! The bodies dance aggressively, and target the party members for unarmed attacks!

ENCOUNTER: ZOMBIES (POSSESSED PATRONS)

Modified **zombies** (2d4+2)

For Stronger Parties. Consider making the encounter have all 12 bodies involved.

If the party defeats the patrons without killing them, they can proceed to investigate the rooms. The party can also kill the patrons, though this prompts the patrons to wake, and give out a death rattle, perhaps even a pleading cry to the party to save their lives. The death of a patron should be a disturbing event. If the party kills more than one such patron, make sure that those present roll a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw to avoid gaining a short term madness (see *madness* in the SRD).

A quick investigation finds a signet ring. If the party makes note of it, or takes the ring, they later learn that it belonged to the mayor's estranged wife. It is uncertain what this means, but the revelation will unhinge the mayor's mind, as well as that of his daughters if they find out. The signet ring is worth 1 gp.

KITCHEN

The party may decide to go into the kitchen. Doing so may require another DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid being battered by moving dishware. A failure deals 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage, while a success deals half as much damage like before.

If the players wait, or after the initial saving throw, the kitchen settles and it will be safe for the party to enter. There is little of interest other than a pot of stew that is still warm. The stew is not poisoned, but does cause those who consume it to have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws for 1d4 hours. This effect is magical, and can be removed with a *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or *protection from evil/good*, as well as any stronger spells that remove negative effects, such as *heal*.

A thorough investigation will locate a trap door that leads downstairs. There is a latch and a lock, though the lock is not secured. This is likely a getaway or easy access panel for the workers. Though a trap door in a kitchen is not entirely unusual, this one also appears to have dried blood caked around its edges.

If the party decides to leave the kitchen through either the door or the trap door, both shut tight and the cast iron stove attacks!

ENCOUNTER: HOT IRON STOVE (MODIFIED SALAMANDER)

Modified **salamander** (1)

For Stronger Parties. Consider adding two **animated armors**, composed of animated pots and pans.

The hot iron stove uses the statistics of a salamander. It loses its spear and tail attacks, and gains the following attack:

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Once defeated, the doors open, and the party can proceed back to the main room, or downstairs.

DOWNSTAIRS

Once the party reaches the lowest level, they see a large room that appears as though it was hewn from one piece of black marble. Even with darkvision, it is difficult to see here, and everything is considered to be lightly obscured unless someone has a torch. There are four craven creatures that have been using the Silver Hoof to drain coffers and life energy from the patrons. These base creatures have created a blood pit that they have slowly been filling by draining patrons who fall asleep in the upstairs area. The blood pit is nearly full. It is unclear what they plan to do with it. If the party does not sneak in, the creatures stalk closer and attack! Even if the party sneaks in, noticing the strange craven creatures is done with a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check made at disadvantage. It is very much more likely that these so-called dancing devils surprise the party! They fight to the death as they are in their den.

ENCOUNTER: DANCING DEVILS (SEE APPENDIX)

MODIFIED DANCING DEVIL (4)

For Stronger Parties. Consider adding a water elemental made of blood that crawls out of the blood pit. For especially stronger parties, every creature that dies in this room may cause a blood elemental to rise from the pit.

CONCLUSION

Once defeated, the tavern's magic dies, and everything returns to its usual appearance. The tavern is

really a dilapidated and condemned building. The blood pit disappears without a trace. There appear to be a number of skeletons and desiccated corpses mixed with those of the patrons, as if many of the former patrons were merely bodies being used as puppets.

The party is praised by the mayor, and given their reward. It is possible that this may lead to more jobs, or gainful employment for as long as the party remains. If they are given some sort of light duty such as bodyguarding or guard duty, the party can live a modest lifestyle as long as they stay in town.

However, some latent energy remains at the former site of the Silver Hoof. Sometime in the future the party may hear that every year on this day, the Silver Hoof reappears as if by magic. Ghosts fill the roles of the corpse puppets. Any townsfolk who were compelled before are compelled again, if only for a night, to reenact the merriment in a macabre display of mindless joy.

APPENDIX

DANCING DEVIL

1,800 XP TOTAL

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Point 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 40 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
21 (+5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)

Skills Deception +12, Perception +4, Performance +12, Persuasion +8

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Innate Spellcasting. The dancing devil's spellcasting ability score is Charisma (DC 16). The devil can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *command*, *disguise self*, *minor illusion*
3/day each: *charm person*, *irresistible dance*
1/day: *mirage arcane*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dancing devil makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10+5) slashing damage.

TACTICS

Before Combat Dancing devils tend to dance when they are among humanoid creatures, or stalk the darkness when they are alone or with their own kind. If they are not tending to their den of evil, they are stalking prey at night along the streets and backroads near their dens.

During Combat A dancing demon first attempts to use its irresistible dance spell on any attackers, and proceeds to attack those who are not affected by it.

Morale A dancing devil will flee if reduced to half hp, unless they are in their dens. A dancing devil will fight to the death if encountered in its den.

Dancing devils are a scourge that preys on innocent mortals. They tend to target lonely folk, regardless of their gender, and sneak up to their rooms at night, luring them out to attend lavish parties and dance

until dawn. Dancing devils will often use their magic to craft vast ballrooms and dance halls out of ruined buildings and castles, and lure various creatures into their clutches through a variety of spells, forcing their targets to dance while disguising themselves as good-looking nobility.

A mortal who dances with these devils often finds themselves exhausted night after night, eventually to the point that they drop dead while dancing. A mortal who dies in such a way has their soul dedicated to the dark powers that the dancing devils serve. Pious souls, and those belonging to a noble bloodline, are especially coveted by these dark powers, and dancing devils seek them out with enthusiasm. Though its name implies that it is some sort of fiend, the dancing devil is a mundane monstrosity that dedicates its existence to the powerful beings that dwell beneath Vathak.



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