# TALES OF THE OLD MARGREVE: A KoboldQuarterly.com Compilation



# 20 Margreve NPCs

Big Bertrecka (CG human) is an obese woman originally from Riverbend Village. The village's "belly cutters" examine deceased villagers' stomachs for a "seat of evil" (a tumor) to determine if the individual was secretly a corpse-eating witch in life. If so, the belly cutters hang the tumor in a wicker cage far from the village and let crows carry the remaining corpse piecemeal to the underworld. A few years ago, Bertrecka developed a protruding stomach hernia, a sure sign of a great seat of evil. She barely escaped the village with her life. Now she makes an unlikely 300 lb. guide and trailblazer. Thing is, she eats in private.

Brissel Rivensky (CN halfling) is the

owner of the Rivensky Inn and Brewery. He is also a kleptomaniac of 20 years. With no memory of his petty crimes, Brissel blames missing items on Kariv thieves. Paranoia has led him to hire extra guards and strong arms, many of whom witness his nocturnal thieving but say nothing due to the steady stream of easy coin.

The Carrion Hags (CE monstrous humanoids) collect the eyes of the Margreve's faithful. With werewolf eyes, they see how to change their shape. With druid eyes, they see how to tap old magic. With zombie eyes, they see beyond death. The hags wear the same heads and talons as the carrion birds that they send to claw at faces. Their voices are the shrieks of scavenger birds. The unwise seek the carrion hags for their great—stolen visions.



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#### Cervon and Alaces (N deer-centaur) have

each grown 13-point antlers every year for 13 years. No 14-pointer has emerged from the Margreve herds in over a century. The ambitious Alaces promises future concessions to the shadow fey if they use their dark magic to grant him the 14 points necessary to secure the Imperial Alseid crown. A third deer-centaur, a young exile named Flawn, will grow a 14-point rack next season.

**Fiddler Twilight (N half-elf)** wanders the Margreve, lulling travelers and beasts asleep with his fiddle. Travelers that manage to stay awake have a chance to converse with a great storyteller, wizened with knowledge of old legends and forest ways. His fiddle holds no magic. But a broken fey arrow lodged in his back glows with a faint enchantment aura.

Geradine Skmil (N human) is a slender framed crone from a dead Margreve village. She earns her keep as a midwife. Women of many races seek her services. She can tell when a female is with child, declare the sex of the child, and glimpse the child's future. Some say she knows these things because it is she who places souls in women's bellies.



Grilton Dibbleloc (CN gnome) is an ex-rogue-card player and puzzlebreaker—who lives at the Fortnight Coaching Inn. He plays cards for coin but prefers tales of novel traps bested. He enjoys guessing at how to disable them. Occasionally. an adventurer brings Grilton a trapped or tricky puzzle-box to open. A game of cards decides whether Grilton opens the box or gets to keep it. Occasionally, Grilton challenges

smug adventurers to open a puzzle-box of his own, one he has never been able to crack, one whose contents change all of their lives forever.

Horak Köhler (N human) is a professional charcoal burner whose mood is perpetually as black as his hands. Horak is never without a depressing observation, a worse-case scenario, or a tale of the forest's terrible vengeance. Thing is, he is always right. Folk visit Horak to pose plans and learn what will go wrong. He is incapable of offering positive news or alternate ideas.

The Hungry Wolf (NG magical beast) challenges travelers to look beyond its wild appearance and ravenous stare. It never attacks. Instead it lowers its head and begs from a distance. If a party offers the Hungry Wolf food and kindness, it gives them a boon. The next time they need a quick escape, they (and their possessions) transform into wolves for 1 hour and escape as a fleet-footed pack. If a party attacks the Hungry Wolf or chases it away, the wolf curses them instead. Again, they turn into wolves for 1 hour, but this time it occurs when any one of them rolls a Diplomacy check.

Lachek (CG intelligent weapon) is a levitating axe that talks your ears off if you let it. Sometimes he threatens to cut them off if he does not like your conversation. Like an old, half-deaf uncle, this lonely and retired spiritual weapon wanders the forest seeking others of his kind. He is tragically alone and never lets anyone forget it. Lachek is reluctant to stoop to the role of someone's weapon, but the truth is

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that the only time he can think straight is in the hands of a cleric.

**Mudgeon (LG dragon)** has horns, wears tiny-sized human clothing, lives in an ogre's shoe, and defends his home with a rusty nail. Before Baba Yaga cursed him with this form, he was a gold dragon and a trainer of heroes. The only way to recover his true form is to instruct an apprentice in the Old Ways. As the apprentice slowly gains experience, Mudgeon slowly regains his draconic powers and his memories. But this takes a long time, and an apprentice is unlikely to seek a master in an ogre's shoe.

Niebor the Tinker (N dwarf) wears a sun-reddened face and a blonde beard. His wagon jangles and clatters along the trails of the Margreve, sedately moving at a pace comfortable to his ancient mule Belebog. Niebor is one of the forest's best gossips and collectors of secrets. Because Kariv gypsies, witches, and worse can read minds, Niebor keeps his most precious and most dangerous secrets in the glass beads in his beard. He seeks one that he has lost and four more that were stolen.

**Old Srecko (N kobold)** lives as a hermit in an abandoned silver mine. Some say he was cured of lycanthropy and now hides from werebrethren whose secret ways he learned while among them. He has trapped the mine to keep out unwanted guests. If you come bearing a silver blade, he may be willing to tell you tales of the forest, but you best wait outside for him to come out. Occasionally, Old Srecko carries a bag of silver to town to trade, so either quite a few generous visitors give him coin for information or his mine is not as empty as he leads people to believe.

**Rook the Hook and Old Hester (CE** humans) work as a team. You will find Rook lying half-dead in the mud of the Great Northern Road. He will be the one who rewards you greedy bastards with a map to the cave. The map leads past Old Hester's cabin in the woods. She will be the one reading you lucky bastards the cards. She will be the one selling you the "potions" you will need. She will be the one who goes to the cave long after you... in winter... when the owlbears are hibernating with your bones in their belly and your precious possessions are scattered about the cave.

Rydae Lemolt (CN half-dragon elf) is a "fire elf," the product of a zmey and an elf maiden. She shares her father's lusts and inner fire. She shares her mother's delicate form and love of art and finery. With her fiery breath weapon, she defends herself and earns a living as an itinerant glass blower and the occasional show woman. Anything she encloses in a Tiny or smaller glass sphere becomes shrouded in whirling, opaque smoke that functions as a permanent mage's private sanctum until the delicate glass breaks. Champions of darkness seek Rydae to hide things. Champions of light seek Rydae to

create glass weapons, the only weapons capable of destroying fext, a new undead lurking in the northern Margreve.

Salbina Lostro (CN half-elf) is an ex-cat burglar hiding from bounty hunters in the fringes of the Margreve. Never camping in the same place two nights in a row, Salbina is difficult to track down. Anyone who wants to know how to break into a Zobeck public





building, private house, or even the thieves' guild best talk to Salbina first. Her knowledge is unparalleled, and she loves boasting of her exploits.

**Treazock (N griffon)** lost the full use of his wings in a kobold trap when he was very young. His wings' stunted development now limits his "flight" to jumping and gliding great distances, which he does like a tree squirrel in a domain he carved for himself in the multistory canopy of the Western Margreve. Those who cannot negotiate the dark, dense, and twisted underbrush or who seek to overtake or hide from enemies on the forest floor seek the "King of the Canopy" to gain his leave to use the branch roads.

**Tsarin the Dirgist (LN human)** travels the Margreve, rendering a song with words, a tune, and the fond memory of one's newly departed loved one. Tsarin's black dog, Shadow, leads Tsarin from place to place, for Shadow smells the funerary flowers of someone who is about to die. Thus, Tsarin and Shadow always arrive with impeccable timing. Some villages blame the pair's arrival for the deaths, but keep them out or no, someone dies just the same. Only Shadow can tell who it will be. Adventurers frequently glimpse Shadow from place to place, for wherever adventurers go, death (and Shadow) is sure to follow.

Varan Corvus (CN human) sells methods for tricking the forest's senses. To fool the forest's tremorsense, he proffers scrolls that change your footfalls to those of another species. To convince the forest that you are someone else and that your deeds are not yours, he sells blood vials to drip as you go. Sometimes, his bloated tick minions collect the blood he sells to travelers. Other times, he barters his scrolls for the buyer's blood. Varan uses his own wares, and the forest has punished many that it thought were him. Three half-ogre minions accompany him as muscle.

Weary Lena (CG dryad) pines for a tree that burned to ashes 200 years ago. Because Lena did not sicken or die that day as she should have, she is convinced that a living seed of her parent tree still exists. Two centuries of fruitless searches have taken their toll on this homeless dryad, yet she refuses to give up or bind with another birch. She now believes the seed must have escaped the Margreve, perhaps stuck on an outsider's cloak. Lena seeks information about the cities of men and about a broad birch that may stand alone among them. For this information, she barters her forest knowledge. Her advice and directions are based on paths long eroded, streams whose course has snaked away, and landmark trees that have toppled and fed the forest floor.

# 25 Reskinned Creatures

The following Margreve creatures reuse the statistics of existing creatures (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* and *Bonus Bestiary*), presenting a new experience for those unfortunate enough to encounter them.

Arboreal Colossi (CR 11) are living engines of destruction used only when the forest's spirit feels deeply aggrieved. Not truly "alive" in the way that treants or awakened trees are, they are direct manifestations of the Margreve's wrath. Treat as colossal animated objects.

**Blackroot Worms (CR 3)** are many-headed balls of worms and slime that erupt from the undergrowth. They strike from the ground and the soil. Treat as young hydras. **Bog Titans (CR 9)** are aquatic giants, preserved and strengthened by their time spent in the fens and bogs of the Margreve. They overturn small watercraft and breathe a deadly tannic acid that eats skin and leather alike. Treat as dragon turtles.

**Briar Horrors (CR 6)** are green-skinned, vaguely humanoid creatures, wrapped in brambles. Their gaze unnerves those who look into their walnut eyes. Treat as kytons, except with thick, thorny vines for dancing chains. **Cernenn (CR 4)** are large monstrous humanoids with elk heads. Known as the bane of the alseids, legend tells of the first cernenns rising from the underworld to balance nature against the birth of the first alseids. They navigate thick forest mazes and bring death and fear to the deer people of the Margreve. Treat as minotaurs.

**Choking Spirits (CR 2)** live under rotted swamp logs and underwater throughout the Margreve. They have too many claws and are

> known for strangling creatures near lake shores, sometimes at the behest of nearby rusalki. Treat as giant crabs.

**Cocooned Corpses (CR 5)** are the desiccated remains of creatures wrapped in the cocoons of giant spiders. Horror and death throes animate the corpses, which break free from their parent web and attack the living, especially those who failed (or never tried) to save them from their fate. Those in their presence feel the fear and horror of the creature's long death. Those struck suffer the poison of the spider bite. Treat as mummies, except with spider poison instead of mummy rot.

**Creeping Willows (CR 4)** have listened too long to the sad songs of rusalki swinging on their branches. These willows wander the forest in search of young men to strangle and drag back to their pale maiden friends. They move slowly when unobserved, and little distinguishes them from regular willow trees until it's too late. Treat their entangling, strangling branches as Huge advanced assassin vines.

Fallen Treants (CR 3) look like rotted logs with a few stunted branches for legs. Shelf mushrooms, galls, and parasitic ants complete the old log camouflage (+10 racial bonus to Disguise in forest). Sap-like acid drips from a hollow (their mouth) at one end. Their tunnels snake and merge under the Margreve floor. Treat as ankhegs.

**Firebirds (CR 5)** look like flying bonfires of brightly glowing, red, orange, and yellow plumage. Lost feathers lose their radiance, but plucked feathers remain as bright as a continual flame, so long as they remain outdoors and above ground. Treat as halfcelestial advanced giant eagles.

Floret Queens (CR 7) are humanoid plants whose heads are a spray of enchanting but toxic flowers. As beautiful as a nymph and as deadly as a medusa, their sweet pollen brings weakness and blissful paralyzation (as medusa poison but requiring only a touch attack), while their gaze compels nearby plants to entangle an enemy, infest them with floral life energy, and transform them into mindless saplings. Treat as medusas.

**Kindly Ones (CR 2)** look like glowing fireflies that drive away goblins, whisper demons, and other nightmares of the forest. They never



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speak and never reveal their purpose before they recede into the night. Those saved by a kindly one are considered worthy of divine favor, and judicial tests for their intervention



have saved more than one condemned man. Treat as lantern archons.

Mandragoras (CR 1) are tiny vegetable servants created by treating mandrake roots

with blood and herbal lotions. These verdurous homunculi are created by druids and witches, who use a dog (or an unwitting human servant) to pull the mandrake from the ground and so avoid its lethal scream. Treat as homunculi.

Margreve Shadows (CR 6) emerge from the deepest hollows of the forest. Their flitting, elongated forms and terrible screams wither the courage of even hardened heroes. "Flee if the wind does not blow but shadow flow" is the byword of the scarred victims who have survived. Treat as shadow mastiffs.

Nettle Storms (CR 3) are whirling clouds of leaves that burn when they touch hands, faces, or any exposed skin. They are especially common near fires set by charcoalers or woodsman. The cumulative effect of the burning rash can be deadly. Treat as wasp swarms.

Petrified Treants (CR 3) are long-buried trunks of the Margreve's fallen that rise again to fight for the forest. These nigh-invulnerable soldiers march through the forest armed with their sharpened branches to enforce the Margreve's will on visitors and residents alike. Treat as caryatid columns.

Quagmen, or Moss Trogs, (CR 1) have muddy, rubbery skin, covered in deep green moss. Their heads are vaguely reptilian with dark twig fangs and hollow obsidian eyes. Their moss attaches to the skin of helpless creatures, budding flowers and transforming the hosts into newly formed quagmen in 1 day. Treat as troglodytes, except with the implant ability of the xill.

Sap Covens (CR 5) are formed when sap demons spend too long in too many possessed bodies. Fragments of their hosts' souls crystallize in their sap, and the Margreve rejects them as tainted. These forsaken eventually gather at the outskirts of the woods, where they merge into an oozing gestalt mass. Treat as gibbering mothers, except their spittle contains sharp amber stones and their ground manipulation affects dense flora rather than earth and stone.

Shivering Maidens (CR 5) have vulnerable voices and slender forms. Their torn shirts hide two pairs of vestigial arms. They call from behind trees, and poison those they touch. Treat as phase spiders.

**Sirin (CR 4)** have the body of a giant owl and the head and breasts of beautiful women. Their captivating songs draw victims into the woods and into their talons. To escape their captivating songs, victims have the option to repeat their Will save. Failure devastates the victim's mind, however, as if by the *feeblemind* spell. Treat as harpies. Swamp Fires (CR 2) occur when young genius loci coax swamp gas from rotting underwater vegetation, set it on fire telekinetically, and give it a life of its own. Whether for sport or defense. Treat the fires as aquatic thoqqua, except with a swim speed instead of a burrow speed.

Whispering Demons (CR 3) are alien mutterings that take form and flight in the deep Margreve. They drive mortals mad although rumors claim that those who survive their touch gain strange insight into the numinous forest. Treat as allips.

Whittlers (CR 8) are skinny treants with crumbling bark, often found among tree stumps whittled into odd humanoid forms. They gore and trample intruders and breathe a green mist that turns targets into petrified wood, which they whittle into more pleasing forms. Treat as gorgons.

Wintermen (CR 4) are emaciated creatures of cold and ice who emerge each winter to purge weak trees and animals from the forest, carpet the underbrush with frost, and lay traps of slippery ice around neighboring villages. They have also been known to stuff incautious children into sacks and carry them to some terrible end. Fortunately, even mild spring warmth drives these hairless creatures into hibernation beneath the ground. Treat as yeti.

# 15 Reskinned Spells

The following spells are variant (or reskinned) versions of existing spells (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). Each

operates in much the same way as the spell upon which it is based, except that the flavor and in some cases minor mechanics—has been changed to suit the Margreve mood and experience. Many more such spells exist... somewhere... deep in the forest. These represent just a few to prime your imagination.

Consider using reskinned spells in one of the following ways, as suits your campaign:

• Instead of operating normally, the base spell operates as the reskinned spell whenever cast within the Margreve.

Outsiders cast the normal base

versions, but Margreve natives always cast the reskinned versions. Outsiders can however learn the reskinned versions from insiders and scrolls.

• Both the base and reskinned versions are available to all casters. The only difference is material components. Reskinned versions require components from the Margreve.

### **Beechwood and Briarskin**

#### Variant barkskin

School transmutation; Level druid 2, ranger 2



As *barkskin*, except *beechwood* grants a thicker bark (+3 natural armor bonus) while reducing movement (-10 ft.), and *briarskin* grants thinner, thorny skin (+1 natural armor bonus) that grants a +2 bonus to Climb and grapple checks.

Other variants of *barkskin* exist. At the GM's discretion, the Margreve flavors the *barkskin* spell based on the qualities of the tree species you touch while casting the spell.

### **Blister Hands**

Variant burning hands

School necromancy; Level druid 1, sorcerer/ wizard 1

The smoke of burning poison sumac jets from your fingertips, causing 1d4 damage/CL (maximum 5d4) to those in the burst.

# Carved Message

Variant whispering wind

**School** transmutation [air]; **Level** bard 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

As *whispering wind*, except that the message must be words, and those words carve themselves into the closest tree within 20 ft. of the designated target location. If no such tree exists, the spell ends. The carvings fade after the message is delivered.

### Eager Decay

Variant death knell

**School** necromancy [death, evil]; **Level** cleric 2 As *death knell*, except that when the target dies, the body grows damp and rapidly rots.

# Evil Eye

Variant magic missile

School illusion [shadow]; Level druid 1, sorcerer/ wizard 1

As *magic missile*, but instead of force missiles flying from your fingertips, shadow thorns pierce the mind of the target at whom you stare.

# **Glitter Beast**

Variant dancing lights

**School** evocation [light]; **Level** bard 0, druid 0, ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 0

Instead of the shapes offered by *dancing lights*, you create thousands of glowing motes as large as fireflies or as fine as pixie dust, as desired. By default, the overall shape is vaguely quadruped, but you may swirl the motes into any Medium shape desired (no concentration required). *Glitter beast* may be made permanent with a *permanency* spell to create firefly-swarm wolf "companions" and the like.

# Hide From Fey

Variant hide from undead School abjuration; Level druid 1, cleric 1 As hide from undead, but it only affects fey instead of undead.

# Leaf Armor

Variant mage armor

**School** conjuration (creation) [force]; **Level** druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

As mage armor, except when struck, the field

of force very briefly manifests as a visible storm of leaves whirling around the subject of the spell.

### Nature Eye

### Variant arcane eye

**School** divination (scrying); **Level** druid 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

As *arcane eye*, except that you conjure a visible copy of your eyes, including eye shape and color. They start upon any tree you can see, and they flit from one tree to the next without passing through the intervening space (though they take as much time to move as if they did).

# Sap Arrow

Variant acid arrow

**School** conjuration (creation) [fire]; **Level** druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

As *acid arrow*, except an arrow of boiling tree sap springs from your hand. It deals fire damage instead of acid damage. To neutralize the sticky sap, the victim must scrape it off as a full round action.

# Screaming Shield

### Variant fire shield

School evocation [sonic]; Level bard 4, druid 5, sorcerer/wizard 4

As *fire shield*, but you wreath yourself in the flickering faces of rabid animals instead of flames. Instead of cold or fire damage dealt to a melee attacker, the shield deals sonic damage in the form of a thousand wounded

animals screaming in your attacker's ears. Such a shield offers no protection against fire or cold.

### Seed Bullet

#### Variant magic stone

**School** transmutation; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1 As *magic stone*, except instead of pebbles, you transmute common acorns, hazelnuts, beechnuts, or chestnuts.

## Summon Nature's Ally

School conjuration (summoning) The following creatures (detailed in *Tales of the Old Margreve*), may also be summoned when casting *summon nature's ally* in the Margreve: *1st level*—suturefly *2nd level*—child of the briar (CE) *3rd level*—green hussar

4th level—leshy

*5th level*—vila

# **Tree Hollow**

Variant rope trick School transmutation; Level druid 2, sorcerer/ wizard 2

As *rope trick*, except instead of a rope, you target a touched tree that is at least 5 ft. in diameter, and you conjure a vertically-oriented, extradimensional window 5–30 ft. up the trunk, as desired. It does not matter whether the window overlaps bark, knot, bole, or hollow. Because there is no rope to give it away, forest creatures often use tree hollow to escape en masse into a tree or spy on oblivious

interlopers as they pass just a few feet below.

# Vermin Sculpt

### Variant unseen servant

**School** conjuration (creation); **Level** bard 1, druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

As unseen servant, except that the "servant" is a visible collection of insects, mice, or other local creatures of Tiny or smaller size packed into a tight swarm. You may direct the swarm to form any contiguous shape and perform simple carrying actions as a group (such as bridges over chasms, long ladders, or even a stretcher for a wounded ally). Complex items or moving parts cannot be formed. It takes 1 full round for the swarm to change to a new shape.

# Margreve Bloodline

The ancient power of the Old Margreve courses through the veins of a sorcerer with the Margreve bloodline. A distant ancestor may have been a legendary druid, a Margreve hedge witch, a dryad, or even a daughter of Baba Yaga. In time, the sorcerer begins to understand the Margreve and even become part of it.

PCs with the Margreve

bloodline who were not raised in the Margreve may not yet realize the source of their power. These include gutter orphans, "wolf children" stolen from the woods and "civilized," and children of violators of the Old Ways escaping the wrath of the Margreve in the city.



Class Skill: Knowledge (nature).

**Bonus Spells:** *entangle* (3rd), *spider climb* (5th), *summon nature's ally III* (7th), *bestow curse* (9th), *baleful polymorph* (11th), *transport via plants* (13th), *animate plants* (15th), *creeping doom* (17th), *shapechange* (19th).

**Bonus Feats:** Alertness, Augment Summoning, Brew Potion, Empower Spell, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]).

**Bloodline Arcana:** Within the confines of the Old Margreve, your magic goes unnoticed by the forest, as if you were under a permanent *feed the forest* spell effect (see *Tales of the Old Margreve*).

**Bloodline Powers:** You can channel the power of the Margreve by calling upon the Old Ways, and over time, this process transforms your mind and body.

Witches' Hex (Sp)—At 1st level, you can bestow a minor curse on a target with a melee touch attack. The target suffers either a -2penalty to attack and weapon damage rolls or temporarily loses access to one randomly determined spell or spell-like ability of the highest level they can cast (your choice). In either case, the condition persists for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your sorcerer level. Multiple touches do not stack but add to the duration. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

*Woodland Stride (Ex)*—At 3rd level, you can move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at your normal speed and



without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect you.

Animal Form (Sp)—At 9th level, you gain the ability to transform yourself into an animal for a number of minutes per day equal to your sorcerer level. This ability functions as *beast shape II*. The duration need not be consecutive, and you can assume different animal forms at different times (although you may not transform directly from one animal to another).

Siphon Magic (Su)—At 15th level, you can siphon magic used against you. As an immediate action, you may force any creature that targets you with a spell or spell-like ability to make a CL check (DC 10 + your sorcerer level). Failure means that all variable numeric effects of the spell are halved, and the save DC decreases by 2. Note that if the spell affects an area or multiple targets, these modifications only apply to you. You may use the stolen energy to boost the CL of your next spell by 2, providing you cast it before the end of your next turn.

*Tree Form (Su)*—At 20th level, the Margreve accepts you as part of itself, bestowing many of the traits of plant creatures upon you. You gain immunity to paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, and stunning. In addition, no creature of the animal or plant type attacks you within the Margreve unless compelled by magic. You

may cast *legend lore* (1/day) as a spell-like ability using your sorcerer level as your CL.

# Margreve Incantations

### **Petition the Elders**

- School divination and necromancy; Effective Level 6th
- Skill Checks Diplomacy DC 24, 1 success; Knowledge (arcana) DC 24, 2 successes; Knowledge (local) DC 24, 1 success; Sense Motive DC 24, 1 success

Components V, S, M

*Material components*—powdered bones from someone who died in the Margreve; mold, toadstools, and poisonous fungi burned and their fumes inhaled.

Casting Time 50 min.

Duration concentration

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no This incantation beseeches the Margreve's spirit for guidance, which sends the souls of those who have died within the forest to advise you. It can only be invoked at night.

Inhaling toxic fumes from burnt fungi, you see a horde of apparitions both humanoid and animal. These spirits are representatives of the land and can provide almost any fact about things or events within the Old Margreve, or information known by creatures that have died within the forest, but their answers are limited by the Margreve's unique perceptions and colored by the spirits' former alignment, memories, and prejudices.

Only you can see or hear the spirits. You

must use Diplomacy to learn any information: Margreve spirits are typically unfriendly to strangers, indifferent to locals, and friendly to druids or characters under the effects of the *Oldwood Rite* incantation (see *Tales of the Old Margreve*). Failing a diplomacy check by 5 or less earns a cryptic answer, equivalent to that from a divination spell.

**Backlash:** Toxic, hallucinogenic fumes cause you, and any other casters, to become sickened for 1d6 hours. In addition, the spirits take a tithe of life energy for every question asked: you must accept a temporary negative level (recovery DC 16).

**Failure:** All incorporeal undead in the area, angered by their disturbance, attack you.

# Margreve Items

# Matryoshka Doll

Aura faint transmutation; CL 5th Slot —; Price 150 gp; Weight 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

The magic of these nested wooden dolls can be conjured with a vigorous shake and a cry of "Mama Matryoshka! Mama Matryoshka! Cut this villain down to size!" This causes the outermost shell of the seven-layered doll to crack open, revealing a smaller one within, and a nearby enemy shrinks by 1 size category as per the *reduce person* spell (Fort DC 15 negates). Beware the seventh, smallest doll, however; if this is used, it releases the evil spirit that empowers the doll—a curse if you're lucky, an ala if you're not.

Unless you created the doll or a divination spell is used, you do not know how many dolls are left. (GMs should roll 1d6+1 to determine number of dolls.) The doll is created by crafting a small hollow wooden doll (just one) from wood harvested from the Margreve. The spell is cast inside the Margreve at the time of the magic item's creation, which



traps the creature that empowers the doll.

Upon use of the seventh and last doll, roll (d%) to determine the outcome:

Roll (d%)	Result
1–50	Curse (-4 penalty on attack
	rolls, saves, and ability and
	skill checks for 1d4 days)
51–75	2d4 mylings
75–100	Ala



Whatever creatures appear attack you and fight to the death, enraged at being trapped and used to empower the item.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *reduce person*; Cost 75 gp

## Ogre's Pot

Aura faint conjuration; CL 5th Slot —; Price 7,000 gp; Weight 60 lb. DESCRIPTION

This cauldron boils anything placed inside, whether venison or timber, to a vaguely edible paste. Also, when commanded (a swift action), the pot rolls directly to its master (speed 40 ft.), following the shortest possible path and knocking down any obstacles—or creatures—in its path (as if making an overrun maneuver with a CMB +9).

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, create food and water, floating disk; **Cost** 3,500 gp

# **Quilted Bridge**

Aura faint illusion; CL 3rd Slot shoulder; Price 6,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

A practiced hand sewed together a collection of cloth remnants from magical garb to make this colorful and warm blanket. Unfold it, pour out 3 drops of wine in tribute to its

maker, and it becomes a 10-ft.-long bridge as sturdy as steel. You may fold the bridge back up as a full-round action.

### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, fabricate,

creator must have 3 ranks in Craft (knitting); **Cost** 3,250 gp

# Salted Web

Aura faint conjuration; CL 3rd Slot shoulder; Price 100 gp; Weight 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

When thrown, this shimmering packet of black silk explodes into a tangle of black webbing. Caustic salt coats the sticky spider webs. For most purposes, this acts exactly like a tanglefoot bag. A *salted web* is especially effective against zmey: a successful ranged touch attack wraps the web around a head, which then suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls with its bite attack. Moreover, the salted web prevents a severed head from maturing into a headling as if it had been smeared with a pound of salt. The (attached) head can attempt to escape (Escape Artist DC 25, made in place of a bite attack).

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *web*; **Cost** 50 gp

# Scorn Pouch

Aura faint divination; CL 1st Slot —; Price 7,000 gp; Weight —

### DESCRIPTION

The heart of a woman scorned turns black and potent. So too does this small, leather pouch darken whenever it comes nigh to a man or woman who would speak ill of you: the pouch darkens when an unfriendly or hostile creature passes within 10 ft.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts, prestidigitation*; Cost 3,500 gp

# 12 Margreve Traits

Characters who spent their formative years in and around the Margreve have had ample opportunity to adapt to this special environment and its many residents and dangers. The following dozen background traits reflect this unique heritage. In addition to the usual mechanical benefits, many of these also have roleplaying and story implications that the GM can incorporate into adventures.

As usual, a PC can select two traits during character creation, but only one of them may come from this category.

Animal Tamer: You spent much of your childhood with animals in or near the Margreve, and you learned tricks to keep the forest's wildness at bay. Handle Animal is always a class skill for you. In addition, animals under your care need only save against the Margreve's aura of wildness ability 1/week (rather than 1/day). You may provide this benefit to a maximum number of animals equal to the number of ranks you have in Handle Animal.

**Fey Friend:** The Margreve's fey are both mischievous and dangerous. You have earned the friendship and blessing of one of their kind: perhaps you helped a vila or dryad punish a wrongdoer or you traded pranks with a pixie. The fey's blessing grants you a +1 trait bonus to either Knowledge (nature) or Survival checks (your choice), and that skill is always a class skill for you.

**Forest Magician:** You completed your apprenticeship within the Margreve, and you have adapted to its curious ways. You can declare that a spell you cast within the Margreve escapes the forest's notice (2/day).

**Gifted by the Old Ways:** The Old Ways run true in your family's blood, especially in you. Your speech often falls into the rhythms of old, and you feel a special kinship to the ancient Margreve. You can use the incantation *Wisdom of the Old Ways* without requiring a skill check (1/day).

**Goblin-Hated:** One of the Margreve's vicious goblins targeted you as an enemy, tormenting you for a season or more. You became wise to the many tricks of these creatures, and this wisdom has helped you avoid trouble since then. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Perception checks, and Perception is always a class skill for you.

**Hag-Touched:** Perhaps to ease the pain of childbirth, perhaps in a misguided attempt to help you, or perhaps simply by coincidence, one of the Margreve's hags touched your mother while she was pregnant with you. The touch left you with a distinctive, evil-looking birthmark but also granted you great physical determination. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Fortitude saving throws.

**Margreve Dreamer:** Your vivid dreams tap into the great numinous forces of the Margreve. Your sleep is filled with clinging nightmares of the ancient world, the changing seasons, and the forest's depths. These alien visions have strengthened your mind, and you gain a +1 trait bonus to Will saving throws.

**Margreve Herbalist:** Your family is renowned for its intricate knowledge of the Margreve's unique plants, and you spent much of your childhood gathering herbs, berries, and beneficial leaves. You gain a +1 trait bonus on either Heal or Knowledge (nature) checks (your choice), and that skill is always a class skill for you.

**Margreve Wanderer:** Through either exile or simple wanderlust, you spent your childhood exploring the Margreve's shifting paths, towering groves, and shadowed corners. You know the forest better than nearly anyone else does. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Knowledge (geography) checks and a +4 trait bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost in the Margreve.

**Superstitious:** Since a young age, you have resisted the strange and mysterious magic of the Margreve. Over the years, you have developed your own set of superstitions and rituals that help to hold it at bay. You receive a +1 trait bonus to saving throws against incantations and against spells from any one school of magic (your choice).

**Tree Progeny:** One of your parents was the recipient of great healing magic within the Margreve and emerged unharmed but profoundly changed by the experience. When you were born, some of this magic passed onto you. Somehow, your body is marked by the trees of the Margreve—such as wooden fingernails or a subtle bark-like texture to your skin. You receive a +2 trait bonus on saving throws against poison.

**Zmey-marked:** You have a strange birthmark resembling a three-headed dragon. The superstitious elders in your village deemed you zmey-marked, a target of one of the Margreve's most fearsome beasts. The mark throbs in moments of stress and grants you a fierce determination. You gain a +1 trait bonus to Intimidate checks, and Intimidate is always a class skill for you. **Corpsehardened (DC 20):** The animal tolerates the presence of undead creatures, accepting them as riders and following their orders. The animal follows closely, even to places where it normally wouldn't go. This trick may replace "heel" when training an animal. Animals trained for undead knights and nobility of Morgau and Doresh regularly have this trait.

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# Margreve Miscellany

### Corpsehardened Trait

This trait may be taught to an animal using the Handle Animal skill.

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