

The Haunted Castle

A Faery's Tale Adventure

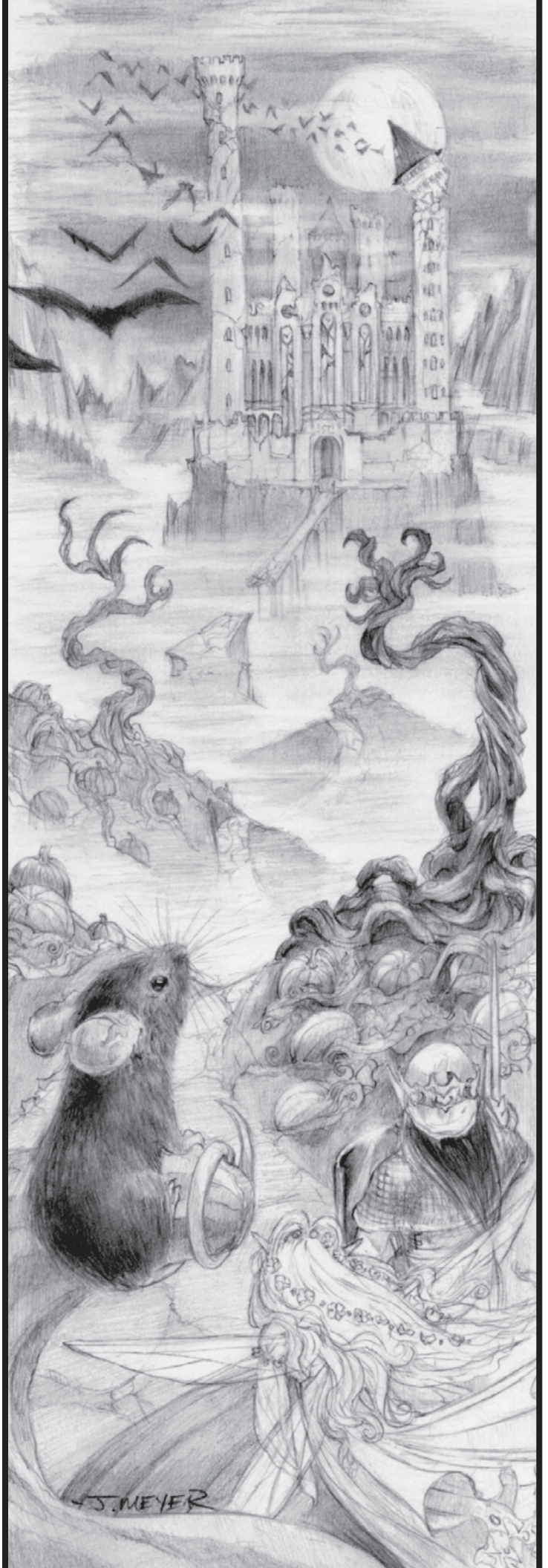
Credits

Author: Matt Forbeck

Artist: Jennifer Meyer

Editor: Patrick Sweeney

Graphic Design & Layout: Hal Mangold



— The Haunted Castle —

Introduction

The Haunted Castle is an adventure for *Faery's Tale*, the interactive storytelling game for players of all ages, from Firefly Games. In it, the players take on the roles of faeries ready to help children endangered by the occupants of a haunted castle deep in the darkest parts of Brightwood.

The adventure can be scary, but in a good, fun way. Eager faeries of all ages can take part.

How to Use This Adventure

If you plan to be a Narrator, then read *The Haunted Castle* all the way through. If you wish to be a player in the adventure instead, stop reading right now. The adventure contains all sorts of surprises for the Narrator to spring on the players, and you don't want to spoil your fun.

What You Need to Play

To play *The Haunted Castle*, your group only needs the things you'd need for any *Faery's Tale* game:

- The *Faery's Tale* rulebook.
- A Narrator and a number of willing players. You need at least one player, but you can have more. Four is a good number for this adventure.
- At least five dice. If you have at least five for each player, plus the Narrator, that would be even better.
- Plenty of Essence counters, enough for each of the players, plus another 30 or so for the Narrator to use.
- Characters for each of the players. If you don't have any, you can use the ready-made characters found in the free *Faery's Tale* introductory pack, *The Tournament of the Fey*, which you can download from www.firefly-games.com.

Once Upon a Time

Deep in the darkest part of the enchanted forest of Brightwood sits the crumbling remains of a once-proud castle. No one has lived there for longer than almost anyone can remember. Many of the place's walls have tumbled down, and vines cover large swaths of what's left.

Most of the time, the castle stands quiet, abandoned long ago. Those who come near it sense something creepy about the place. No birds but crows nest within its walls, and only vermin like rats and worms call the place home.

Wise faeries give the Haunted Castle a wide berth, and warn the younger ones never to go near it. Dark things—goblins and worse—supposedly live in the place and kidnap any young faeries so unwise as to creep within its shadow. On nights with a full moon, strange noises echo from the castle's decaying halls, and some of the braver—or more foolish—faeries report spying ghostly figures walking along what's left of the parapets.

The Castle's Story

Long ago, a king and queen lived in a shining castle on the edge of Brightwood. They ruled over the land with a kind and gentle hand, and their people loved them. They claimed Leanan, the Faery Queen, as their friend, and all the woodland creatures that lived in the shadow of the castle were protected by royal decree.

This made Sluag, the Goblin King, furious. He decided that he would put an end to the good king and queen and their wholesome influences once and for all. To that end, he forged a cursed mirror and made a gift of it to the king and queen.

The mirror was a thing of great beauty, and it seemed to make those shown within its frame to be as handsome and beautiful as they had ever been. The king ordered that it be hung in the main hall for all to enjoy.

That first night, after everyone else in the castle lay asleep, the queen crept down to the hall to behold herself in the mirror. As she did, her image took on a life of its own and grabbed out through the mirror's surface and dragged the startled queen into its ephemeral realm.

The next morning, the king discovered the queen missing and set his people to find her and rescue her from whatever horrible fate had befallen her. They searched many long hours for naught.

That night, the king wandered into the hall alone and gazed upon the mirror. Soon after, he found himself reunited with his wife—trapped on the other side of the mirror.

With both the king and queen missing, the kingdom fell into disarray. The people, convinced that some horrible magic had spirited away their rulers, left the castle and that part of Brightwood far behind.

"Where'er we tread 'tis
haunted, holy ground."

— Lord Byron

About the Author

Matt Forbeck has worked full-time in the gaming industry since 1989. He has designed collectible card games, roleplaying games, miniatures games, toy lines, and board games and has written short fiction, comic books, and novels for companies including Wizards of the Coast (*The Lost Mark* trilogy of Eberron novels), Games Workshop (*Blood Bowl* novels), WizKids (*High Stakes Drifter*), and Playmates Toys (*Marvel Heroes Battle Dice*). This past summer, Wizards of the Coast published his seventh and eighth novels, for their Knights of the Silver Dragon fantasy series for ages eight and up, which he created.

Matt is a proud member of the Alliterates writers' group and the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers. Projects he has worked on have garnered twelve Origins Awards and five ENnies. He lives in Wisconsin, with his wife Ann and their children: Marty, Pat, Nick, Ken, and Helen.

— The Haunted Castle —

The Castle Today

These days, few people remember anything about the Haunted Castle other than the fact it's haunted. Sometimes treasure hunters, brave souls, or simple fools venture inside the place to pick at what secrets they might find within its neglected walls. They almost always regret it.

Goblins run rampant through the Haunted Castle, and they tease and torture any foolhardy enough to disturb the vicious games they play with each other. Their actions run off any intruders they encounter and have led to the rumors throughout the land that the crumbling castle is haunted.

Over the years, though, the goblins have discovered that the castle truly is haunted. On two nights over the full moon, the line between reality and the land behind the mirror's surface blurs, and the king and queen appear in Brightwood once more—as insubstantial ghosts.

Sluag told the goblins who reside in the castle that they must not let anyone break the mirror he gave to the king and queen. If this happens, the magic of the mirror will be lost and the king and queen will be freed. Then the glory of the kingdom might someday be restored.

Goblins do not care much for orders, though, even from the Goblin King. The leader of the creatures who live in the Haunted Castle—a foul redcap called Bilespit (“Bile-Spit”)—learned something interesting about the mirror. For every person trapped within the shadowy realm beyond the mirror's surface, the prisoners can haunt our world for a single night.

Bilespit hopes to lure a score or more of unfortunate souls to their doom within the mirror. If he can find around 30 victims, the castle will be haunted every day of the year. Then no outsiders will ever enter the Haunted Castle again.

The Set-Up

No wise faery would go into the Haunted Castle without a good reason. Fortunately, the characters have one. Read the following to the players as you start the game:

It's a crisp October night here in Brightwood, the last of the month in fact. On this All Hallows' Eve, you've been invited to join Queen Leanan's Fall Ball, to be held in the Fey Court. You plan to meet some of your friends on the other side of Brightwood and travel to the party together.

As you make your way through the forest, you hear voices talking ahead. They don't sound like faeries.

When the characters investigate, read the following:

You reach the edge of a clearing and see a group of shadowy figures standing and talking in low voices. They appear to include a scarecrow, a zombie, and a vampire.

They have their backs to you as they stare up at the black, crumbling walls of a castle that squats before them. A drawbridge stretches across the moat toward them from a gaping hold, like a tongue in a hungry mouth.

“I double dare you to go in there,” a girl's voice says, coming from the vampire's mouth.

“No way,” says the zombie. “I hear Karl went in there two nights ago, and no one's seen him since.”

“I'll bet he's just home sick,” the scarecrow says.

“He probably just too frightened to come out from under his covers,” the vampire says with a snicker.

“He's braver than you,” says the zombie.

“How do you figure that?” the vampire sneers.

“He went in,” the zombie says. “And you're still here.”

The kids can bicker about this as long as you like, but keep it short enough to not bore the players. Sooner or later, the vampire gets irritated with the others and decides that if Karl went into the place then she can too.

The characters have two choices here. They can follow the little vampire into the castle, or they can continue on their way to the ball.

Staying Away

If the characters decide to let the vampire—whose name is Bitsy—go into the Haunted Castle on her own, nothing happens for a while. Then a horrible scream rings out from inside the castle.

Bitsy found the mirror, and it's tugging her in. Even in the characters charge in as fast as they can, they have no chance of reaching the main hall before the mirror traps Bitsy. Her cries should lead them there, but her voice cuts off as they arrive, and she's gone.

If the characters decide to continue on their way to the ball, they don't get far before they hear the scream in the distance. A moment later, the zombie and scarecrow come charging along, fleeing from the castle as fast as they can.

The zombie trips in front of the players and cries, “Bitsy's done for! Her mom and dad are going to kill us!”

“Not if we don't tell them!” the scarecrow shouts as he dashes off, leaving his friend to follow in his wake.

If that's still not enough to convince the characters that they need to lend Bitsy a hand, wait until they reach the Fey Court. Word of the Haunted Castle has reached Leanan's ears, and she asks the characters to investigate the castle on her behalf. She senses Sluag's hand at work here, and she asks the characters to take special care to protect any innocents from the Goblin King and his minions.

Going In

If the characters enter the Haunted Castle with Bitsy, Bilespit and his goblin fellows spy them and put into action a plan to keep the faeries from spoiling their fun. All the goblins need to do is separate Bitsy from the faeries long enough for the girl to find the mirror. If she does that and is without any companions, she is doomed to share the king and queen's fate.

Bilespit's Plans

All Bilespit needs to do is keep the faeries away from Bitsy long enough for the mirror to suck her in. Once that happens, he only needs to keep the characters from figuring out that they should break the mirror.

— The Haunted Castle —

Ideas for Bilesplit's actions appear in each of the location descriptions below. Bilesplit has one goblin on his side for every faery hero in the adventure.

Bilesplit, Knight of Crows

As nasty as redcaps are, Bilesplit, Knight of Crows, is among the worst. He never misses a chance to bully anyone he finds. He keeps a crow named Blackheart as a flying mount.

Bilesplit's reputation for cruelty spreads before him. He prefers to try to intimidate others with his Infamy instead of fight, although he takes to blows eagerly when it comes to that.

Bilesplit, Knight of Crows					
Body	5	Mind	2	Spirit	2
Gifts: Acrobat, Animal Friend, Champion, Infamy, Strong Dark Essence: 4					

Crows					
Body	4	Mind	1	Spirit	2
Gifts: Flying					

Royal Problems

The king and queen—who have been gone for so long that no one remembers their names—roam the castle as ghosts this Halloween. On one hand, they don't want anyone else to get caught in the mirror with them, so they try to scare off anyone they see. On the other, they want someone to set them free.

Torn in these two directions, the king and queen first attempt to scare away anyone who enters the castle. If that fails, they feel that the intruders are brave enough to try to help them, despite the presence of the goblins. They then try to guide the intruder to the main hall to destroy the mirror.

Unfortunately, the king and queen cannot speak through the veil that separates them from this world. They can only moan and groan about their fate. This makes telling the characters what to do a bit tougher, but smart players should be able to figure it out—hopefully in time.

Ghosts

Ghosts are the spirits of people who died before their work in this world was complete. They refuse to leave until their demands are met, after which they fade away into nothingness.

For Kids

If you have younger players who are afraid of the dark, this adventure can be a great way to explore those fears in a safe environment. You can describe the darkness and give the players a thrill, but if they show signs of being truly frightened just remind them that they're really in a brightly lit room with their friends, safe and sound.

If your players aren't terrified of the dark, try dimming the lights in the room in which you play the game. Playing by candlelight—or by the light of a jack o' lantern or three—helps set a spooky mood.

Ghosts					
Body	0	Mind	2	Spirit	5
Gifts: Black Magic, Flying, Intangible, Nightvision. Dark Essence: 10					

New Gift

Ghosts have a new Gift: Intangible.

Intangible

The creature is as insubstantial as moonlight. It cannot be touched, nor can it touch anything. It can pass through solid objects as if they were not there.

The Haunted Castle

The Haunted Castle is a fearsome place, even by daylight. Of course, the events in this adventure will draw the characters into it at night, just to make things worse.

Locations

As the Narrator, you need to know about a number of important places in the castle, each of which is described below. This list is not exhaustive. The full nature of the castle is open for your interpretation, which allows you to add to it on the fly if you like.

If the players want to go someplace that's not described here—like the stables or the pantry—let them. Describe it as much or as little as you like. If you leave out details, most players will mentally fill them in, so be sparing if you can.

These extra places aren't essential to the adventure, but they can still be fun. Also, they can help make the castle more of the kind of place your players imagine it to be. Rather than something they come to, it's a place they help create.

The Moat

The moat around the castle still contains water, although it's cold, murky, and filled with junk, including branches from the forest and large chunks of stone and masonry fallen from the walls above it. It smells, too, like rotting plants. Bubbles of swamp gas bubble to the surface here and there, stinking the place up and hinting that something moving beneath the water might be stirring up the bottom of the moat.

Faeries who can fly can go right over the moat. Others must find another way around or across. If anyone places a boat or a raft in the moat or—even better—tries to swim across, she is bound to meet the hungry, black-scaled alligators that live in the moat. They attack at the slightest provocation. The easiest and safest way to get away from them is to leave the moat.

Alligators					
Body	5	Mind	1	Spirit	0
Gifts: None					

If a faery tries to fly into the castle, a flock of bats erupts from the nearest window or gap in the castle wall. They flutter about, flicking back and forth, until the faery gives up or gets inside. They do not attack the faery, but it's a Heroic challenge to get

— The Haunted Castle —

past them. Any attempt that fails costs the faery 1 Essence from the bats battering her about.

Bats					
Body	3	Mind	1	Spirit	0
Gifts: Flying, Nightvision					

The Drawbridge and Gates

The proper and easiest way to get into the castle is by means of the rickety drawbridge that crosses the moat. It is down, and from the rust on the chains the characters might realize that it has not been moved for a long time. When anyone sets foot on the drawbridge, it creaks horribly and tips from side to side.

Crossing the drawbridge is a Tricky challenge. Anyone who fails falls into the moat and must deal with the alligators.

If Bilespit and his goblins can confront the characters alone—without Bitsy seeing them—they do. They want to separate Bitsy from the characters so that the mirror can suck her in. They stand in the center of the drawbridge and refuse to let the faeries pass.

The faeries can fly over all but Bilespit, or they can try to frighten the goblins off. If any goblin loses a single point of Dark Essence from a faery's attack, it flees through the cemetery and into the castle proper. If two goblins flee in this way, all of them do, including Bilespit.

The Cemetery

Inside the gates, a large yard occupies the area between the drawbridge and the main part of the castle. Most of the yard is open space, but the path to the main doors runs straight through a graveyard in which the earlier members of the royal line are buried.

A thick fog fills the yard, obscuring all but the tops of the gravestones, which tilt at odd angles to each other, as if something underneath them had shoved them up and out of the way. When the characters enter the graveyard, the ghosts of the king and queen rise up from the fog like pale specters who have some to seek revenge on those who dare to disturb their eternal rest.

The king and queen try to scare the faeries away. They cannot speak, but they moan loudly, and they use their Black Magic to help frighten the intruders (but not to harm or injure anyone).

If the faeries stand up to the ghosts, they discover that the ghosts cannot hurt them. Once this happens, the ghosts stop trying to scare the faeries and instead try to gain their help by leading them into the royal quarters inside the castle.

Inside the Castle

As the faeries step into the castle, they enter a massive foyer. Doorways to the left and right stand empty, the doors fallen over into the rubble of the chambers beyond. A sweeping staircase leads to what's left of the upper floor. A pair of doors stand just beyond that, slightly ajar.

If Bitsy is with the faeries, Bilespit and his goblins charge at her, trying to scare her through the double doors. As she disappears through the door, they then turn to face the faeries again.

As before, any goblin that loses a point of Dark Essence from a faery attack runs away, but those unharmed stay until Bilespit flees.

Troubleshooting

No matter how hard the heroes try, sometimes things go wrong. When that happens, it's up to you as the Narrator to step in and give the faeries a second chance.

If the faeries fail to break the mirror, then Bitsy can step up and do it for them. Give the players a chance to give her a hand though. She can ask them to distract Bilespit and his cronies for her, allowing her to get a good, smashing swing in.

If all the faeries get trapped in the mirror—along with Bitsy too—they find that they do not feel like ghosts once inside. As magical creatures, they are solid enough and can try to attack the mirror and smash it from the inside instead. The goblins' plan has backfired upon them, and now the faeries only have to take advantage of it.

The ghosts try to scare the goblins, but it's no use. The goblins have been among the ghosts too long and aren't frightened by them any more.

The Royal Quarters

A set of rickety stairs lead up to the second floor of the castle, most of which has long since fallen to the ground. The only major parts left comprise the living quarters of the king and queen.

If the characters look around here, they find a sheaf of papers. On the top, there's a short note in the king's hand.

I know not how or why my bride went missing in the middle of the night. I have sent my people far and wide to search for her. I only hope that they find her, and soon.

It seems to me that all went wrong soon after I accepted Sluag's gift. I could not refuse such a present from another royal—at least not in public—but now I think I may have been wrong to accept it. If my wife is not returned to me tonight, I will go and destroy the thing myself, alone so that no one may speak of my disrespect for the Goblin King.

The Main Hall

This is where the king and queen used to hold court. It's a long and wide hall with a high, vaulted ceiling. Pillars line the central walkway, straight up to a dais on which lie a pair of toppled thrones.

Moonlight shines through the roof in several places. One large beam falls on gilded mirror that hangs on the wall to the right.

If anyone looks into the mirror while alone in the room, a ghostly duplicate of the viewer leaps from the mirror and tries to pull her in. This is a contest of Spirit, with the dark reflection having the same Spirit score as its prey.

If the viewer wins the contest, it pries itself away from the ghost's grasp and cannot be harmed by the mirror's power again. If the viewer fails, though, she is pulled into the mirror and becomes a ghost.

When the faeries enter the hall, the ghosts try to lead them to the mirror and convince them to break it, something they

— The Haunted Castle —

Extending the Story

Just because *The Haunted Castle* is over doesn't mean the fun has to end. Here are some ideas for continuing the tale.

- Bilespit decides he wants revenge on the faeries who foiled his plans. He tries to chase them down one at a time to beat and capture them.
- The king and queen wish to learn what happened to their friends and family from when they ruled the land. They need the faeries' help.
- The king and queen hope to find certain items in their castle that will help them restore their rule. They need the faeries to lend a hand.
- The kids who dared Bitsy into entering the haunted castle want to get revenge on her for telling the people of their town what they'd done. It's up to the faeries to keep her safe.

Feel free to take the story in any direction that suits you. As long as you think about what the players would want to do, you should have an easy time of it.

cannot do themselves, even with their black magic. As the faeries approach the mirror, though, Bilespit and his goblins move to stop them. They fight until either the mirror is broken or Bilespit loses all of his Dark Essence.

If the players seem unable to figure out that they need to break the mirror, have Bilespit snarl this at the other goblins. *"Keep them away from the magic mirror. They must not harm it!"* Give them plenty of time to figure it out on their own first though.

Since the mirror is enchanted, it is harder to break than the standard sort. Shattering the mirror is a Heroic challenge, requiring four successes. Remember that the faeries can team up to try to break it, and even Bitsy can lend a hand too.

The Climax

When the mirror is broken, the king and queen and any children trapped with them appear as if from thin air. Read the following aloud to your players:

The mirror shatters into hundreds of tiny shards. As the pieces crash to the ground, two figures burst from the mirror's frame as if they'd been flattened behind the glass. They stumble to the ground for but a moment before rising to their feet.

The two people wear regal finery of the bluest velvet, and each bears a jewel-encrusted, golden crown atop their heads. As their eyes turn to you, they beam with sheer joy.

"Thank you, my friends," says the queen. "You have done us the greatest service. You have set us free."

Upon seeing the king and queen, Bilespit and his goblins flee screaming into the night. The heroes are free to pursue them, but the king and queen call them back.

"Let them go," the king says. "They have no power over us any longer, and their master is sure to treat such failures far more cruelly than we."

Rewards

The king and queen give each character a Boon. This comes along with their undying thanks. As symbol of this, the queen gives each of the faeries a silver pin from her hair. This is long and sharp enough for a faery to use as a sword too.

When the faeries make it to the Fey Court, the Faery Queen is thrilled to hear of their exploits. She long ago counted the king and queen as friends of her kingdom, and she has missed them dearly since their disappearance. In her gratitude for their heroism, she puts a silver medal around each of their necks and declares them to be heroes of the grandest sort.

Bitsy is also grateful to the faeries for saving her from the goblins. She tells them that she hopes that she can see them again soon. She promises not to tell anyone else about them, mostly because she's sure that few people would believe her.



Copyright 2006 by Firefly Games. All rights reserved under International Copyright Convention. *The Haunted Castle, Faery's Tale* and all characters and their likenesses are trademarks owned by and/or copyrights by Firefly Games.

All situations, incidents and persons portrayed within are fictional and any similarity without satiric intent to individuals living or dead is strictly coincidental.

Published by Firefly Games
4514 Marconi Ave. #3, Sacramento CA 95821
patrick@firefly-games.com • www.firefly-games.com

