

PLOT HOOKS

Provided below are a number of plot-hooks connected to the well, these are suggestions only and would benefit from GM elaboration.

Underneath each plot hook *in italics* are further suggestions, but each GM should tweak them to suit their game.

Hook

The body of the **Ambry Witch** still lies at the bottom of the well and—when disturbed, rises from the water wearing tattered rags to menace those who put her to death.

*In-fact the body of the young woman has long since decayed, however the men that the **Lord of Tadbury** sends to collect the coins will sometimes dress in a ragged costume to scare away curious youths from the town.*

The **Witching Well** was built on a holy site belonging to an ancient religion, occasionally strange hooded figures can still be seen in the area. Amongst the more normal offerings, berries and branches are sometimes found with no indication of who left them.

*The **Witch of Ambry** actually belonged to a group of ancient herbalists, although she did not reveal this to her pursuers. The Order still exists and make pilgrimage to the site of her death, leaving behind offerings.*

The well opens out into a series of caverns and tunnels that run below the town of **Tadbury**.

This is a good place for a dungeon or cave system for the PCs to explore. Who knows what creatures might rise from the well to menace the locals?

Although most people prefer not to use the well, some of the poor of **Tadbury** are forced to do so by circumstance. Many of them have recently started becoming ill and people have started to whisper about the witch's curse.

In-fact some of the local craftspeople have been dumping waste products into a nearby stream that feeds the well, this has polluted the water and is causing the sickness.

People who drink the waters from the well during the night of the full-moon sometimes display startling insights or increased intelligence. Some local entrepreneurs have suggested bottling and selling the water, an idea that the **Lord of Tadbury** is considering.

*At the bottom of the well, jammed between two rocks is a Gem of Seeing that the **Ambry Witch** had in her possession when she died. After lying there for so long it has infected the water, occasionally bestowing +1D3 Intelligence on a person who drinks it for 1D6 hours. The effects of the water fade soon after it is removed from the well.*

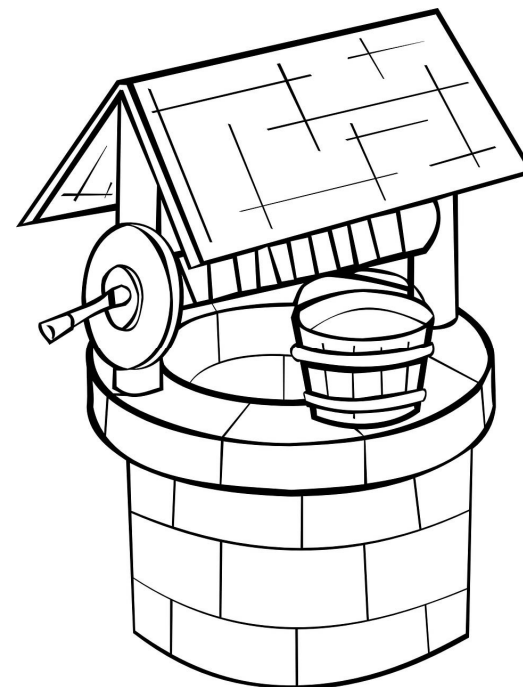
THE WITCHING WELL

LOCAL CURIOSITY

As it has grown the town of **Tadbury** has absorbed a number of smaller villages that once surrounded it. Although these villages have been subsumed into the town and have largely ceased to exist as separate entities, occasionally a piece of local colour or a reminder of these villages will appear.

One such item is the **Witching Well** that was once on the outskirts of the

village of **Ambry**. Although the village itself has long since been consumed by the expanding town the **Witching Well** still stands in a small grassy area between two larger buildings. It is the sight of a strange local festival where the people of **Tadbury** form a procession, led by minstrels and head to the well, where they drape it with flowers and offerings of food.



HISTORY OF THE WELL

Many years ago a local woman named **Shelley Bryan** was accused of witchcraft and was chased through the village streets of **Ambry**. When they reached the well, **Shelley**—who was exhausted and could run no further—turned and spat curses at her pursuers. Which included several of the King’s soldiers.

Wishing to make a quick end of the matter, **Edwin O’Bannon** (the military man leading the pursuit) ordered that **Shelley** be thrown into the well where the waters might cleanse the wickedness from her soul. As she was thrown down the well to her death, **Shelley** cursed the locals saying that if she was in league with the Devil as the locals believed, that her spirit would return to haunt those who had wrongly put her to death.

THE WITCH OF AMBRY

Shelley Bryan was not actually a witch—despite what the locals believed—but rather was a gentle soul learned in the arts of herbalism and healing. She used her knowledge to prepare poultices and remedies for the ill of the village.

However, she spurned the amorous advances of a drunken **Edwin O’Bannon**, who used his influence to stir up ill-feeling towards **Shelley**, blaming her for the failing of crops and recent

illness amongst the live-stock. With the villagers being a superstitious lot it was not difficult to get them to turn on her.

THE DEATH OF EDWIN O’BANNON

Shortly after the slaying of **Shelley Bryan**, **Edwin O’Bannon** was hunting in the nearby woodlands when his horse—startled by an animal—threw him from the saddle. **Edwin** broke his neck and died almost instantly.

The rest of the hunting party claimed to have seen a shadowy figure lurking in the woods nearby just before the incident, it didn’t take people long to link this with the curse of **Ambry Witch**.

WELL DRESSING FESTIVAL

In order to placate the restless spirit of the witch, the people of **Ambry** carried offerings of food and flowers to the well, having a local bard play loud music to repel unclean spirits. This quickly became a local tradition even once the original reason for it had been almost forgotten.

Today in **Tadbury**, the **Well Dressing Festival** has become an annual event where locals dress in garish costumes representing spirits and devils, before parading up to the well lead by minstrels and musicians. Once there flowers are garlanded around the well and small offerings are left in the hope that the celebrants will have good fortune in the coming year.

PEOPLE AT THE FESTIVAL

A diverse mix of locals and visitors take part in the festival, a few suggestions are offered below:

- ❖ **Irlan O’Bannon:** A descendant of **Edwin** he firmly believes his ancestor did the right thing and would be horrified to discover the truth.
- ❖ **Maris Hogbetter:** A local bard seeking to make a name for herself by singing the true ballad of **Shelley Bryan**.
- ❖ **Godric Leonard:** A local, firebrand priest who wants to see this heather festival stamped out.

RUMOURS & GOSSIP

1D10 Rumour

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| 1 | The water from the old Witching Well tastes foul, corrupted by an evil spirit. | properties. |
| 2 | The local church would rather the festival stopped completely, but the Lord of Tadbury knows it attracts people who spend money in the town. | The Ambry Witch had a gold stash and—after she died—the O’Bannon’s got rich. Maybe it’s a coincidence, who knows? |
| 3 | A black cat’s been seen roaming round the well, they say it’s her familiar. | 5 |
| 4 | Long ago, in an attempt to lay the witch to rest, St Francis blessed the waters, giving strange healing | 6 |
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