

# CLOVEN HOUSE, IN THE CITY OF VERTSHUSEN

TUCKED-AWAY IN THE QUIET SOUTHEASTERN QUARTER OF VERTSHUSEN, INSIDE THE CITY WALL, STANDS THIS SMALL, RATHER RUN-DOWN AND NEGLECTED, PROPERTY. ITS WINDOWS, DOORS AND BACK GATE ARE ROUGHLY BOARDED-OVER, AND THE LOCALS BEHAVE AS IF IT WASN'T THERE. THEY AVOID LOOKING AT IT, WALKING NEAR IT OR EVEN SPEAKING OF IT. MENTIONING IT, ESPECIALLY ITS NAME OF "CLOVEN HOUSE", GUARANTEES AN INSTANT SILENCE IN ANY CROWDED SPOT IN THIS PART OF THE CITY, SIGNS AND SIMPLE RITUALS QUICKLY MADE TO AVERT EVIL, AND THAT NOBODY WILL WISH TO BE SEEN SPEAKING WITH THAT INDIVIDUAL IN PUBLIC AT ALL. A RARE FEW MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO TELL WHAT THEY KNOW IN PRIVATE, HOWEVER.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, RUMOURS ABOUT IT, CHIEFLY TO BE LEARNT ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY. THE COMMONEST IS SIMPLY THAT IT'S HAUNTED, WITH LURID TALES OF BY WHAT TO BE HEARD FOR A COIN OR TWO IN SOME PARTS, MOST OF WHICH ARE TYPICAL GHOST STORIES ATTACHED TO THE PLACE, THAT HAVE LITTLE OR NO BEARING ON ITS REALITY.

FACTUAL RUMOURS INCLUDE THE OBVIOUS INFORMATION THAT NOBODY LIVES THERE, AND THE INSIDE IS COMPLETELY EMPTY OF MOVABLE FURNITURE AND POSSESSIONS. MORE INTRIGUINGLY, SOME WILL MENTION THAT ON CERTAIN DAYS (OR NIGHTS), A DISTINCTIVE FLORAL AROMA IS PRESENT NEAR THE HOUSE, THOUGH ANYONE ASKED SUGGESTS THE PERFUME IS DIFFERENT TO WHAT THE NEXT PERSON WILL SAY. THERE ARE NO FLOWERS NEARBY FROM WHICH THIS MIGHT COME. IT IS CONSIDERED UNLUCKY TO CATCH SCENT OF THIS. HARDER TO COME-BY IS THE INFORMATION THAT WHILE THE HOUSE IS OLD, IT IS BUILT ON ONE OF THE VERY OLDEST SITES IN THE ENTIRE SETTLEMENT, AND THAT SOME OF THE STONES ITS WALLS ARE CONSTRUCTED FROM, WERE ONCE MAGICAL STANDING STONES FROM THAT FAR MORE ANCIENT SITE. RAREST OF ALL ARE THOSE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE GENUINELY SEEN SOMETHING IN THE HOUSE, USUALLY DUE TO A CHILDHOOD DARE. SUCH REPORTS ARE ALL DIFFERENT, AND WHILE SOME OF THE DESCRIPTIONS BELOW CAN BE USED FOR THESE, GMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME UP WITH WHATEVER ALTERNATIVES MAY BE PREFERRED TOO. FINALLY, AND WITHOUT BEING CONNECTED TO CLOVEN HOUSE, AT THE "ONE OR TWO PEOPLE ONLY" LEVEL, IS THE RUMOUR THAT GHOULS ARE SUSPECTED OF STEALING BODIES FROM THE CEMETERY OUTSIDE THE NORTH WALL, USING TUNNELS THAT CONNECT WITH THE CITY'S SEWER SYSTEM TO BODYSNATCH AND TRAVEL ABOUT QUITE UNSEEN.

THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION ARE THAT THE OLD, STONE-BUILT HOUSE IS DESERTED OF REGULAR OCCUPANTS, AND HAS NO MOVABLE OBJECTS IN IT OTHER THAN ITS HINGED DOORS AND BACK GATE. IN THE CELLAR, PART OF A VERY ANCIENT STONE MENHIR HAS BEEN BUILT INTO THE BASE OF ONE WALL, WHILE IN THAT WALL IS A SMALL SECTION WHICH IS THINNER, AND ONCE FORMED AN ACCESSWAY INTO AN ADJOINING LOW CAVE IN WHICH THERE ARE MORE SUCH VERY OLD STONES, FORMING A ROUGH RING. THE STONES APPARENTLY HAVE THE MAGICAL POWER TO CALL SPIRITS, SO THE HOUSE IS INDEED HAUNTED BY GHOSTS OF VARIOUS KINDS AND FORMS, ABLE TO MANIFEST THEMSELVES AND SEEMINGLY PHYSICAL OBJECTS, ALTHOUGH NONE OF THEM HAVE ANY CONNECTION TO CLOVEN HOUSE, AND MANY HAVE NO LINK WITH VERTSHUSEN EITHER. QUITE WHERE THEY COME FROM OR GO TO IS LEFT FOR GMS TO DETERMINE, ALONG WITH WHETHER, AND HOW MUCH, INFORMATION ANY MAY BE WILLING AND ABLE TO IMPART TO OTHERS. OPTIONS FOR WHAT MAY BE ENCOUNTERED IN EACH LOCATION IN THE HOUSE ARE PROVIDED BELOW, THOUGH AS WITH THE RUMOURS, GMS SHOULD FEEL FREE TO ADD MORE OR ADAPT AS BEST SUITS.

ONE OF THE STONES IN THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVE IS VERY CLEARLY MISSING. RESOLVING THE HAUNTED NATURE OF THE HOUSE - WHILE NOT DETAILED HERE - MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED IN SOME MANNER BY REPLACING OR RESTORING THAT MISSING STONE, WHEREVER IT MAY BE. WHILE RUN-DOWN, THE BUILDING IS REASONABLY SOLID AND SOUND, AND NOBODY IN VERTSHUSEN WILL ADMIT TO OWNING IT (AT LEAST NOT CURRENTLY), SO A SUCCESSFUL PARTY OF ADVENTURERS MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES WITH A USEFUL, IF VERY SMALL, TOWNHOUSE, SHOULD THEY RESOLVE THE HAUNTINGS.

IN ADDITION, THE LOCAL GHOULS INDEED DO USE THE BASEMENT ROOM WITH THE ANCIENT STONE IN ITS WALL FOR SOME OF THEIR SPECIAL FEASTS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF YEAR, ACCESSING IT VIA THE CELLAR GRATING IN THAT ROOM, ALTHOUGH IT IS RARE INDEED FOR THEM TO VENTURE FURTHER AFIELD THAN THE HOUSE'S YARD, AND THEY NEVER GO OUT INTO THE STREETS FROM HERE. THIS IS ONE OF THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF THE MYSTERIOUS SCENTS, HOWEVER, A HEADY MIX OF EMBALMING FLUIDS, DECAYING FLESH, PERFUMES USED ON THE BODIES OF THE DECEASED, AND FLOWERS BURIED WITH AN INDIVIDUAL. THE NATURE OF THE STONES' MAGIC AND THE PRESENCE OF SO MANY, EVER-CHANGING, GHOSTS PROVIDES THE PERFECT AMBIENCE FOR THEIR CELEBRATIONS. IN REGARD TO THE GHOULS THEMSELVES, IT WOULD BE BEST TO TREAT THEM AS QUITE LOVECRAFTIAN IN NATURE (SUCH AS IN THE STORY "PICKMAN'S MODEL"), SO POTENTIALLY REFINED AND

ABLE TO HOLD INTELLIGENT CONVERSE SOMETIMES IN THEIR OWN WAY, AND ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE VINTAGE AND QUALITY OF WHAT FORMS THEIR MEALS, TEMPORARILY GAINING SOME OF THE MEMORIES AND ABILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUALS SO CONSUMED. SHOULD ANYONE WISH TO INVESTIGATE, THE SEWER GRATING ACCESSWAY WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD BY SEWERS AND TUNNELS TO BENEATH THE NORTHERN CEMETERY. THIS IS NOT A PLEASANT OR EASY JOURNEY FOR NON-GHOULS.

## THE HOUSE PLANS

FIVE PLAN-VIEWS OF THE HOUSE ARE PROVIDED ON THE MAP, IN SEQUENCE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM, FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE ROOF TO THE CELLAR AND ITS HIDDEN CAVE. THE CAVE, ITS CONTENTS AND LABEL CAN BE SHOWN OR CONCEALED USING THE "SECRET" TOGGLE IN THE FCW VERSION OF THE MAP, IF REQUIRED. EACH OF THE PLAN-VIEWS IS DISCUSSED IN THIS SEQUENCE BELOW, ALTHOUGH THE YARD, VISIBLE ON ALL THE ABOVE-GROUND PLANS, IS DETAILED ONLY WITH THE GROUND FLOOR NOTES. EACH FLOOR TO CEILING DISTANCE INSIDE IS AROUND 3 METRES, EXCEPT FOR THE CELLAR ROOMS, WHICH ARE ABOUT 2.5 M INSTEAD. THE TWO ROOF TOWERS ARE OPEN INSIDE TO THE UNDERSIDE OF THEIR ROOFS, AROUND 5 M AT THE APEX. THE WHOLE BUILDING, FROM GROUND LEVEL TO THE OUTSIDE ROOF OF THE TWO TOWERS, IS ALMOST 12 M HIGH. THE SHADED RECTILINEAR OBJECTS THAT EXTEND OFF THE PLAN EDGES ARE ALL THE NEARBY PROPERTIES CLOSE ENOUGH TO FIT WITHIN THE ILLUSTRATED AREA. NONE OF THESE ARE DETAILED HERE.

EACH AREA DESCRIPTION INCLUDES SOME NOTES ON THE GHOSTLY PHENOMENA WHICH MAY BE ENCOUNTERED THERE. THESE MAY BE SWAPPED AROUND, AMENDED OR IGNORED AS GMS PREFER. ALTHOUGH FOR CLARITY, EACH AREA HAS BEEN ALLOCATED A SPECIFIC NAME, SOMETIMES WITH IMPLICATIONS AS TO ITS PROBABLE FUNCTION IN AN OCCUPIED HOUSE, THESE ARE NOT FIRMLY FIXED, GIVEN THERE IS NO PHYSICAL FURNITURE HERE TO PROVIDE INDICATIONS REGARDING SUCH USES IN MOST CASES.

WHILE THERE IS MUCH DUST AND OLD COBWEBBING THROUGHOUT THE PROPERTY, THERE IS LITTLE REAL DAMAGE TO ANY PART OF IT, BEYOND WEAR AND SLIGHT DECAY OF THE WOODEN PARTS IN PLACES AND A FEW MISSING TILES. DESPITE THE COBWEBS, THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF ANY LIVING CREATURES HERE - NO SPIDERS, INSECTS OR SIMILAR SMALL CREATURES, NOR IS THERE EVIDENCE OF RATS OR MICE, OR BIRDS' NESTS, FOR INSTANCE.

## ROOF

ALTHOUGH NOT ACCESSIBLE FROM INSIDE, AND SHOWING SIGNS OF WEAR AND TEAR, THE ROOFING IS REASONABLY SOUND, SO RAIN AND SNOW DO NOT GET INTO THE HOUSE. THIS MAP VIEW IS PRIMARILY FOR INFORMATION ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE ROOF FROM OUTSIDE. THE CHIMNEYS ARE NOT LARGE ENOUGH TO CLIMB DOWN, UNLESS THE PERSON IS VERY SMALL.

## ROOF TOWERS & LOFT

THE TWO SQUARE TOWER ROOMS HAVE VERTICAL WALLS THAT PROJECT ONLY AROUND A METRE ABOVE THE APEX OF THE MAIN HOUSE ROOF, AND THEIR WINDOWS DO NOT EXTEND BELOW THE ROOFLINE, SO ARE NARROW, AND IN PLACES CAN BE QUITE SMALL, LOCATED HIGHER ON THEIR RESPECTIVE WALLS THAN IS TYPICAL ELSEWHERE IN THE HOUSE. A TRAPDOOR IN EACH FLOOR LEADS DOWN BY A LADDER FIXED TO THE WALL OF THE ROOM BELOW, PROVIDING ACCESS FROM THE REST OF THE HOUSE. LOFT ACCESS IS ONLY BY A LOW DOOR IN ONE WALL OF THE SOUTH TOWER. THE FLOORS OF THE TWO TOWERS ARE WOODEN PLANKING, MUCH LIKE THE FLOORS IN BOTH LOWER ABOVE-GROUND FLOORS OF THE HOUSE. THE LOFT "FLOOR" CONSISTS OF RAFTER BEAMS TO WHOSE LOWER SURFACES ARE ATTACHED THIN WOODEN BOARDS, PLASTERED ON THEIR LOWER SIDE (FACING INTO THE UPPER FLOOR AS THE CEILINGS THERE).

**NORTH TOWER:** A STONEMASONRY DOUBLE CHIMNEY FLUE SLOPES UP WEST TO EAST ACROSS THE OUTER SOUTHERN WALL OF THIS ROOM ON ITS LOFT SIDE. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF THIS INSIDE THE ROOM ITSELF, ALTHOUGH THE CHIMNEY STACKS CAN BE SEEN PROJECTING ABOVE THE ROOFLINE FROM EITHER OF THE HIGH-UP SOUTHERN WINDOWS. ALL THE WINDOWS HERE HAVE BEEN BOARDED OVER, BUT OFTEN VERY CRUDELY, SO MORE LIGHT GETS IN FROM OUTSIDE THAN IN SOME OF THE LOWER ROOMS. GHOSTLY MANIFESTATIONS HERE MAY FOLLOW THIS SEQUENCE: FLICKERING LIGHT FROM FLAMES OUTSIDE BEGINS TO ILLUMINATE THE ROOM. PEERING FROM THE WINDOWS, THE ENTIRE CITY OUTSIDE APPEARS TO BE IN FLAMES, WITH PANICKING PEOPLE RUNNING AND SCREAMING THROUGH THE STREETS. THOSE FAMILIAR WITH VERTSHUSEN'S SKYLINE FAIL TO FIND ANY OF THE FAMILIAR LANDMARKS AMIDST THE CONFLAGRATION AND SMOKE HOWEVER, AND THE WHOLE SCENE SEEMS SLIGHTLY TRANSPARENT. A SPECTRAL FIGURE, THE CLASSIC BLACK-ROBED SKELETAL FIGURE OF DEATH, CHUCKLES MOCKINGLY FROM THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM, THEN VANISHES, ALONG WITH THE EXTERNAL FIERY SCENE, AND ALL SUDDENLY BECOMES "NORMAL" AGAIN.

**SOUTH TOWER:** AT THE BASE OF THE NORTHERN WALL IS A LOW DOOR, AROUND 1.2 M HIGH, LEADING OUT INTO THE LOFT. THE WINDOW BOARDING IS A LITTLE MORE SOLID THAN ON THE NORTH TOWER, SO THERE IS LESS LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE HERE. A SMALL OCTAGONAL TABLE APPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. ON IT IS A SMALL, ASYMMETRICAL, GOLDEN-METAL BOX, WITH A CLOSED, HINGED LID. IT IS ABOUT 15 CENTIMETRES ACROSS IN ITS LARGER DIMENSION. THE LID OPENS ON ITS OWN, REVEALING A POLISHED, MANY-FACETED, MINERAL STONE, AROUND 10 CM ACROSS, SUPPORTED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOX BY A METAL RING ATTACHED BY RODS TO THE INTERIOR SIDES OF THE BOX. THE STONE GLEAMS BLACK, WITH NARROW SCARLET STRIATIONS ACROSS ITS SURFACE IN NO OBVIOUS PATTERN. THOSE WHO LOOK AT THE STONE SEE VISIONS OF GREAT CITIES AND MARVELLOUS LANDSCAPES, FOLLOWED BY DARKNESS AND AN INCREASINGLY OVERWHELMING FEELING OF TERROR, AS IF SOMETHING IN THE STONE WAS LOOKING BACK AT THEM. THE STONE SHIMMERS SLIGHTLY IN THE HALF-LIGHT OF THE ROOM; MORE SO IF IT IS NIGHT OUTSIDE AND ALL IS DARK. SHINING ANY LIGHT ONTO THE STONE FROM WITHIN THE ROOM CAUSES THE TABLE, BOX AND STONE TO VANISH. IF NOT THE BOX CLOSES WITH MOCKING LAUGHTER FROM AN INDEFINABLE SOURCE, AND EVERYTHING VANISHES ANYWAY.

**LOFT:** ALTHOUGH THE LOFT ACTUALLY OCCUPIES ALL PARTS OF THE ROOF OUTSIDE THE TWO TOWERS AND BENEATH THE TILES, THE NARROWER "WALL LINE" SURROUNDING THE USUAL INTERIOR "FLOOR" TEXTURE HERE INDICATES THE AREA WHERE MOST TYPICAL ADULT-HUMAN-SIZED HUMANOIDS COULD RELATIVELY EASILY GET ABOUT, STEPPING CAREFULLY FROM RAFTER TO RAFTER, CLINGING ONTO THE ROOF BEAMS, AND SO FORTH. THE CENTRAL LINES WHERE THE ROOF IS HIGHEST HAVE A ROUGH HEADROOM OF JUST UNDER TWO METRES. EVERYWHERE ELSE, THE HEADROOM IS LOWER TO MUCH LOWER, AS THE ROOF SLOPES DOWN TO MEET THE WALLS, MEANING THAT FURTHER FROM THESE CENTRE LINES, THE LOFT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A CRAWLSPACE. ACCESSING THOSE PARTS OF THE LOFT IMMEDIATELY WEST AND EAST OF THE TWO TOWER ROOMS IS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT, AND GETTING INTO THE TWO "WINGS" EAST OF THE TOWERS THAT FLANK THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SIDES OF THE YARD AT GROUND LEVEL, IS NOT PLEASANT. MIS-STEPPING ON A RAFTER MAY LEAD TO FALLING THROUGH THE CEILING INTO THE ROOM BELOW. THE STONE SURROUNDS FOR THE THREE CHIMNEY FLUES PROJECT INTO THE LOFT IN PLACES, FURTHER RESTRICTING WHERE SOMEONE CAN MOVE, MOST ESPECIALLY ON THE OUTER SOUTHERN WALL OF THE NORTH TOWER, AS THIS SURROUND SLOPES UP FROM WEST TO EAST ACROSS THE WALL TO THE CHIMNEY STACKS OUTSIDE. SPOOKY PHENOMENA HERE CHIEFLY COMPRISE ODD NOISES, SNATCHES OF WORDS, LAUGHTER, AND BRIEF FLORAL SCENTS, ALTHOUGH SPECTRAL FORMS SOMETIMES DRIFT THROUGH THE FLOOR AND OUT THROUGH THE ROOF TOO, COMMONLY ONES HARD TO DEFINE BEYOND A VAGUE, FLOWING, HUMANOID SHAPE.

## UPPER FLOOR

ALL THE WINDOWS HERE HAVE BEEN BOARDED-OVER, THOUGH OFTEN NOT WELL, SO THE ROOMS ARE AT LEAST PARTLY LIT FROM OUTSIDE DURING DAYLIGHT. THE WALLS ARE STONE, THE FLOOR WOODEN, THE CEILING PLASTERED THIN WOODEN BOARDS ATTACHED TO THE UNDERSIDE OF THE LOFT'S RAFTERS, EXCEPT BELOW THE TWO ROOF TOWERS, WHICH ARE AGAIN OF SOLID WOODEN PLANKS.

**NURSERY:** THE SMALLEST ROOM ON THIS FLOOR, IT HAS A FIREPLACE ON ITS EAST WALL, AND SMALL WINDOWS LOOKING OUT TO THE SOUTH (OVER THE YARD BELOW), AND NORTH. EVENTS THAT CAN OCCUR HERE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING. A FIRE APPEARS IN THE GRATE, AND THE ROOM BECOMES COMFORTABLY WARM. A CRADLE NEAR THE FIREPLACE GENTLY ROCKS TO AN UNSEEN HAND. A CHILD'S VOICE SOFTLY SINGS A LULLABY THAT MAY HAVE THE MAGICAL EFFECT OF CAUSING LIVING LISTENERS TO FALL ASLEEP. ANOTHER CHILD'S LAUGHTER RISES IN INTENSITY BEFORE MELDING INTO LOUD SCREAMING IN TERROR. A HUGE, INTANGIBLE, TRANSPARENT SCARLET SKULL APPEARS IN MID-AIR, HALF FILLING THE ROOM, ITS JAWS WIDE OPEN AS IF IT IS DOING THE SCREAMING. THE JAWS SNAP SHUT, AND EVERYTHING VANISHES, AS ALL BECOMES VERY SUDDENLY STILL AND SILENT.

**BEDROOM:** THIS IS THE LONGEST ROOM ON THIS FLOOR, WITH DOORS LEADING EAST TO THE NURSERY AND SOUTH TO THE LIVING ROOM. A LADDER FIXED TO THE SOUTH WALL JUST INSIDE THE DOORWAY TO THE LIVING ROOM LEADS UP TO THE CEILING TRAPDOOR INTO THE NORTH TOWER. TWO WINDOWS LOOK OUT NORTH, ABOVE THE EXTERNAL PORCH BELOW, AND ONE FACES WEST. A FIREPLACE ON THE SOUTH WALL BACKS ONTO THAT IN THE LIVING ROOM, ALBEIT WITH A SEPARATING SOLID WALL BETWEEN THE TWO. THE FIRST TIME THIS ROOM IS ENTERED, A STARTLED BLACK CAT HISSES FROM THE TOP OF A BOOKCASE, JUMPS TO THE FLOOR AND VANISHES. A BLACK RAVEN CROAKS MOCKINGLY FROM THE EXACT SPOT ON TOP OF THE BOOKCASE WHERE THE CAT HAD BEEN, THEN FLIES TOWARDS THE DOOR, VEERING MIDWAY UP TO THE CEILING TRAPDOOR, WHERE IT TOO DISAPPEARS. A NAKED HUMANOID COUPLE LIE ON A BED WITH A LARGE DRIED BLOODSTAIN ALL AROUND AND BENEATH THEM. BOTH HAVE BLOODY CUTS ON THEIR ARMS, AND A SHARP KNIFE, ALSO CRUSTED WITH DRIED BLOOD, LIES NEAR ONE OF EACH OF THEIR HANDS, SUGGESTIVE OF A DOUBLE SUICIDE. THE ROOM'S CONTENTS THEN

DISAPPEAR. SOFT WHISPERS AND GIGGLING CAN BE HEARD IN THE ROOM, WITH OCCASIONAL SOFT BRUSHING TOUCHES ON EXPOSED SKIN OF THOSE LIVING IN HERE - ON HANDS AND FACES, FOR EXAMPLE. THERE IS NO DETECTABLE SOURCE FOR THESE. A SCENT OF ROSES BECOMES OBVIOUS. THEN EVERYTHING UNUSUAL SIMPLY STOPS.

**LIVING ROOM:** A SQUARE ROOM WITH LARGER WINDOWS LOOKING OUT EAST OVER THE YARD, AND WEST. THE FIREPLACE ON THE NORTH WALL BACKS ONTO THAT IN THE BEDROOM, WITH A SEPARATING WALL BETWEEN THE TWO. DOORS LEAD NORTH TO THE BEDROOM AND SOUTH TO THE SITTING ROOM. WEAK SIGHING CAN BE HEARD, AND A FAINT FLORAL SCENT NOTICED, LIKE JASMINE. A SILVER SALTIRE-FORM CROSS COVERED IN COBWEBS HANGS ABOVE THE FIREPLACE ON THE WALL. A FEMALE VOICE CHANTS SOFTLY IN AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE. THE DOORS SLAM SHUT, AND WILL NOT OPEN. ONE CORNER OF THE ROOM BECOMES UNNATURALLY DARK AND ICY COLD. A FIRE SPRINGS UP IN THE FIREPLACE, WITH A STRONG SMELL OF INCENSE. THE FLAMES BURN RED (CAUSING HEAT DAMAGE TO ANYONE STANDING CLOSE-BY), THEN ORANGE (PERMANENTLY DRAINING THE MAGIC FROM ONE ITEM ON THE PERSON NEAREST THE FLAMES), FOLLOWED BY YELLOW (MELTS ONE RANDOM METAL OBJECT HELD BY SOMEONE NEAR THE FLAMES), GREEN (A LARGE BLACK DOG APPEARS, LYING IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE; IT GROWLS AT THE INTRUDERS AND ITS EYES GLOW FLAME-RED), BLUE (THE FIRE PROJECTS AN AURA OF INTENSE COLD, CAUSING FROST DAMAGE TO ONE PERSON CLOSE-BY), AND FINALLY VIOLET (A SCREAMING GHOSTLY WOMAN RUNS ACROSS THE ROOM, THROUGH ANYONE IN THE WAY, AND VANISHES, AFTER WHICH THE ROOM IS ENGULFED IN IMAGINARY FLAMES). THE FIRE GOES OUT, AND EVERYTHING BECOMES AS EMPTY AND STILL AS BEFORE.

**SITTING ROOM:** AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS FROM THE GROUND FLOOR. SMALL WINDOWS LOOK OUT TO THE SOUTH, OVER THE NARROW ROOM EXTENSION ON THE FLOOR BELOW, AND WEST, WITH A SINGLE DOOR NORTH INTO THE LIVING ROOM. A LADDER FIXED TO THE NORTH WALL BY THIS DOORWAY LEADS UP TO THE TRAPDOOR INTO THE SOUTH TOWER ABOVE. A SMALL FIREPLACE IS SET IN THE WESTERN WALL-ANGLE. A YOUNG GIRL APPEARS IN A RANDOM CORNER, SCREAMS AND VANISHES. THIS HAPPENS TWICE MORE. AFTER THE THIRD TIME, THE SOUND OF A HOWLING GALE IS HEARD, ALTHOUGH ALL REMAINS CALM OUTSIDE AS VIEWED THROUGH EITHER OF THE WINDOWS, FOLLOWED BY A MONSTROUS GROWLING FROM THE FIREPLACE CHIMNEY, AND A SEVERE RATTING OF THE CEILING TRAPDOOR. NO SOURCE FOR EITHER OF THESE EVENTS CAN BE FOUND.

**STAIRS DOWN:** A WOODEN STAIRCASE WITH A SOLID BANISTER AND HANDRAIL. "AS I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STAIR, I MET A MAN WHO WASN'T THERE. HE WASN'T THERE AGAIN TODAY. OH, HOW I WISH HE'D GO AWAY." A CLASSIC, BUT EFFECTIVE NONETHELESS, AND LIABLE TO RECUR EACH TIME THE STAIRS ARE USED. THE MAN MAY BE SOMETIMES A WOMAN, AND COMMONLY OF A DIFFERENT APPEARANCE EACH TIME. APPARENTLY SILENT AND HARMLESS.

## GROUND FLOOR

THE WINDOWS, DOORS AND BACK GATE HAVE ALL BEEN BOARDED-UP, ALTHOUGH ONLY THOSE FACING INTO THE SURROUNDING STREETS HAVE BEEN CLOSELY BOARDED. THOSE FACING INTO THE YARD HAVE BEEN ONLY CURSORILY BLOCKED THUS, WHILE THE OUTSIDE OF THE BACK GATE SHOWS SIGNS THAT ITS BOARDING-UP HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT, AND APPARENTLY REMOVED, ON SEVERAL PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. THE BACK FENCE WOULD NOT BE HARD TO SCALE, AS IT IS ONLY A COUPLE OF METRES HIGH. STONE WALLS HERE, WITH WOODEN PLANK CEILINGS AND FLOORS INSIDE.

**KITCHEN:** ONE LARGER WINDOW FACES NORTH, WITH DOORS ON THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN WALLS, LEADING TO THE YARD OUTSIDE AND THE HALL INSIDE RESPECTIVELY. A LARGE FIREPLACE IS ON THE EAST WALL, FROM WHICH TWO FLUES EXTEND TO THE ROOF, AS THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE FIREBOXES HERE, ONE AN OPEN FIREPLACE WITH FACILITIES FOR COOKING ON, INCLUDING A METAL HOB FOR A PAN THAT CAN BE SWIVELLED ON OR OFF THE FLAMES, AND FIXTURES IN THE FIREPLACE WALLS FOR A ROASTING SPIT, ALTHOUGH THE SPIT IS NO LONGER PRESENT. THE OTHER IS A CLOSED OVEN FOR MAKING BREAD, PIES AND THE LIKE. AN EMPTY CHAIR ROCKS BY THE FIRE. PLATES FLOAT ACROSS THE ROOM AS IF BEING CARRIED BY SOMEONE UNSEEN. JARS MAY FLING THEMSELVES AT INTRUDERS FROM A WOODEN SIDEBOARD WITH OPEN SHELVES. A TATTERED FEMALE GHOST CHOPS MEAT AT A TABLE AS IF REPEATEDLY STABBING A RITUAL SACRIFICE. HER KNIFE RADIATES AN UNUSUALLY STRONG MAGICAL AURA. ANY ATTEMPT TO INTERACT PHYSICALLY WITH ANY OF THESE THINGS CAUSES THEM TO VANISH.

**YARD:** A ROUGHLY COBBLED BACK YARD, WITH A FEW LONG-DEAD GRASS AND WEED STRANDS IN PLACES. A 2 M HIGH WOODEN FENCE SEALS-OFF THE EASTERN SIDE, IN WHICH THERE IS A SOLID WOODEN GATE, WHILE THE OTHER THREE SIDES ARE FORMED BY THE WALLS OF THE HOUSE. A LARGE WINDOW ON THE WESTERN WALL LOOKS INTO THE DINING ROOM; A SMALLER ONE INTO THE W.C. ON THE SOUTH WALL HAS FROSTED GLASS PANES. ANOTHER LARGER WINDOW CAN BE SEEN IN THE WALL DIRECTLY ABOVE THE DINING ROOM ONE ON THE UPPER FLOOR, ALONG WITH A SMALLER WINDOW IN EACH OF



THE UPPER NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN WALLS. TWO STEPS LEAD UP TO THE NORTHERN DOOR INTO THE KITCHEN, AND THERE IS A SINGLE STEP UP TO THE SMALLER DOOR THAT LEADS TO THE CELLAR STAIRS IN THE SOUTH WALL. THE GATE HERE CREAKS OMINOUSLY, AS IF SLOWLY OPENING, WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING AT IT, ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS SHUT. FOOTSTEPS WITHOUT ANYONE BEING VISIBLE CAN BE HEARD CROSSING THE COBBLES AT TIMES. AN INTANGIBLE BROOM SWEEPS AWAY IN ONE CORNER OF THE YARD, THEN VANISHES.

**CELLAR STAIRS:** A VERY STEEP FLIGHT OF STONE STEPS LEADS DOWN SOUTH, THEN WEST INTO THE CELLAR FROM THE YARD, BY WAY OF A CLOSED DOOR FROM THE YARD. THE STEPS ARE ALMOST RAMP-LIKE IN PLACES, WITH A SOLID WOODEN BANISTER AND HANDRAIL ALL THE WAY DOWN. THEY PASS BENEATH THE MAIN STAIRCASE INSIDE THE HOUSE. ANYONE WHO SLIPS OR FALLS ON THESE STAIRS IS SUBJECT TO MOCKING, SOFT SNIGGERING, ALTHOUGH NOTHING CAN BE SEEN OR SENSED HERE OTHERWISE.

**HALL:** TWO STONE STEPS OUTSIDE LEAD UP TO THE HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR, SET UNDER A NARROW, SLOPING PORCH ROOF OVER THEM. THE DOOR LEADS INTO THE ENTRANCE HALL. INSIDE, DOORS LEAD OFF TO THE EAST AND SOUTH, TO THE KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM RESPECTIVELY, AND THERE IS A FIREPLACE ALSO ON THE SOUTH WALL. THE FIREPLACE BACKS ONTO THAT IN THE DINING ROOM, BUT A SOLID BACK WALL SEPARATES THE PAIR. A SMALL WINDOW IS SET INTO EACH OF THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN WALLS. HOOKS ARE FITTED INTO THE WALLS NEAREST THE FIREPLACE, AT A HEIGHT SUGGESTING THEIR USE FOR HANGING COATS, HATS, CLOAKS AND THE LIKE. THE HALL IS DECEPTIVELY FREE FROM ANY GHOSTLY MANIFESTATIONS.

**DINING ROOM:** THE CENTRAL ROOM ON THIS FLOOR, WITH LARGER WINDOWS IN ITS EASTERN AND WESTERN WALLS, AND A DOOR ON EACH OF ITS SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN WALLS THAT LEAD OUT TO THE HALL (NORTH) AND SMOKING ROOM (SOUTH). A FIREPLACE IS SET INTO THE NORTHERN WALL, WHICH SHARES A BACK WALL WITH THE FIREPLACE IN THE HALL, ALTHOUGH THE TWO GRATES ARE QUITE SEPARATE. SEEMINGLY HIGHLY CIVILISED GHOSTLY DINERS SITTING AROUND A TABLE FEAST DELICATELY ON SLICES CAREFULLY CUT FROM A COOKED HUMANOID CORPSE SET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE. A LARGE LOOKING-GLASS ABOVE THE FIREPLACE HAS A PAINTING OF A DISGUSTINGLY DEPRAVED DEMONIC REVEL AROUND ITS OUTER EDGES, LEAVING ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE CENTRE FREE TO VIEW INTO. THE PAINTED FIGURES SEEM TO MOVE AS IF ALIVE, LOOKING OUT AND LEERING AT VIEWERS MOST DISTURBINGLY. ITS SHATTERS VIOLENTLY IF ANYONE TRIES TO VIEW THEIR OWN REFLECTION IN THE CLEARER CENTRE AREA, BUT THEN RESTORES ITSELF WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING AT IT. THE DINERS IGNORE ALL OF THIS. EVERYTHING WILL THEN GRADUALLY FADE AWAY, LEAVING THE ROOM EMPTY AGAIN.

**SMOKING ROOM:** A LARGE WINDOW FACES SOUTH FROM HERE, A SMALLER ONE WEST, WITH THREE DOORS LEADING OUT, TWO ON THE EAST WALL, ONE ON THE NORTH. THE NORTH DOOR LEADS INTO THE DINING ROOM. THE LARGER EASTERN DOOR LEADS TO THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS UP TO THE UPPER FLOOR, WHILE THE SMALLER ONE OPENS OUT OF THE W.C.. A SMALL FIREPLACE IS SET INTO THE WESTERN WALL-ANGLE. A STRONG SCENT OF A COMMON TYPE OF PIPEWEED (SUCH AS TOBACCO) IS THE FIRST MANIFESTATION HERE. THEN SMOKE IN THE AIR FORMS ITSELF INTO THE GHOSTLY SHAPES OF SEVERAL HUMANOIDS SITTING SMOKING IN CHAIRS FACING TOWARDS THE FIRE. ANY MOVEMENT OF THE AIR CAUSES THIS APPEARANCE TO DISSIPATE, REFORMING ONCE THE AIR STILLS AGAIN.

**W.C.:** AN ABBREVIATION FOR "WATER CLOSET", A EUPHEMISM FOR "TOILET", WHICH IS WHAT THIS SMALL ROOM UNDER THE UPPER PART OF THE STAIRCASE TO THE UPPER FLOOR CONTAINS, WITH PIPES LEADING DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND THENCE TO THE CITY'S SEWER SYSTEM. ODD SOUNDS CAN BE HEARD IN HERE WHEN THE DOOR IS CLOSED, COMMONLY HALF-HEARD VOICES, AS IF COMING FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE HOUSE. THEY STOP AS SOON AS THE DOOR IS OPENED AGAIN.

**STAIRS UP:** AS NOTED ABOVE UNDER "STAIRS DOWN" IN THE UPPER FLOOR SECTION, THIS IS A WOODEN STAIRCASE WITH A SOLID BANISTER AND HANDRAIL. THIS TIME THOUGH, WE CAN SAY, "AS I WAS WALKING UP THE STAIR, I MET A MAN WHO WASN'T THERE. HE WASN'T THERE AGAIN TODAY. OH, HOW I WISH HE'D GO AWAY." AGAIN, AN EVENT LIABLE TO RECUR EACH TIME THE STAIRS ARE USED. THE MAN MAY BE SOMETIMES A WOMAN, AND COMMONLY OF A DIFFERENT APPEARANCE EACH TIME. APPARENTLY SILENT AND HARMLESS.

## CELLAR

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, THE CELLAR PLAN IS AVAILABLE IN TWO VIEWS. THE NORMAL VIEW SHOWS JUST THE STAIRWELL AND THE TWO ROOMS THAT ARE OBVIOUS TO ANYONE EXAMINING THE PLACE. THE OTHER VIEW, AVAILABLE BY ACTIVATING THE "SECRET" TOGGLE IN THE FCW MAP, SHOWS THE CONCEALED WAY INTO THE CAVE CONTAINING THE RING OF STONE MENHIRS THAT SEEM TO POWER THE SPECTRAL APPARITIONS THAT PLAGUE CLOVEN HOUSE. AS ALSO COMMENTED ABOVE, THE READILY-ACCESSIBLE CELLAR ROOMS ARE LOWER THAN THOSE IN THE REST OF THE HOUSE, WITH A FLOOR-CEILING

SEPARATION OF ABOUT 2 M. WALLS AND FLOOR ARE OF STONE HERE, WITH CEILINGS THE UNDERSIDE OF THE WOODEN PLANKING THAT FORMS THE FLOORING OF THE HOUSE'S GROUND FLOOR.

**CELLAR STEPS UP:** AS NOTED IN THE GROUND FLOOR DESCRIPTION, THESE ARE A VERY STEEP FLIGHT OF STONE STEPS, LEADING UP EAST, THEN NORTH, TO THE DOORWAY OUT TO THE SURFACE-LEVEL YARD. THE STEPS ARE ALMOST RAMP-LIKE IN PLACES, WITH A SOLID WOODEN BANISTER AND HANDRAIL ALL THE WAY UP. THEY PASS BENEATH THE MAIN STAIRWELL INSIDE THE HOUSE. ANYONE WHO SLIPS OR FALLS ON THESE STAIRS IS SUBJECT TO MOCKING, SOFT SNIGGERING, ALTHOUGH NOTHING CAN BE SEEN OR SENSED HERE OTHERWISE.

**SOUTH ROOM:** LED INTO DIRECTLY FROM THE FOOT OF THE CELLAR STEPS, THIS IS A FAIRLY LONG, NARROW ROOM, WITH A DOOR AT THE WEST END OF ITS NORTHERN WALL THAT LEADS INTO THE CELLAR'S MAIN ROOM. ANOTHER SMALLER AND LOWER DOOR BELOW THE HIGHEST PART OF THE STEPS (JUST OVER A METRE HIGH) LEADS INTO THE SPACE ENCLOSED BY THE LOWER PARTS OF THE STAIRWELL'S WOODEN BANISTER BENEATH THE STEPS, FORMING AN "L"-SHAPED CUPBOARD THAT GRADUALLY LOWERS TO THE FLOOR BY THE LOWEST END OF THE UNDERSIDE OF THE STEPS. THERE IS A VAGUELY UNPLEASANT SMELL HERE MOST OF THE TIME. SOMETIMES THIS SMELL IS MASKED BY, OR MINGLES WITH, A GHOSTLY FLORAL SCENT. TRANSPARENT GHOSTLY HUMANOID FORMS DRIFT UP THROUGH FLOOR TO CEILING AT TIMES. ALL ARE SOUNDLESS, AND AFTER PASSING THROUGH THE CEILING, THEY VANISH, SO ARE NOT SEEN IN THE HOUSE ABOVE GROUND.

**MAIN ROOM:** ACCESSED FROM A DOOR AT THE WEST END OF ITS SOUTH WALL, LEADING BACK INTO THE CELLAR'S SOUTH ROOM, THERE IS ALSO A CIRCULAR METAL GRATING IN THE FLOOR OF ITS SOUTHEAST CORNER. THE GRATING, THOUGH HEAVY, CAN BE REMOVED, PROVIDING A NARROW ACCESSWAY DOWN TO THE CITY'S SEWER SYSTEM. THE CITY'S GHOULS USE THIS MEANS TO ACCESS THE CELLAR HERE FROM THE SEWERS FOR THEIR OCCASIONAL FEASTS, AS MENTIONED EARLIER. UNLESS THERE ARE ANY GHOULS HERE, THERE IS ONLY A STRONGER VERSION OF THE VAGUELY UNPLEASANT SMELL NOTICED IN THE SOUTH ROOM, WHOSE SOURCE IS FAIRLY OBVIOUSLY THE SEWER GRATING. PIPES FROM THE W.C. ON THE GROUND FLOOR (NOT SHOWN ON THE PLAN) RUN DOWN THROUGH THE WALL IN THIS ROOM'S EASTERN CORNER, INTO THE SEWERS BELOW, WITHOUT PASSING INTO THE PIPE LEADING DOWN FROM THE GRATING DIRECTLY. IF THE ROOM IS EMPTY, SOME UNUSUAL STAINS AND OCCASIONAL SMALL FRAGMENTS OF BONE MAY BE FOUND IN PLACES ON THE FLOOR, REMAINS OF THE GHOULS' MOST RECENT ACTIVITIES HERE. IF A PARTY OF GHOULS IS PRESENT, THEY WILL HAVE THEIR SELECTED DELICACIES CAREFULLY SEGREGATED OVER THE FLOOR BY TYPE AND VINTAGE, AND BE SAMPLING THEM IN WHAT FOR THEM PASSES FOR A REFINED MANNER. LOW DOWN IN ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE NORTHERN WALL, AND CLEARLY BUILT INTO THE WALL, IS THE TOP OF A WEATHER-WORN, VERY ANCIENT, ROUGHLY WORKED, STONE MENHIR. IT REACHES DOWN TO, AND SEEMS TO PASS BENEATH, THE STONE FLOOR, WHOSE STONES HAVE BEEN CUT AND PLACED TO ACCOMMODATE ITS ROUNDED SHAPE. THERE APPEAR TO BE SOME ALMOST INDEFINABLE, INSCRIBED MARKINGS ON THE STONE, APPARENTLY EXTREMELY ANCIENT AND JUST AS WEATHER-WORN AS THE REST OF IT. THE STONE RADIATES A WEAKLY MAGICAL NECROMANTIC AURA FOR THOSE ABLE TO DETECT SUCH THINGS. WHILE NOT AT ALL OBVIOUS, AN AREA OF THE NORTHERN WALL TOWARDS ITS EASTERN END, LOW DOWN (LESS THAN 1.25 M FROM THE FLOOR), IS THINNER THAN THE REST, AND WILL GIVE A SLIGHTLY HOLLOW SOUND IF RAPPED HARD ENOUGH. REMOVING THE OUTER LAYER OF STONEMASONRY HERE, WHICH IS LESS DIFFICULT THAN MIGHT BE SUPPOSED WITH SUITABLE TOOLS, REVEALS A RECTANGULAR LOW OPENING, BLOCKED, THOUGH RATHER HASTILY AND INEFFICIENTLY, BY THICKER STONES MORTARED IN PLACE. ONCE DISCOVERED, THESE CAN BE REMOVED QUITE READILY, PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE CONCEALED CAVE BEYOND. MANIFESTATIONS IN THIS ROOM COMPRISE MORE OF THE GHOSTLY, FLOATING, SILENT HUMANOIDS PASSING BETWEEN FLOOR AND CEILING THAT ARE SOMETIMES VISIBLE IN THE SOUTH ROOM.

**CONCEALED CAVE:** THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY EXCAVATED AT A MUCH EARLIER TIME, AFTER THE HOUSE WAS BUILT, JUDGING BY THE BLOCKED ACCESSWAY FROM THE CELLAR'S MAIN ROOM. THE WALLS (OTHER THAN THE BACK OF THE STONE ONE ADJOINING THE CELLAR) AND CEILING ARE MOSTLY OF FIRMLY-PACKED EARTH, WITH SOME STONES AND WOOD PLANKING IN PLACES, PROVIDING FURTHER SUPPORT. THE FLOOR IS ABOUT A METRE BELOW THAT IN THE CELLAR, AND IS OF ROUGH, HARD-PACKED EARTH. THE CEILING THOUGH IS ABOUT LEVEL WITH THE TOP OF THE ACCESSWAY, GIVING A GENERAL FLOOR TO CEILING SEPARATION BY THE BACK OF THE MAIN ROOM'S WALL ACROSS TOWARDS THE CAVE'S CENTRE OF ABOUT 2.25 M. THE CAVE'S CEILING IS SOMEWHAT DOMED HOWEVER, SO MOST OF THE CAVE HAS A HEIGHT OF NO MORE THAN 1.75 M, AND LESS THAN THAT CLOSER TO THE EARTHEN WALLS. THE TOPS OF MORE STANDING STONES, OF SIMILARLY ANCIENT, WORN, PROBABLY ONCE-INSCRIBED, CHARACTER TO THAT EMBEDDED IN THE MAIN ROOM'S WALL, FORM A ROUGH CIRCLE TOWARDS THE HIGHER PARTS OF THE CAVE. A SLIVER OF THE BACK OF THE STONE IN THE MAIN ROOM'S WALL CAN BE SEEN DESCENDING INTO THE EARTHEN FLOOR, AND TWO MORE STONES IN THE CAVE HAVE BEEN BUILT INTO THE BACK OF THE SAME WALL. INVESTIGATION WILL SHOW THE STONES ALL SEEM TO CONTINUE DEEPER INTO THE EARTH,

AND ALTHOUGH NOT ALL ARE OF EQUAL HEIGHT (SMALLER CIRCLES INDICATE SHORTER VISIBLE STONE TOPS ON THE PLAN), A THOROUGH EXAMINATION BY MAGIC OR A LOT OF DIGGING, WILL FIND THEY CONTINUE FOR ALMOST A METRE MORE, WITH A FURTHER HALF-METRE OR SO BELOW WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL GROUND SURFACE ON WHICH THEY WERE ERECTED (SHOWN BY A LOT LESS WEATHERING AND NO INSCRIPTIONS). AN OBVIOUS, GENERALLY CIRCULAR, DEPRESSION IN THE CENTRE OF THE RING (MARKED BY THE SHADED CIRCLE WITH WAVY LINES) SHOWS WHERE ONE OF THE STONES HAS BEEN DUG UP AND REMOVED, APPARENTLY SINCE THE CAVE WAS CONSTRUCTED. THE STONES RADIATE A WEAKLY NECROMANTIC MAGICAL AURA, LIKE THAT ONE FACING INTO THE MAIN ROOM, AND IT IS THIS RING THAT CHANNELS AND POWERS ALL THE GHOSTLY APPARITIONS HERE, SUPPLEMENTED BY FURTHER MORSELS AND MEMORIES EXTRACTED FROM THE REMAINS BROUGHT IN AND CONSUMED BY THE GHOULS. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE MISSING STONE.