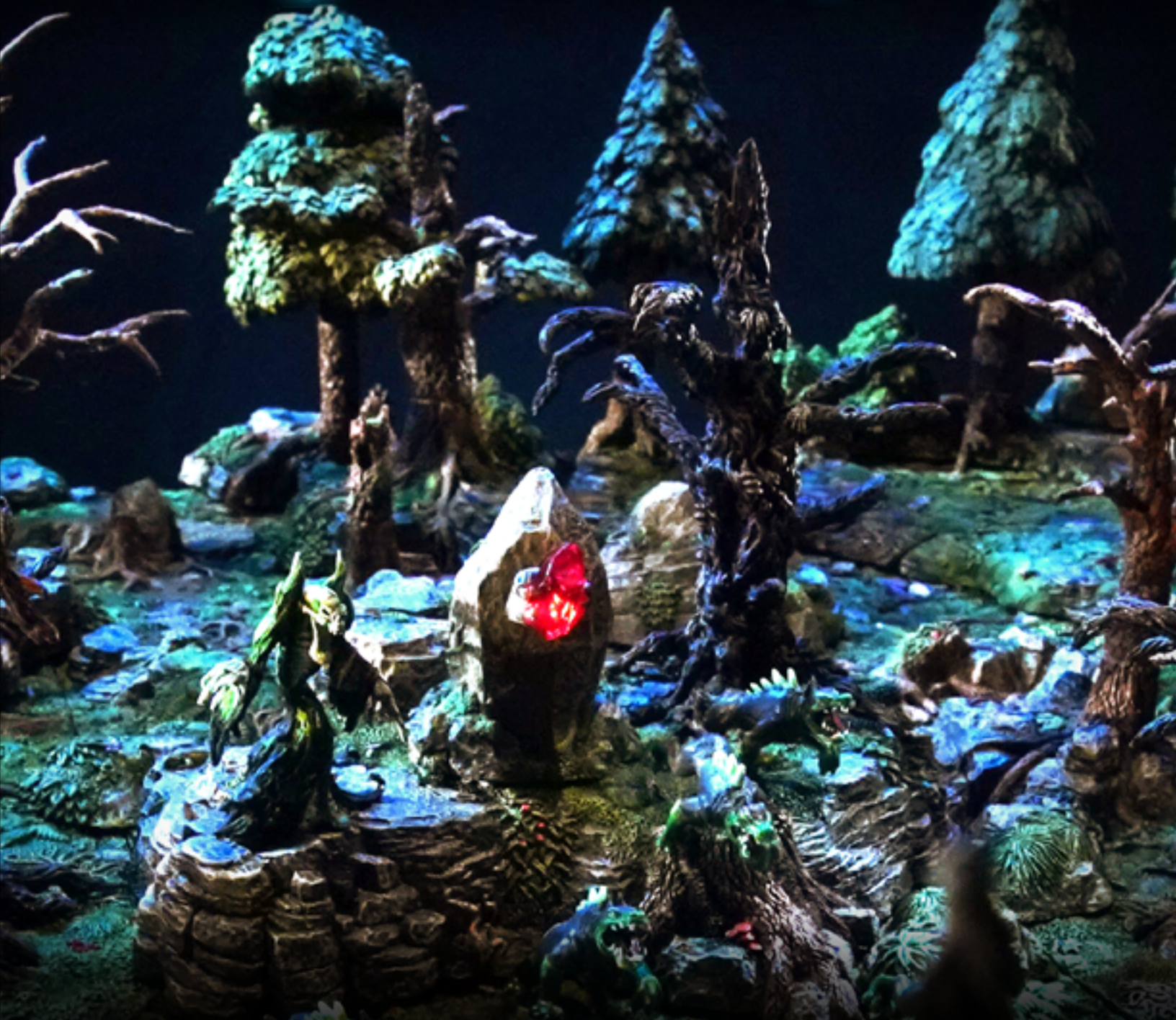


DWARVEN FORGE® WILDLANDS



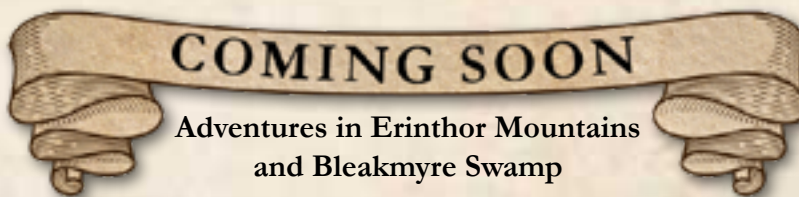
Fifth Edition Encounters

PART 1 OF 3: DREADHOLLOW FOREST

Ten Harrowing Expeditions for Players Levels 3 to 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Map of the Wildlands</i>	...3	Tales of Woe by Teos Abadia	
<i>Introduction</i>	...5	For 3 to 5 5th-Level Players	
Death Druids of Dreadhollow by Elye Alexander		<i>Encounter 1 – The Lost Sage</i>	...23
For 3 to 5 3rd-Level Players		<i>Encounter 2 – Deadly Clues</i>	...25
<i>Encounter 1 – A Grim Discovery</i>	...7	<i>Encounter 3 – Expedition to Dreadhollow</i>	...27
<i>Encounter 2 – A Woodland Ambush</i>	...9	<i>Encounter 4 – Sites of Power</i>	...29
<i>Encounter 3 – Death-Druids’ Ritual</i>	...11	<i>Encounter 5 – Raging Woe</i>	...32
<i>Encounter 4 – Justice for the Death-Bringer</i>	...14		
<i>Encounter 5 – The Feast of Rictilos</i>	...17	<i>Appendix A – Creature Stats</i>	...35
		<i>Appendix B – Handouts</i>	...40
		<i>Open Gaming License</i>	...43



CREDITS

Adventure Design:

Teos Abadia and Elye Alexander

Creative Director:

Nate Taylor

Photography:

Erin Scime

Project Manager:

Chris London

Lead Editor:

Tyler Ankenman

Additional Writing:

Tyler Ankenman and Chris London

Layout and Graphic Design:

Latisha Bevel and Janet Feldman

Map of Wildlands:

Felipe Torrent and Latisha Bevel

Wildlands Creative Team:

Elye Alexander, Tyler Ankenman, Gabe Beresin, Latisha Bevel, Casey Carbone, Janet Feldman, Nina Heath, Selina Heinen, Tobi Lieberman, Chris London, Michelle McGriff, Erin Miller, Stefan Pokorny, Ray Ruiz, Erin Scime, Nate Taylor, Felipe Torrent

World of Mythras:

Stefan Pokorny

MAP OF THE WILDLANDS





INTRODUCTION

You entered these woods all but ten minutes ago, yet the canopy is so thick you feel no connection to the outside world. The sun's light barely filters through the thick branches overhead, so your way is lit by the phosphorescent stalks of Shimmerfronds scattered throughout the woods. Your eyes strain in the low light to make out the various flora around you. Though they are undeniably beautiful, you've been warned of the unrelenting grasp of the Razorvine, the enchanting scent of the Glamourleaf, and to fear the Wyluli who stalk their prey through the underbrush. Rumoured to be a liminal space between the Feywild and Shadowfell, the Dreadhollow Forest is a place of great reward...and even greater danger.

Welcome to the Wildlands! This is Dwarven Forge's third foray into written adventures (following Dungeon of Doom and Caverns Deep) for the 5th edition of the world's most popular fantasy role playing game. Our past two adventures were sprawling journeys taking you through every encounter in their respective Kickstarters. However, as Wildlands was structured differently than the projects that came before it, we thought it only fitting to push into some new territories ourselves. In this book you'll find two separate five-part adventures, helmed by two different designers but utilizing the same setting—the foreboding Dreadhollow Forest.

When designing our terrain, one of our key guiding principles is modularity, and that carries over to these adventures as well. Every chapter of these modules is designed to be played either in order or as standalone trials, to be played as a one-shot or dropped into your existing campaign. Although they were designed with our pieces in mind, they can be played on any terrain or graph paper you like, even the Theater of the Mind. Ours is not to tell you **what** to play with, but to help you enhance your tabletop experience.

As such, we invite you to consider our designing principles as we were creating the Dreadhollow Forest. Pushing through this dense and multiplicitous verdantry should feel at one hand fantastical, and harrowing on its other. This is a place where dualities aren't simply metaphorical, they are its bread and butter. In the Wildland Expanse (comprising the Dreadhollow Forest, Erinthor Mountains, and Bleakmyre Swamp) the Feywild and the Shadowfell ebb and wane daily, flowing into each other just as much as the Prime Material. Ancient Elven ruins scatter its landscape—could they be responsible for the weakening of the veil? The flora of Dreadhollow lives and dies like any other creature might, and as such deserves the same care you might give a wild animal. Each step should evoke mystery and enticement, for it could very well be the last of any who enter.

The team at Dwarven Forge makes terrain because we love to play these games, and this book is an extension of that love. Elye and Teos let their creativity flow onto the page, and as long as their ideas are able to fuse with your own and create a memorable night at the table, we consider this a success. We hope to hear tales of your adventures in the Wildlands, and above all, we hope you have fun!

- Chris London & Tyler Ankenman

DREADHOLLOW FOREST

DEATH DRUIDS OF DREADHOLLOW

BY ELYE ALEXANDER



FOR 3-5 3RD-LEVEL PLAYERS



STORY & SETTING

Summary. A cult of death-druids plot and scheme in the wilderness just beyond a remote rural town. When one of the town's hunters goes missing, the party is tasked with finding them and in doing so come to clash with the cult itself. In the end, the group find themselves in direct confrontation with the cult's powerful patron: a mad Fae lord. Can they survive the cult's machinations, and save this remote outpost from the power of the Fae?

Encounter 1 (Starter Set). The spirit of an evil cultist lurks in a remote forest location, tasked by its wicked master with slaying passersby.

Encounter 2 (Wargame Scatter). The cult of druids releases their pack of Wyluli weretigers to ambush and kidnap the party for sacrifice in an evil ritual, furthering their plans.

Encounter 3 (Explore the Forest). The party uncovers the death-druids' ritual grove, only to find an evil rite currently in progress - can they rescue the sacrifice victim before it is too late?

Encounter 4 (Heart of the Forest). Kassenia, leader of the death-druid cult, has taken refuge in the heart of the forest and our heroes are the only ones who can bring her to justice.

Encounter 5 (Titanstooth Glade). A mad Fae lord, patron to a failed death-druid cult, attempts to lure the party to their ruin. Intending to raise their corpses as undead servants to populate a new cult, the party faces the final battle to cast him from the world before he can carry out his plans.

ENCOUNTER 1A

ENCOUNTER 1: A GRIM DISCOVERY

FOREST STARTER SET

Hook. A hunter, Chaddick Greenling, has been reported missing from a nearby village, and the party has been asked to look for him. The town council offers a modest reward for reliable information about his whereabouts and directs the adventurers to the stretch of woodland that Chaddick frequented.

DM NOTES

Following the path laid by the council guides the party to quickly find the site of Chaddick's demise. Read the following out loud:

A strange, sad keening leads you to a narrow glade lit by slanting sunlight. At the far side, you see a humanoid figure sprawled in a cluster of vines just outside the shadow of the trees. It appears to be a human male clad in hunter's garb, lying face down and unmoving. There's a pale shape in the shade just beyond-- a monstrous skull set atop a small boulder. Dragon? Wyvern? Unclear at this distance. The keening fades as you approach, but seems to have emanated somewhere near the skull.

Hidden inside the wyvern skull is a finger-bone pinned to the stone with a silver nail. The bone belonged to Dandryg, a cult initiate who angered the patron of the corrupted death-druid cult to which he belonged. He was slain and a curse was laid upon his spirit: until he has brought about the deaths of at least two sentient beings, his ghost is condemned to lurk in this remote location, tormented by memories of his failures. Now, after long days of misery, the spirit sees a chance to escape at last. Chaddick, out setting traps for local wildlife, stumbled into Dandryg's presence; the ghost waited until the hunter's spike-trap was set, then captured and strangled the man by animating a nearby razorvine. Now Dandryg only needs one more kill, and now has an extra weapon (the trap) at his disposal. He just needs to lure an adventurer within range...

Playing Dandryg. Despite his spiritual torment, Dandryg does not have a mournful ghost's personality. In life he was sly and mischievous (which is why he fell afoul of the cult's patron), and he'll use his charisma to deceive the adventurers. His plan is simple: to play on their curiosity and remain quiet until they approach Chaddick's body, then attack with the vine and the trap. If the party calls out to the unseen singer (or keep their distance for too long) he'll engage them in conversation, claiming to be a ghost who's mourning the dead hunter and wishes to see him buried. He'll tell them whatever story he thinks will get them to approach, playing to anything he can discern about their personalities.

Dandryg can animate the razorvine at will; it uses the statistics of a Writhing Razorvine Tangle (see *DF Wildlands Bestiary*, pg. 24). He can also create other dangerous effects using his telekinetic abilities (see Lair Actions). He can't be attacked directly, but if a character discovers the finger bone inside the wyvern skull (**DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check**) if the skull is intact; **DC 10** if it has been smashed and pulls free the silver nail (**DC 15 Strength check**), Dandryg's spirit will be cast into the Abyss. He will plead to avoid this outcome, though he has little to offer the party other than a few hints about the cult he belonged to. Alternately, holy water poured over the nail and finger bone will break the curse and send Dandryg's spirit on to a less painful afterlife in Limbo.

LAIR ACTIONS

Each turn, if a creature is within a 50-foot-radius of the wyvern skull, Dandryg can take one of the following actions on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties):

- Rocks and sticks rise and hurtle toward a target creature. Make a *ranged weapon attack*: +6 to hit, range 50 ft, one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.
- A cloud of leaves whirl up in a 5-foot-radius, 10-foot-high cylinder. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, they suffer 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage and have disadvantage on their first attack roll or ability check on the following turn. On a success, they suffer no damage or effects.
- The Wyvern Skull animates and snaps at a creature within 5 feet. Make a *melee weapon attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage. The skull can be attacked (AC 11, 10 HP, immune to psychic and poison damage); once destroyed it can no longer attack.

TERRAIN FEATURES

A series of wooden spikes attached to a 10-foot flexible wooden pole whip out from a concealed location to strike anyone who comes near. This trap is triggered by a hidden tripwire - **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** to spot it; **DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check** to disable it. Even if the tripwire is disarmed, Dandryg can use his limited telekinesis to release the spikes, which he will do if anyone approaches within range. When the trap is triggered, it makes a single melee attack with a +7 bonus against each creature in the 10-foot range, dealing 5 (1d10) piercing damage and 5 (2d4) poison damage on a hit. Any creature that suffers poison damage in this way must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, it is *paralyzed* for 1 minute; it may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

SETUP

Place the Wyvern Skull Cairn at the center of the encounter area with the Razorvine Tangle in front of it; use a prone miniature to represent the fallen hunter. The Mossy Rock Mound should be on the opposite side of the Cairn, with the Whipping Stakes removed, waiting to be revealed, should anyone attempt to approach the Skull from behind. The Tripwire should remain unseen until the party discovers it; if they do, you can place it between the Mossy Rock Mound and the Cairn. The trees can be used to indicate the edge of the tree line on either side of the Cairn, and the remainder of the set can be placed at the DM's discretion, to act as scenery to set the mood and obstacles to funnel them towards the traps.



ENCOUNTER 2: A WOODLAND AMBUSH

FOREST WARGAME SCATTER SET

Hook (interconnected). Either through discussion with Dandryg or finding his possessions from Encounter 1, the party learned of the druidic death cult operating in the area, kidnapping people. (Alternatively, they could speak to the relatives of the slain hunter Chaddick Greenling to learn of a similar area in the forest that people seem to be disappearing from.) As evening approaches while investigating these disappearances—an ambush strikes out from the wilds!

Hook (independent). The party learns of an old shortcut through a dense woodland, but when they inquire at a nearby tavern they are warned no one has taken the route in years because shadowy creatures have taken up residence along the trail, harrying any who pass that way.

DM NOTES

For this excursion, it may be wise to guide your party to choosing someone to help keep an active lookout through the thickets. When you feel it prudent, read the following out loud:

After passing through a stretch of dense woodland you reach a shadowy hollow where larger trees twist up from the rocky soil, thick roots clutching the outcrops like knotted tentacles.

Green-clad boulders jut from the forest floor, some rising twice the height of a tall human. The chatter of an angry squirrel from somewhere ahead disturbs the moss-muted silence.

The chattering squirrel is a hint that something lurks ahead. If the party reacts to it, or otherwise chooses to search the landscape ahead, ask whichever character is scouting to make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check**. If successful, they glimpse a creature hunkered down atop a crag up ahead (the Titanstooth Base) - eyes glinting, but no other discernible feature (a particularly high roll might also detect the second Wyluli hidden in the hedges). Otherwise the coast appears to be clear—maybe that squirrel was simply alarmed by the party...

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

Hoping to ambush passersby and capture any of them for the death-druid cult they serve, a pack of **Wyluli**—weretigers tainted by the Shadowfell—observe with bated breath. An archer (*DF Wildlands Bestiary*, pg. 12) rests atop the crag, while the berserker (*WB*, pg. 13) seethes from a hedge, the magical *Kidnapper's Hood* (see *Appendix B – Handouts*, pg. 42) in its grasp. Their plan is for the archer atop the crag to reveal himself and engage the party, hoping to goad the more skillful fighters into approaching, while the berserker stalks and captures whichever party member remains farthest behind. If someone is caught by the berserker, the archer will distract the rest of the party while they escape (consider whether a **Wisdom (Perception)** check is necessary for remaining members to notice their removal). Once a respectable distance has been covered, the archer will flee in turn.

If the kidnapping succeeds, it's not the end for the captured character. There's still a chance for the rest of the party to stage a rescue! The captured hero can replace the captured villager in the next encounter, and it will be up to their companions to save them.

Playing the Wyluli. The Wyluli are not expecting a band of well-armed adventurers, but they are a serious threat nonetheless. For this reason, be careful not to have them attack too aggressively until sorely pressed. Having so far preyed upon unprepared common folk, they are overconfident and will initially regard the characters as easy prey. Their goal is simply to capture a sacrificial victim (who needs to be taken alive for their masters' purposes) and they will not actively try to slay them unless they are driven to desperation.

Heeding the level of desperation is particularly true if there are only 3 party members. The archer should begin by firing a warning shot as a distraction rather than going for the kill, and the shadows in the hollow should not be deep enough for the Wyluli to use for their Shadow Step ability. If there are 5 party members the Wyluli can be more aggressive, and if there are 6 or more a third Wyluli can be present—a second berserker to assist with the capture and then cover the kidnapper's retreat.

If presented with overwhelming force and no prospects of escaping with a victim, they will flee, especially with only one of them left. They may also let slip who their master's are if pressed for information. Either of these can be a good way to tie the heroes directly to the following encounter.

TERRAIN FEATURES

Tactically, the most significant terrain feature here is the Titanstooth Base where the Wyluli archer is hiding. It will be challenging for any hero to scale this crag while the Wyluli defends it—a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** is required, and the Wyluli can use its reaction to make a melee attack with advantage against anyone it can see climbing up. Other crags and trees in the area may provide partial to complete cover and/or hiding places. Shadows beneath the trees and in the hollow under the Hidden Burrow Lump may enable the Wylulis' Shadow Step abilities, and the Razorvine Tangle can create an area of dangerous difficult terrain.

TREASURE

The Wyluli berserker possesses the sinister *Kidnapper's Hood*, a cursed item that the heroes can use at their own risk (the curse is not revealed until a character has attuned to it). The Wyluli archer has a good quality longbow and a dozen arrows. The two carry 30 gp and 50 sp between them, their reward for aiding the death-cult.

SETUP

Place the Huge Rocky Hummock at the center of the play area and the Titanstooth Base beyond it, opposite side from where the heroes will enter. Place the Cwyldren Tree near the Base, so the archer has the option of leaping into its branches to evade attackers. Use the rest of the trees and outcrops to create an interesting landscape that gives all involved options for hiding and maneuvering, or some type of funnel. Finally, place the two Hollow Hedges near where the characters enter the area, while keeping in sight of the Base.



ENCOUNTER 3: DEATH-DRUIDS' RITUAL

EXPLORE THE FOREST SET

Hook (interconnected). Making use of the new connection to the druids' cult by way of the Wyluli, the party can choose one of the following paths:

- A party member was captured, and they've hunted the hunters back to their employer's ritual glade.
- The Wyluli fled and led them directly to their employer's ritual glade.
- Some form of townsfolk information or divining the location from previous items gained from previous encounters (the Kidnapper's Hood or Dandryg's letters).

Hook (independent). Local townsfolk report dark goings-on in the nearby forest. Woodcutters and others who have ventured beneath the trees have not returned, and rumors speak of foul rites carried out in the deepest glades—dark magic and death-worship. The terrified populace begs the heroes to rout out the evil.

If a character was kidnapped from the previous encounter: Consider what has happened to them since. They aren't deafened with the hood, but have they remained conscious? What may they have learned about the ritual, and other plans? Their patron's name perhaps? What equipment do they have?

DM NOTES

Whatever has led the rest of the party here, they find themselves following a faint trail through the forest far from the edge of town. Tracks indicate that several human-sized creatures have come this way recently, and drag marks suggest they were bringing another humanoid against their will.

An eerie chanting—barely recognizable as human utterance—reaches your ears an instant before you spot the glade ahead. Though sunlight pierces the canopy there, it seems somehow muted, as if the sun itself recoils from the presence of some dark intent.

As you draw closer you spot several figures standing in the glade, gathered around an ancient structure of stone—a circular dais partly overgrown with sinewy vines. Another figure sprawls at the center of the dais. As the chanting continues, you discern a faint swirling of shadow beginning to rotate widdershins around the edge of the dais; the prone figure cries out as if in the throes of a nightmare.

They have arrived just in time to attempt to disrupt a dark ritual and save the sacrificial victim. The abductee is a dwarven tinker, Kalvim Tintapper, who was ambushed while traveling along a remote trail through the wilderness (or if a member of the party was kidnapped by the Wyluli in the previous encounter, place them here) but it is hard to tell given the hood still over their head. A complicated process of gathering poisonous herbs, mixing foul concoctions, and calling upon evil spirits has culminated in a long, slow magical chant that will drain the life from the victim and entrap their soul for later use to fuel the schemes of the cult's patron, a mad Fae lord.

Garian Shull, the second-in-command of the death-druid cult, is directing the ritual. He is a wiry halfling with nimble fingers and darting eyes that peer from beneath the hood of a cloak so stained and besmirched that its color is indistinguishable. He is accompanied by other cultists in the chant, while thuggish enforcers guard the perimeter of the meadow.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The characters are likely to battle the cult in three waves: first the enforcers, then Shull, then the remaining cultists. If approaching stealthily (and thus slowly) by describing the victim's torment in the grip of the shadows, make it clear that time is limited before the victim is slain. Something about the shadows is sapping their life force away.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

The number of cultists and enforcers present varies depending on the number of players. In addition to Garian Shull, there should be one cultist and one enforcer present for each player in the rescuing party.

Playing the Enforcers. As soon as the encounter begins, the enforcers will attack the party, doing their best to keep them away from the dais. Their goal is to keep the ritual going, even at the cost of their own lives.

Playing the Cultists. The cultists, in the grip of a dark frenzy, will continue their chant no matter what, attempting to complete the rite until deliberately interrupted. As a Bonus Action, a cultist (including Shull) may continue chanting even while engaged in melee combat. However, each time they suffer damage they must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution check** to continue chanting. Once a cultist has stopped chanting, they cannot resume while they remain in melee combat.

If it becomes clear that the guards are soon to be defeated, or someone steps onto the dais to remove the victim, Shull will step away from the ritual to confront the heroes.





Playing the Victim. While gripped by the dark energy of the ritual, the sacrificial victim is held by bonds of shadow magic, unable to speak, leave the dais, cast spells (if able), or attack the cultists (given the hood is still on them). Additionally, at the end of each turn that passes while the ritual is maintained, the victim loses 1/10 of their total hit points, rounded up or down as necessary. Once reduced to 0 hit points the victim is unstable and has disadvantage on death saving throws for as long as the ritual continues. If the victim dies under the effects of the ritual, their soul is entrapped in a twisted glass vessel that Shull wears in a holder on his belt.

If they realize that rescuers have arrived, however, they can rouse themselves enough to sit up and gesticulate, potentially providing information to the heroes. Once there are two or fewer cultists chanting, the ritual's hold is more tenuous, and the victim may attempt a **DC 17 Charisma check** at the start of each of their turns. On a success, they burst from their shadowy bonds and end the ritual. If at any point before the victim dies all cultists stop chanting, the ritual fails and the victim is freed and can act normally.

If the vessel that holds the soul of the victim is recovered, the soul may be freed and restore the victim to life using the *revivify* spell; without the vessel, the victim can only be brought back by means of a *wish* spell or equally powerful magic.

Interrupting the ritual. If one of the rescuers attempts to free the victim directly, by pulling them off the dais, they must first succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma check** to overcome the shadow magic and move onto the dais (this counts as part of their move action). On a failure, they are repulsed and cannot move onto the dais that turn. Succeed or fail, they take 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. If they are able to move onto the dais, they may then use an Action to attempt to pull the victim free; this requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Intelligence (Arcana) check** (player's choice). On a success, the victim is freed and the ritual ends. On a failure, nothing happens. The character may choose to remain on the dais, taking 3 (1d6) necrotic damage at the start of each turn within that space, or be ejected to the nearest unoccupied space.

RESOLUTION

The cultists are fanatical and will fight until slain. Shull is the one exception; he will fight to the death to attempt to complete the ritual, but if it is completed and he has the vessel with the victim's soul in his possession, he will flee to take it to his leader. This could lead to a chase scene or to a further encounter wherein the heroes must capture him; alternatively, he could appear in one of the two remaining encounters. If the group rescues Kalvim Tintapper, he is extremely grateful and offers them "free tinker's services for a year" as well as all the gold he possesses (10 gp).

TREASURE

The cult has stashed its treasures and supplies in the hollow beneath the Hidden Burrow Lump at the edge of the meadow; the kidnap victim is aware of this cache. It contains the victim's belongings (in the case of Kalvim Tintapper, a set of tinker's tools, an explorer's pack, and a pouch with 10 gp and 10 sp). It also contains items the cult has accumulated: a *Potion of Firebreathing*, a *Potion of Climbing*, a poisoner's kit; a set of thieves' tools; 120 gp, 150 sp and 200 cp.

CREATURE STATISTICS

Garian Shull uses the statistics of a *Cult Fanatic* (MM pg. 345).

The Cultists and Enforcers use the statistics of *Cultists* and *Thugs* (MM pgs. 345 and 350, respectively).

Kalvim Tintapper uses the statistics of a *Commoner* (MM pg. 345) except he has 10 hit points.

SETUP

Place the Circular Arcane Dais near the center of the encounter area with the appropriate number of cultist minis gathered around it. Place the trees and crags around the edges of the scene to create a central glade; ensure that there are sufficient trees and other features to provide cover for a stealth approach. Place the Hidden Burrow Lump relatively close to the Dais. Place a miniature (or the captured character miniature) in the victim's place upon the Dais. Position the cult's enforcers evenly around the edges of the glade.



ENCOUNTER 4: JUSTICE FOR THE DEATH-BRINGER

HEART OF THE FOREST SET

Hook (either): Word has spread of the collapse of the local death-druid cult. Emboldened by this news, the constables from the local village went to arrest Kassenia, the woman known to be the cult's leader—but were all badly wounded by an arcane trap, and Kassenia escaped. Now the village has turned to the heroes for help in capturing her before she can regroup and reform her nefarious organization. The village elders offer a reward of 500 gp total if she is brought back alive for a trial, or 50 gp if she is slain. The local folk also provide a trained bloodhound to aid in tracking Kassenia.

DM NOTES

It will take some time to journey through the forest, allowing for whatever interactions or preparations are necessary to find the old Elven site. When ready, read the following out loud:

The hound moves steadily along the trail, leading you deeper and deeper into the woodland. Narrow paths weave between crooked boulders overgrown with ferns; strange fungi bulge up like glistening eyes furtively watching as you pass. The day begins to wane, and you realize that you have ventured into the heart of the forest, a region none of you have seen before.

At last, as the sun is sinking in the west and the shadows grow long beneath the trees, the hound pauses, lifts its ears and peers ahead, giving a low uneasy woof. Following its gaze you see a stone dais surmounted by four small statues of winged seraphs; an air of melancholy lies upon the monument. Beyond, a burnished lantern has been affixed to an upthrust stone. It gleams with a bluish, spectral light. A second lantern is dimly visible beyond the first, as a chorus of deep growls sounds from somewhere ahead.

The party has found the ancient site where Kassenia's druidic order was first founded, before it was corrupted and turned into a force for evil. Kassenia has returned here, hoping to regather her strength. The site has been tainted by the death-cult's magic but the spirits of the landscape chafe under Kassenia's control.

The druid leader is a middle-aged human woman, gaunt and hollow-eyed. She is aware of their pursuit, having been warned by animal scouts. She has decided to make her stand here, where she has additional magic at her disposal. A pack of dire wolves have been summoned to fight for her and are imbued with necrotic energy.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

When the party first appears Kassenia will call out to them, warning them not to approach; she hopes to frighten them away and avoid a battle, but will not hesitate to send the wolves to attack. She is however open to negotiation; she simply wants to rebuild. Though unwilling to surrender until defeated, she may attempt to lure her opponents into a vulnerable position (such as standing within the lanterns' light) before attacking. She can command the dire wolves telepathically, and may direct them to attempt to stealthily surround the adventurers.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

If there are 3 players, Kassenia has two dire wolves under her command. For each additional player, add 1 more dire wolf to the pack. Also, add 1 more HD for every player above 3 for Kassenia.

TERRAIN FEATURES

The following elements of the landscape are magical and may affect how the encounter unfolds:

The Druids' Dais. The first good-aligned character who steps onto the dais will receive an instantaneous vision, a message from nature spirits who oppose the death-cult. Read the following out loud:

The moment that your foot touches the weathered stone of the dais, a warm breeze wafts around you, filled with the scent of lilies; motes of light dance in your eyes and a vision unfolds before you.

You see green-clad druids moving solemnly through the forest and sense their harmony with the wilderness—but then you see a shadowy figure loom above them with a malevolent half-moon grin. The druids turn and bow before the newcomer, and are themselves infused with shadow. When they rise, they have skulls for faces.

You sense the spirits of the forest quail at the druids' transformation. You see the death-druids casting animals into a spike-filled pit; chain-like tendrils reach out from the pit, clutching at a nearby tree with bright red berries and crawling over the druids' bodies, deepening their shadows. You hear the forest cry out for aid. Abruptly, your vision clears; the breeze fades; and you realize that but an instant has passed.

Award the player who received the vision one d10 druidic inspiration die, following the same rules as the Bardic Inspiration ability.

Baleful Lanterns. These grim-looking lanterns (represented by the Archaean Glowglobes) radiate negative energy. Any good-aligned creature within a 10-foot radius of either lantern has vulnerability to necrotic damage and, if they attempt to cast a spell, must first succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw** as the lantern attempts to sap their energy. On a failure, the spell fades, but no spell slot is expended. Each lantern has the following statistics: AC 8, 4 HP, vulnerability to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to psychic and poison damage. If reduced to 0 hit points, the lanterns cease to function.

The Death-Pit. This is the site of sacrificial rituals the cult performed to infuse themselves with death-magic. Kassenia recently conducted another ritual here to bind the Rowan to her will and empower the dire wolves. On her turn, Kassenia can use a Bonus Action to call upon the pit to attack a nearby target with a shadowy tendril. *Melee attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15-ft, one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Any character who uses an Action to study the pit and succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** will realize its dark magic can be disrupted and surmise that positive energy of various kinds might break its enchantment. Any of the following will dispel the evil magic of the pit, if cast at it directly:

- A spell that deals at least 5 points of radiant damage
- A spell that cures wounds or ends afflictions (such as *lesser restoration* or *remove curse*)
- A cleric or paladin's use of *Channel Divinity*
- A healing potion or vial of holy water cast into the pit

If the magic ends, Kassenia can no longer cause the pit to attack, she loses the protection of the Rowan tree, and the dire wolves lose their necrotic damage bonus.

The Regal Rowan. Rowan trees are potent sources of protective magic, and Kassenia has harnessed the power of the Regal Rowan here to protect her. So long as she remains within a 20-foot radius of the tree, it will shield her from spells cast against her. (A *detect magic* spell will reveal it as a source of abjuration magic.) As a reaction, Kassenia can call upon the tree to counter a spell that targets her or that has an area of effect that extends within the tree's 20-foot effect radius.

The tree can negate up to 8 spell slots worth of spells (for example, countering a 2nd level spell would use up two slots' worth of its defenses) before its resources are exhausted; each time it does so, clusters of its berries burst in red showers like sprays of blood. If a character decides to investigate the connection, have them make a **DC 12 Arcana (Intelligence) check** to discern that Kassenia has bent this tree to her will, and that they can attempt to free it by calling out to the tree's essence. This requires an Action to perform a **DC 14 Arcana (Intelligence) check**; if successful, the tree ceases to protect Kassenia.

RESOLUTION

If the party clearly gains the upper hand (for example, by slaying all the dire wolves) Kassenia is likely to surrender. If they hold off the dire wolves and take down Kassenia, the wolves, freed from her command, will flee if the tide of battle turns against them. (They will also lose their necrotic auras and the additional damage they provide.) If Kassenia and her minions manage to bring the heroes to the verge of defeat, she may offer to spare them in exchange for their pledge to assist her.

TREASURE

Kassenia carries little money—she has a total of 3 gp and 18 sp in a pouch at her side—but the heroes can take that if she is slain, or potentially confiscate it if she is captured. She does have one magic item, a *Ring of Protection*. She will attempt to conceal this if captured but might also offer it as a bargaining chip or bribe.

SETUP

This encounter uses the layout pictured in the Heart of the Forest graphics. The heroes enter from the side nearest the Archaean Dais. Place Kassenia beside the Regal Rowan once the characters become aware of her. The dire wolves lurk behind the trees and boulders on either side.

CHARACTER STATISTICS

Kassenia uses the statistics of a druid (*MM* pg. 346) with the following changes:

- She has 33 hitpoints (6d8 + 6)
- She has a Charisma score of 16 (+3)
- Replace the spells *produce flame*, *thunderwave*, and *animal messenger* with *ray of frost*, *arms of Hadar*, and *ray of enfeeblement*, respectively.
- Her *Ring of Protection* grants her a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws.

The **dire wolves** use standard dire wolf statistics (*MM* pg. 321) with the following addition: each is shrouded in necrotic shadow; it has advantage on Stealth checks and deals an additional 2 (1d4) necrotic damage with a successful bite attack.

The **bloodhound** uses the statistics of a mastiff (*MM* pg. 332). At your discretion, it may stay to aid the players in the fight or be used as a last-minute source of aid if the situation turns desperate.



ENCOUNTER 5: THE FEAST OF RICTILOS

TITANSTOOTH GLADE SET

Hook (either). As an evening of rest takes over the party, each member has an identical dream in which they are visited by the exiled Fae lord Rictilos Thornmantle.

DM'S NOTES

Rictilos Thornmantle is a malignant influence that corrupted what was originally an inoffensive local order of rustic druids. If you've played through the previous encounters and thwarted the death-druid cult, Rictilos has sought them out specifically to enact his will upon them. If not, he has chosen them simply because he finds them interesting, or out of pure malevolent Fae whimsy. Either way his goal is the same: to lure them to the one place in this world that he can take "physical" form, then charm or browbeat them into starting a new cult in his service—or die should they not agree. Once the party has gone to rest for the night, read the following out loud:

During the night, each of you has a remarkable dream. You find yourself in a verdant forest glade,

behind you the sound of rushing water, before you a distinctive jutting crag of stone upon which stands a gleaming obelisk. A figure steps from behind the obelisk: a tall, thin, handsome man with elf-like features, a wild shock of thistledown hair, and elegant green garb stunningly embroidered with thorns and roses. He gazes haughtily down at you.

"Greetings, mortal," he says, his voice at once sly and imperious. "How good of you to join me. I am Lord Rictilos Thornmantle, and I have but a small request of you. Perhaps you heard of the recent destruction of a certain cult of druids? Their methods may have been regrettable, but their goal was a noble one: to free me from an unjust imprisonment at the hands of my petulant queen. She took offense at a prank of mine—a simple jest of no consequence—long, long ago, and though my time of exile is up it seems she has forgotten to release me. Alas, the druids came to ruin before they could succeed.

So, now, I turn to you, humbly, as I sense you are more capable than they were.

Agree, and I can offer many gifts. Refuse, and I must seek elsewhere. Perhaps a few children from the local villages could make proper servants... But surely you won't disappoint me? Of course, you cannot answer now, across the distance of a dream. You must come to see me personally." He gestures at the glade around him.

"We will have a friendly chat and agree upon our terms. Do not hesitate! I am able to be patient when I must; I've waited five hundred years already, but I am equally impatient when I choose." There is a sudden darkness, a fierce flash of lightning, and abruptly the dream ends.

When you awake, you each have a sense of exactly where the mysterious glade lies: deep in the forest, at least two days' travel, in a hidden valley you somehow know few mortal folk have ever visited.

In this dream-visitation, Rictilos largely spoke the truth. He was a member of the Dark Fae court until he played a cruel prank on the queen. He was banished to the Ethereal Plane, where he wandered for centuries, growing steadily more insane. Eventually he came upon a magical artifact, an arcane Planar Pylon that exists in both the Ethereal and the Prime Material Planes. He discovered that he could use the pylon to transport his essence to the Prime Material, where he becomes a shadowy manifestation of himself—limited in power compared to his true form, but still a creature to be reckoned with. His manifestation is tied to the location of the pylon (a remote glade in the Dreadhollow Forest), from which he seeks to extend his influence in any way possible. He dominated the druid cult to gather magical energy for him, intending to use it to escape his imprisonment, as he cannot affect the material plane.

Rictilos will wait a few days to see if any visitors arrive. If they do not, he will do just what he threatened to do: he'll start kidnapping children from nearby villages, beguiling them in dreams so that they sleep-walk from their homes into the forest, where satyrs who serve the Fae lord will collect them. The party should be made to feel the weight of the disappearances; unless they visit Rictilos, he'll keep stealing more and more children.

Assuming the players do decide to seek out the enigmatic Fae, you can provide random encounters as appropriate as they make their way through the forest, or the journey can be uneventful. Either way, as they make their final approach, read or paraphrase the following:

You sense that you are drawing near to your destination. There's something very strange about the forest here. The colors are abnormally bright, as if the air itself is faintly limned with rainbow hues.

Unfamiliar flowers rustle in an erratic breeze and the songs of birds you've never heard before ring out with breathtaking beauty. Yet there's also a peculiar darkness at the edges of your sight, as if all you see is not quite there, a brightness that conceals a deeper shadow. Up ahead, a broad shallow river—one not marked on any map—emerges from a bank of mist to cross your path. Beyond it, the brilliant colors grow even more intense.

At this point, place the heroes at the edge of the Titanstooth Glade; the encounter begins.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

This scenario can play out in a few different ways, depending on your group's style and the choices they make. Rictilos and his minions (some satyrs and feral blink dogs) are waiting on the far side of the river. His plan is to offer the players his hospitality in the form of an enchanted feast that, if they partake, will make them vulnerable to a geas spell he will cast upon them to force them to act in his service. Failing that, he's equally content to win them over by non-magical means or to kill them outright. Rictilos's avatar is essentially invulnerable to direct attack, however, he can be lastingly banished back to the Ethereal Plane if the Planar Pylon is destroyed, so it's important that the party receive sufficient clues to figure out how to do this. The other NPC in the scene, Krubblug the Fae Frog, is a helpful tool to provide these clues.

When the party first arrives, Rictilos has had his servants lay out a splendid feast on a rustic wooden table next to the Titanstooth; its enticing scent wafting across the river. The Fae lord, regarding all mortals as fools who are easily entranced, is hoping they'll simply rush over and start eating (see **The Feast**). He'll watch in shrouded amusement as they make their way across the strange river, but should they pause too long in their approach he will appear and call out to them, inviting them closer. He will act quickly to distract them if they head toward the Fae Wellspring, hoping they don't discover his vulnerability there.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Adjusting the difficulty of this encounter is more dependent on how you run Rictilos than on major changes in the creatures present. Generally, the Fae lord should not exert his full powers or take full advantage of his invulnerability until the party has realized how they can defeat him, otherwise they are likely to be overwhelmed. On the other hand, if they outmatch Rictilos and his minions too easily, more satyrs and/or blink dogs can emerge from the forest and come to his aid at any moment.



Cross the Nevernear. The River Nevernear is a magical watercourse that flows endlessly through the Border Ethereal, usually appearing where the planar borders are thinnest. The river here is about five feet deep at its deepest and running swiftly. Any creature attempting to cross the river must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check** for each 5 feet of movement spent, or else be confused by strange shadows and shifting currents and be forced to end their movement. Furthermore, each creature not native to the Ethereal Plane that becomes completely submerged in the river's water (or ducks its head under the surface) must succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom saving throw** or suffer the effects of a confusion spell until the end of its next turn.

An enormous **two-headed crocodile** (see *Appendix A – Creature Stats*, pg. 38) that is bound to the Ethereal Plane lurks in the river, beguiled and under service to Rictilos. It will remain out of sight when they first cross the river, waiting for the Fae lord's command to emerge. When the party first approaches the river, Krubblug, the Fae Frog, waits at the river's edge.

Krubblug, the Fae Frog. Krubblug (see *Appendix A – Creature Stats*, pg. 39) is a servant of the Dark Fae queen, tasked with keeping watch on Rictilos and ensuring he doesn't escape. He's also an abject coward who will vanish at the first sign of danger. Furthermore, he's incorrigibly mischievous, and not interested in making anyone's life easy, so he'll only assist the minimum amount necessary to see that Rictilos gets his comeuppance.

When the party first approaches the river, read the following out loud:

You spy a tiny shape peeking out from a clump of moss near the water's edge. The creature looks like a bullfrog with chameleon-like skin, extravagantly large, soulful eyes, and a curiously mobile, almost human mouth. Glancing around nervously, it beckons you nearer, then whispers in a high croaking voice:

"Is it Rictilos you seek? Thorn of cunning, trouble-master? Listen well to what I say and you'll thwart him all the faster."

But a bold reflection is he here, almost a rejection. To banish him for good, pay heed to my direction.

Seek what's bright to gazing eye but silent to the hearer. Smash the shard within the depths. Strike beyond the mirror."

Without pausing to explain, the creature turns and darts into the river, vanishing in an instant beneath the shimmering current.

This may be the last they will see of Krubblug, and the only help he needs to give them. His riddle hints at the way to banish Rictilos: shattering the Planar Pylon by attacking it through the pool of the Fae Wellspring. If combat breaks out with the Fae lord and the party is having trouble figuring it out, consider using Krubblug's teleportation ability to appear anywhere on the battlefield to offer further clues, distract Rictilos at a key moment, or otherwise assist in mischievous ways.

Playing Rictilos. Rictilos (see *Appendix A – Creature Stats*, pg. 36) is supremely arrogant and regards ordinary mortals as rightfully his servants and playthings. But he is also witty, charming, and mischievous, and will do his best to convince them to join him in a meal while they discuss the bargain he wants to strike. He'll assure them that he just needs assistance with "a small ritual or two, to gather a few motes of magical energy" that he can use to free himself from his banishment to the Ethereal Plane. He will claim that the rituals are harmless (a lie—they require humanoid sacrifice) and offer them all manner of treasures from his collection in the Feywild, once he's able to access it again, if they assist him. He will, begrudgingly, let himself be talked into any bargain the party cares to strike; after all, he just needs them to eat. If they question any aspect of his offer or his history, he'll tell them whatever he thinks they want to hear, lying freely but smartly.

Rictilos's spells as they manifest through his avatar on the Prime Material Plane are mere echoes of his true power, so they appear far more terrifying than they are. For example, if he casts *thunderwave*, the entire sky darkens and cataclysmic lightning seems to dance around his form; his *firebolt* takes the guise of massive streaking meteors and his *ray of frost* roars like avalanches – but they do no more damage than normal 1st level castings of these spells.

The reflection of Rictilos within the Wellspring (see *Fae Wellspring*) can be harmed by ranged weapon attacks and spells—his avatar in the glade will cry out if he is successfully targeted—and he will soon retreat in dismay if he is wounded. For purposes of playing the true Rictilos in the pool, treat him as identical to his avatar except that he has access to all spells of 6th level or lower (1/day each, with unlimited cantrips) on the Bard spell list.



The Feast. As soon as the group has crossed the river and approached the table, Rictilos will appear and greet them. Note that he will interrupt anyone about to cast a spell upon the food or otherwise determine its true nature as well. He'll warn them that it is "delicious beyond mortal ken, the work of the finest Fae cookery," and should not be tampered with. This should be done as a delicate lie; something not hurried or hesitant, but simply with the force of a noble to a guest.

The feast itself is a well-prepared assortment of wild foods; there is no poison or other physical danger, and if they taste it it's quite delicious. It is however ensorcelled; a detect magic spell will reveal the presence of enchantment magic, and a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check** will also indicate that the food has been magically infused. Rictilos will insist it is part of Fae cooking, offering to eat of the feast himself, or eat or drink anything they offer him, before they partake (see *Arcane Lanterns*). (He's immune to poison and enchantment, so this is of no risk to him.) If they insist on checking the food magically, Rictilos will grow impatient, and is more susceptible to push the interaction into conflict (see *Rictilos Enraged*).

The enchantment laid upon the food is part of a unique spell that Rictilos has cast. Anyone who eats or drinks even a mouthful immediately suffers disadvantage on all Wisdom saving throws until they complete a long rest (this does not become apparent until they first need to roll a saving throw), and if they all partake, the Fae lord can and will immediately cast a special geas spell that targets them all simultaneously. With a triumphant smirk he will give them the following command:

"The moment you leave this glade, you will dedicate the next thirty days to establishing a new order of druids who exist entirely to serve me, and you will convince as many folk as possible to join the order. You will teach them to worship and obey me and to place all their wealth and effort at my disposal, and you will send them here to be instructed by me. You will speak of me only in praise and admiration, and you will teach them that any who speak against me—including yourselves—are traitors who must be silenced. You may entice folk to join the new order with whatever tales and promises appeal to folk such as yourselves: tell them it is an order of healers, nature worshippers, or what you will."

Any hero who failed their save will now be obligated to adhere to Rictilos's command. But any who were listening carefully may also have detected a few loopholes in what the Fae lord said. Firstly, the targets are required to start a new cult only after they leave the glade, so hypothetically they could stay here for thirty days (until the spell ends) and suffer no obligation. Secondly, although they are forbidden to speak ill of Rictilos, there is nothing to stop them from attacking him directly or otherwise acting against him. However, the power of geas does not end if Rictilos is banished, so they could end up in the strange position of banishing him for good, then leaving the glade and still finding themselves compelled to start a cult on his behalf.

Rictilos Enraged. If the party steadfastly refuses to join in the feast, Rictilos will become increasingly frustrated and will eventually resort to more direct coercion. He will summon his minions—**two satyrs** and **two feral blink dogs** (see *Appendix A – Creature Stats*, pg. 38)—from the woods nearby, and call the crocodile from the river to help intimidate the party. Threatening shadows will rise around him as his anger grows, a storm gathering overhead. If they still refuse to acquiesce he will attack them outright; if they respond in kind and discover that they cannot harm him, he will begin to mock and toy with them, determined to make them miserable for failing to heed his wisdom.

The Planar Pylon. The Planar Pylon looms above the glade, a gleaming crystalline obelisk perched upon the Titanstooth crag. If the party asks the Fae lord about it he describes it as "a prize I found, a beacon in the Ethereal gloom" that lets him step out of his prison "a little way into this world"; then he'll do his best to change the subject. Perceptive or magic sensitive characters may notice a thin, translucent golden chain that stretches from the pylon to Rictilos's ankle—a representation of his magical tether to it. If they try to cut it, they'll find that it's insubstantial; they need to destroy the pylon itself through the Wellspring's reflection in order to cast Rictilos out. If they try to damage the physical pylon, their attacks will simply pass through it, causing it to ripple and reform like a reflection on a pool.

The true (ethereal) Planar Pylon has the following statistics: AC 12, 50 hit points, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and vulnerability to bludgeoning damage. As soon as it is damaged, its manifestation on the Titanstooth will also begin to crack and flicker, making its vulnerability apparent. The Pylon is 30 feet from the pool's surface, meaning a melee weapon cannot damage it, but ranged or spell attacks that meet that range can target it (any ammunition is lost to the pool).

The Fae Wellspring. The Fae Wellspring is a window into the Ethereal Plane, and part of how Rictilos remains connected. Any character who looks into the pool will see, rather than an ordinary reflection, a shadowy, featureless landscape in which only two things are visible: Rictilos and the brightly glowing Planar Pylon. Stranger still, the Rictilos within the pool moves and acts independent of the one in the glade. The strange light from within the pool pulses and glows nearly identically to the pylon, which a character with a high Passive Perception may notice and make the connection.

Any creature attempting to enter the pool, and the Border Ethereal beyond, will be irresistibly pushed back by the surface of the pool as if by a resilient wall of force. They will likely notice, however, that their clothes and the items they carry can dip through the surface unimpeded. The magic of the wellspring prevents living things from passing through

TERRAIN TIP

The Dwarven Forge Light Puck beneath the wellspring can help create erratic flickering effects when the pylon is damaged as an additional dramatic clue.

but does not hinder the passage of items or spell effects.

Once Rictilos realizes they are attacking the pylon, his avatar and minions will assail them ferociously. His true self, visible within the pool, will also unleash a barrage of terrifying magic against them, but fortunately the wellspring is a one-way portal; nothing he does can pass more than 5 feet from the Wellspring. Also note that the clear vision offered by the wellspring prevents the true Rictilos from within the Wellspring obscure or protect the ethereal pylon from attacks. His avatar will be doing more prevention in that way.

TERRAIN FEATURES

The Titanstooth. The Planar Pylon sits upon the massive crag known as the Titanstooth. Climbing the "Tooth" is not difficult on the side where the base is stepped, but requires a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check** on its sheer sides, and a **DC 20 check** where it overhangs.

Arcane Lanterns. The three lanterns on the Standing Stones that surround the feast table add an alluring glamour to all that their light falls upon. Any Charisma check to Perform, Persuade, or Deceive made by a Fey creature within a 10-foot-radius of a lantern gains a +2 bonus.

Optional Magical Plants. In addition to Rictilos's ability to animate nearby plants, the Glamourleaf and Shimmer-frond can play an additional role in the encounter. See their statistics in the *DF Wildlands Bestiary* (pgs. 19-20) for more information.

Optional Traps. Anywhere that there is a Plain Teardrop Insert in one of the Forest Floor tiles has the potential to be a Hidden Pit Trap, revealed the first time a creature steps on it. Use this sparingly.

RESOLUTION

The moment the Planar Pylon is shattered, the avatar of Rictilos vanishes with a wail; his true form can be seen in the Wellspring pool, prancing with ineffectual rage, but he can no longer manifest in nor affect the Prime Material Plane.

The two-headed crocodile may retreat or fight on, but the rest of the Fae lord's minions will immediately flee the scene.

TREASURE

If they search the area, hidden under the Titanstooth they find several treasures Rictilos collected from his druid minions: a dozen emeralds each worth 100 gp; a head-piece crafted of gold and silver leaves, worth 250 gp; an adamantite longsword; and a *Wand of Secrets*. If Rictilos lured any children away from nearby villages, they find them imprisoned in a nearby cave, filthy and hungry but unharmed; their families are exceptionally grateful for their return and may reward the party.

SETUP

This encounter uses the standard setup of the Titanstooth Glade as shown in the build guides, with a few modifications:

1. Replace [the large forest tiles with the spiked pit trap on the lower right-hand side of the set graphic] with the Hole Knoll Floor with the Dwarven Light Puck inside it and the Fae Wellspring on top; the Light Puck should be set to glow with a light similar to that of the Planar Pylon. [**Note to layout:** depending on how the encounter is depicted in the graphics, the description of which tile to replace should be adjusted as necessary. The tile to be replaced is the one that can be seen in the lower right of the primary image of the set. Reference the Wildlands Build Guides (coming soon to our website) at bit.ly/WLBuildGuides]
2. Remove the Archaean Dais and replace it with a feast-table and chairs.
3. If the DM desires, place the Glamourleaf on Rictilos's side of the river, in a place (such as near the Wellspring) where it can potentially affect the battlefield.

The PCs enter the scene on the opposite side of the river from the Titanstooth and the Fae Wellspring.

CHARACTER STATISTICS

The Satyrs use the typical statistics of satyrs (*MM*, pg. 267).

The statistics of the unique creatures in this scenario are provided in *Appendix A – Creature Stats*.

DREADHOLLOW FOREST

TALES OF WOE

BY TEOS ABADIA

FOR 3 TO 5 5TH-LEVEL PLAYERS



STORY & SETTING

Summary. An evil spider creature named Chelicerae Woepinner manipulates ancient elven sites of power, using their arcane energies to corrupt Dreadhollow Forest. As the heroes learn of the corruption, they rush to find the ruins and undo the dark rituals. Deep in the forest they may confront the villain and end her threat.

Encounter 1 (Starter Set). An innkeeper asks for help, feeling responsible for having allowed a historian to head into Dreadhollow Forest without an escort. The heroes find the sage entangled in plants that have been corrupted by magic.

Encounter 2 (Wargame Scatter). A dangerous beast has been hunting area livestock and now a woodsman was attacked. A hunt is called, and a prize offered for ending the threat. The forest is treacherous and the beast clever – will the party be the hunters, or the hunted?

Encounter 3 (Explore the Forest). A sage mounts an expedition to find ancient ruins, which may be linked to recent corruption in the forest. The heroes find they are not the only ones looking for ruins.

Encounter 4 (Heart of the Forest). Ancient elven sites of power have been manipulated by unknown enemies to corrupt the forest. The heroes must find a moon dais and restore it.

Encounter 5 (Titanstooth Glade). Across a raging river rises a pillar of rock. Looming over Dreadhollow Forest, a dreadful spider creature oversees the corruption of the forest. The time has come for heroes to confront the villain and undo her devastating plans!

ENCOUNTER 1: THE LOST SAGE FOREST STARTER SET

Hook. When the party stops at an inn near Dreadhollow Forest, Holga the innkeeper asks for help finding a young historian named Adrián.

DM NOTES

Adrián came in late last night, excitedly asking questions about elven ruins in the forest. Holga was tired and sent him to bed. Adrián must have risen early, departing before she could tell him about Dreadhollow's many dangers, from fell spiders to trolls. Holga feels responsible for his safety. She offers free room and board for the next week, plus 50 gold if they can find Adrián. If agreed, she provides directions to an older part of the forest, in which Adrián expressed interest. After a few hours of travel, the party nears the area. Read the following out loud:

This area of Dreadhollow Forest is wild and dark, with only narrow shafts of light filtering through the tall trees. You weave a course through uneven ground and the roots of ancient trees, when you hear a distant cry for help.

When the characters approach, allow whoever is in the lead to attempt a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check**. On a success, they spot a stake trap between the hedge and the conifer tree. The path they are using passes through this spot. Regardless of check result, they all see the following:

The ground writhes, green vines strangling a young human dressed in explorer's garb. He cries for help, struggling against the tendrils as they constrict him!

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The heroes may rush forward, possibly triggering the trap along their approach. They will likely battle the possessed razorvine, which holds Adrián and is surrounded by a tripwire. The wyvern skull increases the challenge, attacking at the end of each round.

Whipping Stakes Trap. If spotted, they can take a longer path, climb over the terrain with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check**, or disable the trap as an Action with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools)** or **Wisdom (Survival) check**. If it is not disabled or if the check to disable it fails by more than 5, the creature closest to the trap takes 13 (2d10+2) piercing damage and is **restrained** until the start of their next turn.

Tripwire. The area surrounding the razorvine is trapped with a tripwire. Any creature entering a square adjacent to the razorvine may make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. On a success, they spot the tripwire and may avoid it. Otherwise, upon entering the creature is knocked **prone**, pulled into a square containing the razorvine, and the vine may make one *lashing tendril* attack against them.

Wyvern Skull. The skull is corrupted with fell magic. At the end of each round (Init. 0), shadows seem to deepen around the skull and a ray of black energy is unleashed. The skull makes a ranged spell attack with a +4 bonus against two characters it can see. On a hit, a target takes 6 (1d6+3)

necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. At the end of each of the affected target's turns, it can make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** to end the Strength reduction, regaining all lost points on a success. The skull can be attacked (AC 12, 20 hit points, immune to psychic and poison damage), and can no longer attack once it is destroyed.

Razorvine and Adrián. The possessed razorvine uses two of its tendril attacks against creatures within its reach, and one strangle attack each round against the historian. A character adjacent to the razorvine may free Adrián with a successful **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check** made at disadvantage due to the time the razorvine has had to grasp him. Clever ideas, such as tying a rope to a tree, could remove this disadvantage. Adrián is paralyzed with fear and automatically fails his own attempts to escape (though good roleplaying could help him overcome this). Adrián has AC 12 and 16 hit points remaining. If freed while the razorvine is alive, he uses the Help action to assist the nearest character.

RESOLUTION

Once the razorvine is defeated, the adventurers may speak with Adrián (if alive) and investigate the scene. The wyvern skull bears a rune shaped like a spider. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or History) check**, made with advantage if Adrián is alive, reveals that the wyvern skull was enchanted with powerful magic. This magic resembles the ancient magic of the elves, but is different in some way – perhaps a corruption of the original. Additionally, Adrián goes on to tell of how wyverns were sometimes tamed by the elves of this forest and went to investigate it, inadvertently stepping on the razorvine. The traps are mundane, and seem to have been set to catch the unwary. Bones amidst the razorvine reveal that there have been several past victims. Adrián is in the heroes' debt. He gifts them two potions he carries: a *potion of climbing* and a *potion of greater healing*. He also offers to employ them for future adventures, should they want it. If Adrián is not alive, the potions can be found on his body.

SETUP

Place the Wyvern Skull Cairn on the Large Forest Stump Lump. For Adrián, place a prone miniature on top of the Razorvine Tangle. The party will approach between the Hollow Hedge and the Large Forest Stump Lump, but do not place the traps until they are revealed during play. The Tripwire can be revealed next to the Razorvine once triggered or discovered, but is assumed to be in all spaces adjacent to the Razorvine. You can place the Mossy Rock Mound between the two Wild Wolfsbane Patches.



ENCOUNTER 2: DEADLY CLUES

FOREST WARGAME SCATTER SET

Hook (interconnected). Holga the innkeeper has new work for the party, telling them that the town has had problems with a beast coming from the forest as well. A woodsman named Lugo was attacked and was fortunate enough to escape with his life. Holga wants nothing more than to have her townsfolk safe, and is willing to pay 30 gp each on top of their continued room and board if they will investigate what is happening.

Hook (independent). While staying at a tavern, Holga the innkeeper tells the characters that the town has had problems with a beast coming out of nearby Dreadhollow Forest. Townsfolk in the tavern speak up, saying that at first it was just livestock that went missing. But yesterday, a woodsman named Lugo was attacked. He was fortunate to escape with his life. The town is organizing a hunt, and offering a prize of 30 gold pieces and two vials of holy water to anyone ending the threat.

DM NOTES

Historians. If Adrián was saved in the previous mission he is also at the inn, recuperating, and happily assists in the investigation. The party may reroll one failed check

thanks to his help. If Adrián perished, a historian from the same college arrives, named Sabine. She is sorry to hear of Adrián's passing and pledges to take up his important studies – replace any mentions of Adrián in this and future adventures with Sabine. Neither historian will accompany them to the forest.

Investigations in Town. The characters may wish to investigate around town. If they visit the sites of animal attacks, up to two characters can take the lead and attempt either a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature)** check at the farm. With at least one success, they find the livestock tried to flee, but the attacking creature was able to get ahead of them somehow and surprise them. Lugo tells of how he was attacked from behind and shows a terrible bite mark on his back. Any character may attempt a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** check to discern that Lugo is holding something back. A successful **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** (or similar skill) gets him to admit he is ashamed of having been drunk at the time. He saw some sort of horrid hound, but he was so drunk that he saw it both behind and in front of him, then he stumbled and fell into his root cellar, making a lot of noise and the creatures disappeared into thin air. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** check finds hound tracks around the yard, but the tracks are sporadic, as if it could periodically move without leaving tracks.

Heading Into the Forest. Once the party heads into Dreadhollow Forest, have the characters attempt a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) group check**. If at least half the party succeeds, they find tracks similar to those of a large hound.

If they fail, they still come to the clearing but are surprised during the next scene. The trail is hard to follow, seemingly ending for a score or more feet before it resumes again. Read the following aloud:

The ground is uneven here, the main path dropping down between pinnacles of crumbling rock held together by the large roots of towering trees. In the center of this area you can see a strange tree with shiny almost metallic leaves that change colors between blue and purple. You can feel magical power emanating from the tree.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

If the characters are not surprised, they see one of the **feral blink dogs** (see *Appendix A – Cretaure Stats*, pg. 38) near the Cwyldren tree. It does not see them, and the characters can plan their approach and even an ambush. The other feral blink dog is resting in its den, which can be accessed via the hidden burrow lump or the hollow hedge atop the huge rocky hummock. Once combat begins, the second blink dog emerges from hiding.

If the characters are surprised, both feral blink dogs are hiding in the den, having heard the characters. They emerge and attack with surprise from one or both entrances.

Playing the Blink Dogs. The feral blink dogs show signs of having once been majestic blink dogs, though grey scabs dot their fur and their once kind faces snarl with rage. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check** confirms that they have been corrupted by exposure to some powerful and evil magic. In combat, the feral blink dogs prefer to use their *teleport* and *phasing dodge* to move between elevated areas (see **Terrain Features**) and the characters. They can also teleport into the bushes to hide in the den and even move from one entrance to the other.

When the First Feral Blink Dog Dies. Place the reality rupture where the blink dog fell. This represents the creature's foul essence. The reality rupture acts at the beginning of each round and can move 15 feet on its turn. If it ends its turn next to a character, that character must make a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or take 5 (1d6+2) necrotic damage. Once the reality rupture has dealt damage twice, or if an adjacent character succeeds at a **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check** as an action, the reality rupture fades. Other actions could also end the rupture, such as dousing it with holy water or casting *dispel magic*. The death of the

second blink dog releases a shadowy essence, but it does not become a rupture.

Cnyldren Tree. The same magic found in the feral blink dogs is concentrated in the tainted tree. If the tree is cut down, or more than 15 points of damage are inflicted to the tree, the tree dies and its magical essence is released harmlessly. If this happens during combat, each living feral blink dog immediately takes 5 points of damage and the range of their teleportation powers is reduced by half.

TERRAIN FEATURES

Rocky areas are 10-feet high. Characters can climb any of the rocky embankments with a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check**. The den is not part of the play area, and it is assumed that 40 feet of movement is required to move from one den entrance to the other. A character examining the hidden barrow lump or the shrubs atop the huge rocky hummock can spot the den entrances with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. A character can enter the den if they choose, though characters fight at disadvantage inside due to the low ceilings. They choose, though characters fight at disadvantage inside due to the low ceilings.

TREASURE

The feral blink dogs have hunted several travelers, and some of their bones are in the den. The remains include a jewel encrusted dagger worth 200 gp, 50 gp in loose coin, and a special set of *bracers of archery* (see *Appendix B – Handouts*, pg. 41). A wyvern skull with a spider symbol is also found in the den, and a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that its magic has been released (it was used earlier to change the Cwyldren tree).

RESOLUTION

When they return to the village, Holga and the townsfolk greet them as heroes and provide the promised reward. The historian asks about what they found, and promises to research what may be causing this corruption of the forest.

SETUP

Place the Cwyldren tree in a prominent location, with the Hidden Burrow Lump close by. Do not reveal the Reality Rupture to the players until the scenario calls for it. Place one of the figures you are using for the feral blink dogs by the tree only if the party was not surprised. Reveal the second blink dog only once it emerges from the den.



ENCOUNTER THREE:

Expedition to Dreadhollow

ENCOUNTER 3: EXPEDITION TO DREADHOLLOW

EXPLORE THE FOREST SET

Hook (interconnected). When the adventurers next wake up at the inn, they find Adrián (or Sabine, see Encounter #2) excitedly waiting for them.

Hook (independent). When they stop at an inn near Dreadhollow Forest, Holga the innkeeper introduces them to a young historian named Adrián. Adrián originally came to research ancient elven ruins, but has been following up on troubling reports of corrupted plants and animals in the forest.

DM NOTES

Regardless of the hook used, Adrián asks for the heroes to accompany him on an expedition. The sage is convinced that there is a connection between the corruption of animals and plants in the forest, and ancient magic the elves used to grow and govern the forest. Adrián's records show the location of an old site of power. He wants them to help investigate the site, as he is a scholar, and as such is a noncombatant. His AC is 12, with 32 hit points, and a +2 to all saving throws and ability checks. He can use the Help action on his turn to assist the party or the Disengage

action to withdraw from a tough situation. After three hours of travel, the party nears its destination. Read the following out loud:

Majestic trees tower above you, their thick branches and large colorful leaves blocking out all but narrow shafts of sunlight. The historian accompanying you points excitedly. Several of the trees grow from crumbling clusters of rock... which appear to be the ruins of an ancient site. The very center of this area is a circular dais, which has somehow resisted the centuries. Traces of blue inlaid stone still shine, forming patterns. You are not alone, however. Two figures are placing a strange skull on the dais. They turn towards you, revealing feral feline faces and clawed hands similar to those of tigers.

The two **Wyluli weretiger berserkers** have just placed an enchanted wyvern skull on the dais. One of the berserkers wears a cape of the mountebank and the other wields a +1 shortsword, which they will use in battle. Any character with a Passive Perception score of 21 or greater notices the two **Wyluli weretiger archers** that have taken the time to hide. One is located by the rowan tree, the other by the two conifers. Initiative should be rolled, with the archers gaining advantage on their first attack against any character that has not spotted them.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The wyluli attack without mercy and to the death, telling the characters in their growling voices that the adventurers are too late to stop their deeds. Their master will remake this forest, undoing the work of the elves. They won't reveal anything else about their plans or their master. When the wyluli are defeated, see the Treant development below.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Due to their resistances, the Wyluli will usually be a challenging fight. You can give them a +2 bonus to all damage rolls for a greater challenge, but keep in mind that the treant could be more difficult if the party is low on resources. To lower the challenge, reduce the hit points of all Wyluli by 5 and reduce their attack bonus by 1. If the characters are struggling against the Wyluli, the treant could enter the scene by first attacking the Wyluli, then turning to focus on the party. The treant's challenge can be lowered or raised by providing more or fewer hints regarding her motives. If the party is hurt, you can choose to focus on the roleplaying aspect and portray the treant as missing often, perhaps only actually rolling every now and then (perhaps when a character fails a check badly).

Wyvern Skull. Wyverns were sometimes tamed by the elves of this forest. This skull has been corrupted with fell magic, and shadows seem to seep from it into the dais. In this encounter, the wyvern skull does not attack. The skull can be targeted (AC 12, 20 hit points, immune to psychic and poison damage). If it is destroyed the effect ceases, and a magical boon from the dais provides the character destroying it with Inspiration.

Dais. Any character glancing at the dais can see that the once beautiful blue and white stonework is now stained by the shadow it absorbed from the wyvern skull. The skull bears a rune shaped like a spider. Writing in elvish can be seen engraved upon the dais. The writing reads,

"The seed needs the forest's sun, purple veins, blue fingers, and green beard. Cast your magic and the seed will grow."

An elven or half-elven character, or a character succeeding at a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check**, will recognize that there are small bright yellow flowers which are called "forest's sun" by the elves. The writing is an ancient reminder to the elves that purified this forest long ago. The characters can't do much with this information until after combat ends (see **Cleansing Ritual**).

When Combat Ends: Grandtree Varda Awakens. As soon as the last Wyluli is defeated, the Cwyldren tree shakes its branches and snorts loudly, saying in an old cantankerous female voice, "Who goes there? I, Varda, am the eldertree and guardian of this sacred place. Prepare to be squashed, miserable despoiler!" Roll initiative, though this combat will hopefully feature more roleplaying than bloodshed! You might mention at some point during the combat that bright purple vines cover Varda's roots.

Varda the **treant** is a fearsome challenge, though her advanced age means she only has a +5 bonus to her attack rolls and cannot use the **Animate Trees** action. Varda's eyes aren't what they used to be, and her Wisdom (Perception) checks are made at +0. On her turn, Varda issues a challenge and then moves to attack either the last creature to attack her or the closest creature. Varda's challenges make it clear that she thinks the characters are the ones who damaged the dais. While Varda can be defeated in combat, any player may instead use their Action to attempt a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check** to

convince Varda that they are not evil interlopers, or that they seek to stop the forest's corruption. If the characters achieve three successes, or if their roleplaying is particularly effective, Varda halts her attacks.

Cleansing Ritual. After all combat concludes, the characters can speak with the treant if she still lives. Grandtree Varda is forgetful, but could recall clues related to the riddle on the dais. She may recall the elves said it had to do with plants, or she might recall that they would pick the purple vines off of her roots. Yellow flowers (Forest's Sun) grow at the base of the Regal Rowan Tree. Purple Vines grow over the roots of the Cwyldren (Varda). Blue Wolfsbane are the fingers, and any moss serves as the green beard. (*All of these appear as details on the corresponding terrain pieces.*) When any of these flowers are brought to the dais, the shadows seem to lessen. When all four have been placed there is a tangible sense of anticipation, as if something else is needed. As the riddle suggests, magic is needed. A cantrip will seem helpful, but insufficient. If at least one spell slot is expended into the dais, the four flowers are consumed and the corruption in the dais drains away in a brilliant flash of light. The center of the dais cracks and breaks away as a shimmerfrond bursts out of the center of the dais. (*Replace the center of the dais and place the Shimmerfrond to demonstrate the change.*) Blue motes of energy drift away from the **shimmerfrond**, and seem to cleanse this area of the forest, revitalizing it.

RESOLUTION

If the historian lives, Adrián is very impressed with the characters and certain that this proves that someone has been using ancient elven sites of power, manipulating them to corrupt the forest. Adrián pledges to locate other sites, so they can be cleansed as well. He has heard of the Wyluli, and knows they often work for powerful creatures. Eldertree Varda promises to help, but grows tired and falls asleep, snoring quietly. Finally, if any character was inflicted with lycanthropy, they have three weeks before the next full moon.

TREASURE

The Wyluli each carry a bag of small emeralds worth a total of 150 gp. One of the berserkers wears a *cape of the mountebank*, and the other wields a +1 *shortsword* that always appears bloodstained. With a mental command, the wielder of the blade can will it to shed light as if it were a torch, though with a red hue. In addition, if the heroes have played encounters 2 and 3 in this series, they gain enough experience to be 6th level.

SETUP

The setup is similar to the Explore the Forest default build, but remove the Shimmerfrond as it will be used later. Place one Wolfsbane Patch next to the Cwyldren tree and the other on top of the Crescent Rock next to the Cypress tree. The Archaean Glowglobe should initially be unlit. The heroes arrive from the corner between the Cypress and the Gnarled Tree. Place two figures representing the Wyluli adjacent to the Dais, and place the Wyvern Skull Cairn on the Dais.

CREATURE STATISTICS

Grandtree Varda uses the statistics of a Treant (MM pg. 289) with the following changes:

- She only has a +5 bonus to her attack rolls and cannot use the **Animate Trees** action
- Her Wisdom (Perception) checks are made at +0



ENCOUNTER 4: SITES OF POWER

HEART OF THE FOREST SET

Hook (interconnected). Adrián (or Sabine, see Encounter #2) has been researching his old tomes for records of ancient elven ruins or sites of power. When the sage discovers a mention of a site deep in Dreadhollow Forest, he calls upon the heroes for further help.

Hook (independent). When they stop at an inn near Dreadhollow Forest, Holga the innkeeper introduces them to a young historian named Adrián. Adrián originally came to research ancient elven ruins, but has been following up on troubling reports of corrupted plants and animals in the forest. The corruption seems to originate from ancient elven sites of power, which someone has been manipulating to harm the forest.

DM NOTES

Regardless of the hook used, Adrián asks for the heroes to accompany him to this new site and its dais, which is known as a moon dais. His AC is 12, with 32 hit points, and a +2 to all saving throws and ability checks. He can use the Help action on his turn to assist the party or the Disengage action to withdraw from a tough situation.

The elves were said to have used this moon dais for prophecy, in addition to enhancing the forest's growth. After a day and a half of travel, the party nears its destination, a glade deep in the forest. Read the following out loud:

You follow the historian as he pages through an old tome. Several times he seems lost, then finds a feature described in the tome and your travels resume. Finally you descend a moss-covered trail into a secluded glade dotted by towering ancient trees. Though you can't make out all the details as you descend, you can see a dais among the trees, as well as a small pool of water. As you reach the sunken glade floor, you see signs that all is not well. Many of the trees seem sickly, and there are spiderwebs scattered among the branches.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

The characters enter from the side closest to the rowan tree and the spike pit. The characters may explore the area as they wish, encountering the glade's features and challenges in any order. The following features can be encountered:

- **Spike Pit** (Spiked Teardrop Insert): A seemingly obvious trap set by the **ettercaps**.

- **Statue under the Weeping Willow:** The ettercaps placed the first Saluting Seraph statue here, both to prevent the dais from being restored and to lure any heroes to a dangerous plant and swarms of spiders.
- **Small Cave** (Hidden Burrow Lump): The second Saluting Seraph statue is hidden here, protected by a **phase spider**.
- **Moon Dais** (Circular Archaean Dais): This dais is missing two of its statues, preventing its magic from activating. **Four ettercaps** are here, working to corrupt the dais further.
- **Fae Wellspring:** The waters can cleanse the dais.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

For the nettlegorse, you can remove or add swarms of spiders to alter the challenge level, and the glowglobe could absorb fewer or more spell levels. For the phase spider and ettercaps, you can delay the time when either group will join the other if the party is already hurt, or add another phase spider for a harder fight. The ettercaps can be less tactically minded and not focus on restrained characters.

Spike Pit. This open pit is a shaft twenty feet deep, but easily spotted and avoided. From a distance, any character can see that there are branches to either side of the pit, which likely concealed the pit until something fell down into it. Something within the pit illuminates it, though to see the source requires approaching the pit to look down into it.

The area surrounding the pit is trapped with a tripwire (placed by the ettercaps). Any creature entering a square adjacent to the pit must attempt a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check**. On a success, they spot the tripwire made of woven spider web thread and may avoid it. On a failure, the creature trips and must succeed a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** to grab the edge of the pit. Otherwise, they fall 20 feet and take 7 (2d6) falling damage and another 9 (2d4+4) damage from the spikes at the bottom of the pit.

Bones and remnants of clothes can be found at the bottom, along with the source of the light, which is a scroll tube with a permanent *light* spell cast upon it. The scroll tube belonged to a wizard who always wanted a reading light for casting spell scrolls. Within the tube are two scrolls, containing the spells *enhance ability* and *haste*. The scrolls bear a unique magic, allowing anyone to read the scroll's magic and cast the spell, even if the character does not have the spell on their class list or is not capable of casting spells. Once a spell is cast, it fades from the scroll as the magic is expended.

Statue Under the Weeping Willow. As the characters draw near the large weeping willow, allow them all **Wisdom (Perception) checks**. A result of 10 or higher, or the use of a spell such as *detect magic*, allows a character to spot the seraph statue, which is on its side among some shrubs at the foot of the willow. A result of 15 or higher allows the character to also spot the nearby Archaean Glowglobe, which is partially concealed by webs.

Examining the glowglobe reveals it to be magical in nature. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals it has been changed from its original purpose, which was

to strengthen the dais. Instead, it now will draw magic to itself. Any spell cast within a 15-foot-sphere of the glowglobe will be drawn harmlessly into it. The glowglobe can absorb a total of 20 spell levels before it can absorb no more. It will then explode, forcing creatures within a 10-foot-sphere (including the nettlegorse) to make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**, taking 18 (4d6+4) force damage on a failure or half as much on a successful save. The glowglobe can be targeted as an object (AC 12, 20 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage) and will release its energy harmlessly if destroyed.

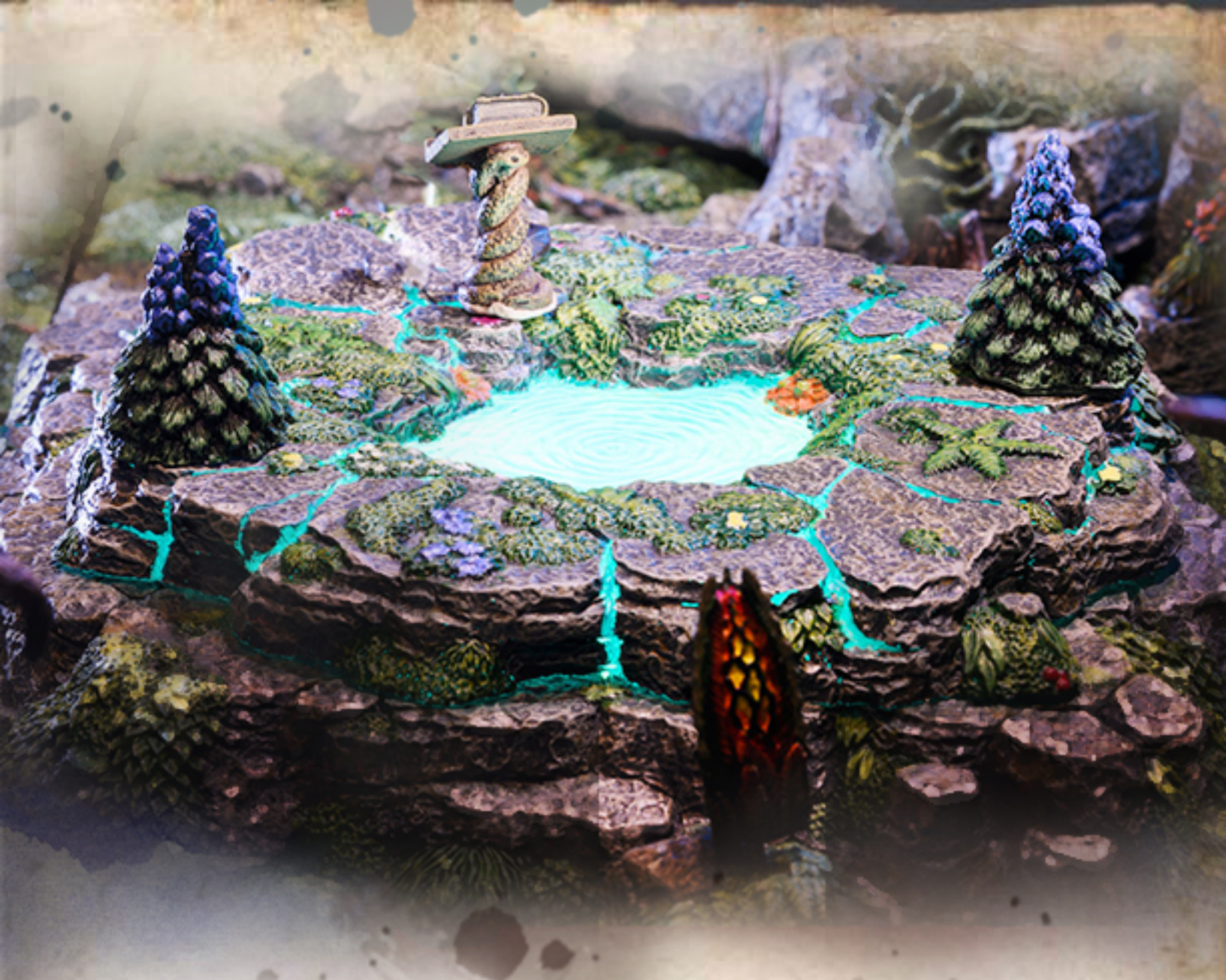
If a character approaches within 30 feet of the statue, place the nettlegorse plant figure below the cypress and roll for initiative. The nettlegorse uses the statistics of a **roper** and its false appearance feature allows it to gain surprise at the start of combat. The nettlegorse can fling long thorny tendrils which grasp its prey and pull them towards its base. Its bite is actually the effect of its thorny branches closing in on any adjacent character. In addition, 2 **swarms of insects (spiders)** live under the roots of the willow. They emerge to attack, focusing on characters restrained by the nettlegorse. Once the characters defeat the nettlegorse and spider swarms, they may reclaim the statue. It bears a dim magical aura (revealed as conjuration with the *detect magic* spell).

Small Cave. If the characters explore the area near the hidden burrow, a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check** or the use of a spell such as *detect magic* will reveal the saluting seraph statue concealed by spider webs within the small cave. A small creature can enter the small cave to retrieve it, though a larger creature could squeeze to enter or use a staff or other method to pull the statue out of the small cave. As the characters are either retrieving the statue or passing by the cave, a phase spider will use its ethereal jaunt to emerge from the ethereal plane and attack the characters. The sound of combat will draw the ettercaps (see **Moon Dais**) and they will appear on the following round.

Moon Dais. The area near the moon dais is covered in webs, both on the ground and in sheets hanging from trees. The area between the trees and the dais is difficult terrain unless the webs are burned away or otherwise removed.

As the characters draw near, they can see **four ettercaps** by the dais. The ettercaps are conducting a ritual, tracing a spider rune upon a wyvern skull, but they drop the skull and focus on the approaching characters. Due to their web sense, the ettercaps gain advantage on their initiative check. The ettercaps fight to the death, and focus their attacks on creatures that another ettercap has ensnared with a web attack. One round after combat begins, the **phase spider** (if alive, see **Small Cave**) arrives and joins the combat against the heroes. One of the ettercaps carries a web-wrapped bundle containing a pair of *boots of levitation* and a *periapt of wound closure*.

When combat concludes, the characters can examine the moon dais. Two of the statues are missing, and until recovered the magic of the dais cannot be activated. Furthermore, the webs placed on the dais have defiled it in some way, visibly staining a web pattern into the stone work. This pattern must be cleaned in some way. A successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check** suggests the easiest method is using water from the fae wellspring, though clever characters could devise another way.



Fae Wellspring. The waters glow with silvery radiance, and a detect magic spell reveals auras of enchantment and conjuration. The water can cleanse the moon dais. In addition, it has curative properties if drunk, acting as a *potion of greater healing* (1/LR if drunk directly from the pool). At your discretion, elven characters or those with close ties to the fey can also sense the water has curative and cleansing properties. The water will retain its magic for up to one month if bottled or placed in a wineskin. Up to eight potion draughts could be drawn from the well per day, though two are needed to cleanse the dais.

RESOLUTION

Once the two seraph statues are placed on the moon dais, and the dais has been cleansed with waters from the fae wellspring, the moon dais begins to glow with soft grey light. If you will be running the next encounter, remove the top of the dais as it becomes insubstantial, revealing a pool of silver below. (To represent this effect, you could place the moon dais over the Hole Knoll Floor and a Light Puck to illuminate it.)

Energy within the dais swirls, revealing a bleak forest where spider creatures performed terrible sacrificial rituals, until elves arrived and defeated them with blade, bow, and magic. The elves constructed this and other daises, weaving powerful magic to restore the forest. The vision then shows the glade where the heroes now stand, and then begins to travel through the forest and across a raging river to the very heart of the Dreadhollow Forest. There, upon a pinnacle of rock, a terrible pale half-spider half-elven creature oversees the corruption of a final dais.

SETUP

This encounter uses the layout pictured in the Heart of the Forest graphics. The players enter from the side nearest the Spiked Pit Teardrop insert. Remove the Nettlegorse and the Shimmerfrond, and add the Nettlegorse when specified by the adventure. Remove two Saluting Seraphs from the dais, adding them when specified by the adventure text.



ENCOUNTER FIVE:

Raging Woe

ENCOUNTER 5:

RAGING WOE

TITANSTOOTH GLADE SET

Hook (interconnected). The heroes were granted a vision at the moon dais, seeing the forest's terrible past when it was ruled by evil spider creatures, as well as how the ancient elves fought to restore the forest. The vision included a glimpse into the center of the forest, where an albino half-spider half-elven creature prepares to corrupt the final moon dais. The historian Adrián (or Sabine, see Encounter #2) has charted a course for them through Dreadhollow Forest so they can reach the site and end the terrible threat.

Hook (independent). When they stop at an inn near Dreadhollow Forest, Holga the innkeeper introduces them to a young historian named Adrián. Adrián originally came to research ancient elven ruins, but has been following up on troubling reports of corrupted plants and animals in the forest. The corruption seems to originate from ancient elven sites of power, which someone has been manipulating to harm the forest. The sage has identified the key site, known as a moon dais. His records suggest a terrible spider creature, an ancient foe of the elves who once lived in this forest, may be to blame.

DM NOTES

In this adventure, the historian stays behind, providing the

maps the heroes need to reach the moon dais and their epic confrontation. Sending them on their way, the journey should take at least two days before they reach their destination. Consider if they face any hardships or additional bits of role playing elements along the way.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

This encounter begins as soon as they reach the river. Read the following out loud:

Following the historian's map, you've finally reached deep into Dreadhollow Forest, facing a river raging through the towering trees. On this side of the river bank you can see the health of the forest has deteriorated. Several trees have died, while others are sickening.

On the far side of the river you can see some trees have withered, but others have been changed, with a wild display of color. Thick spider webs drape many of the trees, obscuring the far side. From an elevated point somewhere in the distance you can see a pale gray light, pulsing eerily through the spider webs.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

This is meant to be a challenging and thrilling encounter, especially once the characters reach the area with the Titanstooth. If you need a greater challenge, and especially if the party is ignoring the pylon, you can allow the pylon to make ranged attacks each round against two different creatures it can see, at a +6 bonus. On a hit, the target takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. (*If you use the pylon to make ranged attacks, you can use its remote control to change the color of the LED as you make each attack roll!*) Make sure that the Glamourleaf and razorvine enter the fray, especially as characters try to reach Chelicerae. You may additionally grant Chelicerae the following additional features:

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Chelicerae fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Legendary Actions. Chelicerae can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Chelicerae regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Attack.** Chelicerae may make one Bite, Longsword, or Longbow attack.
- **Darkness.** Chelicerae casts darkness without expending a use of the spell and may move her speed. The darkness then dissipates.
- **Faerie Fire (Costs 2 Actions).** Chelicerae casts faerie fire without expending a use of the spell.

If the challenge is too high, reduce the AC and hit points of the planar pylon and let the players know that destroying it will end the corrupting effect. You can reduce the hit points of the razorvine tangle, and Chelicerae need not receive the benefit of her magic items.

Crossing the River. The characters enter from the corner on the opposite bank and furthest away from the Titanstooth. The characters may explore this side of the river safely, though they must ultimately decide on a way to cross the river. Note that monsters will attack once the first characters make it across (see *River Ambush*).

The river is only five feet deep in most places, though the currents are obviously swift and dangerous. The banks and any rocks in the river are wet, making them difficult terrain. Because of this, any running long jump is calculated as if the character did not have at least 10 feet of movement before the jump (and, therefore, they can jump a distance equal to half their Strength score). In addition, anyone moving across or jumping onto a rock or other wet surface must succeed at a **DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics)** check or fall into the river.

A character falling into the river or who tries to swim across must succeed at a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to move at quarter speed (half speed if they have a swim speed) in the raging river. A character that fails the check cannot move this turn. Failing the check by more than 7 means the character is dragged under the currents, is pulled ten feet in the direction of the current (toward Titanstooth) and takes 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage as they are knocked against rocks.

There are several ways the characters may make crossing easier, and clever players may devise additional methods. One of the two dead trees could be felled. This simply requires a few minutes to cut them down, and then one character should attempt a **DC 12 Intelligence or Wisdom (Nature)** check to ensure the tree falls in the desired direction. With success, place the tree horizontally so the crown of the tree is directly toward the opposite bank. On a failure, place it diagonally, so it doesn't quite reach the other side and a jump must still be attempted. Trees are difficult terrain and a character must succeed at a single **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to avoid falling off the trunk. Climbing tools, ropes, and other aids could provide advantage on these checks.

The characters may use rope and a grappling hook to try to reach the far bank, or they could potentially use wood or rocks to try to bridge the gap between two stones in the river. Adjudicate as you see fit, generally requiring checks either to cross or to set up the method they choose for crossing. Spells can be particularly effective. The Wyluli may try to attack a character concentrating on a spell that allows passage, or who is holding a rope for others to cross.

River Ambush. On the far side of the river, **2 Wyluli weretiger archers** and **1 Wyluli weretiger berserker** (see *WB*, pg. 12-13) hide and watch for signs of anyone attempting to cross. The Wyluli have had time to hide themselves well. Any character looking for signs of danger must succeed at a **DC 21 Wisdom (Perception)** check to spot one of the Wyluli. You can select the exact location of the Wyluli, such as one at the base of each tree closest to where the characters choose to cross. The Wyluli remain hidden until one or two characters have crossed to their side. At that moment, the archers attack anyone else crossing, while the berserker engages the character on their side of the river. That is also when the **2 lesser nettlegorse** bushes animate on the side of the river where the characters started. Use the statistics of an **awakened tree**, though they are medium size. The nettlegorse attack any characters remaining on this side. All creatures fight to the death.

Exploring the Far Side. Once the characters have defeated the ambushers and crossed safely, they can investigate the far side. Where they head next varies depending on the point where they crossed.

- If they cross to the south, furthest from the Titanstooth, they encounter the Fae Wellspring.
- If they cross near the middle, they encounter the Crablilly and can then head south or north. They can make out some of the details to either side, including the silvery waters of the Fae Wellspring to the south and the moon dais and Titanstooth to the north.
- If they crossed to the north, nearest the Titanstooth, they must contend with the Glamourleaf (and may then head directly to the Titanstooth, but might not benefit from the Fae Wellspring). They will also see the moon dais.

Fae Wellspring. The waters glow with silvery radiance, and a *detect magic* spell reveals auras of enchantment and conjuration. As in Encounter #4, the water can cleanse the moon dais. In addition, it has curative properties if drunk,

acting as a potion of greater healing (1/LR if drunk from pool). The water will retain its magic for up to one month if bottled or placed in a wineskin. Up to eight potion draughts could be drawn from the well, though two are needed to cleanse the dais.

Crablilly. This plant creature roams the middle of the far shore, stealthily searching for creatures it can eat. (If the party is exceptionally strong and still has many resources, you could add a **writhing razorvine tangle** to the fight, though it is suggested to reduce the tangle's hit points to 40.) When the crablilly is defeated, they can find within its central pitcher a slime-covered scimitar. Once it is cleaned, its fine craftsmanship and ruby-covered crossguard is noticeable. It radiates as magic, and is a *flame tongue sword*. An attuned wielder can use an action to change its form to that of any type of sword.

Glamourleaf. A creature crossing the river and approaching Titanstooth will encounter the **glamourleaf**. It is protected by a **writhing razorvine tangle**, and the glamourleaf will typically speak to the characters while they are dealing with the razorvine, using its charm on a character not grappled by the tangle. At your discretion, the sound of combat can draw the attention of Cheliceræ Woepinner.

Moon Dais and Corrupting Presence. Characters within twenty feet of the moon dais can see that a pale gray beam of energy emerges from the planar pylon and bathes the dais in corrupting energy, slowly darkening the moon dais. (To represent this, consider using the remote to turn on the planar pylon's RGB LED, using the "cyan" setting to approximate moonlight. The color can be changed during battle if the characters interact with the pylon, reinforcing the impact they are having.)

Combat will begin once the characters approach, as Cheliceræ will see them from Titanstooth. When combat begins, the corruption of the moon dais has a palpable presence. Each round it is corrupted, the characters are under the effect of an effect similar to the bane spell. Whenever a character attempts an attack or saving throw, they must roll a d4, add the number of rounds of combat that have taken place (including the current round), and subtract the total from their attack roll or saving throw. For example, on the third round of combat, they would subtract 1d4+3 from their rolls! However, if they

cleanse the dais, the number added to the d4 is refreshed to 0 and begins to climb once more. The dais can be cleansed as an action with a quantity of water from Fae Wellspring equivalent to that of two potion bottles. The corrupting presence ends if the planar pylon is destroyed.

Cheliceræ Woepinner. At last, the heroes meet our villain. Cheliceræ Woepinner has the upper body of an albino elven woman, and the lower half of an ivory-white spider. Her mouth shows two fang-like protrusions, dripping with venom (see *Appendix A – Creature Stats*, pg. 37). She will use darkness to force characters to move out of advantageous positions, or to make it harder for them to target her from the south or east, perhaps driving them towards the west and the glamourleaf and razorvine. She uses faerie fire on a group of characters and her oathbow on an important character who is not affected by faerie fire. Her high mobility can allow her to outmaneuver her foes and she can use Titanstooth as cover, fighting while climbing on any side of the rock.

Titanstooth. This massive looming rock is 40 feet high. Cheliceræ and the planar pylon can be found on its flat top. The western side has a series of steps that allow a creature to ascend without making a check (though if *darkness* has been cast, it is difficult terrain). Climbing any other side of the Titanstooth requires a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check**. If this check is failed by more than 5, the character falls. A creature trying to climb the underside of the overhang must additionally succeed at a **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check**, and if either check fails by more than 5 they will plummet to the ground below.

The Planar Pylon. This enormous pale crystal glows with eldritch power. A beam of light emerges from its tip and bathes the moon dais, creating the corrupting presence until it is destroyed. The planar pylon is a large object with AC 16, 40 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

RESOLUTION

If the planar pylon is destroyed and Cheliceræ defeated, the threat to Dreadhollow Forest has been ended. This moon dais and the other sites of power begin to restore the forest. Adrián is overjoyed, promising to let everyone in his academy, and the entire city, hear about their deeds. A festival is held in their honor, as everyone breathes a sigh of relief. Finally, if any character was inflicted with lycanthropy, they have just over two weeks before the next full moon.

TREASURE

If the characters are victorious, they may claim Cheliceræ's *oathbow* and *luck blade*. She also wears jewelry of significant historical value, worth a total of 650 gold pieces.

SETUP

This encounter uses the standard setup of the Titanstooth Glade as shown in the build guides. Move the Cwyldren Tree closer to the river and add the Fae Wellspring where the Cwyldren had been. The Nettlegorse, Razorvine Tangle, and Crablilly should be kept off the map until needed, though the Glamourleaf can remain visible. Reference the Wildlands Build Guides (coming soon to our website) at bit.ly/WLBuildGuides

APPENDIX A – CREATURE STATS

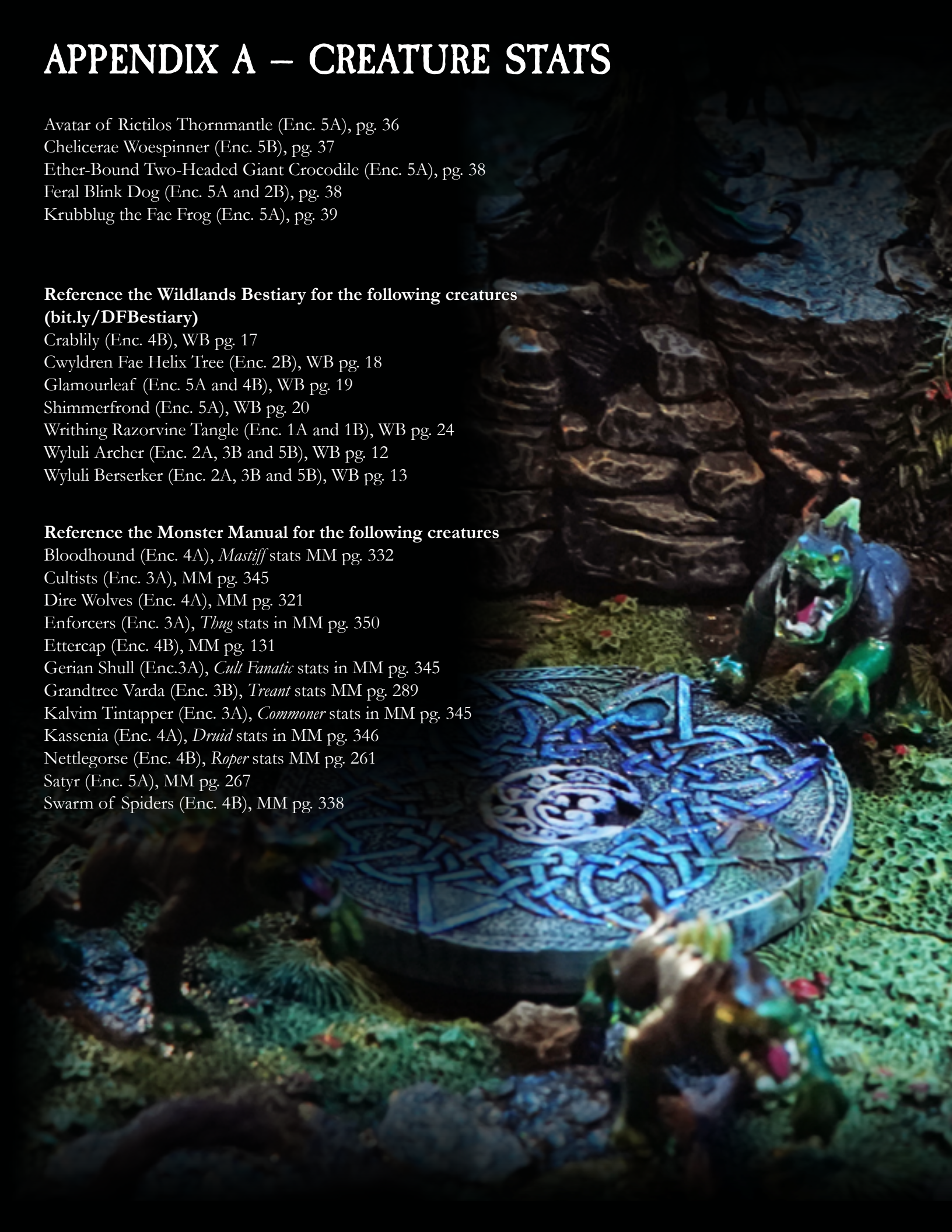
Avatar of Rictilos Thornmantle (Enc. 5A), pg. 36
Chelicerae Woepinner (Enc. 5B), pg. 37
Ether-Bound Two-Headed Giant Crocodile (Enc. 5A), pg. 38
Feral Blink Dog (Enc. 5A and 2B), pg. 38
Krubblug the Fae Frog (Enc. 5A), pg. 39

Reference the Wildlands Bestiary for the following creatures (bit.ly/DFBestiary)

Crablily (Enc. 4B), WB pg. 17
Cwyldren Fae Helix Tree (Enc. 2B), WB pg. 18
Glamourleaf (Enc. 5A and 4B), WB pg. 19
Shimmerfrond (Enc. 5A), WB pg. 20
Writhing Razorvine Tangle (Enc. 1A and 1B), WB pg. 24
Wyluli Archer (Enc. 2A, 3B and 5B), WB pg. 12
Wyluli Berserker (Enc. 2A, 3B and 5B), WB pg. 13

Reference the Monster Manual for the following creatures

Bloodhound (Enc. 4A), *Mastiff* stats MM pg. 332
Cultists (Enc. 3A), MM pg. 345
Dire Wolves (Enc. 4A), MM pg. 321
Enforcers (Enc. 3A), *Thug* stats in MM pg. 350
Ettercap (Enc. 4B), MM pg. 131
Gerian Shull (Enc. 3A), *Cult Fanatic* stats in MM pg. 345
Grandtree Varda (Enc. 3B), *Treant* stats MM pg. 289
Kalvim Tintapper (Enc. 3A), *Commoner* stats in MM pg. 345
Kassenia (Enc. 4A), *Druid* stats in MM pg. 346
Nettlegorse (Enc. 4B), *Roper* stats MM pg. 261
Satyr (Enc. 5A), MM pg. 267
Swarm of Spiders (Enc. 4B), MM pg. 338





AVATAR OF RICTILOS THORNMANTLE

Medium Fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 101

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skill Arcana +6, Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +4, Performance +7, Persuasion +7, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities All

Condition Immunities Asleep, Grappled, Restrained, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Stunned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Primordial, Sylvan

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Slippery Mind. Although Rictilos can be charmed, his mercurial personality soon throws off any attempt to control him. If he is subjected to the charmed condition, it ends after two turns have passed if it hasn't ended previously.

Ethereally Bound. The avatar can move no farther than 80 feet away from the Planar Pylon on the Prime Material Plane. (His true form can move freely on the Ethereal Plane, but cannot leave it.) If some effect would forcefully move him beyond this boundary, instead he teleports to the base of the pylon and is stunned until the end of his next turn.

Unstable Avatar. Although the avatar can't be physically harmed, if he is subjected to more than 20 points of damage in a single round, he will dissolve like a shattered reflection, reforming at the start of his next turn in an unoccupied space of his choice within 20 feet of the Titanstooth.

Innate Spellcasting. Rictilos's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: Firebolt, Mage Hand, Minor Illusion, Ray of Frost, Poison Spray, Prestidigitation, Vicious Mockery

2/day: Command, Misty Step, Thunderwave

1/day: Grasping Vine, Gust of Wind, Tasha's Hideous Laughter

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Rictilos can do any two of the following: use *Imposing Aura*; cast a spell; use *Animate Plants*.

Imposing Aura. Rictilos manifests an aspect of his Fae power. One creature within 30 feet that can see him must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma check or be frightened until the end of its next turn. Once a creature succeeds on a save against this effect, it is immune to it for the next 24 hours.

Animate Plants. Rictilos causes a large plant or tree within 30' to lash out at a nearby creature, which must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become entangled. An entangled creature is grappled and restrained (escape DC 12) and may be pulled up to 15', at the DM's discretion.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Rictilos can take two legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn; Rictilos can not use the same action twice in a row. He regains spend legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Detect. Rictilos makes a Perception check.

Mocking Retort. Rictilos casts Vicious Mockery.

Nimble Dodge. Rictilos moves up to his full movement without provoking opportunity attacks.

Raise the River. Rictilos causes the River Nevernear to lash out at his foes. Make a ranged attack against any creature within 20' of the river. On a hit, the creature takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 12 Strength check or be pulled 10' toward the water and knocked prone.

CHELICERAE WOESPINNER

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d10 + 52)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skill Perception +5, Stealth +9

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Fey Ancestry. Cheliceræ Woespinner has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drider to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. Cheliceræ's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: dancing lights

1/day each: darkness, faerie fire

Spider Climb. Cheliceræ can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Cheliceræ has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Web Walker. Cheliceræ ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cheliceræ makes three attacks, either with her longsword or her longbow. It can replace one of those attacks with a bite attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.

Luck Blade Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Luck. If the sword is on your person, you can call on its luck (no action required) to reroll one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw you dislike. You must use the second roll. This property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Wish. The sword has 1d4-1 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 charge and cast the wish spell from it. This property can't be used again until the next dawn. The sword loses this property if it has no charges.

Oathbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage. If the attack hits your sworn enemy, they take an extra 3d6 piercing damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cheliceræ can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cheliceræ regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. Cheliceræ may make either a Bite, Longsword, or Longbow attack.

Darkness. Cheliceræ casts darkness without expending a use of the spell and may move her speed. The darkness then dissipates.

Faerie Fire (Costs 2 Actions). Cheliceræ casts faerie fire without expending a use of the spell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Cheliceræ fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.



ETHER-BOUND TWO-HEADED GIANT CROCODILE

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 66 (7d12 + 21)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skill Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages –
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Hold Breath. The crocodile can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Two-Headed. The crocodile has advantage on Perception checks and on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

Partial Etherealness. The crocodile can use 5 ft. of movement to escape any grapple.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The crocodile makes two attacks: two with its bite, or one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the crocodile can't bite another target with the same head.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



FERAL BLINK DOG

Medium Fae, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skill Athletics +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages –
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

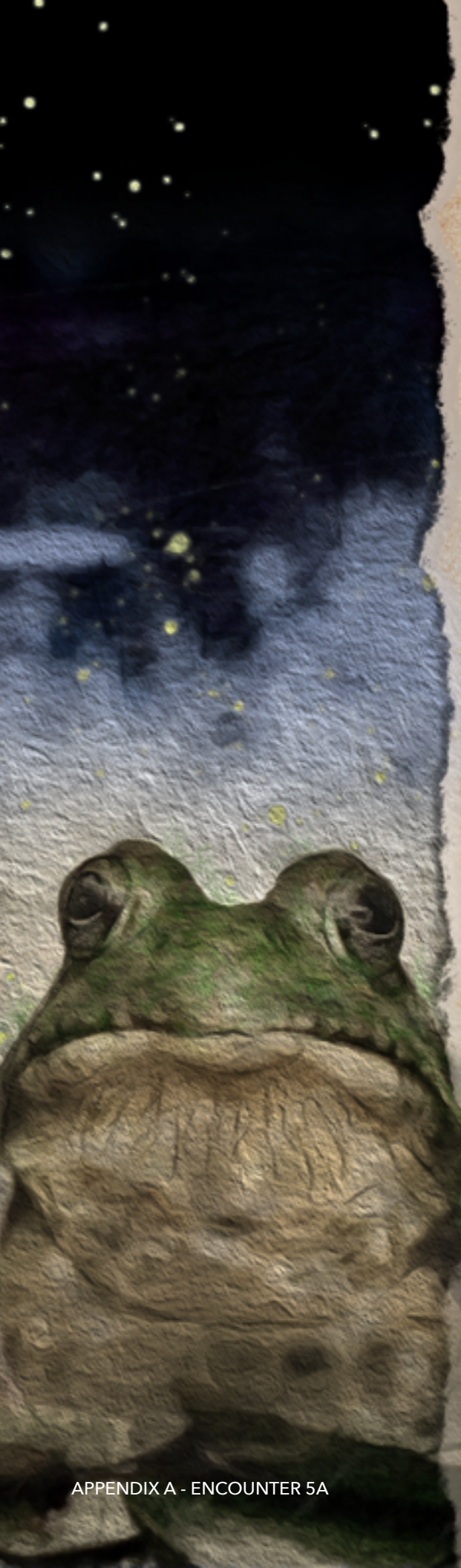
Keen Hearing and Smell. The blink dog has advantage on Perception checks that rely on its senses of hearing and/or smell.

Relentless (recharges after a long rest). If the blink dog is subjected to 10 or less damage that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hitpoint instead.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Teleport (Recharge 4-6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by the crocodile. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The blink dog magically teleports, along with any objects it is carrying, up to 40 ft. to an unoccupied location it can see. It can make a bite attack as part of this action either before or after it teleports.



KRUBBLUG THE FAE FROG

Tiny Fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 20 (8d4+0)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR

3 (-2)

DEX

20 (+5)

CON

10 (+0)

INT

14 (+2)

WIS

13 (+1)

CHA

15 (+2)

Skill Perception +4, Stealth +8

Condition Immunities Asleep, Charmed

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive perception 14

Languages Common, Aquan, Sylvan

Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Evasive. If Krubblug is subjected to an effect that lets him take half damage on a successful Dexterity save, he instead takes no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failure.

Immortal Sentry If Krubblug is slain, his spirit possesses an ordinary frog somewhere nearby which is reborn as Krubblug, with all the same statistics, at the next moonrise.

Innate Spellcasting. Krubblug's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *Expeditious Retreat*; *Misty Step*; *Mage Hand*, *Message*, *Minor Illusion*, *Prestidigitation*

ACTIONS

Spit. Krubblug spits a gob of half-digested flies at the face of an opponent. Ranged Attack. Range 15/30 ft., +7 to strike. Hit: The target suffers no damage but has disadvantage on its next attack roll or ability check.

APPENDIX B – HANDOUTS

Bloodthorn Bracers of Archery (Enc. 2B), pg. 41

Kidnapper's Hood (Enc. 2A), pg. 42

Reference the Dungeon Master's Guide for the following items

Boots of Levitation (Enc. 4B), *DMG* pg. 155

Cape of the Mountebank (Enc. 3B), *DMG* pg. 157

Luck Bow (Enc. 5B), *DMG* pg. 179

Oathbow (Enc. 5B), *DMG* pg. 183

Periapt of Wound Closure (Enc. 4B), *DMG* pg. 184

Potion of Climbing (Enc. 3A and Enc. 1B). *DMG* pg. 187

Potion of Fire Breath (Enc. 3A). *DMG* pg. 187

Potion of Greater Healing (Enc. 1B and Enc. 4B). *DMG* pg. 187

Ring of Protection (Enc. 4A), *DMG* pg. 191



Bloodthorn Bracers of Archery

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement).

While wearing these bracers, you have proficiency with the longbow and shortbow, and you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls on ranged attacks made with such weapons.

Wooden thorns are embedded into the leather of these bracers. As an action, you may cut yourself with these thorns, reducing the number of available hit dice you have by one. When you do so, you receive advantage on the next attack roll you make. The advantage is lost if you take a short or long rest. Once the bracers have been activated, you may not do so again until the next dawn.



Kidnapper's Hood

Wondrous Item. Requires attunement by a creature of chaotic or evil alignment.

This inky black hood seems woven of fibrous shadow. As an action, you may attempt to place the hood over the head of an adjacent medium or smaller creature that is surprised or that you have grappled. You make a contested **Strength** or **Dexterity check** (your choice vs target's choice). On a success, the hood entirely covers the target's head. A creature whose head is inside the hood suffers the following conditions:

- Is under the blinded and restrained conditions
- Has disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity checks
- It cannot speak or otherwise make sounds with its voice
- It cannot target another creature with any attack or spell
- The hood cannot be removed by the target creature (though another creature can use an action to remove it).

As a bonus action on your turn, you may command a creature entrapped in the hood to walk with you in a direction of your choice. It must make a **DC 15 Charisma saving throw**; on a failure, it follows the command.

Cursed. The hood is cursed with dark energy from the Shadowfell and the curse afflicts any who are attuned to it. A cursed creature suffers from insomnia and is plagued by waking dreams of being bound and suffocated in shadow. You cannot benefit from a long rest, and every 24 hours that you are attuned to the hood you must make a **DC 18 Charisma saving throw** as shadowy tendrils assail your spirit. Keep track of all failures. Once you have failed three times you become suffused with shadow; you gain the sunlight sensitivity trait, you gain vulnerability to radiant damage, and you have disadvantage on all rolls made to interact with Celestials, which are generally hostile toward you. Once you've become suffused with shadow, however, your insomnia ends and you can once again benefit from long rests. Either state of this curse may be removed from the use of a remove curse spell.



OPEN GAMING LICENSE

LEGAL INFORMATION

Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document 5.1 (“SRD5”) is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

This material is being released using the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a and you should read and understand the terms of that license before using this material.

The text of the Open Gaming License itself is not Open Game Content. Instructions on using the License are provided within the License itself.

The following items are designated Product Identity, as defined in Section 1(e) of the Open Game License Version 1.0a, and are subject to the conditions set forth in Section 7 of the OGL, and are not Open Content: Dungeons & Dragons, D&D, Player’s Handbook, Dungeon Master, Monster Manual, d20 System, Wizards of the Coast, d20 (when used as a trademark), Forgotten Realms, Faerûn, proper names (including those used in the names of spells or items), places, Underdark, Red Wizard of Thay, the City of Union, Heroic Domains of Ysgard, EverChanging Chaos of Limbo, Windswept Depths of Pandemonium, Infinite Layers of the Abyss, Tarterian Depths of Carceri, Gray Waste of Hades, Bleak Eternity of Gehenna, Nine Hells of Baator, Infernal Battlefield of Acheron, Clockwork Nirvana of Mechanus, Peaceable Kingdoms of Arcadia, Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia, Twin Paradises of Bytopia, Blessed Fields of Elysium, Wilderness of the Beastlands, Olympian Glades of Arborea, Concordant Domain of the Outlands, Sigil, Lady of Pain, Book of Exalted Deeds, Book of Vile Darkness, beholder, gauth, carrion crawler, tanar’ri, baatezu, displacer beast, githyanki, githzerai, mind flayer, illithid, umber hulk, yuan-ti.

All of the rest of the SRD5 is Open Game Content as described in Section 1(d) of the License. The terms of the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a are as follows:

OPEN GAME LICENSE VERSION 1.0A The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) “Contributors” means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content;

(b) “Derivative Material” means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted;

(c) “Distribute” means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute;

(d) “Open Game Content” means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity.

(e) “Product Identity” means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content;

(f) “Trademark” means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor

(g) “Use”, “Used” or “Using” means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content.

(h) “You” or “Your” means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, nonexclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/ or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder’s name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a
Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, LLC. System Reference Document 5.1
Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

END OF LICENSE