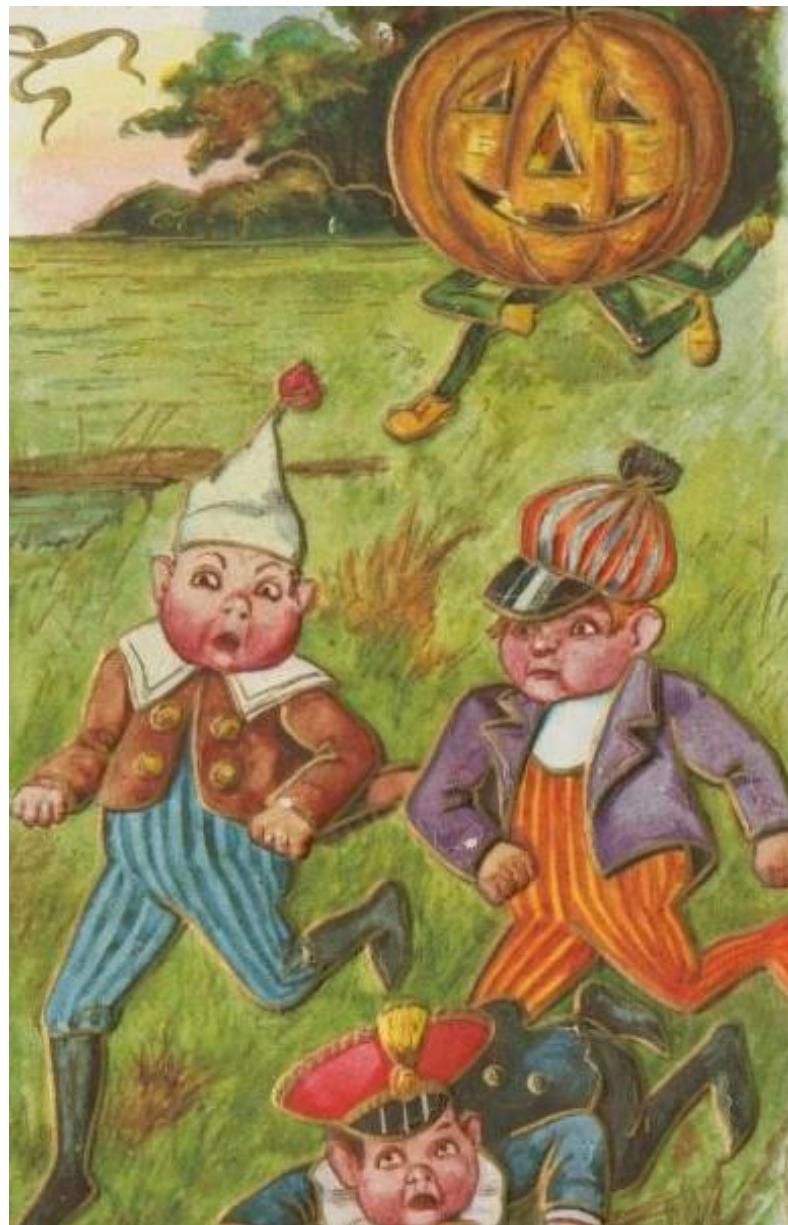


Harvest Horror



A desperate farmer bargained with a powerful dryad to ensure he had the biggest pumpkin for the harvest festival. When misfortune struck and he couldn't uphold his end of the bargain, the dryad had her own plans to claim what she was owed. Can the players discover what's happened and stop the pumpkin horror from exacting revenge against the innocent townsfolk?

A 4-hour adventure for 5 characters of 3rd to 5th level

Introduction

Thank you for downloading *Harvest Horror*, an adventure for the 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game. I've designed this adventure for five players of 3rd to 5th level. Players at the lower end of the spectrum or with fewer players in their party will have a difficult time, especially with the final battle whereas players with large parties at 5th level may feel like unstoppable gods.

This adventure is intended to be dropped in any small, agrarian town appropriate to your campaign but I'll provide the name of a town and NPCs throughout for ease of reading and in case you'd rather run it as a standalone one-shot. As with all adventures, we empower you, the DM, to adjust the encounters as you see fit. The goal is fun, after all. Don't let the numbers I've written down get in the way of that.

Adventure Overview

The party arrives in the town of Golding as it prepares for a harvest festival. They are then tasked with going to see if Old Huell needs help bringing the giant pumpkin to town. As they get closer to Old Huell's farm, they notice things about the land seem wrong. Shortly after, the party is attacked by a flock (or rafter, if you want to use the specific word...) of dire turkeys.

The turkeys defeated; the party continues to Old Huell's Farm where they find him tied on a scarecrow stand in his field alive but badly beaten. He tells them to run but, at that exact time, a few scarecrows and a dryad come out of the fields to attack (and monologue!).

After the scarecrows are destroyed and the fey creature run off, Huell explains he made

a bargain with the fey creature to ensure he could grow a massive pumpkin for the festival in exchange for half his crop. When his crop failed and he barely had enough for himself to scrape through the winter, he begged the dryad to reconsider. She was not in a generous mood and punished him by blighting the rest of his crops and animating his giant pumpkin to go to the village and claim her fair share.

The players must sprint to the village and defeat the animated pumpkin monstrosity before it destroys all the food and sets fire to the village. If they can accomplish this, they will be praised as heroes and stories of their successes will travel throughout the valley, making life much easier for them among the locals.

Chapter 1 – Arrival in Golding

The party arrives in Golding a few hours after dawn. The people are happily zipping around town as they set up for that evening's harvest celebration. Large tables are being carried into the town square, carts from surrounding farms are bringing in loads of their best produce, and great barrels of beer and cider are being rolled out from the tavern. Overseeing it all is a dour, nervous looking halfling woman consulting a long list of tasks to be done before the festivities can begin. Upon seeing the characters, she rushes over and introduces as Willamette Hopfoot.

"Oh," she says. "You've just come up Northdown road, right? You must've seen Old Huell coming with the giant pumpkin, yes? I mean, you must've passed right by his farm, after all. Please tell me you saw him..."

When she finds out the party has not seen Old Huell, she becomes very distraught and begs them to go back to check on him. She

reveals he's usually the first person to set up for the festival and that his pumpkin has been the centerpiece of their celebration for over twenty-five years.

Willamette apologizes for putting them to task as soon as they set foot in her town and says they must be tired. She sends them to her tavern to get a good, hot meal and asks them to return in an hour. She'll work on getting a cart for them in the meantime so they can go help Old Huell. Once they return to town with Old Huell and his giant pumpkin, she promises to feed them to bursting and give them the best room in her inn to sleep it off for the next week.

If they take Willamette up on her offer, she points them to her tidy looking fieldstone inn, the Sapphire Herald, just off the town square. As with everything in the town, the inn is buzzing with activity. A young half-elf woman named Perle ushers them to one of the few remaining tables and brings them bowls of soup, a pitcher of the house ale, and a basket of fresh rolls. She is rushed but trying her best to be pleasant and attentive.

If players ask her or any of the other townsfolk about the festival or about Old Huell, they can learn the following:

- Old Huell is a decent sort and takes great pride in providing the town with the giant pumpkin every year.
- He never married or had children and the past few years have not been profitable enough for him to afford hiring farm hands to help.
- He's been struggling the past few years to get the pumpkin to town but is too prideful to admit he needs the help. Still, he always seems to manage somehow.
- Last year the pumpkin was disappointingly small, and many

townsfolk were upset, saying if Huell couldn't provide an adequate pumpkin then they'd give farmer Aramis a chance at it. Huell was hurt, obviously, but promised to do better next year no matter what.

- Lately he has seemed on edge. Normally he is a sweet, kind man but now any question about this year's pumpkin would be met with a shout to mind one's business.
- Old Huell hasn't been seen in town for about a week which is odd considering he never skips his weekly dice game at the Sapphire Herald.

After the party has satisfied their curiosity and hunger, they will find Willamette has secured them a carriage with two strong horses as well as a crudely drawn map showing which side road to take to get to Huell's farm. She's also provided them a sack of meat and mushroom pies and a few skins of cider to help keep their strength up.

Chapter 2 – The Road to Old Huell's Farm

The well-worn road is busy with families from outlying farms making their way to the village to join the celebration. Bright eyed children and smiling farmers greet the party and wish them well, with perhaps a few of the bolder single farm folk asking if the party will be back in time for the dance.

An hour or so into their journey, they turn off Northdown road onto a far narrower cart path as depicted on the map. The more observant party members may notice the land has taken on a different atmosphere compared to the joviality and abundance of the town. PCs

making perception checks can notice the following:

- Stalks of withered corn line the path, black and stunted beyond use.
- Trees seem gnarled and hunched, swaying in a breeze no one can feel.
- Vultures and crows wheel in low, slow circles as if waiting for the inevitable to happen so they can begin their grim feasts.
- Every once in a while, the corn on the side of the road appears trampled down and the dirt beneath has been rent by massive claws. Particularly careful observers can discover arm-length striped feathers sticking out of the dirt.

Encounter 1 – Turkey Trouble

At any time after you've suitably established the mood of the place, the party's horses begin whinnying and trying to back up away from something just out of sight in the corn field. Players not distracted by trying to calm and control the horses hear a truly horrifying sound: the low, throaty gobble of a flock of five dire turkeys! Unlike normal turkeys, these beasts are bigger than ostriches and highly territorial.

Dire Turkey

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 30 (3d12 + 9)

Speed 25 ft.

STR 16 (+3) DEX 10 (+0) CON 16 (+3) INT 2 (-4)
WIS 10 (+0) CHA 3 (-4)

Skills Athletics +5

Senses Passive Perception 10

Challenge $\frac{1}{2}$

Flapping Leap. The dire turkey's long jump and high jump are up to 25 feet, with or without a running start.

Pack Tactics. The dire turkey has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the dire turkey's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Fearful Fowl. The dire turkey is afraid of everything and has disadvantage on saves vs. Fear

Actions

Multiattack. The Dire turkey makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+3) piercing damage

Talons. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 7 (1d6+3) slashing damage

Tactics: Though their smaller cousins are unutterably stupid, these big turkeys are crafty enough to stay close to each other to make use of their Pack Tactics. Clever PCs can scare them fairly easily, either by activating an effect that causes fear or by a suitably clever action intended to spook the giant birds. Don't neglect the turkeys' Flapping Leap ability if the players get the dire turkeys in a tight spot. Further, they will use this feature to reposition any time they aren't able to use their Pack Tactics.

If the battle feels too tough, have the turkeys attack the horses and allow the horses to fight back at disadvantage as long as they are still attached to the cart. Conversely, if the battle is too easy, perhaps the frantic gobble summon a few more turkeys from nearby fields. Or just let your players revel in their power for once, you bully. Once half the turkeys are dead,

the remaining birds will flee the fight and fly off clumsily into the corn fields.

Rewards: Award the players 500 XP if they defeated (killed or scared off) the five dire turkeys. For every additional turkey they dealt with, award an additional 100 XP. Also, it'd be a shame to waste all that meat. If the players return to town with the turkeys, Willamette will buy the carcasses from the party for 120g in total...provided they aren't doused in acid, burned beyond use, etc.

Chapter 3 – The Farmhouse & Field

The players spot a small, thatched roof farmhouse shortly after their encounter with the turkeys. This single-story building appears well-maintained from a distance but as players draw closer, they notice the shutters have been smashed and the door has been torn off its hinges. Inside the farmhouse, Old Huell's meager possessions have been tossed about and soiled. His fireplace has gone cold, apparently not having been used for a handful of days. Careful players can spot flecks of blood dotting the whitewashed walls and the signs of someone being dragged through the house and out the back door.

Upon exiting the house and following the drag marks through the muddy grass in the back yard, the players spot what appears to be a scarecrow tied up on sticks in a nearby clearing. As the players observe this scene, the scarecrow lolls its head and moans in pain. If the party approaches, they will notice that this "scarecrow" is an old man (Old Huell, to be specific) who yells at them to run and help the village before it's too late. If they don't approach, Old Huell will notice them and deliver the same message as loudly as he can.

In either case, a small peal of laughter rings out from an unknown source and a high-

pitched voice states, "You really shouldn't stick your nose where it doesn't belong. I thought you'd take the hint with the turkeys, but I guess you're as dense as the farmer. So be it, I'll finish you off and then I'll go back to teaching this old man that I always get what's promised to me. That's a lesson the villagers must be learning about now." And with that, everyone should roll initiative as a number of actual scarecrows stumble into the clearing from the rows of stunted corn and attack.

Encounter 2 – The Dour Dryad and her Scarecrows

The voice belongs to a dryad named Sybilla with whom Old Huell bargained to provide him with a massive pumpkin for the festival. Sybilla is similar to others of her kind, only she is a harvest dryad so rather than being tied to a particular forest, she is tied to the farm and surrounding land. After Old Huell failed to hold up his end of the bargain, she animated three of his scarecrows to attack him. She also animated the giant pumpkin which she sent to claim what she's owed from the village.

Sybilla shares all the statistics of the dryad in the Monster Manual (p121) but with the following changes:

Hit Points: 40

Innate Spellcasting: The dryad's innate Spellcasting Ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad can innately cast the following Spells, requiring no material components:

At will: Produce Flame

3/day each: Entangle, Fog Cloud

1/day each: Invisibility (already cast), Spike Growth, Pass without Trace

Plant Stride: On her turn, the dryad can use 10 ft. of her Movement to step magically

into one living or dead plant within her reach and emerge from a second plant of that same type within 60 ft. of the first plant, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the second plant. Both plants must be as tall as a human (corn stalk, tree, sunflower, etc.).

Statistics for the scarecrows can be found on page 268 of the Monster Manual

Tactics: Sybilla is a smart but cowardly combatant, preferring to begin any battle invisible and/or from the cover of the rows of corn surrounding the clearing. She will drop this once she is sure of her hiding spot so she can cast her control spells, such as spike growth and fog cloud. Many of her spells require concentration but she is not afraid to change tactics by dropping one spell for another if she believes it would better protect her to do so. Once the characters locate her, she will make travelling to her as difficult as possible before disappearing into a nearby plant and reappearing far out of their grasp. If an opponent is able to hit her from range, she will use Fey Charm on them and turn them against their friends before slipping away yet again. Once she is reduced to half her hit points, she will use Pass without Trace and multiple instances of Plant Stride to flee the battlefield as quickly as possible. Remember, Sybilla loves to smack talk so, at the start of every turn, make sure she's denigrating one or more of her opponents.

Moving onto the Scarecrows, consider that they are as wise as an average human and, as such, can make tactically sound use of their Terrifying Gaze. Look for opportunities to target ranged casters who threaten Sybilla or particularly strong and quick melee combatants that might get close enough to her to do damage. Of note: scarecrows hate fire and will focus their wrath on any character unlucky enough to wield it against them. The scarecrows will fight to the death to protect

Sybilla. Also, remember that if a character is paralyzed by fear from either their claw attacks or their Terrifying Gaze, all melee attacks against that character are an automatic critical hit and any ranged attack from Sybilla has advantage.

Rewards: Once Sybilla is gone (dead or escaped) and the scarecrows have been reduced to angry straw, award 1,000 XP. Also, your players now have a potential story hook! It's almost certain that Sybilla will escape this battle and, as she is a petty and vengeful creature, she could be a great thorn in the side of the PCs for a long, long time until they decide to pursue and end the threat once and for all.

Now relatively safe, Old Huell will explain to the party the pertinent information found in the Adventure Summary – namely the bargain he truck with Sybilla, the reason for its failure, and the fallout: a massive, animated pumpkin is headed to the village to exact some sort of revenge. He urges the players to make haste to the town and will supply them his own horses and cart if theirs was destroyed or damaged in the battles. Further, Old Huell will reveal that he is a minor druid and, though his powers are fading as he grows older and weaker, he still has enough potions and goodberries stored to heal the party fully prior to the fight with the pumpkin.

Chapter 4 – Golding Aflame

It's near dusk as the players race back toward Golding. Already the low clouds on the horizon are glowing a sickly orange as if reflecting the light of a large fire and, as the party approaches, screams are carried to them on the smoky breeze. The road grows more and more crowded as anyone with the ability flees the town as quickly as possible. The players arrive in time to see a two-story house collapse

into the street below as a 10' diameter pumpkin spurts gouts of fire from its terrifying carved face. It scrambles through the crowd, upsetting tables and lashing out at townsfolk with its foot-thick vines. Every now and then it stops to consume whatever food and drink are on a nearby table before continuing its rampage.

Encounter 3 – Pumpkin Carving Time

The pumpkin horror eats indiscriminately, targeting people and harvest fare in equal measure. Every now and then it unleashes a great orange gout of flame into the remaining crowd and onto nearby edifices. As if it senses the party's hostile intent, the pumpkin turns to face them and howls into the night as it begins charging towards them.

Pumpkin Horror

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 208 (max of 16d10 + 48)

Speed 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.

STR 18 (+4) **DEX** 8 (-1) **CON** 16 (+3) **INT** 5 (-3)

WIS 10 (+0) **CHA** 5 (-3)

Skills Athletics +7

Damage Resistance Cold, Fire

Damage Immunities Lightning

Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (Blind beyond this radius), passive perception 10

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The pumpkin horror makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller creature, the target is grappled (escape DC 15), and the Giant Pumpkin uses its Engulf on it.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). The giant pumpkin exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each Creature in that area must make a DC 14 DEX saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Engulf. The pumpkin horror engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the giant pumpkin and it takes 12 (3d6) fire damage at the start of each of the pumpkin horror's turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points in this way stops taking fire damage and becomes stable. If the pumpkin moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The pumpkin can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

Legendary Actions

1) **Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 2d8+4 bludgeoning damage.

2) **Terrifying Glare.** The pumpkin horror targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the pumpkin horror, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be magically frightened until the pumpkin horror's next turn. The frightened target is paralyzed.

3) **Consume Harvest.** The pumpkin horror heals itself for 2d10+3 as it scoops food into its flaming mouth.

Tactics: The pumpkin horror wants to eat, and it isn't too particular about where its next meal comes from. To that end, the horror will focus both its slam attacks against a single target in an effort to grapple and engulf them. If it misses its first slam attack, it will likely use one of its legendary actions at the end of the next opponent's turn to use another slam attack on a creature that it's already hit. If this slam attack hits, the creature is considered grappled as if both of the pumpkin horror's in-turn slam attacks hit, and it can immediately engulf the grappled creature.

As with the scarecrows, the pumpkin horror's Terrifying Gaze attack means all melee hits on paralyzed creatures are automatically critical hits which makes the target very easy to eat.

Lastly, the pumpkin horror uses its Fire breath every chance it gets, whether that means it targets one opponent or a whole slew of them.

If the battle is going poorly for the characters, consider having the pumpkin horror target a passerby with one or two of its slam attacks and consuming them. While it may recognize the party as the primary threat, its primary motivation is to consume. If the battle is going too well for the party (doubtful), maybe throw a couple vine or twig blights their way. Or have a building collapse on them. Or maybe an ancient red dragon shows up. Either way, make them earn it.

The pumpkin horror fights to the death.

Rewards: After the pumpkin horror is defeated, award the party 2,000 XP. Though the town is in rough shape, the people are thankful that the party intervened and prevented further damage. Once the flames are put out and the survivors return, the party is showered with praise and gifts of gold, family heirlooms, offers of marriage, and anything else you feel your

players might appreciate for their efforts. If they ever pass through Golding again, they'll never have to pay for their own meals, lodging, or booze.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Now that the town is safe, the people want to know the cause of the attack. Players can choose to tell the people the truth about Old Huell's dealings with the fey or they can save his reputation with a convincing lie. If they tell the truth, Old Huell is run out of town and is never heard from again. If they choose to lie, give the players advantage on their deception check since the town holds their new heroes in such high regard.

Moving On...

If the players want to continue their adventure and you're not sure what to do with them, consider the following story hooks for some future escapades:

- Old Huell, if not run out of town, tells the party he used to travel with a group of brave souls in his youth. Everyone but him died in their last adventure but, seeing how strong the party is, he thinks they can accomplish what he could not. He provides them with a map to some far-flung hellhole full of mystery and monsters.
- The party really, really hates that Sybilla got away and will entreat with other local fey to track her down. Perhaps she is just sheltering in a nearby farm or perhaps this brings the players through a nearby veil and into the feywild.

- Word of the party's exploits travel to the nearby aristocracy who summons them to an audience at their castle. There have been rumors of orcs and worse threatening outlying communities and they need stout, willing adventurers to ascertain if there are any truths to the rumors.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this and, hopefully, play it with your friends. I hope you all had fun and that you check in to see what other adventures we offer in the future. Ideally, we'll be releasing one new adventure like this every two weeks for the foreseeable future so stay tuned! If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me at podofwonders@gmail.com.

Art:

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/hall-oween-postcards>

Writing: Nate Magnuski

OGL: This adventure utilizes information from Wizards of the Coast's 5E SRD
<https://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/systems-reference-document-srd>

