

The Salt Marsh Beast

(*Chris and Stella Meacham*)

A peasant by the name of Grom is missing. His wife, Adelen, approaches the party to assist in the search for her husband, as his errands should have been completed by now. A good character or a Knight may be inclined to help, if not, a Sergeant of the Guards will later approach the party discreetly. They cannot be seen, publicly, to be overly concerned with finding this peasant, but there is a reward on offer. The man will seem uncomfortable being questioned further, but will put down a gold crown and say there is more to come if Grom is found alive.

A few peasants and the local priest are looking around the village, checking the tavern and Grom's house. Adelen says her husband did a number of small jobs and some fetching, and she remembers the Butcher had a job for him earlier.

The Butcher, Salford, a broad man with a no-nonsense attitude, tells you that he paid Grom a few coppers to pick up a big bag of salt for him which he hasn't delivered. He will admit Grom is well enough liked and is normally trustworthy. Salford will tell you the salt work is roughly 45 minutes' walk to the East/West (as appropriate) and, normally, there are a few of "The Regiment" patrolling about there.

The peasants tell you that there are "fings wot come out o' the marsh" and Grom has probably been "etten", the man is shushed by his companions and he goes off grumbling. If you catch up with him, he can tell you about "'orrible, twisted man fings wot eat people". He has seen it with his own eyes, allegedly. The Soldiers put some down a few years ago but it's not talked about much.

A different peasant will inform the party that Grom's probably been "done in" by her Ladyship, if you catch my meaning, Grom's mother was a pretty girl who'd worked and lived in the Manor, till she was suddenly removed, and married shortly after to a fellow peasant.

The Priest can tell you that, in very dry summers, old stone ruins are exposed out there in the Marsh; no-one goes to the place as it's haunted, obviously!

The Soldiers you meet are tired and bored. They haven't seen anything unusual but will tell you that if he went out on his own he is daft. Grom wouldn't be the first to disappear in the Marsh, nor like to be the last. An eel catcher vanished a couple months ago.

The salt works are rustic, simple, and also deserted at this time. With some searching around/tracking or good luck the party can pick up some of Grom's movements, a few footprints, where he relieved himself in a bush... the dropped sack of salt, and soon... a bloody drag mark in the soft ground.

If the party chooses to follow this trail out into the distance...

The trail leads out into the salty murky waters of the marsh, where the party can spy a large huddled shape. If they approach, they see a hideous beast, crouched over the half-submerged, bloody mess that was once a man. It tears the body's chest apart and rips the heart from the corpse. Again, it plunges its claws into the body, and this time pulls out ropes of steaming entrails.

This is a hideous and rank-smelling abomination. The grey and peeling flesh of its thickly muscled legs are stitched to a torso that doesn't seem to match at all, two mismatched, beastly arms end in hideous claws.

This is a ghastly parody of life, clearly created by some dark and twisted Necromancer. Its head has a porcine look with a snout and a drooling jaw filled with razor-sharp fangs. This is a Flesh Golem, a necromantic creation, and the monster that haunts the Salt Marsh, and the party must fight it.

The news of Grom's death will be met with sadness from some, and quiet anger from The Lord of the Manor. The Lord may ask the party to delve further into the marsh to root out the evil that dwells there and to find out if this was a targeted attack. This can lead to the Necromancer's Lair¹⁾.

FLESH GOLEM (Patchwork Man)		RE 7	
ATTACK	24	Claws (d8, 4)	
DEFENCE	10	Hide (AF 3)	
MAGICAL ATTACK	N/A	Magic Points	None
MAGICAL DEFENCE	6	Health Points	25
EVASION	4	Movement	5m
STEALTH	8	PERCEPTION	8 (Normal)

Filth Burst - the beast spews forth a gush of noxious sludge composed of foul acids and the remnants of its last meals. Single Target: range 5m, SPEED 12 vs EV, damage (d8 +5 minus AF)

Flesh golems are constructed using the body parts of once-living creatures. These have to be collected from different corpses. The bodies used are often of humanoids or monstrous humanoids, but any physical living creature's parts are usable. Latently magical or fey parts are especially sought after. Spells, unguents, stitches, staples or bindings are required to keep the flesh bound together during creation.

When creating a Patchwork Man, there is a chance (GM's discretion) it will hate or turn on its maker

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¹⁾

A visit to the Necromancer's Lair is coming

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