

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®

Wardens of Wildwood

ADVENTURE PATH

Pactbreaker

By Andrew White



Verduran Forest

50 MILE



Sellen River

Hillhome

Bellis

Blackwood Moot

Wispil

The Desiccated Heath

Verduran Fork

Isle of Arenway

Sellen River

Dead Grove

Cassomir

TALDOR

Oppara

Almas

ANDORAN

GALT



PATHFINDER

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The fledgling empire of Taldor united in the shadow of the Verduran Forest, a primeval bastion of titanic trees, magical beasts, and ancient secrets. Yet as it grew, Taldor saw that wilderness less as a forbidden frontier and more as a resource. Settlers braved the dappled undergrowth to harvest duskwood, only to rile the beasts, fey, and those humanoids who had learned to live in balance with the wild realm. Over generations of cyclical violence, Taldan colonists gradually surrounded the Verduran Forest, picking away at its defenses, hacking away its borders, and quashing its uprisings. Only millennia later did Taldor and the forest's eminent druids—the Wildwood Lodge—negotiate lasting peace. This Treaty of the Wildwood has granted woodcutters a sustainable harvest in return for Taldor's oversight, protection, and conservation.

Yet most of the forest's inhabitants resent this fragile peace. Taldor and its former colonies surround the forest, having whittled it to a fraction of its prehistoric size. Dissidents gather to denounce the Wildwood Lodge's appeasement policies, all while gathering strength and waiting for an excuse to retaliate against Taldor and Andoran. As forest-dwellers gather for the annual Greenwood Gala, the election of Lodge leadership, and the renewal of the treaty, there's an opportunity to resolve old grudges—and as much potential to spark war.

Elemental Echoes

For all its grandeur, the Verduran Forest would not be what it is today without a forgotten elemental plane that vanished ages ago.

As the Elemental Planes coalesced in the multiverse's infancy, twelve powerful elemental beings established themselves as custodians of those six realms: the Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, Metal, Water, and Wood. Two ruled each plane, though not by choice. Instead, each pair vied for influence, forging bitter rivalries. The stalemate only ended after four of the demigods—Ayrzul, the Fossilized King; Hshurha, the Duchess of All Winds; Kelizandri, the Brackish Emperor; and Ymeri, Queen of the Inferno—formed a devious conspiracy.

Together, they isolated, subdued, and imprisoned their counterparts, allowing the four to rule their respective planes uncontested. Though the Planes of Metal and Wood played no part in this coup, those two realms grew weaker in the aftermath, gradually shrinking to the point of disappearing amid the other planes.

Even by the time of Earthfall 10,000 years ago, the Plane of Wood was an apocryphal memory on Golarion. Yet in the Verduran Forest, hints of that verdant realm survived: standing stones inscribed with indecipherable Muan text, seemingly immortal trees growing in perfect radial symmetry, fossilized roots tracing the paths of known ley lines, and more. As druidic traditions rebuilt in the Age of Darkness, they honored and incorporated some of these wonders into their primal magic.

These elemental influences lay dormant for ages until uncovered about 4,700 years ago by a desperate druid named Ghorus. Infuriated by Taldor's incursions into the Verduran Forest, Ghorus organized resistance through what would later be known as the Gorothe Lodge. In his quest to arm his allies with primal magic, he deciphered some of the ancient writings and ritually contacted the Plane of Wood, not knowing who might hear his plea. A demigod answered.

One of the rare beings known as a green man, Zibik wandered the Plane of Wood and was trapped within following the ancient elemental coup. Zibik listened mournfully and with growing rage as Ghorus described humanity's assault on the Verduran Forest. Though he could not cross into the Universe, Zibik taught Ghorus how to tap into the forest's latent elemental magic. With this power, Ghorus infamously developed and weaponized colossal plants, powerful relics, and rituals able to bury entire towns beneath vines. Even so, Taldor gradually prevailed, chasing Ghorus off the continent and destroying many of his creations. Ghorus took most secrets of the Plane of Wood with him, leaving behind caches of primal weapons that largely remain undiscovered to this day. Abroad in Nex, he continued developing plant magic and creatures, including the ghoran ancestry (*Pathfinder Lost Omens: Impossible Lands* 35).



Old Grudges, New Renegades

In the millennia since vanquishing Ghorus, Taldor has surrounded the Verduran Forest, harvesting its resources with a modicum of conservation. The Treaty of the Wildwood maintains relative peace, yet the forest remains a realm besieged by civilization. Each tree felled seeds another grudge against Andoren axes, and even ambivalent fey have lost patience. What none yet realize is that the Plane of Wood has faded back into the known multiverse, empowering the ancient magics that Ghorus once awakened.

During this Adventure Path, the PCs will endeavor to sustain the peace, but when an outspoken centaur becomes infected by elemental power, she becomes Zibik's new champion and threatens to unleash the Plane of Wood's fury upon southeastern Avistan.

Additional Reading

The encounters and supplemental articles included in this and subsequent volumes of the Wardens of Wildwood Adventure Path provide plenty of context for running this campaign. If you want a deeper look into the setting and lore of southwestern Avistan and the Elemental Planes, consider some of this additional reading material.

Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide: This overview of the Lost Omens setting provides an introduction to Andoran, Taldor, and the Verduran Forest—all found in the Shining Kingdoms chapter.

Pathfinder Rage of Elements: This book delves deeply into the Elemental Planes and their history. In addition, an entire chapter is dedicated to the Plane of Wood, including detailed lore, new character options the PCs might find during these adventures, and a host of creatures that primarily appear in the third volume, *Shepherd of Decay*.

Pathfinder Lost Omens: Gods & Magic: The Green Faith, presented on page 96, plays a major role in the Verduran Forest and the Wildwood Lodge. It doesn't quite reach the level of a state religion, but its timeless influence has shaped many beliefs and policies.

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Andoran, Birthplace of Freedom: Though Pathfinder Second Edition has not yet explored Andoran in depth, this earlier book provides a deep dive into the nation west of the Verduran Forest. Here you'll find more information about the beekeeping town of Bellis, the Lumber Consortium, Eagle Knights, and the nation's fraught history with fey relations.

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Taldor, The First Empire: Likewise, this book explores Taldor's geography, politics, and long history with the forest.

Campaign Summary

The campaign's three adventures are summarized below.

PACTBREAKER

By Andrew White

Pathfinder Adventure Path #201, Levels 5–7

Though they arrive as guests, the PCs are soon deputized as part-time guards for the annual Greenwood Gala, a festival associated with the Green Faith, and for the Moot of Ages, a convention for primal tradition power brokers. After entering competitions, making connections, and shutting down troublemakers, the PCs earn a privileged seat at the ceremony renewing the Treaty of the Wildwood—a ceremony ruined when saboteurs assassinate several of the Verduran Forest's eminent leaders. This is the final insult many forest dwellers needed; as vigilantes and militias of arboreals, fey, and beasts mobilize to punish Andoran and Taldor, the PCs must avert bloodshed and maintain order long enough for the Wildwood Lodge to choose a new leader and hopefully restore peace.

SEVERED AT THE ROOT

By Jessica Catalan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #202, Levels 8–10

Under surprising new leadership, the Wildwood Lodge begins a campaign of violence. Shocked, the PCs and their allies form a new lodge in exile to oppose this new regime. As they recruit new friends to their cause, the PCs must deny the Wildwood Lodge a powerful relic created by the renegade druid Ghorus, all while investigating the strange, primal magic the Wildwood Lodge has uncovered. If the PCs are to prevail, they will need to track down one of the Verduran Forest's most dangerous inhabitants and convince her to aid their cause—or ensure she cannot aid their enemy.

SHEPHERD OF DECAY

By Mike Kimmel

Pathfinder Adventure Path #203, Levels 11–13

Having neutralized the Wildwood Lodge's new weapons, the PCs and their allies assault the Wildwood Lodge directly to oust its murderous despot. Yet after recruiting local allies and besieging living fortresses, they discover their foe has fled to an unfamiliar realm: the Plane of Wood. The PCs pursue, arriving in an elemental town that is all too familiar with the Wildwood Lodge's trickery. The PCs must earn the inhabitants' trust and investigate their foe's final gambit before giving chase into a blighted wilderness and averting an invasion that could devastate the Verduran Forest.

Campaign Timeline

The following events provide precede and contribute to this campaign.

Date	Event
Prehistory	Four malevolent demigods seize control of the Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. The coup weakens the Planes of Metal and Wood, causing those planes to recede and seemingly disappear from reality. However, rare evidence of the Plane of Wood survived on Golarion, such as standing stones, legendary trees, and inscriptions in forgotten languages that were adapted into modern druidic cultures.
-1281 AR	General Taldaris conquers scattered city-states along the Inner Sea, founding what would become Taldor.
5 AR	Emboldened by Aroden's apotheosis, an expansionist mindset sweeps over Taldor. Settlers push into the Verduran Forest and other frontiers. Fey, arboreals, druids, centaurs, and beasts mount an uncoordinated resistance. Druidic elders take a frustratingly long view of their expansionist neighbors, knowing that their empires will one day crumble and be overgrown.
16 AR	Incensed by colonists' audacity and his colleagues' passivity, the human druid Ghorus rallies guerrilla forces to raid frontier settlements. The Taldan military bolsters its troops to fight this "savage" threat head-on.
19 AR	His resistance, now known as the Gorothe Lodge, fights fiercely but sustains irreplaceable losses. Ghorus seeks some advantage among the ancient stones and trees once shaped by the Plane of Wood, and using them as a focus, he calls out with his primal magic to see what answers. On the Plane of Wood, a green man hears the druid's distant whisper and responds. Although the green man cannot grant Ghorus reinforcements, he does teach Ghorus dangerous plant magic and elemental rituals.
36 AR	After years of research, construction, and growth, Ghorus deploys several of his new weapons: a counteroffensive

of animated crops, plant-beast hybrids, and more.

37 AR Shocked by this new threat, Taldor launches its First Army of Exploration, which destroys the druidic Gorothe Lodge. Ghorus flees to the Impossible Lands, burying those creations he can't safely smuggle with him. Many of his creations lie hidden, incomplete, or dormant. For the sake of peace, surviving druids denounce Ghorus, remembering him only as "the renegade druid."

499-3840 AR Through its Second, Third, and Fourth Armies of Exploration, Taldor steadily annexes the territories surrounding the Verduran Forest and shrinks its borders through logging. Taldan settlement and resource exploitation trigger druidic reprisals, spurring cyclical conflict in the forest that lasts for millennia.

3841 AR Taldor and the Wildwood Lodge sign the Treaty of the Wildwood, which formally establishes the Verduran Forest as a semiautonomous protectorate in exchange for peaceful behavior and a Taldan's harvesting only modest lumber quota. Despite minor incidents and complaints, the treaty works as intended for centuries.

4700 AR Valenar the Green becomes the elected leader of the Wildwood Lodge. In recent years, Andoran and Taldor have failed to enforce their lumber quotas, riling renewed resentment from Verduran inhabitants. Valenar's leadership helps reaffirm Verduran rights and protections.

4718 AR A succession crisis and civil war lead to Princess Eutropia claiming Taldor's throne. Her initiatives for Taldan innovation and rebuilding what the war destroyed place a heavy demand on timber, driving illegal harvesting. By now, Valenar the Green has grown tired from his political battles, yet local druids continue re-electing him anyway. Vigilante movements within the forest police their own territories and denounce the Treaty of the Wildwood.

4721 AR Violent events like the Broken Bridge Incident and the brief Seven-Stump War drive even greater tension.

4724 AR The current year.

Pactbreaker

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The PCs arrive at the Greenwood Gala, a festival coinciding with the annual Moot of Ages hosted by the druids of the Wildwood Lodge. As accomplished allies of the Lodge, the PCs socialize with notable guests and compete in a series of games for the coveted title of Wildwood Champion. But when a traditional ceremony on the festival's final day is stricken by unthinkable tragedy, the Wildwood Lodge and the future of the Verduran Forest itself are thrown into disarray.

Chapter 2: Wildfires 26

With the Lodge reeling in the wake of a deadly attack that could spark regional war, the PCs are recruited as peacekeepers to keep violence from spreading further. To identify flashpoints, they seek the sage Corazal, a living library with senses extending across the Verduran Forest.

Chapter 3: Fallen Leaves 54

The PCs return to find the Wildwood Lodge full of tension and mistrust, its elders gathered to elect a replacement leader for the one slain weeks ago. Though the PCs and their allies encourage peaceful candidates, a primal demagogue earns massive support and incites fresh violence against anyone who might threaten the forest. The PCs must rush to evacuate the Lodge's moderate members before they're branded as peace-loving traitors.

NO SYLVAN STRANGERS

The Wardens of Wildwood Adventure Path calls upon the PCs to stabilize the Verduran Forest, a primal, fractious realm stoked to outrage by relentless settlers, oft-ignored treaties, and (very soon) a brazen assassination. Even though the PCs recruit allies and aren't working alone, the challenges ahead would overwhelm novice adventurers. To this end, this Adventure Path does something unconventional: it starts the PCs at 5th level, rather than at 1st or 11th.

This presents the PCs as capable contributors to the region, to primal organizations (such as the Green Faith), or both. They might even be sylvan creatures in their own right, such as beastkin, sprites, or even awakened animals! Even so, the Verduran Forest hosts many creatures and NPCs far more powerful than the PCs are—at least for now. Together, this gives the PCs an edge while still preserving much of the mystery and danger of the Verduran Forest. In fact, all three volumes of this Adventure Path thrive on the weird and wonderful aspects of wilderness adventuring, pitting the PCs against perilous domains that provide refreshing spins on what a nature-themed campaign can be.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Pactbreaker" is designed for four characters.

- 5** The PCs begin this adventure at 5th level.
- 6** The PCs reach 6th level by the end of Chapter 1.
- 7** The PCs should reach 7th level after completing four of the five flashpoints in Chapter 2.
- The PCs should reach 8th level by the time they complete the adventure.

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Chapter 1: Seeds of Discontent

For nearly 900 years, druids of the Wildwood Lodge have hosted the Moot of Ages, a summit held every summer solstice on the Isle of Arenway. There, Green Faith practitioners from across Golarion gather to share their knowledge with the greater druidic community and choose a leader to represent the lodge for the coming year. Few other than these druids and primal sages are allowed on the island, yet the surrounding riverbanks have no such restriction. Just across the river, an unaffiliated festival called the Greenwood Gala springs up at the same time, attracting guests from across the forest and beyond: druids, fey, woodland folk, and even dignitaries representing foreign interests. Like the moot itself, the gala invites guests to share their achievements and

discoveries with the public. However, most attendees have less academic interests, instead traveling there to feast, dance, drink, and compete in contests of strength and skill.

The gala spans three days, officially concluding with a ceremonial exchange between representatives of the Verduran Forest and Taldor. The latter offers a bag of seeds in exchange for a piece of wood from the former, symbolically renewing the Treaty of the Wildwood that protects the Verduran Forest and grants Taldor limited lumber rights. Though the treaty keeps the peace, a sizable minority of forest folk grumble about its ramifications, opining that too much territory has been surrendered to Taldan despoilment. It doesn't help that the long-standing leader of the Wildwood

Lodge, Valenar the Green, plays a moderating (even conciliatory) role, tacitly enabling Taldan colonists who would harvest more than they're allowed. As Valenar considers retirement, hawkish candidates have maneuvered to lead the Wildwood Lodge and reassert the forest's sovereignty.

The PCs: This Adventure Path assumes the PCs are residents or allies of the Verduran Forest, potentially even members of the Wildwood Lodge, fey dignitaries, or representatives from distant Green Faith groups. Likewise, some PCs might exist outside of druidic or primal magic society, such as naturalists, foreign diplomats hoping to create something like the Treaty of the Wildwood for their homeland, and nature-loving souls seeking their next adventure. As 5th-level characters, the PCs are capable and might have a minor reputation, but they're not key contributors to the moot's business. Instead, they're here to provide a little extra security, build connections, show off some of their own projects, and enjoy the festivities—excellent activities for budding stars of the natural world. Additional recommendations for creating PCs appears in the *Wardens of Wildwood Player's Guide*.

The Greenwood Gala

This year's gala has dramatically exceeded its expected attendance, straining the organizers' resources to host a safe event. Hoping to deputize help at the last minute, a Wildwood Lodge senior councillor has recruited the PCs as part-time event security. The adventure begins as the PCs meet with this councillor, **Emorga All-Seer** (female awakened tortoise wizard), whose rune-etched shell is over 8 feet wide. Her wrinkled, leathery skin leaves no doubt as to her age, though her black eyes twinkle with spirit and intelligence.

"May the blessings of the Eld be upon you, friends. Never before has the Greenwood Gala welcomed so many guests! It is a wondrous sight, yet also a worrisome one—so many fey, forest folk, and festivities can create dangerous situations. It's far larger than any I remember, and it's more than the gala's organizers can monitor on their own. On behalf of the Wildwood Lodge, I invite you to serve as part-time security. You would still enjoy the gala, of course. And as you respect its rules and traditions, you would assist the organizers in ensuring other guests do the same."

Emorga happily shares any of the above background information if the PCs ask. Eventually, she good-naturedly shoos them out of her tent, exhorting them to enjoy the festival "instead of standing around gabbing with an old tortoise."

EXPLORING THE GALA

The Greenwood Gala features many scenes. The following summarizes these features and where to find them.

Meet and Greet (page 10): The PCs can meet and influence five major NPCs throughout the gala.

Incident Response (page 13): These short encounters can interrupt the gala, requiring the PCs' intervention.

Events (page 16): These are scheduled activities the PCs can join on specific days during the gala. Many of these earn the PCs Gala Prestige, determining who receives a prestigious award on the second day.



THE GALA GROUNDS

The Greenwood Gala is held in the area surrounding a large inlet on the southeast bank of the Verduran Fork, a short distance across the water from the Isle of Arenway itself. By the time the PCs arrive, numerous temporary structures have been erected throughout the area to accommodate the gala's offerings. Major features of the grounds are described below, all of which are open to the PCs at any time.

Amphitheater: Less a structure than a large clearing, this space's perimeter is lined with fallen logs and stone slabs that also serve as audience seating. Most of the gala's competitions and other spectator events take place here.

Bonfire: An enormous bonfire burns day and night at the end of the beach, surrounded at all times by a jubilant throng of nymphs, satyrs, and other like-minded guests caught up in a bacchanalia of music, dance, and general revelry. Others lounge about on the beach nearby, content to enjoy the music and enthusiastically welcoming any passersby to join them for a drink.

Docks and Campsite: A handful of makeshift wooden docks have been constructed here to accommodate incoming watercraft. A large number of tents clustered along the northern bank provide shelter for the attendees, mostly of a humanoid persuasion, who have arrived at the gala by boat.

Markets: The public market area is crowded with colorfully decorated booths occupied by vendors hawking all manner of goods, both mundane and

VERDURAN ODDITIES

Though the Greenwood Gala shares some touchstones with mundane festivals, its strong fey influences and eclectic attendees provide a dizzying experience. A PC might encounter a human fruit vendor selling apples just across from a wizened gremlin offering his own teeth in exchange for one's most treasured childhood memories—and the apples might turn out to be the stranger of the two offerings. Sprites of all kinds caper through the boughs and flit across the sky. A talking bear and a lovely young woman with a cow's tail waltz across the beach, accompanied by phantom music emanating from a singing flower. Depending upon their background, these sorts of sights may not faze the PCs at all, but it could nonetheless be a unique experience for their players.



bizarre. PCs can typically locate common items of level 5 and lower, and at the GM's discretion, they might discover uncommon or higher-level goods, particularly those with strong ties to nature or primal magic.

Exhibition Stages: These modest wooden stages, meant for performances and demonstrations, are open for use by anyone lucky enough to find one empty.

Pavilion Tents: These large and colorful tents are reserved for Wildwood Lodge dignitaries and special guests, and they remain largely empty during the day while most of the Lodge druids conduct business for the moot on the Isle of Arenway.

EVENT SECURITY

The gala demands basic standards of safety, property, and integrity. Violence beyond roughhousing is prohibited, except to protect attendees. Theft and fraud are forbidden, as is using magic on other attendees without explicit consent. Anyone participating in one of the competitions is expected to abide by the rules; cheaters are disqualified and might be banned from future competitions. Finally, fire is tightly controlled, with the bonfire along the beach being one of the few sanctioned pyres. Fire magic is not banned outright, but using it heightens the severity of any other infractions committed, and irresponsible pyromancy earns a harsh reprimand. Enforcing these rules and keeping order is part of the PCs' unofficial

role at the gala. When an altercation does erupt, a pair of awakened trees typically arrives within a minute, followed shortly afterward by the gala's head of security, Inrik Vanderholl. This means the PCs are often the first responders to a nearby crisis, but they can rely on eventual reinforcements if necessary.

AWAKENED TREES (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Monster Core 25

Initiative Perception +13

INRIK VANDERHOLL

CREATURE 4

Dwarf elite tracker (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 219, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6)

Initiative Perception +15

Items +1 striking shock composite longbow

Ranged composite longbow +13 (deadly 1d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus 1d6 electricity

GALA COMPETITIONS

The Greenwood Gala crowns a Wildwood Champion each year, honoring the attendee who most distinguished themselves throughout the gala's many competitions. Three such competitions appear in this adventure: the caber toss (page 17), the flying contest (page 19), and the prismati tournament (page 21). In each competition, participating PCs can earn Gala Prestige, which tracks their overall score to determine a winner at the end of the second day.

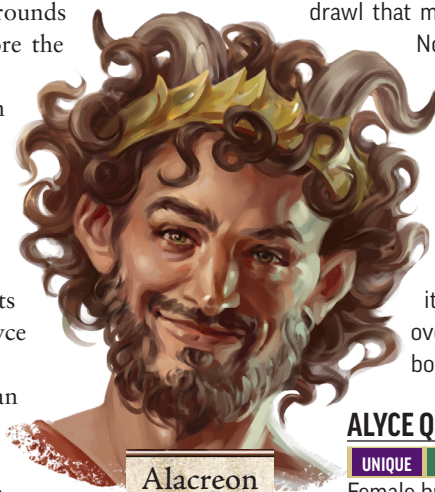
Although the team events can earn Gala Prestige for the whole party, each PC tracks their total separately. You might add additional competitions to expand the gala experience and provide additional opportunities to the PCs, though you should consider increasing the total Gala Prestige needed to win to reflect the higher scores that are likely to result.

Meet and Greet

The gala attracts myriad guests of high esteem, ranging from foreign dignitaries to woodland celebrities to ambitious up-and-comers. The PCs have numerous opportunities to socialize with these characters, both during and between events. This uses the influence subsystem (*Pathfinder GM Core* 187), with a typical social round lasting about 30 minutes. Achieving Influence Points for a particular NPC can affect their behavior in later scenes and potentially earn the PCs treasures as gifts.

Influence Rounds: The PCs have up to 8 influence rounds during the gala, plus several additional opportunities to earn or lose Influence Points, summarized as follows.

- On Day 1, the PCs have 2 social rounds during the day, plus 3 more during the feast (page 18).
- On Day 2, the PCs have 3 social rounds (1 early in the day, and 2 before the award ceremony).
- On Day 3, the PCs can earn additional Influence Points by providing aid following the attack on the gala.
- The No Refunds (page 14) and Bees! (page 14) incidents can earn additional Influence Points for Tanasha Starborne and Alyce Quinley.
- The prismati game (page 21) can earn an additional Influence Point for Alacreon.
- The award ceremony (page 24) might reduce the Influence Points earned for Khasprickle.



Alacreon

ALACREON, THE LAUGHING PRINCE CREATURE 8

UNIQUE MEDIUM FEY

Male satyr hedonist

Perception +15

Will +17

Discovery DC 18 Nature, DC 22 Perception, DC 20 Society

Influence Skills DC 19 Performance (to amuse Alacreon with a song, dance, or joke), DC 20 Nature (to demonstrate wilderness knowledge), DC 21 Society (to swap rumors), DC 22 Diplomacy, DC 24 Deception

Influence 3 Alacreon's attitude toward the PCs is friendly, which affects the Captive Audience quest in Chapter 2.

Influence 5 Alacreon's attitude toward the PCs is helpful. This can sway his vote in Chapter 3, and he gives the PC a *jug of fond remembrance* (Treasure Vault 115) as a gift.

Resistances Humorless or overly aggressive PCs discourage Alacreon; characters who express annoyance at his carefree attitude or attempt to Intimidate him receive a -2 penalty to Influence him for the remainder of the gala.

Weaknesses Any PC who shares a drink with Alacreon or responds positively to his flirtatious overtures gains a +2 circumstance bonus on checks made to Influence him.

Background Alacreon is the de facto leader of the Blackwood satyrs, an incorrigible group of fey known for using charm to get what they want. Accompanied by a revolving cast of eccentrics, the Laughing Prince has drifted around the forest for as long as most remember.

Appearance Alacreon is lean and muscular, with powerful cloven-hoofed goat legs, a mane of tousled sandy-brown hair, and an impressive pair of horns framing a ruggedly handsome face with piercing eyes. Like other Wildwood satyrs, he exudes a sweet aroma of blackwood tar.

Personality Alacreon's demeanor is casual, friendly, and playfully mischievous. He speaks in a soft, slow drawl that makes him seem slightly intoxicated.

Novel carnal experiences pique his interest, from strange foods to romantic flings. The Laughing Prince flirts shamelessly with any character who strikes his fancy, ceasing if his advances are clearly unreciprocated.

Location Caring little for the gala itself, Alacreon usually holds court over a motley gathering at the beach bonfire.

ALYCE QUINLEY CREATURE 6

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human Eagle Knight

Perception +17

Will +14

Discovery DC 18 Andoran Lore, DC 20 Perception, DC 22 Society

Influence Skills DC 20 Diplomacy, DC 21 Nature (to appeal to her druidic background), DC 24 Deception, DC 28 Intimidation

Influence 3 Alyce's attitude toward the PCs is friendly, which affects the Grove of Tears quest in Chapter 2.

Influence 5 Alyce's attitude toward the PCs is helpful, and she gives them a sprig of *primeval mistletoe* (a traditional token of respect from her Greenfire upbringing) as a gift.

Resistances Alyce despises liars and bullies; a PC who fails a Deception or Intimidation check to Influence her takes a -2 penalty on all future checks made to Influence her further.

Weaknesses Alyce appreciates people who can discuss politics and share some of her democratic ideals. When incorporating these topics, a PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus on checks made to Influence her.

Background Raised by druids and trained by Andoran's famous Eagle Knights, Alyce leads patrols through Andoran's forests to maintain security and legal compliance for the region's timber industry. Although Andoran has no treaty with the Wildwood Lodge, it sends an emissary to the Greenwood Gala each year to show solidarity and gather intelligence. This is Alyce's third year in the role. The friends she's made are vastly outnumbered by forest folk who loathe the Andoran-based Lumber Consortium's many transgressions. Secretly, she shares this disdain for the Consortium, harboring a hatred for the political corruption that has empowered that company and smothered independent woodcutters.

Additional information for Alyce appears on page 90.

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Appearance Alyce is an athletic young woman with light brown skin and dark brown hair. Her specialized Eagle Knight uniform sports several slashes of blue and gold but is otherwise designed for woodland camouflage.

Personality Alyce is friendly yet guarded, aware that her indirect association with the Lumber Consortium makes her unpopular with some attendees. She knows that few here care about Andoran's political intricacies and how she's working to reform frontier policies; any nuanced negativity she'd express would just fuel distrust of Andoran. However, she's eager to talk politics with anyone equipped with the knowledge and insight the subject deserves.

Penalty A PC who openly sympathizes with the Lumber Consortium, denounces Andoran democracy, or dismisses the basic rights of individuals takes a -4 penalty to their next check to Influence Alyce.

Location Alyce wanders the whole gala. She periodically retires to her tent at the campsite.



Khasprickle

Background Tanasha is the Taldan senate's elected representative from the gnome settlement of Wispil, the heart of Taldor's logging operations in the Verduran Forest. Despite growing tired of politics, Tanasha understands her role's importance in Queen Eutropia's new Taldor, ensuring that the interests of all Verduran inhabitants are well represented in the capital, Oppara.

Appearance Tanasha wears fashionable clothing in various shades of green and blue. She keeps her well-coiffed hair and eyebrows vibrantly hued in a wide array of colors, typically topped off with creative applications of illusion magic.

Personality Tanasha dutifully represents Taldor, but her political job isn't her life. She's far more enthusiastic about other passions, such as arcane magic, music, and theater. She's adept at diplomatically removing herself from conversations that bore her.

Location Tanasha may be encountered anywhere at the gala, but she particularly enjoys exploring the markets and attending presentations on the open stages.

TANASHA STARBORNE

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE SMALL GNOME HUMANOID

Female gnome aristocrat sorcerer

Perception +11

Will +13

Discovery DC 20 Arcana, DC 22 Perception, DC 18 Society

Influence Skills DC 19 Arcana (to discuss arcane magic with Tanasha), DC 20 Performance, DC 20 Society, DC 21 Diplomacy, DC 25 Intimidation, DC 26 Deception

Influence 3 Tanasha's attitude toward the PCs is friendly, and she's happy to facilitate introductions to another key NPC (either now or later in Chapter 3). When the PCs redeem this favor, Tanasha provides information as if the PCs had critically succeeded at a Discovery check and successfully Aids the PCs' first Influence check for that NPC.

Influence 5 Tanasha's attitude toward the PCs is helpful, and she gives them a *wand of speak with animals* as a gift, joking that they can use it to find more entertaining conversationalists in case anyone here bores them.

Resistances Despite (or perhaps because of) her position in the Taldan senate, Tanasha is dreadfully bored by politics. PCs who expect her to talk politics away from Oppara, or who seem otherwise dull or overly pessimistic, take a -2 penalty on checks made to Influence her.

Weaknesses Tanasha is delighted by exuberant displays of magic and pure expressions of joy; PCs who demonstrate either gain a +2 circumstance bonus on checks made to Influence her.

KHASPRICKLE

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE SMALL FEY

Male pukwudgie agitator

Perception +17

Will +17

Discovery DC 18 Nature, DC 20 Perception, DC 22 Society

Influence Skills DC 19 Diplomacy (to shamelessly flatter Khasprickle), DC 20 Deception (to disingenuously agree with Khasprickle), DC 21 Occultism (to play into his conspiracy theories), DC 24 Intimidation

Influence 3 Khasprickle's attitude toward the PCs is indifferent. He gives them three *bloodseeker beak* talismans, encouraging them to add some mayhem to this disappointingly bloodless festival.

Influence 5 Khasprickle's attitude toward the PCs is friendly, which can affect encounters with him in a later adventure. Once he learns that the PCs have used at least one of the *bloodseeker beaks*, he also gives them a flawed *wounding rune*. This rune requires additional work, representing 100 gp worth of reagents that the PCs might pay for or Craft themselves during downtime.

Resistances Khasprickle dislikes PCs who are clearly not Verduran Forest natives or whom he believes to be hobnobbing excessively with foreign interests (as demonstrated by their having gained 2 or more Influence with Tanasha Starborne or Alyce Quinley). Such characters take a -2 circumstance penalty on checks to Influence him.

Weaknesses Khasprickle considers the Treaty of the Wildwood to be an unforgivable betrayal by the Wildwood Lodge, and any PCs claiming to share this opinion gain a +2 circumstance bonus on checks made to Influence him.

Background Khasprickle is unlikable and oversensitive even for a pukwudgie, driving him to recruit equally unsavory sycophants. He primarily attends the gala out of spite, assuming that he wouldn't be welcome and that he could then enjoy pouting self-righteously. Thus far, attendees are mostly ignoring him, not challenging him, and it's put him in an awkward social situation.

Personality Khasprickle craves acceptance almost as much as he does respect and automatically gravitates toward any fey or forest-native PCs that he sees as peers, showering them with praise and desperately seeking their approval. Of course, as soon as they disappoint him by failing to live up to his unfounded expectations, his fawning attitude swiftly turns to seething contempt. Like all pukwudgies, he is extremely sensitive to personal affronts and takes even the tiniest perceived slight as a grave insult, meaning that all but the most accomplished flatterers and sycophants are bound to end up on his bad side sooner or later.

Easily Offended Critically failing a check to Influence Khasprickle causes the PCs to lose 1d3 Influence Points with him.

Location Khasprickle wanders the gala. Though gala policies (and his own cowardice) prevent him from engaging in outright violence, he eagerly attends events and heckles the PCs once he knows they exist. He tends not to antagonize PCs he doesn't resent, particularly those who have earned Influence Points with him.

RUZADOYA AND VANDALYA SWIFTMANE CREATURE 6

UNIQUE LARGE BEAST

Female centaur dissidents

Perception +12

Will +11

Discovery DC 20 Perception, DC 19 Society

Influence Skills DC 20 Scouting Lore (to discuss the Verduran Forest's vulnerable borders), DC 20 Survival (to prove yourself a capable hunter), DC 21 Athletics (to physically impress the sisters), DC 21 Deception, DC 22 Diplomacy, DC 25 Intimidation

Influence 3 The centaurs' attitude toward the PCs is indifferent. This impacts Vandalya's actions in Chapter 3.



Influence 5 The centaurs' attitude toward the PCs is friendly. They bequeath a *fighter's fork* engraved with a *striking rune* to the PCs while expressing their understanding that the PCs will advocate centaurs' needs in the future.

Resistances Although the Swiftmane clan is ostensibly loyal to the Wildwood Lodge, Ruzadoya and Vandalya have no patience for those who support the Lodge unconditionally or seem dismissive of grievances against it. Any PCs expressing such sentiments take a -2 penalty on further attempts to Influence them.

Weaknesses Both sisters reserve their highest respect for displays of physical strength and endurance. PCs who successfully repel a dangerous threat from the gala grounds,

earn at least 5 Victory Points during the caber toss event (page 17), or play on the winning prismati team (page 21) gain a +2 circumstance bonus on checks made to Influence them.

Background Ruzadoya has come to the Greenwood Gala with an agenda. Following the ceremony on the final day, one of the few events for which Valenar the Green leaves the Isle of Arenway, she intends to confront and personally demand restitution from the Wildwood Lodge's archdruid for centuries of incalculable losses enabled by the Treaty of the Wildwood against her clan's ancestral hunting grounds. Vandalya fully supports her sister in this endeavor.

Appearance Ruzadoya's and Vandalya's family resemblance is obvious; both are powerful and muscular, with brown, battle-scarred skin and cascading dark hair braided with colorful medallions and charms. They carry massive longbows across their backs and wear armor made of still-living wood known as greenwood.

Personality Ruzadoya is proud and commanding, sparing little time for niceties and less patience for those who disagree with her. Vandalya shares most of her sister's opinions, and knows better than to openly challenge her on any that she doesn't.

Location The Swiftmane sisters wander the gala, often observing the competitive events. They avoid Alacreon's bonfire.

Incident Response

Though the Greenwood Gala boasts scheduled events, unplanned drama can spring up without warning. At your discretion, the following incidents occur unexpectedly—ideally when most or all of the PCs are in the same area.

Pactbreaker

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INCIDENT: NO REFUNDS

SEVERE 5

This incident best fits the market, though its key characters could easily chase each other into other areas. At first, the PCs spot a well-dressed and agitated gnome arguing with nearby foliage.

"Look, this is all just a misunderstanding!" the gnome sputters, mopping his brow. "You don't understand. It's worthless to you. I have money! Just let me pay you for it. Name your price!"

The bush he's speaking to rustles, causing the clusters of red berries on its branches to dance irritably. A telepathic message, unheard but unmistakable, ripples through the crowd, a simple phrase spoken in a deep, gravelly voice. "No. Refunds."

Tobinnalkim (male gnome emissary) is a minor attaché from Wispil, a predominantly gnomish settlement in the Verduran Forest. He's part of Tanasha Starborne's retinue, though last night he wandered off alone, partied with the satyr Alacreon, and became deeply intoxicated. While in search of something to eat, he encountered a talking bush interested in bartering some of its berries to him. Tobin didn't question it; he'd already seen stranger sights at the gala while sober. After waking up the next morning, the gnome found himself with a case of buyer's remorse to rival his splitting hangover. He had inadvertently traded away an item of immense sentimental, if not monetary, value: a decorative brass pendant purchased during a long-ago visit to Qadira. He hurried back to the bush, hoping to buy back his memento, only to be rebuffed. Upon spotting the PCs, Tobin signals them for help, hoping they can help him resolve this "misunderstanding."

The merchant is a drainberry bush, a telepathic plant from the First World. It's adopted the name All-Sales-Final, though nobody knows if it understands the concept of names or is simply repeating a favorite phrase. The bush telepathically converses with others in short, simple phrases, usually to learn what potential clients might trade in exchange for a cluster of its delicious berries. It's uninterested in money and most conventional valuables, but it might respond favorably (usually signaling "Give" or "Want that") to a PC who offers it something particularly unique or striking.

All-Sales-Final is staunchly uninterested in returning the gnome's pendant, simply repeating "No refunds" whenever asked. However, it's open to a possible trade: the pendant in exchange for some fey token of great potency. It has no idea where to get such a gift, just that it would like to have one.

Creatures: All-Sales-Final's troll bodyguard Otis is lurking close to the drainberry bush at all times, having used *one with plants* to transform into a nearby tree. Should the PCs threaten violence or attempt to take the bush's treasures against its will, Otis drops his disguise and comes to All-Sales-Final's aid.

ALL-SALES-FINAL

CREATURE 7

Drainberry bush (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 99)

OTIS

CREATURE 5

Variant troll (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 330)

Primal Innate Spells DC 21; **2nd** *one with plants* (×3)

Seeking Security: If the PCs mention All-Sales-Final to event security (page 10), Inrik says that the bush has caused (and been reprimanded for) similar problems in the past. He'd like the PCs to undo All-Sales's mischief and chase it off, not-so-subtly implying he'd look the other way if the PCs decide to "prune" it.

Treasure: If the PCs recover and return Tobin's pendant, he is overjoyed and thanks the PCs profusely, offering them 75 gp as a reward and promising hospitality should they ever visit his home city of Wispil.

Special: Upon learning of the PCs' assistance, Tanasha Starborne personally seeks them out to offer her thanks, earning them 1 Influence Point with her.

INCIDENT: BEES!

SEVERE 5

Among the exhibitors is **Leto Deschamps** (male human druid), who proudly demonstrates his latest innovation before a row of clay pots. An audience of about 50 people watch with interest. Read or paraphrase the following.

Hauling the last clay pot into place, the druid raises both arms triumphantly. "I know what you're thinking. How exciting can it really be to watch flowers grow, right? Your perspective will change when I demonstrate my incredible new technique: by harnessing the innate primal energies surrounding us right now, I can induce these ordinary bulbs to full bloom in not days, not hours, not minutes, but seconds! Behold!"

With a flourish, he sprinkles a handful of soil over each pot. Within moments, a cluster of vivid blossoms bursts from each pot with an audible pop, dusting the entire area in a light coat of fine yellow pollen. The crowd's muttering becomes enthusiastic applause.

Creatures: An unintended side effect of Leto's largely untested magical growth formula is about to become apparent. On the neighboring exhibition stage, **Azalea** (female gnome druid) is demonstrating

her own technique: adapting the cantrip *guidance* to communicate with bees and stimulate honey production. The soft breeze wafts the magical pollen from Leto's demonstration toward Azalea's hives, driving her bees into a frenzy. The insects pour from the hives, swarming toward the intoxicating flowers and chasing off other creatures with a flurry of stings.

When this incident begins, the PCs are about 60 feet from the crowd and bees. Unless attacked by a nearby threat, the swarms fly through the crowd, increasing casualties. A swarm converges on lethal threats (like the PCs), limiting that swarm's impact on the bee-induced panic hazard below.

BEE SWARMS (2) CREATURE 4

Wasp swarms (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 343)

Initiative Perception +10

Hazard: The bees furiously sting everyone and everything in the area unlucky enough to be covered in pollen, including nearby performers and audiences. In addition to neutralizing the bee swarms directly, the PCs minimize the harm caused by the panicking mob. This is tracked by a Casualties score that starts at 0 and approximates the damage inflicted on and by bystanders.

BEE-INDUCED PANIC HAZARD 5

UNIQUE COMPLEX

Description Enraged bees spread panic, causing the crowd to trample each other in a desperate attempt to escape.

Disable DC 22 Diplomacy (expert) to calm the panicked crowd and guide them to safety, DC 20 Medicine (trained) to attend to victims' injuries, or DC 21 Nature (expert) to instruct the crowd on how best to protect themselves from bees. Alternatively, a PC able to communicate with insects can instead attempt a DC 18 Diplomacy (trained) check to calm and redirect the bees. Three successful checks are required to completely disable the hazard. The hazard is automatically disabled after 5 rounds or once both swarms are defeated.

Routine ◆◆◆ Panicked attendees suffer stings and accidentally injure one another in their fear and confusion. Increase the Casualties score by 1. This increases to 1d3 if one swarm is stinging the crowd, and it increases to 1d3+1 if both swarms are stinging the crowd.

Treasure: After the swarms and the mob have been dealt with, a grateful Azalea offers the PCs two doses of *lesser vermin repellent agent* as a reward. Leto offers them 19 gp and his last three unsprouted *primal pollen* bulbs, acknowledging that while the PCs probably

don't have much use for them, he'd rather not risk anyone else getting ahold of one. Each functions as an inhaled poison that must be planted in the soil as an Interact action, then immediately sprouts into a flower that fills a 10-foot-cube with its intoxicating pollen, with the cube centered on the flower.

PRIMAL POLLEN ITEM 5

CONSUMABLE INHALED MAGICAL POISON PRIMAL

Price 25 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ◆ (manipulate)

This magical flower immediately grows and blooms when planted, showering the area with intoxicating pollen. Insects take a -4 penalty on Fortitude saves to resist this poison.

Saving Throw DC 20; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** fascinated and slowed 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** confused and slowed 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** confused (1 round); **Stage 4** unconscious

Special: If the PCs keep the Casualties count to 5 or lower, they gain 1 Influence Point for their choice of Tanasha Starborne or Alyce Quinley.

INCIDENT: POWER COUPLE MODERATE 5

The PCs spot **Delg Logsplitter** (male orc druid) and **Frangelica** (female goblin inventor) sweeping shards of glass from the floor of a tent near the exhibition stages. Read or paraphrase the following.

Visible just inside this tent is a complex device composed of numerous wheels and belts. A thick bundle of copper wires leads from the heart of the device to a plain metal plate embedded in the bottom of what must once have been a glass cube, now shattered into pieces. A ragged tear runs the full height of the back wall of the tent, as though something had ripped its own tent flap rather than using the existing one.

When he notices the PCs, Delg flags them down and requests their help. Frangelica, Delg's partner and a brilliant inventor from Kortos, has come to the Greenwood Gala to demonstrate her latest invention: a complex mechanical device powered entirely by bioelectricity. Normally, the glass chamber would contain Delg's elemental companion Tumbo, a spark bat trained to generate powerful electric shocks at the ringing of a special bell, with each jolt producing enough power to run the attached device for over an hour. Frangelica is coy about what the device actually does, explaining that making it work is her job; giving it a purpose is someone else's. The device can't work

without Tumbo, however, and someone has stolen both him and his bell.

In exchange for their help recovering Tumbo, Delg and Frangelica are willing to offer the PCs a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in their endeavor, promising them wealth beyond their wildest dreams. Or, if the PCs aren't suitably impressed, the pair can gather an assortment of useful gadgets as compensation.

Investigation: Delg and Frangelica have no idea who stole Tumbo, but their method is obvious: the back of the tent has been forcibly ripped open, and a series of large tracks are clearly visible in the soft earth outside. Anyone studying these tracks who succeeds at a DC 22 Nature check recognizes that they were left by a stormdrinker, an intelligent plant that feeds on electricity.

Pursuit: The PCs can use the Track exploration activity to follow the stormdrinker's trail by attempting a DC 18 Survival check. If the PCs fail this check, they're able to identify and follow the trail eventually, but the delay affords the stormdrinker additional time to feed; the stormdrinker begins the imminent encounter with its Absorb Shock benefits active and gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its initiative. After two hours of tracking, the PCs perceive the distinct chime of a bell coming from a thicket ahead of them.

Creatures: Engrossed in its bell, its new pet, and its ability to use the former to motivate the latter to generate a euphoric burst of electricity, the stormdrinker is oblivious to the approach of any PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Stealth check. If alerted, the stormdrinker attacks immediately, usually ringing the bell as its first action each round. As long as the PCs don't harm it, Tumbo clings to the stormdrinker and takes no actions beyond biting the stormdrinker whenever prompted. If attacked or injured, he defends himself to the best of its ability. The stormdrinker tries to stay near Tumbo, attacking anyone who tries to tear the bat away.

STORMDRINKER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON LARGE PLANT

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common, Fey (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +17, Stealth +13 (+17 in forests or swamps)

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

AC 23; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

HP 145; **Immunities** electricity; **Resistances** fire 5

Absorb Shock Whenever the stormdrinker would take electricity damage or is targeted with an electricity effect, it gains 10 temporary HP, is quickened, and increases the reach of its vine Strikes by 5 feet until the end of its next turn. It can use its extra action to Stride, Strike, or Swim.

Speed 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ vine +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning plus Grab

Lightning Blast ♦♦ **Requirements** The stormdrinker is quickened due to Absorb Shock; **Effect** The stormdrinker dismisses its Absorb Shock benefits to expel lightning in a 60-foot line, dealing 8d6 electricity damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save).

Ring Bell ♦ (auditory) **Requirements** The stormdrinker is carrying a bell; **Effect** The stormdrinker rings its bell, signaling Tumbo to bite him once. (Multiple bites don't stack their effects on the stormdrinker.) The stormdrinker can't use this ability when it doesn't have its bell, such as if it is Disarmed.

Vine Lash ♦♦ The stormdrinker makes a vine Strike against each creature within reach. Its multiple attack penalty increases only after all the attacks.

TUMBO

CREATURE 2

Spark bat (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 106)

Initiative Perception +7

Conditioned Response If he hears a bell ring, Tumbo bites a nearby metal lead or (if one is not available) an adjacent creature at the beginning of his turn, if possible.

Resolution: Once the stormdrinker is destroyed, Tumbo allows the PCs to transport him back to the gala grounds without further incident. If the spark bat is safely returned to Frangelica, she thanks them profusely. Otherwise, she sadly thanks them for their trouble, ruefully admitting that she of all people understands that accidents happen; this certainly isn't the first Tumbo.

Treasure: If the PCs successfully rescued Tumbo, Delg and Frangelica reward them with a pair of *gadget skates* (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 70), an *electromuscular stimulator* (*Guns & Gears* 68), and a second once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in their invention. If Tumbo didn't survive, they may choose the skates or the goggles, but not both.

Day 1

The first day starts slowly, with guests more interested in catching up with old friends than watching events. Guests bring out their more perishable food, making a point to prepare large quantities that they can share with passersby, turning the fairgrounds into a massive, improvised cookout.

This provides the PCs two social rounds to find and Influence key NPCs. As they wander the gala, the PCs also learn about the imminent caber tossing event, where any athlete can show off their strength and agility by hurling logs.

EVENT: CABER TOSS

Popularized by Taldan loggers, this competition challenges athletes to lift, carry, and heave a heavy pole underhand. A participant earns points based on the distance of their throw, whether the pole sticks into the ground, and the angle at which it falls (with a pole toppling in the direction it was thrown being best). This event takes place at the amphitheater.

Forming a Team: At the Greenwood Gala, caber-tossing involves small teams of 1–4 athletes. Each athlete makes multiple throws, and only the team's best three throws are scored. Depending on how many PCs want to participate, they might form one or multiple teams. The key NPC Khasprickle (page 12) has already formed a team of three accomplished athletes (detailed below), though Khasprickle avoids competing himself to avoid potential embarrassment.

Contest Rules: When it's a team's turn to throw, one team member who hasn't already competed throws the caber up to three times, and a judge records each throw's points. After each other team has taken a turn, the process repeats until every athlete has participated. The judge then adds up each team's best three throws to determine final scores. If there is a tie, one athlete from each of those teams gets an additional throw whose score acts as a tiebreaker.

CABER TOSS

CONCENTRATE **MANIPULATE**

You precariously heft a caber, jog a short distance, and heave it end over end. First, attempt a DC 19 Acrobatics check to keep the caber balanced as you move. If you succeed, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to the subsequent Athletics check. If you critically succeed, increase the circumstance bonus to +3.

Second, attempt a DC 21 Athletics check or a ranged attack against AC 22 (the caber belongs to the club weapon group) to hurl the caber.

Critical Success Your exceptional throw earns 4 points.

Success Your throw lands off-kilter yet earns 1d3 points.

Failure You struggle to throw the caber, earning no points.

Critical Failure You stumble while lifting or tossing the caber, injuring yourself in the process. You earn no points, you take 1d10 bludgeoning damage, and you are enfeebled 1 for the rest of the contest.

The Competition

Khasprickle's team includes three athletes he's cajoled into competing for him. None of them consider the pukwudgie a friend, but the three have developed a friendly camaraderie.

THUJA

Female wood giant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 124)

Thuja has won the caber toss event five times in six years thanks to her powerful physique. Nonetheless, she behaves with humility and respect toward other competitors.

Skills Athletics +15, Acrobatics +13

Special Wanting a fair competition, Thuja elects to make only two throws.

HERKLE SALTBIARI

Male spriggan (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 252)

Lanky and appearing perpetually bedraggled, Herkle resents anyone taller than he is.

If angered, he magically grows to triple his normal height.



Thuja

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WHERE'S VALENAR?

For all its spectacle, the Greenwood Gala isn't the official gathering for members of the Wildwood Lodge. High-ranking members instead meet on the Isle of Arenway, traveling there on skiffs in the morning for the Moot of Ages and adjourning near sundown to their tents near the fairground. Many make brief appearances at the gala. A few, including Valenar the Green, spend the whole event on the Isle of Arenway to focus on Lodge business and avoid overshadowing any demonstrations in the exhibit area. Only on the third day does Valenar emerge, primarily to perform the ceremony renewing the Treaty of the Wildwood.



Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10

Special Herkle has an unconventional strategy: he purposefully fumbles his first throw and hurts himself to activate his enraged growth ability. This increases his size to Large and grants him a +2 status bonus to Acrobatics and Athletics checks. The strategy is risky; if Herkle critically fails a second time, he immediately reverts to his normal size and becomes too fatigued to make more throws.

GUSTO BARRELBELTER

Male wereboar (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 290)

Belying the stereotype of the antisocial, short-tempered wereboar, Gusto is an affable fellow with a booming, infectious laugh. The only thing he loves more than food, drink, and friendly competition is betting, and he will eagerly wager with PCs on the outcome of any competition (maximum 50 gp total), including the caber toss.

Skills Athletics +11, Acrobatics +9

Special Despite Gusto's amiable attitude, he still doesn't like to lose, and streaks of bad luck quickly sober him up. If the competitor who Tossed a Caber before him earned at least 4 points from their throws, Gusto gains a +1 circumstance bonus to his Athletics checks. If he's bet at least 10 gold on the competition, this bonus increases to +2.

Gala Prestige: A team's score is the sum of its team's three best throws. The team with the highest score wins the competition, earning each team member 3 Gala Prestige; if two teams are tied for the highest score, they each elect a competitor to make one additional

throw to break the tie. For each team, the competitor who earned the most points for the team is its most valuable player (MVP), earning that competitor 1 additional Gala Prestige. So long as a competitor successfully Tossed a Caber at least once, they earn 1 Gala Prestige.

Treasure: If a PC successfully Tosses a Caber at least twice (or critically succeeds once), Thuja acknowledges their strength by gifting them her own caber. After she whittles it down for them, it functions as an *animal staff* that weighs 2 Bulk. The staff meets the drainberry bush All-Sales's requirements (page 14), should the PCs wish to trade it for Tobin's pendant.

EVENT: FEAST

At sunset, the rumbling bellow of immense wooden horns signals a great feast is ready, open to all attendees. Thick oaken tables supported by gnarled stumps sag from the tantalizing bounty of delicacies from every corner of the forest: wild mushrooms, nuts, fresh fruit, trays of dripping honeycomb, and platters piled high with steaming slabs of slow-cooked venison, rabbit, and other wild game. On either end of the amphitheater, additional tables overflow with offerings brought by foreign visitors: fine wines from Kyonin, fragrant cheeses from Taldor, and golden-shelled sweet and savory pies from Andoran. Animated trees trundle slowly back and forth across the area, dutifully replacing emptied platters and pitchers with full ones.

Social Rounds: The feast lasts approximately 2 hours, providing the PCs with 3 social rounds to influence NPCs. With so many people to meet, these key NPCs would rather not spend the entire evening with any one PC. A PC takes a penalty to Influence checks equal to the number of social rounds they have already spent with that NPC so far at the feast (maximum -2 on the third round).

A Toast: As the second social round begins, a hush falls over the crowd as **Xivaga** (male wood giant druid), a Wildwood Lodge elder and the official host of the Greenwood Gala, rises to his feet and raises a wooden mug in a toast.

"Friends, visitors, and fellow folk of the Verduran Forest. Tonight, we gather to celebrate the bounty of the forest, the magic of the Eld, and the spirit of friendship that brought us here today, whether we hail from the wildest depths of the wood or the soaring cities of empire. Let us raise a mug to changing seasons, the cycle of life and death, and the lifeblood of the planet that sustains us all. May our spirits be lifted by the songs of birds and the rustling of leaves, and may our hearts be filled with the wisdom of those that came before us. Let us honor the



spirits of the land and the sky, the creatures of the woods and the waters, the fey of the forest, and the folk who journeyed here from beyond its borders to be with us this day. To the Wildwood Lodge."

Following the applause and cheers, individuals turn back to their own groups and begin making their own toasts toward neighbors. Each PC can make a toast praising whomever they have approached to Influence that round. This functions as Aiding their own check to Influence the NPC that round. Diplomacy and Performance are ideal skills for this check, though other checks might apply depending on the content of the PC's toast.

Afterparty: As the feast winds down, most attendees disperse to get sleep. The notable exception is Alacreon, who leads a small cohort to keep partying at the beach bonfire. This provides an optional bonus social round to Influence him. However, any PC who participates in the afterparty must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save.

Critical Success Alacreon is impressed by your revelry.

Treat any successful Influence check you made during this social round as though it were a critical success.

Success You awaken the following day well-rested, despite sleeping only a few hours.

Failure You are fatigued the next day, but you can remove this condition by spending a social round napping.

Critical Failure You are fatigued the following day.

Day 2

As morning dawns, the PCs can make their daily preparations before partaking of a simple breakfast of berries, fish, and freshly harvested bird eggs in a common area just south of the Wildwood pavilion tents (area F). If they choose, they have an additional two social rounds to influence Alyce Quinley, Tanasha Starborne, or the Swiftmane sisters before the commencement of the day's first event. Khasprickle is off-site stirring up trouble, and Alacreon is still sleeping off the previous night's carousing.

EVENT: FLYING CONTEST

Flying, a fast-paced contest of rhyming insults, features two elements fey adore: wordplay and humiliation. Every year, the gala holds a flying contest free-for-all, in which contestants try to earn crowd favor for themselves while encouraging the crowd to laugh their opponents out of the competition. Early on the second day, the gala is abuzz with rumors of the contest happening that afternoon, open to all comers. Any number of PCs can participate directly, and any PCs (including those knocked out of the contest) can affect the competition from the sidelines.

This event is hosted by celebrity guest **Delgindergrim** (male gnome), a popular Wispillian entertainer who launched his career by winning the contest decades ago. He's gradually become bored with the same old insults and is slowly gaining white hairs thanks to the Bleaching. He sometimes dismisses bad insults by plucking a graying hair and throwing it toward an amateur, whereas he visibly brightens if he hears a unique takedown.

Contest Rules: Contestants gather in a circle on the amphitheater stage. One contestant chooses another, Studies them, and then assails them with a Wildwood Flyte: about 30 seconds of personalized mockery, traditionally delivered with both meter and rhyme. The target can then Counter-Quip to dismiss or reverse the insults, potentially shaming the first contestant. Success is gauged by the audience's reaction, ranging from shocked gasps and howling laughter to unimpressed silence or groans. It is then the second contestant's turn to Flyte at a third contestant of their choice. This process repeats until there's a clear winner—usually when all other contestants have fled the stage, though the moderator can end the contest earlier if it's dragging on too long.

There's no limit to how often a contestant can be targeted, with one exception: a contestant must pick someone new to target with their mockery, so they can't immediately target the person who just mocked them. This means contestants can gang up on a foe, but doing so gives the foe more opportunities to belittle them back!

Scoring: Each contestant starts the competition with 3 points, representing how much the crowd respects them. These serve as Hit Points, and a contestant reduced to 0 points is belittled to the point of conceding and fleeing the stage. Successfully mocking or defending in the competition can earn the contestant points or even steal points from their opponent.

STUDY

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE SECRET VISUAL

Trigger Your turn to Wildwood Flyte begins.

You examine a contestant's mannerisms and recall trivia about them to identify their weaknesses. Attempt a DC 20 Perception check or relevant check to Recall Knowledge about the target.

Critical Success As success, but the circumstance bonus increases to +3.

Success You identify one of the target's weaknesses. The first time you incorporate that weakness into your Wildwood Flyte against the target, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to the accompanying skill check.

Failure No effect.

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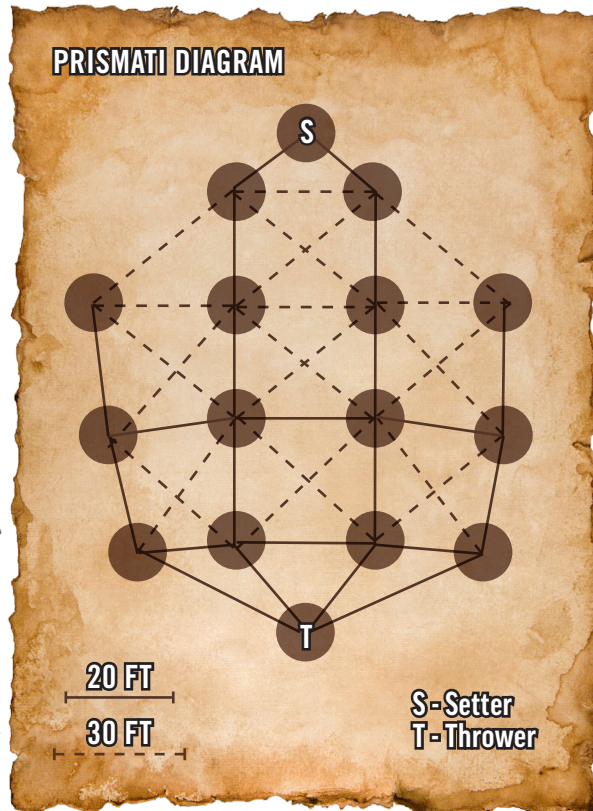
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PRISMATI DIAGRAM



Critical Failure You mistakenly identify something about the target. Using this fake weakness against the target imposes a -2 penalty to your check to Wildwood Flyte.

WILDWOOD FLYTE

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC

You spontaneously compose and deliver a string of rhyming verse to ridicule a contestant. Attempt a Deception, Intimidation, or Performance check against the target's DC associated with that skill. Because the audience gets bored easily, you take a -2 penalty to this check if you used this skill for your most recent Wildwood Flyte attempt.

Critical Success You verbally eviscerate your target and delight the audience. You gain 1 point. Your target loses 2 points and is stupefied 1 until they gain at least 1 point.

Success Your verbal takedown works well, earning widespread approval. You gain 1 point, and your target loses 1 point.

Failure Though coherent, your mockery has no effect.

Critical Failure Your flyting is so clumsy that you lose 1 point.

COUNTER-QUIP

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION LINGUISTIC

Trigger A contestant attempts a skill check when targeting you with a Wildwood Flyte.

You deliver a snappy, witty rebuttal that deflects your

opponent's mockery. Attempt a Deception, Intimidation, or Performance check; the DC equals 10 + the opponent's modifier for the skill they used for the Wildwood Flyte.

Critical Success Your rebuttal is cleverer than the attack! Negate the Wildwood Flyte result, and your opponent loses 1 point.

Success Your witty response reduces the number of points you lose by 1 (minimum 0).

Failure No effect.

Critical Failure Your clumsy comeback only exacerbates the mockery, and you lose 1 additional point.

Heckling: PCs who choose not to participate in the flying contest (or those who have been eliminated already) can assist their allies from the sidelines. Once per contestant's turn, a bystander can either Aid the current contestant's Study check by shouting recommendations, Aid the current contestant's Wildwood Flyte check with suitable cheering and jeering, or Aid the target's Counter-Quip in a similar way.

HUEGRUS

Male awakened giant toad

Huegrus is an enormous toad with an almost impossibly deep, resonant voice. Dozens of cat-sized froglets are embedded and incubating in the skin of his back, and they periodically cheer on their dad.

Perception +10; **Skills** Deception +9, Intimidation +11, Performance +13

Strategy Huegrus can't stand rivals. He preferentially targets anyone with a high point total, eager to dethrone them.

Weaknesses Perception (to notice his discomfort with expansive physical movements), Society (to recall his highly public, doomed love affair with the nymph Myrope), Nature (to recall his fear of snakes)

SNAPGABBLE

Nonbinary flytrap leshy

Snapgabble befuddles opponents with a disorienting rapid-fire flying technique that alternates back and forth between the mouth on their face and the two additional mouths serving as their hands.

Perception +9; **Skills** Deception +14, Intimidation +10, Performance +10

Strategy Snapgabble hates when their rhythm's thrown off by an opponent's retort. They prefer targeting those who successfully Counter-Quip, especially anyone who Counter-Quips them personally.

Weaknesses Perception (to notice old food stuck between the "teeth" in one of their mouths), Society (to recall their embarrassing defeat at last year's contest), Nature (to recall their insecurity over having to eat insects to compensate photosynthesizing poorly)



ZYLRYNDROTH

Female will-o'-wisp

Zylryndroth mesmerizes others with flashing lights and colors as she flytes. When her foes least expect it, she transforms to display a fearsome visage.

Perception +12; **Skills** Deception +11, Intimidation +13, Performance +9

Strategy Zylryndroth craves others' distress, so she prefers targeting competitors who have recently lost points in order to exacerbate their fear and shame.

Weaknesses Perception (to disparagingly compare her brightness to other light sources nearby), Society (to question whether her craving others' fear stems from her own inadequacy), Occult (to recall her dislike for being mistaken as undead)



Gala Prestige: A competitor wins the competition once all other competitors have been shamed off the stage. Winning the competition earns that competitor 4 Gala Prestige. Any other competitor earns 2 Gala Prestige so long as their Wildwood Flyte or Counter-Quip resulted in another competitor's defeat.

Treasure: Delgindergrim awards the winner a *lesser sapling shield* engraved with a laughing face that slowly shifts to a frown as the shield takes damage, quipping that they'll need it to ward off the rhymes of all the flyters who will come for them at the next gala.

EVENT: PRISMATI GAME

Prismati is the signature sport of the Verduran Forest, a fast and frenetic game as well known for its complexity as for its actual entertainment value. Half of the chaos stems from the game's fey origins, and First World teams often change the rules for every match to keep things exciting. The mortals of Andoran and Taldor who have adopted the game have developed more approachable and consistent rules, much to the grousing of prismati purists. Nonetheless, the Greenwood Gala features a prismati tournament that uses these conventional rules, and the PCs can form a team to compete.

Basics: Prismati is a throwing and catching game in which teams score points by throwing seven differently colored objects to each other and ensuring each object ends play in the zone corresponding to its color. A typical match involves playing the game three times (called "stretches") and adding the scores together to determine a final score.

Prismati involves two teams of nine players each, with one "setter," one "thrower," and seven "catchers." At the game's beginning, the teams' setters race to claim up to 9 of the playing field's 14 "digs," which are low mounds used for scoring points. The team then deploys its catchers, with up to one per dig the setter claimed earlier; if a setter didn't secure at least seven digs, then some of the catchers might not be able to participate.

The thrower then lobs seven differently colored objects to their team's catchers, who cannot move off of their digs. The goal is to throw each object to the catcher on the object's corresponding dig (e.g., the blue ball thrown to the catcher on the blue dig), earning points. The team earns

Prismati Game

fewer points depending on how many times an object is thrown and whether it touches the ground before being scored—or no points if the opposing team intercepted the object mid-air. Catchers can throw objects to each other, but each time an object is thrown, the number of points it earns decreases.

In this tournament, each game of prismati plays out over three "stretches." Each stretch consists of two distinct phases: setting and throwing. The PCs can freely reorganize their team roles between stretches.

Equipment: A prismatic thrower receives a bag containing seven objects, each of a different color; traditionally, these are red, teal, pink, indigo, brown, dark green, and lavender, often etched or printed with a distinct pattern to accommodate colorblind players. Usually, most of the objects are suitable for throwing, such as a wooden discus, small bean bag, or apple. However, the teal object is traditionally aerodynamic and easy to throw (such as a blunt dart or wooden ball), whereas the lavender object is traditionally uneven and awkward (such as an old boot or an overripe banana). That said, the referee fills the bag with whatever they want, taking care that each team receives an equally practical assortment.

A typical object has a range increment of 20 feet. An ideal object has a range increment of 30 feet. An awkward object has a range increment of 10 feet. If the thrower has any abilities that improve their thrown weapon attacks, apply those when playing prismati. Likewise, consider providing a thrower a small circumstance bonus to checks (or an increased range increment) if they have special abilities applied to improvised weapons.

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FORMING A TEAM

The PCs likely need additional players to create a prismati team. The following candidates are available. Their skill bonuses have been simplified to present their modifiers for the three main actions in the game.

Breetzeetzeem (female melixie^{B3}) has a small stature that belies her aggressively competitive playstyle. She often gulps a mouthful of colored sugar before attempting a difficult play. **Catch** +14, **Maneuver** +12, **Throw** +8.

Glumgrendle (male pugwampi) just likes to be part of a team, fawning over anyone who recruits him despite his lack of athleticism and his bounty of fleas. His unlucky aura makes him an accidentally exceptional interceptor. **Catch** +10 (+16 to intercept), **Maneuver** +11, **Throw** +9.

Miralanthe (female elf) is willowy as a yew bow and twice as accurate. She has traveled from Kyonin as a delegate and has already fallen in love with this “adorably backwater” game. **Catch** +12, **Maneuver** +11, **Throw** +13. **Windup:** Miralanthe halves all range increment penalties.

Xandramil (male grasshopper sprite) cares less about the final score than he does about the experience—an experience he enjoys making more chaotic with his illusions. **Catch** +9, **Maneuver** +14, **Throw** +12. **Inject Chaos:** Twice per stretch, Xandramil uses magic to apply a -2 to one creature's check.

Zephyr (male dog) is the service animal and occasional mount for **Adrika** (female halfling), a blind druid who indulges Zephyr's love of prismati while shouting praise from the sidelines. Zephyr lacks the tact to be a setter, despite his speed. **Catch** +14, **Maneuver** +12, **Throw** +4. **Good Boy!:** If loudly praised after he critically succeeds at a check, Zephyr gets a +1 status bonus to other checks until the end of the stretch.



Setting

A stretch begins when the referee hands each team's setter nine long, lightweight scarves: one of each color, plus two additional scarves of random colors. The two setters begin at the end of the field farthest from the thrower's mound, and at the referee's signal, the setters race around the field, encircling as many

of the 14 digs as they can with their scarves to claim those digs for their team. Once a setter claims a dig, it's unavailable to the other team's setter. Ideally, a setter claims at least 7 digs (one for each color), favoring those digs closest to the thrower's mound to make the thrower's job easier. Claiming additional digs limits the number of digs available to the other team, potentially preventing some of their catchers from even participating.

Gameplay proceeds in rounds, with each setter having three actions per round. A setter can Arrange a Scarf around the dig they're standing on as a single action. Once every dig is claimed, the setters retire, and the catchers and throwers move onto the field.

If the PCs recruit an NPC as their setter, have one of the players control that NPC during the setting phase.

PRISMATI MANEUVER

MOVE

You dash from one dig to another. Attempt a DC 25 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Games Lore check. You gain a circumstance bonus to the check equal to your Speed divided by 5 (e.g., +5 for 25 feet).

Critical Success You move to a dig up to two spaces away.

Alternatively, you can move to an adjacent dig and then Arrange a Scarf as a free action.

Success You move to an adjacent dig.

Failure You make slow progress; you do not move, but your circumstance bonus to your next Prismati Maneuver check increases by 5.

Throwing

In the second phase, the throwers take turns drawing an object from their bag and then throwing the object toward one of their catchers. Catchers can freely throw an object they catch or that lands near them, typically to pass it to another teammate. A catcher can also score an object by setting it atop their dig, after which the object can't be thrown further.

The digs radiate out from the throwers' mound in 20-foot intervals.

PRISMATI THROW

MANIPULATE

You throw one of the prismati objects toward a catcher atop the dig of your choice. Attempt a DC 15 Games Lore check or a ranged Strike against AC 15, applying any range increment penalties to either roll.

Critical Success Your throw is practically perfect. Your intended catcher gains a +2 circumstance bonus on their check to Catch the object, and any check to Intercept the throw takes a -2 penalty.

Success Your throw is accurate but must still be caught.
Failure Your throw goes wide, missing the target.

PRISMATI CATCH

MANIPULATE

You try to catch a prismati object that's thrown to you. Attempt a DC 18 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Games Lore check, or a DC 18 Reflex save.

Success You catch the thrown item.

Failure You fail to catch the thrown item, which lands outside of your dig and earns no points.

PRISMATI INTERCEPT

MANIPULATE

You try to disrupt or even catch a prismati object that's thrown past you. Attempt a DC 18 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Games Lore check, or a DC 18 Reflex save.

Critical Success You catch the object, ensuring it doesn't score any points.

Success You disrupt the object's trajectory, increasing the DC required to Catch it by 4.

Failure You fail to disrupt the throw.

The Opposition

The opposing team are the returning champions from the previous year: their setter **Sylvarindarian** (male variant pixie); their thrower **Yeerma** (female catfolk); and their catchers **Rizzleflick** (male pixie), **Liriollus** (male gnome druid), **Rilka Copperbraid** (female dwarf cleric of Erastil), **Xasklara** (female lizardfolk ranger), **Gildemeer** (nonbinary human monk), **Thadwick Biscotti** (male halfling fighter), and **Vernog Swiftmane** (male centaur).

The setter's bonus to Maneuver is +14, the thrower's bonus to Throw is +13, and catchers each have a +13 bonus to Catch. Consider varying these bonuses slightly so that some catchers are better than others, granting the PCs a slight edge if they can identify their opponents' best players.

Throw the Game

As the PCs take a break after completing their first prismati stretch, an enterprising fan approaches them: **Glennych Brindlebark** (male leprechaun). After complimenting their best plays, he shares that the bookies made it very profitable to bet against the PCs. Glennych has a sizable bet against the PCs and is willing to share some of those earnings if they purposefully lose (or continue to lose) at least two stretches. He's willing to offer them 100 gp and a bottle of his finest liquor if they lose the tournament. If a PC haggles with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy check, he increases the payout to 150 gp. If the PCs

refuse, Glennych hesitates and then cheerfully insists he was testing their integrity to decide whether they were worth betting on—a face-saving lie PCs can easily pierce with a DC 16 Perception check. If they try to shame him about this, he takes umbrage and curses them (a misfortune effect), causing a PC to reroll the first successful or critically successful prismati check they make and use the lower result in the next stretch.

While negotiating with Glennych, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices the leprechaun furtively glancing toward Alacreon with a hint of malice. In truth, Alacreon has bet on the PCs, and Glennych hopes to profit while watching the satyr (his unrequited rival) lose. If the PCs ask him, Alacreon casually admits he's placed a bet on the PCs, and he's vaguely aware of Glennych and the leprechaun's repeated attempts to achieve relevance through sparking a rivalry. So long as the PCs don't throw the game in a blatant way, Alacreon isn't worried. That said, if the PCs accept Glennych's offer and then decide to win anyway (making him lose a small fortune), the PCs earn 1 Influence Point with Alacreon and a small reward (see page 24). This increases to 2 Influence Points and a larger reward if they win all three stretches, somehow shame the leprechaun artfully while winning, or both.



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Treasure: If the PCs accept and fulfill his deal, Glennych rewards them as promised—both with coins and with a bottle of *Cayden's Brew* (*Treasure Vault* 88). If the PCs instead win, Alacreon invites the PCs to enjoy a celebratory round of drinks, during which he shares some of his recent gambling windfall with them: 120 gp and his favorite mug, a wooden tankard lined with silver worth 10 gp. Both the tankard and the *Cayden's Brew* are suitable gifts for trading to the drainberry bush All-Sales-Final (page 14).

Gala Prestige: If the PCs' team wins at least two of the three stretches, winning the competition, each participating PC earns 3 Gala Prestige. If the PCs' team wins only one stretch, each participating PC earns 1 Gala Prestige. Each team also votes one of its athletes as its most valuable player, who earns 1 additional Gala Prestige.

EVENT: AWARD CEREMONY

As evening falls on the second day, the crowds begin to gravitate to the amphitheater once more, this time to witness the announcement of the contestant or team that accumulated the highest Victory Point total across all three events. The wood giant Xivaga, acting as master of ceremonies, names the winner this year's Wildwood Champion and awards them a ceremonial crown of flowers and the *mantle of the Moot*, a magical cloak that functions as a *greater cloak of repute* (*Lost Omens Character Guide* 72) affecting only Wildwood Lodge druids and other Verduran Forest denizens.

The winner is invited to give a short speech. If Khasprickle's team wins, the pukwudgie uses the opportunity to air various petty grievances against others in attendance, especially any teams who competed against him. If a PC wins, Khasprickle visibly seethes with jealousy. If the PC uses part of their speech to praise Khasprickle (and succeeds at a DC 18 Deception, Diplomacy, or Performance check), he is mollified. Otherwise, he stomps off in a huff, and the PC lose 2 Influence with him.

Once the prize has been awarded, the crowd disperses across the grounds as guests wander off to attend other social gatherings, procure evening meals from the market, or retire early in anticipation of a long journey home following the next morning's ceremony. PCs wishing to socialize have another two social rounds to influence any NPCs they wish, with the exception of Khasprickle.

Day 3

As the third and final day of the festival begins, most of the attendees have already begun breaking down their campsites in preparation for departure later in the day. The PCs have enough time to make daily preparations and disassemble their own campsites before the final event commences shortly before noon.

EVENT: THE GREENWOOD MASSACRE

As the PCs join the crowd on the south beach of the inlet to witness the traditional ceremony that brings the Greenwood Gala to a close, read or paraphrase the following.

All along the beach, spectators jostle excitedly for a better view as two boats approach from the northeast.

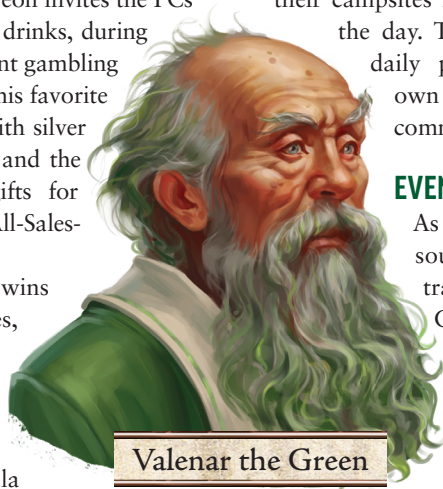
The first is an elegant riverboat flying Taldan colors. The second, approaching steadily from the island's mist, is a simple dugout canoe carrying four green-robed figures. The crowd awaiting them cheers their arrival, especially as the two representatives set foot on shore: an aging Valenar the Green speaks for the Wildwood Lodge, whereas the river guard captain Elgin Wavenly represents Taldor. The latter swings from his boat's rigging to land in the shallows, wasting no time in meeting Valenar.

Valenar produces a small piece of fine blackwood from one pocket of his voluminous green robes and offers it to Elgin, speaking in a loud, clear voice that carries across the inlet: "With this gift, the Wildwood Lodge reaffirms its covenant with the empire of Taldor. Let this token of wood remain forever resolute and unyielding, a symbol of our shared pledge to protect the Verduran Forest and those who dwell within."

Captain Wavenly steps forward to meet him, a small leather pouch in his outstretched hand. "With this gift, the empire of Taldor reaffirms its covenant with the Wildwood Lodge. Let these seeds take root and flourish, as our fellowship does the same."

Valenar reaches out to accept the offered bag of seeds, a serene smile on his face. He is still smiling when the bag explodes in his hand, unleashing a hideous mass of pale tendrils and writhing stalks that promptly tears the old man's face from his skull.

The next few seconds are a blur of mass panic as a cythnophorian—a powerful parasite—erupts from the offering of seeds, slaying Valenar with a single horrific blow and using its fungal possession ability to claim his corpse as its host.



Valenar the Green

Creatures: The cythnophorian uses its spore cloud ability whenever available, exposing as many bystanders as possible to creeping death. Unless treated, those not killed outright by the toxin quickly fall under the cythnophorian's control, whereupon they are directed to defend the cythnophorian from attackers and prevent others from fleeing the scene. Uncontrolled bystanders assist the PCs, typically by Aiding Medicine checks to treat poisoned victims or providing ranged support.

Carnage and Chaos: Other NPCs are present on the battlefield, even if they're too preoccupied with their own struggles to assist the PCs directly. You might periodically describe NPCs in the background contributing in their own ways, such as restraining infected bystanders or guiding terrified crowds to safety. NPCs whom the PCs Influenced might contribute, but not in ways that seriously endanger them (and distract the PCs). This attack results in numerous deaths, including Valenar the Green, Elgin Wavenly, Tobinnalkim, Ruzadoya Swiftmane, and at least a dozen other gala attendees.

CYTHNOPHORIAN

CREATURE 8

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Initiative Perception +12

BYSTANDERS (10)

CREATURE 2

Variant elite guard (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 232, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6)

Skills Athletics +9, Medicine +9, Stealth +7

Items hide armor, staff, sling (20 bullets)

Melee ♦ staff +11 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ sling +9 (range increment 50 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 bludgeoning

Primal Spontaneous Spells DC 18, attack +10; **1st** *heal*, *runic weapon*; **Cantrips** (1st) *caustic blast*, *tangle vine*

Aftermath

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, the gala grounds are a scene of horror and devastation. Debris and personal items left behind by fleeing bystanders are strewn about; survivors stagger across the bloodstained beach, calling the names of missing loved ones; the air fills with wails of anguish, both from the wounded and from those cradling the bodies of the fallen.

It takes several hours to determine the extent of the destruction and count the dead. Each PC can attempt a single skill check to offer assistance to survivors during this time: a DC 19 Medicine check to treat the wounded, a DC 20 Diplomacy check to comfort panicked survivors, or a DC 18 Athletics check to

assist in clearing wreckage from the beach. If more than half the PCs succeed at their chosen checks, the PCs earn 1 Influence Point with a key NPC—ideally applied to an NPC for whom the PCs are 1 point away from meeting an important threshold.

By dusk, most attendees have vacated the area, either disappearing back into the forest or piling into their boats and making a hasty retreat. Some even leave their campsites behind. Confusion and panic have largely been replaced by anger and paranoia, with remaining attendees darkly insinuating that one party or another must be responsible for orchestrating the attack. High on the list of suspects seems to be Taldor, though the evidence supporting this claim seems largely circumstantial: the deadly seeds were delivered, as they always have been, by a Taldan diplomat, and the remaining Taldan River Guard ships were among the first to leave the Arenway docks in the aftermath of the attacks, expediently extracting all Taldan survivors from gala grounds, and swiftly departing without any further communication.

Shortly after sunset, Emorga All-Seer finishes her own emergency meetings with Wildwood Lodge leadership and then gathers the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Today is a dark day for the Wildwood Lodge. This horrific attack has cost us beloved friends, including our archdruid. Thanks to your selfless heroism today, the losses were not much higher, and the Wildwood Lodge is in your debt." Emorga lowers her head in respect, her massive eyes wet with tears. "It is the decision of this Council that we shall meet again in one month's time, when that new moon rises. Then, a regional conclave will select the new leader of the Wildwood Lodge. Yes, there are voices that would have us move more quickly, but decisions such as these require careful deliberation, and we must not act rashly. Until then, I would ask that you stay here with us. The next few weeks will be crucial to the future of the Wildwood Lodge and perhaps the Verduran Forest itself, and we need the help of ones such as you to ensure its safety."

Treasure: To reward their heroism, Emorga offers the PCs a suit of +1 *leaf weave* (*Treasure Vault* 9), one of just a handful of suits crafted from the leaves of the most ancient trees growing on the Isle of Arenway and traditionally gifted only to Lodge members who distinguish themselves through acts of great bravery or sacrifice. This armor is well suited to being upgraded into a *canopy bulwark* (page 81); this is a 6th-level Crafting task requiring raw materials worth 390 gp, minus any earned income discount applied from spending additional downtime working on the project.



Chapter 2: Wildfires

In the gala's aftermath, the PCs have three days to recuperate and pursue exploration and downtime activities. You can provide additional downtime for retraining, crafting, and other activities, but be aware that this chapter is designed to span roughly one lunar cycle, and you might need to adjust the timeline slightly to ensure events like Only You (page 36) occur at a reasonable point in the adventure. The following subsections summarize several leads and opportunities for likely activities the PCs might pursue.

Advising Khasprickle: In the aftermath, Khasprickle becomes an outspoken vigilante who loudly advertises that he's assembling a new Wild Hunt to purge the Verduran Forest of interlopers. If the PCs earned 3 or more Influence Points with Khasprickle in the

previous chapter, he tries to recruit one of his favorite PCs, promising them bloodshed, treasure, and justice if they join him as a raider and advisor. Joining his Wild Hunt is beyond the adventure's scope (and likely beyond the PC's ethical limits); however, the PC can stymie his efforts by providing bad advice that slows the hunt. If the PC Lies to him and succeeds at a DC 22 Deception check when providing advice, they trigger a false start, infighting, or other drama that inhibits the hunt, reducing the Verduran Forest's starting Unrest by 1 (minimum 0; see page 32).

Craft: Rather than build something new, a PC might spend a day attempting to repair damage inflicted by the recent attack with a DC 20 Crafting check. If successful, the PC reduces the region's starting Unrest



by 1 (see page 32). A critical success reduces the Unrest by 2. This cannot reduce Unrest below 0, and each PC can only reduce Unrest once in this way.

Influence: Although the Influence scenes from Chapter 1 have concluded, you might allow a PC to accompany a favorite NPC for a day to chat and help them pack up after the event, providing one last social round to Influence them.

Treat Disease: A PC can spend a day tending to injured and infected bystanders from the recent attack. This is identical to the Craft activity above, though it requires a DC 20 Medicine check instead.

Meeting Emorga

By the time that Emorga summons the PCs, they'll have seen plenty of other attendees departing with plans to take matters into their own hands or rally support elsewhere.

When the PCs meet with Emorga, read or paraphrase the following.

"Once more, thank you on behalf of the Wildwood Lodge for your timely intervention the other day and for your ongoing repairs in the aftermath. The Lodge exists to protect the forest, and you have truly embodied our principles." The great tortoise sighs deeply. "Unfortunately, the Lodge and its allies can't agree on what happens next. We are temporarily without a leader, many emissaries have withdrawn home to defend against further attacks, and others are rallying forces to seek vengeance. Fey who usually attend the gala in good faith and friendship have turned into vigilantes hell-bent on expelling all outsiders from the forest.

"These are grim times. I appreciate your aid, and I do not doubt that you have questions."

The following presents a number of questions the PCs might ask as well as Emorga's answers.

What will happen now? "What is left of Lodge leadership has called for an emergency gathering on the next new moon, approximately a month from now. There, a special assembly will choose Valenar's successor. In the meantime, everyone is dispersing to protect their own territory and ensure other attacks aren't underway."

Why don't you restore Valenar to life? "We have tried. The ritual failed. Perhaps his soul was ready to move on; he had been speaking of retirement for some time. If only he had done so before this tragedy."

What kind of trouble are you seeing? "The Swiftmanes are swearing revenge for Ruzadoya's death and demand the dissolution of the Treaty of the Wildwood. That detestable miscreant Khasprickle and his gang of ne'er-do-wells have decided they're forming

their own 'Wild Hunt' to mete out punishment." Emorga scoffs. "The presumption would be ridiculous if it weren't so dangerous."

Why shouldn't the Lodge seek vengeance? "We were attacked, but by whom? The mob has already chosen to implicate Taldor because that horror sprouted from their gift, but is that proof? The Lodge has many enemies that would benefit from exactly the sort of chaos that has been unleashed by this attack, but it seems that too few are willing to ask these kinds of questions. It's simpler to swear vengeance on an easy scapegoat and ignore any other evidence."

Who is responsible, if not Taldor? "Our preliminary investigation turned up some evidence, but it's not yet conclusive." If the PCs ask about the evidence, Emorga shows them a sketched map recovered from one of the Taldan tents. It indicates a site along the eastern edge of the forest, and has a russet-colored mold growing on one of its corner. Emorga warns against handling the map, noting the mold resembles the growths that attacked the Greenwood Gala. She assures the PCs that she's sending other agents to scout that area; the PCs' efforts are better directed elsewhere. Exploring this site features in the next Adventure Path volume, "Severed at the Root."

Once the PCs have asked their questions, read or paraphrase the following.

"I regret that the Lodge still needs your help." Emorga lowers her enormous head. "Fires—figurative ones, but no less destructive—could ignite throughout the forest at any time, and the Verduran is too large for any of us to identify and stop them all. That is, unless we call on an old ally: Corazal."

The PCs likely have further questions after that.

Who or what is Corazal? "Corazal is a conrasu, a shard of cosmic consciousness that fell to Golarion and was reborn in a body of living wood—not a common sight in Avistan, but also not unheard of. Corazal is one of the forest's oldest creatures, and their soul is indelibly intertwined with the whole region. Centuries ago, Wildwood druids sometimes called on Corazal to identify areas of pain, danger, or sorrow that they should investigate. Corazal eventually grew weary of their constant queries, however, and established boundaries. The Lodge hasn't called on Corazal since, but it's time to rebuild our neglected partnership by sending you to request aid."

Where is Corazal? "Perhaps two hundred miles to the north of here in an ancient grove called the Viridian Nexus."

Why hasn't the Lodge called on Corazal in so long? "I can't say for certain; that was before even my time,

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VIRIDIAN NEXUS UNDERGROUND
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET

if you can believe it. I suppose the Wildwood Treaty reduced conflict to the point that my predecessors no longer needed Corazal.”

Why us? Why not send Lodge leadership? “With the Lodge damaged, it needs its surviving elders here. You have already proven your mettle and your loyalty, and there are few I would trust more with this task than you.” If one of the PCs was crowned Wildwood Champion at the gala, she adds, “Besides, until the next gala, I suppose representing us is one of the duties of your new station.”

What do you want us to do when we get there? “Be courteous, and request Corazal’s aid in identifying areas where strife is growing in the Verduran Forest. Aid Corazal as needed, and contact me should you need to.” To this end, Emorga provides the PCs with three *scrolls of animal messenger*.

Into the Woods

Although the PCs gain access to alternative modes of travel later in the adventure, they’re currently limited to traveling on foot. The Viridian Nexus where Corazal lives lies about 50 miles north of the Isle of Arenway. Unfortunately, traveling here takes the PCs through some

of the Verduran Forest’s densest growth, slowing travel to roughly 10 miles a day (assuming the party’s Speed is 25 feet)—all before accounting for exploration activities that might slow them further, such as Scout or Investigate.

Luckily, they have another option. Located on the northwest bank of the Verduran Fork is Breeleyhome (area A), a small community of kovintus (*Bestiary* 3 153) known for raising and training woodland creatures called chetamogs (page 86). These squirrel-like creatures are capable mounts, able to traverse forests as swiftly as a horse along an open road. That said, their bounding, zig-zagging movements encourage most riders to slow their pace, lest they become motion sick. Remaining gala attendees can ferry the PCs across the river, bringing them a short walk from Breeleyhome. There, **Elwood Breeley** (male kovintus rancher) is willing to sell chetamogs to the PCs for 30 gp each, even offering to throw in a free saddle and pair of saddlebags as a special favor to members of the Wildwood Lodge. He’s also willing to rent out chetamogs for 5 gp a week, with any fees reducing the purchase price if a PC later wants to keep their mount. The chetamogs are smart enough to return to Breeleyhome if dismounted and ordered to go home.

VIRIDIAN NEXUS

Corazal took root ages ago, gradually reshaping their surroundings to create a small grotto. In addition to their towering form at its center, the grotto includes several small, mossy buildings, each shaped from a single piece of wood; these were grown directly from Corazal's body to house their attendants.

Corazal's body resembles a tree into whose bark is inscribed a labyrinthine network of geometric patterns. Their branches bear a haunting resemblance to arms. Moreover, their trunk has grown around a shadowy orb that measures about 10 feet in diameter; it is located about 30 feet up its trunk, giving an observer the impression that the tree has a massive, cyclopean eye. The orb is dull and streaked with gray, as if covered by a cataract.

Corazal is an uncommonly large conrasu, a shard of cosmic sentience that has grown a ligneous body around itself. Like an aeon, Corazal strives to preserve balance in the Verduran Forest not out of love of nature, but rather out of a self-appointed duty to the multiverse. Fortunately, this aligns well with the Wildwood Lodge's goals, as well as with those of the forest's other stewards. Corazal has acted as a living archive of the forest's activities.

With each passing century, Corazal's knowledge has grown like kudzu, clogging their ability to recall specific facts. Hoping to off-load some of their lore so they can think more clearly, Corazal asked their attendants to procure and nurture a cutting, effectively creating a child heir. Unfortunately, the new creature (a fungus that infests plantlife—a wraithvine) lacked Corazal's wisdom and restraint, instead latching onto its parent to leech life force and lore. Months later, Corazal has slipped into torpor and their attendants have gradually deactivated.

GROTTO

The wooden buildings are overgrown both inside and out, though they show no real signs of disrepair. They are outfitted with desks, tables, simple bookcases, and other sparse but functional furnishings.

Corazal's eight attendants are wyrwoods (*Bestiary* 3 298), constructs of living wood that have collapsed in the various buildings. Five remain intact and seem unconscious, their stone hearts still embedded and their bodies untouched by decay. Three others are broken apart, bearing deep gouges that suggest violent deaths. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature check can estimate that the grotto has been untended for less than a year. It shows no signs of perennial plant growth.

Several poorly concealed pits dot the grotto amid the buildings. Each drops about 20 feet into a convoluted tunnel network beneath the grotto (area **B1**) that was carved out by the wraithvine and its offshoots. Several of these offshoots peek out from the pits, studying the PCs as they explore. A PC can attempt a DC 30 Perception check to spot one of the offshoots, each a tangle of vines woven together into a vaguely humanoid shape. If detected, an offshoot retreats underground, preferring to ambush the PCs there.

Treasure: A *staff of nature's cunning* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 167) is clenched tightly in the fist of one of the broken wyrwoods.

B1. WARRENS

MODERATE 6

Crudely excavated tunnels wind beneath the ground, their walls speckled with stray roots and half-exposed stones. The scent of damp earth mixes with a faint, sickly-sweet smell of decay.

Terrain: These warrens are narrow and claustrophobic, having been carved out by roots and later by small creatures. Half of the tunnel segments that connect the various junctions are only about 4 feet tall, functioning as difficult terrain for Medium creatures posing no obstacle to those Small and smaller. The other half are even tighter, functioning as difficult terrain for Small creatures and forcing Medium creatures to Crawl. These create vexing chokepoints that the wraithvines here can exploit.

Creatures: Once the PCs have moved at least 15 feet into the tunnels, wraithvine offshoots begin converging to ambush the party from multiple directions. Just as Corazal splintered off part of themselves to create the wraithvine, the wraithvine in turn has created several of its own spawn to guard its new lair. The offshoots prefer to flank and target Crawling intruders.

WRAITHVINE OFFSHOOTS (4)

CREATURE 4

SMALL PLANT

Variant mandragora (*Bestiary* 2 170)

Perception +11; darkvision, lifesense 30 feet

Languages Common, Fey

Vitality Drain ♦ **Requirements** The wraithvine offshoot has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The offshoot drains blood or ichor from the creature it has grabbed, dealing 2d6 damage. If the creature has the plant trait, the offshoot gains temporary Hit Points equal to the damage dealt. A creature that has its vitality drained by an offshoot is drained 1 until it receives healing of any kind or amount.

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TRAVEL BY TREE

As Emorga has likely explained to the PCs, Corazal can open extradimensional pathways that lead directly to any of the Elder Oaks, trees that are particularly ancient, large, and magical—a helpful ability for groups that need to travel around the forest quickly. This pathway has the effects of a *nature's pathway* spell, except that it only allows for transportation back and forth between Corazal's tree and a single Elder Oak somewhere in the forest. When asking Corazal to open a pathway, the PCs can specify any Elder Oak whose location they know, although at this point in the adventure they are only aware of the tree right outside the gala's grounds (T1).

Opening a pathway to a new Elder Oak takes Corazal four hours and closes any previously existing pathway, if there was one.

B2. WITHERED ROOT

SEVERE 6

Enormous roots, most of them easily the size of regular tree trunks, twist and bulge from the ceiling and walls of this earthen chamber like half-buried bones from some giant animal carcass. This site has been dug out by the wraithvine offshoots to provide an open space for the wraithvine itself to grow and propagate as it siphons away Corazal's life force. The vile plant has spread across the ceiling of the chamber, intertwined with the massive tree roots from which it derives its sustenance. Dangling from a tangled mass of tendrils in one corner are what appear to be three oversized seed pods, each one containing a nascent wraithvine child created from the drained corpse of an unfortunate fey or humanoid.

Creatures: When the PCs enter the chamber, the wraithvine telepathically calls for any remaining wraithvine offshoots to remove the intruders, then joins in attacking the PCs when they arrive. If no offshoots answer its call, or if the PCs take any offensive actions against it, the wraithvine attacks immediately. If it is reduced to 60 or fewer Hit Points and has no offshoots assisting it, it spends three actions to drop all three pods to the floor, each one splitting open to release a gruesome half-formed wraithvine offshoot.

WRAITHVINE

CREATURE 7

HUGE FUNGUS PLANT WRAITHVINE

Perception +15; darkvision, lifesense 30 feet

Languages Fey (can't speak any language); telepathy 120 feet (wraithvine children only)

Skills Acrobatics +17, Stealth +16

Str +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 25; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13

HP 120; **Immunities** poison; **Resistances** piercing 5, slashing 5; **Weaknesses** fire 5

Light Vulnerability Whenever a wraithvine begins its turn in an area of magical light, it is slowed 1 on that turn.

Reactive Strike ⚡ Tentacle only.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⚔ bite +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus wraithvine venom

Melee ⚔ tentacle +18 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d6+11 bludgeoning plus Grab

Parasitic Rejuvenation ⚡ **Requirements** A creature the wraithvine has Grabbed took damage from wraithvine venom (either from itself, or from a wraithvine child's venom) on its last turn, and the wraithvine hasn't used any other actions this turn; **Effect** The wraithvine regains 3d8 HP and recovers from the fatigued and slowed conditions. It reduces any enfeebled value it has by 2.

Wraithvine Venom (poison) As wraithvine offshoot; DC 25.

WEAK WRAITHVINE OFFSHOOTS (3) CREATURE 3

Page 29, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6

Initiative Perception +9

Treasure: In one corner of the room is a pile of slime-covered items stripped from corpses prior to their transformation into wraithvine children. Buried amid the junk are 27 gp and a *dragonfly fulu* (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 77).

RESOLUTION

When the wraithvine dies, its grasp on Corazal's roots slackens and its remains crash to the floor in a heap. A great tremor ripples through the earth, showering dirt and debris down on the PCs; far above, they hear a great creaking sound, as if the massive tree were stirring from a long sleep. Moments later, a telepathic message washes over their minds. Read or paraphrase the following.

The communication begins as a quick sequence of sensations: the smell of wet earth, the cool bite of an icy wind blowing through a stand of towering pine trees, the gentle babbling of a brook as it pours around standing stones over a bed of pebbles. Then comes a chorus of

whispers in a thousand different languages, barely audible at first, but rapidly rising to a crescendo before suddenly going silent in rapid succession, leaving only one behind.

"I saw your coming in dreams. I saw all of it: jubilation, pride, and terror. Green shoots reaching for the sun yet bringing no new life—only death. Now their contagion has spread, causing ancient rivers of resentment to overflow their banks in a flood of outrage that would set the entire forest ablaze.

"Yet the Wildwood Lodge still stands. It is wounded, but not broken. Its resolve is unshaken. We can heal these wounds. Yes. You and I, little creatures. Come to me, and I will show you."

By the time the PCs return to the surface, Corazal's attendants have regained consciousness and begun work to restore the compound. These creatures speak an ornate and ancient dialect of Fey, but they politely decline any attempts at idle conversation; there is much to do and little time to waste. Corazal also shows initial signs of recovery, the orb at their center having returned to a deep indigo hue that seems to sparkle with tiny stars. They listen to any of the PCs' reports detailing the events of the Greenwood Gala before explaining how they might help: they can read the roots, listen to the wind, and smell premonitions of coming events throughout the Verduran Forest, helping identify imminent conflicts that the PCs might resolve before they become disasters that feed more violence. That said, Corazal's insights are ineffable, and drawing them from their subconscious and translating them into a useful form requires a potent ritual.

COMMUNE WITH CORAZAL RITUAL 4

UNIQUE

Cast 4 hours; **Secondary Casters** 3

Primary Check DC 24 Nature (master) or DC 29 Nature (expert); **Secondary Checks** DC 24 Forest Lore, Perception, or Survival

You tap into Corazal's innumerable senses to identify disturbances throughout the Verduran Forest.

Critical Success You and Corazal successfully identify a flashpoint: an imminent event that could stoke distrust and unrest. You experience a sensory premonition of the event, can cast *know the way* as a 7th-rank cantrip to point toward the location, and know which Elder Oak is closest to it.

Success As success, but the ritual heavily taxes your mind and body. You are drained 1, and until the drained condition ends, you are also stupefied 1.

Failure The ritual has no effect.

Critical Failure The ritual has no effect beyond burning your mind with conflicting information. You are drained 2, and until the drained condition ends, you are also stupefied 1 and have the Dubious Knowledge skill feat. Whenever you would decrease this drained value, the value does not decrease unless you succeed at a DC 11 flat check.

Summoning Help: The first time that the PCs do not critically succeed at the *commune with Corazal* ritual, Corazal ponders how best to prevent the PCs' fragile minds from being overwhelmed by the cascade of information. While the primary caster reviewed Corazal's memories, the conrasu witnessed some of that PC's thoughts as well, granting Corazal information about Emorga All-Seer. This isn't the first time Corazal has sensed her presence, though they didn't know her by name. That said, the conrasu suspects her patience and willpower might make her a safer candidate to lead the ritual. If contacted using *animal messenger* or similar means, Emorga is happy to help.

So long as the PCs agree, Corazal begins preparations to open a pathway to the Elder Oak outside the Greenwood Gala grounds, transporting Emorga to the Viridian Nexus approximately

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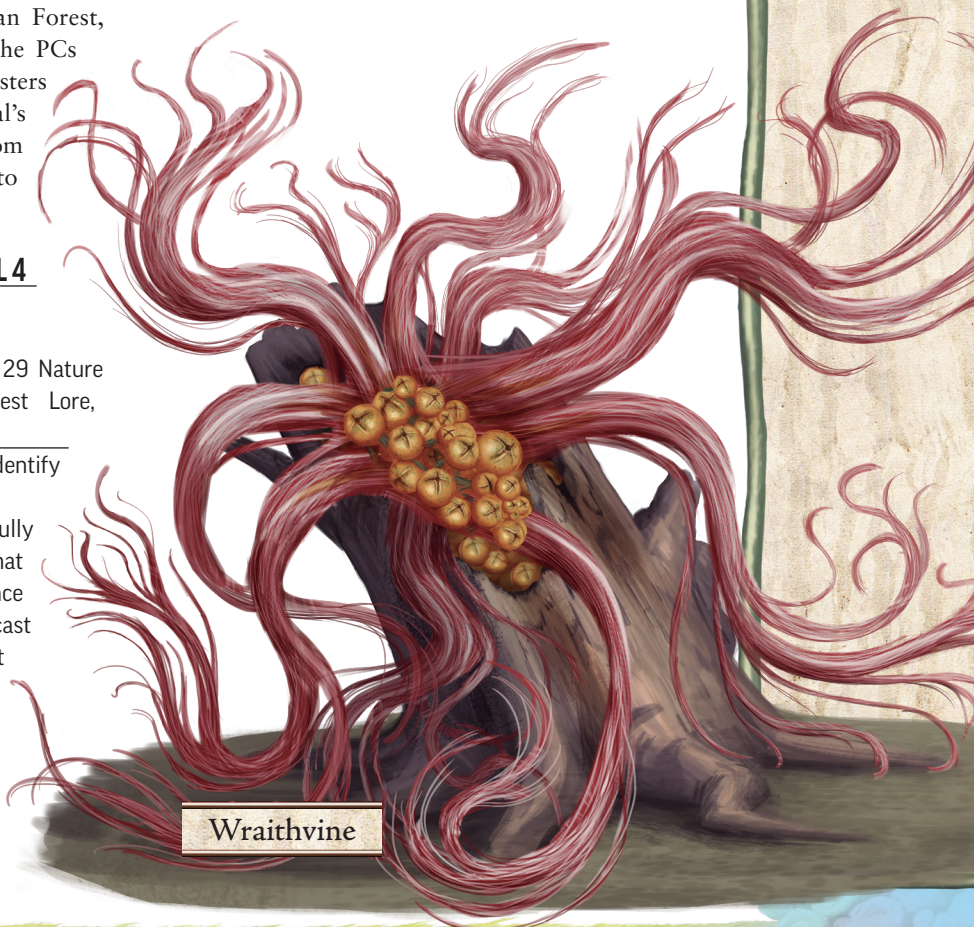
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TRACKING TIME

Chapter 2 of this adventure is presumed to unfold over a period of about 30 days, after which Chapter 3 begins with the assembly of the Wildwood Conclave on the next new moon. One quest in particular ("Only You" on page 36) is presumed to take place precisely at the halfway point. Otherwise, the flashpoints might arise in any order. It's important to keep track of time, however, for if the PCs don't resolve a flashpoint within 3 days of discovering it, the region's Unrest increases by 1. After one week, an active flashpoint has largely run its course; the PCs might still be able to resolve the issue, but they receive the full Unrest penalty as if they'd failed that objective.

UNREST

During this chapter, the Verduran Forest and its inhabitants become increasingly nervous, and even violent, in response to current events. This is tracked through Unrest, a simple point system. Unrest increases if the PCs don't resolve conflicts in a timely or capable manner, as detailed in each of this chapter's Flashpoint quests. Once Unrest reaches certain thresholds (as listed below), scenes in Chapter 2 become more difficult, and NPCs become harder to influence in Chapter 3.

- **Unrest 3:** The PCs begin to see evidence of increased violent clashes between humanoids and fey, some directly attributable to Khasprickle's Wild Hunt or to another established adversary.
- **Unrest 6:** Many NPCs become more paranoid and guarded, increasing the DCs of all Deception, Diplomacy, and Intimidation checks by 1 outside of combat.
- **Unrest 9:** The DC for the skill checks above increases by 1 (+2 total).



four hours later. In the meantime, Corazal's wyrwoods begin preparing the area for Emorga's imminent arrival, rapidly restoring the cloister structures so that they provide sufficient shelter for any visitor to rest comfortably. Once she arrives, Emorga takes some time to catch up on any updates the PCs have for her, then begins acquainting herself with Corazal and their

capabilities. All told, the PCs should have a full day to engage in downtime activities if they wish to.

Flashpoints

Emorga does not arrive bearing good news; hostilities between settlers and forest natives have only increased in the days since the attack on the Greenwood Gala. With Corazal's assistance, however, she hopes that she can identify key areas of potential conflict across the forest and send the PCs in to mediate. To accomplish this, Emorga needs the PCs to assist her in performing the *commune with Corazal* ritual on page 31.

Prognostications: Whenever the PCs discover a new flashpoint as a result of communing with Corazal, they receive a prognostication: a dreamlike mental jumble of images, sensations, and words that represent the forest's impressions of the crisis at hand. These prognostications are intended to be somewhat vague and open to interpretation; however, if you wish, you can allow the PCs to make appropriate skill checks to decipher these visions and provide them with additional background information based on their results.

Flashpoint: Fallen Friends

Destination: C1 (Ironbark's Grove)

Nearest Elder Oak: T2

Prognostication: "By night they came, clattering and killing for the favor of a spirit in green. Those who escaped the slaughter seek salvation within a ring of ash. But the shepherds, weeping over a fallen flock, see no sense in their culling and cry out for vengeance, blinded to the nature of their true foe."

Background: The inhabitants of Marin's Mill (area B3), a remote logging village on the east bank of the Sellen River, began to scale up their logging efforts and conduct a series of controlled burns outside their walls in direct violation of the Treaty of the Wildwood. A nearby community of arboreals (area B1) grew outraged at the seemingly senseless destruction and promptly began to mobilize with the intention of razing the town to the ground. Unbeknownst to anyone but the villagers themselves, what the arboreals see as aggression is actually an act of self-defense taken against an invading swarm of twigjacks, which were overcome with religious fervor after experiencing a vision of a powerful nature spirit called a green man (*Bestiary* 3 118).

C1. Ironbark's Grove

Locating the arboreals' grove isn't difficult. These particular arboreals have been tending the area for over two centuries, most of them having been here since long before Marin's Mill was founded; they have long viewed the village with suspicion if not



outright hostility. That changed when one of the arboreals, a wandering warden named **Rattlebranch** (male arboreal warden), discovered that the loggers of Marin's Mill had all but completely cleared the woods that once surrounded the village, even going so far as to set the remaining stumps and undergrowth ablaze to obliterate them entirely. Aghast, he approached the village to demand an explanation, and the villagers responded with brandished axes and flaming arrows. Rattlebranch promptly returned to his grove leader, **Ironbark** (male arboreal regent), and delivered a report, prompting an emergency moot among the other arboreals in the grove to plan a response.

When the PCs arrive, the arboreals are engaged in a heated discussion over the proper response to the villagers' perfidy, with an overwhelming majority in favor of flattening the town at once. Ironbark is willing to speak with the PCs, but his mind is so clouded by rage over Rattlebranch's report (and general concern over what he's heard about the Greenwood Gala attack and its aftermath) that he's unwilling to entertain any talk of restraint.

"No. No! I will not hear any excuses for this wanton slaughter. These trees were our family, our friends, our community! We have always allowed these people their measure each year, as the Treaty demands. But now they clearly believe that the Lodge has weakened such that they can do as they will, and they will bleed the forest dry with axe and torch if we do not stop them. I will not stand aside and see the rest of my comrades cruelly butchered and set ablaze. No! If you care for the safety of these faithless wretches, go to their town and tell them to flee before we arrive. We will show them no quarter."

Ironbark gives the players three days to evacuate Marin's Mill before the arboreals attack.

C2. Whispers in the Woods

Moderate 6

Marin's Mill is about half a day's travel to the southwest, as the PCs can learn from any of the arboreals. As they move through the forest toward the town, they become increasingly aware that something is stalking them. Rustling noises in the brush and furtive movements just out of sight quickly become apparent to even the least observant PCs, although PCs who succeed at a DC 18 Perception check get a good look at the culprits: multiple tiny humanoid creatures seemingly woven from vines and brambles. They have been shadowing the PCs since shortly after their arrival at the Elder Oak. Any hint of hostility, even loud noises, causes them to scatter and flee. The PCs can track the creatures through the woods with a

successful DC 20 Survival check, although their trail leads toward Marin's Mill, the same direction the PCs were most likely already traveling. If they press on toward their destination, they stumble across a strange ritual site in the forest about an hour outside of town. Read or paraphrase the following.

At the summit of a low hill in the center of this clearing, a trio of ancient stone menhirs protrude from a cluster of grasping brambles, their weathered carvings long since covered by moss. Impaled on the dagger-like thorns of the brush nearest the great stones are dozens of small animal corpses: mice, squirrels, rabbits, and even what appears to be the occasional chicken or house cat.

Perched on a low stone shelf at the base of the hill, a tiny creature—vaguely humanoid in appearance, but with a body composed of sticks and twisted vines—prances and capers, shrieking something indecipherable in a reedy, high-pitched voice. A horde of similar creatures gathered before the thing seem to be excitedly applauding every pronouncement it makes, collectively rattling their dry branches and erupting in a chorus of eerie whistles.

Creatures: Approximately a month ago, a twigjack calling himself **Splintershank** was drawn to this site by a series of prophetic visions in which, looming over this very hill, a great plantlike spirit promised the imminent dawn of a new age in which all interlopers would be driven from the forest forever. Seized by religious fervor, the twigjack began holding frenzied ceremonies at the site, attracting equally zealous followers who sought to hasten the arrival of the spirit with blood sacrifice. When he learned of the massacre at the Greenwood Gala, Splintershank was certain it was the sign he had been waiting for and led his adherents on a bloody rampage of murder and destruction through Marin's Mill. Unable to effectively mount another attack since the villagers cleared the cover that had allowed them to approach unseen, Splintershank and his zealots have instead settled for lying in wait just outside the town's borders, waylaying and slaughtering anyone who ventures beyond the tree line.

Splintershank and the other twigjacks don't hesitate to attack anyone who disturbs their ritual site. They fight to the death without fear or doubt, certain that their bloodthirsty plant god will repay their devotion with resurrection if they fall in battle.

SPLINTERSHANK

CREATURE 6

TINY **FEY** **PLANT**

Twigjack cult leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 270)

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common, Fey

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Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +13, Nature +11, Religion +13, Stealth +15

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items wand of hawthorn (Treasure Vault 140)

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

HP 95; **Weaknesses** fire 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ splinter +15 (deadly d6, range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing

Primal Prepared Spells DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** *slow*, *wall of thorns*; **2nd** *heal*, *oaken resilience*, *quench*; **1st** *fear*, *runic body*, *tailwind*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *caustic blast*, *detect magic*, *puff of poison*, *prestidigitation*, *tangle vine*

Bramble Jump ♦♦♦ (plant, primal, teleportation)

Requirements Splintershank is in the forest's undergrowth;

Effect Splintershank scrambles into the undergrowth and instantly teleports to a different square of undergrowth within 60 feet of him. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Splinter Spray ♦♦ Splintershank sprays a barrage of splinters and brambles from his body in a 15-foot cone, dealing 7d6 piercing damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). He can't use Splinter Spray again for 1d4 rounds.

TWIGJACK BRAMBLE

CREATURE 6

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Investigating the Menhirs: By inspecting the area, the PCs can uncover the following clues about the location and the twigjacks' activities. The PCs must succeed at one or more skill check DCs per clue to be able to meaningfully identify and interpret them.

Site Origins (DC 15 Nature or Religion): This hill and its menhirs are an ancient site of worship for the Green Faith, though it's clearly been neglected until recently. Its creation likely dates back to the Taldan empire's founding, if not earlier.

Carvings (DC 25 Nature or Religion): Geometric and arboreal designs cover these menhirs, though most of them are chipped and eroded beyond recognition. However, a PC identifies two images resembling a face. The first is heavily weathered, as though it dates back to the site's creation. The second is crudely etched into a different menhir, as if by acid. The second design's slightly feathered outline suggests that lichens grew in this shape, gradually eating away at the stone surface before dying off. From the design and context, these seem to represent a powerful nature spirit known as a green man (*Bestiary* 3 118).

Effigies (DC 25 Crafting or Nature): Several tiny effigies made of vines and twigs are propped up among the standing stones. These figures resemble twigjacks, though they've been deliberately woven around bits of fungi, causing parts of each figurine to decay. Based on their design, these effigies depict a specific (albeit unidentified) green man. If a PC also identified the carvings successfully, they also discover that the carvings and effigies are representing the same figure.

Treasure: Scattered among various offerings before the strange effigy are 22 gp.

C3. Marin's Mill

Trivial 6

Marin's Mill has no roads; the only way in and out is by river, and the village doesn't have enough boats on hand to transport everyone out of town at once. The townsfolk are fearful and paranoid, having now endured multiple nightly raids claiming

Splintershank

the lives of many of their neighbors and more than a few of their pets and livestock. Desperate to stave off another night of bloodshed, they recently felled a wide cluster of trees and burned brush to push the tree line back from the borders of their village, hoping that in doing so they could prevent the attackers from approaching undetected. The village is now separated from the forest surrounding it by a ring of charred earth about 40 feet across, and the fallen trees have been hastily converted into a series of rough defensive blockades staggered around the town's perimeter, each currently crewed by a half-dozen loggers.

The villagers aren't hostile, but they are exhausted and desperate. Their starting attitude toward the PCs is indifferent (or unfriendly, if the PCs have any clearly fey or plant-like characters among them, such as leshies or ghorans), but they will answer any questions the PCs might have and describe the horrors they've experienced at the hands of Splintershank and his followers. If the PCs mention the impending arboreal attack, the villagers, clearly on the verge of panic, explain their recent actions if they haven't already and beg the PCs to go back to the arboreals to plead their case.

The PCs can attempt a DC 22 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, reduced by 3 if they present evidence of Splintershank's demise. If the loggers' attitude is raised to helpful, leader **Declan Berk** (male human logger) agrees to accompany the PCs to negotiate with the arboreals. Alternatively, they can attempt a DC 22 Intimidation check to Coerce the loggers into evacuating the town before the arboreals arrive.

Creatures: If attacked, whether by the PCs or arboreals, the loggers defend themselves. If reduced below 20 Hit Points, a logging crew scatters and flees into the forest. Should either of the logging crews flee or be destroyed, all other remaining villagers disperse into the forest, leaving Marin's Mill to its fate.

BESIEGED LOGGING CREWS (2)

CREATURE 4

GARGANTUAN HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +7

Languages Common, Fey

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +12, Lumber Lore +10, Nature +8, Survival +10

Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 18; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

HP 60; Thresholds 40 (12 squares), 20 (8 squares);

Weaknesses area damage 10, splash damage 5

Troop Defenses

Speed 25 feet; troop movement

Form Up ◆

Hurl Axes ◆◆ The loggers draw their hatchets, then launch a ranged attack in the form of a volley. This volley

is a 10-foot burst within 120 feet that deals 3d6 slashing damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save). When the crew is reduced to 8 or fewer squares, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Tandem Chop ◆ to ◆◆◆ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The loggers engage in a coordinated axe attack against each enemy within 10 feet, with a DC 19 basic Reflex save. The damage depends on the number of actions expended.

◆ 1d10 slashing damage

◆◆ 3d6+7 slashing damage

◆◆◆ 3d6+10 slashing damage

Troop Movement Whenever the loggers Stride, they first Form Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing squares), then move up to their Speed. This works just like a Gargantuan creature moving; for instance, if any square of the logging crew enters difficult terrain, the extra movement cost applies to all the loggers.

Return to the Grove

Extreme 6

Assuming the PCs return to the grove before the three days are up, Ironbark and the rest of the arboreals are still engaged in an impassioned debate. If the PCs tell Ironbark that they have new information, he begrudgingly agrees to hear it. His starting attitude toward them is indifferent.

NEGOTIATE PEACE

AUDITORY CONCENTRATION EXPLORATION LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Requirement The arboreals have an unfriendly or higher attitude toward the PCs.

You attempt to mediate the conflict between the loggers of Marin's Mill and the neighboring arboreals by making a case to their leader. Without any supporting evidence, convincing the angry arboreals to leave Marin's Mill alone requires a successful DC 32 Diplomacy check. However, the PCs can lower this DC by successfully making any of the following arguments:

- **The villagers of Marin's Mill are defending themselves against unprovoked twigjack attacks.** A first-hand account of the twigjack attacks reduces the DC by 5, although Ironbark openly questions whether the twigjack attacks were truly "unprovoked." Providing plausible justification for the twigjack attacks by reporting on the worship site reduces the DC by an additional 2; if the PCs also provide proof of Splintershank's demise, they reduce the DC by an additional 3.
- **The villagers actively want peace.** If the PCs can convince the loggers' leader, Declan Berk, to accompany them while they make their case before Ironbark, they reduce the DC by 4.

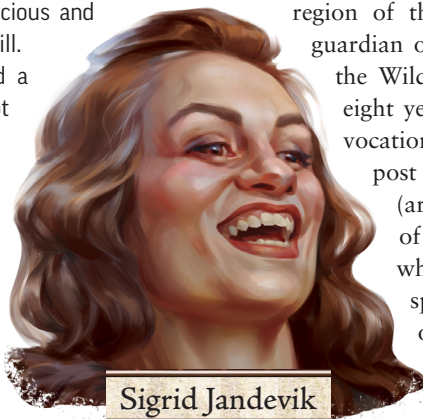
Critical Success As success, but Ironbark agrees to help the people of Marin's Mill repair the damage inflicted by the twigjacks in exchange for their assistance in replanting the burned trees.

Success Ironbark agrees to spare the town, although he and the arboreals remain suspicious and resentful of the people of Marin's Mill.

Failure Ironbark is unconvinced, and a new attempt to convince him cannot be made again for 12 hours.

Critical Failure As failure, but Ironbark's attitude toward the PCs decreases by one step, and a new attempt to convince him cannot be made for 24 hours.

Creatures: If the PCs resort to violence against the arboreals, they fight to the death.



Sigrid Jandevik

IRONBARK

CREATURE 8

Arboreal regent (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 25)

Initiative Perception +18

ARBOREAL WARDENS (4)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Monster Core 24

Initiative Perception +11

Failure: If peace is not negotiated within the allotted 3 days' time, the arboreals march on Marin's Mill and raze the settlement to the ground, slaying all defenders and driving any survivors into the forest. The PCs lose 1 Influence with Tanasha Starborne, and Unrest increases by 3. Unrest also increases by 1 if the PCs kill any of the loggers of Marin's Mill, and again if they kill any of Ironbark's arboreals.

Rewards: If the PCs successfully negotiate peace between the arboreals and Marin's Mill, they gain 2 Influence with Tanasha Starborne as soon as the news reaches Wispil.

Treasure: If the PCs successfully negotiate peace, Ironbark thanks them for their assistance with one of his own branches, which functions as a *twining staff* (*GM Core* 243). Any resolution in which Marin's Mill remains undestroyed also results in the PCs receiving 88 gp as a reward from the grateful townsfolk.

Flashpoint: Only You

Destination: D

Nearest Elder Oak: T3

Prognostication: "A friend in need, bedeviled by a vicious beast. A proud defender, fearful of her own capacity for destruction. A hundred tiny transgressions, a hundred warnings, unheeded. The

urge to nurture and protect, twisted into a gnawing hunger for vengeance. They meant no harm, but that will not save them if the monster is not contained."

Background: For nearly three decades, Sigrid Jandevik (female werebear) tirelessly patrolled her region of the Verduran Forest as a steadfast guardian of the wilderness and sworn ally of the Wildwood Lodge. Since finally retiring eight years ago, Sigrid has taken up a new vocation as the proprietress of a trading post on the west bank of the Sellen River (area D), faithfully serving the needs of the hunters, trappers, and fishers who make up an unofficial community spanning about two miles of riverbank on either side. There, she fulfills her duty to protect the wilds by taking every opportunity to educate her neighbors about ways to lessen

the environmental impact of their activities and encouraging their responsible behavior whenever she can. She's had a good deal of success, too, although their failures still sometimes exasperate her.

However, recent rumors swirling in the wake of the massacre at the Greenwood Gala have put her on edge, both because of her own concern over the future of the Wildwood Lodge and because of the reactionary opinions she's beginning to hear from even her oldest friends and customers, none of whom know about her lycanthropic nature. Acutely aware that she can't always control herself in her bear form and concerned that some of these internalized frustrations might manifest as unwanted mayhem, Sigrid asked an old friend, **Rootgrasp** (male arboreal regent), to monitor her during the rapidly approaching full moon, hoping he'd keep her from misbehaving. Other conflicts have the arboreal occupied, though, so he's broadcast her request so that others might step in to help.

Additional Information: Corazal recognizes the originator of Sigrid's message as an ally of the Wildwood Lodge, though they can't provide any additional information without further analysis—a process that could take days. The urgency of the request is clear, however, and Emorga will urge the PCs to depart immediately if they're not already so inclined.

Arrival: The settlement that houses Sigrid's trading post is roughly half a day's travel from the Elder Oak at T3. As the trees begin to thin out closer to the river, the PCs find themselves among a series of rough campsites and ramshackle buildings sprawled for several miles along the water's edge: fishing shacks, hunting cabins, makeshift docks, and other structures

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of similar purpose. Numerous homesteaders of various ancestries are going about their business as the PCs approach, offering curt nods by way of greeting. If the PCs attempt to ask questions or otherwise engage anyone in conversation, they are directed to the trading post and told that its proprietor tends to be well informed on various happenings in the area.

Sigrid is a pleasant, round-faced human woman of late middle age, with twinkling dark eyes and brown hair that's developing a slight sheen of silver. She greets the PCs warmly as they enter her establishment.

"Well, hello there! I don't believe we've met. You must have arrived on the barge that passed through this morning. My name is Sigrid Jandevik, and I run this fine establishment. Is there anything I can help you with? I've got dry goods, hunting supplies, blades, tackle, and if you need something that isn't here, I'll do what I can to get it brought in for you on the next boat."

If the PCs identify themselves as agents of the Wildwood Lodge, Sigrid is relieved that someone answered her request for help. Otherwise, after a bit of small talk, she asks directly whether they're here on Lodge business; years of experience running a trading post have given her a good eye for adventuring types. Once she's established the PCs as potential allies, she explains her plight.

Glancing briefly around the store to make sure there are no customers within earshot, Sigrid drops her voice to a low whisper. "I've got a bit of a problem. Nothing too serious, but one that requires discretion and perhaps a somewhat specialized skill set. You see... I have a habit of turning into, well, a bear, when the moon is full. Always have. Folks around here don't know, and I'd prefer to keep it that way; they're good people, but they wouldn't understand.

"Most times, it hasn't been a problem. I'll just close up shop for a few days and make sure I get myself out to the woods before sundown. But lately..." She shakes her head and sighs wistfully. "It hasn't been the same around here since that awful business up at the gala. Folks are scared and angry, and if I'm being honest, so am I. I'd never forgive myself if any of those feelings got the better of me when I wasn't entirely in my right mind. What I need is someone to keep an eye on me for the next few nights and make sure I don't do anything I'd regret."

Preparation: How long the PCs have to prepare depends on how long it took them to arrive. This adventure assumes the full moon rises on the 14th, 15th, and 16th day after setting out to meet Corazal, giving the PCs time to commune, travel, and even

complete a few other flashpoints. So long as they haven't needlessly postponed traveling here, they should have at least the day to rest and prepare. Likewise, over the next three days, the PCs are free to do anything they like while the sun is up.


After nightfall, however, Sigrid requests that they accompany her as she wanders about the area in bear form, taking care that she doesn't get up to anything that would hurt anyone or otherwise endanger the community. If the PCs suggest restraining or confining her in any way, Sigrid strongly advises against it, warning them that doing so would only make her angry and more likely to engage in precisely the type of behavior she's hoping to avoid.

Bear Watch: The full moon phase lasts for three nights. Each evening, as the sun sets and the moon rises, Sigrid transforms into a bear and begins slowly wandering her territory, making a rough three-mile circuit up and down the riverbank over the course of the night. In general, she's focused on normal ursine pursuits: foraging for food, splashing in the river, and scratching stubborn back itches against tree trunks. Few of the region's inhabitants bat an eye at the sight of a bear. In fact, in an area with this many druids and rangers, it's not uncommon to see bears and other wild animals strolling around in the company of humanoid companions. Sigrid doesn't extend quite as much courtesy to her neighbors, butting into their business if she smells injustice or an unguarded snack.

This flashpoint uses a Victory Point subsystem (GM Core 184) that tracks how well the PCs apply their skills to identify and react to situations that provoke the transformed Sigrid, ensuring she doesn't do anything she'd regret the following morning. Each night involves at least two complications, although the GM can easily add more either to heighten tension or to provide the PCs an additional opportunity to earn Victory Points (VPs).

Complications involve completing one or more smaller objectives, each of which lists a number of Victory Points, several skills, and associated check DCs. The PCs have several brief phases to resolve the complication before Sigrid arrives, and during each phase, each PC can attempt a check to earn VPs toward the current objective. Once the party has earned the listed number of VPs, that objective is resolved; any excess VPs, such as from a critical success, are lost.

Treat each complication and its skill checks as a loose framework for the scene. The players might devise a clever alternate strategy or unleash the perfect spell, which might earn VPs or negate an objective outright. As long as they're challenged and are enjoying the antics, delight in the chaos.



Encourage the PCs to choose exploration activities as they accompany Sigrid around the area. As long as at least one PC is engaged in the Scout activity, the group can attempt a single DC 21 Perception check using the highest Perception bonus among the scouting PCs to spot each complication in advance. On a success or critical success, they have three rounds to address the complication; otherwise, they have only two.

Once per complication, one PC can attempt a DC 22 Deception check to momentarily distract Sigrid with food or loud noises, buying the group one more round in which to act. Each time they successfully buy time this way, the Deception check DC increases by 1; Sigrid gradually grows wise to their tricks.

NIGHT 1

The first night, Sigrid wanders aimlessly for a while before detecting distant smoke and ambling in its direction.

Complication: Fire Hazard

An unattended, inexpertly built campfire smolders amid sleeping trappers' tents. The fire overflows with embers that could easily spark a forest fire. The PCs need to evacuate the camp and hide the fire before Sigrid does it for them. Violently.

Objective 1 (3 VP): The PCs must rouse the trappers and convince them to vacate the area. Doing so requires succeeding at a DC 23 Deception check, DC 21 Diplomacy check, or DC 25 Intimidate check.

Objective 2 (2 VP): Once the PCs earn the trappers' cooperation, they must smother the fire and hide all traces of it with a DC 22 Acrobatics check or DC 18 Survival check. The PCs can work toward this objective before completing the first one, but trying to do so increases the DCs of all skill checks during this complication by 1 due to the trappers' outrage and interference.

Failure: If the PCs don't evacuate the campsite and extinguish the fire before Sigrid arrives, she flies into a rage and does it for them, shredding the tents and sending the trappers screaming into the woods.

Complication: Angry Dogs

A pack of dogs belonging to a group of deer hunters camped nearby catch Sigrid's scent and sprint toward her and the PCs, barking furiously.

Objective (3 VP): The PCs can command the dogs to back off and return to the hunters' camp with DC 22 Nature checks or DC 23 Intimidation checks. PCs with special abilities to communicate with animals (such as the Animal Empathy feat) gain a +2 circumstance bonus to those checks, and they can also attempt DC 19 Diplomacy checks.

Failure: The dogs surround Sigrid, snarling and snapping, but they're no match for their quarry's strength. The pack scatters after two of the dogs fall to the werebear's claws.

NIGHT 2

The second day coincides with Lucky Night, a local folk holiday that involves staying up late, celebrating the stars, and asking favors from Desna.

Complication: Fireworks Display

A group of rowdy children run along the riverbank, shooting off fireworks as they try to add a few more stars to the sky for Desna.

Objective (3 VP): The PCs must convince the children to surrender the fireworks and leave the area. The children laugh off polite requests, instead requiring DC 23 Deception or Intimidation checks.

Alternate Objective (3 VP): If they prefer stealing the fireworks, the PCs can seize them with a DC 20 Athletics check or DC 21 Thievery check. Forcibly taking the fireworks could irritate the parents, who are encountered later during the Keep Andoran Beautiful complication.

Failure: Horrified at the children's complete disregard for fire safety, Sigrid hurls a youngster into the river to extinguish their fireworks, causing the other children to scatter. The PCs can help the sodden child safely reach the riverbank.

Complication: Fresh Meat

A partially dressed deer carcass hangs from a low tree branch. A short distance away, several hunters are busy setting up their campsite, though they'll soon return to the carcass. Sigrid's stomach rumbles with hunger.

Objective (3 VP): During the first phase (or first two phases, if the PCs successfully scouted this complication), the PCs can sneak into the camp and remove the carcass with DC 20 Stealth checks or DC 21 Thievery checks. If the PCs don't earn enough VPs during this time, the hunters return, and the PCs can no longer complete this objective.

Alternate Objective (2 VP): While unhappy to abandon their kill, the hunters may be convinced to depart by PCs who succeed at DC 24 Deception checks, DC 21 Diplomacy checks, or DC 22 Intimidation checks. If the PCs failed to resolve the "Angry Dogs" complication from the previous night, grief and anger over their dogs' wounds raises the DC of any checks to convince the hunters by 2.

Failure: If the PCs don't relocate the deer or convince the hunters to leave, Sigrid hungrily charges into the campsite. A panicked hunter grabs a weapon and attempts to drive off the bear, only to be hurled



against a nearby tree by one swipe of a massive paw. Fortunately, Sigrid becomes distracted by food, so the other hunters escape with their wounded friend.

NIGHT 3

SEVERE 6

By now rumors of a ravenous bear have circulated, and locals wisely avoid traveling the forest at night.

Complication: Keep Andoran Beautiful

Visitors using a cluster of seasonal fishing cabins have carelessly dumped their garbage into the water, resulting in a befouled mess of rotten food scraps, tangled fishing lines, and other less savory items.

Objective 1 (3 VP): Convincing the residents to evacuate or clean up their mess is a difficult task, requiring DC 24 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation checks.

Objective 2 (2 VP): The litter scattered about the river needs to be cleaned up, requiring DC 24 Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature, or Survival checks. If PCs have completed the first objective, the fishers help them clean, reducing these DCs by 4.

Failure: If a cleanup is not actively underway by the time Sigrid arrives, she knocks the cabins down, chases off the inhabitants, and then cleans up the mess herself, growling at the PCs in a way that clearly communicates a demand for assistance.

Complication: Glad She's on Our Side

A small campsite ahead is under attack by a swarm of shadowy, gibbering figures. The besieged travelers desperately cry for help while fending off their assailants. Hearing people in danger, Sigrid bristles angrily, sniffs the air to determine where the trouble is, and then bounds off to perform ursine heroics.

Objective: Rather than perform skill checks to avert Sigrid's wrath, each PC needs to make a DC 28 skill check or saving throw—Acrobatics, Athletics, and Fortitude are ideal, though other skills might apply—to keep pace with the werebear as she crashes through foliage and charges into combat. A PC gains a circumstance bonus to this check equal to their Speed divided by 5. A PC can voluntarily treat a critical success or success as a failure to lag behind and arrive with their companions.

Critical Success The PC arrives with Sigrid and gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative check.

Success As critical success, but the PC gains no initiative check bonus.

Failure The PC arrives at the beginning of the second combat round.

Critical Failure As failure, but the PC takes 4d6 piercing damage (basic Reflex DC 22) after stumbling through a briar patch.

The campsite occupies a 30-foot-diameter clearing, and the gremlins congregate toward its center.

Creatures: The attackers are nuglub gremlins who spotted the campfire and waited for the travelers to fall asleep before ambushing the camp. If more than half of their number are slain, they attempt to flee, though Sigrid will do everything in her power to ensure that none escape. The travelers try their best to escape, taking shelter just beyond the tree line.

About half of the nuglubs attack Sigrid, and the other half fight any PCs in sight.

ELITE NUGLUBS (8)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 135

Initiative Perception +9

SIGRID JANDEVIK

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE **LARGE** **BEAST** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID** **WERECREATURE**

Female werebear trader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 331)

Perception +15; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +17, Medicine +11, Mercantile Lore +13,

Nature +15, Stealth +12, Survival +15

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 24; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

HP 140; **Weaknesses** silver 8

Speed 25

Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+10 slashing plus Grab

Melee ♦ jaws +16 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal) Medium human with fist +16 for 1d4+10 bludgeoning, or grizzly bear with Speed 35 feet.

Development: Once her foes have been dispatched, Sigrid grunts and wanders back into the woods, leaving the survivors to stammer their thanks to the PCs (and that bear) for saving their lives. Treat this complication as successfully resolved.

THE DAY AFTER

If the PCs successfully resolved at least four of the nights' complications, Sigrid offers them her sincerest thanks and asks that they pass on her well wishes to the rest of the Lodge, hoping that by next month she'll be in a better mental state and better equipped to handle herself. Otherwise, she thanks them for their attempts, but her concern is evident as she worries that "this whole situation is going to get a lot worse before it gets any better."

Failure: If the PCs don't resolve at least four of the nights' complications, Unrest increases by 1.

Treasure: Sigrid's inventory doesn't have much by way of magic or treasures, but she is able to keep her

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store reasonably well-stocked with alchemical items thanks to the trading barges that regularly pass through on their way to and from Cassomir. As a reward for their assistance, she offers the PCs a vial of *camouflage dye*, two *moderate elixirs of life*, and one dose each of *moderate antidote* and *moderate antiplague*.

Flashpoint: Grove of Tears

Destination: E1

Nearest Elder Oak: T4

Prognostication: “A vision in green, poisoned by ancient betrayal. Interlopers, blind with greed, tread where they should not, awakening a thirst for vengeance long left unsated. Three sisters’ tears fall like rain, and where they land, hatred spreads like a sickening mold.”

Background: Nearly everyone in the Andoren city of Bellis and its surrounding environs knows the Grove of Tears, even if few can agree on exactly what it is or how it got its name. Whether it grew from the tomb of a fallen fey warrior-queen or from the site of a long-forgotten battle, the average person’s recommendation is the same: stay out. Of course, the imagination can construct fanciful tales of untold riches associated with any forbidden wilderness, and so it was for Deegs Aggrave, a local leader of Andoran’s Lumber Consortium. Taking advantage of the clashes and chaos, he organized a treasure-hunting expedition to the grove, trusting that any of its guardians would likely be distracted by other events in the Verduran Forest. Before departing, he called in extra security from Bellis to safeguard his own lumber operations. Then his crew disappeared into the woods.

They soon woke the grove’s real danger: a trio of undead dryads whose grove Deegs’s distant ancestors had despoiled. Furious, the lead dryad has begun dominating living creatures with an infectious hatred, sending them out to destroy anything made by human hands. Alyce Quinley arrived with Deegs’s requisitioned security just in time to see the lumber camp being attacked by berserk animals. She has reinforced and defended the camp since, wondering what evil Deegs might have unearthed.

E1. Lumber Camp

Low 6

This small lumber camp has guards, a hastily erected palisade, and barricades, converting it into a makeshift military encampment. Overhead, the Andoren flag flaps in the wind at the top of a tall wooden pole. A short distance outside the camp lie carcasses of wild animals riddled with arrows—enormous wolves, a bear, and a moose. On spotting the PCs, a guard calls for them to hurry inside before more beasts arrive. Inside are a mix of laborers and militia from Bellis. The PCs are soon directed to

the office-turned-command-center headed by Alyce Quinley. She’s relieved to see the PCs, even greeting them as friends if they’ve already earned several Influence Points with her.

“I didn’t expect to see you again so soon, not that we couldn’t use the help. I’ll make it quick: a sanctioned Lumber Consortium operation here recently requested additional security, given the violent rumors that followed the gala attack. I arrived with my forces a few days ago, apparently a day after the Consortium bigwig set off on a grand surveying expedition. We arrived to find the camp already under attack by animals, fought them off, and fortified our position. But something’s driving the beasts—they’ve been throwing themselves against the walls just trying to break in! There’s no sign of the surveyors, and I can’t spare troops to search without dooming the whole camp. Is there any chance I could convince you to go looking for us?”

Alyce is cagey about details unless the PCs have at least 5 Influence with her, acutely aware that the Lodge and the Lumber Consortium aren’t particularly friendly. If they have at least 5 Influence with her, she volunteers additional information from the Background section without their having to ask; otherwise, she’ll only do so in response to specific questions or requests for further details. A few possible questions and their answers are listed below.

Who is this ‘Consortium bigwig?’ “Deegs Aggrave. He runs the Consortium lumber yards out of Bellis. This is his operation; I’m here to make sure he doesn’t get killed.” She scoffs in exasperation. “Or at least try.” If the PCs have at least 5 Influence with Alyce, she provides a more blunt assessment: Aggrave is greedy and corrupt, as are most Lumber Consortium leaders. However, the Consortium is a vital component of Andoran’s economy as well as its military, and it’s her sworn duty as an Eagle Knight to protect their interests on behalf of her homeland.

What were the surveyors looking for? “I questioned the workers here, and Aggrave thinks there’s something powerful, or valuable, hidden out there in the woods in a place called the Grove of Tears. Seems he’s basing that on its cursed reputation and assumes it must be hiding something good. And now, with the chaos in the Verduran, I suppose he thought this was his chance.” Alyce shrugs with exasperation, as though this isn’t the first time she’s had to clean up after treasure-hunters.

Tell us about the animal attacks. “Whatever’s driving the beasts gives them incredible fortitude. Biggest damn bear I’ve ever seen tried to smash the southern barricade, and it took 30 arrows just to bring him down. All the beasts drool, too, almost like they’re



rabid.” Alyce’s description of the bear does not match the werebear Sigrid’s appearance.

Creatures: As the PCs begin to wrap up their questioning, they are interrupted by cries of alarm from outside. A massive hodag has managed to burrow under the southern wall and is now staggering toward the center of camp, sending terrified loggers fleeing in all directions.

At the end of each combat round, guards fire arrows down onto the hodag, dealing 3d8 piercing damage to it (DC 20 basic Reflex). Alyce Quinley follows after the PCs, aiding them where she can.



Infected Logger

HATEFUL HODAG CREATURE 7

Elite variant hodag (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 145)

Initiative Perception +16

Vitriol ♦ (curse, emotion, mental, occult) The hateful hodag vomits a stream of caustic black sludge at a single foe it can detect within 15 feet. The hodag and the target each gain a +1 circumstance bonus on all attack rolls made against each other until the hodag chooses a different target for its Vitriol. The target must attempt a DC 24 Will save, with the following effects. The hodag cannot use Vitriol again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success No effect.

Success The target’s mind is clouded by feelings of rage and hate, causing it to be off-guard against the hodag’s next attack. It can’t use actions with the concentrate trait unless they also have the rage trait.

Failure As success, but the target is off-guard until the end of the hodag’s next turn. While off-guard, it is unable to use actions with the concentrate trait unless they also have the rage trait.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target is off-guard until the hodag chooses a different target for its Vitriol.

Sneak Attack The hodag deals 2d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Nature check notices that the hodag is acting erratically, lashing out seemingly at random and with little regard for its own safety. If they examine its corpse after the fight, they discover a viscous black residue oozing from in its mouth and eyes that radiates strong primal magic, but is unrecognizable as any known chemical or magical substance.

E2. Following the Trail

Deegs Aggraive and his men left camp via a rough logging trail that stretches about two miles southwest into the forest. Fortunately, even PCs untrained in

Survival can easily follow the obvious trail of broken branches and crushed undergrowth left behind by Deegs’s expedition as it moved beyond the trail’s end and pressed deeper into the woods.

Creatures: After traveling for about two hours beyond the end of the trail, the PCs stumble into the territory of a pair of enormous bears. Content until recently to ignore the loggers and feed on deer, they have now fallen victim to the dryads’ curse and transformed into hateful monsters.

HATEFUL BEARS (2) CREATURE 6

Variant cave bears (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 41)

Initiative Perception +15

Vitriol As hateful hodag; DC 22 Will save

Sneak Attack As hateful hodag.

E3. Missing Loggers

Low 6

When the PCs approach within a mile of area E4, they suddenly become aware of the sound of rustling leaves and snapping twigs from the forest ahead. Moments later, a trio of humanoid figures slowly emerge from the forest. A successful DC 16 Society check is enough to identify them as Lumber Consortium loggers; however, it is immediately clear to the PCs that something is very wrong with them. Like other hateful creatures they have encountered thus far, a viscous black substance oozes from the loggers’ eyes and mouths, and their movement is jerky and uncoordinated.

Creatures: Upon spotting the PCs, all three loggers utter screams of rage and lunge forward to attack the PCs. Despite the fact that each logger has a hatchet hanging from their belt, they fight like animals, trying to rip the PCs apart with their bare hands and teeth.

HATEFUL LOGGERS (3) CREATURE 4

HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +11

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +12, Forest Lore +12, Nature +10, Survival +10

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1

Items climbing kit, hatchet, padded armor

AC 20; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 70; **Weaknesses** nonlethal 5

Exhausted Though their minds are suffused with hatred and rage, the loggers have not slept for several days and are ready to drop. They take a –2 status penalty to saving throws against effects with the sleep trait.

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Speed 25 feet

Melee  fist +14 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+8 bludgeoning

Melee  bite +14, **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing

Vitriol As hateful hodag (page 41); DC 19

Sneak Attack The logger deals 1d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

Bring ‘em back alive: If any of the loggers are rendered unconscious, the black residue spills from their eyes and mouths and seeps into the ground as the curse releases its hold over them. Once restored to consciousness, the loggers are confused, but not hostile. Assuming the PCs take no hostile actions themselves, they will answer questions to the best of their ability, although they have no recollection of anything from the past few days and have no idea what happened to them, the rest of their crew, or Deegs Aggrave himself. If the PCs express an intention to continue on toward the Grove of Tears, the loggers offer directions, but under no circumstances will they willingly accompany or lead them there. Left to their own devices, they depart, wishing the PCs the best of luck as they turn back in the direction of camp.

E4. The Grove of Tears

Severe 6

The grove itself is only a mile farther ahead.

An enormous tree looms over a clearing filled with wildflowers and surrounded by young saplings. Lounging beneath the tree's boughs are a dozen woodcutters and scouts, eating from the fruit offered to them by a beautiful young woman carrying an overflowing basket.

Over a millennium ago, three dryads named Silene, Myristica, and Sarracenia happily tended this grove. While Myristica and Sarracenia were content, Silene secretly wished for visitors who could regale them with tales about the world beyond their trees. Eventually, a young man became lost and stumbled into their grove. Silene marveled at his stories, welcomed him back for many months, and even gifted him a branch of duskwood from her tree—much to her two friends' dismay. The other dryads warned of humans' greed to no avail. When the foliage parted once more, it wasn't the young man who entered the grove, it was a logging crew from his town. They had asked the young man about the strange branch, and when he refused to tell them where he found it, they followed his tracks. After all, a piece of duskwood meant there must be pristine duskwood trees nearby! They invaded the grove, harvested what they could, and departed, leaving the three dryads dying from the loss

of their trees. Furious, Silene revived as a waldgeist, a rare undead created from despoiled nature. The spirits of Myristica and Sarracenia have haunted the area, seemingly unwilling (or unable) to rest so long as Silene stalks the land.

Hazard: The pastoral scene before the PCs represents the future Silene dreamed of—a future in which humans and fey might live alongside each other in harmony with nature. Once the hazard is triggered or disabled, it can be seen as it truly is: a barren clearing dominated by a single twisted tree, its leafless branches stretched overhead like skeletal arms. Except where noted, these hazards pose no further threat to the loggers, having already subdued them.

MYRISTICA'S DESPAIR

HAZARD 5

UNIQUE **COMPLEX** **HAUNT**


Stealth +13 (expert) to recognize that the scene before them is an illusion.

Description The illusion shatters, revealing the grove to be a lifeless scar and the seemingly peaceful loggers to be crawling aimlessly about the clearing, consumed by rage and lashing out at anything that comes near.

Disable DC 22 Nature (trained) to tame the primal energy, DC 23 Diplomacy (trained) to console the dryad, DC 24 Occultism (trained) to identify and heal the emotional wounds; three successes are required to disable the haunt.

AC 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Hardness 12; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** vitality 8

Awaken  (emotion, fear, mental, primal) **Trigger** At least two creatures enter the grove; **Effect** The illusion fades, and a sorrowful chill emanates from the giant tree. The haunt rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; emotion, mental, primal) Myristica bemoans her grove's fate, overwhelming foes with sorrow. Each creature in the grove must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is dazzled for 1 round and takes 2d6 mental damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d6 mental damage, plus 2d6 persistent mental damage. While taking this persistent damage, they are dazzled.

Reset Unless Silene is destroyed, this haunt can recharge itself after 1 hour.

SARRACENIA'S IRE

HAZARD 5

UNIQUE **COMPLEX** **HAUNT**


Stealth +13 (expert) to recognize that the scene before them is an illusion.

Description As Myristica's Despair.

Disable DC 22 Nature (trained) to tame the primal energy, DC 24 Religion (trained) to suppress the haunt, DC 25 Diplomacy (trained) to console the dryad; three successes are required to disable the haunt.

AC 23; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Hardness 12; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** vitality 8

Awaken  (emotion, fear, mental, primal) **Trigger** At least two creatures enter the grove; **Effect** The illusion fades, and a sorrowful chill emanates from the giant tree. The haunt rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action; emotion, mental, primal) Sarracenia's rage overwhelms up to two living creatures in the grove, each of which must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is confused for 1 round.

Critical Failure For 1 round, the creature is confused, is stupefied 1, and gains a +4 status bonus to damage rolls.

Reset Unless Silene is destroyed, this haunt can recharge itself after 1 hour.

Creature: Silene awakens when the haunts activate, and she looms beside her tree while watching the PCs' struggle. However, once the PCs earn at least two successes to disable the haunts, or after two rounds have passed (whichever happens first), Silene uses her Possess Tree ability and joins the fight.

SILENE

CREATURE 8

Variant waldgeist (*Book of the Dead* 164)

UNIQUE **INCORPOREAL** **SPIRIT** **UNDEAD**

Perception +18; darkvision

Lumberjack's Bane Silene's Strikes deal an additional 1d6 void damage to humans, an additional 1d6 void damage to creatures wielding axes, or an additional 1d8 void damage to humans wielding axes.

Success: If the PCs successfully deactivate the haunt or destroy Silene within 4 days of receiving the prognostication, her curse on the grove is lifted. When the loggers regain consciousness, they have no memory of anything that has transpired over the past three days, but they are grateful to the PCs for freeing them. Even Deegs Aggraive reluctantly agrees to return to Bellis empty-handed. The hateful beast attacks on the lumber camp cease, even if the haunt eventually resets; at least, until Silene's grove is disturbed again.

Failure: If the PCs do not deactivate the haunt, the entire logging crew is dead by the end of day 4. Unrest increases by 3 and the PCs lose 2 Influence with Alyce Quinley. For every missing logger killed, increase Unrest by 1 (maximum 3).

Treasure: Within the hollow trunk of Silene's tree are the shattered remnants of dozens of humanoid skeletons, many of them centuries old. Buried among these remains is a *bag of holding* (type 1) containing 38 gp and a *wondrous figure* (jade serpent). If the PCs inquire into any sort of reward from Deegs Aggraive, he begrudgingly offers them his +1 *striking feybane hatchet* and agrees to write them a promissory note which can be exchanged at any Andoren Lumber Consortium office for a sum of 50 gp.

Flashpoint: The Bee-Man's Bargain

Destination: F (Amberhill)

Nearest Elder Oak: T5

Prognostication: "A tiny town's sweetness gives way to blood and fear. A name whispered on the wind, a covenant sealed, and a people doomed. Now a



Silene

thousand thousand soldiers stand guard, each serving a woodland king humming decrees from a golden throne. One by one, the people falter and fall.”

Background: When rumors of fey and animal attacks reached Amberhill, the small farming community sent emissaries requesting help to its larger neighbor, Bellis. Unfortunately, Bellis had no forces to spare, especially since the lumber boss Deegs Aggrave rallied half of them to join his treasure hunt (see the Grove of Tears flashpoint on page 40). Days later, Khasprickle and his Wild Hunt swept through Amberhill, slaughtering livestock and townsfolk alike. Desperate for aid, a local beekeeper named Edric Farthing made a fateful decision: he snuck into the woods and invoked Bee-Man of Bellis, a fearsome, local cryptid said to grant favors to those in need—often at a terrible price.

To Edric’s surprise, the Bee-Man answered. Together, they made a pact: the Bee-Man’s swarms would patrol and protect Amberhill, and in return, the people of Amberhill would assume the bees’ usual workload. Edric never had the authority to bargain on Amberhill’s behalf, but the Bee-Man didn’t care. In a flurry of buzzing wings, his swarms chased off Khasprickle’s party before turning on any townsfolk who didn’t immediately begin harvesting nectar and pollen. For several weeks, inhabitants have toiled amid wildflowers, fearful of what might happen if they don’t meet the Bee-Man’s onerous quota. They wouldn’t want to die like Edric did when he tried to renegotiate the deal, and anyone who tries to flee meets a similar fate.

AMBERHILL

TOWN

This rustic community specializes in the beekeeping and honey production that’s made the region famous.

Government council

Population 302 (96% humans, 4% other)

Languages Common, Gnomish

Adeline Moretta (female human) elected municipal leader

Evandio Birchwood (nonbinary gnome druid) doctor and apothecary

OMINOUS WARNING

Amberhill occupies a mile-wide clearing just west of the Sellen River. A well-traveled dirt road skirts around the east edge of the town, connecting to Bellis in the north and other villages to the south. As the PCs

near Amberhill, they encounter a grisly scene: three dead jinkins (*Bestiary* 193). The gremlins’ tiny bodies are each swollen and have a sickly purple hue.

Several foot-long quills are embedded in a nearby tree, and the scattered leaf litter suggests a lot of movement happened here. Studying the scene might provide the PCs insight into Amberhill’s crisis.

Jinkins: By studying the corpses and succeeding at a DC 17 Medicine check or DC 20 Nature check, a PC determines that the jinkins were stung to death by insects.

The parts of the gremlins in contact with the soil suggest that whatever stung them continued to do so even after they fell

here. On a critical success, the PC identifies these as bee stings.

Quills: With a successful DC 17 Nature check or DC 20 Perception check, a PC discerns that the quills came from a giant porcupine or a pukwudgie, likely having been hurled like spears before becoming embedded in the tree. On a critical success, the PC recognizes the quills’ markings and knows they came from Khasprickle.

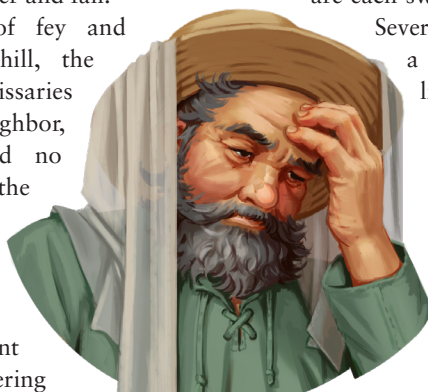
Tracking: With a successful DC 17 Survival check or DC 22 Perception check, a PC can determine that the jinkins weren’t traveling alone. An assortment of creatures (some with hooves, some wearing soft boots) approached Amberhill, suddenly retreated here, briefly fought, and then fled the area.

Bees: By studying their surroundings and succeeding at a DC 20 Perception check, a PC spots a worrying number of bees that have alighted on nearby tree branches. They aren’t gathering nectar, and they’re all facing the PCs as if purposefully watching. If provoked, the bees fly toward Amberhill.

WORKER BEES

Fields of wildflowers surround Amberhill, and as the PCs approach the tree line, they spot dozens of townsfolk crawling among the flowers. A few others are building new beehives, adding to the multitude of brightly painted wooden hives already here. As the PCs get closer, they recognize that these workers are using needles to extract pollen and nectar from each individual flower and storing the harvests in flasks. They’re so intent on their work that they barely notice the PCs until approached.

On spotting visitors, an elderly man named **Waylon Ebbers** (male human beekeeper) who was harvesting pollen, recoils in surprise, barely keeping his flask from



Waylon Ebbers



spilling. After corking the flask, he stands and hoarsely whispers, "There's nothing for you here. Get out while you can. If he hasn't seen you yet, there's still time. Go now, and never come back." With that, he sinks to his knees and resumes his work. Waylon is indifferent to the PCs, yet if they successfully Make an Impression to increase his attitude to friendly (DC 18 Diplomacy), he's willing to answer their questions. An assortment of likely responses are listed below.

What are you doing? "Gathering nectar. And let me tell you, the bees make it look a lot easier than it is." He unstoppers the flask to show the PCs roughly an ounce of sweet-smelling liquid.

Why would you do this? "Because the bees won't. They're too busy. Protecting us." He audibly scoffs. "Watching us. Listening to every word we say. And, well, if we get out of line..." He spits on the ground. "Some days I ask myself: do I deserve this? Is this what I get for all those years of letting them work in the fields all day and then taking their harvest for myself? Is that what he's trying to teach us? Or is he just an evil bastard who likes watching us suffer?"

Who is 'he'? "The Bee-Man. Haven't you figured that out yet? Who else would it be?" Waylon knows the basics of the cryptid legend: that the Bee-Man was a soothsayer who gleaned the future from watching bees, eventually transformed into a swarm of bees, and has lurked in these woods ever since. With a successful DC 22 Society check or DC 24 Nature check to Recall Knowledge, a PC knows similar information, as well as the Bee-Man's reputation for hearing his own name whenever it's spoken and sometimes granting dangerous bargains to those who summon him. Few spot him otherwise—probably for the best, as he seems indifferent to humanoid suffering.

How did this happen? "You hear about the rampaging fey? They attacked Amberhill, burning and killing while being led by some prickly gremlin riding a wolf. Edric—one of my neighbors—called on the Bee-Man for help and damned us all. We've traded death by fey for death by bees. The bees keep their end of the bargain, and we keep ours." He gestures unenthusiastically with the nectar flask.

Where's Edric? Waylon shakes his head sadly. "Dead, if he's lucky. Once he realized what he'd done, he tried to renegotiate. The Bee-Man wasn't having it. Edric went into the warehouse, there was angry buzzing, and he's not come out since."

What do you do with the nectar? "We bring it to him, of course. If we bring enough, we get to do it all again tomorrow, and if we don't ..." The old man trails off. "You'll find out soon enough, I suppose. We've been flapping our lips long enough that there's

no way he doesn't know you're here. I hope it was worth it. You'll never leave this place alive."

Why don't you run? "Oh, some of us try. They make it about halfway to the tree line. And then the screaming starts. You can hear it from here." The old man closes his eyes and shudders. "It... it takes a while, sometimes."

When the PCs are done with their questioning, Waylon drops to his knees once more and resumes his work with a final, "Do what you're gonna do. This time tomorrow, you'll be down here with the rest of us, or you'll be dead."

Ohancanu Assault

Challenging 6

As the PCs conclude talking to Waylon, they hear a cacophony of footsteps approaching through the woods. A trio of fey giants called ohancanus recently decided to join Khasprickle's Wild Hunt, and are only now catching up to where they thought he'd be. Spotting Amberhill, the ohancanus decided to raid the town for fun, only to fall afoul of its apian sentries. The three burst from the trees about 100 feet away, already being stung by bees. However, there aren't enough of the insects nearby to fell these fey. The villagers (use the statistics for farmers on page 222 of the *Gamemastery Guide* if needed) retreat behind the PCs, hoping for extra protection. Enraged, the ohancanus fight until incapacitated, though an individual considers fleeing if reduced to 25 HP and if at least one of their white hairs is plucked.

OHANCANUS (3)

LEVEL 5

Page 88

Initiative Perception +12 (+14 when rolling initiative)

Covered In Bees! Dozens of bees sting the ohancanu, dealing 2d6 persistent piercing damage. The persistent damage ends automatically if the ohancanu takes 10 or more damage from an area effect.

Even once defeated, the ohancanus attract additional bee sentries that crawl over them, patrol the area, and carry any dead bees to the town hall (page 47, back cover). The tired beekeepers thank the PCs while obliquely recommending they flee before the Bee-Man decides they live here. They withdraw cautiously if asked about confronting or meeting the Bee-Man, not wanting to provoke their new tyrant.

AMBERHILL

The tiny town of Amberhill is made up of modest wooden buildings surrounding what must have once been a busy and vibrant central marketplace. Now the streets are eerily still and silent, as if the entire

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BEEKEEPING TOOLS

The PCs can find the following specialty items in the workshop. The swarmsuit originally appears on page 93 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Grand Bazaar*.

BEEKEEPER'S SMOKER

LEVEL 1

UNCOMMON

Price 1 gp

Usage held in 1 hand

Activate **◆◆** (manipulate)

This device resembles a teapot with a trigger. When filled with cloth fuel (worth 1 cp) and lit, it smolders and gradually fills with smoke for 10 minutes, during which time you can squeeze the trigger to spray smoke.

Spray Smoke **◆** (manipulate); **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** You expel smoke into an adjacent 5-foot square. All creatures in that area are concealed, and other creatures are concealed to them. The smoke lasts for 1d4 rounds or until dispersed by strong wind.

SWARMSUIT

LEVEL 1

UNCOMMON

Price 20 gp

Usage attached to explorer's clothing; **Bulk** L

These thick, overlapping layers of clothing are coupled with a matching hat, outfitted with mesh netting around its wide brim to keep you safe from insects. You gain resistance 3 to physical damage from swarms. Explorer's clothing altered in this way has a Dexterity cap of +2, check penalty of -1, and Speed penalty of -5 feet regardless of your Strength.



population had vanished overnight. Silent, that is, save for the constant drone of insect wings from the town hall. At any time, several bees buzz or rest near the PCs, always seeming to study them.

The PCs can freely explore Amberhill, encountering no opposition except in the town hall (page 47). Although it is not completely abandoned, the town shows signs of neglect thanks to its residents' new servitude: a door hangs ajar from one hinge; a broken wooden shutter creaks ominously in the breeze; a cartload of produce lies on its side in the market square, its contents left to rot in the sun. Only at

sundown do villagers return, deposit their harvests in the town hall, and then retire to their homes, pausing only briefly to chat before needing to eat and sleep.

Other than the houses and town hall, the most notable structures are the warehouse and the workshop.

Warehouse

A rectangular barn stores various supplies for the community, most notably its honey, wax, and small-batch mead. There are several hundred jars of honey sealed with wax and stamped with Amberhill's name and the harvest year. 14 wooden casks lined with cloth contain beeswax for candles and export. 20 small casks contain mead of average quality brewed over the past few years.

The warehouse attracts hundreds of bees, not because of the honey but because of their new hive. Edric Farthing's corpse is draped over a roof beam, his body partly hollowed out and transformed into a macabre beehive as punishment for trying to renegotiate his own deal. Though dead, Edric's spirit still lingers here, invisible and mute. However, his words are audible through an unlikely medium: the drone created by the bees' wingbeats. He's able to slur a word or two periodically—enough for the PCs to notice the phenomenon—unless the PCs augment his voice in some way with a successful skill check. This might involve a simple rite to bolster his spiritual energy (DC 20 Occultism or DC 22 Religion), creating a musical tone that adds to the drone's energy (DC 20 Performance), goading the bees to buzz more (DC 22 Nature), or a similar strategy.

If assisted, Edric can communicate brief sentences and warnings, answering the PCs questions as best he can while his spirit lingers. He confirms that he petitioned the Bee-Man, made a bad deal, tried to change the deal to be fairer, and died for his defiance. He believes the Bee-Man is sinister yet honest, offering dangerous deals that he honors; the PCs might negotiate something new, especially if they invoke his name, Vernon Vestha. Otherwise, only force might chase him away. Edric knows that whatever hurts bees can hurt him, including smoke.

Workshop

Divided into several rooms, this workshop provides space for carpentry, milling, and blacksmithing as needed. It's also a storage space for tools, including artisan tools for woodworking and smithing, as well as a superb repair kit. Most residents have learned to handle bees unprotected, yet there are three swarmsuits here for dealing with difficult hives. In addition, there are five handheld smokers for



subduing bees. These specialized tools appear in the sidebar on page 46.

F. Amberhill Town Hall

Severe 6

A map of Amberhill's town hall can be found inside the back cover of this volume; it is a single room with a peaked ceiling and exposed rafters. Simple wooden benches fill much of the space, leading to a low stage with a wooden lectern. The hall's rustic charm is marred not only by the foot-wide holes punched through the walls, but also by the hives that bees have started constructing along the walls and ceiling. While many seem mundane, several hives have cells large enough to hold a wine bottle, as if incubating truly massive bees.

About one minute after the PCs enter the town hall, the Bee-Man arrives and alights on one of the rafters. His body buzzes angrily before his deep, droning voice challenges the intruders.

"LEAVE. YOU WILL NOT MEDDLE WITH THIS ACCORD, AND I HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH YOU. GO NOW, WHILE I STILL ALLOW IT."

If the PCs don't leave within a minute, he attacks to chase them out. There are two likely ways to free Amberhill: negotiation or combat.

Negotiation: The Bee-Man feels entitled to Amberhill, which he earned through his deal with Edric. It's possible yet difficult to convince him to show mercy or trick him into feeling he's failed his part of the bargain (such as by not stopping the ohancanus) and thus lost his claim to the town. Alternatively, a PC might offer an even sweeter deal in exchange for Amberhill. This uses the Influence subsystem (*GM Core* 187) using social rounds of roughly 5 minutes each. Up to 2 PCs can Influence him in each round, and any number of PCs can try to Discover information. The Bee-Man listens for three rounds before making a decision, after which the PCs can either accept his terms or fight.

THE BEE-MAN OF BELLIS

LEVEL 7

UNIQUE MEDIUM ABERRATION ANIMAL SWARM

Male swarm of bees

Perception +18

Will +14

Discovery DC 25 Nature, DC 25 Perception, DC 23 Society

Influence Skills DC 23 Legal Lore (to discuss the pact), DC 23 Performance (to incorporate bee-like dancing into an argument), DC 24 Society (to discuss the contract), DC 25 Diplomacy, DC 28 Deception, DC 28 Intimidation

Influence 1+ The Bee-Man is willing to make a deal after the third influence round, though the deal's terms depend on the total Influence Points earned (see below).

Resistances The Bee-Man is distrustful of anyone wearing a swarmsuit or carrying a lit smoker, and such characters take a -2 penalty to Influence checks.

Weaknesses If a PC invokes the Bee-Man's real name (Vernon Vestha) and declares their interest in making a deal, that PC can use the following as Influence skills: DC 21 Occultism, DC 23 Diplomacy, and DC 23 Nature, as well as being able to attempt Will saves (DC 24) to Influence him. These special options only apply so long as the PC is negotiating terms of a new bargain.

If one or more PCs try to make a new bargain, the terms depend on how many Influence Points the party earned. The following offers guidance (not exact details) for adjudicating such a pact; tailor the exact effects to the PC, the terms, and your campaign. If the PCs refuse the Bee-Man's bargain, he commands them to leave Amberhill, attacking if they dally.

- **Less than 1 Point:** Vexed, the Bee-Man attacks.
- **1–2 points:** The Bee-Man provides onerous terms, such demanding that PC serve him for several years or other costs that would functionally remove the PC from the campaign—possibly a heroic exit if the player wants to introduce a new character.
- **3–5 Points:** The Bee-Man provides terms that seem outwardly harmless yet nonetheless ominous. For example, he might require that a PC carry several dozen bees at all times, bring a cluster of bees to commune with Corazal, or even enter a supernatural pact with the Bee-Man as a PC's patron. At your discretion, this might replace a witch PC's patron with the Pacts witch patron (*Dark Archive* 159), turn the PC into a living vessel (*Dark Archive* 140), grant them customized deviant powers (*Dark Archive* 98), or other mixed blessings of your design. Such a bargain is also any excellent means to access the *Bee-Man's summons* spell on page 80 of this adventure.
- **6 Points:** The Bee-Man is willing to depart Amberhill imminently without preconditions. Even so, the PCs are welcome to make a deal with him as if they had 5 Influence Points.

Combat: The Bee-Man isn't used to spreading his swarms so widely to protect a town, and he's slightly weakened from the effort. He is sickened 3 when combat begins, yet bees throughout town gather into swarms, arriving periodically to aid him. At the beginning of the second round of combat and every 1d3 rounds thereafter, a swarm of bees flies into the town hall and joins the fight. After stinging the PCs for one round, the bees fly next to the Bee-Man and are absorbed into his body, reducing the value of his sickened condition by 1.

Pactbreaker

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Chapter 1: Seeds of Discontent

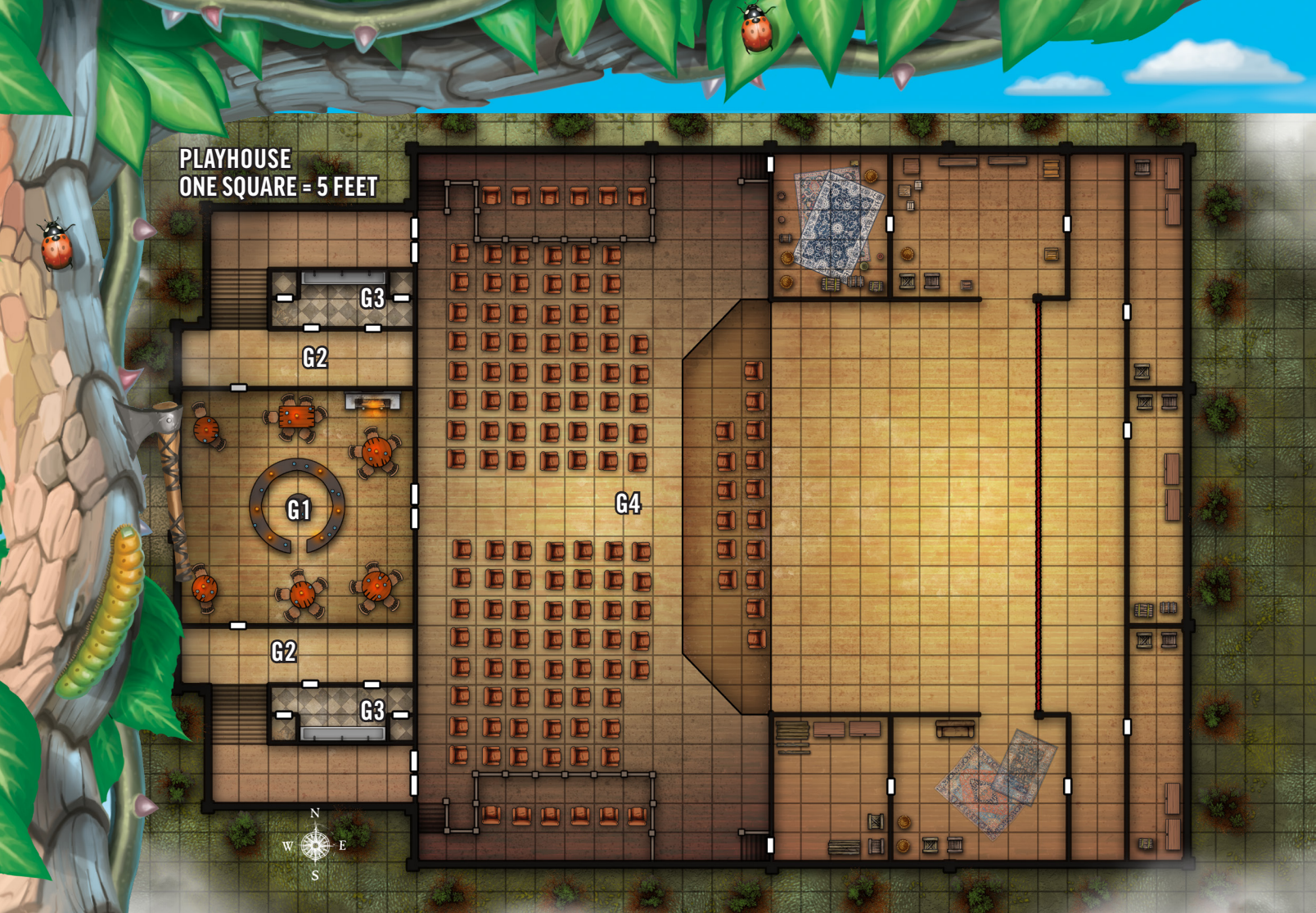
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If reduced to 0 HP, the Bee-Man collapses into a puddle of dazed bees that take flight a few seconds later. This weakened swarm flees, the drone of its wings echoing with the Bee-Man's accusations that an undefended Amberhill will be destroyed. Killing these bees doesn't end the Bee-Man forever; he gradually rejuvenates in the wilderness, regaining a physical body after several months.

THE BEE-MAN OF BELLIS

CREATURE 9

Page 85

Initiative Perception +21 (+18 while sickened 3)

BEE SWARMS

CREATURE 4

As wasp swarm, *Pathfinder Bestiary* 324

Initiative Perception +10

Resolution

If the Bee-Man is driven off or otherwise convinced to leave Amberhill, all bees in the area cease their aggressive behavior and return to diligently harvesting nectar for themselves, freeing the townsfolk of Amberhill to resume their lives and come and go as

they please. If the PCs do not free Amberhill from the Bee-Man's grasp, the situation worsens rapidly over the following week. What remains of the desperate townsfolk all make a simultaneous attempt to flee in multiple directions at once, reasoning that the bees won't be able get all of them. They are wrong. Increase overall Unrest by 3.

Treasure: For saving Amberhill, its inhabitants reward the PCs with what little the town has to offer: 193 gp and a *sarling badger* (*Treasure Vault* 95). In addition, they offer all of the honey the party can carry, albeit with an acknowledgment that they may have lost their taste for the stuff.

Captive Audience

Destination: G (Wispil)

Nearest Elder Oak: T6

Prognostication: "A song, a dance, a rising curtain. A joyous crowd's applause gives way to confusion and fear. The sun rises and sets, again and again, as the wide-eyed audience cheers for more yet awaits a curtain call that never comes. How long before comedy turns to tragedy?"

Background: Wispil is Taldor's largest settlement inside the Verduran Forest, boasting a population nearly entirely comprised of gnomes. As the home of the lumber yards responsible for supplying timber to the shipyards of Cassomir, Wispil is strategically important despite its remoteness. Logging operations here have persisted for nearly a century largely due to the protections and permissions granted by the Wildwood Lodge. Responding to rumors of potential conflict, Taldor has begun mustering an expeditionary force to reinforce Wispil, but those troops likely won't arrive for a week or more—assuming forest inhabitants even allow them safe passage.

Wispil's inhabitants are understandably nervous. Fortunately, a traveling acting troupe recently arrived, seeking a venue for their production of the "The Farriers," a new satirical opera featuring a pair of bumbling stable hands who inadvertently shape the recent Taldan civil war through a series of comic misadventures and mistaken identities. Delighted, the Wispillians welcomed the performers. Yet as the curtain rose on opening night, Wispil discovered that their guests were satyrs and other fey in disguise, led by none other than the notorious Alacreon (page 11)!

What followed was a terrible feedback loop. The fey had no intention of letting the evening's entertainment end with a single performance, sealing the audience inside the playhouse. As the fey tired, their gnome audience became bored and demanded new performances. Both parties have become so entranced by the other that they can't break free of their mutual figurative spells—even to the point of repelling rescue attempts while slowly starving. Complicating matters, the audience includes several influential figures: Mayor Dougal Greenbelt, Marquess Tanasha Starborne, and Dervin Feld, the lumberyard overseer. As the only human in the audience, Dervin isn't entranced; he's distressed. Using his enchanted signet ring, he sent a brief *sending* message to Cassomir, the closest Taldan city. Cassomir has dispatched several armed riverboats north to liberate Wispil, and even if they succeed, these soldiers would kill many fey and stoke further violence in the Verduran Forest. The PCs have the best chance of resolving this bizarre standoff with minimal bloodshed.

WISPIL

CITY

This small city of gnomes oversees Taldor's lumber industry.

Government council

Population 8,813 (98% gnomes, 2% other)

Languages Common, Gnomish

SETTLEMENT 5

Marquess Tanasha Starborne (female gnome) marquess of Wispil and senator of Taldor

Dougal Greenbelt (male gnome) mayor of Wispil

Dervin Feld (male human): Wispil city councilman, logging operations overseer, and local representative of the Imperial Naval Shipyards

Entering Wispil

A wooden palisade with watchtowers protects Wispil, and the guards welcome the PCs inside after a quick inspection. Nearly everyone seems aware of the standoff at the Fairy Ring playhouse, and the building's been cordoned off by guards as they await support from Taldor. These guards try to shoo away PCs who get too close, though they answer their likely questions as listed below.

Has anyone escaped? "Not since the first night. A few audience members and most of the staff managed to sneak out the back right after the big reveal; they're the only reason we have any idea what's going on in there."

How do you know anyone's still alive inside? "We don't. We assume the fey would've gotten bored and moved on by now if they didn't have a live audience. But that's us making predictions about fey motives—always a gamble."

What happened to the previous rescue attempts? "They went in, and they didn't come out. Figure they're either dead or they're in the audience now. Honestly, a week in, I don't know which would be worse."

Although the guards strongly recommend that PCs keep their distance from the theater, they begrudgingly relent and let them through if they insist. The streets and buildings beyond the checkpoints are eerily still and quiet. The gnome residents who had watched excitedly from a distance grew bored and wandered off days ago.

Gaining Access: The Fairy Ring has one official entrance: a front door opening into the barroom. The theater half of the building has no windows, and all windows in the bar area are crafted from smoked glass and open only from the inside, making it all but impossible to see inside from the street. Lively music emanates faintly from somewhere deep within the eastern side of the building.

The unofficial entrance for less squeamish PCs is a trapdoor leading to the cesspit, which collects waste from the two washrooms (area F2). Having not been maintained for a week, the cesspit and chutes are filthy. Ascending into one of the washrooms requires Climbing 20 feet up the chute with a DC 20 Athletics check, which also exposes the PC to a weakened variant of the sewer haze disease (*GM Core* 89) with a saving throw DC of 21.

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G1. Barroom/Box Office

Moderate 6

A magnificent circular bar cut from a single slab of polished blackwood and decorated with intricate carvings sits at the center of this well-appointed barroom. In a far corner, several smaller wooden tables are clustered around a large stone fireplace. A small ticket-taker's stand is positioned against the far wall next to a pair of ornately carved double doors, and the sounds of orchestral music, muffled singing, and occasional smatterings of laughter and applause can be heard from somewhere beyond. The room's luxurious furnishings are designed for gnome-sized patrons, as the top of the bar rises barely two feet off the floor and the ceiling barely three feet beyond that.

If the PCs spend any time investigating the room, they realize that the roaring fire in the fireplace is illusory, as it generates neither sound nor heat. In addition, they observe that while a number of barstools sit at the bar, there are no chairs positioned around the tables. The double doors leading into the theater (area **F3**) have no physical locking mechanism, although they are closed and sealed by a 2nd-level *lock* spell (DC 30).

Low Ceiling: Like nearly all construction in Wispil, the Fairy Ring was designed by and for the gnomes who make up an overwhelming majority of the city's population. Medium creatures are clumsy 1 while inside unless they are prone or can ignore difficult terrain. Large creatures must Crawl to navigate the room.

Hazard: The faintly audible music from the performance beyond the theater doors has a captivating effect on any creatures that do not have the fey trait. Every minute that susceptible PCs remain in the room, they must attempt a DC 20 Will save or become fascinated.

Creatures: A distinguished-looking gnome in a dapper red vest stands behind the bar, diligently wiping a pewter mug with a damp cloth. As the PCs enter, he looks up, smiles cordially, and asks them to take a seat at the bar.

This "gnome" is Lloyd the Leaper, a recent addition to Alacreon's troupe as well as a cruel fey creature known as a spring-heeled jack. If the PCs accept his invitation, Lloyd offers to sell them anything they request from the bar, which is well-stocked with nearly any common nonmagical libation the PCs desire. Lloyd is an inexpert bartender who mixes together whatever he thinks might taste good; there are equal odds that he serves the PCs a drink with the effects of a random alchemical elixir of 6th level or lower, or that he serves them a deceptively potent alcoholic cocktail

that reduces their saving throws against the ongoing music by 1 (a cumulative penalty).

Lloyd has been instructed by Alacreon to mind the bar and prevent any incursions into the theater, ideally without violence. If possible, he is to keep any interlopers occupied by plying them with drinks and conversation until they succumb to the music. At that point, he makes a judgment call to either escort a PC out the front door or to call on an usher (area **F3**) to seat them in the theater (area **F4**). Although this has proven an effective approach thus far, Lloyd's thirst for bloodshed is beginning to get the better of him. Should at least half of the PCs become fascinated, he waits for an opportune moment to drop his disguise and attacks.

Lloyd is polite but formal with the PCs, shrugging off any questions about what's transpiring beyond the double doors and calmly explaining that he can't permit them entrance until the intermission, which should be occurring "any time now." He won't stop them from entering either of the side hallways, although he warns them against disturbing the ushers stationed there. If the PCs attempt to force their way into the theater or initiate hostilities, Lloyd uses his haze of dreams to incapacitate as many of them as possible, then uses his *vanishing leap* ability to take a more advantageous position before attempting to slay the PCs one by one, starting with whomever appears the weakest. If reduced to 35 or fewer Hit Points, Lloyd casts *magic passage* on the ceiling of the room, Vaults through the newly-created exit, and attempts to flee.

LLOYD THE LEAPER

CREATURE 8

SMALL FEY

Variant greater spring-heeled jack (*Monsters of Myth* 94)

Initiative Deception +18

Perception +17; low-light vision

Languages Common, Fey

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18 (+22 to High Jump or Long Jump), Deception +18, Intimidation +15, Stealth +19, Thievery +16

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items *Sally Sharp-tongue* (+1 striking wounding war razor), *unmemorable mantle*

AC 26; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +20, **Will** +15

HP 135

Ghastly Visage ◆ (concentrate, curse, emotion, fear, mental, primal, visual) Lloyd the Leaper locks eyes with a creature he can see within 30 feet. The target must immediately attempt a DC 23 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure), and it can't reduce its frightened condition below 1 for 24 hours or until this curse is removed. After attempting its

save, the creature is temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours.

Reactive Strike

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ Sally Sharp-tongue +18 (agile, backstabber, deadly d8, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d4+7 slashing plus 1d6 bleed

Primal Innate Spells DC 26; 5th *magic passage*; 2nd *calm*; 1st *gentle landing* (at will); Constant (2nd) *vanishing tracks*

Haze of Dreams ♦♦ (incapacitation, mental, poison, primal, sleep) Lloyd exhales a cloud of clammy gray fog. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Success The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 round.

Failure The creature falls unconscious. It wakes up automatically if it's still unconscious after 1 minute.

Critical Failure The creature falls unconscious. It wakes up automatically if it's still unconscious after 1 hour.

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal) Lloyd takes on the appearance of a Small or Medium humanoid dressed in exquisite finery. This doesn't change his Speed or his attack and damage modifiers with his Strikes. When in this form, Lloyd gains a Diplomacy modifier equal to his Intimidation modifier.

Vanishing Leap ♦ (illusion, primal) **Trigger** Lloyd uses Vault; **Effect** Lloyd becomes invisible for 1 round.

Vault ♦ (move) Lloyd jumps up to 20 feet in any direction, including vertically. This movement doesn't trigger reactions based on movement.

Treasure: A pewter bowl sitting on the bar contains 8 gp and a jeweled golden ring worth 110 gp, along with a large quantity of stale peanuts.

G2. Hallways

Moderate 6

These hallways are used primarily by Fairy Ring staff to move between the barroom and the theater without interrupting a performance in progress.

Hazard: See page 50. The music is louder here, raising the Will save DC to 21.

Creatures: Standing at attention before each of the side doors leading into the theater is a roughly human-shaped wooden construct that appear to have been haphazardly assembled from the remains of smashed blackwood chairs lined with red velvet. If approached, a construct sternly shakes its heads and motions the PCs back toward the barroom. If the PCs do not turn back, the construct attacks. The other construct is immediately alerted and begins marching through area **F1** to join the fray.

USHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

MEDIUM CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Variant giant animated statue (Pathfinder Monster Core 19)

Initiative Perception +13; darkvision

Fey Fire The construct's ranged Strike, Brazier, and Burn Alive abilities deal cold damage instead of fire damage, and they do not ignite combustible materials.

G3. Washrooms

These washrooms include stalls, wash basins, and potpourri. Audience members have continued using these facilities over the past week, causing the excess sewage to waft unpleasantly back into the washrooms.



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G4. Theater

Extreme 6

The higher ceiling and dim lighting of this magnificent performance hall lends it the appearance of an underground grotto. Two rows of luxurious velvet-lined seats separated by a single, wide aisle slope gently down toward the main stage. Illuminated by the footlights positioned along the edge of the stage, nine well-dressed gnomes are engaged in an elaborately choreographed dance routine alongside a group of winged sprites with shimmering wings, their steps set to the lively fiddle music emanating from the orchestra pit at the foot of the stage. In sharp contrast to their sprightly movements and the enthusiastic smiles plastered across their faces, the gnomes' eyes betray a deep weariness shot through with desperation. Seated in an ornate throne on stage, a satyr watches the performances with mild interest.

Assuming they encountered him at the Greenwood Gala, the PCs recognize the satyr on the stage as **Alacreon, the Laughing Prince**. Since seizing control of the theater, Alacreon and his troupe have transformed it into an unending revue featuring one extended musical performance after another, often involving the audience. A few times a day, Alacreon declares a brief intermission, pausing the revelry just long enough for the audience to eat, drink, and meet other mortal needs (though they're not to leave the building). Although the fey know they're holding the audience against their will, they consider this an elaborate prank, not a malicious act. Everyone came to see a show, after all!

Hazard: The music (detailed in area G1 on page 50) originates from here, where the Will DC to resist it increases to 23. Creatures without the fey trait who are physically on stage are also subjected to the effects of an *uncontrollable dance* spell unless they succeed at a DC 23 Will save each round. These hazards cease if the music stops, which can be achieved by attacking the musicians inside the orchestra pit, Coercing them to stop (DC 23), Requesting they stop (DC 23), or causing some other impediment to draw their undivided attention.

Creatures: The winged fey are pixies, excitable creatures known for mischief. In the orchestra pit at the foot of the stage, an ensemble of satyrs and sprites busily play a lively tune on a variety of instruments. Overhead, sprites flit about and periodically glow in time with the music. The audience includes dozens of gnomes and a few humans, including Tanasha Starborne and Dervin Feld. The mayor, Dougal Greenback, dances on stage, captivated by the music.

PIXIES (4)

CREATURE 4

Monster Core 323

Initiative Perception +12

SATYRS (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Monster Core 296

Initiative Perception +10

ALACREON, THE LAUGHING PRINCE CREATURE 11

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male satyr hedonist (Pathfinder Monster Core 296)

Initiative Perception +17

Upon noticing the PCs, Alacreon motions for the orchestra to play quietly and rises to his feet to address the PCs.

"What's this?" the satyr muses, an impish smirk creeping across his face. "More aficionados of the performing arts, come to see our show?" He squints through the glare of the footlights. "Wait a minute. I know these folk. Friends of the Wildwood Lodge, they are. Welcome, friends! Take a seat; stay a while. Have a drink. The good mayor here was just about to give us a demonstration of his..." He glances about, seeking inspiration. "Juggling skills!" The satyr loudly thumps a wooden scepter on the stage as a wave of excited whispers ripples across the theater. "Berrywild! Head to the bar and bring us something for the good mayor to juggle."

Neither Alacreon nor his troupe display any hostility toward the PCs, instead entreating them to take a seat and enjoy the show. One of the sprites hurries to the barroom and returns with a pair of pint glasses, which she hands to the mayor. As the orchestra begins to play again, the gnome resumes dancing, this time while also attempting to juggle the proffered glasses.

If the PCs communicate with Alacreon, he beckons them toward the stage to hear them over the music, which he quiets but doesn't halt. He happily converses with the PCs. A few possible questions and his responses are provided below.

What's going on here? "Greatest show on Golarion, friends. Music, dancing, singing, daring displays of athleticism and agility, japes and jests. These are dark times, friend! Fey and city-folk at each other's throats everywhere. What better time to bring us all together with the magic of the stage? Even seems like maybe we've unearthed some hidden talents in these good gnomes. Reawakened their fey blood—with theater!"

Your bartender tried to murder us. "Yes, well..." Alacreon shrugs ambivalently. "That's why I didn't let Lloyd up on stage during the show. Had a bad feeling about him. I suppose I owe you some thanks for proving me right."



You're holding these people against their will! "Well, that's not fair! They came to see a show, and that's what we're giving them. It's not too much to ask for them to stay till we're finished, is it? My companions and I put a lot of work into putting this together, and it shows, wouldn't you say?"

But it's been days! "Has it, though? No windows in here. Can you really say a day's passed without a sunset or a sunrise? Hardly! After all, we're only halfway through the second act. It can't have been that long!"

Yes! It has! The satyr shrugs dismissively. "I guess you and I just see things differently, friend."

Ending the Show

Alacreon doesn't completely control his troupe (especially now that the pixies are dancing), though he's not keen to admit it. Left to his own devices, he'd let the performances continue until everyone revolts and sets fire to the playhouse. That said, he's growing restless. There are two intended ways for the PCs to resolve this drama. First, they can fight off the fey. Second, they can work with the fey to present one final performance that appeases everyone and convinces all in attendance to depart peacefully. Alacreon's contributions depend on how many Influence Points the PCs have earned with him. If they have 2 or fewer points, he's aloof, contributing little but interfering little so long as the PCs don't endanger him directly. If they have 3 or more points, he presents both the violent and nonviolent solutions to the PCs, and he provides encouragement and magical support from the sidelines; this involves him Aiding the PCs a number of times equal to the number of Influence Points they have earned with him.

Violence: If the PCs try to chase off the fey with violence, the pixies fight back, and two satyrs from the orchestra pit clamber out to support them. If the PCs kill any of the fey, they earn 1 Unrest at the end of the adventure. If they kill at least half of the fey combatants, Unrest instead increases by 2—better than the 3 Unrest earned by failing altogether, yet still disruptive. During combat, the gnome audience cheers with excitement, though they become more fearful the more lethal the PCs' tactics are.

Non-Violence: Only a spectacular performance is worthy of ending this entertainment marathon. This is a free-form challenge using the basic Victory Points system (*GM Core* 184). The PCs have two acts in which to perform, during each of which a PC can attempt one skill check to earn Victory Points. Encourage a wide range of skills as the PCs present their eclectic talent show, aided by fey performers.

Most checks have a DC of 23. However, the more elaborate and spectacular the PCs' show and its narrative, the more you should adjust this DC. Especially clever skill use or screen writing could reduce the DC by 1–4. If the PCs end the second act with more VP than there are PCs, they receive a lively ovation from the audience, buying Alacreon time to drop the curtain, shoo the gnomes away, and make his own timely escape.

Resolution

If the PCs successfully liberated the captives and ended the standoff, they are feted as heroes across the city for averting disaster, permanently gaining the benefits of the A Home in Every Port feat (*Advanced Player's Guide* 202) as well as a 10% discount on all goods and services whenever in the city of Wispil.

Failure: If the PCs were unable to rescue the captives, two Taldan platoons arrive by boat three days later and mount an armed assault on the Fairy Ring despite the entreaties of local authorities. The fey are driven off, but at great cost; nearly half of the captives are slain in the fray, and the Fairy Ring itself will require extensive renovations before it can reopen. Increase overall Unrest by 3.

Treasure: Left behind on the two thrones following Alacreon's departure are an *orchestral brooch* (*Secrets of Magic* 174) and a wooden prop scepter that functions as a *wand of fey flames* (*Grand Bazaar* 81). If the PCs successfully liberated the captives, Mayor Greenbelt also gives them 196 gp and awards each of them a garish ornamental key pendant that grants its wearer a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks when prominently worn while interacting with Taldan gnomes. If sold, each pendant is worth 25 gp, although attempting to do so while within Wispil would be an affront to the entire city.

Concluding the Chapter

After approximately 30 days have elapsed since the beginning of Chapter 2, Emorga All-Seer waits for the PCs to return to the Viridian Nexus before asking Corazal to open a pathway back to the Elder Oak outside the gala grounds. She returns there to join to her fellow Lodge leadership in preparing for the impending Wildwood Conclave. Emorga asks the PCs to reconvene with her in no more than three days, giving them that much time to engage in downtime activities or tend to any unfinished business. Any flashpoints still unresolved by this time automatically fail, as detailed in the "Failure" section of each flashpoint's description.

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Called back to the gala grounds by Emorga All-Seer, the PCs find themselves at a very different gathering from the one they attended just a month prior. In place of the vibrant and festive atmosphere of the Greenwood Gala is a highly polarized environment evenly split between the extremes of existential dread and giddy anticipation. Some attendees despair over the seeming inevitability of open conflict and others revel at the thought of finally getting revenge against Taldor and Andoran for centuries of incremental overharvesting and disrespect. The tension and emotion in the air is palpable.

Upon learning of the PCs' arrival, Emorga wastes no time gathering them for a meeting. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Well, here we are again. Though I don't remember ever wanting so badly for different circumstances." Emorga sighs deeply. "In about one day, delegates from across the Verduran Forest will gather in the amphitheater to choose a new leader for the Wildwood Lodge. Rarely does the whole forest vote on Lodge business, and with so many bloodthirsty voices, I fear we stand on the precipice of some greater conflict.

"Many have already begun gathering. We have the opportunity to change hearts and votes, so I ask you speak with old friends and make new ones among the delegates, ensuring as many as possible seek peace. Every voice calling for blood poses a risk to innocent lives."

Emorga shakes her head irritably. "Valenar didn't care much for folk outside the forest, it's true. But he



understood that our charge to protect the forest meant peace with those who live beyond it. He was a good man, a wise leader, and I fear for what the Lodge might become without his guidance."

Emorga identifies five new delegates worth investigating in the limited time available: the fey queen Ambrosia, the scarred unicorn Clydane, the infamous redcap Hobnail, the belligerent arboreal Oakadence, and a previously unknown raven leading a vast flock roosting in nearby trees. Much as Emorga supports the democratic process, she fears what a violent tyrant could accomplish if elected. While she speaks with several representatives—partly to identify a suitable candidate to back—she encourages the PCs to meet with and convince the rest. The notion of leading the Wildwood Lodge herself is daunting, even though Emorga would do so if needed.

The Wildwood Conclave

Each year, senior members of the Wildwood Lodge convene to elect the next year's leader. Because their candidate (the incumbent Valenar the Green) perished mere hours after his reelection, and due to the fractious nature of current events, the Wildwood Lodge has gathered a conclave, an emergency gathering of all the Verduran Forest's leading residents. Here, the entire region will vote on a leader to lead in Valenar's absence—a leader pivotal in deciding how the forest will seek justice and restore peace.

It's an event not seen in centuries, and countless power brokers have emerged from the figurative woodwork to participate. Fey, usually distant from Lodge politics and authority, see this as an ideal time to exert control. Aggrieved beasts and arboreals clamor for retaliatory attacks. By comparison, voices espousing diplomacy and peace seem rare.

Any PC trained in Society already knows how the Conclave works, and Emorga can fill in others as needed. At sunset on the day the PCs arrived, representatives gather to listen to candidates' speeches and nominations. Representatives can ask questions of each candidate, after which representatives cast their votes publicly. Whoever receives at least half of the votes is elected the interim leader for the Wildwood Lodge, controlling the Lodge and effectively speaking for the entire forest.

CONCLAVE ATTENDEES

The PCs are free to seek out and attempt to Influence any of the following voting representatives. Not all of them can be won over; as Emorga fears, some here are eager for conflict and won't be convinced otherwise.

However, some of them have unique vulnerabilities that can be exploited to minimize their ability to affect the vote, as detailed in their descriptions below. As in Chapter 1, these interactions use the Influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151), and the PCs have a mere three social rounds (about 1 hour each) to make an impression.

Five of these candidates are new to the PCs. Five more have returned since Chapter 1, enabling the PCs to earn more Influence Points with NPCs they met in Chapter 1; see the Familiar Faces section on page 58 for information about these characters' recent deeds.

A few candidates' Influence thresholds are not fixed values but instead are based on the Unrest value (page 32) earned during Chapter 2. Treat the Unrest modifier for calculating NPC thresholds as the Unrest score divided by 3, rounded down.

AMBROSIA

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE FEY NYMPH PLANT

Female hamadryad pretender

Perception +20

Will +19

Discovery DC 23 Society, DC 24 Perception, DC 25 Nature

Influence Skills DC 21 Fey Lore (to discuss First World issues), DC 22 Society (to act with courtly grace), DC 23 Diplomacy, DC 23 Performance, DC 25 Deception, DC 29 Intimidation

Influence 1 Ambrosia is suitably amused that she bequeaths a *pentagonal seventh prism* (*Treasure Vault* 75) to a PC to demonstrate her generosity and power.

Influence 3 Ambrosia regally dismisses the PCs, having heard enough. Though she still intends to support violence, the PCs' words convince some of Ambrosia's court to defect. These sprites share gossip about up to three of the other NPCs, as if they had succeeded at a Discovery check. At the GM's discretion, these sprites might later join the PCs' cause, such as in the following Adventure Path volume.

Resistances Citing the recent failed attacks by fey against Andoran wounds Ambrosia's pride and stokes her fury. Doing so increases the DC of the PC's next check to Influence her by 2. In addition, Ambrosia demands a courtly atmosphere; a PC who lacks the Courtly Graces skill feat, an elegant outfit, a formal introduction by other nobility (like Alacreon), or a similarly fancy credential increases all their check DCs to Influence Ambrosia by 3.

Background Younger sister to Syntira, a powerful dryad who tirelessly works to maintain peace between the forest and woodcutters of Andoran, Ambrosia instead defends nature's interests with lethal intent. Her leadership recently sparked an assault on Falcon's Hollow, a prominent Andoren settlement. The attack

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failed, and Ambrosia and her followers fled. Having heard that violence might erupt in the Verduran Forest, Ambrosia has traveled here to encourage that violence, rebuild her personal prestige, and perhaps even rule this mighty forest herself.

Appearance Ambrosia carefully blends wild charm and high fashion, her regal outfit a counterpoint to her elegantly unruly hair. Tiny flowers and leaf buds sprout from her temples, sometimes blooming when she's excited.

Personality Ambrosia behaves like an aloof monarch in exile. Most other creatures are potential pawns in her greater plans, until then serving as quaint entertainment. This arrogance has earned a gaggle of sycophants but few friends in the Verduran Forest.



Clydane

CLYDANE

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE LARGE BEAST FEY

Male unicorn vigilante

Perception +18

Will +18

Discovery DC 20 Nature, DC 22 Religion, DC 24 Perception

Influence Skills DC 23 Diplomacy, Medicine DC 24 (to soothe his old injury), DC 24 Religion (to discuss moral obligations through faith), DC 26 Intimidation, DC 28 Deception

Influence 1+Unrest Modifier Clydane agrees to vote for peace.

Resistances Skittish around humans, Clydane is slow to trust those resembling his past attackers. Increase the Influence DCs by 2 for Medium humanoids.

Weaknesses Clydane likes to stay mobile and vigilant, and he's more talkative while on the move. A PC who accompanies him on his patrols and succeeds at a DC 22 Acrobatics, Athletics, or Survival check reduces the DC of their next check to Influence him by 2. Doing so is part of their Influence check and doesn't require an action.

Background After losing most of his horn to slapdash poachers, Clydane clung to life while slowly being overwhelmed by survivor's guilt and loathing for humanoids. Ever since, he has patrolled the Verduran Forest as a principled vigilante who's widely respected and (to his chagrin) sometimes pitied. His broken horn is part of his identity now, and he would not see it restored even if he had the power.

Appearance Clydane is a dusky unicorn whose upper two-thirds of his horn are missing, leaving a weathered yet jagged break.

Personality Clydane is wary of danger and disappointed by naivete. With Calistria, goddess of vengeance, as his patron, he's easily fixated on debating what forms justice should take and how to secure justice for others.

GLITTERBEAK

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE TINY ANIMAL SWARM

Male awakened raven autocrat

Perception +15

Will +12

Discovery DC 23 Perception, DC 23 Society

Influence Skills DC 23 Crafting (to create a trinket or polish Glitterbeak's treasures), DC 24 Deception, DC 24

Thievery (to steal a stranger's accessory for him), DC 25 Diplomacy, DC 27 Intimidation

Influence 3 Glitterbeak proclaims all the Verduran Forest's flying creatures shall vote for peace, triggering a cacophonous chorus of cawing from his corvid coterie.

Resistances Treating Glitterbeak like a pet or curiosity irritates him, increasing that PC's next check to Influence him by 2.

Weaknesses A PC can offer Glitterbeak one or more shiny objects (worth at least 5 gp) as a gift, decreasing that PC's next check to Influence him by 2. Cheaper yet spectacularly sparkly gifts might have the same effect.

Background Nobody here has met Glitterbeak before; he just appeared, leading a huge flock of corvids and other songbirds, and declared himself speaker for all the forest's winged creatures. Lodge authorities have begrudgingly given him a vote, despite lacking evidence that he holds any authority. Glitterbeak's origins are a mystery, partly because he's told a dozen contradicting tales about how he acquired human-like intelligence: the dying wish of a druid, eating the flesh of a wish-granting salmon, swallowing a *diplomat's badge* (GM Core 289), earning a reward for saving a nature deity, or just deducing the secrets of the multiverse to discover language.

Appearance True to his name, Glitterbeak is a large raven who wears several arm bangles as necklaces and has rolled his beak and head-feathers in gold dust, giving him a metallic sheen. He reflexively preens near reflective surfaces to ensure he appears magnificent. A flock of sycophantic corvids always accompanies him.

Personality Proud and puckish, Glitterbeak enjoys others' praise and playing pranks. Shiny baubles captivate him, triggering heavy breathing and social obliviousness. He takes his self-appointed role as ruler of the skies quite seriously, insisting nobody talk down to him. That said, he seems more intent on his own glory than securing particular rights for his flock of subjects.

HOBNAIL

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE SMALL FEY

Female redcap blackguard

Perception +14

Will +12

Discovery DC 21 Nature, DC 23 Perception

Influence Skills DC 22 Deception (to trick her into violence), DC 23 Performance (to sass her through art), DC 24 Intimidation, DC 24 Thievery (to steal her hat), DC 28 Diplomacy

Influence 2 Hobnail is one effortless taunt away from starting a fight with the PCs (see below); this allows other PCs to convene before combat begins.

Background Hobnail is a prolific killer and the subject of myriad cautionary bedtime stories, having terrorized Andoran and Taldor for over a century. The Wildwood Lodge loathes her lethal escapades, each of which erodes the Treaty of the Wildwood and invites more trouble.

Appearance Leathery, wizened, and leaning on her scythe like a cane, Hobnail plays up her apparent age in order to lull potential victims into underestimating her strength. Her crimson cap is stiff with age, periodically flaking off bits of dried blood “dandruff” when she moves.

Personality Hobnail delights in others’ discomfort, and she thoroughly enjoys being seen at this event where others lack the authority to throw her out. She’s acerbically cordial with fellow troublemakers and relentlessly toxic to everyone else.



Glitterbeak

he provides well-rehearsed explanations of why the druids are traitors. Professing such ignorance decreases that PC’s next check to Influence him by 2.

Background Oakadence leads the Blackwood Moot, a coalition of arboreals and other forest dwellers who openly (and sometimes violently) oppose the Wildwood Lodge and its treacherous treaty that surrendered the Verduran Forest to exploitation. This gnarled arboreal rarely engages with the ruling druids, but this event provides a rare opportunity to affect the Lodge’s leadership and potentially overturn the Treaty of the Wildwood.

Appearance Wizened and peppered with knots, Oakadence is a powerful arboreal who towers 20 feet in height. His face seems perpetually stuck in various states of frowning.

Personality Though usually patient, Oakadence has waited long enough; he’s eager to raid Taldan communities, crush houses, and punt livestock in retaliation for centuries of injustices that he remembers with granular detail. Delivering fiery sermons against “civilization” comes naturally to him. He can rant for hours if properly provoked.

Challenging Hobnail

While she enjoys simply provoking other attendees, Hobnail is always ready for a good fight. Once properly taunted, she abandons her diplomatic immunity in order to assault the PCs—likely by the PCs’ design, for doing so will lead to Hobnails’ eviction if not her death. The combat continues for 4 rounds before additional guards arrive, demanding an end to hostilities and conducting a short investigation that leads to Hobnail’s expulsion.

Creatures: Hobnail and her redcap companions join in the fight. If not all of the PCs are present when the combat begins, consider reducing the number of redcaps so that there is one redcap per PC.

Challenging 7

OAKADENCE

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE HUGE ARBOREAL

Male arboreal regent

Perception +18

Will +16

Discovery DC 23 Forest Lore, DC 23 Nature, DC 25 Perception

Influence Skills DC 24 Deception, DC 24 Occultism, DC 24 Performance, DC 25 Arcana, DC 25 Diplomacy, DC 25 Society, DC 26 Nature, DC 26 Intimidation

Influence 2 Properly goaded, Oakadence becomes so absorbed in his current lecture or debate that he doesn’t attend the council in time to cast his vote. When a PC tries to leave Oakadence after gaining 2 or more Influence Points, they must succeed at a DC 18 Athletics, Deception, or Stealth check to slip away without him noticing, otherwise he takes offense, and his Influence Point total decreases by 1.

Weaknesses Oakadence pities any woodland creature indoctrinated by Wildwood Lodge teachings, for which

HOBNAIL

CREATURE 6

Elite redcap (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 278)

Initiative Perception +14

HOBNAIL’S LACKEYS (3)

CREATURE 5

Redcaps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 278)

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: Hobnail’s pouch contains 41 gp, a *potion of quickness* (*GM Core* 260) and a gruesome keepsake crafted from trophies taken from her victims, which functions as a *horrid figurine*.

Pactbreaker

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Familiar Faces

In addition to the new attendees listed above, several of the PCs' acquaintances from the Greenwood Gala are also in attendance at the Conclave.

Khasprickle and his followers are emboldened by his exploits throughout Chapter 2, boasting of their misdeeds to anyone who will listen and mocking the PCs' efforts to deal with the repercussions. Unsurprisingly, the PCs can't convince the pukwudgie to vote for a peaceful candidate. However, a PC can try to Influence his followers rather than Khasprickle—a DC 23 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check. If successful, the PC spreads enough doubt that many abandon the pukwudgie over the coming days, whether because they adopt less violent beliefs or just lose faith in Khasprickle's leadership. This adjusts a future confrontation with Khasprickle in the next Adventure Path volume, and these defectors might be among those who side with Emorga, the PCs, and other defiant druids later in the campaign.

Alacreon, the Laughing Prince has returned to and rekindled his beach bonfire, lounging about with his merry band as if nothing had happened in the interim. If the PCs have earned at least 3 Influence Points with him or managed to resolve the Captive Audience flashpoint (page 48) without resorting to violence, he greets them as old friends, seemingly oblivious to the dire implications of the events unfolding around him. The PCs can spend up to three rounds attempting to further Influence him, as in Chapter 1. If they ask about his intentions at the Conclave, they learn that he's leaning toward voting for a candidate who will "shake things up," on the grounds that life in the Verduran Forest has been dull of late and could use some more excitement. If their Influence with him is 5 or greater, however, they can convince him to vote for a more peaceful candidate instead. Influencing Alacreon requires spending an entire social round with him, whereas merely requesting he vote a certain way is quick enough that a PC can travel to and Influence someone else that round.

Marchioness Tanasha Starborne and a detachment of Wispillian delegates have set up camp and keep a watchful eye on their surroundings while never straying far from the pier or their boat moored there. Contrary to her usual bubbly nature, Tanasha is somber and tense, aware of how many of those in attendance would happily murder her and her entire retinue given the opportunity. The PCs can further Influence her as in Chapter 1, potentially brightening her mood by offering momentary respite from the looming threats. Tanasha intends to vote for

whichever candidate promises to uphold the Treaty of the Wildwood, but will follow any lead the PCs might suggest so long as they have at least 2 Influence with her.

Alyce Quinley and her own delegates are nearby, equally wary and prepared to make a hasty getaway should circumstances demand. Alyce is particularly concerned by the presence of Ambrosia (page 55), having been terrified as a child by lurid tales of the affair in Falcon's Hollow. She suggests attempting to sway Ambrosia's minions or sabotaging her local support if the PCs haven't thought of it themselves. In addition, the PCs can attempt to Influence Alyce further.

Finally, **Vandalya Swiftmane** leads a host of Swiftmane warriors, having returned to represent the region's centaurs following the death of her sister, Ruzadoya. If the PCs did not earn at least 1 Influence Point with her during Chapter 1, she avoids interacting with them; in this case her Influence check DCs all increase by 2. She intends to vote for a hawkish candidate who will help the centaurs avenge Ruzadoya's death (and countless other slights). Even though the PCs can't change her vote, earning at least 3 Influence with her leads to Vandalya joining the PCs at the end of this chapter.

Choosing a New Leader

As the sun sets on the second day, attendees converge on the amphitheater to nominate leaders, confer among themselves, and cast their votes to determine the Wildwood Lodge's leadership for the next year. Half of the seats filled by hundreds of cheering spectators a month ago are now occupied by solemn Wildwood Lodge druids, worry and concern clearly etched on their faces. Fey, intelligent animals, and other Verduran residents fill the remaining space.

Over the next hour as the sky darkens, roughly a dozen candidates introduce themselves from the amphitheater's simple wooden stage to make a case for their leading the Wildwood Lodge. Underwhelmed by the less belligerent candidates, Emorga All-Seer reluctantly nominates herself. She receives vocal support from many, especially any NPCs whose Influence thresholds the PCs met. The more hawkish candidates (including Khasprickle) seem likely to split the vote, with each espousing war for different reasons and with different objectives. Khasprickle's speech earns little applause, which he interprets as a personal insult; he's dragged from the stage after retaliating with vengeful verbal abuse.

As the voting representatives confer among themselves, a leaf leshy attendant dutifully trundles around the center of the amphitheater setting up a circle

of clay pots filled with earth, one for each candidate. As per tradition, each representative receives a shiny acorn, which they deposit in their favorite candidate's pot to cast their vote. Lodge officials will relocate the winner's pot to a special grove on the Isle of Arenway afterward.

Yet just before voting begins, the various discussions end abruptly as a new contender arrives, striding confidently to the stage. It is Ruzadoya Swiftmane—the centaur dignitary whom the PCs met in Chapter 1 and who perished in the Greenwood Gala attack—or rather, what remains of her. Her body has partly healed but is sickly, seemingly held together as much by her wooden armor as by her willpower.

Ruzadoya Swiftmane slowly trots in a circle, her cold and unblinking gaze commanding everyone's silent attention. Plates of greenwood grow from and twist about her body, encasing her in living armor that covers sickly flesh. She calls out in a clear voice:

"Cowards! Bootlickers!" Her voice constricts into a dry, rattling hiss. "The Wildwood Lodge has failed you. It has failed all of us. For nearly a thousand years, we have watched as the humans of Andoran and Taldor devoured our forest alive with axe and flame—humans the druids invited into our lands. The elves of Kyonin do nothing, content to stand aside so long as *their* forests remain untouched. And despite proclaiming themselves patrons of nature, the gods themselves have abandoned us.

"But I have not!" Ruzadoya gestures to her transformed body. "When I would have died, the Verduran Forest itself restored me and called me back, giving me a sacred charge and a precious truth: only we can protect ourselves. It is time we drove these parasites from our forest forever. We shall cut them down as they felled our trees! We shall cast down their bodies to nourish the soil! We shall strike so ferociously that for generations, our foes won't dare set foot anywhere a tree casts shade!

"And when we have reclaimed our forest and my charge is fulfilled, I shall destroy this transient vessel that stands before you tonight. I shall return to the earth to become part of the land once more."

She places a clay pot among the others, concluding, "If you'll have me, of course."

The audience's shocked silence soon erupts into outrage and disbelief. Elders of the Wildwood Lodge (including Emorga) appear disgusted and terrified, fully cognizant that Ruzadoya's fiery introduction could unite their divided political opponents.

As they observe Ruzadoya, the PCs can attempt checks to understand what she has become and what she intends.

CRAFTING (DC 25)

The PC examines Ruzadoya's strange armor.

Critical Success As success, plus the PC spots a barely discernible insignia in the armor, which is easily mistaken for a natural whorl in the wood grain. The symbol looks like a face. If the PCs found the cryptic face designs among the menhirs on page 34, the PC realizes the mark on Ruzadoya's armor appears eerily similar.

Success Ruzadoya's armor was made of mundane wood when the PCs first met her. She's clearly wearing the same armor she had when killed at the Greenwood Gala, but the armor has grown and expanded, as if it has become living matter once again and taken root in Ruzadoya's flesh.

PERCEPTION (DC 25)

The PC studies Ruzadoya's behavior and features.

Critical Success As success, plus the PC notices Ruzadoya's gaze lingering on particular figures throughout her speech. She seems to think the Verduran Forest's enemies aren't just in Taldor and Andoran; she sees traitors in this very crowd!

Success Ruzadoya seems entirely sincere. She conveys her intent to punish the forest's enemies (real or perceived) and then destroy herself with zealous intent.

NATURE OR RELIGION (DC 25)

The PC deduces what Ruzadoya has become and why.


Critical Success As success, plus the PC recognizes that Ruzadoya's form doesn't show telltale signs of arcane, divine, or occult magic, which would be expected for creating undead. Instead, she seems to be reanimated by primal magic of some unknown source.

Success Ruzadoya appears to be a graveknight, a powerful undead creature that can form when a spiteful warrior dies a violent death. A graveknight becomes permanently fused to their armor—which is almost always metal. Ruzadoya's wooden armor is very unusual.

THE VOTE

As the cacophony begins to die down, the voting representatives assemble near the pots to cast their votes. They hesitate for a moment before Khasprickle kicks over his own pot to signal he's no longer a candidate, then he proudly drops his acorn into Ruzadoya's pot. Most of the key NPCs vote according to the PCs' earlier influence; however, both Alacreon and Clydane vote for Ruzadoya, intrigued by her bold promises.

The wood giant Xivaga dutifully counts the votes, though it's clear just from watching representatives that Ruzadoya is the winner. He announces the outcome, his voice shaking with trepidation.



"The will of the wood is clear, and the Wildwood Lodge has its leader for the next year. May her wisdom and dedication inspire us all to serve the forest and all its denizens with honor and integrity. Arise, Ruzadoya Swiftmane, and accept your charge."

Moving slowly but decisively, Ruzadoya takes her place at the leshy's side. "I accept this honor, and I swear this to you: the Wildwood Lodge will serve the Verduran Forest, not surrender it. We need no permission from outsiders to protect our lands, and we will no longer suffer their presence here. I hereby declare the Treaty of the Wildwood invalid. Those it once shielded from justice will be held accountable. We will not forgive the countless crimes committed against us, nor will we forget the complicity of those who allowed them to happen. We *will* take our vengeance, and those we leave alive will either be driven from the forest, or die screaming."

Raucous applause erupts across the amphitheater, but it is ugly and tinged with bloodlust, so different from the cheers of delight that filled it just a few short weeks ago.

As Ruzadoya concludes her acceptance speech, Tanasha Starborne and Alyce Quinley approach the PCs. Both are acutely aware that the Verduran Forest is no longer safe for them, and they whisper their intention to depart by boat shortly before sunrise (about 8 hours from now). Before they slip away, the two propose a midnight meeting with the PCs near the piers to speak further away from prying ears.

Cover of Night

The PCs can leave the amphitheater at any time without attracting notice, as most of the attendees remain occupied either by jubilantly celebrating Ruzadoya's unexpected ascension or sitting in stunned silence. Attention remains focused on the Conclave for some time, with few departing the amphitheater and its excitement. The PCs have about three hours to prepare before meeting with Alyce and Tanasha, and about halfway through that time, raucous attendees start dispersing from the amphitheater.

By then, the atmosphere has changed dramatically since the PCs first arrived. Throngs of jubilant fey drift through the area, the visible joy on their faces doing little to conceal a barely concealed scorn in their eyes that is almost predatory. Others hasten across the muddy ground with downcast faces, nervously averting their gazes from anyone they encounter. Neither Ruzadoya nor Emorga is anywhere to be seen; should the PCs try to locate Emorga, they are intercepted by armed Swiftmane centaurs who deny access to the Wildwood representatives' campsites, citing security concerns.

PUBLIC ENEMIES

As midnight approaches, the PCs can make their way down to the pier to meet with Tanasha Starborne and Alyce Quinley. They easily spot both of the delegates from several hundred feet away, but they're not alone; both are engaged in heated conversation with Inrik Vanderholl (page 10), head of security. A trio of awakened trees stand ominously behind him as enforcers. PCs who keep their distance and eavesdrop on the conversation overhear that the Taldan and Andoren delegations, along with their boats, have already been seized or taken into custody, and that Inrik has received direct orders to do the same with Tanasha, Alyce, and any other suspected allies of the Lodge's enemies—including the PCs.

Creatures: Once the PCs make their presence known, Inrik remorsefully demands that they lay down their weapons and peacefully be taken into custody by him, stating that while he has no desire to harm anyone, he is sworn to the Wildwood Lodge and must obey its leader's commands. That said, the PCs can Request he defy Ruzadoya's tyrannical orders, requiring a successful DC 26 Diplomacy check. For each of the Incident Responses (pages 13–16) the PCs resolved successfully, the gain a +1 circumstance bonus to this check.

If the check critically succeeds, Inrik calls off the awakened trees and lets the PCs and their friends go, warning them that Ruzadoya has already begun appointing the Verduran's most sinister inhabitants to maintain the peace. If the check is successful, Inrik warns the PCs as above, but he soon realizes that the awakened trees aren't heeding his commands; they've decided Inrik is a traitor and attack the PCs and their allies. If the check fails, Inrik and his enforcers attack unless the PCs quickly surrender. They fight to subdue the PCs, applying lethal force if necessary.

In the event the PCs surrender or are captured, it should quickly become apparent that nothing good can come from remaining in Inrik's custody. Once the PCs decide to escape—whether that's while being escorted or after being dropped off with Emorga and other captives—the infiltration challenges that follow this encounter are easily adapted to securing their own freedom as well as liberating their friends.

Should combat break out, Alyce Quinley assists the PCs to the best of her ability. Tanasha Starborne is a noncombatant and dives for cover, emerging periodically to shout encouragement to her allies.

AWAKENED TREES (3)

Monster Core 25

Initiative Perception +13

MODERATE 7

CREATURE 6

INRIK VANDERHOLL

CREATURE 4

Page 10

Initiative Perception +15

ALYCE QUINLEY

CREATURE 6

Page 11, 90

Initiative Perception +15

Development: If Inrik falls, he uses his dying breath to ask the PCs' forgiveness and to provide them with a crucial piece of information: Ruzadoya has ordered the other Taldan and Andoren delegates, as well as Xivaga and Emorga All-Seer, to be brought to an improvised jail and placed under guard. If the PCs convinced him to let them escape, he offers the same information before departing.

Treasure: If Inrik is convinced to let the PCs go, he tells them it's been an honor to serve beside them and presses his prized *+1 striking shock composite longbow* into their hands before departing. Otherwise, the PCs can recover it from his body, along with 46 gp.

ESCAPE!

Despite the late hour, the old fairgrounds are filled with distant sounds of raucous celebration. The PCs' association with Emorga makes them a target, and it's only a matter of time before Ruzadoya orders their detainment. If the PCs are wavering on what to do next, Alyce firmly offers her own opinion: retreat is the only viable strategy at this point, and only the next few hours might provide the PCs an opportunity to liberate and evacuate key Wildwood Lodge members like Emorga. Doing so involves traversing the area without being spotted by more of Ruzadoya's loyalists, freeing the prisoners, and then making their escape before anyone realizes they're gone.

Obstacles

The PCs' progress toward these goals is measured using the infiltration subsystem (*GM Core* 196). Rather than tracking the PCs' exact locations, the following obstacles provide an abstract framework for their movements and efforts to free key NPCs (while trying to avoid being identified and detained themselves).

You can present the following obstacles in any order, shaped by the PCs' choices and what best fits the narrative. Whatever approach they take, the PCs should earn about 8 Infiltration Points while reaching the detention center (page 64) and about 8 more Infiltration Points while escorting allies to safety. Ideally, each obstacle the PCs face will be unique, but some might be repeatable if their strategy calls for it.

The following obstacles represent some tactics the PCs might attempt. When an obstacle is encountered, each PC attempts an appropriate check to overcome the challenge, with the following results.

Critical Success The PCs gain 2 Infiltration Points.

Success The PCs gain 1 Infiltration Point.

Failure The PCs accrue 1 Awareness Point.

Critical Failure The PCs accrue 2 Awareness Points.

After all participating PCs have attempted a check, they gain 1 Awareness Point. If they have not yet accrued enough Awareness Points to overcome the obstacle, they continue to take turns until they have, gaining 1 Awareness Point at the end of each turn. If a PC contributes to the overall attempt without making a skill check, such as by casting a spell to increase another PC's chance of success, they earn 1 IP.

AVOID NOTICE

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** Intimidation or Stealth DC 23

A group of Ruzadoya's loyalists have congregated directly in the PCs' path. They'll need to either sneak past without



Inrik Vanderholl

Pactbreaker

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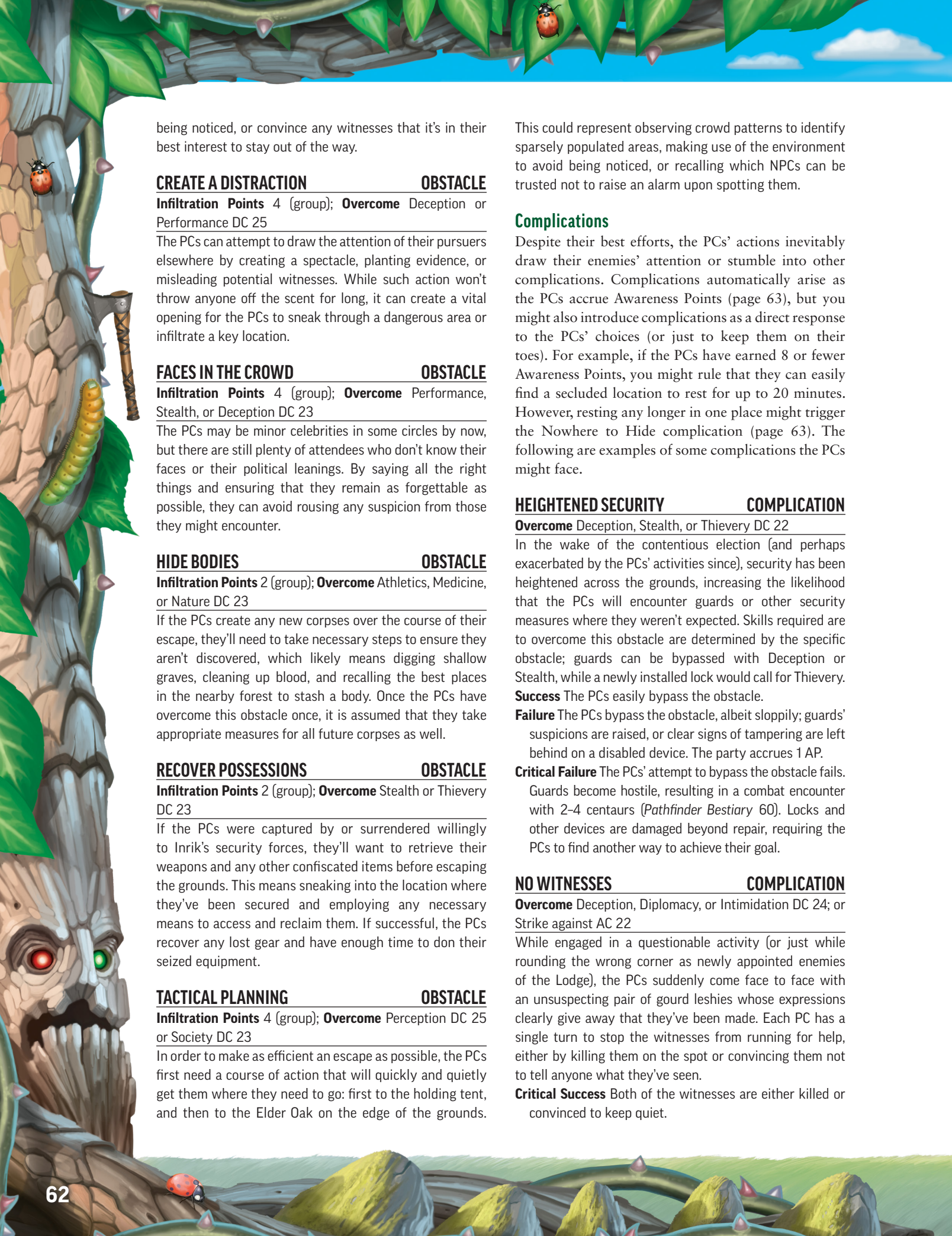
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being noticed, or convince any witnesses that it's in their best interest to stay out of the way.

CREATE A DISTRACTION

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** Deception or Performance DC 25

The PCs can attempt to draw the attention of their pursuers elsewhere by creating a spectacle, planting evidence, or misleading potential witnesses. While such action won't throw anyone off the scent for long, it can create a vital opening for the PCs to sneak through a dangerous area or infiltrate a key location.

FACES IN THE CROWD

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** Performance, Stealth, or Deception DC 23

The PCs may be minor celebrities in some circles by now, but there are still plenty of attendees who don't know their faces or their political leanings. By saying all the right things and ensuring that they remain as forgettable as possible, they can avoid rousing any suspicion from those they might encounter.

HIDE BODIES

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** Athletics, Medicine, or Nature DC 23

If the PCs create any new corpses over the course of their escape, they'll need to take necessary steps to ensure they aren't discovered, which likely means digging shallow graves, cleaning up blood, and recalling the best places in the nearby forest to stash a body. Once the PCs have overcome this obstacle once, it is assumed that they take appropriate measures for all future corpses as well.

RECOVER POSSESSIONS

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 2 (group); **Overcome** Stealth or Thievery DC 23

If the PCs were captured by or surrendered willingly to Inrik's security forces, they'll want to retrieve their weapons and any other confiscated items before escaping the grounds. This means sneaking into the location where they've been secured and employing any necessary means to access and reclaim them. If successful, the PCs recover any lost gear and have enough time to don their seized equipment.

TACTICAL PLANNING

OBSTACLE

Infiltration Points 4 (group); **Overcome** Perception DC 25 or Society DC 23

In order to make as efficient an escape as possible, the PCs first need a course of action that will quickly and quietly get them where they need to go: first to the holding tent, and then to the Elder Oak on the edge of the grounds.

This could represent observing crowd patterns to identify sparsely populated areas, making use of the environment to avoid being noticed, or recalling which NPCs can be trusted not to raise an alarm upon spotting them.

Complications

Despite their best efforts, the PCs' actions inevitably draw their enemies' attention or stumble into other complications. Complications automatically arise as the PCs accrue Awareness Points (page 63), but you might also introduce complications as a direct response to the PCs' choices (or just to keep them on their toes). For example, if the PCs have earned 8 or fewer Awareness Points, you might rule that they can easily find a secluded location to rest for up to 20 minutes. However, resting any longer in one place might trigger the Nowhere to Hide complication (page 63). The following are examples of some complications the PCs might face.

HEIGHTENED SECURITY

COMPLICATION

Overcome Deception, Stealth, or Thievery DC 22

In the wake of the contentious election (and perhaps exacerbated by the PCs' activities since), security has been heightened across the grounds, increasing the likelihood that the PCs will encounter guards or other security measures where they weren't expected. Skills required are to overcome this obstacle are determined by the specific obstacle; guards can be bypassed with Deception or Stealth, while a newly installed lock would call for Thievery.

Success The PCs easily bypass the obstacle.

Failure The PCs bypass the obstacle, albeit sloppily; guards' suspicions are raised, or clear signs of tampering are left behind on a disabled device. The party accrues 1 AP.

Critical Failure The PCs' attempt to bypass the obstacle fails. Guards become hostile, resulting in a combat encounter with 2–4 centaurs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 60). Locks and other devices are damaged beyond repair, requiring the PCs to find another way to achieve their goal.

NO WITNESSES

COMPLICATION

Overcome Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation DC 24; or Strike against AC 22

While engaged in a questionable activity (or just while rounding the wrong corner as newly appointed enemies of the Lodge), the PCs suddenly come face to face with an unsuspecting pair of gourd leshies whose expressions clearly give away that they've been made. Each PC has a single turn to stop the witnesses from running for help, either by killing them on the spot or convincing them not to tell anyone what they've seen.

Critical Success Both of the witnesses are either killed or convinced to keep quiet.

Success One of the witnesses is effectively silenced, but one more remains. Any PCs who haven't acted yet can attempt to silence the remaining witness, suffering a -2 penalty to Deception and Diplomacy checks and a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks if the first one was killed.

Failure One of the witnesses shouts for help. The PCs accrue 1 AP.

Critical Failure One of the witnesses runs screaming, attracting the attention of more bystanders. The PCs accrue 2 AP and must attempt to overcome the complication again from the beginning.

NOWHERE TO HIDE

COMPLICATION

Overcome Stealth DC 20

The PCs are hemmed in on all sides by potential witnesses, with no clear path to safety. Although they're currently out of sight, it's only a matter of time before someone spots them. Each PCs must attempt this check to evade detection.

Success The PC avoids notice entirely.

Failure Someone spots a PC skulking in the shadows from a distance. The PCs gain 1 Awareness Point.

STOP THEM!

COMPLICATION

Overcome Deception or Diplomacy DC 24, or Stealth DC 22

The PCs are spotted by a mob of celebrating fey, flush with victory after witnessing Ruzadoya's electoral triumph, who loudly declare them to "enemies of the Lodge" and move in to surround them. The PCs can try to talk their way out of the situation, or duck behind the nearest corner and flee.

Success The fey are intimidated into silence or convinced they've made a mistake; alternatively, the PCs escape into the night well before the mob reaches them.

Failure The fey accept but are clearly suspicious of the PCs' story; or the PCs escape but leave an easily followed trail behind them. The PCs accrue 1 AP.

Critical Failure The fey ignore the PCs' attempts to mollify them or cut off their escape before they can flee. The PCs accrue 2 AP and are drawn into combat with three satyrs (*Monster Core* 284).

Edge Points

The PCs had little time to prepare for their escape, meaning they likely lack any Edge Points to aid their infiltration. That said, some of their friends might assist them.

Ambrosia's Allies: If the PCs earned at least 3 Influence Points with Ambrosia and lured away some of her followers, those sprites and other fey provide

the PCs an Edge Point best suited to Deception, Performance, or Thievery checks.

Glitterbeak: Perturbed by the noisy revelry, Glitterbeak and his flock retreated to sleep after the vote. As several ravens notice the PCs, they signal Glitterbeak, who uses some of his followers to create distractions to aid the PCs infiltration. This functions as an Edge Point that's most applicable to Perception and Stealth checks. That said, it might provide a more potent effect for the Recover Possessions obstacle or (in a macabre twist) the Hide Bodies obstacle.

Awareness

Awareness Points represent the attention attracted by the PCs as they overcome obstacles and deal with complications. They are usually accrued as the result of a failed skill check, but other actions might generate them as well. The following are a few examples.

- The PCs accrue 1 Awareness Point for each round of combat, unless they take specific precautions to ensure that they aren't attracting attention.



Grimbough

- The PCs earn 2 Awareness Points whenever they carelessly draw attention to themselves or leave evidence behind, such as by taking inherently flashy or noisy actions or failing to hide a corpse.
- The PCs earn 4 Awareness Points if they take actions that are nigh-impossible to ignore, such as starting a fire or indiscriminately murdering noncombatants in public.

Their Awareness Points total has the following effects.

- **3 Awareness Points** A complication occurs. Alerted to potential danger, all NPCs guarding the detention center (page 64) gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Perception checks. To avoid ambushes, this bonus increases to +4 for the centaur guards.
- **5 Awareness Points** A patrol of four elite centaurs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 60) tracks down and engages the PCs in combat.
- **8 Awareness Points** Another complication occurs. The DCs for all obstacles increase by 1.
- **10 Awareness Points** All detention center NPCs are placed on high alert, the circumstance bonus to their Perception checks increasing to +2. The DCs for all obstacles increase by an additional 1.

Detention Center

Severe 7

Upon earning 8 or more Infiltration Points, the PCs arrive at a crescent-shaped hill, its sheer, concave side the result of years of flooding and erosion. The feature now serves as an improvised paddock, with 14 prisoners detailed within. Among them is Emorga, the others being humans and gnomes split between nonviolent Wildwood representatives, sailors, and diplomats from Andoran and Taldor. All but Emorga have their hands bound by hemp rope and their ankles loosely tied together, though they appear unharmed. Emorga has settle onto her belly, patiently observing and concocting plans.

Creatures: Vandalya and three other Swiftmane centaurs constantly patrol the hill's perimeter in roughly a 100-foot radius, watching for any attempts to breach its walls from inside or out. A gnarled arboreal has positioned itself at the paddock's entrance, its thorn-covered limbs and wooden face daring the prisoners to attempt an escape. PCs who met Oakadence (page 57) earlier recall seeing this arboreal among his Blackwood Moot cohort.

The guards don't necessarily spot the PCs at first. Canny PCs might try to quietly subdue one or more centaurs before launching their main attack, in which case the Stealth DC to sneak up on the centaurs might increase based on the PCs' Awareness Point total. Likewise, PCs might execute a ploy to lure one or more centaurs away, reducing

the number of guards they must fight. The arboreal guard is not so easily tricked, almost certainly posing a combat threat.

Once alerted, the arboreal fights to the death to prevent the prisoners' escape, and the centaurs flee only once victory seems impossible. Thanks to their exceptional Speed, centaur guards can reach the fighting within 1 round once combat begins. Fortunately, the detention center is relatively isolated from the remainder of the grounds and the occupants of the sole neighboring tent currently elsewhere, so the battle draws no further attention unless the PCs go out of their way to make a scene; Awareness Points do not increase during this encounter.

Vandalya: How Ruzadoya's sister responds to the PCs depends on how many Influence Points they earned with her. If they have 2 or fewer, she fights alongside the other three centaurs. If they earned 3–4 points, she hesitates for a round before fleeing (approaching the PCs at the end of this adventure and potentially joining them). If they earned 5 or more points, she withdraws and potentially aids the PCs by firing a few arrows from hiding at Grimbough. She then retreats, approaches the PCs at the end of the adventure, and offers to join them.

Prisoners: Except for Emorga, the prisoners provide no significant support during the encounter. Emorga lacks her spellcasting paraphernalia, limiting her magical abilities; however, she can cast *tangle vine* at will, can cast *heal* once as a 4th-rank spell, and Strikes with her bite against any foe who approaches within her reach. She moves little if at all during the encounter, using her body to shield the other prisoners from attackers and stray projectiles.

SWIFTMANE CENTAURS (4)

CREATURE 4

Elite centaurs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 60)

Initiative Perception +11

GRIMBOUGH

CREATURE 8

Elite arboreal reaper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 6, 20)

Initiative Perception +17

EMORGA

CREATURE 11

Page 92

Initiative Perception +21 (+11 for initiative)

Treasure: Each centaur wears a small leather pouch containing a small quantity of gold, totaling 31 gp between them. One also carries a *moderate healing potion*, a broken shortsword with a *grudgestone* affixed to it, and a heavy iron key that opens the



padlocks on the mooring chains binding the Andoren and Taldan boats to the pier.

Development: Once freed, the prisoners thank the PCs quietly yet profusely before conferring with them to draw up an escape plan before reinforcements arrive. They report they saw Xivaga (the wood giant officiant) ushering a small group of other friendly dissidents out of the area, and there are likely several other groups evacuating by various routes. The best plan remains reuniting with Alyce near the riverbank to escape by boat.

At least, that's the best plan for everyone but Emorga, whose massive body would capsize even a seafaring ship. Fortunately, she has identified her own egress that requires the PCs' help. Among Emorga's magical repertoire is a ritual for instantaneously traveling between specific trees in the Verduran Forest—the Elder Oaks. If the PCs can escort her to the nearby Elder Oak before they escape, she can shift herself to a safe location (namely, the Elder Oak most recently connected to the Viridian Nexus) and rendezvous later.

Emorga's ritual could conceivably transport an additional creature, but it couldn't save everyone, and the additional effort required to do so would introduce greater risk.

Friend of My Enemy

With the detainees liberated, the PCs can carefully make their way back across the grounds and into the forest by continuing to tackle obstacles until their Infiltration Points total 8 or more. Traveling with an enormous, slow-moving tortoise does have its downside; any Stealth checks during this portion of the infiltration suffer a -2 penalty.

If the PCs earned at least 3 Influence Points with Vandalya Swiftmane, she withdrew from an earlier confrontation and approaches the PCs as they enter the clearing where the Elder Oak grows.

The centaur raises both hands in front of her, either to show that she's unarmed or to ward off an expected attack. "Wait. Before you go: hear me out. I know that you are not fools, and therefore I will not ask you to trust me, nor will I ask you to forgive what happened here tonight. I came here with my sister to call the weak, cowardly druids of the Lodge to task for the atrocities they have tolerated in our forest. But I did not come to revel in slaughter, or to pursue vengeance for its own sake. I cannot speak for every centaur, but I know my sister; that thing clad in greenwood might wear her face and speak with her voice, but it is not Ruzadoya. Whatever it has planned, I will not be a part of it."

If the PCs earned 3–4 Influence Points, she adds, "But I know your own cause is placid and indecisive, perhaps not worthy of my assistance," awaiting any defense of the Wildwood Lodge that would convince her to defect to the PCs' side. A PC can attempt to convince her with a DC 24 Deception, Diplomacy, or Nature check with a circumstance bonus equal to the number of Influence Points they earned with her. If successful, she volunteers to join the PCs in whatever lies ahead. The PCs can retry the check, but once they fail twice (or critically fail once), Vandalya decides to leave the Verduran Forest altogether.

If the PCs earned 5 or more Influence Points, she instead adds, "And if you intend to stand against it, I will swear my bow and spear to your cause," volunteering her service without needing further convincing.

The PCs are likely to be distrustful, but as far as they can tell, Vandalya seems to be sincere. She doesn't know anything more than they do about how or why Ruzadoya unexpectedly returned from the dead, but she steadfastly maintains that the murderous crusade her sister promised at the Conclave is a vile perversion of the passionate ideals she held in life. Sickened to see so many of her fellow Swiftmanes so easily fall in line behind a brutal tyrant, Vandalya wants nothing more than to leave this place and locate new allies who can help her solve the mystery of her sister's return and, if necessary, send her back to the grave.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether the PCs bring Vandalya with them, their next step is to use the Elder Oak's mystical pathway to travel back to the Viridian Nexus. After requesting that Corazal close the gateway behind them to ensure they won't be followed, Emorga retires to her shelter in the cloister and, following a fitful sleep, enters a state of communion with the great conrasu the following morning to discuss recent events and how she and the PCs can best respond to them.

At this point, the PCs are free to take as much time as they need to engage in whatever downtime activities they choose, potentially including the use of Elder Oaks they've discovered throughout the forest to return to various locations they visited in Chapter 2. This is a good opportunity for them to visit Sigrid Jandevik or other merchants to buy and sell equipment, or to confirm that Alyce Quinley and Tanasha Starborne have arrived safely in Bellis and Wispil respectively. Soon, news arrives of Ruzadoya's Wildwood Lodge and its ongoing operations, kicking off the action in the next Adventure Path volume.

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Arboreal Ecology

Armored in bark and reinforced by lignin, most trees can withstand significant damage. Yet should searing wildfires or biting axes threaten them, a roaring sound may echo from afar: arboreals on the march.

At least, that's what many humanoids believe about arboreals. Mostly encountered in campfire tales or vengeful raids against logging camps, arboreals may seem like one-dimensional monsters, little more than mobile trees. Yet beneath their bulk lies a wit, culture, and strength seldom seen by outsiders. What's more, their stewardship extends beyond mere conservation, with arboreals waging a glacially slow war against primal magic to maintain balance in their domains.

Physiology

Arboreals don't just resemble trees; they are trees. Whether descended from arboreal parents or awakened and animated from a carefully tended mundane sapling, arboreals stem from and share much of their physiology with trees, albeit with predictable mutations.

Mobility: The same lignin that grants a tree strength inhibits its flexibility. To allow movement, an arboreal's body develops less lignin and more flexible woody mass along their joints. These areas bend as needed, though rapid contraction sends easily healed microfractures through the limb, similar to pulling a muscle. Arboreals must stretch at least once a year to stay limber.

During adolescence, an arboreal partially controls their own growth through willpower and patience, effecting cosmetic adjustments over several growing seasons. This is most apparent in the arboreal's face, each a personalized act of body art. Likewise, an arboreal's upper limbs develop from their two favorite branches, which receive additional nutrients, growth, and flexibility. In the event of amputation, an arboreal can spend years modifying an existing branch or regrowing a lost limb. Yet this regenerative potential relies on the arboreal's continued focus; an apathetic arboreal might never regrow completely.

Senses: An arboreal's sensory abilities develop slowly, modifying existing features to better study and navigate their home. Eyes develop in parallel with the face, opening for the first time at about 10

years of age. Their eyesight is roughly comparable to a human's, albeit with a much wider range of visible colors. An arboreal's leaves augment this further, acting as light-sensing eyespots; they can sense how photosynthetically active each of their branches are. By comparison, their thick bark dulls tactile sensations. Those arboreals who crave greater dexterity often sand down their hands, enhancing flexibility and exposing more of their sensitive underbark.

For other senses, arboreals adapt their existing features rather than growing new ones. As they lack ears, arboreals instead absorb sound vibrations across their whole body. Their trunks excel at low-frequency sounds, whereas their leaves can detect and decipher high pitches, leaving arboreals hard of hearing when it comes to the average human's speech. Even though an arboreal's sense of smell barely extends beyond pheromones and air quality, their myriad leaves can assess a scent's strength and direction with astounding accuracy. Finally, an arboreal's mouth has few taste receptors, with most instead lining the roots. These enable them to sense soil composition and nutrient density, and arboreals occasionally rest a foot atop unknown objects as if giving it a cursory lick.

Sapience: Rather than concentrating functions in anything approximating a brain, an arboreal's nervous system spans most of their body. New skills and memories crystallize throughout the heartwood, gradually migrating as the arboreal grows and makes new mental connections. Over time, neurological tissue tends to clump into a few dozen regions, creating rudimentary brains that contribute to the arboreal's coordination and overall consciousness.

In practice, this distributed neural anatomy is inefficient, making many arboreals appear slow-witted as their scattered neurons communicate. Likewise, bodily harm can destroy certain memories, and occasionally a memory wanders into an errant leaf or twig before snapping off. That said, arboreals have exceptional memories; what they do learn, they can retain for centuries. Those with numerous pseudo-brains can also develop extraordinary multitasking abilities, with some clusters quietly

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contemplating a conundrum or line of poetry for days before making a breakthrough that's broadcast to the arboreal's consciousness. It's not uncommon for an arboreal interlocutor to abandon a conversation abruptly, announcing they've just solved an old friend's decade-old problem.

Magic: Though no more adept at wielding magic than any other creature, arboreals are living batteries of primal magic. For them, primal magic is a nutrient—necessary in moderation yet toxic in excess. Just as wetlands filter pollutants from water, arboreals pride themselves on drawing excess primal magic from their environment and safely sequestering it inside themselves, ensuring the troublesome energies can't poison or mutate local life-forms. A few arboreals learn to redirect this power as primal spellcasting, yet for most it's just an essential vitamin (see Nutrition below). So much stored magic means that when an arboreal is sick or injured, primal energy can leak out in unpredictable displays. Most infamously, an ignited arboreal burns with rainbow-hued flames, some of which can even calve off into autonomous fire elementals.

Nutrition: For sustenance, arboreals survive as most trees do—drawing water and nutrients from the soil to drive photosynthesis. Left to their own devices, an arboreal usually spends about three days rooted and regaining strength for every one day of uprooted activity. Even when walking, an arboreal can absorb sunlight, but their small reserves of other nutrients limit how long they can photosynthesize before needing fresh soil. Overly clever arboreals who try to bulk up for upcoming activity can experience “sap sweats,” where their body contains so much fluid that it painfully oozes through the bark to relieve internal pressure. Arboreals often migrate slowly and seasonally to make the most of what their domain offers.

That said, each arboreal maintains a powerful reserve of primal energy. In addition to having fueled the arboreal's animation and emergent consciousness, this energy is also analogous to a fat reserve, fueling extended periods of activity when necessary. A desperate arboreal might march for a month nonstop, though not without cost. Unless restored through rest or absorbing excess primal magic, depleting this reserve causes an arboreal to sicken, lose higher brain function, and eventually die.

While most arboreals have mouths and can even taste what they chew, they have only limited digestive infrastructure. Anything beyond nibbling a shared snack out of politeness or experimentally tasting a treat can make an arboreal sick. Instead of typical humanoid food, many enjoy chewing minerals, crushing small rocks to absorb key minerals while on the move.

Life Cycle

Despite their common traits, arboreals are not a singular species; they're variants of existing plants. This limits an arboreal's potential partners to others within their broad category, whether those partners are arboreals or mundane trees.

As modified trees, arboreals mate using angiosperm and gymnosperm: relying on pollinators or wind respectively to form seeds. There, though, the similarities with regular trees end. After all, arboreals have the mobility and foresight to influence how and where they mate each spring when their reproductive urges kick in. For coniferous arboreals, this means seeking breezy vantages or relocating near favored mates to maximize conception. Their deciduous cousins often shepherd and protect the birds, bats, and insects that visit their flowers each year. Though outwardly arboreals project an air of patient practicality during mating season, they do experience intense urges. Coniferous arboreals sometimes stampede up mountains, determined to reach a summit to sow their pollen. Their deciduous counterparts occasionally raid apiaries and steal beehives to wear as attractive crowns before sheepishly returning the stolen hives weeks later.

Even with a perfectly matched mate, only a fraction of a parent's seeds contains the primal spark needed to create an arboreal offspring. Usually, a parent can sense which seeds have this potential, saving them to plant in carefully chosen nurseries. Parents often scatter the other seeds (or allow them to be harvested) wherever appropriate to support their forest home. Under the right conditions, though, even these mundane seeds can awaken—most often, when planted in regions suffused with primal magic that the seedling absorbs alongside other nutrients.

Saplings: For the first few decades, a young arboreal is almost indistinguishable from a common tree and requires equally limited care. In adolescence, they gradually twist and stretch to maintain flexibility as they gain mass, all the while slowly developing their senses and studying their environment in detail. Even if not tutored by other arboreals, a sapling often learns languages by studying other creatures, even absorbing ancient memories from the soil itself. In practice, though, most saplings receive regular attention and instruction from their elders.

To become an adult, a sapling must undergo a frightful experience: uprooting. This involves weeks of willing their lower trunk to weaken and separate, culminating in sudden bifurcation as the lower trunk snaps apart into legs. After overcoming the shock, the sapling untangles itself from the ground and

takes their first steps into adulthood. Young arboreals must perform these steps without physical aid, but in practice, an arboreal community often gathers to provide moral support and celebrate this important transition. After mastering movement, a young arboreal often embarks on a pilgrimage to understand the natural world before adopting a region to guard.

Adulthood: As they mature, an arboreal's body gradually changes to fulfill their goals—that is, developing into the wide array of forms and specializations, such as an arboreal warden, arboreal regent, arboreal sapstriker, and other variants featured in *Monster Core* and on pages 82–83 of this adventure. With patience and persistence, an arboreal can will their body to grow in particular ways. However, the process usually is subconscious, with the arboreal instinctively registering signals from their environment and growing into whatever role their home needs most. This softly limits the number of arboreal regents in a region, bolsters arboreal warden numbers in vast environments, and spawns arboreal reapers in distressed landscapes.

Final Years: An arboreal's natural life span is measured less by years than by motivation. Each season can dull an arboreal's mind and stiffen their body, if not offset by projects and regular calisthenics. After several years without stimulation and exercise, an arboreal takes root one last time and slowly infuses their primal energy into the surrounding soil, like a tree reabsorbing chlorophyll before winter. Once done, their consciousness fades into a dreamless sleep, and the body lives for centuries more as a mundane tree. These serve as living gravestones for other arboreals, drawing well-wishers for years to come. The primal soil is also an ideal habitat for saplings. Over time, extended family plant their offspring nearby to absorb their beloved ancestor's wisdom and provide their departed kin company.


Society

Arboreals appreciate solitude. They typically form loose communities called stands, covering a biome up to 100 miles across, which afford members ample privacy punctuated by occasional gatherings and serendipitous encounters. Arboreals also congregate in small groups when mentoring saplings, acting like improvised family units for several years before dispersing. Only dire threats reliably draw a stand together. In peaceful times, common elements of arboreal society support a sense of connection.

Language: The Arboreal language is a thrumming tongue that includes many creaks, groans, hums, grunts, and occasional thumps layered atop a

barely audible drone. These sounds travel easily in a dense wilderness, allowing conversations between individuals up to a mile away in ideal conditions. Since the language is a full-body experience, a skilled arboreal can compose several phrases simultaneously, creating a deeply poetic if cumbersome message full of nuance. This forms a variant known as Crown Arboreal, reserved for unrushed, introspective, or highly precise communication that can stretch a simple exchange over several hours. By comparison, Root Arboreal is an abridged approach to the language, seeming abrupt and overly simplistic by comparison. By learning Arboreal, a speaker learns both the Crown and Root dialects, though many speakers struggle to recreate the sounds and sufficiently multitask as needed to speak fluent Crown Arboreal.





In its written form, Arboreal vexes linguists due to its structure: rather than being printed in clear lines on a page, Arboreal winds across a surface and sometimes branches in different directions like linguistic roots seeking water. This enables an arboreal's asides, creating branching verses that explore some nuance of another sentence, much like a footnote. It also allows some text to double back on itself, intersecting with earlier statements to visually convey how the ideas connect. In addition to capturing the arboreal mindset, this style also suits their irregular writing surfaces. Whether carving poetry into rocks or tattooing their own bark, the branching text flows easily across curved and jagged media.

Art: Crafts like sculpting, painting, and poetry often capture an arboreal's attention, as artistry allows them to explore a single image or idea at a comfortably glacial speed. Art usually serves a personal, not political purpose; even when creating a temporary mural across a cliff face, the painting exists for the arboreal's enjoyment rather than as some territorial marker or cultural statement. When sharing art, an arboreal often aims to communicate a complex topic that would otherwise take days to convey in casual speech. After serving that purpose, artwork is allowed to decay or is given away. Perplexed adventurers sometimes stumble out of the wilderness laden with priceless secondhand art after accidentally encountering an arboreal who just wanted their creations to find a loving home.

In general, arboreals favor nonliving materials in art. Carving stone, applying ochre to rockfaces, raising menhirs, and pulverizing gravel to create a zen garden all provide arboreals a creative outlet with minimal impact on living creatures. Media such as leather, bone, ivory, and canvas are either so rarely available or unintuitive that their use is virtually unheard of in arboreal art. Only wood causes any controversy. To most arboreals, woodworking is macabre, analogous to a human sculpting a meatloaf. However, eccentric arboreals sometimes create art from the remains of their fallen mentors or carve greenwood purposefully to incorporate its shock value into the piece's overall message.

Entertainment: For most arboreals, nature is entertainment enough. Watching animal migrations, listening to wind patterns change with the seasons, and admiring new life sprouting in a clearing can hold an arboreal's attention for weeks. Yet when that novelty fades, arboreals invent games that have gradually spread across Golarion.

Most famous of these is Terkakeko, which resembles common tile-placement games played across a vast landscape. Arboreals gradually place rocks in specific locations throughout their territory, using their turns

to surround, capture, or block the other player's rocks. The key word is "gradually." Turns might last weeks or even years, with a player wandering the area to even identify their opponent's most recent move, pondering their next turn, and eventually wandering to wherever they'll place their next piece. Woe to travelers who dislodge these inconspicuous game pieces—several arboreal raids have resulted when humans inadvertently incorporated the wrong stone into their home's foundation.

Arboreals might guard wild places, but that doesn't stop them from playing harmless pranks on travelers and animals. Among the most popular competitions is bird casting: an arboreal (often one laden with fruit or nuts) attracts a flock of birds while staying completely still, then with an artful shake, they send the panicked birds flying. The goal is to scatter the birds in a creative pattern, much as a humanoid might blow smoke rings. Some arboreals strive to send the terrified flock toward a rival, showering the latter in droppings.

Arboreals of Golarion

Arboreals can live wherever there are trees, from frozen taiga to humid jungles to stands of palms overlooking oases. The following explores several noteworthy homes.

Kyonin: True to his name, the powerful fiend Treerazer butchered countless arboreals when he invaded Kyonin millennia ago. When elves returned to find their ancient homeland devastated, they allied with surviving arboreals to drive back the demons. The partnership has persisted since, though arboreals rarely join sorties deep into Tanglebriar itself; the risk of being poisoned or even corrupted by the toxic landscape is too great. Instead, they silently patrol the current border, sometimes carrying elven archers in their branches, like howdahs atop war elephants.

Lands of the Linnorm Kings: First World portals and magic riddle the Grungir Forest, a realm infamous for its fey and linnorms. The rampant primal energy feeds a prolific arboreal population. Yet to these guardians, the magical landscape isn't wondrous; it's a runaway disaster. The arboreals diligently absorb and sequester what primal energy they can, often clashing with the fey, whose antics and portals only intensify the problem.

Mwanga Expanse: The Mwanga Expanse contains dozens of loosely connected ecosystems and just as many arboreal stands. Many of these are home to tobongos, towering arboreals whose sap can lignify living tissue—a condition colloquially known as the barkflesh curse. Left unchecked, this affliction spreads, transforming the victim into a tree or even a young arboreal. It's unclear whether tobongos purposefully developed this ability, yet they've embraced it now,



using it to punish anyone who threatens their homes. Explorers speculate that with the right magic, someone could communicate with lignified victims, potentially extracting whatever secrets they took to their graves, but tobongos are notoriously protective of these transformed trees.

Verduran Forest: In most regions, arboreals freely repel wrongdoers, but not so in Taldor. For centuries, druids and Taldan officials have maintained the Treaty of the Wildwood, which permits limited woodcutting in exchange for protection. Those arboreals unwilling to suffer trespassers formed the Blackwood Moot, a community of vigilante arboreals who strike lumber operations without warning. Most Verduran residents consider these raiders a menace, especially because they periodically recruit and weaponize wild animals. Their longtime leader, **Oakadence** (male arboreal regent magician), rarely speaks to the Wildwood Lodge, insisting that only the treaty's nullification will end his attacks.

Beliefs

For the typical arboreal, the material world and their obligation to protect it addresses essential philosophical questions. Most see ontology, divinity, and other esoterica as curiosities worthy of discussion but unworthy of shaping behavior. The following presents trends in arboreal beliefs when those topics arise.

Origins: An amateur naturalist's common (and too often accurate) explanation for powerful wilderness beings is First World influence: an apt assessment for fey, leshies, green men, and more. Arboreals are an uncommon exception. Their origins seem to extend far into prehistory, likely having awakened spontaneously after absorbing ambient magic. The abundance of ley lines intersecting at arboreals' sacred sites corroborates this, especially since mythologized ancestors supposedly sprouted at these sites. Arboreals have self-perpetuated since, yet the abundance and diversity of arboreal forms and biomes strongly suggests these creatures developed independently on several different continents.

Arboreals tell abundant tales of their origins; likely no story is completely true but instead communicates the community's values through allegory. The popular cosmic tree legend depicts each arboreal as the tip of some cosmic tree's roots, with arboreals tasked to absorb wisdom and guard their patch of soil in service to the multiverse. Another claims arboreals sprang from Gozreh's bifurcation into twin deities, with towering arboreals serving as the columns that separate the earth from the sky. Ultimately, arboreals don't rely on mythology to guide their morals, so origin stories evolve with each generation.

Legends: Most arboreal legends feature their home regions, including just-so tales about how a local animal gained a certain feature, why a river curves a particular way, or who introduced a revered plant into their ecosystem. These stories are more fanciful than historical, and their conflicting narratives further confuse an ancient history that arboreals tend not to care about.

One legend is universal, though: the Ur-Root. In Golarion's infancy, torrential rains and cosmic winds tore at the earth, threatening to wash away the continents before life even began. As the gods blamed each other for the weather, a nature spirit alighted on the planet and took root. With fearsome speed, its roots crisscrossed the planet's surface, stabilizing the soil and anchoring the tectonic plates. Only as the cataclysms subsided did the gods look down, notice the vast net protecting Golarion, and begin fighting over which one of them should receive credit for this miracle.

Over the ages, these roots have faded from the physical realm, yet their echoes remain as Golarion's ley lines, channeling primal magic across the planet. Arboreal realms often develop near ley lines, hinting that the creatures might have sprung from that forgotten spirit known as the Ur-Root. Arboreals sometimes joke that following the ley lines to their source would lead a traveler to the Ur-Root itself.

Faith: Empowered by primal magic and lacking any mythologized connections to the divine, arboreals tend to see deities less as patrons and more as forces of nature. Arboreals typically view nature deities as they would neighbors and sometimes regents. Erastil is kept at arm's length due to his tree-clearing worshippers. Gozreh maintains an air of welcome mystery, especially for arboreals in dry regions or who rely on windborne pollination. Some arboreals revere or even worship Sarenrae as a life-giving sun goddess, though her disciples rarely embrace the Everflame's fiery power.

Most other deities receive ambivalent acknowledgment or reluctant defiance depending on how their followers treat nature. Deities like Abadar, Rovagug, and Urgathoa so often harm nature that arboreals barely tolerate such worshippers, much less worship these gods themselves.

The Green Faith closely aligns with arboreals' values, though they're not identical. This overlap attracts many arboreal disciples, with most embracing the Green Faith as a secular philosophy more than a supernatural religion. These creatures often mentor Green Faith students and provide figurative muscle in protecting Green Faith interests. However, the two parties often disagree on outreach; few arboreals have the patience and interest to proactively teach settlements how to respect nearby wilderness.

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Verduran Forest

Spread out over hundreds of square miles and traversing the borders of three nations, the Verduran Forest is the largest woodland in Avistan. The forest is a wealth of diverse climates, ecologies, and cultures. Rich, clay-like soil under thick, shady canopies along the northern stretch of the Dragonfly River can make for a bitter cold, while heat radiating from the Tandak Plains becomes trapped by similar canopies and, when combined with river floods, creates humid marshes near the Falling River. In both, and in every other microclimate in the forest, plants and wildlife uniquely suited to the environment have developed and flourished.

A variety of peoples and animals call the Verduran Forest home. Most outsiders commonly associate the forest with various factions of druids and fey, but it also holds dragons, arboreals, kovintus, and leshies. Pirates prowl the waterways within the Verduran Forest, and small communities made up of citizens from the forest's surrounding nations have grown along its edges. The most enigmatic of Verduran's inhabitants are the Primordial Ones. Even among the secretive druid circles, they're a mystery. The forest is rife with rumors of their background, history, and beliefs. Even their word for themselves, Keth, is a secret known only to a small few.

History

The Verduran Forest encroaches upon Andoran, Galt, and Taldor, though most of forest's inhabitants think of it as a region unto itself and separate from any nation. None of these three countries has a significant population in the forest beyond small bands along its edge. The forest's relationship with each nation is different as well, but there's one thing they all have in common, an activity that has defined much of Verduran's history: logging.

Andoran has long favored the Arthfell Forest and Darkmoon Vale for its lumber, as both are closer to shipyards and far less hostile. Once, only independent loggers operated out of the Verduran Forest, shipping the wood down the Sellen and selling it to the Lumber Consortium. However, as

Arthfell and Darkmoon eroded and their supply of lumber exhausted, the Lumber Consortium turned a more interested eye to the Verduran. Druids have always protected the forest against loggers, and as the hunger for more wood has grown, so has the druids' increasingly violent pushback. Additionally, while independent loggers were never safe, they now face the added danger of the Lumber Consortium pushing them out, often violently. To date, the Andoran government, needing more and more ships, has not signed any treaties or agreements with the denizens of the Verduran, turning a blind eye to the escalating conflict. Some settlements within the forest have formed their own anti-logging agreements with the other local inhabitants to avoid conflict.

For a long time, Taldor had a similar relationship to the Verduran as the one in which Andoran now finds itself. Taldor heavily logged the forest, resulting in a prolonged bloody conflict. However, Taldor's need for ships became so great that the situation grew untenable. Living loggers produce more lumber than dead ones, even with relaxed quotas. Thus, the Treaty of the Wildwood was signed in 3841 AR. The treaty granted control of the forest to the Wildwood druid circle, and Taldor agreed to engage in more responsible, less aggressive logging. In exchange, the druids would tolerate Taldor's logging operations and provide protection from other aggressive groups. In practice, the druids mainly concern themselves with dangerous fey, but ignore other larger threats like arboreals or dragons. Over time, Taldor has tested the limits of the treaty and taken advantage of any leeway it finds.

Only a small portion of the Verduran is in Galt, and it's far from the major population centers or waterways. Other forests within easier reach are more attractive for Galt's lumber needs. Additionally, Galt's ongoing internal conflict keeps the nation's attention away from the small patch of forest on the southern border. Local Galtans do chop down trees, but the logging is light at best, easily replaceable and tolerable to the forest inhabitants. The relationship between the Verduran and Galt is best described as nonexistent.

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At a Glance

The Verduran Forest is broken into three segments by waterways. The Sellen River enters northwest of the woodlands' center and flows almost directly south before briefly meandering east near the forest's center where it meets the Verduran Fork, one of its largest tributaries, which flows west beyond the forest's eastern edge. The two tributaries divide that the forest between north and south, meeting at the Isle of Arenway, from whence the united Sellen then continues south into the Inner Sea, further splitting the southern portion into east and west. The Sellen marks the border between Andoran and Taldor. The forest east of the Sellen is in Taldan territory, save for a bit to the north, which is in Galt. The forest west of the river is in Andoran. Most travel through and around the forest is done via these two waterways, and settlements within the forest are mostly along the shores of the rivers or their smaller tributaries. Other settlements typically lie within a couple miles of the forest's edge. Population centers of druids, fey, and sentient plant creatures are scattered throughout the interior of the forest but are rarely visited by outsiders.

With the sea immediately to the south and mountains immediately to the north, moisture systems provide a good deal of precipitation to most of the Verduran. The northern edges of the forest, which lie along the southern edges of the mountains, are kept cool by a combination of the thick tree canopies, moderate elevation, and shadow of the mountain range creating montane conditions. Further south, warmer temperatures and proximity to the sea produce muggy conditions and more tropical environments. On its eastern side, Verduran stretches into a corridor between mountain ranges that minimize storm systems but funnel air flows. Here, the forest is dryer and thinner, sustained by annual monsoon seasons and whipped by frequent high winds. Throughout the interior of the forest, a wide variety of biomes can be found, each depending on a range of factors including canopy cover, soil composition, undergrowth density, intersections with other biomes, and much more.

Travelers in the Verduran Forest face a number of dangers, but getting lost in the forest is by far the most common. Without landmarks, much of the forest can look the same to an inexperienced explorer, and, without a clear view of the sky, it's difficult to determine direction. Getting above the canopy can be helpful, but climbing those heights and descending back to the ground can be risky. Water is abundant in parts of the forest, but scarce in others. However, even the water may be dangerous. Hot or humid conditions

breed bacteria, particularly in standing water, that can be harmful or even deadly. In drier parts of the forest, infrequent but sudden rainfalls cause flash flooding that can kill an unprepared traveler. Temperature extremes can also be fatal, and the gradual increase or decrease while traveling can make noticing difficult until it's too late. Different biomes support different wildlife, but all of them feature predators. These predators are well adapted to their environments and excel at hunting in them, especially when their prey is unfamiliar with their surroundings.

Notable Locations

BELLIS

Bellis is an Andoran logging outpost founded less than 100 years ago along the country's western edge, where the Dragonfly, a smaller tributary flowing south from the Five Kings Mountains, meets the Sellen. In its earlier days, the town relied heavily on freelance loggers, who still arrive seasonally in the spring and leave after the first snowfalls in winter. Upon their arrival, a tent town locals call "the Pit" forms near the Sellen. Townsfolk and the town's volunteer authorities generally avoid the Pit, most viewing it as a belligerent but necessary part of the town's economy. The loggers who stay there spend a great deal of their earnings in the taverns, inns, stores, and eateries in the town proper. Without that income Bellis would have failed long ago. However, as Bellis has begun to achieve enough economic success to support itself through other means besides lumber, tolerance for the Pit has begun to diminish, especially as the Lumber Consortium's monopoly on the logging industry grows more aggressive and violent. The ability to navigate the politics of the three groups and serve as go-betweens is becoming more and more lucrative, especially if one is willing to get one's blade dirty.

While lumber is what founded Bellis, it has since been eclipsed as the primary industry by honey and beeswax. Large, beautiful gardens, both planted and native, fill almost every unoccupied space in town, and the buzz of bees is omnipresent. Among the gardens stand Bellis's famed apiaries. From these come the wax and honey used both locally and exported via the Sellen. In addition to wax and honey, many local products made with these components have found a growing demand outside of Bellis. Seasonal honey meads are most popular, but sweet meats, sweet soups, and honey breads have also gained renown. There are also a good many medicinal uses for honey; in addition to treating coughs, dry skin, and



sleep difficulties, the inhabitants of Bellis have begun experimenting with honey in magical items, finding promising results with healing potions in particular. Likewise, and complimenting the town's lumber exports, townsfolk have found that beeswax can be made into an excellent wood lubricant, a polishing agent for both wood and metal, and a waterproof coating for cloth.

Success with bee husbandry has not come without difficulties, however. A recent rash of destroyed apiaries and the accompanying disappearance of a large number of bees have fueled rumors of secret experiments producing monstrous mutant bee-like creatures.

BLACKWOOD MOOT

The Treaty of the Wildwood stemmed the flow of blood between the keepers of Verduran and Taldor, but not everyone was happy with it, and it inspired a different conflict. Deep in the Verduran is a grove of blackwood trees, isolated and difficult to find. This grove serves as a meeting place for a group of arboreals dissatisfied with the treaty. They maintain that any taking of trees is violence against their kin and view the druids of Wildwood Lodge as traitors, collaborators with Taldor who sold them and their kin to the enemy. They also believe the gnomes of Wispil have betrayed their fey ancestry by running logging operations under the treaty. Led by an arboreal sorcerer called Oakadence, the group conducts violent raids against the Isle of Arenway and Wispil. These raids often utilize non-sapient wild creatures as disposable troops, a practice that other residents of the forest, specifically the Wildwood druids, find just as destructive as the taking of trees. Both settlements have achieved little success in stopping the raids or finding Blackwood Moot or Oakadence. In addition to hiring mercenaries to defend against the attacks, a sizable reward has been offered to anyone who can capture or (provably) kill Oakadence, or even locate Blackwood Moot itself.

DEAD GROVE

The swampy region of the Verduran on the southwest end of the Sellen was once covered with highly coveted bald cypress trees. When Andoran began its logging of the forest, this area was the first and most heavily impacted, with every single tree stripped away. The loggers left behind a barren swamp filled with the rotting remains of what trees they couldn't transport. That is, until those remains sprung up, planted

themselves in the ground, and somehow grew into new trees. When the loggers returned, however, they found the new trees unusable. While each had the look, size, and shape of a healthy cypress tree, they were all dead.



Dead Grove Verdorite

Undead are often antithetical to nature, but this is somehow not quite the case in Dead Grove. In addition to the undead trees that continue to spring up, animal life that dies in the grove similarly awakens anew, creating a mockery of a food chain. Decayed alligators feed on undead turtles and fish, which in turn fall out of the alligator's broken belly and go about their own search for food. The entire ecosystem continues in undeath as it did in life, though no living thing survives long.

The standing water of the swamp is filled with the decomposing remains of flora and fauna, making it a breeding ground for illness. Drinking it or allowing it to come into contact with open wounds is almost certainly a death sentence.

The source of this undeath is unknown, but it's not arcane, divine, or occult. The grove appears to be a natural occurrence of primal magic, one that challenges the understood relationship between nature and life. Most druids in the Verduran aren't equipped to face the challenge to their beliefs that the Dead Grove represents and keep their distance, though there are a few interested in the unusual area. It's also of great interest to researchers far and wide who are willing to pay mercenaries great sums for protection while they study the phenomena. Further, unverified rumors of a naiad binding itself to the swamp have recently been spreading like wildfire. The threat of undead fey is a new and terrifying one the local population would rather not have to deal with.

THE DESICCATED HEATH

The Desiccated Heath hardly seems like a name for an enchanted glade; in fact, it doesn't look anything like the enchanted glades traditionally featured in Avistani tales. The exact location of the heath is unknown, as it seems to appear in different places at random. Finding it a first time is difficult, finding it a second time extremely unlikely, and finding it a third time is considered nigh impossible. Seemingly situated somewhere on the far eastern stretch of the forest, the area is nearly 3 acres of dirt, small clumps of brown grass, scattered desert senna, and tall ocotillos. The high winds of the eastern forest don't seem to impact

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the glade beyond an almost constant light, cool breeze. Bumblebees nearly three times their normal size can be found fluttering around the senna, though why they grow so large is a mystery. To date, no bumblebee colonies with even a single individual insect that large has been found elsewhere in the Verduran. Many who find the heath report that the most exciting experience they had was viewing the hummingbirds therein. Hundreds of the tiny birds flutter about drinking the ocotillo nectar. Their pearlescent feathers shift through all the colors of the rainbow as they move, mesmerizing onlookers with their beauty. The hummingbirds mostly avoid newcomers, but when a traveler takes too greedily of the ocotillo flowers, the birds have been reported to form swarms to drive the intruder out of the glade entirely.

When entering the glade, travelers immediately experience feelings of rejuvenation. Fatigue washes away, heavy thoughts lighten, and the body feels reenergized. Magical pools are commonly associated with enchanted glades in tales, and while there's no water here, there's still magic to be found. The flowers of the ocotillo and the nectar inside them can be soaked in water and turned into a sweet tea many claim removes any fatigue and leaves one feeling as if they had received a full night's rest. However, the flowers are said to lose their magic only two days after being taken from the glade. Both the flowers and the bark have more mundane medicinal properties from digestive aides to alleviating coughs and stanching wounds.

Many rumors claim the Desiccated Heath is an otherworldly pocket of the First World, and that's why it's so difficult to find. More recent rumors have begun to suggest that there may be more than one such glade in the Verduran. Different groups of travelers report visiting the heath at the same time, even bringing back ocotillo flowers to prove it, yet somehow did not encounter one another. **Quephira Alcraes** (female tiefling bard), a researcher of occult and arcane locales, claims that rather than the heath moving within the Verduran, there are moving portals that lead to a handful of identical demiplanes. Other researchers have dismissed this hypothesis, but the bard insists that, with a little assistance and more resources, she can prove not just her claims, but that these demiplanes are artificial and serve some dark purpose.

HILLHOME

In the northwestern range of the forest in the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains, concealed in frequent fog, a circle of ancient standing stones is anchored in the hard and often frosty ground. When the correct

ritual is performed, the circle in the center opens, revealing the entrance to an underground town. Spreading beneath the Verduran and the mountain foothills, Hillhome is a settlement of kovintus. What the kovintus call it is known only to them, but nearby Caldamin has dubbed the town "Hillhome," to which the kovintus seem to have no objections.

The town's connecting tunnels are surprisingly shallow beneath the ground but well supported. Individual structures may or may not exit to the surface, and the roofs of many form small hills around the area. Windows in these roofs are difficult to see in daylight until a traveler is nearly atop them, but at night they create hundreds of cheerful lights dotting the foothills. These are often mistaken for will-o'-wisps. The structures themselves are shaped through geomancy and while the walls may resemble worked stone, they're made of densely packed soil and clay, which keeps the heat out in summer and retains the warmth in winter. The surface above can change as the addition of new structures—or the removal of old ones—shifts the ground above them. Similarly, when danger comes to Hillhome the kovintus shape the landscape to keep it away—or even destroy it.

The kovintus are friendly but prefer to be left alone. Travelers to the town receive hospitality, but only if they go looking for it. The settlement does, however, maintain a trade relationship with Caldamin. The residents of Hillhome have developed a fondness for several imported foods—specifically, the sharp spices and hot peppers that have become fashionable beneath the hills. In exchange, kovintus found that the Caldamin people fancy the highly detailed statuettes, figurines, dice, and display pieces they produce through geomancy. Gaming pieces are a particularly in-demand item. These may be shaped from stone, but the more popular pieces are formed by extreme compression of other natural substances like leaves or fur, shaped into a desired form and then encased in a thin shell of clear quartz. The success of this trade with Caldamin has encouraged the kovintus to consider trading with other settlements—they're particularly interested in Bellis's honey. Go-betweens, negotiators, and caravan guards can find good coin in Hillhome, but more significantly, some of the secrets of geomancy may be available for those who gain the kovintus' trust.

ISLE OF ARENWAY

Where the Verduran Fork joins the Sellen, near the heart of the forest, lies the mysterious Isle of Arenway. The island was given to the Wildwood Lodge druids in the Treaty of the Wildwood and established as a place

only the druids can enter. As part of the treaty, Taldor enforces this isolation and helps keep intruders off the island. Circles of standing stones populate the edges of the island and are usually all that's visible to those offshore, though sometimes at night the bright lights of the druids' rituals illuminate the forest for miles. Powerful magics protect important sites on the island from scrying, including the main lodge, ensuring the privacy of the druids.

Druids of other orders are permitted to visit the island, however, under special circumstances. Once a year on the summer solstice the Wildwood druids hold the Moot of Ages, inviting druids from across the world to the island to share their wisdom and knowledge, perform important rituals to aid in the training of new druids, and discuss significant discoveries and issues. One of the most important parts of the moot is the election of a new lodge leader. The responsibilities of the office usually include negotiating with Taldor, but Valenar the Green, who has successfully campaigned for reelection for more than two decades, strongly favors a policy of isolationism. This isolationist view is increasingly unpopular, however, as a growing number of druids feel Valenar's foreign policy is misguided. During the moot, vigilance against intruders is at its highest, as with the tremendous influx of visitors also comes the greatest opportunity for infiltration and, with it, access to ancient and powerful treasures and knowledge.

In addition to the druids and Taldan soldiers, the island is protected by the tremendous variety of wild creatures who call the island home. The Verduran Forest has an ecology all its own, with creatures found nowhere else in the world, and the Isle of Arenway mirrors that in miniature. Nature is at its most wondrous on Arenway, with rare species, primal spirits unseen outside of the First World, and, in some cases, roaming carnivorous plants and primordial beings potent enough to wreak havoc on all Golarion if left unchecked. Because of this, the island is the most sacred of places to the druids who guard it.

WISPIL

The smallest town in the Verduran, Wispil's population is almost entirely gnomes, and the town is built to gnome scale. Some buildings are suitable for larger peoples, like inns and some taverns, but, when coming to Wispil, most taller humanoids should be prepared to crouch a good deal. The town is surprisingly welcoming, and visitors can expect to not only make friends quickly but to be invited to many meals. Cuisine in Wispil is an adventure:

Wispillians, always in search of new experiences, frequently experiment with their food. Ingredient availability makes some ingredients more common than others. It also makes for unique additions whose inclusion many outsiders would question, like wood. The abundance of wood creates frequent cycles of Wispillian chefs experimenting with it as an ingredient, abandoning that line of experimentation when it goes poorly, and then revisiting its inclusion again when the memory of previous culinary failures has faded. Not all experiments are so fraught or short-lived; a wide variety of plant and animal life exists in the Verduran, and some have become mainstays in Wispil's kitchens. A visitor can expect to be lured in with the famously delicious honey venison before becoming a test subject for more outlandish (and sometime dangerous) meal experimentation. Beyond that, barrel aging, both in spirits and—more unusually—in meats, remains a constant.

Until recently, Wispil was exclusively a logging town. Its continued success is mainly due to the gnomes' ability to rapidly reforest despite heavy logging. Their secret is one Taldor desperately wants, but Wispillians refuse to share, typically making ambiguous allusions to their fey origins while gesturing vaguely at nothing when asked. The reality is the gnomes work closely with the Wildwood druids. The druids tend and maintain the forest and Wispil takes the trees the druids point them to. Were Taldor more willing to heed the guidance of the druids, they might find themselves in a similarly beneficial position.

Gnomish inquisitiveness, however, has more recently led to a surge in unique woodcrafts. These creations are inspired by clockwork but made entirely of wood—and often more than a little bit of magic. Portable timepieces, walking or shape-changing furniture, toys that move and articulate on their own, and even retractable walls and roofs for buildings are among the products beginning to move down the waterways from Wispil.

The change in focus has caused a slowdown in lumber production—a slowdown that's been noticed and is of concern to the powers that be in Taldor. As they often depend on the supplemental lumber shipped from Wispil, it's only a matter of time before Taldor comes knocking, possibly sending mercenaries to intimidate or strong-arm the locals. Wispil is likely to be looking for muscle of their own with which to push back. Those willing to contribute to the creation and refining of wooden war machines, as well as those willing to pilot them, are also likely to be well received.



Adventure Toolbox

The following rules and character options supplement the *Pactbreaker* adventure.

Archetype

The Wildwood Lodge and its allies have mastered many techniques over the years, providing its champions a crucial edge in navigating and defending the forest's primal beauty. In the Wardens of Wildwood Adventure Path, the PCs automatically have access to the Verduran Shadow archetype by nature of their prior collaboration with the Lodge or other sylvan societies.

VERDURAN SHADOW

Primal energy exists for far more than being gathered, shaped, and directed by druids; like air currents, it flows naturally through an environment. With the proper training, an explorer can perceive these currents, sensing cues carried on them like airborne scents. With further work, they can drift with these energies like a leaf on a river, or even hide themselves in the primal eddies to evade their foes' senses. Too much exposure can erode the practitioner's higher thoughts, leaving behind a predatory cunning that augments their combat abilities at the risk of wearing away their sense of self.

These techniques have developed independently, spread, and then faded to obscurity countless times, with the Verduran Forest boasting the largest population of practitioners, who are known as Verduran shadows. Developed by the hunter Treyinca centuries ago, Verduran shadow techniques are widespread among the region's guardians but rarely taught to outsiders. Treyinca's fate is unknown, and some speculate she transformed into a primal spirit that mentors woodland warriors to this day.

Additional Feats: **6th** Fleeting Shadow (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 188), Sneak Attacker (*Pathfinder Player Core* 221); **10th** Scout's Pounce (*Advanced Player's Guide* 188); **12th** Camouflage (*Player Core* 161), Sneak Adept (*Player Core* 175)

VERDURAN SHADOW DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Stealth, trained in Survival

Your awareness of primal energies allows you to explore forests with preternatural ease. You become an expert in Survival. You can substitute your proficiency in Survival for your proficiency in Stealth when meeting feat prerequisites and gaining additional benefits from feats for being an expert, master, or legendary in Stealth; however, unless you also fulfill the Stealth prerequisite, you can only use those feats in forest terrain. While in forests, you can use your Survival modifier in place of your Stealth modifier when you Avoid Notice, Hide, Sneak, or would use Stealth to roll initiative.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the Verduran Shadow archetype.



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CANOPY PREDATOR

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE SKILL

Prerequisites Verduran Shadow Dedication, trained in Athletics

You are as at home in the treetops as you are beneath their branches. You gain a climb Speed of 15 feet when moving through trees, vines, and other foliage. Whenever you succeed at an Athletics check to Climb a tree or an Acrobatics check to Balance on a branch, you get a critical success instead. You aren't off-guard while Climbing or Balancing on a tree.

UNDERBRUSH TRAILBLAZER

FEAT 4

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Verduran Shadow Dedication

You gain the Terrain Stalker feat, selecting the underbrush terrain; if you already have Terrain Stalker for underbrush, you can select a different type of difficult terrain. If you Avoid Notice while exploring, and if any allies use Follow the Expert to follow you as you do so, you can extend your Terrain Stalker feat's benefits to one ally so long as they remain within 10 feet of you. If you have master proficiency in Stealth, you can extend the effect to two allies. If you have legendary proficiency in Stealth, you can extend it to four allies.

VERDURAN AMBUSH ◆◆◆

FEAT 6

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Verduran Shadow Dedication, expert in Stealth

You prepare to ambush a foe. You Ready an activity that takes 2 actions, though that activity must either be Death from Above or an activity with the requirement that you be hidden or undetected by all your opponents (such as Scout's Pounce). After using the reaction, you cannot use this feat again for 10 minutes.

DEATH FROM ABOVE ◆◆

FEAT 8

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Canopy Predator, Verduran Shadow Dedication, expert in Athletics

Requirements You are standing, climbing, or balancing on a surface at least 10 feet above your target.

You leap down on your target, using their body to cushion your fall and your momentum to empower your attack. Attempt an Athletics check to Leap to a space adjacent to the target. If you land adjacent to the target, compare the Athletics check result against your target's Reflex DC.

When you leap onto a creature in this way, you do not also deal damage for falling on a creature (*Player Core* 421). Regardless of your result, the target is temporarily immune to your Death from Above for 1 minute.

Critical Success The target falls and lands prone, reducing

the falling damage you take by an amount equal to twice your level. You then can make a melee Strike against the target. The Strike gains the deadly d8 weapon property and deals an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage. This additional damage increases to 2d6 if you are a master in Athletics, and to 3d6 if you are legendary in Athletics.

Success The target is off-guard until the beginning of your next turn, reducing the falling damage you take by an amount equal to your level. You can then make a melee Strike against the target, adding the deadly d8 weapon property to the attack.

Failure You can make a Strike against the target.

Critical Failure You fall prone, whether you take falling damage or not.

SENSE THE STRIKE ↻

FEAT 10

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Verduran Shadow Dedication, master in Survival

Trigger A creature targets you with an attack and you can see the attacker.

You sense how an incoming attack moves through ambient primal energy, predicting how best to dodge. The triggering attack targets your Survival DC instead of your AC. Though this allows you to avoid taking penalties to your AC, it doesn't remove any conditions or other effects causing such penalties. For example, an enemy with sneak attack would still deal extra damage to you for being off-guard, even though you wouldn't take the -2 circumstance penalty when defending against the attack.

Spell

The Bee-Man of Bellis was once a powerful druid before his swarm transformation. On occasion, he shares the following spell with those who invoke his name.

BEE-MAN'S SUMMONS ◆◆

SPELL 2

RARE AUDITORY CONCENTRATE LINGUISTIC MENTAL

Traditions arcane, occult, primal

Area 500-foot-radius emanation centered on you

Duration until the next time you make your daily preparations or until discharged

You recreate the Bee-Man's infamous ability to sense when someone utters their name. During the spell's duration, you mentally sense whenever someone (referred to as a speaker) speaks your full name while within the spell's area. You gain a vague sense of the speaker's identity, such as "a local farmer" or "a halfling in distress," unless the speaker is someone you have met and interacted with before, in which case you recognize the speaker specifically. As a reaction within 1 minute of the speaker's utterance, you can send the speaker a telepathic prompt, asking if they intend to summon you. If they respond affirmatively, the spell's remaining duration

decreases to sustained (up to 10 minutes), during which time you know the direction to where the speaker named you and how far away they are.

Heightened (4th) The emanation's radius increases to 1,000 feet.

Heightened (7th) The emanation's radius increases to 1 mile, and instead of locating the speaker, you can instead converse with the speaker for 5 minutes. This otherwise works as *sending*.

Heightened (9th) As 7th, except the emanation's radius increases to 5 miles, and the duration of the conversation is 10 minutes.

Items

As primal energy sinks, arboreals can absorb such a surfeit of the primal magic that helps animate them that they can infuse specific parts of themselves with this excess essence. These pieces contain power that remains to be drawn upon even after separation from the arboreal and often continue the process of drawing in minuscule amounts of primal energy even though they're no longer part of a living being. When approaching death—or even voluntarily in life—an arboreal can

undertake this surfeit investment into a part or parts of itself and detach some of their primal-infused wood or leaves so they might be turned into magical objects. The items below are simply a few examples crafted from this primal-infused wood, a material that must be given willingly to the crafter. Simply killing an arboreal does not allow for the recovery of this wood, as the nature of primal magic rebels against untimely death and separation from its greater form.

CANOPY BULWARK

ITEM 8

RARE INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 550 gp

Usage worn armor; Bulk 1

This suit of +1 *assisting leaf weave* (Treasure Vault 12, 10) is composed entirely of primal-infused leaves bestowed by a dying arboreal. The leaves display the vibrant greens of summer, as if full of life, regardless of the time that has passed since the arboreal gifted them. The armor is constantly drawing in imperceptible amounts of primal energy to help bear its wearer's burdens. You can draw deeply upon the untapped reserves of primal magic within it and infuse yourself with these energies to a limited extent, giving you a burst of quickness.

Activate \blacklozenge command, envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast *haste* targeting yourself. In addition to the effects of the spell, visible primal energy surges over the armor for the duration. This has no mechanical impact.

Craft Requirements The initial raw materials must include leaves freely given by an arboreal.

ARBOREAL WAND

ITEM 9+

RARE HEALING MAGICAL VITALITY WAND

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

This gnarled wand is made from the branch of an arboreal.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Frequency** once per day, plus overcharge; **Effect** You cast *heal* at the indicated rank. After you cast the spell, the raw primal energy stored within the arboreal from which the wand was made washes over one target you choose and tries to purify its essence. The wand attempts to counteract the lowest level affliction affecting your target. It uses your casting modifier and a counteract rank of half the wand's item level rounded up.

Type 2nd-rank spell; Level 9; Price 700 gp

Type 3rd-rank spell; Level 11; Price 1,400 gp

Type 4th-rank spell; Level 13; Price 3,000 gp

Type 5th-rank spell; Level 15; Price 6,500 gp

Type 6th-rank spell; Level 17; Price 15,000 gp

Type 7th-rank spell; Level 19; Price 40,000 gp

Craft Requirements Supply a casting of *heal* of the appropriate level and a branch freely given by an arboreal.

SKITTER KNOT

ITEM 6+

RARE CONSUMABLE MAGICAL

Usage affixed to armor; Bulk –

Activate \blacklozenge envision; **Trigger** You are dying at the beginning of your turn.

Carved from an arboreal's knuckle, this wooden torus can be activated despite your being unconscious. The knot then sprouts several roots that arch over your body like a spider's legs. These lift you a few inches off the ground before Striding and carrying you with them. The roots prioritize taking you away from obvious harm, though as a reaction, an ally who speaks Arboreal can command the roots to carry you to a particular point within range.

After moving, the roots continue protecting you; this counts as Raising a Shield, giving you a +1 circumstance bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn. The roots use the Shield Block reaction against the first physical attack against you, after which the roots crumble.

Type *lesser skitter knot*; Level 6; Price 50 gp

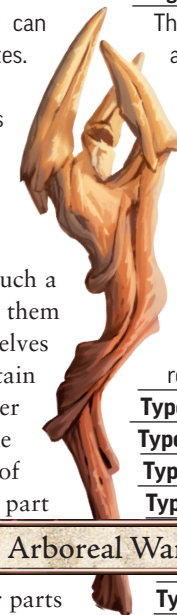
The roots carry you up to 10 feet and have Hardness 5.

Type *greater skitter knot*; Level 11; Price 275 gp

The roots carry you up to 15 feet and have Hardness 10.

Type *major skitter knot*; Level 16; Price 1,800 gp

The roots carry you up to 20 feet and have Hardness 20.



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ALWAYS GROWING

An arboreal sapling gradually grows into a more powerful form, such as an arboreal warden, filling whatever niche suits its interests and environment. However, even centuries later, an arboreal can slowly reshape itself to fill a new role, such as a warden transforming into an arboreal regent after their predecessor's retirement.

Arboreals

An arboreal's abilities gradually change as it grows, explores, and fulfills its forest's needs. After decades of life as an unremarkable tree, an arboreal sapling uproots itself to discover its greater purpose, often guided by elders.

Arboreal Sapling

Young arboreals often appear lanky and uncoordinated. Their awkwardness belies their burgeoning strength and decades of natural studies.

ARBOREAL SAPLING

CREATURE 2

LARGE PLANT

Perception +11; low-light vision

Languages Arboreal, Common, Fey

Skills Athletics +8, Nature +5, Stealth +6 (+10 in forests)

Str +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

AC 17; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

HP 35; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability, fire 5; **Resistances** bludgeoning 3, piercing 3

Axe Vulnerability An arboreal sapling takes 5 additional damage from axes.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ✎ fist +11, **Damage** 1d10+4 bludgeoning

Melee ✎ branch +10 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Timber! ⚡ **Trigger** An arboreal sapling that is not prone either becomes prone or is reduced to 0 HP; **Effect** The arboreal sapling topples over, dealing 2d6 bludgeoning damage to itself and to creatures in a 10-foot line (DC 16 basic Reflex). Creatures that critically fail the saving throw are also knocked prone.

Shaky Footing When an arboreal sapling critically fails an attack roll or Reflex saving throw, it becomes prone unless it succeeds at a DC 11 flat check.

Arboreal Shepherd

Shepherds develop an eccentric fascination with local fauna. These shepherds eagerly bear fruit to feed their friends, provide roosts for bats, and invite beasts to gnaw nesting niches directly into their trunks.

ARBOREAL SHEPHERD

CREATURE 5

HUGE PLANT

Perception +15; low-light vision

Languages Arboreal, Common, Fey; *speaks with animals*

Skills Athletics +11, Diplomacy +12, Nature +14, Stealth +8 (+12 in forests)

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

HP 80; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability, fire 5; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5, piercing 5

Axe Vulnerability An arboreal shepherd takes 5 additional damage from axes.

Defend the Friends ⚡ **Trigger** An animal within the arboreal shepherd's reach takes area damage or splash damage from an effect; **Effect** The arboreal shepherd partly shields the creature. Reduce the damage dealt to the animal by an amount equal to 1d10 + the animal's weakness to the effect, if any. The arboreal shepherd takes an equal amount of damage.

Arboreal Shepherd



OCCULT NUTRIENTS

While drawing water, nutrients, and trace primal energy from the soil, an arboreal sometimes absorbs psychic impressions that shape its growth. Taking root in haunted landscapes or abandoned fairgrounds can result in truly sinister or frolicsome arboreals.

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Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ branch +15 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 22; **3rd** *animal allies* ^{SOM} (×2); **2nd** *animal messenger*; **Constant (2nd)** *speak with animals*

Exalt the Little Ones ♦ (auditory, linguistic, primal) The arboreal shepherd encourages its friends to overcome titanic odds. For 1 round, allies with the animal trait in a 50-foot radius gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. If the animals have the swarm trait, the saving throw DCs to resist their damaging actions gain a +1 status bonus. This bonus increases to +2 for allies whose level is 2 or lower.

Healing Haven ♦ (healing, manipulate) **Frequency** Once per hour; **Effect** The arboreal shepherd scoops up a willing Medium or smaller animal (or animal with the swarm trait) within its reach, sequestering the animal into a recess in the arboreal's trunk. While sequestered, the animal cannot act, gains greater cover, and gains fast healing 5. At the beginning of its turn after regaining Hit Points, the animal can choose to exit by reappearing in any space adjacent to the arboreal as a free action.

Arboreal Sapstriker

Some coniferous arboreals develop viscous sap that they use to trap trespassers. Dozens of half-hardened rivulets drip from their bark, ready to ensnare weapons or even capture airborne particles. Sapstrikers act as bounty hunters who delight in tracking down and punishing loggers.

ARBOREAL SAPSTRIKER

CREATURE 6

LARGE **PLANT**

Perception +17; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Arboreal, Common, Fey

Skills Athletics +13, Nature +11, Stealth +11 (+15 in forests), Survival +15

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +1

AC 23; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +16

HP 115; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5, piercing 5

Axe Vulnerability An arboreal sapstriker takes 5 additional damage from axes.

Primal Sink ♦ **Trigger** An arboreal sapstriker succeeds or critically succeeds at a saving throw against a primal effect; **Effect** The sapstriker gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and sap saving throw DC for 1d4 rounds.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ branch +17, **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning plus sap

Melee ♦ sap +17 (agile, range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 2d6+6 bludgeoning plus sap

Amber Tomb ↻ **Trigger** A foe critically succeeds at a Strike against the arboreal sapstriker with a weapon that deals piercing or slashing damage, or a foe deals damage to an arboreal sapstriker with an axe; **Effect** The arboreal sapstriker attempts to Disarm the triggering foe's weapon, using its Fortitude modifier in place of its Athletics modifier. If it critically succeeds, the weapon is lodged into the sapstriker rather than falling to the ground. A creature can retrieve a lodged weapon by Disarming the sapstriker as if it were wielding the weapon.

Sap A creature that takes damage from an arboreal sapstriker's branch or sap Strike must succeed at a DC 23 Reflex save or take 1d8 persistent acid damage. While taking the persistent damage, a creature takes a -10-foot status penalty to its Speeds.



ARBOREAL FRIENDS

Azhanas are friends and tenders to the massive arboreals, and are found in the same locations—wooded stands of trees in places of primal power. These two beings don't necessarily live among each other continually, but many azhanas count at least a couple of arboreals among their friend group and visit the living trees to share stories, groom them, or engage in friendly games.

Azhana

Resembling pale halflings, azhanas are gregarious fey who tend the wilderness as if it were a giant garden. Their outgoing charm isn't just for their own entertainment; by engaging with flora and fauna alike, they coax local organisms to interact with each other, whether that's teaching animals how to forage together or introducing vines to new surfaces they can climb. This extends even to travelers and foresters. After all, a lumberjack offered salutations is less likely to scuffle with wildlife and knows someone's watching to ensure they don't overharvest a forest's bounty.

Azhanas perform some of this gardening themselves. They carry hefty shears, clipping back invasive species and trimming branches to afford new sprouts a taste of sunlight. Likewise, they occasionally visit rural settlements, offering to teach wilderness skills that help civilization and nature coexist peacefully. Those who respond kindly earn an azhana's generosity. Those who threaten nature or fey instead earn the azhana's ire, usually involving magical misfortunes as small animals steal food, tools melt into useless shapes, and roots suddenly shift to send a trespasser tumbling down a ravine.

Azhanas sometimes gather into small groups called sisterhoods, even if they include rare, non-female azhanas. These groups provide camaraderie and aid in resolving difficult obstacles. Less often, they form organically when an azhana adopts and mentors newborn azhanas. These creatures are never children; instead, they emerge fully formed from mature trees, accompanied by nearby trees thrumming softly in a celebratory chorus. Though any mature tree might suffice, most often an azhana's parent tree stands in some place of primal power or divine significance, such as where a nature deity performed a miracle.

AZHANA

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON SMALL FEY

Perception +12; low-light vision

Languages Common, Fey; *Speak with animals*

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +6, Diplomacy +10, Performance +10, Stealth +11

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items shears

Shears An azhana carries a pair of gardening shears about 10 inches long. In the hands of an azhana, these shears function as an elven curve blade. If an azhana's shears are lost or destroyed, they can make another pair with a week of work and a few scraps of metal.

AC 18; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

HP 45; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shears* +11 (finesse, forceful, magical), **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing

Primal Innate Spells DC 20, attack +12; **2nd** *entangling flora*, *laughing fit*, *shape wood*; **1st** *sleep* (×3); **Cantrips (2nd)** *light*, *figment*, *tangle vine*;

Constant (2nd) *Speak with animals*

Speak with Water (auditory, concentrate, primal) Once per day, four azhanas within 15 feet of each other can perform a 1-minute rite to communicate with an adjacent body of fresh water at least as large as an azhana. This ability functions like *Speak with stones*. Flowing water can generally speak about events happening upstream (even distantly upstream), but not events happening downstream.

The Bee-Man of Bellis

According to legend, the forest hermit Vernon Vestha was once little more than a simple beekeeper, tending to his hives somewhere among the forests and townships of northeastern Andoran. Precisely how he started down the sinister path that made him what he is today remains unknown, but it is generally understood that Vernon came to a strange revelation one day: he saw in his bees the ability to divine the future beyond that of any mortal magic and became convinced that if only he could teach himself to hear the messages in their buzzing and interpret the patterns in their swarms, that power could be his as well. His curiosity became an obsession, and obsession quickly spiraled into madness, culminating in the fateful day that he sacrificed his humanity in some inscrutable honeyed rite to become fully one with his beloved bees.

To this day, they say, the Bee-Man still haunts the woods outside Bellis, waiting for someone to call him by speaking his name aloud. He often appears to those who seek his aid, although he seldom if ever grants it without exacting some terrible price in return.

THE BEE-MAN OF BELLIS

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE MEDIUM ABERRATION ANIMAL SWARM

Perception +21

Languages Common, Wildsong; *speaking with animals* (insects only)

Skills Acrobatics +23, Intimidate +20, Stealth +20, Survival +12

Str +3, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Apian Emissaries The Bee-Man can use bees to duplicate the effects of *vigilant eye* or *message* at will, with a maximum range of 13 miles. A successful DC 20 Perception check identifies the presence of the bees acting as the sensors for these spells, but a DC 24 (expert) Nature check is required to realize they are behaving under outside influence.

Taboo Name Whenever the Bee-Man's full name (Vernon Vestha) is spoken aloud by a creature within 13 miles, he hears it and immediately knows the speaker's direction and distance from him.

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 155; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, sleep, stunned; *swarm mind*; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, smoke susceptibility, splash damage 10; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10, piercing 10, slashing 5

Smoke Susceptibility The Bee-Man is slowed 1 for 1 round if he starts his turn in heavy smoke.

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ slam +19, **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus apitoxin

Primal Innate Spells DC 25, attack +17; **5th** *summon animal* (×3, bee swarms only, treat as wasp swarms); **4th** *honeyed words* (×3); **2nd** *augury* (at will); **1st** *illusory disguise* (at will, male human only); **Constant** (2nd) *speaking with animals* (insects only)

Rituals DC 25; **6th** *commune*, **5th** *geas*, *reincarnate*

Apitoxin (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage, enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d6 poison damage and enfeebled 2 (1 round)

Evasive Swarm ♦ **Trigger** The Bee-Man moves at least 5 feet; **Effect** The Bee-Man gains concealment against ranged attacks until the start of his next turn or until he makes an attack action, whichever comes first.



SWARM DISPERSION

If the Bee-Man is reduced to 0 Hit Points, his physical body dissolves into a cloud of live bees, which immediately scatter in all directions. Legends vary on the length of time that must pass before the Bee-Man can return, as well as on whether it's possible to permanently destroy him by killing every one of the bees before they can escape.



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NATURAL HOARDERS

Chetamogs have a well-documented proclivity for stealing items and burying them in hidden caches throughout the forest, a majority of which are promptly forgotten and never recovered by the chetamog responsible. Although food items are generally preferred, chetamogs are also fascinated by brightly colored, shiny, and particularly fragrant items of any kind, and numerous tales persist of all manner of strange and valuable treasures being discovered in unexpected locations by fortunate explorers while traveling through chetamog territory.

Chetamog

In the pockets of old growth that form the most primeval and untamed regions of the Verduran Forest, there are trees of truly staggering size. The upper reaches of these gargantuan trees are the natural domain of the chetamog: a horse-sized arboreal rodent with a bulk belied by the preternatural grace with which it leaps through the canopy. Their speed and agility, as well as a natural intelligence and aptitude for training, have made chetamogs highly sought-after animal companions for those whose travels take them into the depths of the forest, a demand that has been recognized by enterprising ranchers who breed and raise the creatures for precisely this purpose.

A fully grown chetamog resembles an enormous squirrel, roughly 9 feet long and 5 feet high at the shoulder. Properly trained chetamogs are capable of serving as combat mounts. Few sights can match the glory of chetamog cavalry gliding effortlessly through thick ground cover and striking down a legion of earthbound foes before vanishing back into the treetops with ease.

CHETAMOG

CREATURE 2

LARGE **ANIMAL**

Perception +8; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +6, Survival +6

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 18; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

HP 32

Buck DC 17

Speed 40 feet, climb 30 feet

Melee jaws +11, **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing

Melee claw +11 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing

Scurry The chetamog takes any combination of two Stride or Climb actions.

It has a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed during these actions.

Forest Passage A chetamog ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain from non-magical foliage.

CHETAMOG

Your companion is a chetamog, a large tree-dwelling rodent that makes its home in the branches of the largest and most ancient trees of the Verduran Forest.

Size Medium or Large

Melee jaws, **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Melee claw (agile), **Damage** 1d6 slashing

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0

Hit Points 8

Skill Survival

Senses low-light vision, scent (imprecise, 30 feet)

Speed 40 feet

Special mount

Support Benefit A chetamog ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain from non-magical foliage.

Advanced Maneuver Scurry

SCURRY

Your chetamog takes any combination of two Stride or Climb actions. It has a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed during these Strides.

Cytnophorian

In its natural state, a fully grown cytnophorian resembles a wriggling mass of tendrils and fibrous growths approximately the size of a house cat. Although fully capable of locomotion in this form, a cytnophorian is rarely encountered outside a host, typically a humanoid or animal corpse, which the creature burrows into and animates from within like a grisly flesh puppet. Once so ensconced, the cytnophorian seeks out new victims to infect with its noxious spores, seizing control of their bodies for its own ends until they succumb to the deadly toxin and become incubators for new cytnophorians.

A Medium-sized corpse is typically sufficient to sustain a cytnophorian for two weeks before it must seek out a fresh one. If unable to locate a new host in that time, the creature enters a dormant state, withdrawing into an unremarkable seed pod roughly the size of a child's fist, where it can lie in wait for years until a suitable victim presents itself.

CYTNOPHORIAN

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE TINY FUNGUS PLANT

Perception +12; darkvision, lifesense 30 feet

Skills Stealth +15

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

AC 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

HP 161; **Immunities** mental; **Weaknesses** fire 5

Horrorifying Display ◆ (emotion, fear, mental, visual) **Trigger** The cytnophorian uses Fungal Possession; **Effect** All creatures in a 10-foot emanation must attempt a DC 26 Will save or become sickened 1, or sickened 2 on a critical failure. Affected creatures are off-guard for as long as they're sickened. Once a creature attempts this save, it's temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 15 feet

Melee ◆ tendril +18, **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing plus creeping death and Fungal Possession

Creeping Death (contact, poison) **Saving Throw** DC 22 Fortitude;

Onset 1 round; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and stunned 1

(1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1

round); **Stage 3** 6d6 poison damage and confused (1 round);

Stage 4 6d6 poison damage and controlled (1 round). A

creature that dies while infected with creeping death immediately releases a burst of spores as if using the cytnophorian's Spore Cloud ability. If the corpse is not burned, it rises as the host of a new cytnophorian 12 hours later.

Fungal Possession ◆◆ (concentrate, manipulate, move, possession)

Requirements The cytnophorian's last action was a Strike that killed a target of size Medium or smaller; **Effect** The cytnophorian rips itself out of its current host and burrows its way into the corpse of its latest victim, regaining 3d4 Hit Points and taking control of the corpse as its new host. The cytnophorian enters the space of its new host, and its former host's corpse falls to the ground in its previous space. Moving to a new host doesn't change the cytnophorian's abilities or movement Speeds.

Spore Cloud ◆ (incapacitation, poison) The cytnophorian emits a cloud of toxic spores, exposing all creatures within a 15-foot emanation to creeping death. The cytnophorian can't use Spore Cloud again for 1d4 rounds.



UNKNOWN ORIGINS

Opinions vary as to the exact nature of these creatures, with many scholars citing their similarities to the fungal parasites known as cythnigots as evidence of some qliploth connection. Still others theorize that they began as a natural form of plant life that gradually became twisted and corrupted, deliberately or otherwise, by prolonged exposure to the foul energies of Cyth-V'sug, demon lord of fungus and rot.



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RIDDLES AND RAGE

Ohancanus delight in destroying wordplay almost as much as they love demolishing architecture. A clever riddle can captivate an ohancanu and even halt their rampage. However, such a tactic rarely provide more than a brief opportunity for escape; once an ohancanu solves the puzzle or grows frustrated, their destruction resumes.

Ohancanu

Ohancanus are gigantic fey who delight in destruction. It's not necessarily the sadistic torment of others they enjoy, but living in a devastated landscape seems to bring them peace. Despite their destructive drive, ohancanus are like wildfires: their damage often clears the way for new growth.

Ohancanus resemble cyclopes, and they're covered in untamed hair. Scattered across their hirsute forms, each ohancanu has a few conspicuously white hairs. These are extremely sensitive and seem to anchor some part of an ohancanu's essence, wracking them with nausea and weakness if ever plucked.

Though they habitually raze wildernesses, ohancanus rely on old growth forests for reproduction. When an ohancanu grows old, their companions murder and dissect them, planting their organs among the roots of the oldest trees around. About a year later, some of these organs sprout into young ohancanus who tear themselves free and seek out companions. From their first moments they understand language and basic survival skills, suggesting each generation retains some portion of their butchered progenitors' memories.

OHANCANU

CREATURE 5

LARGE **Fey**

Perception +12; low-light vision

Languages Aklo, Common, Fey

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidation +12, Warfare Lore +22

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Items greataxe, sack with 5 rocks

White Hairs An ohancanu has 2d4 white hairs that are connected to its essence. If a hair is plucked, the ohancanu gains the drained 1 condition. This is cumulative with other drained conditions, and if plucking a hair would increase their drained value to 5 or more, the ohancanu falls unconscious.

A creature can Steal a white hair from an unaware ohancanu, though they always notice a successful theft. If an ohancanu is grappled, restrained, or stunned, a creature can attempt to pluck out a white hair by spending a single action, which has the attack and manipulate traits, to attempt either an Athletics check against the ohancanu's Fortitude DC or a Thievery check.

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

HP 80; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5, white hairs (see above)

Catch Rock ⤴

Denuded Outrage ⤴ **Trigger** A creature plucks

one of the ohancanu's white hairs; **Effect** The ohancanu makes a fist Strike against the triggering creature. If the ohancanu is grappled or restrained, they can instead attempt to Escape.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⚔ greataxe +15 (reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 1d12+8 slashing

Melee ⚔ fist +15 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+8 bludgeoning

Ranged ⚔ rock +13 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

Sudden Charge ⚡ The ohancanu strides twice. If they end their movement within melee reach of at least one enemy, they can make a melee Strike against that enemy.

Throw Rock ⚔



Twigjack Bramble

A single twigjack is a dangerous and unpredictable creature with a capacity for sudden violence. A group of twigjacks united by shared purpose is a substantive force for destruction. The impetus behind the formation of a twigjack group, colloquially known as a “bramble,” can be almost anything, although they nearly always form around a particularly charismatic or demagogic individual. Religious fanaticism is another common factor; notably, however, twigjacks rarely worship established deities and instead devote themselves to strange new gods of their own imagining who, inevitably, demand that their worshippers purge the twigjacks’ territory of those whose presence displeases them.

TWIGJACK BRAMBLE

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN FEY PLANT TROOP

Perception +14; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +13, Nature +11, Stealth +16

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 24; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

HP 102 (16 squares); **Thresholds** 68 (12 squares), 34 (8 squares); **Weaknesses** area damage 10, fire 5, splash damage 5

Troop Defenses

Speed 25 feet; troop movement

Clear Cut ◆◆◆ The twigjack bramble swarms over any creatures in their path, shredding their foes with razor-sharp thorns. The bramble Forms Up and Strides twice, moving through the space of any Medium or smaller creatures. Each creature whose space the bramble moves through takes 4d6 slashing damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, the creature is also knocked prone.

Mass Bramble Jump ◆◆◆ (plant, primal, teleportation) The twigjack bramble uses Form Up to redistribute its squares into any configuration wherein all squares are in undergrowth, then instantly teleports to another square within 60 feet, using Form Up again on the target square. The configuration of the second Form Up must also place all of the bramble’s squares in undergrowth. This movement doesn’t trigger reactions.

Rain of Splinters ◆◆ The twigjack bramble launches a volley of splinters and brambles in a 10-foot burst within 30 feet that deals 4d6 piercing damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save). When the bramble is reduced to 8 or fewer squares, this area decreases to a 5-foot burst.

Troop Movement Whenever the twigjack bramble Strides, it first Forms Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing squares), then moves up to its Speed. This works just like a Gargantuan creature moving; for instance, if any square of the bramble enters difficult terrain, the extra movement cost applies to the whole group.



PROACTIVE VIGILANTES

Twigjacks frequently justify their violent and antisocial tendencies by declaring themselves the guardians of the forests in which they dwell, and that their duty is to keep those protected lands free of non-fey intruders by any means necessary. Rarely patient enough to wait for opportunities to come to them, roving brambles of twigjacks often seek out what they consider to be impending conflicts between forest-folk and outside threats in order to impose their “assistance,” nearly always resulting in brutality and bloodshed that benefits neither side and only serves to escalate the situation.



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Alyce Quinley

Conflicted Champion



Alyce Quinley was born in the wilds of the Darkmoon Vale region in north-central Andoran. Her father, Erasmus Quinley, belongs to the Greenfire Circle, an order of druids in the Arthfell Forest who serve as intermediaries between the Vale's humans and fey. Her mother, Vandra Steiggerson, is a legacy member of the Fangwatch, a reclusive group of rangers dedicated to protecting Arthfell Forest locals from its many dangerous denizens, chiefly a large population of werewolves. Raised alongside other children of the Circle, Alyce and her peers grew up among the beasts and guardians of the wilderness, learning to spot, track, and stalk prey through the forest with a patient lethality.

Alyce's father saw to most her needs, for her mother's patrols often ranged far from home for weeks at a time. Erasmus expected Alyce to follow in his footsteps, becoming a druid. However, he soon realized her talents lay elsewhere. By the time she reached adulthood, she had already distinguished herself as a messenger, scout, and envoy, earning friends throughout the region, including Andoran's frontier military forces. This included the Diamond Regiment, a frontier force tasked with guarding the roads (and valuable duskwood shipments) leading from Darkmoon Vale.

It was in the course of delivering messages that Alyce learned of Eagle Knight Kelvan Drost, sole survivor of a recent hobgoblin ambush in northern Arthfell. The hobgoblins had grown tired of Drost after realizing their prisoner wouldn't surrender the information they wanted. Alyce realized that they would execute Drost soon, so she scouted the area, infiltrated the camp, dispatched the guards, and spirited the wounded prisoner to safety before anyone noticed anything amiss. Her actions earned her a special invitation from the Diamond Regiment's commander, commending her bravery and formally offering training and membership to Alyce.

Over a decade later, having proven her mettle performing dozens of missions all across Andoran, Alyce serves the Diamond Regiment as ranking military officer in the city of Bellis, a remote settlement buried in the Verduran Forest on Andoran's far

northeastern border. While few Diamond Regiment personnel are stationed so far from Darkmoon Vale, Alyce's Greenfire Circle background has equipped her to negotiate with druids, fey, and other forest folk. This will be her third year representing Andoran at the annual Greenwood Gala, and as much as she privately resents serving as the public face of the despicable Lumber Consortium, it's still a pleasant diversion from her day-to-day duties to assist the Bellisian militia in maintaining order, despite the best efforts of the city's large transient population of unruly lumberjacks.

Alyce is a woman between two worlds in some ways, but she doesn't see it that way. She feels like she uses her deep knowledge of and experience with the wilderness to her advantage while serving her country. Many of her kin and friends don't fully recognize the Andoren state, and are content to live their lives hidden by the dense foliage of the forest. Alyce, however recognizes that the reach of Andoran is inevitable and the best way to make sure that the nation interacts with the wild in the best possible way is to put someone between these two worlds that have the wild in their best interest—a role she's happy to play. Alyce can come off as standoffish or too direct, but that's just her defense against the risk of giving too much away. In her daily life she has to negotiate between groups that are often diametrically opposed, and giving too much of yourself away in negotiations only leads to failure and exploitation.

Raised as she was, Alyce has a fondness for athletic pursuits, particularly lone ones where she can test her own capabilities. Her childhood love for climbing trees or going on days-long hikes just to reach a particular point and then return home has carried over to her adult life. In the rare times she's not burdened by responsibility, Alyce goes on "a wander" by herself for days, or even weeks, at a time. It's during these wanders that she catches up with friends from her childhood and others she's met during her life.

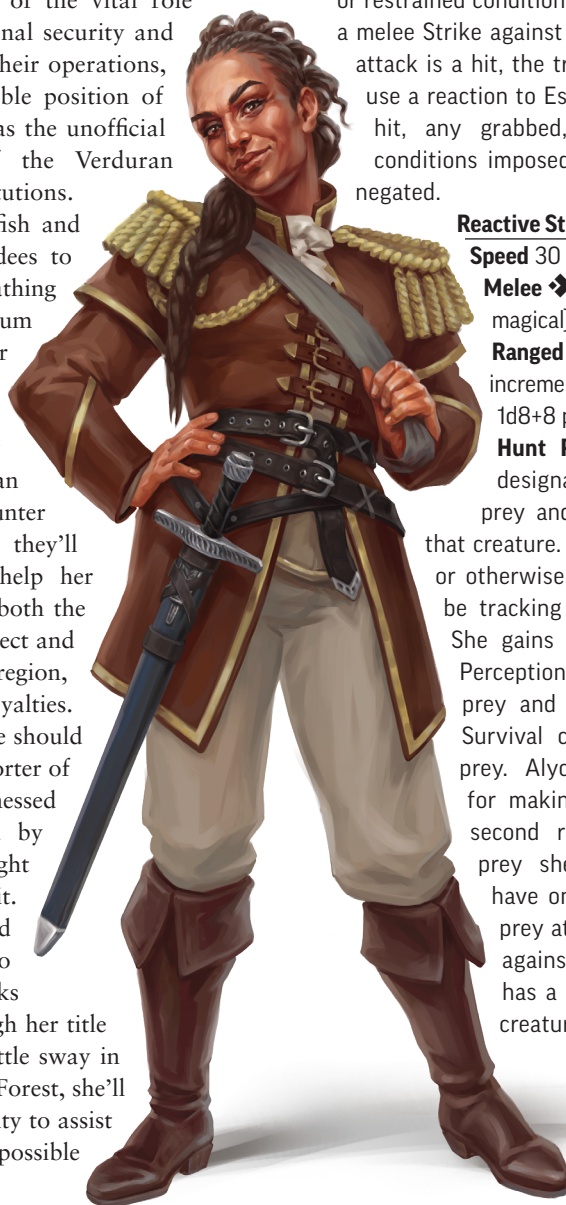
CAMPAIGN ROLE

When the PCs first encounter Alyce in Chapter 1, she's on a diplomatic mission representing Andoren

interests at the Greenwood Gala and keeping a watchful eye on the other attendees so as to suss out any potential threats to those interests. Unlike Taldor, Andoran is not a signatory of the Treaty of the Wildwood, and its logging operations not officially under the Lodge's protection. Those operations have rapidly expanded in recent months to meet the ravenous shipbuilding industry's demands, driven by growing fears of imminent war with Cheliah. Complicating matters further, the infamously underhanded Lumber Consortium maintaining its stranglehold on Andoran's lumber industry continues to act with flagrant lack of regard for how its activities might provoke forest folk. Although disgusted by the Consortium leadership's unscrupulous behavior, Alyce remains well aware of the vital role they play in Andoren national security and the necessity of defending their operations, placing her in the unenviable position of having to attend the Gala as the unofficial representative of one of the Verduran Forest's most despised institutions.

Alyce is initially standoffish and curt, expecting Gala attendees to regard her with the same loathing they have for the Consortium itself. If the PCs get past her defenses, they should come to see her as a potential ally, as her personal goals likely align with theirs more than expected. When they encounter her again in Chapter 2, they'll have the opportunity to help her resolve a crisis threatening both the interests she's sworn to protect and the overall stability of the region, further intertwining their loyalties. By the end of Chapter 3, she should be fully cemented as a supporter of their cause, having both witnessed firsthand the threat posed by Ruzadoya's Lodge and fought alongside the PCs to escape it.

Alyce is an accomplished warrior, and won't hesitate to enter the fray if a fight breaks out in her presence. Although her title as an Eagle Knight holds little sway in the depths of the Verduran Forest, she'll use her position and authority to assist the PCs' efforts in any way possible should opportunities arise.



ALYCE QUINLEY

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human Eagle Knight

Perception +17

Languages Common, Elven, Fey

Skills Andoran Lore +16, Athletics +14, Forest Lore +12, Medicine +11, Nature +12, Stealth +15, Survival +15

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Items bedroll, crossbow (10 bolts), *lesser potion of healing* (2), maps, pup tent, +1 *striking rapier*, scale mail

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

HP 95

Liberating Strike ➤ **Requirements** Alyce is wielding a melee weapon; **Trigger** A creature within Alyce's reach attempts to apply the grabbed, immobilized, or restrained condition to an ally; **Effect** Alyce makes a melee Strike against the triggering creature. If the attack is a hit, the triggering ally can immediately use a reaction to Escape. If the attack is a critical hit, any grabbed, immobilized, or restrained conditions imposed by the triggering action are negated.

Reactive Strike ➤

Speed 30 feet

Melee ➤ *rapier* +17 (deadly 1d8, disarm, magical), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

Ranged ➤ crossbow +16 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8+8 piercing

Hunt Prey ➤ (concentrate) Alyce designates a single creature as her prey and focuses her attacks against that creature. She must be able to see, hear, or otherwise detect the prey, or she must be tracking the prey during exploration. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks when she Seeks her prey and a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks when she Tracks her prey. Alyce also ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks within her second range increment against the prey she's hunting. Alyce can only have one creature designated as her prey at a time. If she uses Hunt Prey against a creature when she already has a creature designated, the prior creature loses the designation and the new prey gains the designation. Her designation lasts until her next daily preparations.

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Emorga All-Seer

Antediluvian Advisor



Emorga All-Seer is an ancient being who has faithfully served as counselor to Wildwood Lodge leadership for centuries. Even Emorga herself is uncertain of her true age, having already grown to full size when she was discovered living on the Isle of Arenway almost four thousand years ago by refugees of the doomed Goroth Lodge after Taldor crushed it. Over centuries, as the isolated sect grew into the mighty Wildwood Lodge and its influence spread across the Verduran Forest, the immense tortoise continued her peaceful existence, mostly ignoring the tiny creatures that had settled around her.

The ever-increasing number of druids flocking to the island were enamored with the enormous but gentle creature, eventually adopting her as a sort of mascot. As centuries became millennia, she also became something of a living historical archive, her massive shell scutes having absorbed and recorded centuries of environmental data like the rings of an ancient tree. Not all these records are formed naturally; Emorga's shell is also covered in thousands of etchings that include elaborate decorative symbols and patterns alongside ancient historical accounts, secret messages recorded in long-forgotten druidic ciphers, and archaic primal spell formulas dating back to the dawn of the tradition. To the druids who shared her island home, Emorga would come to serve both as a symbol of the Wildwood Lodge's endurance across the centuries, and as a living repository of knowledge from the generations that had come before.

By 2281 AR, Taldor's ongoing military expansion and voracious appetite for lumber exerted growing pressure on the region, leading inhabitants to turn to the Wildwood Lodge for protection—ultimately leading to its adoption as the de facto governing body for all of the Verduran Forest. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Lodge druids working in concert with the ancient conrasu Corazal, extensive deforestation and violent clashes were both kept to a minimum and the forest remained in a state of tenuous peace for centuries, finally culminating in the signing of the Treaty of the Wildwood in 3841 AR. Seeking the region's wisest to act as advisors, the druids sought counsel from its oldest and wisest inhabitants to guide their decisions,

among them an ancient and benevolent nature spirit calling itself only the Wildwatcher. The Wildwatcher accepted, and as its first advice, it suggested the Lodge recognize an ancient and overlooked ally: Emorga, the great tortoise that had lived alongside them since the earliest days of their order. Utilizing the ritual of *awakening*, the Wildwatcher granted Emorga sapience so that the Lodge might prevail upon her centuries of accumulated wisdom, humbly inviting the great tortoise to join the Lodge as a respected counselor to its leadership.

Today, some 750 years later, Emorga continues to faithfully serve the Lodge, the druids, and her community. Over centuries of studying soothsaying and divination, she has also become as adept at peering into the future as recalling the distant past, earning her the appellation of “All-Seer” and making her an invaluable member of the council that informs all major Wildwood Lodge decisions.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Emorga All-Seer is the party's initial point of contact at the Greenwood Gala where this adventure begins. Thus, she plays an important part in introducing them both to the Wildwood Lodge and the culture of druids and forest creatures who call the Verduran Forest home. With her vast stores of knowledge and a dagger-sharp intellect that belies her physical ponderousness, Emorga should quickly become a vital resource to the PCs as they are thrust first into the role of defenders of the peace and later into that of rebels against a dangerous new regime. Although she typically can't accompany or directly assist the PCs in their efforts, she provides invaluable assistance by taking on the role of a planner and organizer who can remain at their base of operations, leveraging her connections and knowledge to lay the groundwork for future endeavors, while the characters travel around and get things done.

Emorga has now served on the Lodge council for the better part of a millennium and, in her centuries of life, she has witnessed the rise and fall of many leaders and political factions both within and without. Her dire concern over widespread strife in the aftermath

of the Greenwood Massacre and the implications of Ruzadoya's takeover of the Lodge in Chapter 3 should therefore impress upon the characters the gravity of the situation: these truly are threats the likes of which the Verduran Forest has never seen before.

Although Emorga is an accomplished spellcaster and an imposing physical presence, she rarely involves herself in combat unless there is an immediate threat to herself or those she is charged with protecting. Even then, she typically acts to protect or empower her allies rather than to inflict harm on her enemies. Outside of combat, she is always willing use her spells, rituals, and other abilities to aid the characters whenever she can.

EMORGA ALL-SEER

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN ANIMAL

Female awakened immense tortoise soothsayer

Perception +21 (+11 for initiative); low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Druidic, Fey; *speaks with animals, speak with plants*

Skills Athletics +16, Diplomacy +18, Medicine +19, Nature +21, Society +18, Soothsaying Lore +23, Survival +19

Str +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Read Nature's Omens (concentrate, primal)

Frequency once per day; **Requirements**

Emorga can see a naturally occurring pattern such as ripples in a pond, a murmur of birds wheeling across the sky, or a tangle of interwoven vines and flowers; **Effect** Emorga spends 1 hour contemplating the pattern to receive a brief glimpse of possible futures, optionally posing a question about a specific person, place, or event. She attempts a DC 30 Nature or Soothsaying Lore check.

Critical Success Emorga receives a helpful premonition of one significant event that is to occur within one week. If she specified a specific subject, the premonition relates specifically to events affecting or involving that subject. These visions might be partial or unclear, but they are never purposely misleading.

Success As critical success, but Emorga can only receive visions of events that will occur within the next 1d4 days.

Failure Emorga receives no vision, or receives a vision of something insignificant or unrelated to her subject.

Critical Failure Emorga incorrectly interprets the omens and receives a false vision. Treat as a critical success, but the vision is either wholly inaccurate or presented in a way that actively distorts its meaning.

AC 29; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +15, **Will** +20

HP 170

Take Cover ♦♦ Emorga withdraws into her shell, protecting her head and extremities from harm. She can't take move or attack actions while in this state, but gains a +4 circumstance bonus to AC and resistance 10 to physical attacks. She can end the state as a single action.

Trample ♦♦♦ Large or smaller, foot, DC 25

Speed 10 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +19, **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing

Melee ♦ foot +19, **Damage** 2d8+10 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **5th** *control water, speak with stones*; **4th** *heal, mountain resilience*; **3rd** *earthbind, safe passage*; **2nd** *animal messenger, entangling flora*; **Cantrips (5th)** *guidance, read aura, tangle vine*; **Constant (4th)** *speak with plants*; **(2nd)** *speak with animals*

Rituals DC 25; **6th** *commune, primal call*; **5th** *reincarnate*; **4th** *plant growth*; **2nd** *heartbond*



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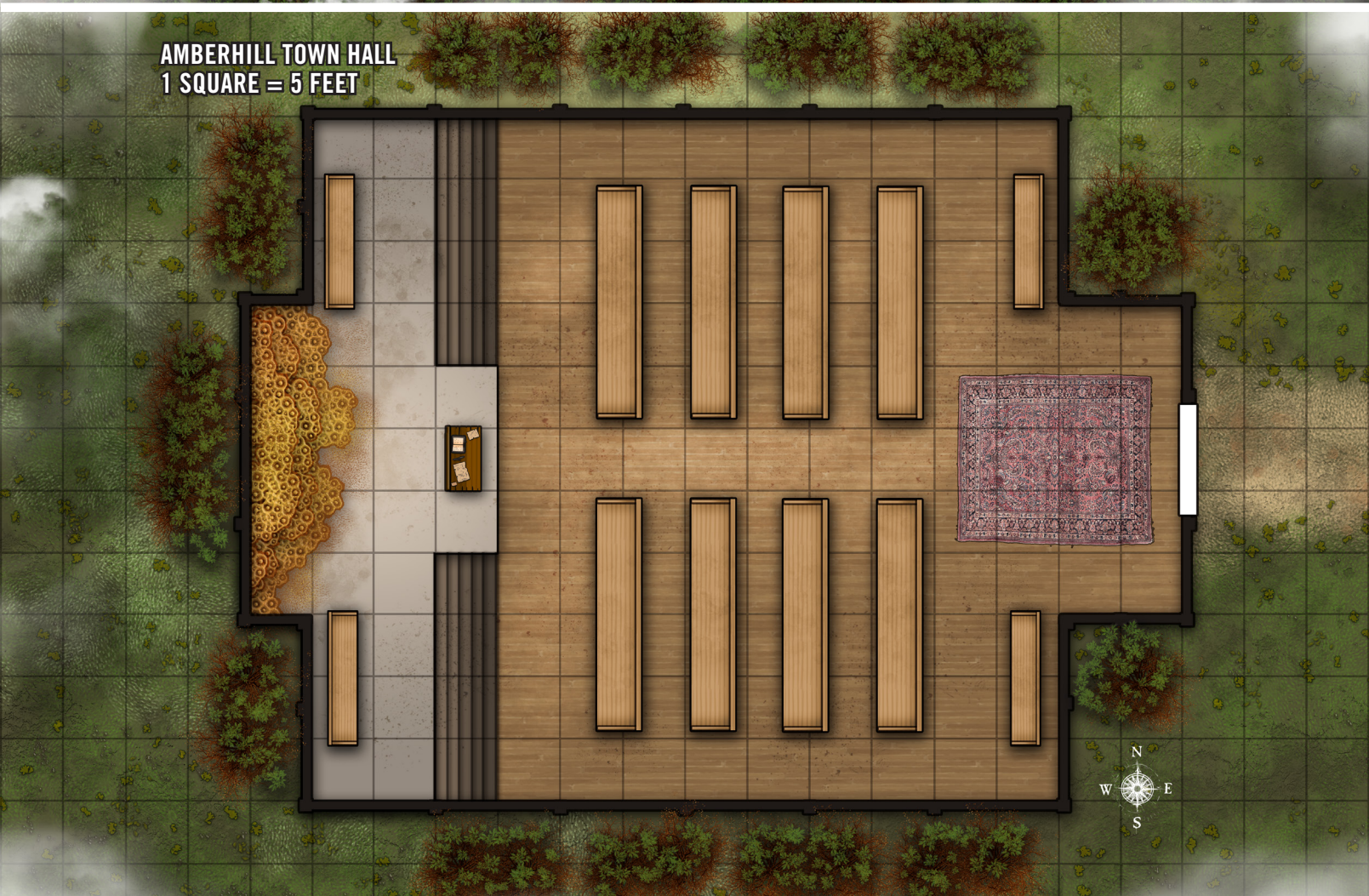
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