

The Monastery

Preparation

The scenario takes place over just a few days and nights and once at the monastery, the characters are trapped until a snowstorm ends. The scenario is not very combat intensive except for the final battle against the restless spirit. The party is probably going to need a strong fighter and a cleric to survive the early easy fights. After that it is a matter of brains rather than brawns that will win the day.

The Map

The map was taken from the "Map-of-the-Week" feature on Wizards' homepage. One square is 10 ft. by 10 ft.

Background

High in a remote mountain pass lies the monastery of Light's Ascendance. Here the brothers of the order toiled in hard labor and quiet meditation to achieve transcendence. The abbot was a ruthless man of principle, flexible as a rock and merciful like the ice-crusting mountains where he had built his monastery. He taught his disciples that strength came through abstinence from all worldly emotions and pleasures. Often he would travel up into the mountains to a cave where he would devote himself for days at a time to fasting and meditating. The initiates made certain that dry firewood was always available in the cave to keep a fire lit while their master fasted.

That is, they did until recently. Zema, the abbot's second in command, had grown tired of his tyrannical mentor. Strong in the spiritual and physical tenets of the order he thought himself a better candidate for the position as abbot. So he made certain that the wood in the cave was wet, knowing that his master would not stoop to lighting a fire unless the cold was actually life threatening. Two nights after the master's departure the winter storms began with sudden ferocity. Too late the abbot realized the danger and tried to light a fire. When he found that the wood was wet and frozen he immediately guessed his underling's plan. With a curse on his lips he tried to make his way down the mountain in the icy gales, but was gripped by a gust of wind and thrown to his death before he made it to safety.

The very same night his vengeful shade returned to life with only one thought in its mind. Revenge. The abbot's shade, now an Ice Haunt, made its way to the abbey where it killed every monk it could get its hands on. That was a year ago and the monastery has been still as a cold tomb since, the frozen corpses of the dead untouched. But soon it will be a full moon again a year past the event and in the three days surrounding the night of the full moon, the shade of the dead abbot will return to haunt his monastery.

Summary

The scenario begins when the characters seek shelter in the monastery (there is a map of the monastery on the last page). The storm that drove them to the monastery becomes so fierce that venturing outside would be suicide. The characters are now trapped here for next three nights. As they explore the monastery they will encounter several weaker undead that should be easily dispatched. The important thing is to build up tension for the night. At the stroke of midnight the monastery suddenly feels colder when the abbot materializes. He will either materialize in his study (room 18) or outside in the blizzard depending on the location of the characters. He will always appear as far from the characters as possible. For the next four hours the abbot sweeps through the monastery killing those he can find. For a summary of his stats and tactics, see the description of room 18. He will reappear two times after this. On the morning of the fourth day the storm subsides and the characters can make their way down the mountain the same way they arrived. The mountain pass they were trying to cross is blocked.

The likely run of events is that the characters slaughter the Darkmantle, the weaker undead and perhaps the two statues on the first day. Thereafter they have time to prepare for the night. Clever players will look for clues as to what attacked them last night and be prepared for it. It is possible that they can defeat the undead abbot on the second night but if possible the DM should try to let the abbot survive until the climax on the third night.

The ghouls

If the characters light fires in the fireplaces the furnace in the basement, the smoke from the chimney will attract two Ice Ghouls[1]. The ghouls try to sneak up to the monastery around midday. If they encounter no resistance they make their way into the monastery but stay on the ground floor. If an opportunity presents itself they ambush the characters one at a time and hide the bodies outside in the snow for later consumption. If they are discovered before they can initiate hostilities they pretend to be travelers like the characters and try to gain their confidence. They know however, that a "great and hungry spirit" resides

here and will not stay the night. If asked if they know of any other shelters they say they can shelter outside in the snow. This is a ruse however. They plan to let the cold kill the characters and then eat them. Ice ghouls are not actually undead, but degenerate cannibals that feed on the unwary travelers in the mountains. The ghouls look like savage men with swarthy suntanned skin and sharpened teeth. Both are hairy and have long tangled black hair and beards. They are dressed in pelts and wear bone ornaments (all animal). They are cunning but not very clever and will say little and smile a lot when spoken to. Their smiles however are false.

Their names are Kairem and Paslak and they will never fight to the death if they can avoid it. They feel no loyalty toward each other and will gladly sacrifice each other to survive.

Ice ghoul (Medium-Size Humanoid); CR 1; HD 2d8+8; 17 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 leathers); Att hatchet +6 melee; Dmg hatchet 1d6+4; SA Rage; SQ Resistances

Fort +7; Refl +2; Will -1; S 18, D 14, C 18, I 7, W 8, Ch 14; AL CE

Skills: Escape artist +2, Hide +5, Intuit direction +2, Listen +4, Move silently +5, Spot +4, Swim +7, Wilderness lore +6

Feats: Alertness, Power attack

Possessions: Paslak carries a sack with 60 gp and Kairem has a Buckler +1 (he has an AC of 13) carved with dwarven runes that say:

"This shield was forged by Thurgood for his thane, the noble Eigil of Mellowdelve.

Good runes give aid in the river of axes".

Adventure hooks

The simplest hook is to place the characters in the mountain pass during a blizzard. They will then have to find shelter or suffer the consequences of being caught out unprepared.

Another ruse might be for a cleric of any of the major religions to approach them and ask them to discover the fate his brother who was the abbot of a monastery in the mountains. Incidentally, this is the brother that has manufactured the animated statues in room 17.

The last hook could be for the characters to hear of the haunted monastery in the mountains. It is said that the monk who founded the place had once been an adventurer himself and that he build the place at great cost with his own money. Is it not reasonable to think that such a man would still have quite a few coins left on the bottom of his chest? And now that no one has heard from the monks for over a year, those coins might be ripe for the taking.

A play tester suggested that the initial hook should have the players traveling through the mountain pass led by an experienced local guide. The guide could then add to the sense uneasiness by constantly mumbling about the unnatural storm, evil spirits and the like, only to disappear suddenly, and then turn up dead in the monastery later. This is left up to the Dungeon Master.

Adapting the adventure

Any DM worth his salt can find a nook in his game world where there are cold snowy mountains in the winter [2]. Drop the monastery in one of the mountain passes and reel the players in.

Scaling the adventure

One way to increase the difficulty of the adventure is to add a few more zombies and skeletons to each encounter. A less obvious way is to have the monsters in some of the rooms (rooms 5, 13, and 16) wander around. Maybe the zombies and skeletons reanimate every night at midnight or perhaps every four hours. Making the dead come alive again puts more focus on the characters building a secure shelter somewhere using the supplies in the basement and the workroom. For 3rd -level groups double the amount of ice ghouls, and make them not be afraid to come at night. The important thing to remember is to keep the tone. If the monsters are constantly battering the characters they quickly lose their paranoia and simply dig in to fight. Monsters should sneak up on the characters whenever possible like in all good horror movies.

Key to the Monastery

The monastery is located on the mountainside above the path through the mountain pass. As the characters come nearer to the dark shadow of the monastery on the white mountainside they can make out the vaguely angled shapes of a manmade structure through the blizzard. Then suddenly the blizzard picks up strength, screaming like a banshee. Thousands of snowflakes turned to shuriken stars by the gales should make the characters realize that they need to find shelter or they will perish. As they veer off the path in the direction they last saw the signs of shelter they come upon a rusty gate leading to area 1.

A low stonewall nearly covered by drifts of snow looms out of the blinding whiteness. A rusty gate stands opens into a crevasse in the Cliffsides, and above the crevasse lies a small monastery. No smoke rises from

its chimneys and the windows are dark. And yet the structure seems sound enough to provide shelter for the icy wind.

1. The courtyard

Past the outer gate the crevasse widens, forming a small courtyard sheltered from the wind. For ears deadened by the roar of the storm the sudden quiet is eerie. In the centre of the yard sits a small stone ringed pond and next to it, half covered by snow, is a little bench. Across the yard from the gate a flight of stairs leads up to a stout wooden gate in the mountainside.

Anyone wiping the snow off the pond will find it filled with frozen water. A dark shape is trapped beneath the ice, but unless the water is somehow thawed out it will not be possible to make out any details. The shape is the frozen corpse of a young man dressed in a monk's habit, with an expression of intense horror on his frozen face.

The gate to the monastery is unlocked but jammed with ice. A successful Strength-check (DC 10) opens it without damaging it.

Ground floor

All the rooms on this floor are unlit and have no windows. Unless there is a light source available or one of the characters has Dark vision, do not read the italicized text aloud. Most of the rooms have steel sconces with torches that can be lit to provide light.

2. Bottom of the Stairwell

This is the room forms the bottom floor of a high-ceilinged room. A set of spiral stairs leads to the second floor of the monastery. The floor of the hall of made of rough tiled stones that have been worn smooth by time and wear.

Two low archways lead north and west, and a stout wooden gate leads outside to the south. Hidden in a shadowy recess on the eastern wall, a small door leads east. If the characters have left one of the doors to the outside open there should be just enough light to glimpse the features mentioned in the description, but not the bulbous extension on the ceiling.

Creatures. A Darkmantle has recently moved into the monastery. It hasn't eaten for months and is half crazed with hunger. It drops from the ceiling on the first character closest to the centre of the room in the second round after they arrive.

Darkmantle (Small Magical Beast); CR 1; HD 1d10+1; 6 hp; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17 (+1 size, +6 natural); Att Slam +5 melee; Dmg Slam 1d4+4; SA Darkness, Improved grab, Constrict 1d4+4; SQ Blind sight

Fort +3; Refl +2; Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10; AL N

Skills: Hide +11, Listen +5

Feats: Improved Initiative

Tactics. Because of its ravenous hunger the Darkmantle will not abandon the fight until it has killed and dragged off at least one character. It initiates the fight by using its Darkness-ability and then dropping on character nearest to the centre of the room. The magical darkness lasts for fifty minutes (or until it is dispelled) and fills the entire room except for small islands in the corners. The Darkmantle is very quiet and the DM should only allow the character to call out if he survives the first attack.

3. Hall of Idols

Dark alcoves line the walls, five in all. Each alcove holds an idol of one of the gods, and small clay bowls have been left at their feet for offerings.

This was where the monks received pilgrims, and several straw mats are stacked in a corner of the room.

The idols are made of wood and cracked by moisture and frost. There is nothing of any real value here, however none of the zombies or skeletons will pursue fleeing characters through this room. The Ice Haunt and the Ice ghouls are unaffected by the room.

4. Kitchen

Two large ovens are nested in the walls. Tables covered with pots and eating utensils line the walls and a large trough fills the centre of the room. The trough is filled with frozen water and a few clay plates are visible through the ice. Two narrow flights of stairs lead up and down from this room.

This used to be the monastery's kitchen. Hidden in a cupboard beneath the stairs leading up are several pots of oil. The oil will not burn on its own except in extreme heat, but if poured on an existing fire it burns quite well. It can also be used as improvised lanterns if a wick of cloth is dipped in the jars. There are 8 sealed jars each containing a quart of oil.

5. Refectory

A large wooden table fills most of this room. Several chairs once lined the table, but it seems there has been some sort of struggle here, for now all the chairs are scattered on the floor. The table is still set for dinner with ten clay plates but there is no food on the table and a thin layer of white frost covers everything.

Two skeletons dressed in ragged robes are sprawled on the floor beneath the debris. A successful Spot-check (DC 15) discovers this.

Creatures. The curse that rests on the monastery prevents the former inhabitants from resting peacefully. The two skeletons are the remains of two monks who were slain on the first night of full moon one year ago, when the dead abbot returned. They were killed while they were setting the table for that night's supper. They lie perfectly still until someone steps within arms reach of one of them; then they both animate and attack.

Skeleton (Medium-Size Undead); CR 1/3; HD 1d12; 6 hp; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Att 2 Claws +0 melee; Dmg Claw 1d4; SQ Undead, immunities Fort +0; Refl +1; Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 11; AL N
Feats: Improved Initiative

6. Patio

On the eastern side of the monastery is a wide patio. Six statues depicting bald monks in various fighting stances line the eastern end of the patio. To the south a sharp drop leads to the courtyard in front of the monastery.

The patio is covered in drifts of snow. The full force of the storm can be felt here and anyone standing too close to the edge of the patio risk being swept off by the wind. The statues are purely decorative, but if the characters have fought the animated statues in room 17 they are likely to be jumpy about these as well.

Basement

Like the ground floor the rooms here are unlit. The walls are rough and hewn from the rock of the mountain. The ceiling is low (5'5"), and characters that have to duck to stand up or wield large weapons that need headspace (most large weapons except pole arms) suffer a -2 situational modifier to their attack rolls in these rooms.

7. The Furnace

A great stone furnace dominates this room. Bronze pipes lead from the furnace and disappear in the ceiling. The doors of the furnace are open but no fire burns within. Piles of coal fill the corners of this room.

If lit, the furnace will heat the monastery to approximately 150 C, over a period of one hour. To keep the fire lit someone must spend fifteen minutes every four hours shovelling coal into the furnace. The heat is very uncomfortable for the Ice Haunt (see the description of room 18, "The Abbot's Study"). And it will try to douse the fires when it materializes at midnight before going after the characters. It attacks anyone standing in its way and a break down doors on the way from the study to the furnace. While the heat is on, the haunt suffers a -2 penalty to its AC and attack rolls. The heat will also thaw frozen objects in the monastery and cause long frozen organic materials to begin decomposing. The DM should modify descriptive texts to reflect this.

Creatures. Half submerged beneath a pile of coal lies the corpse of one of the monks. When the haunt started killing the monks he hid here thinking he would be safe. Obviously he was mistaken. Grey frozen flesh still clings his bones, but only the face is visible beneath the coals. The staring eyes should cause whoever spots them quite a shock (Spot, DC 20). He remains perfectly still unless someone comes within an arms reach of the coal pile or tries to light the furnace.

Zombie (Medium-Size Undead); CR 1/2; HD 2d12+3; 16 hp; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural); Att Slam +2 melee; Dmg Slam 1d6+1; SQ Undead, partial actions only
Fort +0; Refl -1; Will +3; S 13, D 8, C -, I -, W 10, Ch 1; AL N
Feats: Toughness

8. Store room

Large barrels and sacks of supplies are stacked to the ceiling in this room dividing it into narrow corridors between the aisles. The musty smell is very prevalent in here ...

This room contained the monastery's supplies of foodstuffs and clothes. A cursory search will reveal extra robes, sacks of grain, barrels of salted meats and fish, torches, sheets of canvas and robes. There are also bags of flour and salt, but the moisture has turned the contents into solid blocks. Separate successful

searches (Search, DC 15) will reveal one of the following each. Three steel meat hooks big enough to carry an entire ox carcass (Exotic weapon, 1d4 (19-20/x2)) or 50 sheets of fine paper or 100 sheets of parchment or a large supply of writing ink and pens. If a character is specifically searching for one of these items and specifies which one he should gain a +2 situational modifier to his Search roll.

The musty smell is harmless but cruel DM's will imply that it is something sinister and have the players waste time searching for its origin.

9. Armory

Piles of javelins and other more exotic looking weaponry lines the east wall of this narrow room as well as three suits of studded leather armory.

The three suits of armor were a gift from a local lord after the abbot complained about attacks from Ice Ghouls in the area. They are unused, as the monks have no use for armor, but are nonetheless of masterwork quality (no armour check penalty).

The weapon racks contain 1d10+5 weapons of each type of monk weapon (nunchakus, kamas, sianghams, javelins etc.), as well as 10d10 shurikens. All the weapons are in mint condition.

First floor

Like the ground floor the rooms here are unlit but many of the rooms have shuttered windows that can be opened to let in light (... and snow).

10. The library

Piles of snow cover the floor of what must once have been a library the shutters of the windows in this room must have been blown open by the wind. Several tables are visible above the snow and pieces of parchment poke out in some places. In the northeast corner of the room near a door, a crumpled shape is leaning against the wall. Clutched in its hand is an unlit torch held out almost like one would hold out a holy symbol to ward off evil. The well-preserved face of the corpse is fixed in a hideous rictus of fear and hatred.

The corpse is the only one in the haunted monastery that doesn't animate when approached. It's the earthly remains of the abbot's second in command, Zemal, who was the last to die at the hands of the vengeful spirit. On the last night of the full moon he covered the floor of the library with oil soaked sheets of parchment and waited for the vengeful spirit. The abbot came for him at the stroke of midnight and would probably have perished in the flames if fate had not chosen that exact moment for a gust of wind to throw open the shutters and extinguish the monk's torch.

The pieces sticking out of the snow in places are blank and slightly greasy to the touch. The shelves along the walls contain thousands of scrolls but all have been rendered illegible by water damage.

11. The librarian's room

Shelves line the walls of this room and a small table sits in the western end of the room. A robed figure is slouched across the table. Dried garlic is strewn around the table in a semicircle.

The figure is that of the brother librarian who mistakenly took the vengeful spirit of the abbot to be a vampire. On the table before him lies a bottle of dried ink, a pen and a half finished prayer to Pelor, the sun god. The parchment is damaged by moisture and written in a shaky hand (See Appendix 1)

Creatures. The librarian is a zombie like most of the former inhabitants of the monastery. If anyone comes within reach of him he attacks. Until then he stays slumped over his table.

Zombie: hp 16; see area 7 for complete statistics.

Treasure. This room contains several ledgers and rare books all illegible because of moisture. One thing is to be gained from studying them however. A successful Intelligence roll (DC 12) will reveal one of several logs that a book or scroll was taken from or returned to the library by "Abbot Alluzin". Of the books borrowed by the former abbot, many seem to be of an occult nature.

12. Zemal's room

This was once the room of someone important in the monastery. Although Spartan, the furniture of the room is obviously of a good quality, and the cold floor is covered with carpets to keep out the cold. Beside the bed alcove a small table holds a few pieces of parchment and an oil lamp.

The parchments seem to be pages of a diary written in a forceful hand. Only the last page has survived in a legible state (see Appendix 2).

Treasure. A small locked drawer (DC 30) in the table (hardness 5, hit points 10) holds a 20 gp and a ring of keys. The keys fit various unlocked doors in the building. One, a small silver key, unlocks the doors to room 18.

13. The meditation room

The door to this room has been barricaded from the inside, but to no avail. The remnants of the door hang off twisted hinges and the contents of the room have been torn to shreds. Two corpses lie in twisted position indicating multiple bone fractures. Shredded straw mats cover the floor of the room.

This was the last stand of the monks mentioned in the librarian's prayer. All the meditation in the world couldn't prepare for this death.

Creatures. Both corpses are zombies and attack in unison if someone enters the room.

Zombies (2): hp 16 (x2); see area 7 for complete statistics.

Treasure. A small brass bell worth 6 gp lies in the wreckage on the floor and can be found either by searching or by a successful Spot check (DC 15).

14. Cloak room

This is a small room with two doors. Pegs on the walls hold several robes in both brown and white, and several pairs of slippers have been left on the floor.

This room is fully unremarkable. Cruel DM's will therefore put the players on edge by having the door opposite the one they enter slowly creak shut.

Treasure. One of the white cloaks has a small key in its pocket that fits the locked drawer in room 12.

15. Top of the Stairwell

If the Darkmantle's Darkness spell (from location 2) is still in effect, most of this won't be visible.

This room is dominated by a flight of spiral stairs leading down to the hall below. The stair has a carved banister depicting some sort of snake winding its way down.

Most likely the characters have dispatched the Darkmantle on the ceiling when they first entered the monastery. Otherwise it attacks them again here. The door to the stairs that lead up has been destroyed. Attempts seem to have been made to board it up, and the wood splinters are scattered across the landing.

Creatures. See location 2.

16. Workroom

This room looks like it was a workshop of sorts. A large loom stands in one corner while a workbench and several wood working tools fill the other part of the room. Four bony figures are sprawled on the floor. Three of them would seem to have gone down fighting while the last skeleton is crumbled in a corner grinning merrily at it's dead friends.

There is nothing of value in the room. The evidence suggests that the monks here were surprised and killed after a short but brutal fight. There are tools and wood supplies enough here characters with a lust for carpentry.

Creatures. The skeletons come alive if anyone steps into the room.

Skeletons (4): hp 6 (x4); see area 5 for complete statistics.

Second floor

This is the top floor. The roofs of these rooms are sloped. Near the east and west walls the roof is so low that a grown man must crouch, and in the centre two men, one standing on the other's shoulders could not reach the ceiling. There are no windows on this floor so characters must have their own means of seeing.

17. Antechamber

This is a large mostly barren room with a staircase emerging in the middle. Two doors on either side of the stairs are guarded by stone statues in the shape of stern men in monks' habits.

The statues are magical and if anyone tries to open one of the doors without the proper key they animate.

The room is bare apart from the two guardians.

Creatures. 1/day the two statues can animate (treat as medium-sized animated objects). When they do they fight without mercy for 10 rounds (1 minute) before freezing up. Unless destroyed they can reanimate the following day. When a character lands the final blow on one of the statues it falls over and its head smashes on the floor. In the smashed head a little piece of parchment holds the words: "To my little brother - May these stalwart companions guard your sleep now that I cannot". The backside of each message is covered with arcane symbols. Any cleric will recognize these as religious symbols that are part of some kind of magical ritual.

This encounter might seem tough for a small band of 1st-level characters that have grown complacent with battling weak undead. But clever characters quickly figure out that they can run away and make the statues "run out of breath". Characters who deliberately lure the statues to waste their energy and then destroy them should receive full experience points for defeating them.

Guardian Statue (Animated Object) (Medium-Size Construct); CR 2; HD 2d10; 11 hp; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+4 natural); Att Slam +2 melee; Dmg Slam 1d6+1; SQ Construct, Hardness 8

Fort +5; Refl +3; Will +0; S 24, D 6, C -, I -, W 1, Ch 1; AL N

The statues are made of stone and are considered objects. Subtract their hardness (8) from all damage they receive.

18. The abbot's study

This is a large room with a sloped roof like the antechamber. The southern wall of the room is occupied with an uncomfortable looking bed in carved mahogany. Several tables stacked high with papers adorn the various corners of the room. The fireplace has been filled with snow and a deathly cold fills the room. Outside the full fury of the storm have turned its attention on the puny walls of the monastery.

This was the founding abbot's study and this is where he materializes every year during the three nights around the full moon when he was killed. As soon as he materializes he instinctively knows if someone has entered his abode.

Creatures. Although the characters might never meet the abbot in his quarters his stats are listed here.

Abbot Alluzin is an Ice Haunt[3]. In his undead form he appears as a tall, emaciated man dressed in the rags of a monk's habit. His withered flesh is the colour of snow and black veins are visible through the translucent skin. His fingers end in razor sharp claws and fanglike teeth fill his mouth. His eyes are empty sockets with two orange pinpricks of malevolent light at their bottom. While he is in his old monastery he cannot be turned by ordinary means. The old abbot is tough as bent coffin nails (98 hp) and most 1st-level parties are going to be slaughtered wholesale unless they wise up and use fire. Clues to this can be found with a little research (room 12) or trial and error (lighting the furnace).

If anyone calls him by his name (Alluzin) he freezes up. This makes him flatfooted until the end of the round when he must roll initiative again. This only works once no matter what the characters say.

Ice haunt (Medium-Size Undead); CR 4; HD 7d12+14; 98 hp; Init +7 (+4 Improved initiative, +3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Att Bite +10 melee, 2 claws +5 melee; Dmg Bite 1d8+3, claw 2d4+1; SA Numbing grip; SQ Vulnerability, Undead

Fort +7; Refl +5; Will -1; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 5, Cha 2; AL CE

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +3, Listen +5, Move silently +6, Spot +5, Wilderness lore +4

Feats: Alertness, Improved critical, Improved initiative, Track

SA - Numbing Grip (Ex): victims successfully grappled by an ice haunt must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or become so chilled that they lose sensation for 2d6 rounds. Every round a victim is so affected; he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to hold on to any handheld items (weapons, shield, wand, etc.) or in order to cast a spell requiring a somatic component.

SQ - Vulnerability (Ex): An ice haunt takes double damage from fire-based attacks.

SQ - Undead: See the MM page 6 for details of undead abilities.

Tactics. The haunt fights with silent fury. If at all possible he sneaks up on lone victims and dispatch them. If outnumbered he will use his numbing grip attack to numb as many foes as possible before killing them off one by one. Its only fear is fire, which it avoids at all costs. Death has not been kind to the abbot's once impressive powers of intellect and he is quite likely to walk into traps except if they involve going near large fires.

The abbot will materialize three times during the scenario as mentioned in the beginning. On the first and second night it will only fight until he loses 20 hp, and then try to escape, either to the study or into the cold night outside. If cornered in the study it fights to the death. The haunt heals 7 hp at the end of every night. On the last night the haunt will fight to the death even ignoring small fires like campfires and torches.

Treasure. Above the fireplace hangs a finely wrought (not a masterwork) light crossbow, an on the mantelpiece lies a leather quiver with 10 bolts. Another 40 bolts lie in a corner of the room, tied in a bundle. A stout ironbound chest holds the monastery's combined funds of gold. All told the chest contains 200 gp in mixed coinage. The greatest treasure in the room is quite anonymous. There are two chests containing clothes. One contains a fine black monk's habit with carved slippers. The other contains ordinary clothes at first glance, but has at its bottom a neatly folded hooded grey cloak. This is a Cloak of Elvenkind and woven on the soft inside of the cape are words in the elven tongue identifying the cloak as a gift from "The Prince of the Glades" to "his most devoted human friend". The cloak is quite distinctive and should the wearer ever meet "the Prince of the Glades" or any of his retainers, he will learn how the elves treat those who murder and rob their devoted friends ...

Development. If the characters manage to defeat the haunt in ordinary battle it simply returns the next year, fully healed, and they should only get half the amount of XP. To end the undead abbot's unlife he must be killed or finished off with fire.

19. The Parapet

You can see your house from here!

There are no windows or doors lead out here and no sane person would want to climb unto the roof in a blizzard[4]. This room is only keyed because it's listed on the map.

Concluding the adventure

The best way to survive the scenario is to make a trap for the haunt that exposes him to fire. Tough characters can also simply pummel the haunt to a pulp but this doesn't put the dead to rest permanently. Cowardly players can simply hide until the storm ends on the fourth day, but DM's should kill cowardly (read: boring) players without remorse ...

If the characters defeat the abbot with fire and put his cursed soul to rest the abbey suddenly fills with a strange sense of quiet. All undead creatures within the monastery find rest eternal and will never animate again. The character's are heroes and should make their way to a bar, get drunk, and brag about their deeds. When they sober up they probably want to train for their next level. When all that is wrapped up read the following to the characters.

"High in the mountains, snow falls gently on the roof of a lonely monastery. If a weary traveller had happened to pass at that very moment he would have seen a strange procession walking slowly in single file out of the rusty iron gates. A procession of shadowy shapes dressed in dark robes."

If one or more characters were killed in the monastery their shades are in the procession and the DM should describe them without mentioning names.

"When all have passed the gate they turn and look back. And there, just beyond the gate a stands a tall dark figure. After a moment that seems like forever it bows its head towards the gathering of shades then turns and walks back into the monastery. With that solemn farewell the shades turn and fade. Then the wind picks up, and for a moment the watching traveller's view of the monastery is obscured by snow. When he can see again, the monastery is gone, leaving only a cold mountainside."

Handouts

Appendix 1 - The librarian's prayer

Oh lord Pelor, thou who watches over the lands of men with thine golden countenance. Look in mercy upon our accursed monastery in this our hour of need! For we are beset by a nameless evil against which there seems no defence. It comes at the stroke of midnight and kills without discrimination. Only four of us remain now. Brother Cook and brother Apothecary have retreated to the meditation room and seem resigned to death. Only brother [brother is scratched out] abbot Zema still works feverishly on a solution. I, lord Pelor, put my fate in your hands and repent my sins in the name of St. Cuthbert who once walked like us in the lands of men. I ren -

- He comes!

Appendix 2 - The diary

[The date is about the same time as the players live in, but one year ago.]

Day 64 of the last quarter, 590 CY

I know him for who he is ... Pelor have mercy on my soul, for it is I who have brought this curse upon our house. Thus it is up to me to save us ... those who are still alive ... whether it is the light or the heat of it he fears I know not, but my trap shall give him plenty of both tonight.

[1] The Ice Ghoul is a creature taken from Sword & Sorcery's excellent "Creature Collection" supplement. The Ice Ghoul used here varies a little from the one described "Creature Collection" so all relevant details are provided here. It is not necessary to own a copy of the "Creature Collection".

[2] The Dark Sun setting being the one possible exception.

[3] The Ice Haunt is a creature taken from Sword & Sorcery's excellent "Creature Collection" supplement. The Ice Haunt used here varies a little from the one described "Creature Collection" so all relevant details are provided here. It is not necessary to own a copy of the "Creature Collection".

[4] It is the author's firm belief that some characters might still do it.

