

Adventure Locales

The Silent Manse

By Robert Wiese and Skip Williams



Ruined and abandoned houses abound in cities in all campaigns, so you can place this one anywhere. If you need a map for the house, you can use the one from the [Haunted House](#) Map-A-Week feature. This adventure locale is suitable for four 3rd-level characters.

Mansions of the rich and powerful fill the wealthy neighborhoods of cities across Faerûn, from Waterdeep to Ravens Bluff to Skuld. Large or small, they still seem quite impressive to the lowly commoners who pass them. As cities change, the desirable neighborhoods change, too, and some of these mansions end up in less desirable parts of the city as the wealthy move to a new area.

This was the fate of one moderately sized house in the city. When built, it stood in the "right" neighborhood. The neighborhood changed around it, and it now broods in a location of middle-class neighbors. Abandoned now for several years, it has the look almost of a haunted house. Children dare each other to enter the grounds, touch the door, steal something from the grounds, or even spend the night inside the house. No one actually has spent the night in the house, since the door remains locked. Strange lights flicker near the windows from time to time, though no one has found the source. The house even served as the focus of rumors that claimed that undead wandered within its walls and waited to attack the city's populace. Clerics of Lathander investigated the house and found no trace of any undead, but the stories did not die down for a number of months. Among the street people, the stories continue to linger.

The mansion was once the home of a powerful family of traders and politicians. People came and went constantly, and sometimes the visitors and inhabitants decided great affairs of state in the living room, or more usually in the salon or game room. Lavish decorations made the house look opulent internally, and the family enjoyed showing off their power and wealth as much as they enjoyed wielding it. However, their influence and power began to decline when people opposed to their point of view began to undermine their relationships with the rulers. At about the same time, the wealthy had begun constructing even more lavish homes in another quarter of the city to escape what they called the "flood of the middle class," which took the form of rising merchants moving into the district. The ambitions of the owners never faded, but they found it increasingly difficult to wield power. Eventually, or so the stories go, the family packed up and moved elsewhere. No one knows where elsewhere is, but a great many people saw wagons come and remove all the possessions from the house, and they saw the adults of the family enter the family carriage and depart town toward the east. Word was that the children had already been sent away. Everyone expected the family to return, since they did not sell the house, but they never did. And the house sits empty, waiting. Well, almost empty.

A 10-foot-tall stone wall divides the property from the street. Vines have taken root between the rocks, and they cover a small ridge of sharp glass pieces that runs the length of the wall and is designed to keep out thieves.

Sharp Glass Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset but always active until destroyed; Atk +15 melee (1d4+1, glass shard); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 16.

From the closed and rusted gate, one can see gardens that once were well-groomed but now appear to be wilderness tracts, with the plants trying to choke each other out in a fierce competition for scant nourishment. A large expanse of lawn to the right of the gate is knee-deep in grass and weeds. A gravel-and-dirt carriageway meanders from the gate through the gardens and to the house, and then around back to the right where the roof of a carriage house pops into sight. Weeds poke through the stones of the carriageway in random patches, and small whirlwinds play about the carriage drive almost all the time.

Gate: 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 25, open lock DC 24.

The two-story house has seen better days. Weather has taken its toll on the wood and the paint, and some of the ornately decorated pieces have been pried off by opportunistic looters and now adorn other dwellings. The doors are intact and locked against the outside world. Several of the glass windows are broken, but someone has covered them over on the inside with boards, to keep the rain out. The intact windows have boards on them as

well, giving the appearance that the house has its eyes closed. In fact, from the outside it appears no inhabitants lurk within at all, though there are chinks in the boards and between them that allows light through when light is present.

Good Wooden Door: 1 1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18, open lock DC 30.

The carriage house has fared better over time. It was built to match the house architecturally, and most of its decorative pieces remain. Thus, it offers a glimpse of what the house might have looked like years ago. The paint has peeled and cracked, and the wood looks weathered. The single door is barred from the outside. Its interior contains a place to store carriages, and a small stable juts out from the back of the carriage house. The stable has a second door leading to a grassy (overgrown) field behind it. The stable and carriage house are devoid of contents; only musty hay and a broken table remain.

The interior of the house is stark and empty. All of the possessions that once had places of esteem here, and which once delighted or awed the nobility of the city, left with the former owners. No curtains frame the large windows and keep out drafts, and no remnants soften the geometry of the rooms. Only emptiness greets anyone who enters; room after dark-paneled room stands neglected. (Both the paneling and any wallpaper remain in reasonably good condition, though, because little light gets in.) Quiet pervades the house most of the time -- the kind of quiet that makes one feel that one is being watched.

When workmen moved furniture out of the house, they damaged the stairs that lead to the second floor. Sadly, termites have also been busy on the wooden stairs. Now they are somewhat weak, and if more than 200 pounds rests on the stairs, they collapse.

Collapsing Stair Trap: CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Reflex save DC 20 avoids; 10 ft. fall (1d6, fall); Search DC 25; Disable 21.

Broken Boards: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Attack +10 melee (1d2 boards, 1d6 each); Search DC 21; Disable -- (can be blocked).

Should one wander the halls of this quiet and almost moody house, one might run into one or both of its humanoid inhabitants. The family knew nothing about the existence of these creatures in their house, though doubtless some of the servants knew of the creatures. They are fey creatures: a brownie and a boggart. This brownie moved into the house when few houses stood around it, and it stayed for so long that the city grew up around the house. Now it fears leaving and wanders the lonely house repairing things that are broken and spending time with the boggart. The boggart came to the house nearly twenty years ago with some guests, and it stayed when it discovered the brownie. It has a mean temper and breaks things or creates messes much of the time. This keeps the brownie busy, and the two actually get along pretty well. They are both wary of strangers, and they hid when the priests came checking the house for undead.

Brownie

Tiny Fey

Hit Dice: 1/2 d6+2 (3 hp)

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 17 (+2 size, +5 Dex), touch 17, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-11

Attack: Masterwork short sword +0 melee (1d3-3/19-20) or sling +7 ranged (1d2-3)

Full Attack: Masterwork short sword +0 melee (1d3-3/19-20) or sling +7 ranged (1d3-3)

Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Calm animal, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 30 ft., evasion, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +8 (+4 magical beasts)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 5, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13

Skills: Balance+9, Climb +7, Craft (any one) +10, Diplomacy+4, Escape Artist +10, Handle Animal +3, Hide +17, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Tumble +8

Feats: Agile, Dodge[B]

Environment: Temperate and warm forests and plains

Organization: Solitary, pair, band (3-6), or company (7-16)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: 50% coins, 50% goods, standard items, plus masterwork short sword and masterwork artisan's tools

Alignment: Usually lawful good

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

The creature resembles a very small elf, shorter than a halfling and very slim, with brown hair. It wears brightly colored garments and it carries a belt full of artisan's tools.

Brownies are benign and exceedingly nimble creatures that may be related very distantly to halflings. Peaceful and friendly, brownies live in pastoral regions, foraging and gleaning their food.

A brownie stands no taller than 2 feet and weighs about 6 pounds. Their garments are usually made of wool or linen and dyed bright colors and decorated with elaborate embroidery or trimmed with silver or gold studs and buttons.

Brownies speak Common, Halfling, and Sylvan, plus one other language (usually Elven or Gnome).

Combat

Brownies prefer not to engage in combat, and only do so in response to attacks or clear threats of violence. Angry brownies rarely meet their foes in hand-to-hand combat. Instead, they retreat to a safe distance. They rely on their Tumble skill or ability to hide while being observed to avoid attacks of opportunity. Once safely out of reach, brownies use their spell-like abilities to harass and drive away enemies.

Calm Animal (Su): As a free action, a brownie can make an animal calm and docile. The power is similar to a *calm animals* spell as a 7th-level caster, except that it works on a single animal within 30 feet. An animal that has been affected or has made a successful saving throw against this power cannot be affected again for one day. The save DC against this power is 15. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +3 racial adjustment.

Spell-Like Abilities: A brownie can use any of the following, each once a day as a 7th-level caster: *confusion* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *daylight*, *dimension door*, *protection from evil*, *ventriloquism* (DC 12).

Evasion (Ex): If a brownie is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the brownie takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): In areas of dim light, tall grass, or heavy undergrowth, a brownie can make itself practically invisible. Under these conditions, a brownie can use its Hide skill even while being observed and without having anything to actually hide behind.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A brownie retains its Dexterity bonus to AC even if caught flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe. However, the brownie still loses its Dexterity bonus to AC if paralyzed or otherwise immobile.

Wild Empathy (Ex): A brownie can improve the attitude of an animal as a 7th-level character.

Skills: Brownies have a knack for working with their hands, and they gain a +2 racial bonus on all Craft checks. Most brownies also carry masterwork artisan's tools, and they gain a +2 bonus on checks with the Craft skill for which the tools are made (included in the numbers given above). Brownies have keen senses and receive a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Brownies use their Dexterity scores for Climb checks.

Brownie Society

Brownies live in rural areas, making their homes in small burrows, hollow trees, or abandoned buildings. They often live close to or on farms, since they are fascinated by farm life.

Brownies live by harvesting wild fruits and gleaning grain from farmers' fields. Brownies are basically vegetarians who live very comfortably on the gleanings of agricultural life. They make efficient use of leftovers that are too small for humans to notice. When brownies glean from fields, they usually do so after harvest, gathering grains and fruits, which might otherwise be wasted. When they can harvest a few morsels earlier, they often do so if they can without spoiling the harvest.

Being honest to the core, brownies always perform some service in exchange for what they take. For example, a brownie might milk a farmer's cows and take only a small portion for itself.

Some brownies go so far as to become house brownies. They observe the families in a given area, and if one meets their high moral standards, these brownies secretly enter the household. At night, while the residents are asleep, they perform a variety of helpful tasks: spinning, baking bread, repairing farm implements, keeping foxes out of the hen house, mending clothes, and performing other household tasks. If a thief creeps silently into the house, they make enough noise to awaken the residents. Watchdogs and domestic animals usually consider brownies friendly and almost never attack or even bark at them (a result, no doubt, of their ability to calm or influence animals).

All brownies ask in exchange for their labor is a little milk, some bread, and an occasional bit of fruit. Etiquette demands that no notice be taken of them. If the residents boast about the presence of a brownie, the brownie vanishes.

Brownies are not greedy, but they often have small hoards of treasure, which they have taken from evil monsters or received as gifts from humans. A brownie sometimes leaves his treasure in a location where a good person in need is bound to find it.

Brownies quickly note strangers that come to the area where they dwell. They keep careful watch on the newcomers until their motives are established. If the brownies decide that a stranger is harmless, he is left in peace. If not, the brownies unite and drive the intruder out.

Brownies know every nook and cranny of the areas where they live, and thus make excellent guides, if they can be persuaded to serve.

Brownies as Characters

Brownie characters possess the following racial traits.

-- -6 Strength, +10 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma

--Tiny size: A brownie has a +2 bonus to Armor class and attack rolls and a +8 bonus on Hide checks. A brownie uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are half of those of a Medium character.

--A brownie's base land speed is 30 feet.

--Darkvision out to 30 feet.

--Low-light vision.

--Calm Animal: As a free action, a brownie can calm an animal. The power is similar to a *calm animals* spell, except that it works on a single animal within 30 feet. An animal that has been affected or has made a successful saving throw against this power cannot be affected again for one day. The caster level for this power is 7 + the brownie's character level. The save DC against this power is 14 + the brownie's Charisma modifier. This is a supernatural ability.

--Spell-Like Abilities: A brownie can use the any of the following, each once a day: *confusion*, *dancing lights*, *daylight*, *dimension door*, *protection from evil*, *ventriloquism*. Saving throws are 10 + spell level + the brownie's Charisma modifier. The brownie's caster level is 7 + the brownie's character level.

-- Evasion (Ex): If a brownie is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the brownie takes no damage with a successful saving throw. If the brownie gains a class level that gives it the evasion class feature, the brownie gains improved evasion instead.

-- Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): In areas of dim light, tall grass, or heavy undergrowth a brownie can use the Hide skill even while being observed and without having anything to actually hide behind. This ability does not stack with the hide in plain sight class feature.

-- Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A brownie retains its Dexterity bonus to AC even if caught flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe. However, the brownie still loses its Dexterity bonus to AC if paralyzed or otherwise immobile. If the brownie gains a class level that gives it the uncanny dodge class feature, the brownie gains improved uncanny dodge instead.

-- Wild Empathy (Ex): A brownie can improve the attitude of an animal as a druid does. The brownie's bonus on wild empathy checks is 7 + the brownie's Charisma modifier. If the brownie gains levels in a class that has the wild empathy class feature, the brownie's bonus on wild empathy checks is 7 + the relevant class level + the brownie's Charisma modifier.

-- +2 racial bonus on Craft checks.

-- Automatic Languages: Common, Halfling, and Sylvan.

-- Bonus Languages: Draconic, Elven, Giant, Goblin, and Gnome.

-- Favored Class: Expert.

-- Level Adjustment +4.

Boggart

Small Fey (Shapechanger)

Hit Dice: 6d6+12 (33 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 22 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 22, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/-2

Attack: Shock +11 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

Full Attack: Shock +11 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Confusion, electrical bolt

Special Qualities: Deflection, invisibility, immune to electricity, low-light vision, magic immunity, tongues, unstable form

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +8

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 25, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills: Balance+20, Climb +8, Escape Artist +18, Hide +20, Jump +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +16, Tumble +20

Feats: Acrobatic, Agile, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Temperate forests and marsh

Organization: Solitary, pair, or band (3-6)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: 1/10 coins, 50% goods, 50% items

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Small)

Level Adjustment: --

The creature resembles a disheveled and bare-chested gnome. It wears a pair of dirty leather breeches and goes barefoot. It has wildly disarrayed fair hair, dusky skin, and large eyes.

Many scholars contend that the boggart is an immature form of the will-o'-wisp, and that seems so. The boggart shares many of the will-o'-wisp's most dreaded abilities and also can take a will-o'-wisp form briefly. Elf sages, however, contend that the boggart is a baleful fey creature that only superficially resembles the will-o'-wisp. Unlike a will-o'-wisp, a boggart has no ability to feed on emotions and wreaks havoc with other creatures for the sheer pleasure of doing so.

In its natural form, a boggart is about 2-1/2 feet tall and weighs about 15 pounds. Touching the boggart's skin triggers a harmless electrical discharge, much like a static shock. In its will-o'-wisp's form, a boggart's body is a globe of electrified gas about 1 foot across and weighing about a pound. The globe glows and sheds as much light as a hooded lantern (slightly brighter than a will-o'-wisp).

Boggarts speak Common and Sylvan, though they have a magical ability that allows them to converse haltingly with any creature that has a language.

Combat

Boggarts love to lure unsuspecting creatures to their doom. They usually employ their shape-shifting abilities to put victims off their guard before attacking. When possible, they use their confusion ability for the initial assault, then use their electrical shock attacks. If a foe proves immune to electricity, they attempt to escape, usually by

assuming will-o'-wisp form and flying away.

Confusion (Su): A boggart can cause a magical *confusion* effect by keeping up a loud racket for 2 rounds. The boggart can sing, shout, bang pots and pans, or do anything else that makes a great deal of noise. Using this power requires 2 consecutive full-round actions. A single boggart creates a *confusion* effect in a 30-foot spread. Two or more boggarts can cooperate to create a bigger effect. To do so, the boggarts must be within 30 feet of each other and each boggart must make noise in the same general manner; for example, both boggarts might shout out bad poetry or both might sing. Each additional boggart that joins the effort add 10 feet to the spread radius, to a maximum radius of 80 feet. When two or more boggarts produce a *confusion* effect, each boggart produces a spread with the increased size.

The effect works just like the *confusion* spell except that it is a sonic, mind-affecting, compulsion effect. A DC 16 Will save negates the effect. If a creature is subjected to multiple boggart *confusion* effects at the same time, it need save only once (against the effect with the highest DC if they don't all have the same DC). The save DC is Charisma-based. Once a creature has made a successful save against any boggart's *confusion* effect, it cannot be affected again by any boggart's *confusion* effect for 24 hours. A boggart's *confusion* effect does not affect other boggarts.

Electrical Bolt (Ex): A boggart can produce an electrical spark that can affect a single target within 40 feet. The boggart must make a ranged touch attack to hit the target, and a hit deals 2d4 points of electricity damage. Once the boggart fires a bolt, it must wait 1d4 rounds before it can fire another.

Deflection (Su): No matter what its form, a boggart is continually surrounded by a protective field that gives it a +4 deflection bonus to Armor Class (already figured into the numbers given above).

Invisibility (Su): A boggart can become invisible as a standard action. This power works just like an *invisibility* spell, except that it lasts for 3d4 rounds (or until the boggart attacks).

Magic Immunity (Ex): The only spells that can affect boggarts are *magic circle against chaos*, *magic circle against evil*, *magic missile*, *maze*, *protection from chaos*, and *protection from evil*. Other spells and spell-like abilities fail just as if the spellcaster had failed to overcome spell resistance.

Tongues (Su): A boggart can converse with any creature that uses language. This power works just like a *tongues* spell cast by a 6th-level character, except that it is always active and it allows for only basic communication (only one- and two-syllable simple words and simple syntax).

Unstable Form (Su): A boggart can assume its own form or the form of any Small or Tiny humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or fey with a humanoid form. The boggart also can assume the form of a ball of electrified gas similar to a will-o'-wisp, but less tangible. When in will-o'-wisp form, the boggart can fly at a speed of 50, with perfect maneuverability. The boggart also gains damage reduction 10/magic and becomes immune to poison and critical hits. It cannot speak or use its confusion power, but it can use its shock and electrical bolt powers. It has no Strength score, but it cannot enter water. It can, however, pass through small holes or even mere cracks.

A boggart must change form every 3d4 rounds (though it can voluntarily switch forms sooner if it wishes). If flying when forced to change form, the boggart descends 60 feet a round until it lands, and it suffers no falling damage.

The boggart does not regain any hit points for changing its form. When changing form, a boggart retains its fey types and shapechanger subtype. It gains the size of its new form, along with the natural weapons, natural armor, movement modes, and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. The boggart retains its own special qualities and does not gain any special qualities of its new form except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart retains its own special attacks except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart retains its own ability scores except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart is effectively camouflaged as a creature of its new form, and it gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks if it uses this ability to create a disguise.

Game Resources: To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

About the Author

Robert Wiese is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since

early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of **Dragon Magazine** for 18 years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the **Monster Manual**. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

©1995-2004 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.