

HUNTED!

A 5TH EDITION DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ADVENTURE
FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 5-7

BY TONY PETRECCA



DEAN SPENCER

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A DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 5TH EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 5TH-7TH LEVEL
CHARACTERS

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INTRODUCTION

NOT YOUR FATHER'S ORCS

First of all – Thank you for picking up *Hunted!* I certainly hope you enjoy running it as much as I did.

Designed with a party of 5th to 7th level characters in mind, *Hunted!* should offer your players a solid mix of role playing, investigation, exploration, and combat as they attempt to track down the culprits raiding the winter stores of the friendly thorp of Northwood's Rest.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The fall harvest is nearing completion, winter is a month away, and something's been raiding the livestock and winter stores of Northwood's Rest. The townsfolk, long wary of a tribe of orcs dwelling in the Northwood, are convinced the orcs are the culprits, but the situation is not quite so simple.

The orcs, led by the strong, wise, and charismatic huntress Nozamara, want nothing more than to hunt the ample game of the Northwood and raise their families in peace. The orcs have raided nothing. Unbeknownst to them, the people of Northwood's Rest and Nozamara's tribe have a mutual enemy: The horrifying experiments of the mad druid Elpam.

In a secluded forest vale deep within the Northwood lived the mad druid Elpam. A former adventurer, Elpam was driven mad decades ago when her adventuring party chose to plunder the tomb of the demi-lich Acererak. One by one the brave, experienced adventurers died a horrible, brutal death, and as Elpam watched the last of her group's soul get swallowed by the demi-lich she went mad, fleeing the tomb, alive but forever twisted by its horrors.

Time passed and she found her way to her secluded vale, building a hut and living the life of a mad, babbling hermit. She planted an extensive garden, befriended a local wolf pack, and settled into her life of seclusion.

Tending her garden year in and year out she began grafting and cross breeding plants to improve the survivability of her crops. Eventually she brought her magic into play and started experimenting with crazed combinations of plant, animal, and fungal forms. Most of her experiments were failures, but some netted minor, often grotesque, success.

Her experimentation came to the attention of the arch mage Accertep. Himself ever interested in twisting life and death to his will, the arch mage sponsored Elpam's machinations, exchanging notes and knowledge to further her goals. Elpam, you see, envisioned a tree that could aggressively defend itself. After several failed grafts and horrible cross breedings that netted little success, Elpam surmised that what was required was a tree with an inherent will of its own.

Accertep concurred, and helped her capture her key ingredient – a Dryad's tree! Using powerful enchantments and a specialized teleportation, Shanareen the Dryad was banished from her great oak, and the tree was transplanted to Elpam's garden. The pair kept Shanareen alive, and she endured months of torment as Elpam experimented upon the tree and the bond it held to Shanareen.

As Shanareen's will to survive drained with each passing torment, the tree's drive to propagate grew. With Accertep's help Elpam twisted the tree's fruit, eventually producing offspring that sprouted arms, legs, natural weapons, a carnivorous appetite and a will to survive. That will, and appetite, seeped back into the essence of the tree, and in a fateful moment the tree and its offspring turned on Elpam, killing and consuming her. The Wicked Wort and its Wortlings were born.

Smelling more flesh in the air the Wicked Wort has uprooted itself and begun a slow migration south toward Northwood's Grove. Its fruit, the much quicker Wortlings, have scouted the town and raided the stores, bringing flesh for the tree to eat, but that hasn't satiated the tree. Its intent is to slay

the people of Northwood's Grove, feed, and then move to assault the orcs.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Our adventure begins in the village of Northwood's Rest, a tiny farming and hunting village located on the southern edge of the Northwood, where something's been slaughtering the livestock and winter stores. Townsfolk are sure that a tribe of orcs in the Northwood are to blame, and the adventurers are hired to track down the culprits.

The PCs first explore MacGregor Farm, site of the last raid. There they discover livestock slaughtered by strange claws and long thorns, and a trail leading into the Northwood.

Following said trail leads them past Maple Stream and to the orc lair. Nozamara, a well-spoken orc matriarch, greets the PCs in a civilized manner and insists her tribe, the Clan of the Hunting Claw, has no quarrel with the people of Northwood's Rest.

A group of hunters from town have followed the PCs and confront the group, insisting that they kill the orcs. As tensions rise a pack of dire wolves assaults, and the orc warriors assist the PCs and villagers in the ensuing battle.

Nozamara suggests that the dire wolf pack comes from "The Feral One's" territory far to the northwest, and suggests the source of the villager's troubles may emanate from there. Nozamara offers directions to The Feral One's territory, suggesting the PCs follow the Maple Stream to a hut in a small hilly forested valley.



While traveling, the PCs are assaulted by Wicked Wortlings, the fruit of the Wicked Wort, offering further clues as to the nature of the enemy.

The Feral One Elpam's hut is found heavily guarded by twisted abominations of nature, but Elpam is not present. The horrors perpetrated within this vale attracted the attention of several meenlocks, and a meenlock lair has spontaneously formed beneath the hut. The meenlocks, who project horrifying images through their telepathy, are tormenting the dying dryad Shanareen within their lair.

Once rescued, the dryad Shanareen explains what has happened to Elpam and her tree. Evidence found in Elpam's valley domain suggests that it may be possible to reunite the dryad with her tree. Shanareen, who can still sense her tree, suggests that she accompany the PCs back to the village before her tree and its dozens of deadly fruit slaughter the town.

To save the tiny town the PCs will need as much help as they can get. Will they forge an alliance with the orcs? Will they protect the weakened Shanareen while facing the Wicked Wort? Will they win the day? There's only one way to find out.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Hunted! has been designed with a party of 5th to 7th level characters in mind. As written it should present a strong challenge for 5th level characters, and with the addition of a few extra enemies it should scale up easily.

Here are some standards you should find within the formatting of *Hunted!*

When creatures or named NPCs are mentioned for the first time in an encounter they will be in **bold type** to catch your eye, and their origination, Monster Manual (**MM**), Volo's Guide to Monsters (**VGtM**), or this book's appendix, will be noted in parenthesis. Entries for Elpam's twisted creations, as well as stat blocks for Nozamara's dire wolverine friend Niznoc, can be found in the appendix. And just in case you haven't bought Volo's Guide to Monsters yet (what ARE you waiting for?!?) I've included a stat block for the Meenlocks as well.

Magic items and spells will be *italicized*, and trap details and other miscellany will be in a gray text block.

Finally, ye olde traditional box section to be read or paraphrased to the players will appear just like this.



PART 1 – NORTHWOOD'S REST AND MACGREGOR FARM

NORTHWOOD'S REST

Our adventure begins when the PCs, having gotten word that help was needed, arrive in Northwood's Rest. Northwood's Rest is a tiny thorp on the southern edge of the Northwood. Situated at the intersection of a lightly traveled road and Maple Stream, the town center consists of five properties; two modest homes, Maple Mill, and Highland's Inn, Smithy, Stables and General Store. It is fall, and a chill is in the air.

As the PCs approach, read or paraphrase the following:

The fall foliage is on full display but the days grow chilly as winter approaches. It appears that your days of traveling are at an end. After passing a handful of farmsteads over the last several miles of travel you've come upon signs of a grand civilization. Well, grand might not be the proper word. Ahead along the roadside are two homes, a mill, and a larger, fenced compound. You cross a stone bridge that spans a moderately sized stream and a signpost greets you.

"Welcome to Northwood's Rest"

You pass the mill, its wheel turning gently in the stream, and spy a crowd gathered outside what appears to be a smithy. An inn sits next door, with stables on the far side of the inn. The crowd's attention is focused on a tall, sturdy, dark haired and well-weathered man – and the crowd is not happy.

"They raided my coop!" shouts a farmer, "Wasted five and took 25, including both my roosters!"

"And my hogs... all of em!" interrupts another, "Took em overnight, off into the Northwood, two nights ago."

"Yep!" chimes in another, "slaughtered my horses, my bull and half my cows right there in the barn and pasture."

"It's them orcs in the Northwood!" insists a woman, "We gotta get rid of em, or they'll be after us next!"

The group looks to the sturdy man for answers, but he

shakes his head.

"There was a time when I'd have pulled my sword and shield from above the mantle and charged, but those years are behind me. Luckily, I sent word out, and it looks like that word's been heard" he says as he looks your way.

"Adventurers, I'm Joseph Highland. Let me buy you dinner so we can get down to business."

He gestures toward the inn at the front of the compound. Its placard reads "Highland's Inn, Smithy, Stables and General Store."

Joseph is a retired adventurer (**Veteran; MM, p350**) who invested his wealth founding this thorp. It hasn't grown at quite the pace he'd expected, but his retired life has been quiet and comfortable nevertheless. At least until recently.

The nearby farmers, hunters, and trappers have come to enjoy the services of his inn, smithy, stables and general store, and that of the grist mill operated by Joseph's lovely wife Marcine. They've also come to rely on Joseph's particular expertise in times of trouble, but Joseph has gotten too old to be leading the charge against a tribe of orcs. Thus the call for help.

Joseph guides the PCs into the inn, where daughter Judith serves food and drink. The crowd, which includes Will MacGregor, Patrick Treyburn, Stella Archer and Old Man Waterman, enters as well. Once a bit of food and drink are in everyone's belly Joseph will tell the PCs what he knows and suggest a course of action.

The locals have been aware of the orcs living to the north east in the Northwood for several years, but until recently no trouble has come from their presence. It was a couple weeks ago that the first livestock raid occurred – a raid on Patrick Treyburn's chicken coop. Several other raids have occurred since, and just last night Will MacGregor's

horses, bull, and cows were slaughtered.

The locals have managed to scrape together 500 gold to hire the PCs to investigate and handle the situation. Joseph, who is not interested in starting a war with the orcs, is also not quite as convinced

as the farmers that the orcs are responsible. Joseph suggests the PCs start their investigation at MacGregor's farm, the site of the last incident. The farm is just a quarter mile up the road.



AROUND TOWN – THE TOWN LAYOUT

As mentioned, there are only four properties in Northwood's Rest proper. Marcine's Mill resides next to the Maple Stream, Highland's Inn, Smithy, Stables and General Store is the town's centerpiece, while the two houses are situated across the road.

AREA 1 – THE STABLES

Joseph Highland's stables are tended by his son, Marcus. Marcus is a brooding, moody teen who wants nothing more than to get out of this tiny town to find a life of his own. Nevertheless, he tends to his chores dutifully, demonstrating skill and experienced expertise handling most mounts. Stable fees are 5 silver pieces per day.

AREA 2 – THE INN AND GENERAL STORE

Joseph's Inn and General Store is a two level affair set atop a cellar. The main floor is dominated by a tavern with seating for up to 30. The decor is sparse, though Joseph's **+1 longsword** and bold green dragon scaled shield are displayed above the bar. Six-foot long tables with a combination of benches and stools provide the seating arrangements.

Four six-foot tall shelves sparsely stocked with dry goods, flour, and rations line the outer entrance wall, representing the general store. Business is slow, to say the least, thus the inventory is light – however, the local farmers enjoy their hunting, thus Joseph keeps a handful of short and long bows and several scores of arrows on hand throughout the year. Furthermore, Joseph has been trying with little success to sell most of his spare adventuring gear through his store front. Beyond an ample supply of arrows and basic rations give a 20% chance that Joseph might have any given piece of adventuring gear in the Player's Handbook available for sale at book price.

Above the Inn and General Store are five modest rooms for rent. The cellar below is used for storage.

AREA 3 – THE SMITHY

Joseph is a skilled craftsman and blacksmith, and he plies his trade in his smithy. Well, realistically,

given his lack of a customer base he sells a dozen or so horseshoes per season and otherwise crafts weapons as a hobby. He's made several good quality simple and martial weapons, and has recently... well, six months ago... begun work on a suit of plate mail. Thus far, the gauntlets are almost near being finished.

AREA 4 – MARCINE'S MILL

Marcine Highland operates this grist mill, taking grain from local farmers and producing quality flour for sale in the General Store.

AREA 5 – THE ARCHER RESIDENCE

Stella Archer, a tough, strong, wiry 45-year-old farmer and hunter, resides in this modest home. She tends twenty acres of beans, wheat, and corn to the south of the road. She stables her gray workhorse, Misty, in Joseph's stables.

AREA 6 – THE HIGHLAND RESIDENCE

Joseph, Marcine, Marcus and Judith reside in this tastefully decorated two story home.

AREA 7 – THE WICKED WORT

This is the position of the Wicked Wort in the final battle. At adventure's beginning, the tree has not moved here yet.

MACGREGOR FARM

The first stop in the PCs investigation should be MacGregor Farm, site of the last livestock incident. Situated just a few miles west of Northwood's Rest, travel to the farm should take less than an hour.

Farmer Will MacGregor, his wife Eleanor, and their six children till 60 acres, rotating beans, wheat and corn behind their two story farmhouse situated on the south side of the main road. On the north side is a 60×80 foot livestock barn and 20 acres of fenced pasture, behind which lies the Northwood.

THE FARMHOUSE AND FAMILY

With a large family comes the need for a large house. Luckily, when you spend years clearing 80 acres of woodland you've got ample timber from which to build.

The MacGregor farmhouse, an obvious labor of love, is a beautiful two story affair, featuring a large kitchen and living area, a first-floor bedroom for the Mr. and Mrs. and six bedrooms on the top floor for the children.

Mrs. Eleanor MacGregor is a fit, well rounded middle-aged woman with rosy cheeks and a welcoming smile. As head of household (yes, that's right, and Will doesn't disagree) she's a firm manager who leads by example. Nobody works harder, though Will keeps pace and their children certainly try.

Will happily runs the farm, overseeing the daily tending of the livestock, planning the planting, and bringing in the harvest. The children, Joslyn, Bethany, Mikel, Jalen, Elsie and Will Junior go about their chores with little grumble, well aware that the farm is their survival.

All are happy to accommodate polite investigations by PCs looking to help, but they'll be quick to defend themselves if necessary. None heard a thing overnight – it was Elsie who discovered the carnage as she headed to milk the cows. The barn, they insist, is a gruesome sight and frankly, even the sturdy heads of household are still unwilling to set foot within.



THE SLAUGHTER IN THE BARN

As the PCs approach the barn read or paraphrase the following:

The smell of death is overwhelming as you approach the livestock barn. The doors to the large structure, painted a traditional red, are ajar, and flies are swarming about. Taking a peek inside – carnage. The corpses of several horses lay about upon the dirt and hay within, all appearing surprisingly decomposed given their recent demise. At a distance, the carcasses appear to have large wounds along their flanks, but a closer look will be required for any proper inspection.

A **Rot Fungus** (see appendix), whose spores rode along with the wortlings, has grown remarkably

quickly by feeding upon the carnage. It is currently carpeting itself on the floor and atop three rotting horses. While motionless the fungus is impossible to differentiate from the corpses, blood and ichor it is feeding upon. As soon as any PC steps upon it will pounce with surprise, lashing out at any living creatures it detects, hoping to paralyze them and add them to its meal.

Once the fungus is killed the PCs can investigate the scene more closely. The horse bodies have deep parallel wounds, reminiscent of claw marks, along their flanks. A successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals several six to eight-inch thorns embedded in each. Finally, skilled observers utilizing a success with either a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature), Wisdom (Animal Handling)**, or **Wisdom (Survival) check** may note that the claw marks are not uniform in nature. Each claw

wound shows anywhere from three through eight slashes that are not uniformly spaced. This suggests that the appendages that did this damage do not have claws that are uniform in nature. These wounds were not inflicted by any commonplace predator, nor were they inflicted by commonplace weapons.

In the pasture to the north of the barn two bovine corpses reveal the same information.

A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals a trail of blood leading through a broken bit of pasture fence and continuing on to a game trail in the adjacent Northwood. A **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival) check** suggests that several bipedal creatures were dragging cow corpses northward.

As the PCs wrap up their investigation and prepare to follow the trail into the Northwood an early snow begins to fall. The snow is heavy at first, and though it tapers off to a light snowfall it quickly carpets the trail sufficiently such that any tracking efforts are at disadvantage.

PART 2 – FRIEND OR FOE?

THE HUNTING CLAW CLAN

The game trail heads generally north/northeast into the wood, crosses Maple Stream, and ultimately leads to the small cavern complex that is home to the Hunting Claw Clan. The wortlings that are responsible for the raids took their kills as far as the stream and then followed the stream northwest towards Elpam's hut.

Given the snowfall and the wortling's usage of the stream, tracking the wortlings at this point becomes impossible. However, a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals the frequent use of the northeasterly game trail by human sized bipeds, thus the PCs likely follow the broad game trail to its destination, the lair of the Hunting Claw Clan.

Upon reaching their destination, read or paraphrase the following:

Throughout the day the light but steady snowfall has continued, covering the wide, easy to follow trail in two inches of snow. The trail rises and falls throughout the gentle slopes of the Northwood, providing a brisk but pleasant hike. As the trail descends into a shallow valley and winds its way around a steep slope you are confronted with a striking sight.

Some forty feet ahead of you stands a stout orc female – bloody spear in hand. Next to her growls a massive wolverine the size of a small bear, and she is flanked by several other orcs. As you approach, more orcs emerge from a cavern entrance in the hillside behind her. At her feet lies the body of a large, freshly killed wolf. She squares her shoulders your way, and as the orcs behind her raise their spears menacingly she holds her fist up, a silent order for them to hold.

She speaks with surprising clarity.

"Who are you? What are you doing on Hunting Claw grounds? And, have you seen more wolves? They don't typically hunt alone."

This is Nozamara, an **Orc War Chief (MM, p246)** with a neutral alignment. She is chief of the Hunting Claw clan. She is accompanied by her **Dire Wolverine** (see appendix) pet, Niznoc. Immediately behind her are eight more **orcs (MM, p246)**, with another twelve emerging from the cavern lair. Nozamara and the 8 warriors had just returned from a successful hunt when this lone dire wolf attacked. Knowing that such beasts do not hunt alone, the entire clan is now on alert.

Nozamara isn't interested in a war with her neighbors to the south. Her clan only wishes to hunt the wood in peace. She is remarkably calm and level headed for an orc and looks to lead her people to a life of peace and prosperity. She knows full well that if open hostilities were to break out the humans of Northwood's Rest might be overrun by the orc, but bounties would be placed upon the Hunting Claw, who would eventually be hunted down. Thus, she wants no such hostilities to occur.

She vehemently denies any accusations that her clan slaughtered the livestock at Northwood's Rest, and seems genuinely concerned that something would be so brazen. The orcs and the people of Northwood's Rest, she surmises, may face a mutual threat. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** can confirm her sincerity.

Unfortunately, the farmers who've been following a half mile behind the PCs have a different mindset.

THE TROUBLE WITH FARMERS

The farmer's of Northwood's Rest are all skilled hunters who know their way around the Northwood. A group of those farmers, Will MacGregor, Patrick Treyburn, Stella Archer and Old Man Waterman, have been trailing the PCs by half a mile or so. This is the same group who were shouting about the orc menace to Joseph Highland back in town. Motivated by their fear and hatred of the orcs presence in the Northwood, they hope to provide backup to ensure the PCs wipe the orcs out. While the PCs parlay or fight with Nozamara

and the Hunting Claws the farmer's catch up. Use the statistics for **scouts (MM, p349)** to represent the farmers in combat should the need arise.

If hostilities have broken out between the orcs and the PCs prior to the farmer's arrival, then the farmers arrive at the end of the second round and immediately join the PCs in the fight.

If the PCs are parlaying with the orcs when the farmers arrive, the farmers are angry to see the adventurers they hired not following through on the job they were paid to do. Will MacGregor will call out to the PCs.

"What are you doing? Finish the job. What do you think we're paying you for? Kill them!"

Nozamara snarls at the farmer but does not strike first. The PCs, who were actually hired to solve the problem of the slaughtered livestock, are now in the unenviable position of brokering a peace between the orcs and the farmers

THE WOLF PACK ATTACKS

Just as hostilities between the orcs and the farmers are about to break out, a pack of 16 **Dire Wolves (MM, p321)** emerge from all directions, attacking orc, farmer, and PC alike. The wolf pack hails from Elpam's valley and, given the chaos that has taken place therein, the pack is unnerved and frightened. The pack is in a frenzy, lashing out at perceived threats, and assaults even though it is well fed and outnumbered.

Have one or two wolves attack each PC while others attack the farmers and the orcs as part of the narrative background of the scene. During the battle, one wolf immediately knocks Will MacGregor down, and Nozamara charges to rescue him. When the battle ends, the farmers should be convinced that the orcs are not their enemies, though they may not see them as potential allies just yet. At battle's end, the orc



and farmer casualties should mirror that of the PCs.

If the dire wolves enter a battle already engaged between the orcs, farmers, and PCs, then Nozamara calls for her people to retreat into their caves, where they immediately dig in while the farmers and PCs face off against the wolves. Half of the pack charges recklessly into the orc caves while the PCs and farmers contend with the rest. At battle's end Nozamara, Niznoc, and most of the tribe have survived, and the PCs may be in a particularly challenging position.

WHAT THE ATTACK MEANS

Both Nozamara and the farmers are aware of a dire wolf pack that hunts to the northwest and resides in the valley of the druid Elpam. The pack never wanders this far south and has never been a direct threat to either the orcs or Northwood's Rest. This pack has certainly just displayed extremely erratic behavior by attacking such capable prey.

When the dust settles, if the PCs have any allies left alive amongst the farmers or Nozamara, said allies will reveal that information, suggesting that perhaps the cause of Northwood's Rest's troubles might be found in the druid's vale. Any such ally can point out that following north along the Maple Stream will eventually lead to the vale.

Little is known about this woman – she is said to have a hut near the stream, she likes to mutter to herself, and the wolves, and sometimes the plants. The orcs refer to Elpam as "The Feral One", and the farmers as "That crazy old witch." Either through respect or fear, neither the farmers nor the orcs have ever had cause to disturb her privacy for a closer look.

If the dust settles and the PCs find themselves with neither farmer nor orc to consult then they can find the necessary information when they return to town and report the preceding events to Joseph Highland.



PART 3 – THE DRUID'S VALLEY

ELPAM'S DOMAIN

Elpam's hut resides in a small shadowy valley amongst the gentle forested hills of the Northwood. Reaching the hut is a simple matter of following Maple Stream several miles northwest of its intersection with the game trail. However, there will be danger along the way.

WORTLING AMBUSH

When the PCs are one mile out from the hut, read or paraphrase the following:

You've followed the Maple Stream for several miles, and it has been a quiet, uneventful hike. The snowfall has

stopped, the wind calmed, and an eerie silence seems to blanket the forest. Suddenly, without warning, six-inch long thorns are flying through the air in your direction. You are under attack!

Six **wicked wortlings** (see appendix) noticed the PCs approaching and set an ambush. There are three on either side of the stream, with each group twenty feet away from the trail. Given their camouflage a successful **DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) check** is required to notice their presence before they attack. Otherwise they attack with surprise, while using tree trunks for partial cover.

If the PCs thoroughly investigated the wounded

animals at MacGregor Farm then a successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals that the thorns the wortlings hurl appear to match the thorns found embedded in the dead animals. Additionally, the wortling's irregular branch like claws match the claw marks seen on the slaughtered livestock as well.

ELPAM'S GROUNDS

Once the PCs reach Elpam's valley, read or paraphrase the following:

You've been following the stream now for several miles as it's wound its way beneath the old growth forest. Through the ages, the stream has formed a gentle valley with verdant forest hills rising and falling to either side. Rounding a bend around one such hill you spy a dilapidated old round hut surrounded by a fenced, overgrown garden. The low forest hills rise about, and the stream carves its way along a tall, water-carved bluff to the west. The roots of trees growing atop the bluff jut out from its sides.

Cut into the hillside to the east you spy a small cave entrance. You catch the glow of two pairs of eyes gazing watchfully at you from this closer cave to the east.

There are three features of note in Elpam's little vale: The Dire Wolf Lair, the Waterfall Laboratory, and Elpam's Garden Hut.

AREA 1 – THE CAVERN LABORATORY

At the back of the valley, dug into the side of the bluffs and somewhat obscured by tree roots, is a narrow cavern entrance. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals regular, light foot traffic between the hut and the waterfall.

As PCs peer inside, read or paraphrase the following:

The horrible stench of rot overwhelms your senses as you enter this mess of a cavern. The cavern itself, dimly lit by the sun outside, is roughly 40 foot in diameter with a 30-foot high ceiling. The cavern floor is littered with rotted vegetable matter, and the corpses of several twisted abominations are scattered about. At the rear of the cavern are several workbenches with various laboratory

detritus strewn about: beakers, flasks, bamboo piping, note books and various parchments are scattered upon them. Several shelves covered with pottery, ostensibly for plant propagation, can also be seen within.

From its entrance, this certainly looks like a mad druid's lab. Further investigation will be required if you are to find the information you seek.



Covering the bulk of the floor is a **rot fungus** (see appendix), which attacks one round after any small-sized or larger creature steps upon it. The Rot Fungus isn't the only threat, however. One of Elpam's twisted creations, a **stalky monster** (see appendix), has a burrow accessible from a tunnel it has carved in the ceiling at the back of the cavern. The stalky monster will pounce as soon as it hears the commotion, hoping to scramble down the wall, grab a small sized victim, and drag its victim back to its lair for consumption.

Treasure: A thorough search of the workbenches reveals four **potions of superior healing**, a **potion of barkskin**, a stoppered **ever-fresh beaker** (see sidebar) containing thirty **good berries** (Elpam's munchies), various hallucinogenic fungi, and several hand scrawled, dated notebooks. One such notebook contains the following final entry:

"Accertep's plan, kidnap a dryad's tree. Genius. Weakened the dryad, forced it out, captured it. We

imbued the tree with a fiendish will. We keep Shanareen – that's what the dryad calls herself – alive for now. Unsure if her death would kill the tree. We must keep her weak, keep the tree strong, and keep her away from the tree. Accertep believes she could recapture her tree if it were weakened and she was strong.

Ah, excellent, the tree is ready to bear its fruit. Success!"

Ever-fresh Beaker

(Wondrous item, uncommon)

This beaker is slightly larger than a normal potion bottle, weighing no more than one pound when full. Any small food item, liquid, component, or other potentially spoiled item will remain fresh and retain its potency and magical effects so long as it remains stoppered within. The item begins to go stale and decay at its normal rate one minute after being removed from the beaker.

AREA 2 – THE DIRE WOLF DEN

Most of the wolf pack was driven mad by the horrid circumstances surrounding Elpam's destruction and the subsequent presence of the meenlocks. Only wolves who've recently parented resisted the frenzy. With their maternal and paternal instincts overriding their fears and madness, four **dire wolves**, two mated pairs, remain in the den tending to two fresh litters. These four have no intention of emerging from their den to attack a strong, armed force of humanoids. They will growl and howl menacingly at any who approach aggressively, and will certainly guard their young with intense ferocity if their den is invaded.



The wolves are getting hungry, and are also accustomed to human companionship, thus a calm approach, complete with an offering of food, could calm the wolves to the PCs presence. A successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check** reveals the wolves' reluctance to attack, while a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check**, taken with advantage if food is offered, endears the wolves to the PCs.

The den itself consists of a narrow six-foot diameter entrance tunnel beneath a thick tangle of roots. The tunnel leads 25 feet back to a broader cavern roughly thirty foot in diameter. Unless already calmed, should the PCs approach the wolves will retreat into the broader den, flanking the tunnel entrance, and take the ready action, immediately pouncing upon the first PC who enters.

Treasure. Unsurprisingly there is remarkably little of value within the den. However, long ago a young wolf stumbled upon the remains of a fallen wizard and took back to the lair an impressively sturdy chew toy – a hefty, iron clad, **wand of fireballs**. It is buried under six inches of dirt in a far corner of the lair. A successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check** is required to notice this particular patch of loose dirt. Alternatively, a **detect magic** spell reveals an aura beneath the dirt.

Though it is impressively sturdy, the wand has been weakened by the abuse it has sustained in the den. It now holds only two charges and has a 50% chance to be rendered useless if all charges are expended prior to a recharge. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals the full impact of this damage.

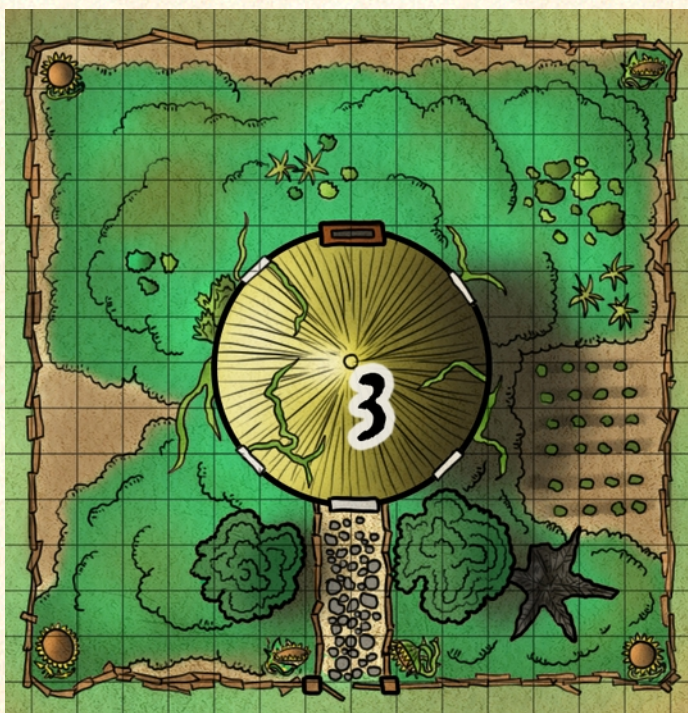
AREA 3 – ELPAM'S HUT AND GARDEN

As the PCs approach her hut, read or paraphrase the following:

The centerpiece of this little valley is the round, thatched-roof hut. The hut is roughly 25 foot in diameter, with a lone, south facing door and four shuttered windows set around it. A stone smokestack protrudes through the roof, and vines cling to its sides.

A fence made of fallen timber surrounds the hut, containing an overgrown garden within. A gate twenty feet from the door allows polite entrance through the fence, though the fence could be easily jumped. A large, recently dug hole can be seen in the right front quadrant of the overgrown garden.

A flagstone path leads from the gate to the hut's door. A similar path circles around the garden. Two trees in the garden flank the flagstone path, providing direct shade to the hut's door, and six-foot tall sunflowers are planted on either side of the gate and at each of the four corners of the garden fencing. As you approach, the sunflowers turn to face you, their central flowers opening to reveal eight-inch diameter eyeballs gazing at you.



Gaining entrance to Elpam's hut will likely be a bit of a challenge. Several creatures and a **glyph of warding** protect the doorway, and the door is locked. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** is required to pick the lock, or the door can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength check**. The four windows are strongly shuttered, each requiring a successful **DC 20 Strength check** to force open.

The sunflowers are **eyestalks** (see appendix), creations of Elpam that act as the first line of defense for the druid's hut. Unless the eyestalks are

attacked or the glyph is triggered they only observe the PCs, rotating on their stalks to keep the PCs in their sights.

The two trees flanking the entrance are **awakened trees** (MM, p317), and two **vine blights** (MM, p32) hang above and around the door. These creatures remain inert unless they are attacked or the glyph is triggered. If any of the plants are attacked or the glyph is triggered then all of the plants immediately begin attacking intruders.

Glyph of Warding trap

There is a **glyph of warding** set by Elpam on the woven doormat of her house.

A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check** is required to notice the glyph. Any creature that isn't Elpam or one of her allies that steps within five feet of the front door, or passes through the open doorway, will trigger the glyph. When triggered the glyph sets off an **entangle** spell in a 20-foot square centered on the mid point of her 20 foot flagstone path, thus covering the entire flagstone walkway from the gate to the door and ten feet in either direction. For the spell's one minute duration this area becomes difficult terrain.

All creatures within the area of effect when the glyph is triggered must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength saving throw** or be **restrained** by the entangling plants. A creature restrained by the plants can use its action to attempt a **DC 16 Strength saving throw**. On a success it frees itself.

ENTERING ELPAM'S HUT

As the PCs enter her hut read or paraphrase the following:

What an overgrown mess! Roots tangle the floor, weeds creep through the floorboards, vines climb the walls, and a six-foot tall redbud grows through cracked floorboards near a window. Within the mess of this one room hut one can see an old desk, several shelves littered with jars, stoppered gourds, vials, disheveled notebooks, an unkempt bed, and all manner of bric-a-brac lining the walls. A fireplace stove with a large pot can be seen across the room, and, near the stove, a table made of fallen logs is littered with cooking utensils. A squirrel with shocking, blazing red eyes chatters at you a moment, then scurries up the chimney.

You hear in your minds a frightened, weak, sickly female voice - "Please. Help me."

The druid's home is indeed quite a disheveled mess. While the squirrel, who's vision has been magically enhanced to offer it darkvision, is indeed one of Elpam's twisted creations, it is no threat to the PCs. The real threat lies under the hut, where the horrors of Elpam's final experiments unintentionally summoned a meenlock lair from the feywild. A large crack in the middle of the floor, concealed by tree roots and overgrowth, behaves as a potential pit trap and leads to the lair (see **The Meenlock Lair** for details).

Treasure: Searching the hut produces a few items of interest-

There is an easel with an original painting by Elpam. Though on an easel the painting is framed in dark oak. The painting depicts a horrifying demon's face, its wide open maw revealing a terrifying blackness. This image, from Acererak's **Tomb of Horrors**, was seared in Elpam's mind prior to her final encounter with the demi-lich. The painting might fetch up to 500 gold if the proper buyer were found, though a common merchant would be unlikely to pay more than 50 gp for it. Tucked in the parchment backing of the frame, behind the painting, is a map depicting the precise location of Acererak's **Tomb of Horrors**.

Amongst the various shelves can be found a druid's spell component bag, three **potions of healing**, and a dozen bottles of fine wine worth 20 gp each. An unlocked footlocker under Elpam's bed contains 200 sp, 150 gp, a gold necklace with a moonstone pendant worth 250 gp and an old journal. The journal tells the tale of Elpam's years spent as an adventurer. Chapters include **The Village of**

Homlet, the **Caves of Chaos**, **The Scourge of the Slave Lords**, **Against the Giants**, [Journey Through the Center of the Underdark](#) and **Descent Into The Depths of the Underdark**. While most chapters are well-written and cogent, the final chapter, **The Tomb of Horrors**, suggests its author was mad. It is a collection of incoherent ramblings about pits of death, mists of doom, doorways to destruction, and a horrid gem-encrusted skull that consumed the souls of her companions.

THE MEENLOCK LAIR

Concealed amongst the twisted tree roots, weeds, and overgrowth on the floor of the hut is a jagged, six-foot long, four-foot wide crack. This crack was formed when the horrors of what took place in Elpam's garden drew the attention of four **meenlocks** (**VgtM**, p170) from the feywild. The concentration of horror spontaneously generated a meenlock lair beneath Elpam's hut. If PCs notice the pit they may descend its jagged, steep twenty-foot slope without fear of falling, though the slope should be treated as difficult terrain.



The Meenlock Lair pit trap

A jagged six-foot long, four-foot wide crack in the floor is concealed by the overgrowth within the hut. PCs who are actively searching the hut notice it with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check. Otherwise a

successful **DC 15 Passive Perception** check reveals its presence.

Failing to notice the pit means the risk of falling in. Any character walking across the middle of the hut unaware of the crack must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity saving throw** or fall through the loose roots and tumble down jagged rocks to the bottom of the lair twenty feet below. Characters falling take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

The steep, jagged slope of the pit is navigable with care but should be treated as difficult terrain.

Once any PC descends into the lair, willingly or through a fall, all PCs are overwhelmed with a horrifying vision. Read or paraphrase the following:

You are drawn out of your consciousness and into a horrifying scene. An elderly lady, her long unkempt gray hair a wild mane about her deeply etched face, stands near a regal oak and stares in wonder. An archmage, tall, bald, and grim faced, completes a ritual nearby, and a beautiful green haired fairy screams in agony as she is pulled from within the protection of her tree. Black tendrils grab at her body, her mind, and her soul, ripping her from her home. She screams again as her life force drains from her, and then she collapses upon the ground. The archmage turns his attention to the tree, and his arms weave through the air, casting a spell and teleporting the massive oak away. The Dryad weeps.

The vision swirls and you see the grim faced archmage in a wizard's laboratory far away, peering into his crystal ball. Your consciousness flies into the crystal ball's image and you hover around a rickety hut and overgrown garden. The oak, now twisted and blackened, is planted in the garden. The old woman prances beneath its boughs, a branch like staff in her hand, herself engaged in some unknown ritual. Dozens of massive acorns fall from the tree and sprout, in a matter of moments, into bizarre humanoid forms. The woman cackles in glee.

"Ah ha ha! He was right. Accertep was right! It worked and you, my children, are born! Arise! Arise my children!"

A presence, dark, twisted, tortured, projects its voice from no mouth.

"Your children? YOUR CHILDREN? You ripped my lady from me. You uprooted me from my home. You cut, beat, burned, and grafted parts to and from me. And now, when I reproduce, you think these are YOUR children. I think not!"

The woman's insane glee turns to horror as the tree's roots grasp her legs and its branches grasp her arms. She struggles to defend herself as the humanoid tree forms assault, filling her with thorns and shredding her with claws. The tree rips her apart, and its roots draw her into the ground and begin to feed.

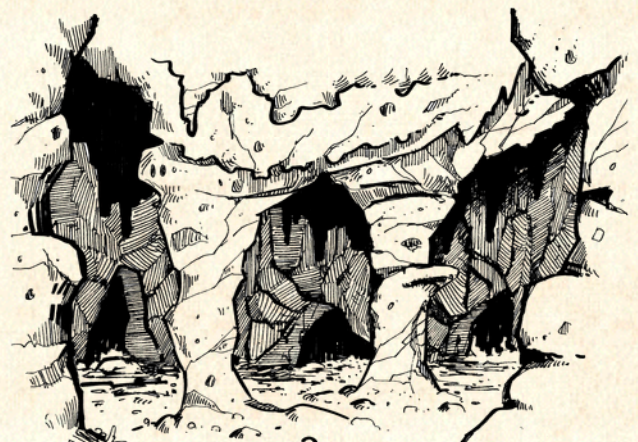
The archmage smiles.

When the vision ends each PC must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom save** or suffer the effects of short-term madness (**Madness; Madness Effects; Short-Term Madness**, p259).

The vision depicts the creation of the Wicked Wort and the fall of the mad druid Elpam. The vision was supplied by the four meenlocks dwelling beneath the hut. The meenlocks relish the terror they instill in other sentient beings and enjoy sharing this tormenting memory.

As mentioned, the meenlock lair was created spontaneously from the psychic echo of the horrors which took place in this vale. The entire lair is lightless and cramped, with tunnels that are only five-foot in diameter, and chambers that are no more than ten-foot high. Jagged rocks, large and small, protrude from all directions, creating ample spots for the meenlocks to hide. The jagged nature of the lair also makes it difficult terrain for movement purposes for any creatures that aren't meenlocks.

The meenlocks use the cramped space, difficult terrain, darkness and ample hiding places in unison with their paralysis inducing claws and **Shadow Teleport** ability to full advantage. They instill fear, surround, and surprise invaders to their lair, hoping to drag paralyzed opponents to be tormented in the rear chamber, all the while telepathically communicating horrific threats to any invaders. Should three of the four meenlocks be defeated the fourth will retreat, burrowing through the veil that separates the prime from the feywild.





AREA 1 – THE LAIR ENTRANCE

This roughly 20-foot diameter chamber lies at the base of the pit, and is the first area in which the PCs are likely to encounter the meenlocks. The wicked creatures pounce in strength on any weakened or lone PCs, hoping to paralyze and capture new victims to torment. If pressed in battle they will retreat to **areas 2**, using their **Shadow Teleport** to improve their mobility and find a new ambush location.

AREAS 2 – THE ANTECHAMBERS

These frightening, jagged chambers provide further opportunity for surviving meenlocks to harass the PCs. The evil beasts will initially separate, each stealthily spying on a separate chamber while

communicating telepathically with each other to coordinate an assault.

AREA 3 – THE REAR CHAMBER

The dryad Shanareen is held captive in this rear chamber. She is held to the ceiling by twisted tendrils of rock. Tortured, dehydrated and malnourished she has only 5 hit points when found. The rock tendrils are brittle and can be easily broken with any blunt weapon, freeing her.

Surviving meenlocks will make a final stand in this room. Using **Shadow Teleport** to flank or surround the PCs the meenlocks will telepathically taunt while waiting for an ideal moment to pounce, possibly when the PCs begin to rescue Shanareen.

Collapsing Reality

The meenlock lair will collapse out of reality thirty minutes after the last meenlock retreats to the Feywild or is slain. The lair will rumble and shake once, then rumble and shake again five minutes later, then four minutes later, then three minutes later, etc. in a crescendo of violence that should make it clear to PCs that they should not linger. When the lair collapses, the crack in Elpam's floor slams shut, forever dispelled to the Feywild.

Should any creatures remain alive in the lair they will be spat out onto the floor of the hut. Each creature in the area when it collapses must make a **DC 20 Dexterity saving throw**, taking 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

Treasure: Stashed under a rocky outcrop near the back wall of the rear chamber is Elpam's **Staff of the Woodlands**. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check** when actively searching the chamber is required to notice it.

SHANAREEN THE DRYAD

Formerly strong and proud, Shanareen has been ripped from her tree by the archmage Accertep, kept weakened but alive by the druid Elpam, and tortured and tormented by the twisted meenlocks. Needless to say, she is weak and frail. However, she is also eager to help in any way that she can.

She explains the tale of her ordeal, filling in any blanks the PCs don't already know. She also knows the layout of this vale, understands the pack hunting nature of the Dire Wolves, and knows that most of Elpam's experiments were conducted in the bluff-side cavern laboratory.

Shanareen doesn't understand why she was kept alive. She does know that she still shares a connection with her tree. Her tree, she explains, has been twisted into something dark, carnivorous, and murderous. Its dozen's of fruit sought out meat and provided the tree with cattle and chicken, but became aware of the town of Northwood's Rest and of the Hunting Claw Clan in the process.

She can feel the tree's intent. Perceiving the villagers to be the weaker prey it marches with its many wortlings toward Northwood's Rest, where it intends to feed on all within. Once satiated, it will grow even stronger, at which point it intends to bear

more fruit and march on the orcs. From there there's no telling what horrors it might perpetrate.

If Shanareen's death would kill the tree (**it won't**) she would willingly sacrifice herself to prevent these horrors, but she does not *feel* that her death would harm it. If she can be reunited with the tree (**She can**) then perhaps she can sway its intent and restore it to good and beauty. Perhaps, she suggests, answers can be found in Elpam's laboratory behind the waterfall. Perhaps the only way to know is to proceed.

Though magical healing or rest might restore her to full hit points, Shanareen will not have her **Innate Spellcasting** abilities nor her **Fey Charm** ability at her disposal until she is reunited with her tree and completes a long rest. She will have her **Magic Resistance**, her ability to **Speak with Beasts and Plants**, and her **Tree Stride** ability. The latter will play a crucial role in the final battle, if she accompanies the PCs.



PART 4 – THE TREE'S ASSAULT

THE FINAL BATTLE

At this point, the PCs should have learned of the Wicked Wort and its intentions to slaughter the populace of Northwood's Rest and the Hunting Claw Clan. This information should set up a final showdown at Northwood's Rest with the tree's offspring and the tree itself, but there is time for a defense to be prepared, and gathering allies may be wise.



THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Given the knowledge that dozens of Wortlings plus a tree of unknown power are marching on Northwood's Rest, the PCs should be understandably concerned with the challenge ahead. The PCs should also be aware that the Wicked Wort has no intention of stopping its violence at Northwood's Rest, and already has plans to consume orc flesh. Thus the people of

Northwood's Rest and the orcs of the Hunting Claw Clan have a mutual enemy.

The PCs might choose to broker an alliance between the two disparate groups. Generally speaking, Nozamara and Joseph are both entirely reasonable leaders who hope to help their community survive. With that said, consider the previous encounter ***The Trouble With Farmers*** and how it played out to help you decide how challenging brokering this alliance might be. The presence of an allied force of orc warriors will greatly impact the difficulty of the final battle, so unless the PCs chose to slaughter all the orcs, the opportunity for an alliance should be available.

How exactly the negotiations play out is left largely to PC choice and DM discretion. Some character's might choose to leave Elpam's Hut and head directly to the orcs to request their help. Others might bring the concept back to Joseph and the townsfolk, needing to convince the town of their urgent need for the orc's assistance. However it might play out, in the end the leaders of the two factions understand strength in numbers and an alliance should be forged. Nozamara, Nisnoc, and twelve orc warriors will join in the defense of the town.

If the PCs do not think to broker such an alliance, then upon returning to town they discover Nozamara, Nisnoc, and four Orc warriors being confronted by the townsfolk outside Joseph's compound. Nozamara, concerned at the growing threat, has come of her own accord to seek information and a peaceful alliance with the town. Even if the farmers from ***The Trouble with Farmers*** returned convinced the orcs weren't their enemy, the townsfolk are still understandably frightened by the unexpected orc presence and are thus up in arms. Joseph is concerned as well, insisting that Nozamara leave. The PCs, hopefully, can broker the peace at this point. If an alliance is forged, Nozamara sends a runner to fetch eight more warriors, bringing the total to twelve as above.

If no peace is brokered, or worse, if the orcs were all killed, the final battle will be notably more challenging.

THE BATTLE PLAN

Depending on how the previous events played out, the personnel available to defend the town may include the human villagers, the orcs, and the dryad. The villagers able to defend include Joseph Highland, a **Veteran**, and six farmer **Scouts**. The orcs include Nozamara, her Dire Wolverine ally Niznoc (See appendix), and 12 orcs. Finally, Shanareen the **Dryad** (**MM**, p121), though weakened, should play a key role.

Once all alliances are in place and all personnel accounted for, give the PCs a reasonable opportunity to work out a defense. Joseph and Nozamara are both strong leaders who understand the strengths and weaknesses of the people they lead, and Shanareen is driven to reunite with her tree, thus each will suggest a tactic for which they are best suited, though ultimately the PCs should forge the plan.

The farmers will feel most comfortable fighting at range. Windows in the town's buildings can provide firing positions with three quarter cover, and tables and other furnishings propped along Joseph's fence line can provide same.

The aggressiveness of the orcs makes them ideal as shock troops. Unwilling to sit back and wait for the fight to come to them, Nozamara feels her warriors

should be on the offensive when the battle is joined. The mill may provide an excellent place for the orcs to wait, ready to charge flanks once combat is engaged.

Shanareen's ultimate desire is to get reunited with her tree. With her **Tree Stride** ability she could

rapidly move through the trees of the Northwood, running circles around the invaders and keeping herself in a position to approach when the Wicked Wort is sufficiently weakened.

The Wicked Wort and its Wortlings have moved stealthily toward Northwood's Rest and have taken up a position sixty feet into the woods just north of Joseph's compound. With the Wortlings having done some scouting, they've determined that the Inn in the evening has the most potential food sources, thus the tree intends to attack the inn at dusk.

The Wicked Wort will command its Wortlings to cross the narrow field, climb Joseph's fence, and commence their assault on the Inn. In all, there are 24 Wortlings involved in the assault. 18 of the 24 will march forth, with six held in reserve near the tree.

Managing such a large battle will be difficult if each wortling and npc is accounted

for each round, thus I suggest the bulk of the action be handled in a narrative fashion. If the orcs and Shanareen are part of the defense the battle should go well for the PCs.

The orcs will aggressively engage in melee with the



Wicked Wortlings, while the farmer's arrows rain down upon the enemy. The PCs should be free to choose their targets within this chaos, engaging, or not, at will.

Once Shanareen is within 100 feet of the Wicked Wort, the Wicked Wort and Shanareen will sense each other's presence. The Wicked Wort will dispatch its reserve of six Wortlings to kill her specifically. The PCs may choose to defend her directly, or she may use her **Tree Stride** ability to draw the six away, a chase she can readily win. In either case, once those six are dealt with the Wicked Wort is, at that point, a lone target for the PCs to assault, and Shanareen will urgently point this out.

As the PCs move into the forest to assault the Wicked Wort most of the Wortlings lie dead, with most of the farmers and orc warriors exhausted or incapacitated. Joseph and Nozamara take firm control of the battlefield, allowing the PCs their assault.

The Wicked Wort is undetectable from a normal tree so long as it remains motionless. However, with the battle turning against it, the Wicked Wort is enraged. As the PCs get within 60 feet of the Wicked Wort it will strike, from surprise, with its ranged attacks, revealing its presence in a small thirty-foot diameter clearing. The tree will use its **Entangling Roots** on any who charge it, attempting to keep them out of their melee range. Remember that its melee attacks have significant reach, thus being restrained by roots can present a particularly hazardous situation as its branches swipe but allow no return strike. No action or reaction is required by the tree to maintain restraint, and there is no limit to how many creatures it might keep restrained.

Assuming Shanareen remains alive, once the tree is reduced to zero hit points it ceases combat and she recapture's her tree. When this occurs read or paraphrase the following:

The wicked tree, its branches broken, its trunk mutilated, ceases its movements and releases its grip. The beautiful dryad Shanareen flits out of a nearby tree and

approaches, her face full of anguish as she gazes upon the ruin of her home. She reaches out a hand, strokes the trunk and lurches in pain – she must feel its wounds! Nevertheless, she presses on, and her skin turns to bark as she melds into the tree. After a moment her face emerges briefly.

"We are gravely injured and need rest. I am eternally sorrowful for the harm caused, and forever grateful for the help you've all provided. We shall root here this winter and focus on healing, and in the spring – Restoration! I promise to serve the good people of the Northwood, human and orc alike, for as long as this tree shall live."

WRAPPING UP

At this point the danger is past. There are no doubt injuries to attend to, and the PCs are thanked and paid their due by the townsfolk. The peoples of the Northwood, the villagers and the orcs, have forged a bond, and they all have a strong ally in Shanareen.

As for the archmage Accertep - who also appears in **Killer Kobolds!** - his schemes and machinations remain a mystery... for now.



APPENDIX – NEW MONSTERS

DIRE WOLVERINE

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 42 (6d8+15)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages -

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The wolverine has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the wolverine moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the wolverine can make an additional bite attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wolverine attacks twice, once with its claws and once with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) slashing damage.

EYE STALK

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 5 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed -

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances piercing

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages -

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Sleepy Eye Ray. The Eye Stalk shoots its eye ray at a target it can see within 60 feet of it. The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.

Originally produced via a twisted grafting of sunflowers and beholder eyes, the six-foot tall Eye Stalks provide a non lethal defense for the mad druid's hut.



MEENLOCK

Small fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 31 (7d6+7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +2

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fear Aura. Any beast or humanoid that starts its turn within 10 feet of the meenlock must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of the creature's next turn.

Light Sensitivity. While in bright light, the meenlock has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Shadow Teleport (Recharge 5-6). As a bonus action, the meenlock can teleport to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of it, provided that both the space it's teleporting from and its destination are in dim light or darkness. The destination need not be within line of sight.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4+2) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

ROT FUNGUS

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 5

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 5 ft.,

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	1 (-5)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages -

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

False Appearance While the rot fungus remains motionless it is indistinguishable from composting matter.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rot fungus makes four rotting touch attacks.

Rotting Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute. Until this poison ends, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poison on itself on a success.

Whether wrapping themselves around fallen logs, rotting animals, or lying flat on the forest floor, a patch of rot fungi can spread up to twenty feet in diameter, and quickly assumes an indistinguishable resemblance to its nutritional source. Creatures unlucky enough to tread close upon it are often finding themselves the fungi's next source of food.

STALKY MONSTER

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d10+24)

Speed 60 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +8,

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, druidic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Nimble Escape. The stalky monster can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

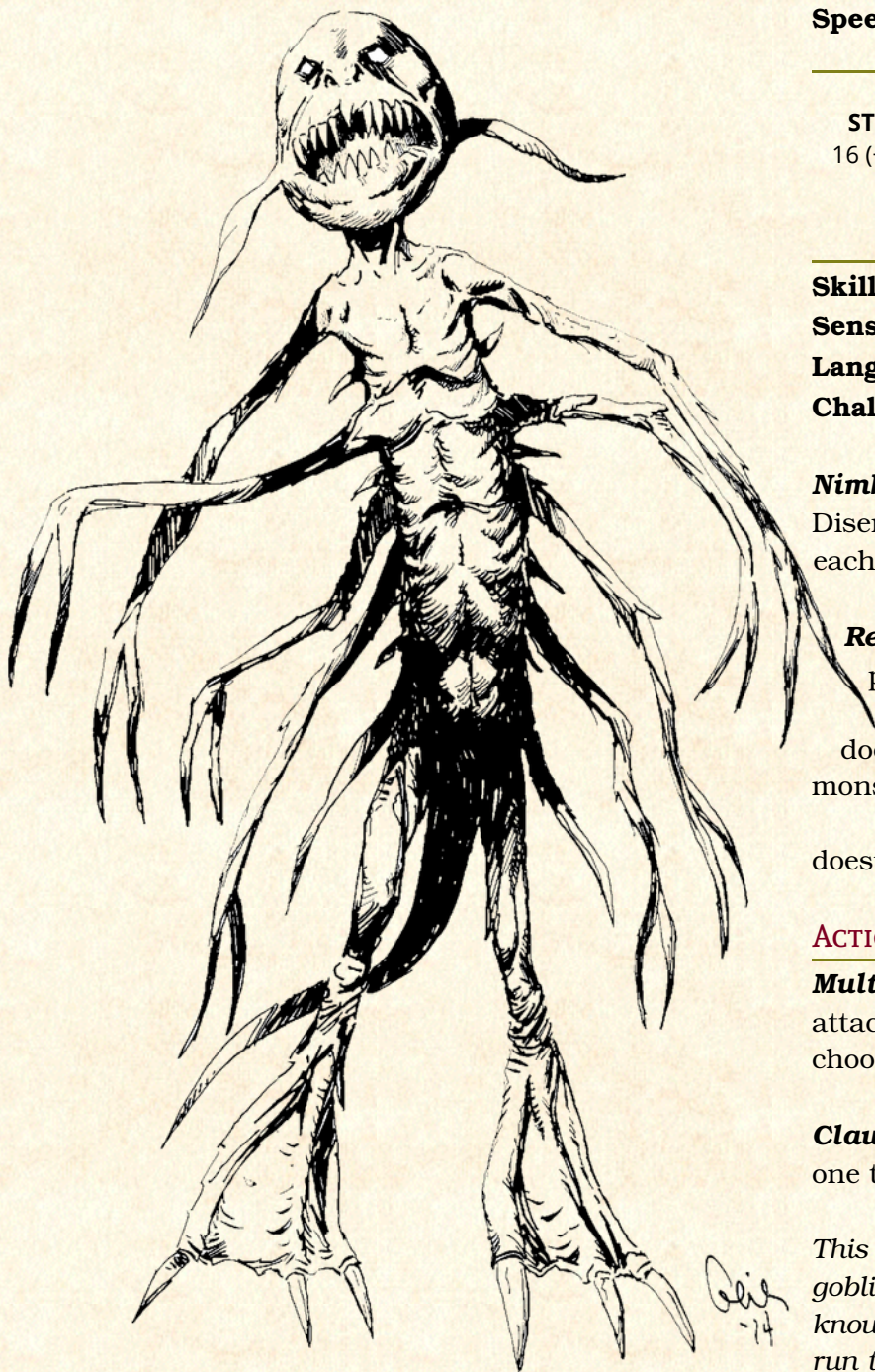
Regeneration. The stalky monster regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the stalky monster takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the stalky monster's next turn. The stalky monster dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stalky monster makes four attacks with its claws. The stalky monster may choose to grapple with some or all of its attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) slashing damage.

This bizarre, twisted mutation is part troll, part goblin, part plant, and part you don't want to know... Pouncing with immense speed, its hit and run tactics from the dark are fearsome indeed. Woe be it to smaller foes who find themselves grappled and dragged off to its lair.



WICKED WORT

Huge plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d12+40)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Senses tremorsense 20 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 9 (5000 XP)

False Appearance. While the wicked wort remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a dead tree.

Reactive Roots. The wicked wort can take one reaction with its entangling roots on every turn in combat.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wicked wort makes four attacks, each of which can be a claw or barbed thorn attack.

Barbed Thorns. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10+4) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Entangling Roots. The roots of the wicked wort grasp at a creature within twenty feet of the wort. The creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained. A creature thus restrained can use its action to make a DC 14 Strength check. On a success, it frees itself.

WICKED WORTLING

Medium plant, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4,

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Wilderness Camouflage. The wicked wortling has advantage on stealth checks while in forests, grasslands, or swamps.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wicked wortling makes two attacks with its claws or barbed thorns.

Barbed Thorns. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+2) slashing damage.

The fruit of the Wicked Wort, these blackened, five-foot tall bipedal tree forms are an extension of the tree itself. Gathering prey to satiate the carnivorous tree, Wicked Worts use their natural camouflage to scout, stalk, and slaughter food sources for the tree.

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