



# CASTLES & CRUSADES®

## Verdant Rage

Mike Stewart



ANGAL ANKEER  
Marsh Bay

In his obsessive quest to keep his forest at peace the druid Argus has sought for and gained access to the Liber Mortis. That dread book of the undead has long been a bane to men, for within its dusty pages lay eldritch sorceries of the gateways and worlds beyond the mind's of men. And Argus' lust has led him astray, corrupting him and making of him a monstrosity and so he has turned his own precious forest into a land of dread, fear and terrible nightmare. So the Dryad Eva has come to the Halls of Men seeking aid for her kind and her forest.

# Verdant Rage

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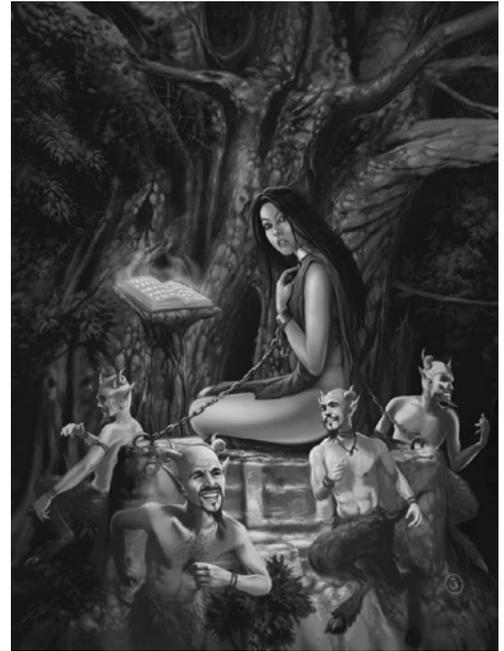
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# Verdant Rage

The hooves of the bay stallion crunched loudly upon the pine needles littering the floor of the Everwood, making the hooded figure leading the animal wince in consternation. As with all those who ply their profession with stealth, such rampant noisemaking was abhorrent to the nature of the man – a ranger by career – traveling deep into the wild woods of the valley. The melodic rustle of the leaves in the wind soothed the ranger somewhat as he made his way purposefully toward the Great Oak at the center of the Everwood, the forest's very heart as well as the nexus of its power. "What an appropriately peaceful setting for a meeting with a druid," the ranger mused, "though at odds with the burden I bear."

Emerging into the clearing he searched for his goal, the druid Argus of Everwood. Despite the open space before the oak, the massive branches of the mighty tree arching overhead only allowed the faintest glow of the noonday sun to illuminate the grass and garden before him. The doorway into the base of the tree, not carved but formed from the living trunk itself, was slightly ajar. Uncertainty slowed the man's step. Should he enter the tree unbidden or search around for the good druid? His thoughts were interrupted by the form of a man in russet brown robes strolling from behind the oak, whistling tunelessly.

"Greetings, Argus," the ranger said with a note of relief as he bowed perfunctorily. "My Lords of the West have bid me seek you out and beg your council on a matter most grave to the Balance."

The druid smiled with amusement, a flash of white teeth in the forest of his dark black beard. His blue eyes twinkled merrily as he cocked his head to one side and responded, "Greetings, Arthur... I see you've still the heart of a herald despite your solitary calling."

The ranger shrugged with mild chagrin and smiled. "Alas, I hope you'll forgive the small bit of theatrics!" His face then grew serious. "Argus, the Ranger Lords have given me something that requires your immediate attention."

The druid's leathern face, tanned from much time in the sun and open air, creased into a frown of perplexity as the woodsman rummaged within the bags attached to the horse's saddle and took a small bundle out of the top of one, unwinding the twine to remove the cloth that hid a book.

"A book?" Argus inquired with a hint of teasing to his voice. "Arthur, have the Ranger Lords finally decided to permit me to teach you to read?"

Arthur grimaced in mock disgust and replied, "No, this book is for you alone to read and protect."

He gave the druid the book, and Argus looked at its black leather cover with a mixture of disgust and curiosity. "It radiates fell magic. Necromantic I'd guess or I'm a badger whelp."

"Aye, 'tis true," the ranger agreed. "It was acquired by some adventurers in the west from a wizard with ill intentions." He scratched his stubbled cheek and continued, "The Lords know of your long study of the undead and the ways to best destroy them."

Therefore, they asked me to request a boon of you. That you keep this book safe until a means to destroy it can be determined, and if possible, glean some useful knowledge from the tome for use against our dark foes." Sighing, he shook himself, like a dog shaking off cold water, as he stepped away from the bound pages.

"I don't even read and it made my blood curdle just carrying it here! Will you take the book?" the ranger inquired with a plea in his tone. Arthur did his duty by carrying the work here, but dreaded a refusal that might mean he would be forced to travel back to the western strongholds with that foul thing sharing the trip.

The druid looked at the tome, interest showing on his features. "Yes," he replied after some thought. "Perhaps before you destroy it I can draw some knowledge from it regarding our enemy, the undead mockers of Nature and the Balance."

"Better you than me," the ranger grumbled. He began to walk toward the nearby spring. Just carrying that book made him feel soiled. He glanced over his shoulder and saw Argus had opened the book and was busy scanning the pages. The druid seemed to flinch from the pages as if struck, but then steeled his frame and purposefully leafed through the pages, each turn of the parchment apparently requiring a force of will to perform. Arthur relaxed when no apparent harm came to Argus, but then frowned to himself. "Didn't the Ranger Lords say the book was evil, an entity that could corrupt the reader?" The young woodsman quickly banished the thought. Argus was a powerful druid, and no simple ranger. "He will be able to keep that thing's evil at bay," Arthur reassured himself. No doubts on that account!

Thus convinced, he kneeled down to gather the crystal waters of the spring in his hands, splashing it on his face to clean away the dust of his travels... and of the doubt that would not leave his thoughts.

## Introduction

In this module, the party must discover what evil force has descended upon the peaceful forest of Everwood and its guardian, the druid Argus. But the party will soon discover that the forest's greatest guardian has become its greatest threat: corrupted by evil, Argus now defiles and destroys the nature he had sworn to defend! The dryad Eva has trekked to the distant town of Camraye, pleading among the halls of man to aid her and the wood folk from certain doom. Will your brave band of adventurers have the mettle to restore the Everwood and defeat this once-noble hero of good?

## Background

The Ranger Lords, goodly men, have gained possession of a foul book of necromancy, the Liber Mortis. As noted in this artifact is a sentient entity and strives to seduce and overpower any who read its evil contents. With promises of power, the Liber Mortis brings only decay and death to its user and those its incantations are used upon.

Suspecting its power and intent, the Ranger Lords gave the book to the Druid Argus of the Everwood for safekeeping. Argus was a powerful druid, and had been a foe of evil and undead for decades. The Rangers thought the book would not be able to corrupt Argus



and while he guards it they could inquire among the wizards of the region to find one who would be willing to help them destroy the dark text. They must be careful in finding the right wizard, since they well knew that if they revealed that the book was in their possession to any unscrupulous sorcerers (which most are, in the Ranger Lords' opinions), he or she might betray them to possess the powerful item. The search for a wizard of good character and intent would take much time, but the book would be safe with Argus and his good-inclined allies in the Everwood forest.

But the Ranger Lords were wrong. Despite the best of intentions, Argus found himself seduced by the book's power and guile. Seeing the power and advantage to necromancy and other evil arts, he began to experiment with the spells in the book, and with each casting the book's hold on him grew stronger and stronger. What began as a rationalized attempt to "know thy enemy" by studying the book led the druid to forsake his own goodness and beliefs. Throwing caution to the winds, he began to experiment with some of the monstrous rites in the Liber upon the denizens of his wood. Using trickery, he provided several satyr hosts for his grave mold. He even managed to infect the local treant Mistlebark with the undead parasitic growth, and the poor creature wanders the woods in insane anguish.

As his experiments continued and grew in complexity and might, his concern for subtlety diminished. As time has progressed, a few of the non-corrupted residents of the wood have determined that something is wrong with Argus and his most odd behavior. So, after some deliberations they have sent Eva the Dryad to the nearby human settlement of Camraye to beg for help. They mistrust the humans, but with Mistlebark apparently unable to control himself, the wood folk feel there is little alternative. A satyr has gone west to seek the assistance of the Ranger Lords, but their stronghold is many weeks journey and few believe that the Lords will be informed in time to stop the malicious destruction of the Everwood.

## Involving the Characters

The Castle Keeper has a choice of several options in order to get a party of adventurers to the crisis in the Everwood. First would be that they are simply traveling through the area on the main caravan route, either alone or as caravan guards. If they entered Camraye from the west they'd be able to hear the town rumors (and encounter Eva the Dryad) to bring their attention to the situation. If they traveled in from the east and therefore through the Everwood, they could have a few random encounters during the journey that could pique their curiosity which would only grow as they arrived in Camraye and heard the other stories of events in the forest.

Another method would be having them encounter the satyr sent to warn the Ranger Lords, perhaps mortally wounded and barely able to whisper his sad tale and beg their aid before dying. They might also hear rumors of the Liber Mortis and how it had been taken east to a "safe location" and might pursue it to destroy the dark tome or acquire it themselves.

Finally, the PCs might have heard that Lord Gustav of Camraye was hiring scouts and woodsmen to escort caravans along the Everwood route, for even if he dismisses Eva's tale it has become obvious that the route through the Everwood has become more dangerous.

## The Town of Camraye

If the party enters Camraye from the east, read the description below of the town as it appears and they travel through its length and breadth. If the party arrives through the Everwood, simply describe the below in reverse order, with the castle appearing first on their left as they emerge from the woodland.

Traveling along the dirt road, you see a town emerging along the horizon. The first buildings that greet you are wooden structures, their rough white planking indicating their recent construction. To

the left of the road is a horse corral with young boys feeding and exercising the horses to and from the barn complex set behind the running yard. On the right of the lane is a two story building with a newly painted sign hanging just over the doorway. The sign depicts a Pegasus, ivory hued on a black background. To the left of this can be seen a display of ironwork and the telltale clanging of a blacksmith hard at work can be heard.

Further travel into the town finds the two dozen or so domiciles flanking the main road in varying degrees of repair, with the newer and more elaborate homes readily apparent closer to the edge of the town. At the center of the town the road forks east and west, only to re-form again on the far side of the knoll, making a great circle in the center of the village. Within this circle are several stone buildings, with the temple and priest's home along the west road and the guildhalls along the east. Beyond this, the northern homes are sparse and grant a clear view of the local castle whose towers overlook the road and surrounding countryside. This fortification is a "motte and bailey" structure, with a central stone tower upon a hill and a set of wooden palisades surrounding the hill. Immediately around this wall, a small moat of stagnant greenish-brown water with a wooden drawbridge surmounts it.

**Note:** It is up to the discretion of the Castle Keeper whether the party will be arriving in Camraye in time for the crisis to emerge or if they will be residing in town for some time. Camraye is on the main caravan route that meanders through the center of the Everwood and so the town is located well for traders and merchant caravans to restock their supplies before plunging into the five days journey through the Everwood, or those coming in from that journey needing to re-supply before continuing onward to the larger cities of the far west.

In any event, the Castle Keeper should insure that the party witnesses a group of Lord Gustav's soldiers (all female) forcibly escorting a small dryad to the town edge and instructing her to return to the wood. The dryad will beg and plead for the guards to listen to her, but the four women warriors will scoff (albeit good-naturedly) and tell her to play her little tricks on satyrs or travelers in the wood and leave good honest folk be.

**Note:** Use the below as average statistics for any Camraye Watch warriors encountered.

4 Watch Guards (*These are lawful neutral, human warriors whose vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 14, HP 4, 5, 8, 9. Their prime attributes are physical. They each carry a spear and short sword and wear leather armor and carry a small wooden shield. Their purses carry 1d6cp and 1d4sp.*)

Eva the Dryad (*This neutral good creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 13, AC 17. Her prime attributes are physical & mental. Her special abilities are tree dependent, tree stride, wild empathy and the spelllike abilities entangle (2/day), charm person (2/day), and sleep (3/day). Saves are at CL3. She has a spell resistance of 10. She attacks with a dagger doing 1d4 damage.*)

If questioned about the dryad's crimes, the guards will say that the dryad had appeared at the castle gates begging to see Lord Gustav and upon gaining audience pleaded with the lord to send men into

the wood with her to apprehend the druid Argus. Why apprehend the druid? The dryad replied that he had read a book and was now very bad to everyone. As the townsfolk are aware of the dryad and satyr preoccupation with pranks and other ways of luring their young folk into the wood, they are convinced that it is just an elaborate trick to get some human men out there to get lost in the wood and otherwise amuse the dryads. Quite innovative, they will remark to the player characters, but too farfetched for anyone to believe. The druid Argus has been a friend to the town for decades, and the townsfolk always do their best to respect the wood and its creatures in return. Argus has done his best to protect the caravans that travel through the Everwood and the town certainly appreciates this assistance to their economic well-being.

The dryad will shout to the player characters that she is telling the truth and to please follow her. She will tell the player characters what she knows if asked further (namely that Argus was given an evil book to study, it has made Argus evil, and he's doing bad things to the wood folk.) She can give vague descriptions of the grave mold (see Appendix) but other than that has little other information to offer (Castle Keepers discretion). She is quite frantic and will do almost anything to convince the characters she's telling the truth.

If the party of adventurers agrees to assist her, she will lead them immediately into the forest. She will know the locations of the pixie hold, Mistlebark's cave and of the assassin vine (area 8), but will have no knowledge of the other encounter areas in the Everwood. She can also lead the party to the Great Oak directly, but is unaware of any of the encounters there, either outside or within.

If the player characters refuse to assist her, she will plead a bit longer, but will eventually move dejectedly out of the town back toward the woods. The town guards will continue to shadow her path until they are certain Eva has returned to the wood. At this point the guards will feel their duty accomplished and will return to the castle.

## Camraye Random Encounters

### Daytime Encounters: 1 in 4

#### d8 Encounters

- 1 Beggar child (D6 = 1-3 honest beggar; 4-6 1st level rogue attempts to pick pockets of party member).
- 2-3 Camraye Watch (1-2) (see average watch warriors).
- 4-5 Townsfolk
- 6-7 Merchant Wagons (1-3) with 2 merchants per wagon.
- 8 Special (see Special Encounters below).

### Nighttime Encounters (1 in 6)

#### d8 Encounters

- 1-2 Thieves ambush (2-3); one is a 0-level lookout, the other two are 1st level rogues and will attempt a mugging if numbers are equal to the party, otherwise they will pass by and attempt a pick pocket check and run for it.
- 3 Townsfolk (1-4)
- 4-6 Camraye Watch (1-2) (see average watch warriors)

- 7 Merchant Wagons (1-3) with 2 merchants per wagon.
- 8 Special (see Special Encounters below).

### Special Random Encounters

- d12** Encounter
- 1-2 Lord Gustav (see Castle Camraye for statistics) and two retainers (see castle men-at-arms).
- 3-5 Markonnen the Mighty and Torgo (see House #4 below).
- 6-8 Dmitri des Pegasus (see #14 below) returning to the Inn with a small mule-driven wagon of supplies.
- 9 - Myrddin Oakarm (see #10 below) returning to the Temple from visiting lay members of his congregation.
- 10 Captain O'Reiley (see Castle Camraye for statistics) with 1-4 castle guards (see watch warriors).
- 11 The dryad Eva, having snuck back into town from the introduction encounter. If player characters have already accompanied her to the wood then this is "no result".

### Non-Player Character Reactions to Adventurers in Camraye-18

On the whole, most non-player characters will react in a polite and friendly manner to adventurers unless otherwise noted in their write-ups. The people of Camraye are used to strange collections of people traveling to and fro on the caravan route, so the motley collection of classes that are usual of most adventuring groups will not warrant much comment or attention. However, no non-player character will be willing to credit Eva's story or be willing to accompany adventurers into the Everwood. Most have businesses to run or jobs to do and won't leave such just to go out on a lark among the trees. Lord Gustav is a bit concerned about the caravans, but will keep his knights and soldiers at the castle in case of a need to begin escorting caravans directly. If, in the Castle Keeper's opinion, a player character is especially persuasive to Lord Gustav, he might assign one or two of the knights to assist, but no more than that and he will be certain to assign a fixed time period before the knights must return (a few days at most). As there are good jobs escorting caravans, there will be few hirelings available for the party to employ. Like it or not, they're on their own!

## Buildings of Camraye

**1-9: Homes** The average home of a resident of Camraye is a circular hut around 20 feet in diameter with a small stone foundation and planked wooden walls. The roofs are thatched for the most part, with some of the wealthier homes and businesses having rigid roofs of wooden or slate shingles.

One home (#4) is of note, and this home has an 8 foot stone wall around it, with intricate runes written into the stone over the iron gate leading inside. It is magic script, and any who can read such will decipher it as saying "Be Wary! For this is the domicile of MARKONNEN THE MIGHTY!" (capital letters distinct) While magical in nature, they have no power and no other spells are active.

Within the gates a courtyard can be found that is 12 feet in diameter. Small shrubs and clinging vines are attached to the inner

walls of the stonework, with path stones that lead to the front door. Above the door are further magical writings that state "Be afraid! For you are at the door of MARKONNEN THE MIGHTY!" None of these writings have any other power other than being magical script. Knocking on the door will result in the appearance of a hobbling manservant named Torgo answering for his master, the wizard Markonnen the Mighty, who is very busy.

Torgo is a stooped and hunchbacked man with black hair and beard. He talks in a drawling stutter and has a habit of repeating himself. He is antisocial and does his best to get rid of visitors.

*Torgo (He is a chaotic neutral, human servant whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, AC 10. His prime attributes are none due to disease and age. His significant attributes are strength 8 and constitution 13. He carries a small knife and a bag of cleaning rags.)*

Within the simple house are three rooms. To the right is a bedroom that has written above the doorjamb, "Be humble, for you approach the bedroom of MARKONNEN THE MIGHTY!" A small kitchen is straight ahead at the end of the short foyer and a tiny greeting room and Markonnen's magic room are to the left. Above the doorway to this arcane room are written the words "Be terrified! You approach the SANCTUM SANCTORUM of MARKONNEN THE MIGHTY!" In this room, which is only 10 feet by 12 feet is a small altar with runes written upon it saying "Be amazed, for this is the ritual altar of MARKONNEN THE MIGHTY!" In a small drawer set in the back of the altar is Markonnen's spellbook with his memorized spells written in it (and the usual announcement inscribed on the cover) as well as several jars of various unguents and spell components. There is a 70% chance that Markonnen himself will be present in this room during the day and a 90% chance at night.

Markonnen the Mighty is a tall and thin man with jet black shoulder length hair and a bristling moustache and eyebrows. He will speak in vague whispers and always try to imply (without actually lying) that he is a very high level wizard. In fact, he is 4th level and already retired. The competition and politics of the arcane community were too much for him and his rather marginal abilities.

*Markonnen the Mighty (He is a chaotic neutral, 4<sup>th</sup> level human wizard. His vital stats are HD 4d4, HP 9, AC 13. His prime attributes are intelligence, constitution and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 15 and dexterity 13. He carries a staff and wears a dagger on his belt. He also wears a +2 ring of protection. He can cast the following spells 0-arcane mark, detect magic, light, mage hand, 1<sup>st</sup> -comprehend languages, floating disk, identify, sleep, 2nd-invisibility, scare.)*

Markonnen has 20gp, 34sp, and 23cp hidden within the lining of his mattress in his bedroom.

**10: Temple** The temple to the local deity of Good is tall (40 feet) and cavernous in its main sanctuary. The stonework is heavy, and the walls and stairs are usually whitewashed to the point of glowing in the daytime sun. Within the sanctuary, the walls are plastered and convey murals of religious themes and lessons, all painted with vibrant colors. Gilding is evident around the altar, and gold and silver are used amongst the candlesticks and other sacraments.

Residing on the temple premises are the priest and priestess Myrddin & Rowan Oakarm, whose statistics and spells are noted below:

Myrddin Oakarm is a gruff but friendly man in his later years with graying black hair and a beard. While only 5 '6" in height, he is solidly built and muscular. He usually wears browns and greens, preferring robes over tunics. He is on good terms with the druid Argus, but will admit he hasn't heard from his old friend in months. He is aware of Eva's pleas, but will publicly dismiss the warnings as a mere prank (though he is privately beginning to worry).

*Myrddin Oakarm (He is a chaotic good, human, 3rd level cleric. His vital stats are HP 20, AC 14. His prime attributes are strength, wisdom and constitution. His significant attributes are strength 14, wisdom 15, constitution 16, and charisma 14. He usually wears a chain shirt under his robes and carries a mace +1 and a holy symbol about his neck. He also carries a vial of holy water for blessings during his visits to his congregants. He can cast the following spells 0 detect chaos/evil/law/good, detect poison, first aid, purify food & drink. 1<sup>st</sup> - bless, cure light wounds, remove fear, 2<sup>nd</sup> - consecrate.)*

Rowan Oakarm is an attractive woman in her later years with red hair and a pale complexion. She performs the duties of High Priestess for the town and believes the same as her husband regarding Eva and her claims about Argus.

*Rowan Oakarm (She is a chaotic good, human, 2nd level cleric. Her vital stats are HP 14, AC 14. Her prime attributes are intelligence, wisdom and charisma. Her significant attributes are intelligence 13, wisdom 14, dexterity 15, and charisma 15. She usually wears ring mail armor under her robes when traveling about town and carries a hammer +1 for protection. She wears a holy symbol about her neck on a silver chain and carries a potion of healing in her purse for emergencies. She can cast the following spells 0 - detect poison, first aid x2, light, 1<sup>st</sup> - cure light wounds x2.)*

There are also 2-5 acolytes on duty in the temple during daylight hours.

*Acolytes (These are chaotic good, humans whose vital stats are HD 1d8, AC 10, HP 3, 4, 4, 5, 6. Their prime attributes are mental. They carry either maces or staffs.)*

All will have cure light wounds memorized (but no others) as their spell (Castle Keeper's discretion).

**11: The Guildhall** The Guildhall is located in the center of Camraye and is the place where the business and trade of the town is conducted. While Camraye is not large enough for official guilds, the central hall is used as a place for trades as well as for commercial arrangements to be made. There are scribes and clarkes on duty here, ready to write contracts for merchants and to insure legal stamps and official sanction of the guild on all transactions. The hall is made of gray stone, and the wood shingled roof is painted red with white eaves. Within the hall, narrow French-style windows let in some light while merchants and burgesses arrange contracts all around. Scribes scribble at the far wall amongst several wooden desks, all splattered with wax from candles and seals and the occasional spilled ink bottle. Torches in sconces line the walls and lanterns hanging from chains attached to overhead roof beams to

illuminate those areas where the light of the outdoors cannot reach. Just within the doors, the red and white-checked tablecloths of the Guild Exchequers are evident as they busy themselves with money exchanges and the accounting of goods.

During daylight hours, the Guild Mistress Arsendis Del Aramar can be found administering guild business and arranging trade negotiations with 1d4 of her clarkes.

Arsendis Del Aramar is a petite woman standing 5 feet with auburn hair and blue eyes. She is gregarious and easy to talk to, but can haggle the horns off of a deer if given the opportunity.

*Arsendis Del Aramar (She is a neutral, human merchant whose vital stats are HP 4, AC 11. Her prime attributes are intelligence, dexterity and charisma. Her significant attributes are intelligence 14, dexterity 15 and charisma 16. She carries a dagger as well as 1d10 silver and 1d6 gold in her purse.)*

*Clarkes (These are lawful neutral, humans whose vital stats are HD 1d6, AC 10 HP 3 each. Their prime attributes are mental. They carry daggers as well as 1d10 copper and 1d6 silver in their purses.)*

The Guildhall is the only locale in town that will exchange coins and gems for a 10% fee. In a triple locked strongbox of level 2, 3 and 4 difficulty respectively (Arsendis has two of the keys and a Clarke the third) are 200gp, 140sp, 520cp and five gems worth 10gp, two for 20gp, and the last two are worth 50gp each. If the hall is robbed, the clarkes with the third key (who remains in the back of the hall most of the time) will slip out the backdoor in order to keep the third key (which goes to the level 4 lock) safe while alerting the Camraye watch.

**12: Town Market** On the north side of the town center, beyond the temple and the Guildhall, is the outdoor market of Camraye. This area is a hodgepodge of tents, stalls and carts with the seasonal crops on sale from local merchants as well as stalls and booths set up by passing merchants to ply their wares for the town folk. There is no real organization to the layout, and even less direction, with meandering walkways spiraling at random and many dead ends terminating with little or no reason nor warning. Foodstuffs, leatherwork and other goods abound in this place, with prices varying depending on the Castle Keeper and the regional economy of the campaign milieu. One thing to remember is that Camraye and the Everwood are not within the range of turbulent frontiers and fell denizens, so weapons and armor will not be as readily available for sale as in more dangerous climes.

There are usually 5-13 stalls with wares on any given day. The Castle Keeper should use the table below to determine the type of merchants if none can be thought up.

#### Random Merchant Determination

d12	Merchant
1	Brewer/Winemaker
2	Astrology/Soothsayer (d6 = 1-4 Fake, 5-6 True seer)
3	Chirurgeon
4	Bowyer & Fletcher
5-6	Foodstuffs
7	Livestock

- 8 Fine Arts (d10 = 1-2 Sculptor, 3-4 Painter, 5-7 Glassmaker,
- 8-9 Ceramics, 0 Special)
- 9 Furrier
- 10 Books & Scrolls (non-magical)
- 11 Jeweler & Lapidary
- 12 Blacksmith (50% chance also Armorer/Weaponsmith)

There can be several of the same type of merchants selling in the square and the choices may change from day to day at the Castle Keeper's discretion since traders frequently enter and leave along the caravan route.

**13: Town Blacksmith** Just beyond the stables on the left of the road is a small blacksmith shop. Scythes, horseshoes and other common ironwork decorate the doorframe and roof edge of this wooden structure. To the side, the clanging of hammer on anvil can be heard, and a faint light beckons, alive with the soft red glow of coals.

The blacksmith normally works on tools such as plows and hoes as well as wagon wheels along with the occasional shoeing of horses. However, he does dabble a bit in weapon craft and will give the player characters a deal on any weapon forging or armor repair (-20 % off listed price of the weapon), but the lack of practice in these peaceful lands means that the quality of the weapon will be average at best. He cannot make armor other than shield bosses, but can repair metal armors at the -20% off standard rate, another deal he'll cut in order to hone his skills with such panoply.

The blacksmith, Jack Grey, is a tall man with a bald pate and quiet demeanor. He is a friendly sort, although intolerant of foolishness or of those he feels are trying to cheat him. If combat erupts, he has two assistants who will come to his aid one round after combat is engaged.

*Jack Grey (He is a chaotic good, human blacksmith whose vital stats are HP 6, AC 12. His prime attributes are physical. His significant attributes are strength 16 and constitution 14. He carries a hammer and wears a leather apron that equates to +1 AC.)*

*Uglyfr and Lieus, the apprentice blacksmiths (They are lawful good apprentices whose vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 5 and 6, AC 11. Their prime attributes are physical. They carry hammers and wear leather aprons that equate +1 to AC.)*

**14: Stables** The primary stables of Camraye are based in a large ground level barn with 12 individual stables and a small attic loft to store hay and other grains for the animals. There are horses for sale here, but only 25% of the available horses will be of riding type with the balance being plow horses or draft animals. The stable mistress Teresa prides herself on her beasts, and all are average or higher in quality for their type.

Teresa Schwartzdale is a blonde woman of average height and deceptively young appearance. She tends to be taciturn among strangers but appreciates anyone who treats animals well.

*Teresa Schwartzdale (She is a chaotic good human merchant whose vital stats are HP 3, AC 10. Her prime attributes are mental. She*

*carries a riding crop [treat as whip] as well as 22 copper and 11 silver in a belt pouch.)*

**15. Tavern:** The Inn of the Pegasus has a large common room with a beamed ceiling that provides an airy place of relaxation for the patrons who frequent the tavern. Several tables are located near the roaring hearth, and fresh rushes are along the floor to provide a pleasant aroma to the room. On occasion, a traveling minstrel will make his or her coppers playing here for the entertainment of the patrons. Three rooms are available with beds on the second floor, and costs are at the standard rate. Poorer patrons are allowed to sleep overnight in the common room for 25% room cost. All beverages and foods are at the standard rate. The specialty of the house is "Dragon Eggs" which are hard boiled eggs encased in meat and bread crumbs, deep fried and served with mustard. A plate of a dozen of these morsels can be had for 10sp.

The proprietor is Dmitri des Pegasus, a former adventurer who retired for a quiet life keeping a tavern. However, he will not tolerate fights in his bar and will remove troublemakers to the outside (conscious or not) if necessary.

Dmitri des Pegasus is a burly human with brown hair and moustache. He is a friendly and jovial innkeeper who will joke with warrior types in his bar about how they'd not be up to the standards of fighters in his day! But such comments will be good natured and if a character takes such ribbing in good humor, Dmitri will give them a free drink on the house and provide one rumor from the rumor table automatically.

*Dmitri des Pegasus (He is a chaotic good, human 6th level fighter whose vital stats are HP 48, AC 15. His prime attributes are strength, intelligence and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 15, constitution 15, dexterity 17, and charisma 13. He is specialized in broadsword and carries on his person a cudgel and a dagger. He wears bracers of protection +3. His purse usually has 2d10 copper, 1d12 silver and 1d8 gold pieces in it. In addition to the above, Dmitri also wears a ring of regeneration (3 HP/round) that is a memento from his adventuring days. It aids him in keeping fit and in out-drinking anyone in the bar.)*

His wife Isabeau & daughter Nichelle keep the kitchen and serve patrons when needed. Both are attractive human women with blonde hair and green eyes, with Isabeau in her thirties and her daughter in the late teens.

*Isabeau des Pegasus (She is a chaotic good, human merchant whose vital stats are HP 3, AC 11. Her prime attributes are mental. She carries a dagger +1 on a belt under her skirt to discourage overly friendly patrons.)*

*Nichelle des Pegasus (She is a chaotic good, human merchant whose vital stats are HP 3, AC 10. Her prime attributes are physical. She carries a small knife in her boot. Like her mother's dagger it is used to discourage overly friendly patrons.)*

If player characters hang around the tavern, whether simply lounging or making an attempt to garner information, there is a chance that they will pick up rumors as noted below.

To determine the success of picking up rumors, the Castle Keeper should have the inquiring player character make a successful charisma check, with bonuses as appropriate if the player character tries to buy drinks for regulars, bribe with coin, etc. Subsequently, if the player characters act in a boorish or insulting manner, the Castle Keeper should impose such penalties as deemed appropriate.

Roll 1D12 and consult the below rumors

1. The druid Argus has always been a friend to both the townsfolk and the woodland creatures. (T)
2. One of the customer's siblings was working with the charcoal burners in the wood and hasn't been heard from in weeks. (T)
3. The druid Argus has a private grove of dryads he tends, and they'll do anything for him! (F)
4. Satyrs are known to attempt to lure any maidens away from nightly encampments in the Everwood. (T)
5. Dmitri saw a treant in the woods once and even talked to him! (False; although there is a treant, Dmitri never saw it and will deny the rumor)
6. The druid Argus once cursed a group of disrespectful lumberjacks by changing them into dryads! (F)
7. There's an oak tree at the center of the Everwood that is thousands of years old, I saw it! (T)
8. Lord Gustav, the Wizard Markonnen, and the druid Argus all used to be adventurers together in the past and are great friends. (Partially True, Gustav & Markonnen adventured together but not with Argus and none are good friends)
9. Markonnen travels to the wood during full moons and uses his magic in foul rites. (F)
10. The Oakarms of the Temple know a lot about Argus. (F)
11. The druid Argus was spurned by Arsendis of the Merchant's Guild and in retaliation for the snub, the druid is plotting revenge on the caravans. (F)
12. Earlier today there was a dryad in town! She went from building to building begging for aid for the Everwood but was directed to Lord Gustav's Castle. (T)

**16: Castle Camraye** Within the wooden outer walls surrounding the keep, arises the sides of Showertop Hill (built up to cover the donjon level of the stone keep). The sides of the hill are dotted with small huts, a blacksmith's forge and a small stable to keep the Lord's horses and a small retinue of warhorses. The outer walls are laid out in a hexagonal fashion, with small wooden ramparts at each point of the hexagon. Of these six ramparts, the two flanking the main gate and the two on the opposite side of the gate are mounted with ballista. While usually covered and unstrung, they can be made ready for combat within half an hour of preparation. The two side ramparts have no such artillery, but do have pulleys for the rapid deployment of cauldrons of oil or pitch prepared in the courtyard below.

The lord of the manor is Lord Gustav von Nvren, who was granted this lordship-in-fief for service to the Crown as a Knight Errant many years ago. He takes his duties very seriously, and frequently schedules patrols and maneuvers to keep himself and his warriors in top shape. Because of the apparent placidity of the area, some of his fighters grumble at what they consider excessive exercise but respect the Lord and will follow him faithfully.

Gustav von Nvren is a stocky human with curly brown hair and a well trimmed goatee. He is sparse in his comments to friend and stranger alike, but this is less due to his station than uncertainty about proper etiquette. Being an adventurer for most of his life has not prepared him for the finer points of courtesy, something his wife strives to rectify.

Lord Gustav (*He is a lawful good, human 5th level knight whose vital stats are HP 41, AC 18. His prime attributes are strength, dexterity and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 15, constitution 16 and charisma 13. He wears full plate armor and wields a +2 longsword on foot and a horse man's axe or lance when astride his warhorse.*)

## The Keep Garrison

Captain Joseph O'Reiley is a tall and lean warrior in his mid-30s with curly red hair. He is a stickler for discipline among the garrison and will follow orders punctually and efficiently. He commands the castle garrison and is the deputy of Lord Gustav.

Captain Joseph O'Reiley (*He is a lawful neutral human 2nd level fighter whose vital stats are HP 12, AC 16. His prime attributes are strength, wisdom and dexterity. His significant attributes are intelligence 14 and dexterity 16. He is specialized in the longsword. He wears chain mail and carries a shield and wields a longsword.*)

20 Castle Guards (*These are lawful neutral, human fighters whose vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 6 each, AC 15. Their prime attributes are physical. They each carry a spear and longsword and wear scale mail armor and carry a small wooden shield. Their purses carry 1d6 cp and 1d4 sp.*)

8 mounted Knights (*These are lawful neutral, human 1st level knights whose vital stats are HD 1d10, HP 7 each, AC 16. Their prime attributes are physical. They each wear chain mail armor and carry a metal shield. They each wield a longsword on foot and a lance when astride their light warhorse. They carry 1d12 gold in their belt pouches.*)

There are perhaps a dozen human commoners as servants within the keep, smithy, and other outbuildings.

## The Everwood

The Everwood Forest is a huge old-growth forest located near the town of Camraye. It is bisected through its center by a dirt caravan road, and most merchants speak well of the wood and its guardian druid. With the exception of the occasional satyr or dryad trying their best to lure individuals from travelers' encampments at night, the road and the wood are free of bandits and most monsters. Other than a week of travel without seeing any habitations, the journey is considered by most a pleasant (albeit dull) one.

But that was before Argus obtained the foul Liber Mortis. So far, only the strange quietude and lack of pranks by the resident wood folk would give any travelers (or investigators) a clue that something is not quite right in the forest.

If, in the Castle Keeper's opinion, the player characters delay excessively before investigating the unusual occurrences within the Everwood, such could result in caravans being attacked in the middle of the night by bands of infected satyrs, dryads and perhaps roving bands of undead. Any caravans attacked in such a fashion will be wiped out, with only the wagons and scattered goods found in the encampments. No bodies should be in evidence, as these would be either taken to be made into undead servants or as feed for the ghouls at the charcoal camp. No coin or goods would be taken, which should also infer to a perceptive party that such is not the work of simple bandits.

Argus is enthusiastically experimenting on humans now (see the gibbering moulder in section 3: The Great Oak) and will want more "material" to experiment upon. Soon, the numbers of undead will increase and travel will grind to a halt in the wood. At such time, if the player characters aren't yet involved they might be hired by Lord Gustav to find out what's going on with the caravan attacks, why Argus hasn't replied to Lord Gustav's summons and why the messengers are not returning. In such a case, the Castle Keeper is encouraged to increase the number of undead creatures encountered (except for the treant and the pixies will have gone underground by then). Doubling the number is not too severe in the author's opinion if the party dawdles too much, but it is left to each Castle Keeper to determine the results of poor planning and curiosity by the party.

#### Random Encounters while traveling the Everwood

During the Day (6am to 6pm): 1 in 6, check once.

During the Night (6pm-6am): 1 in 4, check twice.

#### d12 Encounter

- 1 Animal skeleton. This is not animated, but will be covered with grave mold. See the grave mold write-up in the Appendix for details if anyone attempts to touch or disturb the skeleton or the mold.
- 2 1-4 Pixies [see planned encounter #2 for statistics]
- 3 1-2 Satyrs\* [see planned encounter #1 for statistics]
- 4 1-2 Giant bombardier beetles
- 5 1-2 Black bears
- 6 2-8 Wolves\*
- 7 1-6 Wild boars\*
- 8 2-7 Giant centipedes
- 9 2-7 Large spiders
- 10 Banshee [see planned encounter #10 for statistics]
- 11 1 Centaur infected with grave mold (He is insane and will attack on sight and fight until slain)
- 12 Treant infected with grave mold [see planned encounter #7 for statistics]  
50% chance that the creatures encountered are infected with grave mold.

The number in brackets (ex [1]) indicates that these are part of an encounter area listed in the text. If these creatures are encountered

as wandering monsters and any are slain, then reduce the number of creatures in the encounter area by the appropriate amount.

## Planned Forest Encounters

Planned encounters in the forest proper include a group of infected satyrs, a watch patrol of the pixie realm guarding the entry to their lair, a carnivorous assassin vine (at night), two nymphs unaware of any problems, an insane treant and his cave, and the swamp-like former lagoon known as the Blue Hole, as well as Argus' Great Oak itself, which is now the central nexus of Argus' vicious undead experiments.

**1. Infected Satyrs** As the party cautiously advances upon this clearing, the lilting sound of pipes greets their ears with a pleasant song of the wood folk, though with an undercurrent of melancholic despair. Upon further approach, six satyrs can be seen playing their pipes while sitting on two fallen trees. Both the downed trees and the satyrs seem sprinkled with a fine white powder that has collected into clumps here and there upon their bodies.

This is a group of 6 satyrs who are infected by the grave mold. They will keep in the shadows of the wood to avoid the party's investigation of the white powder any further and try to use their pipes to charm the player characters into submission. However, due to their degenerated state, player characters get a +2 on saving throws and the satyrs cannot use the sleep effects of the pipes. Failing this, they attack until killed.



6 Satyrs (*These neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 21, AC 15. Their prime attributes are mental. They attack with a head butt, doing 2d4 HP of damage. Their pipes require a charisma save or they effect listeners as charm or fear spell. Their spell resistance is 6.*)

**2. Watchpoint of the Pixie Steading** Moving through the forest and clumps of dense underbrush, the party comes upon a huge cedar tree whose low hanging branches sweep across a small (30 foot) clearing. The brisk smell of the cedar wood fills the character's nostrils, but attention is quickly diverted to small winged creatures that descend from the upper branches toward the ground... and the party.

10-14 pixies are on station here (50% chance 4 are on patrol) guarding the root tunnels to the pixie lair under the cedar tree. Half their number will remain invisible in order to support their brethren if attacked, while the leader and his followers will warn any group entering the area to leave, but will not attack unless the party is obviously threatening. In such circumstances, they will brandish weapons and appear menacing, but will keep any creatures at a standoff until reinforcements arrive (perhaps the 4 pixies in the random encounters) or they are given orders otherwise. They know that something is not right with Argus, but have no details other than the grave mold upon his Great Oak and its effect on other denizens of the forest. They will not provide any armed or magical assistance to the party, even if they are truly convinced of their good intentions. However, if pressed, they will provide a guide for the party to get to Argus' Great Oak.

14 Pixies (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 2 x 7, 3 x 6, leader HP 4, AC 16. Their prime attributes are mental. Their special abilities are polymorph self, permanent illusion (1/day), know alignment, confusion (permanent duration unless removed with remove curse), dispel magic (8th level effect) (1/day), dancing lights (1/day), detect thoughts, and sleep (10% chance) (1/day). They attack with 3 types of special arrows: Type I does 2-5 damage, Type II requires a constitution save or sleep for 1-6 turns and Type III which requires a initiative save or lose all memories and skills/levels. Each pixie has 4 arrows of each type and gain a +4 BTH to hit with them. Their spell resistance is 6.*)

**3. Pack Gathering** Before entering this area the player characters will hear the noise of wolves howling to their pack mates. Rangers, druids, gnomes or elves will note that the calls are oddly mournful and of a strange note but that they are clearly calling their fellows to the hunt. For the party, perhaps?

These wolves have been gathered at Argus' command to prepare for an attack on the pixie lair. If the party stumbles onto the gathering they will be attacked. Eight wolves are here and will fight until slain.

8 wolves (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 8, 9, 10, 10, 11, 12, 14, AC 14. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite that does 1-4 points of damage and inflicts a 20% chance of infecting the victim with the grave mold - see new monsters below.*)

**4. Song of the Babbling Brook** Approaching this area, the player characters hear the merry bubbling of water falling into a small pool. Emerging from the trees, a small waterfall can be seen as fresh spring water forms and cascades into a rocky hollow, forming a small pool of the clear fluid before overflowing the rocky ledge and spilling over to flow further.

This brook and pool are the homes of two nymphs. They know nothing of Argus' corruption or of the strange behavior of the other wood folk. They will hide from any non-good player characters, but may (50% chance or 11-20 on 1d20) communicate with good aligned party members. They know of the treant Mistlebark, but not of his current tormented state. They can give general directions to Argus Great Oak, but being nymphs there is a 1 in 4 chance they will get the directions wrong and begin to argue with each other as to which is correct and which is the "silly wethead!"

2 Nymphs (*These neutral good creatures' vital stats are HD 3d6, HP 17, 20, AC 17. Their prime attributes are physical. Their special abilities are divine beauty (stunned for 1 round, make a charisma save or be stunned for 1d4 additional rounds), dimension door (1/day), twilight vision, druid spells. They have a spell resistance is 4. Their spells are 0 - Detect good, endure elements, light, no direction, purify food & drink, 1<sup>st</sup> - Animal friendship, faerie fire, invisibility to animals, obscuring mist, 2<sup>nd</sup> - Charm person/animal, cure light wounds (X2), speak with animals, 3<sup>rd</sup> - cure disease, water breathing, 4<sup>th</sup> - cure serious wounds)*

**5. A Festive Locale** From a distance, this tree appears to be festooned with streamers and various bundles hanging from limbs in white silk and ribbons; apparently a tree decorated for some celebration. However, upon approaching closer, the party will realize that it is a tree covered in spider web and many of the bundles are human shaped! Upon this realization the weavers of the tree's white décor will attack.

Four giant spiders are prowling in this area. Only two are in the tree however, and the other two are hiding in non-webbed trees nearby and will strike to ambush the party, obtaining a +1 to any surprise checks.

4 Giant Spiders (*These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 4, 5, 5, 6, AC 14. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a poison bite that does 1d4 points of damage and requires a constitution save or the victim takes an additional 2 points of damage for the next 3 turns.*)

If the party cuts down any of the bundles, they will find human, satyr and many animal corpses reduced to dried husks. There is a 20% chance that any body disturbed will have spider eggs upon them, which may hatch and attack those that disturb them at the Castle Keeper's discretion.

One of the human corpses will be wearing rotted clothes, but a shirt of mithril chain mail will still be in fine condition. The body will also have a +2 battleaxe strapped to its back as well as a rotting leather pouch containing 32gp and 21sp.

**6. Rampaging Treant** Traveling through the tangled vegetation of the forest, the party suddenly comes upon a swath of destruction.

Topped trees and uprooted scrub and dirt create a rough path of mayhem that leads across the foliage towards the northwest parts of the Everwood. In the distance, an unearthly howl of anguish can be heard from an inhumanly deep voice, cracking in its despair with a sound of splintering wood.

While approaching within 20 yards of the encounter area, the party will hear the smashing of trees and the unearthly wails of a huge creature, obviously in torment. If the party continues to approach, they will find several trees uprooted and knocked aside. The trees will have bark scraped away, and the white powder of the spores of the grave mold slowly beginning to attach themselves to the bared parts of the trees. Following the path of mauled trees, the party will discover a massive walking tree – a treant howling with anguish and scraping its grave mold-infected hide on any trees in its path, desperately attempting to rid itself of the noxious filth.

The treant is infected with grave mold but as yet has not succumbed to its dominance. However, Mistlebark the treant is quite delusional and cannot discern friend from foe in his current state and will attack any creatures or player characters that approach too close and are noticed by him (50% chance, or 11+ on D20). If a party cleric or druid successfully turns the mold, Mistlebark will return to his senses and thank the party. This treant could be a useful ally to the party if they avoid fighting him. If the party just mindlessly attacks him, they will discover he's still quite able to put up a fight and the party gets what they deserve!

*Mistlebark the Treant (This chaotic good creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, HP 42, AC 20. His prime attributes are physical. He attacks with both his trunk-like arms doing 2d8 damage per strike. His special abilities are blend, animate trees, trample, twilight vision, vulnerability to fire.)*

Mistlebark is aware that Argus has been corrupted, but is not aware how or why. He knows the way to the Great Oak, and knows that the satyrs and many dryads have been assailed by the disgusting mold, but has not yet connected the mold's appearance to Argus' experiments. Mistlebark also knows of the yellow mold patch (see 11-E: Blue Hole), but believes the grave mold might be a strange mutation of nature rather than necromancy. So, his current rage at Argus is one for Argus' apparent negligence rather than the druid's direct responsibility.

If healed of his affliction, the treant will do his best to aid the party if asked but if he isn't, he will go on his own to try and defeat the evil of Argus and save the wood and its folk. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to play Mistlebark as a wise figure who is nonetheless in anguish at the state of the Everwood and his unintentional part in assisting the destruction (uprooting and infecting trees).

**7. Charcoal Burner's Camp** The faint smell of burned wood wafts through the forest as the party approaches this clearing. Observant player characters will notice that the clearing is somewhat recent (2 months old) and was cleared by axe, leaving fresh stumps circling the outskirts of the clearing. Within the small clearing are four bedraggled tents set up in a circle around an imposing dead campfire. The fire seems to have been dead for some time, and much wood has been reduced to charcoal and piled next to the fire.

There are faint rustlings within the tents as shambling figures begin to emerge to greet the party.

These figures are ghouls. The burners have been infected with the grave mold so long that the infection has transformed them into the undead: ghouls! They are quite hungry and will attack immediately.

*6 Ghouls (These chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 12 each, AC 14. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with 2 Claws for 1d3 points of damage, and a Bite for 1d6 points of damage.)*

**8. The Assassin Vine** Walking along a thin deer trail through the wood, the party notices a scattering of bones of various animals throughout the path of the trail. Upon closer inspection, the bones appear to have been picked clean and are intertwined by vines; vines that suddenly animate and attack!

*Assassin Vine (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 5d8, HP 29, AC 15. Its prime attributes are physical. It attacks with vines doing 1d4 damage each, with a failed strength save by the victim indicating constriction. Constriction means the victim blacks out in 3 rounds and will be strangled to death in 3 more if not freed. Its special abilities are constrict, improved grab, camouflage and resistance to cold and fire.)*

The assassin vine has been taking advantage of Argus' preoccupation with necromancy and general inattention to the forest and has been greedily feeding on any victims it can find. The party will not be its first taste of sentient meat, for further back in the brush is the skeleton of a human ranger. While most of his belongings have been consumed, his short sword +1 and quiver of arrows (12 +1, 2 +2) are still salvageable. His chain mail purse holds 30gp and 22sp.

**9. Mistlebark's Cave** Entering the cavernous opening, the party sees a shallow high cave with a 30 foot circumference and a roof of approximately similar height. Within the small cave, all appears is chaos. A large table (10 feet high) is lying on its side with two legs broken away. Giant sized ceramic jars and bowls lie scattered and broken throughout the cave. Apparently one broken container held some sort of enlarging potion, for there are 3 large centipedes scuttling on the floor.

*3 Enlarged Centipedes (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d6, HP 3, 4, 5, AC 14. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite that inflicts 1d4 points of damage plus a poison that requires a constitution save or become incapacitated for 1d4 turns.)*

Upon close inspection, investigating characters will find three large decanter-sized potion flasks that are still intact and have their corks securely sealed.

These potion bottles are all that remains of Mistlebark's brewing experiments that treants are well noted for. If the characters attempt to sample the potions or use an identify spell upon them, the following types and effects will be revealed.

**Bottle 1:** Four doses of a regenerative potion. This potion will allow one character per dose to regenerate 3 HP/round for one day.



The potion is not cumulative, so repeated doses will not grant the imbiber any further advantages.

**Bottle 2:** Four doses of delusion of plant control. By imbibing this potion, the imbiber must make an initiative save or else be convinced he or she can control plant life around him or her, up to and including assassin vines, treants, and other vegetative life. The potion's effects last one full day.

**Bottle 3:** This potion contains 4 doses of a potion of longevity (see *Monsters & Treasure* book for more details).

**10. The Glade of Serenity** This peaceful part of the Everwood has been tended for decades as a final resting place for the druids who have passed away in the course of the maintenance of the great forest. There are currently six cairns set in a circle along the peripheral edges of the clearing. Each of the graves is made of piled stones upon a lidless log coffin with a marker stone at the head of each cairn. Any character attempting to read the names will only be able to decipher them on a successful initiative check, for while the writings are in the common language, age and erosion have weathered much of the inscriptions away. The contents of each cairn are described below.

**A. "Brianna Cloverdael: First Druid of the Everwood"** This cairn appears empty of any body save a fine dusting of ash on the bottom of it, but several pieces of jewelry lie in the log along with a rotted cloak. The reason for its lack of a resident is that the former occupant was transformed by Argus into a banshee (see *Random Encounters*), who will arrive in 10 rounds after her tomb is opened unless the party has already encountered and defeated her. However, if a druid or cleric of a nature deity blesses the grave, then the banshee will be freed and her spirit will go on to the afterlife. If this is done, treat any random rolls of "Banshee" as "No Encounter."

The jewelry within the log coffin is two opal necklaces (100gp each), a gold torque worth 75gp, and a ring of fire resistance.

*Banshee (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 7d8, HP 48, AC 20. Her prime attributes are mental. She attacks with a chilling touch that does 1d8 damage. Her special abilities are keening wail and immunity to cold and electricity. Her spell resistance is 10.)*

**B. "Thurin de Rysard: the Land's Friend"** Within this cairn is a wight who will leap to the attack as soon as it is freed. It wears an obsidian headband that allows the bearer to cast a darkness spell once a day and the wight will use it to conceal itself from the sun if the grave is disturbed during the daylight hours. There is no other treasure in the grave.

Wight (*This lawful evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d12, HP 32, AC 15. Its prime attributes are mental. It attacks with its claws for 1d6 points of damage, and a successful hit drains the victim of one level of experience. Its special abilities are create spawn, energy drain and dark vision 60 ft.*)

**C. "Zoranna of the Dawn: From Dragonkeep to the Everwood and Beyond"** This cairn holds a skeleton (non-animated) with gold bracelets etched with Celtic knot work and mistletoe designs (worth 350gp as a set) and a rusted scimitar.

**D. "Stephean Leafshaper: He Was There"** Upon moving the stones enough to get a look inside, a will o' wisp will be roused and will attack the party. Within the log coffin is a leather bag with 100pp in it and a ring of swimming.

Will O' Wisp (*This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 9d8, HP 55, AC 29. Its prime attributes are mental. It attacks with a shocking touch that does 2d8 damage. Its special abilities are dark vision to 60 ft., immunity to magic and natural invisibility.*)

**E. "Mathew de Morin: He Flies Alone and Away"** This cairn holds only dust, and the interior seems blackened and burned as if some conflagration consumed the contents some time ago.

**F. "Sorscha Arrow-Swift: Justice Flies Swiftly from Her"** The cairn holds a skeleton (non-animated) wearing rotted leather armor with a dingy bow and arrows lying by its side. If cleaned off, the bow will be revealed as one of fine workmanship and undamaged by the passage of years. Indeed, it is Avengewynd, a +2 short bow, +4 vs. goblinoids. But to get the bow, one must circumvent a nest of 6 vipers that have made a home in the rib cage of the skeleton.

6 Vipers (*These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 1d4, HP 1 each, AC 1. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite that does 1 HP of damage and requires a constitution saving throw or take and additional 1d4 damage.*)

**11. The Blue Hole** As one travels to the northeast of the Everwood, the terrain begins to grow wet and fetid, with pools of brackish water and algae covered muck predominating the further one travels. This swampy area was once a small lagoon fed by a tributary of the Magna River, but a combination of tectonic shifts and sediment has caused the river to pass this area by. However, residual draining and underground sources keep this area quite swampy. The Blue Hole uses a different random encounters table than the rest of the Everwood and is detailed below.

#### Blue Hole Random Encounters (1-6 on 1D12)

d12	Encounter
1-2	3-12 Giant centipedes
3-4	Assassin vine
5-6	2-4 Giant frogs
7-8	2-4 Wuggs [see Blue Hole encounter 1 for statistics]
9-10	1-4 Giant tics
11-12	4-11 Stirges

**A: Village of the Wuggs** Squishing through the muck and morass of the blue hole, the party encounters a deep ravine with a pool of stagnant water within the center of the depression. Along the edges of the ravine are many trees whose root systems have grown out of the moist earth and have created a spider web of root systems along the sides of the gorge and down to the water's edge.

This area has several mud caves hewn and pasted around the ravine edge from the root systems and limbs of swamp vegetation to create a series of simple dwellings for a small tribe of wuggs who have recently moved into the area. There are 18 males and 7 females with 6 young (non-combatants). If the wugg encounter in the random encounters table located above is made before this area is encountered, subtract the number of wuggs killed from the male total noted above.

18 Male Wuggs (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 10 each, AC 14. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with claws that do 1-2 with each claw (x2) and 1d6 w/bite or spear.*)

7 Female Wuggs (*These chaotic evil creatures' vital stats are HD 1d8, HP 6 each, AC 13. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with claws that do 1-2 with each claw (x2) and 1d6 w/bite.*)

The young will not fight, and will dive into the water as soon as any attack begins. If the tribe is reduced to 50% or less, the rest will dive into the pool and try to swim away by following various streambeds and drain gullies. There is no treasure in evidence, the wuggs only having simple spears and flint knives in their hovels.

**B: The Den of the Croaking Horror** The stagnant pools of water are quite large in this area, creating a small islet off the higher grounds traveled by the party. Only a small mud levee connects the islet to the rest of the Blue Hole, with water surrounding all other sides of the isolated area. The islet is forested and is roughly three acres in diameter. The water surrounding the area has a depth ranging from three to eight feet deep, with leeches, vipers and other small vermin infesting the waters.

This small bog islet is the lair of a Croaking Horror (see Appendix: New Monsters) that is occasionally given sacrifices of animal carcasses by the wuggs, who worship the monster as an avatar of their god. It will attack any non-wuggs who come upon the island and fight until slain.

Croaking Horror (*This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 39, AC 19. Its prime attributes are physical. It attacks with claws that do 1d6 damage each (x2) and a bite that does 2d4 damage. Its special ability is a croak that requires the victim to make a wisdom save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. If the croaking horror is slain, investigating player characters can find within the creature's gullet two rubies worth 300gp each and a bone scroll tube sealed with wax. The scroll inside has three cleric spells: cure moderate wounds (x2) and sympathy.*)

There is a 10% chance that there will be 2-4 wuggs in this area with three muskrat carcasses as an offering to their deity. If encountered by the party, the wuggs will drop their bloody tribute and flee, certain that the blood scents will draw their god to the area and he

will deal with the impudent intruders. See encounter area "A" above for wugg statistics.

**C: Old Shipwreck** The swampy muck that has plagued the party throughout the Blue Hole gives way to a very large pool of water, the largest yet encountered. While as fetid and reeking as all the others, this pool appears to have once been a type of dockyard. The rotting skeleton of a ship pokes its forecandle and one mast out of the ooze, a stark reminder of once civilized inhabitation of the area.

This area was once a river way-station, but now a single hulk of a decrepit vessel and a collapsed longhouse are the only remnants of the small dock that used to exist here. The one remaining mast sticks up out of the greenish brown water as does the foredeck/front half of the ship (the other two masts have long since rotted away). A search of the foredeck will reveal nothing but rotted and collapsing beams as well as various insect lives inhabiting the vessel.

Any adventurers who attempt to explore the rear cabin and aft cargo sections of the ship will have to submerge in the gooey slime and deal with various vermin as well as other crawlies. If a player character submerges into the water, take the AC granted by their armor (that is, the bonus the armor provides) and subtract from 10. The resulting number is subtracted from their constitution checks each round they search the mud-entombed vessel. If a character fails their save, they take 1d4 temporary constitution damage every round until they return to the surface and rest for one hour. Any character who refuses to return will continue to take this damage. At constitution 0, the character runs out of air and drowns.

For every turn a character continues searching the hulk, roll on the below table for results.

### Shipwreck Encounters

d12	Encounters
1	Nothing to swimmers, but a flock of 2-12 stirges swarm over those on surface (see <i>Castles &amp; Crusades Monsters &amp; Treasure</i> for statistics).
2	Normal leeches (total loss of 1 HP/turn until removed).
3	Giant gar ( <i>Its vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 9, AC 14, and are neutral. Its prime attributes are physical. It attacks with a bite for 1d6 damage.</i> )
4	1-2 Giant crocodiles ( <i>Their vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 12, 14, AC 15, and are neutral. Their prime attributes are physical. They attack with a bite for 2d4 damage and a tail slap that does 1d12 damage.</i> )
5-6	Nothing.
7	2 Water ghouls looking for snacks.
8	1-4 wine bottles with corks intact; roll D6 to determine quality of contents; with 1-2 contents fermented to vinegar, 3-4 cheap wine worth 5sp, 5-6 good wine worth 10gp.
9	Waterlogged bundles of rotting textiles.
10	10 Rot grubs in mud ( <i>Their vital stats are HD 1d4, HP</i>

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 11 | Giant water snake.  |
| 12 | Rusted iron chest with 205gp, 38sp, and 2pp as well as a scroll tube with a map in it. The map is quite old, and is discernable despite some water stains. It appears to be a map to travel to the Sturmhald Castle. (Note: this can be devised by the Castle Keeper if desired or can be a lead in to the module <i>Fall From Grace</i> ). |

## Combat Underwater

If swimming or otherwise underwater, player characters encounter creatures during their search of the ship. They may evade the opponents and return to shore with a successful dexterity check. However, if the characters engage in combat with any of the monsters, use the following guidelines for underwater combat.

Unlike normal combat on the surface, strength is not the ability used to hit or damage opponents. Due to water's mass and drag, it is virtually impossible to gain enough force behind blows to make any significant difference in combat. Therefore, dexterity bonuses and penalties are important and are used to add to the combat roll to hit an opponent (but not to damage). As noted in the drowning rules above, constitution checks will still be necessary at the beginning of each round before initiative is rolled with an additional penalty of -1 to rolls per round while engaged in underwater combat. This penalty is cumulative, with a failure requiring the character to swim to the surface immediately to get air. This maneuver prohibits the surfacing character's attacks that round, and grants an opponent a free attack upon the surfacing character, whose AC will not be adjusted for bonuses granted by dexterity or shield modifications (though dexterity penalties are used).

As this water is swampy and foul, a human or demihuman can only see 8-10 feet in front of them, resulting in major limits to spell ranges and targeting. Such variables should be determined by the Castle Keeper.

**D. Storehouse** This rotting pile of lumber is overgrown by creeper vines and other swamp vegetation and is hardly recognizable as the warehouse building it once was. This longhouse style structure had been used by those frequenting the small dock for storage of goods and occasional supplies for the repair of sails and planks, but now the roof has collapsed and the walls have rotted and fallen in. Close inspection will show the stone foundation of the original structure as well as decayed remains of the sails and timber once stored within. A broken barrel of tar is near the back and while the barrel is useless, the tar could be salvaged by a determined adventurer. Other than this, there is nothing of value or interest in the wreckage.

**E. Yellow Mold Garden** This garden-like glade shimmers with a golden glow in the light upon the foliage. Indeed, a cursory inspection will show that many of the plants and grassy turf are covered by a yellowish mold which stretches across the entire clearing.

The party should soon realize that the trees, shrubs and even the grass and ground are in fact covered with yellow mold. Closer inspection will reveal to the curious that it appears as though several

bodies are buried in the mold, with the fungus clinging to the bones as tenaciously as to the vegetation around them.

This small clearing has been carefully grown with yellow mold by Argus as part of his experiments in the creation of the grave mold. There are several dead bodies within the mold, but none as yet animated.

If the party comes upon the yellow mold during the daytime, the resulting sunlight causes the mold to go dormant and therefore it will be of little danger. However, if the mold is encountered during dusk, dawn or the dark of night, it will spray its spores upon the first creature to come within range.

*Yellow Mold (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 0, HP 0, AC 10. It has no primary attributes. It attacks by discharging a spore spray; any within its range must save vs. constitution at -3 penalty or take 1d6 temporary constitution damage. No other attacks.)*

**F. Bridge Over Troubled Trolls** As the party travels onward, they encounter a stone bridge circumventing a deep stream which appears to connect the outer edge of the Blue Hole swamp with the more temperate part of the Everwood. This stone and marble bridge is well maintained, oddly incongruous in the fetid decay of the mire of the swamp that overarches the dank stream below.

If any member of the party attempts to cross the bridge or searches the water bank underneath the bridge, a troll will come out and attack. If the encounter is during the day, the creature will suffer a -1 to hit due to its aversion to sunlight.

The troll is unlike most of its breed as it has a third arm growing out of its back! Argus originally summoned the troll in order to experiment with its rubbery (and regenerating) flesh as modified by the Liber Mortis. While necromancy was unsuccessful on the monster, Argus did cut off one of its arms and inserted the limb into an open wound on the creature's back, curious as to what

the results would be. The limb adhered and so this three armed aberration now stalks the bridge way.

*Troll (Its vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 40, AC 16, and its chaotic evil. Its prime attributes are physical. Its special abilities are darkvision, twilight vision and regeneration. It attacks with 2 claws that do 1d4 damage each (x3) and a bite that does 21d4+1 damage.)*

The troll has a crude mud hole nest dug into the earth underneath the archway supports of the bridge (on the temperate side). The floor of this cave is covered with rotting hides, gnawed bones and other refuse one might expect in a troll den. Sunk into the mud of the flooring is a +1 trident and a bag of holding which is unfortunately filled with nothing but mud and swamp slime.

## The Great Oak of the Druid Argus

The sun is obscured from this clearing as the massive limbs of the mighty oak create a verdant canopy across the circumference of the clearing. The great oak itself is imposing, with a wide trunk and great gnarled roots that emerge slightly at the base of the tree before descending deep within the ground. Among the crannies of these roots, the druid Argus has hollowed from the earth several chambers in which he resides and must be confronted within.

Visible light is small due to the overarching limbs, which have also kept the surrounding area free of trees and brush. This means that player characters will have little cover to mask their advance towards the two wooden doors set into the earth at the base of the Great Oak and framed by the natural roots of the tree. Darkness would provide cover for anyone advancing to the tree to be sure, but any light sources would stand out in the clearing.



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Close inspection of the trunk and roots of the tree will reveal that the bark is crumbling away and patches of grave mold are spreading across the base of the trunk and roots upward along the tree. Disturbing this growth has a 1 in 6 chance of emitting spores that may affect player characters nearby. Check the grave mold write-up in the Appendix for chances of infection.

As the doors face the north, anyone approaching the oak from any southerly direction has a chance of encountering the zombies mentioned below.

Approaching player characters will see three forms shrouded in brown robes sitting in a circle facing each other. If the party approaches to within 20 feet of the figures, they will slowly rise and attack.

3 Zombies (These neutral evil creatures' vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 8, 9, 11; AC 11. They have no prime attributes\*. They attack with one claw\* that does 1d8 damage plus possible rot grub infestation.)

\*Statistics modified due to infestation with rot grubs.

These zombies were part of Argus' first experiments in necromancy with the Liber Mortis, and while he was storing them in a side chamber of his abode, they were infested with rot grubs. Unable to decide how to rid them of the pests (and so as to not infest his other creatures), Argus sent them out of the oak onto the surface until he could think of something to do with them. Any zombie damaged in melee will spray rot grubs from its wound. Count this as an extra attack on the player characters by the zombie. A hit means that the grubs will begin to seek out open flesh and burrow into the body with damage as noted in the random encounters table above.

The burrowed-out rooms are set in a pentagon shape, with the entrance room at the north central point. The rooms continue clockwise to the east-southeast, the south-southeast, the south-southwest, and finally to the west-southwest. All rooms are connected in a circular pattern with 5x6 foot passageways dug from the earth. While root systems are exposed, the pre-corrupted Argus took great care in this construction as to not damage or harm the Great Oak. The doors are 6 feet tall, and most ceilings are 10 feet tall unless otherwise noted in the room description.

## The Druid's Abode

### Ground Floor

**1: Entrance** An elaborately carved set of wooden double doors leads from the outside to a small five step staircase that ends in a 10 feet x 20 feet room cut from the dirt and supported by the oak's intertwined root system in the ceiling. Passageways leading southwest and southeast emerge from the east and west sides of the room. A staircase on the far west wall descends further into the ground to another level. The floor is packed earth with a scattering of bones across the floor. The bones shine brightly white in the party's torches, as if polished to a high sheen.

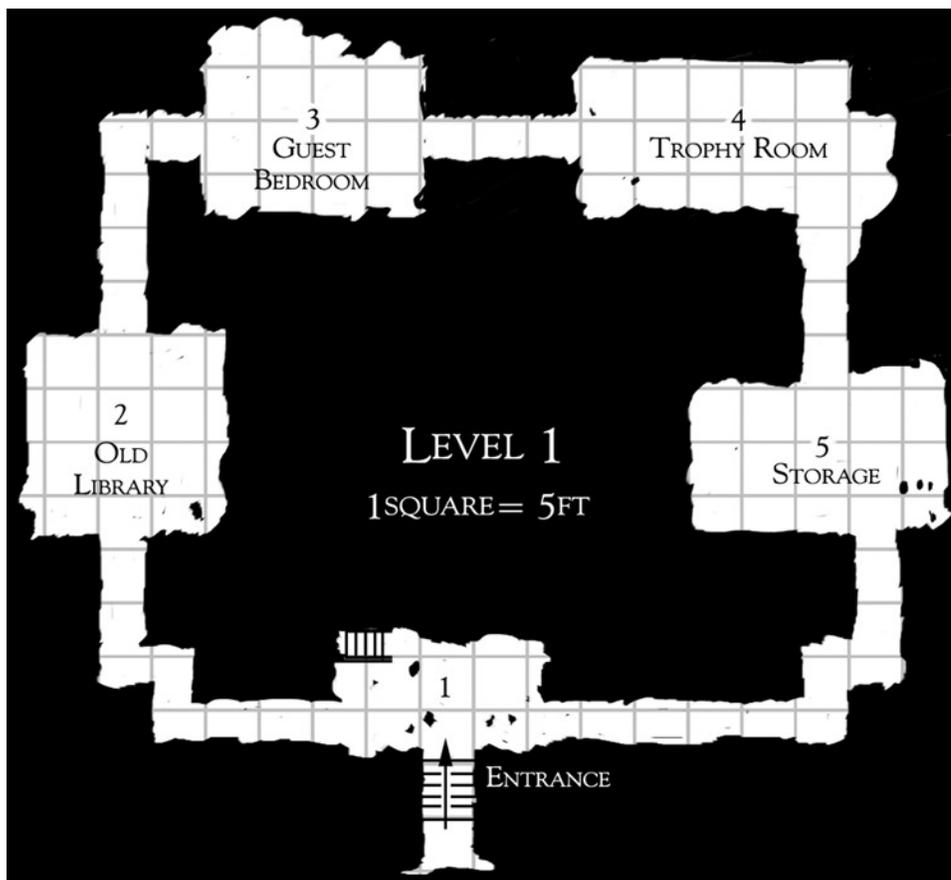
At the south end of the room is a writhing mass of flesh colored goo, and small mewling noises escape from the nightmarish creature. When the party enters the room, three eyeballs spurt up from orifices in the thing's top and gaze at them, the mewling turning to excited babbling as the gruesome monstrosity creeps toward the adventurers!

The creature is a gibbering moulder (see *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure* book), created by Argus' experiments in molding flesh in unnatural shapes. It is savagely hungry and will attack any living intruders (save Argus) until destroyed.

Gibbering Moulder (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 28, AC 19. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with 6 biting maws doing 1d10 damage per bite or uses its acidic spittle inflicting 1d4 damage plus requiring a dexterity save of the victim or they are blinded for 1d4 turns. Its special abilities are gibbering, spittle, blood drain, engulf, amorphous and dark vision 60 feet.)

**2: Old Library** This room is 20 feet x 20 feet and is covered on each wall from floor to ceiling with bookshelves, though many books have been torn down and rent to pieces on the floor. Another passageway continues on the far wall to the southwest.

Close inspection of the books show that the ones most ripped to pieces were those of Nature, holy works and those of generally good topics. The Castle Keeper is encouraged to use their imagination for



titles. If the party takes the time to search, there is a 25% chance (15-20 on D20) that they will discover a wizard's spell book with 3 first, 2 second and a third and fourth level spell each respectively in the tome (Argus was keeping this book as a backup spell folio for a distant friend). However, this search will take up to two hours (as determined by the Castle Keeper) to complete.

There is nothing else of value in the room.

**3: Guest Bedroom** This room was at one time decorated with simple yet tasteful tapestries and a large bed in the southeast corner. A small chest and dresser completed the décor, but all are damaged with mold (not grave) and decay. There is a hallway at the southwest end leading to #4. There are 5 skeletons in the room and any who enter will be attacked immediately by the first four. The fifth will take its bony hand and start striking on the steel mirror on the dresser, acting like a gong which will alert those in adjacent rooms (#2 and #4) of intruders.

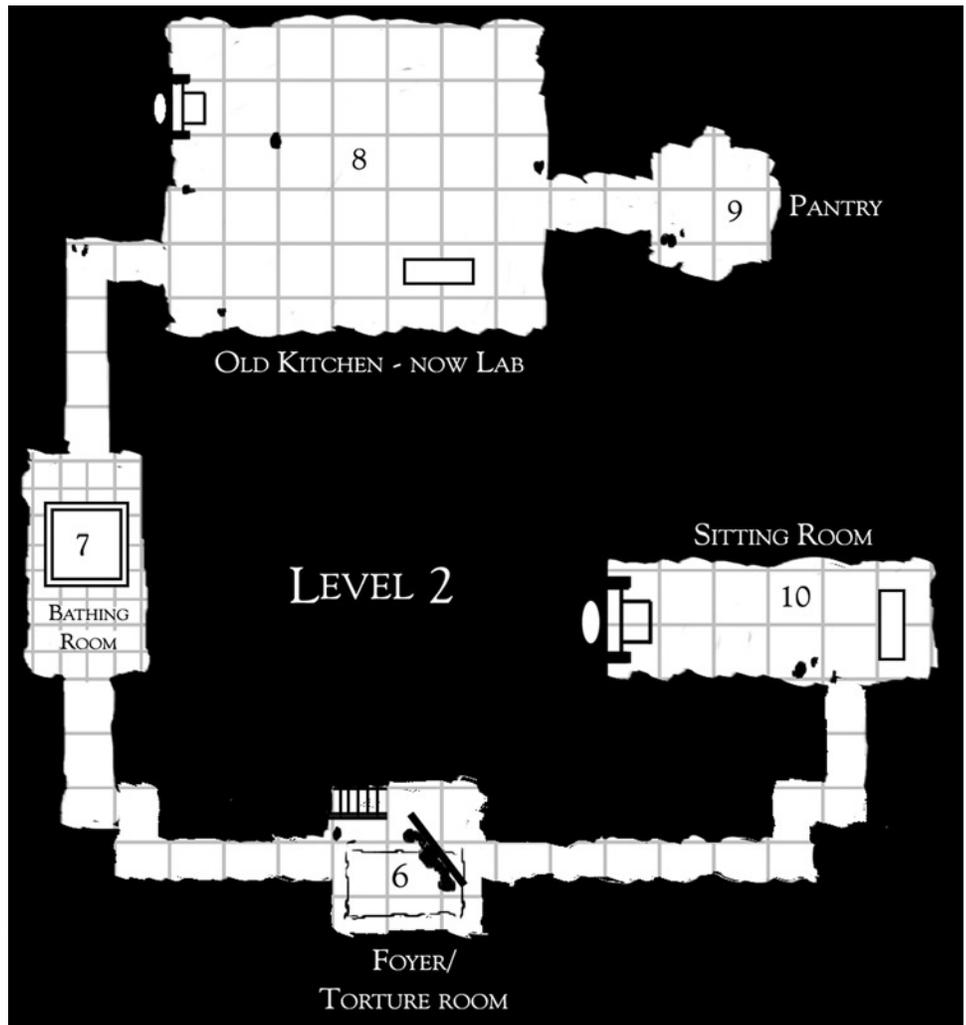
5 Skeletons (These neutral creatures' vital stats are HD 1d12, HP 7, 8, 8, 10, 12, AC 13. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with long swords doing 1d8 points of damage.)

Note that the fifth skeleton (with 7 hit points) will be the one striking the gong and will not engage in combat, even if attacked. Argus didn't program it for more than this simple activity.

The bed is infested with rot grubs, and it was this area where the zombies above ground had been infected. Argus simply cast *cleave flesh* on these four to make them skeletons and thereby salvage something from the bodies. He didn't do the same with the three zombies because of the inevitable inferiority of skeletons to zombies and wanted to try something less drastic.

In the chest a leather sack can be found containing 200gp, 400cp, and a ring of fire resistance. All this treasure was left by an absent minded guest (perhaps the wizard who asked him to store the spell book in room #2). There is an elaborate trap mechanism on the lock (+4 to find trap checks) but it is not dangerous as Argus wanted to scare away intruders instead of hurt them. The trap is a needle (non-poisoned) and is set by a 6th level rogue. There is no danger, but the Castle Keeper might want to play it out to make the players nervous!

**4. Trophy Room:** This room is about 30 feet x 15 feet and has a small ornamental fireplace on the south wall. A leather couch and wooden short tables are the only seating in the room, and the east wall is taken up by a small bar with various bottles and goblets upon its shelves. The upper walls are festooned with the heads of evil non-sentient creatures that Argus took as trophies while defending the Everwood from invasion. A wyvern head overlooks the fireplace,



and the remaining walls hold the visages of a basilisk, a gorgon (neither will petrify), two hydra heads and a hellhound pelt.

The heads of all these creatures have been animated by Argus, but none will move or attack. They will simply relay what they see to Argus via the powers of the *Liber Mortis*. Due to the peculiar nature of the magic, the images will not be accompanied by sound, nor will colors be in evidence (black and white only). If adventurers dally in this room, there is a 50% chance they will be noticed by Argus and he will be prepared for them on the lower level. This chance increases by 10% per additional turn spent in the room.

The bar holds several wines and liquors, all of average to excellent variety. The total will fetch 100gp on resale, though it would take a pack mule and saddle bags to carry all the bottles and paraphernalia.

**5: Storage** This room is used by Argus to store traps, bows and crossbows, and other things he has confiscated from hunters who dared to poach or otherwise take more from the forest than the Balance allows. There are three steel bear traps (Dexterity save or take 1-6 damage if stepped on), 3 spears, two short bows, 32 normal arrows, 3 silver arrows, three light crossbows, one heavy crossbow, and 39 normal bolts. There is also several spools of rope (30 feet, 20 feet and two of 50 feet respectively) and a backpack with a spare cloak, blanket, waterskin (empty) and two weeks of iron rations within its pockets. There is no treasure in the room.

## Lower Level

**6: Foyer/Torture Room** This small room is 15 feet x 15 feet at the base of the stairs, and was originally a small foyer and was once clean and neat. It has a slate floor covered by an elaborately woven rug, cheery tapestries covering the bare walls that depicting nature scenes and the celebrations of a summer solstice, and a small chandelier of short candles hanging from the interlaced roots supporting the ceiling. Like the room above it (#1), this room's passageways lead southwest and southeast and expand out from the east and west sides of the room. A staircase on the far west wall rises upward to the ground level and room #1.

But now the tapestries are bloodstained, the carpets fouled with a charnel reek and other unknown fluids and an overpowering scent of blood and pain. The benches are stacked in the north corner, and over half of the room is taken up by a small torture rack upon which a satyr is slowly bleeding to death, too grievously wounded (-6 hit points) to be saved without major healing. But he will warn the adventurers with his dying breath of Argus' location in the kitchen area (now an alchemical lab) and to "save Iana . . . ."

If somehow the party saves the satyr, he will give his name as Kapyn, and say that they must rush to save the dryad Iana from a terrible experiment that Argus has planned for her. He will state that she had been captured with him and tortured as well, but not as severely as he, for Argus wished her to be mostly intact. Curiously, even though Kapyn is grievously injured, the satyr is not infected with the grave mold. Perhaps the demented druid had other plans in store for the unfortunate wood kin?

*Kapyn the Satyr (This neutral good creature's vital stats are HD 3d8, HP 12/-6, AC 15. His prime attributes are mental. He attacks with a head butt, doing 2d4 points of damage. His pipes require a charisma save or they affect listeners as charm, sleep or fear spells (see note below). His spell resistance is 6.)*

Note: Kapyn has no pipes any longer and therefore cannot use his spell like abilities unless one of the party has pan pipes or something similar to allow him to use (Castle Keeper's discretion).

Other than the rack, there is a primitive bed of woven reed and nails set in the south corner with blood on the nails and pooled on the floor around it. There is also a small table with various implements of torture, most with fresh blood and other fluids upon them, revealing their malicious intent and recent use.

**7: Bathing Room** Upon entering this 12 x 20 foot room, the adventurers are struck by the sudden change from packed earth upon their feet to ceramic tile. This cream colored tile covers the floor and the walls up to a height of 4 feet, at which point the normal lacquered wood panels continue to the ceiling. Perched on the walls are marble benches, with the one on the west wall holding a stack of 3 green towels and 3 washcloths on it. In the center of the room is a sunken 8 foot diameter bathing tub filled with light green colored water. This water can only be seen into for about 6-8 inches, and then seems to turn a dark green, perhaps from the salts or bath oils within it.

In reality, there is a green slime at the bottom of the pool. The druid Argus placed the foul slime in the pool in the early days of his undead experiments, using the pool as a convenient way of disposing of failed experiments and leftover body parts from his victims.

*Green Slime (This neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, HP 31, AC 10. It has no primary attributes. It does not attack, only react to being contacted. When touched it converts any organic material into green slime within 14 rounds or 10 turns for wood or metal; stone is unaffected. It can be killed by fire, cold, or a cure disease spell.)*

Fire will not harm the slime so long as the layer of water remains on top of it, though freezing the pool will kill the slime (and seal the below treasure under the ice). If no one attempts to enter the pool there is no danger. If the party manages to somehow remove the slime from the pool, several bits of bone and metal will be found at the bottom, including a set of diamond earrings worth 125gp as a set (50 as single rings), a dagger +1 (+3 vs. smaller than man sized creatures), and a signet ring with the coat of arms of a nearby duke (or rather his son, as the arms have a label/mark of cadency upon them). The ring is solid gold and worth 150gp by itself, but any adventurers selling it in the immediate area will bring the attention of the duke's men and vassals upon them.

**8: Old Kitchen, Now Lab** This is easily the largest room found so far, measuring 30 feet x 35 feet. There are apparently no other exits from the room, though a small fireplace has a shaft that runs upward to some location (chimney is 2.5 feet in diameter). The counters and cupboards are now being used to house alchemical beakers and potions, some bubbling away over small candle lamps that are heating the contents. The lighting is dark, and a shuffling form can be seen hunched over the dining table at the far south end of the room, the pleading cries of a young girl strapped to the table assault the ears of the party. Upon the entry of the adventurers, the hunched form stands and looks at them with mad, yellowed eyes. It is the druid Argus!

Argus is not himself any longer. The great man is shrunken and stooped, with gray skin and wild eyes. He screams something unintelligible at the party and opens a black tome he had sitting on the table. As soon as he opens the book, the girl begins to scream more frantically.

If the party has been speedy in their investigations, they've interrupted Argus before he's completed his rites upon the dryad tied to the table. If the Castle Keeper feels that the party has needlessly dithered and meandered around during the first part of the adventure (or they've had it too easy) the Castle Keeper can have the ritual completed as they enter and have to face both Argus and the dryad, now converted into a gaunt (see Appendix: New Monsters). As noted in his stats below, there is no helping Argus, he is already too far gone. He will only be able to use two powers of the Liber Mortis before dropping to -1 Wisdom and thereby disintegrating into a pile of dust, his soul devoured by the malicious forces within the text. But these powers are formidable and could cause the party some havoc.

*Argus the Druid (He is a chaotic evil, 7th level human druid whose vital stats are HP 32 and AC 16. His primary attributes are wisdom,*

*constitution and charisma. His significant attributes are strength 13, intelligence 15, wisdom 16, dexterity 13 and charisma 13. He carries a dagger and wears a leather pouch w/herbs. And he has bracers of defense AC15.)*

As Argus has succumbed to evil and chaos, he can no longer access any of his former druidic spells. However, he has a bowl of 24 Hydra's Teeth that he's enchanted to transform into undead skeletons (again via the Liber Mortis). He will use them in 6 skeleton increments (create 6 on round one, another 6 on round two) and use the skeletons as cover while he brings the power of the book to bear upon either the party or to finish converting the dryad Iana into a gaunt. Remember that the Hydra's Teeth were created earlier with the power of the Liber Mortis and therefore their use will not drain Argus of any further wisdom attribute points. He has no idea how close he is to self destruction (the book clouds the mind of its user/victim as to his current state) so he will not hesitate to use the Liber as much as possible.

*Iana the Dryad (Her vital stats are HD 2d8, HP 11/6\*, AC 17 and is neutral good. Her prime attributes are physical & mental. Her special abilities are tree dependent, tree stride, wild empathy and these spell-like abilities: entangle (2/day), charm person (2/day), sleep (3/day); saves are at CL3. She has a spell resistance of 10. She attacks with a dagger [currently missing] doing 1d4 damage.)*

\*Reflects her wounding during capture and the earlier torture session.

*Iana the Gaunt (This chaotic evil creature's vital stats are HD 6d8, HP 31, AC 17. Her primary attributes are physical & mental. She attacks with claws doing 1d4+6 points of damage plus an energy drain of 1 level with touch. Her special abilities are blood drain, energy drain, tree stride, and these spell-like abilities: entangle (2/day), charm person (2/day), sleep (3/day; only cold iron, mistletoe, or magic to hit.)*

If the Castle Keeper uses the dryad in gaunt form, it will take her 1-2 rounds to break her bonds; Argus won't even think of freeing her on his own or attempt to impede her. Also, the gaunt will just as likely (50%) attack Argus as easily as the party members. She will not be interested at the moment in victims so much as escaping into the woods, though she will slay any who bar her path. If she escapes into the woods aboveground (at night) she will hide in a convenient tree until the next evening hoping the adventurers have left. If it is still daylight outside when the gaunt is freed, she will find some place in the rooms to obscure herself and pick the party off one at a time. Note she could seep (or tree stride) into the Great Oak if necessary despite its moldered state, but she is reluctant to do this due to the Great Oak's residual power and inherent goodness, which might be dangerous for her (Castle Keeper's discretion).

Searching the room will reveal 200gp worth of alchemical components and little else other than the Liber Mortis itself. See the Appendix for a description of this book.

**9: Pantry** This small room is 10 x10 feet and is off the kitchen (#8). It is full of several barrels of apples, a large bag of flour and a cured

ham hanging from the ceiling rafters. This is where Argus keeps food for the kitchen and while some of the food has begun to spoil, about 50% is still usable. Despite the power of the Liber Mortis, the druid has found that he must still eat (unlike his undead servitors). There is nothing else of value in the room.

**10: Sitting Room** This room is much like the others, though measuring 30x10' in dimension. It has a small hearth and fireplace with no apparent chimney as well as a rocking chair, side table and other domestic paraphernalia. All are covered with a thick layer of dust and one feels no one has entered this room in some time.

Over the fireplace mantle is a scimitar set behind a wooden shield on display. The scimitar is a +3 sword, of neutral good alignment. It is not intelligent per se, but any evil creature touching it will take 1d4 points of damage each round until it is released. After being corrupted by the book, Argus could no longer use this weapon and so he abandoned it in the sitting room and has not returned there since.

Located at the far eastern wall is a large desk made from lacquered oak (deadwood) with a small candle lantern of brass ornamenting the top. The lantern is not lit, but across the rest of the tabletop are several cards laid out in a magical pattern. Wizards, illusionists, clerics and druids will recognize the cards as those of a tarot deck, though like everything else in this room they are covered under a thick layer of dust. The pattern implies that a reading was done, and The Tower card is located in the place of "final fate." The rest of the deck is stacked neatly to the left of the up faced cards, also with dust clouding its surface.

Upon further investigation of the deck, it will seem a normal tarot deck. If a detect magic is cast, it will radiate arcane magic in significant quantity. An identify spell will reveal the deck to be a deck of many things (see the *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure* tome). If the up faced cards are shuffled back into the deck and some are drawn, consult the book for effects.

If the power of such a deck is too great for the Castle Keeper to wish in their campaign, this can be ignored. Indeed, sadistic Castle Keeper's might determine that Argus had a normal deck and simply enchanted it to preserve the condition of the cards, thus explaining the magical aura but providing no special bonuses or penalties.

For those Castle Keepers who do not possess the *Monsters & Treasure* tome, a modified and abbreviated version of an eldritch tarot is given on the table below. The Castle Keeper can either have the player character draw (number of cards must be announced beforehand) by rolling a d20 and referencing the chart, or take a tarot deck and remove the 4 suits (Wands, Rods, Cups, Swords) and #0 and #21 (Fool & The World) from the remaining cards and draw directly. If the d20 method is used, also roll 1d4, on a 1-2 the card is upright (U), if 3-4 the card is reversed (R). A character can only draw once for magical effect (up to 4 cards at once); any subsequent draws by that character simply show normal cards with no effect.

# New Monsters

## Croaking Horror

**SIZE:** Medium (8 feet)

**HD:** 3-7d8

**MOVE:** 30 feet/60 feet (jump)

**AC:** 19

**ATTACKS:** 2 claw (1-6) and bite (2-8)

**SPECIAL:** Croak (Wisdom save or stunned)

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Animal

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**TYPE:** Beast

**TREASURE:** ~

**XP:** 3 HD: 15 +1

6 HD: 120 +1

4 HD: 30 +1

7 HD: 240 +1

5 HD: 60 +1

The croaking horror is a rare monster, considered by many the result of unnatural experimentation by wizards upon frogs and their kin. Its bulk belies its speed, and its teeth and claws can rend and tear with gruesome results. As agile underwater as on land, it frequently uses its great hind legs to leap out of water onto its victim as a surprise attack.

Its most terrifying weapon is its "croak"; a burst of sound so terrific that any who hear it must make a wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1-6 rounds. A stunned victim loses their footing and cannot attack nor evade attacks very well; any dexterity bonus to AC is neutralized during the period of the stunning (though other AC bonuses by magic & armor will apply). A croaking horror can croak once per day per total hit dice; a 3 HD croaking horror can croak three times a day, a 5 HD horror five times a day, etc. They possess darkvision, and greatly savor elven flesh, actively seeking such prey whenever possible.

**Description:** A vile creature resembling a huge misshapen toad, a croaking horror's loathsome hide is slick with sallow slime and blister-like warts. Bulbous eyes peer from its head and filthy yellow fangs outline its cavernous maw. Black talons festoon its front and rear paws, giving the monstrosity an almost catlike cast as it prowls through its swampland home, ever-seeking prey.

## Gaunt

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 6 (d8)

**MOVE:** 40 feet/8 (gaseous)

**AC:** 17

**ATTACKS:** 2 claw (1d4+4) and bite (2-8)

**SPECIAL:** Energy Drain, iron, mistletoe or magic weapon to hit

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Exceptional (16-17)

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**TYPE:** Undead (Rare)

**TREASURE:** ~

**XP:** 575 + 5

Gaunts are the results of necromantic experimentations upon the corpses of elves and other woodland beings. The result is similar to,

Roll Card	Upright	Reversed
1. The Magician gain	1 intelligence point permanently	Lose 1 intelligence point permanently
2. The High Priestess	Gain 1 wisdom point permanently	Lose 1 wisdom point permanently
3. The Empress	Drawer gains a small keep	Drawer hounded for 100,000gp of debt
4. The Emperor	Auto success on next 3 charisma checks/saves	Auto-fail next 3 charisma checks-saves
5. The Hierophant	Drawer gains a free resurrection at need	Drawer cannot be resurrected until remove curse cast.
6. The Lovers	Gain 1 charisma point permanently + gain hireling-love interest	Lose 1 charisma point permanently and lose all hirelings-love interests
7. The Chariot	Drawer auto-succeeds next vital roll they make	Drawer fails next vital roll they make (CK choice)
8. Strength	Gain +5 to intelligence and wisdom rolls for 1 year	Suffer -5 to intelligence and wisdom rolls for 1 year
9. The Hermit	Drawer gains +1 level	Drawer loses 1 level
10. The Wheel of Fortune	Gain +2 bonus to all attribute checks	Suffers -2 to all attribute checks
11. Justice	Gain ability to detect lie once per day for 1 yr	Suffer -10 on any charisma checks to persuade others for 1 yr.
12. The Hanged Man	Drawer regenerates as troll for 3-12 months	Drawer cannot heal more than 1 HP per week and magic healing does minimal HP returns
13. Death	Drawer must defeat a minor death or die	Drawer ages at one third the normal rate
14. Temperance	+1 point to each of 2 lowest attributes and -2 from single highest	-1 to each of the drawer's two lowest attributes and +2 to the single highest attribute
15. The Devil	Drawer's alignment reverses	Drawer gains +1 to intelligence & wisdom
16. The Tower	Drawer cannot advance in level until quest is fulfilled at Castle Keeper discretion, but gain +1 on all rolls during quest	Drawer loses 1 level
17. The Star	Gains 1 limited wish	Drawer suffers -5 on wisdom checks and saves until next level reached
18. The Moon	Drawer becomes a lycanthrope	Drawer's major magic item lost, though drawer knows location (should be dangerous)
19. The Sun	Drawer gains enough xps to place them 20 away from next level	Drawer sleepwalks next night & tries to steal from party member
20. Judgment	Drawer regresses in age to young adult drawer	Drawer ages an additional 20% years of the total lifespan of their race

There is nothing else of value in the room, and no other exits.

but weaker than, the vampires of human stock. Like vampires, they feast on the blood of the living and shun daylight. One full turn of sunlight will irrevocably kill gaunts, and they react as vampires to the presence of holy symbols. Like their human undead cousins, they are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold person*, paralysis, and poison. They also share the vampire's resistance to cold and electricity, taking ½ damage from such attacks.

The gaunt is weaker than the human vampire in several areas. They only regenerate 1 HP per round and their touch drains only 1 energy level from their victims. Their strength is only 18 as well, making them physically weaker than the vampire and is reflected in the reduced damage they can inflict. They do not have the vampire's innate charm ability, though dryads made into gaunts will still have their racial charming capability. They cannot change to a bat as vampires, but can attain gaseous form at will.

They can summon creatures to their aid as the vampire, but they summon 2-12 stirges and 1-4 giant spiders instead of bats and wolves.

They do not have the vampire's vulnerability to wood, but cold iron burns their flesh and they cannot abide its touch (+1 damage with cold iron weapons). Magic weapons also do standard damage upon them. They are not repelled by garlic as the vampire, but mistletoe repels them and its touch does 1 HP of damage. If a druid touches them with either cold iron or mistletoe, the damage done is 1 HP for each level of the druid. This damage inflicted by a druid cannot be regenerated and must heal over time. Running water does not affect them, but decapitation is the same as human vampires. Sunlight will kill gaunts, as will cold iron driven through the heart.

Gaunts do not reside in coffins as do vampires, but instead turn to a gaseous form and enter the structure of a tree or other living vegetation during the daylight hours. Only burning down or cutting down the tree and dismembering it will kill a gaunt residing within. Trees with a resident gaunt are noticeable due to their gray unhealthy appearance and twisted limbs and roots, reflecting the agony of the undead spirit within. Any female wood folk slain as a gaunt has a 5% chance of rising yet again as a banshee in 1d4 days.

Any human or woodland being killed by a gaunt rises in d4 days as a half strength gaunt (with strength 16) under the control of the gaunt who slew them.

**Description:** The gaunt appears as an emaciated elf, dryad, satyr or other wood folk with grayish sallow skin and limp hair. Their eyes glow a foul green, and their nails are long and wickedly sharp, as are the fangs they will bear in a snarl before attacking their prey.

## Grave Mold

**SIZE:** Small

**HD:** 1 hit point

**MOVE:** 0 feet

**AC:** 10

**ATTACKS:** see below

**SPECIAL:** see below

**SAVES:** None

**INT:** None

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**TYPE:** Ooze

**TREASURE:** ~

**XP:** ~

At first glance this appears to be a sickly yellow-white mold growing on any organic surface. However, close inspection will reveal that it is eating its way into the material and converting the original organic substance to more of the mold. This will lead players to surmise that it is a foul form of fungus and will doubtlessly try various herbs to cure it.

In fact, the mold is far worse. It is an undead creature, formed by Argus from yellow mold with his residual druidic abilities and the Liber Mortis. It can be destroyed by fire (with the affected creature taking 2d4 HP of damage per 20% of the body infected). It can also be turned by a cleric or paladin as other undead, but the trick is to diagnose the problem correctly! A detect undead spell will note its origin, as will a detect evil. Cure disease will destroy it only 50% (11-20 on D20) of the time.

A creature is infected with grave mold in one of two ways. The first situation is if they are unlucky enough to be near an infected creature when the mold has fully run its course and the creature dies, for the mold emits spores as the being disintegrates. The second case is killing an infected creature directly. In the latter case (unless fire is used to kill the creature), as the creature dies, any other non-infected beings in melee must make a constitution save or become infected themselves. Those who are infected begin to lose 1 point of constitution per day until cured or dying (when constitution reaches 0). When the creature is reduced to half their constitution score they are overwhelmed by delirium and are unable to distinguish friend from foe. In such a case, they will either attack anyone near them (1-10 on D20) or flee in a random direction (11-20 on D20), screaming incoherently and dropping all hand held weapons and equipment.

After the infected creature's constitution is reduced to 0, the creature's body dissolves into a cloud of spores and the remaining bones of the skeleton.

## Wuggs

**SIZE:** Small to Medium

**HD:** 2 (d8)

**MOVE:** 20 feet, 40 feet (swim)

**AC:** 14

**ATTACKS:** 2 claw (1-2), bite (1-6) or weapon (by weapon)

**SPECIAL:** None

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low (6-8)

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**TYPE:** Monstrous Humanoid

**TREASURE:** 2

**XP:** 10 +1

No one knows the origins of the strange race that calls themselves wuggs or skum as they are sometimes called by men. These strange bipedal amphibians usually prey in packs, hunting to gather food and booty for their tribe. Wuggs have twilight vision as do halflings,

and see equally well underwater as they do on the land. This enhanced vision also gives them a +1 when reacting or preparing a surprise attack or ambush.

Wuggs can breathe underwater, and when submerged and fighting an opponent underwater, wuggs gain 2 additional claw attacks due to their hind feet, which they can kick and tear at victims with frightful rapidity.

Wuggs wear no clothing, but have snakeskin belts that they use to carry simple flint and wooden weapons and tools. They speak their own language, but a few of the smarter ones have learned a smattering of common, usually employed to interrogate prisoners before they are devoured.

Description: Wuggs are a bipedal froglike race with a thick mottled greenish-brown hide (which accounts for their high AC) and yellow bulbous eyes. Their wide froglike mouths contain a sticky tongue that is 3 feet long and the jaws are lined with small pointed teeth, ideal for tearing flesh. In height, they range from about 3 feet to almost 7 feet, with the latter usually holding positions of authority in their primitive tribal society.

## New Treasure

### The Liber Mortis

This book is a collection of some of the greatest spells and treatise on the black art of necromancy in the land. Its black leather cover seems to radiate evil and corruption, even while the book itself is spotless and neat. There is a silver pentagram upon the cover and a book latch along the side keeps the tome closed when not in use.

The book emits a mild aura of evil at a 15 foot radius. This is easily detectible by even beings not sensitive to magic and no attribute check is required. Any non-evil creatures in the vicinity of the work will feel a sense of disquiet and morale checks will suffer a -2 penalty.

The Liber is far more than just a spell book, however. It is actually imbued with negative planar energy to the point that it has a will of its own. It cannot dominate its wielder, though it will use dreams and other lures to encourage a caster to delve into its secrets and begin to cast its spells which will affect the caster as noted below.

Any spellcaster (wizard, cleric, druid, etc.) may use the spells in the book, even if their class normally precludes the use of arcane spells. Furthermore, the spells cannot be memorized from the book but can be cast from the book just like a scroll. However, the spell is re-castable and will not disappear as scrolls do. With each spell cast, the caster will lose one point of wisdom and be unaware of its loss. When the caster reaches -1 wisdom, the book will consume the caster's soul (no save) and the body will crumble into dust.

Any wizard who reads the tome will gain +1 level in their class. Any other caster will not gain this level advancement but all perusers of the Liber must make a wisdom save or move one rank in alignment towards chaotic evil. For instance, a lawful good wizard who failed his save would become lawful neutral. A neutral evil druid who

failed would become chaotic evil, a chaotic good cleric would become chaotic neutral, etc.

### The Liber Mortis's spell abilities are:

1. Allows the user to cast the below spells as noted:

Cleave Flesh <sup>@</sup>	(4/day)
Detect Undead	(3/day)
Invisibility to Undead	(3/day)
Speak with Dead	(3/day)
Animate/Preserve Dead	(2/day)
Magic Circle vs Undead	(2/day)
Create Undead	(1/day)
Create Greater Undead	(1/week)

2. Allows the reader to attempt to control undead as a cleric of a level equal to the user's level (regardless of class).

3. Gives the alchemical recipe for the creation of Hydra's Teeth. These items (made from the actual teeth of a hydra and other unguents) when properly created, allow the user to bring forth an equal number of skeletons (max HP) as teeth used to serve the caster.

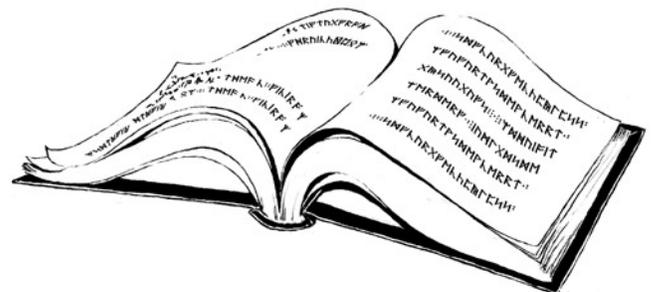
4. Within its pages gives detailed information on the creation of specters and liches.

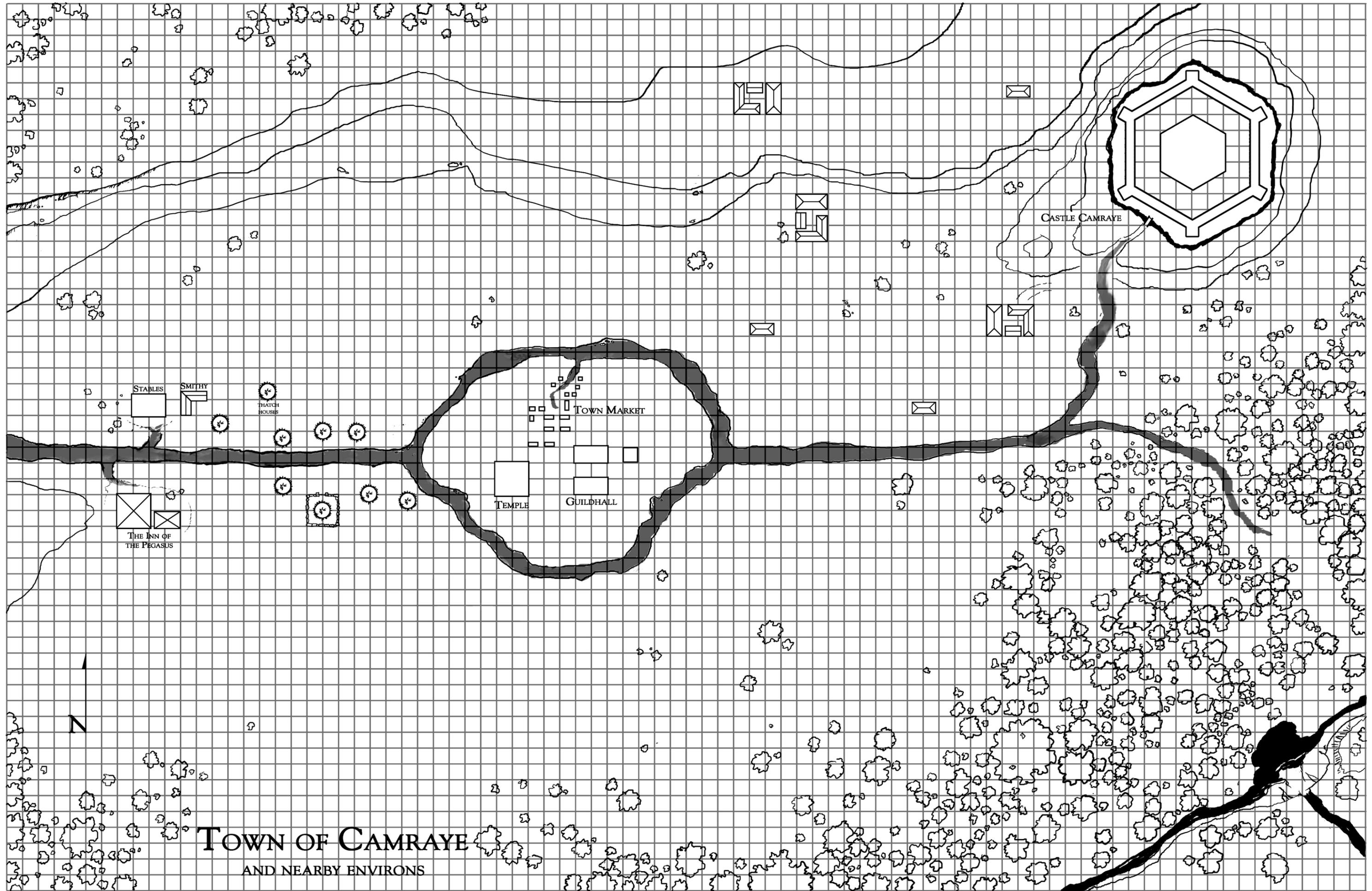
### Alignment

The alignment of the reader affects its capabilities as noted on the chart below. The damage column indicates how much damage the character with the alignment suffers when first handling the book. This happens only once per reader.

Alignment	Damage	Use Abilities
Lawful Good	4d4	1
Lawful Neutral	3d4	1, 2
Lawful Evil	1d4	1, 2, 3
Neutral Good	3d4	1
Neutral	2d4	1, 2
Neutral Evil	1d4	1, 2, 3
Chaotic Good	2d4	1
Chaotic Neutral	1d4	1, 2, 3
Chaotic Evil	~	All

<sup>@</sup>Cleave flesh is a 1st level spell that allows the caster to force the flesh of a corpse to drop away from the skeleton, leaving a clean set of bones behind. It will not do the same to living flesh, but will disrupt the flesh and cause 2d4 damage. Note that the use of this spell to create the gibbering moulder in the Great Oak cannot be employed by the player characters. Argus' necromantic modifications are unique to his situation (as a fallen druid) and are not useable by player characters.





**TOWN OF CAMRAYE**  
AND NEARBY ENVIRONS