



3 Difficulty
4 Complexity

By SKIN & TEETH

A howl of an encounter for five adventurers

By Corwin Riddle

By Skin & Teeth is a standalone encounter designed for five 4th to 6th-level adventurers. A horrible curse has returned, transforming the residents of Remulos into monstrous werewolves. The players must fight off the monsters and bring an end to the horror, while trying to resist the curse's power.

BACKGROUND

The town of Remulos has a dark past. A century ago, as legend tells it, a strange disease crept over the city's residents, triggered by moonlight and transforming many people into fearsome monsters. These abominations slaughtered most of the population, flaying the skin from their victims and devouring the rest. The townsfolk fought back and killed all of the monsters, burning the bodies and dumping the remains into a nearby chasm, condemning the monsters, and the memory of them, to the depths of the abyss.

Ever since, the ancient mine shafts leading to the abyss have released a ghostly wind, howling incessantly as it swirls through the tunnels below. There are few alive who believe the story, though even the skeptics were unwilling to enter the howling mines of Remulos, and, when the moon is full, the streets are empty—doors locked and windows bolted.

Now, a hundred years after the events supposedly transpired, strange things have started happening. Bodies have been found, partially-eaten, the skin removed. People have become ill, often disappearing within days of the sickness. Rumors of monsters—giant wolf-like creatures—prowling in the forest surrounding Remulos, have been spreading throughout the houses of the terrified townsfolk—rumors that are all too familiar. And a full moon shines so very bright.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

By Skin & Teeth is a standalone encounter, but can easily be turned into a full adventure. The PCs can stumble on the town of Remulos, have them sent there to investigate a disap-

pearance or an account of the monsters, or even be summoned to the town by one of the concerned citizens. Once there, you can send them to the howling mines with one or more of the following hooks:

HOOK 1: END THE LUNACY

Neuri is an old, frail woman, and she remembers the legend all too well—she was a child at the time, but saw enough to give her nightmares for her entire life. She would have left the city, but had nowhere to go and little money, so she stayed to run an apothecary she inherited from her family. She tells the players of the town's past, and mentions that the moon, which has become a strange and bright, causes the curse to take effect.

She doesn't know exactly what causes the curse or why it's returned exactly one century later, but thinks the return is a sign that the cycle will continue forever, unless the source is stopped. She points the players to the howling mines, where the wolves are most often seen and where the trails of blood and gore seem to lead. As easy as it would be to wait until daybreak to explore the mines, the players need to go at night to discover the werewolves and the cause of the curse.

She offers the players a meager reward of potions, and gives them each an elixir that should stave off the effects of the curse, though only temporary.

Quest XP: 400 XP and two heroic level potions each for ending the curse.

A Sunny Delight

Level 1

The bottle seems to dance and shimmer, as though reflecting sunlight. Inside glows a bright yellow essence capable of deflecting darkness and the moonlight, though only for a few seconds.

Potion Ranged 1

Effect: Spend a minor action to imbibe the potion or apply it to an adjacent ally. The target of the potion immediately loses all but 1 moonplague counter. If the target was a werewolf, they are returned to normal, though they are still affected by moonplague.

Neuri also gives each player one of the following potion:

HOOK 2: MOONLIGHTING

Arcadus is the local blacksmith, and is one of the few residents willing to try and fight off the monsters. Unfortunately, as Arcadus discovered, the werewolves don't seem to have any vulnerability to silver, and his forays into the darkness have been unproductive—the wolves are crafty and sneaky, and only come out when they have the advantage. Even so, the blacksmith frequently leads groups of fighters into the forest, and have killed a few of the monsters.

Last night, while Arcadus was out hunting, a werewolf broke into his house and slaughtered his wife and child, and the blacksmith is convinced the act was committed by a specific werewolf, called Martus, that Arcadus managed to injure before, taking one of his eyes. Arcadus is not interested in the curse or the cause of the monsters; he just wants Martus killed. He offers the players a choice of weaponry, should they return with the werewolf's head.

Quest XP: 200 XP and a level 4 magical item for retuning with the head of Martus, the one-eyed werewolf.

HOOK 3: A MISSING GRANDMOTHER

A young girl named Nicero is worried, because her grandmother fell ill recently and then disappeared. Nicero never really liked her grandmother and isn't too upset, but she's been planning on leaving town for a while now and if her grandmother is indeed gone, there's nothing keeping her there. Nicero asks the players to head down to the howling mines and look for any sign of her grandmother, Plinia, whether it's in the form of a werewolf, a corpse, or a prisoner. She apologizes for her lack of compassion, but tries to convince the players that her grandmother was a most horrid individual.

If the players bring news of her grandmother's death, Nicero will give them some of her grandmother's jewels as a reward; if they bring back the grandmother, alive and well, Nicero will give them a few jewels, but less than if she were gone for good. She describes a gaudy necklace of fake rubies, which her grandmother always wore, to identify her.

Quest XP: 200 XP and 400 gp in jewels if she's dead, or 200 XP and 100 gp in jewels if she's brought back alive.

SPECIAL FEATURES

ENEMY TRANSFORMATION

The howling werewolves transform into cursed humans, and vice versa, depending on whether they are in a moonlit square on the map. When this happens, the hit points and statuses remain the same, though all other powers, defenses, and abilities change.

MOONPLAGUE

The moonstruck werewolves can infect players with moonplague, which can transform them into mindless werewolves.

- A player infected with moonplague gains a counter, which starts at one.
- Several of the moonstruck werewolves and cultists have abilities that will raise this counter.
- When the counter reaches 5, that player immediately transforms into a werewolf. Details below.
- The werewolf transformation ends in two ways:
 1. The player starts two consecutive turns as a werewolf. At the end of the second turn, the player returns to normal, loses all counters, and is no longer affected by moonplague.
 2. The player starts a turn in a square that is unaffected by moonlight. The player returns to normal, loses 2 counters, and is still affected by moonplague.
 3. A player is doused with *A Sunny Delight*. The player returns to normal, loses all but 1 counter, and is still affected by moonplague.

PLAYER TRANSFORMATION

A player that has been transformed into a werewolf has the following properties:

- -2 to all defenses.
- +2 to all attack rolls.
- Regeneration 5.
- Speed of 7.
- While a werewolf, a player cannot use any abilities, items, or skills, and on their turn they **must** move to and attack the closest creature with the following attack:

Moonplagued Bite

Special Feature

You are overcome with feral rage and lash out at the nearest creature, biting with your razor-sharp teeth and infecting your target.

At-Will ♦ **Martial**

Standard Action

Melee 1

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC, two attacks

Hit: 1d6 + 3 + Strength modifier damage. If the target is a player, they are afflicted with moonplague. If the target is already afflicted with moonplague, the counter increases by 1.

All of these details can be found in a easy-to-read format on the last page of this encounter, so you can cut it out and hand it to your players when they become infected.

GETTING STARTED

Read this as the players approach the town of Remulos:

As you enter the streets of Remulos, you notice that the moon has begun shining a bright and strange, unnatural green. The houses and buildings seem to be at least a hundred years old, and most of the doors and windows have been boarded shut, though thin beams of light escape through the cracks.

In the distance, you hear an eerie, wolf-like howl, which carries through the street as a strong gust of wind sweeps by you. Startled by the cry, a man and his wife huddle together, looking around as they dash toward a nearby building. Moments later, you hear the sound of hammering, as the couple begins to bar their doors.

AREA: THE HOWLING MINES

Read this when the PCs reach the howling mines:

The entrance to the mine is in ruins—it's clear that this area was abandoned long ago; mine carts, tools, and debris litter the tunnel; the inner mine seems to be blocked off with a pile of rubble. The roof is old and tattered, its boards rotten and fallen away, letting the moonlight stream through. A few humanoid shapes are visible in the shadows.

A low growl fills the air, and a pair of werewolves carefully advance in the moonlight. From the darkness, a man steps forward.

"A curse is only a curse if it is unwelcome," he says, grinning with a set of pointed teeth. "One taste shall forever change your minds." He takes a step into the moonlight and arches back, his muscles bulging and contorting as hair spreads over his body. Within seconds he turns into a monstrous werewolf, rearing back for an attack.

Perception (DC 10): The werewolves seem to be making an effort to stay within the moonlight and out of the shadows.

History (DC 10): Werewolf bites are generally contagious, capable of transforming the bitten into monsters within a few minutes.

SETUP

3 Howling Werewolves (W)

2 Cursed Humans (H)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

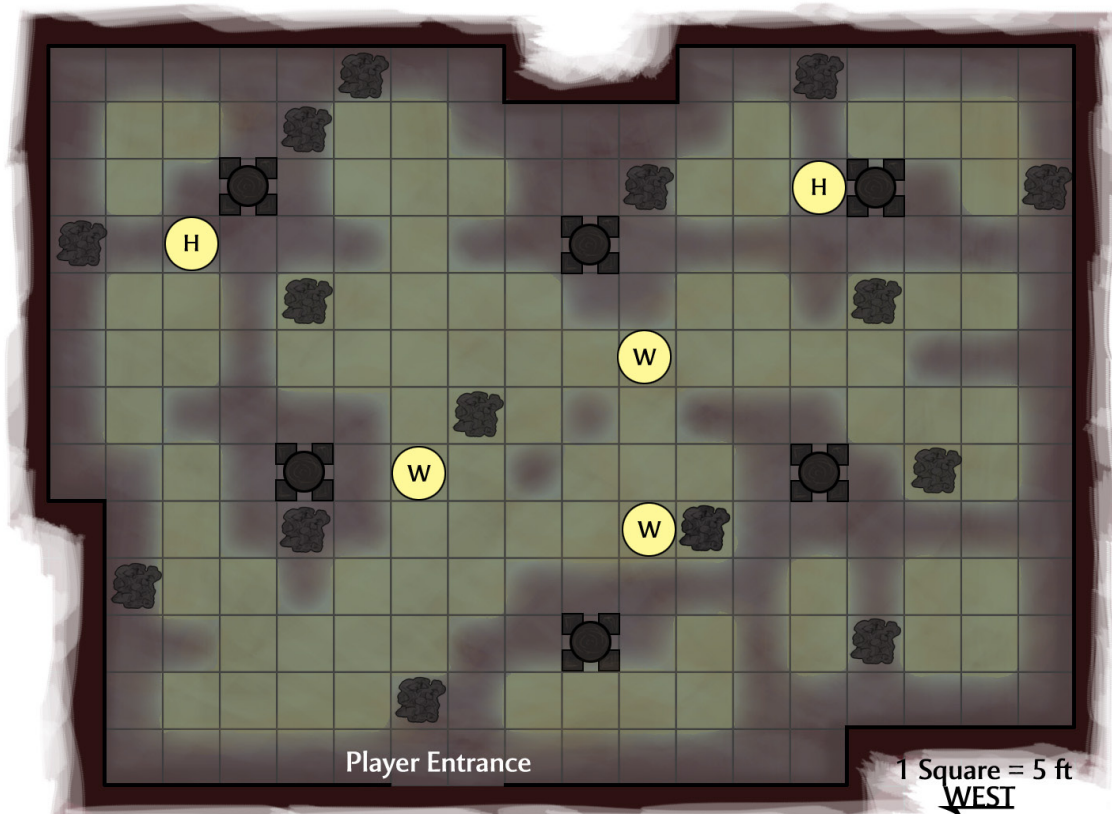
Height: There is no ceiling.

Illumination: The moonlit squares are well lit, the other squares are dimly lit.

Moonlit Squares: Marked as greenish-blue light, these squares affect both player and enemy transformations. See **Special Features** for details.

Supports: Marked as brown columns, these supports hold up the remnants of the roof and block line of sight.

Rubble: Marked as grey rocks and debris, these squares count as difficult terrain.



HOWLING WEREWOLVES IN COMBAT

The howling werewolves are not the mindless feral beasts that the players will become, and are quite capable of tactical retreats and clever flanking positions, but they are still feral beasts, and their strategy should be restricted to pack tactics. More than anything, the werewolves will try to stay in the moonlight and in werewolf form, although a weakened werewolf might try to change back into a human in order to use *Poisoned Dart* for a ranged attack. A howling werewolf will not attack a cursed human, and vice versa.

CURSED HUMANS IN COMBAT

The cursed humans will try to stay at range and use *Poisoned Dart*, remaining outside the moonlit squares until engaged by an enemy. The humans know that they will deal more damage in wolf form, but their AC is higher in human form, so they will switch back and forth depending on which is more beneficial. They will save *Thirst for Blood* for when they are cornered or unable to make an attack due to movement hindering effects.

COMBAT FLAVOR

If you dislike reading powers and effects to your players, give them hints with the following flavor text.

When *Moonlapse* triggers, read:

As the moonlight fades from the werewolf's fur, it begins to contort and shrink, losing its fur and teeth as it turns into a human.

When *Moonstruck* triggers, read:

The moonlight radiates across the human's skin, and it begins to bulge and grow, transforming into a werewolf.

When a player is afflicted by moonplague, read:

You feel instantly feverish, but within the sickness is a strange sense of power and strength, coursing through your body.

When a player gains more moonplague counters, read:

The fever worsens, and you feel a dark presence overtake you.

When a player transforms into a werewolf, read:

You begin to heave uncontrollably, and feel excruciating pain as your bones and muscles change shape. You grow in statue as your face twists into a lupine snout, your teeth and hands becoming razor-sharp as you black out, transforming into a mindless beast.

When a player returns to normal, read:

You return to consciousness, awakened by the pain of transforming back to your original form.

When a player uses *Moonplagued Bite*, read:

You are overcome with feral rage and lash out at the nearest creature, biting with your razor-sharp teeth and infecting your target.

Howling Werewolf		Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (shape changer)		XP 250
HP 80; Bloodied 40	AC 15, Fortitude 17, Reflex 17, Will 16	Initiative +5 Perception +9
Speed 7		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Moonlapse		
If the howling werewolf starts a turn in a square unaffected by moonlight, it immediately transforms into a cursed human with an identical amount of hit points and any other statuses the howling werewolf had on it.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
☐ Bite (disease) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: +11 vs. AC Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage Effect: The player makes a saving throw. If successful, there is no effect. If unsuccessful, the target is afflicted with moonplague; if the target is already afflicted by moonplague, it gains one counter.		
◀ Raging Howl ◆ Recharge [D][D][D]		
Attack: close burst 1; +10 vs. Will Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage. Effect: All creatures in the burst are pushed 2 squares.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Corrupting Rage ◆ Encounter (when bloodied)		
Effect: The werewolf immediately makes a bite attack against an adjacent enemy. If the saving throw fails, the target gains 3 moonplague counters.		
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 15 (+5)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 9 (+2)	Cha 10 (+3)
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	

Cursed Human		Level 6 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (shape changer)		XP 250
HP 80; Bloodied 40	AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 17	Initiative +5 Perception +9
Speed 5		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Moonstruck		
If the cursed human starts a turn in a square affected by moonlight, it immediately transforms into a howling werewolf with an identical amount of hit points and any other statuses the cursed human had on it.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
☐ Club (weapon) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: +9 vs. AC Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage and the target is pushed 1 square.		
☞ Poisoned Dart ◆ At-Will		
Attack: +10 vs. Reflex Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage and slide the target 1 square. Effect: The player makes a saving throw. If successful, there is no effect. If unsuccessful, the target is afflicted with moonplague; if the target is already afflicted by moonplague, it gains one counter.		
MOVE ACTIONS		
Thirst for Blood ◆ Encounter		
Effect: The cursed human loses all statuses that hinder movement, and leaps up to 8 squares. It must end this movement in a moonlit square, and it immediately transforms into a howling werewolf.		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 11 (+4)	Cha 13 (+6)
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	

CONCLUSION

When the werewolves are defeated, the players can locate Martus by his one eye (or even do this during combat). They will find a pile of bones nearby, and next to that the grandmother's fake ruby necklace. The players will find 200 gp scattered about.

If the players investigate the mine further, they will discover that the rubble pile leading to the inside of the mine was recently piled up, and not the result of decay or a collapse. Beyond the pile, shortly down the tunnels, they will encounter an extremely old, injured werewolf, that retains its shape despite not being in direct moonlight. Each breath is a large effort for the werewolf, and it appears to be crippled. Old scars and burns are visible on its body, though they have healed long ago. The werewolf makes no effort to attack the players (not that it could if it tried), and speaks common.

If the players talk with the werewolf, they will find out the following information:

- The werewolf says her entire clan has been destroyed; she is the only remaining werewolf of Remulos. She says Remulos was founded by werewolves, and the humans encroached, provoking their attacks.
- This werewolf is named Sorunas, and a century ago, was beaten, burned, and tossed off the cliff with the other werewolves.
- Sorunas was still alive and managed to grab hold of the cliff, slowly climbing up and into the howling mines.
- Sorunas was discovered shortly after, though the humans did not kill her. They wanted power, and brought Sorunas food and mended her wounds, keeping her alive indefinitely.
- In return, Sorunas told them of the strange moon, called by werewolves the Blighted Moon, and its power to spread the werewolf's curse.
- The humans waited and waited, eventually dying, but not before telling their children of the curse. These children continued the tradition and told their own children, who waited and waited for the Blighted Moon.
- When it appeared, Sorunas bit each of them to turn them into werewolves, repaying her debt to them. They must be bitten on the night it appears, which has passed. *So your players can't be sneaky and try to become werewolves.*
- Only humans bit by an original werewolf like Sorunas maintain their sanity and control; people turned by the werewolves she has made can pass the curse on, but as a mindless feral rage, and it's only temporary.

ADJUSTMENTS

If you like this encounter but aren't sure how to fit it into your campaign, here is some advice:

We have too few or too many players:

For 4 players, subtract one of the werewolves. For 6 players, add another.

We aren't the right level:

*The werewolves are based off the werewolf monsters found in the **Monster Builder**. Scale it to your preference and add in the special abilities and powers.*

It's too easy:

If the fight is too simple, consider having the enemies gang up on a player to transform them into a werewolf almost immediately, so the players can't coordinate all of their efforts.

It's too hard:

If the players can't seem to beat the encounter, consider allowing them to develop an immunity to the disease, or at least enough resistance to it so that they can control some of their actions and choose who to attack.

There's already a werewolf disease:

True! Though I wanted it to happen more quickly and have specific things for increasing and decreasing the counters, rather than a fortitude check. It's not a long-term disease; it wears off almost immediately.

We'd like to continue the story:

The players can decide whether or not to kill Sorunas or release her, and perhaps she can give them insight that will kick off a larger adventure; perhaps a whole race of these werewolves existed and have slowly been hunted down and killed, and she asks the players to find any others that may still be alive. Or perhaps the Blighted Moon caused this, due to something happening on a different plane of reality, and it's a portent of things to come.

We'd rather play a full adventure:

The encounter at the howling mines can be the ending to several sightings of the werewolves. Consider the following series of events:

1. *The PCs spot a shadow in the woods and head off to investigate. It turns out to be the innkeeper, looking for his daughter. Escorting him back to town, he is snatched by werewolves. The PCs chase them down and manage to rescue the man, though they have yet to catch sight of one of the monsters.*
2. *The PCs return to town to find their room at the inn ravaged, and one of the people they've met already slaughtered. Blood covers their belongings. A howl comes from nearby, and they spot one of the werewolves bounding across the rooftops.*
3. *The PCs give chase and find an injured man, who begs them for their help. When the PCs lower their guard, the man transforms into a werewolf and attacks, then tries to escape to the howling mines.*



REFERENCE

PLAYER TRANSFORMATION

A player that has been transformed into a werewolf has the following properties:

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- +2 to all attack rolls.
- Regeneration 5.
- Speed of 7.
- While a werewolf, a player cannot use any abilities, items, or skills, and on their turn they **must** move to and attack the closest creature with the following attack:

Moonplagued Bite

Special Feature

You are overcome with feral rage and lash out at the nearest creature, biting with your razor-sharp teeth and infecting your target.

At-Will ♦ **Martial**

Standard Action **Melee 1**

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC, two attacks

Hit: 1d6 + 3 + Strength modifier damage. If the target is a player, they are afflicted with moonplague. If the target is already afflicted with moonplague, the counter increases by 1.

MOONPLAGUE

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 3. A player is doused with *A Sunny Delight*. The player returns to normal, loses all but 1 counter, and is still affected by moonplague.

POTION

A Sunny Delight

Level 1

The bottle seems to dance and shimmer, as though reflecting sunlight. Inside glows a bright yellow essence capable of deflecting darkness and the moonlight, though only for a few seconds.

Potion **Ranged 1**

Effect: Spend a minor action to imbibe the potion or apply it to an adjacent ally. The target of the potion immediately loses all but 1 moonplague counter. If the target was a werewolf, they are returned to normal, though they are still affected by moonplague.