

Nightham Dale - DREAD Session Notes

01 - The Creaking Gate Tavern

ROSAMUND

- Excited, got the scoop on Nightham Dale Murders, the first and only person to want to speak out about the murders 2 months ago.
- **DEVINA HALLOWHALL** wants to meek at **THE CREAKING GATE** tavern in Nightham Dale itself - smack bang in the middle of nowhere. But worth it to uncover truth.
- Most of the day driving, sun setting. Pull up to dump Tavern. No carpark. Creaking sign above the door. Cold and dark inside. Smell of spilled beer. Terrible 70s decor, wood paneling, patterned fabrics, faded sticky carpet. **Don't stop me now** on the radio.
- Large man defensive behind bar. Looks to only other person in bar. Little lady in a booth.
 - What do you do? Devina (surprisingly sassy) needs another drink before she can speak (throat dry). So, what do you want to know?

LEON, ROMAN and MACCO

- **MACCO** rowdy on river boat, all about **SCHMITTY** getting into a dress. Loud enough in a normal space, painful on a boat.
 - Everyone in the boat Pull
- Riverboat = nice but crowded. Six men on a boat, too much booze, not enough sleep. Spilled beer and smoke. SCMITTY enjoying himself. Nobody seen each other since school, but nice to catch up.
- Boat is moored, solid ground feels alien after boating. Find a pub. Leave stag with the others while getting him in an undersized dress, **LEON, ROMAN and MACCO** walk down overgrown path through the forest as the sun sets, laughing and telling stories. The others will join later.
- **LEON** and **MACCO** get to the pub and order drinks, dead atmosphere, but now playing **BOMFUNK MC's FREESTYLER**.
 - Talk about school days before realising ROMAN isn't there.
 - "... So then the balloon popped, and the paint went all over him! Jacob screamed and fell off the desk and Harry got a ruler stuck up himself! Funny times! And that's how I got fired from my seventh job! Anyway, what are you up to now-a-days? Still playing with old rocks?"

PIPPERTON

- Two hours to walk from **FOLLOWELL** village to the decrepit tavern. No water, but didn't expect such a long walk. Kept walking, letting **HIM** guide you, now you are here. This is where you are meant to be, not sure why. You enter.
 - Take the surrounding in. Recognition of the Barman. Can eavesdrop on the conversations, PULL wants to be subtle about it.

MARA and ROMAN

- **LEON** and **MACCO** sat, talking. First beers down. Waitress comes over to clear away the empty glasses. That is when **LEON** first sees here.
- The music changes to **SPANDAU BALLET's TRUE** as **SHE** walks over. Everything goes into slow motion, lights grow brighter, colours more vivid. Her long blond hair, lots of jewelry, lots of tattoos. Not what you thought was your type, but you're struck by her.
 - Allow for any interaction.
- **ROMAN** walks through the door, mud up one leg, twins in his hair. "Where have you been?"
 - Allow for any interaction.

ROSAMUND

- Questions for DEVINA (Another Drink!), any answers given. PIPPERTON may listen in.

VI and ESCOBAR

- Driving faster than you should. Car radio playing some awesome rhythm and blues as driving down a country road. Your wife sits in the passenger seat. The old partner-in-crime.
- Radio retunes itself.
 - **Every breath you take, Every move you make, Every bond you break, Every step you take...**
- You reach over to change the radio. When you look up, a shadow passes in front of the car. **ESCOBAR PULL** Hit breaks, struggle to keep control again. **BOTH PULL** Impact with oncoming, not bad. Managed to slow down, no real damage.
- Young man with ginger hair knocks at window. You both act like model citizens as you exit the car and take a look - front right tire is shot + engine steam. No phone signal. Push cars to side of road.
- Ginger man mentions phone at Tavern. All walk. He remembers something in the car. Will meet you at the pub. You walk away, clenched teeth, away from the cars, away from what you have in the boot of the car. Hoping not to arouse suspicion.
 - 10 mins walk to the Tavern. Allow for interaction.

The Arrival

- What are the **BOYS** doing?
- What is **PIPPERTON** doing?
- What is **ROSAMUND** discussing?
- Music is playing **If Ya Gettin Down by Five**
- Suddenly a **table in the centre of the room crashes** to the ground. **Reginald** asks **MARA** to clean it up.
- At the moment when **DEVINA** mentions the **BODACHS**, she laughs, or cackles like a witch.
- The music from the radio screeches and the music changes to **THE SONG**.
- Suddenly the **power goes off**. Shunk! You are dropped into darkness.
- Your eyes adjust to the darkness, and you see something strange. It seems as though the **walls are bulging** with an oily darkness, like something is dripping, oozing from the shadows with a strange, insectroid clicking.
- You feel cold. **Colder than it was before**, but the vibrations within your body are not shivers. They almost feel like the ground is trembling, but you know it's coming from within you. **And an earthy scent like mushrooms in the rain.**
 - What do they do?*
- **Reginald** calls out to **MARA**- "Go! Take them! Get out of here! I'll deal with this!"
 - What do you do?
- **Reginald** tells you to take the back exit and you run, take the radio!
 - Roll initiative for last person out, last three people pull.
- As you flee, you turn back to see two large forms of black void towering above Reginald as he stands defiantly between you and the things. A glint of something in his hands catches your eye and just as you turn back to see where you are going, you see him leap towards the creatures; a dark blade in hand.

*IF: any of them stick around or try to fight, their weapons have no effect, and are pinned to the ground as the bodachs attack. They see that the creature is now shadow and bone, with tattered rags covering or binding it. That under it's dropped hoods are countless un-blinking eyes, bloodshot and ever shifting. They can feel it's breath on their face, the breath is warm and has the sickly-sweet metallic smell of blood.

- Players to make two pulls or consider blindness/insanity.
- Eventually saved by Reginald's obsidian blade, which slices through the shadow. Where the blade cut, shining white embers eat away at the dark form like embers slowly burning paper.

NPC

Devina Hallowhall

- Little old lady, teeth as brown as the stuff she is drinking. She wears dark sunglasses in the dim light.
 - She is actually blind, but you don't realise this until she gets up to leave.
- Will not talk until she has another drink - Ale.
- **Cover Up:** She knows that the was a coverup. That the murders were unsolvable, at least in such a cynical world. Something similar happened almost 20 years ago, and someone from the village took the blame, even though he did not do it.
- **The Bodies:** the two bodies everyone talks about were found by the roadside, about a mile or two away. They had one wound, like they had been stabbed right through the chest by something altogether unholy. They looked to have been dragged to the roadside, through the forest, but there were no tracks, or marks, no blood. They were drained. No man could have done that.
- **The Others:** Those were the only two that the press moaned about. But there were bodies turning up all over the place. No wounds to tell of. But, they were missing their eyes.
- **What happened:** There is something downright peculiar about this place. Down right wrong! And the people know. The authorities keep it hidden, like an experiment. Tell me, have you ever heard of 'Bodach'? Haha!

Reginald Liddicott

- Bartender and Landlord of The Creaking Gate.
- Large man, protective of his work and his daughter. Not afraid to pull a punch if needed.
- The only Ale he serves is called Ale, and it is as brown as the river water. He's pretty damn good at cocktails though.
- Ask him anything. If he wants to answer, he will, if not, he won't.
- Everyone is a disdainful city-folk to him.
- **Murders:** Sick and sad business, but nothing to bother about. Do you know that the person who did it was on parole? He was locked up 20 years ago for doing the same thing.
- **Bodachs:** Don't know what you're talking about? Spirits? Ghosts? You heard yourself? Keep on like that and I will refuse to serve you.
- **Nightham Dale:** It's a nice enough place. Quiet, secluded. How I like it.

02 - The Woods

WILLFRED

- Wake up with complete **memory loss**, surrounded by trees the colour of **ash**; light grey with the **complete absence of colour**. Everything has a soft glow about it, like blurred eyesight, There is no sound.
- You wander through a **silent landscape** of grey trees to a clearing. A small road runs next to an old, tattered **Tavern**. It is silent as you enter, empty and grey as everything else in this world is.
- Then you hear a terrible noise, **screeching glass scraping on glass**. Sends shivers of dread down your spine.
 - IF: WILL stays, he must hide as the **jagged creature (describe)** tears into the front of the building.
 - WHEN: he runs, he must pull. Also an odd shimmer around a table, which he **bumps into sending it crashing to the ground**.
 - IF: Tries to confront it: **Fear** of the creature tearing his mind apart, consuming memories. Feels like a thousand pieces of glass tearing at him. Leaves you as an empty shell. He must escape.
- No matter where he runs, he turns to the the Tavern, the creature of glass crawling all over it, **ignoring him**.
- You see something you haven't seen in some time - **Colour**. 7 orbs of different colours in a roughly humanoid shape. As the monster clammers though the front of the tavern, they **escape through the back**.
 - What does he do?
- He notices that the colours vary from aura to aura, but one has a luscious sky blue around them, peaceful and calm. The colour give warmth and hope. Another has the colour of blood, and, though it seems odd to say it in your current condition, lets out a feeling of death.

The Woods

Whilst running through the woods, the group stop to figure out what to do next. There are a few options:

The Cars

- The cars are in a bad state, worse than when they were left, **tires slashed and windows smashed**. The car radios are blairing out, one with **Johnny B Goode**, the other with **Aqua's Doctor Jones**.
- There is no sign of the ginger haired man.
- **WILLFRED** see's a shimmer around the car and can interact with anything.
- In the boot there is an open duffle bag and two sawn-off shotguns (Ammo)
 - Someone could pull to see what's in there - Money.
- They can see the Tavern from here.
- The car radio starts playing THE SONG in perfect synchronicity. - MACCO get got?

The Boat

- You arrive at the boat to find it eerily quiet. The doors to the boat cabin are open.
- Inside they find Schmitty and his best man, their bodies lifeless, their eyes missing.
- Searching here they can find pots and pans, a bottle of rum, chopping knives.
- IF they try the engine. Nothing happens.
- You can see the tavern through the trees. THE SONG starts to play. - MACCO get got?

The Tavern

- Everything about the tavern tells you NOT to go any closer. It tells you to stop, turn and run, like a huge black cloud covering the building. There is nothing but terror and death here.

The Woods Before The Cabin/Hidden Ruins

- You run through the trees, the radio blurring out Song Two by Blur. Good. This means you're safe. - Realise MACCI isn't there, find him shrivelled and eyeless.
- As you go further, you find yourself travelling up a steep rocky hill. At the top, you see a large stone, stood upright, in the middle of the thick forest, the sort of thing placed by early, pagan settlers. It is weathered and smooth, with slight evidence of early engravings, and more modern graffiti,
 - It is likely to be a milestone of some kind, other than that, you cannot see any significance.
 - WILLFRED, however, will see that it has a glowing blue light coming from it something that he can reach through and pull out. When he does, the stone shatters into three irregular pieces.
 - The piece of wood is round, and surrounded with intricate carvings. It is the Wood in the Stone.

- A wavering shadow in the sky spooks you. The party continues on.

The Cabin

- You make out a few lights in the distance. An old cabin, with lights on.
- The cabin is old, unsteady and remarkably small. As you walk closer, you hear the a TV blurring away and an old man's snoring.
 - IF: the team keep **quiet**, they can make a **stealth** into the place without disturbing **Henry Crock**, who is currently **asleep** in his favorite **armchair**, nursing a **rifle**.
 - IF: the team **disturb** him, he will **attack**.
 - IF: the team **knock** on the door, he will **answer, suspicious**, but with the **rifle** in hand.
- Inside, the place is a mess, it is dirty, cluttered and stinks of rotten food.
 - The cabin has three main sections; **living room** (with a stove), **bedroom** (with an on suite) and a **locked door** leading to an empty room (with a rug).
 - To enter the locked room, they must either convince Henry to unlock it, find the key on his body, or pick the lock.
 - If they search **under the rug**, they find a trapdoor that would alert Henry if he hasn't already been alerted.
- The basement is the opposite of what you see upstairs. On one wall there is a mass of **strings connecting photos**, items, newspaper clippings and mad scrawls connected scrawling out like a **web across the wall**.
 - Looking closer at this, you see a ginger haired man, **Steve Knight**.
 - However, if Vi or Escobar looks, it is not the man from the road.
 - It claims his innocence.
 - There are obsessive writings about the hidden ruins a **map** that shows its location, with a line connecting the cabin to the ruins.
 - There are notes on **ghosts** from all types of lore, including one that talks about **Bodachs eating eyes**, and **obsidian** being the only thing that can affect them.
 - **There is also a fable about a man fighting a demon, but the demon stole his eyes and stabbed him with his own weapon.**
- There is an old, windows 95 PC and HP Printer. There are barrels of weapons with **black tipped blades**.
- On the opposite side of the wall, a **tapestry** covers the wall. It shows a depiction of the man fighting the demon, and other demons emerging. It wafts quietly in the wind.

03 - The Hidden Ruins

The Woods

- There is a point within the forest where the **trees are so thick** that you struggle to see far beyond a couple of meters. As you walk through brush and climb over extruding tree roots, without expecting it, **as though it appeared out of thin air**, an opening appears. In the centre of the opening are the **Hidden Ruins**.
- The dense canopy of leaves above only allow traces of fragmented moonlight through, scattering across the open **circular stone courtyard**, falling upon the crumbling columns and broken statues. In the centre of the courtyard you see a **gaping hole**.
- Going into the hole is like dipping yourself in total **inky darkness**. You place your hands on the people in front of you, and feel the touch of the person behind rest on your own shoulders as you descend a steep spiral staircase into the layer below.

The Cabin

- In the basement under the cabin, there is a section hidden by cloth that gently wavers in a slight breeze. Behind this, an uncomfortably tight tunnel through earth and stone brings you out into stone walled corridor that reminds you of an ancient church or castle.

The Hidden Ruins

- Through a **twisting corridor** of cold stone you are led, until you see a flickering light ahead. You are brought into a large circular room, **bright with fired sconces hung intermittent along the wall**.
- At the far side, opposite the entrance, **the face of an unknown beast protrudes** from the wall, **it's eyes closed and it's mouth open in a terrible scream**.
- In the centre, an ancient **tome lies open on a plinth**. Before it, a **statue of a man** is sculpted in a twisted pose, one that looks like torture.
- By the time you notice that there is only one entrance, one exit to the room, **MARA** has pulled a lever, and a **heavy portcullis** drops, sealing you in. She slowly walks into the centre of the room to the plinth. She **speaks words you have never heard before, they are terrible and guttural and almost hurts to hear**.
- The air around you starts to waver, as though seeing life through the reflection of a disturbed lake. **WILLFRED** notices it first - the auras are now people, soon, they realise that NATHAN is with them. **The face of the beast grows larger, and from it's open mouth you hear the sound of scraping glass**.
 - Roll initiative
 - The Bodach Master is slowly coming through the screaming mouth of the sculpted face, it is being birthed into this world to feast. **DM to roll after each turn. Once it gets to 100, the creature is released and everyone dies**.
 - At this point, **WILLFRED** and anyone who is 'dead' will be seen by the rest of the group. However, they can see a blue aura around the statue.

- All the while, they need to avoid the attacks of the Bodachs which, in this situation, are corporeal, can be affected by weapons.
- They need to place the Stone in the Wood and Wood In the Stone artefacts into the eye sockets of the statue, and place the obsidian blade in the crack in his chest.
 - When this happens, the stone state starts to move, eventually taking the **Obsidian Blade which now shines bright blue, and plunging it into the screaming face**. The mouth slams shut, the Bodach Master is crushed. The statue breaks and crumbles, revealing the ghost who **PIPPERTON** follows.

The end

If Players Lose

- The creature feeds upon the flesh of the players, with exception to **MARA** and anyone who is dead. It goes back through the mouth, back to it's own world. **MARA** then, with tears down her face, rushes quickly to The Creaking Gate Tavern, to see **her father wounded, but alive**.
- We cut to a random couple drinking tea over breakfast. A young man rushes in and tells them that there have been more murders. The other exclaims that this is a good thing, and that they will be safe until the next time **IT** gets hungry. Who oversaw the sacrifice? For now they should arrest **MARA**, she did well but they need a scapegoat.
- End with **MARA** being slowly dragged away, after all she had been through, this is how they repay her? She vows to speak to the press and spill the beans. They drag her through to a more modern version of the sacrifice chamber and speak the strange words. You hear the sound of scraping glass.

If Players Win

- The creature dies and the ghost disappears. The dead people fizzle out into peace.
- You each go your separate ways, but the trauma of what you have seen, of what you have experienced, is too much for your fragile human minds to comprehend.
- There are several issues here - People feel the need to out the truth to the press, but no one believes the story. **PIPPERTON** feels she can prove her brother's innocence, but there is no real proof. However, everyone feels the need to share the story, just to get it off their chest. And the thousands of pounds you spend on therapy don't get you anywhere, except the cold, white padded cell.
- We cut to a random couple drinking tea over breakfast. A young man rushes in and tells them that there have been more murders. The other exclaims that this is a good thing, and that they will be safe until the next time **IT** gets hungry. Who oversaw the sacrifice? For now they should arrest **MARA**, she did well but they need a scapegoat.
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