

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

HORROR

THE CORPSE THAT LOVE BUILT

DCC HORROR #4:
A LEVEL 2 ADVENTURE
BY SPINE-CHILLING STEPHEN NEWTON



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"Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?"

- Frankenstein

INTRODUCTION



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

The Corpse That Love Built is designed for 4-6 Level-2 characters. The thematic elements of the adventure give homage to classic horror films such as *Frankenstein*, *The Brain That Wouldn't Die*, and *The Mummy's Curse*, but liberally infused with modern, visceral horror. The adventure is a spiritual successor to *They Served Brandolyn Red*. While designed to be played as a stand-alone adventure, players coming from Brandolyn will find the NPCs and themes very familiar.

BACKGROUND



To say that Lotrin von Weißgras-Geisterblut was obsessed would be a gross understatement. Dr. von Geisterblut, as the local population of Portnelle had come to refer to him, was a member of the politically-powerful Weißgras family who provided vassalage to two-thirds of the village. Two centuries before, Geisterblut's forbidden love—a fiery, red-headed human female whose name has been lost to history—was tragically killed on the day of their wedding by a mob of racists who could not bear to see the union of a human and an elf. His grief eventually succumbed to a singular obsession: to resurrect his beloved fiancée from the dead using blood and bone he collected from her grizzled remains. He proceeded to squander his family's wealth and resources collecting rare and ancient tomes, and studying perverse religions in the darkest corners of Aereth, in pursuit of the secrets to bringing the dead back to life.

The more Geisterblut learned by studying the magic of clerics and mages both sophisticated and barbaric, the more frustrated he became. He became convinced the gods capriciously taunted their loyal subjects, providing glimpses—false hope—of greater rewards for a lifetime of service; it was a sham the Weißgras dynasty had perpetuated on its citizens for centuries. While it was true the gods would occasionally distribute trivial tokens of their generosity—prolonging life by easing a flesh wound or turning away a potential foe—they selfishly hoarded their most treasured gift: the ability to return life to those who had perished.

Geisterblut's research into the mysteries of the flesh made him an expert on human and demi-human anatomy, hence why the locals began calling him "Doctor". He would treat ailments on the residents of Portnelle to hone his craft. Unbeknownst to the residents of Portnelle, he was also becoming an expert on animal physiology, especially those which had the ability to regenerate (e.g. trolls and tapeworms) as well as those with prolonged lifespans such as tortoises and lizardmen. The decades dragged on, and he continued to experiment.

Geisterblut's perseverance eventually paid off when one day he was approached by Kahuna Nui, a traveling merchant of exotic goods suffering from horrific gout. As the portly merchant lamented how his infected foot would be the death of him, he mentioned that his ancient grandmother would pray to Uhsiris for prosperity in her next life. Uhsiris, the merchant explained, was the goddess his grandmother claimed would be responsible for renewing her soul within a new body in her next life. Often times, the merchant explained, this required a blending of replacement tissue from younger bodies, and sometimes even animals. Unpleasant, but necessary.

Once Geisterblut learned of Uhsiris and Her powers, he pledged his remaining years to serving Her in exchange for the ability to resurrect his bride. Not long thereafter, at Her instruction, his experiments with creating human/un-dead chimeras began.

After decades of unsuccessful attempts to fuse together regenerating animals with human remains harvested from his late beloved's corpse, Geisterblut became even more radical with his experiments. He would ply information from visiting adventurers about their encounters with un-dead, often times startling the guarded veterans with increasingly perverse and macabre questions. Tales about his eccentricates transformed from idle gossip to fearful notoriety.

Eventually his obsession and erratic behavior forced him into exile. Ostracized by the Weißgras family and scorned by the villagers, Geisterblut hid himself away behind the walls of Weißgras Tower. Rumors persisted for decades that "Mad Doctor von Geisterblut" had refocused his medical expertise on something entirely unholy, but reliable facts were scarce.

As is common given the longevity of elves, Geisterblut outlived the gossiping fear-mongers, and tales of the mad doctor fell from fashion and eventually became fodder used by nannies to keep children from misbehaving. That was until recently when a spate of abductions struck the town. Dozens of Portnelle's residents have gone missing. Many of the abductees have not been seen again, but in a few cases, corpses have been recovered, often with limbs or organs missing.

An emergency meeting has been called by the town patriarch, the geriatric Father Geralt, to deal with the crisis. Geralt has roused the town with a vision and a dire warning. As leaders within the community, it is at this meeting that the PCs now find themselves.



