

# *Keeping It In The Family*

*A One-shot Adventure for 3rd-5th level characters*

***Introduction: There has been a string of murders in the city. Five people have been murdered and drained of their blood. The guard suspect a supernatural interloper is responsible and call upon the experts. When they were found to be unavailable, they called on your players to deal with the problem.***



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## Synopsis

There is a string of murders in town. First an elderly couple, then a middle aged husband and pregnant wife, and finally a young man had their throats opened, as if to empty their blood. This is the work of a cambion named **Mallon**, preparing a ritual to summon their demonic parent, the incubus **Utrazael**, into this world and ask to join him in the Abyss. Mallon needs the blood of three couples: one married and barren, one married and fertile, and one unmarried and fertile. As they find their victims from their client list, they become more and more adept at using their nascent powers to subdue and take what they need. When the players arrive the cambion is missing the blood of a young, unwed, woman to complete the ritual, but they have attracted to much attention as it is and must exercise caution.

### Encounter 1: Investigate

The PCs are brought to the latest crime scene, where they have to determine who did this. Describe the scene or read this to your players:

The room is bare and cold. There's a bed, a stove, a chair, and a body splayed on the floor. The body is of a young man, dark hair, rough hands. The throat is slit from end to end and a cursory glance at the rope tied around the victim's feet suggest that it was found hanging from the rafters. The guards stay well away from the door. One of them reeks of bile and leftover breakfast and the other is white as a sheet. There is no blood spatter on the walls, just a small pool underneath the corpse. The sergeant comes up to you and says

"His name is Sheawn Martel, a builder up at the new temple at the Spice Gate. Neighbours say he was quiet, saving up for his wedding." She looks back towards the corpse. "We found him all strung up like a pig. I've sent a couple of the lads to fetch his girl... thinking you might want to talk to her... we didn't want her to see this." She turns back to you. "So, what do you make of it?"

While waiting for Agatha, Sheawn's fiancée, to arrive, the players can investigate the room. The following results are suggestions.

### Skill Check results (XP: 450 if completed)

Skills recommended: Investigation (DC 15), Perception (DC 12), Survival/Medicine (DC 10), Arcana/Religion (DC 13)

Results:

Investigation: There seems to be little blood spatter at the scene of the crime, almost as if it were collected carefully. Unless the perpetrator is a butcher. They would need a lot of practice.

Perception: There is a receipt in the victim's hand from *Mallon's Apothecary*, located elsewhere in the city.

Survival: The cuts on the sternum seem to have been widened by some apparatus, similar to how a butcher would drain blood for sausages, but done with improvised tools. Whoever did this was not a butcher, or someone used to dressing animals.

Arcana/Religion: The way the blood has been harvested reminds the player of sacrificed animals during arcane or religious rituals.

When they leave the scene, the guards bring the victim's fiancée Agatha, a barmaid at the Goat and Satyr inn (if the players do not already have rooms, she can arrange for a discount). If asked, she says that her late fiancé was suffering from headaches and talked about going to an apothecary. Near the Spice Market. However, Mallon is nearby, disguised as a guard.

If a paladin uses Divine Sense, the cambion breaks away and rushes to the Apothecary (Move to Encounter 2b)

If they learn that the players wish to inspect the apothecary, they sneak away to prepare the traps and dispatch the Thugs (Move to Encounter 2a).

If neither of those things, simply continue with the investigation.

Should the players wish to interrogate the families of the other victims, roleplay as needed, but the results should all point to the apothecary in one way or another. Mallon has been sloppy in choosing their victims and was able so far to divert the guards' attention whenever they investigated further.

### Encounter 2a: Ambush

As the Party heads towards Mallon's Apothecary, a group of 5 Thugs and 1 Mastiff lies in ambush down an alleyway. They are well versed in these types of tactics and it takes a DC 15 Perception check to spot them. If none of the PCs spot the threat, add +2 to the Thugs initiative roll.

If the party are victorious, and they wish to interrogate a prisoner, they learn that the thugs were paid by a hooded figure to harass the players if they got too close to Mal's Apothecary.

### ***Encounter 2b: Pursuit***

If the party wants to do anything before the challenge that might help them for the rest of the adventure, let them do it. As the Party goes to bed, Mal sneaks into the inn and abducts Agatha to bring her back to their Lair. Agatha wakes and her screams alert the party, along with everyone else.

*If the party revealed Mal's true nature at the end of the previous encounter, this scene occurs in daylight.*

If the players place a guard over Agatha, the Cambion uses Alter Self to pose as a member of the staff and carry off their quarry, thereby surprising the guard. If the players can succeed on a wisdom (Insight DC 17) check they notice something is amiss and are not surprised when Mallon acts. If a fight should break out, Mallon will try to carry Agatha off but will leave her to save their skin if brought below half their HP. Either way, unless Mallon is killed outright, the players move on to the skill challenge.

#### **Pursuit Challenge (XP: 300-900 according to success rate)**

Difficulty rating: Medium—5 successes before 3 failures.

Skills recommended: Acrobatics (DC 13), Athletics (DC 15), Perception (DC 13), Insight (DC 16), Survival (DC 13).

There are degrees of failure and success. Mal has a number of traps in their lair that need to be set once they arrive. The number of successes achieved before failure determines the numbers of traps armed on their arrival to the Apothecary.

Success: Traps in Encounter 4 are all disarmed (900 XP)

Failure:

0-1 Successes before failure: all traps are armed (300 XP)

2-3 Successes before failure: 2 traps are armed (500 XP)

4 Successes before failure: 1 trap is armed (700 XP)

### ***Encounter 3: The Apothecary shop (Puzzle)***

Upon entering the Apothecary there is a counter to the right, where the main part of the shop is, and a door to the left, leading to the greenhouse and Mal's room. Behind the counter is an apothecary's cabinet (6x6

drawers) containing various ingredients and materials for potions and salves. On a drawer there is a red dot on the corner of the label. It is visibly different from the different symbols on the drawers.

### ***Speaking to Mallon (Follow-up from Encounter 2a)***

If the players fought the Thugs (Encounter 2a) and interrogated one of them, they know someone wants to keep them from the apothecary. In truth **Mallon** paid the Thugs to delay the players so they can hide any trace of their involvement. When the players arrive at the shop, they see a mousy woman with brown hair and thick glasses reaching up on a stool to open a drawer high on her cabinet. If asked about the receipt found on the victim **Mallon**

#### ***Secret Door***

A successful Perception check (DC 20) a character can spot the a join in the wood behind the cabinet that seems to indicate a secret door. A successful Athletics check (DC 12) can force the door open, but will alert the cambion below.

Under the counter, among various scales, measures, pestles and mortars, is a ledger bound with a leather cord. Inside the ledger an intelligence check reveals the following:

#### **Intelligence Check Results:**

1-10: This is just a bunch of numbers and words, half of which you don't recognize. Maybe it's a foreign language.

11-12: You recognise this as a standard ledger for the shop's transactions, you don't recognize some of the ingredients, but you now know their value and can sell them for a total of 500 gp to a herbalist, healer, or even another apothecary.

13-15: You realize that the cabinet is a cipher, and the rows and columns correspond to a grid.

No matter the result of their check, the PCs find an inscription

If one of the players want to loot the cabinet, they have a 10% of accidentally solving the puzzle (This is narratively probable and not statistically so). They also can make a herbalism kit if they are proficient in it, there is also material for a Poultice of Soothing, a natural healing item that allows you to add +2 in addition to your constitution modifier when rolling hit dice to heal.

### ***Exploring the Shop***

Behind the door to the left of the counter is Mallon's Room, with a small fireplace on the right hand side, a bed,

a table, and a chair on the other. Under the bed there is a loose board, spotted on a successful Perception check (DC 10). Beneath it is a small folio of notes bound by hand and written messily, as if scribbled in secret. It details the Cambion's discovery of their fiendish heritage and quest to contact Utrazael. It also details the needs of a ritual: the blood of six individuals, Two married and barren, Two married and fertile, and Two unmarried and fertile.

At the other end of the room is another door, leading to the greenhouse. Inside there is an unlit stove that provides heat in the winter, a barrel filled with rain water, and four crates containing exotic plants and herbs. The players with proficiency in Nature and Medicine can identify most of them. These are extremely rare, and can fetch upwards of 500 gp each from the right buyer. They are quite fragile and unsuited to the usual climate, so transporting them will be an issue, though not impossible.

### The Puzzle

#### Puzzle: The Apothecary Cipher

Solution: This is the Grid for the cabinet. The players need to pull open the following drawers: A4, D3, E1, then pull on the F6 drawer, which has two asterisks.

A1	A2	A3	A4*	A5	A6
B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
D1	D2	D3*	D4	D5	D6
E1*	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6**

As the Puzzle is solved or the door forced open, the players see a descending staircase that veers to the left and a pale glow emanating from further below.

### Encounter 4: Descent (Traps)

If the players gained 5 successes in the pursuit skill challenge (Encounter 2b) then you can skip this encounter entirely and move to Encounter 5

Depending on the success rate of the players if they went through encounter 2b, one or more of the traps will have been set, as Mal does not want to be disturbed in the

final phases of the ritual. Which trap is or is not set is up to the DM. The traps are as follows:

#### 1st Trap: Grease Trap

Location: First steps of the staircase

Effect: The first steps of the staircase are covered in oil, making them slippery. If a player steps on the oil, they must succeed on a Dexterity Saving Throw (DC 13) or fall prone and falling down the stairs, taking 1d10 damage along the way.

#### 2nd Trap : Log Trap

Location :Between the 1st and 2nd staircase.

Trigger: Tripwire (DC 15 Perception)

Effect : The player must succeed on a Dexterity Saving Throw (DC 14) or be knocked prone, taking 2d10 damage and be restrained by the log. The log can be lifted up with a Strength/Athletics Check (DC 15)

#### 3rd Trap: Crossbow

Location: Bottom of the second staircase.

Trigger: Tripwire (DC 15 Perception)

Effect: A crossbow is trained at the end of the stairs and will fire upon the player (+5 to hit) and deal 1d6 piercing damage plus an additional 1d6 poison damage.

If the players failed their skill challenge in Encounter 2b then give **200 XP** for each trap they successfully disarm.

### Encounter 5: Dear Ol' Dad (Combat Encounter)

After the party descends the steps into what is ostensibly the cellar of the shop, they find a crudely dug passageway in a side wall that leads to a small chamber roughly shaped like a pentagon. It is pitch black in the chamber and the sounds of chanting can be heard in Abyssal. To complete the ritual, Mallon, or Melloreon as they are truly known, must collect the blood from their sixth and last victim. The **cambion** will not interrupt the ritual unless the players interfere. If the party stands by, the **Incubus** Utrazael is summoned and both he and his offspring fight the party, which almost certainly will kill them if they choose to stand and fight. If Melloreon is killed before the ritual is completed then Utrazael briefly appears as an image and vows revenge on the party. If Utrazael is summoned and he or Melloreon is brought below half of their hp, then they both cast Plane Shift on themselves to head back to the Abyss (Melloreon is not fully aware of their abilities before this).

### Conclusion

Regardless of the outcome, if any one of the party survives they receive 1500 gp from the city authorities as

a reward and a given a grant of land either in the city or in the neighbouring countryside to establish themselves, if they so choose. Any magical items granted are up to the DM's preference.

## Bestiary

### Thug

*Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment*

**Armour Class** 11 (leather armour)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8+10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (0)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	10 (0)	11 (0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Pack Tactics.** The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The thug makes two melee attacks.

**Mace.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

### Mastiff

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armour Class** 12

**Hit Points** 5 (1d8+1)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

#### Actions

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

### Mallon/Mellorean (Cambion)

*Medium Fiend, NE*

**Armour Class** 14 (unarmoured)

**Hp** 82 (11d8+33)

**Speed** 30ft, fly 60ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws:** Str +7, Con +6, Int +5, Cha +6

**Skills:** Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +4, Stealth +7

**Damage Resistances:** cold, fire, lightning, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft.

**Languages:** Abyssal, Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Fiendish Blessing.** The AC of the cambion includes its Charisma bonus.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The cambion's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The cambion can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**3/day each:** *alter self, command, detect magic*

**1/day:** *plane shift* (self only) (Only after Utrazael is summoned)

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The cambion makes two melee attacks or uses its Fire Ray twice.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage on melee attacks.

**Fire Ray.** Ranged Spell Attack: +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage.

**Fiendish Charm.** One humanoid the cambion can see within 30 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the cambion's spoken commands. If the target suffers any harm from the cambion or another creature or receives a suicidal command from the cambion, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cambion's Fiendish Charm for the next 24 hours.

### Utrazael (Incubus)

*Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil*

**Armour Class** 15 (natural armour)

**Hit Points:** 66 (12d8+12)

**Speed:** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

**Skills** Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5,

Persuasion +9, Stealth +7

**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Telepathic Bond.** The fiend ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

**Shapechanger.** The fiend can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

### *Actions*

**Thunderous Stomp (Recharge 6).** The storm giant stomps the ground, triggering a thunderclap. All other creatures within 15 feet of the giant must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) thunder damage and be deafened until the start of the giant's next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't deafened. The thunderclap can be heard out to a range of 1,200 feet.

**Claw (Fiend Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Charm.** One humanoid the fiend can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the fiend's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to this fiend's Charm for the next 24 hours.

The fiend can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

**Draining Kiss.** The fiend kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point

maximum to 0.

**Etherealness.** The fiend magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.