

A Lord's Dying Wish

The Setup

The coastal village of Tangle Ridge is home to the hardy woodsman known as the drowned people, and the Grand Hall of Kintorin. Old Lord Gaspar Tenfeathers has invited four other leaders of the great nations under a banner of truce.

The Trouble with Elves

Lady Elisabeth Lorimar Alameadinar of the elven nation comes late with her adventurous husband, Lord Rondin, he having fallen ill on the road after discovering a sealed palace right beneath their forest home. The elves are wise beyond the ken of most mortals, but even they do not recognize the doom that Lord Rondin carries within him.

The Dark Spore

The Gods scorched an entire continent to prevent its spread, but it survived, and has now re-emerged. The illness mutates its hosts and wrings out their minds. They self-mutilate, babble, and murder, but above all else they know that the only path to joy is to harvest all living creatures to create more hosts.

Kintorin's Grand Hall

The Grand Hall is a labyrinth of tunnels and hallways bored from the earth and through the largest trees at the valley's bottom. There are several entrances, but they are all locked for the peace talks, and the keys are held by the drowned people several miles away in Tangle Ridge. Bas reliefs adorn nearly every wall, and a hundred chambers are all connected by musty air tunnels.

The Adventure

The players are honored mercenary guards hired by one of the five nations for these peace talks. As tradition dictates, the delegations from all five nations are led to Kintorin's Grand Hall for an evening feast before the drowned people take their weapons and close all the doors for one full day.

Lord Rondin is not present for that feast—he has gone to bed. Now fully the property of the dark spore, he strikes his family first as they return from dinner, transforming his wife into a feral monster, and it is hours before the other delegations hear the screaming of elves from elsewhere in the grand hall. They awaken and investigate, and find insane scrawlings and etchings over the walls—hints to the dark spore's nature. There is much blood, but no bodies, and through the air tunnels the occasional cry, whisper, or disturbed muttering can be heard.

Armed only with daggers and what they may find in the Grand Hall, the players must survive. There is no light here except for what is brought with them. There is no escape until the following morning. There is no trust, for anyone could be infected. There are terrible creatures led by old friends, stalking them to be harvested for a fate that will make them wish they had never entered the valley of Kintorin to fulfill a lord's dying wish.

Everything that once made Lord Rondin a regal adventurer and worthy leader has been stolen by numerous perverse mutations. The bones in one arm have either been removed entirely or simply shattered to accommodate the pasty, multi-jointed tentacle that is now writhing from his shoulder. His feet and legs have become knobby, cancerous, elephantine hooves that look like they could crush gravel. Bloody scar tissue from the corners of his mouth and well up his cheeks illustrates a jaw that was violently reformed to house an overlarge tongue. Only his eyes are unchanged, serene, staring out at you from within this tangle of unnaturalness.

Lord Rondin is fully a creature of the dark spore now, and while his voice is never raised and his expression never wavers as he glides unhurriedly towards his enemies, he is brutal and merciless. He makes no notice of his mutations, or of the wounds he might take, knowing with pristine certainty that nothing can stop him from building a family to cover the world.

Lord Rondin	Level 9 Elite Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 800

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision

HP: 232 ;**Bloodied** 116

Regeneration 10

AC: 21; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23

Speed 6

Action Points 1

[Circled Sword Icon] **Tentacle Rake** (standard; at-will)

Of course I enjoy this! As you will!

Reach 2; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is pulled 1 square and either knocked prone or grabbed (until escape)

[Sword Icon] **Drilling Tongue** (move; at-will) [Diamond] Disease

I can show you the truth, my child. Just come near.

Grabbed targets only; +14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends) and the target contracts level 9 dark spore.

[Sword Icon] **Crushing Stomp** (move; at-will)

You would reject this glory? Then you can only be food for me and my children!

Prone targets only; +14 vs. AC; 3d6+5 damage and the target is dazed (save ends).

[Sword Icon] **Fond Embrace** (standard; recharge 4,5,6)

Welcome to the fold, child.

Lord Rondin makes three consecutive drilling tongue attacks against a grabbed target, and the target is stunned until the end of Lord Rondin's next turn (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Elven

Str 20 (+9)
Con 17 (+7)

Dex 17 (+7)
Int 16 (+7)

Wis 14 (+6)
Cha 15 (+6)

Lord Rondin Tactics

Lord Rondin will serenely ask any intelligent creature he encounters if they will join his glorious family before grabbing them with his tentacle and using *drilling tongue* to infect everyone in sight. Creatures that are particularly contrarian to his perfect vision are instead flung to the ground to be stomped into gory paste. He uses Fond Embrace early and often, and since he has no concept of defeat or escape he'll use his action point early on to do as much damage as possible to the softest target available. Each attack is accompanied by a fatherly reassurance or a

Dark Spore (Level 9+ Disease)

The target is cured < The initial effect's penalty becomes -1 < > **Initial Effect** The target takes a -2 penalty to Will defense < > Internal changes begin, the target is very tired and sick to its stomach, suffering a -2 penalty to all D20 rolls < > **Final State** The target is a creature of the dark spore, interested only in propagating more hosts like itself. Serious external mutations occur, usually resulting in one or more new deadly attack forms.