



Background

The locals will tell you – there is no place around more haunted than the abandoned keep of the dead Lord Duchemin. Last of his line, he withdrew into his stony keep and expelled all from his demesne, save only a handful of his most loyal servants. What happened after that is uncertain, though plenty of rumors circulate. All that is known is that eventually the lord passed on, his retainers decamped, and a pall fell over the place. It did not remain quiet for long however, as soon it seemed to fill with unearthly residents. Some say the lord is again at home, a wrathful shade that guards still the secrets of his keep. Of the few who have braved the place, none have yet returned alive.

The Great Hall

Entering the keep of Lord Duchemin, the party soon finds themselves in the great hall. There are doors (D) at either end of the room. The center of the room is occupied by a great table (shaded grey megahexes) surrounded by once-elegant seats (S). In one wall a fire burns within a recessed hearth (F). High on the opposite wall the head of great stag (H) is mounted as a trophy, a cheap tin-and-glass tiara placed on its brow as a macabre jest. In the far corners of the room stand two suits of plate armor (A1 & A2). The table is set for a feast, with plates, goblets, and fine silverware before each seat. Platters of fresh fruit, baskets of bread, and jugs of wine line the table. A roasted pig (P) is featured in the center. The table is illuminated by a massive pair of ornate silver candelabras (C).

As the party is examining the room, the doors at both ends slam shut, locking loudly. This begins the sequence of events. Track how many turns are passing, and each of the events below begins when its turn comes around. It is now turn [1].

Turns

[1] A voice seems to issue from the stag head (H), saying "Lord Duchemin invites you to feast with the dead!" Then lightning springs from the stag's eyes. These attacks will occur every turn until the head is destroyed. The bolts are 1d *Lightning* spells, and the head has a DX of 10. It can take 8 points of damage, though only thrown/missile weapons and spells, or polearms, can effectively reach it.

[3] The 10 dining knives on the table, one before each seat (S), levitate and fly at the closest players. Each is treated as a thrown dart (1d-2) attack from that seat at DX 12. Each player may have a chance to dodge one of the attacks aimed at them.

[4] As the knives clatter to the floor, perhaps along with some blood, a swarm of 20 *vampire bats** drop from the ceiling and attack. This is treated as a nuisance creature encounter, and it can become a painful distraction for the players when later attacks begin.

[6] The roast pig (P) turns out to be a *zombie** and it springs up from the platter to attack. Its stats are ST 10, DX 12, IQ 0, and MA 10. Its bite does 1d damage. It appears to be frenzied and moves from one target to the next rapidly, biting each with long tusk-like teeth.

[8] The fire in the hearth (F) flares and from out of the flames darts a *salamander**. Its stats are ST 16, DX 13, IQ 8, and MA 10. It has the annoying habit of striking and then moving under the table, where it is hard to get at, emerging on the next turn to ambush another person.

[11] The candelabras (C) on the table belch out clouds of white smoke that fill the room. This smoke doesn't do damage but impairs vision. The effect looks like dense fog and imposes a -4 DX penalty on combat and actions. Light does not diminish the obscuring effect. The smoke is magical in nature, so can only be dispersed by magic. *Destroy Creation* will clear a hex of it at a time but only for the next turn, after which it will fill back in. *Dark Vision* has no effect, but *Mage Sight* will allow you to see through it. See *Fighting In The Smoke* below for further ideas about how to game this effect.

[13] The players hear clanking, ponderous footsteps. One of the suits of armor (A1) is in motion. It actually contains a *skeleton** with the stats ST 13, DX 13 (8), IQ 0, and MA 6. It is wielding a morningstar (2d+1). The plate armor provides 5 points of protection. The skeleton is not impaired by the magic smoke from the candelabras.

[16] The smoke clears away as the other suit of armor (A2) comes to life. In this one is a *shadowight**, the mage behind all these supposedly haunted events. It will try to dispatch any survivors left. Its stats are ST 7, DX 13 (8), IQ 19, and MA 6. It is wielding a silver shortsword with the Staff II enchantment, holding 12 ST. Among the spells it knows are *Telekinesis*, *Lightning*, *Create Elemental*, *Zombie*, *Mage Sight*, *Calling*, and *Curse*, plus the *Ventriloquism* talent.

Fighting In The Smoke

When the magic smoke fills the room on turn 11, there are various ways the GM (you) can handle this effect. You can continue to let the players move about the board normally and just impose the DX penalty on their actions. You can somewhat obscure the action by tracking on your own map (ideally behind a GM screen) where enemies are in the room, so that players will have to try to detect them before they attack. Or you can fully obscure the action by telling the players to note where they are, and then remove their counters from the board. They will have to tell the GM where they are moving and facing, and it's up to them to pay attention to where that puts them in the room. The GM will track their actual positions, and those of enemies, behind the screen. This can lead to players stumbling into the table and walls, and running about pell-mell trying to assist others who are being attacked. The GM should choose the approach that is the most manageable and fun for both the players and themselves.

After The Battle

The GM may provide whatever treasure they find appropriate for the survivors. The weapons and armors used by the enemies are certainly fair game. The magic candelabras could conceivably be taken and studied or sold, though they have a number of conceal spells and conditional magics on them to obscure their true enchantments. It is also possible they were a single-use item, and are now simply ordinary (but still potentially valuable) silver candelabras.

This great hall is but one room in the castle and the GM is encouraged to create more. The players may want to investigate why the shadowight was trying so hard to convince people the place was haunted. Perhaps it was to conceal and protect a valuable secret or artifact? And what lies behind the mysterious legacy of Lord Duchemin himself?

The GM can make this more challenging by making the enemies stronger. Another way is to decrease the time between turns when actions occur. Making the obscuring smoke (turn 11) start sooner or last longer can put the players in greater danger as well.

* See the *In The Labyrinth* book for more details on these creatures and effects.

This adventure is inspired at a remove by the story "Henri Duchemin and His Shadows" by Emmanuel Bove.

