



PUMPKIN

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BEING A SHORT TALE OF A WONDERLAND GONE WRONG

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago a young Crow mistakenly feasted on a succulent Pumpkin, and then fled when the sapient Plant attacked him.

The wound was not particularly harmful but left the Pumpkin scarred and bitter. The bitterness became madness over the years as the Pumpkin plotted revenge on all Crows.

The Pumpkin turned to Gourmancy, and after years of experiments, he at last had the means for revenge.

In that time, the Crow family moved on and a family of Blackbirds has come. Unfortunately, the Mad Pumpkin makes no distinctions.

THE SCREAM

The heroes are in the Laughing Horse Tavern in the small village of Frogspite (to the northeast of the Chessboard Fields) when an ale-curdling scream echoes outside. (It is late evening—darkness modifiers apply.)

THE VICTIM

Outside in the street lies a Blackbird amidst a spilled and jumbled mess of vegetables, sticks and a broken wicker basket. No matter how quickly the heroes reacted, there is no sign of anyone else, although other villagers are now approaching.

Investigation will reveal that the Blackbird has been strangled, though she is still alive. A successful Notice roll reveals narrow, deep gouges in her flesh beneath her feathers; a Smarts roll suggests that something like bony fingers caused them. Arcane or mundane healing will fix most of the hurt to the girl, though the damage to her throat will require days



through his stem, and a single black feather has been hung on the handle of the implement.

Successful Notice rolls reveal the spot where Sixpence picked vegetables. A raise on the Notice roll will reveal a series of holes, a half inch in diameter and a couple of inches deep, leading from one of the stick frames, across several plots (including one pumpkin patch—but do not mention this) before they disappear in the hard ground around the plots.

of rest before she can speak. All she can do for now is croak “crow.”

THE BLACKBIRD FAMILY

Before long, the girl’s mother is located; she is distraught over her daughter’s condition but can explain that the girl, Sixpence, had gone to the vegetable patch to fetch some fresh vegetables for dinner. Maybe the old Dandelion who has rooted there saw someone following Sixpence? Could the heroes help?

THE VEGETABLE PATCH

The vegetable patch consists of a dozen neat patches of open soil with a variety of vegetables (non-sapient) growing there. Some plots have wigwam-like frames of sticks supporting climbing plants such as tomatoes and runner beans, while others are covered in ground growing vegetables such as marrows and carrots.

A scarecrow with a pumpkin head and tattered clothes flaps forlornly in the breeze, but there is no sign of the Dandelion. Investigation reveals that the “scarecrow” is the missing Flower; the pumpkin has been thrust over his once proud, petalled head. The Dandelion has been killed by a hand sickle thrust

THE ATTACK

When the heroes return to the village, they can get directions to the Blackbird family home. They are soon invited in and offered tea while they talk of what they found.

Abruptly a crash resounds as the front door is broken inwards and two pumpkin-headed greater scarecrows shamble into the cottage. Three rounds into the combat there is another crash from a side room as a third greater scarecrow clambers through the window.

Once they are defeated, a successful Smarts roll will suggest that the raw materials for the scarecrows were readily available from the vegetable patch.

THE PATCH REVISITED

The patch is a complete mess with leafy vegetables strewn everywhere and gaping holes where they have been uprooted. The orderly frames have been knocked over, their component sticks broken. The holes (see **The Vegetable Patch** above) can be found all over the plots. A dozen or so pumpkins can be found in the patch if someone thinks to look; some of these

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are in fact lesser scarecrows and can be destroyed while still buried.

At a suitable moment, probably while the heroes are smashing pumpkins, the soil in several plots erupts upwards as greater scarecrows (1 per 2 heroes) burst out of their hiding places. At the same time the remaining lesser scarecrows (2 per hero, minus any already smashed) will begin to struggle free—though, as they are weaker, it will take them two rounds to emerge.

THE PUMPKIN'S LAIR

A hero making a raise on a Notice roll at the start of the fight (or automatically, once the fight is over) will spot small flickering flames some distance away in the dark: the eyes of greater scarecrows guarding a deep cave in the nearby hills where the Pumpkin has his lair.

The Pumpkin is within his lair with another six lesser scarecrows. Once discovered, he will scream that all crows must die; he urges his scarecrows forward, while using his prepared Magic Foodstuffs.

Once the Pumpkin is defeated, searching the cave reveals mostly dubious-looking Gourmancy ingredients and a standard cooking set. The only item of real interest is the old, slightly-rotten journal of the Mad Pumpkin. A successful Smarts roll allows a reader to get the gist of the Pumpkin's story from his deranged ramblings.



STATISTICS

SCARECROW

These constructs are just sticks bound with vines, topped with carved pumpkin heads. The carved faces are animate, sneering and blinking while a candle flame flickers behind the eye holes.

Greater scarecrows are identical, but roll a Wild Die on all trait rolls. Otherwise, they are still considered Extras.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** Scarecrows gain a +2 bonus to recover from being Shaken, take no additional damage from called shots, and are immune to disease and poison.
- **Fear:** Scarecrows' scary visage causes fear.
- **Immunity (Fire):** Despite their flammable construction, Scarecrows are immune to fire damage.
- **Weakness:** If the flame inside the pumpkin head is extinguished, the creature collapses, lifeless. This normally involves a Called Shot to the head or a water-based area effect attack.
- **Wooden Claws:** Str+d6 damage.



MAD PUMPKIN

The Pumpkin is about 3 feet tall and wide, with long tentacle-like roots and fronds. His face bears a long and deep scar that has never properly healed.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Cooking d8, Fighting d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Arcane Background (Gourmancy)

Magic Foodstuffs: (20/20 PP)—Pumpkin Pie Plate (*armor*, 2 PP, 8), 2x Pumpkin Vine Wine (*burrow*, 3 PP, 5), 3x Pumpkin Seed Pudding (*entangle*, 4 PP, 6)

Special Abilities:

- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not result in a wound.
- **Mobile ... Mostly:** Pace of 4; Running die is a d4.
- **Plant:** As a Plant, the Pumpkin is immune to diseases and poisons affecting animals, but susceptible to diseases and poisons affecting plants.

He has no need for food, but requires sunlight in its place (1 hour per two days).

- **Small:** -1 to Toughness.

Gear: Carving knife (Str+d4)

Note: Magic Foodstuffs contain prepared powers, taking an action to consume, but no spellcasting roll required. Each is listed with the power name, Power Points invested, and the predetermined spellcasting roll.

RECIPE: SCARECROW SPICE

A new Gourmantic recipe is hidden in the Mad Pumpkin's ramblings: a pumpkin spice that animates scarecrows. A Gourmancer or Witch Queen may use an Advance to gain this power after studying the book.

This acts as the *zombie* power, but animates one lesser scarecrow per 4 Power Points, or a greater scarecrow per 8 Power Points, and requires a pumpkin-headed scarecrow to animate.

This power can also animate jack-o'-lanterns, but, lacking bodies, they can't do much other than to Taunt foes.

Although the art of making *permanent* scarecrows was lost with the Mad Pumpkin, this diary is still worth about £5 if sold in a Wonderland city (requiring a Streetwise check to find an interested Gourmancer or Witch Queen buyer).

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