

# HOPPING MAD

a Red Box Hack adventure

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v1.1

*As a child, Uncle Lo fell in with bandits, but the entire gang was caught and killed by the authorities; because of his age, Lo was spared. Knowing their time was up, and figuring that Lo would escape punishment, the leader had a map tattooed on the young Lo's back revealing the location of their accumulated loot. Lo never knew what it was. Perhaps someone talked, or perhaps there was a survivor after all, because a new group of brigands have heard about the map...*

The PCs are on a long river trip to the city of Fujian, but some unusually rough conditions have meant that the boat has to stop in for repairs at the village of Taishi. While waiting, the PCs notice a group of thugs menacing a woman; they are not physically abusing her, but it is clear that she wants to get away. *Dense Arena.*

**Thugs.** One for each PC.

Al+0 Da+1 El+0 Sn+0 St+1 Sz+1; sticks and kung fu.

## Shan's Story

The woman thanks the PCs and introduces herself as Shan (Ken). She is the wife of a farmer who is currently bed-ridden having suffered a number of tragedies of late. First, his beloved Uncle Lo died about a month ago, which led to the neighbouring landowners starting to sniff around buying the farm, some of whom have been more insistent than others; those thugs were from Kentaro's farm. Then last week, our animals started dying one by one, and just yesterday our farmhands didn't turn up for work. Will you help?

## **Shan Ken**

A slim, woman in her late twenties, she would be attractive were it not for her haggard and exhausted appearance. She wears simple working clothes. Quiet.

Al+0 Da+0 El+1 Sn+0 St+1 Sz+0

## The Farm

About ten minutes' walk from the village, among gentle hills and small clumps of woodland. Already the farm looks a little run-down, with crops unharvested, and plenty of birds scavenging. Inside, Ben sits in a rocking chair, unshaven and dressed in stained bedclothes. He barely registers the PCs entrance.

## **Ben Ken**

A stocky man about the same age as Shan, his round face is sunken and pale, and his eyes are glazed and unfocused. Sullen.

Al+0 Da+0 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+2

\*Uncle Lo suffered a heart attack while working in the fields.

\*He is buried in the family plot just north of the house.

\*The neighbouring farmers feared or respected Lo, but now see this land as theirs. Particularly Kentaro.

\*Animals started dying about a week ago. They seemed to die of exhaustion during the night.

\*Two farmhands, Choi and Piro didn't come in to work today. Shan was in town hoping to find out

more.

*Alertness* rolls will detect that Ben, despite his distance, is deliberately hiding something: Uncle Lo was, as a boy, in trouble with the law, although he never spoke of it, and Ben is worried that this all has something to do with that.

When night falls, Shan gets ready to patrol the farm. The PCs are welcome to join her.

## **X**

These are dead sheep, left to rot in the chaos and confusion. Wilderness/nature types will note that, unusually, carrion animals seem to be leaving the carcasses alone. On a d10 roll of 1-3, the sheep is still alive, but not for much longer, as Lo and Choi are feasting on its life force.

## **The Family Plot**

A very small round hill with a number of simple graves. Uncle Lo's grave has been dug up! Neither Shan nor Ben have been up here since Lo was buried.

## **The Sheds**

The smaller shed seems to be barred or blocked from the inside. A *Size* roll shifts the door open (failure: 1hp damage). Slumped in the far corner of the shed is the body of Piro. The body is grey and emaciated; both Shan and Ben can confirm that Piro was a bulky man in life.

## **The Well**

A smallish character can get down the well, wither by being lowered down, or by climbing (failure: 1hp damage). There is plenty of cold, clean water at the bottom. Lodged in a gap in the wall just below the waterline is a jade ring carved into the shape of a horned serpent. Neither Shan nor Ben recognise it.

## **The Sandpit**

A wide and deep depression filled with coarse sand, and surrounded by trees. Uncle Lo and Choi can be found here on a d10 roll of 1-7, resting.

If Uncle Lo and Choi are not encountered around the farm, then the PCs will hear a scream from the house. Upon returning, they will find two humanoid figures assulting the house.

### **Uncle Lo and Choi**

A hunched figure wearing the burial robes of Lo, with outstretched, clawed hands, snow-white skin and burning red eyes. It moves by making short agile leaps. The other figure is recognisable as Choi, but appears to be undergoing some sort of transformation into a similar creature.

#### **Uncle Lo**

Al+2 Da+1 El+0 Sn+0 St+2 Sz+0; *Bloodlust, Fast, Natural Weapons*; snooty and arrogant.

#### **Choi**

Al+0 Da+0 El+0 Sn+0 St+1 Sz+1; *Natural Weapons*

Choi is vaguely aware of his fate, and will try to get himself killed by throwing himself into combat.

A Magus or Mystic will recognise the creatures as hopping corpses, and are best defeated by binding them with a spell. This spell must be written on a piece of paper which must then be applied to the vampire's face. Creating the binding spell is an easy task for a Magus or Mystic; the only danger is of it not working. If there is no such character in the party, there is a sage back in Taishi who may be able to help. Applying the spell is an attack action, as if with a light weapon. Since the goal is to apply the spell to the vampire's face, a kind GM may allow any die rolled for this "attack" to count as a Face Die.

When the vampire is subdued, Shan or Ben will be able to tell the PCs that although it is wearing the burial robes of Lo, it is definitely not him. A Mystic will be able to communicate with the creature's angry spirit, or *Eloquence* rolls and/or threats may allow communication with it. It has never heard of Uncle Lo. It was once a priest from the monastery to the north, but about a week ago it was dug up and taken to a cave where it was dressed up in some peasant's burial robes and reburied here. It remembers where the cave is, and will take the PCs there if they promise to return it to its proper grave.

### **The Caves**

#### **Entrance**

About six hours by foot from the Ken's farm, in secluded foothills far from well-travelled routes. A wide but low cave mouth is set back from the treeline by about fifty metres (*Open Arena*). A rough wooden barrier has been erected across the cave mouth, a series of short logs with sharpened tops. Bandit A waits behind the barrier. *Alertness* vs *Sneakiness* to spot her, otherwise she will *Surprise* the PCs. She spots the PCs automatically if they don't attempt stealth, and opens fire with a crossbow. If things go poorly, she will sacrifice her action to pull on a nearby cord, alerting the other

bandits inside. The barrier can be clambered over with ease if time is taken, but will require a roll (*Daring?*) in a rush (failure: 1hp damage). It has a Size +2 for purposes of pushing.

#### **Main Passage**

A long, low passage. Bandit B (and Bandit A if she fled) will pepper the PCs with crossbow bolts from the entrance to Cave 1. The passage as a whole is a *Neutral Arena*. Between the entrance and Cave 1 is a trap; thin cords have been stretched across the passage, tripping up any who fail to spot or avoid them for 1hp damage.

#### **Cave 1**

Sleeping area for the bandits. Bedrolls, discarded clothes and the like litter the room, and there are some minor items to be found, but nothing valuable. In one corner, one of the bandits (B) has been doodling on the cave wall, producing what appears to be some kind of erotic visual story involving a woman and an ox. If the alarm is not raised, Bandit B can be found here working on his masterpiece.

#### **Cave 2**

At the entrance to this cave is another stretched cord which sets off a smoke bomb, obscuring sight around the entrance and making that immediate area a *Hazardous Arena*. The cave itself is a large domed area. In the centre of the room is a medium sized fire, and a variety of cooking and eating implements, while against one wall is a small pile of crates, sacks and barrels, supplies and spoils from the bandits' activities. *Dense Arena*.

There are also two tables set up near the fire. On one is the body of a human male, laid face down; on his back there is a tattoo which looks like some kind of map. On the adjacent table are a set of inkwells and pens, and a large sheet of thick paper on which is an almost complete copy of the map.

The remaining bandits are here, as well as the bandit leader. If they are not alerted, the bandits will be discussing the upcoming marriage of one of the Imperial Daughters, while the leader is working on his map. There is one bandit per PC, plus the leader; they are mostly human, although there is one snake and one bear among them. Two rounds into the fight, Bandit C will, as a *Show Off* action, start to exude blue flame, then transform into a vast humanoid elephant with bright red skin and black tusks.

**Kang; Bandit Leader**

Al+2 Da+2 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+0; Light Weapon (double scimitars), Heavy Armour, 5xp  
 Deeply tanned, long dark hair, moustache, perpetual snarl. Cocky (likes to Show Off).

**Kuma-Gin; Bandit Bear**

Al+0 Da+0 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+2; Heavy Ranged Weapon (massive longbow), Light Armour, 5xp  
 Grey fur, slightly overweight. Somewhat cowardly.

**Shima Hebi; Bandit Snake**

Al+1 Da+0 El+0 Sn+1 St+0 Sz+0; Light Weapon (kung fu), Light Armour, *Blast* (lightning bolt), 5xp  
 Yellow skin with conspicuous scales, tall and slim, wearing black monk's robes. Reserved and potentially disloyal.

**Ko Giri; Bandit C (human)**

Al+1 Da+1 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+0; Light Weapon, Light Armour, 5xp

**Ko Giri; Bandit C (elephant)**

Al+2 Da+2 El+0 Sn+0 St+3 Sz+3; Heavy Weapon, Light (Heavy) Armour, *Natural Weapons, Thick Skin, Throw*; 25xp

Young, fairly petite woman with short dark hair tied up in a bun, and pale reddish skin. Infatuated with Kang, so fiercely protective and loyal. Loud, and screams a lot in combat.

**Bandit D**

Al+0 Da+1 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+0; Ranged Weapon, Light Armour; 5xp

**Bandits A, B, E-Z**

Al+1 Da+0 El+0 Sn+0 St+0 Sz+0; Light/Ranged Weapons, Light Armour; 5xp

**Treasure and XP**

Defeating the thugs: 1xp per thug

Finding the jade ring: 10xp

Defeating the hopping corpses: "Lo" 20xp, Choi 7xp

Returning the hopping corpse to the monastery: 10xp

Defeating the bandits: (see above)

Acquiring the map: 20xp

Returning Uncle Lo to his grave: 10xp