

**Scenario Name: Treating Tricklings**

**Ryuujin: Green**

**Scenario Type: Travel**

**Season: Fall**

**Session Time: 2-3 hrs**

**SUMMARY:**

The PCs arrive in a town in panic. This town is the victim of an imp's pranks each year, and while the mayor had been able to avoid its antics by bribing it with treats the past two years, this year he is out of a necessary ingredient. The PCs are given a quest to travel to a witch living in the dark woods to the north and return with the mixture in 3 days before the Trickling imp strikes again.

Using the themes of Halloween and Autumn, the PCs will view landmarks and investigate discoveries inspired by the decorations people use to celebrate each year. These reinterpretations can be spread about as the GM wishes.

The scenario will have the characters meet a Witch and her Apprentice and help make her brew. During this phase, the players will have to use their character's occupations to locate and gather the best ingredients. The following Act involves traveling through a city of eccentric skeletons, but to do so, the PCs will have to be in costume to blend in. Using what they are carrying as equipment and can scavenge from the woods to make disguises, the PCs will have to slip through without attracting too much attention from the undead townsfolk.

Should they be successful, the travelers can spare the poor town of the Trickling's pranks! Or perhaps, they will stumble across another way?

**Act # 1: Arrival at the town of Braidberry**

**Time:** Morning

**Weather:** Clear

**Terrain:** Grassland

**Difficulty:** 6

**Purpose:** Arrival at a town in need of assistance

**Senses:**

The PCs enter the town of Braidberry as its citizens run amok in chaos. Some people are panicking, some are boxing up their belongings, and others are boarding their windows and securing their doors. The sounds of cries, screams, and the frantic hammering of nails echo throughout the small town. In the middle of town, beside an old fountain, a man is shouting for everyone to calm down. He is having no luck at all. After a defeated sigh he looks up and is shocked to see the PCs. He introduces himself as Ermille, the Mayor of Braidberry.

**Event:**

Every year on the same night the town of Braidberry is pranked by a monster they call a Trickling. These tricks are fairly harmless and mostly range from baffling to annoying. The next morning villagers wake up to graffiti painted on their homes, the central fountain's water turned to pudding, streamers hanging from trees, livestock displaced to rooftops, tripwires, pitfalls, falling buckets and other such pratfalls. Pranks on individuals may include recoloring a person's

hair as they sleep, hiding their clothing in the chimney, misplacing important items, or filling a room knee-high with vegetables. The origin and motive of the imp is unknown, but it has regrettably returned each year since the town's founding decades ago.

The Mayor calmly explains this if asked about the commotion, and he explains the day of reckoning is only **3** nights away. Proudly, he adds that since his election three years ago, zero pranks occurred on this frightful night! His wife Ariosa heard an old tale about the Trickling's favorite treat, and had the brilliant idea to offer a peace offering those previous nights in the hopes that the town would be spared. The people were shocked to awake the next morning and find nothing in their vicinity altered or damaged! Unfortunately, this year his wife lacks a necessary ingredient to make the Trickling Treats. He called a meeting to explain this situation to the townsfolk, but as the PCs witnessed, hearing the Trickling would be back to his old antics did not go over well with the crowd.

The ingredient his wife is missing is a mixture that can be bought from a witch in the Bonetimber Forest to the north. No resident would be foolhardy enough to leave their homes unguarded to make this journey, but the PCs are a welcome exception. Mayor Ermille will beg for the travelers' help, and will offer to pay for their services upon their return. The PCs can negotiate their rates to make this trip; the town is not wealthy but a desperate population would be willing to contribute to avoid another year of pranks. The only insistence will be that the travelers must be back before the Trickling strikes. The Bonetimber Forest is one day away with the witch's cabin located an additional half a day into the heart of the woods. Made hastily, the journey there and back before the Trickling strikes is completely possible. Before they leave he will give them money for the Witch to purchase the mixture, an unlit torch for each PC, and a crudely drawn map showing where to find the witch's residence.

**Mayor Ermille and his wife Ariosa have lived in the town of Braidberry their entire lives. Ermille is about 5 and a half feet tall and wide for his stature. He wears fine clothes and a pair of small glasses on a wide nose. His hair is graying and cut short. Resting a hand on his chin, he speaks in a low voice with deliberate pauses in sentences as if the listener needs time to 'catch up.' Ariosa rolls her eyes when he speaks this way. She is a couple inches shorter than Ermille with long dark hair. She wears a simple dress and is not nearly as formal as her husband.**

- **If asked about the Trickling- Ermille will sigh and talk about some of the stupid tricks it has pulled off. Both he and Ariosa have plenty of tales, but mostly, it is the cleaning up afterwards that frustrates everyone far more than the actual pranks.**
- **If asked about the town- Ermille is proud of it and will mention its many fine establishments and the deeds of some of its townsfolk. However, this upcoming Trickling night overshadows the beauty, and he apologizes for your poor timing.**
- **If asked about him- He and Ariosa were school sweethearts, he ran for mayor two years ago and won handedly, and he really loves his town. His favorite dessert is Braidberry Pie.**

- If asked about specific locations- They do have shops and an inn but they would really rather you not waste time and hurry to the Bonetimber Forest so you can get back before the Tricking strikes.
- If asked about the Bonetimber Forest, Ermille warns the PCs of the following dangers-
  - Travel during nighttime is barely possible and very dangerous (hence the torches he gives the PCs).
  - Monsters patrol the forest, but the skeletons are the worse. There is a walled village of the dead in the south of the forest that should be avoided. Skeletons have been known to attack travelers. The old southern road and bridge have fallen into disarray because of this.
  - The Bonetimber Witch is quite friendly despite her name. He has not seen her in years, but she has always been neighborly. You can get to her cabin by entering the forest from the west and then heading north when you meet the Graysprig River.

## **Act # 2: Travel to the Bonetimber Forest**

**Time:** Afternoon

**Weather:** Clear

**Terrain:** Grassland

**Difficulty:** 8

**Purpose:** Exploration during the journey north

**Senses:**

The journey to the Bonetimber Forest takes the PCs northward along a wide cobbled road. Designed to transport crops and produce from the fields to surrounding towns, is now worn with years of use, and its loose stones echo beneath the travelers' feet. The group journeys past acres of corn stalks swaying in the breeze. Insects hum while birds flit about the crops. The corn stalks have begun to brown and their dry leaves rustle with the wind. In between the acres of corn are occasional grazing lands for livestock, mostly empty and now saturated with tall grasses.

**Event:**

The PCs begin their journey. The beginning leg is quite simple, though GMs can always at in monsters appropriate to the PC levels if they like. The road is occasionally wet from collapsed irrigation tunnels-- a minor inconvenience that no one has thought necessary to fix. Along the sides of the road, an occasional collapsed ditch or the leaky walls of an old canal has spilled small pockets of water. The further north you travel, the more the age of the road appears to have outlived its upkeep.

**Subevents:**

The journey between Braidberry and the Bonetimber Forest has two Landmarks, three Discoveries, and one Encounter for the PCs to find.

**Note:** *To keep travel interesting, locations are introduced that the PCs can investigate for bit of bonus experience for themselves and their Ryuujin's tale. These are extras that can be skipped, but are included to add personality and mystery to the world. I included illustrations, but if your*

*group has an artist as a player, let them draw what you describe for their travel journal. If not, feel free to print and paste my sketches instead.*

- *Landmarks are big structures that are unique to their surroundings. They provide backstory or folklore that defines the local culture. Some origins are kept vague mysterious so your PCs can take a crack at explaining the purpose of the places you describe. Let your players tell stories their characters heard about these unique objects.*
- *Discoveries are little items that add flavor to the setting. Lost items, unusual plants or animal life, or habits unique to the local people. Like Landmarks, Discoveries can be interpreted by the GM or the players. Sometimes pieces of these items can even be gathered and sold.*
- *Finally, an Encounter is a side-quest. It serves no purpose to the overall story, but may help to reinforce a setting's mood or further define a city's culture. It is completely skippable if you and your players are pressed for time, but if you need to break monotony, it is available.*

### **Landmark #1- Crow's Crag**

This hilltop precipice seen at the horizon resembles the profile of a bird. It is locally attributed to a legendary carrion crow that appears in many local folk tales, the most popular of which are fables about 'patience.' In one, the crow is mocked by quicker predatory birds as being too lazy to hunt for food. The other birds proceed to die, depending on the storyteller, in either tragic or hilarious ways. After watching each death, the crow offers a witty retort about life, and meanders to the newly deceased to feast. A latter tale depicts the carrion crow and buzzard facing off to see who will outlast who to inevitably eat the other. And the end of this tale, both birds are turned to stone during their ages long stare-down, and parents tell their children the crag is the same crow still staring down the buzzard's gaze lest he be eaten.



### **Landmark #2- Large Seeping Stone**

The road is deliberately curved as it is redirected around an unusual stone marker. It stands about 7 foot tall and is similar to the shape of an hourglass, except with a square base rather than round. From its peak to its base are angled carvings with strange notations. Its most peculiar feature is down these carvings flows a trickle of water from an underground spring. The tiny stream flows along small canals and over tiny falls, and eventually into a crescent



shaped basin at the stone's foot. Whatever purpose the Seeping Stone was meant to serve has been lost. In the process of constructing the current road, the builders either found the Seeping Stone unmovable, too important, or too interesting to plow through. the result is an ungraceful jut in the highway as it veers around the strange stone.



#### **Discovery #1- Wailingword Reeds**

The PCs hear an odd cry in the distance. It does not sound like the beckoning of a person or the bay of an animal, but a ghostly howl being carried on the wind. As they continue, they see a shallow pool of water and the source of the eerie noise—a patch of Wailingword Reeds are growing in the groundwater. These reeds are infamous due to the porous chambers in their long, dark leaves that whistle when a breeze blows. A patch of several reeds produce a strange and unnerving chorus ranging from whispers to howls as the wind blusters and ebbs. Naturally, macabre stories about the reeds are abundant; the reeds cause a man to drown in a lake trying to save a victim who does not exist or the reeds cause a grieving widow to dig up her late husband's grave thinking he is calling to her. Wailingword Reeds are most popular with children who blow on them like musical instruments, and patches of the reeds are often ransacked by large groups of schoolchildren forming such a “band.”

#### **Discovery #2- Ominous Footprints**

There is a path forced through the flanking fields of cornstalks, and across the trodden road is a set of unusual footprints. Recently pressed, they are much larger than a human print, yet are in steps of two unlike an animal. Three “toes” can be identified, but the entire shape of the foot is odd. People often whisper about strange creatures inhabiting the corn fields, especially at night. It is typical for superstitious families to anchor their scarecrows with chains and weights

to the soil, for myths tell of spirits inhabiting the mannequin and causing mischief to the very



fields the scarecrow was meant to protect.

### **Discovery #3- The Unrakeable Swarm**

The travelers approach a large swath of leaves that upon approach jump to the air only to perch a few meters further down the road. They are local butterflies whose wings mimic the falling autumn leaves. They usually travel in swarms, covering the rooftops and lawns as they camouflage themselves in the leaf piles. Jokingly referred to as the Unrakable Swarm, a good shooing away can make one's yard look tidy, but since they only fly in short bursts, the neighbors are likely to try to shoo them back over. The resulting contest between neighboring homes has been known to get very temperamental among residents as the swarm flits nonchalantly throughout the community.

### **Encounter- Fleeing family losing belongings**

As the PCs are traveling north down the road they come across a lonely shoe laying on the ground. A few steps ahead they see an apple. Then a hand mirror. A shirt. A pan. A sack of beans. Whether the PCs continue to travel or remain in place gathering items, eventually they will see another group of travelers, in a donkey-pulled cart, heading their direction, slowly stopping to gather up the lost items. This is a family trying to flee Braidberry in fear of the Trickling, and in their haste, did not notice the children "un-securing" their load. The PCs can help them regather their lost supplies or not. But if they have any questions about the adventure so far, the family would be a good opportunity to ask. They were pranked by the Trickling 3 years ago. The couple had their wardrobe altered, so each could only fit the other's clothing. Their roof was painted blue, the bathtub was filled with sugar, and the dog meowed for a week. As they relay this, their children laugh. The kids seem to think it is all quite funny and are sad they will miss it.

## **Act # 3: Night at the Bonetimber Forest**

**Time:** Night

**Weather:** Foggy

**Terrain:** Forest

**Difficulty:** 10

**Purpose:** Exploration within the Bonetimber Forest

**Senses:**

Approaching the Bonetimber Forest, the setting changes abruptly-- the road grows silent and the sky seems grayer. The grass outside the woods is limp and colorless. Thin leafless black trees gnarl skyward with twisted and knotted branches. When the quiet of the woods is broken

by an animal's cry, it is a strange and unrecognizable sound. Light carries poorly around the forest beneath its gray sky. Lit torches become necessary to move forward at all, and as the night settles it can quickly become too dark to travel safely. By night, even beside a fire, no one can see more than just a few feet ahead.

**Event:**

The PCs are eventually going to have to come to a stop and camp. They can do this within the forest or outside of it, for the purposes of this adventure neither option is very dangerous. A minor monster encounter or appropriate level to the PCs would be adequate here. Chances are the monsters are just looking for food and are not particularly aggressive, so pick something that would be more of a nuisance to the PCs in the dark rather than a threat.



**Subevent:**

The Bonetimber Forest has two Landmarks, three Discoveries, and one Encounter for the PCs to find. These can be done now or after the PCs meet the Bonetimber Witch.

**Landmark #1- Wraithwood Tree**

A thick tree with a gnarled base of twisted roots. Embedded in its massive trunk are dozens of abandoned rusted axes, left behind by defeated woodcutters who failed to retrieve their tools. The Wraithwood is famous for both its rarity and stubbornness. The plant can not only absorb the blows of the mightiest lumberjacks, but its unique timber snatches saws and axes within its bark as its sap bonds the tools in place like glue. Many a poor tradesman hoping to strike it rich upon finding a Wraithwood tree lose everything they own trying to take it down. Stories of men going broke or mad trying to fell a Wraithwood abound in the trade, and the name Wraithwood comes from the many tales of a haunting woodman's ghost refusing to admit defeat to the stubborn tree even after death. Lumberyards jokingly call its wood 'neverlumber,' for while felling a Wraithwood could make a family a fortune, the task is so difficult the tree will never make it to a state of lumber.



### **Landmark #2- Fallen Statue**

Overgrown with moss and half collapsed into a grove of trees, the PCs see the fallen remains of a stone statue. The figure was clearly a woman in armor though time has worn away many details. The figure broke off from her pedestal below her knees. The nearby trees caught the bulk of the warrior, and she leans angled into the grove that has grown around her. A broken arm from the shoulder snapped off and is now lies hidden in the brush around her. Her spear is shattered in pieces about the ground. The pedestal has writing on its base, but the language is either too worn or unfamiliar to read.



### **Discovery #1- Oracnids**

The PCs see a gathering of unusual spider webs belonging to a cluster of Oracnids. Oracnids, or oracle spiders, are a rare breed of spider known for spinning divination webs. Legends say that if one sits beneath their webs and sings a song featuring the word 'tomorrow', the next night the spiders that heard the song will have rewoven their webs to depict scenes from the singer's future. The prophetic webs are open to interpretation, and never specific, but objects and pictographs are fairly obvious to the viewer. Should a PC try it, the next night three of the webs will have objects pertaining to their future. If you have ideas for a future journey, toss them in,

if not the images are “a teapot,” “a waterfall” and “a paintbrush.” With no singers, Oracnid webs are usually spun depicting random geometric shapes or common household items.



### **Discovery #2- Fanghive Bees**

The travelers hear the buzzing of bees in the darkness. In a twisted tangle of trees are several nests of Fanghive bees. Fortunately for the PCs the bees are fairly docile unless the colony is threatened. Their intimidating name comes from the shape of their pointed hives which both hang from branches above like stalactites and rise from the ground below like stalagmites. From afar, a large colony of hives resembles a monstrous maw of teeth. The bees have multiple castes, and workers care for the queen and her young in the upper hives, while more aggressive soldier scouts swarm in the hives below. Stepping unaware on the lower hives will definitely bring misfortune to travelers, and in the dark of the forest, this can be likely. Honey can be gathered from the Fanghives if the bees can be smoked out, which is very sweet and a translucent vermillion in color.



### **Discovery #3- Old Flag**

Tangled around a tree branch is a faded piece of cloth. Should a player unravel it, they would discover that it is an old and unfamiliar flag. Due to its age, the colors are washed and muted, but it looks like it might have been white with a red-ish top and bottom border. There is a saber beside what may have been a wolf's or dog's head barking. Perhaps there was a dark circle, but it is torn now, and the shape is incomplete.

### **Encounter- Hexed Bear**

A hideous monster lurks nearby, and the PCs can hear its dreadful guttural moans. Should they approach, it is bear-like in shape, but where its head should rest is a floating ursine skull with glowing red orbs for eyes. Long scaly arms with sharp claws flank its sides, while thorny spikes protrude from its back and neck. It thrashes about with an unholy roar. It is beastly. It is terrifying. It is in pain.

A more observant viewer would notice that tangled around the beast's arm is a pendant, and unfortunately for one curious bear, this cursed item is now responsible for its misery. The more it tries to fight the pendant off, the worse its situation seems to get. Upon seeing the PCs it will bellow for help and approach them eagerly—which is probably not going to be interpreted well by the players being charged by this monster. Should the GM wish to give this tale a happier ending, during battle it could be determined a player struck the talisman instead of the bear itself. Once the jewel is shattered, the bear will return to normal and flee (but not without looking back and giving a 'thank-you' roar). Unless you wish to have a darker lesson for this encounter, which this season, may be appropriate as well.

### **Act # 4: The Witch and her Apprentice**

**Time:** Morning

**Weather:** Foggy

**Terrain:** Forest

**Difficulty:** 9

**Purpose:** Getting the ingredient from the Witch

**Senses:**

A hazy and eerily quiet morning in a gray forest...



**Event:**

The next morning the PCs head to the Bonetimber Witch's cabin. Despite the haze of the woods, the trek is fairly easy as the trees begin to thin into a clearing. They will reach the Graysprig River, a rocky, muddy river 10 to 12 foot wide, rushing noisily southward. Further upstream they see a cabin and the distance and know they must be near. As they approach they see a young girl with a rake in the front of the residence, not raking but doing some type of work in the main yard. Noticing the travelers, her reaction is one of shock, followed by a child's best rehearsal of 'manners.' She will welcome the PCs as properly as she can recall, with a lot of "uhmms" and nervous ear-scratching in between. She will introduce herself as Satchel, the Madam Bonetimber Witch's Apprentice.

**Satchel is a young girl of about 12. She has short black hair with joyful dark eyes. She is very nervous around people and trying (unsuccessfully) to mask her "uhms" with "proper etiquette." She is wearing an unusual uniform of a leather vest, two large pockets belted to her hips, and a plain knee-length dress. She wears tall socks to her knees and dusty, worn curled shoes. She knows much about the forest at large, especially about the individual plants and animals within. As you talk as Satchel, nervously scratch at your ear as you 'uhm.'**

- **If asked about her clothing- "Uhhh it's a standard Apprentice uniform. Simple with pouches for materials. I haven't earned my hat yet, but I'm working on it."**
- **If asked about her work- Today she is sorting the yard. Not raking, per se, but sorting out the different rocks, leaves, and other debris by type and family, per the Madam's instructions. Should anyone mess up the assortment, she will panic and push them back with a "Oh no no no!"**
- **If asked about the witch or "the Madam"- Satchel will tell them she is very nice though at times the 'Prenticeship is very difficult. She is like a boss and a grandmother. She will prepare introductions right away!**
- **If asked about herself- Satchel was from a poor town where it snowed a lot, she was named after the first thing her parents saw when she was born, she became a Prentice after her mom was sick and her and her dad came to the witch for medicine left Satchel behind because there was no room on the horse, she doesn't know if her family is coming back to get her but it's fine with her, she is most proud that she can read, she likes the forest and doesn't think it's scary, she rarely sees other people at the cabin cuz of the skeletons, and despite the witch stereotypes she does \*not\* like cats but absolutely \*adores\* dogs. (If any PCs are traveling with a cat it will be ignored, but if any PC is traveling with a dog it's about to get its tummy rubbed- yes it is!)**

After introductions Satchel will bring the PCs to the front door and instruct them to wipe their feet. She opens the door to a dusty foyer full of shelves of peculiar knick-knacks. In the room to the left a lab is visible, full of jars and bottles and glass of all shapes. In the room to the right

is a tiny library of books that a perceptive person would notice are seemingly organized by size and color rather than purpose (which may explain Satchel's current yard work trial).

Asking them to wait, as a child recalling how a butler would, she goes to check on the "Madam." (She realizes before she opens the next door she is still holding the rake and nervously slips past the PCs to chuck it out the front door.) After a short wait, Satchel beckons them to the next room where she simply introduces the witch as "Madam of Bonetimber."

**Madam, or the Bonetimber Witch, is built like an oak tree. The elderly woman is between 7 and 8 feet tall with arms as thick and gnarled as branches. Her face is hidden beneath a large pointed hat, yet you can still feel her gaze when she looks in your direction. Long white hair washes over her shoulders from beneath her cap. She is wearing a large gray fur cloak that masks her body. She sits with her slippered feet up in a large rocking chair made from the twisted black trees of the forest, and rocks herself using a crooked cane. She speaks quietly in the beginning of her sentences but grows louder and cackles at the**



end of her sentences, as if each is a jolly joke.

- If asked about the recipe ingredient- It personally doesn't agree with her, but she sees why others may enjoy its flavor. She doesn't have any of the mixture prepared currently, but that is what the Apprentice is for. Satchel will gather the ingredients and get the recipe prepared for the PCs post haste.
- If asked about Satchel- She tells them she took the girl in because she herself was abandoned too, but there is no time for a story as long as hers, they would drop dead before her childhood story was finished.



- If asked about the forest, she will tell them it wasn't always so foreboding, but time changes everything, and that if she has to grow old and wither, it's only fair the forest should too... (Cackle!)
- If asked about any of the locations in the forest- She remembers the statue of the female warrior being built but never wondered who she was, she tried to keep Oracnids as pets but it didn't work out, and the skeletons are a terrible tragedy built upon terrible tragedies failing to prevent further terrible tragedies (?).
- If asked about Braidberry- She's not been, but the people seem nice, and pay adequately for their goods.
- If asked about the Trickling- (CACKLE!) She admires its perseverance.

When pressed for the Trickling Treat ingredient, the Witch gives Satchel the responsibility of gathering the ingredients and preparing the mixture. Satchel will initially protest ("I haven't earned my hat yet") but the Witch cuts her off and explains that this is a simple test. "Our guests are eager to get back to their journey, and they must do so before the next night. You must prepare to their needs quickly and without mistake"-- before she finishes Satchel runs to the lab and begins her research.

The PCs are told they can rest comfortably in the cabin's foyer while Satchel prepares their goods or enjoy the yards. At this point it is a good idea to review how much time has passed. If the traveler's failed to do any side-quests, they may be ahead of schedule, but any distractions to the PCs may have now made them too late to get back to Braidberry before the Trickling's arrival in time. Either way, choosing to help Satchel gather what she needs with help them save time.

#### **Subevent:**

Satchel writes the ingredients she needs from a large book and heads out to the yard. She knows where all these items can be found, but the PCs can help her find them faster. Depending on the occupations of the party, you can divide the tasks as needed while Satchel gathers what remains.

*If a PC is a Minstrel:* Satchel's recipe needs a clutch of Chatter-Beetles. She knows that they are usually hidden on the shadow's side of the black tree bark. When they hear predatory birds, threatened Chatter-Beetles clack their wings and make a loud, horrible, headache-inducing hum. This will often drive predators away, if there are enough beetles humming. She explains that a whistling minstrel or flutist making song should be able to get the Chatter-Beetles to reveal themselves in no time, bypassing a visual hunt.

*If a PC is a Healer:* Satchel's recipe needs a vial of sweet expanding jelly. This sticky jelly can be found in the glen within the pouches of the Bubble-Puff plants. She explains that the Bubble-Puffs repel insects with their explosive bubbles of jelly. When the plant senses a threat it releases water to a bubble bulb that expands so quickly it pops its bulb. The sticky jelly holds the insect in place while the scent attracts mammals that feed on such insects to its location, causing the animals to give a thorough sniffing to rout out any other insects in hiding. She confesses to tasting a few Bubble-Puffs when she was younger, and they are sweet but watch

out for that pop! The jelly can be quickly gathered by a skilled Healer who can identify full, plump bulbs, and prepare the jelly as they would any herb, faster than Satchel.

*If a PC is a Hunter:* Satchel's recipe needs Fungal Antlers. The fungus grows upon the skull of an affected elk and manifests as mushrooms dotted along its horns. Satchel explains that the fungus burrows into the bone causing the animal great pain. The elk try to alleviate the discomfort by scratching at trees and the ground, releasing the mushrooms' spores that allow them to reproduce. Any young that rub against the same trees will be infected that season. Satchel would search the forest floor for shed antlers, but a hunter should have no trouble tracking an elk, via tracks, or the signs or sounds of antler rubbing, to retrieve the pair of Fungal Antlers quickly. Satchel warns about infection, however: After proper skinning and tanning, the hide will be safe to use, but the elk's meat and bones are best left behind in the forest just in case the fungus has spread through the body.

*If a PC is a Merchant:* Satchel's recipe needs Vampire Clover. Satchel clarifies that while Vampire Clover looks identical to other clover, it is actually a parasite in disguise. It invades patches of other vegetation looking benign, but underground it uses its roots to invade and absorb the nutrients from surrounding plants. Vampire Clover can be detected only by those observant enough to notice a healthy patch of clover surrounded by plants looking weak and wilted. A merchant can help find this mimic parasite by looking at the ground and "appraising" the vegetation. If a group of plants are looking particularly dull and hardly worth selling, and a healthy patch of clover is nearby, the ingredient is revealed.

*If a PC is an Artisan:* Satchel's recipe needs a shed skin from a Batfin Lizard. Batfin Lizards are a particular favorite of Satchel, who tried to keep a few as pets during her life. She could never keep them long, however, since Batfins love water and live about ponds and riversides, so she would always return them to the Graysprig after a weekend of pampering. Batfin Lizards are omnivores, and eat insects, fish, fruit, and nuts. They are violet skinned, and get their name from their webbing and sails. As juveniles, the feet of the lizard have bat-wing flaps that they use to skip across still water to catch prey. As they age, the "wings" recede while a wing-like sail grows upon their back to signify maturity. They shed their skin periodically on stones by the river, but the recipe requires a high-complete skin. Satchel can search until she gets lucky enough to find one, but a skilled Artisan can use their skill to collect and "repair" a skin from pieces to complete this task quickly.

*If a PC is a Farmer:* Satchel's recipe needs Bramble Turnips. While Bramble Turnips first appear to be just a very large type of turnip, they are much softer than a traditional turnip. As a result, Satchel explains, a ripe Bramble Turnip feels "mushy" to people not familiar with it. As it grows, the plant becomes entwined in its brambles and thorns that not only to protect it, but serve as a makeshift skeleton as the turnip grows to full size. Once it has matured, the turnip outgrows its brambles, and the thorns peel open the skin to release the seeds inside. A Farmer can harvest the Bramble Turnips much faster than Satchel, as they are a bit large for her to maneuver about easily.

*If a PC is a Noble:* Satchel's recipe needs Traitor's Cologne. The name comes from an old tale about a selfish prince who was robbed by his childhood friend turned bandit. The bandit threw the prince off his trail with a scent that aggravated the noses of his hunting hounds. Before Satchel can reveal the mystery source of the scent, the noble in your party should be given the

opportunity to decide via improvisation. This is a bedtime story told to nobility as children, and the PC and GM should work together so that the noble “knows the story better” than even Satchel. Together, they can fetch the mystery item to finish the recipe.

Once the ingredients are gathered, Satchel returns to the cabin’s lab and begins her work. Everything is mixed together per the recipe instructions. For the purposes of this adventure, Satchel does not fail to succeed, however if the GM is welcome to change the quality or effects of Satchel’s efforts to provide suspense or amusement. One might also have the PCs be victim to a taste test to make sure the results are... edible. The PCs do not want to get all the way back to Braidberry to find out it is not delicious enough for the Trickling! Right?

## **Act # 5: Decision to Detour...**

**Time:** Evening

**Weather:** Foggy

**Terrain:** Forest

**Difficulty:** 8

**Purpose:** Deciding if they should cut through a skeleton city....

**Event:**

On the last leg of their journey, the PCs now need to strategize how to get back to Braidberry in time to thwart the Trickling. Depending on their adventures thus far, they could be ahead or behind schedule. If discussing this with the vicinity of the cabin, Satchel offers a unique idea—cut through the village of the undead skeletons to the south for a more direct route.

The walled town of Fellcast would look just like any other bustling town, if its citizens were not all animated dead. There are shops and boutiques, smithies and apothecaries, inns and taverns. There are politicians and artisans and tradesmen—they just all happen to be quite dead. The townsfolk, skeletons they may be, keep busy with the day to day activities of a thriving town and all the tribulations of internal politics and commerce. Within the walls of Fellcast, it seems as if it is critical to the people to perpetuate the illusion of normalcy. Hunters catch game they cannot eat, blacksmiths hammer iron for farming equipment no one uses, weavers spin fabric for tailors to sew for a population that has zero need of clothing. It’s a strange act; should you die within the Bonetimber Forest, you would be welcomed into the walls of Fellcast openly, then immediately set to reliving your daily routines in their parody of life.

According to Satchel, she has been within the walls of Fellcast often! Because the city welcomes the dead of Bonetimber, all it takes to get past the guards and into the gates is a disguise. Some old clothes, some face paint or a mask, little bit of mud and she slips in unceremoniously to do some shopping. (Because the shopkeepers have so much of the same stock and so few customers to sell to, the prices for ingredients are quite cheap.) All the PCs have to do is throw some costumes together, travel south, enter Fellcast’s north gate and exit the south gate. Exiting the Bonetimber Forest, Braidberry is due south, cutting out a half-day’s travel. According to Satchel it should be easy as long as they do not stay too long. Too much time in Fellcast means you are likely to get noticed as newcomers and the townsfolk will try to set you to work. Get in, get the goods, and get out— that is her approach.

Since getting out of the Bonetimber Forest and returning to Braidberry would take another day and a half returning the way they came, cutting through the skeleton city of Fellcast would be

the only way to guarantee getting back in time. The PCs are going to be stuck in the forest for another night. Their first option is they can head south now, camp, then in the morning cut through Fellcast and travel a half-day to Braidberry. Secondly, they can head back the way they came, camp at the original site, and head back down past the cornfields to Braidberry. Note that any landmarks, discoveries, and encounters may have altered their schedule, as well as how helpful they were to Satchel's recipe hunt.

Should the PCs not agree and wish go back to Braidberry the way they came, they can follow their path in reverse, though they will more than likely arrive after the Tricking strikes. Any discoveries or landmarks they missed can be placed ahead. To create more mystery in the Bonetimber, the GM could shuffle or alter some Landmarks or make locations vanish entirely. Should they head to Fellcast, they will need costumes. If the PCs have an Artisan, it is that character's time to shine! Paint and rags are available from the witch's cabin, but if the PCs are carrying anything on them, try to get them to use items in creative ways. Clothing can be bandages, fruits and vegetables mashed for face paints, helmets turned to masks, broken weapons used as 'fake limbs,' or rope as intestines. Animals and pets do not have to receive similar treatment, but it would be rather clever. As they travel southward down the Graysprig River to the city do not forget to include any missed Discoveries or Landmarks.

The PCs will need to camp out one more night before they can head out on the journey's third day. They can do this near the Witch's Cabin or towards Fellcast. If near Fellcast, an encounter with a skeleton patrol will be likely. They will harass the travelers by tossing rocks and shouting threats, but flee at the first sign of trouble if brought into combat.

## **Act # 6: Fellcast the Skeleton City**

**Time:** Morning

**Weather:** Clear

**Terrain:** Forest

**Difficulty:** 8

**Purpose:** Making up lost time for the return journey

**Senses:**

The forest in this southern region is very quiet as if nothing wants, or perhaps can, live here. The mood is lightened as the way toward Fellcast is comically littered with posted signs upon the trees declaring humans should beware, return home, and simply stay out. The postings are quite juvenile and poorly done. As they approach the village of Fellcast, they can see the surrounding stone wall and two skeleton guards standing posted at the gate. If the PCs are in costume, the northern gate will be opened with no hassle. Perhaps it is the lack of eyes and other sensory organs, but the players will quickly find that as long as they are not acting suspicious, the skeleton population will not notice anything strange about them at all. Upon entering the town, skeletons will wave a hello, shopkeepers will sell their goods, and everyone will just assume that unless they are loitering, they have been citizens of Fellcast all this time.

**Event:**

The skeletons living in Fellcast act as if there is nothing unusual about their existence at all. Everyone is going about daily business as a people would, even if the business in questions

serves little point to the undead. While the clothing the townsfolk wear would be called old or “antiquated” by the PCs’ standards, the homes and businesses of Fellcast look new as they are kept in cleanly-painted picturesque condition. The old remains of roads that were disheveled and abandoned outside the city walls are clean and well-maintained within the city. Newer residents of the city are easy to pick out due to their remaining flesh, while older residents are nothing but bone. The PCs will be recognized as recently arrived citizens of Fellcast.

As your players are passing through Fellcast, be careful to note that suspicious activity will bring unwanted attention. Such things could include:

- Food- Skeletons keep appearances by selling food, but after thanking the butcher, the customer hands it back after purchase. Someone buying food with intent to keep it is strange.
- Items- Since there is no outside trade, shops run on a very limited customer base. Anyone buying something from a shop in bulk is going to get attention.
- Senses- Anyone making a comment about smell or taste is going to alert the townsfolk. Skeletons can hardly see or hear, and primarily use touch. Smelling and Tasting are long gone.
- Facilities- There are technically bathrooms, there is saloon though no one can drink, an inn though no one sleeps, but do I really even need to say “staying at the inn in a city of skeletons is a bad idea?”
- Questions- Anyone asking questions, outside of small talk, will eventually reveal they are newcomers. Asking, “Why is everyone a skeleton” is too obvious, but a “How long have you worked here” is casual enough to not draw attention.
- Loitering- Fellcast is a giant puppet show with everyone acting a part. The last thing the PCs want to do is be a cog outside that machine. Doing nothing means you are newly dead, and that means you need initiation, and the players do not want to hang around. Keep moving: it does not matter if it is this way or that, but rest is for the living, not the dead!

Once in Fellcast, the players just have to keep to the main road and head to the southern gate. If they want to shop, or if they want to ask questions, they can, but will more than likely attract attention. If they stay focused and make it through the gate, continue to the resolution phase of the adventure. If they end up attracting suspicion from the townsfolk, a two-skeleton welcoming committee will approach the PCs. Newcomers to the city all always welcome! Mayor Willoughby and Constable Tomesworth are extremely polite and will greet the travelers with much fanfare. After graciously welcoming the PCs, they will answer questions and invite the travelers to an orientation so they can get fitted for their new un-life in Fellcast.

**Mayor Willoughby is a skeleton with a lot of pantomime in his gestures. He wears loose-fitting clothing that has been frequently stitched up over time. As he talks, his arms wave about, causing his clothes to flap about wildly. Constable Tomesworth is more formal in his manners. He greets with salutes and bows, and speaks in a clearly exaggerated deep tone that not his natural voice. Tomesworth is wearing old serviceman’s uniform of unfamiliar origin with a tall small-brimmed hat.**

- If asked about the town, Mayor Willoughby is quite proud of it. It is quite like a town isn't it? Yes, clean and citizens coming and going, much like a town! Tomesworth will add an "and orderly too!" every now and then.
- If asked any real questions about the history town, Willoughby and Tomesworth get confused. Truth is they do not know how long anyone has been here. Or how long the town has been here. Or where everyone even came from! He will try to end any lines of questioning and revert back to generic compliments.
- If asked about the Bonetimber forest, they know very little. The walls are up to keep the forest away. Wait, that does that make sense? It must, but why? Anyway, no more need to go out to the forest for you new citizens! You are now part of the town!
- If asked about orientation, it is where you are introduced to your new role in Fellcast-- you will get fitted for your clothing, are given your new name and job, and sent out to the town to start acting your role for the rest of your existence!

Should the PCs refuse to go to orientation, and they should, there will be a conflict. If the citizens find out the PCs are actually ALIVE, pandemonium ensues. The Mayor will freak out about this ruse, and he will start suspecting everyone of being secretly alive. The Constable will try to seize the characters for crimes against the good folk of Fellcast. Skeletons nearby likewise act in amplified and unpredictable ways. In a paranoid panic some turn on each other, some become enraged and challenge the PCs to duels, some just flee screaming in terror. The travelers can fight, negotiate, or make a break for it.

- Fighting will be as difficult an option as the GM wishes, as the PCs are outnumbered. But since the skeletons are in a state of chaos, only some will fight while others run, and it is likely a few rounds of combat may serve to intimate frighten off other aggressive skeletons.
- Negotiations are possible as well if they can calm the townsfolk down. Fellcast may choose to let them go with "banishment" as punishment for their trespassing. The skeletons are not looking for retribution; they are going to want them out of Fellcast as soon as possible.
- Finally, the players could just flee to the gates. The lever necessary to open the gate is barely guarded and they could push the skeletons aside from their stations to pull the gates down themselves.

#### **Subevent:**

As the PCs head south to the gate, Mayor Willoughby runs to a stone pedestal at the south end of the city road shouting begging for its forgiveness. The travelers must past this marker to get to the gates, and a casual glance suggest all this excitement is for nothing more than a ceramic bowl on a podium. Standing about four foot tall on a marble pedestal, the statue is topped by a hollow bowl in the shape of a pumpkin or gourd, the inside of which is full of dry seeds. On the pedestal a message is carved stating "your unending death with cease once life returns to the

wood.” The amnesiac village of skeletons interprets this as a threat and has worked hard to keep the living out of Fellcast. However, the travelers know that Satchel has been here, and nothing has destroyed the city as they fear. Should a player wish, the pumpkin’s seeds could be planted anywhere in the Bonetimber Forest. Doing so would lift a curse placed upon the woods and bring about a gradual change in the environment, replacing the lifeless trees with new growth and transforming the skeletons of Fellcast into living people again. Should the travelers return next year, they will find a completely different forest here altogether!

## **Act # 7: Back to Braidberry!**

**Time:** Evening

**Weather:** Clear

**Terrain:** Grassland

**Difficulty:** 7

**Purpose:** Finishing the quest!

**Senses:**

Once through the southern gate the travelers will find themselves on the home stretch back to Braidberry. Past Fellcast they will cross a bridge over the GraySprig River and head down a trodden path out of the Bonetimber Forest. The southward road is bumpy and has not seen much use since no one travels toward Fellcast. Though the area is in bad shape, it still paves a clear way back to town. The gray of the Bonetimber Forest melts away as dead trees become more scarce and live trees more plentiful.

**Event:**

Any unused Landmarks or Discoveries can be placed during this last leg of the journey. The situation in the Bonetimber is intentionally left vague, but as a group the PCs can discuss what exactly they think happened there. Aside from the skeletons, clues may lie in the Discovery items and Landmark sites they came across, as well as questions the Witch may have answered, if they crossed paths with the amulet on the Hexed Bear, and any other folklore they have overheard. All these unrelated tidbits might be the result of a single incredible story! How the adventure ends depends largely on when the PCs arrive back in Braidberry. Depending on how you want the ending to unfold, adjust the time to provide the most interesting result based on your player’s actions. Events that could have influenced the journey include fights, Landmarks and Discoveries, encounters, helping during Satchel’s recipe hunt, and events during any travel through Fellcast.

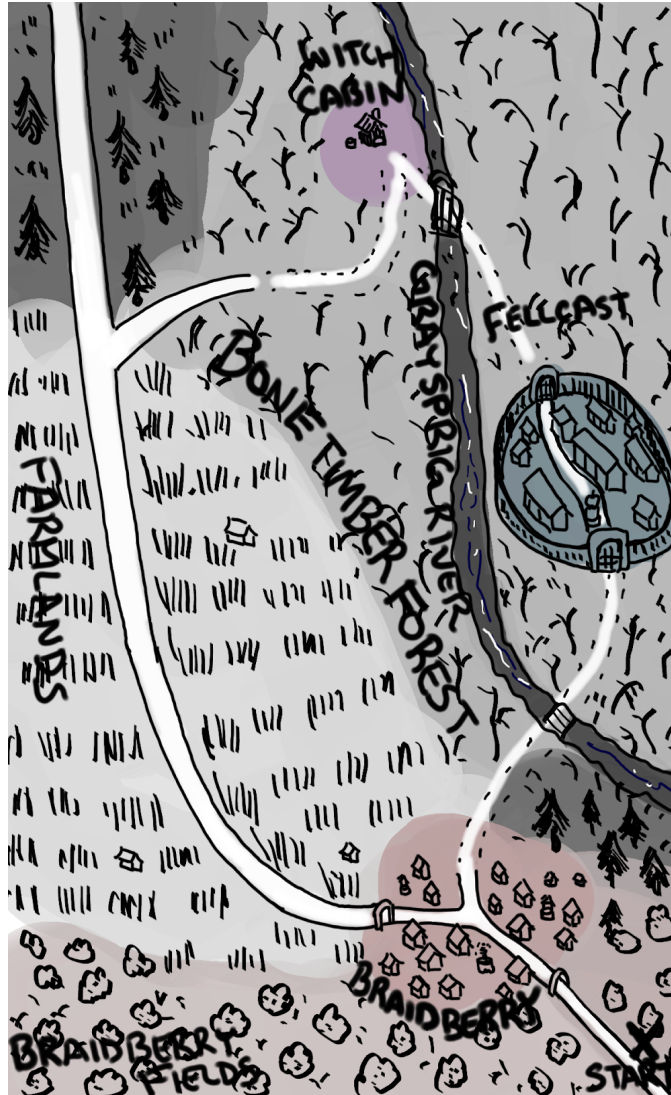
- The PCs arrive before the Trickling’s antics--
  - If still dressed as skeletons... The townsfolk interpret the skeletons approaching as a sign the Trickling is beginning his prank onslaught on the village. People begin to flee, some toss rocks, and general outrage begins until you get closer to the town. Once it becomes clear that the travelers have returned...
  - The PCs arrive on time and all is saved! The treats can be made and the Trickling appeased another year. As a bonus, there is enough of the

mixture for the next few years! The mayor happily rewards the travelers for their efforts.

- Unless they are empty-handed, in which case there is no reward. The townsfolk are disappointed, but they are no better or worse off than before. They implore you for help; the Trickling is coming! Travelers are no safer from his pranks than villagers, so get ready to defend yourself!
- The PCs arrive during the Trickling's antics--
  - If still dressed as skeletons... the Trickling is startled by the PCs- and then terrified! The arrival of a skeleton army causes the Trickling to panic and try to escape. He comically runs about tripping himself up in his own traps as he slinks away. The townspeople who witness this realize they never tried to beat him at his own game- instead of a treat, why not dress up in scary costumes each year and trick the fiend back!
  - Perhaps they can put a stop to the pranks before things get out of hand! If they have the recipe they can offer to negotiate. If given the choice between pranking or eating, the Trickling would much rather be stuffing himself with tasty snacks.
  - If they are empty-handed, the Trickling is cunning but not invulnerable. Even without the ability to make treats, it is still possible to push the Trickling back. If there is one thing a bully fears, it is a bigger bully! Threats and intimidation work to stop the Trickling's assault this year.
- The PCs can arrive after the Trickling's antics--
  - The village is in poor shape: a horse is on the inn's rooftop, streams of paper hang from the trees, cats are mooing, the fountain is full of milk. Crude paintings are on the walls and doors of every building as the PCs walk through town. Townsfolk give them angry glares or disappointed sighs. The mayor takes solace that even if you failed to prevent this year's catastrophe, at least you brought enough ingredients to prevent next year from disaster. The reward is not as great as it would have been if successful, but it is still a small thank you for your efforts.
  - If they are empty-handed, grab a broom. Least you can do is help clean up this mess!

**The Trickling is an imp about four-foot tall with large eyes and a wide grin. It returns to Braidberry every year to cause general mischief and nonsense pranks. Because it does not speak, no one in the village knows where it comes from or its motives for these antics-- only that it is a deliberate thorn in the lives of the townsfolk. The Trickling has never been successfully confronted by the citizens of Braidberry, but if it were cornered, it would flee rather than fight. It has no intention of causing, or suffering, harm. If combated, use the stats for any monster you think would challenge your player's character levels.**





**Opening:**

Arrival at the town of Braidberry where the townsfolk are in a panic

**Act 1**

Main Event: The Mayor explains the situation to the PCs, and they are given a quest to retrieve an ingredient to save the town from a Trickling imp who pranks the citizens each year.

**Act 2**

Main Event: The PCs set off on their journey northward to the Bonetimber Forest to find the Witch who makes the mixture they seek.

Sub Event: There are 2 Landmarks and 3 Discoveries to be investigated on the road north. There is one encounter with a family also attempting to flee the town.

**Act 3**

Main Event: The characters enter the Bonetimber Forest and have to make camp.

Sub Event: There are 2 Landmarks and 3 Discoveries to be investigated in the forest. There may be a minor monster encounter at the GMs preference. There is an optional encounter with a hexed animal.

**Act 4**

Main Event: The PCs meet the Bonetimber Witch and her Apprentice. The Apprentice prepares the mixture for the travelers.

Sub Event: The PCs can help search for and gather the ingredients needed to make the mixture.

#### **Act 5**

Turning Point: A detour is suggested to the PCs, but they will need to prepare costumes for it to work. The last night of camping before the return trip.

Sub Event: Costumes can be made from existing equipment or gathered from the woods.

#### **Act 6**

Main Event: The PCs enter the skeleton town of Fellcast. The skeletons will not confront them if they are in costume and not suspicious, but if they attract too much attention, the situation may lead to pandemonium.

Sub Event: The PCs find dried seeds that they may plant within the Bonetimber Forest.

#### **Act 7**

Main Event: The return to Braidberry and resolution of the quest.

Sub Event: Depending on the arrival of the travelers, they may have to deal with fallout from the imp's antics.