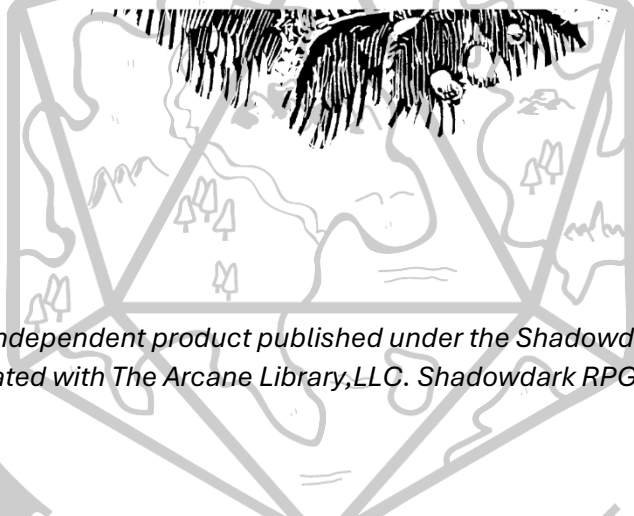


The Last Bell Toll

Backcover Summary:

In Grimvale, fairy tales haunt the night — and any story told has the power to alter reality. The town's church bells have kept the darkness at bay for generations. Now the bells are silent. Can the heroes unravel the mystery of the missing bells, face the monsters that plague the darkness, and contain the night before Grimvale is lost to perpetual darkness?

Designed for use with Shadowdark RPG



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Desired Cover Image:

An empty stone church bell tower stands far in the background, its silhouette barely visible beneath an unnaturally darkened midday sky. The light is wrong, more like dusk than noon, and long, distorted shadows stretch across the cobblestones at impossible angles.

In the foreground include one or two small cottages off to either side and the sturdy log-cabin style townhall, their windows glowing with warm light. A handful of villagers—no more than four—hurry urgently toward their doors, captured mid-motion to emphasize their urgency.

Emphasizes isolation: open space, sparse figures, and the distant church, against a dark cloudy sky. The style evokes a Brothers Grimm illustration—fine ink linework, woodcut texture, muted earth tones, and stark contrast between cold grays and flickering warmth—creating a quiet, creeping sense of dread.

Introduction

Grimvale could easily be used as a remote village in almost any fantasy setting, but is designed as an introductory adventure to **Sagenlund**—a world where fairy tales haunt the night and stories have the power to alter reality.

In Grimvale, the days have been growing shorter ever since the bell-ringer went missing. And the villagers of Grimvale have always feared leaving their homes in the dark hours, for those who venture into the night rarely return.

Using this Adventure

Boxed text is intended to be read aloud to players.

Italicized bold text. Contains information for actions players may want to take at a location.

Inline Bold Text. These are keywords; proper nouns (NPCs, locations), or skill checks. Bolded to help you quickly identify key details.

The Legend of Grimvale

In Sagenlund there is a story behind every monster, in fact, the stories create them. Those who have learned to manipulate this fact have created a world filled with danger and wonder in equal measure. The full campaign setting will contain tools to generate adventures, inspired by the “seven sentences” structure. The following is the example that inspired this adventure, and is meant to be shared with the players:

Darkness befalls Grimvale

Long ago, the people of Grimvale feared leaving their homes, for monsters stirred in the dark beyond their doors.

Every day, darkness came at unpredictable hours, and those who set out too early or returned too late were never seen again.

Then one day, the sun simply did not rise.

Because of that, the people of Grimvale barricaded themselves indoors and sent a brave messenger to the King, begging for deliverance from the endless night.

Because of that, the King sent word throughout the land, calling for a mystic who could save Grimvale from its curse.

Finally, one answered. A strange mystic came to Grimvale and saw that the bells in the town’s church were subject to a powerful curse. Their toll could command the darkness. The mystic taught the townsfolk to ring the bells at sunset to seal the night, and sunrise to release it. With this newfound knowledge, Grimvale could bind the darkness to its proper hours.

Ever since, the bells of Grimvale have reliably heralded sunset and sunrise, and the people have obeyed their sound, hiding from the dark until morning came.

Until one morning, the bells did not ring.

The Adventure Hook

Someone in the party will know the legend, and have heard that the Village of Grimvale once again called out for heroes. Offering whatever meagre wealth the town could gather as a reward for rescuing them from the darkness.

Binding the Darkness

There is never one way to solve a problem in Sagenlund, but there is one approach that always works; rewriting the story. The intended conclusion of this adventure is defeating the Unformed (pg. TK), however players have proposed other convincing endings. The key is really using some truth to create a convincing tale of why the legend has changed. Other potential endings are:

- Tossing the bell into the pit of darkness
- Re-assembling the bell and bringing it back to the church

The Adventure Begins

The action begins immediately as the PCs enter the small town of Grimvale.

The change is subtle, but as the town approaches, the sky quickly begins to darken. Where the bright midday sun should illuminate the sky, there is instead a pale gray sunset, casting long shadows across the ground. As you enter the town, villagers run frantically toward their homes and shops, their lit windows contrasting starkly with the dim gray light of dusk. The pale rays of the setting sun pass through an empty church bell tower, standing just beyond the town hall.

If the PCs do not quickly decide where to head, read-aloud the following passage:

The sun continues setting at an unnatural pace, causing shadows to rapidly spread across the ground. The townsfolk hurry frantically to the nearest building, and the sound of doors slamming shut and locks sliding in place can be heard from all the nearby buildings.

If the PCs act quickly, they can make it to the Town Hall without issue. If they stall, they will need to run, persuade people to let them enter, or set up camp in the darkness.

Proceed to town hall.

The PCs can make it to the town hall without issue if they don't delay. Otherwise, they will need to make a **DC 12 Str or Dex** to get there before the door is locked shut.

Follow the townsfolk.

PCs may find sympathy following almost anyone in town, since the townsfolk firmly believe staying out after dark is a death sentence. With a **DC 10 Cha** check, they can convince someone to let them stay the night. If they convince them they are here to help fix the situation, give them advantage on the roll.

Once the sun sets.

As the sun sets and darkness rises the last windows are shuttered and doors locked shut. Light can just faintly be seen coming from cracks along the edges of doors and windows.

Once the sun sets, no one will open their door without hesitation. **DC 14 Cha** would persuade someone to open their dwelling.

Behind the drawn shades and shuttered windows and doors every house will have lights lit, all night if they are able to. The town is considered **Risky** at night. Since Darkness lasts 12 hours, on average PCs will have 1 encounter overnight. Keeping a campfire, the entire night will cost 4 torches.

Roleplaying the Townsfolk

Many townsfolk fear just letting the darkness seep in from the outside could be enough to invoke the night's wrath.

The fear and behaviors are deeply ingrained in the townsfolk. For as long as anyone can remember, townsfolk have done everything possible to avoid the darkness; most have never been outside at night. Almost everyone

knows someone who took that risk, and didn't return.

Style Note: For a slightly lighter but still dark adventure, I've had townspeople act irrationally fearful of the dark. To the point where their fear has kept them from doing even the most obvious and simple steps to investigate the bell's disappearance. It grounds the ingrained fear of the townsfolk, and adds a bit of light humor.

Grimvale in the Dark Encounters

| Roll d12 | Encounter |
|----------|---|
| 1 | 1d4 Memory Echoes |
| 2 | 1d4 Wolves |
| 3 | A chill howling wind, DC 12 Dex to keep fire lit. |
| 4 | Fearmonger |
| 5 | 1d4 Goblins |
| 6 | 1d4 bandits |
| 7 | Echoing voices coming from the forest |
| 8 | 1d4 Giant Bats |
| 9 | 2 Cultists |
| 10 | 1d4 Darkmantles |
| 11 | Shadow |
| 12 | Vrock |

Investigation Summary

As the legend suggests, heading to the church will quickly lead the PCs to the dungeon the bell has been drug off too. However, meticulous PCs will gain some useful information that can be used to circumvent some dangers in the dungeon. In particular, by identifying victims.

Missing People. Over the years numerous individuals have fallen victim to the shapeless horrors that haunt the darkness. They are now Memory Echoes (pg. TK). If a memory echo is named, it begins to fade away.

Appendix TK is a printable page of descriptions of the missing people. Each has a simple defining characteristic that can be used by villagers to describe who went missing, and by the PCs to identify memory echoes. Anytime the PCs ask or are told by villagers about a missing person roll on the table to identify who the missing individual was.

Events Timeline.

Before Play:

- 1 week before the PCs arrived the Bell ringer vanished
- Disappearances quickly began to escalate, as darkness appeared randomly.
- Days have grown shorter and darker
- Villagers are trying to stay indoors as much as possible

Day 1 (PC Arrival):

- Dusk occurs mid-afternoon
- Total Darkness lasts 16 hours

Day 2-7:

- Darkness increases by 1 hours per day till day 7

Day 5:

- The sun never fully rises
- The Uncounted can linger longer and nearer to homes
- Villagers begin to panic or flee

Day 7+:

- Perpetual Darkness
- Grimvale becomes part of the dark forest
- The story of "a town without dawn" will begin to spread

The Village of Grimvale

Old church tower.

The modest, one-room church stands apart as the town's only stone building. Its bell tower stands out as the only item decorating the town's skyline.

The church is abandoned. It's composed of three rooms; the nave, a staircase behind the sanctuary leading up to the church bell, and a small room attached to the back right corner of the nave used as the bellkeep's quarters.

Townhall.

The town hall stands just off the western edge of the town's single road, anchoring the center of Grimvale. Its walls made of massive, unformed timbers give the structure a sturdy practical appearance.

Mayor Emelia Greyson. An older woman who never had any children. She is the epitome of no nonsense. She cares for the town like a mother, showing compassion while expecting everyone to do their part.

She knows the bell ringer and bell are missing but doesn't have anyone in town able to investigate to figure out what happened. She will mention there was some blood found in the bell tower.

The mayor Emelia and her husband Darrel are just as superstitious as everyone else in town. She'll offer the heroes 20 gold each for binding the darkness to the night. She regrets not being able to offer more, but it's all she has free in the town's meager coffers.

Farmsteads.

A series of small homes and farmsteads dot the landscape, each built in a similar, enduring style: rough-hewn timbers stacked efficiently, with small porches and neat piles of firewood set beside the doors.

Approaching farmsteads. In the dark, no one is likely to open their door and knocking will do little more than evoke fearful reactions from those within. During the day individuals will be nervous and on edge, constantly looking to the sky and worrying as they rush through their daily chores. Each farmstead visited could provide the players with the name of a loved one or friend lost to the darkness (see pg. TK Memory Echoes).

Farmers:

Amanda and Troy Algren. They are a young married couple who were able to purchase this farmstead cheaply, and now deeply regret not listening to the legends about the town.

Bob and Marla Felroot. An older couple whose children have all grown up and moved away from Grimvale.

Henry and Clarice Wheaton. A middle-aged couple with four children spanning in ages from 5 – 15. They've made due in Grimvale but are now fearful for what the future holds if the darkness can't be contained.

Cart Corral: Inn and Stables.

A weathered sign sways overhead, the faint image of a horse-drawn wagon and the words *Cart Corral* barely discernible beneath years of wear. Its chains whine softly in the wind. Though the smell of warm food drifts from within, no laughter or music follows.

The Inn offers lodging for 4 gp. There are never more than 1 or 2 patrons inside the inn. The innkeep Amelia Swift, can provide the name of one Memory Echo and two additional ones if

tipped well. She's deeply superstitious and won't open the door at night. She may open a window allowing the PCs to crawl in or out.

The Inn currently has two patrons. **Elroy Gardam**, a royal guardsman tasked with tax collection and **Barry Melvoy**, an old drunk who sits in the corner and drinks each day till he passes out.

Barry had a few family members disappear over the years, sold his farm, and is now a wealthy homeless person who spends his time drinking.

Elroy is one of many Royal Guardsman in Sagenlund stationed along roadways at inns and other waypoints to tax travelers. They are not particularly well liked by anyone, and the tax he collects on each person that stays at the inn is why the price of the stay is so high.

Perry's Products: General Store.

Grimvale really has only one other building of interest, the general store. The small building is jam packed with a wide assortment of goods, most made by Perry himself.

Perry is a young entrepreneur. He took over his grandfather's general store and started making everything himself to save money. He will quite proudly proclaim this to any who ask, and those who don't.

Optional Flavor: Perry's items are discounted by 10% compared to normal prices. However, there is a 1:20 chance they don't work right. Close inspection DC 10 Int can identify if the item will fail. Otherwise roll on first use.

The Dark Forest

Danger Level: Unsafe

Light: None

The western side of town is bordered by a thick forest. Locals enter it only when necessary.

The well-maintained fields abruptly give way to a thick dark forest. Trees shoot up towards the sky, and their thick foliage casts dark shadows across the forest floor. Dense, skeletal brambles cover the forest floor, their bare branches tangled into a low, unbroken mat.

Forest Encounters

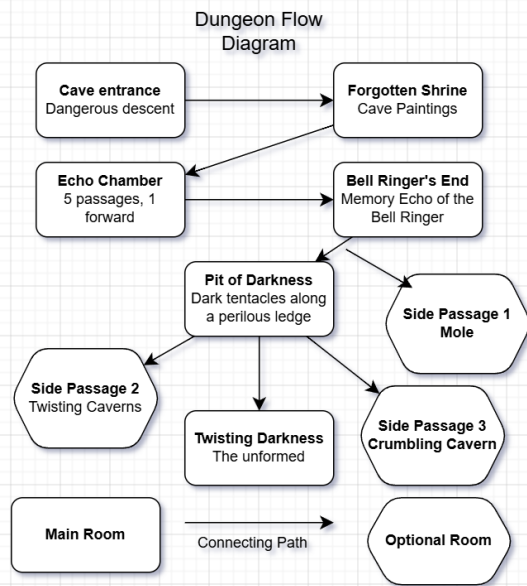
| Roll d12 | Encounter |
|----------|---|
| 1 | 1d4 Goblin Scouts, set snare trap. |
| 2 | Deer in Fog, stalked by 1d4 Wolves |
| 3 | Broken Cart, Caught in a web. 2 Giant Spiders |
| 4 | Hunter's Cache. 1d4 torches, 1d4 rations. 2d10 gold |
| 5 | Hanging Effigy. If disturbed, 1d4 skel |
| 6 | Lost Child. Fades into woods, is a shadow. |
| 7 | Goblin Wolf Riders |
| 8 | A light burning ahead, held by a corpse on a tree. Will burn for 1 hour if removed. 1d4 zombies approach if disturbed |
| 9 | Bandit Cache |
| 10 | Disturbing Darkness |
| 11 | A chill wet wind, rain. |
| 12 | Troll looking for food (can talk through) |

Traversing the forest. Following the trail through have the PCs make three DC 12 Wisdom checks to navigate. Each success takes 10 minutes, while failures take 20. Either way, the PCs are able to follow the trail.

River Crossing. After one success or two failures, the PCs come to a small fast-moving river (use battle map on pg. TK), with a

makeshift log bridge. Once a PC steps onto the log, a few goblins step out of the shadows and demand payment to cross the bridge. The goblins will accept 5 or more gold automatically or can be intimidated DC 13 Cha or Str. Otherwise, they'll fight anyone who attempts to cross the bridge.

The Cave



After the PCs complete navigating the forest, the trail ends at the entrance to a cave.

The thick forest finally breaks up somewhat to reveal a large dark hole in the ground. Its steep surface, covered in sharp rocks jutting out of the dirt at haphazard angles, looks perilous and your light doesn't reach the bottom.

Descending into the cave. Descending without assistance requires **Dex DC 12** on a failure take 1d6 damage from crashing into protruding rocks. There are ample trees to tie a rope to and ensure an easy descent, doing so would take a group of PCs about 10 minutes (1 random encounter roll).

Cave Random Encounter Table

| Roll d12 | Encounter |
|----------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 1d4 Memory Echoes, 1 named |
| 2 | 1d4 Wolves |
| 3 | Will-o-wisp |
| 4 | Devil, Imp |
| 5 | Devil, Barbed |
| 6 | Whispering voices |
| 7 | Floor collapse |
| 8 | Cave Collapse |
| 9 | Brown Bear |
| 10 | Bat Swarm |
| 11 | Doppelganger |
| 12 | Shadow |

The Forgotten Shrine

The torchlight illuminates cave paintings along the wall. Faded and crudely drawn human figures carry torches, barely managing to hold shadows at bay. One figure is being dragged away by shadows holding an unlit torch, and a group of three hold torches over a pit of darkness with tentacles rising from somewhere within its black depths.

Cave drawings. The cave drawings are meant to provide a way to get past the **Pit of Darkness** unharmed. It also hints at the origins of the legends related to darkness in Grimvale.

The Listening Chamber

The cave opens into a large chamber. Five narrow passages branch out from the far wall. From somewhere within them, rhythmic toll of a church bell echoes, barely audible and repeating every few seconds.

The Shifting Echo. Sound in this chamber resonates incorrectly. Any sound originating in one of the five passages is heard as though it comes from the passage three to its right. A sound from passage 1 seems to come from passage 4. A sound from passage 2 seems to come from passage 5. Passages 3, 4, and 5

wrap back around, their sounds come from passages 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

The bell is ringing in **passage 1**. Players will hear it coming from **passage 4**.

Discovering the trick. Following the sounds will send the PCs down passage 4. The offset becomes apparent through experimentation: if a PC calls out or moves noisily into a passage, others in the chamber will hear that sound coming from a different opening. Once players realize the pattern, they can reverse-engineer the correct passage.

| Passage | Leads to |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 1 | The bell ringer's end |
| 2 | Exits at 5 |
| 3 | Random Monster |
| 4 | Trap |
| 5 | Exits at 2 |

The Bell Ringer's End

As the twisting passages give way to a large cavern, the faint echo of the bell comes into focus. In the center of the cavern a shadowy figure leans over the shattered remains of the church bell, swinging his arms to the beat of the bells ringing. Where the bottom half of his right leg should be there is nothing.

There is a wide passage on the opposite side of the cavern, a small cave in to your right, and another small open passage to your left.

This memory echo is the missing bell ringer. If his name is spoken, he'll turn briefly and fade away. With that, the sound of the bell disappears.

Potential Ending. If the PCs can somehow restore the bell, or send it ringing into the darkness this can be spun into a story to convince the villagers the curse is broken.

The Pit of Darkness

The narrow passages once again open into a large cavern, barely filled by your torch light. The center of this cavern is a deep, black hole that the torch seems to barely illuminate. Leaving only a small ledge along the outside edges of the cavern leading to a passage on the opposite side.

Pit of Darkness. This long-forgotten horror has been here for millennia and is the origin of tales of darkness in the area. Anyone who passes through the cavern and is not within **close** of a torch will have tentacles attempt to drag them down. Once grappled, there is 1 round until they are pulled into the darkness and die. Tentacles have 5 hp and will pull back from any light sources brought within near.

Use battlemat on page 14.

Twisting Darkness

The passage opens into a cavern filled with floor to ceiling stalactites and stalagmites. Creating small twisting, connected pathways of their own. As the torchlight reflects off the minerals in the rock formations, a strange shadowy shape moves in the darkness.

Use battlemat on page 15. The Unformed (pg Tk), stalks the PCs in this cavern. He'll alternate attacking, and stepping back into shadow to minimize the time he's seen and if possible attempt to terrorize PCs that separate from the party.

Desired Image.

A vast cavern opens around a circular pit of absolute blackness—so deep it is pure black. A narrow stone ledge winds along both sides of the chasm, clinging to the cavern walls with no railings or protection.

At the entrance to the cavern, a single torch casts dim light across the stone ledge and walls, held into the picture by an arm from a

person outside the cavern and the image. The torches glow barely penetrates the void. Ahead on the left ledge, a lone figure stands frozen as a thick, glistening tentacle reaches toward them from the dark pit. Additional black tentacles can be seen emerging from the darkness.

Deep shadows should dominate, with high-contrast torchlight illuminating the ledge and lone figure walking. The pit is a featureless void. The image should be black and white, or Sepica style tones. Evoking either classic OSR imagery, or a photo of an impossibly dark past.

Side Passages

These are a series of additional, optional (and interchangeable) rooms scattered throughout the cave. In a 4 hour play through I have generally used one of the three. There intended locations are indicated in the flow diagram.

Side Passage 1- Mole Cave

Loose dirt and large claw marks lead down a circular passage. After a short distance the small corridor opens slightly, you see broken bones scattered on the floor and as the room comes fully into view, a large almost shapeless lump of fur lies in the far corner, slowly moving to the sound of heavy breathing.

DC 14 Dex to sneak up the creature without waking it. Roll an additional time for treasure for this creature if they search through the pile of bones.

Side Passage 2 – Crumbling Cavern

Passing the pile of rubble the torchlight reflects off a ring still attached to a boney hand protruding from the pile of rubble. A small opening can be seen that leads to a passage or room on the other side of the rubble.

The PCs can make a DC 13 Dex to slip through the opening or DC 10 Con and spend ten

minutes moving rubble to widen the passage. On the other side there are more partially crushed bodies. They are holding 1 Torch, Chainmail, a Longsword and 5d10 gold. If any of the loot is disturbed, the two figures rise as skeletons.

Side Passage 3 – Twisting Caverns.

Narrow passages, requiring twisting and turning, crawling, which constantly loop back on themselves disorienting individuals and causing them to be unsure of which direction they went. Emphasize the confusion at each intersection.

The passage quickly grows narrow, forcing you to twist and turn to move forward. The movement quickly becomes disorienting and trying to precisely retrace your steps seems nearly impossible. You quickly find yourself in an unfamiliar 4-way intersection, one you're sure you've been at before.

Escaping. Any repeated pattern can be used as a solution, but we default to LR, LR. Continue to describe confusing twisting passages as they proceed. Each time they make a wrong turn, they return to the initial four-way intersection.

If PCs use something to mark their way or attempt to recollect the correct direction, eliminate one or more of the potential paths or reduce the length of the sequence. If the sequence resets, clearly indicate that they have started over. It takes **10 minutes** each and 1 random encounter roll for each loop.

Twisting Passage Encounters.(1d8)

- 1: Dead Adventurer (unguarded treasure)
- 2: Rat
- 3: Memory Echo
- 4: Bats
- 5: Roper
- 6: Cloaker
- 7: Pit Trap

8: Xorn

Conclusion

Legends hold sway because as they are told and retold, the collector weaves them into the truth. But, as stories evolve over time, so do their dangers. In Sagenlund, adventurers don't always need to kill the boss or solve a specific puzzle to end a curse or reshape a legend. They need to be able to tell a convincing tale, to rewrite the story. Of course, the most believable stories always have a thread of truth. This section outlines several potential solutions included in the module, but creative PCs may find their own.

- Restore the bell
- Kill the unformed
- Send the bell ringing into the pit

If you're playing this as part of a Sagenlund campaign, the PCs can make a roll to attempt to change the legend. The DC is 15, and they get +10 for the first and +5 for each additional potential objective they weave into the story. (Meaning it succeeds automatically if the complete at least 2).

Appendix 1: Monsters

SD Monster Quick Reference.

| Monster | Page |
|---------------|------|
| Bandit | 197 |
| Bat Swarm | 198 |
| Brown Bear | 198 |
| Cloaker | 202 |
| Cultist | 203 |
| Darkmantle | 203 |
| Devil, Barbed | 206 |
| Devil, Imp | 207 |
| Doppelganger | 209 |
| Giant Bat | 198 |
| Giant Spider | 254 |
| Goblin | 221 |

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Roper | 248 |
| Shadow | 250 |
| Skeleton | 251 |
| Troll | 259 |
| Will-o-Wisp | 264 |
| Wolf | 264 |
| Vrock | 205 |
| Xorn | 265 |
| Zombie | 265 |

Goblin Wolf Rider.

Use the **Goblin (pg. 221)** and **Wolf (pg. 264)** stat blocks together. The goblin is armed with a spear (1d6) instead of its standard weapon. **Ride-By Attack.** The wolf moves up to its speed. At any point during the move, the goblin may make one spear attack at +2, then continue moving.

Giant Mole.

AC 11, HP 19, ATK 2 claws +3 (1d6) MV double near, S +3, D +0, C +1, I -2, W +0, Ch -2, AL N, LV 4

Blindsight. Cannot be blinded. Navigates by tremorsense within near.

Xorn.

AC 16, HP 24, ATK 2 slam +4 (2d4) MV near, S +3, D +0, C +1, I -1, W +0, Ch -2, AL N, LV 5

Earthglide. Can move through earth and stone as part of its normal movement.

Treasure Sense. Can pinpoint gems and precious metals within far.

Charge. If moving straight toward a target from within near, may make one additional attack at disadvantage.

Fearmongers.

AC 11, HP 6 ATK 1 slam +2 (1d6 & shadow drag) MV near, S +2, D +2, C +0, I -2, W -2, Ch -3, AL N, LV 2

Shadow Grab. Victim must make DC 10 Dex or be dragged into the darkness.

Fearmongers are born out of fear of the unknown. While they manifest most frequently near The Unformed, they can pop up anytime fear becomes prolonged for long enough to breed rumor or story. They often take the shape of shadowy figures in the dark.

Memory Echo.

AC 8, HP 11 ATK 1 slam +2 (1d6 & rot) MV near, S +2, D -2, C +2, I -2, W -2, Ch -3, AL N, LV 2

Undead. Immune to morale checks.

Rot. Victim must make DC 10 Con or become diseased. (Disadvantage on 1 random attribute until rest.)

Memory Echoes are the spirits of those consumed by monsters, doomed to make the dangers of the tale more tangible.

The Unformed.

AC 12, HP 35 ATK 1 spell +5, Spell +2 MV near*, S -1, D +1, C +0, I +3, W +1, Ch +0, AL N, LV 6

Spells and Abilities.

Dreadform. Each round the Unformed can choose a target as a free action. Target makes a will save DC 14 or becomes Terrified while the unformed appears to them as their worst nightmare.

Deceptive. The unformed shapechanges into someone they can see.

Move*, Step through shadows. Unless surrounded by light, can teleport between shadows up to Far for its move.

Bell Toll Weakness. If a bell is rung the unformed must make a Wis DC 12 check. On a fail, the Unformed attacks at disadvantage for the next round

Revealed by Light. If a light source within near is shoved towards them while shapechanged

or in Dreadform it fades away. The unformed takes 1d4 damage from this light.

The **Unformed** are the **unwritten monsters** from fairy tales given shape. They are the source of dark stories, the heart of the mysterious evil. Not all Fairy Tales spawn an Unformed, the ones that do have:

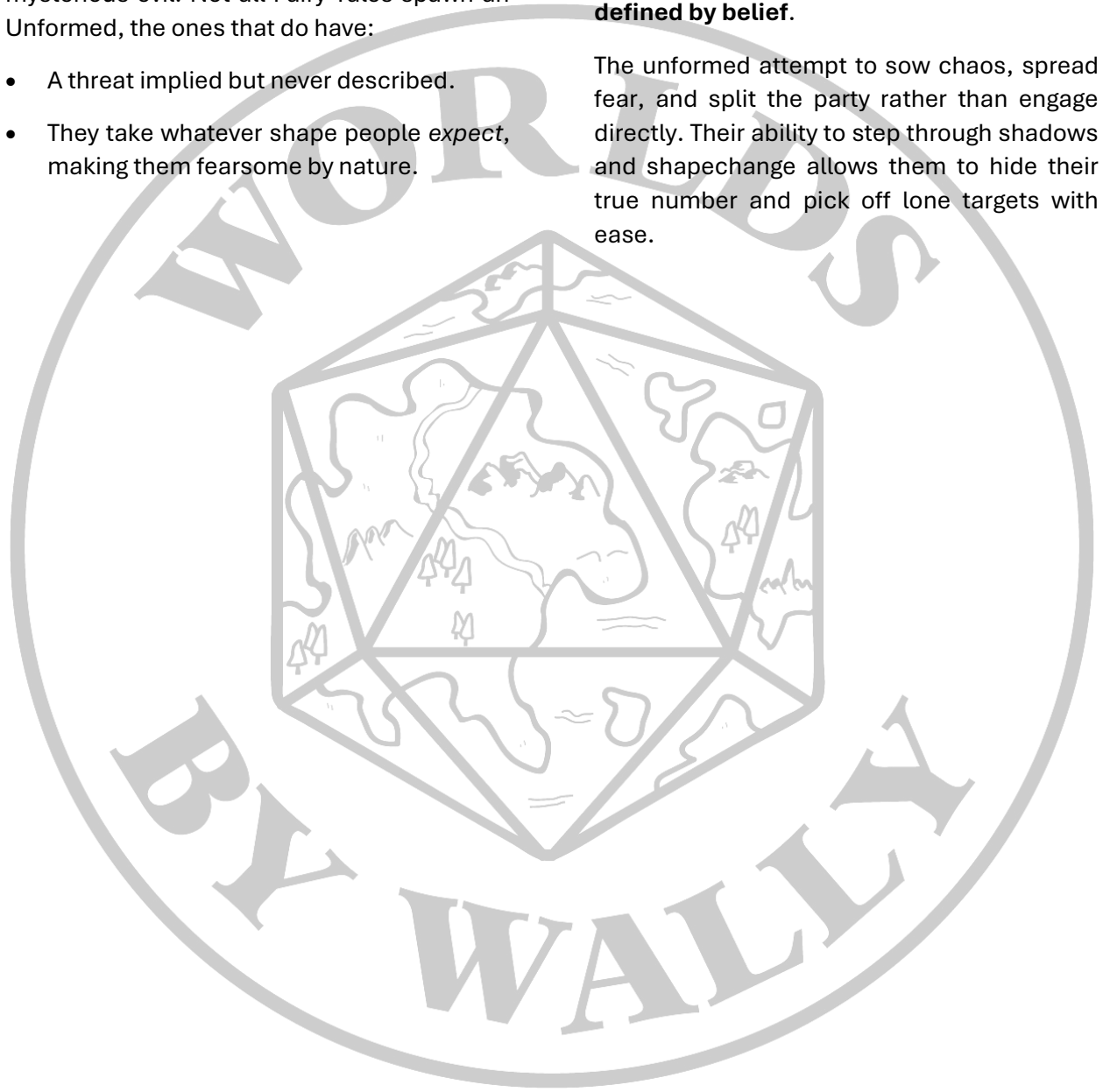
- A threat implied but never described.
- They take whatever shape people *expect*, making them fearsome by nature.

- Their abilities are as varied as the stories that give them birth.

- They almost ubiquitously have a weakness related to their legend.

They have no true form because **they are defined by belief**.

The unformed attempt to sow chaos, spread fear, and split the party rather than engage directly. Their ability to step through shadows and shapechange allows them to hide their true number and pick off lone targets with ease.



Appendix 2: Key NPCs.

Missing Townsfolk. Roll 1d12 for a random missing person.

When seen, describe them as if you're looking at a reflection distorted through a pool of rippling water. Or remembering someone from long ago, certain features clear the rest faded to gray.

1. **Elrik One-Shoe**

Identifying feature: Walked with a limp and wore a single patched boot; the other foot was always wrapped in cloth.

Echo sign: Soft dragging footsteps, never matching in rhythm, and a missing boot.

2. **Maribel Redshawl**

Identifying feature: Always wore a faded crimson shawl, even indoors.

Echo sign: A whisper of fabric brushing stone in the dark, and a red shawl on her otherwise grey figure.

3. **Old Fenna of the Keys**

Identifying feature: Carried a heavy iron keyring that clanked when she walked.

Echo sign: Metallic chiming from nowhere, never loud enough to locate.

4. **Jorek Broadback**

Identifying feature: Enormous shoulders and a hunched posture from hauling lumber.

Echo sign: A shadow that seems too wide for its height.

5. **Anselm Candleburn**

Identifying feature: Burn scars along both palms from years as a chandler.

Echo sign: The smell of hot wax and smoke without flame.

6. **Marta Merrygold**

Identifying feature: She always wore flowers in her hair and smelled of perfume.

Echo sign: The faint smell of a flowery perfume.

7. **Hollis Whitebeard**

Identifying feature: Had white hair in his twenties; his beard was always prematurely silver.

Echo sign: Bright white hair and a shining beard.

8. **Willem Fartel**

Identifying feature: A compulsive gambler, always looking for a game of dice.

Echo sign: A dry rattling like dice in a cup.

9. **Isembard Inkstain**

Identifying feature: Permanently darkened fingertips from years of writing ledgers.

Echo sign: Blackened fingers briefly visible against stone.

10. **Kaela Halfbraid**

Identifying feature: Always wore her hair in a braid that stopped halfway down her back.

Echo sign: Hair that sways, then abruptly ends.

11. **Torven Bentnose**

Identifying feature: A nose broken more than once, visibly crooked.

Echo sign: A profile shadow that never looks straight-on.

12. **Corin Chalkhands**

Identifying feature: Hands dusted white from quarry work, no matter how often washed.

Echo sign: Powdery handprints appearing briefly on walls.

