

FARM TRACK

AN INTRODUCTION

THE DAY IS WARM, THE SKY CLEAR OF ALL BUT A FEW wispy clouds. The surrounding countryside consists of a patchwork of fields and meadows, broken up by hedgerows and dry brick walls. The track you are walking down is rutted and in places thick with mud. Birds and insects fill the air with the sounds of nature. A light breeze blows across the fields, creating ripples in the sea of barley, wheat and wildflowers.

Ahead you can see some abandoned farm buildings at the side of the track, roofs partially collapsed. To your right are rolling grassy meadows, but strangely no livestock graze there. To your left are fields of Barley, wildflowers sprinkled among the golden crop.

As you make your way along the track you begin to notice a change in the air, first the birds stop singing, then the insects. Ahead is a disturbance in the ground, as if part of the track has collapsed in on itself. You pick up a slight astringent scent in the air, a strange bitter citrus smell that catches the back of your throat. The fields take on an air of disquiet, as if something is out of place, unwanted. In the quiet you pick up a clicking sound to your left, but no source is apparent. As you listen the tempo increases and as it does you notice something else, a rumbling in the ground below your feet. As you step back in alarm the track erupts in front of you, a huge many limbed creature covered in thick chitinous plates rears up out of the earth. The lack of livestock suddenly becomes clear as the creature lunges at you with razor sharp mandibles.

NOTES AND TIPS

- 30x30 grid map
- It's always fun to try to tell a little story even for a simple travel encounter. Has the party stepped into something's territory? Why is this creature so far away from its usual range?
- Rack up the tension and anticipation of an encounter by making sure to give your perceptive party members hints at what is to come.
- Farmland seems like a safe place for the party, correct that assumption with a nest of Ankhegs. Maybe watch Tremors for reference :D
- If you go with Ankhegs look for 'The Hive' battle map in my back catalogue for an underground Ankheg nest!
- Roving bands of 'humanoids' often terrorise farmsteads. Goblins, Hobgoblins, Orcs, Human Bandits are all staples.
- Have the party stakeout the fields for a 'sheep thief' and surprise them with something more scally and toothy!
- A farm has been cursed and all its livestock is now deadstock! Zombie sheep and cows with some kind of necromancer as a 'boss'.

VARIANTS

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