



rites of weeping

A FOLK HORROR ADVENTURE FOR
LEVELS 2-3

deep within the woods, where the pines grow high as churches, a god-thing is dying. her children are gone, taken by plague. what was once her temple is now their tomb.

in desperation, she prolongs the life of her last remaining servant, transforming her into a vile instrument of grim necessity — a yellow-eyed horror that preys upon the inhabitants of the local village. it comes at night to drag them, screaming, to the black lake. there — amid the rotten husks of plague-ravaged monks — they are caged, nourishment for a dying thing that dreamed she was a goddess.

rites of weeping is a folk horror adventure designed for characters of levels 2-3.

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FOR JON, SOPHIA, AND BELLA EAVES

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referee's introduction

In the deep woods, where the pines grow tall as churches and the mist hangs thick like a shroud, **what was once a temple has become a tomb.**

Chained below the dark earth, **a god-thing is starving to death.** In desperation, she has bestowed every gift she still has power to give upon her last surviving servant, warping her into a foul instrument of grim necessity – horror with skin that writhes from within. **The Servant** has been stealing people from the nearby village, taking them back to the temple that is now a tomb beneath the wet, black earth. There, they are caged and bound to perform the **rites of weeping**; nourishment for a dying thing that dreamed she was a goddess.

Rites of Weeping is a short folk horror adventure designed for use with **Old School Essentials** and other OSR rulesets. The module is suitable for a party of **3-6 characters** of levels **2-3.**

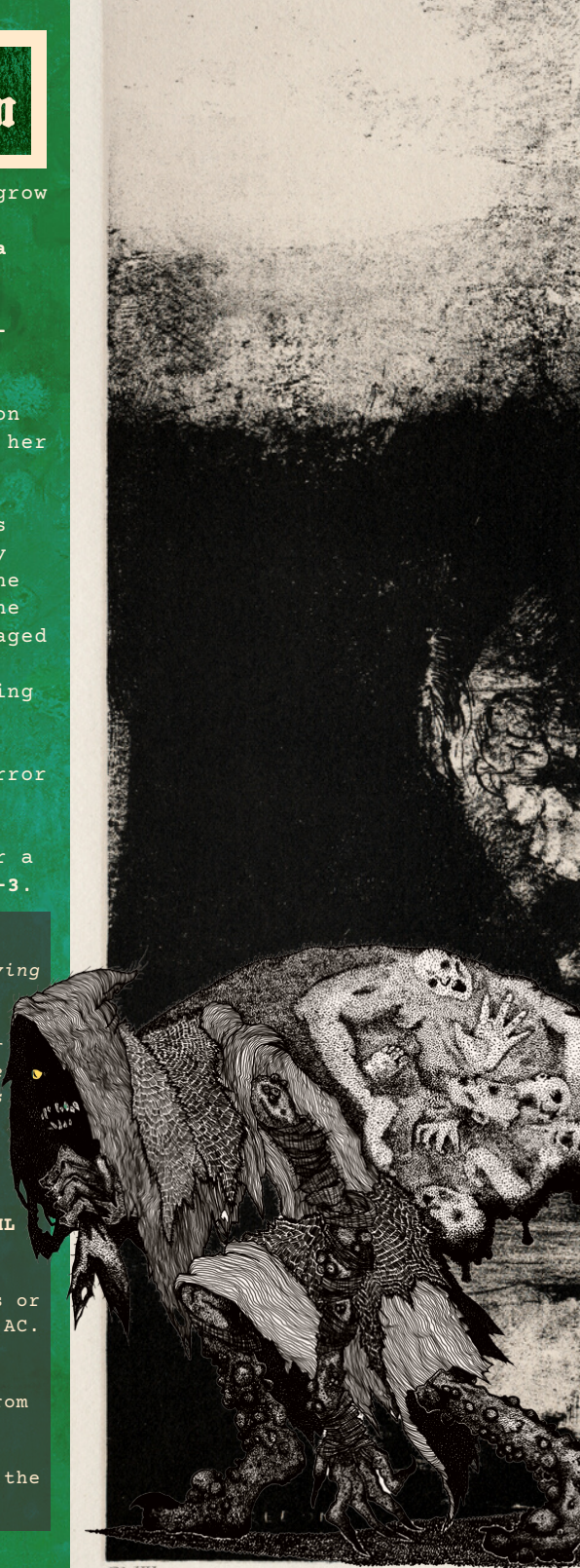
THE SERVANT

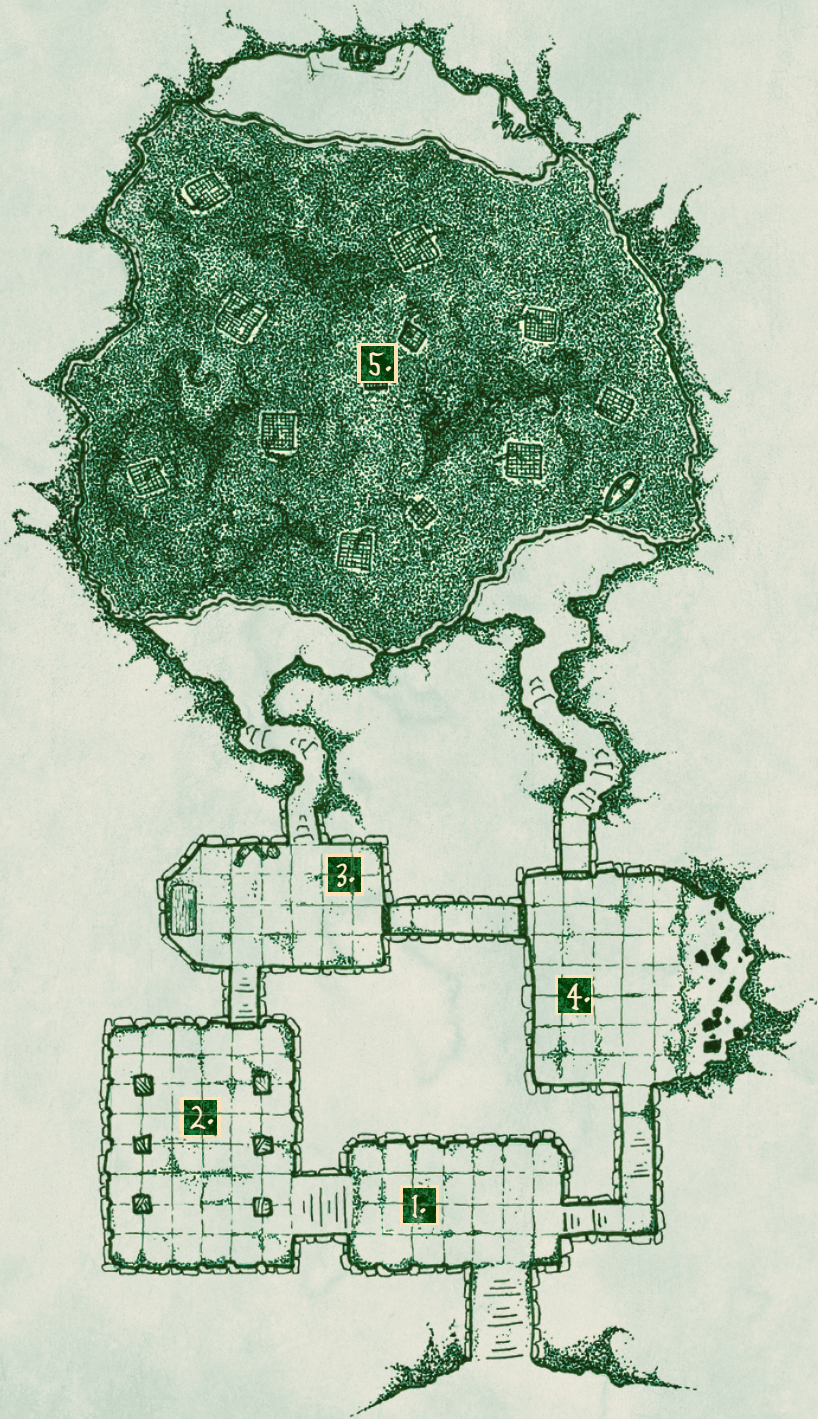
Hunched, yellow-eyed embodiment of a dying god-thing's will. Consumed by virulent plague. Stinks like a leper colony and screams with a voice like tearing paper and gushing boils. Wants to take people and cage them above the Weeping Lake as sustenance for its god.

AC 3 [16], HD 9* (40hp), Att 2 × claw (d8), 1 × mesmerise, THACO 12 [+7], MV 180' (60'), SV D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (9), ML 10, AL Neutral

Mesmerise. A target must save vs Spells or weep uncontrollably; -4 to attacks and AC. Save again each round.

Undying Servitude. While the god-thing remains, The Servant will rise again from lake in Area 5) if killed in 1d6 turns. The water churns as though boiling and bright white light shines from beneath the Idol's veil.





starting the adventure

The boat is leaking. Two days upriver from the last real town; too far to turn back. A soft, cold rain turns the ground to dark, peaty soup and sucks the light from the edges of the sky.

THE VILLAGE

Around the next crook in the river, a small, nameless village – little more than a few thatched cabins with leaky roofs and grubby, solemn occupants – slouches into view. A long, low river barge is lashed to a rotten dock. Goats, chickens, and muck-smearred children run up and down what passes for a street.

THE FISHERWOMEN

Three sullen, cock-eyed fisherwomen sit smoking pipes and drinking coarse bramblewine outside their huts, watching the river pass by. Their boats lie upturned, half inside-half outside of crude wooden shacks. They do not care to share their names.

They know: the leaking boat will take time to fix. The wood needs to dry 'afore it can be tarred, and the boat house is full, so you'll have to wait for the rain to let up.

GOTMAR, THE HEADMAN'S SON

A young man in a stained smock. Thin-faced, nervous. Eyes dark with broken sleep.

Knows: people from his village are being taken by a yellow-eyed horror from the deep woods. The thing has taken many villagers including his father, **Ostmek the Headman**, and one of the river traders staying in town, **Ivan Karnizy**.

Pretends: the attacks are the work of a large wolf from the deep woods, that he will pay handsomely (100 gp per party member) for its pelt.

Offers: a place to stay in a crooked, leaky hut currently also occupied by the two river trader girls whose father was taken the night before. At night, he will extinguish all lamps in the village but those that burn above its door and that

THE KARNIZY SISTERS

Bella and Sophia. Dark-haired young women with wary eyes and thin, angular features. Sitting, dressed in the wet weather gear – waxed cotton cloaks and broad-brimmed hats over bright patterned homespun clothes, the long knives strapped to their boots that mark them as river folk. Traders.

They know: their riverboat put in here two days earlier – for supplies and to trade.

Their father, **Ivan**, was taken in the night. Sophia saw what took him: something big and fast with yellow eyes that stank like a leper colony. Its tracks lead away into the forest. None of the villagers are willing to help, let alone lead them into the deep woods.

They offer: gold (2d4 x 100 gp and an Idol - carved from ivory, a fat man with a cat's head sitting cross-legged, a jade orb in his hands - worth 1,200 gp in a downriver curio shop) and a place on their barge headed downriver in exchange for help finding their father and his safe return. They will defer to the experience of adventurers, but they make it clear that their father must be returned before anyone leaves this place on their barge, let alone gets paid.

STAYING IN THE VILLAGE

Anyone who agrees to help defend the village from the next attack is given food, lodgings, and any assistance short of fighting or accompanying the heroes into the woods that the villagers can provide.

That night (and every following night), the **Servant** attacks the village, taking an NPC or party member if possible (starting with **Gotmar** or whomever the players have taken a liking to). Unless someone is on watch, the chances of a villager raising the alarm before they are taken are just 1-in-6.



BELLA KARNIZY — LEVEL 2 THIEF
Wiry, tense. Deft, practiced motions and sharp eyes. Guarded and cautious as she oils her blade.

AC 6 [13] (leather armour), HP 7, Att 1 x longbow (1d6); or 1 x dagger (1d4), THACO 19 [0], MV 90' (30'), SV D13 W14 P13 B16 S15, AL Neutral, STR 9 INT 10 WIS 13 DEX 14 CON 12 CHA 9, ML 8 (10 with Sophia), Special backstab

SOPHIA KARNIZY — LEVEL 2 FIGHTER
High, sharp cheekbones and a reassuring smile. Kindly. Impulsive. Fondly strokes the hawk perched on her shoulder.

AC 6 [14] (chainmail), HP 6, Att 1 x short sword (1d6) and 1 x hawk (+2 to-hit, 1d4; AC 7 [12], HP 2), THACO 19 [0], MV 60' (20'), SV D12 W13 P14 B15 S16, AL Chaotic, STR 15 INT 10 WIS 8 DEX 8 CON 7 CHA 12, ML 8 (10 with Bella)

the temple that is now a tomb

The trail is easy to follow, winding for half a day into the *primaeval* gloom.

The tracks end at a **rough stone arch**, doors hastily mortared shut with lyme and ash. Daubed with the **symbol for PLAGUE**. Broken open from the inside. **Crude idols** (dozens, 1' tall, carved from soapstone – a robed woman with small fragments of mirror where her face ought to be) clustered facing the doorway. Beyond, stone stairs (slick with water, humid, hot) lead downwards. Flickering candlelight shines from the bottom.

THE SERVANT

During the day, the Servant moves mechanically from one task to another. Roll a **d6** to determine its location and activity. Each turn, there is a **1-in-6 chance the Servant starts a new task**.

1. Relighting candles in Area 1.
2. In Area 3, preparing the bodies of its order for burial by sewing together pieces from the pile of limbs in Area 4.
3. Sorting through the pile of rotten limbs in Area 3, trying to find pieces that match.
- 4-5. Tending to the cages in Area 5.
6. Kneeling before the Idol on the far shore of the lake (Area 5), chanting a low, hypnotic dirge.

At night, there is a **3-in-6 chance the Servant is out hunting**. While inside the temple, roll every two turns to determine when the Servant returns (**2-in-6 chance**).

Area 1. Entrance Hall.

Flickering candlelight, dripping water. Wet stonework caked in mould. Smells of sweet rot and petrichor.

- **Candles** (hundreds, of all sizes) cover the floor, crammed into nooks around the walls. Guttering in the damp; about a quarter have already gone out.
- **Flint and tinder**. In a niche by the door. Wrapped in oilskin. Recently used.
- **Niches**. Slick, wet skulls and neatly bound bundles of bone. Skulls have coins on their eyes (6d6 gp worth in gold, silver; ancient denominations, faces worn away). **Removing the coins**: the skulls wail with grief (2-in-6 chance of attracting the Servant per round a skull is screaming).

Area 2. Mass Crypt.

Once a prayer chamber, converted to a mass grave. Water-damaged murals of the god-thing (a woman in a long robe; mirrors set into the wall in place of a face).

- **Burial Niches** line the walls; hastily carved, inlaid with crude blessings. Contain **3d6 + 4 dessicated corpses** (dressed in mouldy monk robes, their last rites hastily performed). Limbs missing, flesh eroded by an intense and violent leprosy. Each has gold coins covering their eyes. **Removing the coins**: the corpse twitches and groans, then rises as a **Rotten Husk** next turn to attack the living in an attempt to retrieve its coins.



Area 3. Shrine of Preparation.

Caustic, embalming fluid air mixed with the raw iron tang of blood. Yellow, flickering light laps against walls lined with mirrors.

- **Work bench.** A stone butcher's block, stained dark red.
- **Withered corpse.** The partially flayed remains of a monk lie on the block, surrounded by curved scalpels, saws, and a flensing knife – all well maintained. The skull has been removed, cleaned, and carved with runes of power inlaid in silver and gold. Its mouth is open wide, expectantly.

Singing Skull.

Placing a gold coin in the skull's mouth causes it to sing a low, mournful song (non-Lawful-aligned enemies must **Save vs Paralysis to attack the bearer**; lasts 1d4 turns).

ROTTEN HUSK

AC 9 [10] , **HD** 1+1 (6 hp), **Att** 1 x bite (1d4 + rot), **THACO** 19 [0], **MV** 60' (20') **SV** D14 W15 P16 B17 S18, **ML** 12, **AL** Neutral

- **Rot.** On max damage, inflicts leprous rot (save vs Poison or 1d4 Con loss; death at 0, rise as a Rotten Husk)
- **Undead.** Does not need air, food, or water. Immune to sleep and other mind-controlling abilities or spells.
- **Shambling.** Always acts last in initiative order.

Area 4. Unfinished Crypt.

Cut stone (previously quarters for the monks, hastily converted into a crypt) gives way to rough-hewn rock (an expansion abandoned midway). Rubble and broken pickaxes (handles eaten by the damp) strewn about.

- **Limb Pile.** Bloated, mouldering limbs in a 3' high pile in the middle of the room. Rotten and unattached. The pile animates if disturbed. Chases coins in an attempt to find rest.

FESTERING MASS OF UNDEAD LIMBS

AC 7 [12] , **HD** 4 (18 hp), **Att** 1 x touch (2d6 + engulf), **THACO** 16 [+3], **MV** 60' (20') **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic

- **Engulf.** save vs Paralysis or be enveloped, unable to attack, cast spells, etc. 2d6 automatic damage per round. Save again each turn.
- **Fester.** attacks have a 2-in-6 chance of inflicting disease. **Save vs Poison or 1d4 Max hp loss**; death at 0, consumed.
- **Undead.** Does not need air, food, or water. Immune to sleep and other mind-controlling abilities or spells.

Area 5. The Weeping Lake.

Cool, damp, dark. Footsteps and the lapping of water echo against a high, unseen ceiling, mingling with the sound of soft, hopeless sobbing.

Rough stone walls surround an underground lake. A small rowboat (used by the Servant to visit the idol and cage mechanism on the far shore) is moored nearby.

Points of yellow light hang in the darkness above placid black water, drifting like phosphenes; dozens of cages hang from chains above the lake. Some are big enough for three adults crammed in; others are barely big enough for a child. 1d6 + 2 are occupied. Ivan Karnizy, Gotmar's father Ostmek, and any NPCs taken since the adventure began are here. None have the strength to walk, or the will to go on.

Cages. Locked. Once used by the monks for meditation. Now, used by the Servant to imprison people taken from the village. Each occupied cage glimmers with the light from a single candle. The captives' fear and sorrow feed the god-thing.

The Far shore. A rocky beach. A shrine surrounded by candles and mirrors. The idol that contains the god-thing itself. A robed woman, face hidden behind a shroud, one arm outstretched towards the cages, the other clasping a book of scripture bound in human skin. a key hanging around its neck unlocks the cages.

2d4 Rotten Husks worshipping (begging, on their knees, hands outstretched) at the idol's feet. Attack anyone who reaches the shore, trying to drag them into the lake and drown them. If given gold coins, they place them over their eyes and lie still.

The face of the god-thing. Raising the shroud reveals a small hollow space containing a hole into an infinitely reflective abyss. **Looking inside: Save vs Spells (-2 penalty)** or experience overwhelming, painful memories. Affected characters try to drown themselves in the black lake to appease the god-thing (repeat the saving throw each round).

The Book. Details the rites and rituals the god-thing demands (suffering and sorrow), as well as the pact between the Servant and the god-thing. "While the the rites are honoured, SHE shall endure. While SHE endures, so do you."

Block, tackle, and pulleys. Beside the shrine. Can be used to lower and raise cages to the level of the water.

Killing the god-thing and the Servant. Only removing (or killing) the people in the cages will starve and kill the god-thing and prevent the resurrection of its Servant. The statue is immovable and unbreakable while the god-thing still lives.

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