

5E SEEDS OF DECAY



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by Darryl T. Jones

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SPECIAL THANKS:

To my family for the unending patience, grace, and help during the nitty-gritty hours of this project.
I love you Kelly, Isaiah, and Ruth Jones.

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FOREWORD

Our adventure together began in the year 1998. Darryl and I met through a mutual friend and it was truly love at first sight, although I wasn't quite willing to admit that at first. One evening we talked late into the night about anything and everything sitting outside my apartment under a tree. The next day Darryl brought me a drawing he had made of me sitting under that tree, well that sealed the deal, and he has kept my heart ever since. Our story has had many ups and downs but our path together has always been one road, and there is no one I'd rather share this adventure with than him. The Dobbers have been in Darryl's heart for so long and I'm so proud to finally see them out and about in the world. I hope they bring you as much delight, laughter, and hope as they have to our family.

Kelly E. Jones (Shaori)

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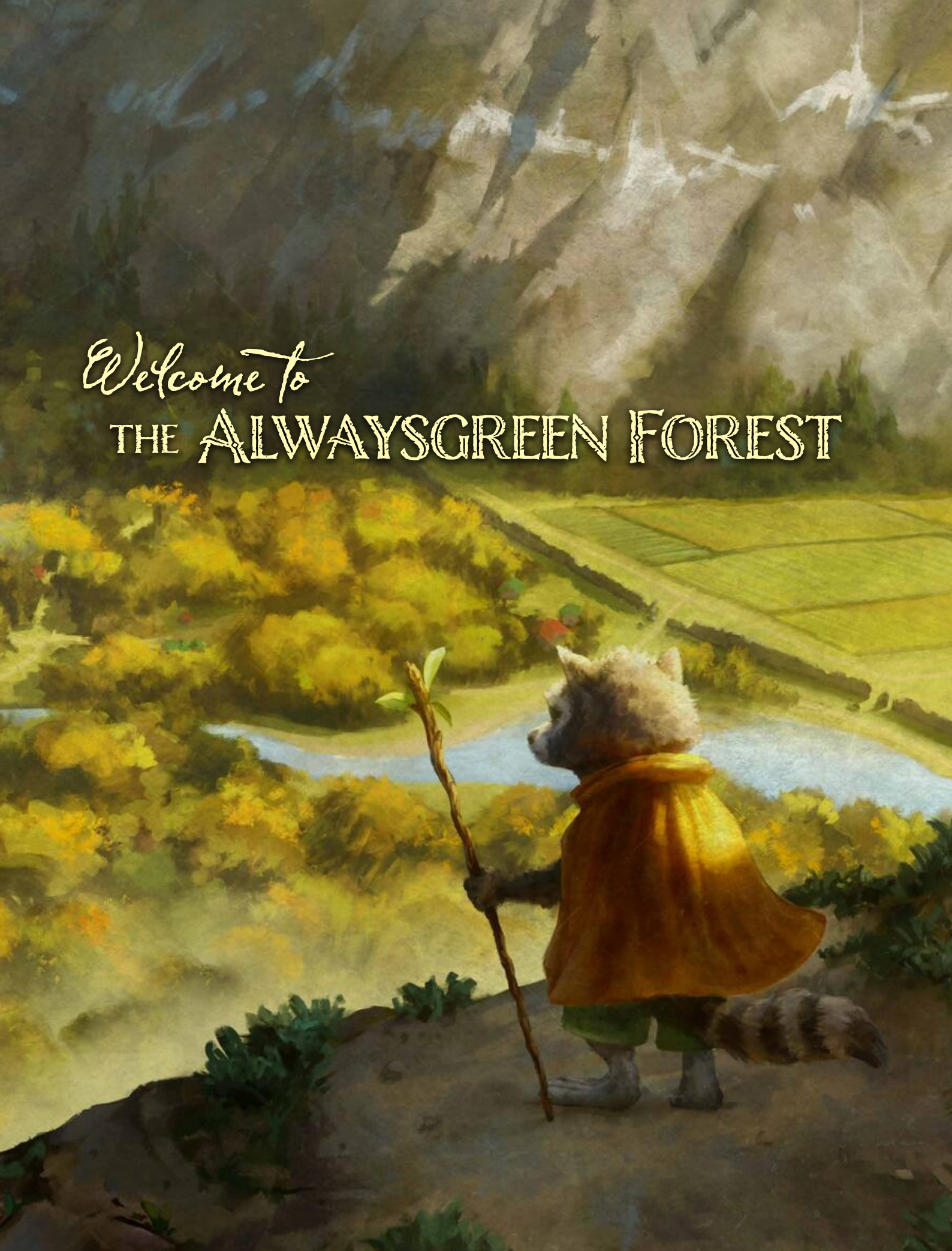
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Welcome to
THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST



THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST

The Alwaysgreen Forest is a lush and beautiful land, full of ancient, towering trees; magical, life-giving waters; and deep crystal-lined caves. It is teeming with life and magic. The awakened woodkin, the majestic deeret, goblins, ratkind, dobbers of all traditions, and many more call it their home. Dobbers are the most populous. They are friends to the forest, belonging to it, and it to them as a leaf does to a tree.

Dobbers are tiny people, often described as three apples tall, though in truth, they are taller. They range between 14 inches and 2 feet tall, though 2 feet tall would be quite rare. What they lack in size, they make up for with intelligence, wisdom, and creativity. Their bodies are often stocky, built with a sturdy frame, and large hands and feet. Their most notable feature is their overly large, round nose and equally large ears.

Their tiny size is perfect for their lives in the forest, where they build their homes into the bases of tree trunks and use wood as their primary resource. Anywhere sun breaks through the canopy, their gardens flourish. They love vegetables, fruits, berries, and nuts. Most prefer

working with their hands, farming, building, or crafting. Some build amazing contraptions and tools to aid their chores. They are hardworking and love their community, always willing to lend a hand, share a story, or enjoy a warm cup of tea by a roaring fire.

However, no story of the Alwaysgreen Forest would be complete without woodkin. Awakened raccoons, badgers, chipmunks, owls, and more also call the forest their home and have been embraced by dobbers as family. Living side-by-side in peace, every town square, farmstead, and holiday gathering is a colorful menagerie of unique characters that have chosen to share their lives.



THE NEIGHBORING LANDS

The Alwaysgreen Forest takes several days to cross on foot, making it the largest forest in the region. The largest non-wooded area is to the east, where the ruins of a stone wall separate the forest from sprawling fields and grasslands. These fields grow many of the grains that inhabitants of the Alwaysgreen Forest harvest for cooking. No one knows who originally planted the grain or built the wall, but the remains of giant, crumbling buildings are dotted throughout the fields. One rumor suggests that they are human buildings, but everyone knows humans are just a myth.

As you travel north, the forest becomes hilly, eventually turning to rocks and mountains. The north, where ice lizards and other dangerous creatures freely roam, is little explored by dobberkind.

The Dreary Mountains are west of the Alwaysgreen Forest and held by the Rat Claw Clan. Don't go west. The Rat Claw Clan hates all dobbers and woodkin alike.

Just outside of the Alwaysgreen Forest to the south, there are more grain fields, but shortly beyond, the ground has gone fallow. If you go far enough, you find a boggy swamp area and eventually the Fenmar Forest. No one really has any need to go that far south. The land isn't farmable, and the inhabitants are hostile.

Dobbers and woodkin alike cherish the comfort and safety that Dobberton affords them. They tend to stay close to home and have yet to learn much of the peoples and cultures outside of the Alwaysgreen Forest.



DOBBERTON

The Dobberton kingdom fills almost the whole of the Alwaysgreen Forest, spanning from the rugged pines of the north to bald cypresses in the south. Spruce, sycamore, fir, hemlock, maple, and more fill the forest with their unique shapes, colors, and personalities. But if one tree is the most beloved in the forest, it is the oak. Oak trees fill the core of Dobberton. The greatest of these trees sits right at its heart, the Prime Tree.

The Prime Tree's magnificence can be seen from every corner of the Alwaysgreen Forest, towering above all other trees. On either side of the Prime Tree are two trees of equal magnificence, if not quite as large. These trees' limbs, roots, and leaves intermingle, growing together in beautiful and surprising ways. If the Prime Tree is the father of the Alwaysgreen Forest, these two intertwined trees are its guides. Some see the three trees and believe them to be one. And in a way, those people are right. Others come close to the trees and truly know them, seeing distinct beauty in each one and recognize them as three. Those people are also right.

These three trees make up the royal hub of the kingdom. The Dobberton palace wraps around the base of the Prime Tree and spans to its guide trees. They say the palace was first built by Orlun many generations ago when the forest was still very young. There are none alive who remember for sure.

The Dobberton capital city shares its name with the kingdom and wraps around the palace just as the palace wraps around the Prime Tree. The symbolism of three is repeated throughout Dobber culture, starting with the leadership. Their king, Quilan, is the head, providing vision and law to the people. He is a patriarch and also acts as the final judge in judicial matters that exceed the local authorities. The queen Governess, Cassandra, leads civil and economic development. She is responsible for kingdom morale, festivals, and is heavily involved with trade policy. The third member of the Triumvirate is the Justiciar, Gearld. As Justiciar, he serves as General of the Kingdom Guard and is the head of the Order of Blue Star paladins. He oversees civil order, security, and protection from outside threats.

THE GOLDEN AGE

King Quillon (KWILL-yun) was a force to be reckoned with. When Quillon was a young man, he received the usual royal education; reading, writing, history, diplomacy, and economics. His mind was a sponge, and he was eager to learn. The Justiciar of the time recognized that he was also physically gifted. He personally trained Quillon in fighting and military arts. Quillon pledged to the Order of the Blue Star and swiftly moved up through its ranks.

When the time came for the Justiciar to retire, Quillon was the natural choice. The whole kingdom rejoiced. They had watched the prince grow from a boy to an impressive young man.

This was the first time in Dobberton's history that the royal family sat in all three seats in the Triumvirate; King, Governess, and Justiciar. It was the start of a remarkable era for Dobberton. This age of prosperity continued when his father passed, and Quillon moved from the position of Justiciar to King. His new wife, Bettany, smoothly moved into the seat of Governess. While the kingdom mourned the passing of the former king, they celebrated their new king - the child they watched grow before their eyes, facing every challenge and obstacle with grace and ease. In fact, he was so beloved that many citizens lobbied for Quillon to maintain his seat as Justiciar while being king. Of course, this wasn't possible. It would break generations of tradition, and Quillon had another plan, his best friend and fellow Blue Star Paladin, Gearld.

The king and queen ruled the kingdom and led it through one of its most prosperous times. Many consider the rise and reign of King Quillon to be the Golden Age of Dobberton.

THE TRIUMVIRATE

THE JUSTICIAR, GEARLD

Gearld was a bit younger than Quillon. As Quillon was completing his training in the Order of the Blue Star, Gearld was just starting. They became fast friends. When elevated to Justiciar, Gearld was one of the youngest in memory and was indeed gifted, but many dobbers did not believe he was ready. It proved to be an inspired move. Quillon guided Gearld, molding him into a more than competent Justiciar. Gearld continued to train with the Blue Stars. He gained the title of Lambent, the highest honor one can achieve in the order. He was the ideal mix of warrior, healer, and leader. Soon, his charisma and influence nearly equaled that of the king. His early elevation to Justiciar was no longer in question.

Today, Gearld continues to serve as the kingdom's Justiciar.

KING QUILAN

King Quilan (KILL-an), the son of Quillon, Dobberton's most celebrated king. Quilan was the apple of his father's eye. He was groomed to be king from a young age, just as his father was before him. The kingdom's people rejoiced when the crown was passed down, and why wouldn't they? Safety and prosperity were at an all-time high.

King Quilan, with the help of his father, maintained the kingdom and helped drive various innovations, such as plumbing and gas-powered lighting in the capital city. The former king, Quillon, died of old age, happy and proud in his own bed.

King Quilan continues to invest in the development of new technology in the kingdom capitol and has expanded to East Watch, where he led the construction of the first windmill. Now certain grains can be ground before making the long journey from the eastern fields to the central part of the kingdom, saving space and making the transition from field to store that much faster. The efforts have been such a success that money and manpower are now being

diverted from the other two branches of the government. There is a sentiment among some of the oldest dobbers that the Kingdom Guard now trains mill workers, not soldiers.

THE QUEEN GOVERNESS, CASSANDRA

King Quilan married a dobber of renowned beauty, the daughter of a well-to-do inn owner and merchant in Swan Hill, Cassandra. She took quickly to the role of Governess, taught by her gentle and wise predecessor, Bettany.

WOOD

Wood is the most essential asset in Dobberton. It is near and dear to them. They build most everything out of it, even their weapons and armor. Of course, there are no laws against the use of metal, but there don't need to be. Metal is hard to find and forge. It's heavy and ugly. Honestly, metal is downright unpleasant. *"It's shiny in a way that is just unnatural."* *"It's not what the Green Man intended."* It's simply not the dobber way to use metal for something that wood can do just as well.

The dobbers have developed a number of methods for treating wood that are renowned throughout the land. They soak wood in different solutions to create different effects, like making



it harder, heavier, more buoyant, or even flame resistant. They have developed several varnishes and paints that further their mastery of woodcraft. Varnishes can add color, strength, certain magical qualities, and sometimes are infused with traits that can be used to verify authenticity or origin.

MONEY

The system of currency in Dobberton is debated at times. The kingdom has crafted wooden coins covered in a special varnish infused with sap from the Prime Tree. This varnish is a crystalline, pale blue in its pure state. When applied, it enhances the natural color of the wood, making it bright and vibrant. The hard maple wood used for these coins becomes golden. Commonly referred to as primes,

they compare in value to a typical gold coin found elsewhere in the world. The second denomination of coins is coated in a varnish from the two trees that accompany the Prime Tree and are carved from poplar. Simply called greys due to their pale, dull appearance, they compare to copper coins.

The Dobberton leadership is wise enough not to presume that all of the world operates with wood as its central measure of value. There is a vault of gold and silver in the bowels of the palace with equivalent value for each prime coin and grey coin in circulation. This metal currency is traded with cultures outside Dobberton for goods and other valuables.

An alternate form of money has unexpectedly *taken purchase* in recent generations. The story goes that these strange, flattened pieces of metal with crinkled edges are called bottle caps. They were used by humans to seal containers of liquid. Of course, this couldn't be true, but all the same, these pieces of metal with unique and varied painted patterns on one side captured the attention of dobber youth. They became coveted. Some dobbers filled their tree hollows with them. They traded, bartered, and began paying for goods with them. Some more unsavory individuals would even steal them. With time, a standard rate of trade was established. A complete bottle cap is worth one silver by worldly standards, making it worth one-tenth of a prime or ten greys.

The kingdom leadership doesn't actively oppose the trading of bottle caps, but many of the shops within the capitol will not accept them, opting only for true wooden prime and grey coins. The further from the kingdom capitol you get, the more bottle caps you see.

Some even prefer them to the official wooden coins of the kingdom.



MAGIC AND FAITH

The use of magic is discouraged within Dobberton. The king's position is that true progress is achieved without magic. An attitude that magic is deceptive in nature and leads to corruption has begun to take root. No mages hold any official positions in court or in the Dobberton School. However, it has not always been that way.

Since the great Orlun, the first king of Dobberton, there has been a council of mages employed by the king to not only serve the king but also educate the people about magic. This led to the Dobberton School of Magic. For eight generations, the school has led in the elevation of arcana and knowledge. Some say the advancement of the school initiated major advancements for the kingdom. If founding the kingdom of Dobberton was Orlun's crown, establishing the school was his throne.

The school grew and became influential in other areas of study. In time, students studying areas other than magic outnumbered the young mages. Eventually, "of Magic" was dropped from the school's name, and it became known simply as the Dobberton School.

Twenty years ago, a major incident with one of the students sent ripples through the community. King Quilan made the decision to shut down the department of magic at the school. If you ask three different people, you'll probably get three entirely different stories as to exactly what happened. Unfortunately, public opinion has turned against magic.

RELIGION

Religion does not manifest in the world of the dobbers the same way it does in our world or as it does in many D&D settings. There are many powerful beings and legends that influence people and their behavior. Throughout generations, this influence has evolved into simple beliefs and mindsets.

THE STAR FATHER

Once a year, the kingdom of Dobberton celebrates the Night of the Blue Star, known appropriately as the Blue Star festival.

Hundreds of generations ago, on a crisp, clear spring night that could only be described as perfect, a bright blue star shone in the sky. It was more bright and blue than any star before it or since. Its light cast down through the leaves, striking a spot of rich, fertile earth.

There sprouted a mass of leaves with a large bud at its center. The sprout was thick and bulky. When the large bud opened, a baby was inside. That baby was the first dobber, and this star became known as the Star Father.

An ancient text held by the Order of The Blue Star proposes that the Prime Tree is a result of the sprout that came up from the Star Father's light. On that holy night of origin, the Star Father was flanked in the sky by two guide stars, both white and pure. It is from the light of these that sprouted the Prime Tree's guides.

The story goes on to prophesize that one day the forest will fall into a time of great evil. This evil will infect every life, leaf, and tree - only to be defeated by a great sacrifice. The sacrifice will be unseen by most, but when the two white stars reappear in the sky flanking the Blue Star, those who have kept faith through the time of evil will know it has come to an end.





THE GREEN MAN

The Green Man is the gardener, the woodsman, the shepherd, and the keeper.

Many think of the Green Man as a metaphor for the forest and how the forest is so vital to life in Dobberton. Some believe he is an actual being. Some say they have seen him from afar - that his spirit of life was nurturing the plants and trees among which he walked. Everyone knows someone who has seen the Green Man. They say he appeared in a time of crisis to intervene on their behalf. And just as unexpectedly as he appeared, he disappeared.

Some describe him as a walking and talking tree. His face is bark, and his hair leaves. Others say he isn't a walking, talking figure at all but a spirit that moves from limb and leaf.

Even though few agree about the appearance and nature of the Green Man, all revere him. If he comes up in conversation, a dobber will say "Thank the Green Man" under his breath and nod in the direction of the closest tree or its roots.

CURRENT-FILLED

The Current is like the energy that flows through all living things, yet it is more than that. It exists outside of time and location, though it is always fully present. It yearns for you to know and commune with it, yet it already knows you and every detail about you. It can cause no pain. However, it uses pain for the good of those who seek it.

Unlike the Star Father, the Green Man, or even Rohr-tan, the Current is not thought of as a deity and has no religion associated with it. Throughout this adventure, the Current is watching and listening and occasionally *nudging* the events herein. One that strives to be sensitive to the nudge of the Current is *Current-filled*. In the next adventure arc, the Current will take on a more meaningful role.

ROHR-TAN, THE LIGHTLESS

When the Star Father touched the earth with his light, the Prime Tree sprouted, and from it came the first dobber. But dobbers aren't the only creatures that were born that day. Darkness was shattered, and from its cracks stepped the Rot Weaver. He is the father of decay, the tainted, an in-between, a shadowling. He has been called many names, but all know him. He is Rohr-tan, the Lightless.

No one truly knows who or what the Lightless is, but most in Dobberton trust that he exists.

Some believe he is only a metaphor for the natural cycle of death and decay in the forest. He is the force that breaks down organic material in the cold and moist places where fungus grows. He fathers decay, a necessary step, leading to fertile ground and new life. One legend suggests that he was a great and evil wizard who haphazardly spliced natural and necrotic magics, thrusting himself into a permanent state of decay. Some believe he is more than a metaphor, a true evil bound to that which decays. Stay away from him, and he cannot touch you.

"If you don't clean your room, the Tainted will make his home in that mess," "Stay in the light to keep the lightless at bay," "That kind of behavior will have you pushing up daisies and feeding the Rot Weaver." For many, the Lightless is just lore turned cliché. He's the threat you tell children when they misbehave. He is fear of the unknown.

Legend has it that for a time, the Lightless was allowed to freely roam the Alwaysgreen Forest. After all, darkness is the natural balance of light. He claimed parts as his own, twisting them and sucking the life from them. Ever hungering for more. It was soon clear to the Star Father that Rohr-tan's pride and lust would lead to the downfall of all life. Thus, the legend continues, the Green Man was sent by the Star Father to hunt down the Lightless and imprison him.

Dolberton



Long before
the Dreary Mountains rose in the
north to be covered by snow and ice the
lotus bloomed. Before clouds of rain spread through the
south, filling it with green life, the lotus bloomed. Long before
the Alwaysgreen Forest was anything more than a swamp and
saplings, the lotus bloomed. Before the Greenman and the Red
Weaver wrestled in the forest, the lotus bloomed. Yet, when
the Star Father's light shone upon the lotus, the
Dolberts bloomed.

CITIES, TOWNS, AND VILLAGES

The Alwaysgreen Forest is home to many unique and flourishing communities, each as distinct and beautiful as the people that fill them. The following highlights some of the characteristics of places found in this adventure.

THE BURROW

The Burrow is unique in Dobberton, inhabited by more woodkin than dobbers. It's commonly believed that it is the water of the Blue River, infused with the magic of the Prime Tree, that awakens woodkin, and the Burrow is the closest community to that convergence. Its architecture is a true amalgam of every shape and size, designed to accommodate all from the tiny chipmunk to towering elk.

DOBBERTON, THE CAPITAL

Dobberton is the largest and oldest city in the Alwaysgreen Forest. It was built around the Prime Tree, the beacon of light and life in the forest. The grandeur and majesty of the capital city are unparalleled. The kingdom seat is home to the royal Triumvirate, the Paladins of the Blue Star, and chapter houses for the trade and labor guilds. It is situated centrally in the forest, a complimentary ornament around the fabled Prime Tree.

LAKE WOOD

Lake Wood is on the southern bank of Lake Croi, opposite its sister city, Swan Hill. The people of Lake Wood are humble and hard-working, prospering in a region rich in resources and trade. Gabbard's Cafe not only has a robust menu of Dobber favorites such as vegetables, grains, and nuts, but also serves fish caught fresh from the lake, a delight for many woodkin.

LITEWYCK

Litewyck is a trading post for a group of farms. Travelers and merchants can buy and trade with these surrounding farms at the Litewyck General Store.

MOSSFORT

A line of tree stands run along the West Road between West Watch and Pine Loft. Mossfort shelters the guards posted to those stands. Some of the toughest warriors, both Dobber and woodkin, call Mossfort their home and take pride in their role as defenders of the kingdom.

OAK DEN

This tight-knit community is nestled in a very fertile area of the forest. Crops of berries, vining fruits, and nuts flourish among the dense oak trees. In the fall, Oak Den hosts the most famous pumpkin fest in all the forest. The aroma of baked treats and simmering pumpkin stew can be smelled for miles around. Travelers often take a short detour to Oak Den when on the road between Dobberton and West Watch to rest and enjoy some true Dobber hospitality.

SWAN HILL

The Dobbers of Swan Hill benefit from a bustling commercial market along Greenway Road, one of the main thoroughfares from the fertile eastern fields and the Alwaysgreen capital. Many Dobbers in Swan Hill have had prosperous lives and know the value of slowing down. It is here they've chosen to live out their golden years, their homes built right on the northern edge of Lake Croi so they can always enjoy the view of sunlight shimmering on the water.

SOUTH WATCH

South Watch is the second largest of the watch towns, following East Watch. Also, like East Watch, it is sometimes called a gate town. The guards of South Watch is responsible for verifying the daily transport of goods into the kingdom from the southern fields. Every wagon, bale, and barrel is checked.

THANWEN

Thanwen is a long day's journey from either South Watch or Dobberton, making it a popular stop-over spot for those traveling to or from the busy gate town. It straddles King's Road, with taverns, eateries, and inns on either side.

WEST WATCH

Keepers of the western front, West Watch is responsible for ensuring the safety of the forest from mountain invaders. Having the tallest Dobber-made tower in the kingdom, the top of which can be seen above the surrounding pines, the watch is well equipped to see the threat of the Rat Claw Clan moving down from the mountains long before they would reach the forest's border.



A HERO'S GUIDE TO DOBBERTON



HEROES

Role-playing games come in many different styles and employ a plethora of mechanics. However, they all have one thing in common; heroes. Heroes are the heart and soul of any story. They excite our imaginations and inspire our dreams. Role-playing games give us all the freedom to be the heroes we hold in our hearts.

In the Alwaysgreen Forest, all the player characters are heroes. They will take on the roles of dobbers, woodkin, and other tiny folk who have made their homes in or around Dobberton.

The character each player creates has, in some way, separated themselves from the community around them. They may not have set out to be a hero, but even from the beginning, their quality shone. Being a hero is not just about having extraordinary powers or abilities. It's about how you treat others. It's about putting yourself in their shoes. A hero is often asked to make sacrifices for the greater good. When you choose to be a hero, you resolve to positively impact the world by lifting others up and putting them before yourself.

The forest needs heroes.

A crack has formed in the darkness, leaking rot and decay. Trees are withering, and crops are failing to mature. Strange, twisted creatures have been seen in the shadows. Parents bring their children in before dark. Guards take extra care that their blades are sharp. They whisper, "*he's returned.*"

It may not be easy, and there may be no reward, but the forest needs more people willing to strike into the shadows. The characters you make for this adventure may be the forest's last hope.

Will you be that hero?

CHARACTER OPTIONS IN THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST

Player characters in *Seeds of Decay* live in or near the Alwaysgreen Forest. The adventure is best suited for characters of good alignment. However, your Game Master (GM) can adjust for any character style they are comfortable with, and you wish to play. How you fit within the story is up to you. Have you heard about the rumors of a strange decay spreading through the forest? Do you believe magic should be outlawed? Or are you content with your life, enjoying the values that the kingdom offers? Have you established yourself as a reliable and valued member of the community, or are you an outsider still striving to do so?

The following pages cover new character options that are unique to the Alwaysgreen Forest. Work with your GM as you make your character and become the hero the forest needs!



PLAYING TINY CHARACTERS

No one likes finding a bear wandering through their cucumber patch, especially when that bear towers over you like a mountain! Being tiny is perfect for having a debate with a chipmunk, but puts you at a serious disadvantage against the vast array of large hostile creatures in the world.

The Alwaysgreen Forest is full of tiny creatures. When playing a tiny creature, one must keep in mind the impact of battling and moving around creatures that may be much larger and, in many cases, much stronger.

ABILITY SCORES

Tiny characters aren't likely to have the same physical ability scores as those who are much larger. To represent this, it is recommended that a cap on both Strength and Constitution for level 1 characters be implemented. If you want to play a tiny character whose attributes exceed the recommended cap, check with your Game Master. All the necessary details are specified for each heritage found in the Alwaysgreen Forest.

MOVEMENT AND RANGE

Make no mechanical changes. For example: Dobber-sized arrows have the same range as human ones.

HIDING AND COVER

When a character is tiny, it can be a lot easier to hide from creatures that are medium or larger. It is important to keep in mind that it takes much less to cover a character that is tiny. That being said, rules for half cover and three-quarters cover in melee combat remain the same.

RANGED COMBAT

It can be difficult for medium or larger creatures to hit tiny characters with ranged attacks. This is particularly true when considering these creatures are likely used to combat with medium or larger creatures. There is simply less for creatures of that size or larger to hit when targeting a tiny character. This gives them the benefit of half cover even when they are out in the open (+2 to AC) and three-quarter cover (+5 to AC) if at least half of them is obscured from the attacker.

PASSING THROUGH THE SPACE OF OTHER CREATURES

A tiny character can easily tumble around or run between the legs of a larger creature in its space. Make an opposed Dexterity (Acrobatics) check with advantage when moving through the space of a larger creature.

Conversely, tiny characters will have a much more difficult time attempting to overrun or shove aside a creature they are attempting to pass in the same space. To do this, make an opposed Strength (Athletics) check with disadvantage.

MOVING THROUGH SMALL OPENINGS

Tiny characters can move through openings much smaller than most characters can. There are no specific mechanics for this, but rather a frame of mind. When a tiny character is in a space designed for medium or larger creatures, it will be easy for that character to hide under chairs, go out windows, or climb down a chimney. Be creative - tiny characters will have a lot of opportunities that larger creatures may not.

SWIMMING, CLIMBING, AND CRAWLING

Tiny characters climb using the same rules as medium and larger creatures; each foot of movement costs 1 extra foot (2 extra feet in difficult terrain) when you're climbing, swimming, or crawling. At the GM's option, climbing a slippery vertical surface or one with few handholds requires a successful Strength (Athletics) check. Similarly, gaining any distance in rough water might require a successful Strength (Athletics) check. However, due to your tiny size, handholds and other elements needed to climb will be harder to reach. The strength needed to swim against the current may be significant. If the Game Master considers this movement to be difficult enough to require an ability check, +2 to the DC. +5 if it is very difficult.

CREATURES

Creatures that are written for the Alwaysgreen Forest are expected to be relative in size to other creatures in the world. Dobbers are the baseline, and no upscaling or other changes are necessary.

CREATURES FROM OTHER SETTINGS

Other settings are usually written with humans as the baseline. To reflect the tactical and mechanical differences that would naturally be in play between tiny and larger creatures, consider using the following scaling options when playing tiny characters in other settings.

Tiny player characters have advantage on Dexterity based rolls and disadvantage on Strength & Constitution based rolls when directly opposing creatures that are medium or larger.

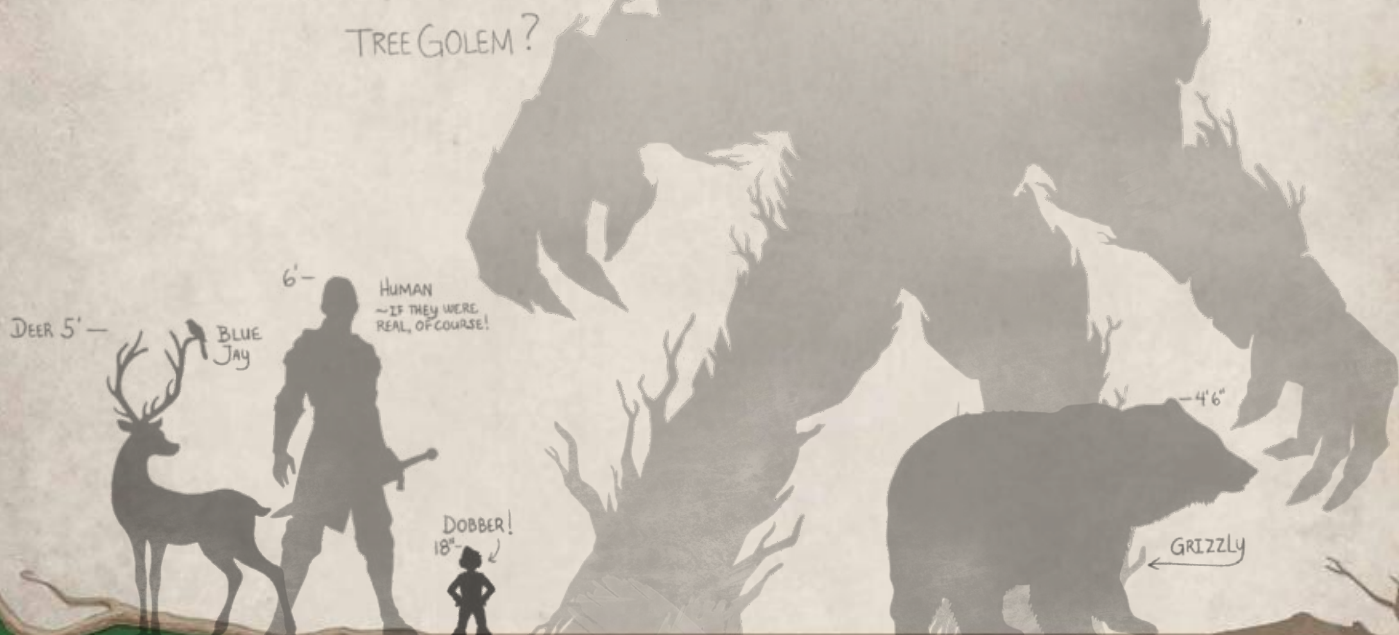
TINY CHARACTERS TAKING DAMAGE

When a tiny character takes damage from a creature that is much larger, it is important to consider how much greater the effect of the damage may be. It may be helpful to visualize your tiny character next to a humanoid or a bear, such as is shown on the previous page.

While this difference can be adequately handled through the Game Master's flavor and description, consider using the effects and extra damage described in the chart on the next page. This will increase the sense of danger and excitement when portraying a tiny character.

Use the table below for suggested damage modifiers:

Damage Type	Large and Huge Creatures	Gargantuan Creatures
Slashing, Piercing	Severed: +1d6 damage & constitution roll vs 10 + 1/4 damage taken or be stunned for a # of rounds equal to the amount failed on the roll	Cleaved: +3d6 damage & constitution roll at disadvantage vs 10 + 1/4 damage taken or be stunned for a # of rounds equal to the amount failed on the roll
Bludgeoning, Thunder, Force	Broken Bones: +1d10 damage & constitution roll vs 10 + 1/4 damage taken or be knocked prone	Crushed: +2d10 damage & constitution roll at disadvantage vs 10 + 1/4 damage taken or be knocked unconscious for a # of rounds equal to the amount failed on the roll



DOBBERS

Dobbers of the Alwaysgreen Forest, also called common dobbers, are the most populous heritage of dobber. They have a well-developed society in the forest. Their towns and villages sprawl along the forest floor, with adobe-style homes and structures built right into the trunks of trees.

Most dobbers spend their time farming, building, or crafting. They tend toward working with their hands and problem-solving to make a living, though, of course, there are those who excel at various skills and trades.

It's rare to hear of a dobber that isn't a vegetarian. They eat a lot of grains, nuts, and mushrooms. It's common for a pot of vegetable soup to be hung over the fire throughout the winter and big bowls of fruit salad to be shared in the summer. Their pastries are famous across the land. They also enjoy a fair amount of cheeses and yogurts. A select few have a permit from the Governess to brew and ferment wines and beers.

Physique. Dobbers are tiny. They average 18" tall, weighing 30 to 50 lbs. Their bodies are dense and stocky for their size, with hands and feet that seem somewhat oversized. Their ears are typically quite large, and their noses dominate their faces, large and round.

Age. Dobbers reach adulthood in their late teens and have been known to live nearly a century.

Alignment. Dobbers tend toward good alignments. However, all alignments are found within the dobber population. As with all cultures, the best and the worst are found among them.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and one extra language of your choice. Dobbers typically learn the languages of other peoples they deal with, including obscure dialects.

Ability Score Increase. +1 to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma plus an additional +1 to any ability score of your choice. Your suggested maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 14.

Speed. Base walking speed is 20 feet.

Gifted Learner. Dobbers are curious and gifted with learning new things. Common dobbers may take two bonus Skill Proficiencies.



SYLVAN DOBBERS

The Sylvan's love for trees extends higher than just the trunk. They make their homes high in the branches, trees connected by a beautiful web of suspended bridges. Their family-centered community is governed by a council, each family having a representative to speak on their behalf. Their city is hidden deep in the Fenmar Forest, cut off from the rest of dobberkind.

Ability Score Increase. +2 to Dexterity. Your maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 13.

Alignment. Sylvan Dobbers are reclusive and very set in their ways. They are often seen as stubborn, which can sometimes make them seem unreasonable. They are usually good, and many are chaotic, but all alignments can be found among the sylvan dobbers.

Size. Sylvan dobbers are often more slender than common dobbers. They are of a similar height but, on average, are a couple of inches taller. Their ears, while as large as their cousins, come to a point at the top.

Speed. Base speed is 25 feet.

Bonus Proficiency, Keen Senses. Sylvan dobbers have proficiency in the Perception skill.

Stubborn. Sylvan dobbers have advantage on saving throws against being Charmed.

Additionally, anyone who uses the Persuasion skill on them has disadvantage.

Treetop Navigation. Sylvan dobbers have a unique relationship with the forest. While in the forest and traveling along the limbs of trees, they have an uncanny ability to move and can always find their way.

- You can't become lost except by magical means.
- If you are traveling alone, you can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- You can hide while in the trees, even when in full light.

Sylvan and terrin dobbers each have their own unique heritage and culture apart from the common dobbers of the Alwaysgreen Forest. Sylvans are often taller and more slender, while terrins are typically wide of body. They all agree that their origin is the Prime Tree, but histories don't align as to why most of the sylvans and terrins left Dobberton.

TERRIN DOBBERS

Terrin dobbers love roots and earth. For a terrin, the roots of a tree are like its heart, responsible for pumping life to all its branches and leaves. And because of this, most make their home in the ground among the roots. They are almost as at home underground as a goblin. There is a terrin colony under the foothills northeast of the Alwaysgreen Forest. They have a network of root farms where they harvest many saps and oils.

Ability Score Increase. +1 to either Wisdom or Intelligence and +1 to Constitution. Your maximum Strength at level 1 is 14, and your maximum Constitution at level 1 is 15.

Alignment. Most terrin dobbers are lawful, believing firmly in the benefits of a well-ordered society. They tend toward good, with a strong sense of fair play and a belief that everyone deserves to share in the benefits of a just order.

Size. Terrin dobbers are the most stocky of the three dobber races. Their ears have a uniquely square shape.

Speed. Your base speed is 20 feet. Your speed is not reduced when traveling over difficult terrain while on the ground. Unlike the other dobber races, terrins do not like being in the trees. The trunk and roots are the important parts of a tree.

Limited Darkvision. Terrin dobbers work the earth digging and mining for ores and particularly rare root types. Having spent so much time underground, they can see in the dark better than most other dobbers. You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Resilience. Terrin dobbers have advantage on saving throws against poison, and have resistance against poison damage.

Bonus Proficiency, Insightful. Terrin dobbers have the bonus proficiency of Insight. Lying to a terrin dobber is never a good idea.

Woodcunning. You have advantage when making an Intelligence (History) check related to the origin of trees or wooden structures. After spending generations digging in and around trees and their root systems, you know them better than anyone else.



THE WOODKIN

Within the kingdom's capital of Dobberton, the great Blue River flows through and around the Prime Tree. The first tree of the forest provides life to these flowing currents, often with unpredictable results. One quality is known; the water gives intelligence and understanding to many forest creatures that otherwise would not have it. These are known as woodkin.

How the Blue River's water chooses which creatures gain knowledge and understanding is not known. Nor do they know why some trees that grow along its banks suddenly uproot, gaining the ability to walk and talk. What is known is that woodkin are just as much a part of Dobberton as the dobbers themselves.

The woodkin are as capable as any other being in the forest, but their physicality differs significantly. The intent is that these awakened animals are not anthropomorphized versions of themselves. They keep the same physical bodies they had as common forest creatures. Many woodkin are tiny; this is represented in-game as a first-level ability score maximum for Strength and/or Constitution. As these characters experience the great adventures before them, these attributes can increase beyond the initial max through leveling up or other magical or in-game means. Additionally, any animal can become awakened. The ones listed here have paws or other traits that allow them to use tools and weapons or to perform the somatic requirements of spells. If you'd like to play an awakened animal not listed here, speak with your GM and refer to the "Make Your Own Woodkin" section below.

COMMON WOODKIN

CHIPMUNK

Traits. +2 to Dexterity. Your maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 11.

Speed. 25 ft., climb 20 ft.

Lucky. When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Sneaky. You are proficient in the Stealth skill.

Magic Resistance. You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

GROUNDHOG

Traits. +1 to Strength and Constitution. Your maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 15.

Speed. 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Sturdy. Your body and low center of gravity give you advantage against being knocked prone.

Burly. Your compact, strong body gives you advantage on Athletics checks and grappling checks.

Claws. Your claws are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with it, you deal slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life underground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

OTTER

Traits. +2 to Intelligence. Your maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 14.

Speed. 25 ft., swim 20 ft.

Natural Swimmer. You take to the water with ease and comfort, giving you advantage on Athletics and Acrobatics checks while in the water.

Skill Versatility. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

Hold Breath. You can hold your breath for up to 20 minutes at a time.

PORCUPINE

Traits. +2 to Constitution. Your maximum Strength at level 1 is 15.

Speed. 20 ft.

Bad Opportunity. If you provoke an attack of opportunity, the attacker must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d4 + your Constitution modifier damage. The DC for this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

Quill. Your quills are a natural weapon, which you can use to make Strength-based, ranged (30/60 ft.) attacks. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life at night, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.



RACCOON

Traits. +1 to Dexterity and Charisma. Your maximum Strength and Constitution at level 1 is 13.

Speed. 25 ft., climb 20 ft.

Nimble Fingers. You gain advantage on Sleight of Hand rolls.

Always at Home. Your natural ability to adapt to your surroundings grants you proficiency in Survival and you roll Survival checks with advantage.

Claws. Your claws are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life at night, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.



RARE WOODKIN

DEERET

Traits. +1 to Dexterity, Charisma, and Wisdom.

Speed. 30 ft.

Majestic Presence. Your grace and impressive antlers grant you proficiency in Performance and Persuasion.

Antlers. Your antlers can be used as weapons, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

Darkvision. Accustomed to life at night, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.



TREE

Traits. +2 to Constitution and +1 to Intelligence.
Your maximum Dexterity at level 1 is 13.

Speed. 20 ft.

Natural Armor. Your base AC is 14 + your Dexterity modifier, adding any bonuses granted by class, spells, or magic items accordingly. You cannot wear crafted armor.

Forest Stealth. Your natural ability to move through the forest grants you proficiency in Stealth, and you roll Stealth checks with advantage.

Natural Appearance. While you remain motionless, you are indistinguishable from other trees in your surroundings.

Speech of the Forest. You have an innate ability to communicate with beasts and plants. They can understand the meaning of your words, though their communication in return is not audible, they can convey emotions or simple mental images. You have advantage on all Charisma checks you make to influence them.

CREATE YOUR OWN WOODKIN

The Blue River has streams and tributaries throughout the Alwaysgreen Forest. Any variety of plant or creature may be awakened by the Blue River's magic. You can build your own woodkin race by selecting the racial traits that fit the type of creature you want to play. Speak with your Game Master about your woodkin idea to ensure that the traits you desire fit well within the setting and story you'll be telling.

Spend creature points to select your traits. Each racial attribute costs either one, two, or three creature points. You are allotted eight (8) creature points to spend when building your woodkin race during character creation.

WOODKIN RACIAL TRAITS

ABILITY SCORE BONUS

Your woodkin's ability scores are established by building your character in the manner established by your GM. However, one or more of your woodkin's ability scores may have a bonus depending on the type of creature you select.

You can spend up to 3 creature points to improve ability scores. Each ability score can be modified one time.

- ▶ **1 creature point = +1 to a single ability score**
- ▶ **3 creature points = +2 to a single ability score**

SPEED

Base walking speed for tiny and small creatures is 20 feet. Spend creature points to increase your woodkin's base speed.

- ▶ **1 creature point = 30 feet.**
- ▶ **2 creature points = 40 feet.**

ALTERNATIVE MOVEMENT

Usually, your character's movement speed for alternate types of movement, such as climbing or swimming, is one-half your character's base walking speed. However, some woodland creatures are adept at these alternate types of movement. Choose the movement type that fits

your woodkin and establish its speed by spending creature points.

- ▶ **1 creature point = 20 feet.**
- ▶ **2 creature points = 30 feet.**

ALTERNATIVE MOVEMENT: FLIGHT

- ▶ **3 creature points**

You have a flying speed of 40 feet. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor.

ALTERNATE MELEE ATTACK

- ▶ **1 creature point**

Many creatures have natural defensive and offensive traits. A claw is the most common alternative melee attack among woodkin, but you may also consider options like a bite, antler, or sting.

Your character gains:

[Name of Trait]. Your [____] are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with [it/them], you deal [damage type] damage equal to 1d4 + your [Strength or Dexterity] modifier.

EXAMPLE:

Claws. Your claws are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal slashing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

ALTERNATE RANGED ATTACK

- ▶ **2 creature points**

Some creatures have natural defensive and offensive traits that are ranged. These are very rare but can add a lot of fun for a player. The porcupine woodkin included here is an example. Check with your GM before selecting this trait.

Your character gains:

[Name of Trait]. Your [____] are a natural weapon, which you can use to make ranged (30/60 ft.) attacks. If you hit with [it/them], you deal [damage type] damage equal to 1d4 + your [Strength or

Dexterity] modifier.

EXAMPLE:

Quills. Your quills are a natural weapon, which you can use to make Strength-based, ranged (30/60 ft.) attacks. If you hit with them, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

ALWAYS AT HOME

► 1 creature point

Your natural ability to adapt to your surroundings grants you proficiency in Survival, and you roll Survival checks with advantage.

BAD OPPORTUNITY

► 1 creature point

If you provoke an attack of opportunity, the attacker must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d4 + your Constitution modifier damage. The DC for this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

BURLY

► 1 creature point

Your compact, strong body gives you advantage on Athletics checks and grappling checks.

DARKVISION

► 1 creature point

Accustomed to life at night or underground, has given you superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

FOREST STEALTH

► 1 creature point

Your natural ability to move through the forest grants you proficiency with Stealth. You also have advantage on Stealth checks while in the forest.

HOLD BREATH

► 1 creature point

Your lungs are designed to allow you to spend a significant amount of time underwater. You can hold your breath for up to 15 minutes at a time.

Most of the creatures you'd play in the Alwaysgreen forest are tiny, small, or medium. If you are not playing in the Alwaysgreen forest, you can use racial traits to create large or bigger creatures as well. Creatures like a chipmunk or rabbit are not likely to have a high score in Strength or Constitution. They might be quite dexterous or their keen senses may lead them to have a bonus to Wisdom. Work with your GM, be creative, and have fun!

LARGE

► 4 creature points

Traits. Your body is much larger than other species in the forest. You have +2 to your Constitution, and your maximum Strength score increases by 2.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Massive Force. Big creatures typically wield oversized weapons that deal additional dice of damage. When you make a weapon attack using a weapon made for your size, including your unarmed strikes, double the damage dice.

Easy to Hit. Your immense size leaves you vulnerable to attacks from all directions. If more than one enemy that is size medium or smaller is within melee range of you during a turn, you suffer a - 2 to your AC.

LUCKY

► 1 creature point

When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

► 1 creature point

You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

MAJESTIC

► 1 creature point

Your grace and impressive form grant you proficiency in Performance and Persuasion.

NATURAL APPEARANCE

► 1 creature point

While you remain motionless, you are indistinguishable from other similar objects (such as trees) in your surroundings.

NATURAL ARMOR

Your hide is thicker and more durable than many creatures of the forest. This makes it almost impossible to find any crafted armor that fits, but you may not need it. Choose a new base AC below, then add your Dexterity modifier and any bonuses granted by class, spells, or magic items accordingly.

► 1 creature point = Base AC of 12

► 3 creature points = Base AC of 14



NIMBLE FINGERS

► 1 creature point

You gain advantage on Dexterity rolls that involve your hands and Sleight of Hand checks.

SKILL VERSATILITY

► 1 creature point

You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.

SNEAKY

► 1 creature point

You are proficient in the Stealth skill.

Speech of the Forest

► 1 creature point

You have an innate ability to communicate with beasts and plants. They can understand the meaning of your words, though their communication in return is not audible, they can convey emotions or simple mental images. You have advantage on all Charisma checks you make to influence them.

STURDY

► 1 creature point

Your body and low center of gravity give you advantage against being knocked prone.

VENOM

► 3 creature points

You secrete a poisonous fluid, the manner of which is based on the creature you are creating. When used in an attack, such as applying it to a weapon or with a bite, the target must make a Constitution saving throw on a hit. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. The target repeats the Constitution saving throw at the beginning of each of their turns for up to 1 minute until they succeed. A creature takes 1d6 damage on a failed save. The damage increases to 2d6 at 6th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 16th level. After you use this ability, you can't secrete another dose until you complete a short or long rest.

PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST

It seems more people from outside the Alwaysgreen Forest visit Dobberton every day. Goblins have become more common in recent years, taking advantage of King Quilan's progressive approach to trade and economy. Ratkin from the Clan, however, are very rare. The conflict between Dobberton and the Rat Claw Clan has raged for years. Nevertheless, it has happened that a Ratkin has defected from the Clan, choosing the promise of peace offered by the Alwaysgreen Forest.

GOBLINS

Goblin ancestry goes back further than memory. They are found throughout the world, and their influence is felt in each culture. They congregate in great cities of commerce, adding to it their unique brand of shrewd business.

While they consider themselves quite adaptable to any community, their native culture seems to have blended into a sort of tribal aristocracy. Most families have their own area of commerce where they focus, either trade, transport, or selling the raw materials found in the mountains. Family clans rise and fall in power as they gain or lose financial resources. A family that holds the chief seat in a tribe can suddenly find themselves out of the leadership tent with the loss of a trade contract or the depletion of resources from one of their mines. Additionally, family skirmishes are common within a tribe, shifting

power to the family with the most allies. Outsiders rarely know who the chief of any given goblin tribe is because it changes so often.

There are two tribes in the mountains to the north. The Rockhart tribe is by far the largest, though rarely seen in the Alwaysgreen Forest. Their thick, leathery skin is ideal for life in the distant arctic north. Their people span across many peaks, though most of their tribe lives on the Broken Mountain, named thus because of the sheer amount of resources mined from it.

The Ironspire tribe claims the Gorgwin mountains, closer to Dobberton, just northwest of the Alwaysgreen Forest. Frequently, dobbers from Pine Loft Watch visit Brasshelm, their capital and closest goblin city. The Ironspire goblins have put a lot of effort into making a front for visitors that is very polished. Their buildings are constructed of the highest quality materials with painstaking detail. Hotels and eateries are adorned with fine furniture and serve exquisite meals to please any pallet. They seem to know that to appeal to those they would trade with, they need to lure them with comfort. Even if they personally don't necessarily enjoy those same luxuries. Their own homes are simply dug into the rocks and earth of the mountains.

Ability Score Increase. +2 Intelligence. Your maximum Strength at level 1 is 14, and your maximum Constitution at level 1 is 12.

Age. Goblins mature around 20 and can live into their 90s.

Size. Goblins vary greatly in size. Some tower over 2 feet tall, and others quite short, barely cresting a foot. Some are skinny, others are fat. Though they come in all shapes and sizes, they tend to have a weak constitution and, at times,



seem to be prone to sickness.

Speed. Base speed is 20 feet.

Bonus Proficiency. Goblins may gain an additional skill proficiency in Deception.

Goblin Cunning. You have advantage on all Wisdom saving throws against magic.

Darkvision. Goblins spend almost all their life in caves. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

THE RAT CLAW CLAN

For generations, the Rat Claw Clan has covered the Dreary Mountains like thick gunge. They frequently raid the goblin tribes of the Gorgwin Mountains, taking what they like and killing anyone in their way. Their disregard for life and civilization has cast fear over dobbers and all people of the Alwaysgreen Forest. It is a credit to Gearld and King Quillon that there hasn't been a significant Rat Claw Clan invasion into Dobberton for nearly two generations.

Their home in the Dreary Mountains is an amalgam of permanent, stone-cut buildings and temporary hide-and-bone tents. The clan prides itself on mobility. Only the elderly or infirm, the children, and some whose power has afforded them laziness, stay in their stone buildings during "raiding season." The rest of the clan is more nomadic.

Everything they need, they can take with them, ready to raid, pillage and plunder at a moment's notice. All the neighboring kingdoms know that the full weight of the mighty Rat Claw Clan army can be upon their border before they've even had a chance to get out of bed.

It's worth noting that not all ratkin are a part of the clan. Some hail from the far Southern Swamp, and there are those who wander the eastern plains. Unfortunately, all that dobbers and woodkin of the Alwaysgreen Forest know about Ratkin is what they have

learned from the Rat Claw Clan. They are chaotic, violent, and bloodthirsty.

Choosing to play a ratkin will take a great deal of wit and charm, as they have no allies in the Alwaysgreen Forest. Most ratkin are chaotic. Within their culture, they lean toward evil, striving to expand their territory, influence, and power. They take what they want, often by force. They have little regard for safety, both for themselves and those around them.

Ability Score Increase. +2 to Strength.

Age. Ratkin reach maturity at the age of 16 and can live into their 80s.

Size. Full-grown ratkin are typically taller than dobbers. They have a lanky, wiry build with arms and legs that seem long for their torso.

Speed. Base speed is 30 feet.

Bonus Attack. As a bonus action, you can make a bite attack. It does 1d4 damage and is considered a melee attack, using your Strength modifier both to hit and on damage.

Bonus Proficiency, Fierce. Rats may gain an additional skill proficiency in Intimidation.



NEW BACKGROUNDS

GREEN THUMB

You have a natural ability to bring life from the earth. You have a green thumb on a large scale. Before you chose the path of adventure, you made a living working on or owning a farm, garden, or orchard. Your farm may have grown common produce and fruits that are native to the region or more specialized or even magical goods. Work with your GM to determine how to best fit this detail into the story you're going to help telling.

You find joy in working with your hands and understand that a hard day's labor is its own reward. You're comfortable with dirt under your nails and sweat on your brow. A meal served with vegetables grown in your own field tastes better, something rich folk will never understand.

While you love the earth and the gifts it gives, generations of farming in your family has begun to wear thin. Perhaps it is time for a change. Perhaps your heart longs for adventure.

Skill Proficiencies. Choose two from among, Animal Handling, Medicine, Nature, and Survival

Tool Proficiencies. One type of artisan's tools

Equipment. A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a book of plans, a bottle of black ink, a quill, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature. A Friend of the Land. You, more so than even you believe at times, are gifted in bringing forth life from the earth. Nearly every seed you plant sprouts. Plants that you care for thrive. You can find the easiest path for irrigation to fields and gardens. You know where to plant each crop to ensure it gets exactly the right amount of light. Crop rotation? Yep, you're a natural. When under your daily care, plants mature and produce 25 percent faster, and they yield 50 percent more.

WOODSMITH

Your hands come alive when holding rasp and saw. Sawdust fills your nostrils and covers your clothes. Wood-curing oils stain your nails. In every piece of wood, you can see what it's meant to be, sword, shield, or armor.

Skill Proficiencies. Athletics and your choice between Perception or Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies. Carpenter's tools and leatherworker's tools

Equipment. Woodsmith's tools, leatherworker's tools, a book of various woodsmith's techniques, a jar of black ink with a quill, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature. Wood Worker. Your skill and craft allow you to create amazing wooden pieces, both beautiful and functional.

INVENTOR

Your curiosity and ingenuity have given you a knack for engineering.

Skill Proficiencies. Insight, Investigation

Tool Proficiencies. One type of artisan's tools

Equipment. A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a book of plans, a bottle of black ink, a quill, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature. Problem Solver. When taking time to analyze a problem, puzzle, or device, you have an uncanny ability to quickly understand what you're looking at. If you are solving a puzzle that involves an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check, you can roll with advantage. You also have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to learn the best method to disable a trap. On a success, you have advantage on Sleight of Hand checks or your tinkerer's tools proficiency in order to disable said trap. Additionally, the time it takes you to build from a contraption diagram is reduced according to your level.

- Levels 1-4: Build time is reduced by 10 percent
- Levels 5-10: Build time is reduced by 25 percent
- Levels 11-17: Build time is reduced by 40 percent
- Levels 18-20: Build time is reduced by 50 percent

NEW CLASS

TINKERER CLASS

She quickly winds a key in the back of a small clockwork duck, then sets the small wooden fowl on the edge of the moat. Its feet begin to paddle, driving the innocent-looking automaton forward across the water. She doesn't believe she's been spotted, but just to make sure, she throws the hood of her cloak up and activates it. Phosphorescent mist, her own design, puffs out, refracting the light around her, making her nearly impossible to see. Just then, the duck completes its swim to the other side of the moat. With a blast that can be heard for miles around, it explodes, blowing a huge hole in the castle's wall. Access granted.

With a deep breath, he calms his mind to concentrate. Mechanical hands extend far above him on wooden centipede-like arms to the control panel of a trap he and his party unwittingly stepped into. His mind races to reverse engineer the trap's triggering mechanism so he can disarm it before they all die. All the while, they are pressed by attacking goblins from behind. A small shield on another wooden arm extends from his belt, deftly slapping aside crossbow bolts that would undoubtedly break his concentration should one strike true.

Wings unfold from her backpack. Each meticulously crafted feather clicks into place, detailed to look like a hawk. She leaps from the ground, the tightly coiled springs in her boots expanding to give her extra lift. The wings catch hold of the air, and she soars. Her heart skips a beat as she remembers that she feels more at home in the sky than on the ground.

Over time you found that your ability to solve problems extended beyond simple tools; it was something much more profound. You could make amazing mechanical contraptions! You are a tinkerer!

MASTERS OF MECHANICS

Invention is at the core of all tinkerers. They've devoted their lives to seeing the world through a different lens. Their world is a puzzle to put together, a problem to solve, and a contraption to conquer. Many tinkerers focus on creating new devices designed to help with day-to-day life. Others have become obsessed with automation, creating fantastic whirring gizmos and mechanical



creatures. And there are those who specialize in contriving unique destructive forces only their clever minds can imagine.

When it comes to combat, tinkerers are masters of versatility. Their meticulous minds excel at diagramming and analysis. Even combat should be viewed as a schematic to be followed, each cog turning in harmony to achieve the desired outcome. Victory need never be in doubt.

CREATING A TINKERER

The most important question to consider when creating your tinkerer is what inspired you to invent? Are you a tradesperson that started

seeing ways to save time and money through your contraptions? You may have been known in town for your ability to fix and improve broken things. Were you inspired by the intricacies of a clock to bring other mechanical marvels to life? Perhaps your tinkerer's talents gained the attention of the local guard captain, landing you a position crafting new and improved weapons and defenses.

You may do your best work in silence and solitude, but your creations speak for themselves. Your reputation is beginning to grow. Everyone needs a tinkerer by their side.

THE TINKERER TABLE

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Sparks	Contraptions Diagrams Known			
				Simple	Standard	Advanced	Master
1st	+2	Contraptionneering, First Contraption	—	2	—	—	—
2nd	+2	Institute of Inspiration	—	3	—	—	—
3rd	+2	Spark	1	3	1	—	—
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	1	3	1	—	—
5th	+3	—	1	4	2	—	—
6th	+3	Institute of Inspiration Feature	2	4	2	—	—
7th	+3	Imbue	2	4	2	—	—
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	3	4	2	—	—
9th	+4	—	3	4	3	1	—
10th	+4	Institute of Inspiration Feature	4	4	3	1	—
11th	+4	—	4	5	3	1	—
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	5	5	3	1	—
13th	+5	—	5	5	3	1	—
14th	+5	Institute of Inspiration Feature	5	5	3	2	—
15th	+5	—	6	5	3	2	1
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	6	5	3	2	1
17th	+6	—	6	5	3	2	1
18th	+6	—	7	5	3	2	1
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	7	5	4	2	1
20th	+6	Mechanical Mind	8	5	4	3	2

QUICK BUILD

You can make a tinkerer quickly by following these suggestions. First, Intelligence should be your highest ability score, followed by Dexterity or Strength. Second, choose the hermit background

CLASS FEATURES

As a tinkerer, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 1d8 per tinkerer level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per tinkerer level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light armor or any contraption with armor qualities you've made

Weapons: Simple weapons, hand crossbows, rapiers, shortswords

Tools: Tinker's tools and (a) one additional type of artisan's tools or (b) thieves' tools

Saving Throws: Intelligence, Dexterity

Skills: Choose any one skill and two from History, Insight, Investigation, and Sleight of Hand

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- Your first contraption (from your book of diagrams), a magnifying glass, and tinker's tools
- a scholar's pack with a book for your contraption diagrams instead of a book of lore
- (a) a shortsword or (b) any simple weapon
- (a) thieves' tools or (b) alchemists' supplies

CONTRAPTIONEERING

Contraptions are the result of the creative genius of tinkerers. Contraptions range from weapons to clockwork creatures and everything in between. The possibilities of what can be invented are only limited by one's imagination. At 1st level, your talents have just started to take shape. You've successfully designed and crafted your first simple contraption. You've recorded it and one other simple contraption diagram in your book of diagrams.

As you progress in levels, you learn and invent more contraptions. You must record them in your book of diagrams. The number of contraption diagrams available to you to record in your book is specified in the Tinkerer's Table.

Contraption challenge DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Contraptioneering modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

INSTITUTE OF INSPIRATION

Starting at 2nd level, you begin to feel a particular affinity toward a certain area of tinkering, the Architect, the Automatonier, the Solutionist, or the Weaponeer.

Your institute grants you specific features at 2nd level and again at 6th, 10th, and 14th level.

BONUS CONTRAPTION

When you choose an Institute of Inspiration, add 1 additional contraption diagram from that institute to your book of diagrams that is of 1 level higher in complexity than your current level allows.

Therefore, from your chosen institute, you gain your first standard complexity contraption at level 2, your first advanced contraption at level 3, and your first master contraption at level 9. These contraptions are in addition to the number shown on the tinkerer table.

SPARK

At 3rd level, you gain spark. Tinkerers can infuse their creations with a bit of their own essence. This essence gives contraptions energy and a rudimentary kind of consciousness.

This is called spark!

As a tinkerer gains levels, they can give and maintain spark in an increasing number of contraptions. Not all contraptions require spark to function. However, if your tinkerer has crafted more contraptions than they have spark, once per day, they must consciously choose to which contraptions are to receive spark that day.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Using the optional feats rule, you can forgo taking this feature to take a feat of your choice instead.

IMBUE

At 7th level, a tinkerer's connection to their contraptions expands beyond spark. You can use imbue to lock magic into your contraptions. This is done by a character casting a spell that uses a spell slot equal to or less than half (rounded down) of your character level in the presence of the contraption that you wish to imbue. Your tinkerer must then spend time with the contraption equal to 10x the casting time of the spell to lock it into the item. Once completed, you have a new, magical contraption.

This new contraption now uses charges to cast or activate the spell imbued on it. The number of charges it has is equal to half your tinkerer's current level of spark (rounded up). This doesn't deduct from the spark you use with your other contraptions.

MECHANICAL MIND

At 20th level, you've memorized all of the contraption diagrams in your book. You can craft them in half the prescribed build time using half of the required components. All of your contraptions that require spark will carry out their purpose indefinitely, even if the contraption gains a new owner or you die.

INSTITUTES OF INSPIRATION

ARCHITECT

You make things that help. You are the classic inventor. When you choose this Institute of Inspiration at level 2, you may add one contraption diagram to your book of diagrams that is of one level higher in complexity than your current level allows.

I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER

At 2nd level, once per long rest, instead of taking an action on your first turn in combat, you analyze the field, instructing your allies on the best strategy. Roll a d6. Up to 10 of your allies may add the number rolled to their attack rolls or ability checks on their next turn and may move up to an additional 5ft beyond their standard movement rate. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

A PERFECT TRAP

At 6th level, your experience crafting trap contraptions has allowed you to make improvements to them. When you craft a new trap contraption, choose one of the following additional effects: (A) creatures have disadvantage on rolls when attempting to avoid triggering the trap, (B) roll with advantage when attempting to hit a target with a trap, (C) the range of the trap is increased by 50 percent or (D) the number of targets the trap can hit is doubled.

EXTRA ATTACK WITH FAVORED WEAPON

Starting at 6th level, you have favored one weapon contraption allowing you to use it to attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

I REALLY LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER

At 10th level, up to 2 times per short rest, instead of taking an action in combat, you analyze the field, instructing your allies on the best strategy. Roll a d10. Up to 10 of your allies may add the number rolled to their attack rolls on their next turn and may move up to an additional 5ft beyond their standard movement rate. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

ARMOR? NO PROBLEM

At 14th level, you've gained a thorough understanding of the forms and constructions of armor. When targeting a creature wearing any kind of crafted armor, you have advantage on attack rolls.

AUTOMATONIER

You make things that do things. You make clockwork robots. When you choose this Institute of Inspiration at level 2, you may add one contraption diagram to your book of diagrams that is of one level higher in complexity than your current level allows.

ADEPT VERSATILITY

At 2nd level, choose one additional skill proficiency and any one tool proficiency.

MORE THAN THE AVERAGE SPARK

At 6th level, you have a number of additional spark available to you equal to your Intelligence modifier.

EXTRA ATTACK WITH FAVORED WEAPON

Starting at 6th level, you have favored one weapon contraption allowing you to use it to attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

EXTRAORDINARY PRECISION

At 10th level, you gain the Sleight of Hand skill. If you already have it, you gain expertise in that skill. You also gain expertise in one of your tool proficiencies.

SURPASSING SKILL

Starting at 14th level, when you make an ability check, you can expend one spark. Roll a d8 and add the number rolled to your ability check. You can choose to do so after you roll the die for the ability check but before the GM tells you whether you succeed or fail.

SOLUTIONIST

You make things better. You look at any common item and immediately think of improvements. You often combine different items into something new. When you choose this institute of inspiration at level 2, you may add one contraption diagram to your book of diagrams that is of one level higher in complexity than your current level allows.

MINOR IMBUE

At 2nd level, you've already started to experiment with weaving magic into your contraptions. You can lock cantrips into your contraptions. This is done by a character casting a cantrip in the presence of the contraption that you wish to imbue. Your tinkerer must then spend time with the contraption equal to 10x the casting time of the spell to complete the fusion of the magic with the item.

This new contraption has one charge that can be used to cast or activate the cantrip. This charge may be reloaded once per long rest.

IMPROVISATION

At 6th level, your ability to craft new contraptions is improved by your ability to make a greater variety of materials work as the required components. When foraging for components, your time searching is reduced by half without increasing the difficulty of the Wisdom (Survival) roll. Additionally, once per long rest, you have advantage on a Wisdom (Survival) roll when foraging. If you are buying materials for crafting your contraptions, you have advantage on Wisdom (Persuasion) rolls when negotiating the price.

EXTRA ATTACK WITH FAVORED WEAPON

Starting at 6th level, you have favored one weapon contraption allowing you to use it to attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

MAJOR IMBUE

At 10th level, your ability to fuse magic and cantrips has become almost second nature. This is done by a character casting a spell that uses a spell slot equal to or less than half of your character level (rounded down) in the presence of the contraption that you wish to imbue. Your tinkerer must then spend time with the contraption equal to 2x the casting time of the spell to lock it into the item. Once completed, you have a new magical contraption.

This new contraption now uses charges to cast or activate the spell imbued on it. The number of charges it has is equal to your current level of spark. This number doesn't deduct from the spark you use with your other contraptions.

GRAFT

At 14th level, your mind can so easily assemble and deconstruct items in the world around you that you can turn almost any two items into a new contraption. Assess the available items by making a Wisdom (Insight) check. DC will be determined by your GM. Next, roll the appropriate tool proficiency to graft them together. Again, the DC will be determined by your GM. Your GM will also determine how long this takes. Basic weapons may only take one turn to graft. Other more complex graftings will take longer. Effects and damage done by the new contraption is based on the effects and damage done by the two items before they were combined. Final details will be determined by your GM.

WEAPONNEER

You make things that hurt. You make weapons. When you choose this institute of inspiration at level 2, you may add one contraption diagram to your book of diagrams that is of one level higher in complexity than your current level allows. You also gain proficiency in martial weapons or firearms.

POWDER EXPERT

At 2nd level, choose any 3 powder diagrams to add to your book of contraption diagrams. These are in addition to the number of diagrams allowed for your current level.

EXTRA ATTACK

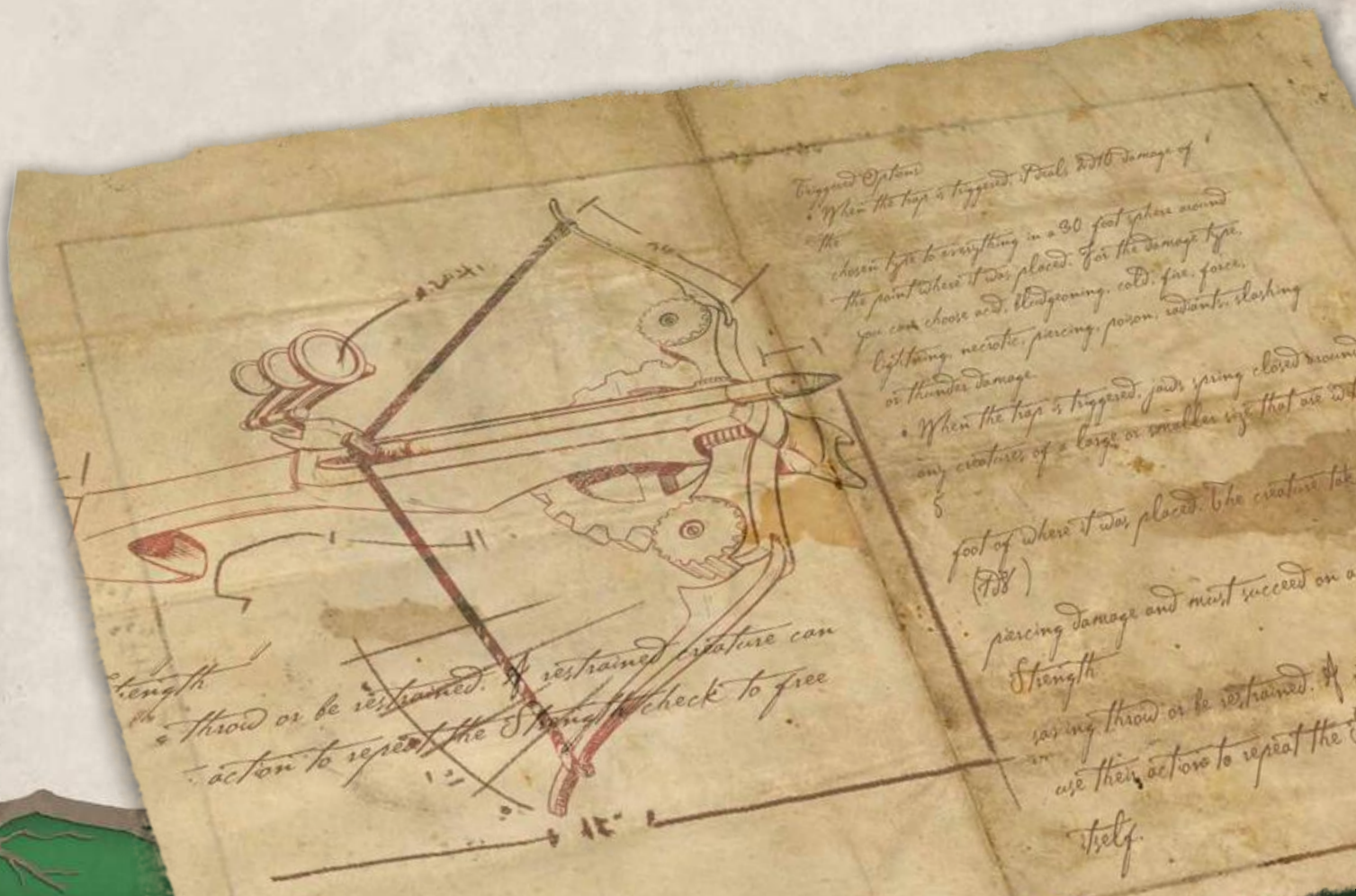
Starting at 6th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

QUICK RELOAD

When you reach 10th level, you become much faster at reloading contraptions that have a Reload attribute. If the Reload time is Long Rest, it requires only a short rest. Short Rest becomes 1 minute. 1 Action becomes 1 Bonus Action. The reload components are still required.

EXTRA ATTACK

Beginning at 14th level, you can attack three times, instead of twice, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.



PALADIN SUBCLASS:

OATH OF THE BLUE STAR

Without the Blue Star, there is no life. It is from the Blue Star that all life flourishes. The Oath of the Blue Star calls a soldier to cast aside self, placing the lives of others ahead of his or her own, in the process giving glory and honor to the Blue Star. If they owe their life to the Blue Star, then they must pour out all they have - and more - in the service of life. When not involved in other duties, they are often found volunteering their time to serve the people of their community, favoring manual labor, and never accepting any pay.

While Blue Star Paladins are idealists, they are no fools. They know they wouldn't be needed if darkness didn't roam the forest. They will always place themselves between an enemy and those who need protection. When lives they have vowed to protect are threatened, the Blue Star Paladins bring the full wrath of their weapons and spells to bear, striking their enemies down with overwhelming force and arcane power of the Blue Star. Yet the Blue Star Paladins still pray that one day, even creatures of wickedness will turn to

the Blue Star and seek redemption, making their order no longer needed. They believe that the Blue Star is the creator of the dobber people. It is by its power that the Prime Tree was created, as were the Brother and Sister trees. And it is from the Blue Star that paladins of this oath draw their power.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE BLUE STAR PALADINS

Some believe that the Green Man is the spiritual manifestation of the Blue Star in the Alwaysgreen Forest, and while the Paladins of the Blue Star do not refute this, they choose to focus on the Star alone in their devotion.

The Oath of the Blue Star is often mistaken as synonymous with Dobberton, and while every paladin to have served the kingdom has been a Blue Star Paladin, the most devout among them will tell you that they serve Dobberton second and their oath first.

Some people feel uncomfortable around a Blue Star Paladin, subconsciously resenting them for their unmatched piety, devotion, and work ethic. It is because of this that Blue Star Paladins find themselves in the ironic position of being a friend to all but having very few loyal friends.

TENETS OF THE BLUE STAR

The tenets of the Oath of the Blue Star hold a paladin to a high standard of peace and service.

Life. Protect life, even at the cost of your own.

Stand in the Light. Evil lives in the dark. A Blue Star Paladin keeps all their actions public and transparent. None of their dealings are done in secret. The light alone provides a natural shield between evil, temptation, and corruption.

Defend the Defenseless. There are many in the forest - dobberkind, woodkin, animals, and plants - that cannot defend themselves. It is the obligation of the Blue Star Paladins to come to their aid.

Never Start a Fight; Always Finish it. Violence should be a last resort. When confronting an enemy, a Blue Star Paladin will typically declare



their intentions and attempt to persuade them to surrender peacefully. If an enemy still attacks, whatever force is necessary to conclude the battle is permitted.

Service. Pour yourself out fully into the people of your community or assignment. By setting the proper example and working to heal the wounds of a deeply flawed forest, you can set anyone on a path to peace.

Forgiveness. In an unknown age to come, the Blue Star will cleanse the forest of all evil and those who promote death. Until that time comes, a Blue Star Paladin does their part by offering forgiveness to the wicked should they choose to accept the peace of the Blue Star and to stand in His light. They believe that even the most wicked can become good again if given a chance.

OATH OF THE BLUE STAR FEATURES

- 3rd Oath Spells, Channel Divinity, Light of Truth
- 7th Beacon of Trust, Always Finish a Fight
- 15th Shooting Star
- 18th Always Finish a Fight improvement
- 20th Radiant Form

OATH OF THE BLUE STAR SPELLS

- 3rd *command, divine favor*
- 5th *arcane senses*, lesser restoration*
- 9th *create food and water, eagle's light**
- 13th *moon smite*, smithing**
- 17th *dispel evil and good, table of abundance**

**These spells are unique to the Alwaysgreen Forest and can be found starting on page 50*

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Overwhelming Light. As an action, you can cast a 30-foot cone of radiant blue energy from your hands. Creatures struck by the cone must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw, or they are stunned for one turn.

Star Light Spear. As a bonus action, you can channel energy into a spear made of pure light. This magical weapon lasts for one hour and is considered a Simple Melee Weapon. When wielding the Star Light Spear, it does 1d8 radiant damage, and you have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. It can be thrown (range 20/60). When the Star Light Spear leaves your hand, you summon it back to your hand instantaneously.

LIGHT OF TRUTH

Your commitment to truth has made you particularly attuned to it. At 3rd level, you have advantage on Insight. Once you have succeeded on a Wisdom (Insight) check versus an individual, you know if that person is lying or telling the truth innately for the next 24 hours.

BEACON OF TRUST

Starting at 7th level, your commitment to peace allows you to easily speak with even the most hostile adversary. An individual you are speaking with must make a Wisdom saving throw. They do so with advantage if you or your allies are fighting them. If they fail the saving throw, the individual regards you as a friend or respected acquaintance until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. When the effect ends, the creature knows it was affected by you.

ALWAYS FINISH A FIGHT

At 7th level, you have made a full commitment to never starting a fight, yet you know with the guidance of the Blue Star, you will always finish one. You may choose to go last in initiative order. If you do so, you gain the following benefits for 1 minute. You have +2 AC against enemy attacks. You also gain +2 to hit when taking the attack action and +2 to damage you deal. Additionally, once per round, when a creature makes an attack against you, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature if it is within range.

Starting at level 18, your bonus to AC, hit, and damage increases to +4, and these benefits last for 10 minutes.

SHOOTING STAR

At 15th level, with a flash of light, like blue lightning, you can use a bonus action to teleport to any unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet. If it is night and stars are visible, the range is increased to 60 feet.

RADIANT FORM

At 20th level, you cloak yourself in the radiant light of the Star Father. Starlight cascades all around you, giving you the appearance of glowing blue crystal. Bright light radiates from you in a 30-foot radius, and dim light shines 30 feet beyond that.

- You have resistance to all damage.
- Whenever a creature hits you with an attack, it takes radiant damage equal to half the damage you take from the attack.
- When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can make one additional attack as part of that action.
- Once you use this ability, you cannot do so again until you complete a long rest.

ROGUE SUBCLASS: VINE WALKER

There is something about them; how they grow and climb and grasp. They can be delicate and bright with life; or old and thick, relentlessly stubborn. They spring from the ground when you're not looking to choke out your garden. They spread from earth to leaf to tree, connecting an ever-growing, suffocating web. Vines are perfect assassins.

SPELLCASTING

Upon selecting this archetype at 3rd level, you gain the spellcasting feature. You can cast Druid spells using Wisdom as your spellcasting modifier. Refer to the Vine Walker Spellcasting chart on page 14 for known spells and slots per rogue level. You prepare and cast spells in a similar manner to the Druid class. When you prepare spells, choose a number of druid spells equal to your Wisdom modifier + your druid level (minimum of one spell). The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier

Use the table on the next page for known cantrips and spell slots.

PRIMAL VINES

Starting at 3rd level, you awaken primal vines that act as an extension of your will. Primal vines last for 1 minute and can be used 3 times per long rest.

Vine Attack: While Primal Vines is active, the next time you hit a creature with a weapon attack, a writhing mass of thorny vines appears at the point of impact, and the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or be restrained by the vines for up to 1 minute. A Large or larger creature has advantage on this saving throw. If the target succeeds on the save, the vines shrivel away.

While restrained by this ability, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature restrained by the vines or one nearby that can touch the creature can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a success, the target is freed.

Vine Reach: As a bonus action, you can extend vines from your hands and grasp a target that is within 25 feet, wrapping it in vines. If the target is unwilling, make a ranged attack roll against its AC. If hit, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be restrained by the primal vines for up to 1 minute. A Large or larger creature has advantage on this saving throw. If the target succeeds on the save, the vines shrivel away. A

creature restrained in this way or one nearby that can touch the creature can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC. On a success, the target is freed.

As an action, you can pull the target or restrained creature to within 5 feet of you. If the object is immobile or a creature that is two or more size tiers larger than you, you can pull yourself to it.

VINE WALKER SPELLCASTING

Rogue	Cantrips	~ Spell Slots per Spell Level ~			
Level	Known	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
3rd	3	2			
4th	3	3			
5th	3	3			
6th	3	4			
7th	3	4	2		
8th	3	4	2		
9th	3	4	2		
10th	4	4	3		
11th	4	4	3		
12th	4	4	3		
13th	4	4	3	2	
14th	4	4	3	2	
15th	4	4	3	2	
16th	4	4	3	3	
17th	4	4	3	3	
18th	4	4	3	3	
19th	4	4	3	3	1
20th	4	4	3	3	1



UNSEEN VINE STRIKE

Beginning at 9th level, you can use your primal vines ability for sneak attacks. As an action, you can spend one spell slot to make a ranged spell attack against a target within 60 feet that you can see, causing vines with razor-sharp tips to burst from the ground or other nearby surfaces. When hit, the target takes $3d8 +$ your spellcasting modifier piercing damage. If you have advantage on this attack or if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll, you may apply sneak attack to this ability.

Also at 9th level, when you successfully use Vine Reach to grasp a creature or an object, you can now use your reaction to pull the target or restrained creature to within 5 feet of you. If the object is immobile, you can pull yourself to it.

PRIMAL PASSAGE

When you reach 13th level, the vines and foliage around you actively try to conceal your presence, giving you advantage on all Stealth rolls when in any terrain with foliage.

You can extend this ability to your companions for up to 1 hour, using available foliage in your area, masking them from detection. For the duration, each creature you choose within 30 feet of you (including you) has a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks and can't be tracked except by magical means. A creature that receives this bonus leaves behind no tracks or other traces of its passage.

VINE DRAGON FORM

At 17th level, the well of primal magic that flows through you allows you to transform your body into a serpent of vine, the Vine Dragon! The details for your transformation follow the guidelines designated by the ability Wild Shape for the Druid class.

The stat block for Vine Dragon Form can be found below.

VINE DRAGON FORM

Medium dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 +48)

Speed 30 ft., fly 45 ft., burrow 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5

Skills Deception +5, Perception +7, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Challenge 8 (3,900 Xp)

Plant communication. The vine dragon can imbue plants within 30 feet with limited sentience, giving them the ability to communicate with the vine dragon and follow simple commands. The vine dragon can sense from these plants information about events, creatures that have

passed, weather, and other circumstances within the last day.

Protective vines. The vine dragon can turn ordinary terrain where plants are present within a 15 ft. radius of it, into difficult terrain that lasts for as long as the vine dragon is in the area, such as causing vines and branches to hinder pursuers. Or it can turn difficult terrain caused by plant growth (such as thickets and undergrowth) into ordinary terrain that lasts for as long as the vine dragon is in the area.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Thorned Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage and make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



WIZARD SUBCLASS:

ORDER OF ROT ARCANES TRADITION

The essence of magic permeates both life and death. As the circle of life, death, and decay progresses, a unique form of magic is released by the decay. There is a certain tranquility you gain by understanding the cycle of life. The closer you draw to it, the more you hunger for it. It is from the decay that your life thrives. It is in between death and life that you find power.

ENDURING

At 2nd level, when you select the Order of Rot, you gain proficiency in the Survival skill if you do not already have it.

LIFE FORAGING

When you take a long or short rest, you may forage for decomposing material. See the foraging table on page 49 to determine if any material is found.

Decomposing material allows you to siphon the energy of decay from it regaining lost hit points. Roll d6 equal to $1/2$ your current level (minimum of 1d6) + your spellcasting modifier. You can use this ability only once per day, regaining it after a long rest.

LIFE FROM DEATH

Beginning at 2nd level, you can transfer the last essence of life from a corpse or recently killed creature to another willing creature. As a bonus action, a target creature regains a number of hit points equal to $1d6$ + your spellcasting modifier. The target creature must be within 10 feet of the corpse during the round Life from Death is used. This can only be done one time per corpse. Fungus and mold cover the corpse once the last essence has been transferred from it.

ANIMATE ROT

Starting at 6th level, you've gained a certain mastery over the energy that flows from decay. Add the Animate Dead spell to your spellbook if it is not there already. When you cast Animate Dead, as an alternative to a corpse or pile of bones, you can target up to two piles of dead plant life or fungus. When doing so, each pile of plant life or fungus creates a **Rot Shamble** creature, shown on the following page.

Whenever you create an undead using this ability, it has the following additional benefits:

ROT SHAMBLE

Small plant, decay

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)

Hit Points 20 (3d6 +9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 1/2 (50 XP)

Meaningless Pile. Even when a rot shamble is in plain sight, you must make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a rot shamble that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the rot shamble's space while unaware of the rot shamble is surprised by the rot shamble.

Unreliable Form. For every 5 damage it takes, the rot shamble's walking speed is reduced by 5 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rot shamble makes one bark longsword attack and one pseudopod attack.

Bark Sword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage. If a 1 is rolled on an attack roll with the bark sword, it breaks and can no longer be used.

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) acid damage.

- The creature's hit point maximum is increased by an amount equal to your wizard level.
- The creature adds your proficiency bonus to its weapon damage rolls.

PUTREFYING GAS

By 10th level, your fondness for and constant proximity to decay has begun to affect you physically. Mushrooms, mold, and other fungi naturally grow on your body. It can be difficult to keep this hidden, but possible. In addition to radiating a permanent smell of rot, your body produces rot spores. You have 3 decay charges to use each day and regain any that were used after a long rest. As a bonus action, you can expend a decay charge to emit a cloud of necrotic gas in a 15-foot radius around you. Any creature within that radius, unless it is undead, must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 4d12 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Any creatures killed by this damage are immediately covered in fungus and decay. They rise up as a Rot Shamble at the start of your next turn. These Rot Shambles pursue the closest creature to it other than you. Statistics for the Rot Shamble are in the appendix.

Additionally, you now have resistance to both poison and necrotic damage.

ROTTEN FAMILIARITY

When you reach 14th level, you can use your connection to decay to bring slimes and oozes under your control, even those created by other wizards. As an action, you can choose one slime or ooze that you can see within 60 feet of you. That creature must make a Charisma saving throw against your wizard spell save DC. If it succeeds, you can't use this feature on it again. If it fails, it becomes friendly to you and obeys your commands until you use this feature again.

Some are harder to control in this way. If the target has an Intelligence of 8 or higher, it has advantage on the saving throw. If it fails the saving throw and has an Intelligence of 12 or higher, it can repeat the saving throw at the end of every hour until it succeeds and breaks free.

You are now immune to poison damage.

You also gain Blindsight up to 60 feet.



FORAGING

Foraging allows characters in the Alwaysgreen Forest to search for the material components they may need for spells, contraptions, potions, and more.

Foraging requires a character to spend 2 hours searching for a specific type of material using their Wisdom (Survival) ability. The DC is set by your GM, determined by the type of material searched for, the terrain you are searching within, and the rarity. Your GM can use the table on the next page or deviate from it however they see fit. Foraging isn't meant to give characters free license to find anything they want. Your GM can at any time determine certain items cannot be found in a specific area no matter how long a character forages.

The DC shown in the table is for common materials in nominal weather. Use the modifiers below to adjust the DC for material rarity or conditions.

Very Common: -1	Extreme Heat: +2
Uncommon: +1	Extreme Cold: +2
Rare: +3	Extreme
Very Rare: +6	Precipitation: +4

The amount of time spent foraging can be interpreted liberally between player and GM. For example, 2 hours foraging might be 1 hour searching for the material and 1 hour refining that material into its most basic usable form.

If your GM determines that it is appropriate, the DC required to find a material can be lowered by 1 for each additional hour a character spends foraging.

Conversely, a character may be able to find the

material they are foraging for in less time. Add 1 to the required DC for every 30 minutes less the character wishes to spend foraging, to a minimum of 30 minutes.

When Foraging in some areas, particularly Urban, the materials you find may have a monetary cost to acquire.

The amount foraged is units. A unit can be thought of as around 1/2 pound, or 225 gram. Though, your GM is free to use whatever amount suits your game best. This allows for easy conversion to the required components when building contraptions. The amount found is entirely up to the GM, though a suggested number of units found is shown below.

Bone: 1d4-1 (minimum 1)
Chemical : 1d4-1 (minimum 1)
Decomposing Creature : 1d6+1
Gems/Minerals : 1d4-2 (minimum 1)
Herbs/Consumable Plants : 1d4
Hide : 1d4-1
Metal : 1d4-1 (minimum 1)
Oils : 1d4-1 (minimum 1)
Rigid Plants : 2d6
Scales : 1d4-1 (minimum 1)
Soft Plants : 1d6
Stone : 1d4+1
Teeth : 1d4-1 (minimum 1)

FORAGING TABLE

Material Type	Terrain foraged							
	Coastal	Desert	Forest	Grassland	Mountain	Subter	Swamp	Urban
Bone	18	18	14	17	16	15	18	24
Chemical	15	13	14	15	13	10	15	15
Decomposing Creature	13	16	10	10	13	14	8	13
Gems/Minerals	13	13	15	16	12	10	14	12
Herbs/ Consumable Plants	12	18	10	11	14	14	12	13
Hide	16	18	14	16	14	18	20	16
Metal	13	14	15	15	12	12	12	12
Oils	16	14	15	16	14	12	13	14
Rigid Plants	10	18	7	11	13	13	10	15
Scales	16	18	15	18	14	15	20	24
Soft Plants	10	16	5	6	12	13	8	12
Stone	12	14	14	14	8	8	14	13
Teeth	16	18	15	16	16	17	18	24

SPELLS OF THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST

The spell lists show which spells can be cast by characters of each class.

BARD SPELLS

Arcane Senses
Gobbledygook
Discordant Missile
Mushroom Song
Musical Weapon
Weather Wood

CLERIC SPELLS

Burrowing Hands
Harvest Overtakes the Sower
Heartstop
Shadow Call
Smithing
Stone to Wood
Table of Abundance

DRUID SPELLS

Antlers
As the Crow Flies
Bark Wall
Burrowing Hands
Frog Cloud
Ooze Form
Mold Wax
Mushroom Song
Splinter Shield
Splinter Barrage
Strangling Thorns
Weather Wood
Wood Bees

PALADIN SPELLS

Arcane Senses
Eagle's Light
Moon Smite
Smithing
Table of Abundance

RANGER SPELLS

Antlers
Arcane Senses
Lizard Guide
Eyes of the Vine
Wood Bees

SORCERER SPELLS

Frog Cloud
Frost Ball
Heartstop
Imbue Seed
Mold Wax
Shadow Call
Weather Wood

WIZARD SPELLS

Arcane Senses
Bark Armor
Bark Wall
Burrowing Hands
Heartstop
Gobbledygook
Imbue Seed
Smithing
Splinter Shield
Splinter Barrage
Strangling Thorns
Stone to Wood
Weather Wood
Wood Bees

SPELL LIST

ANTLERS

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: n/a

Duration: 1 minute

Magical antlers grow upon your head. For the duration, you can use your spellcasting ability instead of Strength for attack and damage rolls when using your antlers for melee attacks. The antlers do 1d8 damage and are considered magical.

If you move at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hit it with a melee attack using your antlers on the same turn, that target takes an additional 1d6 damage and must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Strength modifier) or be knocked prone.

ARCANE SENSES

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a bit of bat fur)

Duration: Up to 10 minutes

You gain the ability to see through arcane deceptions such as illusions and invisibility for the duration of the spell. The ability automatically succeeds against any spell of 3rd level or lower. For each spell of 4th level or higher, make an ability check using your spellcasting ability. The DC equals 10 + the opposing spell's level. This spell does not cause the deception to be dispelled, but allows you to see through it.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the ability automatically succeeds when the spell slot used is equal to or greater than the opposing spell.

AS THE CROW FLIES

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

You or any target within range are propelled 60 feet in a straight line. If the target is unwilling, they must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check to prevent themselves from being propelled. This movement can be in any direction, including through the air as if flying. Once in motion, the target cannot change direction or stop until the full movement is complete or they collide with another object. Depending on the trajectory, the target may continue moving due to momentum, at the discretion of the GM. If the target collides with a stationary object, they take 1d6 damage for every 10 feet propelled before the collision.

BARK ARMOR

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a handful of tree bark)

Duration: 1 minute

This spell creates a suit of magical wooden armor (equivalent to studded leather armor AC 12). It temporarily grants you proficiency in its use. It also grants a +1 to Dexterity and Constitution saving throws for the duration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of a higher level, it receives one of the following bonuses:

- **A 3rd-level spell slot:** It provides an AC of 14, a +2 to Dexterity and Constitution saving throws, and the duration is increased to 2 minutes.
- **A 5th-level spell slot:** It provides an AC of 16, a +3 to Dexterity and Constitution saving throws, and the duration is increased to 10 minutes.

BARK WALL

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 Action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a handful of tree bark)

Duration: 10 minutes

A nonmagical wall of wood forms as bark, twigs, and even leaves fly together, seemingly from nowhere. The wall appears within range on a solid surface and lasts for the duration. You can choose to make the wall up to 40 feet long, 6 feet high, and 3 feet thick. You can also form a circle that has a 15-foot diameter. The wall blocks line of sight.

If the wall cuts through a creature's space when it appears, the creature is pushed to one side of the wall (your choice). If a creature would be surrounded on all sides by the wall (or the wall and another solid surface), that creature can make a Dexterity saving throw versus your spell casting DC. On a success, it can use its reaction to move up to its speed so that it is no longer enclosed by the wall.

The wall is an object made of wood that can be damaged and thus breached. Each 5-foot wide section has AC 11 and 20 hit points per foot of thickness and is vulnerable to fire damage. Reducing a section to 0 hit points destroys it and might cause connected sections to collapse at the GM's discretion.

You may choose to cast this spell as a concentration spell, if you do and maintain your concentration for its whole duration, the wall becomes permanent and can't be dispelled. Otherwise, the wall disappears when the spell ends.

BURROWING HANDS

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S

Duration: 10 minutes

The hands of the creature targeted by this spell transform into paws with thick, shovel-like claws. This spell grants a burrow speed of 20 feet. If the creature already has a burrow speed, it increases

by 20 feet. The target cannot burrow through solid objects such as a large stone slab. It has no effect on other modes of movement. The target also gains +1 to damage rolls when using these claws for unarmed attacks.

DISCORDANT MISSILE

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: S, M (a musical instrument)

Duration: 1 minute

The musical instrument you are holding is imbued with arcane energy. For the duration, as an action, you can play a note or chord on the instrument, creating three invisible sound blasts. Each blast targets a creature of your choice that you can see within range. Each targeted creature must make a Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 force damage for each blast that targeted it. The sound blasts strike simultaneously, and you can direct them to hit one creature or several.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the spell creates one more sound blast for each slot level above 2nd.

EAGLE'S LIGHT

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (ash from a feather)

Duration: 24 hours

You touch ash from a feather on a willing target. Once during the duration of the spell, if the target falls to 0 hit points, the following spell effects occur, where applicable:

- Divine light rises off the target and takes the form of a giant eagle of light. Flying, the eagle carries the target a safe distance away (up to 60 ft.) from what caused the target to drop to 0 hit points. The eagle of light is immune to all forms of damage.
- The target gains 1 hit point.
- The eagle of light makes an attack with its Talons

(**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. against an enemy creature within 60 feet of the target.

- The eagle disappears in a flash of light, dispelling any magical darkness within 120 feet.

EYES OF THE VINE

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (a drop of your own tears)

Duration: Up to 1 hour

You touch a healthy plant, smearing a drop of your own tears on one of its leaves. For the duration of the spell, you can use your action to see through the plant as though its leaves were your eyes and ears. You continue to do so until you use your action to return to your normal senses.

While perceiving through the plant, your physical body is blinded and deafened to your own surroundings.

FROG CLOUD

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: 1 minute

The caster croaks out a stinking cloud of fog in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a Constitution saving throw against your spellcasting DC, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures must repeat this saving throw each turn that they remain in the fog or if they move into the fog.

The cloud can move around corners and heavily obscures vision. It lasts for 1 minute or until a wind of moderate or greater speed disperses it.

FROST BALL

Cantrip evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

You hurl a glob of snow at a creature or object within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a Strength saving throw, or their speed is reduced by 10 feet for 1 minute.

At Higher Levels. This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

GOBBLEDYGOOK

2nd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A creature of your choice that you can see within range must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw, or they become unable to speak any coherent words in any known language. Anything they attempt to say for the duration of the spell comes out as nonsense and gobbledygook. This effect also prevents them from casting spells and using abilities that require verbal communication.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends.

HARVEST OVERTAKES THE SOWER

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 8 hours

Range: Self (1 square mile area)

Target: Plants within a specific area

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell channels vitality into the crops within a 1 square mile area. A single type of crop must be specified by the caster. Over the course of 8 hours, immediately following the chosen crop being sown throughout the area, the plants sprout and

grow to full maturity. The plants yield twice the normal amount of food when harvested. All the produce must be harvested within the following 8-hour period, or it spoils. Any one field can only receive the benefits of this spell once per year.

HEARTSTOP

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 10 minutes

You slow the beating of a willing target's heart to the rate of one beat per minute. The creature's breathing almost stops. To a casual or brief observer, the subject appears dead. At the end of the spell, the creature returns to normal with no ill effects.

IMBUE SEED

5th-level transmutation (Silva Ingenium ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a large seed such as an acorn or walnut)

Duration: Instantaneous

This ritual allows you to imbue a spell of 1st through 3rd level that has a casting time of 1 action, 1 reaction, or 1 bonus action onto a large seed. At the end of the ritual, the seed must be varnished, polished, and left to cure for one day per level of the spell added to it. The spell that has been bound to the seed is triggered when the seed is impacted, such as hitting something after being thrown.

If the spell had a range in feet, the spell originates from the point where the seed was impacted, affecting targets within range, based on the nature of the spell. Spells with a range of Sight can't be imbued.

At Higher Levels: You can perform this ritual as a 7th-level spell to imbue a spell of 4th or 5th level.

LIZARD GUIDE

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: S

Duration: 1 hour

This spell gives the target the keen senses of a lizard. Their eyes take on a sharp, golden hue, and their tongue seems to have a mind of its own, long and forked, spontaneously flicking out to taste the air. For the duration, the target has +10 to passive Perception, gains proficiency in Perception (if they did not already have it), and have advantage on all Perception checks.

MOLD WAX

2nd-level, evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: M (a pinch of candle wax)

Duration: 1 minute

While casting, you apply a bit of wax to the weapon of a willing target. On the next successful attack made with that weapon, it deals an additional 2d8 necrotic damage and is considered magical.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage is increased by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

MUSHROOM SONG

3rd-level, conjuration

Casting Time: 2 actions

Range: 30 ft.

Components: V, S, M (a wild mushroom picked within the last 24 hours)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You eat the mushroom and sing a phrase from any song you know. A ring of spectral mushrooms sprouts from the ground, regardless of the surface. Their caps glow and pulse, producing tones in an incredible musical range, creating a psychedelic spectacle. You may then use your action on the following round to specify up to 3 creatures within range to make a Charisma saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is unaffected. Creatures that fail are affected by one of the

following effects of your choice:

- All affected creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls.
- All affected creatures have disadvantage on saving throws.
- When attacking affected creatures, attackers have advantage on attack rolls.
- The movement of all affected creatures is reduced by one-half or up to 10 feet per round, whichever is lower.

Additionally, affected creatures have disadvantage on Concentration checks while the spell lasts.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of a higher level, it receives one of the following bonuses:

- **A 5th-level spell slot:** The caster can specify 5 creatures to be affected.
- **An 8th-level spell slot:** The caster can specify any number of creatures to be affected.

MOON SMITE

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self (30 feet)

Components: V

Duration: 1 minute

Aurulia, the moon spirit and champion of the Star Father, fills you with holy purpose. The next time you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack during this spell's duration, two mirror images of you, specters of moonlight, appear within 30 feet of you. They immediately make the same attack action. They can target different creatures or the one you just hit. Use the same rolls and any modifiers for attack and damage. Damage done by these moonlight specters is radiant. During the day or when in bright light, these moonlight specters are nearly invisible.

At Higher Levels. When you reach level 13, 3 moonlight specters appear. At level 17, 4 appear.

MUSICAL WEAPON

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Touch

Components: S, M (a drop of polishing oil and a musical instrument)

Duration: 1 minute

The musical instrument you are holding is imbued with arcane energy. For the duration, you can use your spellcasting ability for attack and damage rolls when making melee attacks with the instrument. The instrument deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage and is considered magical. The spell ends if you cast it again or let go of the instrument.

OOZE FORM

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: M (a pinch of candle wax)

Duration: 1 minute

You transform a willing creature you touch, along with everything it is wearing and carrying, into a puddle of ooze for the duration. The spell ends if the creature drops to 0 hit points. An incorporeal creature isn't affected.

While in this form, the target's only method of movement is crawling or *oozing* with a speed of 10 feet. The target can enter and occupy the space of another creature. The target has resistance to nonmagical damage, but it has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws. The target can pass through small holes and narrow openings as small as 1 inch across.

While in the form of an ooze, the target can't talk or manipulate objects, and any objects it was carrying or holding can't be dropped, used, or otherwise interacted with. The target can't cast spells. Any creature it touches takes 1d6 (3) acid damage. It can only make unarmed attacks, a success resulting in an automatic grapple. The grappled creature takes 1d6 (3) damage each turn. To escape, it must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check (DC equal to 10 + the target's Strength modifier.)

SHADOW CALL

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 Action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Tendrils of necrotic shadows erupt from any available shadows striking all creatures within 10 feet of a point you can see within 30 ft of you. Each creature in that area must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 2d6 necrotic damage and is frightened until its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage but suffers no other effect.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

SMITHING

2nd-level Transmutation

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (a shard of volcanic rock and sap from a gum tree)

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell is used to form, shape, and join like materials, just as a blacksmith or woodsmith might. This spell does not create the materials needed to make or repair items, but it does allow the caster to create items as a master smith without having the tools or forge present. It can also repair objects that are heavily damaged and might otherwise be considered ruined. An item created cannot exceed 1 foot in any dimension.

This spell can physically repair a magic item or construct, but the spell can't restore magic to such an object.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level, the maximum size of the item created or repaired is increased to 2 feet in any dimension. A 4th-level slot increases the maximum size of the item created or repaired to 3 feet in any dimension. A 6th-level slot increases the maximum size of the item created or repaired to 5 feet in any dimension. An 8th-level slot increases the maximum size of the item created or repaired to 10 feet in any dimension.

SPLINTER BARRAGE

2nd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (60-foot cone)

Components: V, S, M (a handful of splinters, twigs or other wood scraps)

Duration: Instantaneous

You create a burst of magically propelled splinters. Each creature within a 60-foot cone takes 3d8 slashing damage, or half damage with a successful Dexterity saving throw. Constructs have disadvantage on the saving throw.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd level slot or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

SPLINTER SHIELD

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: S, M (a handful of tree bark)

Duration: 1 minute

You cause a handful of wooden shards to orbit the target's body. These shield the spell's target from incoming attacks, granting a +1 bonus to AC, without hindering the subject's movement, vision, or outgoing attacks.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of a higher level, it receives one of the following bonuses:

- **A 2nd-level spell slot:** +2 to AC and the duration is increased to 2 minutes.
- **A 3rd-level spell slot:** +3 to AC and the duration is increased to 10 minutes.
- **A 5th-level spell slot:** +4 to AC and the duration is increased to 30 minutes.

STONE TO WOOD

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S, M (wood shavings)

Duration: Until Dispelled

You choose an area of stone or group of rocks that you can see that fits within a 20-foot cube and is within range. Nonmagical rock of any sort in the area becomes an equal volume of hardwood for the spell's duration. It retains the shape, size, and any physical design qualities that it had before becoming wood.

This wood has the properties of typical hardwood. It has AC 15 and hit points according to its size; Tiny (bowl, knife) 5 (2d4), Small (chest, lute) 10 (3d6), Medium (barrel, chandelier) 18 (4d8), Large (cart, 10-ft.-by-10-ft. window) 27 (5d10). Larger items, such as an immense bridge or castle wall, should be addressed in smaller parts, as appropriate. It is immune to poison and psychic damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the area or rock affected increases to a 40-foot cube.

STRANGLING THORNS

4th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: S, M (1 foot of vine and a thorned branch)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute.

Choose a non-flying creature you can see within 90 feet. The target must make a successful Strength saving throw or be restrained by barbed vines and take 18 (4d8) piercing damage.

A restrained creature may attempt a Strength saving throw on its turn to break free of the vines. On a failed save, the vines constrict the creature, pulling it down into the earth, and it takes 9 (2d8) piercing damage. This continues each turn until the creature breaks free of the vines or reaches 0 hp. If a creature reaches 0 hp, it has been pulled fully into the ground, unconscious, and buried. The creature must be dug up before it can be revived. The vines do not attack any creatures other than the target.

TABLE OF ABUNDANCE

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous.

Choose yourself or a target you can see within 60 feet that has one or more enemies within melee range. The following conditions are removed from the target, if present; Charmed, 1 level of Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, and Stunned. The target is immune to gaining these conditions for 1 hour. Any enemies within 5 feet of the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC, or they are pushed back 5 feet and knocked prone. Additionally, the target is healed 2d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the healing increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 4th.

WEATHER WOOD

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V S M (A piece of old wood and a drop of rainwater)

Duration: Instantaneous

Choose a crafted wooden object, such as a wooden weapon or wooden furniture, that you can see within range. You cause the object to rapidly age and weather. Lacquers and any nonmagical finishes dissolve. The wood twists, splinters, and separates at joints, becoming brittle and nearly unusable. If applicable, the wooden object takes 3d8 necrotic damage.

The wood targeted is permanently aged, destroying its form and strength. A weathered door can no longer latch properly, popping open, or it becomes stuck closed at the GM's discretion. Weathered ranged weapons are useless. A weathered melee weapon has a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls.

This spell cannot target living or undead wooden plants or creatures. It can target animated wooden objects of an appropriate size.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 3rd and you can target larger objects. At 4th-level, you can target a wooden object of Medium size. At 5th-level, you can target a wooden object of Large size. At 6th-level, you can target a wooden object of Huge size. At 8th-level, you can target an object of Gargantuan size.

WOOD BEES

4th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 120 feet

Components: V, S, M (a pinch of wood dust and pollen)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute.

The caster summons a swarm of wood bees that devour wood, reducing it to a pile of dust. As an action, the caster can target a wooden object they can see within range. If the object targeted isn't being worn or carried, the bees can destroy a 1-foot cube of it in 1 minute.

If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature can make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid the wood bees. If it is a weapon, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls per turn. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. If the object is wooden armor or a wooden shield, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the duration can be increased up to 10 minutes.

CONTRAPTIONS

ELEMENTS OF CONTRAPTIONEERING

Contraptions are the result of the creative genius of tinkerers. Contraptions range from weapons to clockwork creatures and everything in between. The possibilities of what can be invented are only limited by one's imagination.

There are certain qualities that all contraptions share. These contribute to the way they are built, how they work, and what they do. Below is a breakdown of how each element applies to the contraptions that you use and build.

COMPLEXITY

Contraptions have a range of complexity in their design and construction. Some can be made with just a few scraps and a little bit of engineering. Others take months of planning, days to build, and the precision only a gifted mad scientist possesses. As a tinkerer progresses in level, they can build more complex contraptions. The tinkerer's class table details what level of contraption complexity and how many you can build given your character's level.

TYPE

Each contraption comes from a specific institute of inspiration. Tinkerers are more adept at building contraptions from the institute they have focused on. Once you choose an institute of inspiration, you can record and build 1 additional contraption that is of 1 level higher in complexity than your current level allows.

USERS

Contraptions are built to suit the tinkerer who made them. Some contraptions cannot be used by others at all. If a contraption designates **tinkerer** as the user, the contraptions is used at disadvantage by one who did not make it. If a contraption designates **anyone** as the user, anyone can use the contraption with no penalty.

A tinkerer may produce contraptions for other users. However, they can only do so for contraptions whose complexity is one level lower than the tinkerer's current ability. The time to build the contraption is doubled.

COMPONENTS

Each contraption requires certain parts necessary to build it. Some parts can be found by foraging, while others can be bought at shops or even bartered for. Components vary in rarity and can make certain contraptions very hard to build. Foraging for components is only one aspect of contraptioning. It can be extensively explored or merely a superficial part of building contraptions. As such, many components are generalized, allowing for interpretation between you and your GM.

BUILD TIME

Build time designates how long it takes to build a contraption to completion. Some contraptions can be built relatively quickly, while others take hours or even days. 8 working hours per day is assumed. As an optional rule: For every 4 hours worked beyond 8 hours in a day, the character must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of the period or suffer 1 level of exhaustion.

SPARK

Tinkerers have the unique ability to give certain creations limited, life-like automation. Spark allows an insect gizmo to skitter across walls, it allows a clockwork lock to know who has permission to open it, and it gives hawk wings the instinct to keep their user aloft while that user is focused on other tasks. Spark is the subconscious link between tinkerer and contraption that makes items built by a tinkerer truly special. As a tinkerer gains levels, they can give and maintain spark in an increasing number of contraptions. Once per day, tinkerers must consciously choose to which contraptions they are going to give their spark.

ACTIVATION

Many contraptions must be turned on to work. Depending on the type and use of the contraption, the activation time may be as fast as a bonus action or take several minutes. Some contraptions have no activation and are considered always functioning.

RELOAD

Some contraptions require ongoing maintenance to ensure they continue to work optimally. During each long rest, a tinkerer spends time with those contraptions they plan to use in the near future. This is the time when a tinkerer recharges the fuel needed for some contraptions to spit fire, coils springs, or separates powers into correct doses.

System Failure: Critical Fails with Contraptions

Many contraptions jam and become unusable on a critical fail attack roll. If this happens, the contraption cannot be used until it is repaired. In most cases, the contraption can be repaired quickly with 3 DC 14 successful contraptioning checks. If the check is failed 3 times before 3 successes, the contraption is not repairable. Alternatively, the tinkerer can wait until they take a long rest to repair the contraption. If they do, they can take the time necessary to ensure no mistakes are made during the repair, preventing the possibility of the item becoming unrepairable.

CHARGES

Some contraptions gain a number of charges that must be spent to use certain features of the device. Charges are gained during a contraption's reload, by using spark, or sometimes both. The details for how charges are gained and used are fully described with each appropriate contraption.

CONTRAPTION LIST

The spell lists show which spells can be cast by characters of each class.

ARCHITECT

Simple

Exo Suit
Night Goggles
Trap, Capturing

Standard

Exo Suit, Upgrade
Investigation Monocle
Slight of Hand Hands
Trap, Arrow
Trap, Exploding

Advanced

Exo Suit, Advanced Upgrade
Hawk Wings

Master

Exo Suit, Master Upgrade

AUTOMATIONIER

Simple

Clockwork Lock
Gizmo, Hinge

Standard

Extendo Arms
Gizmo, Chipmunk
Gizmo, Insect

Advanced

Gizmo, Assistant
Gizmo, Bear
Gizmo, Raven
Gizmo, Wolf

Master

Gizmo, Combat

SOLUTIONIST

Simple

Bear Claw Bracers
Boots of Balance
Otter Tail
Perception Thingamagig
Sling Sword

Standard

Audiography
Camouflaged Cloak
Helm of Burrowing
Net Cannon
Vest of Persuasion

Advanced

Concussive Weapon
Smart Shield
Spectral Visor

Master

Teleportation Grenade

WEAPONER

Simple

Exploding Arrows or Darts
Greaves of Strength
Helm of Intimidation

Standard

Energy Whip
Grappling Axe
Hand Gun

Advanced

Energy Sword
Flame Thrower
Long Gun

Repeating Crossbow
Retracting Blade
Thunder Boots

Master

Flaming Ball of Hammer

POWDERS/ SOLUTIONS

Simple

Conductive Goo
Powder, Animal Control
Powder, Charming
Powder, Fire
Powder, Sleeping
Powder, Go Go

Standard

Powder, Healing
Powder, Rage
Restorative Salve

SIMPLE CONTRAPTIONS

BEAR CLAW BRACERS

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood and 10 large claws, teeth, or thorns

Build Time: 4 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

Bear claw bracers give the wearer a climbing speed equal to their standard movement. They also function as a simple melee weapon doing 1d6 slashing damage. Strength or Dexterity can be used as the wearer's attack modifier. If Strength is used as the wearer's attack modifier and the target is hit, they are knocked back with the power of a black bear. They must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) roll or be stunned for one turn and knocked prone.

BOOTS OF BALANCE

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 hide and ½ stone (2 small, perfectly round rocks)

Build Time: 5 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

Boots of balance give the wearer an uncanny ability to find their footing regardless of the terrain they are on. They may disregard any movement penalty incurred by difficult terrain if that terrain can be walked upon. They also have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) ability checks and Dexterity saving throws.

CLOCKWORK LOCK

Complexity: Simple

Type: Automatonier

Users: Anyone or Tinkerer

Components: ½ metal and ¼ oil

Build Time: 3 hours

Spark: 0 or 1

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: n/a

This lock is designed to fit in the palm of your hand. It can be used with doors, chests, cabinets, or anything that you want to keep sealed. This lock is typically crafted to be versatile, allowing it to be used with a variety of objects; however, the tinkerer can modify the design so that it can only be used with one specific item. This reduces the build time by 1 hour.

When built, the tinkerer must choose how it is unlocked. It can be opened with a key, a number combination, a puzzle, or it can be set to open on a specific date and time. Additionally, the builder can expend 1 spark to set a keyword that will open the lock when spoken by anyone.

The lock can be broken - AC 16, HP 10



CONDUCTIVE GOO

Complexity: Simple

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 chemical and 1 oil

Build Time: 30 minutes

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

Using tinkering tools, you can produce 1d6 + your contraptioneering modifier units of conductive goo. A unit of conductive goo will burst with electrical energy if struck, doing 3d10 lightning damage to any creature within 5 feet.

A unit of conductive goo can coat a weapon causing it to do 2d10 lightning damage on its next successful attack, in addition to the weapon's normal damage. This effect only occurs once per unit.

Conductive wire is used as a component in a number of different contraptions.



EXO SUIT

Complexity: Simple

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 hide (worked, valuing 10 primes), 2 wood or metal, and ½ oil

Build Time: 5 days

Spark: Varies

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

This suit looks similar to hardened hide or leatherleaf armor, though slightly bulkier. It gives the wearer a degree of protection in combat, providing an AC of 12 + Dexterity modifier.

EXO SUIT MODIFICATIONS

Protection in combat is a small part of the exo suit's potential usefulness. It is designed with modifications and additions in mind. Any contraption can potentially be built onto the exo suit as a modification. Your imagination is the only limit to what amazing contraptions your character may wish to wear. Talk to your GM to develop your own ideas.

After completing the exo suit, one contraption diagram of simple or standard complexity may be recorded in your book of diagrams without counting against the total number of contraption diagrams your tinkerer level allows. This is your first exo suit modification.

When building a contraption as an exo suit modification, diagram plans are changed in the following ways:

- The component requirements are reduced by 1/4th due to some of the basic armature already existing in the suit.
- The build time is reduced by 1/4th.

EXPLODING ARROWS OR DARTS

Complexity: Simple

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Anyone

Components: ½ dose of fire powder and darts or arrows

Build Time: 15 minutes

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: per use

Using your tinkerer's tools and fire powder, you can rig a number of arrows or darts equal to your contraptioneeing modifier (Intelligence modifier + proficiency bonus) to explode upon impact, adding 1d10 fire damage. The arrow or dart is destroyed. You may spend an additional 15 minutes doubling the amount of explosive powder to increase the damage to 2d10.

GIZMO, HINGE

Complexity: Simple

Type: Automatonier

Users: Anyone

Components: ½ wood or other rigged material and a ¼ gem

Build Time: 30 minutes

Spark: 0 or 1

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: n/a

This hinge can be used to open and close things, such as doors, drawers, or levers. To function properly, the hinge must be affixed to the object it is moving.

When built, the tinkerer must choose how the hinge is activated. It can be triggered with a simple button, or the tinkerer can apply spark so that it responds to voice commands. 1 spark can power up to 4 hinge gizmos. If the hinge faces resistance, it has the equivalent Strength of 8 + the tinkerer's Intelligence & proficiency modifiers.

The lock can be broken - AC 16, HP 10

GREAVES OF STRENGTH

Complexity: Simple

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood, 1 metal or bone, ½ chemical, and 1 oil

Build Time: 12 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 3 activations per long rest

When activated, for the next 1 minute, the greaves of strength increase the tinkerer's Strength to 18. If your Strength is already equal to or greater than that, it has no effect on you. The greaves of strength can be reloaded during a long rest.

You can increase the power and duration of the greaves of strength as you gain levels. When activated, the effect increases to 5 minutes and increases your Strength to 20 at 5th level, 10 minutes and 22 Strength at 10th level, and 30 minutes and 24 Strength at 15th level.

HELM OF INTIMIDATION

Complexity: Simple

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: A skull and 1 decomposing material

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

This helm, made from the bones of some terrible creature, smells awful and looks even worse. The wearer gains expertise in the Intimidation skill, doubling their proficiency bonus. They also gain advantage against being intimidated.

NIGHT GOGGLES

Complexity: Simple

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood and 1 crystal or glass (refined, valuing 25 primes.)

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per long rest

This contraption can be activated to grant the wearer darkvision, allowing them to see in darkness up to 60ft. The goggles cannot see through magical darkness. The effect lasts for 1 hour. The night goggles can be reloaded when the tinkerer takes a long rest.

At level 10, the night goggles can be activated 2 times per reload.

OTTER TAIL

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 bone or wood and 1 scales or hide

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

An otter tail gives the wearer a swimming speed equal to their standard movement. The wearer can also use their action to make a sweeping attack. All creatures within 5 feet of the wearer must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or be knocked prone.

PERCEPTION THINGAMAJIG

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 wood or metal, 2 crystal or glass (refined, valuing 40 primes), and ½ silver valuing 40 primes.

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per long rest

Perception thingamajig are a set of simple disks worn about the head to amplify sounds. The wearer gains the following benefits:

- +2 to passive Perception
- The wearer gains proficiency in Perception if they did not have it already.
- The wearer's range of hearing is doubled.
- The wearer has advantage on all hearing and vision-related Wisdom (Perception) checks.

At level 10, the perception thingamajig can be activated 2 times per reload.

POWDER, CHARMING

Complexity: Simple

Type: Any

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 herb, 1 chemical, and ½ gem

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using an alchemy set, you can produce 1d4 + ½ your contraptioneering modifier (rounded down) doses of charming powder. When a target inhales the charming powder, they become more susceptible to manipulation. They must make a Constitution saving throw versus the tinkerer's contraptioneering challenge DC, or they are at disadvantage when resisting being deceived or persuaded. They are also at disadvantage when resisting the effects of the Charm Person spell. This effect lasts for 10 minutes.

POWDER, ANIMAL CONTROL

Complexity: Standard

Type: Any

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 strong-smelling flower, $\frac{1}{2}$ chemical, and 1 drop of your own sweat

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

Using an alchemy set you can produce $1d4 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) doses of animal control powder. The powder produces a strong scent and must be stored in an airtight container, or it will lose its effectiveness. When in use, the animal control powder's scent lasts for 1 hour. When a beast inhales the powder's scent, they must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your contraptioneeing challenge DC or be charmed by you for 24 hours. The beast becomes friendly toward you, treating you like one of its own. If the beast's Intelligence is 4 or higher, the effect fails. Otherwise, if you or one of your companions harms the target, the effect ends.

POWDER, FIRE

Complexity: Simple

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 2 chemical, 1 stone, and 1 oil

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using an alchemy set you can produce $1d6 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) doses of fire powder. If ignited, each dose burns for 2 rounds, doing $2d10$ fire damage on the first round and $1d10$ fire damage on the second round. A creature or flammable object ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes $1d10$ fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

A dose of fire powder can be tightly packed into a tube or similar small container. When ignited, the fire powder explodes, doing $4d10$ fire damage to all creatures within a 5-foot radius.

Fire powder is used as a component in a number of different contraptions.

POWDER, SLEEPING

Complexity: Simple

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 herb and $\frac{1}{2}$ chemical

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using an alchemy set you can create $1d4 + 1\frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) doses of sleeping powder. A target that inhales the powder must make a Constitution saving throw versus your contraptioneeing challenge DC or fall asleep for $1d4$ turns. If the creature is shaken or takes damage, they wake.

The strength and effectiveness of your sleeping powder recipe improves as you gain levels. The number of turns a creature sleeps increases to $1d6$ at 5th level, $1d8$ at 10th level, and $1d10$ at 15th level.



SLING SWORD

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 metal or wood, ½ mineral, and ½ oil

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

The sling sword is a modified short sword where the blade detaches, giving it a limited ranged attack. A thin piece of chain in the hilt and some cleverly assembled gears retract the blade after it's been slung.

When making a melee attack with the sword, the user can choose to trigger a releasing mechanism in the hilt, causing the blade to be slung in a straight line, giving the attacker a reach of 10 feet. If the attack is successful, there is a 10 percent chance that the chain breaks.

As a reaction, the user can trigger the retract mechanism, returning the blade securely to its hilt.

**1d6 piercing damage – light, finesse weapon
– 2 lbs. - reach 10 feet**

TRAP, CAPTURING

Complexity: Simple

Type: Architect

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 rope, 1 wood, and 1 metal

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 action

Reload: Per use

The capturing trap is a simple contraption that restrains a creature when triggered. When built, the tinkerer must place the trap in their desired location and then set the trigger. Choose the trigger from the following options:

- **Wired button** – the tinkerer can use a wire up to 60 feet long with a button trigger, allowing someone to manually trigger the trap.
- **Tripwire** – the tinkerer can place a 30-foot wire in a line near the trap. A creature that passes the line without noticing it falls prone into the trap, restrained.
- **Button or pressure plate** – the tinkerer can specify a specific area up to 5 foot square that, when entered, causes the trap to spring up around the creature, restraining them. This button or pressure plate must be within 5 feet of the trap.

Hidden elements of the capturing trap can be found with a successful Wisdom (Perception) check against the tinkerer's contraptioneeing challenge DC.

Restrained creatures may use their action to attempt to break free of the trap. To do so, they must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check against the tinkerer's contraptioneeing challenge DC. When a creature fails to break free, the tinkerer may use their action to reinforce the restraint. The tinkerer makes a contraptioneeing attempt against the number previously rolled by the restrained creature. On a success, the DC needed to escape restraint increases by 5. This can be done only once per restrained creature.

STANDARD CONTRAPTIONS

AUDIOGRAPH

Complexity: Standard

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood or hide, ½ scale, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 4 hours

Spark: 1

Activation: 1 action

Reload: 1 use per long rest

This unusual music box produces 30 minutes of unique, soothing music. When activated, its soothing music and calming tones help revitalize your wounded allies during a short rest. Any friendly creatures who can hear your contraption regain 1d6 hit points at the end of the short rest.

The hit points regained increase to 1d8 at 5th level, 1d10 at 10th level, and 1d12 at 15th level.

CAMOUFLAGED CLOAK

Complexity: Standard

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 chemical and 2 gems or glass (refined, valuing 50 primes)

Build Time: 2 days

Spark: 1

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per day.

This cloak is lined with tiny mirrors that bend light around the wearer. The wearer can use a bonus action to activate the cloak's mirrors, making the wearer appear invisible. Other items they are wearing or holding are also invisible as long as they remain on their person. The effect requires 1 spark and lasts for up to 1 hour. The effect can be reloaded when the wearer takes a long rest.

ENERGY WHIP

Complexity: Standard

Type: Weaponer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: a typical whip, ½ bone, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 3 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 2 uses per long rest

When not activated, the energy whip functions as a common whip. When activated, this whip contraption is charged with shocking energy for 1 minute, doing 1d10 lightning damage in addition to its weapon damage.

After a successful melee attack, the target must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check against the tinkerer's contraptioning challenge DC or become grappled. A creature grappled in this way may use their action on following turns to repeat the Strength (Athletics) check to escape. While grappled, crackling, blue energy flows through the whip into the target. You can use your action to automatically deal 1d10 lightning damage to the target each turn they are grappled for the activated duration. The grapple ends if you use your action to do anything else.

Each use consumes 1 unit of conductive goo.

1d4 slashing damage – finesse weapon – 2 lbs. - reach 10 feet

EXO SUIT, UPGRADED

Complexity: Standard

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 hide (worked, valuing 10 primes), 1 scale (cleaned and polished, valuing 50 primes), and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 3 days

Spark: Varies

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

The vision for your exo suit is beginning to take shape. The amount of protection the suit provides has been improved with scale, though it hasn't added much weight. An exo suit built with scale provides an AC of 14 + your Dexterity modifier.

When you take a long rest, some general maintenance must be performed to reload the exo suit for the next day. When you don the suit, you must spend 1 spark to activate it for the day.

EXO SUIT MODIFICATIONS

After completing the upgraded exo suit, a second contraption diagram of simple or standard complexity may be recorded in your book of diagrams without counting against the total number of contraption diagrams your tinkerer level allows.

Similar to the simple exo suit, contraptions added to the upgraded exo suit as a modification have the following changes to their diagram plans:

- The component requirements are reduced by 1/4th due to some of the basic armature already existing in the suit.
- The build time is reduced by 1/4th.
- Contraptions that require a long rest to reload can be reloaded during a short rest.



EXTENDO ARMS

Complexity: Standard

Type: Automationier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 wood or bone, 1 scale or metal, 1 conductive goo, and 10 long teeth

Build Time: 8 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per long rest

Once activated, this set of arms extends from a small compartment worn on the tinkerer's body. It gives the wearer a reach of 10 feet for up to 10 minutes. While using the extendo arms, you can use your contraptioning modifier for Dexterity-based checks, such as Slight of Hand and the use of finesse weapons.

The number of times extendo arms can be activated per long rest increases to 2 uses at 5th level, to 3 uses at 10th level, and to 4 uses at 15th level.

Each use consumes 1 unit of conductive goo.

GRAPPLING AXE

Complexity: Standard

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: A battle axe, 20 feet of chain, and 1 oil

Build Time: 4 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 3 uses per long rest

When not activated, the grappling axe functions as a common battleaxe. When activated, you may use your contraptioning modifier to make a ranged attack. The head of this battleaxe contraption can be thrown up to 20 feet to grapple a target that is no more than one size larger than the wielder. The haft remains in your hands, connected to the head by a long chain.

After a successful ranged attack, barbed spines spring from the head of the axe around the target.

who, must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) check against your contraptioneeing challenge DC or become restrained. A creature restrained in this way may use their action on following turns to repeat the Strength (Athletics) check to escape. While restrained, the barbed spines of the grappling axe do 1d6 piercing damage each turn. Also, you can pull the restrained creature to you with the chain.

The grapple ends if you use your action to do anything else.

1d8 slashing damage – versatile (1d10) – 4 lbs. - can be thrown, 20 feet

GIZMO, CHIPMUNK

Complexity: Standard

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood, 1 metal or bone, 1 conductive goo, claws, and fur

Build Time: 16 hours

Spark: 1

Activation: 1 action

Reload: long rest

Building a gizmo takes some time, but they can be very useful. Your chipmunk gizmo is designed to act independently but in harmony with you, always following your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a very simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate with your gizmo as long as it is within 60 feet of you. Your gizmo can't communicate fluently in any language but instead sends single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for a whole day.

Your chipmunk gizmo has the following stats:

CHIPMUNK GIZMO

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 4 (2d4)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages The gizmo can't speak but understands commands from its tinkerer

Keen Hearing. Your chipmunk gizmo has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

ACTIONS

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 1 slashing damage.

GIZMO, INSECT

Complexity: Standard

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: ½ wood, 1 conductive goo, and ½ thin, dried hide for wings

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: 1

Activation: 1 action

Reload: long rest

Building a gizmo takes some time, but they can be very useful. Your insect gizmo is designed to act independently but in harmony with you, always following your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a very simple neuro link

affixed to your temple, you can communicate with your gizmo as long as it is within 60 feet of you. Your gizmo can't communicate fluently in any language but instead sends single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for a whole day.

Your insect gizmo has the following stats:

INSECT GIZMO

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 2 (2d4 -1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages The gizmo can't speak but understands commands from its tinkerer

Insect walk. Your gizmo can walk on walls and inverted surfaces as if they were the ground.

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.



HANDGUN

Complexity: Standard

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 wood, 2 metal, and 1 oil

Build Time: 12 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: After 6 shots

Using tinkerer's tools, you can build a 1-handed, ranged weapon from wood and metal. The weapon fires bullets that are custom to this handgun. Proficiency with firearms allows you to add your proficiency bonus to attack rolls made with it. It can hold up to 6 bullets and takes 1 action to reload. However, while reloading, you can also take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions.

BULLETS

Components: 1 metal and 1 fire powder

Build Time: 1 hour

Using tinkerer's tools, you can make 1d4 + your contraptioning modifier in bullets. Range 40/160. 2d4 piercing damage.

HELM OF BURROWING

Complexity: Standard

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 metal and ½ oil

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a

The helm of burrowing gives the wearer a burrowing speed equal to their standard movement. It can also be used to make a charge attack. If the wearer moves at least 15 feet straight toward a target and then hits it, the target takes 2d6 piercing damage. Strength is used as the wearer's attack and damage modifier.

INVESTIGATION MONOCLE

Complexity: Standard

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 glass or crystal and ½ hide

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: 0 or 1

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: n/a

The wearer gains expertise in the Investigation and Perception skills, doubling their proficiency bonus for each.

Once per long rest, you can expend 1 spark and activate the monocle to gain Truesight. Out to 120 feet, and for the next 5 minutes, you can see in normal and magical darkness, see invisible creatures and objects, automatically detect visual illusions and succeed on saving throws against them, and perceives the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic. You also notice hidden and secret doors. Once this feature has been used, the contraption must be reloaded during a long rest.

NET CANNON

Complexity: Standard

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 50 feet of rope, 1 wood, 1 bone, and ½ fire powder

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: n/a

Reload: 1 action

Your net cannon fires a net covering a 10-foot-square area up to a range of 60 feet. Those in the area must succeed on a Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw against your contraptioneeing challenge DC, or they are trapped under the net and restrained, and those that fail a DC 10 Strength saving throw are also knocked prone. A creature can use its action to make a Strength check against your contraptioneeing challenge DC to free itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The net has AC 10 and 20 hit points.

Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) destroys a 5-foot-square section of it, freeing any creature trapped in that section.

To fire the net cannon again, you must take an action to reload it with a new net and ½ dose of fire powder.

NET FOR CANNON

Components: 50 feet of rope

Build Time: 2 hours

POWDER, GO GO

Complexity: Standard

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 consumable plant and ½ chemical

Build Time: 30 minutes

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using an alchemy set, you can produce 1d4 + ½ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) doses of go go powder. The powder is best consumed in hot water. For some, it is too bitter so you may wish to add cream and sugar.

Within 10 minutes of consuming go go powder, that creature can roll a d6 and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the bonus die but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once rolled, the die is lost. A creature can only gain the benefits of go go powder once per long rest.

The strength and effectiveness of your go go powder recipe improves as you gain levels. The die becomes a d8 at 5th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 15th level.

POWDER, HEALING

Complexity: Standard

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 2 herbs, 1 soft plant, and 1 chemical

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using alchemy tools, you can make $1d4$ + your contraptioneering modifier doses of healing powder. Each dose may be consumed as a bonus action. A creature that consumes a dose of healing powder regains a number of hit points equal to $1d4$ + your contraptioneering modifier. A creature can consume no more than 2 doses of healing powder in a 24-hour period. Additional doses consumed have no effect. Healing powder loses its effectiveness after 48 hours of being crafted.

Healing powder can be mixed with a liquid, allowing one to consume up to 2 doses at once. After 10 minutes of being mixed in a liquid, the powder loses its effectiveness. Healing powder has no effect on undead or constructs.

The effectiveness of your healing powder recipe improve as you gain levels. The hit points healed becomes $2d4$ + your contraptioneering modifier at 5th level, $3d4$ + your contraptioneering modifier at 10th level, and $4d4$ + your contraptioneering modifier at 15th level.

POWDER, RAGE

Complexity: Standard

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 chemical, 1 scale (ground into a powder), and 1 bone

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using alchemy tools, you can make $1d4 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneering modifier (rounded down) doses of ragepowder. Each dose may be consumed as a bonus action to go into a rage.

While raging, you gain the following benefits if you aren't wearing heavy armor:

- You have advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- When you make a melee weapon attack using Strength, you gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- If you are able to cast spells, you can't cast them or concentrate on them while raging.

Your rage lasts for 1 minute and only ends if you are knocked unconscious. When your rage ends, you gain one level of exhaustion that lasts until you've taken a short rest.



RESTORATIVE SALVE

Complexity: Standard

Type: Any

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 very rare herb and 2 consumable plants

Build Time: 1 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: n/a, consumable

Using alchemy tools, you can make $1d4 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) doses of restorative salve. Each dose may be consumed by a creature to end either one disease or one condition afflicting it. The condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned.

In the case of **rot poisoning**, it removes 1 level of exhaustion. If this reduces the creature's exhaustion to 0, they are cured.

SLEIGHT OF HAND HANDS

Complexity: Standard

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 hide, 1 scale, 1 conductive goo, and 1 oil

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: 3 uses per long rest

The sleight of hand hands act as an extension of your own hands but with more grace and dexterity. After 3 uses, you must reload the contraption with another unit of oil. After all, you can't have those fingers squeaking. Sleight of hand hands grants the tinkerer proficiency in sleight of hand if they do not have it already. If they do, they gain expertise in it, doubling their proficiency bonus.

TRAP, ARROW

Complexity: Standard

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 wood, 1 oil, and 4 arrows

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 action

Reload: per use

The arrow trap fires 4 independent arrows when triggered. It does $1d8 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneeing modifier (rounded down) damage to any creature it hits. As an action, the tinkerer must place the trap in their desired location, choose targets, and then set the trigger. Choose from the following methods for targeting:

- **1 target** – choose 1 line extending up to 60 feet from the trap. Any creature that passes through the line can be targeted by all 4 arrows.
- **4 targets** – choose 4 lines extending up to 60 feet from the trap. Any creature that passes through the line can be targeted by a single arrow.

When the trap is triggered, a targeted creature must succeed on a Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw against your contraptioneeing challenge DC to avoid being hit by an arrow.

Choose the trigger from the following options:

- **Wired button** – the tinkerer can use a wire up to 60 feet long with a button trigger, allowing someone to manually fire the arrows.
- **Tripwire** – the tinkerer can place a 30-foot wire in a line near the trap. A creature that passes the line without noticing it triggers the arrows being fired.
- **Button or pressure plate** – the tinkerer can specify a specific area up to 5-foot square that, when entered, causes the trap to fire its arrows. This button or pressure plate must be within 5 feet of the trap.

TRAP, EXPLODING

Complexity: Simple

Type: Architect

Users: Anyone

Components: ½ wood and 1 fire powder

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 action

Reload: per use

The exploding trap is a simple contraption that explodes when triggered. It does 4d10 damage to any creature within a 5-foot radius of where it is placed. As an action, the tinkerer must place the trap in their desired location and then set the trigger. Choose the trigger from the following options:

- Wired button – the tinkerer can use a wire up to 60 feet long with a button trigger, allowing someone to manually trigger the explosion
- Timer – once the trap is placed, it can be set to explode after a specific amount of time has passed, up to 10 minutes.
- Button or pressure plate – the tinkerer can specify a specific area up to 5-foot square that, when entered, causes the trap to explode. This button or pressure plate must be within 5 feet of the trap.

VEST OF PERSUASION

Complexity: Simple

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: Vest, fine quality, 1 herb or chemical, and 1/4 bone or scale

Build Time: 8 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 2 uses per long rest

This finely detailed vest gives the wearer the ability to captivate the attention of onlookers. When activated, the colors of the vest shift and pulse, slightly at first, but increasing as creatures watch. The vest of persuasion releases a gas with a subtle smell most would mistake for perfume or cologne. The wearer gains expertise in the Persuasion skill, doubling their proficiency bonus. Additionally, any creature that is within 15 feet and can see the wearer must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against the tinkerer's contraptioneering challenge DC or become charmed.

- A charmed creature can't attack the charmer or target the charmer with harmful abilities or magical effects.
- The charmer has advantage on any ability check to interact socially with the creature.

The vest of persuasion can be activated twice before reloading during a long rest. The effect lasts for up to 10 minutes. Once a creature resists being charmed, they are immune to its effects for 24 hours. It has no effect on creatures with an Intelligence of 4 or less.

Your efficiency when reloading the vest of persuasion improves as you gain levels. The number of times it can be activated per long rest increases to 3 at 5th level, 5 at 10th level, and 8 at 15th level.

ADVANCED CONTRAPTIONS

CONCUSSIVE WEAPON

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: ½ metal, 1 oil, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 1 hour

Spark: n/a

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 2 uses per long rest

This contraption can be built into any 2-handed or versatile melee weapon. When activated, the effect lasts for 1 minute. After a successful melee attack, add 1d8 force damage to the weapon's damage and the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your contraptioneeing challenge DC or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

The strength of your concussive weapon improves as you gain levels. At 10th level, the activation lasts for 10 minutes, and you add 1d8 force damage to successful melee attacks.

ENERGY SWORD

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 scale, 1 bone, 1 chemical, 1 fire powder, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 4 days

Spark: 1 or 2

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per long rest

This inconspicuous contraption appears to be nothing more than a cylinder, ribbed with scale and bone, a little more than twice the length of the palm of your hand. When activated, a beam of energy, glowing with intense light, extends from the cylinder. The effect lasts for 1 minute, and the contraption is used similarly to a rapier.

1d8 lightning damage – light, finesse weapon – 1/2 lbs. – reach 5 feet

You can increase the power and duration of the energy sword as you gain levels. At 5th level, you can activate the blade 2 times per long rest, and the damage increases to 1d10. At 10th level, you can expend 2 sparks when reloading (instead of 1), allowing you to activate the blade 3 times per long rest; it lasts for 10 minutes, and damage increases to 2d6. At 15th level, you can activate the blade 4 times per long rest; it lasts 30 minutes, and the damage increases to 3d6.



EXO SUIT, ADVANCED UPGRADED

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 scale (cleaned and polished, valuing 50 primes), 1 metal, 1 oil, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 10 days

Spark: 2 or 3

Activation: It takes 10 minutes to don and activate your exo suit

Reload: 1 time per long rest and 1 time per week

It's time to upgrade your exo suit for a second time. The amount of protection the suit provides has been improved again by adding scale plates, giving it an effective AC of 15 + your Dexterity modifier.

When you take a long rest, some general maintenance must be performed to reload the exo suit for the next day. When you don the suit, you must spend 2 sparks to activate it for the day. Once per week, you must also apply 1 new oil and 1 new conductive goo to ensure it maintains optimal performance.

COMBAT CHARGES

You can spend a third spark to activate a special set of features new to this version of the exo suit: combat charges. When activated, you gain 3 charges that can be spent on the following actions:

- **Rapid attack** – Immediately after you take the Attack action on your turn, you can spend 1 charge to make two additional attacks with the same weapon as a bonus action.

- **Rapid escape** – You can spend 1 charge to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on your turn, and your move speed is doubled for the turn.
- **Shield wall** – As a reaction you can spend 1 charge to increase your AC to 25 and gain automatic successes on Strength and Constitution checks and saving throws until the end of your next turn.

Only 1 set of 3 charges can be activated per long rest. Unused charges become unavailable after 24 hours.

EXO SUIT MODIFICATIONS

After completing the advanced upgraded exo suit, a third contraption diagram of advanced or lower complexity may be recorded in your book of diagrams without counting against the total number of contraption diagrams your tinkerer level allows.

Similar to the previous 2 versions of the exo suit, contraptions added to the advanced upgraded exo suit as a modification have the following changes to their diagram plans:

- The component requirements are reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$ due to the basic armature already existing in the suit.
- Contraptions that require a long rest to reload can be reloaded during a short rest.
- Contraptions that require spark to reload can draw from the spark powering the suit. Up to 2 contraptions that have been modified to your exo suit may have their spark requirement reduced.

FLAME THROWER

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 metal, 1 hide, 2 scale, 1 oil, and 2 fire powder

Build Time: 2 days

Spark: 2

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: long rest

Can you say flambé? You've created the ultimate destructive weapon, handheld and portable! Tubes connect to fuel canisters strapped to your body that then run down your arm to a nozzle and triggering mechanism.

When you reload the flame thrower, you must spend 2 spark, plus you must fill the fuel canister with your own special concoction of 1 oil and 2 fire powder. When you do, you gain 3 charges. Each charge can be used to take the Attack action with the flame thrower. In the case of the flame thrower, charges do not expire but can never exceed 3.

When you take the Attack action with the flame thrower, expending 1 charge, you choose a line in a single direction that is 20 feet long. Any creature in that line must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your contraption engineering challenge DC or take 6d8 fire damage, taking half as much on a success. Creatures that fail the saving throw catch on fire, taking an additional 1d8 damage each turn until they take an action to put the fire out.

GIZMO, ASSISTANT

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1

Build Time: 1 week

Spark: 1

Activation: none

Reload: long rest

Building an assistant gizmo is like duplicating yourself. It will act independently but also in harmony with you, always following your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn, though an assistant gizmo is not designed to attack. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate telepathically with your gizmo as long as it is within 60 feet of you. Your assistant gizmo also understands spoken commands and can speak your language using a simple, literal style.

Designed to assist you with your work, an assistant gizmo can reduce the time it takes to build a contraption by up to 1/3rd. They are also good for cleaning, carrying, and cooking. How you use your assistant gizmo is up to you.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for up to 24 hours. Your assistant gizmo has the following stats:

ASSISTANT GIZMO

Tiny gizmo, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 4 (1d8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

GIZMO, BEAR

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 wood, 2 metal or bone, 1 oil, 1 conductive goo, teeth, and fur

Build Time: 1 week

Spark: 1

Activation: none

Reload: long rest

Building a bear gizmo is a big undertaking. It will act independently but always follow your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate telepathically with your gizmo as long as it is within 60 feet of you. Your bear gizmo understands your spoken commands but cannot speak. It uses the neuro link to send single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for a whole day.

Your bear gizmo is designed with a large storage compartment and can carry up to 280 lbs. Additionally, your bear gizmo can have one contraption modified to it. This contraption still requires its designated reload and spark to function but can be independently controlled by the gizmo.

Your bear gizmo has the following stats:

BEAR GIZMO

Medium gizmo, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Athletics +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages The gizmo can't speak but understands commands from its tinkerer

ACTIONS

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

GIZMO, RAVEN

Complexity: Standard

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1

Build Time: 6 days

Spark: 1+

Activation: none

Reload: long rest

Building a raven gizmo will let you extend your influence as far as it can fly. It will act independently but always follow your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate telepathically with your gizmo as long as it is within 1 mile of you. Your

raven gizmo understands your spoken commands but cannot speak. It uses the neuro link to send single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for a whole day.

Additionally, you can spend, 1 spark and as an action, you can see through your raven gizmo's eyes and hear what it hears for up to 1 minute, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the gizmo has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.

Your raven gizmo has the following stats:

RAVEN GIZMO

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages The gizmo can't speak but understands commands from its tinkerer

Mimicry. The raven can mimic simple sounds it has heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

GIZMO, WOLF

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: n/a

Activation: none

Reload: long rest

A wolf gizmo is the perfect companion. It will act independently but always follows your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate telepathically with your gizmo as long as it is within 120 feet of you. Your wolf gizmo understands your spoken commands but cannot speak. It uses the neuro link to send single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see.

With a daily reload for maintenance, 1 spark is enough to keep your gizmo running for a whole day.

Your wolf gizmo has a storage compartment and can carry up to 140 lbs. Additionally, your wolf gizmo can have one contraption modified to it. This contraption still requires its designated reload and spark to function but can be independently controlled by the gizmo.

Your wolf gizmo's stats are on the next page.



WOLF GIZMO

Medium gizmo, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages The gizmo can't speak but understands commands from its tinkerer

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if its tinkerer is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

HAWK WINGS

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 hide (worked, valuing 25 primes), 1 bone, gears, springs and rope, plus a backpack

Build Time: 1 week

Spark: 1+

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: short rest

When activated, you gain a flying speed of 60 feet for 5 minutes. When the duration ends, the hawk wings lose their ability to keep the wearer aloft. The tinkerer wearing the hawk wings can spend another spark to extend the duration an additional 5 minutes. They must do this before the initial duration ends, or the contraption must be reloaded. You can take a short rest to run maintenance, such as recoiling the springs, to reload the hawk wings.

LONG GUN

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 metal, 1 wood, and 1 bone

Build Time: 16 hours

Spark: 0 or 1+

Reload: After 11 shots and per long rest

Using tinkerer's tools, you can build a 2-handed, ranged weapon from wood and metal. The weapon fires custom bullets that only you can make. Proficiency with firearms allows you to add your proficiency bonus to attack rolls made with it. It has a cartridge that can hold up to 11 bullets and takes 2 actions to reload, however, while reloading you can also take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions.

BONE SIGHT

Once after a long rest, you can use 1 spark to activate a bone sight on your long gun. This aiming device lasts for 5 minutes and automatically adjusts for wind and other conditions that can adversely affect accuracy. Using the bone sight,

you can find and exploit weaknesses in your target. The long gun deals an extra 2d6 damage to one creature you hit with an attack if you have advantage on the attack roll. You don't need advantage on the attack roll for the extra damage dice if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

The amount of extra damage increases as you gain levels to 4d6 at 5th level, 5d6 at 10th level, and 6d6 at 15th level.

BULLETS

Components: 1 metal and 1 fire powder

Build Time: 1 hour

Using tinkerer's tools, you can make $1d4 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneering modifier (rounding down) in bullets. Range 120/360. 2d6 piercing damage.

REPEATING CROSSBOW

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 heavy crossbow, 1 metal or 1 bone, and 1 oil

Build Time: 3 hours

Spark: n/a

Reload: After 9 shots

You have successfully modified a heavy crossbow to hold a quantity of crossbow bolts along a self-feeding magazine. When you take the Attack action with the repeating crossbow, you may take 2 shots, each with their own attack roll. Its magazine can hold up to 9 crossbow bolts and takes 1 action to reload. However, while reloading, you can also take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions.

At 10th level, when you take the Attack action with the repeating crossbow, you may take 3 shots, each with their own attack roll.

1d10 piercing - heavy, loading, two-handed - 18 lb. - range 100/400

RETRACTING BLADE BRACER

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 bone, 1 metal, 1 hide, and 1 scale

Build Time: 9 hours

Spark: 1+

Reload: 2 uses per short rest

You've invented an easy-to-conceal, retractable blade wearable on your forearm. When extended, the blade can be wielded similarly to a short sword.

USING THE BLADE EXTENDED

1d6 piercing - Finesse, light - 3 lb.

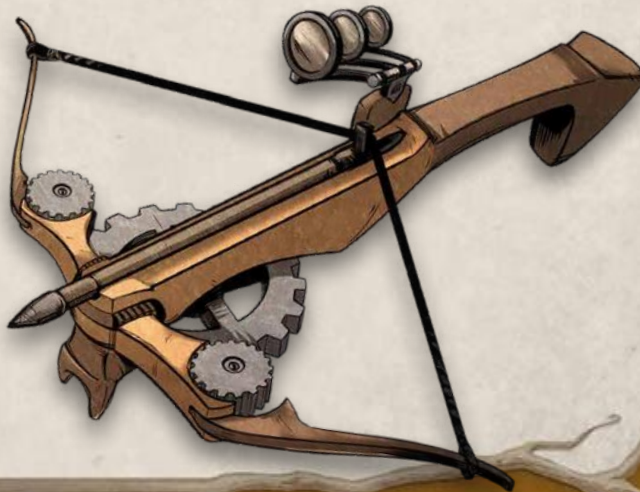
It's true potential as a weapon is found in using its spring-loaded thrust as an attack.

SPRING-LOADED ATTACK

During a short rest, you can expend 1 spark and reload two sets of springs, allowing for 2 spring-loaded attacks before the next reload. You can reload the weapon multiple times during a 24-hour period if you take multiple short rests. If the blade is concealed, you automatically gain advantage on your first attack in an encounter.

The retracting blade deals 3d6 additional damage to one creature you hit with an attack if you have advantage on the attack roll. You don't need advantage on the attack roll to deal the additional damage if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

The amount of damage the retracting blade does increases as you gain levels to 4d6 at 5th level, 6d6 at 10th level, and 8d6 at 15th level.



SMART SHIELD

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Solutionist

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 hide, 1 metal, 1 stone, 2 bone, and 2 oil

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: 1

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 1 use per short rest

This contraption mounts two flexible shields on arms that reposition around your body in defense. You must spend 1 spark each day, and you can reload the mechanism during a short rest.

Use a bonus action to activate the contraption, and it lasts for 1 minute. Once activated, you can use your reaction to deflect or redirect a missile that would hit you by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your contraptioneering modifier.

If you reduce the damage to 0, you redirect the missile (as long as it is small enough to reasonably handle). As part of the same reaction, you can make a ranged attack with the weapon or piece of ammunition. You make this attack with proficiency, regardless of your weapon proficiencies, and the missile has a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet.

THUNDER BOOTS

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 scale, 1 chemical, 1 oil, 1 gem, 1 stone, and 3 conductive goo

Build Time: 2 hours

Spark: 1+

Activation: 1 action

Reload: long rest

Thunder boots immediately improve your stability and power. While wearing them, you cannot be knocked prone from a standing position, and you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks. If you succeed on an unarmed attack that was a “kick,” it does 1d12 damage plus your Intelligence modifier. Stealth attempts are at disadvantage while wearing thunder boots.

After a long rest, you prepare your boots for the day with 1 spark, and if you used *lightning stomp* on the previous day, you’ll need to add 3 more units of conductive goo.

LIGHTNING STOMP

As an action, spending 1 spark, you can stomp one boot and choose 1 to 3 points on the ground within 90 feet to be struck by an arc of lightning from your foot. All creatures within 5 feet of any of those points must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against your contraptioneering challenge DC or take a certain amount of lightning damage. If you choose 3 points, each creature takes 3d10 lightning damage. If you choose 2 points, each creature takes 4d10 lightning damage. If you chose 1 point, those creatures take 7d10 lightning damage. Any creatures that succeeded on the saving throw only take half damage.

MASTER CONTRAPTIONS

EXO SUIT, MASTER UPGRADE

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Architect

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 hide (worked, valuing 25 primes), 1 bone, 1 chemical, 1 oil, and 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 20 days

Spark: 3, 4, or 5

Activation: It takes 10 minutes to don and activate your exo suit

Reload: 1 time per long rest and 1 time per week

It's time to upgrade your exo suit for the last time. It is your master work. The amount of protection the suit provides has been improved by a simple neural link, giving you control and agility as fast as your incredible mind! The master upgraded exo suit has an effective AC of 15 + your Dexterity modifier and ½ your Intelligence modifier (rounded up).

When you take a long rest, some general maintenance must be performed to reload the exo suit for the next day. When you don the suit, you must spend 3 sparks to activate it for the day. Once per week, you must also apply 1 new chemical, 1 new oil, and 1 new conductive goo to ensure it maintains optimal performance.

COMBAT CHARGES

You can spend an additional spark to activate combat charges. When activated, you gain 3 charges that can be spent on the following actions:

- **Rapid attack** – Immediately after you take the Attack action on your turn, you can spend 1 charge to make two additional attacks with the same weapon as a bonus action.
- **Rapid escape** - You can spend 1 charge to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on your turn, and your move speed is doubled for the turn.
- **Shield wall** – As a reaction you can spend 1 charge to increase your AC to 25 and gain automatic successes on Strength and Constitution checks and saving throws until the

end of your next turn.

- **Brutal force** – After spending 1 charge, you can double the rolled damage dice on your next successful melee attack. You can choose to spend this charge after learning if your attack was successful.
- **Push the limits** - On your turn, spend 2 charges, and you can take one additional action on top of your regular action and a possible bonus action. Once you use this feature, you must finish reloading before you can use it again.

Up to 2 sets of 3 charges can be activated per long rest. Unused charges become unavailable after 24 hours.

EXO SUIT MODIFICATIONS

After completing the master upgraded exo suit, you may record the *hawk wings* contraption diagram in your book of diagrams without counting against the total number of contraption diagrams your tinkerer level allows. Hawk wings are added to this exo suit with no additional component requirements.

Similar to the previous 3 versions of the exo suit, contraptions added to the advanced upgraded exo suit as a modification have the following changes to their diagram plans:

- The component requirements are reduced by ½ due to the basic armature already existing in the suit.
- Contraptions that require a long rest to reload can be reloaded during a short rest.
- Contraptions that require spark to reload can draw from the spark powering the suit. Up to 4 contraptions that have been modified to your exo suit that require spark no longer require spark.

FLAMING BALL OF HAMMER

Complexity: Standard

Type: Weaponeer

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 1 warhammer, 4 fire powder, 1 metal, 1 conductive goo

Build Time: 3 days

Spark: 2 or 4

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: 2 uses per long rest

The flaming ball of hammer is a warhammer with the heart of a volcano. When not activated, it can be wielded similarly to a warhammer.

1d8 bludgeoning – versatile (1d10) - 3 lb.

During a long rest, you must reload the hammer with 4 units of fire powder and 2 sparks to prepare it for the day. You can activate it 2 times before the next long rest. Each activation lasts for 10 minutes, heating the head until it glows bright orange. Successful attacks made while the head is heated cause an additional 2d8 fire damage. Flammable creatures or equipment catch on fire, taking an additional 1d8 damage each turn until they take an action to put the fire out.

INCENDIARY BLAST

Once during an activation, you can spend 2 additional sparks to use incendiary blast. With a successful attack, the target is engulfed in a cloud of white-hot embers, and if it is a creature up to 2 sizes larger than you, it is automatically knocked away from you by 10 feet. The incendiary cloud swirls around the target for 1 minute, affecting any creature that starts or comes within 5 feet of it. The incendiary fire on the original target can only be put out by magical means or by fully dousing it with water. The incendiary cloud deals 5d8 fire damage per turn for 6 turns to the original target and any creature in the cloud. It then deals 4d8 fire damage on turn 7, 3d8 fire damage on turn 8, 2d8 fire damage on turn 9, and 1d8 fire damage on turn 10.

After using incendiary blast, the flaming ball of hammer immediately becomes unusable until a long rest, and it is reloaded.

GIZMO, COMBAT

Complexity: Master

Automatonier

Users: Tinkerer

Components: 2 wood, 2 metal, 1 bone, 2 scale, 2 oil, 1 chemical, and 2 conductive goo

Build Time: 1 month

Spark: 2+

Activation: none

Reload: long rest

A combat gizmo is really built for one thing, combat. It will follow your commands, fighting beside you or for you, but will still act independently. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. When your gizmo drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed and must be rebuilt.

Using a simple neuro link affixed to your temple, you can communicate telepathically with your gizmo as long as it is within 120 feet of you. It uses the neuro link to send single-word impressions and mental images of what it can see. Your combat gizmo understands spoken commands and can speak your language using a simple, literal style.

Daily, a combat gizmo requires 3 sparks to function and a reload for maintenance. Once per week, you must also apply 1 new chemical, 1 new oil, and 1 new conductive goo to ensure it maintains optimal performance.

Additionally, you can spend 1 spark, and as an action, you can see through your combat gizmo's eyes and hear what it hears for up to 1 minute, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the gizmo has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.

Your combat gizmo has the following stats:

COMBAT GIZMO

Small gizmo, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (scale)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The combat gizmo makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The combat gizmo adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gizmo must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

TELEPORTATION GRENADE

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Solutionist

Users: Anyone

Components: 1 fire powder, 1 conductive goo, and 1 scale

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: 4

Activation: 1 bonus action

Reload: n/a

Using an alchemy set and your tinkerer's tools, you can produce $1d4 + \frac{1}{2}$ your contraptioneering modifier (rounded down) teleportation grenades. It takes 4 sparks to make a batch of these devices, but once they are complete, spark is not needed to activate them.

As a bonus action you can smash a teleportation grenade. You are briefly surrounded by smoke, momentarily obscured, and then you teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see.





SPOILERS

THE PAGES BEYOND THIS POINT
ARE INTENDED FOR YOUR GAME
MASTER'S EYES ONLY.



PROLOGUE

Over two decades ago, the malevolent creature Rohr-tan sought to blanket the forest in decay. He was defeated by the king's council of mages, but they found he could not be killed, not entirely. They devised a plan to lock him away, sealed forever in a tomb of magic, hidden deep within the mountains, far away from all dobberkind.

Yet, a piece of him remained. Little did the council know that even before their time, Orlun, the first king of Dobberton, was once touched by the Lightless. From within the heritage vault, deep under the palace, Orlun's stone was not silent. The great deceiver spoke into the hearts of any who would listen.

It was Calynn that heard, Calynn that listened. It told her that *she should be great, that she should be heir to the throne, and that one day, she would rule all of the Alwaysgreen Forest*. Calynn stole Orlun's heritage stone and replaced it with her own. If anyone should ever discover a stone was missing, they would assume it was hers.

The stone told her it was the key to her powers, so she decided to make it into a weapon. She affixed it to a hilt inherited from her great-aunt, Merith. She then formed a blade from rosewood and silver. She, with the help of her love, Maegera, imbued the dagger with magic and it was indeed powerful, but the stone continued to whisper. *Free me, it said, and unlock true power, a power greater than even you can imagine!*

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Throughout this book, I'll be referring to the whole adventure arc as the adventure and the smaller plot threads within it as chapters. There are 14 chapters that have been grouped into 3 acts that make up Seeds of Decay.

The adventure is designed for 3 to 5 characters starting in Chapter 1 at level 1. As written, many of the encounters have the potential to be deadly. Please add or remove creatures from any combat to fit the relative strength of your players' party or for the style of game your players enjoy. Upon completion of all 14 chapters, characters will progress to level 8.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

I wrote Seeds of Decay because I love unexpected heroes overcoming insurmountable odds. As with all games, the most important rule is to have fun! If you're all doing that, you're doing it right.

As a GM, you shouldn't feel bound to anything you find in Seeds of Decay - you can change anything. Really, go ahead. Everything in this book is written to inspire **your** campaign and players.

Rename anyone or anything to suit your world. Adapt the clues, treasure, and magic items to suit your players and their goals. There's no reason you can't even change the abilities of a monster mid-encounter if it adds drama and gives your players a truly epic moment! **This is your game**, and though a great deal of blood, sweat, and sleepless nights went into making this book, I now give it to you to make your own!

Each chapter includes an outline of the included scenes, information about the location, and background for any non-player characters the party may interact with. Scenes are written in a linear style, allowing you to easily move from one to the next.

Some text is intended to be read aloud or paraphrased as you desire. There are also blocks of text to give you special instructions or additional information within a scene.

TEXT TO READ ALOUD

Information formatted in a box like this is scripted to be read aloud to your players. Feel free to read it word for word or paraphrase it to fit your style.

GM NOTES

Text found in purple boxes, like this one, is where I get to talk directly to you, the Game Master. It may be used to add depth or background to a non-player character (NPC) or it may give some tips on how to run a scene. These boxes are designed to help you more easily find the critical information you need to facilitate your group's roleplaying experience. I will also provide suggestions based on my experience running this adventure, highlighting important plot points or warnings about particularly difficult encounters.

ACT 1: SOMETHING ROTTEN IN OAK DEN

A mysterious rot spreads through the forests and fields around Oak Den. The party must investigate the threat and learn who the main villain is, the Wood Sprite.

- The Pumpkin Fest is Canceled
- The Pumpkin Patch
- A Sticky Situation
- The Plaguewood Spider

ACT 2: QUEST FOR THE KEY

The Wood Sprite plans to release the Rot Weaver upon the Forest, but first she needs the cursed dagger, Ember, the key to opening his prison. The party must find the dagger and take it to the authorities in Dobberton where it can be hidden.

- Curse of the Wood Sprite
- The Terrin Caves
- Captured by the Sylvans
- Returning to Dobberton
- The Lakewood Terror

ACT 3: RETURN TO THE TOMB

It's now up to the party to delve into a deadly dungeon to reseal the Rot Weaver's tomb or kill him once and for all!

- The Sleeping Bear and the Giant Centipede
- Meeting With the King
- Blue River Daze
- The Tomb Keeper
- The Heart Rohr-tan

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Random Encounters are a great way to add variety, drama, and danger between major events or locations in this adventure. Random encounters should be considered whenever the characters are traveling or are taking a long or short rest in an unsecured location. The challenge and frequency of random encounters should escalate as the party progresses in the adventure.

INTERLUDES AND DREAMS

As the GM, you can add scenes, characters, and themes to your adventure in whatever way makes sense to you. After all, this book is just a bunch of story ingredients to help you make the adventure pie. Some optional ingredients to include are Interludes and Dreams. A few are included in this section to help you flesh out plot details and provide additional adventure hooks.





I

SOMETHING
ROTTEN IN
OAK DEN



OAK DEN

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The Acorn Inn | 6. Tailor |
| 2. The Alwasygreen Garden | 7. Lettie's Lights |
| 3. Tasty Treats | 8. Woodsmith and Millright |
| 4. Baril's Grocery | 9. Barracks |
| 5. Cobbler | 10. Boyer Fletcher |

OAK DEN

Nestled in a very fertile area of the forest, Oak Den is southwest of the Dobberton capital. A number of crops flourish nearby among the dense oak trees, such as berries, nuts, vining fruits, and even corn. Yet it is the pumpkins that garner the most attention. Autumn traditions and tasty treats put everyone in a good mood, making fall a busy and festive time in Oak Den, which culminates in the annual Pumpkin Fest.

Homes are constructed with simple wooden frames with walls of wattle and daub. They favor curved roof peaks thatched with moss. As is the custom throughout the Alwaysgreen Forest, their homes are built right into the trees they share with the forest. There are often as many rooms inside the tree's trunk as there are outside. Trees are vital to their lives, providing shelter, materials, and many foods. As such, they take great care in how they use the trees, ensuring that no harm comes to the tree in which they've made their home.

A creek runs through town before eventually spilling into the Blue River just to the north. The roads in Oak Den are simple hard-packed earth, most making their way to the middle of town where there is a community well and a cobblestone park. The park is usually alive with activity, children playing, merchants selling wares, and it serves as the main gathering place for holidays and special events. Next to the park, the Acorn Inn is always open with a welcoming cup of warm tea or mug of cold ale.

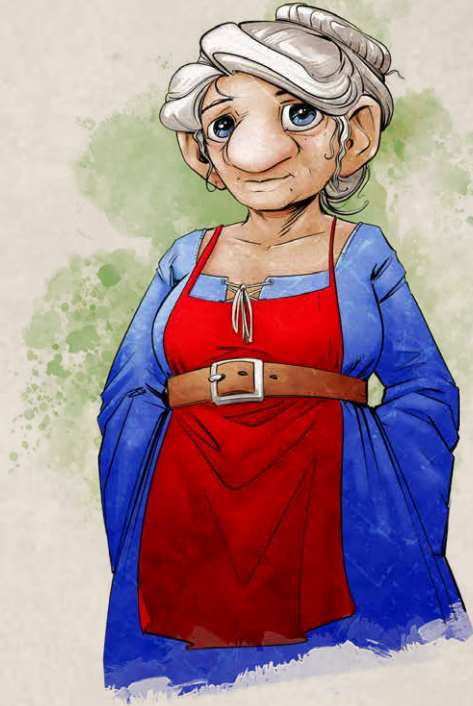
While not nearly as large as East Watch or Lake Wood, Oak Den is a busy little town. In addition to visitors that come for the Pumpkin Fest, the hospitality of the Acorn Inn attracts travelers from the Blue River Road. Oak Den is about halfway between Dobberton and West Watch, making it an ideal spot to stop for the night. Kingdom guards, traveling performers, and merchants have all enjoyed the hospitality of Oak Den.

1 - THE ACORN INN

Beatrice runs the Acorn Inn with care and ease, managing the responsibilities of a full inn and eatery while always having time to show individual attention to every person who crosses her threshold. No person's need is too small or

unimportant. She seems to never tire, but even when she does, she wears an infectious smile. The Acorn Inn has all the comforts of home. Three hearty meals a day. Pumpkin bread with acorn butter, honeyberry tarts, spinach salad with slices of grilled squash, and murkmellon mead are always popular. Plus, there never fails to be a warm pot of hazelnut stew hanging over the fire. There seems to be no limit to Beatrice's imagination, creating scrumptious dishes from produce in every season.

The inn has six rooms upstairs and can sleep nearly twenty if people are willing to share. There is an adjoining general store that carries the goods and sundries that one might need at home or on the road. Splugg, a traveling merchant, stocks the shelves with goods from out of the area, passing through every couple of weeks.



THE PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

The Pumpkin Fest is an annual tradition that takes over the whole town. Everyone is involved in some way. Booths of trinkets and pies line the streets. Children race pumpkins, rolling them down any hill they can find, while strong men compete to see who can throw them the furthest. With a spoon in hand, everyone lines up to taste the new pumpkin-themed recipes concocted by budding chefs from around the region.

THE ACORN INN

The Acorn Inn is a frequently visited location in Act I and can serve as a home base for the Player Characters (PCs). Most Non-Player Characters (NPCs) they meet to start the adventure will be found there. Below are additional locations that are not directly included in the adventure but can be used to flesh out the town as needed.

2 - THE ALWAYSGREEN GARDEN

Behind the Acorn Inn, a mysterious grotto produces fruits and vegetables that seem to never go out of season. As if by magic, the Alwaysgreen Garden thrives even in winter. The garden is attended by four woodkin, though they mostly keep to themselves. Occasionally, Ruthie, the badger, can be seen bustling to and fro, helping in the Inn or around town, making a special delivery. Some say the garden itself is awakened. Others claim it was created by Herb when he was in his prime, a mage of some significance. And there are those that believe it's just a regular garden that happens to grow top-quality produce.

The garden is on the same property as the Acorn Inn, and Beatrice is obliged to take advantage, using its produce in many of the dishes she prepares. She's too busy with the inn to farm it herself, but her woodkin friends Ruthie, a soft-spoken badger, and Clover, a wise old turtle, keep the garden in perfect working order. They are assisted by Lilly, the squirrel, and Urla, the owl who also works at Baril's Grocery.

3 - TASTY TREATS

At Zoey's quaint creek-side store, you'll find an impressive selection of delicious sweets, treats, and culinary delights. Along with freshly baked bread and pastries, Zoey also stocks a range of cheeses, milk, and specialty frothy beverages. The cellar, perhaps due to the nearby creek, stays naturally cool, making it an ideal spot to store perishables.

4 - BARIL'S GROCERY

Baril is one of the most prosperous farmers in Oak Den. His grocery carries seasonal produce and seed. While much of his stock comes from his own fields, he also offers a selection of unique specialty items that come from the Alwaysgreen Garden. In addition, the store features goods from other farms in the area.

Baril is rarely at the store himself. Urla, a woodkin owl, keeps two sharp eyes on the store and manages its daily operations.

5 - COBBLER

Augustus, Gus to his friends, is a retired warrior and now esteemed shoemaker. If there's one thing that hard-working folks, like those of Oak Den, need, it's a good pair of shoes. Gus has been making and repairing shoes in the region for nearly twenty years. People of the Barrow, Litewyck, South Watch, and West Watch are all known to travel to Oak Den for a pair of Gus's shoes. When not helping at the Acorn Inn or wandering the woods, his grandson, Toby, is on hand, learning the trade so that he may take over the business one day.

6 - TAILOR

Aster keeps a few incredible garments on display, from elegant gowns to flowing robes. Though he rarely has an opportunity to sell one. His specialty is practical workwear and the leather gear needed by both farmers and the Dobberton guard.

7 - LETTIE'S LIGHTS

Lettie made candles out of her home for years before her granddaughter, Shaori, talked her into expanding to lanterns. Now Lettie offers a wide assortment of lights and supplies for the home and travel.

8 - WOODSMITH AND MILLRIGHT

Eugewyn and his partner Hardtail, the woodkin beaver, run one of the finest wood shops in all of Dobberton. Their shop is nestled along the bank of the creek, perfect for receiving small boats loaded with fresh lumber. The sweet scent of freshly cut wood floats on the air, even outside. Inside, the walls are lined with shelves of various types of wood, from sturdy oak to delicate cherry. The pair can make almost anything out of wood, from furniture to weapons.

9 - BARRACKS

The barracks in Oak Den provide lodging for any Dobberton Guard as they travel between the capital and West Watch. It's a simple building, though probably larger than it needs to be, spanning two Pin Oak trees. It has ten rooms and can comfortably house twenty guards. More could be packed in if needed. However, there are only two full-time guards posted here in Oak Den, Dolby, and the captain, Saggard.

The building also has a small armory stocked with light armor, short swords, shields, and basic traveling gear. The common room has a small cook stove and basic living supplies.

10 - BOYER FLETCHER

Gravick is a surly old dobber who had planned to retire a few years ago, and he doesn't mind letting anyone who will listen know. *"Ol' Gravick's work is ne'er done. Peoples gots to have ther arrows, don they,"* he'd say. *"Whether it's keeping birds out of yer fields or for fendin' off them nasty Ratkin slippin' past the borders, e'eryone's got ta have der arrows."* And he's right; most people in the Alwaysgreen Forest know how to use a bow.

The shop was supposed to go to his apprentice, Jakob, but he up and left to join the Dobberton guard. The worse part for Gravick is that Jakob's younger brother Gavin seems to think he should be the next apprentice.





CHAPTER 1: THE PUMPKIN FEST IS CANCELED

The characters have come to Oak Den, perhaps to partake in the town's fabled Pumpkin Fest, but instead, they find that it has been canceled.

BACKGROUND

A mysterious rot has come to the forest and fields around Oak Den. Crops have decayed, and livestock have become sick. The pumpkin patches west of town are entirely lost, resulting in the town's annual Pumpkin Fest being canceled.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the players to the setting and their characters to some of the recurring NPCs. While speaking to

these NPCs, the party will learn that the townsfolk are worried about the rot that has infected the pumpkins. Some are even scared. "*There's something **not right** out there,*" they tell the party. The townsfolk need the party to investigate.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **WELCOME TO OAK DEN.** The characters meet Toby in the town's square as he's collecting some of the trash left from the vacated pumpkin festival activities.



- **THE ACORN INN.** Inside the Acorn Inn, the townsfolk meet to talk about the rot that led to canceling the pumpkin festival. Some are worried that there is more to it than just a bad season.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS (NPCs) OF OAK DEN

BEATRICE

In addition to running the Acorn Inn, Beatrice is the honorary mayor of Oak Den. She runs the city meetings, organizes the annual Pumpkin Fest, and is everyone's adopted grandma. As one of the town's elders and the most public among them, it's obvious why many come to her for help or advice. Her warm heart and unconditional love can be felt whenever you're near her. However, none mistake her motherly demeanor for weakness. She keeps order in the Inn and in town. Anyone who causes trouble is likely to get a fry pan to the side of the head!

The following NPCs play an integral part in connecting the players' characters to the main plot of this adventure. Knowing a little about them before you start will serve you well as the GM and help you to bring Oak Den to life. They are summarized here, but their expanded backstory and stat blocks can be found in the NPC Appendix. Feel free to make them your own, changing names, personalities, or other traits to fit your group's needs. Other NPCs that play smaller roles will be detailed within the context of the scene where they are introduced.

Beatrice's full backstory can be found on page 343.

There is more to **Herb** than even he remembers. You can learn about the old mage on page 343.

Toby and **Gavin's** stats can be found on page 344.

HERB

Herb is quite eccentric. He's older than anyone remembers and very absent-minded. He's kind and sincere. When he's not tinkering on a new contraption in his shop, he's at the Acorn Inn sharing stories. If you're willing to listen, he'll go on for hours. Some of his stories are so outlandish and disconnected they sound like dreams. Lately, he's been going on about the poor turnout from the crops. He claims it's more than just a bad season but something sinister. The townsfolk pay little attention to him, though Beatrice seems to trust him. He loves tea and walnut cookies. Some believe he was once a great wizard.



TOBY

Toby is a strapping young lad. His easy smile and enthusiasm make him seem younger than his 17 years. His sharp mind and hard work ethic have earned Beatrice's trust. He helps with just about everything around the Acorn Inn. He takes care of the grounds, carries hot water to the baths, provides food for any animals in the stalls, and brings supplies to the general store. At times he even helps Shaori prepare the rooms for guests.

Gavin and Shaori are his closest friends, and he would do anything for them.

When he's not working around the inn or palling around with his friends, he is learning the arts of a cobbler from his grandfather. He's been told that one day the business will pass to him. Unfortunately, making shoes doesn't excite him much. He'd rather become a fighter like his grandfather used to be.

GAVIN

Gavin is Toby's closest friend though they are vastly different in personality. He tends to be the troublemaker - always trying to get Toby to join his schemes. These schemes aren't usually criminal but might involve an ill-conceived prank. He was raised by an older brother who treated him poorly. Gavin's brother left to *find his fortune* nearly two years ago, and the last Gavin heard, he was in River Pass.

Gavin loves wandering the forest, looking for adventure, though Beatrice would say, '*looking for trouble*.' He knows the woods around Oak Den better than the town elders. He's a crack-shot bowman, able to shoot a grape off the vine at 60 feet. He recently took a job working for Baril as a harvester.

Gavin's time working for Baril has been good for him. He had trouble showing up at first, but Baril was patient with him. Soon Gavin realized it felt good to put in a hard day's work outside under the trees of the Alwaysgreen Forest.

SHAORI

Shaori works at the Acorn Inn, helping Beatrice in whatever way she needs. Cleaning and food preparation are her main duties. She's a young adult with a mild and sincere demeanor, prepared for anything and eager to learn. When she's not working, she's likely to be found helping at Herb's shop, hoping to pick up some magic. He's a bit like a grandpa to her. Sometimes she gets roped into mischief with her friends Toby and Gavin.

ROWAN

Rowan is the Acorn Inn's barkeep. He's old and kind, always willing to listen. He lost one of his legs to an infection so long ago that no one remembers him with two legs. He sits on a stool behind the bar, but when he needs to move, he uses a cane that is strapped to his left forearm.

BARIL

Baril owns the town's grocery and market along with several large fields to the west which grow hearty crops; the greatest among them are pumpkins. He doesn't actually spend much time farming. He hires people for that. Though as a youth, he was a hard worker, building his business from nothing. He comes across as arrogant, and after a few ales, he might say, "When this town finally decides to have

an official election for mayor, I'm the obvious choice." And because of this, he and Beatrice have been known to butt heads.

However, under the bravado and money, he has a good heart. Since Gavin's brother left, Baril has been the closest thing to a father that Gavin has known. He gave the young man a chance when others only saw a troublemaker.

WELCOME TO OAK DEN

The town square is only a shadow of what was expected this afternoon. The square isn't filled with people. The townsfolk aren't tasting pumpkin pies, breads, butters, and candies. No one is selling trinkets and fall-themed decorations. No young ones are rolling pumpkins down Cobb's hill to raucous cheers for the fastest one. No face painting, no awards, and no hot cider with scary stories by moonlight. Today was intended to be the first day of Oak Den's famous pumpkin festival. However, for the first time in memory, it was canceled.

Baril, owner of the largest nearby pumpkin patch, did all he could, but his crops were lost, as were those from smaller nearby patches. Last night, reports had come in that any who attempted to work with what pumpkins they could find for pies or other treats had become sick. Beatrice felt she had no choice but to cancel the festival. She wouldn't risk the town's health, though she knew the economic impact would be crippling to the region, especially some of the smaller farms. Her spirit ached for the broken hearts of the children who wouldn't get to make memories that they would carry for a lifetime.

There is a rumor that Shaori and Toby are courting and Gavin loves to tease them about it.

Shaori's stats are on page 345.

*It's not likely you'll need stats for **Rowan** or **Baril**, but if the need arises, Rowan is an experienced fighter. For Rowan, use the **Dobberton Guard** on page 355. For Baril, you can use a typical **Noble**.*

TOWN SQUARE

Toby is a great first NPC for the players to talk to since he has a basic knowledge of almost everything in Oak Den. He grew up here, knows the locals, and knows most of the details surrounding the canceled pumpkin festival. After all, he works for Beatrice. He will do his best to answer their questions and, in most cases, direct them to the Acorn Inn, where they can speak directly to the person who would know more about their questions.

Some information the party can get from Toby:

- *Beatrice is in charge of things around Oak Den. It was her call to cancel the festival. She's inside and would be happy to talk to you.*
- *The Pumpkin Fest was canceled because there simply weren't enough pumpkins. Plus, people were getting sick after eating any food made with pumpkin.*
- *If they want to know where the rotten pumpkins grew, they can talk to Baril, the owner of the largest pumpkin farm, or Gavin, one of his harvesters. Gavin is inside the inn. Baril should be along shortly but isn't there right now.*
- *No one knows why all the pumpkins are rotten. Some of the farmers are inside talking about it now. Some say it's just a bad season. Some say it was caused by something else.*

Toby should be able to give the characters enough information to coax them into the Acorn Inn, where they can learn more.

Perhaps you have come to Oak Den so you can see their legendary pumpkin festival for yourself. Maybe you are passing through, or you are local to the area. The town square is nearly empty. Melancholy hangs heavy in the air. A roughly packed box of fall decorations sits abandoned against the community well. The remains of a pumpkin, black with mold and dripping gray ooze, are smashed next to it. Wooden stakes with rope tied between them mark the areas where vendor booths should be. You can hear music from inside the inn and tavern. At least the Acorn Inn is open today.

A young, blond-headed dobber pushes an empty wheel barrel from around the west side of the inn toward the well. He awkwardly carries a large flat shovel under his arm. He seems to be shaken out of deep thought when he notices you. He smiles and nods, then drops the shovel. He quickly picks it up with the smallest hint of embarrassment on his face.

Toby is cleaning up what remains of the canceled festival. If a character speaks to him, he stays on task, politely answering their questions as best he can while shoveling the rotten pumpkin into the wheel barrel. The players can tell he's upset that the Pumpkin Fest has been canceled, but he's determined to keep a positive attitude. Once done with the pumpkin, he carefully balances the box of decorations across one edge of the wheel barrel and one of its handles. It seems likely it's going to fall once he starts rolling. If the conversation carries

on for a while, he will proceed to pull up and collect the wooden stakes that had marked locations for the vendor booths. Feel free to embellish moments of Toby dropping one or all of the things he's trying to carry at once. He eventually gets everything organized so he can carry it and push the wheel barrel.

THE ACORN INN

1. ENTRANCE

Once the characters make their way from the square to the Acorn Inn's entrance, read:

The large inn wraps more than three-quarters around the base of a magnificent oak. Warm light glows through windows on the ground floor. Smaller windows, most of which have the curtains drawn, line the second story, nestled under a sloped red shingle roof. On the west side are three simple stalls for foxes or other riding animals. Past the stalls is another entrance that caters to the general store. Large wooden doors greet you as you step up onto the porch. Each has a large acorn carved into it, framed by an ornate braid. A wooden sign arches over the doors that reads, "Acorn Inn."

2. THE DINING ROOM & BAR

Warm light fills this large room day and night. Lacquered wall panels reflect light from lanterns and windows. Square wooden floor tiles have been worn smooth from generations of feet. Round tables, each with enough stools for four, are spaced throughout. You can't help but feel at home in the Acorn Inn.

Beatrice comes in carrying a tray with warm mint tea.

"Helloooooo," calls a friendly voice as Beatrice enters from a passage to the right of the bar. She's carrying a tray with a painted clay teapot and two cups. *"I'll be with you in a moment, dearies. Take any seats you like; Light knows there's plenty available."* She smiles and steps into a side room.

A map of the Acorn Inn can be found on page 110.



Baril should enter when there is a lull in activity from your players. His entrance is highlighted on page 109.

He is most directly affected by the rot, being that it was his crops that were lost. He will provide one of the main hooks for the characters to become involved.

The Acorn Inn isn't empty; it just feels that way. There are a few other patrons and staff around, though much less than anticipated on a festival day. Beatrice has stepped into a side room where the townsfolk are about the meet to discuss what to do now that the Pumpkin Fest has been canceled.

Allow the players to make themselves comfortable and speak to the NPCs. Rowan is behind the bar, serving Adriel, who sits on one of the stools. Freya, a bard squirrel, plays a lute on the stage while Gavin listens. If the party chooses to sit at one of the tables, Shaori is quick to serve them.

There is no particular order for how the characters should interact with the NPCs. Rowan, Shaori, Gavin, and Adriel can each provide some unique details about the canceled pumpkin festival and help the characters begin to understand the situation.

AT A TABLE

If the party chooses a table to sit at, read the following:

A pretty young dobber with long black hair pops out of the kitchen hallway. She strides quickly up to you, pushing some hair out of her eyes and a trickle of sweat off her brow. *"Hi, I'm Shaori."* You can see she's a bit flustered through her pleasant smile, *"Sorry, but the Pumpkin Fest has been canceled, which means a lot of the menu is wrong. I'm sorry."* She hands you a parchment menu affixed to a thin piece of wood.

Shaori doesn't want to disappoint anyone with the bad news about the Pumpkin Fest, even though she had nothing to do with it.

2A. THE BAR

An uncommonly large dobber with rust-red hair polishes the bar to a red-oak gleam. His skin is dark and wrinkled, giving it a bark-like appearance. Behind him, the tree's trunk has shelves and cabinets built into it with mugs, dinnerware, and bottles. Three large barrels, each with a tap, are nestled in the center. Above them, out of reach for most without a ladder, hangs a beautiful tapestry displaying one of the most detailed maps of the Alwaysgreen Forest that you've seen.

Rowan is quiet but attentive. He offers the characters drinks. If they ask for food, he can tell them what is on the menu, but he would rather not get it for them, so he hollers for Shaori.

If anyone asks about items on the special pumpkin menu, he answers with a bit of sadness, *"We had to throw out all the pumpkin treats on account of all the pumpkins going bad. Didn't want anyone else to get sick."*

If questioned about the canceled pumpkin festival, he has most of the same information that Toby does. He's prone to exaggeration, saying, *"I've seen a hundred Pumpkin Fests, and the next one will be here soon enough. Trouble comes, and trouble goes. This trouble will pass as well."* If asked for specifics about the rotten pumpkins, he will direct characters to speak with Gavin, the dark-haired lad over by the stage. Gavin works the pumpkin fields and might be able to tell you some specifics.

Before a conversation with Rowan concludes, he makes sure to add:

THE ACORN INN & GENERAL STORE MENU

PLATES

Fried pea pods with onion and soft cheese	5 greys
Salted chips and soft cheese	4 greys
Roasted carrots and cashew bread	3 greys
Vegetable pie	2 greys
Vegetable stew with hearty bread	3 greys
Cheesy potatoes and hazelnut bread	8 greys
Spinache salad with grilled squash	5 greys
Hazelnut Stew	2 greys

DRINKS

Murkmellon mead	3 greys
Clover honey mead	3 greys
Strawberry ale	2 greys
Goat's milk	2 greys
Crisp cider	1 grey
Roasted brown bean brew	1 grey
Tea (chamomile, mint, thistle, or raspberry)	1 grey

TREATS

Honeyberry tart	2 greys
Walnut cookies	1 grey
Hearty bread with jam (strawberry, blackberry, or murkmellon)	2 greys
Apple pie	2 greys
Strawberry short cake with sweet cream	3 greys

SPECIAL PUMPKIN MENU

Pumpkin Cookies	1 grey
Pumpkin bread with acorn butter	2 greys
Pumpkin and cranberry muffins	2 greys
Grilled pumpkin slices	3 greys
Spicy pumpkin soup	3 greys
Pumpkin pie	2 greys
Pumpkin juice	1 grey

GENERAL STORE

Barrel	1p 50g
Blanket	35 greys
Bottle, glass	2p 50g
Bucket	10 greys
Hammer	1p 70g
Ink (1 ounce bottle)	4p
Ink Pen	10 greys
Ladder (10-foot)	25 greys
Lock	14 primes
Mess Kit	20 greys
Mirror, Steel	5 primes
Paper (one sheet)	20 greys
Parchment (one sheet)	10 greys
Pot, Ironwood	1p 75g
Pouch	50 greys
Rope, Vine	1 prime
Sack	5 greys
Wheel barrel	3 primes
Shovel	1p 50g
Rake	1 prime
Soap	2 greys

ROOMS

Small room, sleeps 2 (5 available)	1 prime
Large room, sleeps 6 (1 available)	2 primes

"But you folk listen close; you best stay away from the rot. People are gettin' sick an' you don't want ta end up like me," the grizzled old dobber says then, gestures to his missing left leg.

He won't discuss how he lost his leg in detail at this time.

2B. THE STAGE

Beatrice likes to provide entertainment for her patrons, especially during festivals. She prefers to hire traveling musicians as opposed to having a permanent in-house performer. She likes the variety and believes it's a good way to stay current with the whole of Dobberton.

If none of the players have been hired by Beatrice to perform, she has hired Freya, a red squirrel with a beautiful voice. When the party first sees the stage read:

West of the main doors, a simple stage is elevated one step above the floor. A beautiful red squirrel is perched on a stool with a lute across her lap. Her deep brown eyes draw you in, and she abruptly shifts to a more up-tempo song, filling the room with life and energy. The only other person who was really paying attention lights up and seems to recognize *"Dance with the Moon"*! After the first chorus, the squirrel stands on the stool, completely lost in the music. She dances atop the stool, causing it to tip precariously from side to side. How she keeps from crashing to the floor is a total mystery.

This may be an opportunity for one of the player's characters to have a solid connection to the opening of the story. A player who is a performer, regardless of their class, could have been hired by Beatrice to perform during the pumpkin festival.

2C. GAVIN

This energetic young adult dobber enthusiastically sings along with Freya. He doesn't seem to mind that his words aren't matching up with hers or that he is terribly out of tune. As he stomps his feet to the music, dried black mud falls from his boots in clumps.

Gavin is waiting for Toby's shift to end so they can hang out. He's been eagerly exploring the forest, looking for any stray pumpkins that haven't gone *"all mushy."* He was sure that this was the year he would win the coveted Pumpkin Wheel - the trophy for the winner of the annual pumpkin roll. If questioned, he will tell the party about how terrible it is that the Pumpkin Fest has been canceled because he knew he was going to win. With a little patience, Gavin will reveal that he works for Baril as a harvester. He's been doing it for a few years and knows the old pumpkin farm pretty well. There are three main pumpkin fields. The westernmost plot has the worst of the rot.

Gavin will escort the party to the rotten pumpkin patch if asked. If your party is small, he and Toby could join them.

2D. ADRIEL

A dobber with thick black hair and a bushy beard leans heavily on the bar, staring into an empty mug.

If questioned, Adriel will hesitantly discuss the problems he's having at his farm. His bees have gotten aggressive. Not too bad, but it's still upsetting. His bees are like family. After a few questions from the characters, Rowan asks:

"Can I get you another mead, Adriel?" Rowan asks.

"No, I should head. It'll be dark before I'm home if I don't get going," the beekeeper answers. He then gets down from his stool with a resigned sigh and leaves through the main entrance.

If the characters attempt to talk to him further or wish to go with him to investigate at his apiary now, he's not interested. *"It's a family matter, nothing you nice folk should concern yourselves with,"* he might politely say.

BARIL

A stocky dobber with graying brown hair roughly pushes through the main entrance, calling back over his shoulder toward the square, *"I've told you it's not that kind of barrel!"* then he mutters to himself, *"...dern kids, my name is Baril, I'm not a barrel."* Though truth be told, his stocky build and round belly do remind you of a barrel.

FREYA

Freya hales from the Burrow but calls the road her home. She travels from town to town in the fall and winter "festival season" and is always a hit wherever she plays. Her unique talents allow her to easily transition from energetic songs played to get people dancing to haunting ballads that will bring a tear to the eye of even the most hardened warrior. She will brag that, on occasion, she's had the good fortune to accompany Theobald, Dobberton's most sought-after storyteller.

ADRIEL

Adriel is a third-generation honey farmer. His apiary has started to show signs of the creeping rot. Any character that speaks with him or looks closely at him notices the swelling of a few bee stings on his face. If players observe him from a distance, they will notice the stings with a successful DC 11 Perception (Wisdom) check.

He strides across the room toward the bar, leaving a trail of black mud from his boots. His clothes seem to be of a finer cut than a typical farmer's, though the hem of his trousers are irrevocably stained. *"I'll have a brown, Rowan. The others in the side room, I take it?"* Rowan nods, and the rotund man proceeds to the side room.

Baril is the last of the townsfolk to join the meeting in the side room. Once he does, it's likely the character's attention will be directed that way. The characters are politely asked not to enter the side room, but should they wish to stand nearby to watch and listen, they can.

Adriel will be more involved in Chapter 3, starting on page 130.



3. THE SIDE ROOM

This smaller room is attached to the main dining room. It's out of the way but has little in the way of privacy. There's a long table that can sit three or four on each side and two small round tables. It's just right for council meetings or small parties.

Characters can easily eavesdrop or, if they feel bold, join in. Once Baril enters the side room, read or paraphrase the following:

*Hot brown
brew is coffee.*

Baril takes the mug of hot brown brew from Rowan and sits at the first open seat in the side room. Beatrice has set her tray of tea on

the end of one of the tables, where a dobber with a long white beard and fluffy eyebrows is seated. His wild eyes twinkle in the lantern light as he addresses the others in the room.

I know you're upset, and you should be," he begins, "we're lucky Beatrice was willing to call off our festival, or many more would have gotten sick, or maybe worse. I fear something evil has come. There is more to the rot than it appears."

The white-bearded dobber is cut off as the others in the room begin shouting at once.

The white-bearded dobber is Herb. His words are often met with skepticism by the townsfolk. The party can overhear some of their responses as they begin talking all at once:

- *"Have you really been listening to this crackpot, Beatrice?"*
- *"You always think something evil around, Herb!"*
- *"It don't seem natural. I ain't never seen a thing like it"*
- *"It's not just the rot! There are 'things' in the fields, hiding in the shadows!"*
- *"What are you going to do about it?"*

"Come now, we're all friends here; let's have a little manners," the elderly woman's voice immediately calms the group, and they begin to speak in more civil tones.

There are eight in the side room, Beatrice, Herb, Tam (the groundhog woodkin who manages the General Store), Baril who just entered, and four others. They each have their own concerns regarding the rot and the canceled Pumpkin Fest. Most of the discussion is predictable, concerns over money since the festival was canceled, worry about what will happen to next year's crops, worry about people getting sick, and ultimately, what should be done. Some feel it is just a bad season, while others side with Herb, believing there is a nefarious cause.

As the GM, feel free to make this as short or as long as makes sense for your group.

The white-bearded dobber steps out of the side room and directly addresses anyone who is listening, *"Is anyone here willing to help? Would someone be willing to visit the pumpkin fields and bring back a pumpkin or some other affected item so I can take a closer look?"* Gavin says *there's some weird mushrooms too. Isn't that right, lad?"*

Gavin immediately jumps to his feet, *"I'll go!"*

Baril interrupts from behind the white-bearded dobber, *"No, boy! You're staying here. There's something 'not right' out there. I'll not have you getting hurt!"*

Gavin is eager to help. He will meet the party outside the Inn, away from Baril's eyes, if they decide to let him escort them to the rotten pumpkin patch.

Of course, Gavin assures Baril that he'll be safe. Toby offers to go too, but Beatrice chimes in, agreeing with Baril. The boys are too young. At that point, the townsfolk will turn their attention to the party, imploring them to investigate the pumpkin patch and report back.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

The party should speak with Herb and the other townsfolk until they are convinced to investigate the pumpkin patch. To secure their help, Baril will offer to pay them for their trouble - ten primes each. Proceed to **Chapter 2: The Pumpkin Patch**.

EXPANDING THE ACORN INN

If the party chooses to take rooms at The Acorn Inn, they are upstairs from area 9a. There are semi-private baths and some extra storage downstairs from area 9b. Details about the other rooms on the main floor are as follows:

4. THE KITCHEN

Hot air swirling with scents, both savory and sweet, fill the kitchen. It has two stoves and a massive stone fireplace. A creamy stew bubbles in a large pot hanging from a hook over the fire. A young female dobber with a pretty face and long black hair chops vegetables at a central table. The walls are lined with shelves, crates, and barrels, perfectly placed so that their contents keep the kitchen running smoothly.

4A. KITCHEN HALLWAY

This passage was carved directly through the tree's trunk and provides access to the areas of the Acorn Inn that are not open to the public.

4B. LADDER

A sturdy ladder leads up to a closed door in the ceiling.

The ladder leads to a small room and devotional area. As a cleric, Beatrice is devout to the Star Father.

5. BEATRICE'S LIVING QUARTERS

Though Beatrice spends most of her time in the dining room and kitchen of the Inn, she does occasionally retire to her private chambers. The room has just enough space for a round table with chairs and a sitting area with two overstuffed chairs and a small, cozy couch. There is a small wood-burning stove in the corner. Though the heat from the inn's kitchen is usually enough to keep her space warm, she will use the stove to warm a pot of tea.

She sits at her table to read and write, using the ample light from the nearby window or candles when it's dark. She keeps a journal of remedies and healing techniques, and it seems there's always something to add or review. Next to the table, there's a cabinet with very small shelves, each no more than a couple of inches deep. Small bottles and jars full of various leaves, flowers, and powders line the shelves. Each has a ribbon tied around its neck with a slanted script label written on one of the tails.

6. BEATRICE'S BEDROOM

This cozy bedroom has a bed large enough for two, though it doesn't appear it's had a second person in it for a very long time. It also has a small wardrobe and a bookshelf. Between the bed and bookshelf, a locked chest stores her valuables.

7. GENERAL STORE

The small general store is well stocked with tools and materials for home upkeep, farming, and basic travel. Items carried by the general store are listed on the menu found on page 105.

8. SUPPLIES

This room is full of overstocked supplies for the general store. The shelves, crates, and baskets are all meticulously organized.

9. HALLWAY

This long hallway runs behind the general store. It gives access to both the store and the stairways that lead to the upper and lower levels of the Acorn Inn.

9A. STAIRS UP

A broad set of stairs cut into the trunk of the Acorn Inn's tree leads up to the second floor.

9B. STAIRS DOWN

A narrow set of steps leads into the basement. The first part is carved into the trunk of the Acorn Inn's tree. About halfway down, the stair doubles back on itself, where the steps transition to stone blocks.

TAM

Tam is a sour groundhog with thick black and grey fur. He's been running the general store for a few years, though some are surprised Beatrice has kept him on for so long. His rough personality contrasts with the cheerful disposition of all the other Acorn Inn staff. He was hired after losing his home and his wife to a fire, something he's never really gotten over. However, he's great with numbers and finance. He can anticipate the needs of travelers and locals, keeping the shelves lined with the right things.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Random Encounters should be considered whenever the characters are traveling. The degree of challenge and frequency of these encounters should escalate as the party progresses through the adventure.

As the GM, you determine exactly how and when to include these encounters. You can select an encounter by rolling, using the suggested instructions below, or you can simply choose the one you want. Additionally, you can change or combine details from any encounter(s) as you see fit.

- During Chapters 2 through 4, roll a d8 once or twice as the party travels between locations.
- During travel in Chapter 5, roll a d8+2 once or twice.
- During Chapter 6, while the party travels *To the Mountains*, roll a d12+2, two or three times per day.
- After Chapter 7 and through Chapter 9, the party should have the cursed dagger, Ember. While they travel back to Dobberton, the creatures of decay are hunting them, drawn by the evil dagger. Roll a d12+6 four or more times per day.
- After Chapter 9, roll a D20. If the party has hidden Ember in an anti-magic box, roll two or three times while traveling between locations. If Ember is not hidden, roll four or more times.

*A Trick of the Eye doesn't need to result in combat, but you could use the **Shadow** from page 372 or for a greater challenge, the **Shadowling** from page 402.*

*The **rot skunk** is on page 400.*

*The **rot slime** is on page 399.*

d20 Encounter

1	A Trick of the Eye
2	Cornered
3	The Deer
4	The Boot
5	Moving Shadows
6	The Fog
7	Walking Fungus
8	Vine Squirrels
9	The Glade
10	Strangling Vines
11	Plague Fungus
12	Rot Toads
13	Ratkin
14	Broken Barrels
15	More Than a Game
16	Shrieking Wolf
17	Raving Rot Ravens
18	Rain
19	Graveyard
20	The Troll Under the Bridge

1. A TRICK OF THE EYE

One of the party notices eyes glittering in the underbrush. A character with darkvision momentarily sees the outline of an unidentifiable creature. When a light is shone toward it, nothing is there.

2. CORNERED

The party hears a scream in the distance. A woman who was picking walnuts and beechnuts is pressed against the trunk of a tree, cornered by an infected **rot skunk**.

3. THE DEER

The smell of decay leads you to a recently deceased deer, upon which a **rot slime** is feeding.

4. THE BOOT

At the edge of a shallow ravine formed by runoff, the party catches sight of a bit of leather and rope. Upon closer examination, they find that the rope is actually the laces of a huge leather boot. It must have been buried here a while, but a recent rain unearthed it. The creature this shoe was made for must easily be 6 feet tall. *By the Green Man, what could it be?*

5. MOVING SHADOWS

Shadows stretch the wrong direction from the plants around the path that the party follows. Without warning, two **shadowlings** attack, one from each side of the path.

6. THE FOG

A patch of fog has gathered along the forest floor in a shallow gully ahead of the party. The air is still, and the fog is dense. Nothing can be seen within. The fog reaches further into the forest than you first thought. It's impossible to tell how much out of the way the party must go to circumvent it.

7. WALKING FUNGUS

A blanket of mushrooms, toadstools, and other fungi spread along the ground ahead of the party. By all appearances, these are typical mushrooms. Unfortunately, once the party gets in the midst of them, 1d6 **walking fungi** attack.

8. VINE SQUIRRELS

A chittering can be heard high in the branches. That's not too uncommon; squirrels are everywhere in the Alwaysgreen Forest. Then, the party realizes the noises are twisted and unnatural. 1d4+1 **vine squirrels** drop out of the trees and attack.

9. THE GLADE

A glade, dappled with sunlight, provides some respite along the party's arduous journey. A gentle brook flows past a group of fruit trees and berry bushes. A captivating blue flower sways in the breeze in the center of the glade. The intoxicating smell of the blue flower draws you toward it. The blue flower is a **spore maw**. It will use its psychic rot spores as soon as a character is within range.

10. STRANGLING VINES

Without warning, vines reach out from the underbrush, grasping at the party. There are two **grasping bushes** flanking the party.

Optional: One of the party members is suddenly and silently dragged into dense foliage. No one saw or heard anything. The rest of the party may even proceed for a time as if nothing happened.

11. PLAGUE FUNGUS

A wisp of purple fog drifts out from behind a massive tree stump in the distance. A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check can smell rot in the air. Two **plague fungi** wait on the other side of the stump for any passers-by that they can infect with rot poisoning.

12. ROT TOADS

You hear the pleasant sounds of bugs buzzing and frogs croaking. There must be a pond nearby. Behind a clump of dark, dense foliage, a small pool ripples with activity. The top is thick with scum and dead leaves.

2d4 **Rot Toads** blend in perfectly with the muck along the edge of the pond. They attack any character that comes within 10 feet. Characters are surprised unless they succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or they have a passive Perception of 15 or higher.

Could it be a human boot? Surely not!

*The **spore maw** is on page 402.*

*The **shadowling** is on page 402.*

*The **grasping bush** is on page 393.*

Almost anything can be hidden in the fog. Use it to prove more tention or combine it with another encounter.

*The **plague fungus** on page 392.*

*The **walking fungus** on page 392.*

*You can find **rot toads** on page 400.*

***Vine squirrels** are on page 408.*

The **fungaling** is on page 391.

The **ratkin warrior** and **ratkin scout** are on pages 382 and 385.

The **shrieking wolf** is on page 403.

The **decay tortoise** is on page 388.

Rot ravens are on page 399.

13. RATKIN

A guttering campfire can be seen in the distance. When the party approaches, they find a campsite that has recently been ransacked. It's hard to tell who was camping here or why. A simple lean-to has been destroyed. Under the debris are two sleeping bags, each with long claw slashes in them. With a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, a character can find evidence of ratkin claw marks in the dirt.

It's an ambush. Two **ratkin warriors** and one **ratkin scout** are hiding around the campsite. They attack, flanking the character they think is their biggest threat.

14. BROKEN BARRELS

The party comes upon a cask, split and spilled upon the ground - the smell of spiced ale thick in the air. A trail of bent grass leads to a massive tortoise. It lumbers through the stalks, a large open-topped box strapped to its shell. Though the crate appears damaged, you can see there are three more casks in it. Two dobbers wearing overalls and straw hats fight to control the tortoise, but it easily repels their efforts. It kicks one away with a massive foot, and the other is whipped away by a ... *vine*. What kind of tortoise is that?

Benjamun and his brother Allun have relied on the strength of their tortoise to help transport goods to and from their barley farm for years. Now, their turtle has been infected with rot poisoning, and the **decay tortoise** has turned aggressive.

15. MORE THAN A GAME

Not far from a few withered acorn squash vines, a small patch of ground has been cleared, roughly in the shape of a rectangle. At each of the shorter ends, someone has dug shallow, oval-shaped holes. This must be a gourdball field, but where are the kids?

This kids' play area was abandoned when the rot began spreading, and parents started to worry. There are two acorn squashes nearby that would be suitable gourdballs should the party want to squeeze in a game. Unfortunately, the two squashes are actually two **fungalings**. They attack if a character gets close.

16. SHRIEKING WOLF

A **shrieking wolf** has caught the scent of the party.. It stealthily stalks them, waiting for the perfect opportunity to attack. For anyone to realize the party is being hunted, they must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

The wolf seizes its opportunity and howls. The sound makes the characters' skin crawl and a stabbing pain in their head. Each of the party that hears the howl must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage and acts as if under the *fear* spell.

When hunting, the shrieking wolf uses fear to drive its prey toward a rock outcrop so that it is cornered and cannot escape.

17. RAVING ROT RAVENS

A flock of blackbirds pulse chaotically over a pile of something dark in the road. They swoop and peck at the mass, calling with shrill squawks. A character that focuses on their target can see it's some kind of creature, dead and beginning to transform into a walking fungus. This poor creature must have been infected by rot poisoning before dying. *Note: When a creature dies that has been infected with rot poisoning, it rises as a walking fungus.*

The ravens turn their attention to the party and attack. There are 1d8+3 **rot ravens**. If one of the party investigates the corpse, they find it was carrying a pouch with 1d20 primes.

18. RAIN

Clouds darken and open, releasing a torrential downpour. Light flashes, momentarily burning retinas, quickly followed by booming thunder. Cold wind buffets the characters as water soaks into their clothes, weapons, and gear. The party can endure it and carry on or seek shelter.

If the party chooses to seek shelter, one character notices a rock outcropping with an overhang just big enough for the party to fit under. At the back of the stone shelter, a cache of armor and weapons has been buried. There are several options. There's a 50 percent chance the cache contains the type of armor or weapon a character wants. There is a 1 percent chance that the item is magical. If it is a weapon, it is a +1 magical weapon. If the item is armor, it has a +1 AC bonus. Roll only once per character.

19. GRAVEYARD

A series of small stones dot an uneven patch of land. There are about a dozen or so on the side of a small hill, making them easy to miss from most viewpoints. Mushrooms flank some of the larger stones, like sentries. Not too unusual. Toadstools are everywhere nowadays. Upon closer examination, it looks like this is a graveyard. The old headstones are so weathered that no names or details can be read upon them. A badger scurries into a hole right by one of the stones. *Sure hope that badger hasn't dug up a skeleton.*

If one of the characters gets within 10 feet of the badger, a **vine badger**, it attacks. As combat ensues, chaos erupts. There are 1d4 **spore skeletons** and 1d4 **spore zombies**. Among the mushrooms are two **walking fungi** and one **plague fungus**.

20. THE TROLL UNDER THE BRIDGE

The party's path slopes down toward a small river. A bridge spans the water, though it wouldn't be too terrible to cross on foot. Sure, you'd get wet, but it doesn't look like the flow is strong enough to wash anyone downstream - perhaps if there was a flash flood?

The bridge looks old but doesn't appear dangerous, and other than the gurgle of water, all is quiet. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher can faintly smell the musk of wet fur. There is an awakened **brown bear** under the bridge. He goes by Rok. He didn't know how to spell boulder. When the party approaches, the bear wildly splashes out from under the bridge and says (yes, says), "**ROAR! This is my bridge! You cannot use it!**"

Rok lives under the bridge. He's been there since just shortly after awakening. The first person he tried to talk to ran for freight. After all, bears are huge and terrifying to most dobbers. The next person also ran, but not before shooting him with an arrow. Later, a group of rotten children threw rocks at him. That was all he could take. He hid under the bridge. At least he got a name out of it. He's been under this bridge since, sad and alone. He's aggressive to people who attempt to cross because he figures that's what they expect.

*You can use typical **brown bear** stats.*

*The **vine badger** is on page 385.*

*The **spore skeleton** and **spore zombie** are on page 405.*

*The **walking fungus** and **plague fungus** are on page 392.*



CHAPTER 2: THE PUMPKIN PATCH

The party has been hired to investigate a nearby pumpkin patch, hoping to discover why all the pumpkins have gone bad.

*The party will not learn much about the **Wood Sprite** until Chapter 5, starting on page 157.*

BACKGROUND

The Wood Sprite has hired ratkin to plant cursed seeds infused with **rot poisoning** around Oak Den. The earth and irrigation are ruined by its unique disease, and most pumpkins have been lost. One such decay seed has been planted near the pumpkin patches west of town.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **THE FARM ROAD.** After the characters agree to investigate the rot causing the pumpkin festival to be canceled,

they follow a little used farm road to the pumpkin patches.

- **THE ROTTEN PUMPKIN PATCH.** They discover a concentration of rot. Not only have the pumpkins been corrupted, but it has affected some of the nearby creatures. They must fight their way through **walking fungus** and **rot toads** to venture into the field.
- **THE FIRST SEED.** Deeper in the patch, the characters find a Seed of Decay planted in the ground, the cause of the rot in this area.



RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 1. Characters who complete this chapter can progress to level 2.

Here the characters will find the first of three Seeds of Decay. They will also encounter **rot poisoning** for the first time and see just how damaging it is. Should it spread, the entire Alwaysgreen Forest could be destroyed. Additionally, the party may find clues that point to the involvement of ratkin.

All in all, more questions are raised than answers are found. The party should come away from this chapter realizing that the threat of the rot is very serious and likely doesn't have a simple explanation.

THE FARM ROAD

Read the following to set the mood:

Your heart becomes heavy as you follow the narrow dirt road toward the pumpkin patch. The forest is sick. You can see that now. The leaves are darker, dreary, and brown, lacking their usual bright fall colors. The autumn wind seems colder than you remember it. You hear something skitter through the nearby underbrush. Long shadows stripe your path, cast by the trees and distant sun. Your eyes strain into the darkness of each shadow, trying to see what you heard.

***Rot poisoning** is clarified on the next page. The threat it creates will be an ongoing theme in this adventure.*

It is optional how much emphasis you put on avoiding the rot. Feel free to play with it. Should the characters move as carefully as possible using Acrobatics (Dexterity) with each step, making the scene very tense? Or would your players rather a bit levity, where you describe the ground as being slick with the decaying guts of the pumpkins, causing a character to slip and splat down into the rot, forcing a Constitution check? Or perhaps, you don't focus on this part much at all? You can set the mood as you like. Be sure that your players are comfortable with mentions of vomit before describing that as one of the effects of the rot poison.

ROT POISONING

Once infected, immediately gain one level of exhaustion. If at any time a character that has already been infected would contract it again, they gain 1 additional level of exhaustion. Furthermore, when a character is instructed to gain "1 level of rot poisoning", they either contract rot poisoning with 1 level of exhaustion or gain 1 additional level of exhaustion. If at any time a character reaches 6 levels of exhaustion, they immediately die.

The full effects and mechanics of Rot Poisoning can be found on page 336.

The pumpkin patch is an hour's hard walk from Oak Den. Feel free to embellish the creepy mood of this walk as much as you like. Add a hooting owl or the howl of a wolf. Perhaps the skittering in the underbrush is a large spider, but it disappears into shadow just before anyone can get to it.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ROTTEN PUMPKIN PATCH MAP

THE ROT IS INFECTIOUS

Throughout this map, characters can be infected with **rot poisoning**. If they touch "rot" with their skin (or fur or bark or whatever may be the organic surface of the character), they will be required to make a Constitution saving throw to resist being infected with rot poisoning. While the characters are south of the fallen tree at Area 4, they need only succeed against a DC 10 to resist contracting rot poison. As they move further north toward the burial site of the decay seed, the intensity of the rot increases, and the DC to resist contracting rot poison increases to 14.

Describe in detail what happens to the character when they come in contact with the rot: If they succeed on the saving throw, read:

A wave of nausea washes over you as rot seeps into your pores. However, you swallow the need to vomit, and the feeling passes.

If they fail the saving throw and gain rot poisoning, read:

Rot seeps into your pores, and you are immediately overwhelmed with nausea. Your stomach twists, and you vomit violently.

CREATURE TACTICS

The **walking fungus** in the pumpkin patch are there to dissuade people from getting too close to the Seed of Decay. They should be somewhat spread out among the rotting pumpkins and other vegetation. They will use their Natural Appearance ability, remaining perfectly still, just like the other large mushrooms in the area, until a character gets within 5 feet of the first one they encounter. Only characters who have a passive Perception of 12 or higher will be able to identify that the walking fungus are not just ordinary mushrooms.

Once the first walking fungus engages in combat, the next nearest one will immediately join the combat. Repeat this with any remaining

walking fungus the characters encounter on the north side of the fallen tree.

The **rot toads** are creatures that were native to the area but became infected by the rot of the decay seed. They are now aggressive and attack any creature that gets within 10 feet of them. Otherwise, they stealthily hop around in their designated area.

COMBAT MAY BE DEADLY

Characters are most likely level 1 in this chapter. Adjust the number of **walking fungus** and **rot toads** as needed to modify the difficulty. As it is written, four level 1 characters will find this encounter difficult. The ability of the walking fungus to put creatures to sleep can quickly make combat deadly.

KEYED AREAS

The following sections are numbered to correspond to the numbered areas shown on the Rotten Pumpkin Patch map.

1. THE PUMPKIN PATCH CLEARING

When the party reaches the pumpkin patch, read:

Heavy shadows darken a patch of low-lying vegetation. You can make out dozens of pumpkins marred black with rot. Large, withered leaves sag from their vines. Unnaturally large mushrooms have sprouted among them. Some are larger than a dobber. Just past the first group of pumpkins stands a few rows of corn, also ruined by rot.

As you explore the plants growing here, you immediately notice black veins that have spread like cracks across the ground and foliage.

The black lines have a shiny, oily appearance and seem to be very sticky.

The party will be able to see that, while the lines of rot running along the ground are erratic, they appear to be coming from the north. All of the pumpkins and vegetation here have been infected. Here the strength of the rot is low. A character will have to closely examine the rot to learn anything about it. However, if they do so and then succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check, they can learn that there are arcane and necrotic properties to the rot.

Ask the player how they investigate the rot. If they make skin-to-skin contact with it, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract **rot poisoning**.

2. THE WAY IS BLOCKED (BY A TOAD)

This dirt path is just wide enough for a supply cart. A strange purple toad lazily hops toward the rows of rot-infested pumpkins that line the south side of the road. It stops to munch on a beetle that was stuck in one of the black veins of rot. When it's done, it turns toward you, its tongue flicking out to lick its eye.

This **rot toad** will stay in the middle of the path until one of the party gets within 10 feet of it. Then it will attack. If they do not approach it, it will remain in this location and be here if the party returns.

*Walking fungus are on page 392 and you can find stats for **rot toads** on page 400.*

*The **Rotten Pumpking Patch** map is on page 123.*

AREA 3A
(OPTIONAL): One of the mushrooms in this cluster is a **walking fungus**.

AREA 3
(OPTIONAL): Once combat has initiated, an additional **walking fungus** may attack, coming from Area 3a.

3. THE INFECTED FIELD

The crops here include both pumpkins and corn. All is ruined. A huge mushroom has sprouted here, taller than a dobber, with two smaller ones to each side of it. It sways slightly from side to side. It must be the wind. Wait, there is no wind.

A **walking fungus** stands here, nearly motionless. Characters must have a passive Perception of 12 or higher to see that the mushroom is actually a walking fungus. Consider how the characters are carrying themselves to determine if they are surprised by the walking fungus when it reveals itself. Once a character comes within 5 feet of it, it immediately attacks. If the character did not notice the walking fungus, the character is surprised. When the walking fungus engages, it uses its Sleep Spore attack first, read:

The tallest mushroom slowly turns its stalk until two black, vacant eyes center on you. Arms and legs separate from the stalk. It tromps toward you with unexpected speed, and without warning, a cloud of gray spores emanates from under its large mushroom cap head.

Near this location, characters will notice the smoke coming from the Seed of Decay. The smoke isn't drifting much. The air is still and stagnant. With a successful DC 14 Perception (Wisdom) check, a character will notice smoke that smells like rot. The smoke will lead them north to Area 5a, past 3b and 5.

3A. MUSHROOM SENTINELS

A cluster of big mushrooms looms here like sentinels.

3B. MUSHROOMS, BRAMBLES, AND FOLIAGE

Vines, brambles, and other foliage tainted by rot grows among the limbs of a fallen tree. Unnaturally large mushrooms push up between black leaves. A strange purple smoke hangs in the air, drifting slowly from the north.

A **walking fungus** is obscured among a few other unnaturally large mushrooms. A **rot toad** hides under the leaves next to the fallen tree. They attack when a character approaches.



3C. THE FALLEN TREE

A massive log, covered in years of overgrowth, lays here, obscuring your view to the north. To its west, an oak tree reaches for the sky, though its limbs are barren of leaves. More of the strange, unnaturally large mushrooms have sprouted here.

A **rot toad** hides in the foliage and will attack when approached.

Thick purplish-gray smoke fills areas 4 and 5. Characters have disadvantage on Investigation (Intelligence) and Perception (Wisdom) checks.

4. BEHIND THE LOG

Characters cannot see past this fallen log as they approach it from the south. A large patch of bushes and foliage grows on its north side, making it perfect cover for any creatures who might wish to hide in it.

5. DENSE SMOKE AND ROT

Acrid smoke hangs between the fallen log and the trunk of a towering maple tree to its east. It burns your nostrils and makes your eyes water.

The ground is covered in veins of rot. Characters must move slowly, as if through **difficult terrain**, to avoid touching the rot. If a character touches the rot, it is much stronger than what was found near Area 1. A character that touches the rot must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract **rot poisoning**.

Mushrooms grow throughout the area, from among them, a **walking fungus** attacks when approached.

5A. THE SEED OF DECAY

A Seed of Decay has been buried in this location. The dirt over it is not packed down, letting heat glow through it. When the characters enter the area, read:

Your eyes sting, and your lungs burn as you push through thick smoke toward a small mound of recently disturbed earth. Purple-ish black smoke rolls out from red, glowing cracks in the dirt. As you get closer, you can see an object just below the surface, radiating heat.

Heated veins of rot flow from its center and radiate out on the ground around it. Any plants that were nearby have withered into black mush. Characters must avoid touching the rot or risk contracting **rot poisoning**, as described at Area 5. The characters are immediately attacked by a **walking fungus** and a **rot toad** when they approach.

Characters who succeed on a DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find claw and paw marks in the dirt all around the burial site of the seed. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check will tell them that these are from ratkin. And a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check will reveal just enough tracks to follow to a hollowed tree trunk at Area 6.

The Seed of Decay is very poisonous and very hot, though it is not actually on fire. Characters will have to be careful when attempting to dig it up. If a character touches the seed directly, they take 7 (2d6) fire damage. After the decay seed has been removed from the ground, it cools, doing 1d6 less damage for every 10 minutes after it's been dug

Stats for **Walking fungus** are on page 392.

You can find stats for **rot toads** on page 400.

AREA 5A (OPTIONAL):
Additional **walking fungi** can attack from Area 5b.

ABOUT THE SEED OF DECAY

The iron for the seed comes from the ratkin mines in the Dreary Mountains. It is coated in a flammable, arcane oil created by the Wood Sprite. While buried, the seed will hold heat for many hours after the fire of the oil has gone out, and while it does, the rot seeps into the earth around it. The rot gets into irrigation and plants nearby, spreading quickly from one to the next. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that the oil is necrotic in origin.

up until it has cooled enough to touch without harm. Also, if a character touches it, they must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or contract **rot poisoning**. When they have the Seed of Decay dug up, read:

This chunk of metal is black from soot and larger than most apples. Its surface is lined with ridges and valleys, giving it a wrinkled appearance. It looks a lot like a peach pit and would easily be mistaken as a seed when you first see it.

When transporting the Seed of Decay, they will need to wrap it in something. Even after it has cooled, characters can be infected with rot poisoning from it.

5B. A CLUSTER OF MUSHROOMS

In some cases, characters may continue along the dirt road toward Area 7 and, thus, approach the decay seed from the west. One **walking fungus** patrols here, among several other mushrooms. When approached, the walking fungus will reveal itself and attack. The walking fungus from Area 5 will join the combat.

6. RATKIN CAMP

Ratkin have been using this tree hollow as a camp while tending to the Seed of Decay buried at Area 5a, but they are not here now. They have been called back to their clan. The entrance to the hollow is covered by a large fern. A

character with a passive Perception of 12 or higher will notice that the fern at the base of this tree doesn't match those around it. If they look closer, they find the entrance to the hollow behind it. When they enter, read:

The dark hollow of this tree smells of dirty fur and rotten meat. Piles of dry leaves and fur line the floor where two spots have been matted down, likely where a creature had been sleeping. In the middle of the hollow, there is some typical camping gear, which includes: a half-eaten rabbit, only partially cooked, a leather bag with tinder supplies, and a small, rough wooden crate left open.

The crate was used by the ratkin to transport the Seed of Decay here. If they look closely at the wooden crate, read:

This small crate has pine needles and heavy, leather-like leaves pressed against the walls. There is a void that implies the leaves may have been wrapped around something. There is enough space for a large apple.

A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check will reveal that the leaves are cottonwood and the needles are from a common pine. Neither of which are local to this area. Any character that has traveled beyond the Alwaysgreen Forest will recognize that both can be found in the Dreary Mountains to the West, where the Rat Claw Clan makes their home.

The bag of tinder supplies was used by the ratkin to light the Seed of Decay. There is an empty vial with an oily residue inside, a flint, steel, and downy fir that was probably used as the starter material.

7. THE FARM ROAD CONTINUES

The road continues into the forest, passing more fields of corn, gourds, and, mostly, pumpkins. All are ruined, but none quite as bad as what was found near the Seed of Decay. The road eventually ends at Baril's large family home.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

BACK TO OAK DEN. Once the party digs up the Seed of Decay, they may take it and any other samples they choose to collect back to Oak Den. Herb asked that samples be brought back to him so he could look more closely at them, hoping to determine what had caused all the fields to go bad.

ON TO BARIL'S HOME. Should the party want to continue along the road to Baril's home, they will discover a nice dobber home in the base of a huge white oak. The home has all the trappings of a large, successful farm. His family is kind but not terribly helpful. They will turn the party back to Oak Den to talk to Beatrice.

TRACKING THE RATKIN. The party might want to track the ratkin that seem to have brought the Seed of Decay here. The tracks lead in many directions but circle back or vanish before leading anywhere meaningful. There is some evidence they went toward Oak Den, not their presumed home in the Dreary Mountains.

LEVELING UP

Once this chapter is complete, and after the characters finish a long rest, they should progress from level 1 to level 2.



INTERLUDES

Interludes are optional encounters that can be used to expand the party's knowledge. They are designed to give you, the GM, additional tools to fill in gaps between chapters. If the party wants to pursue details that do not directly line up with their next chapter, look through the interludes for ideas or make up your own.

INTERLUDE: SICK AND ALONE

As the rot poisoning spreads in the woods around Oak Den, individuals other than the characters are likely to be infected. An infected character can quickly become exhausted, and that can lead to someone being unable to seek help.

Gavin was one of the first dobbers in Oak Den to discover rot in the fields, but that hasn't stopped him from wandering the woods. Now, it seems the rot has discovered him. He has rot poisoning, and his current level of exhaustion is 3.

The party can hear a rustling sound ahead on the other side of a thick clump of brambles. They will have to get closer to see what it is. With a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) roll, a character might conclude that it is the sound of a creature struggling against some kind of restraints, though it's impossible to be certain.

If members of the party choose to approach quietly, they must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) roll. If they succeed, they gain advantage on Initiative, should the encounter turn to combat. However they approach, on the other side of the brambles, they see:

A young, dark-haired dobber struggles weakly against a thick dark vine wrapping his neck. It slowly drags him toward a strange bush with long, dark fronds stinking of decay. Dark veins bulge from the boy's arms as he pulls at the vine to no avail. A second creature, like a mushroom but creeping low to the ground on four legs, whips at the young man with a tentacle.

Gavin has been captured by a **grasping bush** and is being assaulted by a **fungaling**. Gavin is on the verge of death. It will only be a few rounds before he falls unconscious. The party must free him and heal him from rot poisoning before it's too late. If no one in the party knows the spell *lesser restoration*, they will need to take him back

to Beatrice at the Acorn Inn. She can cast *lesser restoration* up to four times per day.

You can make this encounter more challenging by adding a 2nd fungaling or an infected **decay bear**!

INTERLUDE: CAUGHT RED-HANDED

Saggard doesn't consider his post at Oak Den an honor. In fact, he's grown quite bitter about it. He's always thought of himself as more important than he really is. That may be why he was removed from the West Watch, effectively a demotion. His pride would often get in the way of what was best for his fellows. Now, it seems he's putting everyone in danger.

For weeks now, Saggard has been covering the tracks of a small fist of warriors from the Rat Claw Clan. They are working with the Wood Sprite, burying the seeds of decay and keeping them hot while they seep decay into the ground, poisoning everything around them.

This encounter begins with the party overhearing a nearby conversation. Read or paraphrase the following:

"I told you, not here! It's not safe!" a gruff voice angrily whispers, though not very quietly.

The voice that answers doesn't sound dobber, but it is speaking Common. All you can make out is, *"... seed... been found."*

"I told you I'd keep them off your trail, but it does no good if you're found because you're too close to Oak Den," answers the gruff voice.

Behind the trunk of a large tree, **Saggard** is talking to a **ratkin warrior**, crouching together conspiratorially. Two more ratkin warriors are nearby, hidden in the underbrush.

Once the party reveals themselves to Saggard, he smirks and says, *"Guess I've been caught red-*

handed. Kill them!" All three ratkin rush to attack. Saggard draws his shortsword. The ratkin will fight to the death, and Saggard will flee once he realizes defeat is imminent.

If the party captures Saggard to question him, he'll talk, but he doesn't know much about the true plans of the Wood Sprite. When he's pressed, it becomes clear he's more scared of her than anything the party might do to him.

- *"She made me. Said she'd destroy everything if I didn't help."*
- *"You think you're heroes? You don't know what you're messing with!"*
- *"She promised I could have my post at West Watch back once she wins."*
- *"She has a giant! You can't defeat her. You'll all die!"*

INTERLUDE: THE CURRENT

The Current is a spiritual extension of all living things and more. It connects the Green Man and the Star Father to His people the same way a blanket of morning dew connects all life in the forest. It exists outside of time and location, though its only concern is the present, desiring only that one's next step is the right one. The Current is always watching and listening, occasionally *nudging* and whispering. It shares a thought or feeling with those keen to listen, and when one hears it, they surely cannot explain.

It is most rare that the Current might intervene with more than a whisper or nudge, but it has been known to happen. Should the party find themselves on the brink of total death, they may be rescued by the Current.

You wake in a circular room entirely made of green leaves and vines. The walls are formed by twisted tendrils of vine. There are no doors, and the walls are too steep to easily climb. The top is open to the sky, and the curved floor is covered with soft foliage. You feel refreshed, and peace settles over you as you gather your senses.

The party has been transported to safety and now rests in a huge magical nest. They are fully healed, and any conditions, such as rot poisoning or exhaustion, have been restored. After the party has had some time to collect themselves, the vines of the nest will retract, and the party can carry on with their adventure.

In the meantime, each member of the party is comforted by a **walking stick** or **walking leaf**. These creatures are small but important physical manifestations of the Current. They will totter around, curious and fascinated by each member of the party, as if this is the first time they've ever encountered anyone before, and in fact, it is.

These manifestations think only of the current day as their own. They know the past and the future but see each day other than the current one as a memory experienced by one of their brothers and sisters. They will speak to the party, but their knowledge is filtered by that very unusual sense where even the future is seen to them as a memory. As the GM, you can have the Current reveal anything that you feel will add depth and intrigue to the adventure. Keep in mind that it will refer to things in the future as a memory. Some other phrases to work in might be:

- *I have been sent to comfort and restore.*
- *You are the heroes that have saved the forest from decay.* (This presumably refers to the future, but to the Current, it is a memory.)
- *The Father has chosen you for such a time as this.*
- *The dark one rejected our Father and, as such, has rejected us.*
- *Thousands of my siblings have come before me, and many more are yet to come.*

INTERLUDE: THE WOODSMAN

There may come a time when the party is completely lost or discouraged. This may lead them to an encounter with the Woodsman. The Woodsman is a bit of a legend in the Alwaysgreen Forest. He is known as a kind dobber, wandering the woods, seeming to be nearby when someone is in need. A desperate child is lost; the Woodsman might show at just the right time to send them in the right direction and give them a bit of food. He's been known to chop wood for a widow to ensure she is ready for winter. He retrieves lost livestock and frees animals caught in a snare. As unexpectedly as he arrives, he disappears.

No one truly knows who he is. Opinions vary widely, from being a figment of the imagination to the obvious, that he's a kindly hermit. There are those who believe with all their heart that the Woodsman is actually the Green Man.

You hear the gentle and familiar *cthunk* of an axe striking wood. You've come upon a simple camp. It seems almost as if it appeared from nowhere. How had you not noticed it as you approached? Setting down an axe and picking up a piece of freshly chopped wood, a kind-faced dobber with a thick brown beard shares a wan smile. He sets the wood upon the fire just under a steaming cook pot. His eyes twinkle as he greets you, *"Just in time."*

The Woodsman has prepared a meal for the party. Bread and hot stew with fresh cuts of, well, just about anything the characters desire. Even if they weren't planning to eat, they find the aroma nearly too hard to resist. Yet, no one is forced. For those who partake, the meal is the best they can ever remember having. If anyone is injured, they recover 4d4 + 4 hit points. Any conditions, such as rot poisoning or exhaustion, are removed. As they eat, the Woodsman listens to their story and encourages them. He may say things like:

- *"I am pleased to meet the heroes that will push back this present darkness."*
- *"You have been chosen for such a time as this."*
- *"You are strong and brave. Your hearts are true. Rohr-tan's time is fleeting. In the end, you will prevail. "*

The Woodsman knows that Calynn, the Wood Sprite, was cursed by Rohr-tan, and through that connection, the dark one manipulates her. The Woodsman knows she has been spreading rot poisoning and that she seeks to release Rohr-tan. The woodsman will not tell the party more than they already know, but he may guide them to draw such conclusions.

- *"The Rot Weaver's greatest power is not decay; it is pride. He plants it deep in the hearts of his followers. But even for them, forgiveness and restoration is possible."*
- To one who asks, 'what I/we should do?', *"I cannot tell you your path, only that I see your heart. When the time comes, you will do what is required, no matter how hard it seems."*
- *"Arm yourself with wisdom and endurance, and most importantly, truth."*
- And to one who asks, 'what is the truth?', *"There are times when one's only hope is in good people who are willing to stand against evil."*

The Woodsman will not confirm or deny that he is the Green Man. He will not tell the characters specifically what to do, but he will confirm that they are on the right path.

DREAMS

Dreams are a great tool for adding drama and personal connections between the characters and events taking place throughout the adventure. One of the most effective ways to do this is to use elements and memories from a character's backstory. It's up to you, the GM, to weave those personal character details into a vivid and surreal scene that could only happen while sleeping.

DREAMS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The Star Father, the Green Man, and the Current have all been known, in their own ways, to speak to their devoted. They come through dreams and visions, and sometimes as a result of prayer.

The Star Father can seem aloof to most, but in times of great need, will speak directly to His followers, particularly Paladins of the Blue Star. His words are brief and direct, often instructive. The Star Father is heartbroken by what Rohr-tan is doing to the forest and may speak to a character when their circumstance is most dire.

The Green Man may appear in a dream to any who fight on behalf of the forest and its people. He comes as a woodsman or an unassuming wanderer. He is kind and open but less forward, often letting interactions be initiated by the character. His words are those of encouragement and comfort. He isn't likely to tell a character exactly what to do or how to do something; he is likely to say, *"Do not be discouraged. You have all the strength you need."* or *"The Father and I have chosen you for such a time as this."* He will not say who the Father is.

The Current will appear to anyone but tends to interact more with those who are akin with nature. It will appear as sentient leaves and sticks. Sometimes just one, sometimes a group. It has a very strange consciousness. It knows only the current day but has the memories of thousands of brothers and sisters that have come before and will come after. Each of these thousands knows only one day. Thus, the Current speaks in riddles. It sees the world with joy and wonder and will see the characters in the same way, fascinated by them. It may appear, ask some questions to get to know the characters, then say something strange about something that recently happened, and then disappear, leaving the party healed or cured. The Current is the antithesis of rot, therefore, less likely to appear as the party gets closer to the heart of Rohr-tan.

DREAMS OF WOE

Characters infected by Rot Poisoning will start having disturbing dreams and visions. Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, wants to fill the heroes with doubt while drawing them to his side. There are two ideas these dreams will present to a character.

The V-shaped tree serves as a door to the magically hidden bog where the Wood Sprite is temporarily bound. A character infected with Rot Poisoning may see this tree as a flash in a dream or perhaps even a waking vision. Characters that see this tree may feel drawn to it; a sense like that which is sick inside them (the rot poisoning) needs to go there. Keep the connection subtle, but tying this location to Rot Poisoning should give them a sense of apprehension. Give this vision of this tree to one of the characters before Herb also tells them that he has had a dream about a "V" shaped tree. That should ensure the characters will seek out this location.

The Rot Weaver will also use **dreams of discouragement** against any characters that have contracted Rot Poisoning. These types of dreams should be crafted from the backstories of your players' characters. Perhaps a family member has fallen mortally ill. Maybe they had an important task in which they failed that resulted in bad consequences. Or maybe the character has goals, but in a dream, they are told they aren't good enough.

Using these types of dreams in your campaign takes some wisdom and sensitivity. You can use dreams to add tension, dread, and even a touch of horror. The purpose of these dreams is to expand the gravitas of the spreading rot in the forest. However, sensitivity is key - knowing your players' triggers and boundaries will ensure that you do not inadvertently touch on sensitive topics without consent.



CHAPTER 3: A STICKY SITUATION

While Herb examines the Seed, another threat must be investigated at a nearby apiary.

BACKGROUND

Another Seed of Decay has been hidden in an apiary north of Oak Den. Of the Seeds of Decay the party will encounter, this one has been in place the shortest amount of time. The honey is infected with **rot poison**, and the **queen** has been twisted into a terrible monster. The worker bees have not yet been infected, though they are agitated and still serve their queen. There is a chance these bees can be calmed without being killed. The **ratkin** who planted this seed at the apiary are still there but have

been wounded after being attacked by the bees.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **MORNING.** After returning to Oak Den, the party gives Herb the seed and any other samples of the rot they collected.
- **ADRIEL IS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH.** The characters discover that Adriel, a local beekeeper, has been attacked and nearly killed by his bees. Herb is convinced it is also connected to the rot.



- **THE APIARY.** The party must go to the apiary and defeat the rot-twisted **queen bee** to uncover another Seed of Decay.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 2. Characters who complete this chapter can progress to level 3.

In this chapter, the characters will discover a second Seed of Decay. They will also encounter **ratkin**, likely for the first time, confirming any suspicions that they are involved.

The characters must use Adriel's harp to calm the worker bees. If they

do not, the worker bees will defend the **queen**, even though the rot has turned her into a monster. If the party doesn't use the harp, it will be nearly impossible to survive the apiary.

MORNING

By the time the party returned from the Rotten Pumpkin Patch, it was very late. Nothing could be done about the mysterious seed right then. Everyone at the Acorn Inn was asleep but Beatrice. She was waiting up with a hot drink to comfort the party before tucking them into a warm bed.

It is now morning. When the characters come down from their rooms the following morning, read:

At this hour, the Acorn Inn is empty, save two. Herb is at the bar, sipping some tea; a small plate with nothing but crumbs sits before him. Across from him, Beatrice leans on an elbow. As they converse, you can see the type of sincere friendship that takes years to forge. She sips from her own cup before resting her hand on top of Herb's, a gesture of kindness, not romance. Herb downs the last of his tea, tipping the cup comically upside down and likely getting a mouth full of dregs, then wipes his hand through his mustaches.

"Look who it is," he says, turning to you as you enter the room, "the heroes who set off to investigate our rotten pumpkin problem."

"Yes, they got in late last night," Beatrice adds as she bounces down off her stool.

"What'll it be this morning? How about a thick slice of bread right out of the oven, slathered with blackberry jam?"

How is she so perky, you wonder? When did she sleep? While the party discusses the seed with Herb, Beatrice will do her best to make sure they're fed and cared for.

SHOW HERB THE SEED

Herb is eager to have a look at what the party has brought back from their investigation. Once the characters let Herb have a look at the Seed of Decay, he becomes almost giddy, excited to get the seed back to his home where he can really examine it. His thoughts and words become hard to follow.

"I've got it," he blurts out and holds up his teacup. "It's right here!" he seems to be referring to the teacup. "I'm taking this back home so I can look at it more closely," referring again to the seed.

Before you can react to Herb, a woman's voice shouts from outside, *"Beatrice! Beatrice, hurry, we need your help."*

ADRIEL IS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH

Serci has brought her husband, Adriel, from their apiary. They rode here on their horned goat, Willow. It was faster than walking, but not by much. Adriel is on the verge of death after having been attacked by their bees. Beatrice springs into action and rushes outside. They carry Adriel in. Herb, who seems to know the routine, finds a thick blanket to lay out on the floor. They push some tables aside and make a comfortable place for the beekeeper.

"He was trying to calm them," Serci explains. The bees had become more aggressive than ever, so Adriel went to the hive this morning to play their song. She goes on to explain that the bees are soothed by music. In fact, one specific song is how shared control over the hive has been passed from generation to generation. Years ago, when Adriel and his father played the song together, the role of Apiculturist (or Master Beekeeper) was passed to Adriel.

Adriel interrupts her explanation to add through a grimace of pain, *"She's taken back control... but somethings not right. The queen... she's sick."* He continues through a painful cough, *"find the harp...you'll need this..."*

Here, Herb could say some things that seem completely unrelated. The arcane decay present reminds him of something.

He's very excited to study if further.

Adriel hands a scroll to one of the characters before slipping into unconsciousness. The scroll is old, made of thin bark, treated to be flexible and durable. On both sides, it has several bars of hand-drawn music. Before any additional conversation can happen, Beatrice asks you to give her and Serci some space so they can tend to his wounds. She doesn't make a show of it, but if the characters watch, they can tell that Beatrice is using some healing magic.

"Beatrice will tend to Adriel, and I will have a look at the seed," Herb says to you. "We need you to go to the apiary."

Herb's somber and direct tone contrasts with his recent excited curiosity. Herb is worried that the bees pose an even greater threat than rotten pumpkins. He gives you some simple directions on how to get there and urges the party to go immediately.

Should the party want to discuss the situation further, Serci will answer their questions, though she is distracted by her husband's condition. Use the following to keep the conversation going:

- Adriel's bees are larger than typical bees; that's one of the reasons we are worried about them being aggressive.
- They call the song on the scroll the *Succession Song*. It was used to pass shared control of the bees to Adriel from his father and from his grandfather before. The bees have always responded well to music, but other songs they like aren't soothing them this time. Adriel decided to try the Succession Song even though he couldn't play it properly by himself. The reason he could not play it properly is not explained.

- The queen is still the *queen* of the hive. When the song gives control to a person, they don't surpass the queen but become like a partner. A co-queen of sorts.
- There is a shed just outside of the apiary that the party can use.

If the party needs further convincing to go to the apiary to investigate, Serci will ask directly, tears in her eyes.

THE MUSIC SCROLL

If a character wishes to learn more about the scroll, a successful DC 14 Investigation (Intelligence) check will reveal that the music on both sides of the scroll lines up. If one holds the scroll up to the light, they can see that the bars align and many of the notes are mirrored.

A character can also examine the scroll from a musical perspective. A successful DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check will reveal that the two sides of the music are complimentary. They are not to be played in sequence, side one and then side two, but should be played at the same time. If they succeeded with a 16 or higher, add: One side is clearly written for harp. The other side seems more generic. It might be played with any instrument, or perhaps it could be sung.

THE ROAD NORTH

The party sets out from the Acorn Inn, following Herb's directions. As they leave, they meet Saggard coming into town.

SAGGARD

Saggard is a dobberton guard with a sour disposition. He manages a small barrack in town with only one other full-time guard assigned to Oak Den. The barrack primarily houses traveling guards moving between Dobberton and the West Watch. He's been in Oak Den

*Read more about
Saggard on page
346.*

a few years, but he doesn't hesitate to make it known that he preferred when he was assigned to the West Watch.

As you pass an oak that marks the northern edge of town, you see the shape of a stocky dobber approaching along the road. He's wearing a simple though well-worn uniform, common to Dobberton guards. His collar has a star, denoting a rank higher than a common soldier. As he approaches, he stares boldly at you, a sour, disapproving look on his face.

THE BIG SECRET

Saggard was bribed by the Wood Sprite not to investigate the rot and to look the other way if he sees any ratkin. He doesn't want the party to get close to the truth.

The truth of Saggard's involvement with the Wood Sprite and ratkin will eventually come out. See Caught Red Handed on page 124.

Saggard is content to pass by the party without much interaction. However, he is a Dobberton guard with some authority. The party may want to talk to him, thinking he can help.

Unfortunately, Saggard doesn't want to talk. At first, he will try to avoid a conversation by placating the party with vague, comforting words. If that doesn't work, he becomes rude. Some things he might say are:

- You have nothing to fear; the Dobberton Guard are on top of it.
- We're handling it. You can go back home.
- I don't want any more citizens getting sick. You should stay in town.
- You don't understand what you're

messing with. Stay out of it!

- If I have to lock you up for the night to convince you to drop this, I will!

For now, Saggard's threats are empty. Be careful not to let this conversation escalate to combat. *Save that for later.*

With a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check, a character can tell that he is hiding something, though, at this time, it's impossible to suss out what.

The forest North of Oak Den is a little less rugged but just as dense with oak and other stout deciduous trees.

THE APIARY

Adriel's apiary is a complex of huge honeycombs and pools of honey hidden in a grove of towering trees. It would be obscured to passersby in the forest if it were not for the dirt road that leads to its entrance.

The narrow road leads to a cluster of trees with wide branches that are covered in vines. The branches reach toward one another, and the trunks lean inward as if they are huddled together to tell a secret. The vines that hang from their limbs curtain off that which is within their circle. The air carries on it the whiff of sweet honey and vibrates with a deep hum, the beating of bees' wings. The hard-packed dirt road transitions to grass in front of a simple wooden shed. The old gray shed has been here so long that it looks like a natural part of the vines and limbs surrounding this copse of trees. Past it, you can see a cleft in the curtain of vines barred by a simple fence constructed of both wood and stone. Beyond the fence, you can just make out a pool of golden honey.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE APIARY MAP

Unless otherwise noted, locations along the Apiary map have the following features:

HONEY

It is clear to the party that the apiary is not normally a quagmire of honey spilling from opened comb. The honey is thick and very sticky. If a character falls in the honey, viscous fluid gives them disadvantage on Strength and Dexterity-based attack and skill rolls. Additionally, their movement is reduced by half. This lasts until the character takes a full action to wipe or, in some way, remove the honey. Other means to get the honey off, such as the spell *Prestidigitation*, may also work. Let your players be creative. To up the drama a bit, use Strength (Athletic) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks when characters attempt to jump over any paths of honey. The DC for these checks should be between 10 and 15, depending on the distance jumped.

The honey has been infected by the rot. Since this Seed of Decay has not been here as long as the others have been in their locations, the honey isn't poisonous to touch. However, if a character ingests any of the honey, they must succeed against a DC 14 Constitution saving throw to resist contracting **rot poison**. (see Rot Poisoning for more details)

COMBAT NEAR THE POOLS OF HONEY

If at any time a character is within 5 feet of the pools of honey and is hit by a melee attack that does not grapple or restrain, they may be knocked into the honey. The character must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check or be knocked into the honey.

WORKER BEES

Adriel and his family have some very special bees in their apiary. They are very large and, until recently, very friendly. Now the worker bees are aggressive, upset by the changes in their queen. They have not been twisted by the rot as she has. They attack because the stability of their home has been shaken.

The worker bees will stop attacking if the party can successfully play the Succession Song from the scroll they were given by Adriel. At the discretion of the GM, other means of pacifying the bees may be effective. However, if a character attempts another means, it should be difficult and should only apply to one bee at a time.

CREATURE TACTICS

The **worker bees** will attack any creature they can see within 60 feet. They are smart and prefer not to fight alone. If one is isolated, it will fly away to get another bee. They will fly around their targets, cornering them against a pool of honey. That way, if the target flees, it will be forced into the honey, where it will be stuck and severely slowed. Even if the worker bees are pacified in some way, they will not help the party or attack the queen.

The **queen bee-hemoth** is a terrible creature twisted into an unsightly monster by the Seed of Decay that was placed in her hive.

The **ratkin warriors** are injured and have realized they are no match for the bees. When they see the party, they will try to intimidate their way out of a fight. They will never back down from dobbies and their allies, but these ratkin realize they are at a disadvantage. If intimidation doesn't work, the ratkin will attack the party.

Worker bees and the queen bee-hemoth stats are found on pages 378 and 379.

The **Apiary Map**
is on page 137.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following sections are numbered to correspond to the numbered areas shown on the Apiary Map.

1. THE SHED

This 10-foot by 15-foot wooden shed lost its door long ago, and the window has no glass in it. Various beekeeping tools and supplies are haphazardly scattered around the floor.

The ratkin have ransacked the shed, looking for anything that will help them tame the bees. They left two dobber-sized **beekeeper suits** and a **smoke gun**. One of the suits has claw slashes through it. The other suit provides a +2 to AC versus piercing attacks. The smoke gun has 2 charges. Each charge lasts for 1d6 rounds. The gun emits gray smoke in a 10-foot radius around the character that holds it. Bees that attack within this radius do so with disadvantage.

2. GATE

This fence denotes the edge of the hive. It's not intended to keep anything in or out. It provides ½ cover to anyone hiding behind it. Two **ratkin** are hiding behind the tree trunk just to the west of the gate.

3. HONEYCOMB

Gigantic honeycombs grow out of the inner walls of foliage and tree trunks that form this hidden grotto. Each hex overflows with wax and honey. A deep buzz resonates all around you, implying that your party is vastly outnumbered by bees. However, you currently only see one tending to one of the honeycomb hexes.

There is one **worker bee** on the honeycomb in this area. It will casually fly toward the party, staying out of melee range until another bee can join.

4. STONE PATH

Stones have been placed to make a walkway across a wide stream of honey. If a character is careful, moving at half speed or slower, they have no problem crossing. If they wish to move faster, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) saving throw or fall into the honey.

4A. A PLACE TO HIDE

A nook in this tree trunk is covered with loose leafy vines. It provides the perfect cover for two **ratkin warriors**. As with the Seed of Decay that was planted near the pumpkin patch, these are here to tend the seed, keeping it heated and undiscovered. Their plans were wrecked when the bees of the apiary were affected by the rot of the seed and became aggressive. The ratkin were leaving the apiary when they heard the approaching party and hid. One of the two ratkin hiding here has been badly hurt by bee stings. His hit points are only 11, and he has lost one of his throwing axes.

A character with a passive Perception of 12 or one who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) roll will notice the hiding ratkin. If no one notices, they will simply slip out of the apiary after the party passes. If noticed by a member of the party, the ratkin will use Charisma (Intimidation) so that they can leave without a fight. They know they are at a disadvantage. One might growl, *"Stay back, or I'll gut you!"* or *"You don't stand a chance against the queen! She'll do our work for us!"* as they come out of their hiding place to move toward the apiary exit. They won't answer any of the party's questions unless they are subdued they believe their life depends on it. Even then, they

Ratkin scouts and warriors can be found on pages 384 and 385. These ratkin were injured by the bees. You may wish to reduce their hit points.

won't say much. A few talking points include:

- Si-ak, the war chief, gave orders: do whatever the wood lady says. They don't know why. Those who question Si-ak, die!
- They would rather die than tell a dobber the plans of the great Rat Claw Clan.
- It's an honor to die in battle.
- The Seeds will make the forest weak. Dobberton will fall! The Rat Claw Clan will reign!

If the party decides to take one or more of the ratkin as prisoners, they will be a constant threat and distraction.

5. HONEYCOMB

As the characters approach this area, they begin to smell the now familiar, rot-filled smoke coming from a Seed of Decay. Also, the pooled honey is darker, with thin purple-black lines of rot floating within. They can easily deduce that following the smoke and tainted honey further south will lead to the source of the rot, likely another Seed of Decay.

Additionally, two **worker bees** tend to the hexes of the honeycomb in this Area. As soon as one of the characters from the party is within 60 feet of these bees, they attack. If the bee from Area 3 is nearby, it will also attack.

6. THE LOST HARP

A soft leatherleaf wrap lays open on the ground. On it, you can see a finely crafted lap harp. The neck and sound box are maple, darkened by age to a deep gold. Ornate leaves have been carved into the crown and feet where the column joins them. The strings glint like silver, though it's hard to tell what they are made of.

As soon as one of the characters touches the harp or its wrap, two **worker bees** rush to attack from Area 6b. During combat, at the end of initiative, roll a d6. If a 6 is rolled, add one more worker bee to combat, flying from Areas 5 or 6b.

Now that the party has the harp, they can attempt to take control of the bees by playing the Succession Song from the scroll given to them by Adriel. It takes two party members to play the music. If the characters haven't come up with a creative means to hold the scroll up so that both sides can be seen simultaneously, another party member must hold it up for the performers. The two performers must take their full turn to play the music, one playing the part for the harp and the other playing the complimentary part that is on the opposite side of the scroll. To take control of the bees, they must succeed against a DC 14 Charisma (Performance) check 5 total times. Each character should make the roll on their turn, though it doesn't matter who achieves any of the successes as long as both are playing the music. It also doesn't matter how many turns the characters perform the song as long as they are both performing when the 5th successful roll is made. After the 5th success is achieved, the worker bees immediately stop attacking and land.

Once the party has gained control of the worker bees, they are calm and will no longer attack the party. They innately understand simple commands and will carry them out within their ability. They will not attack the queen.

7. QUEEN'S NEST

Once the party has control of the worker bees, the **queen bee-hemoth** emerges. Read:

Worker bees and infected worker bees can be found on page 378.

Mix in infected and non-infected bees as you see fit, using more infected bees closer to the queen.

Stats for the queen bee-hemoth are on page 378.

The buzz of the worker bees fades out as they land and twitch their antennae toward you. The acrid smell of a nearby decay seed floats on the still air, a false calm. A new buzz shatters the silence, so deep and powerful it rattles the earth you stand on.

A huge bee-like monster drifts down from a void in the honeycomb. It hovers a few feet above the rot-spoiled honey. Two sets of transparent wings beat in a blur to keep the massive creature aloft. Vine-like tentacles lined with hooked thorns dangle from beneath the bee's carapace, dragging lightly across the surface of the honey. Purple-black rot drips from saw-edged mandibles.

Stats for the queen bee-hemoth are on page 378.

The **queen bee-hemoth** attacks the party, fighting to the death. There is no way to save her; she has been twisted too far by the rot. Throughout combat, the worker bees are very nervous. A few may fly around the area of the battle, seeming not to know whose side they are on.

Any creature that the queen bee-hemoth is able to grapple with her tentacles is dragged into the honey and must also deal with the effects caused by being covered in sticky honey.

MAKING COMBAT MORE DIFFICULT

If the party is having an easy time of it, have one or more of the bees join combat. The party can play the Succession Song again to reassume control or kill them. Play up the tension and the drama.

8. SEED OF DECAY

Black honey bubbles along the south edge of this pool, rot-laced smoke bursting from each bubble as they pop. Your eyes and nose burn from the smell as your feet sink into the black honey, mud, and rot around the burial site for a Seed of Decay.

The party is able to dig up a second seed in as many days. It is like the one they found in the pumpkin patch and follows the same mechanics. Additionally, characters can investigate to find ratkin tracks and can conclude that the ratkin they encountered in Area 4b were involved with burying the seed here.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

Once the party has secured this Seed of Decay, they will likely suspect that someone or something is trying to hurt the Alwaysgreen Forest and Dobberton.

MORE RATKIN. Now that the party has encountered a group of ratkin directly, they will probably want to hunt them down for answers. The ratkin are very good at covering their tracks. The party spends hours in the nearby forest tracking them. Have the party go in circles or jump to **Interlude: Caught Red Handed** on page 124.

BACK TO OAK DEN. The party will probably want to take the Seed back to Oak Den so that Herb can compare it with the first one they found. When they get back to Oak Den, they find that there is a wagon hitched to a fox parked in front of the Acorn Inn. Beatrice is out front talking to a goblin.

If the party chooses to interact with the goblin and Beatrice, go directly to **Chapter 4: The Plaguewood Spider.**

CONFRONTING SAGGARD. The party may want to talk to the guard captain that is stationed in Oak Den. They

did run into him as they were leaving, and he was coming from the direction of the apiary. If characters ask around, no one has seen Saggard since the party left. If they go to the barracks, Dolby is there. He tells the party that Saggard had to leave unexpectedly and without explanation. Dolby would like to help investigate who or what has brought these decay seeds into Dobberton, but at least one guard has to stay in Oak Den. The best he can do is to send a

message to the guard in the Dobberton capital, asking them for help.

LEVELING UP

Once this chapter is complete, and after the characters finish a long rest, they should progress from level 2 to level 3.





CHAPTER 4: THE PLAGUEWOOD SPIDER

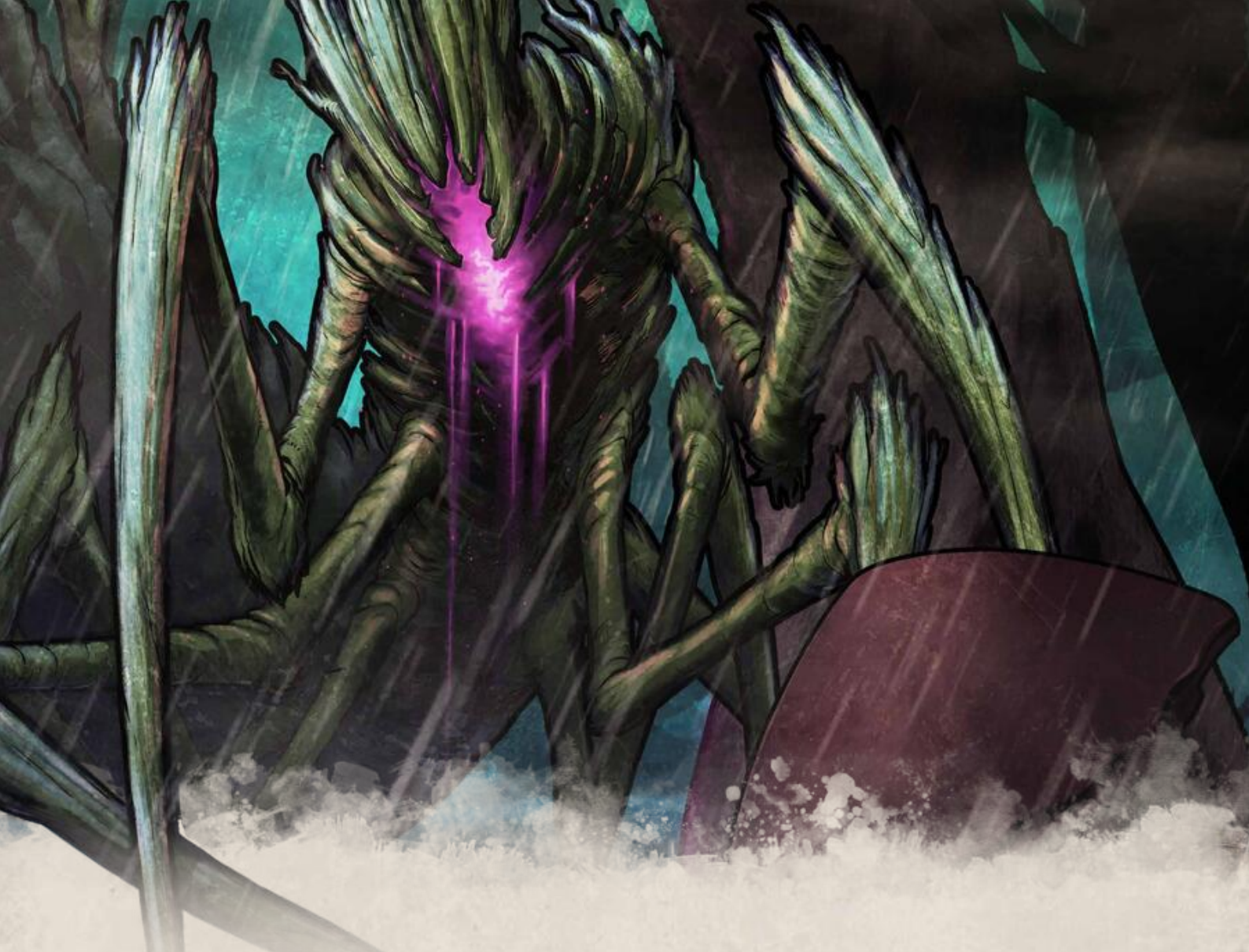
The party must track down a mysterious creature that has been terrorizing the farms of Lytewick. Their only clue is a young goat that has been turned to stone.

BACKGROUND

A large moss boar has wandered into the Alwaysgreen Forest from its swamp home in the south. The beast's behavior is erratic and unpredictable. Most moss boars are solitary and avoid contact with any civilization. It's very unusual for a moss boar to leave the swamp and enter the Alwaysgreen Forest, and it is unclear why this one did. They typically feed on roots, fungi, and other vegetation, yet this one has developed a taste for meat. It has gone mad, infected

by rot poisoning. A third Seed of Decay has been hidden near the cave that this moss boar now uses for a nest.

Before Harold knew what was happening, his fences were down, and his livestock were loose. The moss boar charged through the dobber's ranch, easily breaking down fences and scattering all the goats and sheep. All the creature left behind was a strange gray mud. Following the granite-colored mud, Harold put together a trail. It led him away from the farmland of Litewyck



to a dense and rugged part of the forest. This was an area few dobbers had ventured before. He began to fear the worst. The trail led to a rocky cleft in the ground, perhaps a cave opening. As he neared, he saw a stone figure. It was Joy, his sweet red-haired goat. She had been turned to stone. When he knelt to examine the statue, a giant beetle came out of the cave and chased him away, stone kid in his arms.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **SPLUGG, THE TRAVELING MERCHANT.** After meeting Splugg at the Acorn Inn, the party learns that there is more evidence of the spreading rot in Litewyk. Marge manages the General Store there. She directs them to Harold's Farm.
- **HAROLD'S FARM.** At Harold's they see the results of the Moss Boar's destruction.
- **THE MUDDY TRAIL.** The trail leads to a cave, cut into a rock outcropping by years of erosion.
- **THE MOSS BOAR'S CAVE.** There are a number of other creatures using the cave for nesting and feeding.
- **THE SEED OF DECAY.** On the other side of the cave, the characters find one of the Seeds of Decay, defended by plague fungus. Once those monsters are defeated, they attempt to dig up the decay seed. This triggers the boss fight with the Plagewood Spider.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 3. Characters who complete this chapter will have earned enough experience points to progress to level 4.

The Seed of Decay the party will find at the end of this chapter has been in the ground the longest. Creatures twisted by decay have gathered to protect it. An infected moss boar has made its nest nearby, but the party's greatest challenge will be defeating the Plagewood Spider, a construct of living rot. The body of this rot creature is almost impossible to damage, but it has a weakness; the party can defeat it by fully submerging the Seed of Decay it protects.

Recovering the third seed will temporarily stop the spread of decay in the area. They will then need to return to Oak Den and find Herb to discuss with him this Seed of Decay.

SPLUGG, THE TRAVELING MERCHANT

After returning from the apiary with a second decay seed, the party come upon a bit of a commotion outside of the Acorn Inn. A large wagon, pulled by a fox, has parked right in front of the Acorn Inn. Beatrice is outside, speaking with a goblin.

A thin goblin wearing a tailored purple velvet overcoat is talking to Beatrice, gesturing with exasperation. Wild, unkempt hair dances on his head as he gestures to the wagon next to them. The wagon has a few open crates and a number of jugs and barrels in the back. A single fox is comfortably harnessed to it, pawing the ground.

As you approach, you hear the goblin grumble, *"I don't care if goat turnt to gold, without milk and cheeses, I find someone else!"*

The goblin is Splugg, the traveling merchant that frequents many of the shops and farms in the area. He was making his usual rounds, moving goods from farms to markets, when he discovered that one of his most important customers, Harold had nothing for him. This meant he couldn't then sell to the Acorn Inn and, more importantly, Thanwen. Today, Splugg only has strawberry wine for Beatrice. That's hardly worth the trouble of making the trip to Oak Den.



Splugg should provide a good role-playing moment with the characters. He will complain about his business suffering, blaming both local dobbers and woodkin for not taking good care of the forest.

SPLUGG

Splugg is exceedingly arrogant and disrespectful toward the local farmers. He also knows that he is the only merchant working this area, taking their goods to the larger neighboring towns and making money for these farms. He is their bread and butter, just as they are his.

When the two see you approaching, they stop their conversation.

Beatrice smiles and waves. The goblin grins manically, seeming to have just won an argument.

"See," the goblin exclaims, "you have customers! If Harold can't make the cheeses and milk, Splugg will find someone who can!"

Splugg is happy to complain to the party about how *stupid dobbers* can't keep their farms safe from bears. He laughs at the idea of one of Harold's goats being turned to stone.

- He knows a mysterious creature nearly destroyed Harold's farm. It must have been a bear - what else could it be?
- Marge, a dobber in Litewyck, claims one of Harold's goats was turned to

stone, but, of course, Splugg doesn't believe it. *"Baby red goat he talks about like it dobber child,"* the sour goblin grumbles.

- Harold's fences were knocked down, and all his livestock are missing (except the stone one, of course).
- He knows that rot is spreading in the area, damaging crops. He downplays this because he worries that some of the strawberry wine he's selling from Sasha's farm has gone bad. And strawberry wine is all he has to sell currently.

Beatrice had heard the story from Splugg. While he remains focused on how this negatively affects his business, she is concerned about her friends in Litewyck. If the party doesn't immediately head toward Litewyck, she invites them into the Inn for some tea. Splugg interjects, *"Or perhaps something stronger, like strawberry wine!"*

- Inside, Rowan is at the bar, and Adriel, who appears to have recovered a bit, sits with his wife at one of the round tables having a simple meal.
- Herb is not here. He's gone back to his home to examine the first decay seed.
- It's been a few days since the pumpkin fest was canceled. Things are mostly cleaned up and quiet.
- If the party would like, a local, probably Toby or Rowan, will keep safe the decay seed they got from the apiary until Herb returns.
- Beatrice will tell the party about Litewyck and the few farms around it. She knows Splugg well enough to see that things are probably more dire than he indicated. If the party needs another push to go to Litewyck, she will give it.

Beatrice is eager to hear about their trip to the apiary. You can expand and elaborate on this scene as you see fit. The party may want to go find Herb next, but Beatrice believes lives may be at stake and insists they investigate Litewyck first.

THE ROAD TO LITEWYCK

The road from Oak Den is narrow but traveled enough to be clear. The trees create a shaded canopy for most of the trip, with only a few spots of sun peeking through here and there.

LITEWYCK

Litewyck isn't really a village. It's the crossroads where the Litewyck General Store is found. It serves as a meeting place where the nearby farming families gather to trade and discuss the weather. There's just enough traffic from travelers that wander off the King's Road to support the store and give the farms a place to sell their produce. The General Store also provides a central location for the farmers to meet with the regional traveling merchant, Splugg.

The Litewyck General store is anything but exotic. However, it has many of the basics the players may need. The store also has a limited eatery, serving a few breads, cheeses, and several local fruits. Drinks include goat's milk, hazelnut tea, juices from local fruits, and mead made from Sasha's murk melons and honey.

As the road widens, the canopy opens, letting the sun break through. The party can see a humble

storefront at the base of a great poplar tree. On the boardwalk in front of it, a portly dobber woman with long gray and brown striped hair leans on a broom. She is speaking to a dark-brown porcupine who is standing next to the boardwalk.

The dobber is Marge, and the porcupine is Ula. She and Marge had been talking about what happened at Harold's farm. They are old friends and enjoy time together to gossip, though with the goings on in the forest these days, darkness hovers over their conversation.

Marge and Ula greet the party with smiles and try to push their worries from their minds. After introducing themselves, Ula is eager to hear news from Oak Den. Marge invites them into the store. She offers them a hot drink to help with the chilly autumn air. She can't offer them any milk or cheese since Harold isn't able to fill any orders right now.

In addition to the general store, there is a modest public dining room, though it doesn't look like it gets much use. It has a table large enough to seat four comfortably and another that looks like it hasn't seated guests in a while - it has parts of several farming tools spread out on it, mid-repair. To the side, there's a small fireplace with a few leftover coals from the previous day. A small serving bar at the back of the room, near the tree's trunk, sits adjacent to the door Marge goes through when getting food or drinks for the party.

Marge apologizes in advance, "Sorry, we're out of so many things. We don't have any milk, cheese, or melons." If the party asks about this or the stone goat, she will direct them to Harold's farm.

The Litewyck General Store menu can be found on page 432

NPCS OF LITEWYCK

MARGE

Marge runs the store and makes sure it is stocked with basic sundries for the people of Litewyck and occasional passersby. She has set aside a large room for travelers should they like to stay the night. It's a nice room with a large bed, and if a few are willing to take the floor, it can comfortably accommodate four. Marge provides three square meals a day that guests will share with her, the kids, and Jeb when he is not crafting or rangering.

JEB

Marge's husband, Jeb, is a ranger and friend to everyone he meets. He's also been known to work a little wood and leather, making some of the items that are sold in the store. Jeb built his and his wife's home into the same tree as the Litewyck store.

HAROLD

Harold's farm is the smallest in the area. He specializes in livestock, raising goats and a few sheep. Harold provides milk, butter, cheeses, and wool. One of Harold's young goats is very unique. She was born with bright red fur. And as soon as she could stand, she ran and jumped all about her pen. The bright red kid joyfully bounded around, colliding with all her brothers and sisters. Harold laughed so hard that he started calling the kid Joy.

MARTIN AND SASHA

Martin and Sasha are other farmers in the area. Martin and his family farm apples and nuts. Martin also has a small mill and has somehow trained a large tortoise to help him turn the milling wheel. Sasha grows berries and murk melons. While the sticky, savory-sweet flesh of the murk melon doesn't appeal to everyone, they are hard to grow, which makes them a bit of an attraction for Litewyck.

JEB WENT TO HELP. As the conversation with Marge continues, she eventually brings up that her husband went to Harold's to check on him and help with repairs. She's worried about him because it's been two days. Normally this wouldn't bother her, "he is a ranger an' all," but given the circumstances, she'd really like him to come home.

HAROLD'S FARM

The farm is a short walk from the Litewyck store and fairly easy to find.

A faint hammering can be heard as you approach a simple house built into the base of an old oak. Ramshackle fencing covered in vines extends to either side of the tree trunk, with pens for livestock behind it. A portion of the fence is gray with mud. A dobber with salt and pepper hair wearing well-worn overalls is repairing the fence.

Harold notices the party but is focused on the task at hand. He doesn't greet them, but he does open up with a little prodding. When he does, he speaks slowly and is clearly upset. When asked what knocked down the fences, he answers, "Some kinna monster. It smashed thru ev'ry pen, startin' at tha back. I didn't getta good look. Just a great ball of gray anger," Beyond that, he doesn't know what it was or where the odd gray mud came from. If pressed, he might say it was a bear.



Once the conversation gets going, Harold is eager to show the party Joy, his young goat that was turned to stone. She's been placed back in her pen behind the oak. Harold has even put a small pile of hay at her feet, just in case she wakes up and is hungry.

Harold leads you to a small pen behind his oak, where you see the stone kid. There's a small pile of hay at its feet. He shoos away a fat chicken as you enter the little shed while he tells you about her, "I ain't never seen anything like it. Bright red fur an' so full o' energy. There weren't a one who saw her who didn't smile," he mumbles as tears start to form in his eyes.

At this point, the characters won't have the spell, **Greater Restoration** or any other means to remove the petrification. If they discuss finding a solution, Harold could suggest that Herb in Oak Den is rumored to be a wizard of some sort. If the players respond to this, Harold will urge them to investigate the monster that destroyed his farm first. *"If someone don't stop that beasty, me'in ev'ry one in Litewyck ill be ruint."*

A character who succeeds on a DC14 Intelligence (Investigation) check can find and identify cloven hoof prints in the mud. The creature who did this was not a bear. It seems likely the mud was brought here by the creature or possibly came from it.

A character who succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Arcana) check can identify

the mud as having organic and magical qualities. They realize it can petrify living creatures. Additionally, there are traces of the disease Rot Poisoning.

Harold doesn't know anything about moss boars, and it's unlikely anyone in the party does. You should freely drop clues about cloven hoof prints or tusk marks in the fence posts.

When asked, he tells the characters that he found the statue in the forest, "y' know, where it gets wild." He followed the trail of that weird mud until he found her. It went into a cave. He would've followed, but a giant beetle chased him back. He tells them as much as he knows about the trail and where it goes.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check can easily lead the party along a trail of gray mud and hoof prints. There are also a few dobber bootprints along the trail; those may be Jeb's.

WHERE IS JEB?

Jeb did indeed come to Harold's ranch. He helped with the fence for a while before discovering a clue about the monster. He left without a word. Harold assumed he went off to hunt the beast.

THE MUDDY TRAIL

As you follow the trail, paying close attention to the details described by Harold, it begins to rain. The forest becomes uncomfortably dense and damp. Wet leaves hang low, crowding and obscuring the path. Wet fog hovers above the soft earth. Just off the trail, a squirrel struggles to pull itself free of an odd smear of mud. The mud has a grey, stony look to it. The squirrel is strangely lethargic.

Upon closer examination, the characters will see that the squirrel is in the midst of turning to stone, the mud on it crystallizing the same way water does in extreme cold. Players can easily free or attack it (but who would do that - it's an innocent squirrel). Upon closer examination, they also see evidence of rot poisoning in the mud. Though petrifying mud can be cleaned from the squirrel, freeing it, if it has rot poisoning, it will not live long.

ATTACK SQUIRRELS FROM ABOVE

While the party is distracted by the squirrel stuck in the gray mud, six **rot squirrels** drop out of the trees. If no one in the party specified that they were listening for danger or in some way keeping watch, the entire party is surprised for one round. If a character is actively alert, they can prevent the surprise round by succeeding on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Four of the rot squirrels focus their attacks on the character that was closest to the squirrel that was stuck in the mud. The other two attack the next closest.

Stats for **vine squirrels** are on page 408.

Combat will not last long as most rot squirrels can be killed with one hit. This encounter will warm the group up a bit, as most of the adventure so far has been social. Use this encounter to create some urgency and tension in the characters. Common squirrels are now potentially deadly! One or more of the characters may have contracted rot poisoning from the squirrels.



THE TRAIL CONTINUES

The trail becomes more difficult to follow as the rain washes away the mud and tracks. A successful DC15 Wisdom (Survival) roll allows them to easily follow the path, leading them on to **The Cave**.

If they fail, the party is temporarily lost. Their wandering leads to a shallow pond less than 45 feet across. The sounds of croaking toads mix with the loud patter of heavy rain.

ROT TOADS

A number of large toads sit along the bank of this pond, seeming to pay no attention to you or the rain pouring over them. Some jump in or out of the water hunting bugs and small fish. Many of them have large orange and purple boils on their backs and legs. Black veins cover their skin.

*Stats for **rot toads** are on page 400.*

None in the party can learn much about the toads from a distance. A character can see that these toads have rot poisoning without approaching if they succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check at disadvantage. However, a **rot toad** attacks with its tongue immediately once a character gets within 5 feet. These creatures twisted by rot are alarming.

Once the first toad attacks, proceed with initiative. 9 (2d6+2) rot toads join the combat. If the party flees the pond, the toads do not pursue. If the party explores the whole pond, they find two more groups of rot toads, each with 9 (2d6+2) toads.

THE FINAL STRETCH

The party stumbles upon a fresh smear of gray mud - they've found the trail again. This may be an opportunity for role-playing as the characters discuss getting lost and almost killed by toads.

Your clothing and gear are now saturated from the rain. Your feet are caked in mud as it becomes more and more difficult to step around pools of water on the trail. A rocky outcropping rises in front of you, the path coming to an end. Wet vines and moss drape down the rocks like a curtain. Gray mud clings to the rocks, particularly at the base. Some of the leaves appear to be gray and brittle, like stone.

There is ample evidence of the moss boar here. There are more cloven hoof prints and gray mud, plus a few small plants and a beetle that have been turned to stone. The party easily finds an entrance to a cave behind large leaves clinging to the side of the rocks. The smell of rot wafts from within.

THE MOSS BOAR'S CAVE

This cave is the result of dirt and loose rock washing out from around larger rocks along a granite outcropping. The cave is old, but not so old that it has any significant formations of stalactites and stalagmites.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, locations within the Moss Boar's Cave map have the following features.

FLOORS AND WALLS. Water runs freely down the natural rock walls. They are slick and difficult to grip. Mud, mold, and some other stinky muck make the floor extremely slippery. Characters can only safely move at half their normal speed. To move faster, a player must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If they fail, their character falls prone.

Throughout the cave, there are areas where the mud seems to be smeared or splattered around. It's on the rocks,

walls, and even on items in the cave, like bones. The mud has a strange, stony appearance, almost as if stone crystals are forming within it.

The ceiling height fluctuates between 3 and 6 feet from the floor, though is usually around 4 feet. No areas are higher than 6 feet. Some areas are very narrow. Small and medium characters must travel in a single-file line. Large or larger characters cannot pass through the cave.

LIGHT. The only natural light is that which casts in from the openings from Areas 1 and 6. Otherwise, characters will have to provide their own light sources.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following sections are numbered to correspond to the numbered locations shown on the Moss Boar's Cave map.

1 - CAVE ENTRANCE

A cleft a bit wider than a dobber leads down into the earth. The rocks are slick with moisture, and the cold air that wafts from the hole smells of mold, mildew, and rot.

This cave was formed by years of water erosion. It's likely that the cave fills quickly during heavy rain. There are water lines along the walls at a few different heights. Players who succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will hear chitinous mandibles scraping on bone from within the cleft.

2 - PILE OF BONES

Water drips from the ceiling of this small chamber, and the small vein of water running through its center widens as it goes from east to west. Here the smell of decay

The moss boar's cave map is on page 153.

overshadows the mildew and mold. Bones lie scattered on the ground. An enormous stag beetle digs through a pile on the far wall.

The **giant stag beetle's** stats are on page 365.

The **giant stag beetle** gnaws on a large bone about the size of a dobber's arm. There are two distinct types of teeth marks on the bones; the scratchy claw-like marks of the beetle's mandibles and large gouges made by thick teeth and a strong jaw. Players who succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check know that the giant stag beetle is a scavenger, preferring to feed on the scraps left by another predator. However, they will attack to defend their nest. A second giant stag beetle bursts from the pile of bones and debris if one of the party disturbs it.

In the debris, the party can find an old, worn short sword. It's probably been here for years, though it is usable. They also find a simple traveling bag. In it, there are some smashed berries and stale bread. The food was wrapped in a cloth with J&M embroidered on it.

The **rot slime** is on page 399.

A long dark corridor extends to the west beyond this alcove. In places, it is very narrow. No creatures larger than medium can move through it.

3 - STAGNANT WATER

A pool of stagnant water has formed in this cave room. A thick film mixed with unidentifiable debris covers the top. Some fungus clings to the west wall, hanging above the water. A number of bones lay about the floor, many of them along the edge of the pool.

The pool spans the majority of the side of the room that leads to the next room. The characters can wade through it. At its deepest point, the murky water only reaches a dobber's waist.

Two **rot slimes** float on the top of the water, one along the far west edge and one nearest the edge from where the party approaches. Only a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal the creatures to the players. The rot slimes attack the party when they get within 5 feet. The party can avoid combat if each character succeeds on a DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check and moves one at a time, pressed against the wall furthest from the water's edge.

4 - MOSS BOAR NEST

Mud, mold, and large mushrooms fill this chamber. Moss, roots, and black foliage lie in a heap along the wall. Decay, rot, and waste fill your nostrils.



The heap along the wall is hiding the **moss boar**. It is unseen to the characters when motionless. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal the subtle breathing of the creature. A character that succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check will reveal that the mud and foliage around the heap have an unnaturally stony appearance.

The moss boar is waiting for the best opportunity to attack. The only way the characters can avoid combat is by going back the way they came and succeeding on a DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

The heap of black foliage and fungus shifts suddenly. It stands, revealing a huge boar creature. With a great snort, it blows a cone of petrifying mud from its nostrils on the ground in an arc in front of it. It stamps a hooved foot in challenge! You can see the black vine-like veins of rot poisoning wrapping around its legs. Its eyes are bloodshot and wild with rage.

The moss boar will use its first attack to target as many characters as it can with its cone breath weapon. Following that, it will charge and gore. It will fight to the death to protect its lair. However, if it has less than half of its health left and the characters flee, it will not pursue them.

Once the moss boar is killed, the characters are able to confirm that it was infected by the rot poisoning. A character with a medicine skill or other healing abilities should come to the conclusion that anyone turned to stone by this creature would also be infected with rot poisoning.

The cave continues to the south. A trail of smoke with the smell of rot in it hangs beneath the ceiling.

Find the **moss boar** on page 395.

5 - THE CAVE EXIT

As you leave the moss boar's chamber and move around the next bend, a bit of gray light seeps in around rocks to reveal a narrow opening. You might expect the air from outside the cave to smell fresher; however, it doesn't. The air outside the cave is thick with pungent smoke.

This can be an unpredictable and challenging encounter. Characters may have a level of exhaustion from rot poisoning, giving them disadvantage on ability checks. Add the possibility of a character falling asleep from the fungi's sleep spores, and you have a very dangerous encounter.

Should the party choose to investigate the decay seed before defeating the fungus and toads, the Plaguewood Spider will attack. This will make the encounter even more deadly. If they leave the decay seed alone, the Plaguewood Spider will stay dormant until they approach it. Be prepared to steer your party one way or the other.

The source of the smoke is the **decay seed** left here by agents of the Rat Claw Clan. It is buried just beyond a pool of stagnant water that crowds this opening to the cave.

6 - THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP

A cluster of mushrooms crowd around a pool of stagnant water. Some of them are strangely large, a few of them even taller than a dobber. A haze of purple spores emanates from them, mixing with the smoke. To your surprise, a dobber with a heavy cloak is crouched under one of the mushroom caps. As you focus on him, you see that he is caked in mud and has been turned to stone.

There are two **plague fungi** and three smaller **walking fungi** guarding the site where the decay seed is buried. There are also four **rot toads** nearby. The entire area is twisted by rot and living decay. These fungi seem to be larger and more mature. They attack anyone who approaches the seed. If the party is low on health, you can reduce the number of fungi. If they need to be challenged, bring the rot toads into the battle.

Hissing smoke pours out of a small mound of earth just past the pool. The mound is just above water level. Orange glows through the cracks of packed mud, burning off the rain as it falls on top of it.

When investigating the decay seed, they find that it is extremely hot, as they would expect. Rain hisses on any part of it that is exposed. A player who touches the seed takes 7 (2d6) fire damage and automatically contracts rot poisoning if they don't already have it. A successful DC 12 (Wisdom) Arcana roll will reveal that the heat has an arcane quality to it, perhaps causing it to cool more slowly,

though Dispel Magic has no effect on it.

They also confirm that this seed has been in the ground long enough to saturate the area with rot poisoning twisting all the creatures and plants. A successful DC 12 (Intelligence) Investigation check will reveal ratkin tracks that haven't been washed away by the rain. Ratkin must be close enough to keep the seed hot.

THE PLAGUEWOOD SPIDER

The party can examine the site where the Seed of Decay is buried. Before they can bring it up from the earth, the **Plaguewood Spider** emerges from the foliage. This monster was a fallen tree, awakened by decay into a giant spider, the guardian of the decay seed. The spider will immediately attack, thrusting the party back into combat.

A loud crack of wood snaps your attention to the wet foliage just beyond the buried seed. A fallen tree trunk lurches from the ground. Huge splinters snap off the main shaft, cracking and popping as they bend into eight terrible legs.

The monster scrambles forward to the seed. Rotten wood and bark tower over you. Glowing purple decay drips from its heart.

The Plaguewood Spider is resistant to many forms of damage and extremely difficult to kill. The decay seed is key to this encounter. If the party can extinguish the seed, the spider will fall to the forest floor, dormant.

The **plague fungus** and **walking fungus** are on page 392.

The **rot toad** stats are on page 400.

The **plaguewood spider** can be found on page 397.

PLAGUEWOOD SPIDER TACTICS

- The spider will immediately attack whoever is closest to the decay seed.
- It will attempt to grapple or restrain the character, pinning them, then it will use its kiss of corruption.
- If the party abandons the seed, it will not pursue them.
- The Plaguewood Spider will fight to the death to keep the party away from the Seed of Decay.

Extinguishing the Decay Seed

The party can immediately kill the Plaguewood Spider by extinguishing the seed. The party can extinguish the decay seed by doing 50 cold or radiant damage to it. It is immune to all other forms of damage. However, if the seed is fully submerged in water, it is immediately extinguished.

It's likely the party may assume that the rain is helping to cool the seed. However, it's not enough. As the GM, you can use this clue to help the party realize that the seed must be fully submerged or extinguished by cold and/or radiant damage.

As the party interacts with the seed, point out that the Plaguewood Spider reacts as the decay seed is pulled out of the earth and more rain falls on it.

The monstrous, spider-like creature roars - a sound like a tree being torn up by the roots - full of pain and rage.

IS ANYONE LEFT?

If the Plaguewood Spider is defeated, whoever is still standing can take a moment to gather their senses. No threat remains. The decay seed, if it is extinguished, can be easily collected and transported. If any of the party ingests the water in the area or makes skin-to-skin contact with the remains of the defeated creatures, they must roll against contracting the rot poison disease. The party can use the spells Purify Food and Drink and Lesser Restoration to remove the disease from the water and plants in the area. However, they soon discover that no matter how many spell slots they expend, they barely make a dent in the damage done.

THE STONE RANGER

Once the mud is brushed away, you can see that the weathered dobber is perfectly preserved. Could this be Marge's husband, Jeb?

The party may choose to take the stone ranger with them. A full-grown dobber of stone is quite heavy. It will take two characters to carry it back. Role play with those who carry him, reminding them that they are getting tired from the weight.

The party may feel some responsibility to restore Jeb. In a future chapter they may be able to get horgorath balm from Othkara. It has the ability to cure petrification. You can read the details on page 419.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

There are many directions the characters may go from here. In fact, they should feel pulled in multiple directions. If they choose to go somewhere not listed below, feel free to pull from other areas of this book or just improvise. Make your own adventure.

However, after exploring some other scenes, they need to make their way back to Oak Den to find Herb and discuss with him the third Seed of Decay.

TRACKING THE RAKIN. The ratkin have a simple camp hidden between Litewyck and Oak Den. Tracking them back to their camp should not be too difficult for the party. Most of their tracks have been obscured by the rain; therefore use a series of skill checks - Survival and Investigation - to allow them to *eventually* find the right path. Proceed to the interlude: **Caught Red-Handed.**

BACK TO HAROLD'S FARM. Harold is relieved that the moss boar has been dealt with though he is wrought with guilt over Jeb being turned to stone. He is concerned that other creatures will go mad and even more damage could be done in the forest. He urges the party to continue searching for the rot's true cause.

BACK TO THE LITEWYCK STORE. The party must break the news to Marge that her husband has been turned to stone, and as of right now, they have no way to cure him. She is gracious through her tears and manages to thank them for all they were able to do. She is impressed with their abilities and, as Harold would have, urges them to search for a way to stop the spread of the rot.

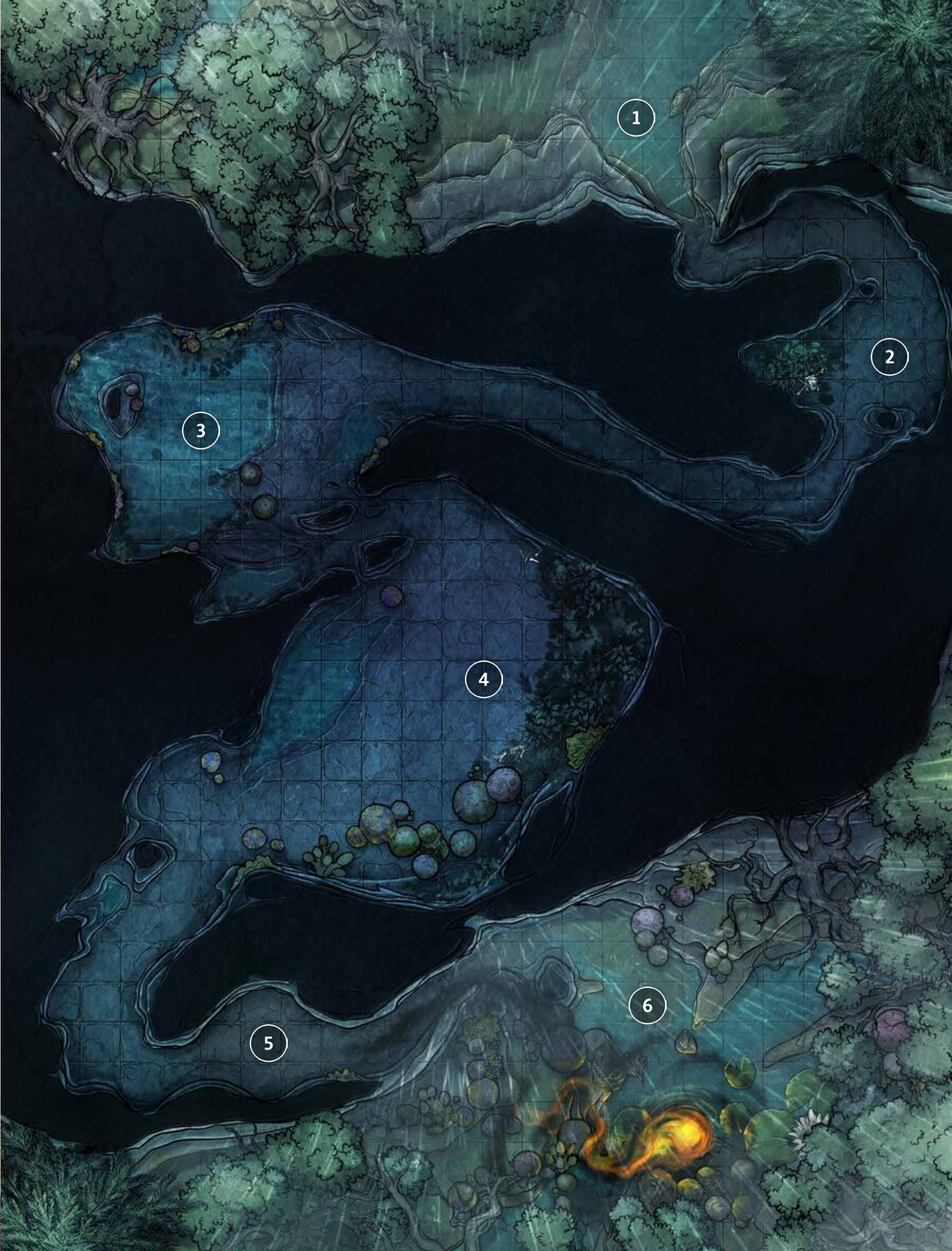
WHERE ARE THE GOATS? If the characters wish to continue from the cave to try and find the missing goats, they will eventually find a few scattered tracks. Make this as elaborate as you'd like. Do they find a few goats wandering the hills in the wood? Do comedic shenanigans ensue as they try to catch them? Or just summarize, they find one or two, but the clues indicate that most of them are dead.

BACK TO OAK DEN – FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BUNNY

Once the main plot threads around Litewyck have been resolved, it's time to return to Oak Den. However, as the party makes their way back, an intriguing hazel-colored rabbit interrupts their journey. The rabbit pesters the party, trying to get them to follow it. Proceed to the next quest: **The Curse of the Wood Sprite.**

LEVELING UP

Once this chapter is complete, and after the characters finish a long rest, they should progress from level 3 to level 4.



1

2

3

4

5

6





II

QUEST FOR
THE KEY



CHAPTER 5: THE CURSE OF THE WOOD SPRITE

The party has found three Seeds of Decay. Now they must find where they came from and who is behind their creation.

BACKGROUND

Calynn was the firstborn of King Quillon. When her younger brother, Quilan, was named heir to the throne, pride took her down a dark path. She studied the dark magic of Rohr-tan the Rot Weaver and thought she could control him using a magical dagger she'd created called Ember. This didn't work, and the Rot Weaver cursed her. Now, as the Wood Sprite, she is forced to serve the Father of Decay, sowing Seeds of Decay in the forest, preparing the land for his return.

As part of her curse, she is bound to the bog. So she enlisted ratkin from the Rat Claw Clan to plant and tend her decay seeds. They believe that by helping her, they are weakening Dobberton for their eventual takeover. But she has no intention of letting the ratkin come to power. She will release the Rot Weaver from his prison. She will convince him to reverse the curse, and together they will overthrow the Alwaysgreen Forest.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **EXPECTED GUESTS.** The party visits Herb's home, where he has been busy studying a Seed of Decay. Together they determine that the party must search for the origin of these decay seeds.
- **THE TREES HAVE EYES.** As the party explores the forest, looking for the origin of the decay seeds, they must fend off a number of rot-twisted forest creatures.

- **THE HARALD.** The beast of Rohr-tan guards the entrance to the Wood Sprite's bog.
- **THE BOG.** The Wood Sprite's bog is like another world, a fungal nightmare. The party is given the task of finding a key called Ember. Surrounded by an army of rot monsters, the party is left with little choice but to comply.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. Characters who complete this chapter will have earned enough experience points to progress halfway to level 5 from level 4.

This chapter changes the entire direction of the campaign, from hunting down a few rot monsters to hunting for a cursed dagger that can supposedly control a deity, Rohr-tan the Rot Weaver.

The party will set out to find the origin of the Seeds of Decay. They discover a cursed Wood Sprite and learn that the threat is even greater than they feared. The Wood Sprite is using the decay seeds to prepare the land for the return of the Rohr-tan. Now she needs the party to retrieve a magical dagger, Ember, one of the keys to her plan.

No ploy is off-limits when convincing the party to do this task; she will threaten to destroy the forest and their homes, she will promise them great power and status, or she will use her unstoppable army of rot monsters to simply kill them and find someone else to do her bidding.

The full background for Calynn the Wood Sprite can be found on page 336.

It may be clear to the party that she is evil, but if she needs this dagger to move forward with her plans, finding it may be the best way to keep it from her.

EXPECTED GUESTS

After finding the third Seed of Decay, the party is left wondering what to do next. If they go back to Oak Den, they can talk to Beatrice or the other townsfolk. For now, things seem to have quieted down. No new dangers have emerged. It's time to talk to Herb and find out what he's learned about the seed they left with him to study. They are given some vague directions but assured: *"It isn't hard to find."*

No sooner than the party heads in the direction they hope is correct, an intriguing hazel-colored bunny hops onto their path. The rabbit pesters the party until they follow it, always staying out of reach but never beyond sight.

HERB'S HOME

Herb lives in a wild forest grotto. His home is perhaps an hour's walk from Oak Den. The senile old wizard's home is in bad shape, but he doesn't notice. His mind is occupied with his work and, in many cases, trying to remember what he was working on. It's every bit as strange as you hoped it would be.

In a forest gully not far from Oak Den a great gnarled tree rises from the wet earth. The huge knobby roots of the oak cradle a rickety, mushroom-shaped house. A thin trail of smoke rises from a small chimney and out the window below it. A second window has a flower box hanging haphazardly from the ledge. In it grows a variety of fungi; colorful mushrooms, spongy mold, and even something black and slimy. A large sheet of tree bark between the two windows seems to be the door. The

path that leads to it is flanked by root knobs and mushrooms.

Unfamiliar plants with a rainbow of mysterious flowers sprout between the root knees. The hazel rabbit sits on top of one, just a few feet from the door.

If the party approaches by the path, the bunny lets them get fairly close but eventually scampers off. It does not allow them to get close enough to touch it. If someone attempts to sneak up on it, the rabbit has a passive perception of 18. If they attack the innocent rabbit for some terrible reason, give it advantage on initiative. In all cases, it wiggles its nose before hopping around and out of sight behind the oak's trunk.

If any of the party follow the bunny, they find a small hole where the base of the mushroom-shaped home meets its tree. Over the hole is a flap of wood that swings from a hinge at its top. It still swings, the rabbit just having passed through it. The hole is too small for dobber-size or larger creatures to fit through and was barely large enough for the rabbit.

THE DOOR IS LOCKED

The party finds the door tightly shut. There is no handle, knob, or apparent lock. They can hear a bit of movement from inside. If they call out, Herb will shout back for them to come in. He assumes they know how to open the door. If someone asks how to open the door, he is engrossed in his work and doesn't answer.

However, a knot in the wood seems a little more pronounced than it should be. It is subtle, but one of the characters should notice it in time. But if your players are eager to roll dice, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal it has tiny runes carved around it. These runes

Herb sent his rabbit to lead the party to his home. He is too wrapped up in studying the decay seeds to fetch them himself.

are of an unknown nature, and none of the party have ever seen any like them. The knot in the middle of the ring of runes is actually a button.

Pressing the knob causes it to sink into the door. A faint ding of a bell can be heard from inside, followed by clicking. The door opens, slowly pivoting inward. You can now see large gears turning at the hinge along the right edge of the door. As the door fully opens, the first thing you see is a huge pill bug! Upon closer examination, you can see that the pill bug is made of wood. Tiny gears turn between the segments of its body. Its antennae of twigs twitch on the top of its head. A distinct aged voice beckons you to come in.

The round room is cramped and overflowing with miscellaneous and hard-to-identify stuff. Gears, hinges, and pieces of coiled vine litter the floor. A variety of wooden boards shaped into tools and other mechanical parts lean against the walls. Piles of dried leaves and baskets of various forest ingredients stack precariously to the ceiling. Every surface is covered with books, vials, all types of leaves and flowers, nuts, crystals, mushrooms, and even a few jars of colored powders. A hall that leads deeper into the tree's trunk is centered across from the entry.

On the right, a tea kettle bubbles happily on a small wood-burning stove. Its ill-fitting chimney leaks smoke into the room and out the nearby window. The hazel bunny chomps on a large purple carrot atop a small table where a tea set is haphazardly arranged.

A tall, slender dobber with long white hair and beard leans over a workbench to your left. He peers at

a small pile of black dirt through a large magnifying glass. The glass is suspended by a hinged arm, arching into the perfect position. On his right, a candle drips wax onto a pile of previously depleted candles. An impressive column of wax connects the bench to the floor.

The ancient man turns to the party, absentmindedly pulling the magnifying glass with him. His wild, oversized eyes blink from behind the convex glass.

The pill bug is an animatronic contraption invented by Herb. It runs on a wind-up mechanism and has stopped moving right in front of the party. The pill bug has run out of power and is standing on the button in the floor that opens the door.

The old dobber pushes the magnifying glass away. "Welcome," he squeaks as he flashes a toothy grin. Then talking to the pill bug on the floor, "Close the door, Olive. Come now, close the door."

Herb's mechanical pill bug, Olive, doesn't move. If one of the party picks it up or moves it, they find the button set into the floor. Moving the pill bug off it causes the button to rise back to its natural position and the door to close. Herb rushes over and either picks the pill bug up or takes it from whoever might have picked it up.

The mechanical marvel is large enough to be awkward in his hands. However, he turns it over and finds a key in a recess on its belly. He turns the key, winding it up, and sets the device back down. It skitters across

*Olive, the pill bug, is Herb's version of the **insect gizmo** found on page 69.*

the room, squeaking and chirping happily. *"I really have to figure out a better power source,"* he mutters half to himself. *"What brings you to my..."* he gestures around the room, trailing off without finishing the question.

Regardless of what the party does, *short of something that would initiate combat*, Herb goes to the stove and pours himself a cup of tea. He'd happily share with anyone in the party but forgets to offer. He does remember to offer a cup to his rabbit.

HERB IS A BIT OF A MYSTERY

In previous chapters, the party has had an opportunity to talk to Herb and has likely gathered that he is, or once was, a powerful wizard. In fact, he was part of the last council of mages that worked directly for King Quillon, the current king's father. Herb and his three peers were responsible for entombing the Rot Weaver and protecting the forest from his decay. Without that, the kingdom would never have come to the prosperity it has now. Unfortunately, Herb doesn't remember any of that. His long-time friend and fellow council member, Othkara, erased his memory. It was not an easy decision, but Herb

Throughout the party's conversation with Herb, include some cute names for some of the other things in his hut. The arm that holds the magnifying glass could be Lilly. A pile of coiled vines with a large round sprocket in the middle could be Penelope. Be silly, have fun. Names: Anis, Daniella, Tulip, Marge (marjoram), etc.

ultimately agreed out of fear that one day, his knowledge would be used against him. The other two mages in the council, Merith and Setarus, died during their encounter with Rohr-tan.

ROHR-TAN, THE ROT WEAVER

At this time, the characters would only know the common lore about Rohr-tan; he's the Lightless, boogie man, the dark one, and the cliché found in every scary story. For now, let what is discussed about the Rot Weaver remain vague. The characters were likely told about the Rot Weaver when they were younger. If one of the characters has a background in the arcane, they may know the *"legend of the four mages, sent by the king, atop four white wolves"* who destroyed the Rot Weaver decades ago.

DISCUSSING THE ROT

Herb has been eagerly examining the seed and has been studying the infected dirt since the crops first showed signs of decay. He's seen this type of decay before. It's the same kind of rot spread by the Rot Weaver 20 years ago. At first, he is hesitant to share that specific detail. To imply the Rot Weaver has returned would cause panic. Yet, he realizes the party needs to know. *"I fear the Rot Weaver is trying to escape his prison, and this rot is just the beginning."*

There are a few bits of memory that Herb could sprinkle into their conversation:

- He remembers that he was an adepti at the Dobberton School of Magic but not that he was one of the Council of Mages.
- He remembers how much fear and doubt there was 20 years ago when Rohr-tan first attacked.
- He remembers that the four mages, whoever they were, could not kill Rohr-tan. Most people assume he was killed or destroyed by the mages.

Herb doesn't even remember that he was on the king's council of mages.

The full story is on page 343.

- For some reason, he thinks that the Rot Weaver's prison is somewhere to the west, but he's not sure why.

HERB IS SICK

During their conversation, the party will notice that Herb has contracted rot poisoning. They can see black veins around his eyes and on his hands and arms.

What he does share is that it's spreading, and it's bad. He's confident it is what is killing the crops around Oak Den.

"I fear this is beyond me. I followed traces of this rot south from here as far as I could go, but alas, in my advanced years, I dare not stray far from my home," he confides as he takes a sip of tea. Maybe when I was in my prime, I could have gone further, but not today.

He asks the party to venture on his behalf. There is a bog a couple days' hike from here. He believes you will find more answers there.

Herb gives the party a simple description of how to get to the bog that, as the GM, you should embellish as much as you like. Read or paraphrase the following:

"Follow the old road southeast out of Oak Den. Once you notice more spruce trees than oak and maple, look for a huge rock outcropping. You won't miss it because it has lichen on it that looks like lizard scales. At that point, cut into the forest and go due south. The trees are older and darker here, hardly ever traveled by dobberkind."

Make sure to include that Herb has also had a dream about the V-shaped tree.

"That's as far as I could manage," he concludes, *"but I felt a pull to go further. I'd had a dream about a tree with a divided trunk, like a 'V.' I kept having the image from that dream pop in my head as I followed the traces of rot south."*

There are a few things that Herb might offer to the party to aid in their quest, should they ask or if you, as the GM, want to offer them. First is a small pouch of 4 (1d4+1) **Horcberries**. They are a large, firm, plum-like fruit that tastes awful. *"You shouldn't chew them, just horc them down,"* Herb chuckles. Second, he offers them a **arcane visor**. It sits on the head with a stretchy, adjustable band. Herb is pleased with how well the visor blocks the sun. *"It's very helpful when the sun is in your eyes,"* he muses. *"However, notice the attached monocle. It will help you find what you're looking for."* He also offers the **Caterpillar on a Stick**, offering it as if it's an ordinary walking stick.

THE TREES HAVE EYES

The forest south of Herb's home is darker and denser than what the party is used to around Oak Den. The ground is soft and wet. As they get closer to the bog described by Herb, they notice the plants are darker in color and withered.

Use this time to build some tension. This part of the forest shouldn't feel different, but somehow it is unknown to them. It's still part of their forest home, yet it is not. The trees are twisted, and the earth is covered with new fungi. Even the bugs seem bigger, with long, deep chirps. The birds' songs are distorted and sick.

Horcberries can be found on page 419.

The **Arcane Visor** is on page 412.

The **Caterpillar on a Stick** is on page 416.

*Creatures of decay are connected to one another and able to share limited knowledge about what they can see. Read **Decay Classification** and **Decay Speech** on page 359.*

Vine squirrels are on page 408.

Rot toads are found on page 400.

Shadowlings are on page 402.

- The shadow cast across the path by some nearby foliage suddenly skitters across to the other side.
- An uncommonly large number of squirrels follow the party from above, jumping through the limbs from tree to tree. They chitter menacingly and throw seeds but never seem close enough to attack. If a character uses a ranged weapon against them, they always move just in time, behind a limb or clump of leaves.
- A large mushroom seen from the corner of the eye moves, but when a character looks more intently, it seems to be an ordinary mushroom.

Build the party's feeling of dread as they get closer to the bog. Bring them to the edges of their seats, then drop the **ambush** on them.

AMBUSH

Suddenly **vine squirrels** drop out of the trees, **rot toads** leap from the bushes, and **shadowlings** emerge from under large leaves to attack the party. With so much tension built in the preceding scene, they react to every sound. Anxious as they are, it is nearly impossible for the party to effectively anticipate an attack. To avoid a surprise round, a character must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

During the surprise round, the rot squirrels will use their thorned vine attack to grapple targets and gain advantage on future attacks. Rot toads hop into a space where their spore death will hit the most characters. The shadowlings attack from the sides, staying hidden in the foliage.

The number of attacking creatures is up to you, the GM. As a rule of thumb, one or two creatures more than the party size should be just enough to build worry for the characters. You can always add more. The forest around the party is full of twisted creatures. Use this encounter to show the party they are vulnerable and deplete some resources. **Make sure at least one character contracts rot poison before moving on to The Bog.**

DECAY SPEECH

The language of Decay is entirely unique to the creatures that have been corrupted by the Rohr-tan's rot. Decay allows these creatures to communicate through a psychic bond. They don't use structure and words as most understand language, but their communication is effective.

However, sentient creatures who know and understand spoken language can use Decay Speech to converse telepathically. They need only be able to see whom they wish to telepathically speak with. They do not need to speak the same language, as all individuals communicating this way automatically



understand each other. A creature can attempt to block Decay Speech by succeeding on opposing Wisdom checks. However, the creature speaking has advantage.

In the following scenes, the Vine Wolf and the Wood Sprite will use Decay Speech to speak to characters that have rot poisoning.

THE V-SHAPED TREE

The party can't take time to catch their breath or tend to their wounds; they must press on. What terrible monstrosities lie ahead?

The dense trees and foliage block out any light from the sky. Ahead, at the top of a slight rise, there is a large tree where the trunk divides like a "V."

When the party approaches, read:

A swarm of rot squirrels, toads, walking fungus, and all manner of living decay emerge on either side of the tree. Several descend from its branches. Tentacle-like vines writhe. Teeth drip with viscous slime.

A great wolf steps through the part in the tree's trunk to join the squirrels.

A rotten and broken wolf steps into the midst of the decay creatures. Upon its head are powerful, twisted antlers. Branches grow out of the coarse, bark-like fur of its back. Where its mouth and throat should be, there is a gaping void, glowing and oozing green energy. Vines reach from this void, whipping and grasping. Emotionless, penetrating green eyes gaze down at you.

Here the party faces impossible odds. The massive number of rot

monsters and the powerful vine wolf would defeat them in combat. Help the party come to the conclusion that they must speak to the Wood Sprite to discover where the seeds came from and to have any hope of saving their forest.

THE VINE WOLF, AKA THE BEAST OF ROHR-TAN

The vine wolf is a gatekeeper for the Wood Sprite's bog. It will not let the party pass if no one in it has **rot poisoning**. When the vine wolf speaks, it does only with Decay Speech; characters with **rot poisoning** hear its voice in their minds. It does not speak physically.

"Siblings, you are welcome here,"
a voice like a deep, rushing wind echoes in the minds of those infected with **rot poisoning**. You know the voice comes from the wolf. *"Have you come to serve?"*

If there are some in the party that do not have **rot poisoning**, he goes on before the party can fully answer.

"Do you speak for these outsiders?"
You know the wolf means any who are not infected. *"They are not welcome unless they come under your authority."*

The vine wolf doesn't hesitate to show dislike for any who do not have **rot poisoning**.

While speaking, the vine wolf will refer to the Wood Sprite as the "Daughter" as she is the metaphorical daughter of the Rot Weaver. He will refer to the Rot Weaver as the "Father" and all those who have the **rot poisoning** as "siblings." The vine wolf will refer to any in the party who have **rot poisoning** as such.

*Characters who were infected by rot poisoning and had dreams, as described on page 127 would recognize the **V-shaped tree** and feel drawn to it.*

*The full effects of **rot poisoning** can be found on page 336.*

*The **vine wolf** is a fearsome monster. His stats are on page 387.*

Characters who are infected with rot poisoning would innately feel a connection with the Vine Wolf and the Wood Sprite, though they will not understand it.

The **Father's touch** is rot poisoning.

Here, as the GM, you can foreshadow that sacrifice, likely personal, will be required to save the forest. Having rot poisoning is not only key to entering the bog but also to gaining the trust of the Wood Sprite.

To explain what the wolf means by calling those with **rot poisoning** "siblings," he might say:

"I can smell the Father's touch on you. I can see into your mind. You are one of us."

If one of the party asks about the Seeds of Decay, the wolf might answer:

"The Daughter was chosen to prepare the way. You have been called to serve."

IF THAT PARTY DECIDES THAT COMBAT IS THE ONLY OPTION:

Overwhelm them with rot squirrels, rot toads, and walking fungus. The vine wolf watches. Once the party has taken a few hits and rot poisoning begins to take a greater toll, he will command the creatures to stop, and he'll use decay speech to call forth the infected.

"One day soon, all of the forest will bow to the Lightless. It is not too late for you to answer the call. The Daughter has a task for you. Do it, and you shall live."

ANOTHER DECEPTION

The Wood Sprite whispers. Even before the party comes into the bog, she reaches out to one of the characters of your choice, infected by **rot poisoning**, to plant a seed of deception. If possible, pass this message to that character without the other party members knowing.

"Help me," a female voice pleads. "I am cursed and trapped here. The only way I can be freed is for you to retrieve my key."

Once someone in the party has received this message, the party should at least feign fealty to the "Daughter" so that they can see her. The vine wolf will let them pass through the divide in the V-shaped tree.

THE WOOD SPRITE

Calynn is the eldest child of King Quillon yet her younger brother was chosen as heir to the throne. She vowed revenge. She turned to dark magic and summoned the greatest evil known in the land, the Rot Weaver. She thought to use him as a weapon. If she could not rule Dobberton, she would rule all the land as the Queen of Decay!

However, she was a fool. She could not control Rohr-tan. He cursed her and bound to this bog where she is simply, the Wood Sprite.

Now she again seeks the Rot Weaver, preparing the land for his return by casting it into decay.

The party has found the bog where she is bound. The decay of Rohr-tan's tomb leaks into this bog through a mysterious link. Here she has gathered an army of decay.

Her Seeds of Decay have done their work, spreading rot and decay in the woods and fear and doubt in its people.

It is time to free the Lightless. It's time for Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, to return. First, she needs the dagger, Ember.

The enchanted dagger was stolen by her former partner, Maegera. She can sense it under the verdant mountains to the south. She needs the party to get it for her.

When role-playing the Wood Sprite, she will lie, deceive and manipulate using any knowledge she can grasp. Because of her connection to those infected by **rot poisoning**, she can access thoughts and emotions. For example, she may have already planted dreams of the V-shaped tree. She will use this access against the characters.

Know your players and what they would be comfortable with. Anyone who is infected by **rot poisoning** has disadvantage against her Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion).

THE BOG

The vine wolf releases the party to pass through the divide in the V-shaped tree. As they do, any who are not infected by **rot poisoning** feel a sense of dread emanating from all around. Any who have **rot poisoning** feel comfort.

As you step through the V-shaped tree, it's like stepping through a door. You now stand on a large flat rock that overhangs a decay-filled pool. It spans over 100 feet in diameter. Bugs dance above it, and slimy things skitter across its surface. Encircling it, with at least 30 on each side, are great mushrooms, their caps angled toward the water as if bowing in reverence.

Directly across from you, at the edge of the pool, lies a great fallen tree. Its roots, draped with muck and moss, hang menacingly over the water.

Give the players a moment to take in the scene. They've discovered something both beautiful and terrible. All of the twisted rot and vine creatures they've encountered thus far are here in reverence.

Before the party moves from the rock precipice, read:

You see movement at the crest of the root ball. A small figure, shrouded in shadow, rises up onto one of the larger branches. Her form is rough, like bark. Sharp branches extend from her arms. Branches reach from the top of her head, with two dominant ones on either side like a horned crown. Her voice hisses like a whisper yet echoes with power, *"You have answered, his call my siblings, and your service will be rewarded."*

It's now clear to the party that these creatures are bowing to Wood Sprite. After the party can briefly reply, she goes on:

"We have called you here for a purpose. You will retrieve the key for us." She holds up a willowy hand that transforms into a long, wooden dagger. *"Ember is the key to our future. I need it..."* she pauses to gaze at the dagger while it returns to the shape of her hand, *"... to free the Father."*

The scene continues with the Wood Sprite convincing the party to retrieve Ember, the enchanted dagger. There are a number of details she will reveal through the ensuing conversation, and some she won't.

Calynn's backstory starts on page 338 and stats for her as the **Wood Sprite** are on page 339.

The bog is hidden and unreachable unless one steps through the V-shaped tree.

Do not reveal that the Wood Sprite is Calynn, the king's sister yet. It will be more dramatic if revealed in a later chapter.

The Wood Sprite has run out of patience. She will do anything necessary to convince the party to retrieve Ember. She will deceive, manipulate, and threaten without hesitation.

The tree golem's stats can be found on page 406.

THINGS SHE WILL NOT REVEAL:

- She is a dobber, her name is Calynn, and the king is her brother.
- She was cursed by the Rot Weaver. Though she may say that she was "created" by him.
- Why she can't leave the bog, or why she needs them to get Ember for her.

THINGS SHE WILL REVEAL:

- She refers to herself as the "Daughter." Who she is now was created by the Rot Weaver. The Rot Weaver is the "Father." All who are in service of the Rot Weaver are "Siblings," though she is the "Eldest Sibling."
- She needs Ember because it is the key to bringing the Father back. She will often refer to Ember as a key, not a dagger.
- She has been preparing the land for the Father's return by spreading rot and decay.
- She was responsible for planting the decay seeds. She persuaded some ratkin of the Rat Claw Clan to bury them for her.
- She is bound to the bog until the Father returns.
- She seeks revenge on Dobberton.

When one of the characters asks who the "Father" is, read:

"He goes by many names, the Ruler of Rot, the Sovereign of Shadow, the Father of Fungus. He is the Lord of the In-Between. Where decay pulls at life and death pulls at decay, he is the pull. Children call him the Rohrtan, the Rot Weaver."

If any of the party threatens her or refuses to retrieve Ember for her, she will use any threat necessary to convince them. Read:

Without warning, the great fallen tree rises out of the earth with the Wood Sprite mounted upon it. Powerful arms and legs emerge from the limbs and the trunk. Roots hang from a huge vacant head like hair and a beard. This tree golem towers above the party and creatures around the bog. Incomprehensible power at the disposal of the Wood Sprite who rides upon its neck.

"You will retrieve the key for me, or I will destroy you, your loved ones, and everyone in Dobberton."

And to the character she already spoke with through decay speech:

"Please," the Wood Sprite pleads in your mind. "I don't have any choice. He holds me hostage. I must do his bidding. But, if you bring me Ember, I can be freed, and we can defeat him."

Once the party is convinced, read:

The Wood Sprite lifts one of her dark, bark-covered hands. With the sounds of snapping twigs, it transforms into the shape of a long slender dagger. *"This is the key you seek. Take care, for if you stare into*

its heart, you will be burned." Her hand returns to its normal form, and she gestures to the West.

She ignores any further questions. The crowd of decay monsters part on the western side of the bog pool, revealing a stream of mucky water. Even the bugs flying above the pool align, pointing the party in that direction.

She says, "Follow the flowing path, through the treeless land, to the arch beneath the mountains. In depths where the dead share roots and earth, Ember yet burns. You must bring me the key before the Blue Star is at His highest. Do it not, and all shall perish."

As the party leaves by way of the stream, they feel the eyes of the rot monsters. It's clear they have no choice but to go the way they are directed. The stream runs west for a time before veering south. As they travel, the party never quite feels like they escape the shadow of the Wood Sprite or her minions. Then, the stream breaks free of the wood, leading them into a vast open plain.

IT'S TIME TO FIND THE KEY

When the party leaves the wood, they feel a weight has been lifted. The air is cleaner, and their path is clear. The oppressive presence of decay, at least for the time being, must be bound to the forest.

The stream zig-zags through miles of rolling fields, though generally finds itself flowing south. Rising above the plain, perhaps a few days' journey ahead, lies the grey outline of mountains.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

The party's next step may be pretty straightforward, find this key, or dagger, or Ember, whatever it may be. But what they are to do after is rife with questions and doubt. Proceed directly to **Chapter 6: The Terrin Caves**.

LEVELING UP

Once this chapter is complete, the characters have earned enough experience points to progress halfway to level 5 from level 4.

*The key she refers to is the cursed dagger, **Ember**, detailed on page 427.*

Once the party leaves the bog, it will be invisible to them. They look back and can see the stream they follow, but not the bog. But they can feel it, they can smell it, like a scent that sticks in the nose for hours - the rot, the decay, and the evil.



CHAPTER 6: THE TERRIN CAVES

At the behest of the Wood Sprite, the party has left the Alwaysgreen Forest, venturing south to the Verdant Mountains, where they must find the dagger called Ember.

BACKGROUND

Many generations ago, a colony of terrin dobber miners found an underground stream that gave them access to some extraordinary roots from which to draw sap.

They excavated several large rooms and set up production. They used the rock mole tunnels and dug some of their own paths to move between rooms. The waterways made moving the large barrels of sap much easier than carrying them.

That was many years ago, and the taps have long since dried up. The mine was abandoned and forgotten until recently. Now, the wizard, Maegera, is using it to construct a war machine he calls the Castle Breaker. He and several ratkin assistants have taken up residence in the main room. Here they have built a workshop with a forge powered by the magical dagger, Ember. The same dagger the party was sent here by the Wood Sprite to find.



SCENE SUMMARY

- **TO THE MOUNTAINS.** The party crosses the grasslands south of the Alwaysgreen Forest on their way to the terrin caves.
- **THE UNDERGROUND STREAM.** The stream leads the party to the base of the Verdant Moxwuntains, where it plunges underground.
- **THE ROCK MOLES.** While exploring the stream caves, the party discovers a sap mining room with some curious rock moles.
- **THE BURIAL CHAMBER.** The party must solve the puzzle of an ancient terrin king before they can move on.
- **THE FORGE ROOM.** The party discovers Maegera's workshop, where he is using the magic of Ember to power a forge, and his ratkin workers are building the Castle Breaker. The party

must defeat Maegera and retrieve Ember before the mountain collapses on top of them.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 4. Characters who complete this chapter will have earned enough experience points to progress to level 5.

This chapter runs like a dungeon crawl, with the characters moving from area to area, exploring and facing challenges. When the party reaches the Forge Room, they battle Maegera and his workers, culminating in the room's total collapse. All seems lost, but somehow the characters survive.

Maegera reveals that the Wood Sprite is actually Calynn, the king's sister. Even if the encounter goes vastly differently than written, ensure this detail gets revealed.

TO THE MOUNTAINS

The party follows a stream out of the bog. They walk for hours; out of the Alwaysgreen Forest and across fields of grain overdue for harvest. In the distance, they can see mountains rising out of a valley. Two days pass, but they trust their understanding of the Wood Sprite's final instructions, *"...follow the flowing path, through the treeless land, to the arch beneath the mountains."* With each step, they draw closer to the mountains.

As the party travels, they are bound to discuss recent events. *What will they do with the dagger if they find it? They certainly can't take it back to the Wood Sprite, can they? Who is the Wood Sprite? Did she create all the decay monsters? What about the enormous tree golem? Does she have more ratkin at her command?*

The stream they follow flows down into the valley, leaving the soft earth of the fields and cutting into rockier land. The din of rushing water obscures the sounds of birds and bugs. Ahead they can see where the water flows beneath two tall columns of rock that have fallen into each other, forming a natural arch. There the stream disappears into depths under the mountains.

THE UNDERGROUND STREAM

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TERRIN CAVES MAP

Unless otherwise noted, areas in the Terrin Caves map have the following features:

FLOORS AND WALLS OF THE NATURAL CAVERN.

The natural cavern was formed by years of running water and is mostly smooth. Areas where the ground is wet are only somewhat slick. Characters

can move freely at their normal rate. However, a dash action will require a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, or they will fall prone.

THE EXCAVATED SAP MINE ROOMS

These rooms have rough-packed dirt floors and walls. Where not disturbed by the rock moles or invading ratkin, ages of dust have collected.

While more than stable enough for most days, the ceiling will drop small rocks and dirt whenever there is a loud noise or a force that causes uncharacteristic vibration; such as the *earthquake* or *thunderwave* spells.

SMELLS AND SOUNDS

As the party approaches Area 3, they may be able to smell evidence of the ratkin's waste or food. Perhaps it is the faint smell of a recently extinguished lantern or the sound of the rock moles rummaging in the trash. Feel free to draw the players into this room using these clues or others that make sense to you.

Similarly, near Area 8, the party should be able to smell the smoke of the forge and hear the sound of hammers and saws. Until alerted to the presence of the party, the ratkin will continue working to build their Castle Breaker.

LIGHT

The only natural light is that which casts in from the openings of Areas 1 and 10. There is an unlit lantern in Area 3 and the glowing light of the forge in Area 8. Otherwise, characters will have to provide their own light sources.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following sections are numbered to correspond to the numbered areas shown on the Terrin Caves map.

The **Terrin Caves map** is on page 182.

1 - STEPPED WATERFALL ENTRANCE

Water loudly cascades over rocks down into the earth. Through the splashing water, you can see that the path will be easier to travel at the bottom of the falls.

The stream follows an underground cavern, splashing down a rocky waterfall. The party must descend this stepped waterfall carefully, succeeding on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, or fall nearly fifteen feet. If they fail, they take (3) 1d6 damage tumbling over a series of rocks; pushed by the water to the cavern floor. They are bruised and wet.

2 - THE SOUTHERN FLOW

The water winds south from here at a more leisurely pace. The cascading water from the entrance echoes loudly around you off the slick stone walls.

Though the footing is challenging, characters can walk along the sides of the passage to avoid walking in the water. There are some cracks along the walls. Any explorer that tries to squeeze into one finds a dead end.

2A - A PASSAGE

When they come to the passage that goes east, the party notices some claw marks on the walls. Some sort of creature with huge claws has made this crevice more passable. With a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Nature) check, they realize the only creature with claws that can dig through stone like this is the rare rock mole.

THE ROCK MOLES

3 - THE STAGING AREA

This oddly shaped room doesn't appear to be dug by animals. The walls are rough but precise and care was taken not to damage the huge roots that span from ceiling to floor.

This room is the first in a series of terrin dobber sap mines. While this one is much older than modern ones in the terrin community, a terrin dobber in the party would recognize the practice. If there is no terrin in the party, you could have them roll a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check to see if they recognize what they see.

Terrins dig mining rooms under huge trees to harvest sap directly from the roots. They believe this gives them a sap that is purer and more versatile when creating lacquers, stains, and finishes.

3A - RUMMAGING ROCK MOLES

The east side of the room tells a different tale with plenty of evidence of recent activity.

Crates, barrels, and scraps of wood have been scattered about the east part of the room. Trash and waste are piled in one of the corners. A makeshift table has scraps of paper, a few woodworking tools, and an extinguished lantern resting on it. Around it are overturned buckets and crates for chairs.

AREA 2

(OPTIONAL): One or two **Giant Wolf Spiders** may be crawling along the walls or ceiling.

Adult and juvenile rock mole stats are on pages 370 and 371.

Boom sticks are on page 415.

A tinkerer would recognize the papers as plans for a very large contraption, but they are incomplete.

A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) roll will reveal that the throwing axes are of the type commonly used by the Rat Claw Clan.

AREA 3C (OPTIONAL):
A **Giant Wolf Spider** has made a home in among the crates, covering them with web.

A mother, **adult rock mole**, and two **juvenile rock moles** are rummaging through the debris and waste in the corner. They are not usually aggressive, but these have been tormented by the ratkin. If the party moves to the table or in within 20 feet of the creatures, they will attack. However, they will not fight to the death unless they have no escape.

On the table, there is a hammer, saw, and a pair of pliers. They are of poor quality but still usable. The papers have instructions for the fabrication of a few items, such as a large hinge, wooden joints, and some sort of gear-driven lift. In the corner of one of the pages, written in the ratkin language in a messy script, is the word "Konugur." This is the Terrin word for King.

In the trash pile, if anyone searches it, there is a pair of throwing axes with sharp stone heads, though one has a broken handle. There is also a rusty dagger, a torn green cloak, a half-eaten deer carcass, and various sundry screws, nails, and scraps of wood.

3B - THE ROOT TAP

A huge tree must stand on the surface above this room. Its mighty roots span from ceiling to floor. Around these natural wood columns, years of dust rest undisturbed. Barrels have been placed near one of these roots, each with a tap designed to draw sap from the root into the barrel.

Upon closer examination, the party finds that the taps have long since dried up, clogged with hard sap, blocking the flow to the barrels. The seal on most of the barrels has broken, and all the sap within has dried, becoming useless. If the party decides to check each barrel, they find one whose seal did not break. It is full of a valuable ironwood sap.

3C - DEAD END

This tunnel collapsed many years ago. There's no way to determine how far it goes or if it's even possible to dig it out. Hidden in the rocks and debris are a number of broken crates. However, one is intact and contains 1d4 **boom sticks**.

4 - DEEPER WATER

The stream widens and deepens here. The bank to the northwest is too small to walk along. The characters must swim or use the bank on the southeast side of the water.

4A - RUSHING WATER

The stream once again narrows, but now the current has much more force. Anyone attempting to swim against the current here must succeed on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check or be washed downstream, bashed against unseen rocks under the water. They take 7 (2d6) damage and finally slow down at Area 4b. As the GM, use this area to create danger and tension from the environment. Ultimately the party needs to go into Area 5, but this area can create some great role-playing moments.

4B - SHALLOWS

The water slows here enough that characters can get to the edge of the cavern on either side of the stream. Further downstream, a cacophony of rushing water implies probable death. Only a large waterfall could produce that much noise.

Here they need to either find a way back upstream or dig through one of the walls that lead to Areas 4c or 4d. Let the players use their equipment to make their way back upstream or tell them they see small cracks in the walls that they can open by digging or with boom sticks. This is a great area for the players to explore creative problem-solving.

If the characters continue downstream, they will be washed out of the cave at Area 10 and over a 120-foot waterfall. If this happens (and they don't die), make sure they know that they must have been in the right place. They must go back into the cavern and find Ember.

5 - THE EMBANKMENT

From Area 3, the party must return to the waterway. It leads to an open room along the southeast side of the stream.

As you round the bend of the stream, you see an embankment on the southeast shore. The water continues to flow further west into the mountain, where the current increases and the water appears much deeper.

Steps cut into the earth lead up the embankment into a large open room.

THE BURIAL CHAMBER

5A - THE KNEELING KING

Roots span from ceiling to floor as they did in area 3.

In the center of the room are four caskets, two on either side of an ornately carved plinth upon which is the statue of a kneeling terrin dobber.

Around the caskets and statue are huge columns of root wood. These giant roots have an ancient terrin dobber dialect carved into them and some unknown symbols.

With closer examination, the party discovers the statue and caskets are made from beautifully carved wood,

though these relics look like stone. They've been treated by one of the more difficult-to-produce dobber resins that creates this wood-to-stone effect.

SCRIPT CARVED INTO THE ROOTS

The script engraved into the roots is just as beautiful as the craftsmanship of the kneeling statue. A star with roots extending from it is carved below each word, and limbs with leaves branch above them.

A non-Terrin-speaking character must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to translate the words. A character who speaks Terrin and succeeds against a DC 12 History check immediately figures out the words. Even if they fail the check, eventually, they can suss out the meaning. Read the following:

I walk among roots and know them
a friend

I know their strength, their honesty,
and wisdom they lend

They are of the earth interlocking
Parts of a whole their love has been
given

To endure this season's king
until blessing has arisen

This clue is key to the party unlocking the door in Area 6: *Above each word are carved limbs extending to leaves. Below each word, there is a star, each with a series of roots extending under it.*

AREA 3C (OPTIONAL):
A Giant Wolf Spider has made a home in among the crates, covering them with web.

THE CASKETS

The four caskets contain the remains of esteemed servants of the king from the colony that once occupied this mine. One of the caskets has already been pried open, its edge heavily damaged. Within it, the bones of a terrin dobber have already been scavenged. All that remains are moth-eaten clothes.

The other caskets can be opened, but not easily. A character must succeed on a DC 18 Strength check to pry one open. Each one contains the bones of a terrin dobber and the following usable items, respectively, from west to east:

- **Pincer Shield** - a shield of the chitinous shell and pincers of the fearsome giant stag beetle.
- A beautifully crafted +1 **Greatsword**.
- **Earthen Hammer** - The head is a piece of carved stone broken from an ancient, unknown relic. The helve is formed by roots that seem to have grasped the stone head of their own accord.

6 - THE SECRET DOOR

A beautifully carved statue of a terrin dobber in full warrior's armor stands against the wall. Even though there is an impressive long sword sheathed at his hip, he holds an ornately carved dagger just below the hilt, pressed to his chest in salute. Where the blade and crossbar meet, there is a carved star. Roots extend down into the blade - limbs and leaves branch into the handle.

The statue blocks the passageways that lead to the main chamber of this mine, where Maegera and Ember wait. After a little poking about, a character discovers the dagger can be removed from the statue.

A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the roots and limbs carved into the dagger are to scale with the roots and limbs that appear above and below each word carved into the large roots. The star etched into the hilt of the dagger aligns with the stars carved below each word in the poem on the roots.

To open the secret door: One of the characters must place the dagger over the word "king" in the poem carved into the large roots.

If the party has yet to solve the puzzle, you can provide another clue. With a successful DC 11 Intelligence check, they recall that the word konugur, which is Terrin for king, was scratched into one of the papers from Area 3. Someone thought the word "king" was important.

When one of the characters has aligned the dagger over the word king in the poem, read:

With a click and a subtle grinding,
the terrin warrior statue begins to move. Dust trails down from the ceiling as gears in the walls vibrate. The statue slides from the wall, revealing a pair of passages, one to the north and one to the south.

7 - THE NORTH PASSAGE

This passage leads west, then curves north to a ledge that overlooks a treacherous stream. Rushing water echoes from some 20 feet below. Poorly tied-together planks of wood lean against the wall near the opening. On the other side of the stream, you can see that the passage continues.

The **Pincer Shield** is on page 424 and the **Earthen Hammer** is on page 418.

If needed, tell the party that the star, roots, and limbs carved into the dagger match those above and below the words carved into the roots.

The ratkin have been using the wood as a bridge. It takes some strength to heft it above the water and place it securely on the facing ledge. Make a DC 14 Strength check to successfully place the bridge.

Once across the bridge, the party can smell the distinct smoke of a forge and the sounds of tools ahead of them.

This passage leads to Area 8, entering behind a root column, giving the party an opportunity to see what's in the room. Characters have advantage on Stealth when approaching by this passage.

7A - THE SOUTH PASSAGE

This passage to the south seems to have been dug more recently. The sound of hammering and the distinct smell of forge smoke grows more prominent as you travel the long hallway. Ahead you see a mass of thick spider webs.

As the party proceeds, they come to an expanse of thick spider webs. A **clockwork spider** waits in ambush, guarding Maegera's forge room.

The opening from this passage to Area 8 is openly visible; coupled with the noise made while fighting the clockwork spider, the characters have disadvantage if attempting to approach using Stealth.

8 - THE FORGE ROOM

A character must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check to enter the room unnoticed. If they approach via the north Passage (Area 7), they have advantage. If they approach from the south Passage (Area 7a), they have disadvantage. If their Stealth check is successful, they may make use of a surprise round.

The acrid smell of hot metal floats in the air. Crackling fire from a roughly built forge illuminates ratkin as they hammer crude chunks of metal. They move between a forge and a monstrous construction of wood and metal in one corner. Three stone statues stand guard around the forge while a cloaked figure watches the work, a white skull gleaming in the firelight from under the figure's hood.

This was once a ceremonial chamber for the terrin dobber colony that used this mine. Now the altar has been replaced by crudely constructed forge. Though most of the smoke exits through a chimney in the ceiling, there is still a haze of smoke throughout the room.

The wizard and tinkerer, Maegera built the forge and with his minions, use it to create mechanical monsters, like the *Castle Breaker*.

8A - THE FORGE

The forge is a single round chamber with four evenly spaced openings for working. A raised ledge around the main chamber provides an anvil-like surface. In the center, the dagger, Ember, stands vertically, blade down in the coals. Heat and light radiate from the dagger, powering the forge but partially obscuring its view.

It is possible that someone in the party looks into the core of the forge as they enter the room. It is equally possible that no one in the party has a chance to investigate the forge until after the battle. Wait until an appropriately dramatic moment to reveal Ember.

The **clockwork spider** is on page 376.

Combat may be triggered as soon as the party enters Area 8. Jump to page 177 and read **The Battle with Maegera**.

Ember, the cursed dagger and its history are detailed on page 427.

Learn more about **Maegera** and **Calynn's** relationship on pages 338 and 342.

If one of the party looks closely or investigates the forge, read this:

As your eyes adjust to the intense light radiating from the core of the forge, you see the dagger described by the Wood Sprite. It stands on end with its tip in the coals. This beautifully crafted weapon is a sight to behold. The wooden blade has veins of silver running through its grain. The handle is silver with gold filigree. There is a glowing red stone in the hilt. When you look closely, you can see that the heart of the stone is liquid. It looks like blood.

EMBER

The dagger is in the center of the forge. At any time during the battle with Maegera or after, a party member may try to retrieve it. If they reach into the fire without any protection from the fire, magical or otherwise, they take 7 (2d6) damage. A ratkin has left forge tongs leaning on the ring around the forge. A party member can use those or spells like *mage hand* to get it out safely. When someone pulls Ember from the fire, flames cling to it and seem to have a life of their own. They die down after a minute, but it is a full hour before the dagger is cool enough to touch.

The characters can discover a number of things by looking closely at the dagger. Spells such as *detect magic* or *detect evil and good* reveal that it has been magically desecrated and has magical properties from the schools of evocation, transmutation, and necromancy.

MAEGERA, THE WIZARD

Maegera is not a rat. He's a dobber. He hides behind the rat skull out of bitterness and to deceive his ratkin minions. He was once a respected and rising apprentice wizard in the Dobber community. He fell in love with Calynn, the daughter of the King. She was incredibly jealous of her brother, who would inherit the crown.

They created Ember and thought to use it for revenge, but for Calynn, revenge wasn't enough. She tried to summon Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, believing she could harness his power for her own. She was wrong. The Rot Weaver cursed Calynn, turning her into what she is now known as - the Wood Sprite. Maegera was cast aside. But not before he claimed Ember for his own. Maegera assumed the Wood Sprite curse was fatal. Though he didn't see it for himself, he assumed Calynn to be dead.



THE BATTLE WITH MAEGERA

As soon as the party has been revealed, Maegera orders his ratkin to attack. He has no interest in negotiations or the lives of anyone around him. His highest priority is keeping the party away from Ember, the dagger powering the forge. The following briefly describes the battle tactics of all the participants.

THE RATKIN

The **ratkin scout** rush forward, attacking with hammers. The **ratkin warrior** attacks with two throwing axes before rushing into melee range.

THE STONE STATUES

The three **stone guardian** statues around the forge are carved from the same wood as those in the burial chamber and, similarly, are treated to be as hard as stone. They were originally placed here as an honor to the altar that once stood where the forge is now. Maegera has enchanted them. They

are now simple constructs that do his bidding. If any of the party approach the forge, getting within 10 feet of it, these statues awaken and attack. They are automatons, following only the last order they were given, “*protect the dagger from outsiders.*”

MAEGERA

Maegera stays out of melee range and begins the battle with defensive spells. Initially, he assumes his ratkin minions will easily turn away the foolish

If Maegera believes his death is imminent, he will use misty step to flee and ooze form so he can squeeze into a crack to hide. Regardless of how you narrate this as the GM, Maegera doesn't make it far. The party will need to find him and talk to him just before his eventual demise.

Stats for the **ratkin scout** and **ratkin warrior** are on pages 384 and 385.

The **stone guardian** can be found on page 377.

Maegera's stats are on page 342 and additional details for **his staff** are on page 422.

Ooze form is a spell you can find on page 55.





The **castle breaker** is designed just for that, to attack the Dobberton palace, giving Maegera the revenge he seeks!

Find its stats on page 375.

explorers (the party). As the conflict progresses, he enters the battle directly.

Once the ratkin begin to fall, he panics and shouts, “Protect the Ember!”, “You fools! You have no place here! All of Dobberton will burn for what they did to me!” and “They must not take the dagger! It’s all I have left of Calynn.”

He quickly loses his composure and will get into melee range to use his magical mace-like staff. Though he is a formidable wizard, Maegera is physically frail. Once he takes a few hits, he will awaken the **Castle Breaker**!

As the tide turns to the players, Maegera extends his staff toward the Castle Breaker, commanding it to awaken and attack the intruders.

THE CASTLE BREAKER

Awakening the Castle Breaker is Maegera’s last resort. The beast is incomplete and too large to maneuver properly in this space.

With a loud click and grinding of gears, the huge, half-assembled mechanical marvel quakes to life. Its massive mouth hinges open with a terrifying groan. One of its impossible wooden and metal arms is long enough to extend more than halfway across the room. It lifts, poised to crush anyone it can reach.

This terrible construct violently attacks from its corner, where it can reach more than halfway across the room. It punches and throws gears at anyone it cannot reach. Its terrible destructive power can kill with a single blow.

Once Maegera falls, or on the Castle Breaker's fourth turn in combat, whichever comes first, it swings its arm wildly across the room, using its **sweeping arm slam** attack, slamming enemy and ally alike.

At this point, the party should be low on health, knocked out, or even dead. This is the final sequence in the battle. Make it dramatic! As the GM, make sure one of the party doesn't get knocked unconscious so that they can revive the others.

THE CAVE-IN

With a terrible groan of grating metal, the machine sweeps its arm across the room, slamming all in its path with deadly force. It smashes through the forge, scattering hot coals and bringing down the chimney. Smoke and ash billow into the room as cracks split the ceiling. Rocks and earth fill the room in a sudden collapse.

The room shakes, and the ceiling collapses! The forge is extinguished, and the chimney is torn down. Smoke, ash, and dust fill the room. The room is plunged into darkness. Each character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity

You should read the full backgrounds for Maegera on page 342 and Calynn the Wood Sprite on page 338. Both may be useful for the coming conversation. The following details are key:

Maegera feels betrayed by everyone; the adepts at Dobberton School of Magic, who didn't understand his and Calynn's genius, the King for not granting them mercy after their failed coup, Rohr-tan for cursing Calynn, and finally, Calynn, who abandoned him for her obsession with the Rot Weaver.

He believed the Wood Sprite curse was fatal and that Calynn died not long after they parted.

He loved Calynn once. Over time she pushed him away. He knew it was the Rot Weaver. Somehow that monster changed her. It must have been through the dagger.

Now that he's lost everything, he, too, is obsessed with revenge. His Castle Breaker, the towering war machine, will be his finale, his grande opus.

Even he will not touch Ember. He uses mage hand to lift it.

He doesn't want any help, flatly rejecting any aid or healing.

(Acrobatics) saving throw or take (7) 2d6 falling boulder damage.

THE AFTERMATH

Movement is reduced by half due to rocks and debris filling the room. There is zero visibility for 5 minutes after the collapse. Gaps, where large rocks wedge against others, provide just enough space for characters to slowly feel their way around, tending to any party members in need or investigating fallen adversaries.

The dust settles, and the smoke dissipates. The party must find a new

THE AFTERMATH (OPTIONAL):

Aftershocks shake the room. Dust and an occasional bolder falls. If the party delays, they will eventually be crushed as the rest of the ceiling collapses.

*Give Maegera
the perfect
cinematic death,
he deserves it.*

way out. The way from which they came is completely blocked. If no one in the party has retrieved Ember from the forge, they should do so now.

MAEGERA LIVES

While the party is looking for a new way out, the character with the highest Passive Perception hears a faint wheeze. Maegera lays motionless, his rat-skull mask gone, revealing a withered and frail dobber face. He is injured beyond any aid the party can give, most of his body crushed under a boulder.

He freely answers the party's questions, knowing his death is imminent. He reveals all he knows about Calynn, the Wood Sprite. He believed she was dead. When he finds out she isn't, he talks about their love, coughing, and wheezing throughout. Read or paraphrase the text below:

"We studied together and fell in love. She was so beautiful - young, passionate, curious, and brilliant. We studied under Othkara, but he didn't understand her genius."

"She began to believe that she could control life and death. She had found a book on rot magic. She obsessed over it. One day she came to me, very excited. She had a dagger; she called it Ember. She said it was the missing piece. It could sear the spirit, forever burning it into whatever she desired. She led me to her lab, where a squirrel was tied to a pedestal. 'I have mastered life over death!' she exclaimed."

"She moved around the squirrel, gesturing with one hand, and holding the sword above her head with the other. 'Spirit Forging' she called it. Time seemed to stand still. The blade of the sword caught fire. It was a deep, sanguine. She struck the squirrel, killing it instantly. Blood red flame rose from the body and arced across the room to a nearby table. The fire splashed against it, burning a great scar into it."

"I was frozen in horror and confusion. She stared intently at the table, excitement clear on her face, waiting in anticipation. The table creaked as if a great weight had been placed upon it. Then the legs trembled, but instead of crashing to the floor, a ruined piece of furniture, it began to walk. It stepped toward Calynn. Her eyes were wide with the pride I now know was madness."

"The table 'lived' for only a few minutes. This drove her further. She grew more and more obsessed with life and death. She was kicked out of the school and eventually exiled from Dobberton."

Maegera only has moments left to answer any more of the party's questions. However, before he dies, he tries to tell them one more important detail:

He falls into a painful coughing fit then stops breathing. He forces out a few more words, "The stone... in the dagger... is..." and then he dies.

8B - AN OLD PASSAGE OPENED

BEFORE THE CAVE IN: Rocks and dirt fill this alcove where there was once a large passage. It is completely blocked by rocks and debris. With a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) roll, a character can see that the passage was only recently filled in. As it is now, this passage is not passable.

AFTER THE CAVE IN: Many of the rocks that were blocking this passage have shifted. With some effort, the characters can clear away enough debris to exit this chamber. It appears that this is now the only out. After an hour of hard labor, they open up a hallway that ascends to the surface of the mountain. This is the only way out. The openings to Areas 7 and 7a are hopelessly blocked.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

The party limps their way to the surface of the mountain. The mist that hangs in the air feels cool on their beaten and exhausted bodies.

They now know who the Wood Sprite is and that she is the sister of the Dobber King. They know that Ember is a terrible and powerful weapon and that the Wood Sprite plans to use it for something terrible.

What is the party's next step? Do they go back to Herb? Should they go straight to the King? Could the King be involved? Do they dare take Ember to the Wood Sprite, hoping to defeat her or possibly bargain?

AN ENDING INTERRUPTED

The party begins making their way down the mountain. The sparsely forested area gains trees and foliage as the elevation decreases. Once the party is within a fully wooded patch in the lower mountains, a band of sylvan dobbers reveals themselves from hiding.

Without warning, a dozen cloaked figures drop out of the trees. You are surrounded with multiple arrows trained on each of you. A deep, quiet voice speaks, *"Your party breathes so loud we could've shot you in the dark."*

The party is surrounded by a band of sylvan dobbers, clearly not from Dobberton. This group had been monitoring Maegera. They chose to follow the party when they came out of the caverns. Their leader, a gruff, red-bearded dobber, carries a charm that can detect the evil of the cursed dagger, Ember.

LEVELING UP

Once this chapter is complete, and after the characters finish a long rest, they should proceed from level 4 to level 5.

When the party comes to the surface of the mountain, they are no where near where they entered. However, they are high enough to identify the Alwaysgreen Forest in the distance and determine what direction they must go to return home.







KAIRIA

The sylvan dobber city of Kairia sits in the treetops of the Fenmar Forest: a wood at the base of the Verdant Mountains, dense with cypress, spruce, cedar, and ash. The High Stone River has carved the perfect grotto into the mountains, making a V-shaped cleft almost as deep as the trees are tall. The rock walls of the cleft create two-thirds of a protective triangle around Kairia. The southernmost point is capped by a waterfall that shrouds the whole city in mist. The city's buildings are built into the trees, high above the ground, spanning from limb to limb and cliff face to trunk, all connected by a web of suspended walkways. One could live their whole life in Kairia and never set foot on the ground beneath.

THE ATELIER

The Atelier serves as the civic center of Kairia. It also has rooms for families and occasional visitors to use as needed. Another large platform is used for gatherings and festivals. The topmost room is where the Fenmar Council meets.

KEEPER'S LODGE

A cluster of small rooms make up the Keeper's Lodge. This is where the keepers stay when on duty but not on patrol. This is where you find Derlon or Ivy when they're in town.

FISH FEATHERS

An oddly shaped building with several erratically placed entrances. Houses Fish Feathers - a bait and tackle shop, eatery, and gathering place for birds and fellows who like to fish. The menu can be found on page 434.

OPAL'S MARKET

Opal's Market is cluttered and cramped. Tables and shelving racks overflowing with goods, sit at all manner of angles, making it difficult to move around the store. Those larger than a dobber need not even try. Opal, a weasel and just scampers over anything that might be in the way of two-legged folk.

Hooks and small shelves cover the walls, displaying everything from clothing to musical instruments to seed packets. Even the windows are covered, letting in slivers of light that only serve to draw your attention to the thick layer of dust in the unvisited corners of the shop.

When someone enters, Opal is known to say, "Just because you don't see it, doesn't mean I don't carry it, so make sure to ask!"

Opal's inventory can be found on page 343.

JENZU

Jenzu means guests. According to Enryn, it's the closest dobber-sounding word for the woodkin concept for when one creature allows another into their territory. Today, the Fenmar council uses the Jenzu rooms for outsiders.

SOMARA'S TOYS AND TRINKETS

Somara is a raccoon woodkin that can make almost anything out of wood. She enjoys making toys and puzzles most, though she has been known to make certain contraptions.

PANICLE SANCTUARY

A cypress tree with large open rooms formed by careful espalier. The branches have been trained to grow into the shapes needed for floor and walls. Tall gaps between thin branches act as windows. Loose, airy, multi-branched clusters of flowers form roofs. The structure is beautiful and ordered, yet wild and fierce.

It is within the harmony of untamed order that one seeks to know the heart of the Green Man. Hadrian serves as the spiritual guide to visitors of the sanctuary and as its overseer.

SAP REFINERY

Each floor of this narrow, multi-story building is filled with a single large barrel. The sap in each barrel undergoes a unique treatment to produce the desired characteristics. Additionally, a water wheel extends from each floor, turning thanks to the High Stone River Falls. Each wheel powers a portion of the refinery, from stirring the sap to powering pulleys that raise and lower platforms. A patrol of keepers is always nearby, protecting some of Kairia's most coveted secrets.



CHAPTER 7: CAPTURED BY THE SYLVANS

The party now has the cursed dagger, Ember, and knows the Wood Sprite intends to use it to release the Rot Weaver. Before they can act on this, they are captured by sylvan keepers and taken to the Fenmar Council for questioning.

BACKGROUND

Sylvan dobbers have a city at the base of the Verdant Mountains in the Fenmar Forest. They monitor their home and the surrounding areas with a vigilance that some would say approaches paranoia. Before running this chapter, familiarize yourself with Kairia and its people below.

KAIRIA, THE SHROUDED CITY

The sylvan dobber city of Kairia sits in the treetops of the Fenmar Forest: a wood at the base of the Verdant Mountains, dense with cypress, spruce, cedar, and ash. The High Stone River has carved the perfect grotto into the

mountains, making a V-shaped cleft almost as deep as the trees are tall. The rock walls of the cleft create two-thirds of a protective triangle around the city. The southernmost point is capped by a waterfall that shrouds the whole city in mist. The city's buildings are built into the trees, high above the ground, spanning from limb to limb and cliff face to trunk, all connected by a web of suspended walkways. One could live their whole life in Kairia and never set foot on the ground beneath.

SYLVAN DOBBER COMMUNITY

Sylvan dobber families are fiercely loyal and often quite large when compared to their counterparts in the Alwaysgreen Forest. Family pods each have their own



rules and systems. While many pods have similar core values, they don't interfere with each other's business. In time their community grew and it became clear that certain decisions required families to work together. The Fenmar Council was formed. The original seven on the council were the matriarchs or patriarchs from the seven largest families. Now, many generations later, the council hasn't changed much. The larger families tend to have a representative on the council, but it is no longer the only criterion.

WOODKIN

Woodkin number far less in the forest of Fenmar than in Dobberton. This is because the only known source of the magic that awakens them is the Blue River in the Alwaysgreen Forest. The awakened that are here have traveled far from their home of origin. Still, some come. The Fenmar Forest is a refuge for those looking to maintain a lifestyle more akin to their birth. After all, not

all who awaken want to join society and cast off their animal instincts. In Fenmar, they are free to do so, and in Kairia, no one questions them.

Birdfolk woodkin tend to be particularly fond of the sylvan city. A culture that spends most of its time in the trees is a natural fit. One such woodkin, a crane called Enryn, has been selected for the Fenmar Council.

THE KEEPERS

The keepers are appointed rangers, warriors, and scouts charged with the safety of Kairia. While they are skilled fighters, their primary duty is to keep threats out. They keep roads hidden. They turn travelers around without them even realizing it. When needed, they kill predators that wander into their lands. Anyone can submit to join the keepers, but the council has the final say. Derlon oversees the keepers. For him, they are like his pod. He has devoted himself more to the keepers than his own family.

The current
Fenmar Council
is detailed on
page 192.

THE FORGE UNDER THE MOUNTAIN

The council was first alerted to Maegera's forge when Ivy, a keeper scout, saw a party of ratkin traveling along the Fenmar border. She followed them to an old mine that was once worked by terrin dobbers, though that was long before her time. She spied on them until she discovered they were serving a man who kept his face covered by a rat skull mask. It was impossible to tell if he was ratkin or dobber. It didn't matter. He had placed a forge deep in the mountain and was using it to build some kind of war machine. The forge was clearly powered by a powerful magic item. It never ran out of heat and hardly gave off any smoke.

She brought the matter to the attention of her mentor, Derlon. Together, they investigated. Around his neck, Derlon wears the silvered petals of magnolia. Through this enchanted flower, Derlon can detect the true nature of an object. He knew right away that the dagger that powered the forge was tainted with evil. The man wearing the rat skull was clearly up to no good. Derlon immediately advised the council that they should intervene.

Derlon's contingent of keepers was already on the way when the party's battle with Maegera and his allies shook the whole mountain.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **YOU ARE SURROUNDED.** After acquiring Ember from Maegera and exiting the collapsed mine, the party is taken captive by sylvan keepers.
- **AN EVENING TO REST.** While still under guard, the party is fed, has their wounds tended, and is provided a comfortable place to sleep for the night.
- **MEETING THE COUNCIL.** The party is taken to the Fenmar Council to talk about the cursed dagger, Ember.

Derlon's stats
are found on page
348.

If they determine the party isn't planning to start a war, the council encourages the party to take the dagger to Dobberton. They must take it to the King only. It's too dangerous to take lightly.

- **A TREETOP FEAST.** After assuring the council that the party's intentions with Ember are not to harm Kairia, tensions ease. The party is treated to an evening of food and entertainment with the sylvan community.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 8 and 9, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.

This chapter focuses on the dangers of Ember and reveals the political intrigue connected to it.

Early in this chapter, the party is presented with a choice: cooperate with the sylvan keepers or refuse. If the party cooperates, they will go with the sylvan keepers for an evening of rest and healing. Then, they will meet with the Fenmar Council, gaining valuable insights into Ember and learning about the heritage stone affixed to its hilt.

Conversely, the party can refuse to go with the sylvan keepers, who will then forcibly escort them out of the Fenmar Forest. The party will miss out on some important information, but that won't prevent them from continuing.

YOU ARE SURROUNDED

Six sylvan keepers are tracking the movements of the party. Among them are Derlon and Ivy.

DERLON

Derlon, also known as "The Red Crow," oversees the keepers, the guard force

for sylvan dobbbers of Fenmar. He's soft-spoken and grim when the party first meets him, though he loosens up in time. He is one of the more influential members of the Fenmar Council.

IVY

Ivy is a seasoned keeper but still young in Derlon's eyes. She is a skilled rogue, cunning and crafty. She thinks she's going to take over Derlon's position as overseer of the keepers when he retires. Hopefully soon.

YOU CARRY A VERY DANGEROUS ITEM

The party is surrounded by 6 **sylvan keepers**, all with weapons at the ready.

"Your party breathes so loud we could've shot you in the dark," echoes in your ears as you take in your new situation. Six dobbbers, shrouded in heavy cloaks, their noses just visible under large hoods, surround you. *"You carry a very dangerous item,"* the same voice says as he pushes down his hood. Subtle vine tattoos wrap around piercing eyes, his face framed by dark red hair and a thick beard. Braids fall from his temples, drawing your attention to his pointed, sylvan ears. A crow with ragged feathers and a scared beak sits on his shoulder. He crosses his arms, intently surveying each of you. Those with him keep their arrows trained on you.

Let the tension build. The characters have just come out of an intense battle. They may be injured and depleted. A detail of keepers has surrounded the party and are ready to do whatever is necessary to protect their home from the evil of Ember.

They didn't come here to kill the party, just to protect their home. It is their intent to take the party back to their city, Kairia, where they will be questioned by the Fenmar Council about the dagger. Once they know the intent of those in the party is not evil, they may be released.

A female voice speaks up, lowering her hood. You can see she also has sylvan ears under her blonde hair. "Why so grim, Derlon?" she asks the red-bearded man. "We mean you no harm," she says to you with a smile. "We can see you've survived a harrowing experience. The whole mountain shook only hours ago, and here you are, covered in dust and worse. We have food and a safe place for you to rest. We request only that you meet our elders and answer a few questions."

Ivy's stats are found on page 348.

The sylvan keeper stats are found on page 349.



WILL THE PARTY GO WITH THE BAND OF SYLVANS?

The tension among the characters is likely at its highest point. Who are these people? Can they be trusted? What do they know about the dagger? These are just a few of the questions the party may have. But the question they must answer first is: Will they go with them?

"The thing you carry calls like a beacon to any who have known its evil," the red-bearded sylvan growls. "You are not permitted here with it."

Derlon and Ivy will play off one another. Derlon is stern and forceful, while Ivy is friendly and encouraging.

"Come with us, peacefully," the blonde adds, "I promise, none of you will be harmed. You will be cared for."

Afterward, Ivy offers a mushroom to each individual in the party. It heals one hit point for those who partake. After this, she has advantage on any social checks, such as Charisma (Persuasion), to convince the party to go with them peacefully.

IF THE PARTY AGREES TO GO WITH THE SYLVANS

Combat is avoided. The party is asked to wear blindfolds while they walk to Kairia. The walk would normally take a few hours, but leading a group that is blindfolded is a bit more difficult. The trek is arduous and awkward. Eventually, the party hears the distinct sounds of rushing water, and it is clear they walking along a river path. "Watch your step!" a keeper might shout as they pull a character back from stepping off the path right into the water.

A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check can

convince Derlon or Ivy to remove the blindfolds. This can only happen after they've walked a little way without making trouble - far enough to keep the location of Kairia a secret. *Skip to **An Evening to Rest**.*

IF THE PARTY REFUSES TO GO WITH THE SYLVANS

If the party refuses, Derlon asks for the dagger, "You can go, but you won't be taking that dagger with you." The sylvans will do what they can to avoid a fight, but they don't know the party yet. They are not willing to let the dagger go with a group they do not trust. Therefore, combat is unavoidable.

The sylvans will not use lethal force if they can help it. Details for Derlon and Ivy are below. It should become clear that the party is outmatched in a few turns. Give them an opportunity to surrender willingly. If they don't, Derlon uses a **sleeping powder cloud**, ending combat. *Skip to **Waking Up**.*

IF THE PARTY IS WILLING TO GIVE UP THE DAGGER

Combat is avoided, but the keepers don't want the party to leave yet. They offer them an opportunity to rest and recover while their council discusses the evil dagger. *Skip to the next quest, **Returning to Dobberton**.*

NOTE: The party may want to leave, heading back home without the dagger. Maybe they think that the Wood Sprite will attack the sylvans for the dagger instead of Dobberton. Don't force them into a decision, but remind them how dangerous the Wood Sprite is. Maybe they don't know what to do with the dagger, but the best hands to be holding that dagger for the moment are their own.

Derlon's **sleeping powder cloud** is similar to sleeping powder found on page 65. To use it, he breaks a glass vial, releasing a 30 foot diameter cloud that knocks out everyone in it.

AN EVENING TO REST

Two thick cypress trees flank the path ahead. They are golden with autumn leaves, standing sentinel before a wonderous, suspended city. The sylvans have built high in the boughs of these cedar, ash, and spruce trees. Tall, lean structures characterized by slender doors and windows cling to trunks hundreds of feet from the ground. A third cypress, taller and more robust than any other, has a series of buildings in rings around the upper part of its trunk. Each circular building is bigger than most homes in Dobberton. Suspended paths spiral out from them, interconnecting this tree with the whole community. A waterfall cascades out of the mountains that provide the backdrop to this magical scene.

The party is escorted to a large ash tree, where a path ramps gently upward to a small circular platform. From there they take a rope pulley elevator. Most of the mechanism is inside of the trunk of the supporting tree, making it impossible to truly understand how it works.

The party's rooms are more than ten stories off the ground and half a dozen suspended paths from the elevator. A large platform, half of which is cut into the trunk of a birch, the other half hanging off of it like a balcony, provides a common area. Tall narrow holes, like windows, but with no glass, line the outer walls. There is a calming rustle of fall leaves and a breeze that gently blows through the room. Within it are plush chairs and couches built with ornately carved frames. A table has a glass pitcher filled with clear water surrounded by empty glass cups. Though there are no rugs, the polished

wooden floor feels warm, and the room is inviting.

Doors lead further into the trunk to simple rooms, each with a bed, chair, and small table. The bed looks comfortable; the blanket over the top has a leaf pattern embroidered into it. It's soft and the perfect weight, enough to keep you warm without making you hot.

Two keepers are posted at the platform entrance. They are kind and happy to make small talk. They don't want you to feel like prisoners, though they ask you to stay in this area until the council meets.

KEELY

Keely is an elderly healer. She has very dark skin and thick white hair that reaches her waist. She visits shortly after the party has had a chance to become accustomed to the space. She takes time to speak with each person in the party, all the while pulling various salves or tinctures from the pockets of her billowing robes. She tends to any of the party's injuries or concerns. Each is fully healed and has any condition or disease removed, including **rot poisoning**.

She visits a bit later with an assistant. They've brought a full meal catered to each person. She seems to innately know what kind of food each character prefers. Drinks also, though nothing with alcohol. She has even prepared meat if there is a woodkin in the party that likes it.

WAKING UP

The next morning, the party wakes from one of the best sleeps they've had in a while. Two **sylvan keeper** guards are still at the opening from the platform to the suspended walkway. These guards are different from the two who were posted last night, though they are just as friendly. Enryn, the crane woodkin and councilwoman, has already arrived.

Keely is a cleric, similar to Beatrice, though she is devoted to the Green Man. Both the Green Man and the Star Father encourage their followers' acts of love and service.

If needed, you can find stats for Beatrice on page 343.

Sylvan keeper stats can be found on page 349.

Sylvan dobbers tend to be more conscientious of woodkin food preferences. That's why they included fish with the other breakfast items.

A white crane with a red feathered forehead sips tea with her long beak just outside of your rooms. "Ahhh, you're awake!" She squawks as you emerge. She ruffles her wings a bit, "I am Enryn. The council is ready for you. Take a wake and have a bite, but don't dally." With sudden speed, she snatches a minnow out of a bowl on a nearby table. "Ivy will take you to the council room when you're ready. Or before. Up to you." The big crane drops off the platform and glides out of sight.

A table lined with breakfast foods has been prepared. It has a variety of vegetables, breads, cheeses, and jams. There is also a small bowl of fresh fish to be paired with toast and mustard. Ivy arrives shortly after the bird departs. She waits impatiently until the party is ready and then takes you to the council room.

MEETING THE COUNCIL

The purpose of the following conversation is for the Fenmar Council to assess the intent and attitudes of the party. Each council member has a different style and specifics that they want to discuss. However, they have a common goal: they want to determine if their community is safe and what new threats, if any, lie beyond their borders. They don't plan to get involved, at least not yet.

Use the notes for each council member below as a way to guide the conversation. This should be a rather tense social exchange. It's impossible to predict how it will go, so read through each council member's section before you begin. If you know each character, you'll be able to more effectively improvise and keep the scene feeling organic.

Change any of the statements as you see fit. Change the order as the characters lead the conversation. Evelina's first statement should start things off, but it may be a while before she speaks again. Hopefully, the characters can convince the council that the cursed dagger is in the right hands, theirs.

FENMAR COUNCIL MEMBERS

The council room is high in a cypress tree. It's a large room that can oversee the whole of Kairia. Its walls have many narrow windows with no glass. The council members all sit on the floor in a crescent shape.

EVELINA

Evelina is the speaker for the Council. This may imply that she is in charge, but each member is of equal standing. As the speaker, she coordinates communication from the Council to the Kairia community. She has long braided hair that is completely white and is as lustrous as pearls. She's believed to be one of the oldest members of the

community, though she does not look it. She is kind and generous. However, she has a tendency to always speak the truth, even at the expense of someone's feelings. This and her great wisdom have earned her a lot of respect.

DERLON

The party has already met *The Red Crow*. He's starting to get along in years but is still stronger than many men his younger. Unlike the other council members, he is dressed like a woodsman, with a hooded cloak, long bow, axes, and a well-worn pair of boots. Derlon has committed his life to the keepers, which has estranged him from his mother. She would rather he 'settle down,' get married, and give her some grandchildren. What she doesn't know is that he almost did. The crow that accompanies him everywhere is Regina, and they were betrothed. She was a sylvan like him before being permanently transformed into a crow. Now, he considers the keepers his family, and many of the younger ones are like his children. Derlon is well-traveled and even knows Gearld, the Dobberton Justiciar.

KEIFER

Keifer is very lean and has dark, styled hair. His clothes appear new and expensive. He likes gossip, especially about Dobberton. His primary concern is commerce.

ENRYN

Enryn is a crane woodkin, only the second woodkin to be on the council since it was formed generations ago. Though she means well, her attitude can come across as negative and pessimistic. Enryn and her family are heavily involved with helping woodkin who leave the Alwasgreen Forest. They help them find homes and food more consistent with their nature. Her brother manages a small fishing business on the High Stone River.

MERIGOLD

Marigold has wavy silver hair, blue eyes, and rough brown skin. She has a scar along her right arm down to her hand and is deaf in her right ear. She is even-tempered and usually speaks in a whisper. Her family farms nuts, berries, and other fruit-bearing trees native to the area.

TALIA

Talia is just past middle age, though probably not as old as Evelina. She is bald with a beautiful round face and reddish skin. Her head and arms are tattooed with vines and leaves. Various pieces of jewelry cover her body: wrists, neck, ears, and fingers. She is the liaison to the craftspeople of Kairia. Her family is primarily jewelers, but they also deal with potters, weavers, tailors, and more. She has a natural rivalry with Evelina, but Talia's ambitions are sometimes seen as self-serving. She likes to see things planned out and is quickly irritated when someone is lazy.

HADRIAN

Hadrian is Ivy's father. He is short with wiry, dark hair cut short. He has an olive complexion with a thin beard and mustache. He is a gardener of the Green Man (one who cultivates spiritual health in the people of the Green Man). He speaks on behalf of the churches in the community. He has a contentious relationship with Derlon since his daughter seems to favor the old ranger more than him. Most of the time, Hadrian is considerate and soft-spoken.

Hadrian doesn't understand why his daughter has become a keeper. He would much rather she do something safer, like follow in his footsteps and become a spiritual leader.



TO THE ATELIER

ABOUT THE HERITAGE STONE

Ember has a red stone where the blade meets the hilt. It glows red, magic always flowing. When you look closely, you can see that the heart of the stone is liquid. It looks like blood.

A Heritage Stone is a ruby with a drop of blood trapped in its center. Every member of the royal family, back to Orlun, the first king of Dobberton, has a Heritage Stone in the Heritage vault under the palace. If there's ever any question about the validity of one's royal lineage, the Heritage Stone can prove the truth beyond question. Few outside of the royal family have seen a Heritage Stone up close. Only when a child is born to the King and Queen are they even discussed. However, Derlon had the opportunity to see one years ago when he visited his friend, Gearld in Dobberton.

This is a key to how the magic of Ember is tied to the Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. More will be detailed later.

Ivy leads the party up one of the suspended paths, two guards trailing behind. Her long, dark green cloak swirls around her feet, occasionally shifting enough to show the end of an ornately carved scabbard at to her hip.

You are led to a large round room. Two guards at the entrance step aside, allowing you to enter. Soft light glows out through tall open windows that span floor to ceiling. Within the room, five sylvans sit in a semicircle, each on the floor with their legs crossed. Enryn, the crane, is with them. A pair of crows fly in through a window, one of which transforms into Derlon, the man with braided red hair. He sits with the group; the other crow hops up on his shoulder. Making the council seven.

An elegant woman with long braided hair and pure white robes pooled around her gestures to the space across from the group. There is room for each of you to sit, completing the circle. There is a small pedestal in the center. She gently implores, *"Please, place the dagger here and have a seat."*

EVELINA

Evelina guides the conversation. She is polite but does not wish the conversation to linger on trivialities. If the conversation drifts to tangents, she cuts directly to the reason for this meeting, Ember.

"Let's begin. I am Evelina, the speaker for the Fenmar Council. We represent the people of Kairia. I trust your stay has been pleasant thus far. May we have your names?"

She hardly allows enough time for each of the party to answer before going on.

"You left the Alwaysgreen Forest, crossed the rolling plains, and entered a cave in the foothills of the Verdant Mountains, correct? Your path was direct and intentional. How did you know about the dagger, and why did you seek it?"

Allow the party time to answer. Even though this meeting is tense, hopefully the sylvans have convinced them to speak honestly.

If the party doesn't want to talk, Evelina will take on a motherly tone, attempting to persuade them, "We just want to help." "I assure you we're on your side."

Once the party begins to open up to the Council, Hadrian wants to know about the Wood Sprite's curse. Derlon interrupts, angry to discover how dangerous the dagger actually is.

HADRIAN

Hadrian wants to know how Rohr-tan is connected to this.

"What of this 'Wood Sprite,' you called her? What is the nature of her curse? Is it spiritual or physical?"

DERLON

Derlon is direct when speaking about the dagger. If he feels that it is warranted, he will subtly threaten the party and anyone who would bring danger to his home. After the party reveals they were sent to find the dagger by the Wood Sprite, he adds:

"So, you knew the dagger was linked to Rohr-tan, and still you retrieved it! How foolish are you?"

"How do we know the dagger hasn't already begun to affect you? We know it to be evil. It may be manipulating you."

The party doesn't have long to respond to Derlon before the rest of the council starts shouting opinions and questions.

KEIFER

"I say send them back to Dobberton with that cursed dagger. It was their problem to begin with. Let them deal with it."

ENRYN

"Will this rot get into our water supply?"

MARIGOLD

"I'd like to know more about how the farms were affected by this rot."

HADRIAN

If there isn't something important to say, he will not say anything.

"My main concern is with the spiritual connection this dagger has with Rohr-tan. This isn't just the kind of evil that might cause someone to do a bad thing, like steal or lie. It's the kind of evil that corrupts one's soul. It's the kind of evil that destroys people."

Once it is suggested that the dagger be taken back to Dobberton he adds:

"And what if you fail? What if the dagger is used to release Rohr-tan?"

Evelina is calm and persuasive, Derlon is forceful and intimidating. Play these two personalities against one another. A kind of "good sylvan, bad sylvan".

Revealing the concept of a Heritage Stone to the party must not be overlooked.

A character might even remember Maegera trying to say something about the stone before he died.

Once a Heritage Stone is created, it never leaves the Heritage Vault. How could one be affixed to a dagger?

DERLON

Eventually, the red-headed dobber gets fed up with talking around how serious the situation is and interrupts:

The grizzled ranger abruptly stands, pointing down at the dagger on its pedestal. *"Do you not realize what that is?! It's a Heritage Stone. I'd bet my vines on it. That means Dobberton royalty. This isn't just about a magic dagger or even the Lightless. It's about the whole of Dobberton!"*

TALIA

"You're right, Derlon, that is a Heritage Stone. The royal family of Dobberton uses those to verify the family bloodline. That liquid inside is someone's blood. My understanding is they are kept in a vault deep under the palace. Whosever it is, or whoever put it in that dagger, they are behind this mess, rot and all."

If at any time one of the party tells the council that according to Maegera, the Wood Sprite is Calynn, add:

"If that wretched creature was once Calynn, doesn't it stand to reason that the dagger holds her Heritage Stone?"

Evelina will explain all they know about Heritage Stones if the party has questions. See the Heritage Stone side-bar on page 194.

EVELINA

If the party claims to have retrieved the dagger to protect their home or to keep it away from the Wood Sprite, she adds:

"They must take the dagger back to the Dobberton King. If that is a Heritage Stone, this is certainly a Dobberton matter."

Depending on how the characters respond during this conversation, it could feel more like an interrogation. Perhaps it is a cacophony of voices all talking over one another. The council is scared. They are desperate for reassurance that the party wants nothing to do with the evil of the dagger. They need to feel confident that the party's hands are the safest place for the dagger currently and that they are going to take it directly to King Quilan or Justiciar Gearld.

If the conversation goes well: The council concludes that the party doesn't mean any harm to their community. Yet, they have great concern regarding the Wood Sprite and the cursed dagger. Therefore, they tell the party they *must* take the dagger to Quilan, the Dobber King. They gift the party with some items to help in their journey.

If the conversation results in conflict: The party is told to leave with no gifts.

TO EACH, A GIFT IS GIVEN

Once it is decided that the party must take the dagger back to Dobberton and give it to the King, each member of the party is presented with a gift. Evelina has quickly gained some insight into the party and gives items that best suit each character's strength. Distribute the items below to the party, no more than one per character:

- Whip of Water (page 426)
- Forest Edge Blade (page 418)
- Nature's Gift (page 423)
- Leaf Glider (page 421)
- Cloak of Mist (page 417)
- Spinner Seed (page 425)

After the gifts are given, Evelina suggests that the party take another day to rest and recover. They are free to explore the city and would be welcome at a special meal in their honor this coming evening.

If the party wishes to stay in Kairia for the day, refer to page 185 for some locations that they may want to explore.

A TREETOP FEAST

The Fenmar Council put on a festive meal for the characters. The party takes place on a platform on top of a bald cypress with a massive circumference. There is room for dozens of dobbers and woodkin.

Tables overflowing with food are arranged by type. There is a table of fruits and desserts. One for salads, grilled vegetables, and raw. And one with a crawfish and potato stew. Animals of all kinds, not just woodkin, are welcome at the feast.

Dancing, games, food, and drinks flow long into the night. Energetic music led by a driving, multi-layered drum beat and harmonious woodwinds fills the night air. You have been welcomed by the sylvans, and for a time, you feel like you are one of them. For a time, you feel you belong in the trees!

ESCORTED FROM FENMAR

The next morning, the party is escorted to the pulley-operated elevator, then down the ramp to the path that skirts the edge of the High Stone River. They are led along the path until they round a bend that puts Kairia out of sight and are asked to once again don blindfolds.

A character would need to succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Survival) ability check to be able to recount the path leading back into the Fenmar Forest and the sylvan city of Kairia.

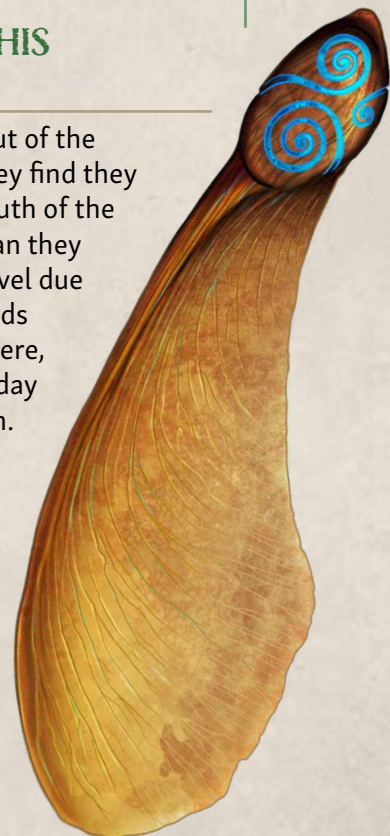
CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

Once the party is led out of the sylvan city of Kairia, they find they are further east and south of the Alwaysgreen Forest than they realized. They must travel due north across rolling fields and grasslands. From here, it is approximately a 3-day journey to South Watch.

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 8 and 9, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.

TO EACH, A GIFT IS GIVEN (OPTIONAL):
Peruse the items starting on page 412 for more gift options.



SOUTH WATCH

South Watch is the main point of egress between the large grain fields south of the Alwaysgreen Forest and the people of Dobberton. During harvest season, it is one of the busiest places in all of Dobberton.

THE GUARD HOUSE

The South Watch guard house sticks out like a sore thumb. It's three stories tall and most peculiar of all, it's not built into a tree. It just stands there, all by itself, a narrow, wooden tower.

THE WALL & GATES

The wall extends several hundred feet east and west into the forest. The wall isn't designed to keep people out or provide impenetrable defense. Since the walls don't extend all the way around the kingdom, someone can simply go around. However, wagons and other vehicles cannot. They need the easy travel of the King's Road. Therefore, those transporting loads of grain or other produce must pass through one of the three gates.

THE COMMERCE COMMISSION

Wilamina is the head of the Commerce Commission. The Commerce Commission is a relatively new organization instituted by the current king. The purpose of the Commerce Commission is to ensure that goods that come into Dobberton are properly distributed, fairly priced, and protected. There is a branch of the Commerce Commission in both South Watch and East Watch. Wilamina spends time in both, though she calls South Watch her home.

One of the main jobs of the Commerce Commission is to run the gates. The gate receives order requests from shops, grocers, and other businesses in Dobberton so that every wagon load of goods that passes through knows where to go. If a wagon load comes through that doesn't have an order request, they can help find a buyer. The Commission also helps set pricing based on supply and demand that season, given

they have a front-row view. Additionally, the Commission helps to maintain the main trade roads.

IRONWOOD ARMS

Weapons, armor, and other supplies to keep local heroes armed. Much of the equipment kept in the Ironwood Arms is explicitly for the Dobberton guard. However, Michan, the master-at-arms of the division of guards posted to South Watch, does keep a small store of simple weapons available to the public. You can find details on the weapons on page 432.



THE FOX HOLE

The Fox Hole is a simple inn that caters mostly to wagoners and farmers. The room on the ground floor is a simple waiting room. There's a large common room on the second floor if you don't mind sleeping on a straw mat or in a hammock. There are four private rooms above that, which cost a little more coin. The innkeeper is a young terrin dobber named Nanian. He mostly keeps to himself and lets the guests alone. It wouldn't be surprising if a guest stayed an extra night once in a while without paying.

SWEETY'S

Sweety is a handyman dobber, starting to get along in years. For years, he's been the go-to guy to repair wagon wheels and barrels. But that's not all he can do; in fact, he has a hard time saying no to just about any request. If it can be made out of wood, he can make it or figure out a close alternative. Everyone visits Sweety's eventually.

BUSHEL'S AND BARRELS

Bushels and Barrels is an eatery and tavern built of robust timber. Thick framing and wide plank board make it feel larger than it really is. It's an old tavern that passed to Gilli, the barkeep, from her father. Now, she and her spouse, Brien, serve locals and travelers along the King's Road with equal care.

WEIGH AND TRADE

From its outward appearance, Barlow's Weigh and Trade looks like a run-down conglomeration of barns built into a clump of pine trees. It is actually one of the busiest and most prosperous businesses in South Watch.

Barlow's first building keeps an enormous scale; each plate can hold up to 6 full-sized barrels. He'll weigh your grains by the sack-full, barrel-full, or even the wagon load. In the main storefront, he keeps a much smaller scale for weighing coins, gems, and jewels. A third warehouse is used for storage; some short-term, some long-term. If your wagoner is running late, you have to keep your produce somewhere.

LUCKY'S

Farm tools and general supplies, Lucky's has it all. Lucky specializes in goat cheese and fertilizers, both of which stink. Yes indeed, Lucky has what you need.



CHAPTER 8: RETURN TO DOBBERTON

The party must return to the Alwaysgreen Forest and, while doing so, are hunted by minions of decay who seek Ember.

BACKGROUND

Now that the party has left the protective sanctuary of the sylvan dobbers, Ember can be sensed by the Wood Sprite. Though she is still bound to the bog, her minions hunt. They can sense the taint that Ember carries. They smell it on the air and feel it in their veins. They are drawn to it. It is the key to her plans!

In the meantime, the Rat Claw Clan has grown impatient. The Wood Sprite had promised the clan a weakened Dobberton for them to conquer. They only needed to distribute and tend to her Seeds of Decay. Si-ak, the commander of the Rat Claw Clan

armies, has sent a fist of scouts to determine if she is delivering on her promise and, ultimately, to prepare for war. They have made camp south of the forest, in a low area, just out of sight from South Watch.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **CROSSING THE FIELDS.** The party must cross the great expanse of fields south of the Alwaysgreen Forest while carrying the cursed dagger.
- **SNEAKING THROUGH THE RATKIN CAMP.** The party discovers a Rat Claw Clan camp. They are preparing for an assault on Dobberton.



- **SOUTH WATCH.** South Watch is primarily an exchange post for the southern farms where goods move from the fields into the kingdom. The outpost is attacked by twisted forest creatures before the party can get help from any authorities.
- **THEY'VE COME FOR EMBER.** After reaching South Watch, another wave of decay monsters attack the party. They meet Milo, a magical item merchant, who thinks he can help by making an antimagic box. He tells them to go to Lake Wood to find Amarak and an antimagic stone.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with

Chapters 7 and 9, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.

There are two main goals of this chapter: first, to escalate the sense of danger for the party. They are carrying Ember, and it should become apparent that minions of the Wood Sprite can sense it and are hunting it. Use the Random Encounters that start on page 112 or make up your own scenarios of decay monsters pursuing them as they cross the fields.

Second, they meet Milo, who will help them hide Ember by creating an antimagic box. But in order to do so, they need to find an antimagic stone. He believes Amarak in Lake Wood has one.

The **shrieking wolf**, shown below and on page 403, is a relentless hunter. To increase the sense of danger, add these wolves, to encounters as the party crosses the fields on their way back to Dobberton.

CROSSING THE FIELDS

A lot has changed for the party in the handful of days since they met the Wood Sprite and left the Alwaysgreen Forest. Now, they must return.

You look out over the land from atop a foothill of the Verdant Mountains. The Alwaysgreen Forest seems so far away, just a dark patch on the horizon, the morning sun just beginning to light up the remaining autumn leaves.

WHILE THEY CROSS THE FIELDS, THE PARTY IS BEING HUNTED.

The crossing will take about three days. Shorten this to two days or increase it to four. As the GM, it's up to you how you execute this. Consider four or more encounters per day. You can roll on the Random Encounters table or choose the specific encounters you feel fit the story best. If you roll random encounters, use a d12+6. The encounters in that range fit this portion of the adventure. Optionally, you can pull from the Bestiary, using any creature you'd like to create your own encounters.

After descending the mountains, the party has miles of rolling fields to cross before reaching the southern edge of the forest. Their origin from Kairia is much further east and south than the route they took to the Terrin Caves in Chapter 6. From here, their most direct path will lead them to South Watch.

It will take three full days, maybe more, for the party to cross the fields and reach South Watch. While they are crossing, roll random encounters or choose the ones you like. Ember is a beacon to creatures of decay, far and wide

SMOKE ON THE HORIZON

Toward the end of the party's last day of travel across the fields, they notice a whisp of smoke rising from a naturally low part of the ground.

They are approaching a ratkin camp, clearly visible from their southern vantage. The way it is positioned, the hill north of it makes it unlikely anyone approaching from the north would



notice it until they were right on top of it. Thus, the people of South Watch likely have no clue there's a ratkin camp so close.

THE RATKIN CAMP

The camp is sparse. There are no tents or similar structures, only piles of dried wheat and hay for sleeping pallets. There's a haphazard pile of gear, a fire pit, and a pot for cooking.

Sitting around the fire are two **ratkin warriors**, two **ratkin scouts**, and one **ratkin berserker**. There is one additional ratkin warrior and one scout patrolling, each on opposite sides of the camp. While they were instructed to patrol the whole area around the camp, their focus has been to the north. It just so happens that neither notices the party when it approaches from the south.

If the party goes around the camp or lingers at its edge, they may be caught unaware by those on patrol. The ratkin scout can be detected by a character who has a passive Perception of 18 or higher or if they succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. The warrior scout can be detected by a character who has a passive Perception of 13 or higher or if they succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check.

If the party approaches the camp, they can remain undetected, should they choose to be, with a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. In doing so, they can overhear the chatter of those around the fire. Read or paraphrase the following scene:

The biggest of the five ratkin sits on a bulging sack. He leans toward the guttering fire, orange light glinting off his big incisors and red eyes. He thrusts an ugly curved knife into the coals and pulls out a bit of what must be charred meat.

He foolishly takes a bite. His eyes get big as he realizes it's too hot, and he quickly spits it out. He launches from his seat and dunks his head in a nearby bucket, presumably full of water, slurping loudly.

Cackles, guffaws, and chiggers of laughter erupt from his companions. A thin ratkin with wiry black fur is so overcome with mirth he falls, rolling on the dusty ground.

"What are you laughing at!?" roars the big one as he springs from the bucket, landing with his full weight on black fur. The laughs fall silent. The big one presses his knife to the throat of black fur. *"I asked you a question, what's so funny?"*

The one with black fur stammers, *"n-n-nuthin'."*

The big one lifts his knife to point it at the others, eyeing each one.

A grey-furred ratkin, not quite so small as the black-furred one, steps forward, palms up. *"Com'on boss, we ain't mean nuthin' at you. We's just havin' a laugh about dobbers. You know, thinkin' about how surprised they'll be when we attack! It'll be hilarious, right boss?"*

"The big one slowly steps off of black fur, putting away his knife, beginning to chuckle, *"You're right, Yellow Tooth. They won't know what hit them."* He suddenly punches the one he called Yellow Tooth, sending him sprawling to the ground. He bursts into laughter so brazen and loud it makes your skin crawl.

The **ratkin warrior**, **ratkin scout**, and the **ratkin berserker** are found on pages 384 and 385.

The other ratkin force themselves to join their chief's laughter for fear they might be next to feel his wrath. The laughter dies down, and four of the five return to various seats around the dim fire. Yellow Tooth curls up on one of the sleeping pads away from the fire to nurse his hurt jaw. Their discussion stumbles along without much direction. Most of their talk revolves around insulting the dobbers or complimenting themselves.

If the characters continue to listen, eventually, they will learn that there is a scouting party led by a ratkin called Soft Paw in the Alwaysgreen Forest right now. They should be returning to camp any time. However, if the characters wait long enough to overhear this part of the conversation, the ratkin scout that was on patrol sneaks up behind them. Unless one of the party is on active lookout duty, someone must have a passive Perception of 18 or higher to notice the ratkin's approach.

She takes a shot at one of the characters with her heavy bow, then shouts for the ratkin at camp. *Roll initiative, combat ensues.*

If the characters do not wait, they can move into the camp, surprising the ratkin. Ratkin who are surprised can't move or take an action on their first turn of the combat and can't take a reaction until that turn ends.

The ratkin will always assume they are superior in strength and fighting ability. Yet, they don't intend to die here. If they feel their advantage slipping away, they will flee to the forest and hide.

If any of the ratkin are captured and interrogated by the party, characters can learn from the following:

- The big one, a ratkin berserker, goes by Mudvein.
- Soft Paw is the second for this fist,

and he has led a group into the Alwaysgreen Forest. They are scouting for any vulnerabilities that may have been caused by the rot.

- Si-ak, the commander of the Rat Claw Clan armies, is planning to attack regardless of what this scouting party finds. Dobberton doesn't stand a chance! It'll be like a horgorath swallowing a dung beetle.
- No, they don't know when the attack will be, but they hope it's soon.
- Of course, they know about the previous fist of ratkin that was helping the Wood Sprite with her magic rot seeds.
- They also know a dobber named Saggard was helping them.
- They do not know anything about Calynn.

Either in the aftermath of combat or while the characters are questioning the ratkin, read:

The distant sound of screaming, carried on the night breeze, just reaches your ears. You look north; a yellow glow undulates out of the darkness at the edge of the horizon. That unmistakable yellow light can only be one thing: fire, a big one.

SOUTH WATCH

If the party runs, they can reach the South Watch gate in less than 15 minutes. Once they arrive, they find guard tower and a portion of the wall on the west side of the road are on fire. It looks like bushels of hay made the blaze easy to start. Citizens, with the help of one **Dobberton guard**, have formed a bucket brigade to keep the fire from spreading. Two other guards struggle against murderous ratkin.

Mudvein is, of course, a **ratkin berserker**, page 385.

The **Dobberton guard** is on page 355.

Fire blazes from bushels of hay against the tall wooden walls that block the road between Dobberton from the southern fields. Its walls stretch into the forest on either side of its three closed gates. A dobberton guard, flanked by two brave citizens with sticks fend off murderous ratkin while a group of farmers try to put out the fire.

There are two **ratkin warriors** and four **ratkin scouts** led by Soft Paw. They are not here to win a battle. They are here to test the Dobberton defenses and cause havoc. When the party engages, they will quickly retreat into the forest and hide. The party can **Let the Ratkin Run** or **Chase the Ratkin**.

LET THE RATKIN RUN

If the party does not pursue them, citizens urge them to help put out the fire. It doesn't take long before it's under control. Proceed to **Inside the Gate**.

CHASING THE RATKIN

If the party pursues them, they are led into a trap. In their scouting efforts, the ratkin have discovered a stream overrun with rot poisoning. It is home to a particularly nasty conglomeration of decay monsters.



Stats for the **walking fungus** and **plague fungus** are on page 392.

The **rot slime** is on 399 and the **decay bear** is on 388.

If the party survives the trap set by the ratkin, they will fight to the death.

These ratkin are fast and clearly know the terrain. At the crest of the next rise, one looks back at you, cracks a wicked smile, and bounds over the hill out of sight.

When reaching the top of the rise, the ratkin you were pursuing are nowhere to be seen. A creek runs perpendicular to your path, lined by unnaturally large mushrooms with purple spores blanketing the ground around them. An earthen cave opens into the hill on the other side of the creek.

The party immediately notices tracks in the dirt at the entrance to the cave, leading in. There are three **walking fungi** and one **plague fungus** among the other fungi. There are two **rot slimes** along the edge of the water. The ratkin have hidden in the underbrush, equally divided, 30 feet away to either side of the cave entrance. There is a **decay bear** inside the cave.

As long as the party focuses on the tracks, the fungi and slimes remain motionless and nearly undetectable. If a character has a passive Perception of 16, they notice the decay creatures. However, those creatures don't attack unless the party does or if the ratkin attack.

The tracks in front of the cave are clearly ratkin. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that they were placed there intentionally. A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to find the true tracks leading to where the ratkin are hidden on either side of the cave.

Ambush! The ratkin, fungi, and slimes all attack. If possible, they push the party into the cave, where the decay bear is waiting to rip the party to shreds.

INSIDE THE GATE

On the other side of the gates, there are a dozen stalls for foxes and wagons. Attached is the Commerce Commission building, where merchants can hire transport of goods from the fields. The stall closest to the wall has only light damage from the fire.

A number of dobbers and woodkin bustle about in the aftermath of the fire. All that is left of the bucket brigade is a muddy path from sloshed water leading off into the forest, presumably to the nearest water source.

A tall dobber with a long red cloak seems to have taken charge, sending workers to the wall to begin repairs and directing others out of the way.

WILLAMINA

Willamina is unfazed by the surprise attack. Not a hair of her tight black bun is out of place. She knows that maintaining the gates is paramount to the Commerce Commission and, in her opinion, the entire Dobberton economy. She will not rest until they are restored to full working order.

She will thank the party for helping with the fire and ratkin attack, then happily send them to work on the wall. If pressed, she will share a few curt details:

- *"To my knowledge, this is the first sighting of the Rat Claw Clan in a very long time."*
- *"If you take the night at the Fox Hole, tell them Willamina and all of South Watch are in your debt. They will give you a discount."*
- She will share details about the Commerce Commission if asked.
- The party may realize, with the carts and foxes around, that they can get Ember to the King faster if they travel by wagon. If they ask about hiring transportation, she will direct them to Bushels and Barrels.

Before they can talk much longer, a slender dobber with a fine blue coat interrupts. He looks barely old enough to grow a beard, and the coat is tight, as if he's put on a few pounds. Maddox is in the employ of a wealthy merchant from the Dobberton capitol. He's very upset that his transport of barley will now be delayed. He was already upset that the amount was so meager. Maddox takes over Willamina's attention, making it clear that the party will get no further help.

GUMP

Nearby, an elderly dobber with a short white beard is comforting a large, though thin, grey fox. The fox is hitched to a simple two-wheeled cart. One side of it is dark from the fire but not significantly damaged. He catches your eye and nods his thanks for your help with the fire and ratkin.

*What will the party do next? They may want to have a drink with Gump at **Bushels and Barrels**. Maybe they want to get some rest at the **Fox Hole**? Or they may want to keep moving, striving to get to the King as soon as they can.*

*The next two scenes will be **Meeting Milo** and **The Tree Golem Attack**. Those scenes can occur regardless of where the party chooses to go next. Adjust them to fit your narrative in any way you, the GM, need.*

The elderly dobber goes by Gump. His fox is named Emmal he just calls her 'Em.' If the party approaches, he offers to buy them a drink at Bushels and

Barrels. He'll even give them a ride in the back of his cart.

If the party would rather go somewhere else in town, such as the Fox Hole, he'll gladly take them. If they ask for a ride to Dobberton, he refuses. Even if they offer to buy Em and his cart, he refuses. He's a farmer and got no use for the city.

BUSHEL AND BARRELS

This simple building of sturdy timber is built into the base of a maple tree. It's a very old tavern, passed down through generations. Gilli, the barkeep, and her spouse have their personal rooms behind the kitchen which is behind the bar, further into the tree's trunk. Bushels and Barrels also boasts half a dozen private dining and meeting rooms off the main room, making it ideal for civic meetings and parties.

As you step through the double doors of Bushels and Barrels, you are assaulted by the strange smell of stale barley and sweet maple. A variety of square and round tables with mismatched chairs fill the large room's floor. A long bar of age-polished wood stands in front of the back wall, which is the rough-hewn wood of a maple trunk.

Gilli

The barkeep is a stout female dobber named Gilli. She is a retired **Dobberton guard** and takes no guff. Though the city caters mostly to farmers and trades folk, she knows how to spot a traveling hero. She will go out of her way to make sure they are well cared for. She keeps a small arsenal of exotic weapons and poisons in a secret room behind the bar.

*The menu for **Bushels and Barrels** is on the next page.*

***Gump** is a wagoner looking for work. As he and his fox Emmal have slowed with age, the jobs come less frequent.*

*The stats for a **Dobberton guard** are on page 355.*

BUSHELS & BARRELS MENU

FOOD

Pinenut bread and whey cheese	3 greys
Dried portobello, sliced thick and cashew bread	6 greys
Barley vegetable stew	3 greys
Wheat porridge with maple syrup	2 greys
Hot maple apples and oats	3 greys

DRINKS

Maple barley beer	3 greys
Bitter malt	5 greys
Squash juice	2 greys
Oat milk	2 greys

WEAPONS (SECRET MENU)

Pair of +1 daggers	29 primes
+1 copper short sword	42 primes
Repeating crossbow (page 81)	98 primes
Energy whip (page 67)	19 primes
The Guardsman (page 414)	16 primes
Expoding darts, bag of 13 (page 63)	8 primes

POTIONS (SECRET MENU)

Potion of Detect Thoughts (1 available)	120 primes
Potion of Healing (3 available)	30 primes
Potion of Greater Healing (1 available)	50 primes
Go Go Powder (1 available) (page 71)	19 primes
Rage Powder (1 available) (page 72)	66 primes

THE FOX HOLE MENU

ACCOMODATIONS

Small room, sleeps 2 (4 available)	1p 20g
Common room cot (12 available)	60 greys
Common room hammic (6 available)	50 greys

PATRONS

The main room is quiet, a somber atmosphere lingering in the aftermath of the gate fire. Patrons enjoy their drinks and food both at tables and at the bar. A few patrons of note are as follows:

Brien

Brien is a handsome dobber with a hard face, grey hair, and bright blue eyes. Soot covers his well-worn clothing, and sweat covers his brow. Brien is Gilli's spouse. He's at the bar, enjoying a well-earned bitter malt after helping to put out the fire at the gates.

Estel

Estel is an exceptionally beautiful sylvan dobber with silver hair and dark amber eyes. She wears modest garments and carries a long knife.

Burbrubb

Burbrubb is a short yet rotund stoat woodkin, with black fur and blue eyes. He wears well-made clothing, and several pouches hang from his belt. He speaks with a loud voice and gets louder after enjoying a few maple beers.

Thatur

Thatur has a round face, with red hair and light amber eyes. She wears chain mail and wields a hammer. Thatur is a private guard for the Commerce Commission. She's looking for information about an alleged thief who goes by the Newt.

THE FOX HOLE

The first floor of the Fox Hole looks like a simple shack. It's built into a birch tree and has a small hedged yard. The entry room has a few refreshments and a place to sit until Nanian, the

innkeeper, comes to greet any who wish to take a night.

Accommodations upstairs consist of a large common room with wooden cots and several hammocks. Further up, on the third floor, are small private rooms, each with a straw-filled mattress. A shed behind the inn has room for foxes and martins.

The small waiting room of the Fox Hole has a couch, a few chairs, and a small table with doors on either side. On the table, a clay pitcher with just a few drops of water in the bottom sits nestled with overturned wooden cups. There is a bell nearby with the note, 'Ring bell for service.' Other than that and the substantial dust bunnies in the corners, the room is empty.

Nanian

The innkeeper is a young terrin dobber named Nanian. His father was a thief, now deceased. Authorities never found his father's last score, a treasure that would allow someone to live like a king. Nanian thinks he might know where it's hidden. He just must wait long enough to be sure he's not being watched.

If one of the party rings the bell, Nanian comes up from his personal quarters through the door left of the table. His rooms are below, among the roots. The door on the right leads upstairs to the common room.

GUESTS

A few guests are using the cots and hammocks of the common room. Only one of the private rooms on the third floor is occupied. A few patrons of note are as follows:

Etherin

Etherin is a cleric employed by the Commerce Commission. He's tall and

Etherin has another patient hidden in the woods, one of the ratkin from the attack. While he is committed to the defense of South Watch, he is also committed to helping those in need. Maybe by helping this ratkin, the Star Father will help her to see that dobbers are not the enemy. Maybe her heart can be changed.

Etherin knows most dobbers would see this as treasonous, so he is doing all he can to keep his aid to the ratkin a secret. If the party speaks with him, he'll cut the conversation short because he must get back to his patient.

A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Insight) check will suspect that Etherin is hiding something. It will then require a successful DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) check to get him to tell the party about the injured ratkin he is helping. If a character in the party uses Intimidation, Etherin will refuse to speak to them any further.

heavysset, with matted black hair and hazel eyes. His hands are pressed against a wound on the thigh of an elderly dobber lying in one of the cots, Mervin. Etherin has been busy in recent weeks helping the sick and injured around South Watch. Tonight was especially busy with the attack on the gates.

If the party speaks with the cleric, he seems to be carefully picking his words. He talks about how the animals that are normally peaceful in the area have turned savage. He knows one man who was attacked by squirrels! He also has growing concerns about a mysterious illness that seems to be growing in the area.

Mervin

Mervin is a slender dobber with a deep, wrinkled face and long white hair pulled back into a tail. He cleans and maintains the stalls near the gates. His old grey trousers are caked with grime from the

Brien, Thatur, and Etherin have their stats detailed, starting on page 352.

*If approached by the party, **Etherin** is eager to tell someone about the new dangers in the forest.*

knees down. His left thigh is dark with drying blood where he took a ratkin spear.

Duli

Duli is using one of the private rooms on the third floor. He has copper hair, grey eyes, and a wide mouth. He wears simple clothing and carries a long knife. He's a grain wagoner who transports goods between South Watch and Dobberton. His red fox, Prys, is bedded down in the shed behind the inn.

Grery

Grery is asleep in one of the hammocks. He's a farmhand who works the southern fields, has braided golden hair, and a braided beard. His clothing is simple but well cared for.

Grery is groggy if awoken, but he'll talk to the party. He's worried about his job; a lot of the produce from the fields went rotten far too quickly. Also, a tortoise his buddy uses to pull wagons went mad. He'd never seen anything like it. It attacked anyone who came near... *with tentacles!*

THEY'VE COME FOR EMBER

TIN

Tin is a bit down on his luck, between jobs, and lost in his cup. He has tin-colored hair and light brown eyes. He wears travel-stained clothing and carries an old shovel. He has bits of metal tied to

his body with rope and vine. Every move he makes causes it to clang and ring. That and his malevolent smile makes everyone around him uncomfortable.

Tin has been infected by rot poisoning. The voices of decay speech have pushed him near madness. He thinks tying metal to his body will keep the voices away, but it's not working. Surprisingly, he's not far off; had he used copper, it might actually have helped (see page 359, the Gleam of Copper).

The voices have told Tin about Ember. They've told him to find it. He can sense it with the party.

A dobber with pieces of metal tied over travel-stained clothes suddenly rushes toward you. Discordant clangs accent his odd, erratic movements. He grabs at you. *"They come! The decay comes,"* he cackles! *"They want the Ember. You cannot hide!"*

A second man with a blue conical hat and a thick-wired monocle intervenes, grabbing the first by the shoulders, *"Take it easy, friend. What's this about decay?"*

The second man is Milo. He talks to the man wearing metal, calming him, learning what he can about the decay.

Introduce Tin and Milo to the party regardless of where they are at this point. Tin bursts into the room or rushes up to them on the street. Milo then joins, hoping to settle Tin down.

- *If the party goes to Bushels and Barrels, Milo is one of the patrons having a drink.*
- *If they go to the Fox Hole, he's settling down on one of the straw mats in the common room, having arrived just before the party.*
- *If they go to neither, he's observing from just off the road they are traveling.*



MILO

Milo wears a cone-shaped blue hat, like that of generations past. He has a round face and sharp eyes that measure everything they see. He wears a heavy long coat over a bulky tunic and trousers. One with a suspicious eye might suspect he's hiding something under all that cloth.

Milo has been aware of the rot almost as long as the party. He first found evidence near South Watch and his own home, Thanwen, right after it moved into the farms of Litewyck. For the last few days, the forest has been

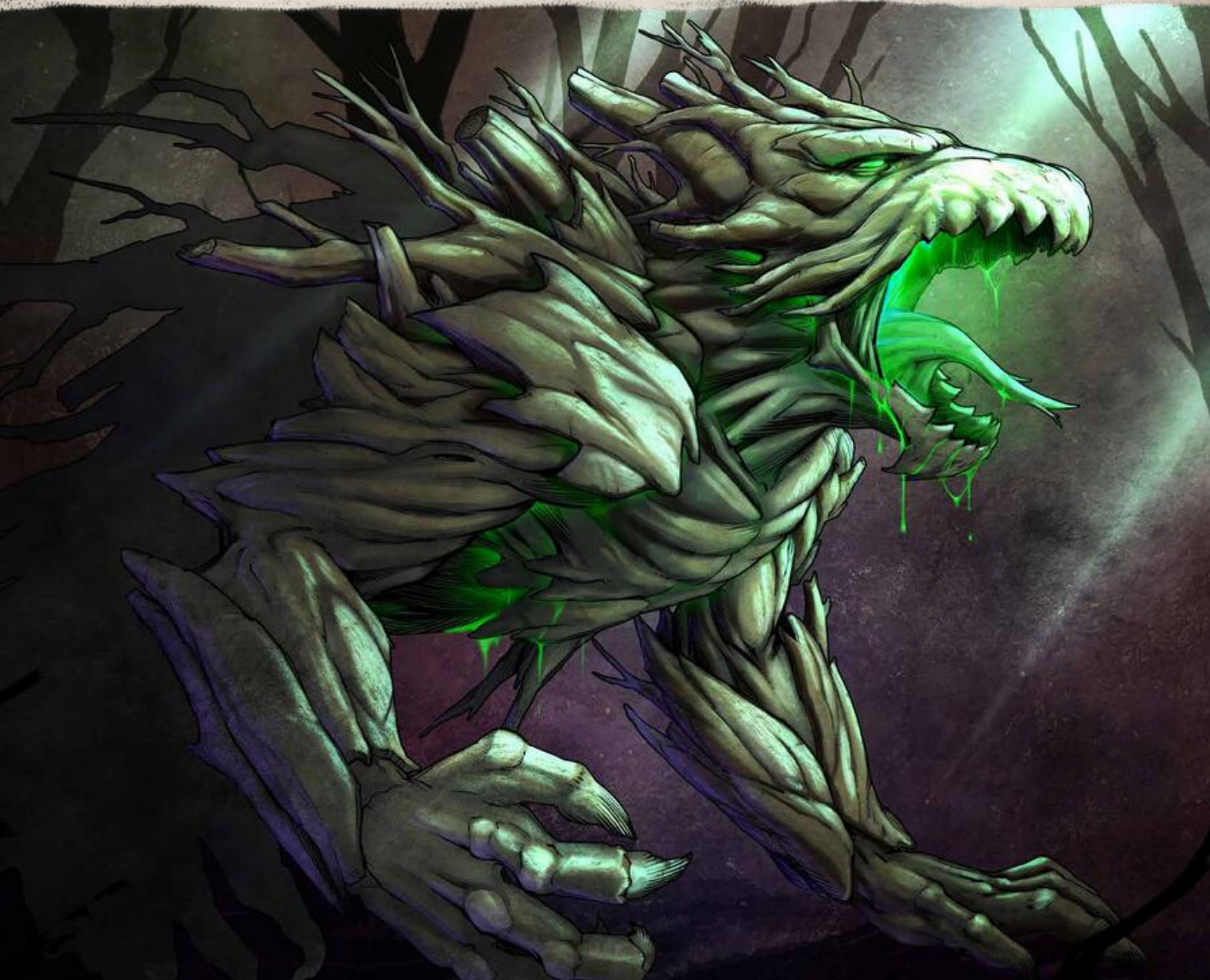
full of twisted and dangerous versions of common creatures. The forest has changed. It's hurting and angry. He can feel it, and he has some evidence to back it up.

Milo uses a modified version of the **Investigation Monocle**. He's modified it to not only give him truesight but to also alert him to the presence of arcane rot. He sees it all over Tin. He has been using the monocle to diagnose other people who've contracted rot poisoning. He refers to it as 'decay sickness.'

The party's conversation with Milo and Tin can barely begin before

Milo is on page 353.

*The **investigation monocle** can be found on page 71.*



another wave of decay monsters attack. Paraphrase the following to fit the location of the party:

A crash of breaking wood shatters your attention on the two strangers. An enormous form of wood, moss, and decay smashes through tree limbs and buildings. A massive, wooden hand picks up a table and tosses it away like a dry leaf.

Thick timbers pivot under a mass of bark and brambles, parting to form a terrifying maw. Its roar nearly bursts your eardrums. Green energy radiates from the mouth like heat, and rot drips between jagged wooden teeth.

The **Tree Golem**, six **rot ravens**, three **walking fungi**, and two **plague fungi** surge to attack. Most of the nearby townsfolk scatter, including Tin.

Milo helps from the beginning, standing shoulder-to-shoulder in combat with the party. Creatures come into melee range according to the following:

1st round: The rot ravens swoop in, all attacking the character carrying Ember.

2nd round: The tree golem comes into melee range after having smashed through any obstacles between it and the party. It recklessly attacks whoever is in front.

3rd round: two walking fungi and one plague fungi come into melee range. Also, beginning this round, some townsfolk join. Gilli, Brien, Thatur, and Etherin engage the walking and plague fungi, allowing the party and Milo to focus on the tree golem.

4th round: any remaining hostile creatures engage.

This is a potentially deadly encounter for the party. As the GM, you can use the NPCs as needed. After the tree golem shows how much damage it can do, Milo will reveal his flame thrower contraption from under his baggy clothes.

WE NEED TO TALK

As soon as the tree golem is defeated, Milo pulls the party into a nearby building. It appears to be a home, vacated when the tree golem attacked.

"You must hide; more are surely coming. What do you have that they want?" The man with the conical hat puts his monocle into his left eye and looks at who is carrying the cursed dagger. *"I see the decay; you're carrying it!"*

Milo eagerly questions the party about their adventures. Hopefully, Milo has earned their trust after fighting alongside them.



The **tree golem** can be found on page 406.

The **walking fungus** and **plague fungus** are on page 392.

Stats for **rot ravens** are on page 399.

For **Gilli** a **Dobberton guard** are on page 355.

Stats for **Brien**, **Thatur**, and **Etherin** can be found on page 352.

He quickly puts together the pieces; *the decay monsters are after the cursed dagger.*

After the party tells Milo about Ember, he says:

"You'll never reach the King with that dagger the way those monsters are hunting you. I have an idea."

Milo tells the party that he's a tinkerer. He believes he can make an antimagic box that, if the cursed dagger is inside, will prevent the decay monsters from being able to find it.

If there is a tinkerer character in the party, Milo will happily share plans for the antimagic box with them.

There's just one problem: to power the antimagic box, they need an antimagic stone, called a black diamond by some. There's a rumor that Amarak, a retired paladin in Lake Wood, has one. The party must go to Lake Wood and get the stone from Amarak. The dagger is simply too dangerous if it is not hidden!

Milo will stay here and build the box. As soon as it's done, he will head toward Lake Wood and join the party so that the antimagic stone can immediately be applied.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

The party continues to face ever-increasing danger, and it may seem they are at their breaking point. **Is the forest doomed? Must they continue to face such reckless destruction?**

The party has two chief options: look for the antimagic stone in Lake Wood or stick with their original plan and take Ember to the King as quickly as possible.

TO LAKE WOOD TO FIND THE ANTIMAGIC STONE.

Lake Wood is less than a day's travel by foot from South Watch. But if the party doesn't find the antimagic stone there, they've wasted a lot of time. They are putting a lot of faith in Milo, a

dobber they just met, that this is the best plan. What's more, Milo doesn't know exactly how to find Amarak. He assures the party that someone in Lake Wood will know where to find the old-timer; *after all, he's a famous Blue Star paladin, just ask around.*

STRAIGHT TO DOBBERTON AND THE KING. Despite the horrendous attack of the tree golem, the party may decide to go straight to Dobberton. They must know that they will risk further attacks from all sorts of decay monsters that are hunting Ember.

Dobberton is almost three days by foot from South Watch. Use the Random Encounter table on page 112 to generate four or more encounters per day. Roll a d12+6 to randomly select those encounters or choose the specific encounters you like. Embellish and increase the danger as you see fit.

If the party chooses to go straight to Dobberton, skip Chapter 9. Go on to Chapter 10, Palace Infiltration.

Is there a faster way? The party can reduce their travel time by one-half if they go by fox-pulled wagon. Unfortunately, after the tree golem attack, there are no wagoneers in South Watch willing to be hired. The party will have to be a little more creative, or at least, very persuasive. Maybe they should talk to Gump?

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 7 and 9, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.



CHAPTER 9: THE LAKE WOOD TERROR

Milo has sent the party to Lake Wood to seek an antimagic stone from the retired paladin, Amarak. Milo believes it can be used to create an antimagic box in which to hide Ember.

BACKGROUND

For several days, the party has been relentlessly hunted by decay monsters. Now, they head to Lake Wood to find the antimagic stone Milo told them about. Unfortunately, Lake Wood has some trouble of its own. A pack of twisted, wolf-like creatures hunts around the lake. And there are rumors of unseen creatures dragging livestock into the water. Many who call the lake home may be forced to leave. The party may be Lake Wood's last hope.

THE GREAT UMZOLLI AND THE MOHKGAARB

The umzolli is a giant vining plant. It thrives in water where its roots and vines can grow and spread beneath the surface of the water. Its neck stalk extends high above the water, an enormous bloom at the top, reaching for sunlight and any birds it can snatch out of the air. The vines that grow from the roots beneath the water are tissue-thin, tender, grass-like leaves that dance with the shifting currents. They fill the surrounding water with nutrients that attract fish from miles around. The



roots provide protection for the fish. The thin vines provide food. The largest of umzolli have been known to shelter hundreds of fish at a time.

The mohkgaarb are a simple, reptilian race that worships the umzolli. The mohkgaarb love fish. And, while they are capable hunters, the ease with which they can catch and feast upon fish that have been attracted by the umzolli is an opportunity too good to pass up.

When solitary, the umzolli usually hunts birds, using its incredibly long neck stalk to snatch them out of the sky. But, given the opportunity, it will eat almost any mammal it can get its toothy bloom around. This is where the mohkgaarb come in. They hunt for the carnivorous flower, not only birds, but often much larger meats. Both the mohkgaarb and umzolli would survive

on their own, but together, they thrive.

Until now, there has never been an umzolli in the Alwaysgreen Forest or anywhere near it, for that matter. Now, one has sprouted in the most unlikely of places, an inlet off of Lake Croi. The mohkgaarb have moved in, partially damming the inlet so that much of the water is stagnant. The only water that still flows is near the bottom, where the biggest fish roam.

LAKE WOOD

Lake Wood and its sister city, Swan Hill, are on opposite sides of Lake Croi in the southeastern part of Dobberton. While Lake Wood is more blue-collar than Swan Hill, both are quite prosperous. The region is rich with resources such as nuts, fruits, and the unique saps dobbers use to treat wood so that it has the strength of metal or stone.

Gabbard isn't interested in talking about his heritage or past. His big hat conceals those tell-tale square terrin ears and makes it easier to keep the past where it belongs. It's not likely new visitors to the café would realize he's not a common dobber.

Lake Wood also serves the grain farms south of Dobberton. Trade Row, the common name for Hawthorn Road, runs right through the heart of Lake Wood. It connects with the north-south traveling King's Road, a heavily used road, for citizens and trade. Two robust watermills operate along the Greenway River before it spills into Lake Croi. The squeak of the water wheels that turn the grinding stones within can be heard from dawn 'til dusk. As a result, Lake Wood is also known for its breads and pastries. Leelan makes the best fruit-filled tarts in all of Dobberton. Come fall and winter, Tedric's canning and preserving techniques are second to none.

The people of Lake Wood are known for their hardworking, constantly busy attitude. The rivalry with Swan Hill stems from the hardworking nature of the Lake Wooders. The dobbers of Swan Hill know the value of slowing down. Many dobbers in Swan Hill are older and have had prosperous lives. It is here they've chosen to live out their golden years. Their homes are built right on the northern edge of Lake Croi, so they can always enjoy the view of sunlight glinting off the water.

AMARAK AND ROSA

Amarak is a retired paladin, though most don't know his whole story. He is nearly blind, yet he can always find his way to the café where he can be found sharing a story and sipping a huckleberry ale. His stories focus on great battles and daring rescues. He rarely refers to himself in these stories,

though the details he shares make it hard to believe he wasn't the central character. Not everyone knows he was a paladin; those that do know he was of great renown.

Rosa is Amarak's wife. She's a bit of a matriarch for the town. She always has kind words and wisdom to share. If you get too close, she'll grab you in a somewhat rough hug and kiss you on the cheek. Her long, wiry gray hair sticks out in all directions, and her thick glasses make her eyes look too big for her face.

GABBARD

Gabbard is the proprietor of Gabbard's Café, the most active eatery and inn of Lake Wood. He's a terrin dobber, which most of the townsfolk know, but he wears an odd, knitted hat that comes down over his ears.

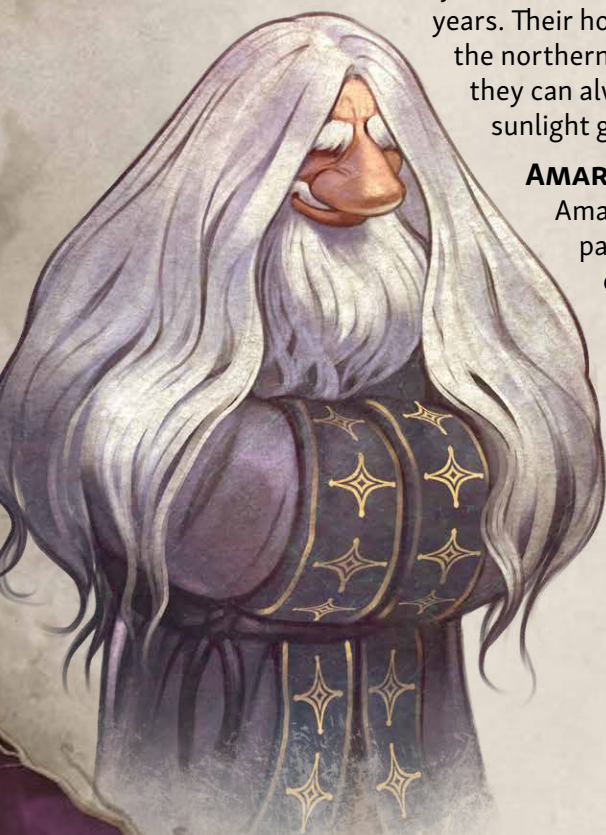
Gabbard is more of a listener than a talker, but when he does speak, he tends to be brutally honest. He has no patience for insincerity or beating around the bush. He's found this direct approach has served him well in running the business and as an elder in the community.

TRAVELING CIRCUS

Argus and the amazing horned tortoise.

Argus is an awakened **brown bear** who's assembled a group of traveling entertainers. Gurney is his best friend, a giant blue tortoise. They've fabricated huge, curved horns for Gurney to wear, plus spikes to go along the back of his shell. Characters would have to look very close to see that they are fake, succeeding on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) roll. The two never break character, insisting that Gurney is one-of-a-kind. No other tortoise like him has ever been in the Alwaysgreen Forest.

Argus and his crew are performing all this week on the peninsula that extends into Lake Croi. This is, of course, directly in front of Gabbard's Café.



Tickets are only one Prime (1gp) each. See Gabbard for details.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **To Amarak.** The party travels to Lake Wood to find an old Paladin, Amarak. Milo has told them Amarak has a piece of the black gemstone needed to create an antimagic box that they can keep Ember in, effectively stopping the Wood Sprite's minions from being able to track them.
- **Argus has been Kidnapped.** When the party arrives at Lake Wood, they notice a traveling circus has just begun setting up their main tent, but their first stop should be Gabbard's Café. While talking to Gabbard and other locals, a commotion arises across from the little eatery. A band of mohkgaarb splash out of the lake, attacking the traveling circus that was preparing for this evening's performance. Before anyone can respond, they take their conductor, Argus, the brown bear, captive and drag him into the lake.
- **Otis's Farm.** The attackers flee back into the lake, swimming much too fast for the party to pursue. A handful of clues direct them to Otis's farm. When they finally arrive, they meet Daris, the goose. She knows where the mohkgaarb hideout is.
- **Umzolli Cave.** Using Daris's instructions, the party finds the cave where the mohkgaarb have taken Argus to be a sacrifice to the Great Umzolli! The party must fight their way through the mohkgaarb caves to the umzolli temple to save Argus from being the carnivorous flower's next meal.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 5. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 7 and 8, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.

The party is in Lake Wood to get an antimagic stone from the local paladin, Amarak. While they are here, they can earn Amarak's trust by saving the people of Lake Wood from a giant plant monster.

GABBARD'S CAFÉ

The road widens as you come into Lake Wood. Ahead of you, a pair of dobbers are deep in discussion; one is leaning on a porch rail, and a floppy knitted hat sits low over his head. The other, by his dress, is the hard, work-with-your-hands type. The cuff on both his pant legs and sleeves are stained by years of farming. Past them, a group is unloading a brightly painted wagon. In this group are dobbers, a brown bear, and a huge blue turtle. Though it's hard to be sure from this vantage, it looks like the turtle has great curved horns! It appears a circus is in town. Beyond them, the last trace of deep golden sunlight reflects off the low water of Lake Croi.

Once someone in the party is close enough, they can hear the one with stained sleeves say, *"Daris seems to be their leader. She won't even talk to me. Just squawks when I gets near. Squawk, squawk, squawk! Her gaggle jus' took over, trampin' and chewing up everything!"*

"Mmhummm," is the only reply from the dobber leaning on the rail, who happens to be Gabbard.

They are in front of Gabbard's Café, Lake Wood's famous inn and eatery. Gabbard is listening to Otis complain about the geese in his rice cove, but he's more focused on the bear and his other circus performers trying to raise a tent for their performance tonight. Otis wants Gabbard to persuade Amarak to chase off the geese. He says things like, *"My rice is already late since that lake water is down. That awakened one, Daris, is so rude! She said the cove where they come from was overrun by green wolves!"*

Gabbard is polite and reassures him that Amarak will deal with it soon, but then turns his attention to the party. *"Visitors?" he asks with a broad smile. Here for the circus, I bet."* He urges them inside to grab a bite or a drink. There, they can ask about Amarak and possibly the black diamond.

Gabbard's Café menu is on page 433.

Give the party a good reason to go inside and pull their attention away from the circus.

GABBARD'S CAFÉ

Inside there are five tables large enough for 6 seats each. A few dobbers and an awakened porcupine are scattered throughout, eating or drinking.

GABBARD'S SERVES FISH

The café is known for being one of the few in all of Dobberton that offers fish dishes, catering to woodkin. Of course, they also offer popular vegetable dishes for dobbers.

Mohkgaarb stats can be found on pages 383.

Gabbard is eager to sell these newcomers tickets to the circus show tonight. "Welcome to Lake Wood!" he boasts. "I'm sure you'll be wantin' tickets to tonight's show. Only a prime each and with every ticket, a complimentary meal and ale! I'll get your tickets while Alisa takes your food order." He doesn't wait for anyone in the party to decline before he disappears into a back room. Alisa is Gabbard's wife. Her long dark hair is braided over her round dobber ears.

Information the party can get from Gabbard, Alisa, or other patrons in the café:

- "Amarak will be around shortly. He won't want to miss the show."
- "Nope, never heard of any kinda no-magic crystal."
- "The lake is down some. Though it had been a hot summer. It'll surely come back up."
- "Yes, we've heard about the rot around Oak Den. Terrible news that."

- There's been some concern over wolves hunting the animals around the lake. "Otis says he saw one out his way. Says it was green. He's been sipping that rice wine he makes."

MOHKGAARB ATTACK

The distinct roar of a bear reverberates in through the windows of the café. A young dobber screams in fright. Toward the lake you see several creatures, dripping wet, having just come out of the water. Their heads are long with a pointed snout, and their ears stand on the top of their heads. Their silhouette reminds you of a wolf, but in the fading light, it seems their skin is green.

A group of four **mohkgaarb** have come to take food to the umzolli. Argus, the bear, could be the biggest and most satisfying meal they've been able to give to the terrible plant monster for a very long time. One thing is sure: the bear will be better than the geese they've been giving it of late.

The combined strength of the four mohkgaarb is just enough to lasso and restrain the strong bear. They struggle to pull him into the water from whence they came. When Gurney, the blue turtle, and some other circus performers rush in to help, it looks like there is hope that Argus will not be captured. That hope is short-lived. Powerful, **thorned vines** burst from the water, quickly wrapping the bear and dragging him into the water. In a breath, Argus is deep in the lake. The whole scene takes only a few seconds. The four mohkgaarb brandish their spears if anyone gets within striking distance, ensuring the vines have

If a character engages the thorned vines, refer to umzolli vines on the page 221.

plenty of time to secure their quarry. When they believe this is done, they turn and dive back into the lake, their powerful tails slashing from side to side, propelling them deep into the water and out of site. Only on a successful DC 20 Intelligence (History) roll will one of the characters be familiar with the mohkgaarb. And in that case, they would only have heard or read that they are swamp creatures. None have ever been in the Alwaysgreen Forest, as far as anyone knows.

WHAT IF THE CHARACTERS ATTACK THE MOHKGAARB

The whole scene should be described as happening very quickly. The powerful vines are too fast for the party to stop them. However, the party may use ranged weapons or have another way to engage the mohkgaarb. The mohkgaarb's main priority is getting away. They will disengage and dash, diving into the water to escape, even if they are hurt.

If one of them is captured, it will reveal very little about their plan. They speak in broken and raspy Common. It will only say things like: *"I serve the Great Umzolli!"* *"The Great Umzolli will save me!"* *"You will all die!"* *"Fat bear make good food for master!"* and so on. With enough pressure, DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) or DC 16 Strength (Intimidation), and at the GM's discretion, the mohkgaarb will reveal that they've dammed the creek upstream, diverting it to a nearby cave. That cave is their home, where Argus is being taken.

AMARAK ARRIVES

Soon after Argus has been pulled into the lake, Amarak arrives. The old, retired paladin's hair is so long and thick you can barely see his face. Does he even have eyes under those bushy brows? Apparently, he does; he saw enough to know the party wasn't involved with the kidnapping.

He quickly takes charge, questioning the witnesses and encouraging the party to join in. Eventually, they only find one actionable lead: **Otis and the geese that have overrun his farm cove.** Daris, the head goose, had said some green, wolf-like creatures had been hunting them. They were forced from their home. That's why they were at Otis's.

NOTE: If the party had taken one of the mohkgaarb captive, Amarak will help with the questioning. Being a Paladin of the Blue Star, he believes "there's always hope that one will turn to the light." He won't resort to torture or anything like that, but he will cast Zone of Truth.

Only once a plan is in place for rescuing Argus, Amarak will entertain questions about the **black diamond**. "Highly irregular," the old paladin intones, "I only just acquired the gem. How would this Milo even know I have it?" Amarak wishes to keep the conversation brief. He doesn't want any time wasted. Saving Argus is the first priority. Use the points below for conversation:

- "Oh no, it's not for sale. It's far too valuable."
- "Yes, I've heard about the bad harvest for fields around Oak Den."
- The party easily convinces him it's much worse than a "bad season."
- If they show him the dagger, Ember, he immediately recognizes the Heritage Stone.

The mohkgaarb are fast and cunning. No dobber would be able to keep up with them, especially in the water.

*The **black diamond** is the antimagic stone Milo had hoped Amarak might have, but he won't talk about that until the mohkgaarb attack has been looked into.*

Amarak will tell the party more about Heritage Stones if they ask. He believes the first king of Dobberton, Orlun, was a genius for instituting the system.

Daris is a cranky, loud, and hilarious old goose. Ham it up!

THE DAM (OPTIONAL):

On the way to the dam, a pair of **wolves** are scavenging in some fish bones left by the mohkgaarb.

"This is troubling, indeed. This is clearly a Heritage Stone. One is made for each of the royal family. I can't imagine why or how one was affixed to this dagger." He looks at it very closely, pulling his glasses down onto his nose to help his aged eyes, though he is careful not to touch it. After a moment of concentration, he adds, *"I feel evil here. Not the dagger, exactly, but somehow through it."*

Amarak comes to believe that the party's need for the black diamond is a noble one. However, years of experience have taught him not to be impetuous. Perhaps if they rescue Argus, he will know the good of the Alwaysgreen Forest is their true motivation. Then, he will give them the black diamond.

OTIS'S FARM

Otis's farm is along one of the more remote edges of the lake, away from the business and noise of the town. There is an easy-to-follow trail around one of the southern fingers of the lake that leads right to it.

Moonlight glistens on the water of this once beautiful and manicured cove. The grass-like leaves of rice plants poke up through the water in what were once neat rows. Now, most are trampled, bent, and chewed by the large, buoyant bodies of the geese that float among them.

One goose, with her head held high, takes note of the party. She charges the party, squawking frantically. Daris, an awakened goose, tells them they were driven from their home pond because they were being hunted. She squawks angrily, *"We had a home, a beaut! But some beasties clogged it up and started hunting it. It's a terrible mess now. Can't live there! Honk!"*

She goes on to tell them that the cove where they were nesting was being hunted. Many of her gaggle was taken by green wolves. Upstream from their former cove is a new dam. She thinks the green wolves put it there. It blocks enough water to make the lake low and reduce the number of fish for them to eat. The dam has diverted the water to a different part of the wood.

THE DAM

Further upstream along from Otis's farm, the party will find the dam Daris told them about. The party may notice evidence of the mohkgaarb in the area as they follow the path next to the stream on their way to the dam. Upon a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check, they will find tracks moving up and down the stream bank. Among the tracks, they will find the occasional discarded set of fish bones, picked nearly clean, probably eaten raw. These tracks can be identified as the same creatures they saw in town that kidnapped Argus with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) roll. The clawed feet and thick tail of the mohkgaarb leave a distinct pattern in the mud recently exposed by the low water. Should anyone in the party have rolled a 20 or higher on the aforementioned Survival check, they will also find evidence of the tied-up bear - a tuft of fur and some claw marks. The mohkgaarb must have drug him along this stream.

A massive, downed tree, darkened by years of laying on the forest floor has been pushed across the creek. Around it, branches and twigs have been packed, the gaps filled with mud and leaves. Thick vines with heavy thorns drape over the piled debris, like the long fingers of hands resting on knees. Barely a third of the once strongly flowing creek moves past the blockage. The water upstream from the dam has filled the immediate low-lying areas. Water spills into a small ravine, naturally formed by runoff, but now a new stream.

The party will need to follow the new stream to find the mohkgaarb caves and save Argus, though the party may want to take a closer look at the dam construction or possibly remove it. Remind the party that time is precious. Argus may be only moments away from being someone's dinner.

If the party approaches the dam, 1d4+3 **umzolli vines** attack.

If the party defeats the vines and still wants to remove the dam, it will take a minimum of four hours. The party must collectively succeed on four DC 16 Strength rolls, one for each hour of work. Party members can help, but the same character cannot make the check two times in a row. Each failed attempt adds one hour to the work.

After clearing the dam, the party is covered in mud and very tired. Anyone in the party who participated in the Strength check has gained one level of exhaustion that can be recovered by a short rest.

ON TO THE CAVE

If the party did not clear the dam, read:

UNZOLLI VINES

Slashing vines erupt from the water, targeting all enemy creatures within reach. Melee Weapon Attack: +6, Reach 45 ft., multiple targets. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage. Each vine has an AC of 14 and 1 HP.

The new stream leads you to a dark and dense part of the wood. The water twists around rocks and tumbles over thick roots. Limbs dense with ancient moss and the last of autumn's leaves block out any light from the sky.

If the party did clear the dam, read:

Though you cleared the dam, returning the water to its original flow, it will be some time before this new stream dries up. It leads to a dark and dense part of the wood. It twists around rocks and over thick roots. Limbs dense with ancient moss and the last of autumn's leaves block out any light from the sky.

As darkness settles on the party, remind them that they carry Ember, the cursed dagger. Even though they have not seen evidence of rot along this stream, they are still being hunted. Maybe they hear a snapping twig behind them? Perhaps a whiff of the now-familiar smell of rot poisoning? You may even tell them that they hear the breathy hiss of the Wood Sprite's voice. It must be their imagination, right? It's just exhaustion.

The path of diverted creek water eventually leads to a deep cavity in the earth.

The mohkgaarb have fought back the encroaching decay creatures. There are none along this stream, but the party doesn't know that.

The **Mohkgaarb Cave map** is on page 230.

THE WHIRLPOOL

The dense trees and brush that surround you open, expanding your vision further down the hill. A cavity in the earth swallows the flowing water, twisting into a dark whirlpool. A series of rocks and crevasses stand guard on the far side of the pool. More thorned vines, like those from the dam, lie in wait on the banks of the whirlpool.

As they investigate around the pool, they will find some bones of fish and maybe a few goose feathers. They are picked clean with some tooth and claw marks on the bones.

The vines wait for the party to get close. If one of them gets within range, it will attempt to grab and pull them into the whirlpool. There are only two **umzolli vines** this time. If a creature falls into the whirlpool, the rushing water leads to the Great Umzolli and certain death. While the characters navigate the edge of the whirlpool and battle the vines, a mohkgaarb runner will taunt them from an opening in the rocks.

"Yah, yah, yah, yah!" shouts a shrill gravelly voice from the shadows between two rocks on the far side of the whirlpool. You see a green-skinned humanoid shaking a spear above its head. It has a long snout and pointed ears and wears armor that looks like thick, leathery leaves. In an instant, it disappears back into the shadows out of sight.

Be careful how you narrate this scene. The threat of falling into the whirlpool should feel very real to the players. If they do, they are whisked away to Area 9.

THE MOHKGAARB CAVE

WITHIN THE CAVE

FLOORS, WALLS, AND CEILING

Thin layers of shale form the base of the hills the party has been traveling. Much of the cave was dug by hand, the mohkgaarb following the naturally softer spots in the earth, making patternless tunnels and rooms around the harder-packed shale stone. The walls are jagged where stones protrude into the space, and loose dirt has been dug out between them. Mud leaves and other sediment cover the stone and dirt cave floor.

LIGHT

The mohkgaarb have limited dark vision and have little need for the pleasures of a lighted space. However, they have discovered a bioluminescent fungus that grows in these wet and dark places. In certain rooms, they've collected the glowing fungus for carved driftwood sconces, giving these rooms a strange purple glow.

MOHKGAARB TACTICS

From the Entrance through to the Ceremonial Room, three **mohkgaarb runners** will taunt the characters. One at a time, they will use their action to attack the character that is in the lead with blow darts and then *bonus action* *hide* around a corner. They use this tactic to wear down intruders and hopefully drive them off.

This starts with one mohkgaarb at the entrance (Area 1). He is joined by a second where the path Ts (Area 1a). The first party member to enter this area will get shot by a dart from each before they split up, one going north, the other south. A third mohkgaarb will join the one to the south, coming from the Ceremonial Room (Area 3).

PREPARING THE TRIBUTE FOR THE UMZOLLI

The mohkgaarb have taken Argus captive as a special, much more hearty

Near **Area 1** of the Mohkgaarb Cave map: **Umzolli vines** are detailed on the page 221.

The **mohkgaarb runner** is on page 383.

meal for the umzolli. A great brown bear is sure to be more satisfying than geese and squirrels.

First, they must wake the umzolli. They do this by preparing a special concoction of stinky herbs, magic, and a little bit of the sacrifice's blood. This concoction is prepared in Area 3, the Ceremonial Room.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *This is a little dark. Know your players and tone down the blood as you need. The concoction could just be fur from the captive, sugar, and the pollen of a stinky flower.*

Second, the mohkgaarb take the concoction to Area 7, the Fishing Cracks, and pour it into the flowing water. The liquid flows with the stream to Area 9, the Umzolli's Chamber, where it wakes the monstrosity.

Third, the tribute, who was tied on the plinth in Area 5, the Preparation Chamber, is carried to Area 9, arriving about the time the umzolli awakens.

PREVENTING THE UMZOLLI FROM BEING AWAKENED

Once the party sees the ceremony in Area 3, they should infer that the goblets full of red liquid are important. The mohkgaarb that have the concoction will charge toward Area 7 so they can dump the liquid in and awaken their master. The mohkgaarb's speed is slightly more than the average dobber, plus they can hide and disengage as a bonus action. They are only slowed by not wanting to spill their goblets of red liquid. If the party wants to stop them, they will have to use ranged attacks or other cleverness. The party needs to spill the liquid they are carrying. It can be done. The chase scene that ensues should be really fun and tense.

I – THE ENTRANCE

At the edge of the whirlpool, a void between two rocks leads to darkness. You know the green-skinned wolf creature is just out of sight waiting to strike.

One **mohkgaarb runner** fires darts at the party as they approach, hiding in the bend that leads east until it no longer gives him cover. He continues that pattern until one of the party enters, then he hides around the corner toward Area 1a.

The opening is just large enough for two dobbers to step into, and you can see it gets very narrow. It's clear from the muck and sediment on the ground that this passage fills with water after a heavy rain, even with the whirlpool leading most of the water away.

1A – INTERSECTION

A second **mohkgaarb runner** joins the first. Both shoot darts at the party, then *bonus action* hide. They split up, one going toward Area 2 and the other toward Area 2b. They are hoping to divide the party. The one that goes to the north will continue to dart and hide all the way into Area 2a. If pursued that far, he will fight to the death. If he is not pursued, he will dart at the characters from behind as they go south.

2 – 2C – THE WARRENS

A series of small chambers where the mohkgaarb make their homes. Each one is smelly and dirty.

AREAS 1

THROUGH 3

(OPTIONAL): *The mohkgaarb will taunt the party, using every nook and cranny to their advantage. They believe their poison darts will eventually kill any intruders.*

Add mohkgaarb runners if the party isn't being challenged enough by this game of cat and mouse.

The **mohkgaarb runner** is on page 383.

2C – SOUTH DEN

A third **mohkgaarb runner** emerges from Area 2c to shoot darts at the party, then *bonus action* hides.

2D – A STONE SLAB

The passage abruptly ends at a stone slab. There are no obvious locks, levers, or hinges. It covers the full width of the passage and spans floor to ceiling. You can hear the chanting of several of the reptilian wolf-like creatures from the other side.

"Umzolli, umzolli! Maka lika maki! Umzolli!"

A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal that the large piece of rock slid into this space from above. With enough strength, a character can lift the stone, sliding it back up. It requires a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. If unaided, it takes two full turns to lift it enough for a character to pass. If aided, it can be lifted fully in one turn or if the Strength (Athletics) roll was 20 or higher. If released, it will immediately slide back down, doing 3d6 force damage to any creature in the way. For a character to pass, the stone slab will have to be held or propped open in some way.

When the characters find a way to lift the stone slab, read:

As you peer under the stone slab, you see four more of the strange reptilians, each holding a roughly carved wooden goblet. A larger fifth one wears similar leatherleaf, but in a longer style that looks like a robe. It pours from a waterskin into the goblets. They are still chanting when the robed one notices you've found a way in. *"Go! Fast!"* the robed one screeches at the others, *"wake the great Umzolli!"*



3 – CEREMONIAL ROOM

Inside the room:

A strange purple glow fills this room with light from glowing fungus ensconced around the room. Pelts matted with grime line the floor. Six well-worn stumps are arranged in a circle. The four creatures with goblets flee to the east when you enter. The fifth reaches into a pouch and throws a handful of black sand at you, shouting, “We will make Umzolli full on you and bear friend!”

There are four **mohkgaarb fighters** and one **mohkgaarb chief xaran** in this ceremonial room. When the first party member enters the room, the chief xaran throws black sand at them, casting *Infestation*. The four mohkgaarb fighters flee to the passage that leads to Area 5. The chief xaran protects their escape, next casting *shadow call*, then attacking with his short sword.

4 – REFUSE PIT

Grime and muck cover the floor of this room. The smell of refuse assaults your senses. It appears that there is nothing in here but fish bones and foul-smelling waste.

5 – 5C – CEREMONIAL PASSAGE

Worked stone marks a distinct difference in the floor and walls of this area. Four rough-carved stone heads rest in pairs on either side of the passage. They resemble the green wolf-like creatures who call this their home. They span nearly floor to ceiling. The first one on the

west has a large chunk broken off of it from a rock that fell from the ceiling. Near where its cracked jaw rests on the floor, greenish liquid has pooled.

There are three traps that can be triggered along this passage. Two are triggered by pressure plates in front of the mohkgaarb statue heads. When triggered, they exude poisonous gas, like that which is on the mohkgaarb darts. The third trap is triggered when both pressure plates are activated at the same time, dropping stone slabs at the north and south of Areas 5-5c, closing the passage off, and trapping whoever is inside.

At the end of the passage, you see the bear, Argus, unconscious. He’s being lifted from a stone altar by two more of the green creatures.

At this point, the party is probably pursuing the mohkgaarb carrying the goblets, not worrying about stealth. If so, also read:

One of the reptilian creatures presses his palm on the top of another stone head at the end of the hall, past where the bear was lying.

This initiates the poison and stone slab traps. If any mohkgaarb, such as the ones being chased by the party who are carrying the goblets, are still in Areas 5 – 5c, they are subject to the traps just the same as the characters.

5 – THE FIRST TRAP

If a creature or object of 5 lbs or more presses anywhere in the 10 ft x 10 ft area of stone directly between the two statue heads in this area, the poison

The **mohkgaarb fighter** is on page 383 and **chief xaran** is on page 382.

AREAS 3 THROUGH 5 (OPTIONAL): **Mohkgaarb runners** attack the party from behind along the path to Area 5.

The party can see **Argus** at the end of the passage leading to Area 6. The stone head in this same room is used to activate the stone slab traps.

AREA 5B: Don't miss the two stone slabs at either end of this passage that trap the characters in with the poison gas. All characters in Areas 5 through 5c are trapped.

gas trap is triggered. Only a passive Perception of 16 or higher will notice the seam in the worked stone around the pressure plate. They will also see the seam with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) roll. If their roll succeeds with a 17 or higher, they also notice a groove on either side of the passage at the southern edge of Area 5. This is where the stone slab slides down, closing off the passage. If a character indicates that they are "looking up," describe a void in the ceiling through which one of the stone slabs could fall. This pressure plate does not trigger the falling of the stone slab.

If the pressure plate is activated, read:

The stone jaw of the stone head to the east drops open, revealing a tube that immediately blows out green gas. The stone head to the west clicks, but no gas flows out of it. Instead, you see some green liquid dripping from the cracked jaw to pool below it.

Only one of the stone heads emits poisonous gas. It blasts a 10 ft x 10 ft area in front of it for one full round. Any creature entering that space during that time is affected by the poison. Those affected by the poison gas must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If they fail the save, the target also takes 4 (1d6) damage at the end of their following turn. If a creature is reduced to 0 hp by this poison, it does not kill them. They are reduced to 1 hp instead and are unconscious.

5A – A SAFE SPOT

The 5 ft x 10 ft space between Areas 5 and 5b does not trigger any traps.

5B – THE SECOND TRAP

This area is similar to Area 5 and has the same 10 ft x 10 ft pressure plate. Also, there is a second stone slab that will fall from the ceiling at the north edge of this area. If anyone in the party noticed the first pressure plate through Investigation or it was triggered, they can easily see this one without an ability check. However, the same rules as the trap above apply to the party discovering the second stone slab that falls from the ceiling.

If the pressure plate in this area is activated, both of the stone heads to either side expel poisonous gas. Additionally, when this second plate is activated, it causes both stone slabs to fall, trapping any characters in Areas 5 – 5c. The poison gas is stronger than before being expelled by two sources at once.

Those affected by the poison gas must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. They continue to take damage for the next 3 turns or as long as they are trapped within Areas 5 – 5c. On these subsequent turns, the damage amount is reduced by 1d6. If a creature is reduced to 0 hp by this poison, it does not kill them. They are reduced to 1 hp instead and are unconscious.

Use the same language from Area 2d to lift either stone slab.

6 – PREPARATION CHAMBER

Dark stains that remind you of blood cover the top of the stone plinth centered in this room. *How many creatures took their last breaths here before being taken to the umzolli as tribute?* Columns in each corner have etchings of the strange green, wolf-like creatures gazing down on the altar. On the north wall, another

stone face is carved, similar to, but not as large as, the ones in the previous passage. A piece of stone in the shape of a diamond is recessed into its forehead.

Here, the mohkgaarb prepare their umzolli tribute. Fur and/or blood is taken from the victim to be added to the concoction used to awaken the umzolli. Normally, that victim would lay here tied or unconscious until the terrible plant monster is awake. Today, their ceremony has been cut short. Two **mohkgaarb fighters** have already untied Argus to take him to Area 9.

The recess on the stone head in the north wall initiates the traps in Areas 5 – 5c. If they were all triggered, the button is pressable, reinitiating them.

7 - ANTECHAMBER

Any remaining mohkgaarb with goblets dash through this room toward Area 8. The two who are carrying Argus drag him across the floor and down the stairs toward Area 9.

A single sconce of glowing purple fungus lights the far wall. There is a passage on either side of it. From the north passage, rushing water echoes on rock walls. Large steps travel down through the southern opening. Faint golden light glows in the distance.

7A - DECENT

Rough-hewn steps lead the party down to a massive chamber. Streaks of dark red fluid stain the ground beneath your feet.

If any **mohkgaarb runners** or **fighters** remain, they will attack with darts and spears, then use their ability to *bonus action hide* at the bottom of the steps.

8 – GROUND FISSURES

In this area, any Perception checks involving sound are made with disadvantage.

A cacophony of rushing water fills your ears as they enter this area, obscuring other sounds. Cracks in the shale floor reveal a river passage.

Turbulent water from the whirlpool can be seen passing under large fissures in the floor. It is here that the mohkgaarb pour the concoction intended to wake the Great Umzolli. From here, it follows the underground river to the sleeping plant monster.

9 - UMZOLLI'S CHAMBER

Finally, the party gets to encounter the Great Umzolli for themselves. The giant plant monster mostly sleeps, but when the mohkgaarb have a special tribute to offer, they wake it. If the mohkgaarb's special concoction has been poured into the water in Area 8, the monster is close to waking. Otherwise, one of the mohkgaarb will have to wake it. As the party reaches the foot of the stairs from Area 7a, read:

Light peeks from the sky through gaps in a root-matted ceiling. The floor transitions from worked stone to rough rock. A bank of wet rock and dirt extends to either side of the last step. Beyond the bank, murky, gray-green water fills the rest of the chamber. A huge pink and white flower resembling a crocus floats 20 or 30 feet from the water's edge. Each massive petal is taller than a dobber. Great thorned vines float atop the water to either side.

Stats for the mohkgaarb fighter are on page 383.

AREA 9: *If the party prevented the goblets from being emptied into the water at Area 8, the Great Umzolli sleeps. All the party will see is the bloom, a huge white and pink flower floating on the water.*

Stats for the **Great Umzolli** are detailed on page 382.

*A **swallowed creature** is blinded and has disadvantage on all attack rolls and abilities checks. It takes 7 (2d6) acid damage at the start of each turn. The swallowed creature can attack the great umzolli from the inside. If the great umzolli takes 16 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, a hole opens large enough for the swallowed creature to exit through. See page 382 for more.*

All remaining mohkgaarb have gathered here, chanting to wake the umzolli, “Umzolli, umzolli! *Maka lika maki! Umzolli!*” or any other nonsense you, as the GM, want to make up. They will fight to the death. If Argus is still with them, he will be laid at the very edge of the water. The floating bloom in the water is the **Great Umzolli**.

If none of the concoction was poured into the water at Area 8, a mohkgaarb realizes they must wake the Great Umzolli themselves. Read or paraphrase the following:

One of the green, wolf-like creatures dives into the water toward the huge flower. Its powerful tail sweeps side to side, propelling it quickly through the water.

The mohkgaarb is swimming toward the flower to wake it. It will only take him one full round to reach it. It will then take 1d6 rounds for the Umzolli to wake. If the bloom can be cut from the stalk before it wakes, it dies and never attacks the party.

If any of the concoction was poured into the water at Area 8, it has reached the umzolli, which is now beginning to wake. The plant monster will be fully awake and attack in 1d4 rounds of the party reaching this room. When it does, read:

The massive pink and white petals of the floating flower open, revealing row after row of vicious yellow thorns. The bloom lifts off the water on a thick green stalk. Water sprays from vines as they rip across the water, writhing on either side. Your mind races to comprehend what it’s seeing as the bloom turns toward you, the petals curling in what looks like a snarl. Those weren’t thorns; they were teeth!

BATTLING THE GREAT UMZOLLI

The stalk of the umzolli is planted firmly in the earth, 20 ft below the water. The creature cannot move, but it has a 30-foot reach with its stalk when attacking with its bite and a 40-foot reach with its vines. Additionally, when using its vines, it grapples targeted creatures, dragging them within reach of its bite.

The mohkgaarb will fight to the death to defend the Great Umzolli. However, should the party kill the umzolli, any remaining mohkgaarb will immediately stop fighting.

KILLING THE UMZOLLI

The easiest way to kill the umzolli is to target the bloom. It only takes 50 total damage to this spot to kill it. Damage done to any other portion of the creature applies against its normal hit points. If the umzolli is awake, its bloom towers above the water, and targeting it with an attack is made with disadvantage. If it is asleep, it floats on the surface of the water; targeting the bloom with an attack does not impose disadvantage.

SWALLOWED CREATURES

Any creatures that are swallowed by the umzolli continue to suffer the effects of being swallowed even if the umzolli has been killed. Allies on the outside can help those swallowed by attacking the stalk.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

The mohkgaarb caves may have pushed the party to their limits, but returning to Lake Wood, having saved Argus, will mark them as true heroes. The town rejoices. Gurney is so relieved to have his partner, and best friend returned that they throw a party for the whole town.





AMARAK AND MILO

Before the characters can get too distracted by the party Gurney and Argus hold in their honor, they find Amarak in Gabbard's crowded café. He's at the bar, having a drink with Milo.

Amarak's mouth stretches into a broad smile when you enter, his thick beard and mustache doing little to mask his joy. The old timer drops down off his stool and spreads his hands above his head, gathering the crowd's attention.

"Friends, we have heroes in our midst," he says.

"Everyone lift a glass: a toast is in order. It is my pleasure to honor these great citizens..."

As Amarak trundles into a long monologue, Milo sidles up next to you, whispering, *"Amarak will hold their attention - meet me outside."*

Milo has arranged for Amarak to give them the antimagic stone, but not until after the party has gotten going. They don't want to risk anyone knowing about the antimagic stone or what it is going to be used for.

When the time is right, Amarak joins Milo and the party in a prearranged location, a secluded grove a few miles from town. There, Amarak provides the antimagic stone, and Milo can finish the box.

Onward! With Ember safely hidden in their antimagic box, the party can finally make their way to Dobberton to meet with the King. Milo and Amarak wish them well but cannot accompany them. Amarak does, however, give them his Oath of the Blue Star cloak pin. Will it be enough to gain them an audience with the King?

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 7 and 8, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 6.

If one of the characters in the party is a Tinkerer, they may be able to make or complete the antimagic box. There's no reason Milo has to make it; he can provide the plans.

ANTIMAGIC BOX

Complexity: Advanced

Type: Architect

Users: Any

Components: 2 wood, 1 metal, 1 oil, 1 fabric, and 1 antimagic stone

Build Time: 6 hours

Spark: 0 or 1

Activation: none

Reload: none

The antimagic box suppresses the properties and powers of magic items that it contains. For example, a +1 long sword in the box functions as a nonmagical long sword. However, it does not cease to be magical. When a magic weapon or item is removed from the box, the magic of the item ceases to be suppressed as soon as it is out.

The tinkerer building the antimagic box can include a locking mechanism. The type of lock is chosen at the time it is built. Options include a key, a number combination, a puzzle, or a timer so that it opens on a specific date and time. Additionally, the builder can expend 1 spark to set a keyword that will open the lock when spoken aloud.



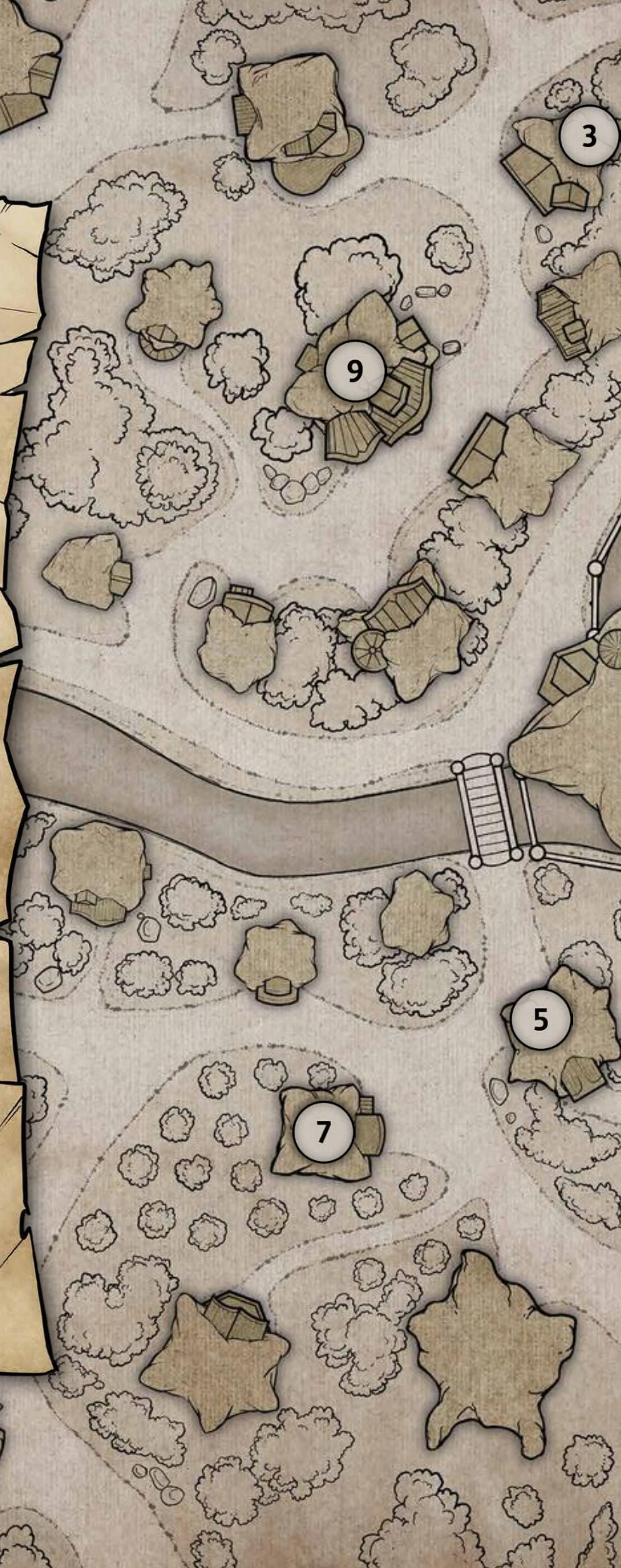


III

THE ROT
WEAVER'S
TOMB

THE CITY OF DOBBERTON

1. The Palace Complex
2. King's Keep
3. Cily's Books and Ledgers
4. Cream and Cheese
5. Early Risers Bread
6. Exquisite Elixirs
7. Produce and Deli
8. The Broken Thorn
9. The Dobberton School
10. The Flask & Toad
11. The Sleeping Bear
12. Weasel and Wolf Pest Control





1

8

11

4

12

2

6

10

DOBBERTON, THE CAPITAL CITY

The grandeur and majesty of the capital city are unparalleled in the Alwaysgreen Forest. The Kingdom seat is home to the royal Triumvirate, the Paladins of the Blue Star, and chapter houses for the trade and labor guilds. It is situated centrally in the forest, a beautiful ornament around the fabled Prime Tree.

Dobberton is generations old, the beginnings of which were designed by the first King of the Alwaysgreen Forest, Orlun. He divided the city into wards, each with a cultural or economic focus, though zoning has mixed over the years. Northwest of the palace is the university, with residential wards on either side. To the east, southeast, and south are merchant, guild, and trade wards, respectively. The Dobberton Guard headquarters and accompanying barracks are the main features of the southwest ward.

The larger main roads through the city are smoothly paved tiles of slate and sandstone. Secondary streets are of relatively even cobblestone, while other roads and alleys are typically hard-packed earth.

Buildings within Dobberton vary in size and style according to their use and age. Wood frames with adobe walls, arched roofs, windows, and doors are most common. Buildings are constructed right into the bases of trees and often have as many rooms inside the trunk as there are outside. Roofs are usually curved, covered in bark shingle and moss or vine. Dobbersons of the Alwaysgreen Forest rarely build above two stories, the most notable exception being the palace.

I - THE PALACE COMPLEX

The palace is an architectural marvel of glass and wood. Sculpted arches connect it with the Prime Tree and its companion guide trees. Twisting spires frame polished white oak paths throughout the royal complex. Manicured grass and ornamental seasonal flowers frame every view.

Canals from the Blue River have been designed to complement the majesty of the palace complex. They ring the palace like a moat, flowing under ornate bridges and paralleling walkways. Roots from the Prime Tree extend deep into the crystalline waters, bestowing the magical essence believed to awaken woodkin. Orlun's design for the canals successfully sets the Prime Tree and king's

palace atop the water surrounding it, making it appear to float. Decorative waterways branch out from there, taking the magical essence of the Prime Tree throughout the city.

THE PRIME SEED HARVEST CELEBRATION

Each year, on the last day of autumn, the Dobberton Triumvirate presents a seed from the Prime Tree to the people of the Alwaysgreen Forest. The seed represents the bounty given to them by the first gardener, the Green Man, and the protection given to them by the Star Father.

The night before, everyone celebrates with festive meals and family gatherings. For those who don't have that opportunity, the palace hosts a bountiful feast open to everyone, organized by the Queen.

The following day is Bestowing Day. That morning, the Justiciar, or a personally selected representative, leads a worship service to the Star Father from the palace balcony. People from all of Dobberton pack the courtyard and neighboring streets. For that day, all are equal, shoulder to shoulder, every creed and heritage, giving homage to God.

Following the service, the King presents the seed, first from the balcony, then by leading a procession out of the palace. They follow the road that parallels the complex walls, ending on the Blue River bridge just south of the palace. There, the seed is presented to a representative from one of the Alwaysgreen Forest's villages. The seed is given to bestow God's favor on that community for the coming year.

During the two days of the Prime Seed celebration, hearts are softened, and generosity abounds. Estranged loved ones are reunited, and the sick are healed. During the Prime Seed celebration, many are reminded that love, faith, and family are greater than any material possession.



THE DOBBERTON GUARD HEADQUARTERS

The official headquarters of the Dobberton Guard. It houses and trains guards for every position in the Alwaysgreen Forest.

2 - KING'S KEEP

The King's Keep supplies weapons, armor, and gear to the Dobberton Guard, the Order of the Blue Star Paladins, and all of the top fighters in the Alwaysgreen Forest. Although the King's Keep is officially a royal enterprise, it serves any with the right coin.

WEAPON SMITH

Teaphal is the Dobberton Guard's master weaponsmith. He and his apprentice, Fogcut, a woodkin that must be some kind of lizard, work closely with Efrin to make weapons worthy of the king.

ARMORY

The armory is run by twins Roto and Seleh. Both trained as paladins before deciding to focus on the craft.

BOWYER & FLETCHER

Alain has recently graduated from his apprenticeship. And while he is young, he is considered one of the best in the forest.

WOOD REFINERY

The wood refinery is responsible for treating the wood used to make weapons and armor for the Dobberton Guard and Order of the Blue Star Paladins. Boasting techniques that no other refinery has discovered, Efrin and his crew offer the hardest and lightest materials in the land.

DOBBERTON BUSINESSES

Dobberton is a cornucopia of business and enterprise. Under Quilon, the economy has thrived, bolstered by advances in technology and infrastructure. There are craftsmen and merchants to satisfy almost every conceivable need. Bakers, banks, chandlers, florists, hat makers, jewelers, curriers, makeup and hair artists, tailors, weavers, and more line the streets of Dobberton.

3 - CILY'S BOOKS AND LEDGERS

Cily's Books and Ledgers not only offer the latest books and scrolls written by Dobberton's most prestigious authors, but he also sells paper, ink, and quills.

4 - CREAM AND CHEESE

Gus has been making cheese since he was a boy, taught by his pop, who was taught by his pop. It has been a family business for three generations, and the whole family runs the business. Gus runs the creamery out of an old willow tree. It's just on the edge of the city where there's room for his goats. His sons deliver milk and cheese all over Dobberton.

5 - EARLY RISERS BREAD

Valerie makes the fluffiest biscuits in town, sweet and buttery. She makes all types: blueberry, hazelnut, pepper, cheese, and more. She also serves a variety of brewed drinks, hot, cold, sweet, bitter, your choice. The brown beans she roasts to make those drinks sure have some kick. It'll wake up even the sleepest dobber!

6 - EXQUISITE ELIXIRS

Gurdron is an artist. No potion, tincture, elixir, or salve leaves his apothecary unless it is perfect.

7 - PRODUCE AND DELI

Edmur offers Dobberton's largest selection of produce. He has a wide variety of vegetables, berries, nuts, fruits, tubers, and leafy greens available. Edmur sources his produce from several gardens located around the Alwaysgreen Forest. Some of which are so hidden that even he forgets where they are. In addition to fresh produce, Edmur's Deli also offers a unique selection of sliced, roasted, and pre-made vegetable dishes.

8 - THE BROKEN THORN

The Broken Thorn is an inn that caters to the wealthy with high-priced rooms and luxury linens. Sandy, the innkeeper, used to manage the household for the Setarus family, a wealthy landowner in East Watch. While she was there, she developed a fondness for the nursery rhymes she often read to the little ones. The Broken Thorn is named after one such rhyme.

9 - THE DOBBERTON SCHOOL

Formerly the Dobberton School of Magic, the school now serves the people of the Alwaysgreen Forest by teaching history, sciences, math, agriculture, and trade skills.

10 - THE FLASK & TOAD

The Flask & Toad is an inn and tavern with a simple design built into an old, gnarled magnolia tree. It's run by a rather disorganized badger woodkin named Riffolk. He keeps a fake fire lizard's skull over the hearth and exotic spirits in the basement.

Iskcah is a cobbler who runs his business from the other side of the same tree. He's also a master tinkerer but doesn't offer tinkering to customers. He loves his creations too much to sell them.

11 - THE SLEEPING BEAR

The Sleeping Bear is one of the most unique taverns in Dobberton. They serve exotic food and drinks, especially catering to woodkin. Evenings feature live entertainment and a roasted boar or goat, served hot and whole. Nights can tend to get a little rowdy, but that's okay; Chops, the barkeep, can handle it.

12 - WEASEL AND WOLF PEST CONTROL

Recently, the need for pest control services has been on the rise, which is unfortunate since that part of the business is just a front. For those who know how to ask, Weasel and Wolf offer a variety of services that aren't exactly defined as legal. Weasel deals in stolen goods. His partner Wolf, an awakened, you guessed it, wolf, is a bounty hunter with no conscience.



CHAPTER 10: THE SLEEPING BEAR AND THE GIANT CENTIPEDE

Upon arriving in Dobberton, the party discovers that none may enter or leave the palace, and no one knows why. How will the party take Ember to the king?

BACKGROUND

In the time that the party was away from the Alwaysgreen Forest, the decay around Oak Den has spread throughout the south. It has become a known worry to citizens throughout the kingdom. While most as far north as Dobberton believe the issue to be natural, there are rumors that the Rot Weaver's tomb is leaking. His taint flows through streams and grows in fields. Twisted creatures hunt in the darkness, turning woodkin and dobbers to corruption.

But that is just a rumor, right?

The party knows otherwise, as does the royal Triumvirate. The Queen has become infected with rot poisoning. She is near death, barely kept on this side of decay through Gearld's daily healing and prayers to the Star Father.

The King has declared that no one may know of the Queen's illness. He fears the people would panic and he would look weak. Yet, that has already started to happen. People know of the rot in the south, and as rumors of



the Rot Weaver spread, they want to know if the kingdom is safe. Is the rot spreading northward? Is it dangerous? Can dobbers catch it? To make matters worse, the King and Queen haven't been seen in days, and so close to the most important holiday of the year, the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration. The people of Dobberton are worried.

THE PRIME SEED HARVEST CELEBRATION

The party arrives in Dobberton on the eve of the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration - a two-day event that begins with feasts of thanksgiving, continues with gifts to loved ones, and ends with the Bestowing Day when the Prime Seed is given to one of the forest's many villages. It is the most important holiday of the year. The

palace hosts a feast for anyone who has need and has done so since the time of Dobberton's first king, Orlun. It serves as a reminder to all that the Star Father will always love and provide for his people.

Yet this year, the palace has made no preparations for the feast. The King and Queen haven't been seen in days, and now the palace has instituted a lockdown.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **TO THE PALACE.** Knowing what they carry is of critical importance, the party goes straight to the palace to see the King. Unfortunately, no one is allowed in. One of the guards suggests they enjoy the evening at the Sleeping Bear.

In the days preceding the **Prime Seed Harvest Celebration** it is tradition to hang garland over the doors of one's home. The garland is adorned with oak leaves and ribbons. On the ribbons, dobbers write things that they are thankful for from the past year and things they are hopeful for in the year to come.

- **THE SLEEPING BEAR.** The party goes to the Sleeping Bear to further consider their next steps and enjoy a meal. There, they meet Gwyn, also known as Weasel. Weasel knows how to get into the palace if the party is willing to take a few risks.
- **CATRIN'S CANDIES.** In the basement of Catrin's Candies lies an entrance to an underground river. But first, they must break into the candy shop undetected.
- **THE COLD WATER SPRING.** A cold water spring hidden under downtown Dobberton feeds into the Blue River. If the party can survive the monster sleeping there, they should be able to find passage under the palace walls.
- **THE BASEMENT.** The party can enter the palace through water vents from the palace boiler room. Once inside, they discover a terrible secret in one of the holding cells.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 11 and 12, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.

This chapter involves a bit of exploration and discovery. There's a lot in Dobberton, and depending on your GMing style, your players may want to wander about. However, the main objectives of this chapter are to establish how far the rot has reached and for the players to get into the palace.

It's worth noting that once the characters get into the palace, tension will be high. They may begin to feel that the King, and subsequently the palace guard, and even the Blue Star Paladins are the enemy. That is not the intended case. There is some intrigue and ulterior motives, but even so, the heroes should not have to resort to combat or violence with any of the palace or royal family.

HIDE AND SEEK

During Chapters 10 and 11, you can add more excitement with patrolling palace guards. This would begin when the characters reach the Palace Basement. Doing so can turn these chapters into an elaborate game of hide and seek. Use Dexterity (Stealth) rolls and creative actions by the characters to keep them just ahead of the guards and out of sight. This is optional but can be a lot of fun.

TO THE PALACE

The party follows King's Road north toward the palace. For some of the characters, this may be their first time in the great city of Dobberton. The initial impression does not meet expectations. If Dobberton is the jewel of the Alwaysgreen Forest, it has become a dull one.

Characters would know about the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration. There are some decorations over the doors and in the windows, but the atmosphere doesn't feel right.

There is a wall that encircles the palace with the main gated entrance at the south. There are three other entrances that are less often used, predictably on the west, north, and east sides. Guards patrol the wall at all hours. Some are posted at each entrance, while others walk its circumference.

The beautifully ornate double gate is carved out of a pale wood that looks almost white. Vertical bars were made to look like twisting vines, the top of each door meeting in a high peak. As you draw near, a guard in blue livery steps from a small guard house. "Move along," he says. "The palace isn't taking any visitors at this time."

The conversation with Samlet doesn't have to be at the guard house next to the wall. You can easily insert this interaction with the party wherever it most seamlessly fits. He could be walking along the perimeter of the wall or even patrolling the streets.

SAMLET, ORDER OF THE BLUE STAR PALADIN

Samlet is a Dobberton Paladin. Usually, his job is pleasant, greeting visitors to the palace, providing directions, and other tasks that tend to be more social and less military. He's charismatic and intuitive and almost always eager to help fellow citizens. Today, less so. The palace has been locked down for three days, and he's been given very little explanation. Gearld himself gave the orders, "No one may enter the palace complex under any circumstances."

And what distresses him most is that the annual celebration of the Prime Seed should start tomorrow. Even preparations for that seem to have been put on hold. The streets should be busy with people and merriment, but with no word from anyone in the palace for three days, the city seems to be holding its breath. The palace should be abuzz with activity. Tables should line the courtyard, and banners should be hung from arches.

With a little persuasion, Samlet can be convinced to discuss the situation, at least the details he's been able to learn in the past three days:

- There's a rumor that the Queen and one of her attendants are very sick.
- Some fear she's caught the rot, the same that's been running rampant in the south.

- The King is trying to minimize the worry about the spreading rot, but even the paladins have become concerned.
- Also, there's the Rat Claw Clan attack on South Watch. Some say all-out war is next.

If the party is forthcoming about why they must see the King, Samlet will offer to relay a message. If the party reveals Ember, the young paladin offers some additional information:

Samlet leans in and whispers, "I cannot let you in, but I see your cause is urgent indeed. My friend, Gwyn, was a groundskeeper for the palace; he may be able to help you." Then, louder, not concealing his voice from any that may be passing by, he adds, "No one may come in. Check back tomorrow if you like. But tonight, you should go to the Sleeping Bear. Theobald the Great is performing. You shouldn't miss it!"

The party might infer that they can find Gwyn at the Sleeping Bear, but do they? Eventually, the party must accept that this guard is not going to let them into the palace complex.

THE SLEEPING BEAR

The Sleeping Bear is only a handful of trees from the palace complex and seems to be one of the few places left in Dobberton flush with business.

A huge, reinforced wooden door, easily the size of four typical doors, stands wide open at the base of a thick beech tree. Inside, you can see a rowdy tavern crowd, the clientele spanning a huge gamut of species. A black porcupine woodkin leans

Samlet is trying to imply that the party can find Gwyn at the Sleeping Bear.

For Samlet, you can use stats from the **Dobberton Elite Guard**.

against the bar, talking to a dobber with frizzy brown hair. A raucous group of dobbers and woodkin pound a table they have gathered around, cheering on a badger and turtle as they arm wrestle. It seems there's activity at every table - drinking, cards, dice - dobbers and woodkin alike having a good time. Other woodkin around include a black-tail marten, an opossum walking with a cane, a screech owl, and a cloaked raccoon. At the center of it all, a chipmunk woodkin energetically tends the bar.

CHOPS

Chops is a woodkin chipmunk druid who likes wildshaping into a bear if things get out of hand. She's a good barkeep, fiercely loyal to her regulars, and a pretty good business person. That's really all anyone needs to know.

*If the crowd gets too rowdy, use **brown bear** stats for **Chops**. While all is under control, she remains a chipmunk.*

After the arm wrestling match ends, the turtle winning, of course, the pair head to the massive, exterior door. Together, they pull it closed, then drop a crossbar into place, effectively locking everyone in. As they do, a cheer arises from the patrons. While the door was being closed, the porcupine and brown-haired dobber had disappeared to the kitchen. They return, pushing a large cart. On the cart is a huge, roasted boar. The crowd cheers again. Clearly, this is what the patrons are here for.

If any of the characters ask around, they find out that this is one of the few places in the capital city that specializes in serving meat. In recent years, the Sleeping Bear has become a sensation with more and more dobbers and woodkin embracing non-vegetarian fare.

THEOBALD THE GREAT

After the door is closed and the cheer quiets, a deeret emerges from behind a curtain in a previously unnoticed corner. A long, multicolored cloak swishes around grey paws. With a flourish, the deeret reveals a highly polished lute and begins to strum. With each chord, feathers dance atop his oversized hat.

Following a powerful strum, he announces, "*I am Theobald!*" He holds his arms out wide, bowing to the crowd, their focus now on him. "*Feast!*" He proclaims. "*Feast and allow me to take you back, back to a time when the forest was young and full of mystery. Back, I dare say, to a time of heroes...*" he pauses for dramatic effect, "*...and monsters!*"

The captivating bard seamlessly flows into a tale, masterfully dramatized with his lute - something about a dobber princess who needed rescuing. She was, of course, by a brave vole warrior who faced many trials, including a terrible fire lizard. While the yarn unwinds, a line of hungry people ready to fill their plates with freshly roasted boar has formed, leading to the cart.

FINDING GWYN

Learning who Gwyn is isn't easy. It takes some guile, perhaps Persuasion, and maybe even Intimidation. Though, if one of the characters is willing to buy a few drinks, tongues loosen quickly. Eventually, a patron says:

"You must mean Weasel. That's 'em over there," they say while pointing to the dobber with frizzy brown hair.

The rough-looking dobber is in the process of finishing a plate of boar, the meat's juices running down his chin. Some dobbers' stomachs would violently turn at the thought! He sits with the black porcupine woodkin he'd previously been chatting with at the bar.

When characters approach, they are invited to sit. The porcupine goes back to the bar.

Through a mouthful, he says, *"can't get enough of the stuff,"* referring to the meat, you guess. *"My partner turned me on to it. He's not here tonight."*

He listens to the party openly, eating and drinking the whole time, speaking little, and not caring much for manners. He says just enough to ensure the characters do most of the talking. He might say or paraphrase the following to get the characters talking.

- Looks like we're not having the Prime Seed Fest. It's sad if y'ask me.
- I've not gone by 'Gwyn' for a time. Who told you 'bout me?
- Samlet always treated people right, me too. Been a while tho.

Once one of the party reveals that they need to get into the palace, his demeanor changes.

- Ahh, I might know a guy who has a way. But yous strike me as good guys - we're not talkin' bout good guy work.
- It won't be easy.
- We probably should take this conversation somewhere a little more private.

Weasel leads you to a dark corner table where an otter sips from a tall clay glass by herself. Weasel introduces you as he sits. *"This is*

Daithi. We go way back. Did some jobs together." He turns to the otter, *"My friends need a way into the palace. They say it's urgent."*

Weasel encourages the party to explain the situation. The otter listens, her thick whiskers twitching as the story is relayed. In short order, Daithi is convinced and nods to her dobber friend.

"Right then," Weasel says, *"yous do us a favor, and we'll tell you how to get in, agreed?"*

Let the party answer. If they ask what the favor is, Weasel just says, *"We'll get to that in a sec."* If they refuse, he might say, *"Do you want in the palace or not?"* Regardless, eventually, Weasel goes on even if the party hasn't definitively agreed to anything.

"Ya'see, there's this cellar." Weasel says, *"It's right next to a natural underground spring. A while back, the spring caused part of the cellar wall t'fall in. An' wouldn't ya know it, one of the branches of that spring led right to the palace's heatin' and coolin' system."*

He goes on to tell them about the palace. They've devised a system that pumps heated and cooled water through the walls and floors. It's actually pretty impressive, but in King Quilan's haste to achieve this technological marvel, some vulnerabilities were created to the palace's security. In recent years, most of those vulnerabilities have been fixed.

Daithi interrupts, her voice like whispering glass, *"Someone*

Gwyn now goes by **Weasel**. Since leaving the employ of the palace, he's been able to build quite a profitable business with his partner, Wolf. Their business is highlighted on page 239.

Daithi is a thief for hire. Weasel often hires her to get in and out of tight spots.

Daithi can't wait for someone to take care of that monster in the underground stream so she can easily slip in and out of the castle.

*This is a typical
Potion of Water Breathing.*

discovered the opening and had the wall repaired. But that's not all; now there's something living in that underground waterway. I don't know if somebody put it there or if it just decided to move in. Either way, if you want in the castle, you'll have to kill it."

Weasel adds, *"That's our price. You kill it, and as far as anyone else is concerned, we never met. Deal?"*

The party is then given directions to the cellar. It's in a treat shop: Catrin's Candies. The natural underground spring keeps the stone block-walled room quite cool. This underground cooling room has allowed Catrin to

make all sorts of treats others can't. Her specialty is frozen goat's milk mixed with nuts and fruit.

They recommend going around midnight. The cellar entrance is in the back of the shop's sycamore tree, and it'll probably be locked. Daithi then gives each member of the party a **Potion of Water Breathing**. If you want to make it more interesting, roll 1d4+1 (or 1d6 - up to you) to determine how many vials of the potion she has.

CATRIN'S CANDIES

The streets are dark except for a few flickering lanterns. The candy shop is northeast of the palace, on the edge of a residential part of Dobberton. It's a small home with cute details built into a sycamore. Catrin's Candies is carved into a small wooden sign that hangs over the door. Under the words, a cupcake with an excessive amount of icing has been painted. There are no lights visible through the windows, and the front door is locked.

CATRIN AND TOREY

Catrin and her husband, Torey, are sleeping above the shop. Any noise the party makes above a whisper might cause them to wake. If they do wake, they won't attack; they are effectively commoners, but they will shout for the Dobberton Guard.

Add some tension to the scene by rolling to see if Catrin and Torey wake up. To do this, roll a d20 with no modifiers against a DC based on how loud the noise is.

- Very loud = DC 10
- Loud = DC 13
- Normal speaking volume = DC 16
- Very quiet noise = DC 20

DOBBERTON PATROL

Approximately every 20 minutes, a **dobberton guard** passes by. There are

FOUR THERE WERE

Before the party leaves, they find their focus shift to one of Theobald's stories:

Four there were, riding out on the king's personal carriage, pulled by his own white foxes. White as lightning they were! King Quillon's destiny will be forever tied to the quest these wizards embarked upon. Failure would mean the forest and all who lived in it would fall to the Tainted. Yes. You all know him. The father of decay, the Rot Weaver, an in-between, a shadowling. He has been called many names, but yes, you all know him. He is Rohr-tan the Lightless. Success and the king would be forever known as the one who saved the forest!

Four there were, Setarus could call lightning and wind. Mereth was master of beasts big and small. Othkara commanded life, and Herbert's contraptions could confound the mighty.

Four, there were - seals on his tomb. Secrets known only to the wizards of Dobberton.

three different roads nearby that guards patrol. Closest is the road directly in front of Catrin's and one to its south, forming a corner. The third road is behind the shop, a couple of trees to the east, but still close enough that one could hear noises the party may make.

THE CELLAR DOORS

The party can see two facing doors just at the edge of the sycamore's trunk. They are angled downward, implying a stair that leads under the trunk. They do not open and must be locked, yet there is no visible locking mechanism. Affixed where the two doors meet is a huge dobber nose carved from matching wood. Painted beneath the nose is a cupcake, one that matches the sign over the front door. Clearly, Catrin has a cute sense of style and humor.

The party cannot see the lock that is behind the nose. The nose cannot be moved unless it smells Catrin, which is to say, Catrin always smells like sweets. The nose will move if it smells something sweet. A character can brute force the nose off the doors, revealing the lock, but that will make a loud noise. The nose has an AC of 14 and 14 hit points.

If a character produces a sweet smell, the nostrils on the nose flare as if enjoying the odor. Then it slides up, revealing the lock underneath. It can be picked. It requires a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open. Alternatively, the cellar doors can be forced open, but that will also make a loud noise. The doors have an AC of 15 and 20 damage must be done to open them enough to pass through.

INSIDE THE CELLAR

Stone stairs lead down from the entrance. The air inside the cellar is indeed cold. Characters can see their breath. The room is full of shelves and small barrels. There's just enough room

for the party to fit. The shelves have mostly baked goods like cookies and cakes. Just to the right of the stairs, small barrels are stacked, three high and three deep. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher will immediately notice that the stone wall behind the barrels is a slightly different color. Those must be new blocks. If they don't immediately notice the blocks, a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find them.

The party can move the small barrels easily enough, though they might get distracted, given that they are full of ice cream. The wall they were stacked against is the coldest in the room. If a character presses their ear against the block wall, they can hear churning water on the other side. With a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, they can tell that the water does not fill the whole space on the other side of the wall. Opening the wall will not cause the room to flood.

It will take some effort to remove enough stone blocks to create an opening big enough for the characters. The characters must work together for 10 minutes and succeed on 3 consecutive DC 18 Strength (Athletic) checks. A character proficient in an appropriate tool can use that proficiency and roll with advantage. A failure causes the time and checks to start over until 3 successes are rolled in a row.

If a roll is failed, the character can choose to succeed instead; however, noise is made. The amount of noise is determined by how much the roll fails:

- Fail by 11 or more = A very loud noise
- Fail by 7-10 = A loud noise
- Fail by 3-6 = a noise equivalent to normal speaking volume
- Fail by 1 or 2 = A very quiet noise

Use the table above to determine if Catrin or Torey wakes up.

Stats for a **Dobberton guard** are found on page 355.

*The nose on the **cellar doors** has a fairly simple enchantment. Any sweet smell, even an artificial or arcane one will cause it to move, giving the party access to the lock so it can be picked. Dispel magic will also disable the nose, giving access to the lock.*

The **Cold Water Spring** map is on pages 256 and 257.

THE COLD WATER SPRING

The opening in the wall reveals a shallow underground river. Water flows from the east and sounds much more turbulent to the west.

A blast of even colder air rushes in from the new opening. Echoes of gurgling and dripping water cascade down the naturally formed waterway. The passage is so dark it easily swallows any light that would invade from the cellar.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE COLD WATER SPRING MAP

The cold water spring refers to the naturally formed cave comprised of Areas 1 through 8. Unless otherwise noted, these areas have the following features:

FLOORS AND WALLS OF THE NATURAL CAVERN.

This cave was formed when a natural aquifer began to bubble up into some loose earth. Over the years, the flow washed away the soft dirt, leaving a cave. The walls and floor are rock, smoothed by years of flowing water. The wet ground is somewhat slick to walk on but can be managed when careful. A dash action requires a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to complete without falling prone.

SMELLS AND SOUNDS

The cave has the natural mineral smell of water filtering through rocks. The sounds in Areas 1 through 3 are the pleasant trickling and dripping akin to a lazy stream. Sounds echo and can, at times, be disorienting. Areas 5 through 8 are a cacophony of roaring water.

LIGHT

There is no natural light in Areas 1 - 8.

KEYED LOCATIONS

1 - A GENTLE FLOW

The water flows from east to west at a slow, but steady pace. The rocks of the walls and floor have been smoothed by the flowing water, yet the shape of this passage is very irregular. There are deep voids scattered throughout. Similarly, there are rocks jutting out from the walls.

This makes the depth of the water unpredictable. In most areas, it's less than a foot deep, but a hole hidden in the dark water may be 3 or more feet deep.

2 - A ROCKY CHUTE

The passage narrows and twists toward the north, water cascading over rocky step-like falls. The rise impedes movement, slowing characters to half speed unless they succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

3 - SPRING

This is the source for the spring, a pool 4 feet deep at the center. The floor is made up of smaller stones that filter the water as it wells up from a deep aquifer.

4 - AROUND THE BEND

As you move west with the gently flowing river, you come to a ledge that separates this passage from a large cavity to the north. The roar of rushing water echoes out of the distance. The way forward is obscured not only by darkness but also by a thick mist from the churning water.

AREA 4

(OPTIONAL):

After falling over ledge into west side of Area 5, the strong current pushes character toward Area 7, bashing them into rocks dealing another 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. They then must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or be washed into Area 7.

To proceed, the party will have to climb down over the ledge. Rocks and the uneven surface of the cave walls provide ample ways to secure ropes or other equipment so that characters can easily descend the 10-foot drop. Characters can scale down with a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If a character falls, they take 1d6 falling damage and alert the creature in Area 5.

5 - THE CENTIPEDE'S LAIR

Roaring water echoes throughout this room, both from the north and west. Through the darkness and mist to the north, you can just make out water gushing out of a fissure in the wall. Further west, the water crashes down into a turbulent runnel.

You've found footing on a berm next to this tumultuous channel. There's no telling how deep the water is, but you can tell it is flowing dangerously fast.

The water flows from the fissures in Area 6 to the rapids in Area 8. If a character gets caught in this powerful flow, they must succeed on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to reach the water's edge. If they fail, they are bashed into rocks and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each round they remain in the water.

THE GIANT OBSIDIAN CENTIPEDE

The north-western portion of this room is the lair of a **giant obsidian centipede**. Here, the ground is wet from mist but not submerged. If the obsidian centipede was alerted to the party's presence by someone falling over the ledge from Area 4, the creature rushes to attack immediately. Otherwise, it attacks if a character comes within 15 feet of it.

*The **giant obsidian centipede** is found on page 365.*



AREA 6 (OPTIONAL):

To move from Area 6 to Area 9, characters must swim against a turbulent current.

To do so, each character must accumulate 2 successes in 3 attempts against a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

AREAS 9

THROUGH 11:

Characters are moving through fully submerged areas and will have to hold their breath until reaching the palace basement. This is where the **Potions of Water Breathing** apply.

Stats for the **Dobberton elite guard** is found on page 355.

6 - FISSURE FROM THE RIVER ABOVE

The cave exposed a weak area in the floor of the decorative moat around the palace.

7 - RUSHING CASCADE

Bolstered by the water falling through the fissure in Area 6, the flow rushes over a cluster of rocks into an area that appears much deeper.

8 - DEEP POOL

Water fills this chamber, and the ceiling slopes down to meet it. There is no telling where it goes as it flows deeper into the earth.

THE PALACE MOAT

Areas 9 through 10 refer to the very bottom of the moat that flows around the Dobberton Palace. Though the characters will have limited access to the surface, the areas of the map referenced in this section are underwater.

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE PALACE MOAT

The floor and walls of the moat are packed earth and rock, slick with moss and algae. The moat itself was dug when the palace was built, giving the walls a gently curved shape. The water is clean and comes from the Blue River, full of life and peace.

LIGHT

There is little light deep in the moat, only what filters down from the surface.

9 - DEEP IN THE PALACE MOAT

Faint light filters down from above - green from passing through seaweed

and other water plants. The steady current is exhausting to swim through but pales in comparison to the rushing torrent in the cave below.

The Boiler Room Intake pipe is about 20 feet north of where the party entered this area. Even though they must swim against the current, their path is clear, except for the occasional harmless fish.

If a character swims to the surface, they find nowhere to get out of the water. On one side, an inner wall of the palace complex extends up from the moat's edge. Walls of the the palace itself are on the other side. There is a lawn - part of the palace's courtyard - just northwest of the moat, where an **elite dobberton guard** patrols. This portion of lawn can only be reached from Area 9a.

9A - FENCE

A heavy fence keeps large fish and other creatures from swimming through this area. It also keeps creatures in.

On the other side of the fence, huge rainbow fish can be seen passing through the shadow of a bridge. Their iridescent scales catch the lantern light from the bridge's rail, casting a myriad of colors into the water around them.

The moat west of the fence flows under the central bridge that leads to the royal palace entrance. The fence keeps the rainbow fish in view of any visitors who cross the bridge. It's reinforced for security. The thinking was that anyone who would try to find another way into the palace by jumping into the moat would be trapped in this section near the bridge.

It should be clear to the players that if they go to the surface, they run a huge risk of alerting the palace guards and would never be able to speak with the king.

Of course, the characters running around the palace grounds, doing their best to avoid being found out, can be a lot of fun.

The purpose of having the party go through the palace basement is to reveal more plot details. As the GM, you can improvise and insert these details however you see fit.

All this is to say, the frequency of the patrolling guards is up to you, and you get to determine how difficult it is to cut the underwater fence.

10 - BOILER ROOM WATER INTAKE

A thick wooden pipe protrudes from the palace-facing wall of the moat. Its diameter is quite a bit larger than a dobber, but it is capped by some kind of mesh. A soggy leaf is stuck to the mesh by the force of the water being sucked in. You can see one side has been repaired by a few hasty loops of twine.

This thick wooden pipe has clearly been treated with ironwood sap to give it the strength and longevity needed to bring water into the castle for many years. It's big enough to fit a medium-sized creature. The mesh is to keep fish and debris out. It can be removed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or if a character is proficient with tinkering tools, a DC 10 Intelligence (Tinkering) check. The mesh can also be cut open by doing 10 damage to it against an AC of 12. When the party enters the pipe, they feel the water pulling them along. If they wish to stop, they must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. If they wish to go against the current, they must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

THE PALACE BASEMENT

The palace basement refers to the rooms in the basement of the Dobberton royal palace and is comprised of Areas 11 through 14.

Unless otherwise noted, these areas have the following features:

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE PALACE BASEMENT

The floors are thin limestone tiles. The walls are wood, reinforced at the corners with stone. Roots from the Prime Tree and its two guides wrap around the basement, some branching into the space along the walls.

LIGHT

Oil-fueled sconces are evenly spaced along the wall throughout the palace, though when the party arrives, they are not lit.

11 - WATER PIPE

The water pushes you along, the cold waning as the pipe travels deeper into the earth beneath the Prime Tree.

There are only two destinations at the end of this pipe: a chamber where the water is filtered and cleaned for use by the residents of the palace and a chamber where the water is heated so that it can be pushed around to heat other rooms.

The first branch leads to the filtering chamber. An open valve lets the water flow freely. It appears this valve can be closed and locked. In addition to the valve, the opening into the chamber is covered by a mesh similar to the

*Characters can easily remove the mesh over the **Boiler Room Water Intake** pipe even while swimming.*

Area 11B (Optional): A character who finds themselves in this chamber takes 1 fire damage from the hot water per turn until they get out. A character that is in the Boiler Room, Area 12, can open a valve on the side of the Water Heating Chamber to release the character. This opening is just above the level of the water inside the chamber.

one the party encountered earlier. It can be removed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or if a character is proficient with tinkering tools, a DC 10 Intelligence (Tinkering) check. The mesh can also be cut open by doing 10 damage to it against an AC of 12.

The second branch leads to the heating chamber. If a character moves past the first branch, they immediately notice that the water is warmer. When a character reaches the branch, they come to a one-way valve that can freely pivot, standing open when water flows in, pulling closed if the water has cause to flow out. The main purpose of the one-way valve is to keep the hot water from flowing back out of the chamber.

I1A - WATER FILTERING CHAMBER

The water filtering chamber is ironwood like the pipe that fills it. That pipe connects to this small holding tank near the top, spilling into a small, mesh-lined holding tank. Beyond the mesh, the water seems to be moving through a series of cloth strips. Above, you can see a sealed valve; the opening mechanism must be on the outside.

I1B - WATER HEATING CHAMBER

Fortunately, during this time of year, the heating chamber is only used at half capacity. If a character winds up in there, they would get burned but might be able to get out before it proves fatal.

I2 - BOILER ROOM

This is a simple room, the main feature being the two large water chambers. A control panel angles out from each at about a dobber's waist height. Each has a different array of knobs and buttons. A contrivance of levers, pulleys, and ropes leads to pipes that spiderweb along the ceiling.

Presumably, these are the pipes used to transport the heated and cleaned water around the palace.

Two tall cabinets sit on the wall across from the huge water tanks. There are tables next to each with various tools and scraps scattered on them.

There is a door in the east corner. Through an opening on the west wall, the party can see a desk and the beginning of the hallway that leads to the holding cells, Area 13.

I2A - STORAGE ROOM

The door seems locked but is actually just stuck. It can be opened with a hard shove, DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

The smell of stale ash fills your nose. Crates, small barrels, and a myriad of small tools are piled haphazardly in a half-ring around the door. Beyond that, large equipment, black with years of dust and soot, sits buried in more soot and unidentifiable junk.

The items stacked near the door are occasionally used by the tinkerer in charge of the water heating and filtering

BEFORE THE PARTY LEAVES THE BOILER ROOM

When the party is about to leave Area 12, Gearld comes down the stairs in Area 14. He has come to speak with the Queen, who is currently in one of the holding cells, Area 13a. The party can easily eavesdrop on this conversation, and they should.

The party, or at least someone in the party, should realize this is Gearld, the King's Justiciar. Gearld is likely the most powerful dobber in Dobberton. The party should understand this isn't a man to be trifled with.

chambers. They rarely go deeper into the room, and there's no need to. That equipment is the remnants of a wood-burning heating system. It hasn't been touched in decades.

GEARLD, THE KING'S JUSTICIAR

Gearld is a living legend. He's a beloved member of the Triumvirate, serving as the kingdom's Justiciar now and for the previous King. He has had his eye on the party since they defeated fungal creatures in Oak Den.

Samlet, one of the palace guards, brought word to him that they had come to Dobberton with an important message for the King. He didn't expect that they would sneak into the palace, but here they are. Gearld has decided to let them explore a bit before confronting them.

THE JUSTICIAR ENTERS

You hear footfalls coming down the stairs. They are steady and confident, the sound of someone who's walked these steps a thousand times. As they reach the bottom, they turn toward the holding cells, and you see the back of a dobber in full plate armor. Long, steel-gray hair flows over the top of a blue cape. The cape is emblazoned with the insignia that symbolizes peace, justice, and strength throughout Dobberton, the white logo of the Order of the Blue Star.

He was there only briefly before turning down the hall and out of sight, yet his presence seared your mind. The energy around him was a force unlike any you've ever felt, yet you know in your heart that it is a force for good.

If any of the characters were wondering what it was like to encounter a level 20 paladin, now they know. The auras of courage and protection that Gearld radiates wash over each character as he passes by, soliciting feelings in them that only they can know. Yet, even a force for good may not take kindly to a group of so-called heroes sneaking into the palace through the water system.

Gearld walks to the 5th cell, Area 13a. He intends to check on the Queen, who is badly infected with rot poisoning. She's in the last stages, so far gone even he cannot fully restore her. He's doing everything he can to keep her from fully crossing over into decay, hoping a way to fully heal her presents itself soon.

The party can overhear the following conversation. Feel free to shorten it or paraphrase it as you see fit:

"Gearld," speaks a voice like dried leaves crumbling to dust. *"Have you come to punish me more?"*

"Cassandra," responds the quiet yet strong voice of Gearld. *"Shhhh,"* he soothes and begins to pray. *"Star Father, shine your holy light upon us."* Even at a distance, you can feel power flowing as the prayer continues. At first, the other voice seems to object, crackling, unintelligible cries and moans. They quickly taper to silence, then sobs.

"Oh, Gearld, I'm so sorry," a female voice now speaks, just a touch of gravelliness remaining. With a shock, you realize it's the same voice as before, restored to something more natural.

"Why didn't you come to me sooner?" Gearld asks. *"I could've stopped it from getting this far. Why didn't you bring Calynn to me?"*

"She wouldn't have listened," Cassandra answers. Then, in almost a whisper, *"Not to you. Her trust in us was broken. Even the great Gearld couldn't have fixed it."*

"Now we are all..."

"I can feel him, you know," Cassandra interrupts, *"through the decay."*

"The Lightless moves more boldly in the south," Gearld responds. *"His forces grow. There was an attack on South Watch. I do my best to shield you from his taint, but until..."*

"No," she snaps. *"Here! I feel him here."* She punctuates each word as her voice descends back into the rasping, crackling tone it had before.

The queen does "feel him here" as she just declared to Gearld. She feels the presence of Rohr-tan through Ember.

The party can hear Gearld suddenly begin to move back up the hall. The voice of the queen cracks into a laugh that echoes with the paladin's firm steps. When he gets to the foot of the stairs, he pauses as if listening or thinking. However, he does not look around or make any effort to discover the party.

Gearld goes up the stairs from whence he came with the same confident stride, though now, a bit faster. If a character listens after him, they will hear a mechanical click a few flights up. He will then continue ascending until out of earshot.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will realize what the click was: a bolt being unlocked and a door opened. There is no indication that the door was reclosed after.

Gearld's behavior might seem odd. Why would he unlock a door and leave it open so conveniently for the characters? He first heard about the party after they tracked down the moss boar in Litewyck. He's seen that they are doing good and hopes that is why they are here now.

Gearld may be the only one with royal authority who knows how dangerous the spreading decay is. Even with the Queen in the state she's in, the King is more concerned about his image than the safety of his people.

Though Gearld isn't sure how they got into the palace, they present an unexpected opportunity. Maybe they can help the King see the truth. Before that, however, he wants them to see the Prime Seed room.

13 - HOLDING CELLS

At the head of a hallway that runs to the south, you find a well-worn desk. On it, a thick book sits closed, covering a small stack of loose paper. An old quill sticks out of a nearly empty ink well next to a lantern. Padding on the chair behind the desk is threadbare but looks comfortable.

It's fairly obvious to the party by the lack of dust and wet ink that this desk is regularly used.

Half a dozen holding cells with ironwood bars line the hallway. As far as dungeons go, these cells are nice. Each has a bed with simple linens and a chamber pot. The floor and walls are clean. There are no sconces on the wall of the dark hallway. All of the cells are unoccupied, their barred doors standing ajar, save one.

13A - THE QUEEN

Once Gearld is safely away, the party can take a moment to speak with the Queen in her holding cell should they want to.

As you survey the cells, you're surprised to find that none appear to be occupied. It doesn't seem that any of the bed linens are crumpled. However, in the 5th cell, a cluster of black fungus and vine grows thick in the corner.

Then you realize with horror that the shape of a female dobber is part of the mass of dark fungi. Limb-like vines might be arms and legs. A group of mushroom mycelium hangs like hair. Stalks might be fingers.

WHAT IF THE PARTY APPROACHES GEARLD?

Gearld will confront the party in a manner similar to what you find in Chapter 11, Area 2, the Royal Garden, of the Main Floor of the Palace map. He will then take them to meet the King, Area 5 of the same map.

A rough, bark-like mushroom cap splits from side to side and speaks, "Shadow Father. Have you come to free me?" Two small mushroom caps above the mouth blink. "No. Who are you?"

Cassandra can feel Rohr-tan through Ember, even from within the antimagic box. She is disoriented in this state. She doesn't understand how she can feel him or that no one in the party is actually the Rot Weaver.

It's difficult to talk to the Queen because she is distracted by feeling Rohr-tan and thinks one of the party is him. She believes that he is here to either kill her or free her. She pleads for mercy and vows to serve. In moments of lucidity, she will share some of the following:

- The Prime Seed Celebration has been canceled because she is sick.
- She caught rot poisoning from Calynn.
- She and Calynn were friends long before she married King Quilan.
- Calynn came to her right after she was cursed by Rohr-tan, but before the curse was in full effect. Calynn had not yet become the Wood Sprite, bound to the bog.
- Cassandra's illness progressed slowly. It wasn't until it blossomed fully into rot poisoning that she realized the

rumors of the Wood Sprite spreading rot in the forest were actually Calynn.

When the party leaves, she begs them to stay... she begs Rohr-tan to stay.

14 - STAIRS UP

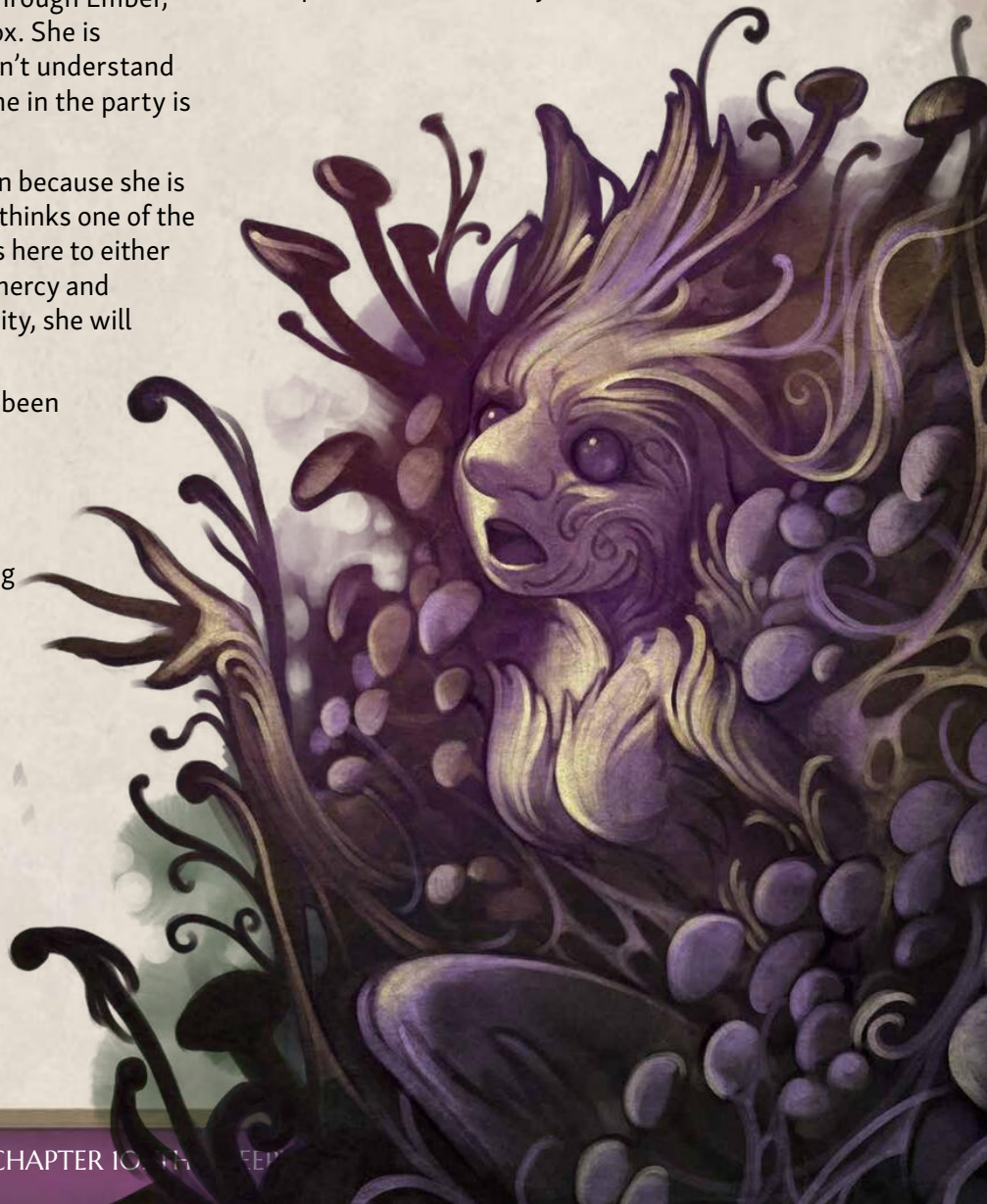
Four flights of stairs switch back on themselves until they reach a small platform. From this platform, one can take an open door into a narrow passage or continue up following more stairs.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

Chapter 10 flows directly into the next one. When the characters are ready to move up the stairs in Area 14, proceed to Chapter 11.

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 11 and 12, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.







11

10

3

9

6

2

9a

5

1

4



CHAPTER II: MEETING WITH THE KING

The party has infiltrated the palace, but they have yet to find the king so that they can tell him about Ember and Calynn. When they find him, will he listen, or will they be imprisoned with the queen?

BACKGROUND

Surely the party didn't expect to get out of the castle after breaking in? Perhaps they will have an opportunity to convince the king of the great evil connected to the dagger.

GEARLD, THE JUSTICIAR

Gearld has been keeping tabs on the party since Oak Den. He knows they've come to Dobberton with important news for the King. Their message for the king must be very important since they've snuck into the palace. These

would-be heroes are quite persistent. Gearld is eager to hear what they know about the spreading rot.

KING QUILAN

Numerous reports of the spreading rot have come to the king, yet he refuses to act, insisting that the local authorities are more than capable of handling it. He believes the rumors that his sister, Calynn, is involved, are false. And to suggest that she is trying to free the Rot Weaver is ludicrous.



SARUS

Sarus has appointed himself the personal advisor to the King, operating outside of the established Triumvirate government. And it's working. He's recently found favor with the King, always by his side and in his ear. Sarus's motivations are unclear at this time, but some have noticed, like Gearld, that they aren't for the good of the kingdom.

PALACE STAFF

The palace is fully staffed by dozens of dobbers and woodkin. The party will not have much opportunity to meet them during this chapter, but a few they might encounter are listed below.

Rian is the head butler. He has been since Quilan's father was king. He is very quiet, often in the room, quietly observing without being noticed.

Clara is the head cook. She's quite rotund, as a quality cook should be. She smiles, giggles, and constantly bows in deference while speaking with others.

Samlet is a palace guard and friend of Gearld. The party met him in the last chapter at the front gate.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **THE HERITAGE LEVEL.** The party explores the Prime Seed room and the heritage vault.
- **THE ROYAL GARDEN.** After ascending to the royal garden on the main floor, the party is surrounded by palace guards.
- **MEETING THE KING.** The party finally has the chance to give Ember to the King.

- **THE NEXT MORNING.** After thinking their part in saving the kingdom from the Wood Sprite and the spreading rot has come to an end, the party is given a new quest.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 10 and 12, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.

This chapter allows the party to see how far the threat of the rot has reached. They also will learn that the Triumvirate is not going to be much help. Even though the queen is sick with rot poisoning, the king remains convinced the problem will go away on its own. Gearld wants to help, but his hands are tied.

The party will learn that they are the best hope to save the forest.

HIDE AND SEEK CONTINUED

If you are using the suggestion from the last chapter, you can continue that on the heritage level and main floor of the palace. When the party emerges into Area 2, the Royal Garden, give them time to hide before Gearld and the Palace Guards show up. Gearld and the guards will need to eventually catch them and take them to meet the King in Area 5.

THE HERITAGE LEVEL

The heritage level of the palace keeps the royal treasury, the heritage vault, and most importantly, a central room with the prime seed. Two grand staircases descend from the palace's royal garden to the heritage level. While the heritage vault and treasury are magically locked and guarded, the Prime Seed room is open to the citizenry during certain hours.

1 - A NOT-SO-SECRET DOOR

The party can enter the heritage level through a secret, staff-only passage that was left open by Gearld.

You follow a series of stairs where each flight switches back on itself with a small platform between. Four flights up, off one of the platforms, a door stands partially open. Had the door not been open, you may not even have noticed it.

Inside, a short hallway leads to a second door also left ajar, faint yellow light peeking around it.

If one of the characters takes a close look, they find that the lock for both doors is inside this small passage. On the other side, the closure is flush and nearly seamless. It's clear that these doors are supposed to be hidden.

2 - THE PRIME SEED ROOM

After the party enters the room with the Prime Seed, read or paraphrase:

You come into a large, oval room. There's a raised dais in the center, pushing up through the floor like a wooden bloom, cradling a large seed. Thick, rib-like roots traverse the curved wall on its right. An alcove displaying a carved bust is featured on the wall to the left. A pair of passages exit on either side of the alcove, and ornately carved double doors are next to each passage.

Every surface of this large oval room is natural, polished wood. Golden light radiates from the bloom, shining upon the seed and bathing the room in a warm glow.

*The map of **The Heritage Level** is on page 263.*

*The **door to Area 1**, when viewed from Area 2 is perfectly camouflaged with the texture of the walls, making it nearly invisible.*

If one of the characters takes a closer look at the seed, read:

The seed has an oblong shape, three-quarters of a foot from bottom to top, and has a subtle ridged texture. Along some of the ridges, you can see black veins. You catch a hint of the now sickeningly familiar decay. Your heart sinks.

It's true - decay has reached the Prime Seed. This is clearly another reason why it seems like there are no plans for a Prime Seed Harvest Celebration. Does that mean it's too late? Did the Wood Sprite win?

3 - A BUST OF THE KING

When one of the characters approaches the alcove, read:

This small alcove features a chiseled bust of the first king of Dobberton, Orlun. Fierce eyes are carved beneath strong brows. He wears a heavy crown of simple design and a short, long beard. The corner of his mouth curls into a smirk, giving the statue a great deal of personality.

4 - THE TREASURY DOORS

When one of the characters approaches the treasury doors, read:

Two ornately carved doors bar the entrance to the treasure room. Gold filigree swirls around twisting columns that frame the entrance. The doors themselves depict stylized versions of the Prime Tree and the two accompanying guide trees.



A character that is proficient in Intelligence (Arcana) will easily notice that these doors are magically locked. A very sensitive alarm spell has been cast on the doors.

SKIP THE FOLLOWING SECTION IF THE ALARM IS NOT TRIGGERED:

The alarm doesn't get triggered if a character casually touches the doors or lightly jiggles the handle. But, anything more than that does trigger the alarm. As the GM, it's up to you how much a character has to do to trigger the alarm.

If triggered, the alarm is silent to the characters. Gearld, Samlet, and six **palace guards** rush into the room down the stairs at Area 6.

Gearld's impressive stats are on page 356. You can the **Elite Dobberton guard** for Samlet and **Dobberton guards** for the palace guards, found on page 355.

The full **Beacon of Trust** ability is detailed on page 41 and Gearld's full stats are page 356.

Gearld summons the Star Light Spear, the signature weapon of the Blue Star Paladins, bathing the party in blue light. *"Your explorations end here. Come with us peacefully and none of you will be hurt."*

Gearld activates his paladin ability, **Beacon of Trust**. All characters must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail the saving throw, they regard Gearld as a friend or respected acquaintance.

4A - THE TREASURY

The only people who have access to the treasure room are members of the Triumvirate, the Justiciar, the Queen, and the King. Though, if someone were to gain access, they would find a treasure beyond their wildest dreams.

5 - THE HERITAGE VAULT DOORS

When one of the characters approaches the heritage vault doors, read:

These two doors share the same frame as the other set, with gold filigree and spiraling columns. However, the relief on the doors differs, depicting a clean-shaven dobber wearing a crown. He holds a long sword across his chest, not in a combative stance, but more relaxed, yet not to be taken lightly either. This dobber does not look like Orlun, the king portrayed in the nearby bust, nor any other king you can remember from the history books you had to study as a child. The palace is carved into the background. At first, you didn't notice, but it appears these doors are slightly open.

These doors have magical protections similar to the doors to the treasury, but currently, those protections are disabled.

5A - THE HERITAGE ROOM

These magically crafted doors open without any resistance. The only light comes from the Prime Seed room and that which bounces off of the ruby red Heritage Stones. When a character enters, read:

The doors silently pivot open, revealing a slightly smaller oval-shaped room. Light glints off dozens of red gems evenly arrayed on the back wall. Each gem is set into a plaque: name and title engraved below the stone. A few feet from the wall, three pedestals hold three plaques with gems similar to those on the wall. The center one, which stands a little higher than the other two, reads *Quilan, King of Dobberton*. The plaque and gem to the left has *Cassandra, Queen Governess* engraved on it, and the left one reads *Gearld, High Justiciar*.

You soon realize that the plaques on the wall are grouped by family. You find the previous king, Quillon, and his Queen, Bettany. Below these plaques, you find an open space for Quilan, whose plaque is displayed on a pedestal. Next to the open space, you find a plaque with *Calynn, First Princess* engraved on it. The gem that should be set into it is missing; scratches in the surface make it obvious it was pried loose.



A Heritage Stone for every king and family, from Orlun, the first king, to the current, Quilon, is represented. Orlun's plaque is centered at the very top of the wall. A character who succeeds on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) or DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can notice that there are scratches around Orlun's stone. The stone is there, but it looks like someone may have tried to pry it free.

If the character examining Orlun's plaque rolls a 21 or higher, you can choose to add: It seems the heritage stone belonging to Orlun was successfully removed at some point, but it's clearly there now.

6 - CEREMONIAL STAIRS

The passages to either side of the alcove for the bust of Orlun are identical, though mirrored. Each features wide curving steps carved from the Prime Tree leading up to the next floor.

MAIN FLOOR OF THE PALACE

The main floor of the palace is used primarily for staff and public interaction with the Triumvirate. Staff is housed in the west wing. The east wing has a kitchen and a formal dining room for visitors. Between the two are the promenade and the royal garden.

1 - CEREMONIAL STAIRS

Two sets of broad, curved steps connect the royal garden of the palace's main floor and the heritage level below.

Actually, Orlun's Heritage Stone was switched with Calynn's. However, there is no way for the party to learn that here.

Later the party will learn that the stone in Ember was Orlun's all along.

The map of the Main Floor of the Palace is on page 266.

The pair of stairs that flank the fountain are only used for ceremonies involving the Prime Seed.

Gearld's impressive stats are on page 356. You can the **Elite Dobberton guard** for Samlet and **Dobberton guards** for the palace guards, found on page 355.

The full **Beacon of Trust** ability is detailed on page 41.

2 - THE ROYAL GARDEN

The royal garden comes into view for the party as they climb the stairs in Area 1. If the party initially snuck into the palace according to Weasel and Daithi's instructions, it is late at night, the only light coming from the moon outside. If they followed a different timeline, change the description below as needed:

You emerge from the lower level into a beautifully manicured garden with no natural light except that of the moon reflecting off the many polished wood surfaces. Silhouettes of perfectly shaped trees and bushes line the front. Dark vines cling to the wall behind.

A beautiful fountain is between the pair of stairs.

The fountain centered in this garden is an artistic wonder, carved from a single piece of white wood. Water flows from the top over a cascading series of wispy, crescent-shaped clouds that swirl below a six-pointed star. Slender columns of wood support the star's lofty height. A sheen of water shimmers and reflects light from the columns, tricking the senses into thinking they are beams of radiance cast down from the star.

Gearld has prepared a group of guards to greet the party when they emerge from the heritage level. Give the party a moment to take in their surroundings, then read:

Blue light pierces the darkness as Gearld summons his Star Light Spear, a glowing bar of solid light synonymous with the Order of Blue Star Paladins. *"You've explored the palace enough. Come with us peacefully, and none of you will be hurt."* The light illuminates him and six other palace guards, emerging from behind bushes and topiary trees, one of which is Samlet.

The party is now surrounded by six **palace guards**. Gearld activates his paladin ability, **Beacon of Trust**. *All characters must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If they fail the saving throw, they regard Gearld as a friend or respected acquaintance.*

Gearld is going to do everything in his power to avoid combat. After all, he left the Prime Seed room and the heritage vault open for them.

Gearld steps forward, holding the spear for illumination, not as a weapon. *"You can trust me. I think we're on the same side. Come with me so we can speak."*

If the party chooses to go peacefully, they are led to the dining room at Area 5.

3 - PROMENADE

A wide walkway of white birch borders the southern side of the royal garden. It is framed by two rows of columns, one on the garden side and one between it and the outer courtyard.

3A - STAIRS UP

On either side of the promenade, grand staircases lead up to the royal chambers and other rooms restricted to the public. An official palace guard stands

at the foot of each, vigilant of who may pass and who cannot.

4 - VISITOR'S WAITING ROOM

This sitting room is available for dignitaries and other notable citizens while they wait to take council with the King or before a formal meal. It is finely appointed with padded chairs and a thick rug that fills the floor. Portraits of the royal family hang on the walls. Hot tea and cookies are always available when guests are in, though some say the cookies are quite bland. At this time, however, the cookies are gone, and the tea is cold.

5 - PUBLIC DINING ROOM

This beautifully decorated room is where the royal family shares meals with honored visitors. It also serves as a meeting space when needed.

The table is carved from dark walnut and is decorated with a gold inlay of the royal family crest. Ten matching walnut chairs with red velvet cushions accompany the table. The west wall is lined with sideboard tables for dinnerware and serving platters. The north wall has an imposing stone fireplace with a robust mantle and hearth.

Meeting the King

King Quilan and Councilman Sarus are already seated at the large table. Samlet and Gearld enter with the party. The rest of the guards stay in the hallway posted at the doors.

The king stands. He's not as tall as you imagined. A portrait of his father hangs on the wall behind him - a formidable and impressive man. Even the painting oozes charisma. This man, however, bears a resemblance but seems mousy in comparison. "Are these the intruders?" he asks.

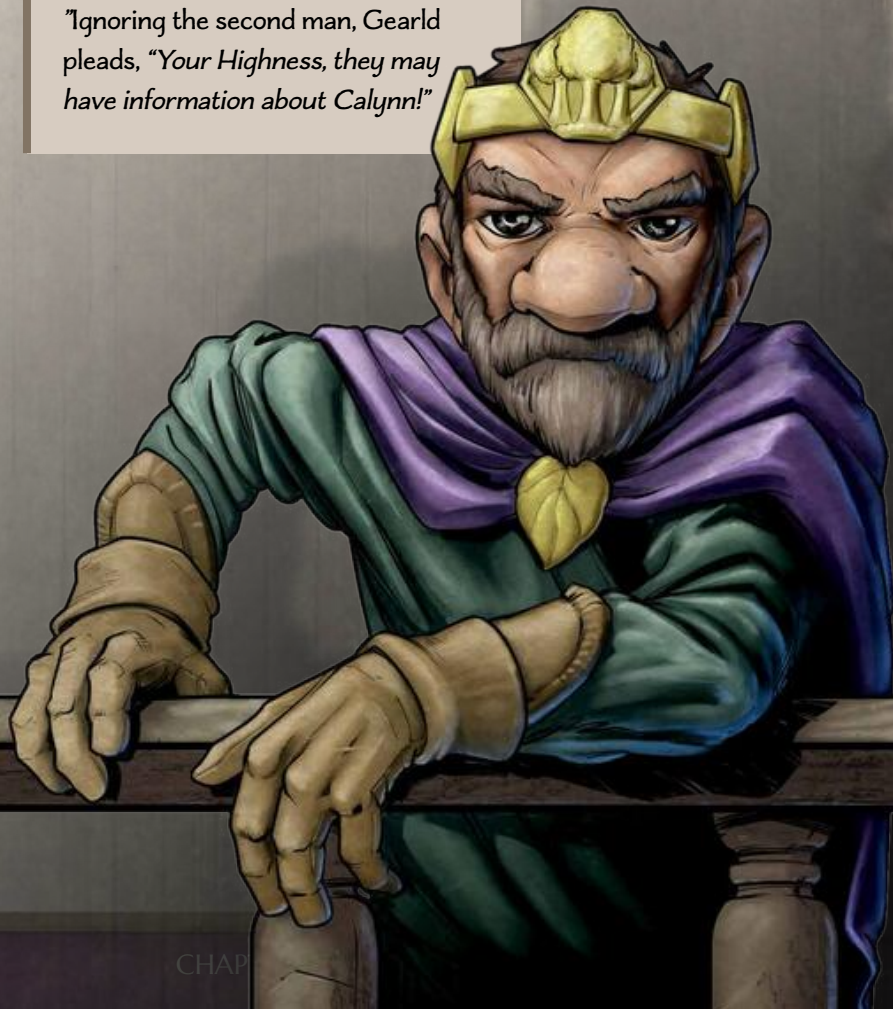
"These are the heroes I told you about, Your Highness," Gearld answers. "They have been combating the rot in the south."

"Oh, that," the King waves a hand dismissively and sits back down. "Why are they here? And in the middle of the night, no less!"

The second dobber who was sitting with the King when you entered interjects, "Why are you wasting the King's time with this? He's weak with worry for his wife. He needs his rest."

"Ignoring the second man, Gearld pleads, "Your Highness, they may have information about Calynn!"

King Quilan struggles under the weight of his father's legendary regime. He's afraid of the public's critical eye and perceived failure.





At this point, Gearld does not know the party carries Ember or that it has the missing Heritage Stone affixed to it. He believes that Calynn has the Heritage stone. He recently discovered that she was cursed, becoming the Wood Sprite. He fears she is responsible for the spreading decay in the south. After all, if she was cursed by Rohr-tan, the lord of decay may be using her.

ABOUT CALYNN, THE WOOD SPRITE

The party has been hunted by every kind of decay monster since leaving the Sylvan Dobbers in the Fenmar Forest with the singular goal of presenting Ember to the King and being free of it. Now they are here. What will they do?



Gearld prompts, “Just start from the beginning. Why are you here?”

As the party tells King Quilan and Gearld about Ember, allow the conversation to unfold naturally. Use the details below to inform how they respond:

GEARLD

Gearld wants to save the forest and protect its people.

- He knows the party faced the walking fungus and other decay monsters around Oak Den and Litewyck.
- He believes, that with Herb’s help, they found where the Wood Sprite was hiding, after which the party set out for the Verdant Mountains.
- He also knows that Herb was one of the last Council of Mages who imprisoned Rohr-tan, and had his memory wiped by Othkara. This isn’t a detail he would reveal to the party.
- He believes the party has been trying to stop the spreading rot from the beginning, something that he feels he should’ve been doing, but his hands have been tied here at the capitol.
- He believes that had he been able to address this threat from the beginning, the Rat Claw Clan would have never gotten involved. He fears they are now preparing to strike.

KING QUILAN

Quilan wants this whole rot business to just go away with the least amount of effort. He was planning to ignore it entirely until the Queen fell ill with rot poisoning. Calynn isn’t really evil; this whole thing has been blown out of proportion.

- Even though he’s very angry with Calynn, he wants to help her.
- He might say, “*She must be found. She’s my sister. I can convince her to stop all of this.*”
- Quilan is surprisingly self-aware regarding his sister, understanding that Calynn has always been jealous that he was chosen to be king. He doesn’t hold that against her.

SARUS

Sarus is a sycophant who is trying to weasel into power.

- He believes the kingdom is invincible. He doesn’t take this threat seriously. It’s just a distraction.
- He might say to the King, “*How could she be so selfish? You are the rightful King of Dobberton.*”
- “*Sire, Calynn was exiled for a reason. She clearly has been lost to the Lightless.*”

The guest rooms are on the second floor along a balcony that overlooks the royal gardens. Characters who take a moment to appreciate the view will see true artistic achievement in the garden, fountain and surrounding architecture.

ONCE EMBER HAS BEEN REVEALED

Gearld can immediately sense evil radiating from Ember.

King Quilan seems relieved. He jumps to the conclusion that the dagger is the only significant threat. They have the dagger. The party are heroes! All is saved.

Sarus suggests they just lock Ember in the vault, solving the problem.

Gearld stands, *"Your Highness, I can sense true evil here. I feel the evil of Rohr-tan coming from the dagger. It must be destroyed! We have to make sure the tomb is still sealed!"*

"Of course, the tomb is sealed. Stop fear-mongering, Gearld." Sarus mocks. *"We have the dagger. These folks are heroes."* Sarus smiles broadly at you.

"Besides, no one even remembers where the tomb is. And these folk are heroes!" the King declares. *"They must be rewarded! See that they have our best guest rooms. And food, of course. Tomorrow, we will celebrate what they've done for our kingdom!"*

Gearld doesn't think the King sees the full breadth of the situation. He pleads with the King that more must be done. The threat persists.

However, the King, with ongoing encouragement from Sarus, just wants to lock the dagger away.

"Gearld, take the dagger to the vault. Return the heritage stone to its rightful place," the King commands.

ROYAL GUEST ROOMS

The party doesn't have another option. They must turn the dagger over. Gearld takes the dagger, and Samlet escorts the party out. They are taken to rooms and shortly after brought meals.

6 - KITCHEN

This kitchen has all the amenities one would expect in a palace. Large preparation tables, cabinets full of serving and preparation utensils, and a huge walk-in pantry. The fireplace on the south wall is suited for cooking with brick-lined alcoves for baking and a large space for a tripod or a spit to be placed over an open fire.

7 - GUARD AND STAFF QUARTERS

The west wing of the palace is primarily for palace guards and staff. Even the smaller rooms include a bed, table, chair, and small wardrobe - luxurious compared to most inns. Senior staff have rugs, writing desks, and even a sitting area for visitors. Palace staff are well cared for.

EMBER MUST BE DESTROYED, BUT NOT HERE

Gearld spent the remainder of the night studying the dagger. He has found evidence that a bit of spirit from both Calynn and Rohr-tan is trapped in the Heritage Stone affixed to Ember. It's clear to him that it must be destroyed, but he doesn't know what will happen. The party must find Othkara. He's the only one who knows how to handle the uncertainty that might follow releasing those fractured spirits.

THE NEXT MORNING

The party's sleep is restful but cut short.

You are abruptly awoken from one of the deepest sleeps you've had in a while. The beautifully appointed rooms and deep plush beds the King has provided for you held no power over the booming voice of Gearld announcing his presence in the fore chamber, *"I apologize for waking you so early, but it cannot be helped. The peoples of the Alwaysgreen Forest have further need of you."*

As you emerge from your rooms, still shaking off the fog of sleep, you see the Dobberton Justiciar is already adorned in his full royal armor. The clear concern on his face overshadows the calming aura of the Star Father that radiates from him. In his hands, he holds the box of black wood that you and your allies made to conceal the magic of the cursed dagger, Ember.

"We are under attack," he states flatly. *"Very early this morning, I received news that the Rat Claw Clan has come in force along the south and western borders. My contingent there has already fallen. Si-ak's army will be here in no more than three days. I depart within the hour to stop his push into our homeland. I need you to take the dagger. It cannot stay here, especially if the Clan and Calynn are indeed working together. I fear that things are already in motion to release the Rot Weaver. You must not let that happen! Find Othkara. He will know what to do. Go to the Burrow. If he is not there, someone there will know where he is."*

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

Gearld rushes off, attending to the crisis at hand. After a few minutes to gather their things, Samlet escorts the party out of the palace. It seems they are being *snuck* out, taking back halls and staff doors.

They are given 250 primes and a day's worth of rations. The Burrow is just west of Dobberton, less than a day's journey.

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 10 and 12, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.



CHAPTER 12: BLUE RIVER DAZE

by Kat Kruger with Darryl T. Jones

The party has been sent to find Othkara, a mage believed to be able to destroy the cursed dagger, Ember. His last known location was the Burrow. Unfortunately, a servant of the Wood Sprite has beaten them there, trapping the town in a time loop.

BACKGROUND

Since the party placed Ember in an antimagic box, the Wood Sprite has lost its trail. Now, her attention has turned to her old mentor, Othkara, but first, she has to find him. Working through a corrupt mage, Ardalion, she hopes to flush Othkara out by attacking his former home, the Burrow.

The Wood Sprite doesn't want to simply hurt the people of the Burrow;

she wants to show Othkara she has power over them. She has devised a way to trap them, a *time loop seed*.

However, the Wood Sprite is still bound to her bog. She needs someone to take the seed to the Burrow, someone savvier than her ratkin helpers and more intelligent than the decay monsters. That is where Ardalion comes in. He has placed the time loop seed in the heart of the Burrow, locking its residents in a continuously repeating day.



RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 10 and 11, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.

When the adventurers enter the Burrow, they quickly discover they are trapped in a time loop with the rest of the village. To progress further on their quest to find Othkara, they must break the spell and face the evil mage, Ardalion.

This chapter doesn't follow the typical scene-by-scene progression that

the others use. Instead, characters will explore the village and festival, looking for the cause of the time loop. It ends when they find Ardalion and kill him, or he flees. In either case, the magic of the time loop seed ends.

At this stage of the adventure, the tension is high, and time is short. They must find Othkara and come up with a plan to stop the Wood Sprite from releasing the Rot Weaver. This quest will have a different feel, and getting trapped in a time loop will only increase the stress.

Puck is a **nobel** with traits similar to a **groundhog** found on page 25 plus an **alternative melee attack**, claws, which you can find on page 28.

Kirsikka is a typical **Bard** with **Deeret** traits found on page 26.

Ardalion's stats are on page 350.

THE BURROW

The Burrow is a village nestled along the Blue River, just a few miles from where it flows past the Prime Tree. Founded by the first awakened woodkin, they make up most of the Burrow's population. The architecture within the village is a true amalgam of every shape and size, designed to accommodate all, from the tiny chipmunk to the towering elk.

WHERE IS OTHKARA

Othkara was born in the Burrow and is one of the oldest awakened woodkin. He is very well known, though his reputation is muddy. Some see him as one of the heroes who helped capture the Rot Weaver 20 years ago, while others fear Othkara was an ally of the Rohr-tan.

Just about everyone in the Burrow knows Othkara, and they have wildly fluctuating opinions about his past. Unfortunately, no one claims to know where he is.

THE PRIME SEED HARVEST CELEBRATION AND BLUE RIVER DAYS

For the woodkin of the Burrow, the Prime Tree doesn't only symbolize hope and peace; it is their very source of life. Therefore, the annual Prime Seed Harvest Celebration has additional significance. It is for this reason that they created Blue River Days. Blue River Days is a festival that spans the 10 days leading up to the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration, making the holiday 12 days. Blue River Days is a joyous time of fun, games, family, and food. It attracts visitors from all over the Alwaysgreen Forest.

ARDALION

There are those who have been lured into the damp embrace of decay. Ardalion, an otter woodkin and powerful mage, is one of those. He has become infected with rot poisoning and is eager to be counted as worthy by the Rot Weaver. He now follows the commands

of the Wood Sprite, her voice in his head connected by decay speech.

PUCK

The absent-minded innkeeper at Cherry Tree Inn is a badger woodkin whose family has run the business since travelers began their first pilgrimage to the Burrow to pay homage to the birthplace of woodkin. The inn is part of a massive cherry tree, with the reception and a small tavern inside the base and stairs leading to rooms ringing the outside of the tree.

KIRSIKKA

The mayor of the Burrow, this deeret, is a proud leader, assertive but serene. She tries to find the positive in every situation. She freely uses her charms and natural deeret beauty to her advantage.

THE TIME LOOP CURSE

This chapter requires days to be played out on repeat. The concepts below are meant to establish a foundation for the action and help keep things fun for everyone.

THE TIME LOOP

Ardalion has placed a time loop seed in the village square. The magic of the seed has caused the Burrow to exist in a time loop. This curse causes the day to reset at midnight. When people wake the next day, their routines start over as if they'd never happened. When the party arrives at the Burrow, the loop has been repeating for seven days.

TRAPPED IN THE VILLAGE

The magic that alters time here traps the residents within the village boundaries. Any creature that attempts to leave finds it impossible, circling back to the Burrow town square instead. When the party enters the village boundaries, they, too, are trapped.

FIXED ROUTINES

Throughout this chapter, characters encounter residents as well as travelers from nearby settlements. They are simply living their lives and unaware of the time loop curse. To assist in constructing a timeline for the characters, refer to the routines in the “Blue River Days” section of this adventure for more details. When the characters have a random encounter on the first day, it becomes part of the story timeline that occurs on subsequent days and part of the fixed timeline. The players can solve minor problems, but these reset every day.

Each time a routine is encountered, the characters have an opportunity to effect positive, negative, or neutral change. At the end of each day, if the net mood is positive or negative, the next day is affected accordingly. As GM, alter the mood of the NPCs and their interactions with each other as well as their attitude toward the characters. The characters will recognize the loop and see the impact their action from the previous day had. The attitude of the townsfolk will change based on that impact, but they won’t realize it.

ARDALION’S END GAME

Ardalion is also trapped in the village by the time loop seed but is unaffected by the memory reset that happens each morning. He now wants to escape his own trap and has started a portal ritual. This ritual requires negative energy to come to full power. If it does, he can use the portal to escape.

When all routines become negative or positive, an encounter with Ardalion is triggered.

- A completely negative day allows him to open a portal and attempt to escape. Ardalion reveals himself. The party will only have moments to try and stop him.

STORY TRACKER

Day #: _____

Morning Routines	Notes	Outcome (+ = Positive, - = Negative)
------------------	-------	---

Afternoon Routines	Notes	Outcome (+ = Positive, - = Negative)
--------------------	-------	---

Evening Routines	Notes	Outcome (+ = Positive, - = Negative)
------------------	-------	---

General Notes

- A completely positive day breaks the curse of the time loop seed and prevents the portal from opening. In this case, Ardalion attacks the party out of frustration.

DAY BY DAY

Although the events of the festival and its revelers repeat daily, the characters can effect change. As Game Master, you may introduce any number of NPCs throughout the festival as they go about their routines throughout the day. Those who learn of the time loop may be frightened or skeptical, while others may attempt to help. Unfortunately, they all forget everything at dawn. GMs are encouraged to play out the first day in full and then use a “montage” storytelling style to present the days that follow.

Use the Story Tracker and Random NPC Tables when establishing the first day of events. Alternatively, choose the events in advance or make up some of your own. To cause change, the characters must create a net positive or negative on a day. Otherwise, the curse of the time loop continues uninterrupted. To end it, the characters must find, dig up, and destroy the time loop seed or effect enough good in the timeline to break the curse.

STARTING THIS CHAPTER

Characters enter the Burrow to discover the village is a few days into Blue River Days, the festival leading up to the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration. For the Burrow, Blue River Days and the Prime Seed Harvest Celebration hold special significance as the Prime Tree is key to their lives. They do not realize they are trapped in a time loop. While the rest of the Alwaysgreen Forest is celebrating Bestowing Day, they believe it is still a week away.

Additionally, most of the Alwaysgreen Forest already knows the seed won't be presented this year (detailed in Chapters 10 and 11). Word travels fast, and it is the most important event of the year. Additionally, news of the Rat Claw Clan attack on South Watch should have reached the Burrow. But, being trapped in the time loop, no one remembers those reports the next day when the loop resets.

BLUE RIVER DAYS

When the characters arrive at the festival, read aloud:

Lighthearted music and laughter fill the air as the scent of sugary and savory treats wafts on a breeze. Woodkin of every kind wander between merchant stalls while entertainers draw in crowds to delight.

Ardalion lurks throughout the festival. Having accidentally been caught in the time loop, he keeps tabs on the characters and attempts to stop them from removing the magic that has cursed the Burrow. He also wreaks mischief upon the festival by sowing discord and causing general chaos after having cast *alter self* or *greater invisibility* on himself.

A character with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check can notice Ardalion, if visible, while moving through crowds and paying close attention to suspicious-looking folks. If discovered, Ardalion tries to flee using whatever means necessary to break the line of sight and disappear.

The **Story Tracker** is on page 273.

The **Random NPC** tables can be found on page 435.

You can find stats for **Ardalion** on page 350.

The time loop seed has been planted in a fountain representing the Prime Tree in the center of the Burrow's village square. Ardalion has obfuscated the item by casting the spell *arcanist's magic aura* on it. Every night he checks on the time loop seed to see if he has disrupted the festival with enough evil deeds to cause a rift to open for him.

MORNING ROUTINES

At dawn, the vendors begin to set up their shops. An hour later, the festival grounds open to visitors, and Mayor Kirsikka makes her opening remarks. Ardalion discretely attempts to distract and annoy the mayor in hopes that the mood of the festival starts off poorly.

d6 Morning Routines

- 1 A porcupine woodkin is late opening a vendor stall and at risk of losing their job.
- 2 The main thoroughfare is blocked by two caravans, and the drivers are quarreling over right-of-way.
- 3 One of the bean bags at a festival toss game was replaced by a *bag of beans*, which explodes.
- 4 Wooden ducks that are numbered on the bottom with corresponding prizes have turned into real (and hungry) ducks.
- 5 The pie-eating contest turns deadly when one of them is poisoned, and the baker is accused of attempted murder.
- 6 At the face painting stall, the paints have been mixed with *sovereign glue*, and the festival goers blame the painter for their permanent art.

AFTERNOON ROUTINES

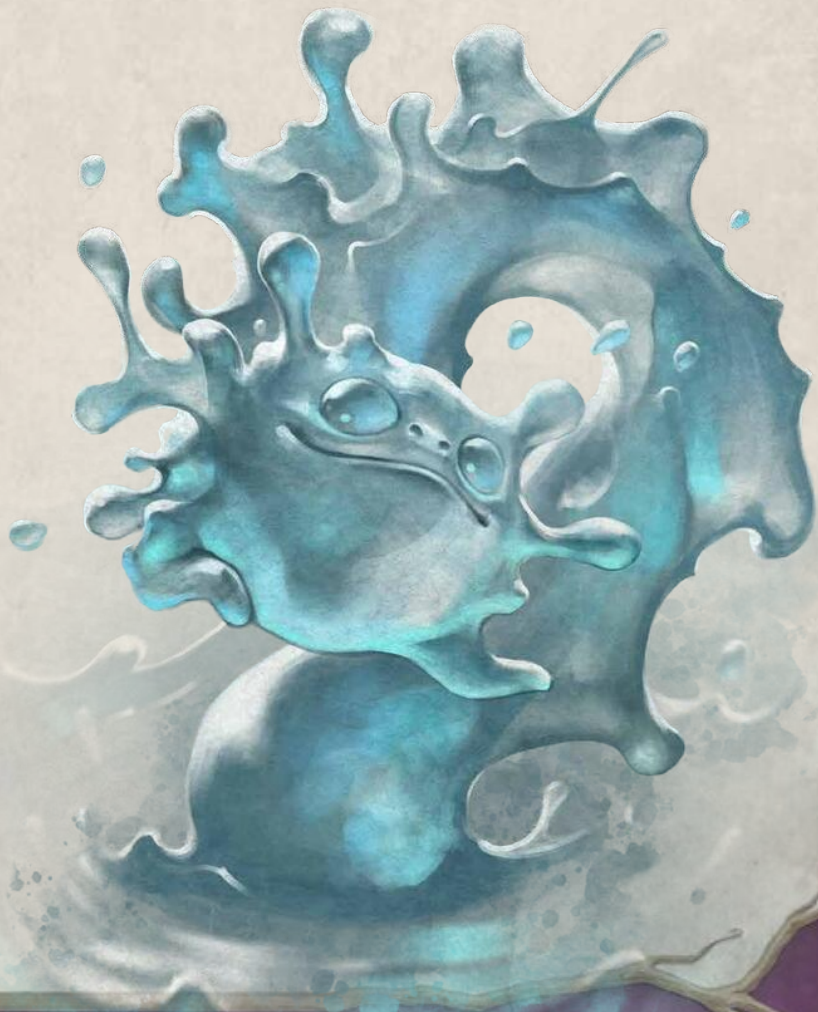
The afternoon at Blue River Days festival features a water balloon fight and a dance performance. The dance is performed by a team of woodkin who manipulate a long, flexible giant puppet of a water spirit, called a *nathair*, using poles positioned at regular intervals along the puppet's length. The dance team simulates the imagined movements of this river spirit

in a sinuous, undulating manner. A *nathair* is often quite small; however, legend has it, there was once a giant one that brought luck to all woodkin. This dance is to call that mystical *nathair* back to the Burrow, and the longer the dance lasts, the more effective the call. Ardalion attempts to trip up the dancers through magic.

d6 Afternoon Routines

- 1 A mysterious deeret woodkin entertains a crowd with riddles and puzzles.
- 2 Clouds of biting flies begin pouring out from a tree.
- 3 A darts contest has moved out of a festival game booth and into the main thoroughfare.
- 4 Frantic, a festivalgoer searches for their missing child.
- 5 A small fire breaks out at the puppet show.
- 6 While a fool distracts a crowd, several young thieves cutpurses.

The *nathair*, shown below, are mischievous elementals that are rarely ever seen. Maybe one will be drawn to the dance this year? You can find their stats on page 368.



Ardalion's character stats can be found on page 350.

After the first day, the party has probably discovered that they are trapped in the village, but do not know they are in a time loop. The first time the day resets may be disorienting to the characters. Be sure to provide ample clues to communicate that the day is repeating itself.

EVENING ROUTINES

The festival ends with two big events: a feast and an event called the Lighting of the Stars where lanterns are set adrift along the Blue River. Ardalion attempts to alter the food at the banquet. During the lantern lighting, he makes his way to the center of the Burrow to check on the time loop seed.

d6 Evening Routines

- 1 One of the festivalgoers climbs atop the clocktower on a dare and accidentally dislodges a tile as they dance upon a rooftop.
- 2 A dobber claims they have been robbed of a small coffer of coins.
- 3 A chipmunk woodkin stumbles into the path of a heavy wagon.
- 4 While busking for coins, a bard watches for someone.
- 5 A group of apprentice wizards harass passers-by with cantrips.
- 6 Stones from the street begin rising into the air.

THE DAY RESETS

At midnight, the magic of the time loop seed resets the day. The characters find themselves in bed at Cherry Tree Inn, woken up by the sound of a bard staying at the inn, loudly practicing their performance for the festival. The day progresses according to the Story Tracker, changing only if the characters force change. To end the curse, they must affect enough positive change to the daily routines, as determined by you, the GM. This also stops Ardalion's portal ritual from coming to fruition. Finding the time loop seed and destroying it also stops the time loop; however, the seed explodes. See **Destroying the Seed** on the next page.

ARDALION BATTLE TACTICS

Although he is a powerful mage, Ardalion wishes to leave the time loop. He is focused on causing disturbances that sour the mood of the residents for the time loop seed to open a portal for him and trap the characters in the Burrow.

- Melee engagement is not his style; he only does so if he has no other actions available.
- Casts *animate dead* to create Rot Shamble creatures.
- Knows the location of the time seed loop.
- Does not warn the characters of the dangers involved in destroying the time loop seed. A creature in possession of the time loop seed can use an action to smash it on a solid surface. The seed is destroyed and releases its remaining magic in an explosion that expands to fill a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Each creature in the area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 132 (24d10) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. When the seed is destroyed, the time loop ends.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

There are a few ways the Blue River Daze chapter can end. Regardless of the party's success or failure in ending the curse.

ENDING THE TIME LOOP CURSE

The characters make enough positive changes to the timeline that the curse ends and Ardalion is defeated.

ARDALION ESCAPES

Enough negative changes occur in the timeline that a dark portal opens, and Ardalion escapes through it. After the portal closes, the time loop seed explodes!

DESTROYING THE SEED

The seed is destroyed and releases its remaining magic in an explosion that expands to fill a 30-foot-radius sphere

centered on it. Each creature in the area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 132 (24d10) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. When the seed is destroyed, the time loop ends.

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapters 10 and 11, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 7.





CHAPTER 13: THE TOMB KEEPER

The party must find a mage by the name of Othkara to help them destroy the cursed dagger, Ember. Little do they know that Othkara has been blackmailed by the Wood Sprite to lead them into a trap. The party carries the cursed dagger with them, hidden in an antimagic box.

BACKGROUND

When arriving at the Burrow, the party found that Ardalion, an agent of the Wood Sprite, had trapped the town hostage in a time loop. This was to gain leverage over Othkara, who may be the only person in the forest the Wood Sprite fears. The party successfully defeated Ardalion, but the Wood Sprite had proven to Othkara that he and the Burrow were vulnerable.

It's unlikely that anyone in the Burrow or the party realizes that Ardalion's attack was intended to draw Othkara out. In either case, Ardalion's

defeat has earned Kirsikka's trust. She will help them find Othkara.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **THE BURROW.** The party speaks with Kirsikka, a woodkin deeret, and mayor of the Burrow. They learn more about Othkara and where to find him.
- **AN ILLUSION ON SUNDOWN CREEK.** The party travels along Sundown Creek until they find the woodkin viper, Rose. They must win her trust by facing an illusion and understanding a parable.



- **OTHKARA'S UNGROUND LABORATORY.** The party must explore underground tunnels where Othkara's laboratory is hidden. After presenting the cursed dagger to him, they learn it must be taken to the tomb of Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. It can only be destroyed after Rohr-tan's crypt is resealed.
- **ALL THEY WANT IS THE DAGGER.** Othkara leads the party into an ambush. He had agreed to turn them over to the Wood Sprite if she would spare his home, the Burrow. But more importantly, he believed if he could look her in the eyes, she could be reasoned with.
- **FINALLY, THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB.** If they survive the ambush, the party finds their way to an ancient statue, the entrance to Rohr-tan's tomb.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 7. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapter 14, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 8.

When the party begins this chapter, they are still in the Burrow, having just defeated Ardalion. They have earned the favor of Kirsikka, who will help them find Othkara. Their path becomes more straightforward, at least more so than their last few days. However, it has the potential to be quite deadly.

Keep in mind that Othkara doesn't want to be found, though it is important that the party eventually does. Once they do find him, his character walks a fine line between *cute groundhog* and

Read the
expanded
biography of
Calynn on page
338.

An expanded
biography of
Othkara can be
found on page
340.

most powerful wizard in the forest. If one of the characters in the party gets cocky, Othkara won't hesitate to put them in their place. Even so, he should seem trustworthy. Do your best to not forecast Othkara's betrayal. The more shocking, the better.

The battle with the Wood Sprite's minions, led by the Vine Wolf, is deadly. Depending on your play style, you, as the Game Master, may want to scale back the encounter to ensure someone survives. Or not - go hardcore, I usually do!

CALYNN, THE WOOD SPRITE

Calynn was first introduced to the party in Chapter 5. Here, she returns, risking her life by leaving the bog to which she is bound for the chance to retrieve Ember.

She is the firstborn of King Quillon. When her younger brother, Quilan, was named heir to the throne, her pride took her down a dark path. She studied the dark magic of Rohr-tan the Rot Weaver and thought she could control him using a magical dagger she'd created called Ember. This didn't work, and the Rot Weaver cursed her. Now, as the Wood Sprite, she sows decay in the forest, preparing the land for the Rot Weaver's return.

OTHKARA

Othkara is one of the most famous mages in the Alwaysgreen Forest. He's an awakened groundhog who is among the oldest living woodkin. He pioneered the Order of Rot school of magic and was once a part of the king's council of mages. While he was a teacher at the Dobberton School of Magic, he was a mentor to Calynn before she was cursed and became the Wood Sprite. Othkara went into hiding after corruption swept the court. Many assumed he would return to the Burrow, but none of its residents claim to have seen him.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Read aloud:

For weeks now, your party has been on a quest to save your forest home from an insidious arcane rot. At every turn, you battle the denizens of the Wood Sprite who has brought this decay and intends to release Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. This has led you to retrieve the cursed dagger, Ember, which you suspect is somehow linked to the Rot Weaver. To protect yourselves and prevent the magic of the dagger from being detected, it is kept in an antimagic box. You are now in the woodkin village of the Burrow, where you hope to find Othkara, a powerful mage who has gone into hiding. He should know how to destroy it.

FINDING OTHKARA

The Burrow is relatively quiet now that the battle with Ardalion has ended, though many of the citizens are in a state of unrest after coming out of the time loop that had been placed upon them. Some of them may come to the party looking for answers, though the party needs answers themselves. They came to the Burrow to find Othkara.

KIRSIKKA SHARES WHAT SHE KNOWS

Kirsikka approaches the party, either in the village square or in the Cherry Tree Inn - wherever the party is taking a breather. She has a little more information than she was willing to share during their first meeting. Even if the party had told her they were sent to find Othkara by Gearld, the kingdom's Justiciar, she would not have revealed his location. Othkara explicitly told her he was not to be disturbed while

working to find a cure for the spreading rot. Now, things have changed; the party helped to save the Burrow from Ardalion's plans.

When Kirsikka approaches the party read, or paraphrase:

"Thank you, my friends. We surely would have been doomed had you not intervened. The Burrow is forever in your debt." Kirsikka's deeret fur, which ordinarily shines like silver, is matted with dust. "It seems the Dark One has taken exception with our humble village. I fear there are worse conflicts on the horizon." Even in the aftermath of battle, she holds her head high, antlers spearing the sky, a perfect accent to her steely resolve.

She continues, "I expect your most pressing concern continues to be finding Othkara? I cannot tell you exactly where he is, but I believe there is one who can." She pauses as if to reconsider telling you, then says, "Rose." You can't help but hear the disdain in her voice when she says the name.

Kirsikka knows Othkara well, and if questioned, she may reveal some basic information about him. However, she does not wish to betray his trust and truly does not know where his home is. The party has earned some favor with the deeret, but how much?

About Othkara, she freely shares:

- Othkara came back to the Burrow after the disaster that led to the Dobberton School of Magic shutting down. He came here to retire.
- Othkara told her he's been trying to find a cure for the spreading rot, but no details.

- He is the last surviving member of former King Quillon's Council of Mages. Most believe the other three were killed when Rohr-tan was imprisoned the first time.
- Othkara was an Adepti at the Dobberton School of Magic - all four of the King's Council of Mages were before the teaching of magic was discontinued.

About Rose:

- Rose is a friend of Othkara and has taken it upon herself to be his bodyguard.
- She keeps her nest just west of the Burrow. Follow Sundown Creek upstream for about six miles until you come to a slow-moving pool. As the sun sets between two west mountain peaks, the water catches its light. If you linger there, she will try to scare you off. If you hold your ground, you should be able to engage her in conversation. Hopefully, you can convince her to take you to Othkara.
- Kirsikka is most reluctant to reveal that Rose is a huge black viper woodkin.

About the Dark One:

- Kirsikka refers to Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, as the Dark One. While many, if not most, people skirt around him or pretend he's nothing but a myth, she speaks very frankly about him.

The information below she shares only if charmed or if a character succeeds on a DC 16 Persuasion (Charisma) check:

- Othkara was the first to study rot magic and was responsible for creating the Order of Rot wizarding discipline.
- Othkara came back to the Burrow, the place of his birth, to hide. He was rejected by his peers because he drew too close to the power of rot.

Kirsikka was introduced in Chapter 12 on page 272.

If needed, she is a typical **Bard** with **Deeret** traits as described on page 26.

Even though he was instrumental in capturing Rohr-tan some 20 years ago, one particularly nasty rumor suggested: *"Othkara was only fixing a problem he created."* They believed he was the one to release the Rot Weaver in the first place. Of course, Kirsikka knows the truth, *"he didn't release the Rot Weaver, no matter what they say."*

- Othkara spoke of Calynn and Maegera often. They were some of his favorite students.
- Even though she trusts Othkara, Kirsikka says, *"He should've known better! He should've burned all his research and forgot everything he knew about rot magic!"* He was meddling with dangerous, dark things. It was pride that led him to believe it was safe to teach that magic to Calynn.

UP SUNDOWN CREEK

When the party is ready to leave the Burrow for Rose's nest, read or paraphrase:

After losing so much time in the Burrow, you are on your way. Could you finally be near to ridding yourselves of the dagger that weighs so heavily upon you? Will Othkara be able to remove the curse? You dare not hope. Hope has been stolen before. Even if Othkara can destroy it, what good will that do? Half the forest already festers with rot and the Rat Claw Clan wages war in the south.

But the party must press on. The creek is framed by pine, fir, and spruce. The forest is quiet, the ground covered by soft needles that absorb all but the heaviest of footsteps.

Creatures of decay continue to spread, moving north from their origin near Oak Den. While no encounter is needed for their journey, you may choose to roll for a random one from those starting on page 112.

Additionally, you can create some tension by talking about the setting sun. Will they reach the pool Kirsikka described before the sun is too low? If the sun sets before they reach the pool, how will they know if they've found it?

Light slants through the trees from the west. Your path along the creek has you walking right into it. Shielding your eyes, you look ahead and see it won't be long before the sun has fallen behind the Dreary Mountains. From this vantage, only the top half can be seen as it descends between two peaks. Ahead, the creek twists past a moss-covered boulder, where, behind the trunk of a great ash tree, golden light bounces off glassy water.

The pool is surrounded by rocks and trees. There is barely enough berm around it for a dobber to walk on, though the water doesn't appear too deep. Most could wade through it without having to swim. The creek that led the party here from the Burrow continues on to the west.

ROSE, THE AWAKENED VIPER

Rose is a viper woodkin who was once a bounty hunter but now is Othkara's bodyguard. She has a nest for her and her two sons near Wallace's roots. They protect the groundhog from those who hunt him and any that accidentally stumble upon his home.

Rose is hidden in a walnut tree on the south side of the pool. She has two sons, common **vipers**, hidden in bushes along the north bank. The walnut tree Rose sits in is an awakened tree named Wallace. His main objective is to guard the entrance to Othkara's laboratory.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Illusory Trap below before continuing with the scene.

Rose has an arcane emerald in a brass setting affixed to her forehead by brass bands. It allows her to cast *Mirage Arcane*. She has devised an elaborate illusion to either scare away any visitors or trap them.

THE ILLUSORY TRAP

Rose's casting of *Mirage Arcane* is in place when the party arrives. Only a character with truesight can see that this is an illusion. Even if they have truesight and know it's an illusion, it still appears just as real.

Only the north half of the pool is actually water. It isn't too deep, and most characters can wade through it, getting good and wet but not having to swim. The water is cold and uncomfortable.

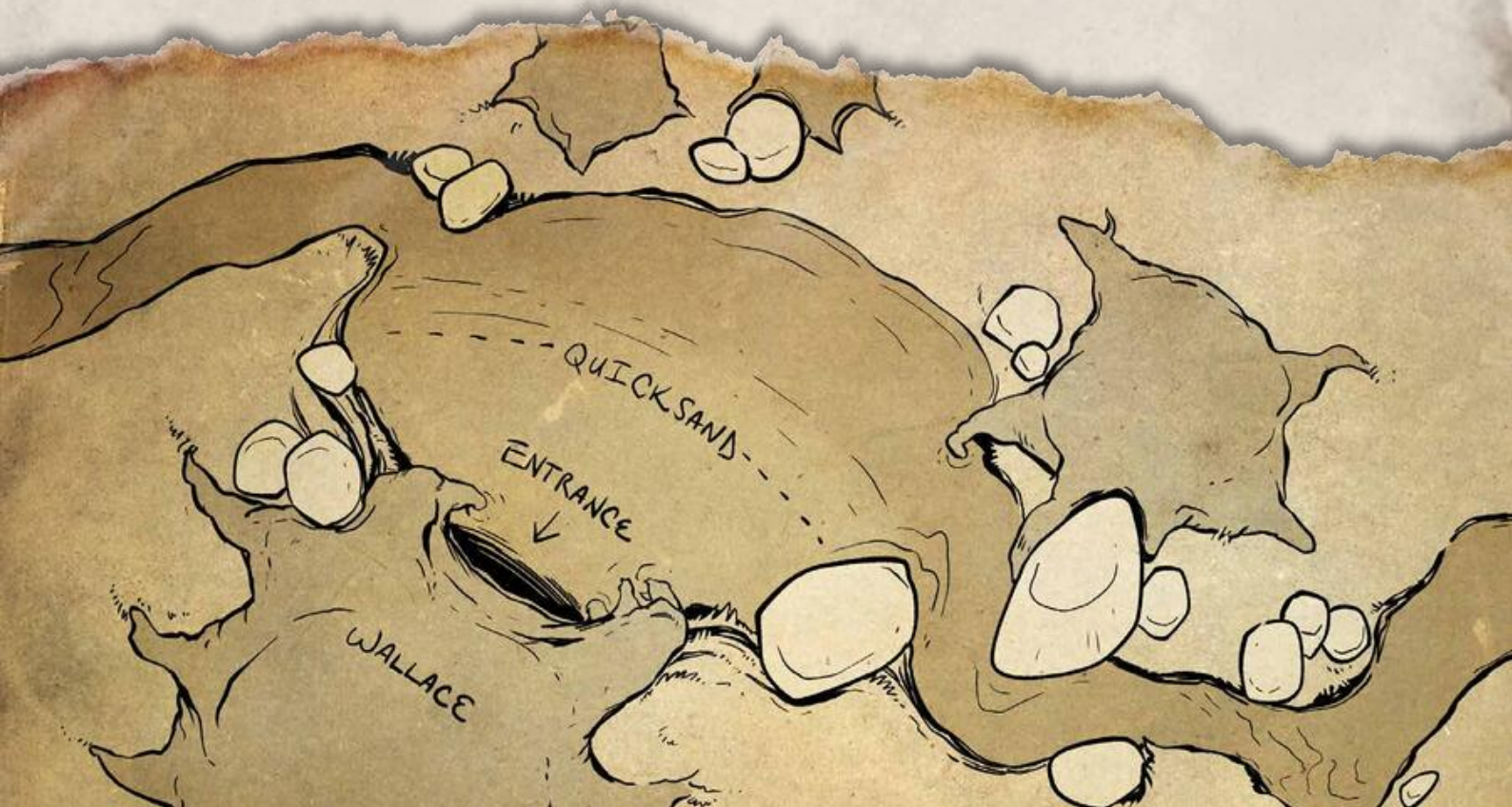
QUICKSAND: The south half of the pool is quicksand. The illusion makes it look like a continuation of the natural water.

THE NEST: Along this edge is a deep recess in the earth framed by roots and rocks that overhang the water. It could be the nest the party is looking for, but it cannot be accessed without first getting into the water. If a character wants to enter from the north, they will have to wade across the pool, stepping into the unseen quicksand as they approach. If they attempt to enter from the south, they will have to drop down from the top of the nest's entrance, in which case, they also end up in the quicksand.

*You can read how **Rose** became Othkara's bodyguard and find her stats on page 350.*

***Viper** stats are on page 374*

*Use the map below to clarify positioning of the various pieces of the **Illusory Trap**. The party will initially approach from the east, which is the right-hand side.*



THE ALLIGATOR: When a creature comes to the bank of the pool or in some way attempts to access the nest, a scene within the illusion plays out - a duck innocently floating on the water is violently eaten by a huge alligator. This is usually more than enough to scare away any visitors.

If those who approach are undeterred, they are trapped by the quicksand. Since the quicksand is unseen, it is unavoidable for characters that wish to enter the nest. The two exceptions are: Any character with truesight or any character that somehow flies above the water.

- Truesight - As noted, truesight does not cause the illusion to go away. A character with truesight would still see the duck get eaten by the alligator and see the water of the pool instead of quicksand. However, they may attempt to identify where the quicksand is. To accurately determine where the water ends and the quicksand begins, they must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. If they are proficient in Arcana, they may roll with advantage.
- Flying - If a character attempts to enter the mouth of the nest by flying over the water, the roots that frame the entrance move together, blocking the opening.

WAIT, THE ROOTS MOVED?

Wallace is an awakened walnut tree. He is very old but dedicated to Othkara. Aside from guarding the nest's entrance, he doesn't do much. But, I suppose, that's more than most trees.

Wallace's full story can be found on page 351.

THE APPROACH

When the party first notices the pool, they are far enough away that they have the choice to approach by any means they deem necessary, be it stealth or through the forest apart from the creek.

If they approach by way of the creek, they must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity (Stealth) roll to go unnoticed. Rose and her sons keep a sharp eye on the creek, knowing that some use it to travel the area.

If they leave the creek and approach from the forest, they must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) roll to go unnoticed.

Whether they succeed at stealth or not, should they step up to the bank of the pool, the *alligator scene* is triggered, and you should read or paraphrase the following:

A duck paddles across the glassy water, barely disturbing it. Without warning, a huge lizard-like creature bursts from the pool just in front of the nest's entrance. Light from the setting sun causes the eruption of scales and water to glow like fire. Long, spear-like teeth line the gaping maw of an impossibly long snout. This terrifying beast's mouth could easily fit two whole dobbers in it. It crashes back into the water, its jaws engulfing the unsuspecting duck, which must be just a snack to such an immense monster. The long, scaley body quickly disappears into shadow below the surface. The water settles almost as quickly as it was disturbed. Where the duck once floated peacefully, a single feather remains.

The scene will alert Rose and her sons to the characters' presence, even if they are hidden.

If characters approach by way of the forest instead of the creek, they may stumble upon Rose before triggering the alligator scene. If a character has a passive Perception of 18 or higher, they notice Rose lying on a branch of a large walnut tree. If they indicate that they are actively looking for items of interest outside of the pool, they must succeed on a DC18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find clues that lead to Rose's nest. In either case, skip to the section header "Surprising Rose."

ARE THE CHARACTERS DETERRED?

For most, the *alligator scene* is enough to scare them away. A typical dobber that wanders by doesn't want anything to do with a big, toothy monster like that. Rose's goal is to turn people away without anyone getting hurt.

Rose's nest is actually just up the hill above the opening at the edge of the pool. It's obscured by a group of rocks and Wallace, the walnut tree. She rests watchfully on a limb of the walnut that overhangs the rocks. Her two sons will stay hidden in low foliage on the north side of the pool unless their mom calls on them. The nest that the party may have assumed was their goal, at the south edge of the pool, is actually an entrance to the tunnels that lead to Othkara's laboratory.

There are a lot of things the characters may attempt after seeing the alligator eat the duck. It's impossible to predict them all, but here are a few to consider:

- They attack the illusory alligator. Of course, nothing happens. Eventually, the party figures out it was only an illusion. Anyone who got into melee range gets caught in the quicksand.
- They yell into the nest opening at the edge of the pool or, in some other way, attempt to get Rose's attention. She doesn't reply immediately, but eventually, she does. Continue with **"Meeting Rose."**
- They scout the area, looking for clues or another way into the nest. Rose and her sons have already been alerted to their presence, so stealth is of no use. Allow them to wonder a little before continuing with **"Meeting Rose."**
- They try to enter the nest opening without getting into the water. No matter how creative they are, Wallace anticipates their actions. He closes up the opening tight using thick and hardened roots. If spoken to, Wallace will answer in very short and confusing sentences. If a character talks to the tree, attacks the roots, falls into the quicksand, or they are on the brink of giving up, continue with **"Meeting Rose."**

SO YOU FELL IN QUICKSAND?

If some or all of the party ends up in the quicksand, they are considered prone and restrained for 1 full turn. Due to the illusion, they could not anticipate falling into the trap. The quicksand is 3 feet deep. Characters can keep their heads above the surface if they choose to without the need for a roll. After one round of being restrained has passed, characters may attempt a Strength (Athletics) check to get free. On a roll of

10 or higher, the character can struggle free in 4 rounds. On a roll of 14 or higher, they may get free in 3 rounds. A roll of 18 or higher, and they will be free in 2 rounds. They can free themselves from the quicksand in 1 round on a roll of 22 or higher.

MEETING ROSE

A breathy voice hisses from somewhere up on the hill, "Youuu don't belong here." A rustling of leaves brings your attention to a silhouette, long and serpentine, wrapped around the branch of a walnut tree. "Leave now, or I will be forsssed to kill you." More rustling can be heard on the opposite side. Two vipers emerge from the foliage on the north bank of the pool.

Rose's main objective is to keep people away from Othkara. She has no desire to fight and has always been able to scare off even the most stubborn of wanderers. Today is different because the party believes they must reach Othkara, or the forest may be doomed.

Encourage a conversation with Rose. At first, she remains cryptic, insisting that they leave. Once they mention Othkara, she opens up a little. Some talking points may include:

- "Why are you searching for Othkara **here**?" She is careful not to reveal that he is here.
- "What do you know of the spreading rot?" It's clear that she is worried. She's interested in learning what the party knows.
- "Why do you believe Othkara can help?" She is beginning to take the party seriously.

Once the party has convinced Rose that they are determined to speak to

Othkara, read or paraphrase:

The long black snake slithers down from her perch in the walnut tree. She stops with her head at eye level, flicking her tongue as she speaks, "Before I can take you to my massster's home, I must know you better. Would you allow me to tell you a ssstory and assk a simple question?"

Allow the party to answer before continuing.

"In a faraway land," she begins, "there was a king who was determined that his people would prossper. He thought that all should know the sssecrets of agriculture."

"The next sssummer, he called together all the brightest and most experienced minds in the field and taught everyone in the kingdom the sssecrets of agriculture. And prosper they did. Foods of every kind grew and multiplied. By autumn, an abundance was harvested. The people rejoiced. Their hearts overflowed. They gave to any who had need, including the neighboring kingdomsss." Her dark eyes meet each of yours in turn as she tells the tale.

"The people praised the Star Father and celebrated the king. They said, 'Surely this man was ssent by God, for he has shown us the secrets of agriculture, and we have all prosspered.'

"Winter came, and even though the people had not sssquandered the

harvest, winter was long and their food ran out. The people sssuffered. They curssed God and blamed the king, saying, 'If we were meant to know the secrets of agriculture, sssummer would have lasted forever, and we would not have sssuffered.'

"After a momentary pause to allow her words to sink in, she asks, 'My question to you is, when the king became ill and died the next ssspring, did the people rejoice or mourn?'"

Rose does not seek a correct answer, only a sincere one. After listening to the party's answers and discussing their ideas, Rose says:

"A thing is not good jussst because it lasts. A thing that is good for a ssseason is indeed good, even if that season has passsed." She looks to each of the party in turn, then adds, "Othkara does not abide those who are rash. It appears that your need is not. Follow the tunnel below. He keepsss his laboratory deep within these hillsss." You see the walnut tree shift as one of its large roots curves down to the opening at the edge of the pool, making an easy path to avoid the quicksand.

If any of the characters ask for more information, she doesn't give much. A few options are:

- She will not be accompanying them.
- They may encounter dangers in the tunnels.
- If they come to the strange color mushrooms, they are getting close.

ENTERING THE TUNNELS

The tunnels are made up of dirt, stone, and roots. Unless otherwise noted, there are no light sources.

1 - THE ENTRANCE

The entrance looks like the nest that the party thought it was. The floor is covered with twigs and dried grass. Under the debris, there are a few carcass bones and the husk of a large viper.

2 - THE DARK PASSAGE

Rounding the corner, the party leaves any remnants of natural light behind. There is a putrid smell, different than decay, more acrid. If a character has darkvision or if someone in the party has a light source, they can see a few small holes along the walls. They are only a few inches in diameter, too small for a dobber, but it appears they were burrowed by something. There is a small line of moisture along the bottoms of the paths. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher can hear a faint slurping sound coming from ahead.

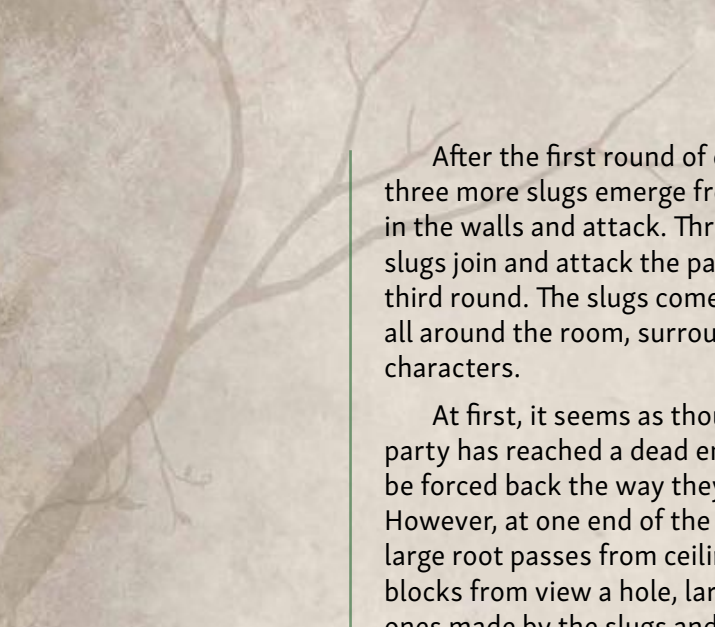
3 - WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE SLUGS

This large room has small animal bones littered all about the slime-covered floor. A creature that looks somewhat like a tongue with teeth, but as large as a dobber, glistens with mucus as it wriggles on the ground. Pseudopod-like tendrils extend from it, wrapping around the remains of the lizard upon which it feasts. Like the passage before, the walls are lined with small holes.

When the party enters the room, the **Horgorath Slug** releases the dead lizard and attacks.

The map of Othkara's Tunnels on page 299.

Horgorath slugs are disgusting and you can find them on page 368.



After the first round of combat, three more slugs emerge from the holes in the walls and attack. Three more slugs join and attack the party after the third round. The slugs come from holes all around the room, surrounding the characters.

At first, it seems as though the party has reached a dead end and will be forced back the way they came. However, at one end of the room, a large root passes from ceiling to floor. It blocks from view a hole, larger than the ones made by the slugs and thankfully not coated in their mucous. Through the opening, the party can see a room. It is fairly large, with six giant, absurdly colored mushrooms along one wall.

It's nearly a 10-foot drop to the floor of the room below. Characters can use the root to climb down halfway but will have to drop from there.

4 - THE MUSHROOM CHAMBER

This chamber is much like the one above, a naturally formed cavity in the earth. One side of the room has six huge mushrooms, the tallest over 4 feet and the smallest a foot and a

half. Each one is a different, vibrant color. Among the dirt and roots on the wall opposite the mushrooms, natural columns of stone flecked with crystal run from floor to ceiling. The multicolored glow from the mushrooms and the refraction from the crystals cause deceptive shadows in the corners, where you expect to find another path or opening to another room. Instead, you find no way out of the room except back up the way you came.

There is some evidence of creature activity, but that seems limited to harmless bugs. However, a character who searches the floor and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find traces of groundhog tracks in the packed dirt. These tracks lead up to the stone columns and disappear. If that character continues their investigation, examining the stones, they find lines scratched into them. To notice the lines in the stone without having their attention drawn to them by the footprints, they must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

The lines scratched into the stone columns of Area 4 are shown below. Each column of lines represents a chord that can be played using the different mushrooms.

The highest note played on the smallest mushroom and the lowest note on the largest mushroom.



A character that searches the mushrooms will find that they are organic but unlike any species they may have come across before. Their caps are almost entirely hollow. If one strikes a cap, it makes a sonorous tone, like a bell. Each mushroom emits a different pitch.

To open these doors, the characters must play the mushrooms, using the pattern scratched into the stones as if it were sheet music. The stone columns will slide into the floor and ceiling, opening a door into Othkara's chamber.

5 - OTHKARA'S LABORATORY

The crystal-flecked stone panels slide away, revealing another room. Roots crisscross the ceiling, covered with years of dust, dirt, and dampness, the combination of which makes them look like they are dripping with slime. Strange, unnaturally colored fungus grows from the floors and walls, softly glowing in purples, greens, and blues. The natural stone and dirt walls are almost entirely obscured by clutter. Rickety shelves with papers and books, vials of powders, liquids, and crystals, and strange equipment for unfathomable experiments make this large space feel cramped. There is a sparse bit of furniture, including a chair, table, and workbench, all sized for a groundhog.

Othkara sits in his chair, reading by the light of a lantern filled with glowing fungus. The tome he holds is so tattered and worn with age it can scarcely be called a book. The pages are no longer bound to the spine, and any lettering has long since worn off the cover.

The small groundhog sets his tattered book down atop an absurd clay pot. It has legs, and once it's received the book, it trots over to a bookshelf and bangs into it. The book slides off, and instead of landing on one of the shelves, it clatters onto the floor into a pile of other poorly kept books.

"Who might you be?" asks the groundhog as he hops down from his chair.

The party has finally found Othkara. They've been searching for someone, anyone, who would know what to do about the cursed dagger, Ember. According to Gearld, the King's Justiciar, Othkara is their best bet. It's believed he is the last surviving member of the King's Council of Mages and possibly the most powerful wizard in the forest.

*If the party decides to pick a fight with **Othkara**, and they shouldn't, his stats are on page 340.*



Once or twice during this scene, describe a small tremor that shakes the whole room - a bit of dust falls from above, or a book or jar falls off one of the shelves. If someone asks what that was, Othkara answers in a nonchalant way, "The Horgorath."

WHAT MUST BE DONE WITH EMBER?

After the party shares why they have come, Othkara will want to examine Ember. After they hand over the box with Ember in it, read or paraphrase:

Othkara will carefully open the antimagic box, and you immediately notice his face change. "No one told me about the Heritage Stone!" he exclaims. "This is it. Why didn't I think of it before? Blood. Tying the Rot Weaver's magic to blood gives the wielder control!"

This will spawn a crucial conversation. Use these bullet points:

- "What concerns me most is that freeing the Wood Sprite from her curse will not stop the spreading decay and destroying the dagger may release Rohr-tan if done so before the tomb is resealed."
- "The dagger touched Rohr-tan, and it seems, he and Calynn are linked by the Heritage Stone in the dagger. I believe that is how she was cursed to become the Wood Sprite."
- "The dagger must be taken to Rohr-tan's crypt, where he and it must both be destroyed or be forever entombed."
- "I don't know how she found Rohr-tan's tomb or made her way the crypt; that's irrelevant at this point. The bigger

problem is that the crypt has been breached."

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that this is partially a lie. Othkara suspects that somehow Calynn tricked Herb into revealing the location of the tomb.

- "This dagger was used to pierce the magic of the Rot Weavers prison. It may be a small puncture, but it is like the hole that will eventually bring the whole dam down."

About Calynn specifically:

- "She was always willful and prideful. She was driven in a way that none of my other students were. But she was also talented. I thought that teaching her, even beyond what the school was willing, was the right thing."
- "The King (the former King, Calynn's father, not her brother, the current King) confided in me that her drive made him feel she should not be his successor. 'A leader must be tempered with patience and wisdom. A leader can't be all ambition and will...' I didn't agree with him at the time. I see it now."

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that Othkara is hiding his feelings. He fully supported Calynn as the next leader of Dobberton and he had told King Quillon. It burned Othkara that the King wouldn't listen. That is one of the reasons the groundhog agreed to continue teaching Calynn after she was expelled from the Dobberton School of Magic.

- “As it was with Rohr-tan 20 years ago, it’s pride that drives her now. She’s out to prove to everyone, particularly her father, that she should’ve been chosen to lead Dobberton!”

There are a number of things Othkara is hesitant to say. This may be because he’s scared or feels responsible. The characters can draw more from him with clever roleplay or a successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

- It may be too late. It’s possible she’s been the Wood Sprite for too long, and the change is permanent.
- “**Horgorath balm** may heal her, returning her to her dobber self, but only if the connection to the Rot Weaver is broken first.”
- “Calynn did not make the dagger, Ember, well, at least, not all of it. She got the hilt from her grandmother, Merith. It was a family heirloom.”

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that this is partially a lie. Othkara knows that Merith is a descendant of Skaggerak and that the hilt was originally part of his legendary broadsword, Blaze. Merith had Blaze in her possession until she used it as part of the ritual to seal Rohr-tan’s crypt. She broke off the hilt in the process. She kept it years later, and Calynn ended up with it.

If they persuade Othkara to talk about Herb:

- “He was a good friend, one of the best wizards I’ve ever known, but his heart was just too pure. He always saw the best in people.”

- “The King feared, and I did also, that if the right circumstances presented themselves, he wouldn’t keep secret what we’d done. If anyone found out about the keep or how we imprisoned the Rot Weaver, our work and sacrifice could be at risk.”
- “I erased all memory of his time on the Mage’s Council. He doesn’t know it. Unfortunately, it makes him seem senile, jumbling together what memory he does have.”

The most imperative:

“You must take the dagger back to Rohr-tan’s tomb,” the small groundhog emplores. “You can use it to reseal his prison and then destroy the Heritage Stone on it, breaking any connection he has to our world.”

Find details on the **horgorath balm** on page 419.

Details that Othkara knows but **will not share** under any circumstance:

- He is leading them into a trap. He is using the party as bait just to get to talk to Calynn.
- He believes that he can make Calynn realize that Rohr-tan is using her and that she has to stop.
- After convincing her of the truth, he believes that she and he will be the ones to reseal the Rot Weaver’s prison. That is why he doesn’t divulge how to reseal the crypt.

OTHKARA HAS AMAZING THINGS

Othkara's laboratory is rife with potentially useful items for the party. A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check will convince him to share. He will offer things to the party from the list below based on what they say they have need of. If a character attempts to intimidate him, nothing is shared.

OTHKARA'S ITEMS

Bandalore Flail (page 414)	1 available
Essence of Rot Skunk	1d6 doses
Go Go Powder (page 71)	1d4 doses
Giant Mushroom Spore (page 417)	1 available
Horgorath Balm (page 419)	1d4+1 doses
Lightning Rod (page 422)	1 available
Potion of Fire Resistance	1 dose
Potion of Greater Healing	1d6+1 doses
Potion of Necrotic Resistance	2d6 doses
Potion of Poison Resistance	2 doses
Rage Powder (page 72)	1 dose
Simple Poison	2d6 doses
Truth Serum	1 dose
Animated Jug (page 412)	1 available

After sharing items with the party, he gives them a folded parchment. It's very old with torn and ragged edges.

*"You must also take this," he says.
"It's the notes I have left from Rohrtan's tomb. It's not everything, but it will help. You won't need it until we get to the old statue."*



He grunts and shoves aside one of the room's bookshelves, revealing a hole. He steps out and clearly expects you to follow.

A slope descends out of Othkara's laboratory behind one of his piecemeal bookshelves. "This way," the groundhog calls as he trundles on out of the room ahead of you. "Tread lightly; the Horgorath can feel even the slightest vibration of your steps." as if on cue, the earth around you trembles. "That's a good sign," he says, catching some of the falling dust in his palm. "I think it's sleeping."

6 - THE HORGORATH TUNNEL

Hard-packed earth and rock make up the walls of this tunnel. Roots hang down in places, looking like the dirt around them was pushed away rather than them growing down into the opening. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check will confirm that this tunnel was burrowed by some huge, long creature. A DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check will reveal dried secretions in places on the walls and floor, indicating that it has been a while since the creature used the tunnel.

6A - THE SLEEPING HORGORATH

After the characters have had a chance to look around, read or paraphrase:

All the walls around this tube-like passage are the same: dark dirt, rocks, and roots, except one strange section along the south wall. It glistens wet and pink like a portion of the earth has been cut away, revealing something else behind it. "Don't touch that," Othkara warns. "That's the Horgorath. It sleeps just on the other side of that wall." If you watch closely, you can see the rise and fall of the fleshy material as if it's breathing. You realize there must be a parallel tunnel running along the one you travel. A portion of the separating wall has broken away, revealing whatever that pink thing is. Progressing along the tunnel reveals light ahead. A golden-orange glow catches the edge of the natural rocks along the passage's floor and walls.

7 - THE GROB TREE

Around the next bend, you see what appears to be a huge tree, growing from floor to ceiling and glowing gold. All around it, golden, orange, and pink orbs sprout from knobby roots that have pushed up through the floor. Rings of yellow fungus wrap around the trunk. Leaves, if it has any, must be in a cavern above this one, or perhaps the tree pushes all the way to the surface. Your eyes struggle to comprehend its strange beauty in this dark place.

This is the Grob Tree. Othkara will freely tell the party if asked. It is the result of the mucus from the Horgorath and rare fungal spores that are natural to the area. Othkara uses the *larva orbs* that grow off the tree's roots to make *horgorath balm*. It is also from these orbs that the **horgorath slugs** are born.

Horgorath slugs
on page 368.

While in areas 7 and 8, if any of these larva orbs are popped, a horgorath slug emerges and immediately attacks. To move in this area, characters must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid popping any orbs. A character can reduce their speed to 1/2 to avoid having to make the check. Additionally, if a character is knocked prone, an orb pops.

"Wait here," Othkara commands you as he walks into the next room.

If any in the party object, he adds, "If you don't wait here, all will be lost!"

A cavernous room lays on the other side of the Grob Tree's trunk. More of the slug-birthing orbs line the floor. Across the room, a hint of daylight shines between large natural columns.

8 - IT'S A TRAP

Here, the Beast of Rohr-tan, aka the Vine Wolf, and minions of the Wood Sprite lay in wait for the party. Calynn, the Wood Sprite, mounted on a root wyrm, watches from just outside Area 8.

Othkara believed, in vain, that he could lure her here to talk by offering to give her Ember. He hoped if he could just speak with her, she would listen. After all, he'd been the father to her that she never had, the one she really needed when she felt rejected. Furthermore, he would at least plead for the Burrow to be saved from the spread of rot and her coming rule. Once the party was permitted into the tunnels by Rose, she immediately sent word to Calynn that Othkara would have Ember.

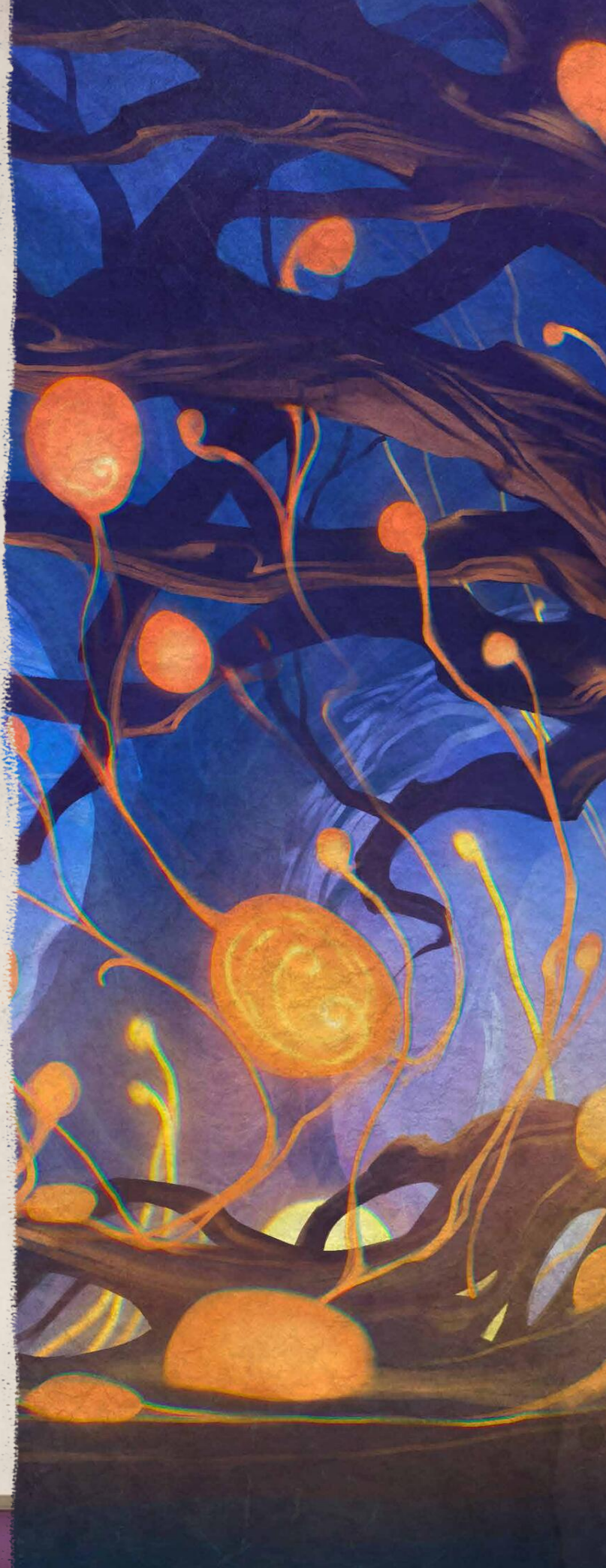
Othkara makes his way into the room, his groundhog body a silhouette in a strange light. *"I know you're there, Calynn,"* he calls across the room. A figure moves into view, also a silhouette, in between two of the earth and root columns. *"I've brought you Ember,"* Othkara continues, *"but please, this doesn't have to go any further. I will talk to the king; maybe we can find a way to restore you."*

The figure moves into view, a rotten and broken wolf. Twisted antlers and twigs sprout from its head. More branches grow out of the coarse, bark-like fur of its back. Where its mouth and throat should be, there is a gaping void, glowing and oozing green energy. Vines reach from this void, grasping and whipping. *"We are not here to negotiate,"* growls the beast, its voice seeming to reach your mind before your ears.

In less than a heartbeat, the beast vanishes and reappears, antlers deeply gored into Othkara. Tongue-like vines are already wrapping around the groundhog, pulling him into the sickening green ooze that drips from the wolf's throat. As fast as it began, it's over. Othkara is gone.

"You weren't supposed to kill him!" A female voice calls from beyond the columns.

Roll initiative. After Othkara's death, the vine wolf and other minions of the Wood Sprite attack the party. The Wood Sprite, however, hides, staying out of combat.





The **vine wolf** is on page 387.

*The Woods Sprite's curse has also bound her to the trees of the bog. She has an enchanted stone that has allowed her to bring some of that energy with her. Every member of the party will be needed to survive combat with the Vine Wolf, but should a character decide to pursue the Wood Sprite, read through **The Wood Sprite Was Wrong All Along** from Chapter 14, **The Heart of Rohr-tan** on page 303 to learn how she will interact with the characters.*

The **fungal lizard** is on page 390. The **plague fungus** and **walking fungus** are on page 392.

The **horgorath** is on page 367.

COMBAT AND TACTICS

8A - THE CEILING COLLAPSES

Behind the character closest to Area 6, the ceiling collapses, preventing any retreat in that direction. Read:

A gurgling roar from an unknown monster echoes from the other side of the Grob Tree's trunk. The room quakes, and just behind you, a huge limb crashes through the ceiling. Dirt, rocks, and roots fall, blocking any exit toward Othkara's lab.

8B - THE HORGORATH

The **horgorath** has awoken. Its long body extends into the depths of the earth behind it. Its head can reach 30 feet into Area 8. Any character that moves into or passes through a square within the horgorath's reach (marked by a dotted line on the GM's map) provokes an opportunity attack by it. When one of the party steps into the line of sight of 8a, read or paraphrase:

As if things couldn't get any worse, a pink, tooth-lined maw lunges forward from a tunnel south of the grob tree. The immense worm glistens with mucus, its long body extending far into the earth behind it. There's no telling how long it is. The room trembles as it swings its head from side to side, snapping its mouth at anything it can reach.

When it first lunges from its hole, all characters must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) saving throw or be knocked prone.

THE VINE WOLF

The **Beast of Rohr-tan**, **The Vine Wolf** must wait a full round to *digest* (eww) before it can attack. Its mission is to destroy the party, eliminating the greatest threat to Rohr-tan's return. The Vine Wolf will fight to the death if necessary. If it believes the party's will is broken, it does not kill them but instead ensures that they have contracted rot poisoning. It then flees out through Area 9.

ROT LIZARDS, WALKING FUNGUS, AND PLAGUE FUNGUS

There are two **fungal lizards**, four **walking fungi**, and two **plague fungi** in total. They come from Area 9. The rot lizards enter the room on the first round of combat, running toward two different targets and attacking when in range. The party will have two full rounds to attack just the Vine Wolf and the rot lizards, giving them a false sense of hope. Beginning with round 3 of combat, one walking fungus and one plague fungus enter. On following turns, spaced at the GM's discretion, add walking fungus and plague fungus until they are all in the room.



Larva Orbs - *Don't forget, every time one of the larva orbs is popped, a horgorath slug emerges and attacks.*

COMBAT ENDS

Combat ends when all of the enemy monsters are killed or when all of the characters in the party are killed or incapacitated. The Vine Wolf would rather the party die from rot poisoning, eventually rising as a walking fungus loyal to Rohr-tan, than simply kill them. If the party is incapacitated, the Vine Wolf will use its withering breath to ensure that everyone has rot poisoning and leave with Ember.

JUGGY SAVES THE DAY

If the whole party is incapacitated, they are revived by Juggy, the animated pot from Othkara's laboratory. If the party survived combat, defeating all of the minions, Juggy bumbles into their midsts before they can leave. It pours out the liquid it contains, just enough for everyone in the party to get one dose, healing 4d4+4 hit points. There is a note stuck to the jug's back with rushed, messy writing on it, *"I asked Juggy to come to you if I died. I hoped to stop Calynn myself, using you as bait. I saw no other way. It appears you are now the forest's only hope."*

9 - EXITING THE TUNNELS

When the party leaves the tunnels, they come out into a small valley. It was once known as the King's Valley, but it has been hidden from the Alwaysgreen forest in the foothills of the Dreary Mountains. From here, the party can see the long-lost entrance to Skagerrak's castle. As they come out of the tunnels, read:

The tunnels open into a densely forested area on the side of a hill. The valley below is a dark mess of tangled vines, brambles, and old twisted trees. In the distance, just over the growth, you can make out the top of a weathered stone statue. Is that the 'old statue' Othkara was talking about? Crossing this ominous valley is the only way to find out for sure.

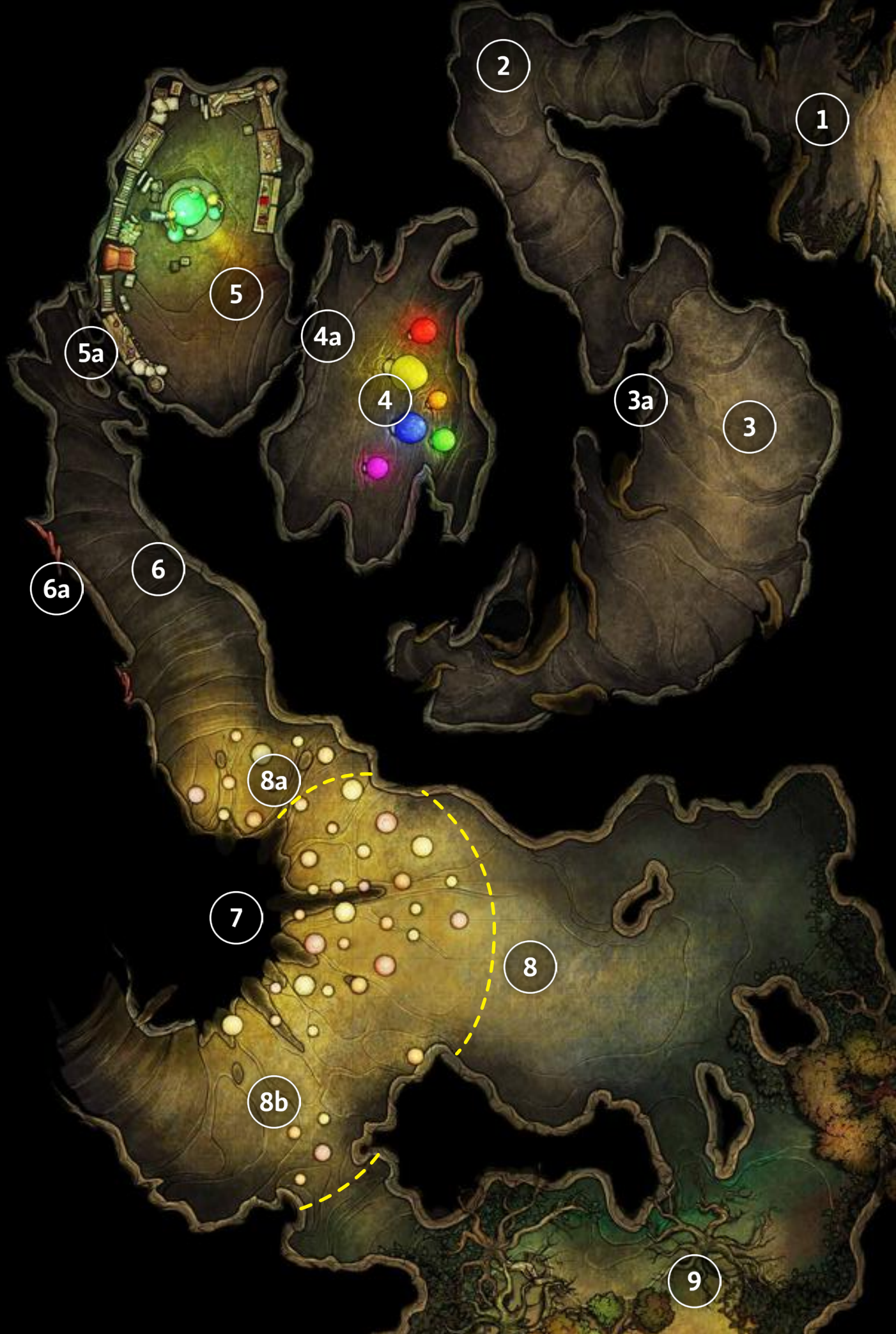
CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

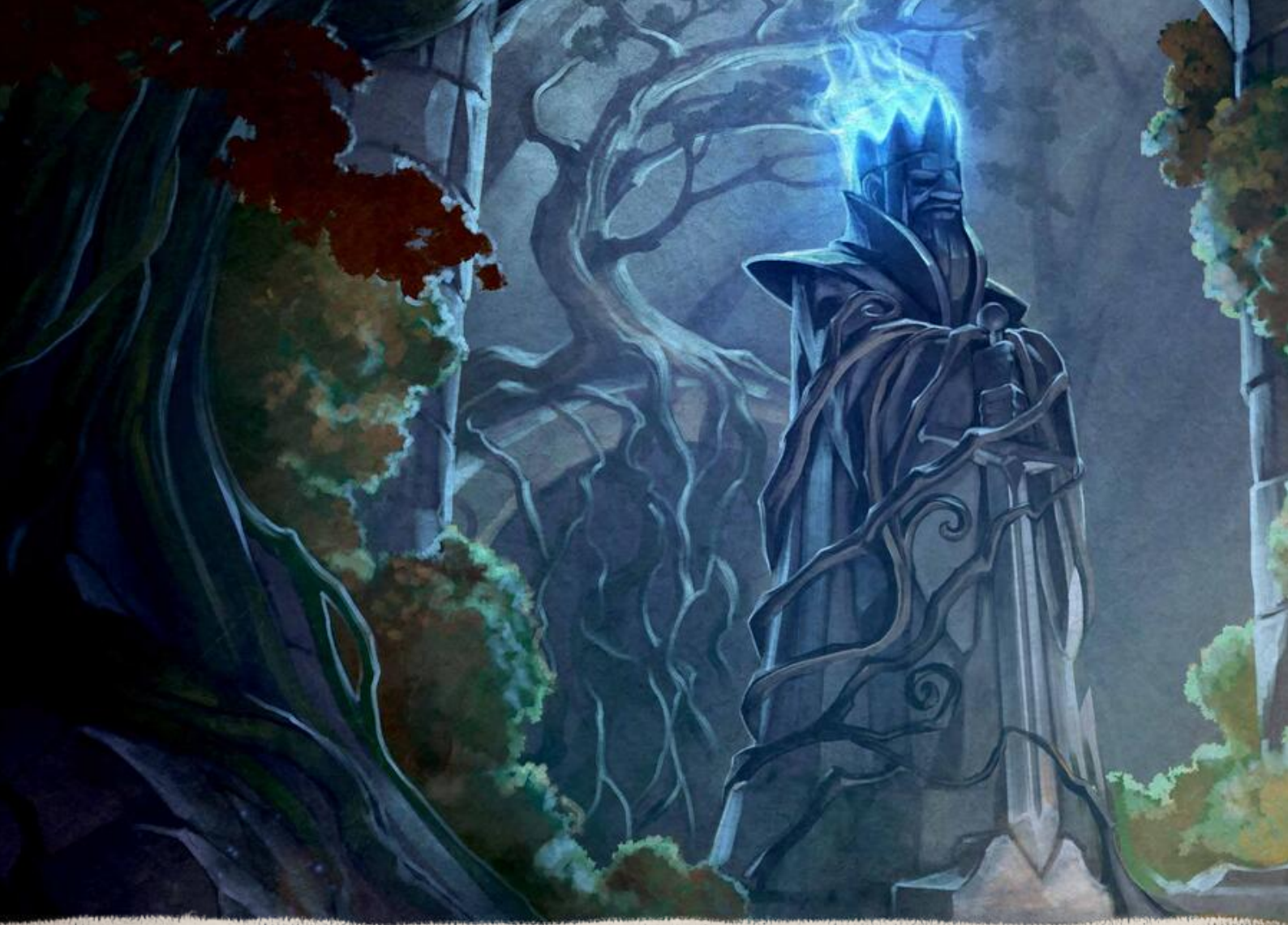
The party found Othkara and learned that they would have to take Ember to Rohr-tan's tomb. Othkara led them to the King's Valley, just outside the tomb's entrance, but ultimately betrayed the party. Now he is dead, and the party is left with more questions, the biggest one being, *"Do they continue on to the tomb, facing whatever horrors are inside to reseal Rohr-tan's crypt?"*

LEVELING UP

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 7. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapter 14, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 8.

Juggy is actually the animated jug found on page 412.





CHAPTER 14: THE HEART OF ROHR-TAN

The party must now brave the underground remains of Skaggerak's Keep. They continue to carry the cursed dagger, believing it is key to reimprisoning the Rot Weaver when they find his crypt.

BACKGROUND

Over two decades ago, the malevolent creature Rohr-tan sought to blanket the forest in decay. He was defeated by the King's Council of Mages, but they found he could not be killed, not entirely. They devised a plan to lock him away, sealed forever in a magic tomb, far away from all dobberkind.

The plan would've worked had they chosen a different place for his prison. The mages were desperate. They didn't have time to build something elaborate,

so Setarus, the elder of the four, suggested the Dreary Mountains, where they might find a cave. They found something even better: an abandoned keep.

They had no idea the abandoned keep was built by the founder of Dobberton, a king with secrets they didn't know. Secrets that, even to this day, are still hidden. That which I tell you next must stay between us, for it would rock the foundations of dobber society. Orlun, the famed first king of



Dobberton, never even set foot in the Alwaysgreen Forest. He died of a rare disease that sought to corrupt his heart, but his heart would not be corrupted, so it destroyed his body instead.

Overwhelmed with grief, Orlun's father, Skaggerak, left his home for the Alwaysgreen Forest. He started over from nothing and built a kingdom. He chose a new life and a new name, taking his son's as his own. But the corruption that tried to take his son came with him.

SCENE SUMMARY

- **THE KING'S GROTTO.** The party investigates an ancient statue, believing it is the key to entering Rohr-tan's tomb. In an encounter with the Wood Sprite, she reveals she's had a change of conscience. She then dies, no longer able to survive the decay within her.
- **THE CAVERN OF STONE TREES.** A strange underground courtyard leads the party to the keep's entrance.
- **SKAGGERAK'S KEEP.** Throughout a number of rooms on the main level of the keep, memories are being reenacted by Decay Spirits. These memories of Skaggerak's tragic end contain important clues for how the party is to defeat Rohr-tan. Here, they find the original blade for Ember.
- **THE FORGE LEVEL.** This level of the keep was built for refining ores and forging weapons and armor. Here, the party can restore Blaze by forging together the original blade and the hilt of Ember.

- **THE TOMB.** Rohr-tan's crypt has become a heart of pulsing necrotic energy. It's too late to reseal the prison. The party must defeat the Rot Weaver himself in combat using Blaze.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is intended for 3 to 5 characters with an average party level (APL) of 7. Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapter 13, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 8.

This is the final chapter in the Seeds of Decay story arc. It is designed to push the characters to their limit and cause them to question what they know about the origins of Dobberton.

This chapter introduces the concept of spore spirits. Spore spirits manifest the memories that left an indelible imprint in Skaggerak's Keep from a time forgotten by the living. The memories they portray have no power, but they mask the presence of other decay monsters and foreshadow future adventures.

Additionally, the characters will need to reference the parchment they got from Othkara. It provides valuable clues about Skaggerak's Keep and the forge below. The parchment also has details the party needs to reforge Blaze from the hilt of Ember with a blade they will find in the keep's mausoleum. Blaze is needed to reveal the path that leads to Rohr-tan's sarcophagus in the Tomb Cavern.

The final room, the Tomb Cavern, is deadly, not only because of the damage creatures can do but because of the effects of cumulative levels of rot poisoning. As the Game Master, you can use all the factors present to create the most dramatic climax available to your campaign.

THE KING'S GROTTA

This statue marks the entrance to the tomb of Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. Beneath the surface are the ruins of Orlun's first castle before an arcane disaster caused it to collapse into the earth. Very few even know it exists. Orlun was the first king of Dobberton. He laid the foundation of the palace where the Prime Tree grows. If the people knew he had built another castle before it, it would destabilize generations of history. But that is a

story for another time.

The Dobberton Council of Wizards chose this site for the Rot Weaver's tomb, not only for its secret location but also because its passages are full of traps. No one would ever be foolish enough to enter this place; as well they shouldn't.

As the party looks around, they may wonder if this is the "old statue" that Othkara mentioned back in his laboratory. With a little searching, they will find they stand in a stone courtyard. Most of it was hidden by years of dirt and leaves.

You step into a grotto, hidden from civilization for years, where you find an ancient statue. Its face is worn and unrecognizable - from a time of forgotten histories. Atop its head, the remnants of a crown. Thick vines wrap its legs and waist. They twist around its arms and the sword it holds as if in restraint. Gashes, each longer than your arm, like those made by enormous talons, crisscross its shoulders. What manner of creature has perched there? A plaque at its feet, almost entirely hidden by the brambles, reads, *"The King is silent, for he was corrupt. He is now bound. His mouth is shut."*

Anyone who searches the area must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see:

Behind the statue, two large bushes seem too evenly spaced. Under the foliage, they find stone columns, completely hidden by clinging vines.

Another character must succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check to see:

Past the columns, but centered between them, grows an ancient cedar tree. Its trunk is wrapped with vines and wild foliage, but beneath that are the remains of a stone arch. It's so old that some of the tree's trunk has engulfed it while it grew. It's clear, at least, at some time in history, this was a door.

No amount of knocking, scratching, digging, incantations, or other manipulation will cause a door to open or appear here. **The door will only open if someone who is related to Skaggerak by blood speaks his name.**

THE WOOD SPRITE WAS WRONG ALL ALONG

Just before the party loses any hope of opening this door, read:

"I can open it." A weak female voice answers the unspoken question, *"Only one who is related to the first king by blood can, but I need the dagger."* The Wood Sprite emerges from behind thick brambles. *"My blood is corrupt in this form, but the blood in the heritage stone is not."* She doesn't look the way you remember. The bark of her skin is almost black. She is thin and slumped over. Even speaking seems to take great effort.

When the Wood Sprite reveals herself, the party may want to attack her. She is clearly in a weakened state and makes no effort to defend herself. Something about her demeanor implies she may soon be dead.

If the party is willing to speak to her, use the following as conversation points:

- *"If I speak Olun's true name, Skaggerak, while holding the dagger, the door will open."*
- *"Skaggerak took on the name of his son, Orlun, before he came to the Alwaysgreen Forest - before he became the first king of Dobberton."*
- *"I do not know if one such as you can open the door just because you hold the dagger. Perhaps, but you must know, you are not Ember's master. It will burn you."*
- *"I never wanted so many to be hurt."* She continues through sobs, *"The wolf wasn't supposed to kill Othkara!"*

There is the potential for a heart-

THE WOOD SPRITE IS DYING

In her cursed state, she is bound to the bog south of Oak Den. This bog, like the Wood Sprite, has been cursed by Rohr-tan. It now produces an arcane rot energy that Calynn needs to survive. If she strays from the bog for too long, she begins to wither and die. However, she was able to fashion a temporary solution, an enchanted emerald able to produce the same arcane rot. It has sustained the Wood Sprite for the time needed to travel here, but that is all. The stone is drained, and now, without the bog, Calynn is all but helpless.

felt discussion here. Calynn never wanted to destroy the forest. When this all started, all she wanted was to be respected. It escalated over and over. She'd been blinded by pride and bitterness for so long she fully believed the lies; *"I'm in control. The Rot Weaver isn't using me; I'm using him. I'm not hurting anyone, just scaring them. Everything will go back to the way it was once I win."* Othkara's death finally forced her to see that the most rotten Seed of Decay had been her heart.

OPENING THE DOOR

If any character or Calynn says "Skaggerak" while holding Ember, read:

Light engulfs the ancient statue. Liquid, blue flames travel up its body. The fire settles in the bowl of the statue's crown, writhing blue hair. More blue flame appears at the base of the cedar tree, quickly climbing up the stone arch embedded in its trunk. Within the arch, you no longer see bark and wood but a surface, glassy and black, like ink.

The door to Skaggerak's Keep will open for anyone holding Ember who speaks "Skaggerak" aloud. In fact, it would open for anyone holding any Heritage Stone, for the are all part of the same blood line.

The door to Rohr-tan's tomb is open. Only darkness can be seen through the aperture. As long as the party does not attempt to pass through the archway, it remains an eerie, opaque black liquid wall.

If one of the party moves toward the arch with the intention of entering, read:

A voice cracks and wheezes from beyond the blackness in the arch, *"Meritha, you return in vain. The dead keep these halls, and they mean not to share them."*

An ancient vulture with tattered feathers and a heavily scarred beak steps from the void. Milky grey eyes stare without focus out of a dull black face. A long tail of broken tail feathers, caked with years of grime, drags the ground from under an equally ancient robe.

AARIK

Aarik, a vulture woodkin in life, was the last of the Selinus Shepherds, an order of guardians tasked with protecting the forest. The modern dobber has never heard of the Selinus Shepherds, and even those who have studied either the historical or mythical past of the dobbers would only know a little.

Long before King Quilan sent his Council of Mages to imprison Rohr-tan, it was the Selinus Shepherds that kept rot at bay. For years, they had done so, champions of the Green Man. It was when Rohr-tan lured a third of their number to join him that the shepherds fell. It was their falling that led to the Rot Weaver gaining power and eventually having to be imprisoned by the council of mages.

Aarik survived the final battle of shepherds and remained loyal to the Green Man. He agreed to stay at the tomb at the behest of the Council of Mages, its eternal guardian. He called out to Meritha, believing she was the only one who could open the door.



THE BIG TWIST

The Aarik that has stepped through the arch is an imposter, a **fungal doppelganger** created by the arcane rot within the halls below. Over the years, the power of Rohr-tan's rot has greatly expanded within Skaggarak's ancient home. Fungal monsters wander the halls, dead spirits have been awakened, and the true Aarik was killed. The creature before the party is an animated husk of the shepherd. It has the memories of Aarik but acts at the will of Rohr-tan.

The fungal doppelganger attacks, focusing its efforts on those closest to the arch. It does not pursue if the party leaves the area. After a successful attack, that character can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice that Aarik's appearance is an illusion. Under the façade of a vulture, there is a shambling body of hardened vine and fungus.

Throughout the combat, the fungal doppelganger pulls from Aarik's original memories. It refers to the characters as "*denizens of the Rot Weaver*." Imagine an old warrior reliving old glories. Some other things he might say are:

- "I bested the Rot Weaver with his very own blade! What makes you think you rabble stand a chance!" He holds up one feathery hand as if holding a sword. What he is holding looks more like a twisted tree branch blackened with mold.
- "The Green Man will not abide your evil here!"
- He locks eyes with one of the characters, clearly believing he is speaking to someone else, "You go too far! You do not avenge your son; you dishonor him!"

- "You may slay me," he says before using the Fungal Minion attack, "*but your comeuppance is nigh.*"

A character that succeeds on a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check realizes that none of what this creature says is directed to the characters but instead is part of some memory.

After defeating the Aarik doppelganger, the illusion dissolves, blowing into the breeze like dust, leaving just a pile of rotten wood, fungus, and mold. The party can now step through the arch and descend the stairs to the courtyard of Skaggarak's Keep.

DEATH OF THE WOOD SPRITE

Calynn is withered and drained. She risked everything by leaving the bog, all for Ember. But, instead of retrieving the weapon she thought would give her power of Rohr-tan, she gained a valuable truth; she had been on a path of evil and did not want to be.

As the game master, insert the Wood Sprite's death wherever it fits best. She will collapse and die, too weak to continue. This should take place sometime after the party faces Aarik, the fungal doppelganger, and before they enter Skaggarak's Keep.

The **fungal doppelganger** is on page 389.

Meritha, one of the council of mages that died imprisoning Rohr-tan, was great-aunt to Quillan and Calynn. It is because of her blood relation to the line of Orlun that she was able to open the door to Skaggarak's Keep many years ago.

THE CAVERN OF STONE TREES

This large underground room was once the ornamental courtyard leading to the entrance of Skaggerak's Keep.

ENTRANCE

The first few steps you descend are in complete darkness. No magical light or natural gift of sight can penetrate the black. After six strides or so, further below, you can just make out a faint, purple-ish grey light.

Magical darkness prevents anyone in the party from seeing into or out of this passage. They can see light from the courtyard below as they move further down the steps from the entrance. The tunnel for these steps was roughly cut through hard-packed earth and stone. Someone with stone-cutting or mining skills may notice subtle evidence that the path was dug from below toward the surface. A rough and hastily constructed arch supports where the stair opens into a large courtyard.

COURTYARD OF TREES

As you enter the courtyard, you can't help but marvel at its former beauty. Six stone columns, ornately carved to look like trees, frame the central, tiled path. Veins of rot that feed phosphorescent purple mushrooms, the only source of light in the room, line the walls. The path before you leads to a grand, double-doored entrance that beckons you further into the unknown.

TEN STEPS

Ten steps lead up to magnificent double doors of polished ash. A faded and chipped mural of a foreign land has been painted on the walls above and to each side of the doors. Vines, tainted by corruption, grow from cracks in the wall and floor. If Rohrtan's tomb is the source of the decay taking over the forest, it would seem you are moving in the right direction.

If one of the characters wishes to look closer at the map on the wall, read:

The map is unlike any you've seen before. It depicts land at a scale that far exceeds the Alwaysgreen Forest. At its center, painted with a pale blue, surrounding the double doors, is what must be an enormous body of water, like a lake but bigger. Encircling the water, lands of various terrains are depicted by color and simple icons - forests, plains, mountains, rivers, and even a barren white land.

Nine lines extend from the doors' frame, dividing the water into ten parts. When those lines meet the shore, they twist and turn, following irregular paths, like the unpredictable winding of a river. The result is a land of ten distinct territories or, perhaps, kingdoms.

There are 36 stone steps that lead down to the Courtyard of Trees. While on the steps, characters can only see darkness to the left and right, the only light being at the bottom and back where they entered.

**COURTYARD
OF TREES
(OPTIONAL):**
*Walking Fungus
and Plague
Fungus, page
392, are hidden
among the other
mushrooms.*

When one of the characters comes close to the doors, read or paraphrase:

The relief on the doors portrays a massive vessel that surpasses any boat those from the Alwaysgreen Forest would've ever laid eyes on. The dobbers shown on it are so tiny it must have been larger than a house. Large swaths of fabric billow out from towering poles. The huge boat seems to be floating on a vast body of choppy, undulating water.

The tainted vines that have grown around the doors make them stick, but with a little effort, you find they are not locked.

SKAGGERAK'S KEEP

Skaggerak's Keep was built over a series of mines. Skaggerak and his brothers discovered a vein of precious metals in a cliff face along the shore of the Dark Sea. They began to dig and found more. Their tunnels led them deep into the mountain, where they found a seemingly endless supply of ore and a plethora of mysteries. The details of those mysteries will have to wait for another time.

The brothers soon felt they could drastically improve their efforts by building a forge near the heart of the ore. Unlike many dobbers, they did not have an aversion to crafting with metal. In fact, they excelled at it. The brothers became quite wealthy, and Skaggerak, the eldest, became high lord of the Dark Sea. It was many, many years later, after his brothers had died that he built the keep above the mine as part of the forge.

It was never intended to be a permanent residence but simply an outpost where Skaggerak could monitor the production of the mines. As he spent more time there, he grew to love the mountains. They were so different from

the endless night of the Dark Sea. He felt like the king of this undiscovered country. He expanded the living quarters and added the banquet hall and facilities necessary to host special events.

After the death of his son, Orlun, and the massacre that followed, Skaggerak never returned to his home in the Dark Sea. He managed the mines, guided by nothing but bitterness and greed. The endless maze of crisscrossing tunnels under the keep proved to be too much. The forge and keep collapsed into the mountain where Skaggerak and his secrets should forever have been hidden.

STATE OF THE KEEP

Three major conditions are at play throughout the keep and the forge below. Feel free to expound upon these as you see fit, as it didn't seem necessary to restate those details in every room. Be sure to keep them in mind whether they are specifically mentioned or not.

DAMAGE

The mines and forge under the keep collapsed, bringing the whole structure into the mountain. There is no way for the party to know how deep underground they are. While certain rooms appear to have been spared significant damage, others are buried in rubble. Structural damage has resulted in doors being wedged shut, and some walls are cracked through, threatening to give way without warning.

VANDALISM

For years after the collapse, the keep was a coveted site for looting and vandalism. Valuables have been stolen, furniture broken, and unwarranted damage has been sown throughout the keep. For a time, a pack of ratkin claimed the keep as their home. That didn't last long. There were *things* under the mountain that drove them out.

The map painted on the wall is of the Dark Sea and the ten kingdoms that surround it. Skaggerak ruled these kingdoms before coming to the Alwaysgreen Forest.

The vessel shown on the doors is, of course, a sailing ship upon the Dark Sea. Perhaps one day, we will discover great adventures on that sea, but that day is not today.

The map for Skaggerak's Keep is on page 326.

THE ROT

The Dobberton Council of Mages discovered the location of the keep when one of their members came across its description in notes found in one of her family's historical records. Having been abandoned for years and virtually unknown to dobberkind, they chose this location to imprison Rohr-tan. They hoped his power, even if it could escape his crypt, would remain trapped deep within the mountains.

In fact, the crypt would have been sufficient had Calynn not broken the seal. When she did, the tainted rot of Rohr-tan's power began to fill the chambers and mine tunnels below the now underground keep. It's hard to find a surface that hasn't, in some way, been corrupted by decay. Fungus, mold, and dripping ooze are just the beginning. The already terrible creatures of the mountain's gut have been twisted into minions of rot.

The clue the party needs to open the doors in the Antechamber is on Othkara's parchment. "Lies love darkness. Truth in light is freedom."

IA - THE ANTECHAMBER

The doors open into a small room, no bigger than a few strides in either direction. Stone hounds stand sentinel to the right and left. A thick layer of dust has settled on their heads, undisturbed for decades. Across from your entrance is another pair of doors. Thin sheets of brass have been haphazardly affixed to them, covering them entirely.

The Council of Mages added brass to these doors and their frame after containing Rohr-tan in his crypt. They believed that creatures of decay are vulnerable to brass, and though this effort may not have provided a perfect seal, it should at least have kept any of the Rot Weaver's minions from opening these doors.

If a character listens at the doors, they will hear the sounds of celebration on the other side. None of the party can make out specific words, but clearly, there are a large number of people having a feast of some sort. A character can determine that the voices are most likely dobberkind with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

The brass doors are locked. They will not budge, even by force. The secret to opening the doors is on Othkara's parchment. The party may choose to examine the hound statues. The creatures portrayed are wolf-like but with shorter snouts and ears that lay on the sides of their heads. Instead of fur, they have scales, like a reptile. They must have been domesticated, each having a collar with a chain attached. The collars are stone, like the rest of the statues, but the chain is metal, rusted, but still flexible. The party will notice that one has its head turned toward the doors that lead back to the courtyard. That statue has the word *truth* scratched into its collar. The other has its head turned toward the doors covered in brass. That statue has the word *lies* scratched into its collar.

Solution: *Shine light on the "truth" hound and remove its chain while the "lies" hound is in shadow.*

I - THE FEAST

You step into a beautiful ballroom, pristine and elegant, with none of the decay and rot you expected. There are tables lined with people in formal attire, extravagant candelabra centerpieces, servants bustling about, and more food than an army could eat.

You have stumbled upon what appears to be a royal family wedding. Along the wall left of the entrance, the bride and groom smile doe-eyed at each other. The presumed parents of the couple sit to either side. One of these, a dobber with a thick black beard, wears an ostentatious crown upon his head. Three spines, glimmering gold in the bright candlelight, curve up above his brow. In front of their table sits an ornately designed pedestal upon which is displayed a gleaming broadsword.

Guest tables stretch out perpendicular to the head table. Dobbers of every size, shape, and heritage watch in rapt attention as the black-bearded dobber with the crown steps around the head table toward the sword. He lifts the sword and displays it to the guests. He talks to them at length, and the party can tell this is a happy and proud day for the patriarchal dobber. But no matter how hard they try, none of the party can make out what he's saying. At first, it's subtle; they don't realize they don't know what the bearded dobber is saying, the same way you wouldn't if you were in a crowded room and not focused on anyone.

The groom, who looks to be a younger copy of the patriarch with the same dark hair and beard, comes around the table. The crowned dobber presents the sword to the younger, who takes it in one hand. They join in a one-armed embrace as the younger holds the sword above his head, beaming in triumph. The words spoken continue to sound like muddled nonsense to the characters, but somehow, the lack of understanding doesn't cause alarm.

Eventually, the sword is put back on display on the pedestal in front of the bride and groom. If the party stays long enough, they can watch the entire

DECAY MEMORIES AND SPORE SPIRITS

*The scene that plays out before the party is a memory being reenacted by an amalgam of tainted spores and arcane rot energy, **spore spirits**. The creatures that play out this scene are not sentient but are a manifestation of real memories from real people who once inhabited this keep. They will act out this scene in a loop, entirely undisturbed by the player characters. If spoken to, the decay spirits will seem not to hear. If touched, their form will splash away like liquid dust floating in the air. However, any character that touches them will get a nasty jolt, 3 (1d6) necrotic damage, then must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract a level of Rot Poisoning. Only the furniture and pedestal the sword is displayed on are solid. The broadsword itself is also a manifestation of these spore spirits. If any of the characters touch it or interact with it in any way, it dissolves in a cloud of dust and the decay spirits attack.*

As the Game Master, you may describe this scene in as much or as little detail as you wish. The primary goal is to draw attention to the sword and that its hilt looks just like Ember's.

wedding reception until it repeats. Hours later, the whole scene starts again from the beginning, with the happy bride and groom entering, and not long after, being gifted the sword.

If any in the party have the opportunity to look closely at the sword, read:

The hilt and pommel of this sword look strangely familiar. It matches that of the cursed dagger, Ember, down to every detail save one; it does not have a Heritage Stone mounted upon it.



WHAT IF A CHARACTER TOUCHES THE SWORD?

As soon as a character attempts to touch the sword, read:

It disappears into a cloud of spore-like dust. The fine clothes and healthy bodies dissolve from the feast's attendees, an apparent illusion. Fungus and decay appear on every surface of the once-pristine dining hall.

The decay spirits have transformed into various undead monstrosities who attack the party. They are led by the **Scorched One**, who wears the crown, the presumed father of the groom. The groom becomes the **Spore Sentry**, and three of the wedding party become **Spore Skeletons**. The illusion of the bride disappears entirely. 1d6+3 of the attendees become **Spore Zombies**. The servants become 1d4 **Plague Fungi** and 1d4+2 **Walking Fungus**.

The face of the black-bearded dobber withers and decays before your eyes, leaving hanging strings of flesh on ancient bones. His glowing eyes burn through a cloud of black spores from under the same heavy crown. His formal attire warps into a ragged coat with gold buttons and large boots that go nearly to his knees. He draws a long curved sword from his side and charges.

The decay spirits do not pursue the characters if they leave this room. If they leave without triggering combat, the scene is presumed to repeat indefinitely. If they leave after or during combat, the scene resets as if it never was altered after 10 minutes.

A character who listens at the door that leads to Area 2 can hear sobbing.

A character who listens at the door that leads to Area 3 hears nothing.

2 - THE VIEWING ROOM

In the middle of the room, a casket rests on a plinth. A sobbing dobber with a black beard and a crown is draped over it. He pounds a fist into the polished wooden surface, startling the other dobbers sitting in chairs to either side. Their eyes are red from crying, but you also see fear.

The scene playing out in this room is a memory from a couple of years after the wedding scene shown in Area 1. As it continues, characters may recognize dobbers from the wedding's head table. All four parents are present, as well as the bride. The groom is conspicuously absent.

There are four other dobbers, one in each corner of the room, wearing the same formal attire. They rise from their chairs in unison and approach the casket. One of them gestures for the presumed father of the groom to step back, but the conversation is inaudible to the rest of the party. Suddenly, the bearded dobber violently pushes a servant away.

The bride, just as beautiful as when you saw her at the wedding, cautiously approaches the black-bearded dobber. She speaks softly in his ear, and the tension in the room eases. The dobber releases the casket and crumples to the floor, tears streaming down his face. The four servants assume positions at each corner of the casket and carefully lift it. One gentle step at a time, they make their way to the door across from where the party entered. Another mourner opens it, and they file out of the room.

Not every guest turns into a decay monster. Modify the quantity that attack the party as you see fit.

*The **scorched one** is on page 401.*

*The **spore sentry**, **spore skeletons**, and **spore zombies** are on pages 404 and 405. The **plague fungus** and **walking fungus** are on page 392.*



The **scorched one** is on page 401. The **spore skeleton** is on pages 404 and 405. The **plague fungus** and **walking fungus** are on page 392.

You can find stats for a **black pudding** on page 361.

THE CASKET

As in Area 1, this scene is portrayed by decay spirits, reenacting a memory from Skaggerak's past. The spirits do not hear or in any way react to actions taken by the player characters. The scene is broken only if a character opens the casket lid. They will get a glimpse of the groom, emaciated and dead, with the gifted sword on his chest. The appearance of the room will dissolve back into one of ruin and rot. The decay spirits will transform into hideous undead creatures and attack the party.

The party is attacked by a **Scorched One**, three **Spore Skeletons**, two **Walking Fungi**, and two **Plague Fungi**.

If no one in the party breaks the scene, they can simply leave the room, going to either Area 1 or Area 4 without any opposition.

3 - GALLEY

These rooms include a once fully operational kitchen and a long preparation area where servants can garnish and place the finishing touches on meals to be served in the dining room. The illusion from the dining room has extended here, making the room appear to be in good order, though under the illusion, it is a mess of rot and decay.

These two interconnected rooms are fresh and clean. There are tables lined with food in various stages of prep. Through a large opening, you can see the second room has a full kitchen. However, unlike the dining room, everything here lies dormant. No well-dressed servants or wedding guests bustling about. Just a cold, still room.

If the party investigates, they will find that the food is old beyond description. It seems to be somewhat

petrified. The appearance is maintained, maybe enhanced by the illusion in the previous room, but in no way is the food preserved.

3A - KITCHEN

The fully equipped kitchen is surprisingly pristine. It also has a variety of dishes in various stages of preparation. Soups, vegetables, and a large slab of meat hang on a spit over a long-since dormant fire. A huge cookpot full of a thick black liquid rests over another cold fireplace opposite the spit.

If a party member investigates the black liquid in the cook pot, they will be attacked by a **Black Pudding**. A second one will join it from hiding among other cooking wares. The puddings will only attack if it is disturbed or if the party lingers here for too long, perhaps if they decide to take a short or long rest.

4 - THE PROCESSION

Four dobbers in formal ware solemnly carry a casket across the room. Four other dobbers, dressed in black with eyes red from crying, walk beside it. You recognize most of them from the wedding's head table. Just as you realize who is missing, the black-bearded dobber wearing a crown, charges in, his face a twisted mask of grief. He throws open the casket lid and yanks out a broadsword, the same one given to the groom. The servants stumble away, nearly dropping the casket. The bearded dobber points the sword at the mourners, shouting unintelligible accusations.

No one in the party can tell exactly what the groom's father is saying, but with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check, one can determine that he blames the others for his son's death. That they *took* him.

The room itself appears to be a sitting area. There are a few plush chairs, a small table, and an ornamental rug. Family portraits hang on the walls.

The illusion continues with the bearded dobber wildly swinging the sword from side to side. The family scatters to the walls. The servants end up dropping the casket, fearing they may be struck by the flailing sword. When the casket strikes the hard tiled floor, the beautiful ash wood cracks, and the lid pops open. After describing the dropped casket, read:

The groom's father stares down into the broken casket, his face twisting from grief to rage! He lifts the sword again, and it sparks. Flame erupts from the hilt, traveling down the blade in a jet of destruction. All is consumed. Everything in the room is reduced to charred embers.

The fire is not hot, and if any of the party remain in the room, they are not burned. The scene can be broken if a character attempts to take the sword. The party will then be attacked by the same decay spirits from Area 2: a **Scorched One**, three **Spore Skeletons**, two **Walking Fungi**, and two **Plague Fungi**. Otherwise, the room sits dormant, a smoking, charred mess, silent except for the occasional pop of wood cooling. After 10 minutes, the scene starts again with the servants carrying the casket.

5 - STAFF WAITING ROOM

You are almost relieved to see a room not preserved by illusion. Dust covers the floor and furniture. Fungus rings the walls and grows in the corners. This feels more like what you'd expect to find in an abandoned keep that has been lost for decades.

This is a modest area that serves as an entrance to the living quarters for household staff. There are two simple chairs, a table, and a bookshelf. The door to the west stands open. The other two doors are locked. The eastern door lock would require a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to pick. The north-eastern door lock would require a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open.

6 - LIBRARY

Long shelves, sagging with age and lined with books, cover one wall of this rectangular room. Mushrooms and rot grow in the corners. A straight-backed chair and writing desk sit across from the shelves, a few papers and an ink well upon it. Rings of fungus cling to its side. There is a large, over-stuffed chair in one corner with a pedestal lamp next to it. A stack of books next to the chair has toppled over and deteriorated nearly to dust.

There is no illusion or decay spirits in this room. The west door is locked. The east door is not locked, but it can be. Either lock requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open.

If a character examines the books, most are too decayed to even make out a title. Eventually, they may find books on mining and metallurgy. None of the contents can be read.

There are also several loose-leaf ledgers for some kind of accounting. These are also too rotten to reveal any details.

KEY REFERENCE:

Two pine keys
for common room
doors.

**Oak key with
metal studs** for
the armory.

**Key with four
posts** opens the
gas valve to the
forge on the floor
below.

The **vine-like
tendrils** are
tentacles, like
those of an
octopus, but no
one from the
Alwaysgreen
Forest would've
ever seen such a
thing.

One of the drawers in the desk has a false back. Within it is a key ring with four keys. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check will allow a character to find the secret compartment.

- Two of the keys, simple designs, probably made from pine, operate the locks for the rooms on this level of the keep, except the door to the armory.
- A heavy oak key with metal studs opens the door to Area 11, the armory.
- The description of the last key:

At first, you wouldn't assume this is a key. It has a very unusual design, with four posts affixed to the shank, each made of a different material. One is a light wood, another dark, a heavy metal one that may be iron, and the fourth looks to be gold. A bit sticks out of each, making a cross shape. It looks like four keys that have been welded together. The whole thing is scarred black like it's been heated to the point of burning and didn't quite catch on fire.

7 - THE THRONE ROOM

Dust and decay fill this large room with five angled walls. A set of double doors on the north wall are framed by ornate trim and molding. One of the doors hangs askew on its hinges, and the other lies on the floor. The opening is flanked by columns that span floor to ceiling. They each have some kind of vine-like tendril wrapped around them. The intricate carving doesn't show bark, leaves, or thorns, instead the tendrils have rows of cupped nodules.

Skaggarak once sat in this throne room contemplating his legacy. He must have had a very strange sense of formality to place his throne at the entrance to the mausoleum of his loved ones.

There is a platform two steps high in front of the columns. The threadbare remnants of a decorative rug have been left upon it to rot. Marks on the fabric show where furniture must have once sat. The only piece that remains is a toppled lantern stand.

A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check will allow a character to discover four distinct marks, spaced as they would for the legs of a large chair. The door to the west is locked by a bolt with a thumb latch on this side.

8 - THE MAUSOLEUM

At the center of this round room, a bearded man, his crown on the floor at his feet, sits on an out-of-place throne. He is hunched forward, his face resting in one palm, propped by an elbow on the royal chair's arm. The other arm extends out to the hilt of the sword, held vertically so that the point rests against the tile floor, his hand, resting on the pommel like you would a staff.

Behind him, a huge statue of a woodkin vulture looms, standing at attention, both of his feathery arms holding the scabbard of a broadsword.

This room has a decay spirit memory in it as well, though it is not playing out a scene. It is just the image of the bearded king, Skaggerak, mourning in the mausoleum of his family. Like the rooms before, the dobber in the memory doesn't react to any of the party's actions. Unlike the other rooms, however, there isn't any way to break this scene, causing a decay spirit to attack. Even if someone attempts to take the sword from Skaggerak, nothing happens. The character just passes through it, causing a splash of dust that quickly reforms. The throne is real. It was drug to this spot decades before when Skaggerak sat here, forming the memory that the party now sees.

The statue behind the throne and Skaggerak is also real. It looks like Aarik, the same vulture that the party encountered before entering Skaggerak's keep. When the party first sees the statue, it may be assumed that it is holding an empty scabbard. But, upon closer examination, they find the scabbard holds a blade with no hilt. The blade is real, not made of stone like the statue. There is a void where the tang should be.

If one of the characters inserts the blade of Ember into this void, it almost fits perfectly. Unfortunately, to make the connection permanent, they would need forging tools. Once the hilt of Ember has been affixed to this blade, the party will have reformed the legendary sword, Blaze. Blaze is the broadsword seen in the memories throughout the keep.

LAERDRAA

Laerdraa was the bride shown in the memories from previous rooms. A spectral shadow of her haunts these rooms, protecting the only connection she has left with her groom, the broadsword that was gifted to him on the day of their wedding.

If anyone in the party attempts to leave the mausoleum with Blaze, Laerdraa, the spore ghost attacks. She will place herself between the party and the rest of the keep, most likely in Area 7. Read or paraphrase the following:

A voice screeches throughout the keep, piercing your ears like a rusty blade, "That sword is my husband's!" each word, a punctuated staccato that repeatedly thrusts like a knife.

A gaseous specter appears in the room before you. Her translucent form hovers above the floor, strips of a tattered wedding gown undulating all around her. Through the wrath of her expression, you can see a smooth, beautiful face, the face of a young woman. You recognize her as the bride from each vision throughout the keep.

When Laerdraa attacks, she seeks to take possession of the most martial character. She wants someone that can do a lot of damage. If she is unable to take possession of a character, she will use her life drain attack until she is near 0 hit points. Once she is below 5, she will use her action to flee.

Stats for **Laerdraa** are on page 394.



THE CRYPTS

Several passages lead off of this round room. Each passage leads to a chamber just large enough for a single coffin. At the entrance to each passage hangs a plaque. Moving clockwise around the room, starting to the left of the main entrance:

PLAQUE: GORM - REGENT ARCANE

This casket is huge when compared to the typical needs of a dobber. It fills the whole space. A character can find chips along one side of the casket's lid, implying that someone has tried to pry it open but failed. A character succeeding on a DC 11 Wisdom (Arcana) check would surmise that the casket has been magically sealed. To open the casket, a character must cast Dispel Magic and succeed on a DC 17 spellcasting ability check.

Once Opened: It appears that Gorm was a large woodkin snapping turtle. His huge shell, bones, and scales are all that remains of the creature. A polished wooden staff rests on his chest, the **Branch of Life**. The head of which is carved into a loop. Within its center is a free-floating green orb that pulsates with energy.

PLAQUE: RIAN - PROTECTOR OF THE REALM

Rian's coffin is sized for a typical dobber. The box itself is heavily damaged, with scratches and scrapes. The varnish is all but removed, and where it does remain, it is bubbled and cracked. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher will immediately notice streaks on the walls and floor where the years of dust have been cleared away by something. If they search further, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal acidic slime on the edge of the lid.

Characters will find that the casket is not locked. When opened, a **rot slime** springs out, attacking whoever opened the lid. If none of the characters found the acidic slime on the edge of the lid,

the rot slime has advantage on initiative.

The inside of the casket is all but burnt away by the acidic secretions of the slime. There are two short swords that must have been magically protected from the corrosive slime, each granting +1 to attack and damage. It appears that Rian was laid to rest wearing full plate armor, but it was not lucky enough to survive time intermingled with a rot slime. The parts that remain may be useful to a tinkerer. A character proficient in Tinkering can make the armor usable in six hours of work with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Tinkering) check. If they succeed with a roll of 17 or higher, the work only takes four hours.

PLAQUE: ORLUN - THE KING THAT NEVER WAS

The dobber-sized casket in this chamber is covered with a mound of withered flowers, so brittle with age that they turn to dust with but a breath. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Wisdom (Nature) check will notice that even though the top flowers are still many years old, they are not nearly as old as everything else in this keep.

It somehow feels wrong to push the crumbling flowers off the top of the casket to open it, but if a character does, they find it is not locked. The skeleton inside is wearing dress clothes and a hard leather vest, beautifully embossed with a crest on the chest. White ash bracers and greaves cover skeletal arms and legs. A golden circlet rests upon the skull. The bracers and greaves, when worn together, improve a character's AC by 2. They can only be worn by dobber-sized characters.

PLAQUE: LAERDRAA

This chamber is empty. Some rot seeps along the crevices, and the floor is covered in years of dust, but beyond that, this room is empty and relatively clean.

*Details for the **Branch of Life** are on page 415.*

*The **rot slime** is on page 399.*

PLAQUE: SKAGGERAK - KING, FATHER, CONQUEROR

Down this passage, a once ornately detailed casket lays in a ruined heap. Burn marks, water damage, and deep cuts from bladed weapons scar the wood. Onlookers can scarcely confirm it was ever a coffin. If a character searches through the wreckage, they find no remains of Skaggerak, not even a finger bone. However, rummaging through the boards of the casket triggers the release of a noxious gas.

Without warning, a black cloud fills the room. All characters in the room immediately feel a wave of weakness come over their body. Each character in the room must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, or the affected character deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength for the next 10 minutes. If, at any time, a character recovers hit points by any arcane means, the effect also ends. Otherwise, the effect lasts for the full 10 minutes.

PLAQUE: FAEDARA - QUEEN, MOTHER

The queen's casket is even more luxuriously detailed than Skaggerak's, though it has not been destroyed. The room is heavy with fungus and decay. A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher will immediately notice streaks on the walls and floor where the years of dust have been cleared away by something. If they search further, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal an acidic slime trail leading under the casket.

When a character draws near enough to open the casket, a **rot slime** oozes out from under it, attacking whoever approached. If none of the characters found the acidic slime leading under the casket, the rot slime has advantage on initiative.

Characters will find that the casket is not locked. Inside, the skeleton of the

queen is dressed in a gown, faded and rotten by time. A jeweled gold necklace has fallen down around her neck vertebrae. Her skeletal hands and wrists are adorned with rings and bracelets. A delicate golden crown has slid off her skull into a pile of ancient hair.

9 - STAFF HALL

This simple hall has two doors, one to the north and one to the south. The north-facing door is standing ajar. The door to the south differs from the others you've seen throughout the keep, reinforced with grey metal bands. The bands are heavily scarred with scratches and dents, particularly near the lock and keyhole. The door handle appears to be entirely torn off.

In spite of the heavy damage, the lock can be unlocked with the key (oak with metal studs) found in Area 6, the Library. It can also be picked. It requires a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open. Once it is unlocked, the door does not easily open due to the heavy damage. It requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to force open.

10 - ROOMS

There are a handful of simple rooms down this corridor. Four rooms appear to be private chambers, likely for staff that were higher in authority. These rooms are adorned with a simple, single bed, a small table with chair and lamp, and a wardrobe.

Another room seems to be a community chamber. It has sleeping areas partitioned with screens and a common living area.

11 - ARMORY

This large room has racks for weapons and armor of almost every type, most of which are heavily damaged or corroded from age and decay. However, it might be worth the party taking a look around.

The **rot slime** is on page 399.

Skaggerak's forge was truly impressive, renowned for crafting weapons and armor that catered to a wide range of needs and fighting styles. If characters wish to search for a specific item, they can roll percentile dice, with a 30 percent chance of finding the exact type of weapon or armor in the appropriate size among the racks. They may only make one search attempt per specific item. However, they may search for other items. The odds of success decrease by 10 percent with each subsequent search.

Additionally, roll on the chart below to highlight some of the more interesting items.

A pair of heavy wooden doors, reinforced by metal bands, leads to the south. Cracks in the same wall press the lintel down on them, binding them under pressure. Hinges on the left door look about to tear from the wall. A massive chunk of stone has fallen from the ceiling and leans against it. The right door isn't blocked, but there is a rack piled with parts of weapons and armor next to it.

If a character succeeds in a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they will notice scratches on the floor, suggesting that a pile of equipment was previously used to barricade the door. Additionally, if a character has a passive Perception score of 12 or above, they will be able to detect a distinct odor of decay emanating from the other side of the doors.

The right door doesn't seem locked, but it is stuck under the pressure of the sagging wall. A successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check is required to force it open.

Two characters working together can take two turns to easily move the stone from in front of the left door. A character that wishes to move it by themselves must succeed on a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to do so. Still, the door will not open because of the damaged hinges. The hinges can be repaired with a successful DC 12 Tinker's Tool check or a successful DC 15 Thieves' Tool check. The door will open easily once the hinges are repaired.

OPENING THE DOORS

As soon as the doors are opened, regardless of the manner, a gust of tainted, rot-filled air invades the room. All characters within 20 feet of the doors, when opened, must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become stunned for 1 turn. Immediately, a **plague orb** rushes into the room and attacks. All characters should roll initiative, but those who are stunned will not act in the first round.

Stats for the **plague orb** are on page 396.

12 - DOWN WE GO

A small platform sits in the darkness beyond the doors. Damage to the surrounding walls calls its stability into question. To one side, a wood-framed stair leads down. On the other, an open shaft plummets into nothing. Above it hangs a pulley contraption of some kind. The air is so heavy with the smell of decay that it stings the eyes and throat.

Shelves of fungus cling to the walls. Surfaces are slick with rotten slime. Drips echo up and down the stairwell shaft. The feeling of dread rises as the party realizes their descent takes them closer to their final destination, the Rot Weaver's tomb.

It's just over 20 feet to the lower level floor, and there are over 40 steps.



The wood is rotten and brittle; the characters have to step over where steps are missing or clearly too weak to hold someone's weight. There is a 25 percent chance that a step will give way without warning. Roll this percentile chance as many or as few times as seems appropriate to add the most drama. When a step gives way, that character must succeed on a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or fall to the floor below, taking 7 (2d6) damage. Allow the party to come up with creative ways to avoid the potential of collapsing steps.

THE FORGE LEVEL

1 - THE LAST STEPS

The final three steps of the stairs are smashed by a portion of collapsed wall. A large cart lies in a broken pile, a huge mushroom growing off one side. The other end of the pulley system lies broken in a pile of rope. Metal rails curve away from under the rubble and disappear into another mass of fallen stone.

2 - STAGING AREA

Rows of weapon and armor racks line this alcove. Like the room above, the equipment is mostly damaged and incomplete.

3 - QUIET HALL

As the party moves down this quiet, unassuming passage, read:

Rough-cut stone blocks make up the walls and floor. The blocks on the floor are irregular, but arranged in three rows. The middle row is a bit lower than the rows along each wall.

You can see a wooden wheel-like object against the wall at the end of the hall. Spokes radiate from the center, extending past the wheel's

circumference, making small prongs. Thick frayed ropes hang from floor to ceiling, unevenly dispersed along the walls.

3A - HELM ROOM

When a character steps from the last two middle blocks from the hallway floor to this room, read:

When you step from the hall into this irregularly shaped room, the floor behind you raises slightly with a subtle click, becoming flush with the stones along the wall. Immediately, walls crash down from the ceiling, closing this room off from any path.

The room is sealed off from the north - the path through which the party approached - and the east path that leads out of the room.

The character that triggered the walls to fall must move the rest of the way into the room. Any other characters can dive into the room if they succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If they fail the check, they take 10 (3d6) force damage as the wall smashes into them, but they still fall the rest of the way into the room.

A character with a passive Perception of 14 or higher will have noticed the ropes moving when the walls crashed. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check confirms that the ropes are part of the mechanism that operates the walls. Other parts are hidden and impossible to get to. If the Investigation roll was 17 or higher, the character can determine which rope to pull on to lift the walls back to their original position. Pulling this rope to lift the walls requires a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check.

The **Forge Level map** is on page 326.

AREA 2 (OPTIONAL):

Mushrooms grow along the walls and dilapidated equipment. Among the fungus the characters find a **Deepshroom**. Find Deepshrooms on page 417.

AREA 4A: Yellow dashed lines on the Forge Level map show where the walls close off the **Helm Room**.

The walls can also be retracted by turning the wheel attached to the wall. The wheel must be turned in a specific pattern. Clues are on the parchment given to the party by Othkara. The room is not soundproof. Characters can communicate with each other from within or without.

Solution: *The wheel must be turned three full rotations counter-clockwise, one rotation clockwise, then two more rotations counter-clockwise.*

4 - TRAPPED HALL

Like the previous hall, this passage has a square block floor, four blocks wide. The center two are a bit lower than the stones next to the walls.

This passage is also trapped. Following a 2x2 pattern of blocks, every other group is a pressure plate trigger. When triggered, jagged spikes thrust from the floor and ceiling between the pressure plates. The spikes are delayed, catching a creature unaware as they step from the pressure plate to the spiked area. The spikes retract and reset after a few seconds, ready to spear the next creature walking along.

A character that triggers the trap takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage. A character with a passive Perception of 14 hears the click of the pressure plate, warning them of the trap. If they have this warning, they must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid being speared and take no damage.

The row of blocks along either wall does not trigger the spikes. One can also attempt to jump over the 2x2 trigger plates by succeeding on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

There is a secret door to Area 5 at the end of this hallway. It opens with a simple hard shove, but it is very hard to see. It has no visible hinges or handles, and the edges line up with the other blocks in the wall. A character must have a passive Perception of 15 or succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check to find the door.

5 - SECRET ROOM

This room functioned as a storage room and personal chamber for the forge master. In time, it doubled as an infirmary for those injured while working the forge or mine. The crates used for make-shift furniture are deteriorated beyond use. If a character searches, they find the **Healer's Kit of the Path**.

6 - FORGE ROOM

When the party enters the first half of the forge room, read:

This hexagon-shaped room is divided into two halves. When you enter, you see a variety of different containers: weapon racks, open-topped barrels, a deep rectangular trough, a crate full of coal, and several tall metal canisters. To the right, you find a closed metal door. In front of you, a large sliding door is open, allowing you access to the other half of the room. In it, you see the workings of a forge.

The Healer's Kit of the Path is on page 419.

6A - THE FORGE

This forge room has everything the party needs to reforge the blade found in the vulture statue in the mausoleum with the hilt of Ember. First, they have to figure out how to light the forge.

Anvil, bellows, fire pit, and more, everything a working forge needs. Opposite the bellows are two large metal canisters. Some kind of tubing leads from just under the hearth, along the wall, and connects to the canisters. Near where the tubing connects to the hearth, just under the lip, there is an oddly shaped hole. It looks a bit like a cross.

There is coal at the top of the fire pit, but it is not for burning, just to hold heat. Liquid from the canisters fuels the fire. However, the ones connected are empty. One of the full canisters from Area 7a must be attached to the tubes under the hearth to fuel the forge. The cross-shaped key found in the library fits the cross-shaped hole near the tubing. This will open the valve so fuel may flow into the fire pit. It still needs to be lit.

If one of the characters looks around for tools or is ready to begin using the forge, describe the table:

On a nearby table rests a sword template. It seems perfect. Could it be the original form that was used to create this sword? The blade and hilt fit perfectly within it.

When the forge is lit, a 15-foot radius sphere of fire fills the room. Any character that isn't behind cover must succeed on a DC 15 saving throw or take 14 (4d6) fire damage, taking half

that amount if they succeed. A **fire elemental** emerges from the explosion and attacks.

Once the forge is lit and the fire elemental is defeated, they can finally reforge the sword. It is easy for a tinkerer or someone with an appropriate background, taking an hour or so.

Keep in mind that Ember is cursed. Anyone working with the hilt during forging will want to take special care not to touch it or suffer the effects of the curse.

Once they have completed reforging the sword, they have **Blaze**!

7 - STORAGE

In this room, there are heaps of raw ore and tracks that run at a slight angle from north to south. Carts can drop off materials here to be used in the forge or continue on to the elevator in Area 1. There is also a parallel walking path alongside the tracks that lead to the rest of the mine south.

7A - BEHIND THE FORGE

This passage allowed workers to access the rear of the forge hearth. From here, forge workers could stoke the fire or make repairs. Four canisters of liquid fuel are stored here.

8 - SWITCH STATION

The rails lead to a simple switching device where a cart can be moved to one of three branching sets of rails. This round room remains nearly intact despite heavy damage to the walls and piles of fallen rubble in each of the branching hallways.

You can use stats for a typical **fire elemental**.

If no one in the party has the skills to use a forge, they can eventually figure it out with enough time, 1d4+1 hours. During that time, a pair of **spore maws** from page 402, slowly creep into the room.

Blaze is on page 329.

The **spore maw** is on page 402.

8A - FISSURE

When the castle collapsed, only a portion of this original corridor remained intact. However, a fissure opened in the earth, creating a new path to Area 9.

8B - COLLAPSED ROCK

This pathway of track is unpassable due to collapsed rock.

8C - A HIDDEN PASSAGE

Another cart track leads to a dead end, rock and debris blocking the way. Winding behind fallen rocks and crags, a fissure opens to a hidden room - Area 5.

9 - ANOTHER ELEVATOR

The party comes to a small round room with an elevator shaft in its center. It is nearly covered in vines and decay.

The walls of this round room are almost completely grown over with fungus. Tentacles from alien mushrooms wave in an absent breeze. Centered on the ceiling hangs a pulley covered in fungus and mold. No rope is attached. Below it, a square shaft leads down, fungal vines clinging to its walls.

The floor is mostly obscured by black mold and ooze. Two metal plates, barely recognizable as brass, lay to either side of a square shaft. A **spore maw** and a **grasping bush** are clinging to the lip of the shaft opening. Any character hit by one of the spore maw's attacks while attempting to climb down the shaft must succeed on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check or fall down the shaft, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage when they hit bottom. Proceed to Area 12.

The **grasping bush** is on page 393.

Even if no characters attempt to engage the creatures in this room, their abilities will come into effect. See the following:

Spore Maw, Alluring Aroma. The spore maw emits a sickly sweet aroma in a 30-foot radius around it. Whenever a creature starts its turn within this radius, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the spore maw for 1 minute. A creature charmed in this way cannot attack any decay plants. A charmed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success and becoming immune to the spore maw's aroma for 24 hours.

Grasping Bush, Grasping Tentacles. If a character comes within 10 feet of a grasping bush, they must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. At the beginning of their turn, a character restrained in this way has their maximum hit points reduced by 7 (2d6). They may use their action to free themselves from the tentacles by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. Reduced hit points are recovered at a rate of 3 (1d6) per long rest. If the creature's hit points reach 0 from this ability, it immediately dies.

10 - MINE PIT

This large room has an irregular shape, dug by miners who followed the naturally occurring ore. Large columns were constructed to ensure support, but when the keep fell, they were little help. Fallen earth and stone litter the whole area.

10A - AN OPEN FISSURE

As the party explores further into these underground craggy rooms, read:

Your path leads around a large swath of rock that fell from the ceiling. A strange purple light emanates from a crack in the far wall.

11 - GLIMPING THE END

If one of the characters chooses to look through the crack on the wall, read:

Peering through reveals a vast cavern. Near its center hangs a colossal shard of decay, black vines and thorns clutching a radiating mass of energy that resembles a purple heart. With each beat, it pulses necrotic energy. Swarms of decay creatures swirl around it, twitching in the air, matching the rhythm of the heart. Liquid decay runs down the sides and drips onto a ledge beneath it.

The party can see into a vast cavern through an opening barely wide enough for a dobber. If a character does step through, there is only a small ledge on which to stand. They can look down into the cavern from somewhere near its apex. The walls are covered with razor-sharp rocks that look like teeth. They cannot be scaled, no matter how skilled the climber.

On the other side of the room from where the party stands, at about the same height as the bottom of the shard, there are other ledges nearly 200 feet away. There is no safe way to climb down. If a character can fly or proposes another creative solution, you may skip to *The Tomb Cavern* map. Those ledges are labeled as Area 2.

If any of the party stays on this ledge for more than a few moments, a **plague orb** swoops in to attack!

12 - DOWN THE CART ELEVATOR SHAFT

Fungal vines line this shaft, providing some handholds as the party climbs down. The cart and platform assembly for the elevator lie smashed on the floor below, barely discernable under more fungal vines and mushrooms.

At the bottom, cart rails lead to the west, disappearing under a pile of rocks. A **grasping bush** and a **fungaling** attack the characters as soon as they are within reach.

12A - A DARK CLEFT

A cleft opens into a small passage that dead ends. There are three **grasping bushes** inside, one near the entrance. They can easily be avoided if no one attempts to enter.

12B - CONTINUING DOWN

Further along that side of this room, a fissure opens into a space below. The path continues to be slick and treacherous.

13 - DESCENDING THE FISSURE

Pervasive rot and fungus now cling to every surface. One careful step at a time, the rocky ground is slick with decay. Shadows play at your periphery, skittering across walls and underfoot.

*Stats for the **plague orb** are on page 396.*

*The **grasping bush** is on page 393 and the **fungaling** is on page 391.*



The descent is steep, but any character that succeeds on a DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check can proceed at their normal pace. If they fail, they must reduce their speed by half. If they fail by 5 or more, they fall to Area 14, taking 7 (2d6) falling damage and in to the grasp of a **grasping bush**.

14 - THE FINAL DESCENT

Each room delves further under the mountain; the floor descends so steeply that the party must move carefully. This area may be as much as 50 feet lower than Area 13 and 100 feet lower than Area 12.

Every surface in this long room has a strange organic appearance. Spikes grow from the walls, ceiling, and floor, not stalagmites or stalactites, but something that looks like teeth. Clumps of tentacles, like bushes, sprout between the teeth, reaching toward any movement they sense. A dreadful purple glow splashes through a narrow crevasse on the opposite side of the room, where you can hear rushing wind.

There are two **spore maws** and seven **grasping bushes** along the walls and floor in this room. Some can be avoided, but not all of them. How difficult it is to navigate around them is up to you, the GM.

The party can leave the room by going toward the purple light. The opening is just big enough for a medium-sized creature to pass through without squeezing.

15 - TOMB ENTRANCE

Area 15 coincides with Area 1 on the Tomb Map.

THE TOMB CAVERN

The tomb is a large open cavern. At its center hangs a shard of decay, a column that tapers to a spike at the bottom. It appears to be made of fungal vines and calcified rot. It holds Rohr-tan's sarcophagus in a suspension of liquid decay. The party must stab either Ember or Blaze into the sarcophagus to defeat the Rot Weaver, but first, they must get to it.

The shard is surrounded by a void, an eternity of nothing. Flying around the shard, swirling in the void, are countless plague orbs. Walking fungi and other terrible monsters stalk the ledge between the party and the void.

The party must find a way over the void to the platform under the shard, all while fending off the most terrible monsters they've faced yet.

The **Tomb Cavern map** is on page 331.

The **spore maw** is on page 402 and the **grasping bush** is on page 393.

WHAT ABOUT FLYING CHARACTERS?

If a character can fly or in some other way can cross the void without the path in Area 3b (such as being thrown, catapulted, etc), Rohr-tan's sarcophagus can be reached from the side of the shard. The sarcophagus is suspended in gelatinous decay goo. A large opening in the side of the fungal vines and calcified rot, like a window, shows the sarcophagus floating in the goo.

However, the invisible arcane barrier completely surrounds the sarcophagus. So, even a flying character cannot reach Rohr-tan unless the barrier is deactivated or penetrated by either Ember or Blaze.

PLAGUE ORBS

Plague Orbs fly throughout the tomb cavern. There are more than could ever be defeated. The party must just survive them long enough to stab Rohr-tan's sarcophagus. They are sentinels of the tomb, seeking to exterminate



any unwanted creatures. They have no interest in focusing on a perceived bigger threat; they have to exterminate all intruders.

1d4+1 **plague orbs** attack at one time, dividing themselves evenly among party members. Other plague orbs will attack as the first ones are killed.

ROHR-TAN'S FATE, THE VINE GUARDIAN

The most dangerous creature in this cavern may be **Rohr-tan's Fate, the Vine Guardian**. This monster, the Rot Weaver's last defense, will not attack until a character reaches the shard containing Rohr-tan's tomb.

1 - TOMB ENTRANCE

You step into a colossal amphitheater of death. At its center, a shard of decay hangs in the rank, foul wind of this subterranean tomb. A black void, splattered with pinpricks of light, stretches to infinitum above and below.

The shard seems to be made up of vine-like tentacles, great clutching thorns, and pure decay. It pulses like a heart, pumping necrotic energy like blood. Strange, tainted light casts the room in a purple glow.

At its core, a stone sarcophagus is barely visible within the column of necrotic growth. Silhouettes of alien creatures swirl around the room. Some fly like bats, others swim through the air propelled by tentacles. They shift and twitch in time with the beating heart.

Warning: it is very likely that characters will die or possibly need to sacrifice themselves during this encounter. Their sacrifice will make the success of the survivors that much more meaningful.

Liquid decay runs down from within and on the sides of the hanging column, pooling on a plinth beneath it. There doesn't appear to be any way to get to the plinth from the ledge without flying or some sort of bridge.

2 - THE LEDGE

A large ledge spans the width of the tomb cavern, stretching from side to side before the entrance. It slopes down toward its edge, but not so steeply that a character cannot walk on it, though a false step could lead to someone tumbling off into the void. If a character is knocked prone, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or roll 10 feet toward the edge.

The rough floor is scattered with mushrooms, tentacles, and vines; everyone a potential foe. Dispersed throughout the space, though most nearer the edge, are six **walking fungi**, four **plague fungi**, four **rot slimes**, four **spore maws**, and nine **grasping bushes**. Those with movement go toward the characters to attack as soon as they enter the tomb cavern.

None of the creatures with movement will use a dash action. It may take a few turns before they are in range to attack. This is okay; the threat and anticipation add a lot to the tension in this scene.

Stats for **walking fungus** and **plague fungus** can be found on page 292.

The **rot slime** is on page 399.

The **spore maw** is on page 402.

The **grasping bush** is on page 393.

If the party doesn't have Blaze, as the GM, you can choose to allow Ember or another weapon to be used with the control panel to unlock The Path, Area 3B.

3 - CONTROL PANEL

This alcove has panel that controls the path to the plinth in Area 4 and the invisible barrier that surrounds the shard of decay with the sarcophagus inside. The control panel is a raised stone pedestal, octagonal, with cryptic runes running along the outside edge. A 4-inch diameter circle is incised into the center. Running horizontally within that, a 3-inch wide slit penetrates deep into the stone.

The blade of Blaze can be inserted into the slit. If it is, it can be turned like a key, rotating the 4-inch diameter circle around the slit. The stone cylinder turns slowly, glowing along its edges. If this is done, the **path** in Area 3b forms. Additionally, this deactivates the invisible **arcane barrier** described in Area 4 that surrounds the Rohr-tan's sarcophagus.

3A - THE INFINITE DROP

Staring into the void is like looking into nothing and everything. Should one fall into it, they would fall forever. *And that isn't very nice, is it, precious?*

3B - THE PATH

This area only exists if it is unlocked using Blaze in the control panel of Area 2. Once it is unlocked, read:

Irregular stones rise from the depths, seeming to materialize in the void. They float toward each other, interlocking in unexpected ways, forming a path between the ledge and the plinth.

4 - ROHR-TAN'S SARCOPHAGUS

THE PLINTH

Underneath the column of decay that holds Rohr-tan's sarcophagus and prison, there is a platform. At one time, the sarcophagus rested on this platform, a lonely island of flat

stone surrounded by a void. Now, like everything else in this cavern, it is covered with rot, fungi, and decay.

A stream of viscous decay drips from the column above, pooling in the center of the plinth. Rivulets of the glowing purple goo flow organically to the sides and over the edge into the void. If a character touches the purple decay goo, they take 3 (1d6) necrotic damage for each round they remain in contact with it.

THE ARCANES BARRIER

An invisible arcane barrier surrounds the Rohr-tan's sarcophagus. It cannot be penetrated by any creature or weapon except Ember or Blaze. If struck by one of the cursed weapons, read:

A huge invisible orb becomes momentarily visible as cracks splinter along its surface, breaking like glass. The air flashes white as the glass-like chips of magic dissolve into nothing.

The arcane barrier is also deactivated by the control panel in Area 3. If this happens, there is no visual indication.

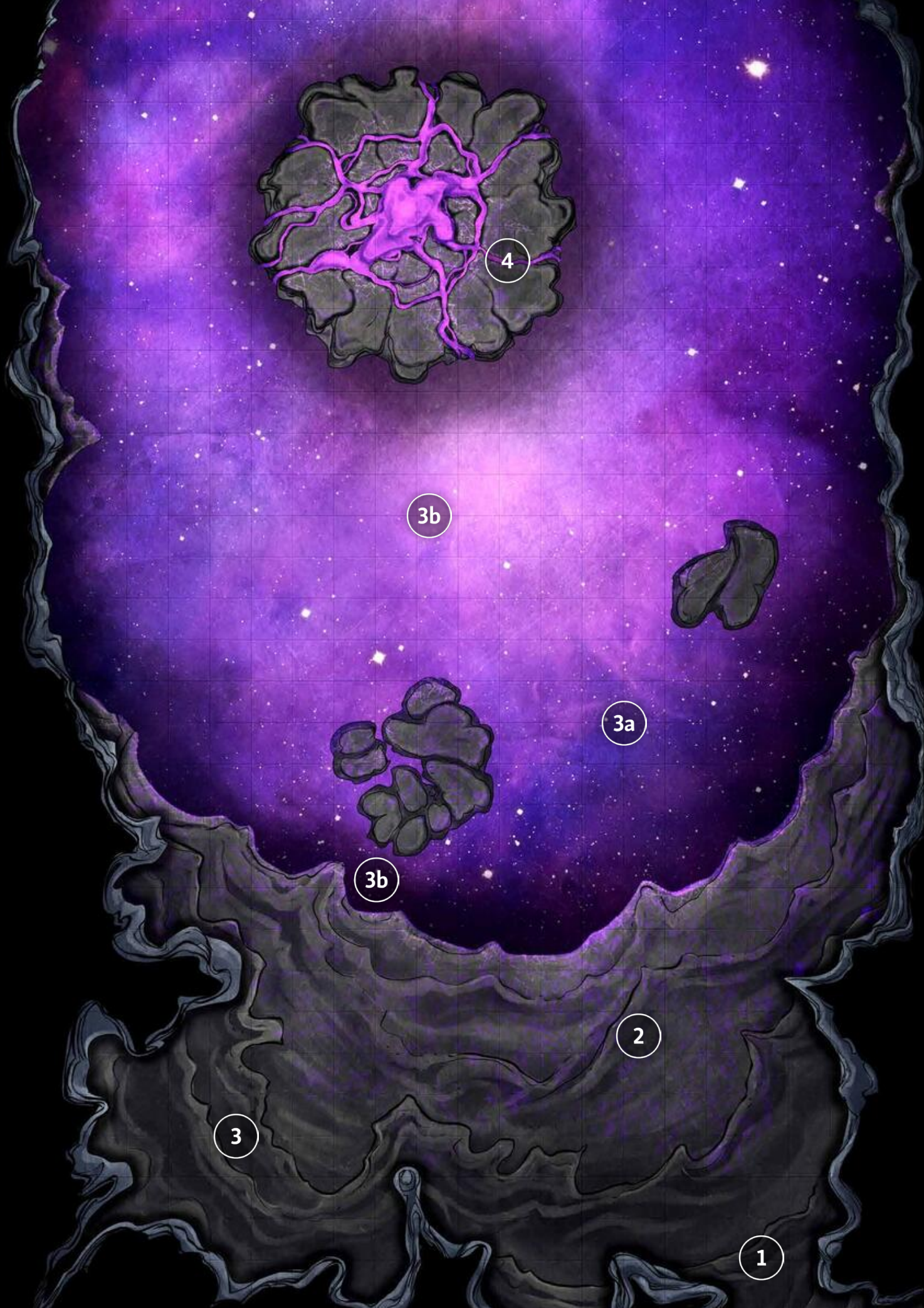
INSIDE THE SHARD OF DECAY

Rohr-tan's sarcophagus is suspended in a womb of purple decay goo. While some is dripping to the platform below, the majority seems to defy gravity, filling the hollow of the gigantic shard of decay. The sarcophagus can be seen at the center of the translucent purple jelly-like goo.

One can reach the sarcophagus by climbing up through the chamber of the column. A character doing this will be fully immersed in decay goo, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic damage for each round they are inside it. Climbing up through this goo is excruciating. A character must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to move up toward the sarcophagus. Every round the character is in the goo, the DC increases by 1.

AREA 4 (OPTIONAL):

Once a character reaches the plinth beneath the column of decay, monsters stop attacking them,



THE THREAT INCREASES

After the arcane barrier comes down, **Rohr-tan's Fate**, the **Vine Guardian** crawls down from the upper parts of the decay shard to attack. Read aloud:

"An ear-splitting roar shakes the whole cavern as vines that wrap the shard of decay come alive. They come together, intertwining into a monstrous dragon!"

Stats for the **vine guardian** can be found on page 298.

Cue the dramatic escape from a collapsing mountain.

If you wish to add some mechanics to your party's escape, have them roll Strength (Athletics) for characters to jump over large fissures in the floor, Dexterity (Acrobatics) to avoid falling rocks, and Intelligence (Survival) to find the best path out. The DC for each is up to you, but I suggest 15 or higher.

The DC will be 14 on the second turn, 15 on the third turn, and so on. The character must succeed 3 times to reach the sarcophagus. A roll of a natural 20 counts as 2 successes. On a failure, the character doesn't move up. There is no limit to the number of rounds a character may attempt to climb up the chamber as long as they haven't had their hit points reduced to 0. If this happens, the character is pushed out of the goo back onto the plinth below.

THE SARCOPHAGUS

Rohr-tan is defeated if the sarcophagus is stabbed by either Ember or Blaze. A character wielding one of these must make a melee attack roll against an AC of 10. The larva-like body of the Rot Weaver is killed with just 1 damage.

ROHR-TAN IS DEAD!

Once the sarcophagus is stabbed and Rohr-tan's larva is killed, **the tomb cavern, the forge level, and the keep begin to collapse**. Characters will have to run for the surface, disregarding any other concerns if they wish to survive.

Characters have to avoid falling rocks and jump cracks in the floor even as they form. Paths they had traveled before are now impassable. New passages, formed by the shifting mountain, must be followed out of desperation. Where they lead doesn't matter as long as they keep moving. All that matters is hope. Hope that their next steps don't lead to death. Hope that they can find the surface.

CONCLUDING THIS CHAPTER

When the party comes out of the mountain, they don't recognize their surroundings.

You emerge from the depths of Skaggerak's Keep, shaken and exhausted. Smoke and dust drift up from the collapse, adding to the already hazy air of the Dreary Mountains. You mistakenly think the danger has passed.

The earth shakes beneath your feet. An oak tree topples as its foundation suddenly drops dozens of feet. A slab of rock shifts, sending a boulder rolling down the mountain past you. This whole part of the mountain seems on the verge of disappearing into the earth.

The party has come out of the mountain in a completely different place than where they entered. It may not be possible to find their way back to Othkara's tunnels. They don't have time to try to figure it out. They must move down the mountain to safety.

Minutes later, the party can stop to assess the situation. They have escaped the shifting ground and cloud of smoke from the collapsing keep, but they can see more smoke ahead to the east. Dozens of plumes rise from the trees of the Alwaysgreen Forest.

LEVELING UP

Characters who complete this chapter, in conjunction with Chapter 13, have completed the necessary tasks to achieve level 8.



EPILOGUE

THE JOURNEY HOME

The party returns to the Alwaysgreen Forest to find it has been decimated by a monumental battle with the Rat Claw Clan. During the battle, the ratkin released an antimagic field over the forest. Without the magic that is so intrinsic to its nature, the forest is dying. *Who will save the forest now? That, my friends, is a story for another time.*

The trip from the mountains to Moss Fort will take less than a day.

It will take almost three days to get to Oak Den from Moss Fort.

MOSS FORT

The nearest group of structures is Moss Fort. Moss Fort is a small community supporting the Dobberton guard that patrols the western border. Most of the citizens are guards, families of guards, or the staff that keep the barracks.

Moss Fort is virtually deserted. A few families remain, but all the guards were sent south to the battle. If the party asks, they will find that the Rat Claw Clan attacked with a great force, bolstered by terrible fungal monsters. They are told that the fiercest battle happened in Oak Den. But Gearld defeated Si-ak, thank the Star Father.

OAK DEN

As you come near to Oak Den, smoke hangs so thick above the trees that the light can barely penetrate.

Oak Den is in near ruins, but the rebuilding process has already begun. Beatrice's steady encouragement and gentle voice can be heard guiding dobbers as needed.

Toby recognizes the party and rushes to greet them. He's now wearing a guard's uniform.

Toby rushes toward you excitedly. He's now wearing a Dobberton guard's uniform and also sports a fresh cut on his cheek and a sling supporting his left arm. *"It was you! I knew it had to be you,"* he exclaims. *"Right in the middle of the battle, the rot monsters collapsed into a pile of goo! Some of our people who were infected with rot poisoning suddenly remembered who they were and switched back to our side. It was like the evil inside of them just left!"*

"Without them, the Rat Claw Clan was suddenly outnumbered, but Si-ak didn't care! Did I tell you Gearld was here? He saved so many people! He fought Si-ak right over there!" Toby points toward the town's central well. *"He gave Si-ak a chance to surrender, but of course, he didn't. It was epic! I've never seen anything like it. The battle seemed to go on forever. Everyone on both sides stopped to watch. When Gearld had finally won, he gave Si-ak another chance to surrender; then it happened: with his last gasp, the rat pulled a shard of obsidian from his boot and thrust it into Gearld's neck."* Toby swallows hard, fighting back tears, then continues, *"another rat, riding on a war wolf, grabbed Si-ak and ran. The rest of the rats also retreated; the battle was over."*

Though Toby is grieving, he is eager to hear about their adventure and tell them more about his.

Corvin is now in charge of the guards stationed here in Oak Den. Currently, there are quite a few, most helping with repairs. He comes to the party, professing gratitude for their service to the kingdom. He gives them a letter from the King. It reads:

Silenus Shepherds,

The Alwaysgreen Forest is forever in your debt. I hope all of your number have returned, but for those who you left behind, know that their sacrifice is not unfelt.

Many things have changed in the last few days. It has become clear to me that your efforts were integral to saving the kingdom. I don't know how or why many of the forces we faced retreated, but I am sure you were at the heart of it. I want to assure you that Dobberton and the Alwaysgreen Forest have been forever changed. Never again will we take threats of the arcane lightly or ignore the supernatural as superstition.

As of the writing of this letter, I am officially reinstating the Silenus Shepherds. By Royal Decree, I appoint you to this honorable position. You are charged with the overall health and well-being of the Alwaysgreen Forest. You are entrusted with how the kingdom and the forest can most effectively coexist. You will serve as my eyes and ears in matters that extend beyond the Dobberton guard, reporting directly to me or any advisors I appoint.

Again, without your service, I fear Dobberton would have fallen into the hands of the Rat Claw Clan. Thank you. I pray to the Star Father that you receive this letter favorably and will come into my service as Silenus Shepherds.

Your King, Quilan

THE DOBBERS WILL RETURN.



ROT POISONING

Once infected, immediately gain one level of exhaustion. If at any time a character that has already been infected would contract it again, they gain 1 additional level of exhaustion. Furthermore, when a character is instructed to gain “1 level of rot poisoning”, they either contract rot poisoning with 1 level of exhaustion or gain 1 additional level of exhaustion. If at any time a character reaches 6 levels of exhaustion, they immediately die.

After a long rest, the creature may make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. If they succeed, remove one level of exhaustion. If the creature, as a result, reaches an exhaustion level of 0, they are healed and fully recovered from rot poisoning.

If they fail the saving throw, the creature gains 1 level of exhaustion. As symptoms worsen, the creature has trouble breathing, and painful black boils form on its skin. As it progresses, the boils erupt, and blackened, vine-like tendrils emerge, wrapping around the creature's limbs.

A creature that has died as a result of rot poisoning, after an hour of its corpse resting in shadow, rises as a shambling **plague fungus**. If the body is exposed to sunlight or radiant light, it will not rise.

Spells that cure disease, such as **Lesser Restoration**, reduce the severity of the disease, removing one level of exhaustion. The spell, **Greater Restoration**, fully cures a creature of rot poisoning. If the creature removes all levels of exhaustion by magical means or naturally (a long rest and successful saving throw), they are cured of the disease.

The sword sealed the barrier

Skaggerak loved keys.
Different keys for everything.

AN INVISIBLE LOCK
RIGHT OUT
OVER THE EDGE
APPARENTLY MERETH IS
RELATED TO THE KING.

A thing is not good just because it lasts.
REMAINS FROM
SOME KIND OF FEAST?
ORLUN'S LAST

Lies love darkness
Truth in light is freedom.

WE CHOSE TO REST IN THE LIBRARY
SEEMED SECURE & WE HAD JUST DEFEATED
A WANT-TO-BE GOD!

THE HUGE MAP IS
SUPPOSEDLY OF THE
10 KINGDOMS OF
THE DARK SEA.

IF ORLUN WAS KILLED
BY HIS FATHER, WHO FOUNDED
DOSSERTON?



WE THOUGHT THIS WAS ORLUN'S
FIRST CASTLE

FORGE HEATED
LIQUID? BY

SILENCED ^{BY} MERETH SPOKE AND THE STATUE
NOT SEVEN FEET
CAUGHT FIRE

NEAR TRICK I'M
GOING TO HAVE TO WARN
THAT

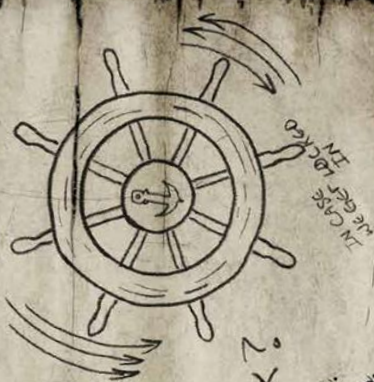
TOO BAD THE BOOKS ARE ALL
DUST. WOULD'VE LIKED TO READ THOSE.

SHE BROKE AARIS'S SWORD IN
TWO USING THE FORGE. KEPT
THE HILT & LEFT THE BLADE WITH
HER. USE DESMOY HILT.

AARIS, THE
LAST SHEPHERD WAS
A WOODSMAN.

SKAGGERAK?

The prosperous Kingdom no one regrets.
From the sea, black water, bitter depths.
A citadel to rule, the throne upon ten steps
A voice of blood can enter, the lord's name accepts.
ORLUN?



The difference
between success & failure
may be one more step.

The southern edge of the forge path doesn't trigger the trap.
The mausoleum must be haunted. Setarus handled it.

RIGHT OFF
THE EDGE

FEATURED NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

CALYNN

Calynn was the firstborn of King Quillon. Her younger brother, Quilan, is the current King of Dobberton. She had been prepared for the day her brother would take the throne from an early age. Unfortunately, her parents didn't protect her from envy growing in her heart: unintentionally, they fostered it. Her heart became hard, calcified by jealousy and pride.

*After all, it was wrong, wasn't it - that **he** would be king? She was the firstborn!*

Her resentment grew in complete silence. She was the perfect daughter, obedient and polite. She was the perfect sister, encouraging and loyal. She was the perfect student, eager for knowledge and always managed to exceed the expectations of her tutors.

She began her studies at the Dobberton School of Magic, where she met Maegera, a student a few years her senior. They learned together and created together. Their first success was Ember, a magical dagger. They imbued it with a few fire-related abilities. As young mages and tinkerers, this was quite an accomplishment, but for Calynn, it wasn't enough. Her brother had been chosen over her to become the heir to the throne. The drive to prove her worth, the drive that had been planted in her by her father, had turned into an obsession.

Though her talent was undeniable, she was impatient and developed a reputation for being reckless. She had heard about experimental magics and wanted to learn more. One of her professors had been studying the origins of magic. It was rumored that he had interesting findings regarding where the Rot Weaver got his power. She convinced Maegera to borrow the professor's notes "*purely for academic purposes.*"

Othkara's notes on the subject were intended to be theoretical. The journal proposed that at the moment of death, the soul has both the characteristics of being fully alive and dead. It is from this liminal state that Rohr-tan draws his power. That's why the professor took to calling him the In-betweener. The text went on to

suggest that an entire discipline of magic could be developed from this liminal power.

She found ways to put them into practice. She took to the art of rot magic quickly. Othkara was amazed, and the three of them, Calynn, Maegera, and Othkara, worked tirelessly to unlock more. While initially, they set out to explore any and all origins of magic, she became obsessed with rot and death. Othkara tried to steer her away, but she would not be deterred. She found it easy to tap into the power released from a recently diseased creature. The school's Adepti falsely assumed this was necromancy, which was forbidden. She was expelled. Again, she felt those around her wanted to push down her genius.

She kept Othkara's journal and poured herself fully into rot magic. One of her first successes, Ember, came to mind. Calynn attempted to imbue the *Life From Death* ability onto the dagger. It didn't work. *Life From Death* transfers energy from the recently dead to the living, but the dagger is an inanimate object. It could not receive the energy. She then attempted to use it as a bridge between the dead and a living target, but nothing she tried worked.

Then, in a moment of inspiration, perhaps fueled by her growing disdain for the school, her brother, and her father, she stole a Heritage Stone from the heritage vault. She affixed it to the dagger, binding a bit of living essence to it.

It worked. Calynn could transfer the final vestiges of life from a creature into the dagger and then into another target, seemingly without limits. She just had to stab the creature with the dagger. It became the bridge she hoped it would be. Yet, it was even more than that; it was a three-way bridge, not only transferring the energy of the creature to another target, but also to her. That's when she discovered something she didn't expect - if a creature she stabbed survived, the bond formed with that creature. She could control them, exerting her will over theirs. And no will, except perhaps her father's, could exceed hers.

This was it. This was how she would show all of Dobberton her greatness.

CALYNN, THE WOOD SPRITE

Tiny wood sprite, decay (cursed dobber)

Armor Class 13 (16 with bark armor)

Hit Points 28 (11d6 - 11)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Medicine +6, Perception +6, Religion +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common Dobber, Terrin Dobber, Sylvan Dobber, Ratkin, Goblin

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

► *The Wood Sprite's abilities are diminished due to the Rot Weaver's curse.*

Putrefying Gas. The Wood Sprite's body produces rot spores. She has 3 decay charges to use each day. She can use a charge to emit a cloud of necrotic gas in a 15-foot radius. Any creature within that radius, unless it is undead, must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 4d12 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as

much damage on a successful one. Any creatures killed by this damage are immediately covered in fungus and decay. They rise up as a Rot Shamble at the start of the next turn. These Rot Shambles pursue the closest creature to it other than the Wood Sprite.

Spellcasting. The Wood Sprite is an 11th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). The Wood Sprite has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *chill touch*, *light*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *bark armor**, *detect magic*, *shadow call**, *splinter shield**

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane senses**, *smithing*, *spider climb*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *lightning bolt*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *stangling thorns**

5th level (2 slots): *animate object*, *imbue seed**

6th level (1 slot): *circle of death*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Wood Sprite makes two melee attacks.

Thorned claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

She decided she would use the dagger to take control of the most powerful creature she could think of, Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. Maybe it was because she had already been consumed by rot magic. Maybe the Dark One's whispers had poisoned her mind. It's hard to say exactly why she chose the Rot Weaver, but it's safe to assume it was pride that allowed her to believe her will was strong enough to control a legendary forest demon such as Rohr-tan.

It took some resourcefulness, but Calynn found the Rot Weaver's tomb. She stabbed his sarcophagus and was seared by his power. Her will was no match for his. And, though the dagger was uniquely powerful, it only cracked the seal that kept Rohr-tan imprisoned. The crack was just enough for a connection to form through the dagger. She was no longer in control. He was.

He cursed her, turning her into the creature known as the Wood Sprite. A monster bound

to the trees where only their life can sustain her. Her life is just an echo of what it once had been, a horror of slowly decaying wood.

Rohr-tan's will calls to her, *"Free me! Unlock the darkness. Prepare the way. Restore my throne. Do this, and I will lift the curse placed upon you."*

THE WOOD SPRITE

As the Wood Sprite, Calynn seeks revenge. She plans to weaken the infrastructure of the kingdom and prepare the forest for the return of Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. She has persuaded the Rat Claw Clan to help her, carrying out certain tasks

OTHKARA

Othkara is one of the oldest awakened woodkin in the Alwaysgreen Forest. He is very well known, though his reputation is muddy. Some see him as one of the heroes who helped capture Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, two decades ago, while others fear Othkara was an ally of the Dark One. While he was a teacher at the Dobberton School of Magic, he mentored Calynn before she was cursed and became the Wood Sprite.

Many woodkin are slow to adjust to a life that is so different from the simple ways of survival and instinct. But not Othkara. When the magic of the Blue River gave him increased understanding, he immediately wanted more. He found someone to teach him magic and quickly surpassed her, taking readily to the arcane arts. He experimented and explored many disciplines. He became proficient in illusion and enchantment magic. He was a pioneer in contraptioneering. He also became obsessed with dobber legends, particularly those of the Green Man and the Rot Weaver. He was convinced that magic, at least in part, had its origin with these beings. Yet, after years, many of their mysteries remain beyond him, so he continues to search. However, in his search, he has unlocked a few secrets, one of particular note: *decay magic*.

While he studied, he worked to make a name for himself. Using illusion magic and leaning heavily on the novelty of being a groundhog, he became a well-known performer. This led to an opportunity to perform for the King. Quillon immediately recognized the creature's

that she cannot while still bound by the curse, promising them power once Dobberton falls. They have brought to her five iron ingots, shaped roughly like large seeds. She's coated these seeds with an arcane poison that, when heated, spreads rot through the ground and into nearby plants and waterways. Rot Poisoning twists everything it touches, giving her influence and power in the area. It also pushes back the influence of the Green Man and his spirits of life.

She believes that once all five seeds are placed, the stage will be set for the return of Rohr-tan the Rot Weaver. Then, she can move on to stage two of her plan.

talent and offered him a job as an instructor at the Dobberton School of Magic. It didn't take long before he was promoted to the rank of Adepti, then a few years later, he was added to the King's Council.

While on the council, he was integral in imprisoning Rohr-tan when the Dark One tried to take over the land two decades ago. He witnessed two of his colleagues die in the conflict, Mereth and Setarus. Even though ultimately they were successful, the King disbanded the council, fearing their dependence on magic had become too great. The King had Othkara wipe the memory of the other living member, Herb (Yep, that Herb). He removed all of Herb's memories related to his time as a member of the council.

Still, he maintained his position in the Dobberton School of Magic. He would make the best of it, but he was distracted and deeply affected by his encounter with Rohr-tan. His mind kept wandering to decay magic. He couldn't stop himself from questioning if there was a way he could bring his friends back. He dug deeper into the dark magic until he feared he might lose himself to it. He closed his notebook, and it stayed that way until a pair of curious young students asked Othkara to share his findings *"purely for academic purposes."* Maybe he should've known better.

Maegera and Calynn used Othkara's notes to corrupt and twist magic. They performed dangerous experiments and ignored warnings from both their teachers and peers. Calynn became obsessed. She was expelled, and Maegera

went with her. Only a few short weeks later, her younger brother was made king. It was too much. *She was the eldest. She was smarter and stronger. She had mastered magic that no one else dared!* The seed of pride had taken root in her heart. She vowed revenge. She found a way to contact the Rot Weaver, reaching his power even while he was imprisoned. She returned to the school, releasing a tainted spore cloud. It spread from

room to room, consuming an entire wing of the school before it could be contained. In the conflict, Maegera and Calynn disappeared. It was believed they were killed.

Quilan's first major act as King was to shut down the Dobberton School of Magic.

Othkara returned to his home near the Burrow, carrying an immense weight of guilt, and went into hiding.

OTHKARA

Tiny groundhog woodkin

Armor Class 13 (16 with mage armor)

Hit Points 53 (15d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Medicine +6, Perception +6, Religion +8

Damage Resistances necrotic, poison

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common Dobber, Terrin Dobber, Sylvan Dobber, Ratkin, Goblin

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Keen Sight. Othkara has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Life Foraging. Once per day, Othkara can siphon the last vestiges of energy from a recently diseased corpse, regaining 5d6+6 hit points.

Animate Rot. Othkara may cast animate dead on a pile of rotting leaves or other plant debris to create a rot shamble.

Putrefying Gas. Othkara's body produces rot spores. He has 3 decay charges to use each day. He can use a charge to emit a cloud of necrotic gas in a 15-foot radius. Any creature within that radius, unless it is undead, must make a

Constitution saving throw, taking 4d12 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Any creatures killed by this damage are immediately covered in fungus and decay. They rise up as a Rot Shamble at the start of the next turn. These Rot Shambles pursue the closest creature to it other than Othkara.

Spellcasting. Othkara is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Othkara has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane senses*, *misty step*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *fireball*

4th level (3 slots): *strangling thorns**, *wood bees**

5th level (2 slots): *imbue seed**, *modify memory*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate*

7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*

8th level (1 slot): *clone*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Othkara makes two melee attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage at range.

MAEGERA

Maegera studied magic under the same master as Calynn, Othkara. Not long after they met, he fell for her. He told himself it would never work, after all, she was the princess of the kingdom, but her talent and ambition were intoxicating - intoxicating and dangerous.

Much of Maegera's story is intertwined with Calynn and Othkara. You should read those characters' stories for a more complete picture.

Together, Maegera and Calynn created Ember. They planned to use it to summon Rohr-tan, the

Rot Weaver, believing they could harness his power for their own. They underestimated Rohr-tan's strength. He would not be controlled. The Rot Weaver cursed Calynn, trapping her in a body of wood, destined to eventual rot and decay.

Maegera fled to the Verdant Mountains to hide, taking Ember with him. There he mourned Calynn and began planning his revenge. He posed as a ratkin death mage to compel a small clan ratkin to aid him. They are his servants and body guards. He now uses Ember to forge constructs - but he cannot access the power of the Heritage Stone in the hilt, unlocking its true power.

MAEGERA

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 14 (exo suit)

Hit Points 48 (7d6 + 5d8 - 12)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7

Skills Intimidation +10, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages - Common Dobber, Ratkin, Goblin

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. Maegera is a 7th-level spell caster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can cast the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *message*, *mending*, *thaumaturgy*

1st Level (4 slots): *bark armor**, *splinter shield**, *burning hands*, *mage armor*

2nd Level (3 slots): *misty step*, *heartstop**, *splinter barrage**

3rd Level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *ooze form**

4th Level (3 slots): *strangling vines**

Contraptionneering. Maegera is a 5th-level tinkerer. His tinkering ability is Intelligence (contraptionneering DC 14, +6 to hit with contraption attacks). Maegera has the following contraptions built:

Helm of Intimidation. Maegera's helm is made from the bones of ratkin and contributes to his ability to recruit their service. With it, he gains expertise in the Intimidation skill and advantage against being intimidated.

Upgraded Exo Suit. Due to injuries sustained while performing an experiment with Calynn, Maegera requires the exo suit to walk.

Upgraded Insect Gizmo. Clockwork spiders guard the passages to Maegera's forge room.

Upgraded Combat Gizmo. The castle breaker is near completion. Once it is, Maegera will finally have his revenge!

► *Tinkering Institue of Inspiration: Automationier*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Maegera can make two melee attacks.

Maegera's Staff (+2 Mace). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. * See the Items Appendix for a full list of abilities.

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) necrotic damage.

♦ *Maegera casts on himself at level 3 before combat. * Found in the Spell Appendix.*

CHARACTERS OF OAK DEN

HERB

Herbert was once one of the most respected and innovative mages in Dobberton. Now, he is not much more than a shadow of his former self. He's still bright and passionate but also haunted by the memory of a life he can't quite fathom. Scenes come to him in dreams, but not being able to reconcile these memories to his life as he knows it makes these dreams nightmares.

Herb served the king on the Council of Mages and is one of two surviving members, the other two perishing in a battle with Rohr-tan decades ago. He and Othkara returned home victorious; the Rot Weaver locked away in a crypt they hoped would never be found. Then the king did something no one expected - instead of appointing two new members to the council, he dismissed both Herb

and Othkara. No satisfactory explanation was ever given. Then, he directed Othkara to erase all of Herb's memories related to his time as a member of the council.

To Oak Den, he's an eccentric old dobber who might be crazy. No one knows how old he is except Beatrice. He's kind and sincere. He's not taken seriously by the townsfolk, even laughed at from behind corners. If Beatrice catches anyone making fun of him, she'll give them an earful. She'd do more, but Othkara strictly forbade her from doing anything that might lead to his true past.

BEATRICE

Beatrice has a true servant's heart and the strong will of a leader. She gracefully walks the line between the two. She's run the Acorn Inn for nearly three decades like her parents did before

BEATRICE

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 12 (leatherleaf apron)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +7

Skills Medicine +6, Persuasion +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common Dobber, Sylvan Dobber, Goblin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. Beatrice is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *mass healing word, spirit guardians*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Magic Frying Pan. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage. Damage is magical.

Magic Frying Pan has 3 charges. As a bonus action, a charge can be expended to produce bright light in a 45-foot cone and dim light for an additional 30 feet. It lasts for 10 minutes.

Preserve Life (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Beatrice targets up to six creatures she can see within 30 feet. She heals these creatures, dividing up 30 hit points between them.

her. Her husband passed while she still thought of herself as young, and they had no children; only *the Star Father knows why*. She never remarried, committing fully to the Acorn Inn and her service to the people of Oak Den.

Some think she and Herb have developed a relationship, but that couldn't be further from the truth. She doesn't bother correcting them. People will gossip and talk no matter what she says. Othkara brought Herb to Oak Den to hide him and left him in Beatrice's care, knowing the old mage would be vulnerable. She only knows what Othkara told her, but it was enough to understand how dangerous it might be should someone learn what Herb once knew: things like the location of

Rohr-tan's prison and how to open it. That doesn't stop her heart from breaking over his state, a genius reduced to someone who seems simple. She will keep her promise, protecting the secret of *"that nasty groundhog who took his memories. Protecting the forest, bah! It was just mean; that's what it was!"*

TOBY

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 13 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+2)

Skills Athletics +3, Insight +4, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common Dobber, learning Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage or 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Unarmed strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage. Toby can grapple as a bonus action when he successfully hits a creature with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon.

GAVIN

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Investigation +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each turns, Gavin can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Gavin deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Gavin that isn't incapacitated and Gavin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gavin makes two melee attacks.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

SHAORI

Tiny dobber

Armor Class: 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points: 18

Speed: 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills: Arcana +6, History +4, Insight +5

Senses: passive Perception 11

Languages: Common Dobber, Goblin, Ratkin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Lucky. When Shaori rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Spellcasting. Shaori is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Shaori has 2 sorcery points and the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *suggestion*

Meta Magic (Recharge 3-6). Shaori can use this ability to modify a spell in one of the following ways:

Empowered Spell. Shaori may re-roll up to 3 of a spell's damage dice.

Quicken Spell. Shaori may use a bonus action to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

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



SAGGARD

Saggard is now captain of the small barrack in Oak Den. He's been in Oak Den a few years, but he doesn't hesitate to make it known that he preferred when he was assigned to the West Watch. He'd much rather be there than here, babysitting the people of Oak Den.

Rumors suggest that the Rat Claw Clan has been more active near the border of late. If anyone claims to have seen a ratkin or even mentions the clan, Saggard becomes very uncomfortable and irritated. He changes the subject as quickly as possible.

SAGGARD

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 60 (8d10+16)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4 , Dex +5 ,

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common Dobber, Ratkin

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Saggard makes three melee attacks: two with his scimitar and one with his dagger. Or Saggard makes two ranged attacks with his daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Saggard adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Saggard must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

CHARACTERS OF KAIRIA

DERLON

Tiny sylvan dobber

Armor Class 15 (scalebark)

Hit Points 63 (14d6 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +9

Damage Resistances poison

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Sylvan Dobber, Common Dobber, Goblin, Ratkin

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Assassinate. During his first turn, Derlon has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit Derlon scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Evasion. If Derlon is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Derlon instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Derlon deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Derlon that isn't incapacitated and Derlon doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Vine Attack. Activated as a bonus action that lasts for 1 minute. The next time Derlon hits a creature with a weapon attack, a writhing mass of thorny vines appears at the point of impact, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the vines for up to 1

minute. A Large or larger creature has advantage on this saving throw. If the target succeeds on the save, the vines shrivel away.

The target takes 1d6 piercing damage at the start of each of its turns while restrained.

Vine Reach. As a bonus action, Derlon can extend vines from his hands and grasp a target that is within 25 feet. If the target is unwilling, make a ranged attack roll against its AC. If hit, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained for up to 1 minute. A Large or larger creature has advantage on this saving throw. If the target succeeds on the save, the vines shrivel away.

Derlon can use vine reach to pull himself to a stationary object or pull a target of Medium size or smaller to him.

Unseen Vine Strike. As an action, you can spend one spell slot to make a ranged spell attack against a target within 60 feet that you can see, causing vines with razor-sharp tips to burst from the ground or other nearby surfaces. When hit, the target takes 3d8 + your spellcasting modifier piercing damage. If you have advantage on this attack or if another enemy of the target is within 5 feet of it, that enemy isn't incapacitated, and you don't have disadvantage on the attack roll, you may apply sneak attack to this ability.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The assassin makes two scimitar attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack* : +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. *See Vine Attack above for additional effects.*

Poisoned Darts (6 equipped). *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

IVY

Tiny sylvan dobber

Armor Class 15 (scalebark)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +7

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Sylvan Dobber, Common Dobber

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Colossus Slayer (1/Turn). When Ivy hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 4 (1d8) damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Spellcasting. Ivy is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 12). She can cast the following ranger spells:

At Will: *antlers**

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *hunter's mark*

2nd level (2 slots): *lizard guide**, *spike growth*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ivy makes two attacks with her shortsword or two attacks with her longbow.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

EVELINA

Tiny sylvan dobber

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +6

Skills Insight +6, Nature +5, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Sylvan Dobber, Common Dobber, Druidic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. Evelina is a 8th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks).

At Will: *druidcraft*, *guidance*, *poison spray*, *resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *entangle*, *frog cloud**

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *gust of wind*, *locate animals or plant*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals*, *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*

4th level (2 slots): *dominate beast*, *giant insect*, *stoneskin*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) bludgeoning damage.

SYLVAN KEEPER

Tiny sylvan dobber

Armor Class 13 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed: 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Languages Sylvan Dobber, Common Dobber

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

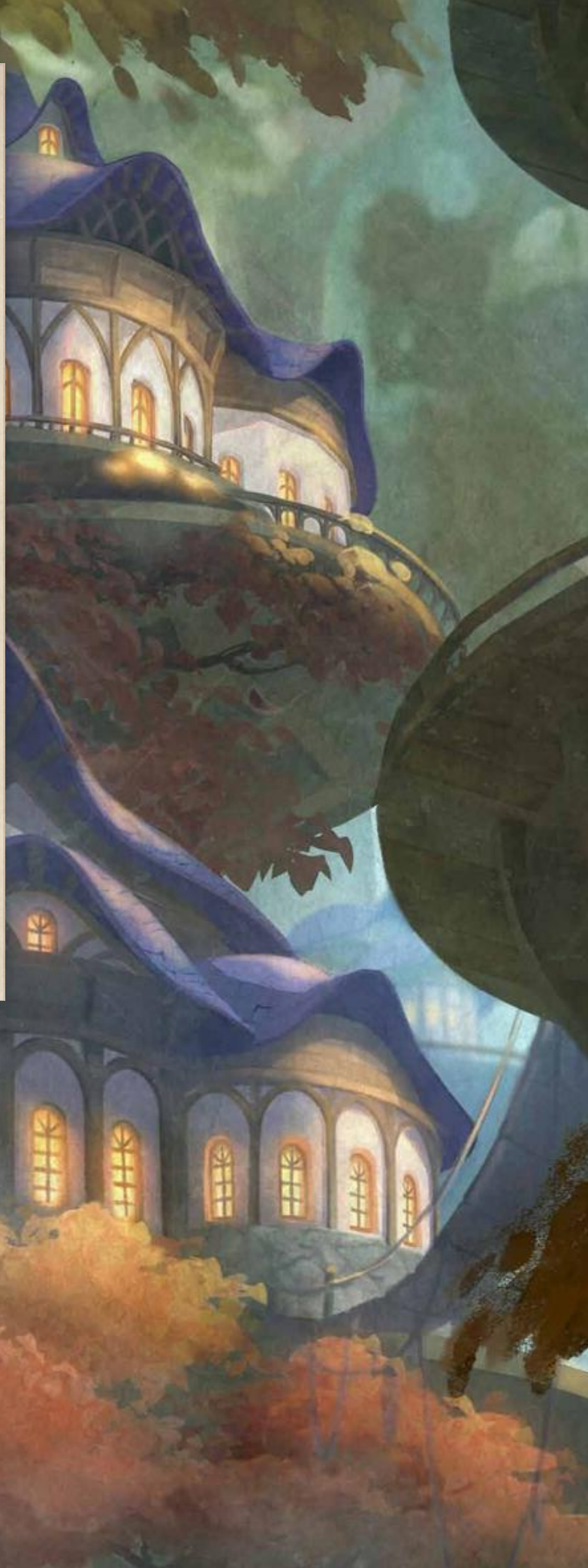
Keen Hearing and Sight. The keeper has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The keeper makes two melee attacks, or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. 1d20+4 *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. 1d20+4 *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



CHARACTERS NEAR THE BURROW

ARDALION

Tiny otter woodkin

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 54 (12d6 + 12)

Speed 25 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +9, History +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Hold Breath. Ardalion can hold his breath for up to 20 minutes at a time.

Magic Resistance. Ardalion has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Natural Swimmer. Ardalion takes to the water with ease and comfort, giving him advantage on Athletic and Acrobatic checks while in the water.

Spellcasting. Ardalion is a 12th-level spellcaster.

His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Ardalion can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *false life*, *mage armor* ♦, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *arcanist's magic aura*, *misty step*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*

4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *wood bees**, *greater invisibility*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, *passwall*

♦ Ardalion casts *mage armor* on himself before combat. * Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

ROSE, THE AWAKENED VIPER

Rose, a one-time bounty hunter, is now Othkara's bodyguard.

Rose has only been awakened for a few years. Before then, she and her family did as most snakes do: hunt. When she first awoke, it seemed her instincts were out of control. She could think, and plan, and scheme. Hunting became too easy. She started hunting more challenging prey. Her sons would hunt with her, and though they were not awakened, they learned to follow her instructions.

Soon, hunting was more about the thrill than

about providing for her family.

With pride beginning to rot her judgment, she began to hunt for hire. One of her first targets was a groundhog. She had heard he was awakened, but that didn't matter to her. She only cared about the thrill of the hunt!

Othkara's arcane abilities made short work of Rose and her sons. A hunter knows what death smells like, and she could smell it on the air. It would be her own death this time. But, to her surprise, instead of killing her and her sons, the groundhog mage made her an offer. "I need a

bodyguard," he said. "I have made many enemies over the years."

Now, in the groundhog's debt, she made a nest for her family near Wallace's roots. There they protect the groundhog from those who hunt him and any who accidentally stumble upon his home. Over these past many months, they have become close friends. They talk often and even have helped each other heal the wounds of their past sins.

ROSE, THE AWAKENED VIPER

Large beast

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (3d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +3, Stealth +4

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. Rose has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing and sight.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned this way, the target is blind and takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

WALLACE, THE AWAKENED WALNUT TREE

Wallace likes the hill above Othkara's underground tunnels. The sunlight is just right. Also, Othkara is his friend. Trees don't have many friends.

It wasn't long after awakening that Wallace concluded that life in society could be difficult. He visited Dobberton and even spent time in the Burrow, but he did not fit in. Not only was he too big, but he also did not understand dobbers or his fellow woodkin. People have such strange customs and habits, and their emotions confuse him. No, society was not for him. He would do as trees do and nothing more. Deep into the earth, he grew his roots and found even as an awakened, life could be good.

One day, while enjoying the warmth of the summer sun on his leaves, he heard a small voice. It was a groundhog. He could swear the little creature was talking to him, but how did he know Wallace could hear? He had not revealed himself. Animals and dobbers frequently pass by and never realize he's awakened.

It turns out that Othkara was speaking to himself and that he does so often. The groundhog had chosen Wallace's roots as a perfect location to dig out a new burrow. Day and night, Othkara would talk to himself, and Wallace knew no rest. The great walnut tree had had enough.

"Stop!" the tree cried. "Why must you chitter and chatter day and night?"

"Finally!" Othkara answered. "You thought to ignore me forever? I know my own kind. You could not hide your nature from me."

At first, this upset Wallace. He did not like being tricked. Why would someone do that? Tricking is a thing people do, not trees. He wanted Othkara to leave, but the whistle pig would not. Soon, Wallace forgot why he was ever mad at Othkara. He is a tree, after all. They became friends. Othkara continued to talk all the time, but now he was sharing. He talked about his experiences and discoveries. He even talked about his past, not only his many successes but also his mistakes.

CHARACTERS NEAR SOUTH WATCH

ETHERIN

Etherin is a cleric employed by the Commerce Commission. He's tall and heavyset, with matted black hair and hazel eyes.

If the party speaks with the cleric, he talks about how the animals that are normally peaceful have turned savage. He knows one man who was attacked by squirrels! He's worried about a mysterious illness that is spreading in the area.

BRIEN

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 11 (15 when wearing scalebark)

Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 4)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Brien makes two longsword attacks. If he has a shortsword drawn, he can also make a shortsword attack.

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

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

ETHERIN

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 11 (14 when wearing padded bark weave)

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +4

Skills Medicine +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Etherin is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (2 slots): *harvest overtakes the sower*, lesser restoration*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

MILO

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 11 (13 with splinter shield)

Hit Points 45 (4d6 + 7d8)

Speed: 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +6

Skills Insight +6, Stealth +4, Tinkering +7

Languages Common Dobber, Goblin

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Milo is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Milo has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *alarm, bark armor*, charm person, feather fall, identify, protection from evil and good, splinter shield*, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, blur, gobbledygook*, hold person, smithing*, scorching ray, suggestion*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

Contraptioneering. Milo is a 7th-level tinkerer. His tinkering ability is Intelligence (contraptioneering DC 15, +7 to hit with contraption attacks). Milo has the following contraptions built:

Investigation Monocle. The wearer gains expertise in the Investigation and Perception skills, doubling their proficiency bonus for each. Once per long rest, you can expend 1 spark and activate the monocle to gain Truesight.

Camouflaged Cloak. 1 use per day. Use a bonus action to activate, making the wearer appear invisible. Other items they are wearing or holding are also invisible as long as they remain on their person. The effect requires 1 spark and lasts for up to 1 hour.

Sling Sword. The sling sword is a modified short sword where the blade detaches, extending via an internal chain, providing a reach of 10 feet. The user can retract mechanism as a reaction.

Concussive Weapon. 2 uses per long rest. Built into a sling sword. When activated, the effect lasts for 1 minute. Add 1d8 force damage to the weapon's damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Flame Thrower. Milo has the ultimate destructive weapon, handheld and portable! Tubes connect to fuel canisters strapped to his body that then run down your arm to a nozzle and triggering mechanism. Expend 1 charge to attack.

► *Tinkering Institue of Inspiration: Solutionist.* See the *Contraption Appendix* for more.

Minor Imbue. At 2nd level, you've already started to experiment with weaving magic into your contraptions. Milo does this by casting a spell that uses a 3rd level spell slot or less (based on Milo's level). This new contraption has one charge that can be used to cast or activate the spell. This charge may be reloaded once per long rest.

Spark. At 3rd level, you gain spark. Tinkerers can infuse their creations with a bit of their own essence. This essence gives contraptions energy and a rudimentary kind of consciousness. This is called spark! As a 7th level tinkerer, Milo can maintain 2 spark.

Improvisation. At 6th level, your ability to craft new contraptions is improved by your ability to make a greater variety of materials work as the required components.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Milo makes two attacks with his sling sword.

Sling sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage. *When activating Concussive Weapon:* Add 1d8 force damage to the weapon's damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of your next turn. Lasts for 1 minute.

Flame Thrower. The shots fire in a 20-foot line. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that fail the saving throw catch on fire, taking an additional 1d8 damage each turn until they take an action to put the fire out.

THATUR

Tiny terrin dobber

Armor Class 10 (14 when wearing reinforced leatherleaf)

Hit Points 25 (3d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Religion +2, Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Terrin Dobber, Common Dobber

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Judgement of the Sky, Warhammer. *Melee*

Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 +2) bludgeoning damage

Judgment (3 charges/day). Expend 1 charge to add 13 (3d8) lightning damage to a successful attack. Target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 10 feet and knocked prone.

CHARACTERS OF DOBBERTON

DOBBERTON GUARD

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 13 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 24 (3d10 + 6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Insight +3, Perception +3, Persuasion +2

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The dobberton guard has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one other dobberton guard is within 5 feet of them and the dobberton guard isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dobberton guard makes two melee attacks.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

DOBBERTON ELITE GUARD

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 16 (ironwood mail, shield)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 20 ft.

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

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5, Cha +6

Skills Insight +4, Intimidation +6, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common Dobber

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The paladin has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Spellcasting. The Dobberton elite guard is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks).

The Dobberton elite guard has the following paladin spells prepared:

1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, detect evil and good, heroism, protection from evil and good*

2nd level (2 slots): *aid, arcane senses*, lesser restoration, protection from poison*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Dobberton elite guard makes two melee or two ranged attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Star Light Spear. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) radiant damage.

REACTIONS

Protection. When a creature the Dobberton elite guard can see attacks a target other than them that is within 5 feet of them, they impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

GEARLD, JUSTICAIR OF DOBBERTON

Tiny dobber

Armor Class 27 (holy scalebark)

Hit Points 190 (20d10 + 80)

Speed: 20 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +1, Wis +9, Cha +10

Condition Immunities disease, frightened, charmed

Languages Common Dobber, Sylvan Dobber, Terrin Dobber, Ratkin, Goblin

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Gearld is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Gearld has the following spells prepared:

At Will: 1st level (4 slots): *command*, *divine favor*, *thunderous smite*

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane senses**, *lesser restoration*, *smithing**

3rd level (3 slots): *blinding smite*, *create food and water*, *eagle's light**

4th level (3 slots): *aura of purity*, *moon smite**, *table of abundance**

5th level (2 slots): *circle of power*, *dispel evil and good*

* Found in the Spell Appendix.

Divine Smite. When Gearld hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell slot higher than first, to a maximum of 5d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or fiend to a maximum of 6d8.

Channel Divinity (1 use per day)

Overwhelming Light. As an action, Gearld can cast a 30-foot cone of radiant blue energy from his hands. Creatures struck by the cone must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for one turn.

Star Light Spear. As a bonus action, Gearld can channel energy into a spear made of pure light. This magical weapon lasts for one hour and is considered a Simple Melee Weapon. When wielding the Star Light Spear, it does 1d8 radiant damage, with +2 to attack and damage rolls. It can be thrown (range 20/60). When the Star Light Spear is thrown, it is summoned back to Gearld instantaneously.

Oath Features

Light of Truth. Gearld has advantage on Insight. Once succeeding on a Wisdom (Insight) check versus an individual, he knows if that person is lying or telling the truth innately for the next 24 hours.

Beacon of Trust. Gearld's commitment to peace allows him to easily speak with even the most hostile adversary. An individual he is speaking with must make a Wisdom saving throw. They do so with advantage if he or his allies are fighting them. If they fail the saving throw, the individual regards Gearld as a friend or respected acquaintance until he or his companions do anything harmful to the target. When the effect ends, the creature knows it was affected by the paladin.

Always Finish a Fight. Gearld has made a commitment to never starting a fight, yet with the guidance of the Blue Star, he will always finish one. He may choose to go last in initiative order. If Gearld goes last in initiative order, he gains +4 to his AC, damage dealt, and to hit with the Attack action. These benefits last for 10 minutes.

GEARLD, JUSTICAIR OF DOBBERTON CONTINUED

Shooting Star. Gearld can use a bonus action to teleport to any unoccupied space that he can see within 30 feet. If it is night and stars are visible, the range is increased to 60 feet.

Radiant Form. Gearld can cloak himself in the radiant light of the Star Father. Starlight cascades all around him, giving him the appearance of glowing blue crystal. Bright light radiates from him in a 30-foot radius, and dim light shines 30 feet beyond that.

He has resistance to all damage. Whenever a creature hits Gearld with an attack, it takes radiant damage equal to half the damage he takes from the attack, and when he takes the Attack action, he can make one additional attack as part of that action. Once he uses this ability, he cannot do so again until he completes a long rest.

► *Paladin Oath of the Blue Star.* See subclass in *Heroes of the Forest* for more.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gearld makes two melee or ranged weapon attacks.

Star Light Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) radiant damage.

Star Light Spear. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) radiant damage.

Long Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) radiant damage.

Cleansing Touch. Gearld can use his action to end one spell on himself or on one willing creature he touches. He can use this ability a number of times equal to his Charisma modifier (4). Gearld regains all expended charges after finishing a long rest.

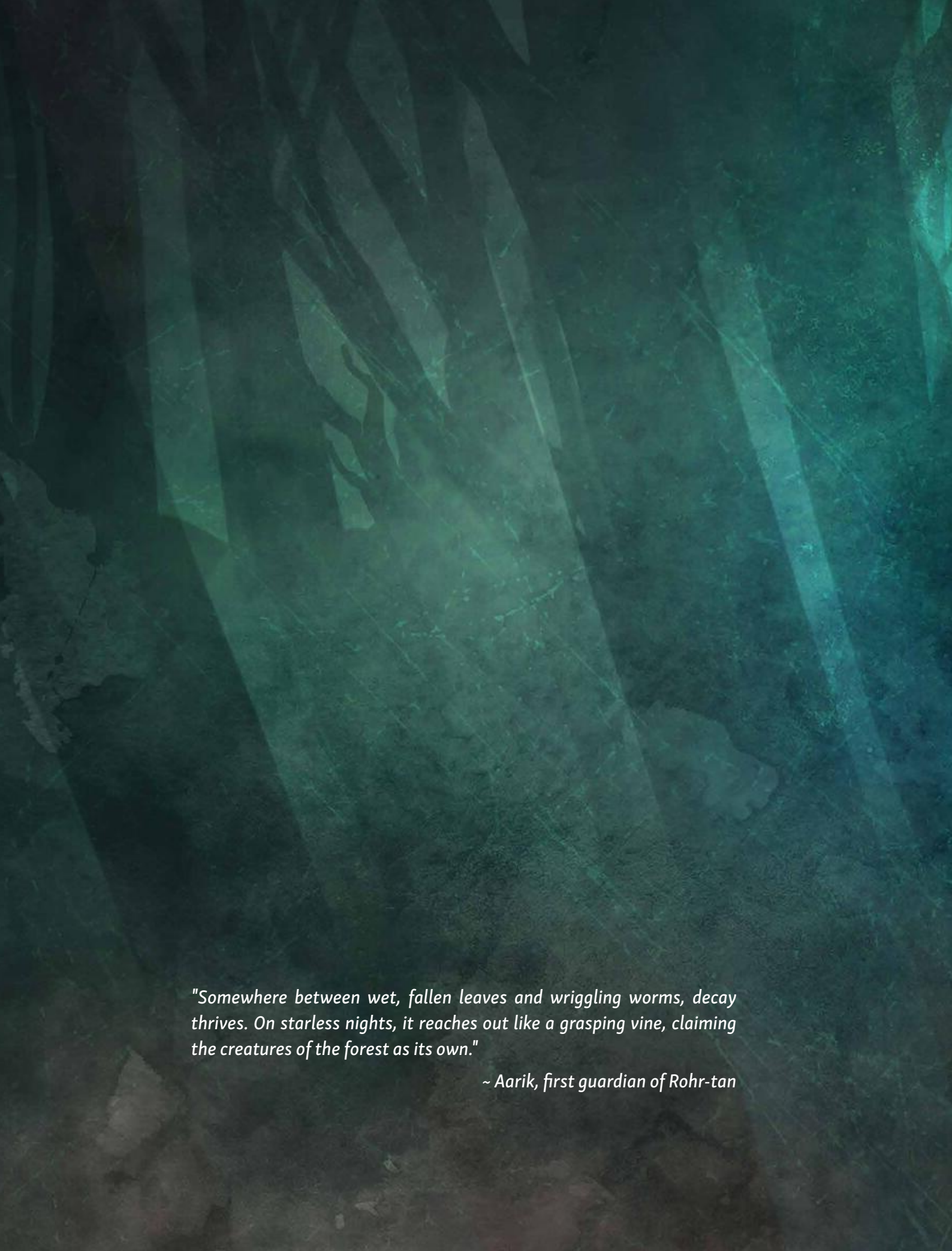
Divine Sense. As an action, Gearld can open his awareness to detect forces of good and evil. Until the end of his turn, he knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses but not its identity. Within the same radius, Gearld also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *Hallow* spell. He can use this feature a number of times equal to 1 + his Charisma modifier (4). When the paladin finishes a long rest, he regains all expended uses.

Lay on Hands. Gearld has a pool of healing power that replenishes when he takes a long rest. With that pool, he can restore a total number of hit points equal to his paladin level x 5 (100). As an action, he can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in their pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points from his pool of Healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. Gearld can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending Hit Points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on Undead and Constructs.

REACTIONS

Protection. When a creature Gearld can see attacks a target other than him that is within 5 feet of him, he can impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

Parry. Gearld adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Gearld must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

A dark, atmospheric forest scene with sunlight filtering through the trees. The image is dominated by deep greens and blacks, with several bright, diagonal beams of light cutting through the darkness, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The texture of the forest floor and the silhouettes of the trees are visible in the lower half of the image.

"Somewhere between wet, fallen leaves and wriggling worms, decay thrives. On starless nights, it reaches out like a grasping vine, claiming the creatures of the forest as its own."

~ Aarik, first guardian of Rohr-tan

APPENDIX

BESTIARY OF THE ALWAYSGREEN FOREST AND SURROUNDING AREAS

The Alwaysgreen Forest is full of life, creatures both big and small. Some live harmoniously with dobbers and other native species. Others, not so much. Some may have a natural instinct toward aggression as predators, or they may have been twisted by the dark magic of the rot.

Be cautious if you encounter any creatures, as they can be dangerous if provoked. You never know if an animal that is typically harmless is actually a terrible monster of decay. It's always best to observe from a distance and avoid any interactions.

DECAY CLASSIFICATION

Rohr-tan's minions are not limited by species. Any creature can be infected by the rot and become one of his servants. Many of these creatures have the simple purpose of "preparing the land." They continue to follow most of their natural tendencies, but in doing so, spread rot and decay throughout the forest. Others have a higher purpose, protecting and guiding those servants who seek to free the Rot Weaver from his prison and elevate him as the rightful lord of the forest.

A creature that is infected with rot poisoning travels a painful and tortuous path. Within a few hours, the infected's breathing becomes restricted, as if hidden vines are tightening around their lungs. Black, painful black boils form on their skin. The capillaries around and in their eyes darken until their eyes appear entirely black. The condition worsens each day until the boils erupt with blackened, vine-like tendrils emerging to wrap around the creature's limbs. The disease runs its course in no more than six days, resulting in the infected's death, but that's not the end of their path.

The next time the corpse lays for an hour in full darkness, it rises, a minion of the Lightless, the Rot Weaver, Rohr-tan the lord of decay. Many retain a shell of their living form, though it is twisted by deformations and writhing vines. For others, fungus so fully covers the creature that its previous form is no longer recognizable.

ALIGNMENT AND BEHAVIOR

I have chosen not to include alignment as part of any creature stat block in this book. For me, a creature's behavior is determined by their story and the circumstances of the encounter they are a part of. In the Alwaysgreen Forest, there are creatures and characters that span the gamut from truly terrible to entirely honorable. In all of those cases, I don't find the inclusion of alignment as part of the stat block to be necessary. It's up to you, the GM, to decide, based on the context of the story you and your players are telling, how a creature behaves.

The decay has many unpredictable and deadly powers, though many have the ability to infect others with rot poisoning. A creature infected with Rohr-tan's rot will have "decay" appear just after that creature's species, below its name.

DECAY SPEECH

There are many languages in and around the Alwaysgreen Forest that may have an influence over the creatures in the area. The language of decay is entirely unique to the creatures that have been corrupted by the Rohr-tan's rot. Decay allows these creatures to communicate through a telepathic bond. They don't use structure or words as most understand language, but their communication is quite effective. They can convey motives, desires, intent, and commands. It is believed that the longer a creature is infected with the rot, the further they can communicate with decay, though that's just a theory. No one dares get close enough to actually study the creatures, or if they have, they have probably been turned into one of the Rot Weaver's minions.



However, sentient creatures who know and understand spoken language can use decay speech to converse telepathically. They need only be able to see whom they wish to telepathically speak with. They do not need to speak the same language as all parties speaking this way automatically understand each other. A creature can attempt to block decay speech by succeeding on opposing Wisdom checks, where the creature speaking has advantage.

THE GLEAM OF COPPER

Wood is by far the most preferred material for building and crafting in the Alwaysgreen Forest. While the goblins and ratkin don't have any aversion to iron and steel, dobbers avoid metal

to an almost religious degree. That is why we are fortunate to even have discovered that minions of decay seem to be vulnerable to copper. It appears to disrupt their life force. Most minions of Rohrtan are in a liminal state between dead and alive. Some might call them undead, while unalive might be more accurate. The energy created by decaying matter is what gives them their unlife, and copper disrupts that energy. It seems to be a simple chemical reaction. The flesh of a decay creature stuck by copper begins to liquefy, bubbling and smoking while the copper that touched it does the same. Liquids from a decay creature on the metal cause it to corrode and eventually render it useless. Any creature with the subspecies "decay" is vulnerable to copper.

FANTASTIC CREATURES

BLACK PUDDING

Large ooze

Armor Class 7

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, cold, lightning, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Amorphous. The pudding can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Corrosive Form. A creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits the pudding corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1

penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits the pudding is destroyed after dealing damage.

The pudding can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

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

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

REACTIONS

Split. When a pudding that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new puddings if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new pudding has hit points equal to half the original pudding's, rounded down. New puddings are one size smaller than the original pudding.



FIRE SNAKE

Small beast

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	13 (+1)	11 (0)

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Heated Body. Any creature that touches the fire snake or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 2 (1d4) fire damage.

Magic Resistance. The fire snake has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

FIRE LIZARD, GREAT

Large beast

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	11 (0)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6

Skills Perception +3

Damage Immunities Fire

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Fire Lizard, can understand Common but cannot speak it

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Searing Scales. A creature that touches the fire lizard or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Illumination. The fire lizard's scales glow from its heat, shedding bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fire lizard makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its claws.

Claw. *Melee Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Fire Tail Sweep. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one or two targets. *Hit* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Sweeping attack: *If the first target is hit by the fire tail sweep and a second enemy creature is within 5 feet, the second creature is automatically hit as well.*

REACTIONS

Flame Cloud (recharge 5-6). If the great fire lizard has 2 or more enemies within 5 feet of it and is hit by a melee attack, it can use its reaction to emit super-heated embers and smoke from the hollow horns on its back. They engulf the fire lizard in a cloud of fire. Any creature within 5 feet of the fire lizard must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The embers die out at the end of the round.



FIRE LIZARD, HATCHLING

Medium beast

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	6 (-6)	10 (0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3

Skills Perception +2

Damage Immunities Fire

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Fire Lizard

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Searing Scales. A creature that touches the fire lizard or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Illumination. The fire lizard's scales glow from its heat, shedding dim light in a 5-foot radius.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Flame Cloud (1/day). If the hatchling fire lizard has 2 or more enemies within 5 feet of it and is hit by a melee attack, it can use its reaction to emit super-heated embers and smoke from the hollow horns on its back. They engulf the fire lizard in a cloud of fire. Any creature within 5 feet of the fire lizard must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The embers die out at the end of the round.



GIANT OBSIDIAN CENTIPEDE

Large aberration

Armor Class 19 (natural)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7

Skills Perception +6

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages –

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Obsidian Spikes. A creature that touches the giant obsidian centipede or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

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

Magic Resistance. The giant obsidian centipede has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant obsidian centipede makes two attacks, one with its bite and one claw attack or two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit 16 (3d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned, the target has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

GIANT STAG BEETLE

Medium insect

Armor Class 18 (natural)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The giant stag beetle makes two attacks with its mandibles.

Mandibles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the giant stag beetle can't make mandible attacks against another target.

Squeeze (Recharge 5-6). A creature grappled by the giant stag beetle must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 13 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage and is incapacitated until the end of its next turn. On a success, the creature takes half the damage and isn't incapacitated.



GLIDING LIZARD

Tiny beast

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 9 (6d4-6)

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Evasion. If the gliding lizard is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage on a success, and only half damage if it fails.

Flyby. The gliding lizard doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing.

HORGORATH

Gargantuan monstrosity

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 165 (10d20 + 60)

Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	7 (-2)	22 (+6)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +10

Senses blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 90 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages –

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Tunneler. The horgorath can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or

be swallowed by the horgorath. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, and it takes 14 (4d6) acid damage at the start of each of the worm's turns. It also has total cover against attacks and other effects occurring outside the horgorath. The swallowed creature can attack the horgorath from the inside.

If the horgorath takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the worm must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the horgorath's mouth. If the horgorath dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse's mouth by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

LAIR ACTIONS

Thunderous Roar. The horgorath lets loose a roar that violently shakes the ground and tunnels around it for up to 200 feet. This happens first in initiative order on the first round it enters combat and again on every following fourth round. Each creature in range must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 1d8 thunder damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature takes no damage and isn't knocked prone.

HORGORATH SLUG

Medium monstrosity

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 25 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +3

Condition Immunities prone

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 45 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Acid Spit. The acid of the horgorath slug can corrode 1 foot of organic matter in 1 minute.

Tunneler. The horgorath slug can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed. Earth and other

material collapse behind it, leaving an unpassable tunnel in its wake.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The horgorath slug makes one *grasp* attack and one *bite* attack. It can only make a bite attack on a creature it has restrained.

Grasp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become grappled and restrained. As an action, the restrained creature can attempt the saving throw again on their turn to free themselves. The horgorath slug has advantage on bite attacks versus a target restrained in this way.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage.

Acid Spit (Recharge 6). The giant slug spits acid in a 30-foot line. Each creature in that line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

NATHAIR

Small elemental

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	10 (0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Damage Immunities fire, cold

Damage Vulnerabilities lightning

Senses tremorsense 30 ft. (underwater only), passive Perception 13

Languages Nathair

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The nathair can breathe air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. The nathair's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *friends, control water, frost ball**

Water Form. The nathair can occupy another creature's space. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

ACTIONS

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 1d6 cold damage.



ROCK MOLE, ADULT

Large animal

Armor Class 17 (natural)

If the Rock Mole is on its back with its underside exposed, use an Armor Class of 11.

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft., burrow 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +4

Skills Perception +3

Condition Vulnerabilities blinded by intense light

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Rock Mole

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The adult rock mole has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Defensive Ball. The adult rock mole can roll its body into a ball, making it almost impossible for an attack to penetrate its thick scales, increasing

its AC to 21. While in a defensive ball, the adult rock mole cannot attack. Its movement is unaffected. Uncurling from the ball can be done as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The adult rock mole can make two melee attacks; however will only make one attack per round until its HP is reduced to 50 percent or lower.

Rending Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. The adult rock mole's claws, which can easily cut through stone, can also damage armor. Upon a successful attack, there is a 20 percent chance that the target's armor is damaged, requiring repair and reducing their AC by 1. There is a 10 percent chance the target's armor is destroyed completely, removing all AC benefits it had given.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Defensive Ball. If the adult rock mole is targeted by an attack of opportunity, it rolls its body into a defensive ball, increasing its AC to 21.



ROCK MOLE, JUVENILE

Medium animal

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

If the Juvenile Rock Mole is on its back with its underside exposed, use an Armor Class of 10.

Hit Points 18 (4d6 + 4)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	10 (0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Perception +2

Condition Vulnerabilities blinded by intense light

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Rock Mole

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The juvenile rock mole has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Defensive Ball. The juvenile rock mole can roll its

body into a ball, making it almost impossible for an attack to penetrate its thick scales, increasing its AC to 20. While in a defensive ball, the juvenile rock mole cannot attack. Its movement is unaffected. Uncurling from the ball can be done as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The juvenile rock mole can make two melee attacks; however will only make one attack per round until its HP is reduced to 50 percent or lower.

Rending Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage. The juvenile rock mole's claws, which can easily cut through stone, can also damage armor. Upon a successful attack, there is a 15 percent chance that the target's armor is damaged, requiring repair and reducing their AC by 1.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Defensive Ball. If the juvenile rock mole is targeted by an attack of opportunity, it rolls its body into a defensive ball, increasing its AC to 20.



ROOT WYRM

Huge dragon

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 103 (9d12 + 45)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +5, Con +9

Skills Intimidation +7, Perception +6, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Decay, Draconic

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Plant communication. The root wurm can imbue plants within 30 feet with limited sentience and movement, giving them the ability to communicate and follow simple commands. The root wurm can sense information from the plants about events, creatures that have passed, weather, and other circumstances within the last 24 hours.

Protective vines. The root wurm can turn ordinary terrain where plants are present into difficult terrain that lasts for as long as the vine dragon is in the area, causing vines and branches to hinder pursuers, for example. Or it can turn difficult terrain caused by natural plant growth into ordinary terrain that lasts for as long as the root wurm is in the area. *Plants can perform other tasks at the GM's discretion. This does not enable plants to uproot themselves and walk about, but they can move branches, vines, and stalks.*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The root wurm can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the root wurm's choice that is within 120 feet of the root wurm and aware of it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the root wurm's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Poison Vine Wave (recharge 6). The root wurm stomps its foot, causing vines with poisonous thorns to erupt from the ground in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If a creature within the area fails their saving throw by 5 or more, they are also restrained. A creature restrained by the vines can use its action to try to escape. To do so, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

REACTIONS

Thorned Tail Sweep. *If at any time the root wurm is flanked by 2 or more enemy creatures, it can use its reaction for a thorned tail sweep. Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one or more targets. Hit: 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage, and the targets must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. **Sweeping attack:** *If the first target is hit by the thorned tail sweep and other enemy creatures are within 5 feet of the root wurm, those creatures are automatically hit as well.*

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The root wurm can take 2 legendary actions per round, 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. The wurm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Bite Attack. The root wurm makes a bite attack.

Claw Attack. The root wurm makes a claw attack.



SHADOW

Medium undead

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a creature dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

VIPER

Large beast

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 25 (3d10 + 9)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Skills Intimidation +2, Perception +3, Stealth +4

Languages understands Common but cannot speak

Challenge 1 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned this way, the target is blind and takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

CONSTRUCTS

CASTLE BREAKER

Huge construct

Armor Class 13 (*natural armor*)

Hit Points 84 (8d12 + 32)

Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	5 (-3)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	10 (0)	3 (-4)

Damage Immunities *poison, psychic*

Damage Resistance *piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks.*

Condition Immunities *charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone*

Damage Vulnerabilities *fire, lightning*

Senses *blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius)*

Languages *understands the language of its creator but can't speak*

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Constructed Nature. The castle breaker doesn't need air, food, drink or sleep.

Immutable Form. The castle breaker is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Exploding Death. When the construct dies, it explodes in a burst of fire, gears, and wooden

shards. Each creature within 50 feet of it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire and 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The construct makes two melee attacks or one ranged attack.

Punch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (3d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Gear Throw. *Ranged Attack:* +0 to hit, range 40/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Sweeping Arm Slam (Recharge 5-6). The castle breaker makes four attacks with its punch. If a punch hits, the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTION

Mouth Cannon (1/day). If an attack reduces the castle breaker's hit points below half, its gaping maw opens to reveal an enormous cannon through which it emits a blast of gears, bolts, and metal shards in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.



CLOCKWORK SPIDER

Medium construct

Armor Class 17 (natural)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Perception +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Constructed Nature. The clockwork spider doesn't need air, food, drink or sleep.

Immutable Form. The clockwork spider is immune to any effect that would alter its form.

Weakness. There are 4 pneumatic tubes that each power a pair of the clockwork spider's legs. These tubes can be targeted and do not have damage resistance. If 9 damage is done to one of these tubes, it is disabled. If 2 of these tubes are disabled, its speed is halved. If all 4 are disabled, the creature is incapacitated.

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

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The clockwork spider makes two attacks, one web and one claw attack or two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Web. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/40 ft. Hit 7 (2d6) lightning damage. Creatures hit are restrained. If they are restrained when they begin their turn, they take 7 (2d6) lightning damage. As an action, a restrained creature can make a DC 15 Athletics (Strength) check, breaking free of the webbing on a success. The webbing can be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 15; vulnerable to fire damage; immune to poison and psychic damage). When hit successfully, the attacking creature immediately takes 7 (2d6) lightning damage. If the web has not been destroyed after an attack is completed, the attacking creature becomes restrained.

REACTIONS

Electrify (recharge 5-6). If the clockwork spider is hit by a melee attack, it can use its reaction to emit a wave of energy in a 5 foot radius around its body. Any creature in range must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) lightning damage. Those that succeed on the saving throw must move 5 feet away from the clockwork spider but take no damage.

SPLINTERLING

Small construct

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)

Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	10 (0)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Constructed Nature. The splinterling doesn't need air, food, drink or sleep.

Immutable Form. The splinterling is immune to any effect that would alter its form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The splinterling makes two splinter attacks.

Splinter. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing.

STONE GUARDIAN

Medium construct

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d8 + 24)

Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16(+3)	3 (-4)	10 (0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Damage Resistance piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning, thunder, force

Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Stone Appearance. While the stone guardian remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate stone statue.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stone guardian makes two slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTION

Surprise slam. The first time any enemy creature comes within 5 feet of the stone guardian, it can make a slam attack with advantage.

BEEES

GIANT WORKER BEE

Small beast

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

GIANT WORKER BEE, INFECTED

Small beast, decay

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning. The target takes no damage and does not contract a level of rot poisoning on a success.

QUEEN BEE-HEMOTH

Medium beast, decay

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (0)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The queen bee-hemoth makes three attacks, one with its sting and two with its tentacles.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning. The target takes half damage and does not contract a level of rot poisoning on a success.

Thorned Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, Reach 10, one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be grappled. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is restrained until this grapple ends. The grappled target can repeat the saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns, ending the grapple on a success. While the target is grappled, the queen bee-hemoth has advantage on sting attack rolls against it, and the queen bee-hemoth cannot use this attack against other targets. When the queen bee-hemoth moves, any medium or smaller target it has grappled moves with it.





MOHKGAARB

THE GREAT UMZOLLI

Huge plant monstrosity

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d12 + 48)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	2 (-5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Weakness. The great umzolli's bloom, which functions as the creature's head, has no damage resistances. If it is targeted and takes 42 damage by nonmagical attacks, the great umzolli dies.

False Appearance. While the great umzolli remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from, albeit giant, a floating lotus blossom.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The great umzolli makes two vine attacks and one bite or swallow attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage, and the target is grappled. The grappled target can use their action to escape by succeeding on a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the great umzolli can't bite another target.

Grasping Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8, Reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage, and the target is grappled. The grappled target can use their action to escape by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

REACTIONS

Swallow. As a reaction to successfully grappling a Medium or smaller creature, either with its bite or grasping vine attack, the great umzolli makes an additional bite attack against the target it has grappled. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage and is swallowed. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained and has disadvantage on all attack rolls and abilities checks. It takes 7 (2d6) acid damage at the start of each of the great umzolli's turns. It also has total cover against attacks and other effects occurring outside the great umzolli. The swallowed creature can attack the great umzolli from the inside. If the great umzolli takes 16 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, a hole opens large enough for the swallowed creature to exit through.

The great umzolli can swallow up to 4 tiny creatures, 2 small creatures, or 1 medium creature per day.

If the great umzolli dies, swallowed creatures are no longer restrained and can escape from the corpse by using a full action.

LAIR ACTIONS

Slashing Vines. *Triggered once the great umzolli's hit points fall to 63 or lower or its bloom is successfully targeted by an enemy attack and again every following third round:* Slashing vines erupt from the water, targeting all enemy creatures within reach. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8, Reach 45 ft., multiple targets. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage.



MOHKGAARB CHIEF XARAN

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 17 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)

Speed 25 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Intimidation +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 25 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Mohkgaarb, limited Common

Challenge 4 (1100 XP)

Determined. The chief xaran has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The chief xaran is a spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks, 6 known spells, 2 slots). The chief xaran has the following warlock spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *message*, *poison spray* (2d12)

1st level: *hellish rebuke*, *thunderwave*, *shadow call**

2nd level: *darkness*, *spider climb*

3rd level: *vampiric touch*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mohkgaarb chief xaran makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Biting Insects (1/day). If the chief xaran sees 1 or more of his allies go down as the result of enemy attacks, he will create a diversion to escape. He reaches into a pouch and throws what appears to be a cloud of black dust. A swarm of biting and stinging insects create a 10-foot diameter cloud centering on a targeted point 10 feet in front of himself. The cloud obscures vision and the chief xaran can escape without provoking an attack of opportunity. The cloud lasts for 1 minute. Creatures within or that move into the cloud must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, or it take 10 (3d6) poison damage and must move out of the cloud away from the chief xaran. Creatures that succeed on the saving throw take half damage and are not forced to move.

MOHKGAARB FIGHTER

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 16 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft., swim 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Acrobatics +5

Senses darkvision 25 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Mohkgaarb, limited Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Nimble Escape. The mohkgaarb fighter can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mohkgaarb fighter makes two melee attacks, one with its shortsword and one with its spear.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5, Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

MOHKGAARB RUNNER

Medium humanoid

Armor Class 15 (leatherleaf armor)

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 25 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3, Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 25 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages mohkgaarb, limited Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Nimble Escape. The mohkgaarb runner can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

ACTIONS

Blow Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5, range 15/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d2 + 3) piercing damage. If the target takes damage from the dart, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If they failed the save, the target also takes 3 (1d6) poison damage at the end of their following turn. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by this poison, it does not kill them. They are reduced to 1 hit point instead and are unconscious.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.



THE RAT CLAW CLAN



RATKIN SCOUT

Small ratkin

Armor Class 12 (hide armor)

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (0)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Ratkin, Common Dobber

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3, Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Heavy Bow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5, Range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

RATKIN WARRIOR

Small ratkin

Armor Class 13 (*hide armor*)

Hit Points 22 (5d6+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	10 (0)	8 (-1)

Senses *darkvision* 60 ft., *blindsight* 30 ft., *passive Perception* 13

Languages Ratkin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ratkin warrior makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4, Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Thrown Hand Axe (Quantity 2). *Ranged Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

RATKIN BERSERKER

Small ratkin

Armor Class 14 (*hide armor*)

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)

Skills *Intimidation* +5

Senses *passive Perception* 8

Languages Ratkin, Common Dobber

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ratkin berserker makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Hammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Thrown Handaxe (2). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3, Range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Blood Rage. When the ratkin berserker successfully hits with two melee attacks on its turn, it can move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

CREATURES OF DECAY



BEAST OF ROHR-TAN, THE HERALD, THE ROT HUNTER, THE VINE WOLF

Large beast, decay

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 40 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +6, Intimidation +6, Perception +8

Damage Vulnerabilities magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Decay

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting: *The Beast of Rohr-tan's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks).* He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: fear, minor illusion, antlers*♦

3/day each: bark armor*♦, entangle, strangling thorns*

1/day each: blight, conjure animals (rot squirrels* and rot toads*), insect plague, wall of thorns

* Found in the spell appendix.

♦ The Beast of Rohr-tan uses his legendary actions to cast these spells on himself during the first round of combat. He casts bark armor at level 5.

Magical Attacks. The Beast of Rohr-tan's attacks are magical.

Charge. If the Beast of Rohr-tan moves at least 10 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Unseen Vine Walk. The Beast of Rohr-tan magically turns invisible until he attacks, casts a spell, or until his concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, he leaves no physical evidence of his passage and is only able to be

tracked by magic. Any equipment he wears or carries is also invisible.

Withering Breath. A cloud of chilling necrotic energy envelopes any creature within 5 feet of the Beast of Rohr-tan. The target takes 6 poison damage and must succeed on a DC 16 saving throw or take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Beast of Rohr-tan makes a gore attack then a claw attack on the same target.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Marked by Rot (recharge 5-6). The Beast of Rohr-tan marks one creature it can see within 60 feet. For the next 24 hours, the Beast always knows the creature's location, even if it is on a different plane. Additionally, the marked creature is vulnerable to necrotic damage until the beginning of the Beast's next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The vine wolf can take 2 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. The vine wolf regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Thorned Vines (1 action). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. The target must make a successful Strength saving throw or be restrained by barbed vines and take 18 (4d8) piercing damage.

A restrained creature may attempt a Strength saving throw on its turn to break free of the vines. On a failed save, the vines constrict the creature, pulling it into the void in the vine wolf's throat. The creature takes 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and the vine wolf regains the same amount of hit points. This continues each turn until the creature breaks free of the vines or reaches 0 hit points. If a creature reaches 0 hit points, it has been fully consumed by the vine wolf. The creature's spirit is trapped in the vine wolf and can only be resurrected if the vine wolf has been killed.

Innate Spellcasting (1 action). The vine wolf can use one of its available innate spells.

DECAY BEAR

Large beast, decay

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 34 (4d10 + 12)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Decay Spore Fortitude. If damage reduces the decay bear to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to the amount of damage taken unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the decay bear drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Back kick. If the decay bear is targeted by an attack of opportunity, it can use its reaction to make one claw attack against the attacker.

DECAY TORTOISE

Large beast, decay

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages –

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The giant tortoise can hold its breath underwater for one hour.

Huge Load. The giant tortoise can carry 1,000 pounds.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Fungal Vines. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

FUNGAL DOPPELGANGER

Medium plant construct, decay

Armor Class 16 (natural)

Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (0)

Saving Throws Dext +6, Wis +7

Skills Insight +7, Perception +7, Nature +11

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

The Dank and The Dark. The fungal doppelganger regains 10 hit points at the start of its turns if any part of its body is not in direct sunlight. The fungal doppelganger only dies if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and cannot regenerate.

False Appearance. The fungal spores have created an illusion that conceals the true form of the fungal doppelganger. The creature looks like an old friend or perhaps a family member pulled from the recesses of memory of those who see it. The illusion functions only in shadow. If sunlight touches it, its true form, vines, rot, and decay become visible.

Fungal Body. The fungal doppelganger's body consists of vines and viscous, rotting fungus that

stick onto anything that touches it. A creature that hits the fungal doppelganger with a melee attack must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Innate Spellcasting. The fungal doppelganger's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/Day each: *moonbeam, blight, confusion, shadow call**

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fungal doppelganger makes two fungal slam attacks.

Fungal Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Fungal Minion (Recharge 5-6). The fungal doppelganger emits 1d6 spore charges that hover around its body. As a part of this action, it can throw any number of these charges up to 60 feet towards a creature. A targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) necrotic damage and contract **aggressive rot poisoning**. A creature with aggressive rot poisoning makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of their turns until accumulating 3 successes. For each failure, the creature gains one level of exhaustion, and black vines and fungus sprout all over their body. If the creature reaches 6 levels of exhaustion, it immediately dies. If no part of the body is in direct sunlight, it rises as a **Walking Fungus**.



FUNGAL HARE

Small beast, decay

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The giant rabbit has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) piercing damage.

Stinging Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

FUNGAL LIZARD

Small beast, decay

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (0)	15 (+2)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Decay

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute.

FUNGAL OPOSSUM

Small beast, decay

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft.

Languages –

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 point of piercing damage.

Sleep Spores (recharge 5-6). The fungal opossum ejects spores in a 5-foot radius around itself. All creatures within that area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall asleep for 1d4 rounds. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

FUNGALING

Tiny plant, decay

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 15 (6d4)

Speed fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	9 (-1)	11 (0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances poison, psychic

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages Decay

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Stinging Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

Calming Spores (1/Day). The fungaling releases a cloud of spores that spreads up to 10 feet in all directions. All creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be charmed by the fungaling until its end of the next turn.



FUNGUS, PLAGUE

Medium plant, decay

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (0)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Decay

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Natural Appearance. While the plague fungus remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from its surroundings.

Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, the plague fungus has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. If the plague fungus is in direct sunlight for 10 minutes or more, it drops to 0 hit points, shrivels up, and dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The plague fungus uses either its Sleep Spores or Rot Spores, then makes a slam attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Rot Spores (recharge 4-6). The plague fungus exhales a concentrated cloud of spores in a 5-foot radius around itself. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (3d8) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

FUNGUS, WALKING

Small plant, decay

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 21 (6d6)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	10 (0)	10 (0)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Decay

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Natural Appearance. While the walking fungus remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from its surroundings.

remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from its surroundings.

Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, the walking fungus has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. If the walking fungus is in direct sunlight for 10 minutes or more, it drops to 0 hit points, shrivels up, and dies.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Sleep Spores (recharge 6). The walking fungus ejects spores in a 5-foot radius around itself. All creatures within that area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall asleep for 1d2 rounds. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

GRASPING BUSH

Medium plant, decay

Armor Class 14 (natural)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	4 (-3)

Senses tremorsense 20 ft.

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Grasping Tentacles. If a character comes within 10 feet of a grasping bush, they must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. At the beginning of their turn, a character restrained in this way has their maximum hit points reduced by 7 (2d6). They may use their action to free themselves from the tentacles by succeeding on a DC 14 Strength saving throw. Reduced hit points are recovered at a rate of 3 (1d6) per long rest. If the creature's hit points reach 0 from this ability, it immediately dies.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft. (can only use this attack against creatures that it has restrained), one target. Hit 8 (2d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



LAERDRAA, SPORE GHOST

Small undead, decay

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 42 (12d6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Vulnerabilities copper magical or nonmagical weapons

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common Dobber, Decay

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

ACTIONS

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible

on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

MOSS BOAR, INFECTED

Large beast, decay

Armor Class 14 (natural)

Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Survival +2, Perception +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages –

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Charge. If the moss boar moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).

If the moss boar takes 15 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

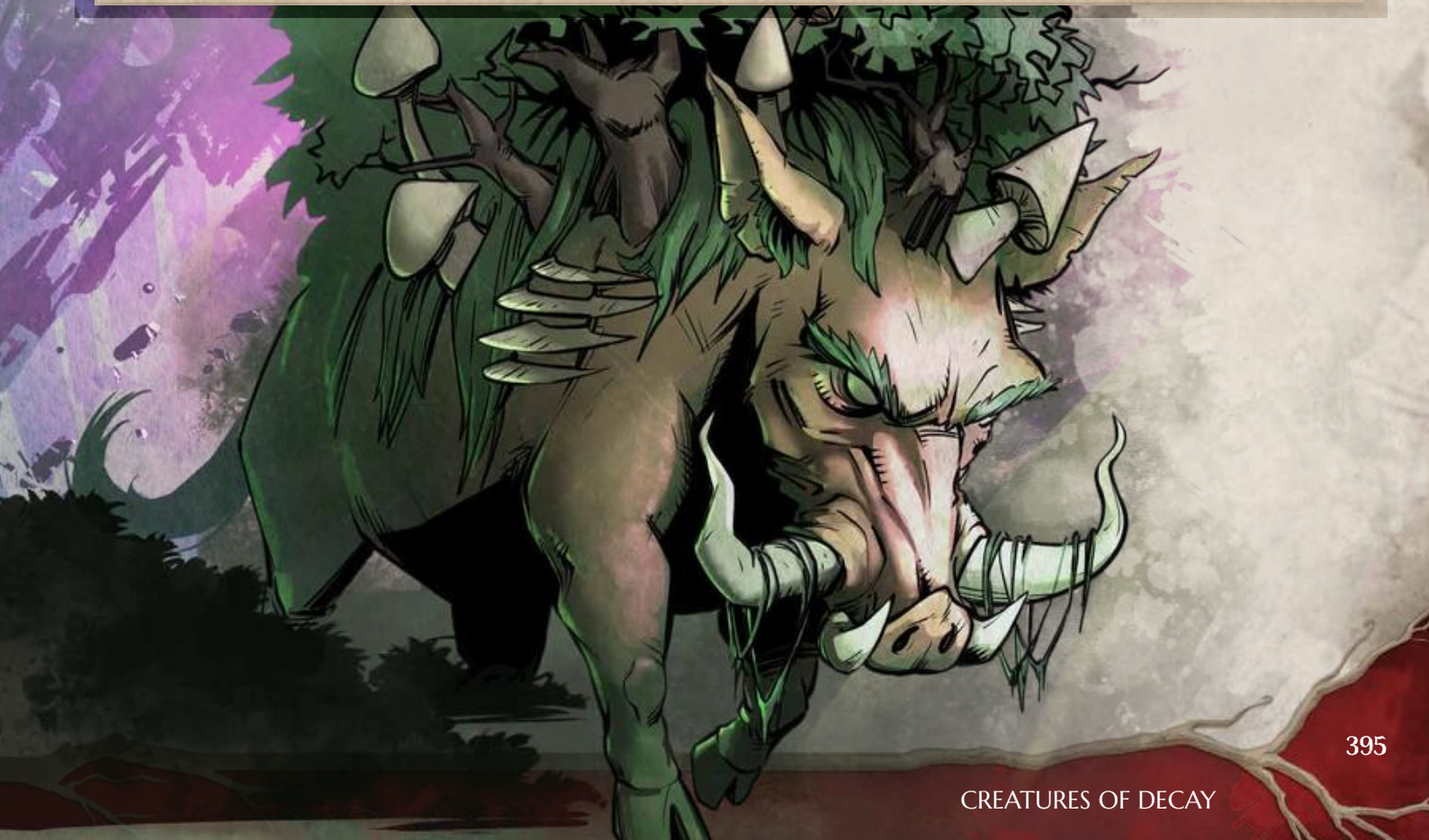
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The moss boar makes 2 tusk attacks.

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Petrifying Mud Blast (Recharge 5-6). The moss boar blasts a forceful stream of petrifying mud in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) force damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

The target is covered in sticky, freezing mud, and if it is a creature, has disadvantage on actions until it takes an action to wipe the mud off or the mud is removed by another creature. At the end of each subsequent turn, if the mud has not been removed, the target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. If the target fails 3 times, they turn to stone.



PLAGUE ORB

Medium undead plant, decay

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)

Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (0)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire from Ember, radiant, magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Decay

Challenge 9 (450 XP)

Death Burst. When the plague orb dies, it explodes in a burst of liquid rot. Each creature within 15

feet of it must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The plague orb makes four attacks: three with its vines and one with its stinger.

Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) poison damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning. On a successful save, the target takes half as much poison damage and does not contract rot poisoning.

Spore Cloud (recharge 5-6). The plague orb breathes out a cloud of spores in a 10-foot radius around itself. All creatures within that area must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (3d8) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and does not contract rot poisoning.





PLAGUEWOOD SPIDER

Large undead plant, decay

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant, magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Damage Immunities poison, psychic, necrotic

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, slashing and piercing from nonmagical weapons

Senses blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Decay

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Thick Bark. Any attack that does 10 or less damage to the plaguewood spider is reduced to 0.

Weakness: Decay Seed Bond. The plaguewood spider is a manifestation of the corruption spread by the decay seed. If the decay seed is extinguished, the plaguewood spider immediately dies.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The plaguewood spider makes two impale attacks and then makes a Splintered Web attack or a Kiss of Corruption attack.

Impale. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) saving throw or be grappled and pinned to the ground.

Kiss of Corruption. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, creature must be restrained or grappled. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and is no longer restrained or grappled. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or is frightened and compelled to use their next action to attack the creature closest to them other than the plaguewood spider, even if that creature is an ally.

Splintered Web (recharge 4-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/40 ft., cone. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. Creatures hit are restrained. As an action the restrained creature can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; *vulnerable to fire damage; immune to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage*).

ROHR-TAN'S FATE, THE VINE GUARDIAN

Huge monstrosity, decay

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)

Speed 40 ft. Climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (0)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire from Ember, magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Decay

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Ambush. While the vine guardian remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a tangle of roots or vines. Until it moves, the vine guardian has +10 to Stealth. The vine guardian has advantage against any creature that has not taken an action.

Life Drain. The vine guardian regains hit points equal to the amount of necrotic damage sustained by a grappled creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vine guardian makes three attacks from any of the following.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Vine. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15), restrained, and takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage each turn until the grapple ends.

Tentacle Slam. The vine guardian slams creatures grappled into a solid surface or another creature. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of the vine guardian's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and isn't stunned.

Throw. The vine guardian throws a creature it currently has restrained in any direction up to 15 feet. That creature takes 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Vine Swarm (recharge 5-6). Taking place last in initiative order, the vine guardian can use vine swarm as a special action. Any number of creatures within 10 feet are targeted with a vine attack, each with a separate attack roll.

ROT RAVEN

Tiny beast, decay

Armor Class 14 (natural)

Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)

Speed 10 ft, fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Mimicry. The raven can mimic simple sounds it has heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 11 Wisdom (Insight) check. A creature that hears the mimicry and fails to realize it is an imitation becomes charmed toward other creatures of decay.

ACTIONS

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage and 1 necrotic damage each following turn for 1 minute. Additionally, the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poison.

ROT SLIME

Small ooze, decay

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 31 (7d6 + 7)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages –

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Festering Rot. Any creature who touches the ooze or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning, and they must spend their next full action vomiting.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rot slime makes two attacks with its pseudopod.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature contracts 1 level of rot poisoning, and they must spend their next full action vomiting.

Devour Corpse. The slime consumes the flesh of a dead creature no larger than Medium in size. It gains a cumulative +1 to attack and damage rolls for 1 minute and regains 12 hit points. Any points beyond its hit point maximum are treated as temporary hit points.

ROT SKUNK

Tiny beast, decay

Armor Class 10 (natural)

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages –

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 point of piercing damage.

Musk (1/day). When threatened, the rot skunk sprays a cloud of stinking musk in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in range must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid being affected by the cloud. An affected creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute and contract 1 level rot poisoning.

The stench of the musk is highly potent and short of magical means of cleaning or a thorough washing that includes days of soaking, the stench clings to affected creatures for 1d6 days. During this time, other decay creatures are attracted from miles around, doubling the odds of a random encounter. Additionally, the strong smell requires stealth checks to be made with disadvantage.

ROT TOAD

Tiny beast, decay

Armor Class 12 (natural)

Hit Points 3 (2d4-2)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spore Death. When the rot toad takes damage, reducing it to 0 hit points it explodes in a cloud of spores. Each creature within 5 feet of the rot toad must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 8 (1d10 + 3) necrotic damage. Any creature taking damage in this way must also succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, the rot toad has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. If the rot toad is in direct sunlight for 10 minutes or more, it drops to 0 hit points, shrivels up, and dies.

Amphibious. The rot toad can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The toad's long jump is up to 10 ft. and its high jump is up to 5 ft., with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Tongue. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d6-2) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (1d10) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.



SCORCHED ONE

Small undead, decay

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 62 (10d6 + 27)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Damage Vulnerabilities magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common Dobber, Decay

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The scorched one can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

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

Scorched Trail. The scorched one leaves behind it a 30-foot-long trail of necrotic spores that look like black ash. If a creature passes through the trail of spores, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

ACTIONS

Create Specter. The scorched one targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the scorched one's control. The scorched one can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Scorched Life (recharge 5-6). The scorched one blasts black necrotic fire in a 30-foot line. All creatures in that line must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage and their hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. If they succeed the saving throw, they take half as much damage and do not have their hit point maximum reduced.

SHADOWLING

Small fiend, decay

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (4d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., *climb* 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (0)	12 (+1)	11 (0)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Damage Resistances fire, necrotic

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Condition Immunities charmed

Skills Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Infernal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Magic Resistance. The shadowling has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Shadow Appearance. While the shadowling remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from other shadows in its surroundings.

Spider Climb. The shadowling can climb difficult surfaces, such as upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (3d4 - 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

BONUS ACTIONS

Shadow Step. The shadowling magically teleports up to 30 feet to a shadow in an unoccupied space it can see.

SPORE MAW

Small undead plant, decay

Armor Class 12 (natural)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)	4 (-3)

Senses tremorsense 30 ft

Languages –

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Alluring Aroma. The spore maw emits a sickly sweet aroma in a 30-foot radius around it. Whenever a creature starts its turn within this radius, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the spore maw for 1 minute. A creature charmed in this way cannot attack any decay creatures. A charmed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success and becoming immune to the spore maw's aroma for 24 hours.

Sense Intelligence. The spore maw can sense the presence of any creature within 60 feet of it that has an intelligence of 4 or higher.

ACTIONS

Thorned Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 6 (2d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Psychic Rot Spores (3/day). The spore maw exhales a cloud of spores in a 30-foot radius around it. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be wracked with psychic rot for 1 minute. At the beginning of each turn that a creature is affected by psychic rot spores, they are stunned, take 13 (3d8) psychic damage, and their Intelligence score is temporarily reduced by 2 (1d4). They can repeat the saving throw at the end of their turn, ending the effect of the spores on a success. Intelligence lost this way is recovered after a long rest. If the creature's Intelligence score reaches 0, they immediately die.

SHRIEKING WOLF

Large beast, decay

Armor Class 16 (natural)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +7

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 20

Languages –

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Fleet of Foot. The shrieking wolf can take the Dash or Disengage actions as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Keen Hearing. The shrieking wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shrieking wolf makes two attacks with its bite or claws and uses its Shrieking Howl if it is charged.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Shrieking Howl (Recharge 5-6). The shrieking wolf uses one of the following howls.

Disrupting Howl. The wolf emits a howl that confuses and distracts. Each creature of the wolf's choice within 60 feet that can hear it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) psychic damage and acts as if under the *confusion* spell until the end of the wolf's next turn. A creature that succeeds on the save takes half damage and isn't confused.

Frightening Howl. The wolf emits a howl that fills all that hear it with terror. Each creature of the wolf's choice within 60 feet that can hear it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) psychic damage and acts as if under the *fear* spell until the end of the wolf's next turn. A creature that succeeds on the save takes half damage and isn't frightened.

Thunderous Howl. The wolf emits a howl that fills all that hear it with terror. Each creature of the wolf's choice within 60 feet that can hear it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) thunder damage and is pushed back 10 feet from the wolf and knocked prone. A creature that succeeds on the save takes half damage and isn't pushed back or knocked prone.



SPORE SENTRY

Small undead, decay

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (7d6 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Damage Vulnerabilities magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't copper

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Common Dobber and Decay but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Spore Death. When the spore sentry takes damage,

reducing it to 0 hit points it explodes in a cloud of spores. Each creature within 5' of the rot toad must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 8 (1d10 + 3) necrotic damage. Any creature taking damage in this way must also succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spore sentry makes two longsword attacks or one longsword attack and it uses its Life Drain.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the spore sentry's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The spore sentry can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

SPORE SKELETON

Small undead, decay

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning, magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common Dobber and Decay but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Decay Spore Fortitude. If damage reduces the spore skeleton to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to the amount of damage taken unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the spore skeleton drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

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

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

SPORE ZOMBIE

Small undead, decay

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (4d6 + 8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities magical or nonmagical copper weapons

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands Common Dobber and Decay but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Decay Spore Fortitude. If damage reduces the spore zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to the amount of damage taken unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the spore zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

Withering Breath. A cloud of chilling necrotic energy envelopes any creature that comes within 5 feet of the spore zombie. They must succeed on a DC 16 saving throw or take 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning. If they succeed the saving throw, they take half as much damage and do not have their hit point maximum reduced.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

TREE GOLEM

Gargantuan construct, decay

Armor Class 15 (natural)

Hit Points 139 (9d20+45)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (1)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Immunities poison

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Decay

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Aversion to Fire. If the tree golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form. The tree golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Poison Absorption. Whenever the tree golem is subjected to poison damage, it takes no damage

and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the poison damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tree golem makes two slam attacks or one slam attack and one bite attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage, 3 (1d6) fire damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or be knocked prone.

Decay Fire Breath (Recharge 6). The tree golem exhales decay fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) necrotic damage and 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites with decay fire. Until a creature takes an action to douse the decay fire, the target takes 3 (1d6) necrotic damage, 3 (1d6) fire damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract 1 level of rot poisoning at the start of each of its turns until the fire is put out.



VINE BADGER

Tiny beast, decay

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 3 (1d4 + 1)

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 30 Ft., passive Perception 11

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Smell. The badger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 2 (1d4) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Thorns. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

VINE SQUIRREL

Tiny beast, decay

Armor Class 14 (*natural*)

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 35 ft., *climb* 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +5, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Natural Appearance. While the vine squirrel remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from its surroundings.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) slashing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 3 (1d6) necrotic damage and contract 1 level of rot poisoning.

Thorned Vines. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 - 1) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be grappled in tangling vines, the vine squirrel clinging to the head of the target. While grappled, the rot squirrel has advantage on claw attacks against the target. A grappled target can use their action to tear free of the vines with a successful DC12 Strength saving throw.

CURRENT FILLED

FLYING LEAF

Tiny plant, celestial

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 10 (4d4)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (0)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft.,
passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the flying leaf remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal leaf.

Limited Telepathy. The flying leaf can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 60 feet of it. The creature contacted doesn't need to share a language with the flying leaf to communicate in this way with it, but it must be able to understand at least one language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Magic Resistance. The walking leaf has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Natural Camouflage. When the flying leaf is in an environment with other leaves or plants, it has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Wing Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d2 + 2) slashing damage.

WALKING LEAF

Tiny plant, celestial

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 10 (4d4)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +3, Perception +5

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the walking leaf remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal leaf.

Telepathy. The walking leaf can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 60 feet of it. The creature contacted doesn't need to share a language with the walking leaf to communicate in this way with it, but it must be able to understand at least one language. This form of telepathy allows contacted creatures to receive and respond to telepathic messages but can't initiate or terminate a telepathic conversation.

Magic Resistance. The walking leaf has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Natural Camouflage. When the walking leaf is in an environment with other leaves or plants, it has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Boop. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 0 (1d4 - 2) bludgeoning damage.

WALKING STICK

Tiny plant, celestial

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 10 (4d4)

Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the walking stick remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal twig.

Limited Telepathy. The walking stick can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 60 feet of it. The creature contacted doesn't need to share a language with the walking stick to communicate in this way with it, but it must be able to understand at least one language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Magic Resistance. The walking stick has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Natural Camouflage. When the walking stick is in an environment with other leaves or plants, it has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

ACTIONS

Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.



APPENDIX:

MAGIC ITEMS AND ODDITIES

ANIMATED JUG

Wondrous item, uncommon

This odd jug has feet. Upon closer inspection, the oddities continue to mount. Its clay exterior is built around a crystalline bottle with sections revealing the sub-surface for a user to see its contents. The small clay feet are clad with crude iron toes and heels to lower its center of balance. In its center, a small polished gem sits embedded within the clear surface. All of these oddities seem out of place. That is, until it starts to move.

- This jug is an inanimate object until the user brings it to life with a command word and a press of its center as a bonus action. It will remain animated until the user issues the command word or it is reduced to 0 HP, becoming inert.
- While active, this creature is friendly towards the user and their companions. It understands the user's languages and will obey their spoken commands. If they issue no commands, the creature will take the Dodge action, and take no additional actions besides following the user.
- If reduced to 0 HP, it freezes in its place. At the GM's discretion, it may fall over and spill its contents.

ARCANE VISOR

Wondrous item, rare

You may take an object interaction to activate this magical item. For the next five minutes, your vision gains some extraordinary qualities. You gain the Perception proficiency if you did not have it already, you gain advantage on checks to notice hidden and secret doors, you can automatically tell if what you are looking at is an illusion, and you can automatically tell if any decay you see is arcane in nature, containing rot poisoning. The range of this vision is 120 feet. Once this effect has been used, the item must be recharged and cannot be used again until you have completed a short or long rest.



ASHES OF THE FLAMING NETHERWORLD

Wondrous item, uncommon

Bound in a leather pouch of stitched leather, closed with sinew and bone. When opened, the smell of brimstone ushers forth, and a soft glowing ash is revealed. While not warm to the touch, its embers look like the struggling coals of a waning flame.

Call of Rage. As an Action, the user can ingest the content of the bag and gain the features associated with the *Ashes of the Flaming Netherworld* for 1 Minute. Once used, a creature cannot benefit from the effects of this item for 24 Hours.

- For the next minute, they are considered to be under the effects of the barbarian's rage feature.
- They do not need to take damage or sustain this state.

Barbarian. If a barbarian consumes these ashes, it triggers the above. It also grants the user's rage damage extra necrotic damage (minimum 2) equal to their proficiency bonus.

ANIMATED JUG

This odd animated jug, does its absolute best, no matter the challenges, which are often many.

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	4 (-3)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities acid, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Conditional Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 6

Languages understands the user's languages

Skills Acrobatics +6

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Acid Absorption. Whenever the *Jug* is subjected to **acid damage**, it takes no damage and instead regains **HP** equal to the **acid damage** dealt.

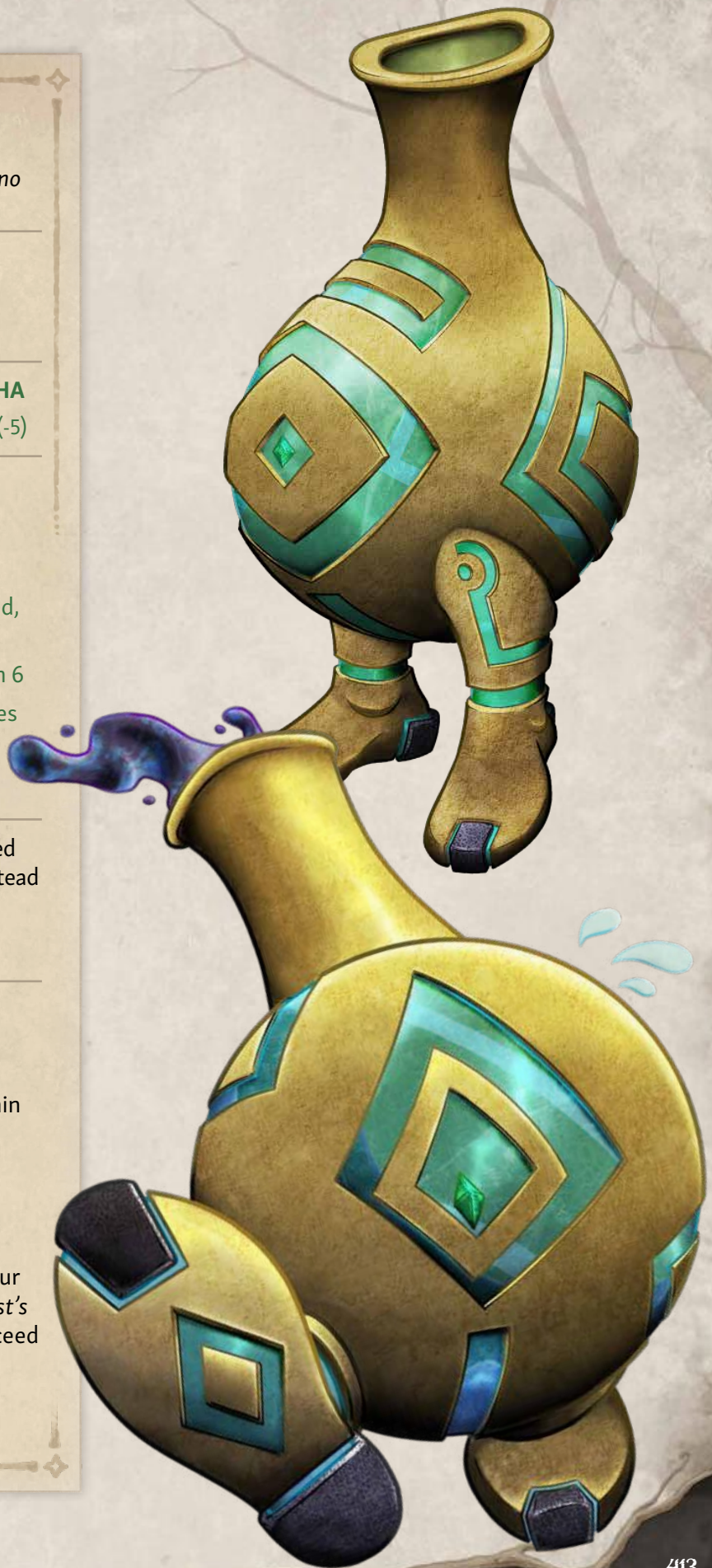
ACTIONS

The Jug cannot attack. It can, however, use other actions as normal, as well as the following actions:

Pour. The *Jug* can pour its contents out within the same **5-foot** square that it occupies.

If there is an unconscious creature within this space, the Animated Jug can administer the contents to the creature.

Harmful Contents. If the *jug* attempts to pour harmful contents (such as *acid* or *alchemist's fire*) on a creature, the creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or be subjected to the damage and effects appropriate for the contents.



BANDALORE FLAIL

Weapon, rare

This unique weapon comes from the carefully controlled gestation of a sweetgum ball. Just before it falls from the tree, it is strapped to the branch with a hole drilled into the side, through which a combination of sap and chemicals are added. This causes the interior to melt into a rubbery sap. Once severed from the branch, it is carefully split in two with the sap now serving as a rubbery neck, a twisted hemp threaded through the end for a grip.



Barbed. This weapon deals an extra 1d4 piercing damage.

Stretch. If the user expends their bonus action, they can twist the flail in a manner to extend its reach by 5 feet.

Hop the Fence. As an action, the user can lash out the flail in an arching flurry, all creatures in a 10-foot straight line in front and behind the user. All targets must attempt a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, or suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

Hop the Fence (Alt). As part of an attack action after hitting a target, the user targets another creature within 5 feet. The attack deals 1d8 piercing damage. Once this feature is used, it cannot be used again until the user rolls Initiative.

BLADE OF THE GREEDY GUARDSMAN

Weapon, very rare

This blade of hardened wood holds a well-polished golden coin within its pommel of greenish, hard stone. While this blade is wielded, it holds a slight chill to the touch. It is said that this blade once belonged to a guard of ill reputation who eventually met a wicked end. This coin is said to be the last bribe they ever took.

- The user gains +1 to attack rolls made with this weapon.

Veteran's Input. The user makes an Investigation (Wisdom) check, and the voice will offer its opinion. Offering advantage on the roll at the GM's discretion.

Keen Eye for Pockets. As an action, the user can touch the grip of the blade and look towards a creature capable of trading currency. The voice will offer an informed opinion (GM determines if it is accurate) option about how much coin this creature is carrying and what amount of coins it might take to sway them.

- The voice usually makes two offers: the amount to gain advantage for a Persuasion (Charisma) check or the amount to avoid a check entirely.

BRANCH OF LIFE

Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

"The tree of life springs evergreen."

This staff looks to be one continuous branch of wood with a loop formed at the top. The bark has been removed so that it is perfectly smooth. Within the loop floats a green orb that pulsates with energy, bound to the staff upon creation. Polished silver with ebbing, colored patterns wraps the middle of the staff, forming a grip. When spells are cast through the staff, translucent leaves and vines can be seen growing from patches of bark. It is said this beautiful weapon was carved and molded from the Tree of Life itself.

- Whenever the user expends a spell slot to cast a spell that restores hit points while holding this staff, they can add a d8 to the amount of hit points restored.
- This staff has 20 charges and regains 2d8 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. These charges can be expended to cast one of the following spells using the user's spell save DC and spellcasting ability. The user can increase the spell slot level by 1 for each additional charge expended.

1 charge. *cure wounds*

2 charges. *prayer of healing*

3 charges. *mass healing word*

4 charges. *death ward*

5 charges. *mass cure wounds*

6 charges. *heal*

Life-Bringer. When the user casts a spell from the staff, they can expend Inspiration (if they have it) to treat any dice rolled to determine the amount of hit points restored as having rolled their maximum value. Once this property has been used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

BOOM STICKS

Wondrous item, uncommon

These hollowed-out wooden tubes are packed tightly with black powder. Each has a cork in the end with an oil-infused string.

As an action, a creature can light the string and throw a boom stick at a point up to 40 feet away. Make a ranged attack roll to hit a specific target. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d12 bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

A character can bind boom sticks together so they explode at the same time. Each additional stick increases the damage by 1d12 (to a maximum of 10d12) and the burst radius by 5 feet (to a maximum of 20 feet).

Boom sticks can be rigged with a longer fuse to explode after a set amount of time, between 1 and 6 rounds. Roll initiative for the boom stick. After the set number of rounds goes by, the black powder explodes on that initiative.



CATERPILLAR

Armor Class: 12

Hit Points: 4

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)

Senses: Darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10.

Many Legs. The caterpillar can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Silk Walker. The caterpillar ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Pincher. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage

CATERPILLAR ON A STICK

Staff, very Rare

One might make assumptions about a caterpillar perched on its favorite branch, but those assumptions would probably be wrong. This is no ordinary caterpillar. This being is bound magically to its beloved stick and will faithfully serve any who wields it.

A massive bug on a stick that becomes a familiar to the user. It has a variety of special attacks such as Web and Poison Spray.

- The user's spell save DC and spell attack modifier each increase by 1.
- The user gains a *caterpillar* that acts akin to the *find familiar* spell except the *If Slain* feature below.

Web Spit (recharge 5-6). As an Action, the user can target a Large or smaller creature within 60 feet that they can see and launch a ball of silken web towards them. The creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained. The creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength check, breaking free on a success.

Web Cone. As an action, the caterpillar can spray out a massive 45-foot cone of webbing, which mimics the web spell with a DC 15 but does not require concentration. Once used, the caterpillar cannot use this feature again until the next dawn.

If Slain. If the Caterpillar is reduced to 0 Hit Points. The rod will grow a small cocoon, from which the caterpillar will regenerate after 1d4 days. During this time, the user cannot use the Web Spit or Web Cone features.



CLOAK OF MIST

Wonderous Item, very rare

The *cloak of mist* always appears wet. While you wear this black and blue tattered mantle, you have resistance to fire damage. Additionally, you suffer no harm from being in a hot environment, automatically succeeding on all saving throws made to resist the effects of extremely hot weather conditions.

You can use a bonus action to become incorporeal for up to 1 minute. Once you use this ability, it cannot be used again until the following dawn. While incorporeal, you can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If you are within a solid object when your time runs out, you are shunted to the closest unoccupied space, regardless of direction, and you take 1d6 points of damage for every 5 feet you are forced to travel.

DEEPSHROOM

Wondrous item, uncommon

Sourced from the long-forgotten depths, this oddly colored spore resembles a large seed about the size of a marble but with the consistency of a sponge. While in daylight, it is a pale gray, but when examined under darkness, it glows a vibrant blue and green. If allowed to *Take Root*, the large spore will burst forth into a glowing mushroom pulsing with vivid hues.

Take Root. As an action, the user can throw the spore to a flat surface within 30 feet of them, where it sticks. At the start of the user's next turn, the spore grows to its full size, becoming a massive *deepshroom*.

- The *deepshroom* occupies a 5-foot cube on the ground, wall, or ceiling. It adapts to the surface and becomes either an obstacle, cover, or a usable platform.
- If a Medium or smaller creature occupies the space in which the spore lands, that creature is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space within 5 feet of it at the start of its next turn.
- Once grown, the *deepshroom* has 35 hit points and AC 10. If the *deepshroom* is reduced to 0 hit points, it collapses.

- As a platform, it can't support more than 500 pounds before collapsing.
- If a creature falls onto the *deepshroom*, it takes no falling damage, but the *deepshroom* collapses.

Dim Light. This mushroom sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius.

Edible. Known for its rich flavoring, a single *deepshroom* can feed up to 10 creatures for a day.

- The *deepshroom* can survive and thrive in the cover of darkness, with a natural life cycle of 7 days. If exposed to direct sunlight, it will wither into dust within 1 minute.
- Due to the magic that preserves the spores, they don't reproduce during their life cycle.



EARTHEN HAMMER

Weapon, very rare

This hammer is a curiosity as it is an amalgamation rather than something forged. Originally, this head of stone came from an altar on a sacred site devoted to the worship of stone. It was broken free after some centuries of disuse. From the roots nearby, it intertwined and grew itself these vines that now compose its handle. Changing its nature from a relic to a weapon with this act.

- The user gains an additional +1 to attack and damage rolls with this weapon.

This *earthen hammer* has 3 charges, and it regains spent charges at dawn. It can use the charges in the following ways:

1 charge. Holding the hammer to a stone surface allows the user to replicating the *meld with stone* spell.

2 charges. Touching the hammer, the user can cast the *shape stone* spell.

3 charges. The user can strike the ground, wrapping themselves in the *stoneskin* spell.

FOREST EDGE BLADE

Weapon, legendary

A type of blade that is designed with a leaf patterning, specializing in granting skill proficiency in Nature and the ability to talk to creatures.

The main section of this sword is composed of a stone hilt in the form of a massive leaf, with its stem twisting to form a grip. The blade can transform according to the user's whim. Leaves flurry around the hilt as if carried by a strong wind, forming into the desired blade shape. This transformation has made them a beloved asset to adventurers who cherish versatility.

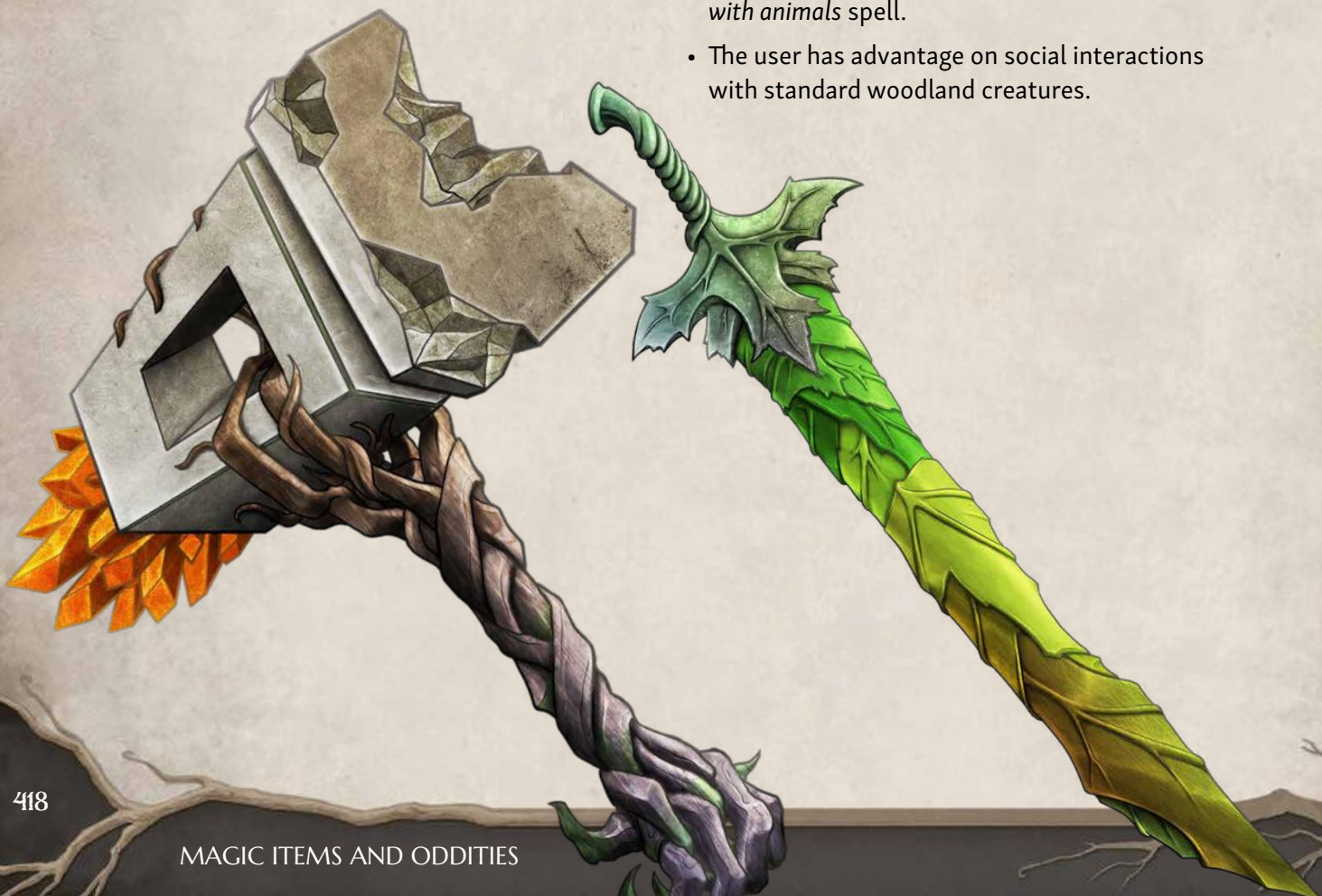
- The user gains +1 to attack rolls with this weapon.

Growth Spurt. As an action, the user is able to transform the weapon into any simple or martial bladed weapon that can be wielded with one hand.

100 Cutting Leaves (3/day). For 1 minute, the user deals an additional 1d6 slashing or piercing damage depending on the weapon type.

Woodland Folk. While wielded, the user is considered to be under the effects of the *speaking with animals* spell.

- The user has advantage on social interactions with standard woodland creatures.



HEALER'S KIT OF THE PATH

Wondrous item, uncommon

"The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease."

Originating from those who have chosen to walk the Green Path, these kits are known for their dependability in the most dire of situations. Formed from mushroom leather with a bottom clad in bark, it contains numerous natural salves and bandages formed of moss and leaf. Treasured for their reliability, these kits have saved countless creatures from succumbing to wounds.

- This *healer's kit* holds 4 uses of naturally grown salves and bandages. It regrows 1d4 expended uses daily at dawn.
- As an action, the user can expend 1 uses to stabilize a creature and restore it to 1 hit point.

HORCBERRIES

Wondrous item, rare

These oddly firm, plumb-like berries taste awful. A creature that eats one heals 12 (2d8 + 3) hit points and gains all the benefits of a short rest, such as recovering abilities and an opportunity to use hit dice.

If a creature eats more than one *horcberry* in a 24-hour period, the creature becomes violently ill for 1 minute, unable to take any actions during that time. They also suffer one level of exhaustion.

HORGORATH BALM

Wondrous item, rare

This small tin comes emblazoned with a metallic eye crafted into its cover, allowing all who see it to understand its purpose. The inside of the tin is coated in an alchemical silver, holding a balm made from a composition of horgorath mucus and rock mole tallow carefully mixed with an arcane agent and set within beeswax. This allows the balm to serve as a last-ditch effort and safeguard against one of an adventurer's most feared ends—petrification. Tragically, the canisters are often found within the belongings of petrified statues.

- The *horgorath balm* has one application within each container.

- Applying this *balm* takes an action and has the following effects if applied to a petrified target.
- 1 hour after application, a still-petrified target returns to its original state.
- This effect only works on targets that have been petrified for less than 30 days.
- Normal petrification rules apply. If the target is not whole from being physically broken, it will alter its original state.





HUCK'S ALARM BELL

Wondrous item, uncommon

"The bell lets you know it's time to go home."

This brass and iron bell is named for its first bearer, Henrick the Hill Giant, who was adopted at a young age by farmers. He had a habit of laboring on, regardless of sunlight, mealtime, or hour. This was crafted by a friendly hedge mage who stayed with the family for a time, feeling for the old man who had to wander out at night looking for his wayward son. The design was so successful that they eventually began to sell them to local markets on their travels, keeping the name in honor of the original influence.

The user can use *huck's alarm bell* in either of the following ways. Once one of these features is used, neither option can be used again until the next dawn.

- As an action, the user can prepare and set this bell akin to the alarm spell. The bell must hung in a static position to function properly.
- As a bonus action to speak a command word followed by a duration of time less than 24 hours, once this time has passed, it will trigger the sound of an audible bell for 6 seconds within 60 feet.



HUNGERING MAW IN A SHELL

Wondrous item, legendary

Some of the oldest stories become forgotten, but there is a fate for those that remain and instead diminish with time. Once an ancient creature that made the very world shake in its thrall, it has now diminished into a gibbering mindless creature that clutches to pebbles and crumbs as its treasures. Occasionally, it becomes enthralled with passersby or creatures and follows them until it loses interest or they are destroyed.

Curious Madness. The hungry maw will randomly become enthralled with a creature, typically a sentient one, though its reasoning is beyond understanding. Once it does, it will continuously crawl after them, finding its way into that creature's belongings, an unexpected companion. If the hungry maw's companion is slain, or if it inexplicitly loses interest, it will seek a new one.

HUNGERING MAW

Tiny aberration

Armor Class 9 (12 with Shell)

Hit Points 13 (2d6 + 6)

Speed 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Condition Immunities prone

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hungering Gibbering (recharge 5-6). The maw babbles incoherently while it can see a creature that it considers hostile and that isn't a focus of its *Curious Madness* and is within 20 feet. If this creature can hear the gibbering, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn:

1 to 4. The creature does nothing.

5 to 6. The creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction.

7 to 8. The creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Age Untold. The *hungering maw* has ushered in untold ages and has diminished in each. However, even in this diminished state, creatures can be frightened by its appearance. This grants the *hungering maw's* current fixation advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks against these creatures.

If Slain. If the *hungering maw* is reduced to 0 hit points. It will vanish, only to reappear within a shell, crack, object, or shadow within 500 feet at the end of combat or in 1d6 rounds.

LEAF GLIDER

Wondrous item, uncommon

This device is hewn from saplings and the youngest leaves from the highest branches of a forest. These young leaves are remarkably adapted to the fickle nature of high winds, making them the perfect canopy for this mechanism. Once latched to the sapling branches and attached to the guiding rings by cords, it is taken for its first maiden flight before being offered for sale.

- Must be wielded with two hands to function.
- When falling, the user can move up to double their regular movement speed in a horizontal direction.
- The user's falling speed is slowed to 20 feet per round while holding onto this *leaf glider*.





LIGHTNING ROD JAVELIN

Rod, very rare

This sharpened rod of metal is clad in wooden bark and branches strung with a metal wire. Akin to the lightning rods found protecting the oldest forest trees, these have been altered for a specific purpose. Shortened and spiked, these rods serve as javelins to harness deadly voltage.

Embed. On a hit, the javelin embeds into the target. All lightning damage dealt to the target is increased by 1 damage die.

The target, or a creature within reach, can spend an action to attempt to remove the embedded rod by rolling a DC 15 Strength check. Pulling it free on a success.

MAEGERA'S STAFF

Staff, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wooden staff was fashioned from the limb of an aspen tree, though it has been lacquered to look black. The carved talons of a vulture hold a glowing white, translucent orb at its head. It functions as a magic mace that grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. The staff has 10 charges and regains expended charges at dawn each day. Charges can be expended to cast spells associated with five different buttons that are set in a row along the haft. In addition to the buttons, the staff has two other properties, also detailed below.

Five Buttons. You can push one of the buttons along the haft as an action. The effect and duration are described below.

- **Button 1 - Grease (1 charge).** Grease shoots from the end of the staff, producing an effect exactly like the *grease* spell.
- **Button 2 - Maegera's hand (1 charge).** A large rat hand with an eerie purple light emerges from the staff, connected to it by a thin wisp of energy. The hand functions exactly like the *mage hand* spell.
- **Button 3 - Heat Metal (1 charge).** As you point the staff, the orb glows like molten glass and produces an effect exactly like the *heat metal* spell.
- **Button 4 - Witch Bolt (1 charge).** You lower the staff at a target as it crackles with energy. White electricity jumps out of the orb at a target. This produces the *witch bolt* spell at 2nd level.
- **Button 5 - Command (1 charge).** Pressing this button produces an effect exactly like the *command* Spell. However, you can also use this on constructs that you have built. These commands can be up to 10 words, and the construct must carry out that command until you give it a new command or it is destroyed.

Life Drain (2 charges). When you hit a creature with a melee attack using the staff, you can force the target to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target takes an extra 3d6 necrotic damage, and you regain a number of hit points equal to half that necrotic damage.

Searing Smite (2 charges). When you hit a creature with a melee attack, the staff flares with white-hot intensity, and the attack deals an extra 1d6 fire damage to the target and causes the target to ignite in flames. At the start of each of its turns until the spell ends, the target must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 1d6 fire damage. On a successful save, the spell ends. If the target or a creature within 5 feet of it uses an action to put out the flames, or if some other effect douses the flames (such as the target being submerged in water), the spell ends.

MYSTERIOUS FIREWORK

Wondrous item, rare

This wooden tube holds a bit of wonder, wrapped in moist leaves that never seem to dry. The tube is stuffed and then covered with a dry wick, waiting for its grand reveal. Along its side, instructions or perhaps warnings have long since worn away, making its contents an unpredictable but often vibrant surprise within.

As an action, the user can light the fuse and aim the *mysterious firework* at a creature or a space. This uses a spell attack bonus of +7 and has a DC of 15. Roll a 1d4 to determine the effect of the blast from the list below.

- **1 - Sky Streaker.** *scorching ray* spell at 4th Level. (5 Rays)
- **2 - Bursting Candle.** *magic missile* spell at 4th level. (7 Darts)
- **3 - Razzle Dazzle.** *chromatic orb* spell at 4th level. (6d8)
- **4 - Show Stopper.** *fireball* spell at 4th level. (9d6)

This item is single use. Once expended it becomes a mundane wooden tube.



NATURE'S GIFT

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This strange bracer is made of bark and foliage and has a flat, stone trinket clutched as a focus. While it seems dried and aged, it still holds touches of green throughout, giving it a sense of life just waiting to bloom. The simple act of donning this bracer grants one a better sense of the ebb and flow of the natural life surrounding them.

While wearing this bracer, the user can cast the *druidcraft* cantrip, and the bracer can be used as a druidic focus.

Ebb. As an action, the user can cast the *entangle* spell, requiring no concentration. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Flow. While in forest or grassland terrain, the user's speed increases by 10 feet.

PINCHER SHIELD

Armor, uncommon

This shield is assembled from the remains of one of the most fearsome foes within the forest, the massive beetle. Using the carapace, that would make a heavily armored knight green with envy, and transforming it into a shield. A series of ropes and a cleverly housed mechanism have allowed this creation to handle some of the beetle's biting force.

- While holding this *pincher shield*, the user gains a +1 bonus to Armor Class. This is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.
- While held, the user has advantage on grapple checks on anything within two size categories of the user.

Grabber. If the user makes a melee attack during their turn, they are able to use their bonus action to make a grapple attempt.



ROT GAUNTLET

Armor, legendary

This gauntlet of rotten and layered wood holds a gaping wound within its palm. The stench and foulness of this cracked and twisted hole are enough to turn the strongest of stomachs. Its very presence is enough to upset woodland creatures or those attuned to the nature of things. That said, it still draws in those compelled to harness its power despite the cost.

- Using an unarmed strike attack action with this gauntlet deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage to the target and 1d4 damage to the user.
- If the target is a Plant or Plant Creature, this damage is doubled.

Wither Away. As an action, the user may make an unarmed melee attack against a target. Any nonmagical object made of wood that the *rot gauntlet* touches withers. When used in this way, it does not attack deal damage, but inflicts the following:

- If a weapon, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If the penalty reaches -5, the weapon is destroyed.
- If armor, it takes a -1 penalty to AC. If the total AC provided drops below 10, the armor is destroyed.
- Ammunition made of (or containing) wood that hits the user is destroyed after dealing damage.
- The user is able to cast the *blight* spell at a range of touch, requiring a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Once this feature is used, it cannot be used again until the next dusk.



SPEAR OF THE WIND

Weapon, very rare (requires attunement)

This spear holds a crystallized tip, the color of clear skies. Crowned with carved stone and decorated with feathers from fabled birds of the sky, it holds a special relation to the wind. It seems almost too light in heft and flies from the hand with an added gust to seek its target.

- While attuned to this item, the user always benefits from the effects of the *longstrider* spell.
- This spear holds a number of charges equal to the user's proficiency bonus, and regains all expended charges at each dawn. The charges can be expended in any of the following ways:

Wind Friend. 1 charge - as an action, the user is able to replicate the *gust of wind* spell at a DC 15.

Piercing Blow. 1 charge - As an action, the user is able to drive the spear forward and move themselves 30 feet in a straight line instantly. All creatures within that line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d8 piercing damage.

SPINNER SEED

Consumable (seed), common

This seed, while common enough within the mortal realms, has been touched by the arcane.

Collectively known as spinner seeds, they are often kept on the person of wayfarers as a safeguard against unforeseen falls. As such, they are seen as a token of goodwill and a boon to travelers at the start of a long journey.

This item has a single use of either of the following implementations:

Spinner. As a reaction, while falling, the user can harness the power of the seed if it is on their person to cast the *feather fall* spell, targeting only themselves.

- Upon reaching the ground, the user is stunned for 1d4 rounds due to spinning the entire fall.

Taking Root. If planted in at least 1 cubic foot of soil, even in harsh climates, the seed will rapidly mature into a tree that is 30 feet tall within 1d100 days. The tree reaches sapling status in half that time.





SQUIRREL TAIL

Armor, legendary

This large tail of the tree-faring squirrel has been carefully attached to a leather base with strapping for attachment. These decorations are sometimes seen dangling from the belts or bags of rangers and other forest explorers, from all types of woodland creatures. This one, however, carries a spark of magic with the enchantment bestowing a bit of the wild curiousness of the beast upon the user.

While worn, this grants the user the following features:

- They gain a climbing speed equal to their movement speed and their jump distance is also doubled.
- Their nails are hardened, granting their unarmed attacks an additional +1 slashing damage.
- The user gains an affection for nuts and seeds, both for consumption and the desire to hoard them. Eating exclusively this food as rations during a long rest will grant advantage on a check of their choosing within the next 24 hours.



WHIP OF WATER

Weapon, rare

This unique handle can gather moisture from the air to form a lashing whip of liquid. However, this ever-thirsting tool awaits an additional source of water to truly unleash its powers. It is designed to optimize the user's ability to lash as well as control the power of this versatile element.

Unfurled Waves. As a bonus action, the user can summon water from their air to form a full-length whip.

When exposed to an additional source of water of at least 5 gallons, as an action, the user can absorb this water into the hilt and use it for one of the following features with a DC 15 as needed:

Water Lash (3/day). The whip gains an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage for the next 10 minutes.

Dominate the Flow (2/day). The user is able to use the whip to cast the *control water* spell.

Endless Douse (1/day). The user is able to focus a blast of water outward into a 30-foot cone mimicking an adapted *tidal wave* spell.

APPENDIX:

CURSED BLADES

EMBER

Weapon, very rare (requires attunement)

Dagger. Grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

FLAMING BLADE

You can use a bonus action to speak this dagger's command word, causing flames to flicker up around the blade. These flames shed bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. While the dagger is ablaze, it deals an extra 1d6 fire damage to any target it hits. The amount of damage this fire deals increases with the level of the wielder. This fire damage increases to 2d6 when you reach 5th level, 3d6 at 9th level, 4d6 at 14th level, and 5d6 at 18th level.

The flames last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again or until you drop or sheathe the dagger.

FLAMING JET

Ember has 3 charges. You can use a charge to make a ranged attack. The dagger can blast a mote of fire at a creature or object within range (60 feet). Make a ranged weapon attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 2d10 fire damage. A flammable object hit by this spell ignites. This damage increases to 3d10 when you reach 5th level, 4d10 at 9th level, 5d10 at 14th level, and 6d10 at 18th level. Its 3 charges are restored at dawn each day.

CURSED

Ember has touched Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, and his taint remains on it. Whenever someone touches the dagger, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 (13) necrotic damage, taking half as much on a success. When struck by this damage, you see flashes of death and decay in your mind. The first time this happens, roll on the short-term madness chart adopting any of the effects described. The next time, roll on the long-term madness chart. And the 3rd time you touch Ember, roll on the

infinite madness chart adopting any of the effects described. If you touch Ember a 4th time, you instantly die.

HISTORY

Ember is the magical dagger inherited by Calynn from her grandmother. Calynn and her boyfriend, Maegera, decided they wanted to enhance the dagger. They imbued it with a few fire-related abilities. They were exploring their skills as young mages and tinkerers, and this was quite an accomplishment, but for Calynn, it wasn't enough. She was desperate to prove herself as the greatest in her family. Her brother had been chosen over her to become the heir to the throne. She was insanely jealous.

Though her talent was undeniable, she was impatient and developed a reputation for being reckless. She had heard about some experimental disciplines of magic and was determined to learn more. One of her professors sought the origins of magic, starting with the Rot Weaver and the Green Man. She convinced Maegera to borrow the professor's notes "purely for academic purposes."

Othkara's notes on the subject were just theoretical. Calynn found ways to put them into practice. She took to rot magic quickly. Othkara was amazed, and the three of them, Calynn, Maegera, and Othkara, worked tirelessly to unlock more. While the three of them set out to explore any and all origins of magic, Calynn became obsessed with rot and death. Othkara tried to steer her away, but she wouldn't. She found it easy to tap into the power released from a recently diseased creature. But that kind of magic was forbidden at the school. She was expelled. Again, she felt those around her wanted to push down her genius.

She kept Othkara's notebook and poured herself fully into rot magic. One of her first successes, Ember, the dagger, came to mind. Calynn decided to give the Life From Death ability to the dagger. It didn't work. Life From Death transfers energy from the recently dead to the

living, but the dagger was an inanimate object. She hoped it could serve as a bridge between the two, but nothing she tried worked.

Then, in a moment of inspiration, perhaps fueled by her growing disdain for the school, her brother, and her father, the King, she stole her own heritage stone from the heritage vault. She affixed the heritage stone to the dagger, binding a bit of her living essence to it.

It worked. She could transfer the final vestiges of life from a creature into herself, seemingly without limits. She just had to stab the creature with the dagger. It worked on creatures killed by the dagger or ones that had recently died by another means. Then she discovered something she didn't expect. If a creature she stabbed survived, a bond was formed with that creature - she was connected to it psychically through the dagger. She could control them, exerting her will over theirs.

This was it. This was how she would show all of Dobberton her greatness.

She decided she would use the dagger to take control of the most powerful creature she could think of, Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver. Maybe it was just because she had already been consumed by rot magic. Maybe the dark one's agents had poisoned her mind. It's hard to say exactly why she chose the Rot Weaver, but it's safe to assume it was pride that allowed her to believe her will was great enough to control a legendary monster such as Rohr-tan.

It took some resourcefulness, but Calynn found the Rot Weaver's tomb. She stabbed his sarcophagus and immediately regretted it. Her will was no match for his. And, though the dagger was uniquely powerful, it could not fully break the seal that kept Rohr-tan trapped. The seal was broken just enough for a connection to form through the dagger, but she was not in control. He was. And to ensure she would remain subservient, he cursed her, transforming her into the form called the Wood Sprite.



BLAZE

Weapon, legendary (requires attunement)

Long Sword, versatile. Grants +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

FLAMING BLADE

You can use a bonus action to speak this sword's command word, causing flames to flicker around the blade. These flames shed bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. While the sword is ablaze, it deals an extra 1d6 fire damage to any target it hits. The amount of damage this fire deals increases with the level of the wielder. This fire damage increases to 2d6 when you reach 5th level, 3d6 at 9th level, 4d6 at 14th level, and 5d6 at 18th level.

The flames last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again or until you drop or sheathe the sword.

FLAMING JET

Blaze has 1 charge. You can use a charge to shoot fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A flammable object hit by this spell ignites.

CURSED

Blaze has touched Rohr-tan, the Rot Weaver, and his taint remains. Whenever someone touches the dagger, they must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 2d6 (13) necrotic damage, taking half as much on a success. When struck by this damage, you see flashes of death and decay in your mind. The first time this happens, roll on the short-term madness chart adopting any of the effects described. The next time, roll on the long-term madness chart. And the 3rd time you touch Blaze, roll on the infinite madness chart adopting any of the effects described. If you touch Blaze a 4th time, you instantly die. described. If you touch Ember a 4th time, you instantly die.



APPENDIX: MENUS

THE ACORN INN & GENERAL STORE MENU

PLATES

Fried pea pods with onion and soft cheese	5 greys
Salted chips and soft cheese	4 greys
Roasted carrots and cashew bread	3 greys
Vegetable stew with hearty bread	3 greys
Cheesy potatoes and hazelnut bread	8 greys
Spinach salad with grilled squash	5 greys
Hazelnut Stew	2 greys

DRINKS

Murkmellon mead	3 greys
Clover honey mead	3 greys
Strawberry ale	2 greys
Goat's milk	2 greys
Crisp cider	1 grey
Roasted brown bean brew	1 grey
Tea (chamomile, mint, or raspberry)	1 grey

SPECIAL PUMPKIN MENU

Pumpkin Cookies	1 grey
Pumpkin bread with acorn butter	2 greys
Pumpkin and cranberry muffins	2 greys
Grilled pumpkin slices	3 greys
Spicy pumpkin soup	3 greys
Pumpkin pie	2 greys
Pumpkin juice	1 grey

ROOMS

Small room, sleeps 2 (5 available)	1 prime
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TREATS

Honeyberry tart	2 greys
Walnut cookies	1 grey
Hearty bread with jam (strawberry, blackberry, or murkmellon)	2 greys
Apple pie	2 greys
Strawberry cake with sweet cream	3 greys

GENERAL STORE

Barrel	1p 50g
Blanket	35 greys
Bottle, glass	2p 50g
Bucket	10 greys
Hammer	1p 70g
Ink (1 ounce bottle) and Pen	4p
Ladder (10-foot)	25 greys
Lock	14 primes
Mess Kit	20 greys
Mirror, Steel	5 primes
Parchment (one sheet)	10 greys
Pot, Ironwood	1p 75g
Pouch	50 greys
Rope, Vine	1 prime
Sack	5 greys
Wheel barrel	3 primes
Shovel	1p 50g
Rake	1 prime
Soap	2 greys

Large room, sleeps 6 (1 available)	2 primes
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BUSHELS & BARRELS

FOOD

Pinenut bread and whey cheese	3 greys
Dried portobello, sliced thick and cashew bread	6 greys
Barley vegetable stew	3 greys
Wheat porridge with maple syrup	2 greys
Hot maple apples and oats	3 greys

DRINKS

Maple barley beer	3 greys
Bitter malt	5 greys
Squash juice	2 greys
Oat milk	2 greys

SECRET MENU

WEAPONS

Pair of +1 daggers	29 primes
+1 copper short sword	42 primes
Repeating crossbow (page 81)	98 primes
Energy whip (page 67)	19 primes
The Guardsman (page 414)	16 primes
Expoding darts - bag of 13 (2d6+6) (page 63)	8 primes

POTIONS

Potion of Detect Thoughts (1 available)	120 primes
Potion of Healing (3 available)	30 primes
Potion of Greater Healing (1 available)	50 primes
Go Go Powder (1 available) (page 71)	19 primes
Rage Powder (1 available) (page 72)	66 primes

THE FOX HOLE

ACCOMMODATIONS

Small room, sleeps 2 (4 available)	1p 20g
Common room cot (12 available)	60 greys
Common room hammock (6 available)	50 greys

LITEWYCK GENERAL STORE MENU

PLATES

Hard bread	1 greys
Cinnamon buns with honey	4 greys
Potato rolls	2 greys
Vegetable pie	2 greys
Apple walnut pie	3 greys
Hard dill cheese	2 greys
Hot pepper yellow cheese	3 greys
Melon berry apple salad	2 greys
Squash and apples	1 grey
Oats	1 grey
Cottage cheese	2 greys
Soft cheese with rind	15 greys

DRINKS

Goat's milk	2 greys
Hazelnut tea	2 greys
Strawberry wine	3 greys
Murkmellon mead	3 greys
Tea (black, strawberry, mum, apple)	1 grey
Apple juice	1 grey

GENERAL STORE

Barrel	1p
Blanket	30 greys
Bell	1 prime
Bucket	5 greys
Candle	1 grey
Crowbar	1 prime
Horcberry (1 available)	4 primes
Harness, small	3 primes
Harness, medium	8 primes
Hunting Trap	3 primes
Rope, Vine	1p 50g
Sack	15 greys
Wheel barrel	2p 20g
Shovel	1prime
Rake	1 prime
Hoe	1 prime

IRONWOOD ARMS

WEAPONS

Dagger	3 primes
Handaxe	5 primes
Spear	75 greys
Greataxe	25 primes
Longsword	20 primes
Quarterstaff	2 primes
Shortsword	12 primes
Javalin	1 prime
Longbow	35 primes

ARMOR

		Armor Class
Leatherleaf armor	50 primes	12 + Dex modifier
Padded bark weave	62 primes	13 + Dex modifier
Scalebark*	58 primes	14 + Dex modifier (max 2)
Reinforced leatherleaf*	32 primes	14
Splintwood*	174 primes	17
Shield	8 primes	2

* Disadvantage on Stealth

GABBARD'S CAFÉ

FOOD

Vegetable and rice bowl	2 greys
Kale, artichoke, berries, and nuts	4 greys
Oyster mushroom, roasted with butter and garlic	9 greys
Spinach wrap with fried rice sticks	4 greys
Vegetable stew with rye bread	3 greys
Cheesy rice and roasted acorn squash	6 greys
Squash fritter with yam spread	5 greys
Cabbage stew	3 greys

DRINKS

Rice cream	2 greys
Rice wine	3 greys
Apple juice	2 greys
Goat's milk	2 greys
Gabbard's special	1 grey
Roasted brown bean brew	1 grey
Tea (cinnamon, clover, or oak)	1 grey

FISH

Fried trout	8 greys	Crawfish, peppers, and mushrooms	10 greys
Baked minnows	5 greys	Frog Legs	4 greys
Spicy perch and carrot stew	4 greys	You catch, we cook	3 greys

KING'S KEEP

WEAPONS

Dagger	3 primes
Handaxe	5 primes
Spear	75 greys
Greataxe	25 primes
Longsword	20 primes
Rapier	24 primes
Shortsword	12 primes
Shortbow	20 primes
Longbow	35 primes
Crossbow	55 primes

ARMOR

		Armor Class
Leatherleaf armor	50 primes	12 + Dex modifier
Wooden scale *	55 primes	13 + Dex modifier (max 2)
Breastplate	125 primes	14 + Dex modifier (max 2)
Half Plate*	240 primes	15 + Dex modifier (max 2)
Bark Mail	32 primes	14
Splint*	175 primes	17
Shield	8 primes	2

* *Disadvantage on Stealth*

FISH FEATHERS

FOOD

Salmon jerky and hard cheese	4 greys
Fish and pinenut stew	3 greys
Smoked trout and hot rolls with cherry butter	7 greys
Vegetable pie	3 greys
Sliced potatoes with spinach spread	4 greys
Mixed nuts (sweet or salty)	2 greys
Baked apple with nuts and berries	4 greys
Dill bread and soft pinenut cheese	3 greys

DRINKS

Mixed berry juice	3 greys
Hazelnut cream	5 greys
Apricot mead	4 greys

BAIT AND TACKLE

Minnows	2 greys
Worms or grubs	1 grey
Flies	3 greys
Rod and reel	4 primes
Net	2p 50g
Vine Rope	2 primes
Bucket	10 greys

OPAL'S MARKET

GENERAL STORE

Barrel	1p
Blanket	30 greys
Bell	1 prime
Bucket	5 greys
Scimitar	26 primes
Crowbar	1 prime
Necklace with amulet	4 primes
Dulcimer	7 primes
Embroidered backpack	2p 50g
Hunting Trap	3 primes
Rope, Vine	1p 50g
Sack	15 greys
Healers Kit	2p 20g

GENERAL STORE

Hourglass	22 primes
Dice set	5 greys
Candle	2 greys
Manacles	1p 50g
Bolt of dyed cloth	1 prime
Potion of (random)	3 primes

SEARCHING

Search for a common item	50 percent
An uncommon item	33 percent
A simple magic item	10 percent
A rare magic items	1 percent

APPENDIX: NPC GENERATOR

RANDOM NPC TABLE

Use the sections below, as needed, to create random non-player characters.

ANCESTRY	D10	DOBBER NAMES	D10	WOODKIN NAMES	D10
Chipmunk	1	Boross	1	Petalthistle	1
Groundhog	2	Alda	2	Dewdrop	2
Otter	3	Tuck	3	Hibiscae	3
Porcupine	4	Juniper	4	Hazelpaw	4
Dobber	5	Kaden	5	Lichen	5
Dobber	6	Thadius	6	Luna	6
Racoon	7	Vatra	7	Nyx	7
Deeret	8	Hailey	8	Saffron	8
Tree	9	Owen	9	Sycamore	9
Crow	10	Keeley	10	Willoris	10

QUIRK	D10
Fond of useless trivia.	1
Always answers questions with questions.	2
Has a devious laugh.	3
Always carries a spoon in their pocket, "Just in case..."	4
Cannot admit to being wrong even when shown evidence of being wrong.	5
Flips a coin to make even the smallest decisions.	6
Speaks in the third person.	7
Mixes up idioms.	8
Has no sense of humor and treats jokes as serious statements.	9
Afraid of their own reflection.	10



For Grandpa

HITPOINT
PRESS

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INK GAMES

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has returned.*

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