

4-6 PCs



Levels 2-3

FOREST FOR THE TREES



A4

FOREST FOR THE TREES

A 5th Edition compatible adventure for four to six 2nd to 3rd level PCs

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CREDITS

Authors: Jonathan G. Nelson

Creative Director: Jonathan G. Nelson

Cartographer: Todd Gamble

Art Director: Alex Tallon

Interior Artists: Jacob Blackmon, Gary Dupuis, Rick Hershey,

Cover Artist: Todd Gamble

Malcolm McClinton, Louis Porter Jr.

Publisher: Jonathan G. Nelson

Layout: Alex Tallon

Shenanigans spell created by Will Myers

AAW GAMES LLC

Jonathan G. Nelson

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Adventure Background

Five years ago men from the local village started to log **West Wood** (located just east of the Crypt of Sun Lord Ka'Teek). The nearby forest was nicknamed by the loggers due to the simple fact that it was due west of the infamous Dark Wood. **West Wood** was a prime target for two reasons: first, it is much safer than the dreaded Dark Wood (which is teeming with devils and monsters); second, it has an elevated pond. The elevated pond was easy to dam up and install a system which controlled the flow of water. This assisted the loggers by carrying logs down the river and out into the Serpent Lake. A ship would then pick up the logs and transport them to the Klavek Homeland. Once the installation of the dam was in place a group of local loggers moved in, built a base camp, and went to work logging **West Wood**.

A few days ago the logging team was busy working at a clear-cut next to the lumber pond. Gordon the Lumber-Master was in charge and most of his men were hard at work when something strange happened. A strong wind suddenly sprang up out of nowhere and the sky grew dark. The loggers began to hear an eerie whisper upon the wind. At first the whisper was inaudible, but it slowly rose in volume until the loggers could discern the message. It said, "*Leave this place unwanted creatures, or you will fall dead one by one!*"

Gordon ordered his crew off the hill and back to the base camp at the edge of the forest. They sent word to the mayor of the local village using a carrier bird.



Adventure Synopsis

The PCs travel from the village to the west toward a logging camp. They attract the attention of a female Pixie who follows them from afar.

When they arrive at the logging camp the PCs meet Gordon the Lumber-Master. A group of disgruntled loggers poses a potential threat which must be diffused by the PCs. Gordon tells the PCs about the incident at the clear-cut and offers to join the PCs in their investigation.

When the group reaches the clear-cut an eerie voice on the wind tells them to leave the forest.

The adventurers follow the voice to the Sacred Grove where six Hamadryads guard the Great Hamadryad (an ancient treant). The Great Hamadryad refuses to speak with the group unless the PCs are willing to help her. The Great Hamadryad asks the PCs to take on three quests on which they will obtain three objects and return them to her.

The PCs visit a Kobold cave, a Pixie village, and a washed out Brownie village in search of the items to fulfill the Great Hamadryad's quest.

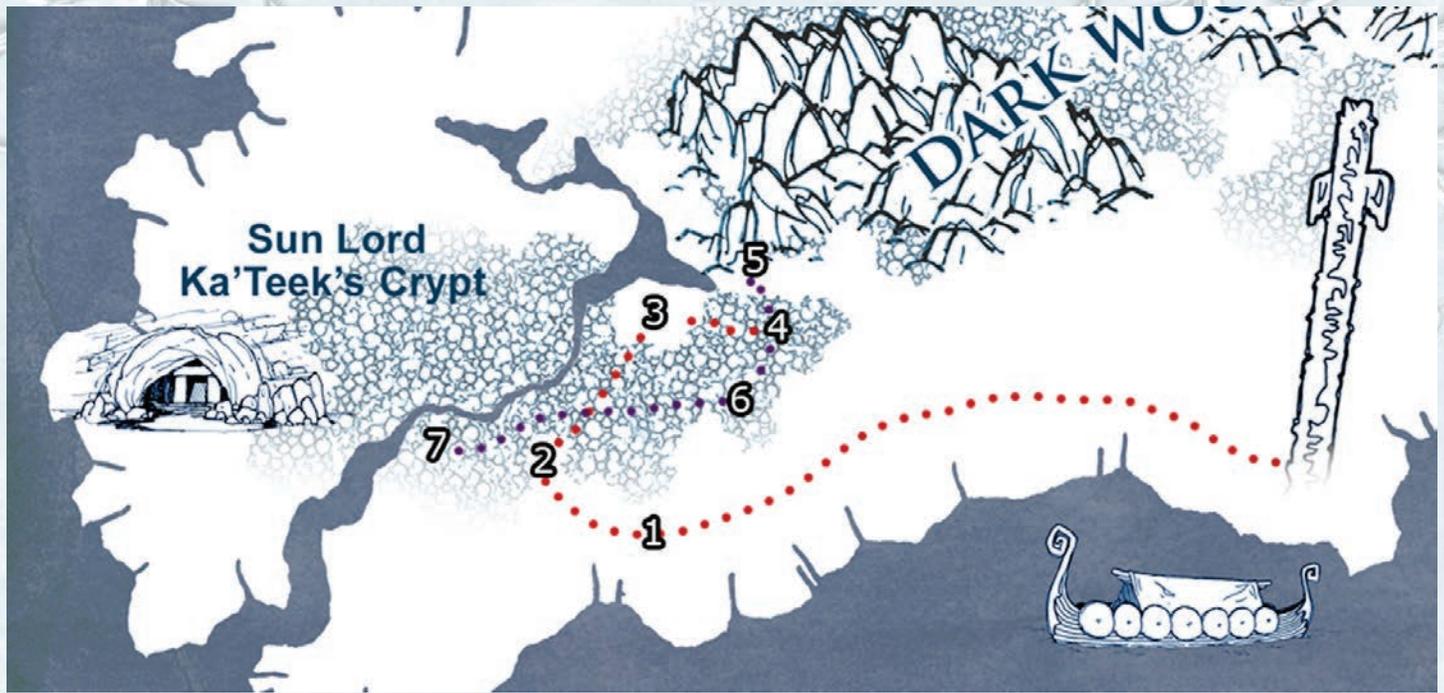
The group returns to the Great Hamadryad and presents the objects. She will now speak with them regarding the status quo. She gives the PCs an ultimatum. She asks them to escort the loggers out of the forest. If they refuse, the Great Hamadryad will attack the PCs while simultaneously telepathically ordering the Dryads to destroy the logging camp, killing all of the loggers in the process.

Adventure Hooks

1. Mayor Igor Leonid of Rybalka summons the PCs to the Rybalka City Hall and explains the situation. He is willing to offer them 100 gold pieces each if they can solve the problems at the logging camp and return the crew to work. He gives them a map of the area and directions from Rybalka to the logging camp. Once there, Gordon the Lumber-Master will direct them further. (*If you are not using the AaW Campaign Setting simply replace Rybalka with a village of your choosing.*)

2. A logger was recently injured while working in West Wood and is now recovering in the village. He informs the PCs that his friends and fellow loggers need their help as something has happened and the camp is shut down. He's just received word via carrier pigeon that an evil entity has threatened to kill the loggers should they cut down any more trees in West Wood.

3. Wwolf (or a local ranger) approaches the PCs to warn them of a potentially dangerous situation brewing in West Wood. Through his various sources, Wwolf has heard that the loggers have delved too deep and felled one too many trees. Now the beings living in the forest want the loggers removed. If they fail to leave, the forest dwellers will take matters into their own hands. Wwolf does not reveal to the PCs where he gets his information.



Continuing from Previous A-Series Adventures

If you are playing through all the A-Series and continuing on from A03: Champion's Rest your party is probably at least 3rd level, if not 4th. This adventure, although designed for levels 2-3 will be more appropriate for 3rd level characters. A party of higher level will still be challenged.

1. Barren Snow Fields

Heavy snowfall and gusty winds have recently buried these barren fields in 5 feet of snow.

Those without snowshoes will find progress through this area extremely slow. Each step causes one to sink deeper and deeper into the snow. Movement is reduced to 1/4. Every so often the PCs come upon a marker driven into a tree or posted using a tall wooden sign driven deep through the snow and into the frozen earth beyond. The markers are made of wood and painted with a red directional arrow showing the way from the village to the logging camp.

Read the following:

"Barren fields packed with almost 5 feet of snow meander over small hills to the edge of a dark forest. The tall pines begin abruptly like a thick, dark green blanket against a bright white background. The forest climbs a gentle rise and then works its way into the cracks and seams of aged gray moss-covered rock. White snow rabbits and mice occasionally pop their heads out from under the snow and rush from one hiding place to another."

"You keep your eyes peeled for the next marker, a large wooden post painted red and driven through the snow into the firm earth below. You finally spot it up ahead and check the directional arrow on top which points due west, closer to the forest's edge. You continue to trudge along, following the markers and hoping the logging camp is not too much farther."

Tricks and Pranks

As the PCs near the edge of the forest a small Pixie named Trialia grows interested in them. The PCs look different from the other humans she has seen visiting the area. Trialia has recently lost her innate invisibility due to fluctuations in the life force of the forest. Dealing with the loss of such an important ability, Trialia watches the PCs from the safety of the forest. She finally decides to start following, but does so discretely at a distance by hiding in tunnels and holes made by snow rabbits.

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 20

This check is not meant to be rolled by the players. If anyone's passive Perception is 20 or higher, they notice the pixie. This check is a result of the pixie's stealth check result. This Pixie Trialia needs some time to pull some pranks.

Success: *"You notice that something small periodically pops its head out of the snow behind you. It appears to be following you."*

If the group stops and turns around, Trialia will immediately cast *entangle* on the tall grass that grows deep beneath the snow. The grass will magically spring up and begin to wrap around the legs of the PCs. As they deal with this threat she will quietly slip away into one of the deeper rabbit holes in the snow.

Halfway to the logging camp the PCs start having pranks pulled on them - *boots tied together, holes in their waterskins, being tripped and falling in the snow, and a huge snowball rolling down the hill toward the party!*

2. Logging Base Camp

Go wild with ideas and have fun with the PCs as they try to determine who or what is causing these shenanigans.

You may choose the required ability checks to avoid these pranks. Even if the PCs fail their checks, none of the pranks cause physical damage (nothing permanent anyway!)

For Trialia it's all in good fun!

You may eventually decide to let the PCs discover Trialia the Pixie. She will politely ask to tag along with a mischievous look in her eye. If the PCs refuse, she will still sneak about from a distance, continuing her pranks, singing silly songs, and making the PCs' lives miserable. If the party agrees she also agrees to stop the pranks (for the time being).

If Trialia the Pixie accompanies the PCs on their quest she will not reveal any of the surprises in store for them. Trialia holds great respect for the Great Hamadryad and will do anything she can to assist the Great Mother. If and when the PCs approach Pyrandia (the Pixie Village), she will sneak off to warn Sir Dellwood that the "tall ones" are coming.

Combat

(1) Pixie, CR 1/4; 50xp. See official entry for full statistics.



This clearing is full of stumps and a few felled logs around campfires along with two outbuildings, a smithy, and piles of logging equipment. A water flume redirects water from a stream in the hills into the camp to turn a mill-blade and operate saws.

Read the following:

"You approach a remote logging camp at the base of a rocky, tree-covered hill. Two outbuildings provide protection from the elements for the loggers while an on-site smithy is available for equipment repairs. A flume directs water from a source in the hills into the camp to turn a mill-blade and operate saws."

"The loggers seem in a foul mood and clomp about the camp in a daze, drinking coffee and sitting on logs around the fire to keep warm. Drizzly rain and some hail begins to fall on the camp making the ground slushy and muddy."

Gordon the Lumber-Master approaches the PCs. Although he doesn't like their presence here any more than the rest of his crew, he sees them as a necessary evil. He hopes they will finish their job quickly so the loggers may return to work.

Disgruntled Loggers

Gordon explains that a few days ago his team was working in a clear-cut, felling trees into the log pond. Suddenly a strong wind came up and the sky grew dark. The loggers heard an eerie whisper upon the wind; it said, "Leave this place unwanted creatures, or you will fall dead one by one!" Gordon ordered his crew off the hill and back to the base camp at the edge of the forest. They sent word to the mayor using a carrier bird. The PCs' arrival is the loggers first response from the village.

While Gordon is explaining himself, a man named Grelf approaches wielding a sharp hand axe. Grelf is tired of outsiders having a say in how the loggers do their job. He wants to get back to work so he can pay off debt owed to the government and return to the Klavek Homeland.

Read the following:

"An angry looking logger approaches you. He has arms the size of tree trunks and wields a sharp hand axe. "Why don't you city trash go back where ya came from? We don't need ya here! You're all wasting our time!" The man shakes the axe at you. He's starting to get a little too close for comfort."

"Gordon turns to the man; "Grelf, you don't want to do this. You've nearly paid off your debt to the Monarchy. These adventurers will take care of this quickly." A few loggers overhear this and begin to gather around your party. "Won't you?" Gordon peers into your eyes seeking answers."

Here is a good opportunity for some role-playing. Although the party does not have many answers, they must tell the loggers something or risk major unrest. Many of these men are brutish woodsmen types who "don't take crap from nobody" and will actually threaten or even attack PCs who refuse to answer their questions.

Skill Check

Charisma (Persuasion) check DC 12/17

Failure = Grelf rallies a small group of the men (4 loggers). They brandish hand axes and demand the PCs return to the village. If the PCs refuse to leave, Grelf and his followers attack both Gordon the Lumber-Master and the PCs. The men blame Gordon for calling outside help before the loggers had the chance to investigate further. The loggers only seek to injure the PCs and Gordon. They are not evil, simply men who must make a living to feed their families. If it comes down to it, they will fight to protect their livelihood. If combat erupts make it clear that lethal force is a bad idea, and there are no penalties for dealing non-lethal damage.

12 Success = The loggers temporarily back down and accept the PC's answer. Grelf on the other hand doesn't care at all for the PC's answer and begins to push around whoever retains the leadership role in the party. If the PCs don't think or act quickly combat between Grelf and the PCs will begin within 1d4 rounds.

17 Success = Both the loggers and Grelf accept the PCs' answer and back down. Grelf is still perturbed and wanders around complaining to others about the presence of the PCs. If the group attempts to remain in the logging camp overnight they may find themselves in hand-to-hand combat with a drunken Grelf at the community campfire that evening.

Skill Check

Charisma (Intimidation) check DC 12/17

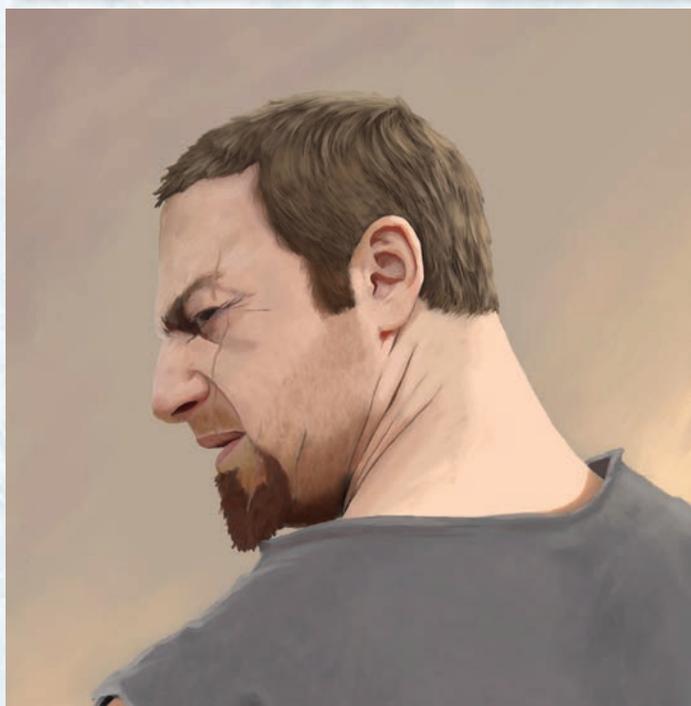
Failure = With the PCs attempting to intimidate a group of soaking wet, out-of-work loggers, Grelf is able to gather a small group (6 loggers) which outright attacks both Gordon the Lumber-Master and the PCs. A couple of these men will actually fight to the death, whereas the rest simply want to teach Gordon and the PCs a lesson.

12 Success = The loggers fear the PCs' reprisal should their work crew choose to rise up against them. Most of the loggers back down leaving only Grelf and a two of his closest friends who move in and begin to push around whoever holds the leadership role in the party. If the PCs do not act quickly this will escalate to full scale combat in 1d4 rounds.

17 Success = Grelf and the loggers back down. Some of the loggers may have heard of the PCs' adventures and fear confronting such skilled warriors. However, Grelf isn't one to be pushed around and decides that he will follow the PCs on their quest from afar. When the PCs meet with the Great Hamadryad, Grelf will eavesdrop and return to the loggers, spreading word of this creature and the PCs who are now working for it. This will cause a major uprising at the logging camp. As the PCs meet the Great Hamadryad for the last time, a group of loggers suddenly charges from the woods, surrounding and attacking the ancient Great Hamadryad. The loggers wish to fell this creature so that they may continue logging the forest. If this path comes to pass, then the Hamadryad's redirection of the Logging Pond toward the camp will prove ineffective. It will simply cause minor damage to some of the logging equipment and wash away food and supplies. The logging will continue.

Combat

(6) Thug, CR ½; XP 100; Adjusted Encounter Hard, 1,200 XP; See official entry for full statistics.



If the PCs are attacked by any of the disgruntled mob, the rest of the loggers stand back and begin to place bets.

As long as none of the PCs initiated the combat, Gordon hefts up a double bladed axe used for felling huge timber and offers to go with the group. *"I'm not afraid of death, nor his minions,"* Gordon says with a smile before throwing the axe over his shoulder. Should the group refuse they must convince him to stay put while they attend to their mission.

Skill Check

Charisma (Persuasion) check DC 15

Success = Gordon will give the group directions but will stay safely in the logging camp until the PCs' return.

Failure = Gordon will refuse to stay in the camp and will accompany the PCs on their quest. He will begin by leading them to the clear-cut at the top of the forest hills. The PCs must figure out a way to deal with this major liability and keep him alive for the duration of the journey. Treat him as a Thug as above, but using a Greataxe (Hit: +5, 1d12+2 slashing damage).

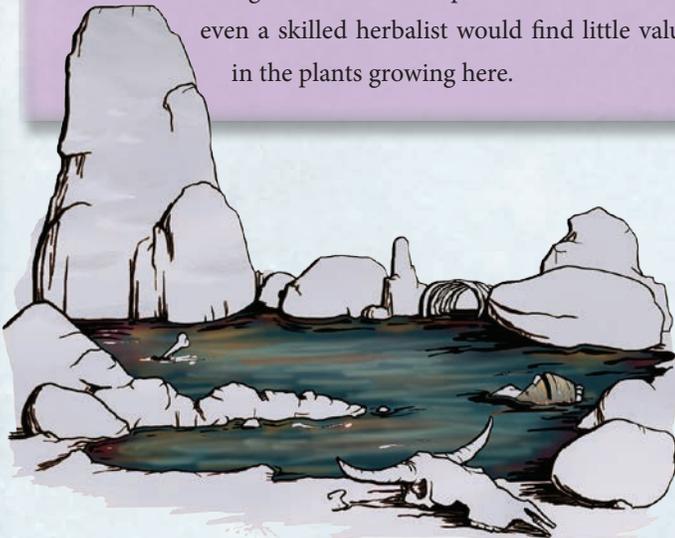
Gordon will lead the group toward the clear-cut in area 3. On the way there the group may wish to investigate the forest further.

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 16 or

Intelligence (Nature) check DC 12

Success = You notice that the health of this forest seems quite poor. The pine needles on most of the trees fall to the ground as you brush by them. The snow-covered forest floor is littered with brown needles and fallen limbs. The plants which are able to crest the large snow banks are pale and devoid of life; even a skilled herbalist would find little value in the plants growing here.



3. Clear Cut

This area has been heavily damaged by reckless logging practices; all of the trees in a two mile radius have been cut down. A pond nearby has been outfitted with a makeshift dam and overloaded with the timber.

Read the following:

"The journey through the forest is a peaceful one. A heavily traveled trail from the logging camp meanders up through the rocky, tree-covered slopes. The once-lush and now barely green forest surrounds you, the pine trees keeping the heavy snow hoisted high above in their great arms.

Finally, at the top of a great climb, you emerge to a massive circle of destruction."

As the group moves into this area they will notice that no new life grows here and large amounts of snow blanket the region, no longer caught by the trees above. Even the tree stumps are barely visible above the vast amount of snowfall. In the distance the rocky crags of the nearby mountains can be seen.

Read the following:

"A section of the forest in a two mile radius has been cut clear. The fallen timber has been dumped in a nearby pond for the time being. A makeshift dam holds the logs in place. The dam can presumably be knocked down to empty the pond water into the trickling stream below and push the lumber into the great Serpent Lake."

This area is devoid of wildlife as the reckless logging practices have decimated the ecological balance in this area.

This pond was once full of fish which both wildlife and humanoids in the forest used as a food source. The fish fed upon an algae which grew using the light of the sun. Now the fish cannot get proper oxygen due to the massive amount of logs filling the water, and their food source has been depleted. Only a few fish still live in the pond, and those that do are sickly and dying.

The creatures that once used the trees for homes and food have since died or moved to other parts of the forest.

Diseased Scrag

A nasty and diseased Scrag named Slog calls this logging pond home. In the past he ignored the lumberjacks and instead dined daily on a steady supply of fresh fish from the pond. Ever since the loggers filled his pond with logs, his food supply has been dwindling. Slog has subsisted on a diet of dying fish and diseased beavers in order to survive. Now that his food supply is nearing an end he frequently comes to the surface in search of fresh kills. He is so hungry now that he will go after hunters, loggers, and even wandering adventurers!

When the PCs wander near the pond he waits for one to get close and then reaches out, attempting to drag them under water.



Combat

Combat - Scrag (Troll), CR 5; Deadly 1,800 XP

Scrag (Troll)

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	13(+1)	20(+5)	7(-2)	9(-1)	7(-2)

Skills Perception +1

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Giant

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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

Amphibious. The troll can breathe air and water.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

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

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

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

The clearing has a few very old tracks from foxes and deer that once passed through the area. If the PCs investigate they will notice some tracks that are unfamiliar even to the most skilled of trackers.

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 18 or

Wisdom (Survival) check DC 14

Success: Strange tracks are visible in the snow, as if a group of giant snakes slithered through this area and into the forest to the east.

GM Info: These tracks were left by the Hamadryads who guard and watch over the Great Hamadryad, Protector of the Wood.

After the group has explored the area for a bit the wind suddenly picks up and the sky fills with threatening storm clouds. A whispering voice can be heard upon the wind calling out to them, "Return from whence you came. This matter does not concern you. If you stay you too will die!"

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 12

Success: The PCs notice that the wind (and thus the voice) is coming from the forest to the east.

If Trialia the Pixie is with the PCs she will say, "The Great Tree Mother is not happy with you big lugs!" Trialia knows that the Great Hamadryad lives to the east of here but will never give up the location. There is a bond between all the good forest creatures that they do not break and Trialia despite her chaotic nature will not betray another.



4. Sacred Grove

This grove is strategically set into a steeply rising hillside to the east. The hill is covered in loose rock and packed snow, ready to come tumbling down at the slightest disturbance. An immediate drop off to the north makes this location impossible to approach from anywhere save the southwest.

Read the following:

“Six tall, smooth trees grow with beautiful symmetry in a perfect circle around the biggest tree you have ever seen. It would take nearly 50 people holding hands to round the trunk of this great tree. Although the giant tree is wide, it is also squat, its limbs covered in lush pine needles. The 6 trees that grow around it appear to have been planted strategically to guard the larger tree.”

This location looks very difficult to approach, with the trees growing into the side of a rising hill that turns into a dangerous slope littered with loose rocks and snow banks. To the north, the ground drops away in a dead-fall some 200 feet to the forest floor below. The beautiful look-out grants a view of the landscape past Rybalka and into the Serpent Lake and its peninsulas and inlets.”

The Great Hamadryad and the Six Sisters

The trees which surround the Great Hamadryad are lesser Hamadryads and have statistics identical to Dryads with the added ability of shape-shifting into an immobile tree at will. If anyone attempts to harm the Great Hamadryad, the six Hamadryad sisters will attack mercilessly until the guilty party is slain.

The Great Hamadryad, Dalarna, has been planted firmly in this place for so long that she would find it very difficult to move herself. Thus she **requires 3 rounds** before being able to move freely about.

Combat

(6) Dryads, CR 1; xp 200; Adjusted encounter Deadly 2,400 XP; plus (1) Treant, CR 9; 5,000 XP; Adjusted Encounter CR 3; XP 700; See official entries for full statistics.



Great Hamadryad (Treat Weakened)

Huge plant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 current (8d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	8(-1)	15(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)	12(+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire, slashing (the bark is weakened and easily broken)

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Sylvan, Elvish, Common, Druidic

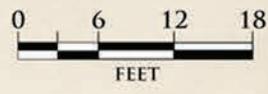
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

False Appearance. While the great hamadryad remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. The great hamadryad deals double damage to objects and structures.

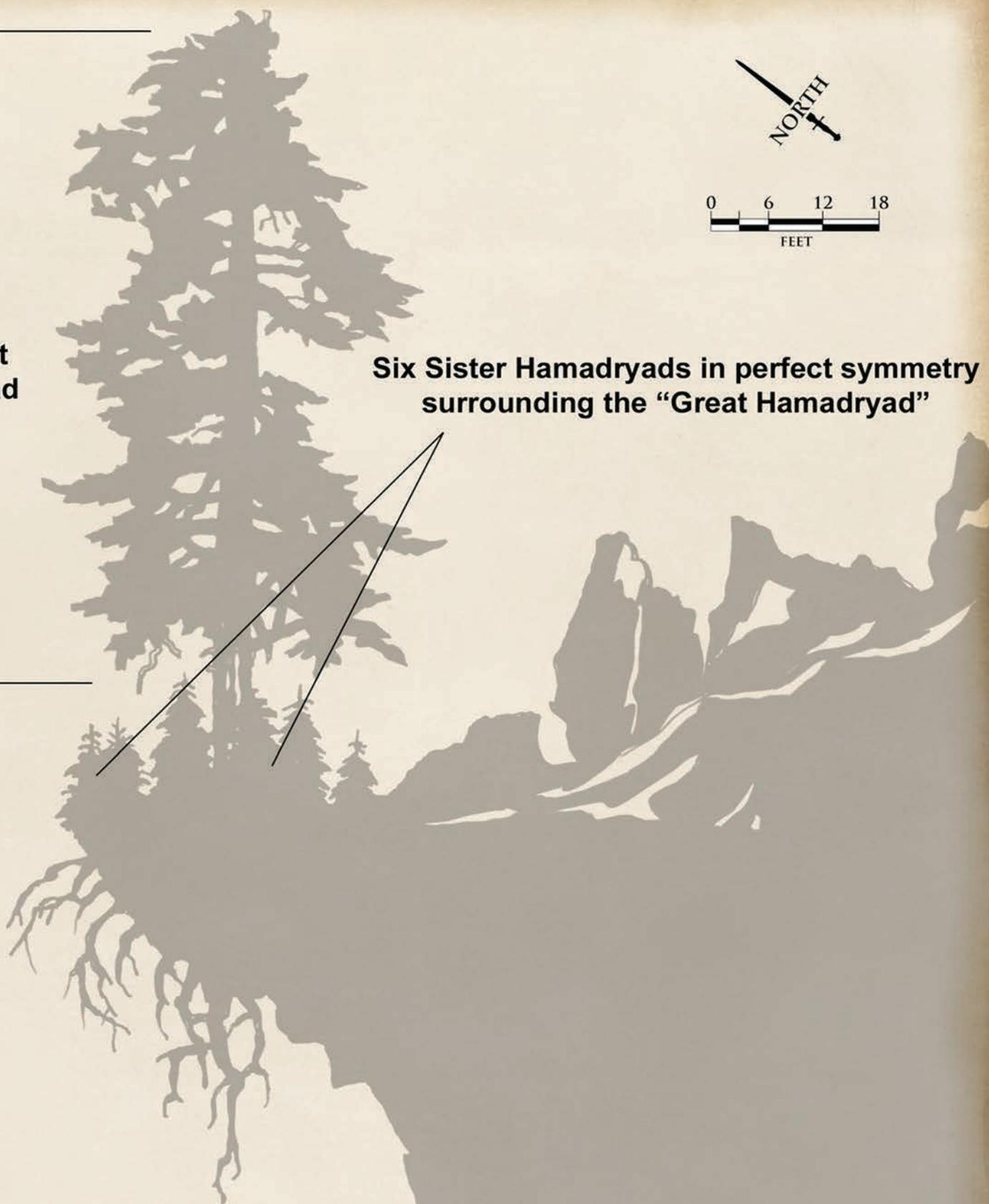
ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.



The Great Hamadryad

Six Sister Hamadryads in perfect symmetry surrounding the "Great Hamadryad"



THE GREAT HAMADRYAD AND THE SIX SISTERS



As the PCs approach the great tree, a strong gust of wind suddenly slams into them, knocking them back a few steps. The wind picks up with myriad soft female voices upon it; “We, the six sisters, forbid you to speak to the mother.” If the PCs ask any questions aloud the only answer they get is, “Go back and tell the rest of your kind they are not welcome here. If they return they will surely die!”

After this the Great Hamadryad finally decides that she has something to say.

“The ground begins to rumble and you look around for something to hold on to. Just as you find something, the shaking stops. The limbs of the great tree begin to move and the twisted face of an old woman with exaggerated features appears in the bark. She peers out at the group and watches you in complete silence.”

If the first reaction by the PCs is negative, she will respond by disappearing into the tree and telepathically ordering her six daughters to attack. If the Dryads are injured, the Great Hamadryad won't hesitate to join in the fray if needed. *Perhaps killing these pink skinned creatures will teach the rest a lesson she assumes.*

DM Note



The Six dryads alone are more than enough to take down at least some of the PCs, if not a TPK (Total Party Kill) at this level. And this is without the great Hamadryad getting involved. If the PCs do intend to fight, the dryads will only seek to incapacitate the PCs, unless the PCs begin using fire, and then they will fight to the death. The dryads will first attempt to Fey Charm the PCs and then have them listen to the Great Tree and follow her quests. If combat ensues, the Great Hamadryad will activate as normal, but before she enters combat she will give the party one last reprieve. Additionally the Great Hamadryad is severely weakened due to the state of the forest.

If the PCs kindly greet her she will respond as follows:

“Just like those before you, you care not where you tread or what you kill. You dare to disturb the slumber of ancients who dwelt here ages before your ancestors were born. Your kind has been warned to leave this forest or die.”

Allow the PCs to respond before continuing.

“I will speak no further regarding this unless you fulfill three quests for me.”

If the PCs accept, continue; if they refuse, the Great Hamadryad will give the loggers **3 days** to leave the area before unleashing the entire logging pond on their camp, killing all of the loggers and transforming the site into a turbulent stream leading out to Serpent Lake.

Read the following:

“Firstly you must journey through the woods to the northwest of here, to the cave of the kobolds on the edge of the Jagged Crags. These kobolds are known for a fine delicacy: pickled fish. Bring me one such fish, but please, spare the lives of the kobolds.”

“Secondly you will travel back into the forest to a location to the southwest of here. The tiny village of Pyrandia is hidden away in the trees, a village of pixies. See if you can find their home and pay them a short visit. Mark the location on a map, which you will later bring to me to prove you have successfully found Pyrandia.”

“Thirdly, travel due west from the Pixie village until you reach a small, trickling stream. Follow it toward the great lake until you find the home of the brownies. Ask their leader how his people fair and bring me the one thing that all those brownies have in common.”

“After you have done all three of these things, return here. Then we will speak further.”

The giant trees limbs return to their former positions and the face contorts and disappears back into the ancient bark from whence it came. A silent breeze brings a chill which cuts you to the bone.

5. Kobold Cave

A small cave on the edge of a rocky hillside that is sheltered from the snow and spotted with trees.

The Kobolds

The kobolds have called this cave home for longer than they remember. Every year they fish the pond to the west of their cave to sustain their families and pickle the rest to eat throughout winter.

This year there have been no fish, and now the kobolds starve. They have depleted their supply of pickled fish and now hunt the area for whatever they can scrounge up. Even humans have become fair game to them. One such kill was a local hunter named Dwelb who has been missing from the village for over 2 months. His bones are scattered about the cave in area A., covered in gnaw marks.

Mini Quest

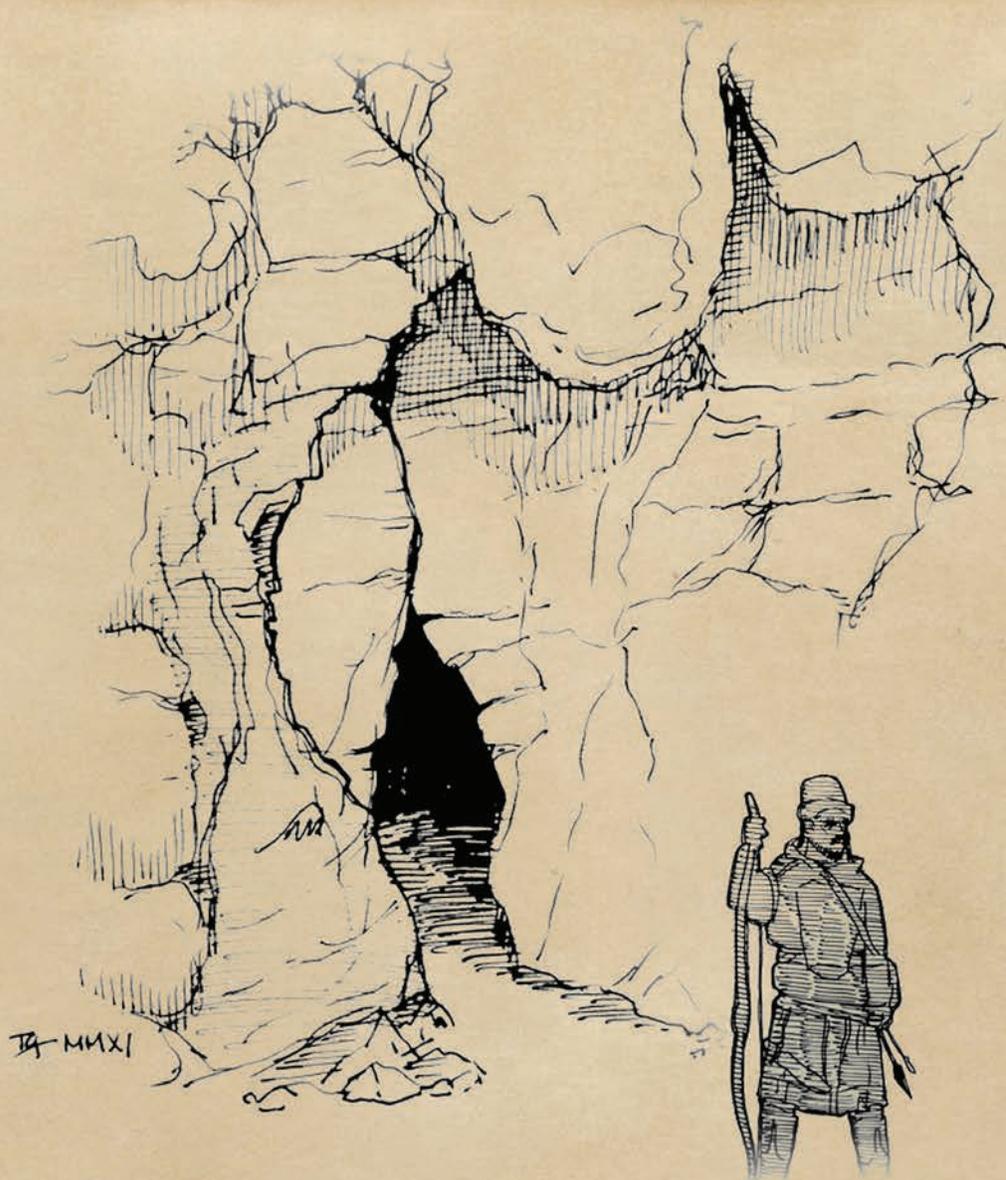


If the PCs gather Dwelb's bones and return them to the village they will be rewarded 20 gp by his family. The family will also pay the PCs another 100 gp to return to the kobold cave to slay each and every one of the foul creatures.

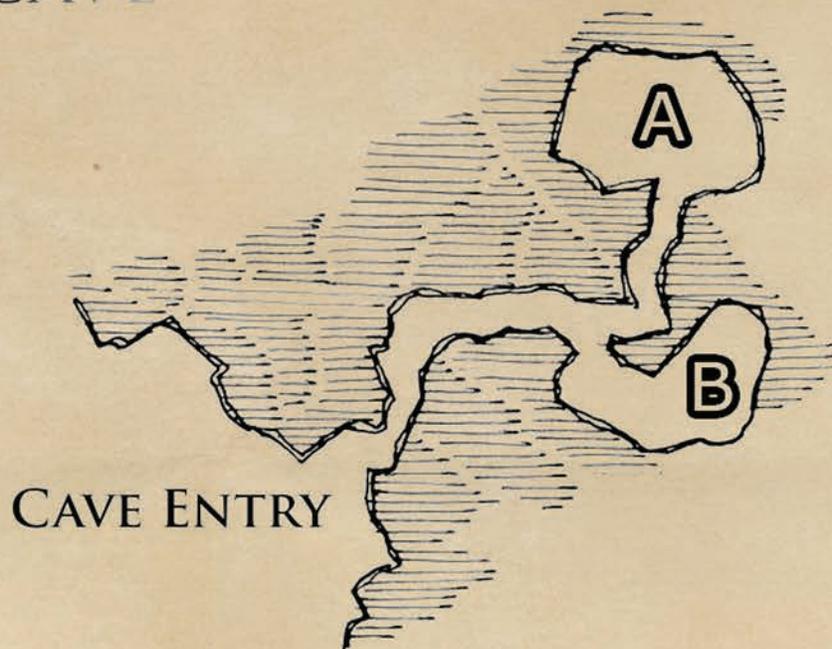
Cave Entry

The entrance of the Kobold Cave appears simple enough. A path of dried fallen leaves leads up to the entrance, concealing the kobold tracks from would be revenge seekers from the local village.

A concealed trap awaits the PCs just outside the entrance. The kobolds have worked hard to dig a deep pit and conceal it with stretched bear skins covered in leaves. Now all they must do is wait for a foolish humanoid to come to dinner.



KOBOLD CAVE



Concealed Pit

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 15 to find, **Dexterity check DC 15** to disable; affects all targets entering a 10 ft. square area, **Dexterity saving throw DC 16** save or take 4d10 damage.

A. Living Quarters

This section of the cave contains a roaring fire fed with wet timber which creates a lot of smoke. Most of the smoke exits the ceiling through numerous cracks in the rocks.

Bones and refuse are scattered throughout this area including the bones of Dwelb the hunter. *If these bones are collected and returned to the village for identification a reward of 20 gold will be given to the PCs along with many thanks by friends of Dwelb.* 15 of the 20 kobolds who live here can be found in this room at any given time. The rest are out hunting and scavenging for anything they can get their hands on.

All of the kobolds are sickly and emaciated. It is fairly obvious to the PCs that they are starving.

Skill Check

Charisma Check

If the PCs offer food to the kobolds they have advantage on Charisma checks made against them.

If the PCs offer enough food to feed all of the kobolds for 1 day they not only have advantage on any checks but the checks also lower in difficulty by 5.

DC 12 (Change kobold reaction from Hostile to Unfriendly)

DC 15 (Change kobold reaction from Hostile to Indifferent)

DC 20 (Change kobold reaction from Hostile to Friendly)

Success = The kobolds will listen to the PCs. If the PCs offer immediate food with a promise of more to come, the kobolds will refrain from killing the PCs (for now). If the party succeeds on a DC 20 check or above they can convince the kobolds to move to a better location, thus fulfilling both quests (Dryads and Dwelb).

**Note: If the PCs are able to befriend the kobolds they will warn the PCs that a small number of the tribe (1d4+2) are still out hunting and will return soon. They will need to be cautious so the newcomers don't attack outright.*

Failure = The kobolds decide to eat the PCs for supper!

B. Store Room/Traps

This is normally where the kobolds keep their supply of food for the winter. Now it is just about empty. Only a few used barrels and glass jars (stolen from humans) litter this area. A few traps which the kobolds have been building to snag prey for food are being constructed here, although none of the traps are currently operational.

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check DC 14

Success = There are a few fish bones covered in dirt. They have a faint pickled smell and can be taken by the PCs in place of a whole fish.

There are no whole fish of any kind within the kobolds' cave.

There is a 20% chance that two kobolds will be in this room working on one of the traps. If they see the PCs, they will scream to alert the rest of the family in area A.

Combat

Combat - Starving Kobolds (20), cr 1/8; 25 XP;

Adjusted encounter Medium 625 XP; See official entry for full statistics.

The kobolds are considered exhausted and have disadvantage on all checks, but are able to fight for 10 rounds before collapsing from complete exhaustion.

Tactics: The kobolds have no tactics at this point. Normally they are quite crafty and tricky, but these kobolds are starving and attack with survival on their mind. If given the chance some will even rip raw flesh off the bones of the PCs during combat.



6. Pyrandia the Pixie Village

A beautiful miniature village using the natural beauty of the forest as its canvas is seemingly painted upon the trees.

Read the following:

"Tiny houses built onto tree limbs and tucked inside squirrel holes wrap around every tree in this part of the forest. Creatures dripping with glistening sparkles and little insect wings flutter about, chattering like a storm of chipmunks as you approach."

If Trialia the Pixie is with the PCs she will warn the villagers that the PCs are coming then return to the party. As they all enter the village, she will beg the other pixies not to attack the PCs (Wisdom (Insight) DC 12 reveals her true motives). Her pleas go unanswered (of course) and the PCs are met with a barrage of debilitating spells and arrows!

Although the pixies only attempt to disable the PCs, they will engage in more serious combat should the PCs kill any of their kin. Five of the Pixies ready counterspells against any magic the PCs might cast. Each can counterspell twice.

Combat

(15) Pixies, CR ¼; 50 XP; Adjusted Encounter Deadly 3,000 XP; See official entry for full statistics.

Sir Dellwood

The leader of the pixies is Sir Dellwood, a pixie old and wise beyond his years. He holds a grand inquisition to get to the bottom of why the magical energy of the forest has been weakening of late. The pixies draw their energy from the strength of the woods and some of their spells, such as the one that keeps their home invisible to outsiders, have not been functioning.

He also wants to know what happened to the Brownie Village that was washed away a couple years ago. Many felled logs were found at the site of the massacre and the incident was assumed to have been caused by humans. Sir Dellwood has conducted many inquisitions and interrogations, thus is almost always able to tell when someone is lying. He will find out if the PCs know anything, or perhaps were responsible for the death of the brownies.

Sir Dellwood is a reasonable man and will only torture the PCs should they refuse to answer his inquisition.

Once all of the PCs are disabled, the pixies tie them to nearby trees. When they begin to awake the questioning begins.

"You awaken and look around. You are tied to a large tree! Both your hands and legs are tightly bound together and you cannot move. A great buzz, like a thousand beehives, can be heard above and you see the glistening of pixie dust falling from the treetops. One by one, pixies begin to land in the nearby trees. Pretty soon you have accrued quite the audience."

A larger pixie with white hair and golden clothing gently descends from above, looking each of you over. He holds a silver scepter in one hand and a tiny book in the other. He nods at each of you and turns to the mob buzzing in a high pitched whir. "Hear ye, hear ye! Today, we pixies have caught some pink-skinned invaders intent on some sort of malicious activity, which they intended on performing whilst within the pixie-owned territory of this woodland. We will now torture the invaders, both to get to the bottom of this and find out who sent them."

"Men, remove the boots!" A few pixies quickly untie and remove the boots from your entire group. "Remove socks!" Your socks come off. "Prepare the weapon." Pixies fly down from the higher tree limbs holding gigantic white feathers.

Sir Dellwood asks, "Will you talk?"

If the PCs are prepared to discuss who sent them and why they are here (or make up a lie the pixies are satisfied with) Sir Dellwood will document this information and then release the PCs. More than anything else, Sir Dellwood wants to know the reason for the waning magical energy within the forest. (Fact: It is the trickle-down effect from clear-cut and log pond-caused depletion.)

If the PCs refuse to cooperate, by all means continue with the torture!!!

"Commence torture!" The pixies flutter their wings against the soles of your feet while tickling away with the giant feathers. You burst into laughter!



Skill Check

Tickle Torture

A person can only endure laughter for so long before breaking and Sir Dellwood knows this. He also enjoys hearing laughter in the forest again (both from the PCs and the pixies watching).

Constitution saving throw DC 10

For every 2-3 minutes of "tickle torture" the Constitution saving throw DC increases by 2 points until hitting its maximum at DC 20.

If the PCs still won't talk the pixies will release them in the middle of the night when most of the dangerous predators are out lurking.

7. Washed Out Brownie Village

The remnants of a small brownie village are scattered throughout the woods. Landlocked logs are frozen in many small ponds.

This is all that is left of a once-glorious brownie village. A couple years ago the loggers pulled the dam at the pond, releasing the water and over 500 logs, which flowed down the hill and into the Serpent Lake where they could be retrieved by ship. Little did they know that 100 Brownies made their homes next to the river that flows through this part of the forest. When the logs and water were released they came crashing down the river, obliterating everything in their path. All 100 Brownies were killed, men, women, and children.

This event was horrific and an enormous shock to the magical energy which binds the forest. Most of the brownies died before fulfilling their life quests. Because of this, many of the dead brownies later arose as undead spirits bound to the mortal world and doomed to exist forever in pure agony and suffering.

Three of these spirits, in the form of skeletons, approach the PCs when they arrive at the decimated village. These undead brownies immediately suspect that the PCs are responsible for the destruction of their village as they rarely see "tall folk" in this part of the woods.

Combat

(3) Skeletal Brownies, CR 1; Hard 1200 XP.

Skill Check

Charisma (Persuasion) check DC 20

PCs explain they are a mission for the Great Hamadryad = advantage

PCs spend time to explain themselves in great detail = +2 bonus

PCs reveal the existence of the loggers and the pond above which may have caused this damage = automatic success

Success = Once the PCs have convinced the spirits they are not the ones who killed them, the spirits ask for their help. They need the PCs to gather the bones of all the brownie villagers and their children. They must then take them to the Great Hamadryad to be buried so they may finally be laid to rest.

If the PCs refuse to help the undead brownies they attack the group. The brownies suspect that the PCs have lied to them and are in fact the ones that destroyed the village.

Failure = The undead skeletal brownies attack the party!

Skeletal Brownie

Tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poison, charmed

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Innate Spellcasting. The skeletal brownie's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: druidcraft

1/day each: confusion, dancing lights, dispel magic, entangle, sleep

Skill Check

Wisdom (Perception) check

DC 11 Success = The PCs find pieces of miniature houses, rocking chairs, swings, and other debris. Then they start to discover the bones. Just over 70 tiny skeletons scattered throughout the forest buried in the snow next to logs, some frozen in ponds the raging water left behind.

DC 14 Success = The PCs locate all 100 Skeletal Brownies scattered throughout the woods, some buried others stuck to the bottom of streams and ponds. They may now take these bones to the Great Hamadryad so she may lay them all to rest.

DC 18 Success = The PCs locate everything listed above PLUS a couple magical items. These items are listed below.

Treasure

Staff of Size Alteration (20 charges)

Staff, rare, (requires attunement by a druid)

At first glance this appears to be a small wooden stick. Upon closer inspection one finds small black magical runes traveling up one side. Once attuned, the staff can be activated with the command word, 'Lillybiggy' to change the wielder's size from as small as Tiny to as big as Huge. This change does not change the targets weight or stats and lasts for 1 minute and consumes 1 charge. The staff can also change the size of willing targets by expending a charge for each. Due to lost brownie lore and magic, the staff cannot be recharged.

Tiny Eversmoking Bottle

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This tiny bottle (brownie size) is a small blue ceramic decanter. A minuscule cork keeps the bottle closed. Upon opening a never ending supply of smoke bellows forth. Due to the small size, this bottle produces exactly 1/2 the area of effect and amount of smoke as a standard Eversmoking Bottle (30 ft radius instead of 60 ft). The cloud's area is heavily obscured. Each minute the bottle remains open the radius increases 10 ft. to a maximum of 60 ft.

Return to the Sacred Grove

When the PCs return to the grove read the following:

You return to the grove of trees to find the six symmetrical trees absent. The great tree remains and as you approach the face once again appears and looks you over. "So, you return. Tell me of your journey and set the items on the ground before me."

Great Hamadryad Quest Completion

The PCs should have returned to the Sacred Grove with the following:

1. Fish bones
2. Map with location of the pixie village
3. At least 1 brownie skeleton

It is not necessary to have all of these, but the Great Hamadryad will look upon the PCs with greater respect if they do so. Her main purpose in these quests was for the PCs to find out for themselves how drastic an effect the logging has had. Holding the death of the forest in their hands was something she hoped would cause a sense of personal physical connection to the experience.

Read this once the PCs have finished recounting their tale and laying the items before her:

"So, now you understand the effect that your kind has had on the forest. The animals lose their homes, the food supply dwindles, the destruction kills, and the magical energy dissipates; this weakening us all. I do not wish to cause harm to another living creature, but your kind has given us no choice. You will go now, leave these woods with the rest of your ilk, never to return."

The PCs may choose to negotiate with the Great Hamadryad. She is not accustomed to having her rule questioned, but since the PCs have humored her thus far she will hear them out.



Skill Check

Charisma (Persuasion) check DC 18

PCs refused to perform any of the “three quests” = automatic failure

PCs performed 1 out of 3 quests = disadvantage on the check

PCs performed 2 out of 3 quests = no change

PCs performed 3 out of 3 quests = advantage on the check

PCs performed 3 out of 3 quests including bringing back ALL of the Brownie skeletons = advantage on the check with a +1 bonus

PCs performed 3 out of 3 quests including bringing back ALL of the Brownie skeletons and retain a druid or ranger in their party = automatic success if the PCs roleplay well, otherwise grant them advantage with a +2 bonus.

Success = The Great Hamadryad is willing to take all dead logs, stumps, and trees in the entire West Wood and float them down the river to Serpent Lake as long as she is protector of the West Wood. In return she requests the removal of the logging camp. Villagers are hereby forbidden within the confines of West Wood for all time. If all three quests were successfully performed she also offers up the treasure shown below.*

Failure = The Great Hamadryad orders the humans out of the forest immediately and proceeds with the events described below under “World Shaping Event”.

*If the PCs performed all 3 quests for the Great Hamadryad, she also offers up a strange ring found on an explorer who died here many years ago. This ring will only be passed to the PCs should they agree to evacuate the logging camp.

Ring of the Ram

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

See official entry for statistics.

World Changing Event

It is now up to the PCs to decide which path to take.

Do they agree to leave the forest and order the loggers back to the village? If so, how will they justify this to the Mayor?

*If they choose this option, **the Path of the Druid**, then the mayor, loggers, and the village will be furious with them but they will save the forest. Locals in the village may threaten or attack the PCs, calling them traitors.

-OR-

Do they decide to stay regardless of the Great Hamadryad's demands? Do they attack her now that she is unguarded and remove her so that the loggers can finish the job?

*If they choose this option, the events below in **the Path of the Lumberjack** will unfold with the PCs' party leader being the focus instead of Gordon. After the Great Hamadryad is badly injured or slain the forest will slowly die, becoming a barren wasteland. The mayor, loggers, and the village will be indebted to the PCs for the job, but future generations will accuse them of destroying a resource which provided lumber for houses and good jobs for the locals.

Make it clear that it is up to the PCs to choose the course of action they would like. There is no wrong answer, there is only cause and effect.



The Path of the Druid



This will be the likely choice for parties which retain druid or ranger types.

If the group decides to protect the forest they must deal with the loggers and the local village, neither of which will be happy with them. They will be sacrificing the local economy, many local jobs, the well-being of the village, and potential future jobs working in and for the village. Having said that, the sacrifices the adventurers make now may help to strengthen the forest. The Great Hamadryad may remember the good deeds of the local village and move to defend them in the future should the need arise.

Path of the Druid - Requesting Assistance

It may seem difficult to convince an entire camp of loggers to turn tail and leave the area. The PCs may wish to contact some of the groups within the forest to request assistance.

The following list details which groups will help and how they will provide assistance:

Dalarna, the Great Hamadryad = She has done all she can. If the PCs beg her for assistance she will grant them the Ring of the Ram if she has not already done so.

Hamadryads = The Hamadryads will arrive in the camp at once, blocking the path into the forest that the loggers regularly use. They will take tree form and stalwartly stand there unless attacked, in which case they will retaliate.

Kobolds = The kobolds will not assist the PCs unless the leader of the PCs personally requests an audience with their leader. Only if the PCs provided a significant amount of food to the kobolds will they offer to help. They will surround the logging camp and attack from afar using ranged weapons such as bows and slings, refraining from hitting any of the loggers unless they attempt to retaliate. As per the PCs instructions, the goal is to drive them away, not kill anyone.

Pixies = The pixies will jump at the chance to join in. They show up en masse, armed with tiny poisoned arrows (sleep poison only) and their spells of course. They will do whatever is required to drive the nasty loggers away!

Skeletal Brownies = The skeletal brownies have already been buried by the Great Hamadryad. Their skeletons are now buried deep underground below her root structure. At the PCs request the Great Hamadryad will call upon the three skeletal brownies the PCs originally spoke with to return and assist them. After this their debt is paid and the brownies will sleep for eternity.

The Path of the Lumberjack



This will be the likely choice for parties which retain mercenary types or those who hold human progress in greater regard than the well-being of nature.

If the group decides to attack and destroy the Great Hamadryad, the mayor, loggers, and the village will be indebted to the PCs for the job. The loggers will continue working hard to log all of the West Wood until not a tree is left standing. The local village economy will skyrocket and the PCs will be hired by many locals for quests and errands at +25%-50% the going rate!

The once great forest will fall and leave a barren wasteland of snow and ice. Future generations will accuse the PCs of destroying a resource which provided lumber for houses and good jobs for the locals.

If the group brought Gordon the Lumber-Master with them he will make the choice on his own. Given that the six guardians are away he will use this opportunity to surprise the Great Hamadryad and attack. He sees her as a powerful threat to not only him and his men, but the entire region. "A creature this powerful must be knocked off its pedestal," are his exact thoughts.

Although she focuses her attacks on Gordon she calls out, "*You are next, and your kin have already met their end!*" What she means by this is that the six Dryad sisters have been busy digging trenches to reroute the flow of water from the river below the dam toward the mining camp. When Gordon launches this attack against the mother she instantly telepathically notifies her daughters who pull the supports holding the dam at the logging pond. All of the water and logs now rush down the newly gouged path straight for the lumberjacks.

By the time the PCs escape this madness and return to the camp everyone is already dead.

If the Great Hamadryad is killed then parts of the forest start to dwindle and die. It will survive and return to its former glory in time, but it has been gravely weakened at the loss of the great mother of the garden.

Conclusion

Obviously the events described herein are to have a lasting impact your campaign setting. There are many effects that will follow the PCs as long as they stay in this region. The following effects are simply the “tip of the iceberg”. You may branch out and elaborate on any of the following events/affects. You are also welcome to add more as the PCs encounter new members of society.

Path of the Druid: Village

The villagers view the PCs as untrustworthy outsiders. Many refuse to deal with them at all while others increase their rates to 125%-200% when dealing with the PCs.

The mayor will be especially disappointed and will only present future quests at a mere 50% pay compared to the usual going rate. If any important quests come up which risk national security, he will not allow the PCs to take on the responsibility and will instead rely on the Black Bears mercenary company. Sage Yuri Statel will be quite pleased that the PCs have preserved the West Wood. Many rare herbs and flowers bloom there in spring. He uses these as ingredients in his potions and experiments. Although he will refrain from showing any appreciation of their efforts in public, in private he will offer them **six free potions** (*potions of healing*). Each adventure that the PCs begin in the future will allow them **1 more free potion** from Yuri Statel as thanks for what they did in the West Wood and an incentive to continue preserving rare ingredients in the realm.

Path of the Lumberjack: Village

The villagers view the PCs as heroes who have stabilized their economy. Most merchants will give them a 25%-50% discount in dealing with the PCs.

The mayor will be especially happy with the PCs and will offer future quests with a special reward such as a minor magical item and/or an increase to 125% their normal pay. If any important quests come up the mayor will call upon the PCs first.

Sage Yuri Statel is secretly upset about the PCs actions in assisting the destruction at West Wood. Many rare herbs and flowers bloom there in spring. He uses these as ingredients in his potions and experiments. Now that the forest is to be completely logged he will have to find new ingredients to replace those he lost. Yuri attempts to kill two birds with one stone by hiring the PCs to retrieve rare herbs for him in hard to reach places, blaming them for his limited supply. After obtaining a sizable quantity he begins ordering them deep into Dark Wood where they might (whoops!) be slain by powerful devils.



New Spell



Shenanigans

conjuration cantrip

bard, cleric, druid, ranger, wizard

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Shenanigans are tricks that can confuse or confound the target due to minor mishaps. You cause shoelaces to be tied together, buckles to come unbuckled, cause water in a water skin tastes strongly of lemon, or make the target's favorite sword turn blue. Any effect is subject to DM approval and these effects end when the spell duration ends. Shenanigans cannot be used to cause actual harm to the target. You can create a different effect each round the spell is in effect.

A04 Experience Awards

If using the Milestone rules:

- The party can gain a level.
- If you are planning to proceed into A05, make sure the party is at least 4th or 5th level.
- Consider awarding additional experience for good roleplaying.

If not using the Milestone rules:

- 500 each - Persuading the loggers to return to the village thereby preventing bloodshed
- 300 each/per quest - For each quest completed for the Great Hamadryad
- 500 each BONUS! - All 3 Quests completed for Great Hamadryad
- 100 each - Attempting to find alternative solutions to the newly arisen problems in the forest
- 500 each - Solving the entire dilemma of the forest with a mutually agreeable compromise
- 200 each - Support Roles: Cartographer (map-maker), Treasure Keeper, Adventure Log, Time Keeper/Initiative Tracker
- 100-300 each - Roleplaying experience which varies depending on if player got into their role & changed their voice
- Any additional awards you feel are appropriate as well as combat XP.



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⌘ A 5th Edition compatible adventure for four to six 2nd to 3rd level PCs

The loggers of the West Wood have been logging these lands for over five years without a problem. Now, an eerie entity demands that they cease their logging activities and evacuate the forest immediately. If they refuse, they will die.

When the PCs arrive to help they find that things are not so black and white. The decisions which they make will have permanent and lasting implications for the entire region.

Will the PCs choose to save the forest and lose the support of the village, or destroy a sacred elder tree in order to win the hearts of the loggers and their families?

Also included in “Forest for the Trees”:

- New location: West Wood
- New Spell: Shenanigans
- Featured Artist Sketchbook Illustration: Logging Camp Artifacts and Equipment
- Maps and Illustrations: Hamadryad sisters, Kobold Cave,
- Maps by 3x ENnie Award winning Cartographer Todd Gamble
- Numerous situations which must be dealt with diplomatically and solved using skillful tact.
- New Monster: Hamadryads
- A04: Forest for the Trees allows the PCs to make choices which will permanently impact the local village and shape the future of the region.