



# ESOTICIAN ECLIPSE

## BOOK 2: ROOT AND BRANCH

LPJ9479





““Dark spruce forest  
frowned on either side the  
frozen waterway. The trees  
had been stripped by a  
recent wind of their white  
covering of frost, and they  
seemed to lean towards each  
other, black and ominous,  
in the fading light.

A vast silence reigned  
over the land.”

jack London

# ⊕BSIDIAN ECLIPSE

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## dedication

To cats. The unwitting writing partners without whom many an author would simultaneously get a lot more work done, but be a lot more lonely.







BOOK

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ROOT AND BRANCH



## introduction

This is the second of a series of adventure and resource books for the Obsidian Twilight game setting, which is written for the Pathfinder RPG. The aim of these books is to provide some more background information, useful rules expansions and easily used adventures to aid in the playing and understanding of the Obsidian Twilight setting.

## obsidian twilight

The world of Abaddon is a ravaged planet. Around a century ago a great comet of hurtled out of the void and smashed into the planet, shattering its crust, turning the sky to ashen darkness, draining the seas, twisting the planet on its axis and killing the vast majority of sentient life found upon its surface. This calamity was compounded by plague, a terrible long-lasting winter and the rise of undead across the whole world. Only a few redoubts of civilisation managed to withstand the disaster and most of these came under the dominion of the warring undead.

Peace, of a kind, has descended at last as the vampiric lich-lord Calix Sabinus has cemented his control over his empire but the living races still chafe against their bonds, desiring freedom or revenge for a century of oppression and control. In the wild, lost places there are ruins to explore and to loot, opportunities for adventure, wrongs to right. There are also things, strange things, alien beings that stalk the wild places but march upon the fortress cities of Abaddon. While this threat grows, the undead lords squabble and fight amongst themselves, vying for power in the imperial bureaucracy and even battling openly with each other as Calix Sabinus ignores their squabbles, lost in a pursuit of greater power.

It's a time of change, opportunity, perhaps a time in which people can even dare to hope. A time for great adventurers to step forward and make a difference.

## obsidian eclipse

Obsidian Eclipse is a series of adventure and resource books for Obsidian Twilight. Each will explore different aspects of Abaddon and fill out some of the details about the world, its people, magic, societies and other details as well as showing how these work in the context of an adventure. These adventures can work as starting points for your own adventures or as 'side quests' from the main thrust of your campaign, splashes of local colour and incidents while the broader material can inspire and influence your campaign and spark new ideas or add individuality to your player and non-player characters.

## useful adventures

The aim of Obsidian Eclipse is to provide an adventure book with a little more longevity and usefulness as a resource beyond being played through as a single adventure and then discarded. The non-player-characters and monsters provided should be able to be re-used and the setting and other information should help to inform and shape your own games as well as providing a playground and context for your own stories. Feedback is important in the development of this sort of product, so be sure to let us know what you would find useful and would keep you coming back to Obsidian Eclipse again and again.

## background

Mournbreth, once the mightiest of Abaddon's forests, is no longer in such a wonderful state of natural opulence. Much of the once-great woodland was shattered, blown flat, by the impact of shards of the great meteor during the cataclysm. After that initial assault the long night and the cold winter robbed the forest of the warmth and light that it needed to thrive. It began to die, acre by acre, tree by tree until barely any life clung on at all.

Struck a mortal blow by the meteor themselves the elves of Mournbreth, once named Tallisan, tried to save themselves and then tried to save the forest around them. They managed to find a way to save themselves, adapting to the new, dead and rotten state of their forest and their dwelling-trees but they could not save the forest.

Elves have long lives, however changed they are and the elves of Mournbreth, now Myconian elves, reflecting the state of their home now overgrown with rot, fungus and mould, carry with them the scars of the cataclysm as though it were yesterday. It looms large in their memory making them a traumatised, introspective and scowling people who fiercely defend whatever few things they have left.

## mournbreth forest

The great forest is much smaller than it once was, eroded by time and rot and shrunk down, nibbled away by desperate hordes of refugees and without new growth every year it gets a little smaller. Broken stumps of trees thrust up from the ground like jagged teeth. The corpses of larger trees lean drunkenly and dangerously and not a day goes by without the ground eroding away from under one of these once-majestic trunks and causing it to crash, deafeningly to the ground.

Everywhere there is rot, mushrooms, mould, slime. The air – once green with pollen – is now smoky with spores. Water lies beneath the rotten trees in brown, infested pools. Toadstools thrust up from the earth, massive in size where once new shoots would reach for the sun. Without warning the ground, or the rotten wood, can give way, breaking at

a touch into scattered and blackened fragments and dropping a wanderer into swampy underground chambers or the hollowed inside of a log, home to some unspeakable beast.

The Myconian Elves call this place home, finding a way to live in the dead and dying remnants of their former abode. They roam in bands trying to find, recover and hunt for what they can as well as forming settlements around what little of their old sacred places still survive.

## wild paths

Ancient woodland paths and gulleys carve their way to and fro throughout Mournbreth. Some of these are ancient paths, trod down for millennia by the great beasts that used to call these forests home. Some are gulleys and ancient river paths, dried out or diverted by the changes in the forest. Still more are new paths, cut through the mould, fungus, briars and ivy that choke the corpse of the forest. The wild paths wend their way throughout the greater body of the forest and are haunted by hunters, beasts and predatory plants, hoping to get a meal from those that use the paths to travel. Despite the danger the paths are, hopefully, faster and a little safer than straying from it.

## dwelling-trees

Back when the great forest was still named Tallisan the elves lived in and around enormous, magically imbued and changed dwelling-trees. These trees were massive warrens of living wood, providing food, shelter and safety to the elven people who lived within, around and under these trees.

All of the dwelling trees were killed in the cataclysm and many were destroyed. Unused to living without the comfort of the trees many elves, who were linked spiritually to them, simply curled up and died, unable and unwilling to cope without the lives they had built for themselves. Some of the dwelling trees survived the initial upheaval only to die slow, lingering deaths in the freezing winter that came afterwards, driving their inhabitants mad in the process.

Only a few of the dwelling-trees now remain, dead, slowly rotting hulks that can still provide shelter. Most of these are now the homes of insane Myconian elves, traumatised and driven wild by their grief, or the lairs of strange beasts and monsters that have taken the rotting holes as their own, creating new and foul ecosystems where once the glowing green halls echoed with laughter.

Only a scant handful of dwelling-trees remain in the hands of sane Myconian elf tribes, those who have worked to preserve them as best they can and to find a new way to live in the wreckage of their old lives. These are powerful fortresses and centres of preserved knowledge, jealously guarded and protected by the Myconian elves who are paranoid and dangerous to outsiders. The wandering tribes move from city to city, trading with their more sedentary cousins and bringing news of the outside as it filters through the forest.

## TALLISAN FOREST

TALLISAN FOREST WAS ONCE ONE OF THE MIGHTIEST FORESTS OF THE WESTERN NATIONS STRETCHING FROM THE CONIFEROUS WOODS OF THE MOUNTAINOUS NORTH TO THE STEAMING SWAMP-JUNGLES OF THE SOUTH. TALLISAN WAS LIKE A SINGLE, LIVING ORGANISM AND THE HOME NATION OF MOST OF THE ELVES WHO CALLED ABADDON HOME. THE FOREST ITSELF ACTED AS A BORDER BETWEEN TAZRA IN THE EAST AND CONRA IN THE WEST WITH THE ELVES ACTING AS DIPLOMATS AND A BUFFER ZONE BETWEEN THE TWO — NOW LOST — NATIONS.

## sacred places

The forest of old was a place that seethed and pulsed with the power of natural magic. Nodes of pure magical energy would well up from beneath the trees and were tapped by the elves in places of power throughout the land. These old sacred places still exist, though the magic has been disrupted or perverted by the damage done to the land. Many of these are now places of evil, draining what little life remains in the forest and twisting whatever crosses its path. Some retain some echo of their former power and provide some tiny oasis of growth and fertility in a dead and dying world. Most are simply empty, overgrown with fungus, thorns and creepers, awaiting the prying presence of some greedy adventurer or tomb robber willing to profit from a forgotten past.

## the bogs

There were always bogs and hidden pools throughout the forests but as the trees have died away and the roots have broken, more and more of these flyblown pools of stagnant brown water have collected over time. They writhe with filth and often lay hidden under a crust of ash and dirt, ready for someone to fall into.

Over whole swathes of Mournbreth solid ground has been replaced by stinking mud that swims with insect larvae and diseased. The skeletal remains of trees protrude from the muck on cages of roots and things hide and slither in the belching, gaseous depths of the deep bogs. Nobody lives here but there are strange beasts, ruins and treasures to be found half-sunk into the stinking mire.

## the under-paths

Damp and soft the earth of the forest is not good for caverns or tunnels. Nonetheless there are paths beneath the surface, animals dig holes and maintain them, old temples had chambers and passages beneath them and where the grander, old trees still stand in groves and copses — albeit dead — the water has washed away the soil from their grandiose root systems and left strange tunnels and pathways beneath the surface. Some of these are a good way to pass undetected and undisturbed but many others are home to unpleasant creatures and the hurriedly buried dead, many of whom are no longer so dead after all...



## the blightgroves

Where the trees have died back the fungus has surged upward, growing to enormous sizes and webbing its way between the jagged stumps of the dead trees. A new forest is emerging, one of mushrooms and toadstools of mycelium and spores. These spreading areas are known as 'blight-groves', poisonous and dangerous, home to strange hybrid organisms, poisonous air, dangerous slimes and oozes but, at the same time, many of these fungal growths have value as medicines and poisons, as food and shelter, even for more unusual uses such as kindling, dyes and alchemy. Braving the blightgroves can be foolhardy and is often a right of passage amongst the Myconian elves.

## noistok

Noistok is one of the few remaining dwelling-trees inhabited by sane and civilised Myconian elves within Mournbreth. It was a relatively young and hearty tree, far from the heart of the forest when the cataclysm occurred and with a great deal of sacrifice it managed to last through some of the great winter that followed. No matter how much effort its inhabitants made they could not keep it alive though and when it did eventually die their efforts changed to those of preservation, helping the dead tree retain its shape and serve as their fort and shelter. What was once a provincial fortress of the elven peoples now passes for a capital of the Myconian elves.

Noistok is still underpopulated, elves do not breed quickly and their long lives can only help so much when so many are cut short by violence or hazard. It is a proper settlement however, filled and surrounded by thousands of Myconian elves working to preserve their home and learn to live in the changed world.

Noistok is a shadow of its former self, a darkened and leafless dwelling-tree, surrounded by rings of thorns and creepers, a natural defence against interlopers and raiders. It is far from the few trade roads that make their way through Mournbreth and is kept largely secret – at least as much as possible – shaded by magics that hide it as well as its remote location and the dangers of the forest.

## the canopy

The outer branches of the dwelling-tree were once the foliage of the dwelling tree itself. The leaves were thick and provided great cover. They were used as other peoples might use leather, to fashion clothing, make tents, to turn into Armor and a thousand other uses. Those leaves are long gone and the branches have been bare of any new growth for decades. They are, however, no longer bare. Many of the Myconian elves have taken to the branches, spinning a new home of rope-ladders and bridges, of hanging homes made out of rope, cloth and animal skins and some have even gone so far as to express their defiance of the death of the tree by making and hanging artificial leaves from its branches. This practice has become entwined with the Myconian elves

funerary rites and prayers with each one accompanied by the tying of a new 'leaf' to the high branches of the dwelling-tree.

## the trunk

The main trunk of the dwelling-tree is riddled with passages and chambers grown into it while it was alive. Back in the time when it was alive the tree glowed with an inner light but now it has to be lit with magic – no lanterns or candles are allowed. The ruling classes of the settlement live within the trunk and the main branches in these soft, rounded chambers and passages. Despite their best efforts rot and ruin is beginning to take its toll on the tree and repairs are having to be made here and there to shore it up. Without its growing and regenerating abilities it is only a matter of time before the tree is a ruin and amongst those in the know – given the long lives of the elves – this is a constant source of stress and upset, despite laying some decades or centuries into the future.

The deep trunk acts as a storehouse with the Myconians hoarding as much as they can of their lost people's wealth and culture as well as preserved food and stores of whatever armaments and magical artefacts that they can find, the better to defend themselves against the forest creatures and the dead – should they come seeking to conquer as they have most everywhere else.

## the scattering

Around the husk of the dwelling-tree and bounded by the wall of thorns there are many small farms, settlements and trading posts that deal with the wandering tribes and the rare outsiders. Farming in the dead forest is difficult but some manage to raise mushrooms, pigs and even insects as well as a few fruiting parasitic plants. It's a hard-scrabble existence that has to be supported by the hunting bounty of the wandering tribes but it does make living in Noistok at least achievable.

The farmers, scavengers, hunters and gatherers of the scattering are very much second-class citizens compared to those that live within the trunk. While the Myconian elves are all satisfied to sacrifice for the greater good of what remains of their people, sadness and acceptance is beginning to turn to resentment as many feel that despite all their changes and efforts no real advances are being made in the cause of their people.

## the roots

Deep beneath the dwelling-tree enormous roots surged through the dirt and crack open the living rock beneath. Dead now and shrivelling the root passages allow clean, fresh water to bubble up from deep aquifers and leave tunnels and chambers deep into the ground beneath the dwelling-tree. Down here the natural glow of fungus and mould means there is no need for the magical lanterns that light the trunk but these tunnels are relatively unexplored. A few are used to raise fungus or to hide the deeper secrets of

the ruling council but most are simply empty, a good place to meet out of sight and out of mind.

## the myconian elves

Elves have always been tied to nature and to their environment, typically the forests but also to the seas. In times past and across the planes elves have embodied some aspect of or moulded themselves to the nature of the land that they live upon. Archetypically they are a people of the forests, green-eyed, slipping through the boughs like dappled shadow, armed with the weapons the woods give them, living on the bounty that they provided. Long-lived as the great oaks, flexible as the green wood of the saplings, playful as a breeze caressing the leaves, stately and solid as a redwood.

That was then.

That environment, that nurturing, living, green forest of light and shade has vanished and all that remains is its twisted corpse, slowly sinking into the mud and mire and being devoured and replaced by creepers, thorns and fungus. Little wonder then that the Myconian elves have changed along with it and become much like the forest itself, dead inside, strange, alien, disconnected from both animals and plants alike, aloof, distant and tortured.

The only way for them to survive as a race was to adapt to the changing nature of their world and, so, the deep magic in the blood that ties the elves to their land was changed altered, redirected and the elves themselves began to change. Now they are tied to the fungus and mould that has bloomed in place of their once-great trees and their appearance and nature has changed along with the magic.

Myconian Elves are shorter than normal elves and their skin varies from a very light, almost white to a very dark, almost black – most are grey skinned and some have blemishes and patches upon and around their heads and backs that mimic the markings on top of some of the more lurid toadstools. Some have a rainbow, oily sheen to their skin and hair, similar to that found on the wings of crows or the poisonous exudations of toxic mushrooms.

Myconian elf eyes are a milky white-in-white that can give them the appearance of blindness to those who are unused to them. It can make their expressions hard to read and their glance unsettling as they appear to look right through you. Myconian's do have pupils but their eyes are so well adjusted to the gloomy murk of Mournbreth that in anything like normal light they become mere pinpricks, vanishingly small.

Their hair is thing and straggly, appearing to be wet, clinging to their scalps and their necks and contributing to their damp, 'amphibious' look. Many also have slight webbing between their fingers and toes and thicker and

### ELDER KUORAN GILLCREST

NOISTOK IS NOMINALLY RULED BY AN ELDER COUNCIL MADE UP OF THOSE MYCONIAN ELVES WHO LIVED THROUGH THE CATAclySM. CHIEF AMONGST THESE IS ELDER KUORAN GILLCREST WHO MAINTAINS SUCH REVERENCE AND DEFERENCE FROM THE OTHER ELDERS AND FROM THE MYCONIAN ELVES OF NOISTOK ITSELF THAT HE MIGHT AS WELL BE CONSIDERED IN CHARGE HIMSELF. HIS ELEVATED POSITION OF RELATIVE LUXURY AND SAFETY INSULATES HIM FROM THE REALITIES OF LIFE IN AND AROUND NOISTOK AND HE OFTEN SENDS VISITORS AND HIS OWN TRIBESPEOPLE OFF ON WILD GOOSE CHASES, HUNTING DOWN ARTEFACTS FROM THE TIME BEFORE THE CATAclySM THAT HE – AND NOBODY ELSE – BELIEVES CAN HELP RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF THE ELVES. HE MAY WELL HAVE GONE INSANE UNDER THE PRESSURE.

more protruding lips than other elves, all contributing to their slightly alien appearance.

Even the way a Myconian elf moves is unnerving, liquid, smooth, unnaturally still whenever they are not moving, quiet, slow and considered, often eerily silent. Their temperament can also be unsettling to those who are not used to it, taciturn, damaged, pained, depressing not so much aloof – as many elves can be – but rather just different, unable to relate any longer to the more normal, conventional races, even the Ash or the Weald elves.

Myconian elves are experts with poisons, derived from the toxic mushrooms of the Mournbreth and the venoms of the insects that live there. They are also skilled in crafting Armor from chitin and leather and are deadly with their shortbows, crafted from horn and chitin. Many are skilled climbers, capable hidiers and these skills, along with their natural talents, make them common assassins outside the protection of the Mournbreth, objects of suspicion and fear even more so than they already were due to their nature.

There is a real worry amongst those few who do deal with the Myconian elves that they have lost themselves in their changing with the world, that they are going to continue to become even more alien as time goes on and become something completely other, something evil, something dangerous in a world that is already more than dangerous enough.

## religion

The elves used to worship gods and goddesses who embodied aspects of the forest as it was. As their forest has changed and they have been cut off from direct interaction with those gods and their emissaries their concepts of those gods have changed to become more suited to their current situation. The uncorrupted and unchanged versions of these deities are still worshipped by the Weald elves but those the Myconian elves worship are very different.

## Sylla

Once the dancing maiden of the treetops, the goddess of new growth, of leaves, wind and sun, Sylla has become the



bereaved. Her tears create the bogs, she is cold and distant from those she once loved. Her naked form is hidden by her long white hair which spreads around her like the cilia and threads of the fungus that has replaced her old domain. She wants to die but cannot, being a goddess, imbibing and creating poison after poison in her attempts.

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Portfolios:** Grief, fungus and mushrooms, bereavement, water, women, poison and suicide.

**Domains:** Chaos, Earth, Madness, Repose, Water.

**Favoured Weapon:** Shortbow (poisoned arrows).

## darash

Once the strong and powerful king of the woods, the lord of the trees, Darash is now a god of defiance, of stoicism, of fierce protectiveness. He is seen as a tall man of blackened wood, fierce in battle and protective of his family, grudging in defeat, surly and spiteful. One who spits in the face of death and fights to his last.

**Alignment:** Chaotic Good

**Portfolios:** Warriors, defences, health, strength, protection and pyrrhic victories.

**Domains:** Community, Destruction, Protection, Strength, War.

**Favoured Weapon:** Mace.

## rishara

The goddess of death and the underworld, of the dark roots and the fertile ground, Rishara has appeared to change the least out of the elven deities in the woodlands. Her change has been subtle, but no less important than the change in the other gods of the elves. Where she was once the goddess of death and rebirth, of the wheel of life, of rot and ruin feeding back into the forest, now she has become twisted and unnatural. A grasping hoarder of death who gives nothing back, pictured as a gaunt and twisted witch and shunned in worship by most Myconian Elves where once she was the most popular. What cults and temples of hers remain are now havens to necromancers and the twisted.

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**Portfolios:** Goddess of death, of greed, covetousness, selfishness, pride and dreams.

**Domains:** Darkness, Death, Evil, Repose, Rune.

**Favoured Weapon:** Dagger.

## myconian elf wanderers

Outside the few settlements most of the Myconian Elves are nomadic, moving from place to place throughout the forest, chasing the scant game, raiding those foolhardy enough to travel through Mournbreth and stripping areas of edible mushrooms, grubs and other materials that can be 'farmed' as they move in cycles through the woods, stopping in at the settlements to trade with their more sedentary cousins.

The wandering tribes are much more aggressive and violent than their compatriots in Noistok and similar redoubts. Survival is their key concern and outside of their own people they can be extremely unforgiving and dangerous, striking from the shadows and the mire with poisoned arrows and deadly swiftness. When the forest is bereft of food they will wander beyond, attacking weak settlements without true malice but simply because they place their survival above that of others.

In the northern Mournbreth where the forest is thinner and more open, the wanderers rely much more heavily on camouflage and ambush tactics in their hunting and raiding, burying themselves in the dirt and hiding for days on end while they wait for their prey to approach.

The the middle section of the Mournbreth, which survived most intact, the land is a dark place, dotted with the stumps and skeletons of many trees. Here the darkness is almost perpetual, an eternal night rather than a perpetual twilight. Here the wanderers alter their consciousness with mushrooms and paint their bodies with patterns in glowing spores, breaking up their outlines so that they're harder to target.

In the southern Mournbreth where the bogs and swamps are the most prevalent the wanderers establish stilt 'villages' and move between them in a regular cycle, using stilts of their own to stalk through the marshes above the predators, striking down with spears at the pale fish and other things that move through the brackish water.

## creatures

A world remade means that the life upon it is also remade in the image of the new order. The Maggot-Kin are amongst those most reshaped but new forms of undead have also arisen out of necessity, invention and the strange new energies of the cataclysm.

## fungal horror cr +1

*This shambling creature is infested with fungal spores. All over its flesh mushrooms are fruiting out the flesh and trailing fronds and strings of fungal matter festoon it. Spores are constantly erupting into clouds around it and settling onto the ground like powder.*

A fungal horror uses all the creature's base statistics and special abilities, except as noted here.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +1.

**Alignment:** Neutral.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to plant with the appropriate augmented subtype. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Change all racial hit dice to d8s.

**Armor Class:** If the creature has a natural AC of +1 or lower, increase it by +2.

**Saves:** Recalculate with Fortitude as the good save and Will and Reflexes as the poor saves.

**Base Attack Bonus:** Reduce the base attack of the creature by -1, to a minimum of zero.

**Attack:** The fungal horror retains all the normal attacks and weapon proficiencies of the base creature and its denser flesh grants it a slam attack with damage appropriate to its size.

Size	Slam Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

**Special Attacks:** A Fungal Horror retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those listed below.

**Entangle (Sp):** A Fungal Horror can use entangle (caster level equals Fungal Horror's character level) once per day, plus one additional time per day for each 5 HD the Fungal Horror possesses. This ability functions like the spell of the same name, except that it affects fungus and mould. A Fungal Horror is immune to the effects of its own entangle.

**Improved Grab (Sp):** To use this ability, a Fungal Horror must hit with one of its natural attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold. This ability grants the Fungal Horror a +4 on CMB checks to start or maintain a grapple.

**Spore Cloud (Sp):** When struck for at least five points of physical damage the Fungal Horror bursts open and sprays fungal spores in a five foot radius. Anyone with the area must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + the Fungal Horror's level or become infected with its spores as per Walking Fungus in the appendix.

### Special Qualities:

**Fungal Walk (Sp):** This ability works like the tree stride spell (caster level equals Fungal Horror's character level), except that the Fungal Horror can travel only through mushrooms and patches of mould, as well as 'faerie circles'. In addition, a Fungal Horror can move through patches of fungus without taking damage or suffering any impairment. Fungal walk is usable once per day, plus one additional time per day for each 5 HD the Fungal Horror possesses.

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** A Fungal Horror can move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, or similar terrain) at its normal speed without taking damage or suffering other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magi-

cally manipulated to impede motion (except via its own entangle ability) still affect the Fungal Horror.

**Abilities:** Change from the base creature as follows: Str +1, Con +1, Dex -2.

**Environment:** Fungal Horrors arise from infection by other Fungal Horrors and from independent mould and mushrooms that carry the disease. They mostly arise in rotten forests or in abandoned buildings that have gone over to rot.

### Slime Horror (template)

*Its features half dissolved, its flesh gelatinous and semi-transparent it half staggers and half flows one shaky, dripping, step after another.*

A Slime Horror uses all the creature's base statistics and special abilities, except as noted here.

**Senses:** A slime horror loses its original senses and gains Blindsight.

**Blindsight (Ex):** A Slime Horror can discern objects and creatures within 60 feet regardless of concealment. It usually does not need to make Perception checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight. A silence spell negates this ability and forces the cave creature to rely on the base creature's senses.

**Armor Class:** A Slime Horror's slippery flesh gives it a +1 bonus to its Armor Class.

**Damage Reduction:** 5/Fire

**Speed:** Slime Horrors reduce their speed by 5 ft to a minimum of 5 ft.

**Attack:** The Slime Horror retains all the base creature's attacks, and its weapon and Armor proficiencies. These attacks retain the same primary or secondary status they had for the base creature.

**Damage:** The Slime Horror's unarmed attacks cause acid damage according to their size and their foul exudations coat their weapons, converting their damage to acid and granting a bonus to it. Those who take damage from Slime Horror's acid attacks have a chance of contracting Walking Slime – see the Appendix.

Size	Acid Damage	Acid Weapon Bonus
Fine	1	+0
Diminutive	1d2	+1
Tiny	1d3	+1
Small	1d4	+2
Medium	1d6	+2
Large	1d8	+2
Huge	2d6	+2
Gargantuan	2d8	+3
Colossal	4d6	+4

**Abilities:** Change from the base creature as follows: Str +1, Dex -2 (minimum 1), Int -2 (minimum 1).



**Skills:** The creature retains its racial skill bonuses but drops all other skills to zero. It may then spend points to buy these skills back up – at low levels – as though it had 2+ Int modifier per level, minimum of 1 per level.

**Environment:** Slime Horrors are found in shaded, cool areas, typically where there's rot, mould and damp.

## myconian elf bandit

Smear'd with dirt and glowing mushroom spores the figure rises, smooth as oil, from the dirt and draws back on the strong of his short bow, fixing you with a thousand-yard stare from empty, milky eyes.

### myconian elf bandit cr 1

XP 400

Myconian Elf Warrior Level 3

CN Medium Elf

**Init** +2 **Perception** +5 (low light vision)

#### defence

**AC** 15 **Touch** 12 **Flatfooted** 13 (+2 Dex, +2 chitin Armor)

**HP** 11 (3d10-6)

**Resistances**

**Fort** +1 **Ref** +3 **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities**

**Elven Immunities:** Immune to magic sleep effects and a +2 bonus versus poisons and diseases.

#### offence

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee Attack:** +3 1d8 damage, 19-20 x2 (longsword)

**Ranged Attack:** +5 1d6 damage, x3 (composite shortbow)

**Attack Options**

**Venom:** Weapons are coated with a poisonous venom with a save DC of 12, immediate onset, giving its effect every round for four rounds and causing the loss of 1 str. It can be cured by a single save.

**Space** 5ft sq.

#### statistics

**Str** 10+0 **Dex** 15+2 **Con** 7-2 **Int** 13+1 **Wis** 12+1 **Cha** 8 -1

**Base Atk** +3 **CMB** +3 **CMD** 15

**Feats**

**PoInt** blank shot, Alertness

**Skills**

Climb +2, Handle Animal +2, Swim +1, Stealth +3, Perception +5, Sense Motive +3.

**Gear**

Composite short bow, longsword, leather Armor.

#### ecology

**Environment:** Dead forests.

**Organisation:** Pair (2), Warband (5-10), Tribe (20-50, plus women and childRen).

**Treasure:** Standard

## special abilities

**Elven Magic:** Elves receive a +2 racial bonus on caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance. In addition elves gain a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks made to identify magical items.

**Weapon Familiarity:** Elves are proficient with longbows, longswords, rapiers and shortbows and treat any weapon with 'elven' in the title as a martial weapon.

## metics

Myconian Elf bandits operate from stealth and ambush. They take their time to prepare a good spot and then they wait, endlessly, camouflaged in the mud, until suitable prey comes past, striking all at once – as though a unified organism. Striking at range and with poison they seek to weaken their enemy before they close in and finish them off with their swords, ganging up like a pack, striking as a group at one target, then another.

## lore

**DC 5:** The Myconian Elves are the inheritors of the woodland elves from before the cataclysm. They are a damaged people, insane as a race and becoming stranger.

**DC 10:** The Myconian Elves have bonded with the rot and ruin of their home, embracing that which has destroyed it. As the forest rots they become more and more like it, more and more fungoid and alien.

**DC 15:** The Myconian and Weald elves are the same people, the Weald Elves being those who have stubbornly refused to conform to the new order. The Myconians don't believe the forests can recover and have accepted their lot, the Weald elves disagree. The truth? Nobody knows.

## razormoths

*Fluttering up from the ground rises a cloud of coal-black, glittering moths. For a moment it's beautiful until every flap of those wings opens a minute cut on your exposed skin and the blood begins to flow.*

### razor moth swarm cr 3

XP 800

N Diminutive Vermin (Swarm)

**Init** +1 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft. **Perception** +9

#### defence

**AC** 15 **Touch** 15 **Flatfooted** 14 (+1 Dex, +4 Size)

**HP** 31 (7d8)

#### resistances

**Fort** +3 **Ref** +5 **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities:** Swarm traits **Immune** weapon damage.

**Weakness:** Swarm traits.

#### offence

**Spd** 5 ft, fly 20 ft.

### Melee Swarm (2d6)

Space 10 ft, Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks: Distraction (DC 15)

### statistics

Str 1-5 Dex 13+1 Con 10+0 Int - Wis 12+1 Cha 9-1

Base Atk +5 CMB - CMD -

#### Feats

Skills: Fly +11, Perception +9, Racial Modifier: +8 Perception

Special Qualities: Swarm traits, vermin traits.

### special abilities

**Razored Wings:** Victims of razormoth attacks take 2 additional points of damage every turn. The bleeding can be stopped with a DC 15 Health check.

### ecology

**Environment:** Razormoth swarms are found mostly in the rotting forests but can be found anywhere there's scrub or cover. They normally lurk in colonies near to regularly travelled animal trails, ready to rise up around their prey.

**Organisation:** Razormoth swarms are normally limited to one in any given area as they are fiercely competitive. If there is a particularly good path two or three may lurk in close proximity.

**Treasure:** Razormoths rarely take intelligent targets and so only minimal treasure **Will** be found near them.

### tactics

Razormoths rely on ambush tactics. Spotting them when they're on the ground requires a DC 20 Perception check as they bury themselves just below the surface of the ground. Their fluttering is not only dangerous – their wings like broken glass – but also distracting as it glitters and whirls.

### lore

**DC 10:** Razormoths are a dangerous, predatory and scavenging insect that has only been rendered more dangerous since the cataclysm. Distractingly beautiful they are deadly because their razor wings open cuts in their targets that bleed them to death.

**DC 15:** Razormoths feed on the sugar in the blood and the sweet fungus that blooms on rotting bodies. They can sometimes be distracted with something sweet like sugar or honey.

**DC 20:** Myconian Elves sometimes 'plant' colonies of Razormoths as traps, 'rigging' bodies with them so that intruders and treasure-seekers who stray into their territory succumb to the moths.

## Stump horror

*Coiled within the hollow stump of the rotten tree the creature suddenly explodes outwards. Eight feet or more of pulpy, glistening flesh ending in a hard, shiny, carapace covered head with snatching, pierc-*

*ing jaws. It strives out with lightning speed to bite and drag its prey to its doom.*

## Stump horror cr 4

XP 1,200

N Medium Vermin

Init +1 Perception +4 (darkvision 60 ft.)

### defence

AC 17 Touch 11 Flatfooted 16 (+1 Dex, +6 Natural)

HP 45 (6d8+18)

### resistances

Fort +8 Ref +3 Will +2

Defensive Abilities

Immune: Mind-affecting effects.

### offence

Spd 5 ft, Climb 5 ft.

Melee: Bite +7 (1d8+3)

Attack Options

Reach: 10 ft.

**Poison pit:** The Stump Horror fills its stump or pit with foul exudations sweated out of its skin. This mire of poisonous fluid requires a **Fortitude** save against a DC of 15 to resist, otherwise it reduces the target's Strength by one. This continues for as long as the target is in contact with the fluid.

Space 5 ft sq.

### statistics

Str 16 +3 Dex 13 +1 Con 17 +3 Int - Wis 11 +0 Cha 2 -4

Base Atk +4 CMB +7 CMD 18

#### Feats

Skills Climb +7, Perception +4, Stealth +9; Racial Modifiers +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +8 Stealth

### ecology

**Environment:** Stump Horrors are found wherever there are rotten logs or damp, loose-soiled pits in which they can hide and carve a nest for themselves.

**Organisation:** Solitary (1).

**Treasure:** Negligible.

### tactics

Stump Horrors wait in their dens until something passes close by to them, then they erupt from their hiding place and bite, trying to drag their prey back into their home pit to poison, drown or bite it to death ready for digestion. Once a Stump Horror has its prey killed it is content to remain in its hole and feast and will not attack unless disturbed.

### lore

**DC 10:** The Stump Horror is a predatory insect that lurks in the hollows of rotten tree stumps and in pits that they dig into loose dirt and shallow bogs. Dangerous and predatory it is always best to make sure you check a hiding place before you enter it.



**DC 15:** Stump Horrors are the larval form of a benign giant moth that flies above the rotten forests. A rare thing of beauty in such a dead place and born of such vicious, predatory predations.

**DC 20:** Stump Horrors didn't exist in anything like such huge numbers before the cataclysm and were neither as large as they are now, nor as dangerous. Something in the nature of the cataclysm has changed them and may continue to do so. There are even rumours of larger and more deadly Stump Horrors in the deep depths of Mournbreth where the great trees still stand, dead, but tall.

## feats

There are many specialist skills that have emerged to deal with the strange and dangerous remade world of Abaddon, as well as many more literal changes in the very nature of the people of the world. The transformed forests are no exception and learning their ways and their peculiarities can aid greatly with survival in many other arenas.

### bioluminescence

Your veins run with spores and bacteria that can be induced to glow when you need light.

**Prerequisite:** Myconian elf or fungal creature.

**Benefit:** As a free action you can cause your body to glow, casting light in a 10 ft radius, enough to read by without giving away your location too far away. While you glow your AC is reduced by -1 against ranged attacks as you are more visible.

### sense the rot

You have a talent for sensing when someone or something is rotten, where it is vulnerable or breakable, how to strike at it for the maximum possible effect.

**Prerequisite:** Perception 4 ranks or more.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to damage against foes if you spend a whole turn studying them. This bonus is increased to +4 against undead, plants, fungus, constructs, slimes and similar non-animalistic enemies.

### stillness

There isn't a huge amount of cover in the dead forests. The plants have died away and what there is is rot, mould, bare stumps and little else. Stealth in the dead forests is as much a matter of being still and slow as it is hiding.

**Prerequisite:** Stealth 2 ranks or more, Survival 2 ranks or more.

**Benefit:** So long as you do not move more than 5 ft at a time you can make Stealth checks as normal. You can even hide from creatures with Blindsense and other sensory powers,

such as Tremorsense, that would normally be able to detect you even if they couldn't see or hear you.

## toxic skin

Your flesh is poisonous and excretes a substance that can be used to treat arrows and other weapons.

**Prerequisite:** Myconian Elf or fungal creature.

**Benefit:** By taking a full turn to do so you can coat a weapon or arrowhead with poison. This poison is an injury poison with a Fort DC of 10 + Level, an instant onset, a frequency of 1/rd for 4 rounds and an effect of 1d3 against whatever ability of yours is the highest. If you have two abilities the same as each other you can choose which ability it affects. If your highest ability changes as you progress in levels, so does the effect of the poison. If you have this Feat your skin is likely to change colour and show spots, somewhat similar to a poison frog or a noxious mushroom.

## spells

The unique metaphysical nature of Abaddon and the destruction of most of the old orders of magic in the cataclysm has lead to a great revival in experimental magic. The rise of the dead has also lead to a renaissance in necromantic magic which is now practiced openly by the quick and the dead alike without fear of reprisal. Needless to say, many of these spells relate to the dead or the undead and there is certainly no shortage of bodies, bones and restless spirits anywhere upon Abaddon virtually all of which is one, massive grave site.

### rot

**School:** Necromancy; **Level:** Cleric/DRuid 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 5

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action.

**Components:** V, S.

**Range:** 5 ft +5 ft/Level

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates. **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

With a word and a gesture the caster reaches out and calls to the seeds of doom that already lie in any living, or once living, thing. Spores bloom, mould spreads, organic matter crumbles, skin and flesh blotch as bacteria multiply and the target is sickened or destroyed, reduced to a torrent of suppurating filth.

This spell afflicts a single target and can harm plant-based creatures or organic items such as skins, wood, food and living or unliving flesh. Against a living target it does 1d4 damage per level to a maximum of 15d4 and destroys any non-magical item such as a suit of hide or leather Armor or a staff or spear that depends on its wooden haft.

## spore cloud

**School:** Necromancy; Level: Cleric 4, DRuid 3

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action.

**Components:** V, S, DF.

**Range:** Medium (100 ft + 10 ft/level).

**Effect:** An eruption of spores in a 10 ft. radius, 10 ft. deep.

**Duration:** 1 turn/level.

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance:** No.

Mushrooms and mould erupt from the ground and anything dead in the area exploding into a cloud of drifting spores that hang in the air, choking and poisoning those who pass through the area.

The poisonous spores deal 1d3 Constitution damage per round that the target is exposed to them and fails their Fortitude saves though saves must be made so long as the target is exposed.

## sucking bog

**School:** Transmutation; Level: DRuid 5, Sorcerer/Wizard 5

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action.

**Components:** V, S, DF/Material (handful of crushed leaves).

**Range:** Medium (100 ft + 10 ft/level)

Area: 20 ft cube.

**Duration:** Level/days.

**Saving Throw:** See text; **Spell Resistance:** No.

With a cast of the hand the ground sinks in upon itself becoming an unnatural, enchanted bog that isn't simply treacherous, but is actively malignant and will do its best to trap and drown anyone or anything that stumbles into it.

If someone moves through one of the sucking bog spaces they are ensnared by it, there is no saving throw. To continue moving they must make Swim checks against a DC of 20 to move a maximum of 5 ft. Any failed Swim checks mean that they are dragged down beneath the surface and must make a roll – and waste a turn – simply to surface. While submerged they are subject to the drowning rules. The bog is a thick slurry of dirt and water and is subject to spells that can affect soil and water alike.

## root & branch

The forests form a barrier that few, living or dead, are willing to travel through – and with good reason. Dark, dangerous and strange as well as being home to territorial factions of the Myconian Elves even just passing through the fringes of the old forests can be dangerous, the depths are virtually unexplored. This can, occasionally, make them a tempting haven for bandits and revolutionaries seeking to escape the forces of the undead lords but the stories are such that many would prefer the dungeons of the torturers to the mysterious, dank, shrouded ruins of Mournbreth.



Going through the forests, if successful, can also provide a short cut allowing secret messages to move from place to place faster than more conventional forces and groups can transfer or act upon the information. This is how the characters are going to get drawn in, a mole within one of the undead legions has information about the travel route of the legion's resupply and payment convoy that he needs to transfer to the rebels on the other side of the forest. The characters represent his best chance of getting that information to the rebels and he can pay well enough – the rebels should be able to pay the balance when the characters reach them.

Of course, nothing is ever that simple...

## the hook

*Fort Brass isn't much of a fort any longer and the brass that once adorned it as decoration is long gone but it remains an important stopover point on the slender trade road that snakes its way around the Mournbreth forest.*

*More of a permanent camp than a true settlement it affords cover from the wind and what passes for a warm welcome in Abaddon. There are fires – dung and rotten wood – drink and food, company in the form of other travellers and pedlars and it's a good place to pick up news.*

*You're huddled around one of the stinking pit-fires, gazing out into the night. In the far distance you can barely make out a few, scattered, bluish lights. Magic so that the army camped out there can see – those few amongst it who cannot see in the dark at least. The undead legions are still strong*



*and still scour the lands in a show of force, fortunately for you they seem to be far away from here.*

*As you turn back to the fires, chasing the scant heat that they provide, there is a rush of air and the flames flutter like a wounded bird. Turning back a man – or what was once a man – in legion armor and a long red cloak stands at the edge of the circle of light and gestures to you, beckoning with an Armored gauntlet.*

Kline Sarrak is an agent of revolutionaries, hidden amongst the third legion and working against it, even as he holds a position of authority within that army. Kline has managed to get hold of some sensitive information about a resupply and payment convoy on its way to the army and he needs to get that information to the rebels quickly. The only way to do that is to get someone else to take the sealed message cannister through the forest to the rebel outpost in the outskirts of the forest at the other side. The only choice he has is to entrust this important message to the mercenary scum and adventurers that hang out at Fort Brass.

He doesn't particularly want to tip his hand but, if they seem sympathetic to the rebels and hostile to his appearance he may let them see the information and let on that he's a double agent. Otherwise he'll trust to money and professionalism to see the message there safely.

He can offer five-hundred gold's worth of high denomination coin and promises that his 'contacts' on the other side of the forest will match that payment and that they'll know them when they see them. All the group has to do is travel east and wait to be contacted, they'll get half the money in advance and the rest once the message is delivered. If they want the money they'll have to put up with the secrecy if they want to be paid – unless they can convince Kline that they'd rebels or sympathisers themselves.

## entering the forest

*For about a half mile the forest is fringed by stumps and burned ground, blackened and with only the occasional, defiant, scrubby plant pushing itself from the soil. Then – as though at some mysterious command – things abruptly change. Suddenly there are blackened stumps and skeletal trees, thrust up from the ground like broken teeth. Mist clings to these stumps and lingers persistently around them and even in the eternal dusk, things suddenly seem darker. Here and there clusters of mushrooms and threads of mould spring up, festooning the stumps and filling the damp, still air with drifting spores. In the distance there are eerie lights, glowing around the shadows of stumps deeper in the woods – this is unsettling and unnatural, even for Abaddon.*

In the appendix there are some ideas for various forest encounters, things that can be discovered, encountered or seen. These need not be combat encounters – though some are described in such a way that they can be used as those encounters. Many are just strange, pieces of local colour or minor obstacles, things to establish the nature of the forest.

You can use these to give some background and draw people into the nature of Mournbreth before they run into something more dangerous.

You can make the journey last as long as you want and add in extra encounters but there are three key encounters, the Myconian Elves, the Lost Temple and – at the other side of the Mournbreth – the rebel camp to which they are meant to be bringing the information.

## encounter 1: myconian patrol (2,400 xp)

*The animal trail that you've been following for a while crosses another one in the middle of a tangled stand of ancient, dead trees. The air is even stiller here, a choking, stinking miasma of damp air and spores. The trees form a natural bower, lit up with glowing fungus and all around there are thick brambles, wreathed around the other stumps. As you reach this natural crossroad you hear the cry of a crow and then, without any further warning, arrows fly out of the darkness and the brambles.*

There are six Myconian Elf bandits secreted in the woods around the party as they travel through the woods. They have been laying in wait for some time and, as the characters approach, they spring their ambush, jealously guarding their woods and seeing an opportunity for profit.

The statistics for the Myconian Elf bandits are found earlier in this book and these are standard Myconian Elves. They have had plenty of time to hide and camouflage themselves and the DC to spot them before the ambush takes place is DC 25.

The Myconian Elves will open fire, initially taking individual shots against each of the characters, after that first, opportunistic ambush they will try to concentrate their fire upon one target at a time while moving away, slowly. If they take two casualties they will start to concentrate on moving away and escaping, rather than fighting but may well, then, follow the characters. Setting up a new ambush if, for example, the characters enter The Lost Temple.

Once this encounter is resolved, one way or another, the party are free to move on, eastward, through the forest until they stumble, by chance, upon the temple.

## encounter complications

**Spore Cloud:** This area of the forest is very still and heavy with damp, spore laden air. Any character (that breathes) that makes a full-round run action while in the area must make a Fortitude Save against a DC of 15 or become fatigued.

**Glowing Fungus:** Anyone within the glow of the fungus around the crossroads has their AC reduced by -1 when attacked with ranged weapons.

**Brambles:** These brambles count as difficult terrain and moving through them requires a single Reflex save against

a DC of 12 or the character takes 1 hit point of damage. The Myconian Elves have imbibed potions that replicate the effects of the Druid's Woodland Stride and so can pass unimpeded through the brambles.

## encounter 2: the lost temple

*Looming out of the gloom you espy the jagged, regular shapes of cut stone, contrasting massively with the trees and undulating dirt that make up the rest of the Mournbreth. Even so, it is a little hard to spot, shrouded in ivy that grows so thickly only the occasional stone block thrusts out of the earth. The ground here is littered with blackened splinters of wood, perhaps there was once a tree here but now all that remains is this stone edifice. It seems that there are overgrown steps, leading down into what may have once been an entrance.*

This site is one of the lost temples of the elves from back when their forest was alive and beautiful. It was a celebration of the life of the forest and was built into a great tree – which has since been destroyed. All that remains of the temple now are its underground levels and these are hazardous and infested with mindless fungal and slime zombies, the remnants of the old priesthood that once served here and tried to preserve the temple as long as they could.

### entrance

*Descending down the worn and overgrown steps to the entrance of the temple you pass beneath two ivy-shrouded statues, their identity lost beneath the foliage. Crumbled remnants of wooden doors leave little more than a damp stain on the ground and the rusted remnants of handles. The doorway itself, empty and open, is curtained with thick strands of ivy, several strands deep, dead old growth and new growth alike.*

If they stop to listen they may hear the faint burble of water as well as shuffling sounds within (Perception DC 12), a warning of things to come. Cutting through the ivy isn't too challenging so long as someone has a blade, it's just a matter of time and effort. Almost immediately within the entrance it turns pitch black and there are no natural sources of illumination within, even the fungus.

### fountain chamber (1,200 xp)

*Torchlight glitters off water. The room is damp and glittering, the floor covered with generations of roots radiating out from the middle. Illuminated by the flickering light an ancient fountain, against all odds still bubbling away, at least faintly. Long shadows cast around from abstract sculptures and gaping doorways left, right, straight on and behind you. Water drips like slow rain from the ceiling, filling the chamber with a dull plopping resonance.*

Slumped around the fountain base are three slime zombies – detailed in the appendix. They are not up and active at the

start but once the characters get closer – inside the fountain chamber and close to them – they will rise and attack.

### priest's cells (1,600 xp)

*The dark doorway opens out into a simple corridor running left to right, joining a number of simple, priestly cells together. Once this must have been the dwelling of the priests who tended this temple. A simple life of charity and contemplation. Now it is given over to rot and ruin and behind the fungal fibres things shuffle in what was once a holy space.*

Four fungal zombies lurk in the cells, elven priests who succumbed to starvation and later infection and reanimation. They will have to be disturbed to come to life but they will all come alive at once, groaning and calling out as they do so.

The chambers are mostly empty, rotten and ruined beds and tables with nothing worth plundering within them. They are merely a curiosity that can be explored on the off-chance. The zombies can also emerge from here into the fountain chamber as the characters make their way back from elsewhere, if the Games Master feels that the characters have had too easy a time of it.

### offering well

*A rounded chamber is revealed in the torchlight, opened into a yawning pit, deep within which can be heard the distant slopping of water. Your torchlight glitters on more than water down in that hole, offerings perhaps from the time before to some elven god or goddess. A sense of magic lingers here, weakened and almost gone but still fluttering a little, a sense of peace and stillness.*

The well was where elves would come in times past to make offerings to the temple and to their gods and goddesses. Much may have been lost to time and the underground streams but much still remains below. Of course, Abaddon being cut off from the gods blasphemy doesn't carry the sting it once did and nor do blessings but either removing or donating to the well can grant a curse or a blessing to those who do so.

Donating an item or coinage worth at least 20 gold pieces will result in gaining the effects of the Bless spell for the remainder of the encounter at the Lost Temple. Taking any coin or treasure from the bottom of the well (DC 18 to climb down and 20 to climb back up) will result in the effects of the Bane spell being levelled against the one who did so for the same duration.

The offering well has some 1,300 gold pieces worth of coins of mixed coinage, copper, silver and gold, at the bottom of it though it would take some time to collect it all and good light is necessary. The water at the bottom flows away and has likely swept away more coinage, but there isn't room to pursue it.



## supplicant's path (400 xp)

*This doorway opens into a long, sloping corridor that cuts deep into the earth. Roots pierce the ceiling and the ground is littered with fallen bricks from the ceiling of the corridor. It groans above you like straining wood and threatens to collapse with your presence, disturbing the ages. At the far end lies another chamber, a last chamber to what remains of this temple and the last place in which secrets may lie.*

The ceiling here threatens to collapse if the adventurers are not extremely careful. If it does collapse not only will they take harm from that collapse but they will have to dig their way free – no easy task.

### falling ceiling cr 1

**Type:** Mechanical Perception: DC 15  
Disable Device: DC 25 (Propping up the ceiling)

#### Effects

**Trigger:** Location (incautious movement) **Reset:** None.

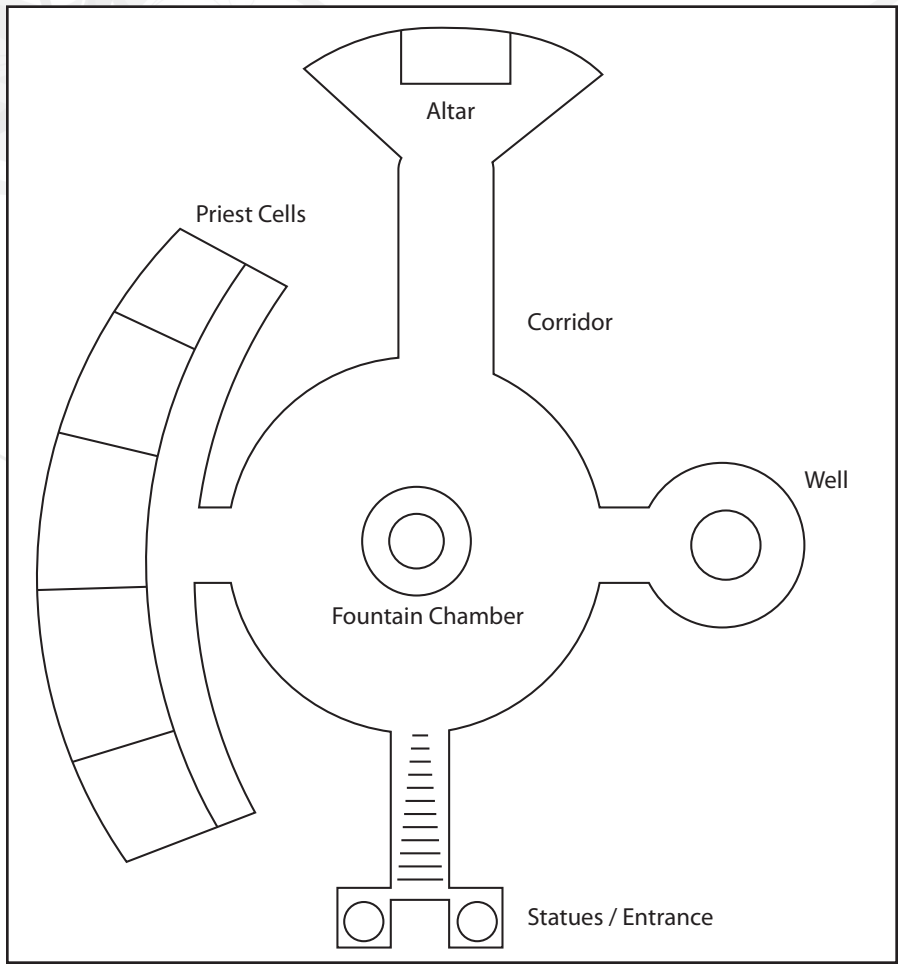
**Effect:** Falling rocks the length of the corridor do 2d6 damage. DC 20 Reflex check halves damage.

## root altar (400 xp)

*At the end of the corridor lays another chamber, completely draped in roots. The shape suggests an altar at the far side of the room and something glitters beneath that dark and rotting drapery. There is a statue too, that of a veiled woman, behind and above the altar; her features obscured with grime or... perhaps... is it two statues? No... the one at the base of the altar moves, tearing free of the roots and reaching for you with a wheezing growl, the lost remnant of what was once, perhaps, the archpriest.*

This chamber was once the central point of the rites of the temple and is now the last resting place of its master. He presents little more threat than the other zombies though the relics of his power in life may present a little more of a problem for our heroes. This zombie wear a Mithral Shirt and a Ring of Force Shield which, combined, increase its AC by +6, both can be looted from the undead following its demise.

The Altar itself has a few scattered items under the roots. A lacquered box contains a fine, rabbit-fur belt worth 130 gp and two small idols, one carved from green quartz and worth 30 gp, the other a wooden statuette clasping a small emerald worth 120 gp.



## encounter 3: the rebels

*The oppressive darkness of the Mournbreth finally begins to fade into the more familiar twilight but you have not yet reached the very edge of the forest when you smell smoke and see the dim light of a fire not far ahead. Someone is here and freedom from the oppressive darkness of the forest lies further to the east, these must be the people you have come here to see... or at least you hope so.*

The camp-site itself is little more than just a fire and a little cleared earth. It's meant to draw in anyone looking for the rebels so that they can spy on them a while before deciding if they want to deal with them or not. When the characters arrive at the fire it's abandoned and this should echo the ambush that they walked into in their first encounter.

Once the characters are around the camp-site the rebels will emerge from the rotten trees, wary and armed, eight men and women, little more than commoners at the end of their patience with the status quo and with nothing left to lose. They are a rag-tag band, little good in a fight but with the information that the characters bring they may be able to strike at the legion, destabilise it and encourage some dissent or rebellion within its ranks.

After initial suspicion the rebels are more than happy to accept the information and to work with it. If you want to extend the adventure on they can recruit the characters to

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

YOU CAN END THIS ADVENTURE IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS THAT CAN MAKE IT LEAD ONWARDS. YOU COULD HAVE THE WHOLE THING BE A TRAP, SET UP BY KLINE AND HAVE HAD THE ADVENTURERS FOLLOWED BY A UNIT OF LEGIONARIES OR YOU COULD HAVE THEM GO ON TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE THE REBELS AND AMBUSH THE SUPPLY CONVOY. FOR EITHER CONTINGENCY THE STATISTICS FOR UNDEAD LEGIONARIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE APPENDIX.

help them raid the supply convoy for the legion. One thing that they cannot do is meet Kline's promise of payment. They have no money to offer, only a modicum of hospitality, food and water.

## conclusion

With the information the rebels have they can attack the legion's resupply convoy and take a great deal of money, weaponry and Armor for themselves as well as wagons and pack animals – rare enough given Abaddon's devastation. The legion will, in turn, be denied its money and supplies, weakening its morale and its ability to fight rebels – and others – within this area. It will bring a breath of freedom – and lawlessness – to the area around the Mournbreth, something that could have both positive and negative outcomes for the people of that area.

The interpretation of what occurs following the completion of the adventure is down to you but in such a dark and desolate world it is, perhaps, more important even than in a more normal setting that the players see that the actions of their characters have an impact on the world around them – that they can make a difference for good or ill.

The conclusion of this scenario leaves the characters with contacts both in the legion – Kline – and amongst the rebels. Excellent story-hooks for you to spin off your own adventures later on.

## appendices

### the message

The message to the rebels is sealed in a copper cannister consisting of two halves, the join sealed with wax and a rosette pressed into the thicker wax on one side bearing the skull and laurels of the legion insignia. Within the cannister is a tightly rolled scroll containing a hurriedly drawn map of the supply routes around the Mournbreth as well as dates when and where the wagons are supposed to be. With this information the rebels can harry and disrupt the legion's supply and operations for perhaps a year, or at least until they work out that their secrets are known.

### the lost temples

A mini-campaign could be made out of searching out the lost temples of the elves within the Mournbreth. The Weald

Elves in particular are obsessed with finding them as they believe these holy places hold the key to returning life to the forest. They may be right if any seeds of the dwelling-trees, considered holy relics, survive in any of these lost temples. A dangerous quest indeed since the Weald Elves are often dismissed as fanatics and the Myconian Elves so jealously guard their borders, furthermore these temples have made good homes for dangerous beasts to turn into their lairs.

## npcs & monsters

For reference and for examples the various non-player characters and monsters used in the adventure are presented here – if they have not already been covered before. This gives you a handy file of typical enemies to use in your own games later on and details some of the NPCs a little more clearly than in the adventure text.

### kline sir sarrah harrowed legion officer

*Grey-skinned and white of hair the legion officer has darting red eyes and a nervous disposition though his Armor shines bright and his weapons are maintained there is something desperate and almost... grubby about him*

XP 1,600

Harrowed Fighter 4

CN Medium Humanoid

Init +2 Perception +1 (darkvision 60 ft)

### defence

AC 20, Touch 12, Flatfooted 18 (+2 Dex, +6 breastplate, +2 shield)

HP 30

### Resistances

Fort +8 Ref +3 Will +0

+4 Vs poison, disease, death and paralysis.

All healing made with positive magic only has 50% effect.

Effects that deal damage to undead do half damage to Harrowed.

Effects that deal double damage to undead do half-again as much damage to Harrowed.

Harrowed need only sleep, eat and breathe half as much as the truly living.

Harrowed can hold their breath for a number of turns equal to their Con multiplied by 4.

### Defensive Abilities

#### Offence

Spd 30 ft.

Shortspear: +7 1d6+4 damage.

### Attack Options

Space 5ft sq.

### Statistics



**Str** 17+3 **Dex** 14+2 **Con** 14+2 **Int** 10+0 **Wis** 9-1 **Cha** 13+1

**Base Atk** +4 **CMB** +7 **CMD** 19

#### Feats

Alertness

, Combat **Reflexes**, Deceitful, Great **Fortitude**, Mounted Combat

, Persuasive.

#### Skills

Bluff +3

, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +3, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +5, Perception +1, Ride +5, Sense Motive +1

, Survival +4

#### Gear

Shortspear, Breastplate, heavy wooden shield.

#### Special Abilities

**Undead Familiarity:** +1 bonus to hit and damage Vs Undead.

**Bravery:** +1 Save Vs Fear

**Armor Training:** Reduce Armor Check Penalty and increase Max **Dex** Bonus by +1

## elven fungal zombies (cr 1)

*The ragged remnants of priestly vestments hang around the bloated forms of these long dead elves, their features lost behind the swell of fungal growths, puffs of spores from their mouths as they lurch towards you.*

XP 400

N Medium undead plant

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +2

Defence

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 natural)

**HP** 12 (2d8+3)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

Offence

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +4 (1d6+4)

### attack options

**Entangle (Sp):** A Fungal Horror can use entangle (caster level equals Fungal Horror's character level) once per day, plus one additional time per day for each 5 HD the Fungal Horror possesses. This ability functions like the spell of the same name, except that it affects fungus and mould. A Fungal Horror is immune to the effects of its own entangle.

**Improved Grab (Sp):** To use this ability, a Fungal Horror must hit with one of its natural attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold. This ability grants the Fungal Horror a +4 on CMB checks to start or maintain a grapple.

**Spore Cloud (Sp):** When struck for at least five points of physical damage the Fungal Horror bursts open and sprays fungal spores in a five foot radius. Anyone with the area

must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + the Fungal Horror's level or become infected with its spores as per Walking Fungus in the appendix.

#### Statistics

**Str** 18 +4, **Dex** 10 +0, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10 +0, **Cha** 10 +0

**Base Atk** +0; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

**Feats:** Toughness

**Special Abilities:** Staggered

**Staggered (Ex):** Zombies have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.

**Fungal Walk (Sp):** This ability works like the tree stride spell (caster level equals Fungal Horror's character level), except that the Fungal Horror can travel only through mushrooms and patches of mould, as well as 'faerie circles'. In addition, a Fungal Horror can move through patches of fungus without taking damage or suffering any impairment. Fungal walk is usable once per day, plus one additional time per day for each 5 HD the Fungal Horror possesses.

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** A Fungal Horror can move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, or similar terrain) at its normal speed without taking damage or suffering other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion (except via its own entangle ability) still affect the Fungal Horror.

## elven slime zombies (cr 1)

*These figures are naked, barely humanoid, their appearance is that of a wax figure held too close to the fire and they drip and slide, mouths open without a sound, drooling slippery goo.*

XP 400

N Medium undead ooze

**Init** +0; **Senses:** blindsight 60 ft.; **Perception** +2

Defence

**AC** 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+3 natural)

**HP** 12 (2d8+3)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/slashing/Fire; **Immune** undead traits

Offence

**Spd** 25 ft.

**Melee** +5 (1d6+6 acid)

#### Statistics

**Str** 18 +4, **Dex** 10 +0, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10 +0, **Cha** 10 +0

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

**Feats:** Toughness

**Special Qualities:** Staggered

**Staggered (Ex):** Zombies have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.

## rebels (commoner 3 cr 1)

*These men and women look like they've known nothing but hard times. Rangy and tired, they look on the edge of starvation and have a wild and desperate look in their eyes but a fire and steel as well.*

XP 400
Commoner 3
NG Medium Humanoid
Init +0 Perception +5
Defence
AC 12 Touch 10 Flatfooted 12 (+2 leather Armor)
HP 14
Resistances
Fort +2 Ref +1 Will +2
Offence
Spd 30 ft.
Dagger: +1 (1d4)
Shortbow: +1 (1d6)
Space 5ft sq.
Statistics
Str 11+0 Dex 10+0 Con 13+1 Int 9-1 Wis 12+1 Cha 10 +0
Base Atk +1 CMB +1 CMD 11
Feats
Alertness
, PoInt Blank Shot, Stealthy
Skills
Climb +2
, Craft +1, Escape Artist +2, Perception +5, Sense Motive +2, Stealth +2.
Gear
Dagger, shortbow, leather Armor.

## undead legion

*Skeletons with the light of intelligence in their eyes form ranks, shield to shield, spears high. Tarnished Armor gleams in the dim light as an unnatural, rattling hiss issues from their jaws and their spears come down as one to form a thicket.*

XP 1,200
Fighter 3
LE Medium Undead
Init +6 Darkvision: 60 ft. Perception +0
Defence
AC 22 Touch 12 Flatfooted 20 (+6 Armor, +2 shield, +2 natural, +2 Dex)
HP 17
Resistances
Fort +3 Ref +3 Will +1
Offence

Spd 30 ft.
Shortspear: +5 (1d6+2)
Shortbow: +5 (1d6)
Space 5ft sq.
Statistics
Str 15+2 Dex 14+2 Con - Int 10+0 Wis 10+0 Cha 10 +0
Base Atk +3 CMB +5 CMD 17
Feats
Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash, Power Attack, Run
Skills
Climb +5, Intimidate +3
Gear
Shortspear, heavy wooden shield, breastplate.

## new elements

The dead forest of the Mournbreth has given rise to new dangers and new ideas, new means of doing things and new diseases that prey upon the weak.

### chitin armor (armor)

Chitin Armor is crafted from the shells of insect creatures, torn free and fashioned into overlapping bands and scales that protect the wearer, almost as tough as conventional scalemail but much lighter, though somewhat more constricting.

Cost: 50 gp, Armor/Shield Bonus: +4, Maximum Dex Bonus: +3, Armor Check Penalty: -3, Arcane Spell Failure Chance: 25%, Speed: Unchanged.

### spore patterns (armor)

The Myconian Elves have taken to an unusual form of camouflage using glowing mushroom spores. They paint their bodies in swirling and zig-zagging patterns that break up their outline and make it harder to discern how they are moving. It seems counter-intuitive but, so long as the wearer is moving it does make their motions harder to predict. Painting such patterns requires an appropriate Craft check against a DC of 15 and, if successful, incurs a -2 penalty to Stealth checks but increases the wearer's AC versus ranged attacks by +2.

The principle behind such patterns is the same as that used in naval camouflage in the real world during World War I where it was used to confuse U-Boat captains as to the course and heading of their target vessels.

### walking fungus (disease)

Walking Fungus is a terrible disease carried by Fungal Horrors but also found occurring naturally around fungus that grow throughout the Mournbreth. When infected a creature or person – unless they fight off the disease – is transformed into a Fungal Horror. Even those that die or



choose death to escape this doom may rise as undead and still altered by the fungus.

Type: Disease, contact; Save: Fortitude DC 15, Onset: 1 day, Frequency: 1/day, **Effect:** 1d6 Con damage. Cure: Save, or self-administering 1d10 points of fire damage and a successful Heal check against DC 20.

## walking slime (disease)

Akin to Walking Fungus, walking slime is a related disease that liquidises flesh and reduces the infected to a partially gelatinous mass, their mind virtually lost as they become monsters. As with walking fungus even those who die are not spared this fate as their bodies can be raised as horrific, undead slime creatures.

Type: Disease, contact; Save: Fortitude DC 15, Onset: 1 day, Frequency: 1/day, **Effect:** 1d6 Str damage. Cure: Save, or self-administering 1d10 points of fire damage and a successful Heal check against DC 20.

## forest encounters

You can throw in these encounters as hazards or simply for 'colour', you can also use them to complicate combat encounters and give them their own, unique, flavour.

### bats

*A wheeling mass of bats hurtles around the trees in a swooping, chirping horde, moving unpredictably in pursuit of their insect prey.*

Bats are one of the most plentiful creatures in the Mournbreth, hunting the insects that swarm in the rot. An animal or a person moving across the forest disturbs the ground and the wood, sending up clouds of insects and bringing the bats.

The wheeling mass of bats is distracting and obscures vision, so long as they are in the area they reduce any ranged attacks by a -2 penalty. If you want to use them as a combat encounter, predatory and vampiric bats can also be attracted by the rising insects as these are a sign of a moving animal.

### biting midges

*Stagnant pools of brackish water hum with buzzing clouds of tiny, biting insects. Any exposed flesh is soon itchy and raw.*

Masses of biting insects are spawned in the pools of standing water and they're always hungry for fresh blood. A person moving through or near these pools is fair game for the insects.

Anyone passing through a midge-infested pool or within five feet of it must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 12 or take a single hit point of damage. Anyone in that same area also takes a -1 penalty to any actions due to the distraction that the midges cause. At the Games Master's discretion

the midges can also carry diseases. If you want to turn this into a combat encounter more dangerous creatures – such as giant water-scorpions which are immune to the effects of the midges – may use such infested areas as good ambush spots to attack their prey.

### bog

*What seemed like solid ground gives way beneath you, plunging you into icy, filthy water, threatening to drown you in stinking filth.*

Mournbreth's bogs are particularly deadly compared to normal bogs and are closer to quicksand in their nature and deadliness. Spotting a bog in the Mournbreth requires a Survival check against a DC of 12. Characters in a bog must make a Swim check against a DC of 10 to tread water or 12 to move five feet in any direction. If a character fails this check by three or more they sink and begin to drown. Any nearby character can help another one out of a bog using a stick or vine.

Bogs often carry diseases and parasites that can infect or infest a character exposed to them. If you want to turn a bog into a combat encounter there are plenty of creatures that can hide within their muddy depths, even creatures that might more usually be found in lakes or the sea such as giant octopi.

### brambles

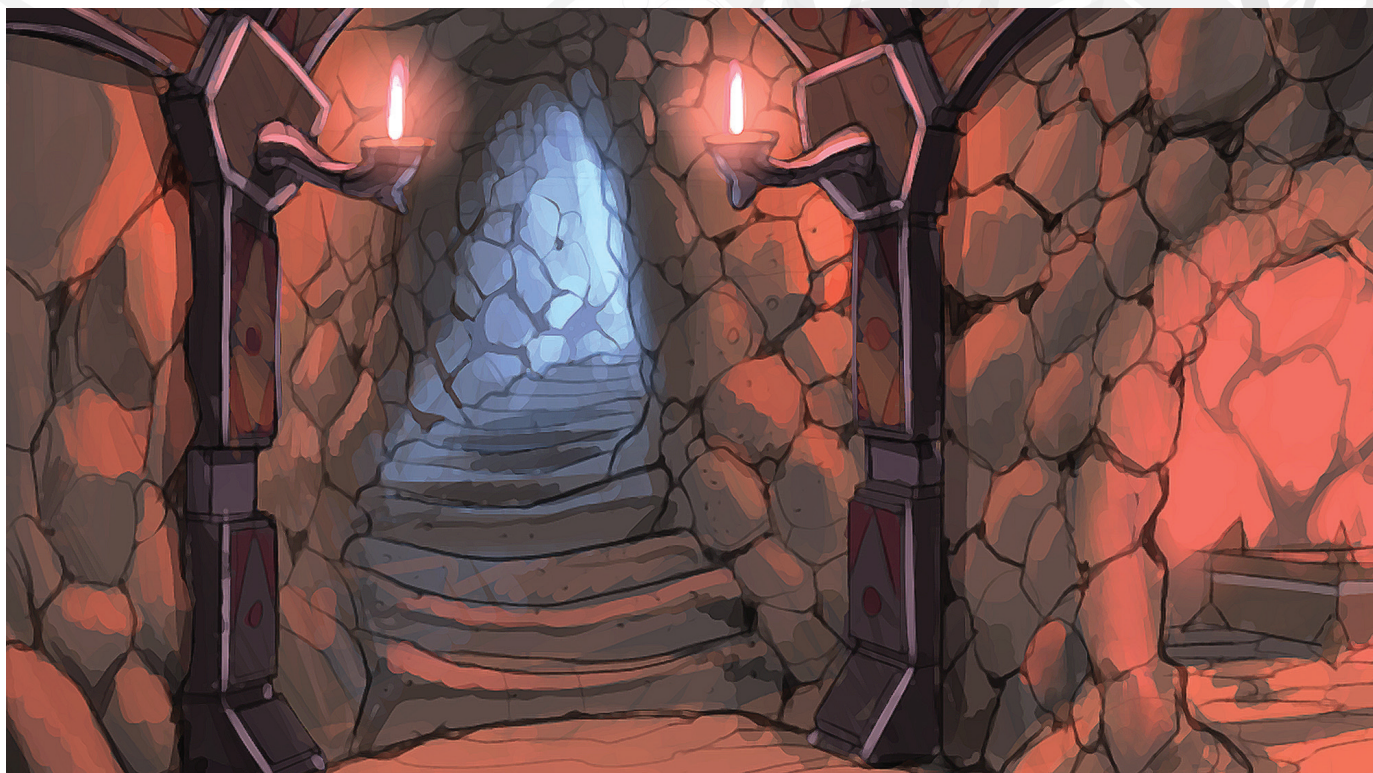
*A tangle of spiky plants fills this area with thorns like blades, so dense that you can see no real way across.*

Mournbreth's brambles have overgrown whole swathes of the forest and are large and dangerous in many areas with spikes that can grow as large as daggers. These are all difficult terrain and any attempt to move faster than 5 ft a turn through the brambles requires a Reflex check against a DC of 15 for each extra 5 ft moved and failure incurs 1, 1-2, or 1d4 damage depending on the density and size of the brambles. If you want to turn brambles into a combat encounter it is the perfect place to present plant-based opponents perhaps applying themes or templates to make them more suitably thorny.

### exposed roots

*Since the trees died along with much of the undergrowth there's little to hold the ground together. A century of rain has washed away much of the soil and left nests and tangles of roots exposed, making the ground treacherous.*

Where this is particularly bad it should be considered difficult terrain. Otherwise any movement faster than normal speed that passes through an area of more normal exposed roots requires a Reflex save against a DC of 12 or the person running trips and falls prone. These roots can form natural 'caves' and as such are good places for either plant



or underground based encounters if you want to turn them into a combat encounter.

## ***gaseous eruption***

*The earth itself seems to erupt as a bilious eruption bursts from beneath the earth, scattering soil, creating a sudden, gaping hole in the earth and filling the area with noxious gases.*

Beneath the surface of the soil the remains of the ancient forest and the animals that died in enormous numbers during the cataclysm continue to rot and in so doing produce a lot of foul gases. Occasionally these will erupt out from the soil in an explosion of dirt and gas.

The explosion – often triggered by being walked upon – requires a Reflex save against a DC of 15 for everyone within 5 ft of the eruption. This causes 1d10 damage. The pit left behind requires the same Reflex check to avoid, falling in causes 1d6 points of damage and it's a DC 12 Climb check to clamber out. The gas that fills the area is noxious, though it rapidly disperses. For the first turn that it is present anyone within 10 ft of the eruption area must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 15 or be nauseated for 1d4 turns.

Gaseous eruptions are not particularly suited to combat encounters, although a fight that takes place on unstable, gaseous land might make for interesting complications. The raw magic that still flows through parts of the forest may embody some of these gases into the form of air elementals.

## ***light fungus***

*Tall stalks of fungus glow in the dim gloom. In this darkness their glow can seem as bright as the long-forgotten day and its relative starkness throws everything into sharp relief.*

The glowing fungal growths of the Mournbreth are beautiful and can be used to create lanterns that glow in many colours. They can also be used as body-paint or in other decorative arts. The downside is that standing in or near the groves of glowing fungus makes one stand out as a target. Being within 5 ft. of a patch of glowing fungus makes one an easier target for ranged attacks, giving them a bonus of +2 to hit. If you want to turn this into a combat encounter insectoid and fungal creatures fit the best, as do ambushers with ranged weapons.

## ***spore cloud***

*Where once the air drifted with the green and yellow of pollen now all that dusts the air is a grey mist of spores that cling damply to your lungs and make everything smell like spoiled bread.*

This area of the forest is very still and heavy with damn, spore laden air. Any character (that breathes) that makes a full-round run action while in the area must make a Fortitude Save against a DC of 15 or become fatigued. To make for a challenging combat encounter throw in some fast-moving enemies that don't need to breathe such as plants, constructs, elementals or undead.



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