



*Patreon Adventure Supplement
December 2022*

The Nest of Leeches Tavern

*Maps: The Nest of Leeches
The Nest of Leeches - Autumn
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The Nest of Leeches Tavern

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Patreon *Map of the Month* GM's supplement

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Regional map made using Inkarnate (www.inkarnate.com).

SETTING



Setting description

Along the lonely Slaughterwalk Way stands the Nest of Leeches tavern, a haven - of a boozy, run-down sort - among the sinister Blackthorne Woods, which it keeps at bay with its walled courtyard. To the east is Harcombe, a small town flushed with the burgeoning prosperity of its illegal banking trade. To the south, littering the woods past the ruined chapel (in which some say vampires lurk), lie a clutch of miserable villages - Little Joy, Brideswell and Nighgonne.

Gormen Bittersudd has run this establishment for 20-odd years, gloomily serving the inhabitants of these less than illustrious places. It was The Slaughterer's Arms when he took over, but the earliest documents name the tavern as The Hangman's Rest. It's always been a bit of a dive, but it's a solid, familiar building and draws in sufficient numbers of travellers and locals to stay solvent.

In the past few years, Gormen has noticed an increase in interest in the rumoured local vampires, with his tavern even becoming the meeting place for a band of vampire hunters. Never one to miss an opportunity, Gormen has renamed the tavern to capitalise on the interest and now most people who sup here have something to say about the 'the local leeches'.

Vampires, of course, are not all this tavern is about. The atmosphere is always dire, brawling is never far from breaking out and the staff are never less than sinister or strange. Quiet travellers inhabit the shadowiest corners, and who can say if they be foreigner on the run or watching, waiting rogue? There's the familiar chill of the lodgings above the stench of the stable, of course. And who could forget the miserable expressions of the locals, drained from a day's work, staring into the bottom of their tankards? Still, there's always a lot going on at the Nest of Leeches and who knows what dark adventure the place might set one off on?

PEOPLE

Staff of The Nest of Leeches

- 1 **Gormen Bittersudd**, proprietor and licensee, is a huge bull of a man. Impatient and cynical, he is a force like a black hole behind the bar. He wears a filthy apron and spends much of the day using it to slowly polish the drinking vessels.
- 2 **Draven Marwood**, a bartender with a long stare and a silent demeanor. Young and humourless, he is exceedingly tall.
- 3 **Perdith Wassailer**, a bartender who will engage customers in lengthy and florid arguments about inconsequential points. She is friendly, quick-witted and incredibly annoying.
- 4 **Guin Bront**, the cook, was trained by the chef of a barracks and always makes and serves a little too much. Quick-tempered, red-faced and vulgar. She dresses all in brown.
- 5 **Oberick Stone**, kitchen hand, a widower who works here to pay for the upkeep of his nine children, the youngest few of whom can often be found playing under the kitchen table.
- 6 **Casta Wrenwick**, the cleaner, who is not especially good at her job. Still, she turns up every day and does it. Even though Gormen has fired her several times. Has a long blonde plait that drags on the floor and sweeps up better than she does.
- 7 **Merle Lackelock**, the potman. Old and gurning, his hearing has gone. Regularly collects tankards still being used. Stacks up drinking vessels on a tray that he frequently drops.
- 8 **Hemlyn Quade**, the stableboy, a snivelling, solemn lad who loves horses. He gets very angry if he suspects a person may be treating their horse badly.

Regular drinkers in the tavern

- 1 **Sigrin Clyve**, a forester who spends less and less time in the woods now they are more dangerous. A fountain of jokes.
- 2 **Dustin Haymonde**, a swineherd, who leaves his pigs to snuffle in the woods while he drinks all day in the Leeches.
- 3 **Wolf Darble**, a poacher, known to thief on some of the private lands to the north. A mean-spirited man.
- 4 **Boltwyn Reddy**, a carman who delivers things around the area using a small wagon. Tells many a tall tale (a liar).
- 5 **Olive Staky**, a raucous housewife from Little Joy who isn't often in her house and isn't much of a wife. Likes gambling.
- 6 **Paskle Meade**, a shingler who sets out every day to travel around the area looking for work. Often gets no further than The Nest of Leeches.
- 7 **Surgeon Raphalelle Swinton**, a doctor who used to travel around the villages and farms here. Since the rumoured vampires made travelling dangerous, she has set up a makeshift consulting room in the corner of the bar.
- 8 **Wilkin Botch**, a bailiff who likes nothing more than to crown a good day hassling the local peasants with a hot meal and several hours drinking at The Leeches.

Strangers in the tavern

- 1 **Rordan de Noir**, a herald, who is travelling to Harcombe to announce new taxes. Is incredibly nervous and is considering employing a bodyguard in case things go badly.
- 2 **Lucien Cygnus**, an astrologer heading to the village of Little Joy to prepare a chart for a client who is suffering bad dreams and terrible visions.
- 3 **Brother Jaspar**, an itinerant friar who is renowned for selling indulgences and conducting blessings for money. He wanders the tavern trying to persuade patrons that they need his services.
- 4 **Frey Smith**, a tourist, who has travelled here hoping to catch a glimpse of a real vampire. Cosplays as a vampire bride.
- 5 **Old Ann Rummage**, a peddler who is walking the entire Slaughterwalk Way. Carries all sorts of things and will trade.
- 6 **Claryn Vayell**, who sits quietly in a corner hoping not to be recognised. Has fled their home city accused of a murder.
- 7 **Velika Trissti**, a famed fresco painter who has been invited by a priest to inspect the ruins of the Chapel of the Innocent Blood with a view to beginning a new mural cycle.
- 8 **Marion Maisley**, who is travelling north to visit her family from whom she was estranged when she cursed her sisters to never find love. Carries a book in which she pens curse ideas and is often muttering under her breath.

Animals around the Tavern

Horses in the stables

- 1 **Bonerack**, a skinny grey packhorse with a sad face.
- 2 Two bay coursers, **Morrel and Sorrel**, stabled here by two young, inexperienced knights who want to hunt in the woods.
- 3 **Shortbread**, a buckskin palfrey stallion, belonging to a baron's daughter. Her guard, Timney, who is travelling with her, sleeps beneath the horse.
- 4 Two hobbies, **Candlewick** (a white mare) and **Punchline** (a brown mare) resting here on a long journey.

Other animals

- 5 **Shrewgutter**, a raggedy looking ginger cat who lives in the tavern yard. Ill-tempered.
- 6 A small colony of rats, who live in various holes around the yard and who are in a constant battle to keep their numbers up in the face of Shrewgutter's attacks.
- 7 **Botsy, Damble and Hildame**, three turkeys that live in the yard and provide the tavern with most of its eggs. They are to be avoided at all costs due to their violence.
- 8 **Cobble**, a stray dog who sleeps outside the tavern walls. Is fed scraps by tavern patrons who find its face adorable.

THE TAVERN

Drinks menu

Hot drinks

- 1 Hot water flavoured with lemon jam – tankard 1sp
- 2 White chocolate drink – small beaker, 4sp
- 3 Nettle and wild garlic tea – tankard 1sp
- 4 Hot & spiced mulled damson wine – small beaker, 2sp

Soft drinks

- 1 Green plum juice – small beaker, 2sp
- 2 Blackberry and apple cordial – tankard, 2sp
- 3 Beetroot and rhubarb cordial – tankard, 3sp
- 4 Dr Iverson's Famous Turnip Tonic – small beaker, 5sp

Beer and Cider (by tankard), Spirits (by the measure)

- 1 St Misery's – a cask ale, 1sp
- 2 Hopmonks' Dregs – a watery, blonde lager, 3sp
- 3 Stefanson's Blackberry and Thornleaf Cider – 3sp
- 4 Cyder Barrele Brewery's Ye Old Maggot – strong cider, 2sp
- 5 Elf Cup – an acorn spirit, 6sp
- 6 Whitethorne – distilled from blackberries, 5sp

Wine (by glass/bottle)

- 1 Mulberry and damson wine – local (2sp/1gp)
- 2 Elderflower wine – local (1sp/6sp)
- 3 Brugen White – a dandelion and honey wine (5sp/2gp)
- 4 Domaine de Colmis – fruity, red grape (5sp/2gp)
- 5 Greycoate Cellar – sour, white grape (2sp/1gp)
- 6 Pragwuen Sparkling Celebration Wine (1gp/5gp)

Meal prices

Breakfast – 3sp

Luncheon

Single course – 5sp

Two courses (luncheon and pudding) – 7sp

Dinner

Single course – 8sp

Two courses (dinner and pudding) – 1gp

Leeches Feast – 1gp

Pudding – 2sp

Food menu

Breakfast

- 1 Hot oat porridge with lemon jam
- 2 A fried turkey egg on spelt pancakes
- 3 Rye bread slices with salted butter and a gammon slice
- 4 Wodge, hot pastry filled with cottage cheese and potato

Luncheon

- 1 Hot griddled porridge cakes with lemon jam
- 2 Forester's Lunch – half a boiled egg, slice of buttered rye bread, mushroom pate, and a large pickled onion.
- 3 Blackthorne Stew – black garlic, mushroom and wildpig stew
- 4 Wodge, cold pastry filled with cottage cheese and potato

Dinner

- 1 Cold porridge cakes with mushroom pate and hot gravy
- 2 Baked turnip, filled with wild garlic and cottage cheese
- 3 Blackpepper Stew – a peppery stew of black garlic, mushroom & wildpig
- 4 Leeches Feast – a vampire-themed, 2 course dinner: cold beetroot soup followed by pig livers in a red wine sauce

Puddings

- 1 Dried raspberry and oat flapjacks with a lemon jam syrup
- 2 Hot raspberry sponge pudding with sweet milk

Tavern services

1 Livery

Horses, ponies or donkeys can be stabled overnight for 4sp. The stableboy can care for & feed the animal for 3sp.

2 Bed and Board

Bed only – stay a night in the stableloft for 1sp

Bed and breakfast – overnight in the stableloft and a morning meal, 4sp

Half board – dinner and breakfast, plus a night in the stableloft, 9sp

3 Local Guides

The tavern can put you in touch with a local guide. Choose between the competent Benn Stottwyn (4gp per day) or the expert Winky Garfle (10gp per day).

4 Noticeboard

For a 1cp per ten-word, place a small note on the tavern noticeboard.

5 Cab service

Cab to Harcombe Town – 1gp

Cab to the Villages – 4 gp

STORIES

Story Starters

Nest of Leeches default map

- 1 The Leeches' proprietor Gormen Bittersudd confides in the party that he has seen shadows moving around the tavern yard that don't belong to anything. He's worried he's losing his wits – can anyone else see them?
- 2 The party stay overnight in the hayloft and are disturbed all night by the sound of a phantom horse. As they complain to the proprietor and ask for a refund, a phantom highwayman jangles into the bar. As all eyes turn to him, he produces a crossbow and demands the day's takings.

Nest of Leeches Autumn map

- 3 Moments after a traveller finished their lunch and left the tavern, their lifeless body is found in the yard – a dagger in their forehead. Bittersudd asks the armed party to ensure no one leaves the premises until he can bring the guards from Harcombe to investigate.
- 4 As the party tuck into dinner, a young lad bursts into The Leeches, begging that the door is barred behind him. Breathlessly, he recounts being chased up the road by zombies. Peering out the window, it becomes clear the entire building is besieged by walking dead.

Nest of Leeches Winter map

- 5 Arriving at the lonely tavern, the party are greeted by the swinging body of a woman, hanged from the tavern sign. A placard has been placed around her neck that says 'No Dead Listeners Welcome Here'. What could be going on?
- 6 A white direwolf slowly prowls outside the tavern perimeter wall. It is unthreatening and allows people to enter. The tavern owner explains that it howls upon every hour and is making patrons nervous. He's hoping someone will get rid of it, but what does it want?

Nest of Leeches On Fire map

- 7 After bedding down for the night in the hayloft, the party are awoken by the smell of burning. As they stumble out into the yard, they can see the entire tavern is aflame. Someone is shouting for help from the main building, but sometimes their calls sound more like a demonic laugh.
- 8 The party are heading along the road when they come across the burning tavern. Standing around the building are a number of masked men using pitchforks and spears to prevent anyone leaving, pushing them back towards the flames and ignoring all pleas for mercy.

Events that might happen today at the tavern

- 1 The kitchenhand, Oberick Stone, has not shown up for work. He usually walks up to the tavern through the woods and the staff are all very worried that he hasn't arrived.
- 2 After some shouting, a brawl has broken out between three regulars – a swineherd, a poacher and a housewife. They are crashing around the bar, throwing chairs and tankards.
- 3 A man dressed in flowing white robes, a little muddy around the ankles, arrives and starts asking around for The Sentinel, who they are certain is here, "as it has been prophesied." They are persistent.
- 4 A group of amateur vampire hunters that meet in the tavern have worked themselves up into a frenzy. One is standing on a table calling for posse as the others grab their coats.
- 5 The brewer's delivery cart has arrived but it is being driven by someone The Leeches' staff have never seen before. They seem to be wearing a disguise and are acting suspiciously.
- 6 A large hunting party of nobles arrives and takes over the yard and bar. They are rude and are making loud, guffawing demands.
- 7 Someone has let all the horses out of the stable and spooked them. They are galloping around the yard, wildly.
- 8 The sky darkens and an unusual hailstorm bursts from the clouds. Tavern patrons are amazed by the melon-sized balls of ice smashing into the ground, but Gormen Bittersudd is most worried about his turkeys in the yard.

Rumours heard in the tavern

- 1 "I heard someone say that they was told that the landlord, Gormen, is the real vampire round here. They said that their mate saw him with blood all round his mouth and eyes all aflame. He does scare, that one."
- 2 "There used to be an old fella drank in here, swore that there was a wagon buried in the woods filled with gold. He said a tree with white acorns marks the spot and that all he had to do was just find that tree one day...He never did of course."
- 3 "There's a lass in the village of Little Joy that says she used to be a king and that her sons stole her kingdom from her. Funny little girl, that one. Only 7 but speaks all posh."
- 4 "My sister's husband swears there's a group of feral kids that live in the woods. He's seen them snatching food from the houses. Says they look more like wolves than kids."
- 5 "A lady on a horse comes up and down the road sometimes here. They say she's looking for someone and she looks sad and pale like a ghost. But she's not, she's very real. I've never seen her mind, but my uncle said his horse hit him once."
- 6 "A bloke was in here last week says he's heard there's big trouble on the border to the East. A war's coming, he said. And we'll all feel the touch of death. Nonsense, I reckon."