

M. Manticore Mill Ruins

Manticore Mill Ruins is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3, 5, 8, or 11**. This document offers a general guideline on scaling the adventure for each level. The characters enter the ruins of an old windmill, hoping to find valuables within the wreckage. A pride of vicious manticores now call the ruins home, and they don't care for visitors.

Jodak's Mill

Jodak's mill had been a community staple for generations, its blades turning in the wind to grind grain into flour. The mill had been passed down from father to son for centuries, each generation adding its own touch to the old wooden structure. But despite the care that had been put into it, the mill had fallen into disrepair over time. The wooden beams had rotted, and the tiles on the roof had

begun to slip, threatening to collapse at any moment. The mill's last owner, Pytor Jodak, had been unable to afford the repairs it needed, and so it sat on the hill, a silent reminder of a bygone era.

It wasn't until a fierce storm blew through the area that the mill met its ultimate fate. The winds howled, and the rain poured down, lashing at the old wooden structure. Jodak watched in horror as the roof began to buckle, and the walls shook and groaned under the force of the storm. And then, with a deafening crack, one of the support beams gave way, causing the entire mill to collapse in a heap of splintered wood and broken tiles. Jodak mourned the loss of the mill, but there was nothing he could do. And so, the ruins sat on the hill, slowly being reclaimed by nature. Drawn by the shelter of the ruins and the abundance of prey in the surrounding

countryside, a pride of manticores made the ruins their home. Originally led by the older, wiser, and more experienced manticore, Zebrarg, the manticores lived in harmony. Unfortunately, a younger manticore named Lenyin challenged Zebrarg for his role as the leader of the pride and won. Since then, the pride has gotten sloppy in its endeavors, drawing unwanted attention to their lair.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, Jodak's Mill has the following features.

Architecture. What little remains of the old mill and adjoining home is in ruins, the wood splintered, rotten, and mold-stricken. Only the stone base of the windmill stands strong.

Doors and Windows. What few doors are still standing are rotting and nearly useless. They can't be locked, but could potentially be barred. A barred door can be forced open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Illumination. Holes in the ceilings and broken windows provide plenty of sunlight in the daytime. At night, only the light from the moon and stars illuminate the otherwise pitch-black location.

Flies and Stench. The remains of the manticores' myriad corpses litter the mill's old grounds, drawing thousands of black flies. When a creature that doesn't live in or around the ruins starts its turn on the mill's grounds, it must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is poisoned until the end of its next turn. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw is immune to the stench of the rotting carcasses for 24 hours.

Nocturnal Predators. Manticores are nocturnal creatures, preferring to leave the mill grounds to hunt at night. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check knows this fact and realizes that the party may face less opposition if they attack after dark.

Manticore Attack. While the manticores have all claimed their own sections of the mill's ruins, if they sense there is an attack, they emerge from their locations and attack as one. The Daytime and Nighttime Manticore Locations tables list the locations of the various manticores. Creatures marked with an asterisk are new creatures detailed in the appendix. Note that manticore cubs do not leave their dens. If the characters hope to sneak past the manticores, they will need to succeed on a DC 11 group Dexterity (Stealth) check every 10 minutes they walk around the property.

DAYTIME MANTICORE LOCATIONS

Location	3rd Level	5th Level	8th Level	11th Level
M02	1 manticore	1 manticore	2 manticores	1 manticore alpha* and 1 manticore
M07	1 manticore	1 manticore	1 manticore	1 manticore
M09	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*
M10	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha* and 1 manticore	1 manticore alpha* and 2 manticores	1 manticore alpha* and 3 manticores

NIGHTTIME MANTICORE LOCATIONS

Location	3rd Level	5th Level	8th Level	11th Level
M02	—	—	1 manticore	1 manticore
M07	1 manticore	1 manticore	1 manticore	1 manticore
M09	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*
M10	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha*	1 manticore alpha* and 1 manticore	1 manticore alpha* and 1 manticore

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the maps of the mill ruins on page 4.

M01 – Mill Grounds

The first time the characters arrive on the mill grounds, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the ruined mill grounds, the first thing that hits you is the smell. A sickly sweet odor hangs heavy in the air, and the buzzing of flies is a constant hum. The yard is strewn with animal carcasses, picked clean by scavengers and left to rot in the sun. Their bones lay scattered amidst the overgrown grass, and the ground is slick with feces. It's clear that the ruins have been claimed by something far more dangerous than time.

Two buildings stand in the clearing, the original mill, and the owners' old house, both now in ruins. The mill has mostly toppled over, exposing the western side to the elements. The wooden beams that once held it together now lay in a tangled heap, and the roof has long since collapsed, leaving the interior open to the sky. The old house isn't much better, its windows long gone, and the walls slowly being swallowed

by ivy and other creeping plants. The ruins stand as silent witnesses to a time long gone, forgotten by all but those who call it home.

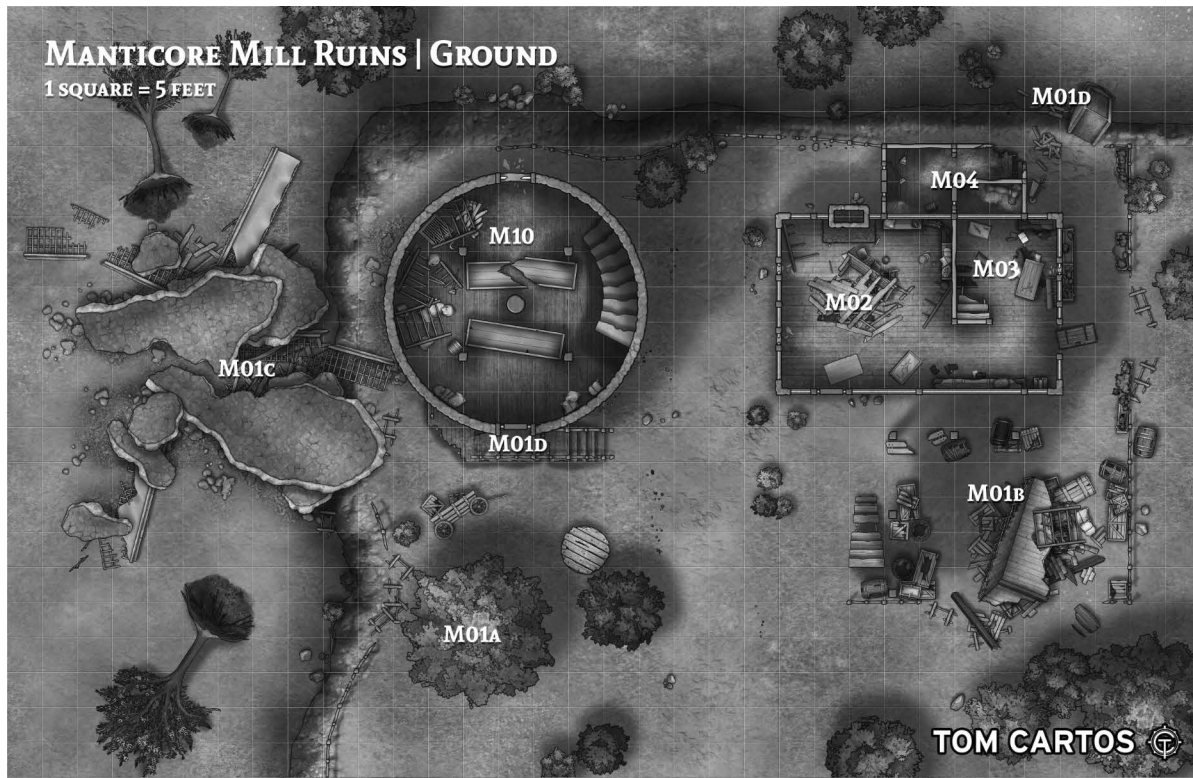
The ground underfoot is treacherous, littered with fallen stones and broken tiles, making it difficult to navigate. But as you take your first steps towards the ruins, a sense of danger sets in. The buzzing of flies grows louder, and you can hear the sound of something moving in the ruins. You know that you must tread carefully, for the creatures that call this place home are not to be trifled with.

The old road that leads up to the hill on the mill is overgrown and open to the sky, giving the manticores a clear view of the area. If the characters aren't careful when they enter this area, they will alert the manticores hiding in the ruins (see the "Manticore Attack" section in General Features for details). The best way to approach the grounds is via the mill's collapsed stone wall on the west side of the hill. A character who observes the area for 1 minute and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that this area is a blindspot for the manticores.

M01a – Treasure: Corpse Goodies. The red-leaved tree in front of the mill has a

MANTICORE MILL RUINS | GROUND

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



MANTICORE MILL RUINS | UPPER LEVELS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



humanoid corpse hanging upside down in its branches. A golden necklace set with a large red stone hangs from the dead man's neck. A character can pull it free with a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a failed check, the character still pulls the necklace free, but the body falls from the tree, and the sound alerts the manticores see "Manticore Attack" for details.

M01b – Obstacle: Rubbish. The storage building (see area M07) collapsed long ago, dropping its contents onto the ground below; treat this entire area as difficult terrain. Looters removed anything worth taking years ago, leaving only rotting food stuffs, rusted tools, and other useless items. The old trap door leading up to the storage building is still intact; however, the rope ladder that was there has since rotted away.

M01c – Obstacle: Collapsed Mill. The easiest way to get onto the hill without being spotted is via the shattered remains of the old mill. A creature that attempts to hide on this side of the building makes its Dexterity (Stealth) check with advantage. However, climbing up the ruined wall still requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. A failed check causes the climber to slide back to the ground, creating a commotion loud enough to draw the manticores' attention.

M01d – Topped Outhouse. The old outhouse is intact—it's just upside down. Other than buzzing insects and black mold, the outhouse is empty.

M01e – Obstacle: Stuck Door. The door leading into the old windmill (area M10) is stuck shut, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength check to shove open.

M02 – Manticore Den

With only two small, broken windows in the western wall and no holes in the ceiling, this area is dimly lit in the day and pitch black at night. Rubbish covering the floor makes it an area of difficult terrain.

Encounter: Manticores. A pile of broken furniture makes for a crude nest at the center of this room, upon which one or more manticores sleep during daylight hours. The number of manticores encountered here depends on the level of the adventure and the time of day, as shown in the Area M02 Encounter table. A fight that breaks out here will likely draw the attention of the ghouls in area M03. Creatures marked with an asterisk are detailed in the appendix.

M03 – Ghoul Den

Once serving as a lounge, study, and part of the house where the stairs connected to the upstairs, this area is now in ruins.

AREA M02 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Day Encounters	Night Encounters
3rd	1 manticore	—
5th	1 manticore and 2 manticore cubs*	2 manticore cubs*
8th	2 manticores and 2 manticore cubs*	1 manticore and 2 manticore cubs*
11th	1 manticore alpha,* 1 manticore, and 2 manticore cubs*	1 manticore and 2 manticore cubs*

AREA M03 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Day Encounters	Night Encounters
3rd	—	2 ghouls
5th	—	1 ghast and 2 ghouls
8th	—	3 ghasts and 2 ghouls
11th	—	1 vampire spawn and 3 ghasts

Encounter: Ghouls. Drawn by their love of rotting flesh and a similar love of chaos and evil, a pack of ghouls resides in this part of the house, acting as de facto guardians when the manticores are away. Unless drawn by the sounds occurring in area M02, the ghouls hide in the shadowy recesses until the characters enter this area. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure and the time of day as shown in the Area M03 Encounter table. Note that the ghouls are not present in the day, preferring to sleep in a nearby subterranean lair.

Obstacle: Stairs Are Out. The only set of stairs that connected the ground and upper floors are gone. However, there's enough of its structure remaining that a character can ascend to the upper floor with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check and vice versa.

M04 – Ruined Barn

The stables at the rear of the building weren't spared by time's wrath either.

Encounter: Cats. A **cat** and her three kittens hide here in the barn. Stealthy, they've managed to avoid the detection of the manticores and other creatures in the area. The cats are friendly and hungry.

M05 – Ruined Bedroom

The stairs from area M03 technically lead to area M06, but the lack of a wall between the old bedroom here exposes the stairway to this area. The rubbish covering the floors creates an area of difficult terrain.

Hazard: Bad Floors. Constant rain and snow fed by a hole in the ceiling directly above this room have severely weakened the floors. When a creature weighing 50 pounds or more enters this old room for the first time on a turn or starts its turn here, roll a d6. On a 1, the floor collapses. When this happens, all creatures in the room fall 10 feet down to the floor below, taking 3 (1d6) falling damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the debris, landing prone. If it's nighttime and the characters haven't yet encountered the ghouls in area M03, the ghouls take the same amount of damage from the collapsing floor. The sound draws any manticores into the area.

Sepia Snake Sigil

6th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (powdered amber worth 500 gp, a snake scale, and a pinch of mushroom spores)

Duration: Until dispelled or triggered

Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard

When you cast this spell, a small symbol appears in the text of one written work you touch, such as a book, scroll, or map. The text containing the symbol must be at least twenty-five words long or the spell fails. When a creature reads the text containing the symbol, a sepia snake springs into being and strikes at the reader.

The target must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the snake dissipates in a flash of brown light accompanied by a puff of dun-colored smoke and a loud popping noise. On a failed save, the target is engulfed by the snake, causing the target to be covered in a shimmering amber field of force and immobilized for 7 days or until you choose to end the effect early.

While immobilized in this way, the target is paralyzed and doesn't age, breathe, grow hungry, or sleep. It is preserved in a state of suspended animation, unaware of its surroundings. It can be damaged by outside forces (and perhaps even killed) since the field provides no protection against physical injury.

The hidden sigil can't be detected by normal observation, and detect magic only reveals that the entire text is magical. A dispel magic spell targeting the text removes the sigil, and a remove curse spell ends the immobilization effect on a target early.

M06 – Ruined Study

There was once a study here. All that remains is broken furniture and rotting books.

Treasure and Trap: Hidden Spellbook.

A character with proficiency in Arcana who investigates the area spots a spellbook amid the rubbish. However, the spellbook is protected with an old spell—*sepia snake sigil* (save DC 14). See the sidebar. The original caster is long gone and won't be able to end the spell early. The spellbook contains the contents of a **mage's** spellbook plus the aforementioned *sepia snake sigil* spell.

M07 – Collapsed Storage Building

The adjoining storage building that once stood at the south end of the house collapsed. Anything that was useful amid these items is long gone.

Encounter: Look Out. Day or night, a lone **manticore** stands guard in these ruins, keeping an eye on the southern-facing side of the mill's grounds. Recently, the manticore ambushed a wealthy half-elf **noble** and dragged the man back to the mill, thinking him dead. To the manticore's surprise, the noble is alive (with 1 hit point remaining). Now the manticore toys with the injured man, torturing him, lavishing in his cries to be set free. The noble carries a jangling coin purse filled with 10 pp per level of the adventure. If the characters save the noble, he thanks them by relinquishing half of the contents of his coin purse.

AREA M08 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounters
3rd	1 ion slime
5th	2 ion slimes
8th	2 ion slimes
11th	3 ion slimes

M08 – Ruined Bedroom

This master bedroom is completely destroyed. A hole in the ceiling offers plenty of light in the day.

Encounter: Ion Slimes. When lightning strikes ruined this portion of the home, it inadvertently created **ion slimes** (see the appendix). These creatures lurk within the rubbish, moving so sluggishly they almost look like puddles of black water. The manticores know to ignore them. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area M08 Encounters table.

M09 – Ruined Bedroom

Zebrarg, the ousted patriarch of the manticore clan, uses this dark, abandoned room as his lair.

Encounter: Zebrarg. The manticore **alpha** Zebrarg loathes Lenyin and his mates (see area M10) and wants to see them destroyed. Before a battle begins, Zebrarg will offer the characters a deal—they can have the contents of Lenyin’s hoard as long as they promise to kill Lenyin. Zebrarg won’t fight the characters unless they attack him.

M10 – Windmill Ground Floor

The door leading into the old windmill is stuck shut, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength check to shove it open. Trying to break open the door gives Lenyin and any other creatures here enough time to sneak out the roof and attack the party from behind.

Two huge tables that once served as a workstation for the mill lie in the center of the room. The rest of the furniture and rotting sacks of grain are spread out around the area. This entire room reeks of rotten meat and animal feces.

Encounter: Lenyin and His Mates. Lenyin, leader of the manticore pride, uses this area as his personal lair and mating grounds. Having recently ousted Zebrarg (see area 9) as leader of the pride, Lenyin spends

AREA M10 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Day Encounters	Night Encounters
3rd	Lenyin (manticore alpha*)	Lenyin (manticore alpha*)
5th	Lenyin (manticore alpha*) and 1 manticore	Lenyin (manticore alpha*)
8th	Lenyin (manticore alpha*) and 2 manticores	Lenyin (manticore alpha*) and 1 manticore
11th	Lenyin (manticore alpha*) and 3 manticores	Lenyin (manticore alpha*) and 1 manticore

his days lazing about, letting his mates do all the work for him. If a fight breaks out here, Lenyin is smart enough to fly out of the rear window or return to the top floor and escape through the roof before engaging in cramped quarters. If he can't do that, he'll attempt to bargain with his treasure hoard before engaging the party. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure and the time of day, as shown in the Area M10 Encounter table.

Treasure: Lenyin's Treasure. Lenyin uses a small chest to hold his valuables. The nature of this stash depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area M10 Treasure table.

M11 – Windmill Upper Floor

The roof and most of the western wall are completely gone. The old gears and furniture that once stood here are also destroyed, creating an area of difficult terrain everywhere.

Encounter: Manticore Cubs. Lenyin's (see area 10) six children, four of which are **manticore cubs**, live in this part of the windmill. The cubs won't take chances with the characters and will flee to the lower level to fetch Lenyin and their mothers.

AREA M10 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
3rd	150 gp, eight gems worth 10 gp each, and two pieces of jewelry worth 25 gp each
5th	150 pp, eight gems worth 50 gp each, and two pieces of jewelry worth 100 gp each
8th	250 pp, twelve gems worth 100 gp each, and four pieces of jewelry worth 250 gp each
11th	600 pp, twelve gems worth 500 gp each, and four pieces of jewelry worth 1,000 gp each

Aftermath

If the characters defeat the manticores, the mill stands empty for a few months before another terrible creature makes the mill its home. If the characters run away from the mill or fail to defeat all the manticores, the remaining members of the pride recognize that the mill may not be the safe home they once thought it was. The manticores grab their possessions and flee to another lair, ideally one where adventurers are a little less common and victims are easier to catch. Ω

Manticore Alpha

Large Monstrosity, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +4, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +3

Special Traits

Multi-target Adept. When the manticore makes a ranged attack against a creature that is more than 5 feet away from it, it doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll as a result of being within 5 feet of a hostile creature.

Tail Spike Regrowth. The manticore has fifty tail spikes. Used spikes regrow when the manticore finishes a long rest.

Actions

Multiattack. The manticore makes five attacks: one with its Bite, two with its Claws, and two with its Tail Spikes. Alternatively, it makes five attacks with its Tail Spikes.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Tail Spike. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Tackle. Immediately after hitting a creature with both its Claw attacks as part of its Multiattack, the manticore attempts to pounce on the target. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and grappled by the manticore (escape DC 15).

Manticore Cub

Medium Monstrosity, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands Common but can't speak it

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Actions

Multiattack. The manticore makes two attacks: one with its Bite and one with its Claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.