

THE GRIM CREATION

The line between life and death is but a whisper. Heed the call of the sea's darkest depths, where fate's hands weave the threads of destiny.

Excerpt from the Black Tome

This adventure is about Mr. Gibbs, a man of medicine turned mariner, who lives with his son Perry on the outskirts of the city. They lead a peaceful life next to the sea where sometimes when the need arises, Mr. Gibbs performs small medical procedures for a significantly small fee.

The turning point of their narrative began with a peculiar discovery aboard Mr. Gibbs' fishing barge—a safe ensconced in the ocean's embrace, harboring a tome as dark as the depths from which it was retrieved. Unbeknownst to Gibbs, its pages whispered necromancy, an art that veils the threshold between life and death.

MR. GIBBS'S OBSESSION

TIME CARRIED ON until it coursed through a day of despair. Perry, vibrant and full of youth, fell victim to sahuagin's savagery, leaving Mr. Gibbs to navigate a tempest of grief and guilt. The sea, which had given him so much, had now exacted a price much too steep.

Mr. Gibbs made a solemn vow—born of desperation and a father's love, to breach the unbreachable, to defy the natural order, and reclaim what was unjustly taken. Thus began his descent into necromancy, guided by the black tome's eldritch practices. The book became the beacon of his obsession. And Mr. Gibbs, once a healer of bodies, now sought to mend the ravages of death itself. Alas, the wretched art of necromancy is a cursed journey. The resurrection he seeks is but a mirage; the outcome is but a grim parody of life. Perry, the son he yearns to bring back, is beyond reach. In his stead, only a cursed ghoul shall rise; a mindless shell, a vile creation born of a father's undying love turned to desperation.

INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE

This module is meant to be used as the first stop for a group of adventurers starting their hero lives. There is no job to be done, there is no objective to meet, and there is no treasure to loot. The characters simply stumble upon Mr. Gibbs on the grim day he succeeds. Perry, the deceased son, shall rise as a **ghoul**, ravenous and incapable of recognizing his people from food.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Introduction. The heroes' journey begins! They grab their gear, purchase stuff, and maybe even get a job. They leave the safety of town and come across Mr. Gibbs's home on the road. The heroes are unbothered by the seemingly empty building until they hear a horrible scream coming from inside the seaside house (0 XP).

Level 0 Adventure

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a **Random Event** every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (4-in-6 chance).

► **Smells and Sounds.** The wind whistles and the birds sing. The crash of occasional waves breaks the few moments of silence. A rotting stench comes from the house.

► **Necromancy.** A *detect magic* spell shows the heroes the obscure energy coming from the book and the ghoul. The magic is the strongest near the evil-filled tome.

► **Bad Signs.** A rotting smell, necromancy, and the horrible screams coming from the house (see **Adventure Hooks**). A careful priest would conclude a *protection from evil* spell would work here (DC 11 INT).

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d6	Details
1	A group of four peasants approach the house (Reaction check); they hear the screaming too (see Adventure Hook).
2	A pair of elves from a nearby forest were sent by their seer. Their leader felt the obscure energies coming from this small home and they have been tasked with finding the source of this evil and destroying it. They are unsure about the heroes (Reaction).
3	A knight was hired to investigate the foul smells coming from the fisherman's home. He does not know the heroes (Reaction).
4	The smell from the house draws the attention of two hungry wolves . The beasts want to see the source of this stench for themselves. They become aggressive if someone stands in between. However, they leave if they are given at least 10 pounds of food.
5	A pair of sahuagin appear in area 3. They demand gold from the heroes. They fight for it but flee when reduced to half their HP.
6	An itinerant merchant travels from one city to another. He offers the heroes simple gear, common items, and rations.



1. THE CAPITAL ROAD

Beneath a canopy of whispering pines, a winding path clings to the rugged coastline, leading travelers to the secluded abode of Mr. Gibbs, where the sea's breath mingles with the scent of brine and pine.

The heroes leave Oxenta and travel southward when they stumble upon the fisherman's home. Let the heroes wander off, explore, or even ignore the home altogether.

2. THE SHORE

Beside Mr. Gibbs' home, the shore whispers tales of yore, where the gentle lapping of waves caresses the sands, a serene haven for stern, wayward seafarers.

It is when they approach this area that they hear horrible screams coming from the building. They must act immediately to have a chance to save hapless Mr. Gibbs.

THE CONFRONTATION

The characters rush to the house and kick the door open. A humanoid creature with one arm and its entrails hanging has Mr. Gibbs (**peasant**) pinned to the ground. The old man struggles to breathe. If the **ghoul** wins the initiative, the fisherman is bitten and might perish. Otherwise, the heroes arrive just in time to stop Perry, mindless and revived, from killing his grieving father.

3. THE SMALL GULF

Nestled next to Mr. Gibbs' abode, the gulf cradles tranquil waters, and a lonely boat rocks with the gentle waves. It looks like it has not been used in days.

Mr. Gibbs's boat is anchored to the wooden pier. The heroes may loot this place if they ignore the screams or if the fisherman lives no more. There are 18 gp, a dagger, and a dozen bags of rare spices (10 gp each, 2 XP).

4. ROAD (SOUTH)

The road continues for days. Several villages and hamlets dot the countryside before the next big city. Regardless of what happens here, the show must go on, and the heroes must continue their journey toward glory.

5. MR. GIBBS'S ROOM

A chamber filled with maritime relics, mementos, and old maps. A sturdy, oak desk stands by the window, inviting with an open, leather-bound journal.

► **Saviors.** The heroes save Mr. Gibbs and heal his wounds, if any. After the traumatizing event, he has no words to thank them. Instead, he grabs 150 gp from under his bed as payment (2 XP). He asks them to take the black book, which only fed him impossible fantasies.

► **Tragedy.** Mr. Gibbs is dead. The heroes may grab whatever they want from the house. If this happens, one of **Random Encounters 2** or **3** (or both) occurs. **Reaction** checks are made with disadvantage in this case. Skip the check if the heroes possess the book (see below).

6. STUDIO

Here, Mr. Gibbs used the mystical book to breathe life back into his son's corpse. A worn altar bears the faint, lingering touch of Perry's accursed revival spell.

This room is evidence of Mr. Gibbs's infirmity. He became obsessed with a fool's errand; a doomed plan.

► **The Black Tome.** A sentient black leather tome. It is up to the GM's discretion to decide the extent of the book's powers. The black tome is a beacon of evil that shall draw the attention of both justice-seekers and evil-doers. Whoever possesses it shall be considered an enemy of what is lawful, good, and right.