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Introduction

Once, long ago, elves, humans, and dwarves lived side-by-side in the idyllic paradise of the Broadreach Forest. As so often happens in the sad world of Scarn, however, violence marred the forest's beauty and war disrupted its peace. Brought to bay and defeated, the titaness Mormo was torn asunder; her flesh and blood rained down upon the Broadreach, transforming it into the place of horror known today as the Hornsaw Forest.

Darkness fell upon this land as the titanspawn spread throughout the wood, seeking the sundered pieces of the fallen Serpent Queen. Hags, ratmen, asaath, gorgons, and other even more terrifying creatures lurk in the Hornsaw's shadows alongside beasts twisted and transformed by Mormo's touch such as the Hornsaw unicorns. Above the forest, on a lone plateau, spreads Glivid-Autel, city of wicked necromancers, and to the south looms the growing power of Calastia.

Yet all is not lost in the Hornsaw, for a tiny flame of hope now flickers. After over a century of dormancy, merged with their beloved forest, the elves have returned, bringing with them the possibility of restoration and redemption.

In this forest, where the forces of light and the darkness struggle, the basic conflicts of the Scarred Lands are literally embodied. The elves' task appears almost impossible, for Mormo's spawn are powerful and determined. Darkness, however, never pervades completely, and evil never abides without flaw. The elves and their wood dwarf allies fight on, knowing that if they fail, the ancient Broadreach is lost forever.

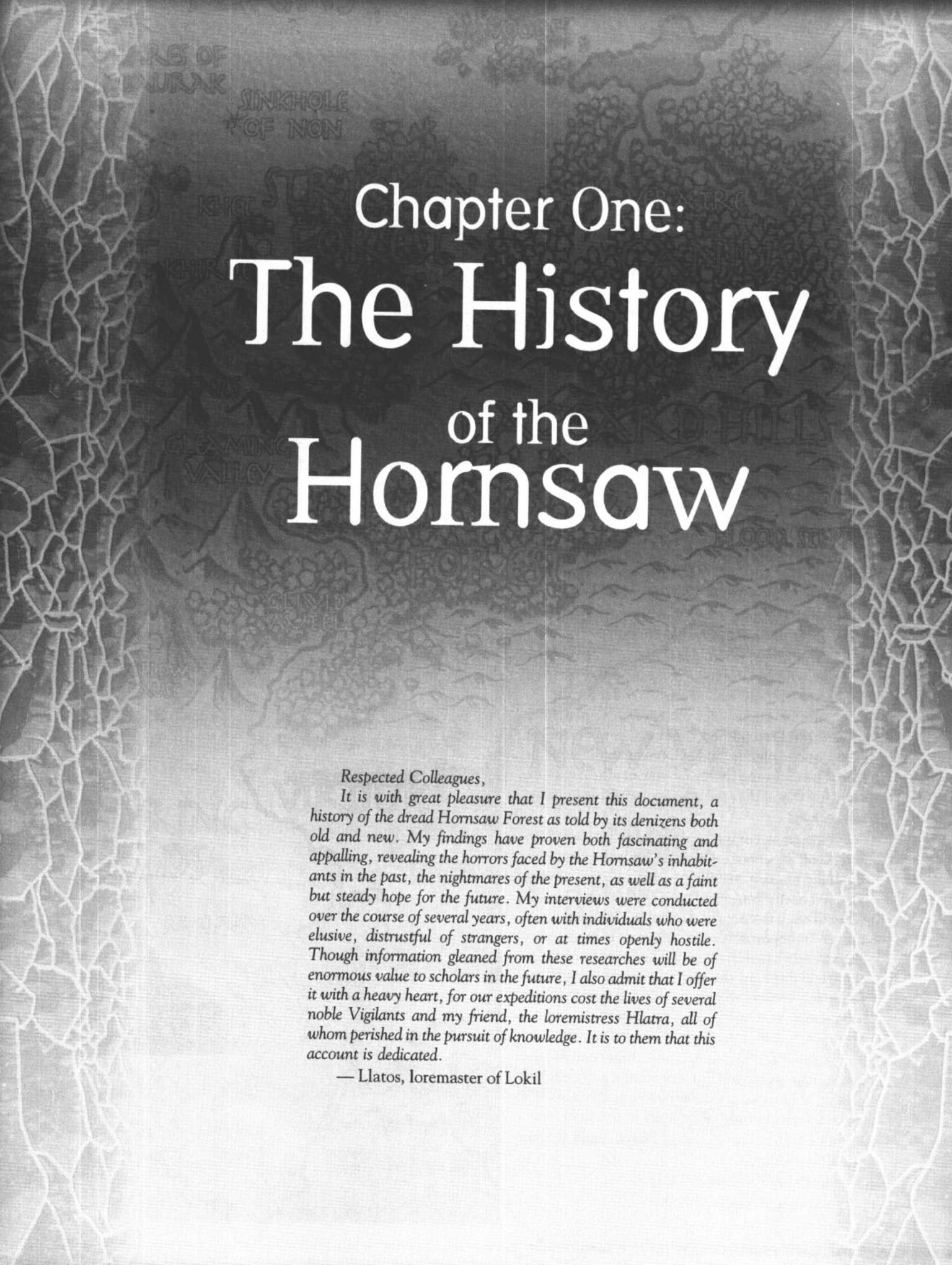
This, then, comprises the world that your characters will experience when they visit the Hornsaw. Bold adventurers can influence this fearsome struggle for good or ill. *Hornsaw: Forest of Blood* provides all you will need to visit this dangerous place, as well as numerous opportunities to help your players create Broadreach-based characters. The Broadreach elves, the wood dwarves, the Hornsaw sentinels, and the Liliandeli archers all receive full descriptions here, along with new magic and equipment to make a Hornsaw-based campaign unique and exciting.

Join our authors, Joseph and Rhiannon, and the rest of us at Sword and Sorcery Studio, as we explore this legendary place, where good and evil wage their eternal struggle and horror lurks in the shadows.

Enter *Hornsaw: Forest of Blood*... and beware the Blood Crone.

Anthony Pryor, Developer
Sword and Sorcery Studio





Chapter One: The History of the Hornsaw

Respected Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I present this document, a history of the dread Hornsaw Forest as told by its denizens both old and new. My findings have proven both fascinating and appalling, revealing the horrors faced by the Hornsaw's inhabitants in the past, the nightmares of the present, as well as a faint but steady hope for the future. My interviews were conducted over the course of several years, often with individuals who were elusive, distrustful of strangers, or at times openly hostile. Though information gleaned from these researches will be of enormous value to scholars in the future, I also admit that I offer it with a heavy heart, for our expeditions cost the lives of several noble Vigilants and my friend, the loremistress Hlatra, all of whom perished in the pursuit of knowledge. It is to them that this account is dedicated.

— Llatos, loremaster of Lokil

The Hornsaw Elves

As remembered by Sema, druid of Clan Oak.

Much pain have I seen in my life and much sorrow. So many humans envy us elves for our long lives. They fear death and the judgment of their gods. They itch for more time to learn, accomplish, love, and experience. So many humans feel that one hundred years is far too little time to spend in living.

I do not know what it is like to understand that one will live only for one hundred years and then die; I cannot judge the envy and fear that humans feel. I do know, however, that I myself have lived too long. My first human lifespan was as perfect as anyone could wish; I learned, accomplished, loved, and experienced much, and my heart was afire with hope and passion for the future. I miss my youth. My connection to the earth grants that my body remains as strong as ever it was, but my aging heart is weak and sad. I look forward to death. Whatever it brings, at least it will only be my own death and not the death of everyone and everything that I love.

The Divine War

I think that I was 385 years old when the Divine War broke out. I still have trouble reckoning the change in the calendars. In any event, I was already an elder — already a respected leader among the druids of the Broadreach Forest. I do not look like an old man, but I have nevertheless

lived as an old man for the length of at least three human lifetimes. How could any human envy this? How could any human envy the centuries of despair that I have weathered?

My fellow druids and I protected the Broadreach as best we could. We welcomed refugees from the carnage and horror of the various battles. We surrounded our forest with protective magics while our dwarven and human allies built fortifications and destroyed the few titanspawn who breached our defenses. Throughout the course of the war, the Broadreach Forest provided a haven for all good and neutral beings loyal to Denev and the gods. Even evil people were aided and succored so long as their loyalty remained true to our cause.

Very few of our people ventured forth to battle for the gods. Denev did not ask us to do so, and we saw ourselves as fulfilling an equally worthwhile purpose during the war. Orphans flocked to our borders. Crippled and magically diseased soldiers came here for healing and then returned to the fray. The elderly and infirm came to work in our cities to produce weapons and food for the divine races, while those unable to fight but still able to run transported these supplies to countless armies all throughout the several decades spanned by the war.

The Broadreach was always a paradise, and in the years of horror during the war it seemed doubly so; even with the crowding and the hospital stink of the sick and injured, at least we were



safe. Denev lent her power to our crops and hunters so that despite all the food we exported to the Divine Warriors, we never needed to ration supplies. Not one person, including the few prisoners we guarded, ever went hungry within the borders of the Broadreach.

We did not fight for the gods, but the gods could never have won without us. As far as we were concerned, we represented the health, compassion, beauty, and peace that made this whole hideous war worth fighting. We provided a beacon of hope, a bastion of sanity for those poor doomed soldiers — especially the unfortunate warriors of the short-lived races, the halflings and humans who grew to adulthood never knowing a world that was not warped and torn asunder by the ravages of the most destructive conflict ever seen by any land. Many a broken and dying combatant stumbled across our borders only to leave weeks later with a new light in her eyes and new purpose in her step, fully healed inside and out and ready to fight again. The gods could not have won without us.

And what was our reward?

For most of the war, our magics kept the forest safe from the struggles of the gods and titans. Our wards and barriers made it so that, without really thinking about it, the mighty beings stepped around instead of on us and casually cast their destructive spells in other directions. We could not have kept even one of them out had they chosen specifically to enter the Broadreach, but so long as they did not notice us, they — seemingly coincidentally — did not harm us. Only Madriel, Tanil, Denev, and but a few benevolent demigods ever chose to visit us, always to bring us aid and strength — and briefly to heal themselves from the inner pain the war caused them.

The titaness Mormo proved hard to catch, however, and soon the gods began searching for a bait so tempting they could be assured of its efficacy against her. Madriel, innocent as ever, knew nothing of their plans. She was in the vicinity of the Broadreach only to visit and to succor us. No, Chardun, Vangal, and Belsameth arranged the snare. The evil gods cared nothing for the orphans, the refugees, the wounded in our forest. They saw no value in the hope and sanity we provided for the divine races. They knew what they did. They lied to Denev about the eventual outcome of their schemes, and our beloved mother was so rage-blinded by her ages-old hatred for Mormo that she believed them.

Before her sundering, Mormo was more like Denev than she is now. Where Denev embodied natural life, Mormo embodied natural death; they formed perfect and necessary opposites of the same pole, and neither could ever fully separate

herself from the other. Denev's life-giving powers always involved a little bit of death and sacrifice, and Mormo's deadly gifts always involved a little bit of birth and creation. Neither could continue without the other, yet neither could attain full power without the other's destruction. We Broadreach elves hated Mormo because our Mother hated Mormo, but we never hated her followers and they never hated us. We understood the natural world's delicate balance.

Yet the two titanesses could not help but seek each other's destruction at every possible opportunity. This desire was woven into the very nature of their essences like the Hornsaw Forest is now woven into ours.

The titanspawn tell two different stories about the opposition of Denev and Mormo during the Divine War. One suggests that Denev disdained the gods as much as any other titan, but that she betrayed her own kind simply so that she would be on the opposite side of the battle from Mormo, her hated sister. I think this telling is madness, as any good druid of Denev should; yet the other tale, almost equally blasphemous and only told by a few followers of Mormo, claims that Mormo, like Denev, understood the way the titans harmed the land and hated the cruel destruction of titans such as Chern and Gaurak. Mormo would gladly have joined the battle on the side of the gods, but Denev arrived there first. Even if Mormo and Denev could have resolved their differences long enough to fight side by side, the gods had all by then hardened their hearts against the Mother of Serpents because of Denev's influence. To speak either of these impious stories is taboo among the Broadreach elves, but I am old, and I sense that my time is coming. I trust that Denev will forgive me for seeing some small grain of truth within the blasphemy.

In any case, Mormo as she was then relied on the health of nature every bit as much as Denev. Hers were the claws and fangs and the natural poisons of every living thing, and as the land was further and further rent asunder, Mormo could feel herself weakening. Deceptive Belsameth, without seeming to do so, pointed out the unblemished paradise of the Broadreach to our Mother's oldest enemy, and Mormo, seeking to replenish herself, took the bait. We elves were utterly helpless to stop her or the gods that lay in wait for her from fouling our forest with their struggles. We did not even try.

We evacuated as many as we could during the long days of the battle, but we could do only so much for the sick and injured — and next to nothing for the animals and plants and the glorious, ancient, life-giving trees. Many thousands of Broadreach elves chose to stay behind and pro-

tect what little we could with our magics. Dwarf and human allies too dedicated and loyal for their own good stayed behind as well to lend us what strength they could and to give their forces in battle to the armies of the gods. Madriel also stayed behind with us, earning our undying love, second only now to our love for Mother Denev.

A thousand books document the ensuing battle in a thousand different ways. I freely admit that I, a mere mortal, was far too dazzled and far too deeply occupied with my meager protective spells and chants to remember enough clearly to know the most accurate version of the battle. In truth, I remember only two events clearly out of the several long deadly days that the battle raged. I remember the look on Mormo's face as Denev tore out her heart. I saw the Serpent Mother change in her soul from my Earth Mother's sister and polar opposite. I saw the hatred and the despair and the rage and the betrayal take over Mormo's being and turn her into the monster her druids now worship.

In that moment, Mormo knew that she was beaten, and she wanted only to spite her sister earth mother in the deepest and cruelest way possible. With every last ounce of her remaining strength, Mormo destroyed the Broadreach Forest. She no longer cared that this unnatural rending of a sacred natural forest would harm her in ways from which she could never recover. All Mormo cared for was the fact that this final deed was the best, most scarring way to hurt Denev.

In the end, Mormo vanquished herself in the same spirit of blind hatred that had earlier consumed Denev. When Vangal tore Mormo apart, he was not finishing her off but merely making certain that she could not heal. She was already finished. Naturally, though, thoughtless Vangal dropped the pieces of Mormo's flesh wherever they fell, further poisoning an already ruined and unrecognizably twisted forest.

The one other event I remember during those days and nights of endless chaos and devastation was Belsameth's face during the aftermath, right before all the evil gods disappeared and left us mortals (not their followers, so why should they care?) to our various fates. Belsameth stood still for a while before leaving. She watched with apparent dispassion as Denev writhed in the Broadreach's agony, mourning the loss of her hated sister and wracked with the pain caused by this same sister's final act. Then Belsameth turned to Madriel and their eyes locked. I saw some strange understanding pass between this other pair of opposite and enemy sisters. I imagined it was an unspoken agreement that no matter how much they hated each other, they would never

make the mistake just made by Denev and Mormo. Then Belsameth left, and the rest of us began trying to pick up the shreds of our ruined lives.

The Aftermath

The Broadreach Forest was dead, with only Hornsaw left in its place. For days I was aware of almost nothing but weeping and moans of pain. I was not injured and had not faced any spells cast upon me, but the shock was so great that my mind could not hold the memories from those first days. I am told I was as active as any of the druids in the organization and protection of the survivors, but I remember none of this. I only remember the weeping. Perhaps weeping was the only sound my poor old heart could bear to hear.

When I came to myself, I accompanied several expeditions into the forest's heart and saw the devastation first hand. How my sanity survived that ordeal intact, I will never know.

Sema declined to describe the experiences of those first weeks. He was silent for a long time and then wept and asked this humble historian to leave him. The remainder of the interview took place one week later. Historical data indicate that Sema and the elves he led came close to death on an almost daily basis during their reconnaissance mission into the center of the new Hornsaw Forest, and they must have seen far more unimaginable horrors than any lesser group of heroes could ever have withstood. If even steadfast and ancient Sema cannot bear to speak of that journey, one can assume that these matters are better left unsaid.

I lost every single member of my family to the devastation, either immediately or by their own hands in the months that followed. Suicides became one of the most common forms of death in the first weeks. Several of the ancient thirty-three clans, including my own, came within a whisper of extinction, and three were indeed forever lost.

The Clan of the Hummingbird, traditionally lighthearted ambassadors of hope and healing, all fell to mysterious and incurable illnesses within a month of the tragedy. The last of the Hummingbird mothers told me before she died, "The time of joyful Hummingbird Clan has passed. Perhaps when the land has healed, new hummingbirds will be born." No one has yet sighted a single living hummingbird of the animal variety anywhere in the Hornsaw Forest since the War.

Clan Unicorn, as one, willingly sacrificed their lives to perform one final, great, land-healing ritual. They told none of the other clans their intentions, and no one has ascertained so far the efficacy of their magical working. Certainly, if they intended to save the Hornsaw unicorns, they

failed, but perhaps their sacrifice healed the land in some way we cannot see. Perhaps the situation would be even worse without the last Clan Unicorn ritual. All we know for sure is what we found carved on their city's sacred tree: "We give our lives now to our mother. Life no longer has value to us. We hope it will have value to her." When this note was found, the entire village lay dead in their sacred circle, and the area radiated powerful healing magic. The region is respectfully maintained as a gravesite, and no Hornsaw unicorn will enter there.

Saddest of all, every member of Clan Treesnake went mad. They wandered off into the forest in singles and pairs, and those few who were ever seen again were warped and murderous when they returned. We killed them, both for our own protection (they had become mindlessly evil and cruel) and also to free their tortured souls for the next life. A strange rumor reached me recently that one or two somehow made their way to the Ganjus and healing, and that a single scion has emerged, but I do not believe it. The Treesnake Clan is gone.

The titanspawn and the warped natural creatures grew in strength and cruelty over the coming months, and we and the remaining humans and dwarves were in a state of constant war merely to stay alive. Populations continued to drop alarmingly due to regular massacres by titanspawn armies and also to simple lack of a will to live on the part of the divine races. The most peaceful region of Ghelspad during the Titanswar quickly became the most war-torn in the years AV.

After far too many long years of this desperation, a great council of all the leaders in the Hornsaw Forest was held. To the elves' great chagrin, not a single place in the forest was safe enough for such a council. The clan mothers and the delegated dwarves and humans were forced to trek to the southernmost Ganjus Forest, where the elves of Vera-Tre granted us the rights to one of their largest sacred groves for as long as we needed it: the Grove of Kalan.

This great council, known now as the Grand Moot of Kalan, lasted for two or three years. I cannot really remember how long. I stayed at home to protect my people during this time, so I know only what I have heard. Debates raged endlessly between the three races as to how they should deal with the problem of the Hornsaw. Even within the ranks of the elven leaders, I have heard that dissent lasted for a long time. Eventually, in the course of the debates, we elves snobbishly offended the hot-blooded humans, who then decided to leave the Hornsaw and its troubles behind.

After this loss of one a major ally, all the energy left the council, especially among the dwarves, who by then had realized, I think, that our elven devotion to our forest bordered on madness. We did not seek a reasonable option — we patiently awaited a miracle. The dwarves were sympathetic but spiritually and emotionally exhausted as a people. Inquiries were made with Burok Torn, and the entire Broadreach dwarven population was extended an open-armed invitation to strengthen the war-weakened ranks of the Burok Torn dwarves. Most of the wood dwarves accepted, and so ended the Grand Moot of Kalan in 12 AV.

In the years that followed, many of us were angry with the dwarves who left, but I think in light of all that Burok Torn has suffered since, most of us have found forgiveness in our hearts. The wood dwarves did not leave because they no longer loved the forest or us. They simply were not quite mad enough to stay. In the end, their steadying influence has saved us all, even in their absence, so how can we complain?

The clan mothers returned home from the Moot with the hopeless news that we had lost all our allies on the very anniversary, by the Old Calendar, of the day of Mormo's defeat. This was the first year that the Broadreach elves spent that dread anniversary in mourning silence, much to the consternation of the departing dwarves who came to say goodbye.

A few humans and dwarves stayed, here and there. Some of them were just too stubborn to give up on anything, no matter what their leaders told them. Others were just as attached to the forest as we or felt they owed life debts to the elves. A small few stayed because they had officially joined elven clans and refused to leave their adoptive relatives. I believe Clan Porcupine even counted a small family of halflings among their ranks. Yet aside from individuals who stayed behind for their own reasons and now depended on us for safety and leadership, only the Broadreach elves inhabited the Hornsaw Forest from about 13 AV on.

The Great Merging

We could not keep the evils of the ruined forest at bay without our human and dwarven allies. Emissaries from the Ganjus came to invite us to join them in Vera-Tre as the wood dwarves had joined the mountain dwarves of Burok Torn. We thanked them, but the vast majority of us refused. With the choice to leave or die, we would prefer to die. Even then the forest was a part of our souls. We could not abandon our ailing siblings — the animals, flowers, and trees. We could not admit defeat.

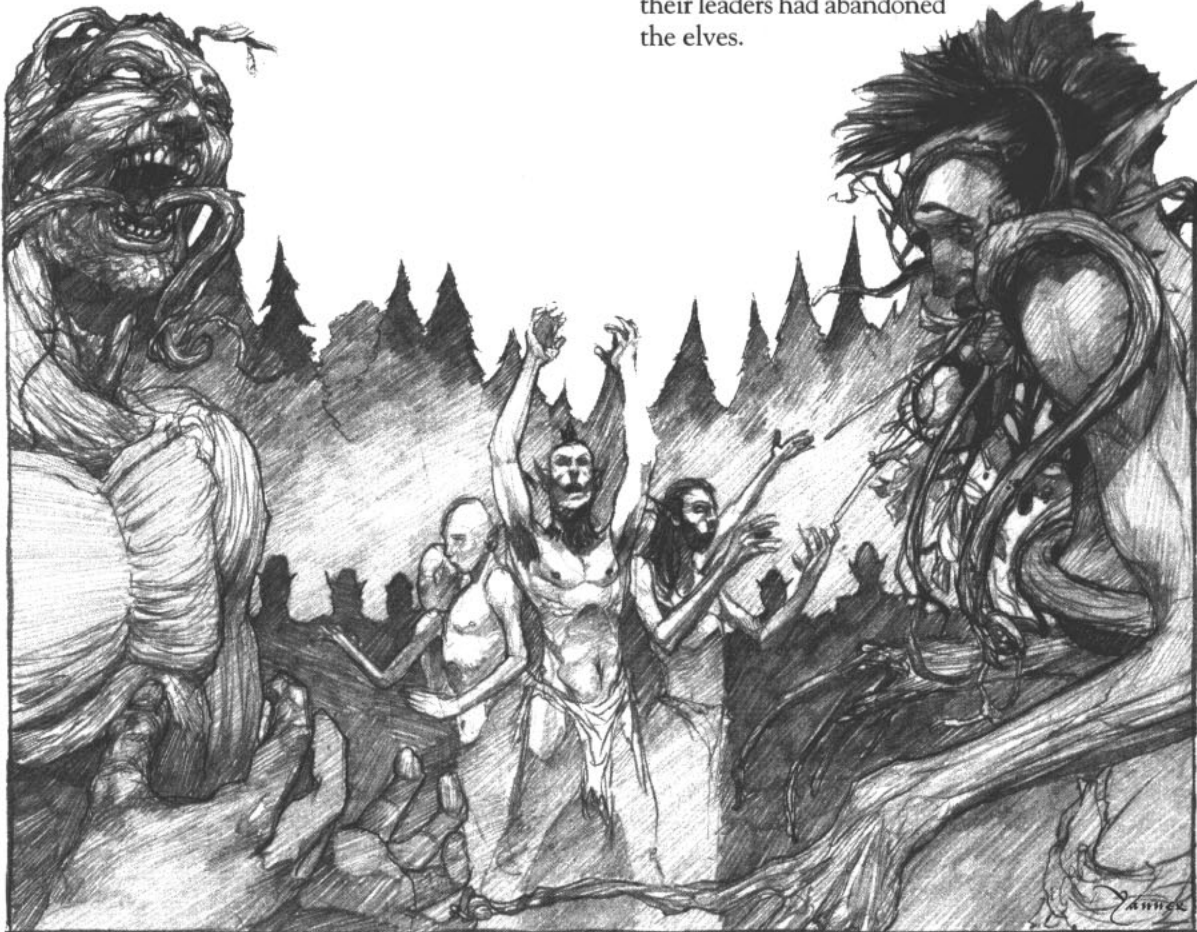
The eldest druid of each of the remaining clans was asked to spend a year searching for a magical cure for the forest's ills, though none really believed we would find one. I was one of these thirty individuals, and though I too believed the search to be futile, I dutifully spent a year in regular fasting, prayer, and solitude, hoping perhaps futilely that I would find some answer to my people's and my forest's need.

I learned nothing for a full year. I received no inspirations whatsoever and became daily more and more hopeless as the seasons passed uneventfully. The very night that would have marked the end of my year of study, I experienced a strange and vivid dream. It was not a hopeful dream, and in many ways it was disturbing, but it carefully detailed the chants and actions required to remove the Broadreach elves from the world and to merge us with the forest itself for one hundred years. During this time, we could take almost no direct action to protect the forest, and we ourselves would lie beyond all harm or care of any kind. If our collective will was strong enough, however, there existed a tiny chance that we would influence the course of the Hornsaw's destiny for the better. The price for this nebulous power was unclear, but I woke in a cold sweat as if from a nightmare.

I decided the dream was a false one, based only on my own desperation not return to my people and my fellow druids empty handed. I chided myself for my internal dishonesty and resolved myself to admit to the others that I had found nothing at all in a year of seeking. When I arrived at the appointed meeting place, however, all the other druids were abuzz with an odd mixture of excitement and terror. Every last one of them had dreamt the same dream the night before — the same dream I would not share.

Understandably, I think, the thirty of us had rather mixed feelings about this turn of events. We told the clan mothers of our discovery, though, and I watched with hopeful horror as every single clan, one at a time, unanimously decided to enact the ritual.

Somehow, we knew from the dream that anyone who participated in the ritual would continue to age during the hundred years they spent outside the physical world, so we chose not to allow the short-lived races to join us in our great circle. We did not want anyone to miss out on an entire lifetime while fused with the forest. I think we communicated this badly to the humans, as they were angered that we would not allow them to make their own choices, and also that we were hypocritically abandoning them in the physical world just as their leaders had abandoned the elves.



Yet the clan mothers could not be swayed. In the end, the remaining wood dwarves chose to stay behind with the humans, to lend them strength and to help the humans feel that they were not the only ones excluded. The Porcupine Clan halflings stayed behind with the humans as well.

Many of us, including myself and all twenty-nine of the other eldest druids, felt pain and even shame at the thought of leaving all our friends alone in this now terrifying forest for an entire hundred years, but the vast majority of the elven population had grasped onto the ritual as if it would instantly solve all problems. I think the general belief was that we would spend the next hundred years acting as a kind of collective demigod to the natural and good denizens of the Hornsaw, protecting the untainted and crushing the followers of Mormo, so that one hundred years hence, when we emerged, the forest would be pure and perfect once more.

The other druids and I preached caution and moderation whenever we could, but we were all but ignored while the clan mothers falsely reassured the dwarves and humans that everything would be fine once the elves disappeared. We did not repay their loyalty well.

In the end, as everyone knows, we performed the ritual on Grim Day of 15 AV, and every single Broadreach elf disappeared from the material world for exactly one hundred years. Nothing we said could dissuade them, and in our loyalty to our people and to our forest, the old druids led the chants and motions. I still do not know whether we made the right decision.

The next hundred years passed as a blur for the elves. The experience was slightly different for each individual elf, but none of us holds many memories of our time outside the world. As individuals, we experienced no physical sensation of any kind, and we still none of us know what happened to our bodies while we were gone. I suppose the experience was something like going to sleep and then waking after a full century of vague and confusing dreams that one cannot quite recall.

Add to that vagueness, however, a sense of being part of a collective — a contributor to a whole much larger than oneself. The forest itself, an alien consciousness so vast no elf could ever fully comprehend it, ruled of our hive-mind undisputedly. We elves were like so many drops of water in a lake of blood... like candles in a live volcano. We were numerous enough that together we added to the forest's strength and lent direction to its savage will, but individually we were as nothing.

The few individual memories we do retain are unclear and difficult to interpret. For example, I distinctly remember a bright and proud shade of red in association with hordes of evil armies that marched on Vera-Tre. I knew that this march would harm the Hornsaw, so I made it not happen, though I have no memory of how. A handful of other elves have awoken with this same memory, but what does it mean? Does the red represent Calastia or some other army? Does this dreamlike fragment imply that, without the influence of the Broadreach elves, Virduk's army would have marched on Vera-Tre decades ago? If so, what does that have to do with the Hornsaw's health?

Many similar fragments exist in my own memory and in the memory of every Broadreach elf. All are mysterious and strange and some are frightening or even disgusting. Most Broadreach elves now conclude that we do not wish to know the meaning of all of them. We are not certain we could live with the consequences of some of the decisions our collective consciousness may have made while joined with the tainted Hornsaw Forest. Did we urge armies to attack our allies simply so that these armies would be too weak to fight us on our return? Did we encourage the deaths of innocents so that heroes would follow into the forest and avenge them? My heart withers at the very thought. As a people, we are not ready to face the answers to these and many other questions.

Some of the Hornsaw's other inhabitants have told us stories that they associate with the collective forest-elf consciousness that are not so terrible. Human families have related great stories of their grandparents who were saved from titanspawn cruelty by hoards of terrible elven ghosts. Dwarves have quietly thanked us for comforting them in times of need. Sometimes, one of us has a memory that corresponds with the incident and sometimes not.

Two fairly clear memories are shared by every single Broadreach elf together. When first we enacted the ritual, we were each one wracked with mind-searing pain as we took into ourselves a small portion of the marrow-deep torment in which the maddened forest writhed. This suffering never abated in the hundred years we endured it, though it did seem to lessen gradually over time. We still do not know if this was a sign of improvement or if we were only becoming accustomed to the agony.

Our one other collective and clear memory was the sensation of returning to our physical bodies exactly one century later, on Grim Day of

115 AV. For some of us, the experience was stranger than others. Children emerged as adults; young people were now middle-aged. Somehow, our bodies seemed to have experienced every bit as much as our minds and hearts, though not one of us can fully comprehend the implications of this possibility.

All of us were strong and healthy, agile and pain-hardened — almost as if all our experiences as part of the forest were transferred from our minds to our bodies. Our emotional and spiritual changes remained as they were during the merging, but the memories disappeared, replaced somehow by the skills and abilities we would have learned instead over the course of a normal life.

And, of course, there was the relief. All of a sudden, we found ourselves in strong, healthy physical bodies, feeling no pain, no ache, no ravages of bone-rotting disease. All of a sudden we were free, ourselves, alive. We stared around at each other in silent wonder for a moment, straining to recognize the grown children and our own age-weathered hands, and then, all at once, we all began to weep and sing together. We praised the earth our Mother and mourned her suffering. We wondered aloud at the sounds of our own voices. We laughed wildly and held each other for the pure joy of feeling again with our very own skin. Many of us made love, some for the first time. All of us reveled in the ecstatic pleasure that is sudden and total lack of all pain.

Not until the days that followed did the true depth of our transformation come home to us. We had done far more than grow and age under the influence of the forest's embrace.

The Return

That the mind of every Broadreach elf has been utterly wiped of the memory of how to perform the ritual that bound us all to the Hornsaw is something of a relief to me. I doubt that any among us would be foolish enough even to consider reenacting it after all that has befallen us, but I am comforted to know that even if we were in future generations to become so unwise, we would also be unable. I would not for all my soul see my people more forest-altered than we are now.

Irrevocably changed we are — in our bodies, minds, hearts, and souls. Even those of us who have borne children since our return have passed our new way of being on to these innocent young ones. We elves were always an inextricable part of the Broadreach Forest as fingers or eyes are a part of an elven body, but now the twisted Hornsaw is

even more inextricably part of us, like the blood and the nerves fueling and instructing those same fingers and eyes. We have returned to our individual bodies and the physical world, but our minds will never fully escape from our communion with our wounded forest.

These core-deep changes have many manifestations and ramifications. We are both more and less now than wood elves. We are all plagued with strange nightmares and frightening obsessions. We feel lonely even in the warmest and most welcoming of crowds, for even being in the arms of one's dearest family is a horrifying isolation in comparison to sharing a mind with thousands upon thousands of other souls.

Our hearts and minds are wracked daily with memories of a pain no other mortal being has ever experienced and survived, and these memories threaten each day to overtake our very sanity and remake us in the image of the very same evil and poisoned forces that we have struggled so long against. Only the physical pain we inflict on ourselves in our severe new rites and ceremonies can help us to maintain our sanity in a world where suffering such as that endured by our beloved forest can be permitted to occur. Only the strictest of laws and covenants may grant us stability and control in the face of encroaching madness.

We are Broadreach elves still, but only the breadth of a hair separates us from becoming something else entirely — something horribly akin to the warped and twisted creatures we sacrificed so much to save. We are not yet Hornsaw elves, but I fear for the future.

Recent Years

Not only did our ritual wound us more deeply than even we can fathom, it also failed to fix everything as so many of us believed it would. We are still at war with the titanspawn, and the forest still writhes with the pain of Mormo's taint. Our abandoned allies were indeed overwhelmed by evil armies in our absence, and only the long-lived dwarves remained for us to save when we returned.

They have rejoined us now in the Broadreach Horizon. Some are timid and submissive from being born into slavery, the eldest among them — those born in freedom before we left — healing slowly and helping to heal and teach the younger, and some recently arrived from the mountains are wracked with guilt for leaving Burok Torn but too wracked with guilt for leaving the Hornsaw to stay there either. We keep them busy, and they all can still fight. They will adjust in time.

Since their arrival, we have done nothing but maintain our lands and continue to survive. Our only real hope anymore for the forest's future is to settle and populate as much of the Hornsaw as we can, driving the titanspawn and titan-worshippers out with sheer force of numbers. We are maintaining the lands we have secured, and for the rest we have no option but patience.

After the Elves

History never stands still, of course, and while the elves were absent, the Hornsaw Forest continued to change and grow, usually for the worse. The die-hard human settlers who remained behind were sorely beset by the forest's increasingly dangerous inhabitants, and many perished or were forced out of the forest altogether.

The titanspawn were on the move. Hags and serpentine asaathi moved into the forest, drawn by Mormo's foul essence and determined to find the sundered pieces of their goddess and return the Queen of Serpents to life. The woods swarmed with poisonous snakes, many of which had formed part of Mormo's body and still bore a portion of her tainted soul.

The creatures of the forest were twisted as well — the gentle unicorns were transformed into mad flesh-eating beasts, ordinary insects grew savage and rapacious, and even the creations of other titans, such as the terrifying blood reapers, were attracted and held by Mormo's fell influence.

The evil of the woods drew other creatures as well, such as Belsameth's lycanthropes and tribes of goblins and orcs displaced by the war. New to the forest were the Red Witch slitheren, magic-wielding ratmen created when Mormo's blood touched ordinary rodents.

Worse things lurked in the forest, as well — demons, aberrations, outsiders drawn by the upheavals of the Titanswar and stranded on Scarn. Worst of all was the monstrous being known as the Blood Crone, a hag transformed by the power of Mormo and now determined to find and restore her fallen mistress.

The dwarves and humans who stayed were hard-pressed, and some speculate that it was only the quarrelsome nature of the Hornsaw's new inhabitants, who constantly fought among themselves, that kept the divine races from complete destruction. Without the elves, the few who remained in the forest felt isolated and abandoned.

The Sleeping Guardians

Kappia, a human inhabitant of the Hornsaw, was luckier than most, for he discovered that, even in their isolation, the elves could sometimes aid their old friends.

My great grandfather, Kapos, grew up in the Border Wood during the years the elves were gone. His parents were among the stubborn few who had stayed to stick it out during those difficult decades, so Kapos grew up tougher than most and knowing the Border Wood like the back of his hand. He knew better than to venture very far into the forest's main body, and he was adept at noting the line where the trees and creatures began to get just a hair too bizarre for comfort. He knew to turn back toward home before he encountered anything he could not handle.

One winter, life got really rough, though. This would have been somewhere around... 35 AV, I think. He and his young, half-mad wife (Grandmother Tinpel is a whole other story, but I don't want to get off on a tangent) were almost out of food and supplies come mid-Belsamer, and Kapos hadn't caught sight of a single beast in weeks. They all seemed to have moved away, or else they were being hunted by something bigger and hungrier than Kapos.

Desperation began to cloud my great grandfather's native caution, and he finally decided that he'd no choice but to hunt further within the forest's borders. Tinpel, pregnant at the time with my grandmother, though she didn't know it yet, packed what supplies she could for his journey and holed herself up to await his return. Then Kapos set out with his bow, his axe, and this very hunting knife here that I have in my belt.

He found nothing for several days, and his hunger became acute. Eventually, his meager rations — a few strips of dried rabbit and some stale bread — ran out, and Kapos knew he had to find something soon or starve to death and let his wife starve as well, back in their cabin. With a stubbornness he could only have come by growing up in a place like the Hornsaw, he continued on, determined not to let his pretty Tinpel down and even more determined not to let the Hornsaw Forest beat him.

Then his bow froze in the night and broke neatly in half the next morning when he tried to string it. You may think you know a thing or two about despair, but let me tell you — nothing you've felt could have topped my great grandfather's anguish as he mourned that bow. Here he was, alone, cold, and starving in a hostile forest without even a bow to hunt for food that did not seem to be there to hunt in the first place. He felt doomed without that bow, and he was certain he'd already failed his beloved (if crazy) wife. All his hopes were gone.



My great grandfather Kapos was never a religious man, but I think we all revere the gods when we're about to die, and Kapos was no different. He began to pray as hard as he could to everyone he could think of. He prayed to Madriel since she seemed to him to be the most apt to answer, and to Denev and Tanil, since they've been known to help hunters now and again. Once, decades later, when he was very drunk, Kapos admitted to my father that he even begged for Mormo's aid, on the logic that, evil titan or no, it was her blasted forest after all — since the Titanswar anyway.

Kapos says he doesn't know whether he got an answer from any of those mighty beings or not. All he knows is that he suddenly felt an oddly ghostlike touch on his shoulder, and when he turned around he saw a shimmering silver elf woman, translucent as mist and sadder than Denev herself. After Grandmother Tinpel died, Kapos admitted to my father that the elven mist woman was the most beautiful being he'd ever seen. Tinpel was a close second, but nothing could match the aching compassion he saw in that eldritch and ghostly face in his time of need.

"Don't give up," she said to him then. He said he didn't really hear anything, but he saw her lips move, and he knew without question what she said. Then a wind blew past them both, swirling and dissipating the mist that formed her, and she was gone.

Well, that may not seem like much, but to a man as stubborn as my great grandfather, it was enough. He picked himself up and brushed the snow off his ragged and dirty clothes, and then he trudged onward. The elf woman told him not to give up, so he didn't, and he wouldn't all the way to his very last heartbeat. He did not know where he was going any more, and he did not even really know what he was looking for. Most of the time, he could remember that his mission was food, but his mind was so cold- and hunger-fogged that sometimes he forgot even that.

Finally, on his sixth day of involuntary fasting, Grandfather Kapos came across a dying Hornsaw unicorn. I know what you're thinking. A Hornsaw unicorn! Who would eat that? All I can say is, next time you're starving to death in the middle of a Hornsaw winter, you ask yourself that same question and just see if you don't find the word "me" among your list of answers. By Vangal's beard, at that point Kapos might have tried to eat a zombie.

The beast was as stringy and starved as Kapos himself, but even with its last few breaths it was mean enough nearly to kill my great grandfather, whom you'll remember was without a bow and forced to wade in close and battle the damn thing with his axe. The creature managed to break the weapon with its horn and hooves (like I said, it

was mean), and before the fight was done, Grandfather Kapos suffered a deep scar on his chest that he never in his life ceased to take great pride in. Rough as the fight was, though, Kapos was just ever so slightly meaner than that unicorn, and even after losing his axe he beat the thing by plunging this very dagger into its eye.

After a quick but much needed unicorn-flesh meal, my great grandfather carved up the rest of the beast and headed for home with the meat and the hacked-off horn (for a souvenir) dragging behind him on a makeshift sled. Unfortunately, in his hunger-clouded wanderings, he'd gotten a bit turned around, and though he was not quite headed into the Hornsaw's black heart, he was not headed away from it either. He dragged that carcass behind him for hours before he realized his mistake, and by then it was too late. Some hunting orcs, probably mercenaries for some titanspawn faction or other who were just as hungry as Kapos, surrounded him with their spears and rusty greataxes, and there was really nothing at all that my exhausted, wounded great grandfather could do about it.

He'd be damned if he was going to let those bloody titanspawn take his unicorn without a fight, though, so he grabbed up his hunting knife and that mean serrated horn (my cousin inherited the horn), and he readied himself to fight to the death with 19 or 20 desperate orc warriors. He knew he didn't stand a chance, but that's my great grandfather for you. He never gave up on anything in his whole life.

He fought off the first few strikes pretty well. Even wounded and still half-starved, old Kapos was no easy prey, but the orcs had him surrounded, and he was tiring quickly. His valiant last stand did not promise to last for long.

Then that same strange silvery mist sprang up all around the battle, and out of the corner of his eye Kapos could have sworn the whole area was surrounded with tattooed elven warriors, silvery and indistinct in the mist, but unmistakable. My great grandfather could never really explain what happened next. All he knew was that he suddenly felt filled with new strength and health, almost as if he was instantly healed of all his wounds and fatigue. Then another rush and another left him feeling like some kind of mighty hero out of legend, and the orcs began to look nervous. Then came two, three, four more bursts of unimaginable energy and power, and Kapos was sweeping axes aside like so many bits of straw. When his makeshift Hornsaw weapon lopped off the heads of the leader and three more warriors in one single blow, the rest of the orcs turned and ran.

Then one at a time, the energy bursts left him, and the mist slowly blew away leaving only exhausted and bleeding Grandfather Kapos surrounded by the blood and bodies of all the things he'd killed.

He didn't have time to rest or to ponder. His wife (and though he did not know it, his unborn child, also) was waiting for him. He grabbed his sled and headed home.

This is end of the story: they made it through the winter, and my family has been fiercely loyal to both our home and to its elven benefactors ever since. Grandmother Tinpel was too lost in her own weird world to care that she was cooking titan-warped meat for their suppers, and it was not until spring thawed the forest into bloom that my ancestors began to wonder why the elves had gone to so much trouble to save them.

We still have no answer for that. The elves have come back to the real world and one or two of them actually remember Kapos's battle and how they entered my great grandfather's body with their spirits to lend him their strength and battle prowess. Not one of them remembers why it was so important, though, or what would have happened if they'd let him and my great grandmother die that winter.

My parents taught me growing up that I must always do my very best at everything, because someday I might need to pay back the Broadreach elves for the help they gave my great grandfather. Father always said our whole family owed our very existence to those elves, and that we had to stick by them no matter what.

I'm getting old now to be paying back favors from generations ago, but I've taught my children and my grandchildren the same thing my parents taught me, and I envy whichever one of them gets to repay the family debt and bring honor to us all. I wish I could've been the one to make the elves' efforts worthwhile, but I have faith in my descendants. We'll heal this old forest yet.

The Fate of the Wood Dwarves

The necromancers of Glivid-Autel were quick to exploit the plight of the forest's inhabitants. Exiled from Hollowfaust for their evil ways, these renegades descended upon one of the Hornsaw's most vulnerable communities — the wood dwarves. Gimath, a wood dwarf flutist, was among the unfortunates taken by the necromancers. After years of forced labor and after also surviving the Blood Crone's siege of Glivid-Autel, she too was saved by the magic of the Hornsaw elves, albeit a bit less promptly.

I was not among those who believed the elves' ritual would fix everything. If they were not strong enough in the physical realm to put the

Broadreach back to the way it was, why would moving to some mysterious other realm be of any help? I don't think I had a clear conception of the "merged with the forest" part. I was not angry with them for leaving, though. They were doing the only thing they could think to do in a desperate and hopeless situation, and they sincerely did not mean to abandon us.

Most of the remaining wood dwarves who had not already packed up and left for Burok Torn felt as I did. Indeed, most of us were sufficiently desperate that if not for the poor humans who would be left behind, we would have joined in the ritual and lent our own magic to that of the elves. We did not really understand what the elves were attempting, but we understood what drove them to such lengths.

After they were gone, the rest of us holed up together in the Border Wood and made the best of it. I think there were about 350 wood dwarves and a little less than 400 humans left in the Hornsaw in 15 AV. Most of us built ourselves a walled village and stuck by each other come what may. A very few rugged and unsociable souls chose to rough it on their own and only came to the village a few times a year to buy supplies. As it turned out, their small numbers made them less noticeable to the titanspawn rather than more exposed, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

I was only a young girl in those early days, just past twenty, and looking back I'm really amazed at the level of energy and determination I had then. I was already pretty good at the flute, and though I was still too young to fight, they let me help our town warriors by playing my music as often as I could.

And that was quite a lot. I took it as my sacred duty to keep everyone's spirits up, and I worked my lungs and lips and fingers as hard as I could every single day trying to get people to sing along with me or at very least to smile. I looked forward to the day when I could fight beside them, but until then I would help them in the best way I knew how, and when I got tired or felt overwhelmed by the sadness all around me, I would think of my mother and play on.

My mother died during the battle for the Broadreach, before it was turned into the Hornsaw. She did not live to see Mormo's disastrous fall, and I'm glad. She deserved to die valiantly in battle while the home she protected was still beautiful. Her final words to me before going off to war were, "We will win. I promise you this. As long as we never stop fighting, eventually we'll win."



She died proving those words correct, at least insofar as the Titanswar was concerned, and since then I live every day in an attempt to prove them true in my own life as well. I still believe them to be true, even after all I've endured. We may not win in my lifetime, but as long as we never stop fighting, eventually we will.

So, as a young girl not yet allowed to fight, I lived up to my mother's example in the best way I could: by helping those around me to fight more valiantly. I may not have turned the tide of any battles (though the warriors often teased me that I did), but I know I made a difference to my fellow villagers, and I know they loved me. As an orphaned child, that was more important to me than anything.

I was still very young when the Glivid-Autel necromancers laid siege to our town in 31 AV. I'm not sure why they did it. It seems unlikely that they went to all that trouble just to get a few slaves. Perhaps they were trying to purge the forest of anyone besides themselves who wasn't undead, or perhaps we were simply in the way. In any case, this was the first real army to assault our little haven. Before this, we'd dealt only with ragged bands of disorganized titanspawn, and we'd never once been pushed all the way back to our walls. We were constantly fighting to keep our lands safe, but we were not under siege until the undead army arrived.

Our walls were well designed and easily defensible, and we maintained extensive provisions and deep wells, but our magics were nothing to match the necromancers' wizardry. When we proved too resourceful to be easily defeated, they simply destroyed all of our supplies and poisoned our water. From then on, our defeat was only a matter of time. Without sufficient food and water, we could do very little. Our few priests and druids kept us going for a little while, but they were simply not enough to provide for the entire village.

So the necromancers and their walking dead entered the village and took us prisoner. They immediately killed all of the old and sick and most of the young children. At least they were not slow or cruel about it. I was only barely old enough to be spared, and I felt horribly guilty as I watched other children almost my own age crumple to the ground stone dead from the effects of spells I did not understand. After this final round of murders, fewer than 150 humans and 100 dwarves from the village survived. The rest of the village had either died in the battle or in the cold blooded disposal of all those unfit to travel on foot.

Once the old, young, sick, and wounded were slain, the wizards tied us all up in rows and a small contingent began to escort us deep into the forest. The rest of the army (ghoulishly including the raised corpses of our dead) moved on, and I never did find out where they were going or why. I hope they ran into some even greater force and met their slaughter before they attained their goal. In any case, that particular magical and undead army did not make history outside our own experiences.

The march was grueling. More humans died along the way, only to be immediately raised as reserve guards, and the living guards wielded magical rods that caused us great pain any time we talked out of turn or refused to keep walking. At first, we wept and mourned a great deal, and the guards punished us for it. Soon, however, one of the humans — I can't remember his name anymore, but I remember vividly the clear and beautiful baritone of his voice — began to sing. The necromancer guards ignored it and did nothing.

The man sang "The Warrior Bard," an old elven song from the Divine War about mourning and perseverance and the strength found in compassion. We all knew it well, and most of us knew enough Elven still to understand what it meant (after all, the elves had only been gone for sixteen years at that point). One at a time, all the dwarves and humans in the column raised their voices to join in, and the crying slowly stopped. Our captors could not comprehend what we sang, but as long as we did not pester them with the ugly sounds of grief, they didn't care.

That song lifted our spirits in a way I cannot adequately describe. It drew us out of our inner prisons of blackened woe and reminded us that at least we still had each other to rely on. We began to hold hands with one another, and when I reached out to clasp my neighbor's outstretched palm, I noticed that I still had my flute clutched tightly in my fist. I didn't hesitate or even think. In fact, I only felt guilty that I had not begun playing earlier. Raising spirits with music was my self-imposed sacred duty.

At the sound of my flute, however, the guards reacted. I suppose they did not want any of us to keep tools or belongings. They halted the column and ordered us all to stop singing. After some prodding here and there with their pain rods, we complied with silence. My neighbors in the line had to poke me to get me to stop playing, however. I was so lost in my music that failed to realize why we had stopped or what the commotion was. The guards approached me menacingly, and one of them snatched the flute out of my hand and made as if to break it.

At that moment, I noticed an oddly glowing mist around the entire column. I could not say for sure how long it had been there, either. Just as the necromancer made to destroy my flute, I saw the extraordinarily sad face of a motherly elven woman standing right behind him. She gently placed her nearly transparent hand on his shoulder, and suddenly he hesitated, calmed himself and glanced uncertainly at the other living guards. Every one of them had a sadly gentle elven face just nearby and a ghostlike hand on one shoulder. The wizards themselves apparently could not see this, or if they could, they didn't react at all. They only shrugged at the one who held my flute and looked away.

I turned back hopefully to the guard in front of me. The maternal looking mist-woman moved forward and kissed his cheek. He shook himself roughly, brushing angrily at his eyes as if trying to hide tears, and then he handed me back my flute. Just like that. The mist disappeared, the column started moving, and no word was ever again said about my playing.

We knew then that the elves really were merged with the forest, that they were not really gone. We did not understand why they had not helped us before this, but we knew they were there now. The elven song we'd been singing just before their arrival became a kind of prayer anthem for us all afterward, and many of us even began to pray to the elves on occasion as well as to Madriel and Goran, as if they were indeed some kind of collective Hornsaw demigod.

We did not see or hear anything from the elves again for years, however. We arrived at Glivid-Autel and the necromancers threw us into a deep and lightless dungeon, where we remained for several weeks. Zombies brought us muddy water and stale food twice a day and emptied our waste buckets once a week. We had to post guards at all times to keep the rats from trying to chew on us in our sleep, and the huge pit-like chamber was crowded and hot. Most of the humans and many of the dwarves became ill, and that only worsened the smell and the claustrophobia.

Most oppressive, though, was the darkness. Once our eyes had adjusted, we dwarves could only see a few inches into the gloom. The poor humans could not see anything. The rat guards had to patrol the great pit by feel, driving the vicious rodents away, especially from the sick, and keeping track of who had died in their sleep. Even when the zombies came, the light levels rose only barely enough for us to make out their forms as they shambled about.

The darkness more than anything that kept us from trying to escape. Where could we go? I think that was the only time in my life that I ever wished I was a mountain dwarf instead of a wood dwarf—to know stone well enough to sense how far underground we were and have some chance of helping us all to find our way out. Our wood dwarf instincts for metal were useless to us in the pit.

I remember the first time the big zombies came to drag away the bodies of our dead. You've never seen a group of half-dead and half-mad dwarves and humans mobilize so quickly. We'd be damned if we were going to let them turn our friends and relatives into more of their kind. We did manage to take the first team down. Two hundred to five isn't bad odds after all, but the next group was better armed and had bright light to blind us all and even some wizards with them who punished us painfully for our misdeeds while the fresh zombies, uncontested, dragged away our dead. After that, they always brought magically bright light and wizards to make certain we all stayed back and let the corpses go.

Through all of this ordeal, of course, I continued to play my flute every day. I was very popular in the pit, and people even offered me portions of their food and insisted on taking my turn on rat guard. Many told me that I was the only thing keeping them sane. Indeed, that flute was the only thing that kept *me* sane in those weeks, too. That, and the spark of hope that the elves would magically appear and set us all free.

Years afterward, while we were still slaves but at least no longer kept in the pit, one old dwarf told me something that makes me cry every time I remember it. "Your music was my sunlight in that place. When you started to play it was dawn, and when you stopped to rest it was dusk. My eyes may have been blinded by the darkness, but through you my ears could still see the sun, and that's how I was able to keep my hope alive and remember who I was. The elves did a lot more for us than you realize when they let you keep that flute."

The last time I saw the man who said that, he was a zombie.

I doubt that even Tanil's music could have kept us spiritually alive in that place for very long, much less my own meager melodies. Fortunately, after the third or fourth time the big zombies came to drag away our dead, the necromancers came to fetch us. I don't know if they were disturbed that we were dying off so quickly and had come to grant us better quarters, or—perhaps more likely—if they had merely left us down there for a while to weed out the weak and had finally decided the

survivors were sufficiently tough for their purposes. In any case, we never did find out for sure how long we were in there, but the women conferred and agreed that, based on their moon cycles, it had been less than two months. I remember feeling grown up and honored that I got to be a part of that discussion.

So, after nearly two months' confinement in a large and crowded lightless pit, I woke up one "day" to a commotion. When, out of pure habit, I opened my eyes, I saw. There was light. Not the blinding brilliance the wizards would use to keep us in line, but a friendly, bobbing candle glow slowly approaching us and growing brighter. Soon we could see a few feet ahead of us, and then even the humans were catching a flicker of a glow.

When the candle bearer finally arrived in the room (after what felt to us like hours), we were blinking and tearing from the brilliance of that single candle (especially the dwarves), but we could see across the pit and look into beloved faces we had not seen in weeks. Bedraggled, filthy, and gaunt as we were, to each other, we were the most beautiful beings in the whole world. Even our tall, pale visitor looked pretty good to us at that point, no matter that we knew he worked for the necromancers. We listened as he addressed us.

I don't really remember what he said. It was all drivel anyway. Something about being ordered to apologize to us for the dreadful mistake someone made in locking us down here, and that the authorities were horrified — the whole raid had been without their knowledge or permission, and so on. Now, to make up for it, we would be freely granted jobs, homes, and liberty. Some of us might have believed it. I was naïve enough then that I'm not really sure why I didn't. I just knew it was a lie, and that we'd been thrown down here on purpose and that we were still prisoners, even if we got to have a candle and an apology.

True or false didn't matter at that moment though. We were being gently rounded up and escorted out of the pit by a sizeable contingent of clean and polished-looking skeletons with pretty swords. They were there to help us, we were told, in case some of us were too weak to stand or walk. Of course, we all kept our distance from the skeleton warriors and huddled together for support in the center of the circle they made around us. The pale lackey and our fancy new guards led us slowly up what seemed like a million flights of stairs (which all of us only vaguely remembered coming down on the way in), pausing courteously at intervals to allow our eyes to adjust.

On the journey, we took a head count and found that about a hundred humans and eighty dwarves remained of our entire village, and every single one of the dwarves still alive was between about 40 and 180 years of age (I was the youngest at 39), and the humans were all between 16 and 51. All those bright children and wise old souls, gone. We cried for pain as we trudged up the stairs and for joy as well simply to see each other again and to be going anywhere but the pit. Even if we were being led to our deaths, it had to be better than the pit. We sang, too, that same elven song, and, as always, I played my flute.

Eventually, we reached the top of the stairs and entered an ancient building. The rainy sky out the high windows was unbearably bright, yet we couldn't help but stare at it longingly. We wondered how long it would be before we could stand under open sky again. Not right then, in any case. Our guides led us around a series of turns and corridors, never showing us even the faintest semblance of an exit, and then down again, which made all of us very nervous. We were too tired and hopeless to protest simply over walking down some stairs, however, so we only huddled together more tightly and trudged on, eyeing our skeletal guards suspiciously.

Then our pale human guide led us into a well-appointed smithy and stopped. A sigh of comprehension and almost relief washed through us. Is that all they wanted? Dwarf-forged weapons and armor? That would be easy compared to what we had already endured. Looking back, perhaps that was exactly what they intended us to think. Perhaps the whole nightmarish episode in the pit was simply so that slavery in a hell-hot forge would look good to us.

In any case, we were shown our new well-appointed but nevertheless barracks-like sleeping quarters just off the smithy. It was complete with fresh clothing for everyone and linens and an adjoined communal bath, as well as an enormous and well-stocked communal kitchen and a great workroom full of tools and supplies of all sorts, apparently for the use of those who knew other crafts besides smithing. Our guide explained to us what we already knew. The necromancers wanted weapons for their undead army, and they were sure we were just the people to provide them. The humans could stay with us dwarves as aides and students. In time, with good hard work and a show of dedication, we might be offered other positions elsewhere in the community of Glivid-Autel.

One of us finally dared to ask him, what if we chose not to spend our lives making weapons for zombies? What if we only wanted to go home? The man only smiled in a weirdly patronizing and half-dazed way. I remember his next words vividly for some reason.

"The wizards instructed me that you might feel this way after such an ordeal, and naturally such sentiments are well justified, but the forest is more than deadly. We simply cannot in good conscience allow you to leave until we can spare you an escort and be assured of your safe conduct. You must stay here while we build up our forces. You may find that you like it here, though. Please try to settle in. You will be happier if you do."

Naturally, not one of us believed a word, but we weren't about to brave the points of the skeletons' swords. We were too weak and sick and soul weary to fight just then. Our guide left us and locked the only door that led out to the network of hallways, and in spite of our knowledge that we'd only gone from a hellish dungeon into a semi-gilded slavery, we nevertheless fell into the baths with a relief you cannot even imagine.

The indoor water pumps and drainpipes were luxuries we'd never even experienced before, and the bath area also sported a huge stove for heating water before pouring it into the main tub. Being clean never felt so good to anyone as it did to us then. Our new clothes were plain and did not fit us well, but they were clean and reasonably comfortable. The kitchen held foods we never dared to imagine in months: fresh meats, fruits breads, thick brown ales, and hearty wines. Fresh air blew in through barred windows too high for even the humans to reach, but it still felt and smelled like heaven.

Our clerics and druids checked everything for magic spells to make certain nothing was illusory or enchanted, and they did find a few oddities. All the knives in the kitchen were magical, as was anything else in the place that might be used as a weapon. We guessed that they would probably cast some spell on anyone who tried to use them violently. We never found out for sure what they did, but it didn't seem to affect our food. Our chamber pots had illusions cast on them so they always smelled fresh no matter what was in them — that was nice. I wish I'd been able to bring one of those away with me. The forges were magical, too, but we didn't figure that spell out until later.

The whole place was obviously designed specifically for us, or for a group of blacksmiths very much like us. Perhaps their siege on our town really was simply to acquire dwarven smiths. I always found strange the idea that they would go

to such lengths rather than simply buying weapons like everyone else. I wonder what really are the economics of slavery. After building the confined work area, raising the army to capture them in the first place, and then paying for their food and upkeep, is it really that much easier and less expensive to rely on slaves?

They gave us about a week to get used to our surroundings and to recover from our trials. They made certain we always had plenty of light and plenty of delicious food. Nothing was asked of us, and shiny white skeletons came in daily to clean for us like housemaids. It's amazing how much easier it is to get used to skeletons than zombies. They're morbid still, but they don't smell bad and they don't look like rotting people.

Of course, we were not allowed to leave.

After a week, our guide from before came back and explained to us that we had to start earning our keep until the wizards could spare us an escort for home. This did not surprise us. We fought about it from of a sense of duty. We could not give in so easily and help to equip an army of undead. Yet we knew what the final result would be. We had no weapons, and even after a week we still were not quite recovered to our full strength. They cowed us, and the pale lackey acted shocked and horrified at our "brutish behavior" and "lack of courtesy." He threatened us with all that would happen if we angered the necromancers.

What could we do? We'd lost so many people, we couldn't bear to lose more. Dying for a cause is much harder when you know that your remains will instantly be raised to fight against your friends. I can't really excuse our decision. We deliberately crafted weapons knowing full well that they would be used by undead monsters. We felt horrible about it, but what could we do?

We were constantly on watch for ways to escape — if even one person could escape, perhaps they could somehow make it through the forest and find help. The necromancers were crafty, though. We never got a chance. They monitored us magically so that any plot we conceived they heard about before we could enact it. We could never figure out how they were watching us either, and so we could not circumvent their magical spies. I'm not sure why we never gave up on that, but we never did. Not that it did us any good.

One of the most disastrous escape attempts was one of the first. We went about making a set of lovely axes like good little slaves. We worked like busy bees for several weeks until it just so happened that we'd made exactly enough axes for each and every one of us. Then we waited for a

living person to come and collect them. They had bookkeepers and inspectors that always looked over and counted our products before instructing the skeletons to pack them up and carry them away. When they came this time, we took them hostage and tried to find a way out.

Within moments, a small cadre of elite necromancers arrived, showing no concern at all for our meager hostages. We rushed to attack them with our axes, but the blades turned in our hands or jumped away from us and clattered to the ground. No matter how we tried, there was nothing we could do. I and the other spellcasters did what we could without weapons, but we were never any match for the necromancers, and this incident proved no exception. They cowed us quickly, laughing all the while.

"You should know," a haughty woman told us, "that we know every plan you make in that little suite of yours. Escape is not something you will ever do, and I can't imagine why you'd want to anyway, as well as we treat you. Perhaps you're all spoiled and soft from too much kindness?"

She then proceeded very slowly and painfully to take the life of our leader, a great and wise dwarf named Telbor. She immediately raised him as a zombie and then turned back to us while Telbor's corpse stood there and stared at us impassively. She picked up one of the fallen axes and inspected it.

"Really a lovely weapon. You obviously took great care with this batch, thank you. Another thing you should know about your home here is that no weapon crafted in your forges will ever allow itself to be used against a wizard of Glivid-Autel. We all did a blood ritual when we built those forges, just for this very reason. One cannot allow discontented slaves to possess weapons they can use, after all. Don't try anything like this ever again."

And with that she handed the axe to the monster that only moments before had been Telbor, and she commanded him to attack us. Our axes worked against him, but he killed two people before we could snatch up the fallen weapons and fight back, tears streaming down our faces. When the zombie was destroyed, the necromancers laughed at us again. All pretense of contrition or kindness was gone — their true intentions were exposed.

"Leave the dead and the axes here, and go back to your appointed tasks," said the woman. "If you do not, we will continue to destroy and remake you one at a time until you do."

We didn't need to be told twice. We went back to our "suite," and the incident was never mentioned again. Our escape attempts became

increasingly subtle after that, but the necromancers always thwarted them before we could even begin. They never punished us for trying unless we inconvenienced them in some way. Our plots were so insignificant to them that apparently our attempts usually did not even irritate them. It really is a wonder that we kept making them. I suppose it was something to do.

This is the way life went for decades. Some of the humans were offered other positions in the city, and they usually took them. We always tried to talk them out of it, but every one of them had some reason why it was a better idea to agree than refuse. Usually the claim was, "Out there, I'll have more freedom. I'll be able to escape eventually and send help to the rest of you." Somewhere in there we always heard something like, "I'll go crazy if I'm trapped in here another day!" and we understood. They couldn't save the rest of us, but they could save themselves, and they'd be crazy not to do it, wouldn't they?

Oddly enough, I think there was some truth to the wizard-woman's comments about us being spoiled during that early escape attempt. We were slaves, pure and simple, but from what I hear, I think the necromancers were much more generous and tolerant with us than with any of their ordinary citizens. The "free" non-magical people of Glivid-Autel may have enjoyed a few more liberties than we did, but if they ever broke laws or stepped out of line, they became zombies, just like that. We were needed for our smithing skills, however — even the "free-willed" undead of later years could not hope to duplicate our competence; so, aside from keeping us locked in a barely-large-enough five-room prison, they actually gave us a great deal of leeway. I really pity the citizens of Glivid-Autel.

In any case, none of them ever returned with shining armies to free us all, and eventually all the humans were gone. We can only assume they were integrated into the rest of the pale, half-dazed populace who occasionally visited us with new orders. I cannot imagine how anyone could live that way, but humans are famed for their adaptability. I wonder if, in this case, adaptability was actually more of a curse than a blessing. The Glivid-Autel citizens seemed almost as dead as the skeletons and zombies that worked alongside them.

They never offered positions in the city to dwarves, and we never really understood why. Not all of us were blacksmiths, after all. Perhaps they sensed something different in us. Perhaps they knew that we still thought only of the outside world and freedom. Perhaps dwarves only make good slaves when they know they are slaves.

The humans could be fooled into thinking they were free. I don't know. I don't want to judge them. Their lives are so short. Maybe dwarves really aren't stronger of will, but simply more patient, and you can't really blame humans for that. In fact, if they'd stayed with us, they would indeed never have left our little self-contained smithy in their entire lives. Our rescue came far too late to have saved the short-lived humans.

I was a grown woman by the time the humans had all moved away, however, and soon I had a husband and then a son — the first blood relative since my parents died. I still played the flute as my sacred obligation to my community, and I had also become an acolyte of one of the priests of Madriel. It's strange how life can go on in even the most wretched of conditions. We simply made do. It's sort of like taming a wild animal, I suppose. Eventually, one just accepts the lack of freedom and stops worrying about it.

It's not that we were domesticated or anything like that. As I said, we were still looking for ways to escape, and we still talked about the future and taught our children about the outside world and dwarven culture. We just refused to let our captivity get in the way of being alive. Our children gave us hope and strength, and they also helped to ensure that we did not outlive our usefulness to the necromancers. They knew we would not last forever, and they liked it that we were already providing them with replacements for when we ourselves grew too old. Of course, we intended nothing of the kind for our babies, but letting the necromancers feel more secure certainly did not hurt us.

We had no means of keeping track of days or years, but looking back I'm sure it must have been 112 AV and the armies of the Blood Crone that next disturbed our strange little imprisoned world. Glivid-Autel came under attack.

I was in a very difficult period of my life right then, and the attack made my situation almost unbearable. My old friend, the one who had told me my music was like sunlight, had just died less than a week before the battle started. He was the closest person I ever found to a replacement parent since my mother's death during the Titanswar, and so I mourned him as I would have mourned a father, if I had met my father before he died. In addition, I was fast approaching middle age and realizing that I had already spent most of my life as a slave. I did not know quite how to face such a realization, and for the first time in my life, I was really beginning to despair that I would never get out — never again be free. My oldest son's wife had just given birth to their second child, and instead of feeling happy for

them and for myself as a grandmother, I began to feel contempt for them and for all of the dwarves, including myself, who'd chosen to have children in this place.

Then my friend died, and I played my flute at the memorial service we dwarves held for him. I played a song that I wrote especially for him, and I cried for days. When the skeletons came to take the body (we'd tried burning our dead in the forge fires so that they could rest in peace, but someone always appeared at the door just in time to stop us, so we quit trying), I felt some part of myself go with his corpse, and I felt somehow dead inside. For the first time in years, I didn't play my flute for days on end.

The surprise assault began then and apparently caught the necromancers unawares. Most of us knew about the attack only because they worked us almost as hard as they worked their zombies during those weeks, making weapons and arrows for the castle's defense. And we could hear people running in the corridors and sometimes shouting.

No one knows why the Crone attacked. Perhaps the necromancers had secured a big chunk of mother Mormo, and the Crone wanted it. Perhaps the necromancers were a threat to the Crone's power. Or maybe she just wanted to kill things. I don't know. All I know is that the Crone would have proven a far worse conqueror than the necromancers, and in the end it is probably best that her forces were driven off.

Some of us managed to get a glimpse of the fighting and told of a wood alive with ratmen, asaatthi, bloodmen, and blood reapers — and of endless hordes of undead lurching from the citadel to counterattack. They said that a single man in black seemed to be everywhere at once, directing the defense and sometimes even casting his own powerful magic at the foe. This, we found later, was none other than Lucian Daine, the man now called the Black Messiah.

Those days were pretty unnerving, really. On one hand, we hoped desperately that it was someone who had somehow learned we were here. On the other, what if it was someone — or something — even worse. And then there was the way the necromancers worked us. Actual wizards were in our confinement area day and night. They were the first of the aristocracy we'd seen since our failed escape attempt three quarters of a century previous, and they were every bit as utterly heartless as we remembered. They forced us to keep working at all times. We could sleep in shifts, but never for very long. Our hands blistered and several of us experienced fainting episodes after a while, but they did not let up, and when we faltered, they simply used magic to force us to comply.

The history books say that the Blood Crone's forces were not much of a challenge for the necromancers, and that she badly depleted her resources by attacking the castle. We didn't know that at the time. From the way the necromancers treated us, you would think the castle was about to fall down around our ears. Maybe they were just trying to keep us busy so we would not think of escape during the confusion. I don't believe so, though. I think the necromancers were harder pressed than they appeared on the surface. They may have won a stunning victory in the end, but I think they taxed themselves — and us — enormously to make it look easy.

As the siege dragged on, the necromancers began to work us to the bone (literally in the case of one of our best smiths, who was very badly burned on the third day), and I could feel people looking to me expectantly, as if at any moment I would go and find my flute and ease their suffering a little bit, as I always had. I didn't do it. I couldn't bring myself to play. I helped with any and every other daily chore that I could think of (I was never much of a smith), but I simply couldn't create music.

The others tried to sing without me, but our rooms were so hot and oppressive with the constant forge fires and the endless labor that the singing always seemed thin and died out after a song or two. Whenever it died, someone would inevitably look to me hopefully. I quickly busied myself in other tasks and never said anything.

The situation was getting really bad for all of us. The necromancers drove us onward heartlessly, and I could practically feel the souls of my people breaking all around me. I felt washed in guilt so deep, I worried I would never be free of its taint; yet I could not play for my family and friends.

Then another wizard came to our enclosure to bring news to the three who watched us in shifts. They were very quiet for most of their conversation, but I was working near them and I overheard two pieces of information. First, I heard the new one tell the other three that we'd made enough weapons, so they could go to join the battle and let us rest. That was good news and a huge relief to me, but the conversation went on from there. What I next heard clearly was, "The main problem is that we need at least a hundred more warriors to cover the south wall. I don't know where we're going to get..." As his voice trailed off, I turned in

say anything, even quietly, or they'd overhear me somehow, as they always seemed to do. I froze in indecision for a moment — after all, what help could I really hope to be? Then a clear voice spoke within my head.

"Play your flute."

It was a ridiculous thought, but I did not hesitate. As casually as I could, I hurried into the sleeping area and found the flute beneath my pillow. I rushed back into the main smithy in time to see the wizards beginning to chant some spell. Most of the dwarves had not noticed them. When I put the flute to my lips, a strange, cool mist poured through the high windows and into the room.

I played "The Warrior Bard" at first, but the melody quickly took off on its own and seemed to play without me, scampering like a stream or rustling leaves or a small forest creature through the room as the mist rose and took the shape of dozens of elves. Everyone stopped and stared, even the necromancers, as the unearthly elven apparitions raised their voices to harmonize with my haunting melody.

The mist grew so thick that the forge fire actually sputtered and went out. The expressions of the necromancers went blank. The elves stopped singing, and my flute came back under my own control, right where I'd left off in the old Divine War ballad about strength and love in the face of despair. The other dwarves joined in the song as the mist rolled up and out of the windows. The necromancers looked around them suddenly.

"Why are those forge-fires out? Well, no matter. You've completed your tasks. You may rest."

And they all walked out and locked the door behind them.

I collapsed unconscious for several hours. During that time, I had vivid dreams of the motherly elf woman who had helped me to keep my flute so long ago. She didn't look like mist in the dream, but was simply an aging elven woman, like any other (not that I'd seen one in nearly a century). "I'm terribly sorry for all you've been through," she told me. "I promise it will be over soon."

I didn't know what this meant, but I shared it with the others, and it infused us all with new hope for a while.

For the most part, though, after our second

returned our workload to its previous level. Apparently, they hadn't really needed those hundred warriors so desperately after all. If I ever see any of those four wizards again, I'll spit on them.

A few years later, after the Broadreach elves ended their century of merging, a few of them remembered helping us, and a small group of them soon came covertly to set us free. I believe our rescue was one of the first times when the elves' Hornsaw nightmares proved themselves useful. Some of our rescuers had prophetic nightmares right before the rescue attempt, and they were able to use the information in those disturbing dreams to find us and to avoid the guards.

Getting out was more difficult since our quarters were spied on as usual, but the elves came to us just before dawn, and luckily very few necromancers were awake. The elves were different from how I remembered them — more distant, unworldly, and almost frightening. They had a pair of druids with them to counter the wizards we met on our way out. The elven warriors also made short work of the undead guards, including, sickeningly enough, the barely recognizable corpse of my friend and father figure, the very last of us to die in Glivid-Autel. At least his soul can finally rest.

Whether because they no longer really needed us or because they fear either the forest itself or our elven allies, Glivid-Autel has not come after us, and we are finally — 30 years since our escape — beginning to settle into village life and freedom in the Broadreach Horizon. The few who survived the entire ordeal, as I did, are still a little disoriented with our freedom, I think, but our children are blossoming beautifully.

Incidentally, one of the women who remembered our plight was a powerful Clan Wolf mother named Balshum. When I met her later, I instantly recognized her as the very same gentle woman who had stopped the guards from breaking my flute and appeared in my dream. She has become like a grandmother to my two youngest children. When she asks me to play "The Warrior Bard," I do so with pride and honor, and the song remains our anthem, a memory of the days that we spent in bondage.

When the dwarves of Burok Torn heard the story of our rescue, many of the wood dwarves who had left us in the Hornsaw were horrified by the tale of what we had endured. Many felt, I'm sure, that it was our own fault for not joining them in Burok Torn more than a century ago, and I



don't blame them for thinking so, but some old dwarves seem to feel the reverse. If they had stayed in the Hornsaw, they are convinced, our town would never have been taken.

In spite of everything we could do to assuage the guilt of these generous souls, over a dozen families have felt they must rejoin us in the Hornsaw. Usually led by aging dwarves who remember some of us well or are even relatives of ours, entire extended groups of kin whose ancestry lies among the wood dwarves have crept secretly from Burok Torn and rejoined us in the forest, swelling the numbers of dwarven inhabitants of the Hornsaw forest back to a whole three hundred members. Many of them are having just as hard a time readjusting to life in the forest as we are, but an inkling of wood dwarven culture is returning, especially among the children.

Naturally, though, relations with Burok Torn are a bit strained at present. The mountain dwarves, not entirely without reason, feel that they have been deserted in their time of need by the dwarves who have returned to the Hornsaw. King Thain is reported to have said of the would-be wood dwarves, "They feel that they abandoned their friends and relations more than a century ago when they were most needed, and they wish to atone for this mistake. This I can respect, but how is it an atonement if to do so they must abandon their present friends and relations in the process? They are not atoning, but repeating an old mistake."

I can see the king's point, and I cannot really blame the mountain dwarves for feeling angry with us. I'm sure that many of them feel claustrophobic at times in those besieged halls. I'm sure a few of the dwarves who have rejoined us have indeed done so not out of loyalty but simply because they desperately want to be somewhere that they can safely leave whenever they wish. The Hornsaw is no paradise, so they need not feel like cowards for joining the fight here, but they also need not be trapped in a mountain for the rest of their lives. I think any wood dwarf would prefer a hopelessly tainted forest to a hopelessly besieged city.

Of course, as I said before, the Hornsaw is certainly not a paradise, and the newly self-proclaimed wood dwarves are spending at least as much if not more time fighting titanspawn among the elves than they did fighting dark elves beneath the Kelders. We very much appreciate their aid and strength, and though we would not want to make relations worse with Burok Torn by encouraging more dwarven settlers, we cannot regret the arrival of those who have already joined us.

Interestingly enough, most of the wood dwarves still pray to Goran regularly and nearly half still count him as their chief deity. What the god of dwarves thinks of the "defection," he has not said, but his wood dwarven clerics still have power, whatever that means.

Of course, the Burok Torn quandary is not in any way ameliorated by the fact that our closest allies and benefactors are a group of strange and possibly warped elves with a penchant for decorating their bodies with magical tattoos. The parallels between the Broadreach elves and the mountain dwarves' oldest sworn enemies are difficult for the naturally wary and reticent mountain dwarves to overcome.

Indeed, even we, who owe our freedom and perhaps even our sanity to the Broadreach elves, tend to worry about them a little. They have changed far more in the years they were gone than even my fellow prisoners and I have during our years in Glivid-Autel. As horrible as our ordeal was, when I look into the pain-filled eyes of my new elven friends and hear them speak of their soul-wracking nightmares, I can only wonder if we wood dwarves did not end up with the better end of the deal.

The Horror of the Blood Crone

Among the most terrifying of the Hornsaw's inhabitants is the strange creature known as the Blood Crone. Said to be a hag who devoured a chunk of Mormo's bloody flesh, for years she dwelled in the forest engaged in a lone quest to gather up the pieces of the Queen of Serpents and, alone, restore her to life. Those who have studied this foul creature believe her to contain a critical portion of Mormo's essence, acting almost as a living avatar of the fallen titaness.

The Blood Crone quickly gained power in the forest, using the horrific creatures of the Hornsaw as her eyes and ears. As her might grew, so did her arrogance, and in 112 AV, she threw her creatures against the city of Glivid-Autel. The efforts of Lucian Daine and the other necromancers shattered the Crone's forces and sent them fleeing into the forest.

Her power broken, the Blood Crone retreated. It was plain that she now needed replacements for her lost forces. Elsewhere in the forest, the Dar al Annot grew in prominence, and in them the Crone saw a valuable source of new minions. Yet she could not bring herself to join the coven as an equal. Accordingly, in around 135 AV, she transported herself into the midst of a coven gathering, where she asserted her power over the other hags and assumed leadership of the group.

Since that time, the Dar al Annot have grown in power, influence, and aggression. Their forces have moved into the Broadreach Horizon on several occa-

sions, but the elves forcibly ejected them each time. Presently, the Blood Crone sees the elves as more of an annoyance than anything else, and most believe the Horizon does not contain any pieces of Mormo. As the elves become more powerful in their own right, however, they may threaten the Dar al Annot's plans, and open warfare may break out.

Few members of the divine races ever gazed upon the face of the Blood Crone and lived. One of these is the wood elf Umat, who was captured by the Crone's forces soon after the elves' return in 115 AV.

My companions slain, I fled through the horribly transformed forest, desperate to return to my clan and report what we had seen. Yet it was not to be — blood-red moths swarmed around me, and from a small stream rose up a being of living blood, blocking my way. I turned to flee in the other direction and was confronted by a monstrous, insectoid thing with great scimitar-like claws and alien, emotionless eyes. To my horror, the thing spoke to me.

"Welcome, my child. Welcome to my forest."

Then they were upon me, and I fell into blackness.

When at last I recovered, my first thought was that I had fallen into some titan's hell. I was held tightly by the bloody mantis-creature (later I was told that it was a blood reaper, though I did not know this at the time). I was in a filthy shack built of tree trunks, caked with dead leaves and ferns. The ceiling was tangled with spider webs crawling with fat, ugly spiders. On the floor, serpents crawled. The walls were lined with shelves, containing ceramic and glass jars, dripping with foul blood. The stench was terrible, of course.

"You are awake, childling," said a chilling voice, the same as that which had emerged from the blood reaper. "I trust you had a restful sleep."

I looked toward the voice and beheld the greatest horror of all. She was a tall, twisted creature who looked much like the hags that we had faced during the Battle of the Broadreach. Yet she was taller, stronger-looking and, if possible, even uglier.

"You are one of those elven creatures who have just emerged from my forest," she said, approaching me. She extended one filthy claw and stroked me under my chin, and I could not flinch away, for the blood reaper held me fast. "Here I thought you all perished after the war... I admit that you have surprised me, childling, and that is a remarkable thing."

She turned and took up a jar brimming with blood.

"See this, young one?" she said. "This is a piece of the holy mother Mormo, torn asunder by

the foul godlings that you worship." She moved closer to me, her hideous face twisted with rage. "The godlings will rue their treachery. And so shall you, little elf. So shall you."

With that, the hag-thing scratched my face with one of her jagged claws, and a droplet of blood trickled down my chin to land in her palm.

The crone cackled madly at this and turned away. She mumbled to herself, and I heard a few words in the hated dark tongue, the language of the titans, with the inflection of a Mormo-worshipper.

I do not know how long the creature's ritual lasted, but I was racked by pain as my very blood writhed in agony. The reaper held me tight, and the crone's voice echoed in my head like the scream of a demon.

You serve me. You are my minion. I shall see through your eyes and speak with your tongue. You serve me. You serve Mormo.

I screamed, feeling the crone's foul touch brush against my heart and soul. And in my agony, I silently called upon mother Denev, the only titan that my people still revered.

And I felt my agony lessen and the soft touch of the earth mother.

Let her believe that you serve her, said a gentle voice. I will protect you from the power of my sister.

I went limp then, feeling the crone's power ebb away.

She lurched over to me. The ritual seemed to have weakened her, but malign magic still radiated from her. She seized my hair and pulled my head up, staring into my eyes.

"Whom do you serve?" she demanded.

I replied spontaneously, and the words were not mine.

"I serve you," I said, my voice flat and lifeless. "And I serve Mother Mormo."

The crone's hideous face split into a mad grin.

"It is good, little elf," she hissed, then gestured at the blood reaper, which released me. I fell to the filthy dirt floor, amid the crawling serpents.

"Stand," the crone demanded, and I stumbled painfully to my feet. "Return to your people," she continued. "Watch, wait, and report to me what you see. I would know what your elven brethren are up to. And I would know if they would make worthy minions." She gestured toward the doorway, covered with a tattered black cloth. "Go now, minion. Go and serve me well."

I stumbled from the shack and out into the heart of the Hornsaw. I walked slowly and deliberately as I went, though every instinct screamed at me to run. I mastered myself, however, and my faith in Denev sustained me.

At last, the witch's house was lost in the trees. Evening was come, and soon darkness would engulf the forest. Yet my heart was strong, and Denev guided me. Unerringly, I walked back to the Broadreach Horizon, to the heart of my clan, where I told them my story.

The clan mothers inspected me, cast spells, and determined that I had truly avoided domination by the witch-thing. Later, we learned more about her, and knew that she was one of the most fearful creatures of the Hornsaw. Mine, then, was our first meeting with the monster known as the Blood Crone, and to this day I thank Denev that I survived to tell my people.

The Accursed

In 120 AV, the Broadreach elves encountered the Accursed for the first time when a small hunting party of Clan Reed elves was ambushed by a much larger party of wererats. The rats had apparently entered the Broadreach Horizon in search of food, assuming that their large numbers would keep them safe from the forest's dangers.

Indeed, the wererats, originally traversing the Blood Steppes on some unknown mission for Belsameth, would normally have been correct in their assumptions. Even though the Broadreach elves had returned to this region of the forest and were fighting to cleanse and secure it, elven forces were concentrated elsewhere at the time, fighting hags and gorgons closer to the Hornsaw interior.

Fortunately for Clan Reed, a small band of Accursed lycanthropes had sighted these wererats a week earlier and were tracking them carefully. The Accursed band was too small to tackle the rats head on and had sent word to their fortress in the southern Hornsaw for reinforcements, but when the rats and elves stumbled upon each other and a desperate and one-sided battle ensued, the Accursed knew they could wait no longer.

Rushing in to attack the wererats from behind, the Accursed turned the tide of the battle and saw to it that the evil wererats were destroyed. The wounded and confused elves were in no mood to accept the fellowship of any sort of lycanthropes, however, and they fled the scene before the Accursed could explain themselves.

Dedicated to their cause of saving the souls of fellow lycanthropes from Belsameth's evil, however, the Accursed knew they must pursue the elves — several of whom were wounded by infectious wererat attacks — and offer aid before lycanthropic infection set in.

Unfortunately, the Accursed party lost the elves' trail and wandered for several days before they were discovered by a Clan Wolf scouting party. The Clan

Wolf elves had the advantage of first encountering the lycanthropes in their humanoid forms, and so were willing to hear them out. Eventually, they brought the Accursed band to the Clan Wolf council, who examined them and ruled them to be true agents of good and allies to the Broadreach elves.

Clan Wolf then sent word to Clan Reed, who agreed to send all the elves touched by wererat blades to live with the Accursed in their fortress until the next full moon, for the safety of all the Broadreach clans. Indeed, several of Clan Reed's warriors had been infected, but when they turned into ravening monsters on the next full moon, they were carefully contained in the Accursed fortress and no one was hurt. Two elves even decided not to have their lycanthropy cured but to learn to control their curses and to use their powers for good. They have since become model members of the Accursed community.

In spite of Clan Reed's direct ties to the Accursed fortress, however, it is Clan Wolf that has secured and maintained the closest friendly relations with the lycanthropes. One werewolf druid of Denev, an elven woman born in the Ganjus, was even adopted as a member of Clan Wolf. She now spends almost half her time living and fighting among the Broadreach elves and has become an important advisor on understanding the elves' now distant Ganjus cousins. She also helped to orchestrate the official alliance between the Accursed and the Broadreach elves.

Even the two Clan Reed men (now wererats) who joined the Accursed now seem to gravitate more toward Clan Wolf when they come back to visit the Broadreach Horizon. With typical Clan Reed stubbornness, the clan mothers have never fully forgiven the Accursed for that unfortunate first meeting, causing a certain amount of tension between the two groups.

To shed more light on this tension, the tale of Talsa, one of the two Clan Reed elves who chose to remain a wererat, has been included.

Battle raged on the borders of the Horizon, but even the strongest elven warriors cannot survive without food, and ten of us from each clan were regularly sent away from the heart of the fighting to hunt. Eager as we always were to return and kill our share of ratmen, however, we knew our duty. The Reed Clan hunting party, as always, set out for the fertile northeastern edge of the forest, our usual hunting grounds, where we knew we could quickly obtain large quantities of untainted meat and fruits to carry back to our people.

Our leader was Piantose, and among our number was her young daughter Pentah, born less than a day before the great merging and known for her fey nature and of whom Piantose was fiercely protective. The rest of us were only young



men; we were good hunters, but since we held no leadership roles in the clan, we could be spared from the battlefield.

We understood and accepted why we had been chosen for the food-gathering expedition, but Piantose was insulted. She was never very good at admitting to her daughter's Hornsaw-born strangeness, and the clan mothers knew this made her a liability at times. Nevertheless, we were used to young Pentah's eccentricities, and since ours was no more than a simple hunt, we were unconcerned with Piantose's illusions.

Upon entering our home territory, however, we found it strangely devoid of suitable prey. In our habitual hurry to return to the conflict, we were not as careful as we might have been in such unusual circumstances. Piantose urged us on, hoping, I think, for the glory we could gain by destroying whatever had scared away the animals — anything to prove that the clan mothers were wrong about her daughter.

Soon, we happened upon a group of six shady-looking humans, and moved in to take them prisoner. In time of war, it would have been odd for us to do anything else with a group of suspicious strangers. We were startled by their nonchalance as we approached: being outnumbered by nearly two-to-one should have made them nervous, and I suppose that their attitude should have served as a warning to us. Nevertheless, our surprise was complete when all six men

transformed hideously into berserk ratlike things before launching their attack. They looked like slitheren, but we immediately knew that we did not face ordinary ratmen: these were shapechangers, servants of wicked Belsameth.

We held our own at first, but we soon realized that our blades were not hurting them at all, except for Piantose's, which was magical. We tried to send Pentah off as a messenger, requesting aid from the clans so that we could simply take a defensive stance until help arrived, but just as the young woman escaped into the trees, over a dozen more men and ratbeasts appeared, apparently drawn by the sounds of battle. Now we were the ones who were outnumbered, by a foe we could not hurt.

I felt despair creeping into my heart as mad little Pentah fell, and then a rat blade pierced my own flesh as well. My world swam with pain and terror. I barely managed to stay on my feet, while a grief-maddened Piantose provided our only meager offense. Her furious blows struck down two of the shapechangers, but she was sorely wounded. I had no real hope, but then, I'm a Broadreach elf. I'm used to living without hope.

I remember whispering a brief prayer to Madriel — though I normally prefer Denev. I expected nothing, and when several more raging and ravaging hybrid monsters, along with a great bear and a pair of mad boars, joined the battle, I knew we were doomed. The fighting

escalated around us to a frenzy of blood and claws and blades, and the pain from my wounded leg made it hard for me to see at all, much less keep track of what transpired. I almost fell several times when my leg tried to give out on me, and once I remember being caught and steadied by a hand that was much too large and furry. I turned and found that huge bear right beside me! I struck at it reflexively, yet then saw the broken body of a wererat in its claws. My pain-fogged brain could not comprehend that the great bear was actually fighting on my side. Luckily, my blade did the bear no more harm than it did the ratbeasts.

I vaguely recall someone handing me a short sword and telling me it was silver. I knew nothing about werebeasts then and so was utterly confused by this, but I went ahead and fought with the silver sword anyway. I think I was sufficiently confused to try anything by that time. I was shocked when the new sword actually worked, tearing into a ratbeast's flesh and making it howl with pain and gush red blood like any mortal creature. I almost dropped the weapon in surprise, and the wounded rat scratched me again across the belly.

Our monstrous saviors easily turned the tide of battle, and soon I was standing still and dazed with a handful of my wounded and confused companions. As in the aftermath of any battle, the silence was almost deafening, punctuated only with occasional shouts while the bear, boars, and the other three monsters (one was a wolf, and two were rats just like our attackers) chased every one of the cruel rat creatures down and killed them.

When they were done, all six of them changed into ordinary humans (and one elf), but before they could approach and speak with us, I heard Piantose shouting at all of us to run. My mind was so pain and confusion-fogged than I simply obeyed her, wounded leg and all. We did not know this at the time, but in ordering us to run, Piantose made things a lot more difficult for us all. Lycanthropy is much more easily cured in the first three days after exposure. Along the way back, our leader also noticed that a few of us, including myself, were still carrying the silver short swords we'd been given, and she ordered us to drop them in case they were cursed.

When we got back to our fortress, Piantose told the clan we'd been caught in the middle of a war between two factions of evil werebeasts. She said she saw the bear leader through the trees, deliberately waiting for Pentah's death before they rushed in — something I found impossible to believe and now know to be completely untrue. I

doubt Piantose was lying, but whatever she saw was not what she believed it to be. In any case, the werebear and its cronies had tricked us into fighting on their side, according to Piantose's account before the clan mothers. She told them we had barely escaped with our lives.

I didn't know then if the trauma had addled their brains or mine, but three of the seven men who survived sided with Piantose, and the rest of us, being young and largely inexperienced males, were ignored when we tried to explain how we would all have died without the bear's help. One of the clan mothers was Piantose's grandmother anyway, which gave her story added weight.

The nightmares came to me twice in the nights that followed. First, I dreamed that I killed my sister and my father with my bare hands, and I could not stop myself. Next, I dreamed that Piantose forced me and four of the other men from the hunting party to kill our families. I was on edge and still feeling very confused when the Clan Wolf mothers contacted us, five days after the encounter.

The bodies of our fallen had been respectfully returned to us, and Clan Wolf was convinced that our rescuers were in fact good beings that wanted to help us protect the Hornsaw from evil. They told us about our possible lycanthropic infection and the need to be carefully watched on the next full moon in case we changed.

Piantose's first reaction was to have some clerics try to raise her daughter. She even had a diamond from her great-great-grandmother (I've been told that diamonds somehow provide a doorway between the spirit and material realms that clerics can use to give the dead passage back into life) that she offered for the ritual. Someone agreed to make the attempt, but even though the diamond was destroyed as normal (so I was told), the spell was unsuccessful.

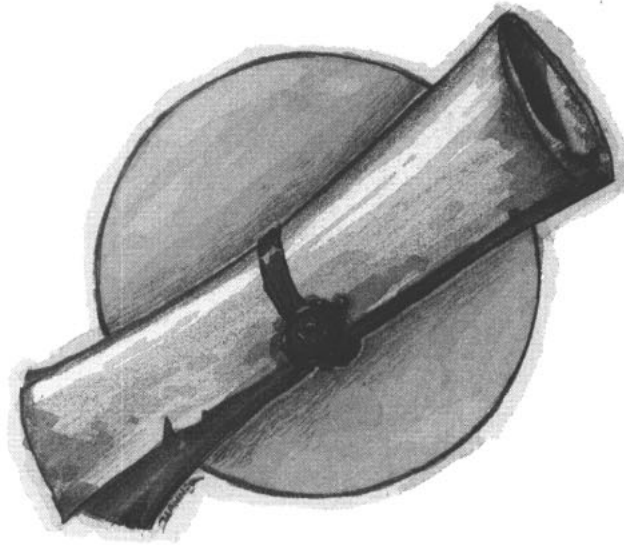
The priest tried to explain that sometimes such things happened, and that sometimes a soul is so happy in the afterlife that it wishes to stay, but Piantose could not be consoled and insisted that the lycanthropes had done something to the body. She pleaded to the clan mothers not to allow us to go to the Accursed's fortress. She was certain that we would all be turned, against our will, into ravening evil monsters.

I told the Clan Reed mothers my dreams, though, and four of the other men that fought beside me came forward with similar nightmares. We begged to go with the lycanthropes. Eventually, it was decided that all who had been wounded in the battle (and we all had) would be allowed to

accompany the lycanthropes if we so chose, but we were advised against it. Only Piantose remained behind.

By some sort of great good luck, Piantose proved to be one of three of us who resisted the curse completely, and no one was endangered by her decision to stay home. Three more men chose to be cured by priests among the Accursed. They stayed with us at the fortress for only the few months it took for the spell to take effect. Kamso and I were so impressed by the honor and dedication among the Accursed that we chose to join them.

I cannot really describe what it is like to be a wererat to someone who has never experienced it, except to say that it is a frightening choice to try and embrace and control the evil in your soul for the sake of a cause you love. It has helped me to achieve a far greater understanding of my people's taint, I think, and our connection to the Hornsaw Forest. I am more a Broadreach elf than a wererat still, even if I live among the Accursed now, but I have more to learn before I can turn my curse fully to the forest's advantage, so for now, among the Accursed I remain.





Chapter Two: The Land

A Wood Awash in Blood

The Hornsaw's horrors extend beyond the creatures that dwell within its hoary expanses. Where once the Broadreach was a strong, primal place, Mormo's touch tainted that power and turned it into a ravening, vitriol-laden pit of darkness, poison, and — above all — blood.

A journey through the Hornsaw reveals that the land itself is very much alive. Its life, however, is not the idyllic peace that one imagines for the Ganjus. Rather, it is a ferocious and virile life, where creatures defend themselves bloodily or are eaten. The life that comes from the Hornsaw is not (as a popular wood elven epic would have it) “a gift from the Mother Denev.” No, life here is visceral and messy.

Trees of the Hornsaw

The very heart of the Hornsaw — its trees — were once a wonder to behold. For miles in every direction, strong trees made up the body of the Broadreach, and these trees were perhaps all that kept the eruption of Mormo's body from spewing over the entirety of Ghelspad's center, corrupting the land from the Gaspars to the Kelders.

Yet the trees did not serve as simple walls, turning back the spray of gore. Rather, they absorbed it, some say in a manner that only Denev's will could have accomplished.

Of Trees & Blood

From the *Lay of Holdrian*, a song composed by Holdrian Ambereye, a bard of the Chorus of the Ages, present at the destruction of the Broadreach:

*And then was Serpent laid to rest,
Her heart torn out and split asunder;
A flood of poison to lay waste to the land
Did the blood of the Serpent flow.
The Mother saw this and with grieving cry;
The trees were all athirst
With blood; like water, were the trees slaked,
Devoured by poison were they.
And the skies wept to see the Broadreach die,
That the rest of the lands might live.*

The Grandfather Tree

Legends claim that every major forest in Scarn harbors a Grandfather Tree — a massive tree that grows to many times the size of even the greatest of other trees. The wood elves of Ghelspad gather their greatest civilizations around these mighty boles, in an effort to defend the great forest-hearts.

In the Ganjus, Vera-Tre has grown around that forest's Grandfather Tree. In the Broadreach, the Grandfather Tree was defended well by the forest's elves who dwelt in the wicker-like construction at its base, coaxing strong vines through potent magic to grow into walls and roofs.

Mormo's destruction warped its essence horrifically, twisting and blasting the tree. Some who have seen the leafless limbs and blood-blackened bark of this tree citadel say that the Grandfather Tree of the Broadreach is dead.

Others say that it yet lives, though horribly warped and sickened, ridden with cancers and unwholesome growths. The Grandfather Tree of the Broadreach has been transformed into the Annot Kalambath, the tree-citadel of the Dar al Annot witch's sisterhood.

The elves of the Broadreach believe that, coiled in the roots of the Annot Kalambath, a small sapling grows. This sapling is another Grand-

father Tree, waiting for the destruction of the current one that it might grow. Many of the Broadreach elves have lost their lives seeking this sapling, hoping to dig it up carefully and transfer it to cleansed ground, where it might take root and grow to become the spiritual center of the new Broadreach, free from Mormo's taint.

Mundane Trees

Numerous species of trees grow within the Hornsaw. Many are varieties that might be found anywhere, though these tend to be either sickly, stunted specimens or changed somehow. Many of these trees have evolved the strange features that allow them to survive in the face of the Hornsaw's oft-mad, destructive denizens. Many of these evolutionary traits are noted in the "Hazards of the Hornsaw" sidebar.

The Hornsaw contains an abundance of trees known throughout Ghelspad (and, indeed, in many other places in the world). Apple and cherry trees were once common in the Broadreach, but many of the fruits produced by these trees are now either withered and stunted or simply poisonous. A few unchanged fruit trees grow in the elven lands of the Borderwood and the Broadreach Horizon, and the elves hope one day to cultivate them in the heart of the Hornsaw.

Ash, oak, and hawthorn trees were once considered the Three Holy Woods from which druids crafted charms and weapons, and the Broadreach — like the Ganjus — provided plenty of both. Now, however, the ash trees are stained with streaks of red and the hawthorns tend to be blackened and twisted. Only the oaks remain seemingly untouched, though the druids note that none of the oaks in the Hornsaw's heart bear the sacred mistletoe.

Among those trees relatively untouched by the taint in the Hornsaw are the ironwood, birch, elm, and yew trees, though they are sometimes transformed in dangerous ways (such as by fang-leaf or by the slime-root blight; see the "Hazards of the Hornsaw" sidebar for more information on such hazards). The chestnuts of the Broadreach were all inexorably changed by Mormo's destruction, and the nuts they bear, while perfectly nutritious, leave the joint taste of blood-iron and bitter poison in the mouth when eaten.

The mangroves and willows that grow along the Broadreach River seem the least tainted of the Broadreach's trees, though occasionally one of the willows turns out to be the monstrous leeching willow, a breed most often found in the Swamps of Kan Thet. The Hornsaw's bitter trees are also well known, and many of the hawthorn, maple, and walnut trees are actually the dreaded carnivorous trees. (For the leeching willow, bitter tree, and carnivorous tree, see **Creature Collection II: Dark**

Menagerie.) Though treants once dwelt in the Broadreach, they do so no more. Some whisper, however, that a small gathering of Mormo-tainted treants dwells within the Hornsaw.

In addition to the more common trees mentioned above, the Hornsaw supports a number of others:

Nightwood: A strange crossbreed of ironwood and darkwood trees, nightwood was originally created by the Broadreach elves and raised in groves meant for harvesting. With the destruction of the elves, nightwood has spread naturally into the wild, and stands of this deep black wood can be found all over. The Broadreach elves now cultivate nightwood saplings in their territories, hoping that they will one day grow into great groves like their ancestors. Nightwood is treated as darkwood for the effects of creating items from it (see the *DMG*, Chapter 8, "Special Materials"), but it has a hardness of 8 and 15 hit points per inch of thickness. Like those of darkwood, items made of nightwood are considered to be masterwork items and cost an additional +15 gp per pound of the final item.

Shard Tree: These strange trees exude a sap over their leaves that rapidly hardens to a brittle, crystalline coat when exposed to air. Very dangerous to the average traveler in the Hornsaw, shard trees tinkle merrily in the breeze. Strong winds, however, will shatter the leaves, turning them into deadly, flaying leaf-storms that shred vegetation for yards around the tree and horribly maim or even kill those misfortunate enough to get caught in such storms. More information can be found on shard trees in Chapter Three of *Wilderness & Wastelands*.

Soulwood: First discovered in the Specter's Wood around Glivid-Autel, soulwood has since spread to other parts of the Hornsaw, though it does not grow in areas strong with the taint of Mormo. Soulwood appears to be oak, elm, ash, or yew, save that its bark is incredibly pale and its leaves nearly translucent. Walking through a grove of soulwood is odd, as the areas around these trees are invariably quiet — natural animals shun soulwood, somehow sensing the death energies that permeate it. Items made from soulwood are easily enchanted with necromantic energies. The cost of the magical item is increased by +20 gp per pound of the item, and weapons, armor, and shields crafted from soulwood are considered masterwork items. Magic items that use a necromantic spell as a prerequisite, however, have their XP cost to create reduced by 10%.

Venomwood: Some of the ash, hawthorns, and mangroves of the Hornsaw were changed in their very nature by Mormo's blood, so much so that the strange aberrations in the trees bred true in their seedlings. Venomwood, as these trees are referred to, grows very quickly and well in the Hornsaw's tainted

soil, but it has never been spotted outside of it. Though the wood always smells slightly bitter, it can be used to craft items normally. The sap is poisonous, however: the smoke from the wood causes a burning in the lungs and brings stinging tears to the eyes. When distilled by an alchemist or herbalist (Alchemy or Profession [herbalist] check [DC 18], takes one day), venomwood sap creates a potent poison:

Injury: Fort DC 16; *Initial Damage:* 1 Con; *Secondary Damage:* 1d6 Con; *Price:* 150 gp.

Enough sap to make 1d3 doses can be gathered from any one tree with a Knowledge (nature), Profession (herbalist), or Wilderness Lore check (DC 16).

Other Plants of the Hornsaw

A number of other plants grow in the rich loam of the Hornsaw, curling up the root systems of the trees or rapidly filling in those areas where the great trees do not block the sunlight. Various ivies, ferns, and other creepers grow here, as well as wildflowers and prickly wild rose. In the forest's shadows and roots, lichens and fungi thrive on the rot that gathers there and grows strong. The Hornsaw's flowers and blossoms are often brilliantly colored, but many of them bear hidden thorns coated with flesh-irritating sap — even those plants that do not normally bear thorns in other places.

Monstrous Plants

Even the Hornsaw's plant life can present an active danger to the unprepared. The serpent root (see *Creature Collection Revised*) has spread to the rest of Ghelspad from its birthplace in the Hornsaw, and the gallows vine (see *Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie*) is prevalent as well.

The assassin vine (see *MM*), a favored cultivated plant of the Cult of Ancients, can be found here, often competing with the serpent vine for the same terrain, which leads to entire swathes of the Hornsaw that are nothing but layer after layer of choking vines intertwining with and desperately trying to strangle one another, while killing off all other life in the area.

The shambling mound and the tendriculos (see *MM*) can be encountered in the Hornsaw as well, though they are often either sickly and unhealthy from the forest's taint or strangely insane and rage-driven. Finally, a number of the sentient plant-women known as hamadryads inhabit the Hornsaw, though these creatures tend toward being reclusive and sometimes serve as the home to serpents.

Poisonous Worts

One of Mormo's names was Venom's Dame. As the titaness of poisons and venom, that her essence touched the home for the greatest number of poison-bearing plants in all Ghelspad seems perhaps only fitting.

The mannikin plant, which when harvested provides the poison known as greenblood oil, is quite prolific here, as is the deathblade fern, from which the deathblade poison is made. Some herbalists suggest that this poisonous quality was acquired when the roots of the Hornsaw's plants absorbed Mormo's blood like rainwater, and the number of poison-bearing roots lends support to this idea — bloodroot, malyss root, and terinav root among the most common of them. Certain blossoms, such as the blue whinnies, also bear poisons, as do certain photosensitive growths such as the id moss and striped toadstool. (The poisonous effects of the herbs mentioned in this paragraph can be found in the DMG, Chapter 3, "Poisons.")

Viper Spittle: A dark-green, nearly black fern with fronds forked like the tongue of an adder, the viper tongue fern is a source for a powerful poison. When properly prepared, viper tongue fern becomes viper spittle, a woody-tasting ingested poison that can be added unobtrusively to foods that include grains, from beers and ales to breads and porridge. Viper spittle causes loss of motor control and severe weakness in its victims:

Ingested: Fort DC 20; *Initial Damage:* 2d6 Str; *Secondary Damage:* 2d6 Str (a second Fortitude save must be made, or 1 point of this damage is permanent drain); *Price:* 500 gp.

Spider Moss: Growing around the roots of certain trees is the nearly-translucent spider moss, a naturally occurring moss that appears like nothing so much as strands of cob webbing. The touch of spider moss on insects and Diminutive animals can cause paralysis and loss of sensation for as long as contact is maintained; insects often land on the moss and are simply unable to move again, dying without sustenance and then rotting to provide the moss nutrients. Large clumps of this moss can be prepared into a sticky contact poison that causes confusion, loss of senses, and eventually unconsciousness.

Contact: Fort DC 18; *Initial Damage:* 1d3 Wis; *Secondary Damage:* 1d6 Wis + unconsciousness; *Price:* 800 gp.

Strange Berries and Flowers

Not all of the strange herbal phenomenon in the Hornsaw is poisonous: Mormo was also Queen of Witches and in her very essence writ the power of magic. Strange things such as bloodberries, dream poppies, and shriek flowers (see Chapter Three in *Wilderness & Wasteland*) are found in the Hornsaw, as are several breeds of lotuses, notably gold, blue (from which green lotus is harvested), red, and white.

Hornsaw sourberries: Though the sourberries of the Hornsaw are perfectly nutritious, they still carry some of the taint of Mormo's venom, which reacted with the berry-bush in odd ways, however.



Those who cast *goodberry* upon a Hornsaw sourberry create a natural poison resistant. Each such berry consumed grants a +1 bonus to saves against poison for 24 hours. Eating multiple berries does have a cumulative effect, though should the bonus ever exceed the consumer's Constitution modifier, the richness of the berries have overwhelmed the consumer, causing vomiting and a loss of the bonuses.

Serpentberry: This deep red berry is sweet to the taste and quite common in the Borderwood region, making it a tempting food source to the uninitiated. Unfortunately, eating these berries can have a disorienting effect and has in the past led to disaster. Anyone who consumes a serpentberry must make a Will save (DC 13). Failure indicates that the character will begin to walk directly toward the center of the Hornsaw, but think that he is actually walking in the same direction as he was before eating the berries. This effect lasts for 1d20 minutes per berry consumed. If dried, cooked, or fermented, serpentberries lose all their magical properties, and serpentberry wine is a common drink in the Hornsaw; occasionally, it is even exported, being highly prized at tables in Calastia and Vesh.

Serpentberries resemble several other species of normal edible plants, but can be spotted with a successful Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (plants), or Profession (herbalist) check (DC 10). Those with Knowledge (Hornsaw) can easily identify serpentberries — for them the DC is only 5.

River Plants

Numerous mundane plants that grow alongside the mighty Broadreach River. A few, of course, are dangerous — most notably the bizarre plant known as the wistful reed.

Wistful Reeds: Named for the lovely wistful sighing these water plants emit when the wind rustles them, the ordinarily harmless wistful reeds can be extremely dangerous if cut or broken by a boat or careless traveler. Whenever a wistful reed is cut or otherwise damaged, it sprays a pleasantly tangy mist into the air. Anyone within 5 feet must make a Will save (DC 13) or be seized by the desire to plunge into the river and hold himself underwater. Affected characters may take no other action than rushing into the water to submerge themselves fully. They will stay beneath the river's surface until just before their lungs give out (see DMG, Chapter Three, sidebar: *The Drowning Rule*), at which time they may roll a second Will save, also at DC 13. If this one is also failed, characters stay underwater and begin to drown. Characters who make the first Will save are completely unaffected, while characters who make the second come to their senses just in time to rise to the surface and suffer no damage. If the GM rules that the water is sufficiently deep, these characters may

still need to make a Swim check. Affected characters pulled forcibly from the water before the second Will save snap out of the reeds' spell immediately, with no ill effects. After the second Will save, characters are unconscious and drowning. If a character survives, she will have no memory of the episode.

Animals of the Hornsaw

Like the plants of the forest, Mormo's destruction inexorably changed the Hornsaw's animals. Many species of animals simply died out with the onset of the cataclysmic flood of viscera; many others have effectively become extinct in the interim, either changed forever by the taint or killed off by the far more vicious denizens of the Hornsaw that came to dwell there.

Mammals

The Hornsaw's mammals are similar to those found elsewhere, with two notable exceptions. These creatures are very vicious and swift to react violently, even normally timid herbivores — for only those animals that can meet potential threats with violence survive to breed. Secondly, many of the Hornsaw's mammals manifest mange-like bald patches. Those who study these patches see that they are not the kinds of skin afflictions that cause mange in animals — rather, the fur has fallen away to reveal paper-thin, nearly translucent pebbly scales beneath, similar to those found on newborn snakes.

The standard small mammals that one can normally find in a forest are present in the Hornsaw: voles, shrews, squirrels, and field mice. These small mammals are hunted by predators such as wolves, wild dogs, lynxes, and other hunting cats, as well as various raptors. The Hornsaw is also home to the rare Tanil's fox, which is more than capable of surviving the forest's dangers.

Larger prey animals are also present, but as noted above, they tend toward more violent dispositions. The stags and boars of the Hornsaw should not be hunted carelessly, and all too often hunters suddenly find trails looping back as the animals circle around to attack from behind. The Hornsaw's spirit has warped the instinct to remain in herds or packs for survival. Herds of herbivores are actually known to attack aggressors *en masse*.

The Hornsaw is also home to a number of truly massive, monstrous beasts such as dire animals and goblin bears. The last known emperor stag (see **Creature Collection Revised**) seen anywhere near the Hornsaw was observed standing on a hillside just north of the forest, watching as it was transformed. On the day that the sun rose on the Broadreach but set on the Hornsaw, the great creature turned its back on the changed wood and walked away toward the Ganjus.

Reptiles

The number of reptiles in the Hornsaw has swollen far beyond pre-Divine War populations. The majority of these creatures are snakes of all sizes, from harmless serpents to massive constrictors (never seen in Ghelspad before Mormo's demise). The majority of these serpents are various adders and vipers, though some of them grow to truly massive sizes, such as the blade hood (see **Creature Collection Revised**).

It would seem that the serpents of the Hornsaw are attracted by a number of things. For one, during the battles that led up to her destruction, Mormo summoned and formed a body from thousands of serpents; during these confrontations, she was sometimes forced to release her control over the snakes, allowing them to fall back to their normal states, sending them fleeing without returning them to their original homes. Undoubtedly, many of the snakes simply remained behind, carving new places in the forest's ecology in the days following her destruction, when they were strengthened while other animals were weakened by the exposure to Mormo's viscera.

The Hornsaw's serpents seem attracted to the sinkholes of Mormo's power known as serpentholds that often mark where a significant piece of her viscera landed. In these places, the serpents gather in the writhing hordes that are usually indicative of a breeding season among the vipers. The various servitors of Mormo consider these places to be very holy and often construct serpent pits in which the serpents might be gathered for the construction of serpent golems as well as for the breeding of massive serpents in the service of the various cults.

Serpents, however, are not the only reptiles that inhabit the Hornsaw. Lizards of all types, from innocuous geckos to massive mock dragons, range throughout the forest as well, as does the more dangerous hookwing. The Broadreach River, particularly its wilder lower reaches, serves as home to a number of the mighty rumblers.

Birds

The birds of the Hornsaw range from small, brightly colored songbirds to the mighty raptors of the area, such as owls, hawks, and falcons. On many levels, the birds appear the least affected by the changes to the Hornsaw, likely because many of them are simply not native to the area and so tend to avoid it. For the most part, those songbirds found in the forest are usually on migration patterns elsewhere; frankly, most of the native birds of the Broadreach died with Mormo's demise, and the number of serpents in the Hornsaw capable of eating smaller birds makes it an unlikely place for them to settle. Several raptors do dwell in the deeps of the forest, however, especially those owls and hawks that dine on snakes and vipers. Perhaps the mightiest among these rap-

Poisonous Spirit

The serpents of the Hornsaw are known for their extraordinary virulence; in game terms, the poison save DC of all serpents or serpent-like creatures (including ophidian monsters such as nagas) from the Hornsaw is increased by +2. This increase applies only to poisons that the creature itself creates, rather than any venom that may simply be used by the creature (such as asaathi and their serpentsteel weapons).

Druids postulate that this virulence has nothing to do with the creatures themselves; indeed, those serpents taken from the forest lose the potency of their venom. Rather, is the druids believe that the ambient nature of the Hornsaw causes this effect, as the spirit of Mormo strengthens those aspects of her former existence in an effort to rebuild a body for herself.

Other poisonous creatures, which grew to strength on the blood of Mormo after her destruction by feeding on the vile essence of poison that was the titaness, also tend to be very venomous. Increase the poison save DCs of all non-serpent creatures by +1.

tors is the scythe falcon. Owls are scarce, for many of their number perished fighting Mormo under their king the wise Otillos, who went on to become the herald of the god Erias.

One notable population of birds is corvids: many crebains, crows, and ravens of all sizes occupy the Hornsaw, especially in the vicinity of Annot Kalambath. The corpses that hang from the withered branches of the Broadreach's once mighty Grandfather Tree draw them, and something about Mormo's power keeps them here. Indeed, druid historians note that at one time the raven was another of Mormo's animals, but her predilection for the use of serpents during the Divine War led to most scholars associating her with serpents exclusively. Most other carrion birds can be found in the Hornsaw as well, with one exception: most vultures are chased from the demesnes of the Hornsaw by the corvids. Those who understand Belsameth's association with the vulture tend to nod their heads knowingly.

Insects

In the aftermath of Mormo's destruction, when gore still dripped thickly from choked branches, swarms of insects were attracted to the area's charnel stench. Eggs were laid in the pools of filthy ichor, and the resultant larvae consumed the very essence of Mormo, growing fat and bloated on the power therein. As such, the various insects of the Hornsaw tend to be very persistent and strong — both the monstrous and the normal variety.

Insects in the Hornsaw come in two varieties: the voracious and the venomous. Those insects that consume blood do so hungrily, in a near frenzy of feeding. Even the normal blood drinking insects that one might find in a forest — horseflies, mosquitoes, ticks, fleas — are notably persistent and ravenous, sometimes drinking so much blood (if they are not stopped) that they simply cannot move or even rupture their own abdomens in the process. Those rare few creatures that are well adapted to the Hornsaw and its taint, such as the gore beetle, bloodfly, and blood moth rarely demonstrate these excessive behaviors.

The ever-present swarms of these blood-drinking vermin certainly take their toll on those traveling through the Hornsaw. While the forest's various denizens have developed ways to keep the creatures out of their lairs (or are not particularly bothered by them), those moving through the Hornsaw often end up covered in blotchy red welts and weeping sores.

In game terms, for every day of travel through the Hornsaw without some kind of protection from blood-sucking insects, travelers must make a Fortitude save (DC 8) or take a single point of temporary Constitution damage. Note that this damage cannot be healed overnight as normal for ability damage unless appropriate protections are taken against the insects because they continue to bite during the night as well. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) will allow the character to protect himself from these insects; for every point rolled greater than the DC, the character may help protect one other person. This check must be made each day. Note that the above rules assume day-long, persistent insects, rather than true swarming activity.

The Hornsaw's poisonous insects are also quite dangerous. These creatures tend toward viciousness and swarming activity. Additionally, they tend to be more poisonous than the kinds of creatures found elsewhere (see the "Poisonous Spirit" sidebar). Various swarms occur here, from wasps to the far more dangerous blood moths. Additionally, various monstrous vermin can be encountered here, as can berserker wasps and cathedral beetles. For more information on various kinds of swarms, see *Wilderness & Wasteland* for details.

Monsters of the Hornsaw

For all of the "interesting" evolutionary and ecological features of the Hornsaw, no one can deny that the place derives its reputation primarily from the fell beasts that roam its reaches.

Aberrations

The Hornsaw's twisted and unwholesome nature is reflected in a number of the dangerous beasts that dwell here, from the gibbering mouthers, bloodmen,

and bone lords to the incredibly dangerous narleth and chuul. The deadly blood reapers are especially common in the forest's depths, and it is said that some actually serve the hags and the Blood Crone as soldiers, scouts, and raiders. Perhaps the most notable aberrations of the Hornsaw are the nagas: every known breed of naga has been spotted here at one time or another, save perhaps the guardian naga.

Beasts

Once mundane animals, or at least of animal intelligence, the various beasts of the Hornsaw inspire fear in most who are forced to travel these woods. Spire wyverns, dread ravens, and stirges haunt the air, while grippetts, hill howlers, and giant wolf spiders often watch for prey from the branches of trees. In addition, blood mares, low gorgons, iron tuskers, ankhegs, bulettes, gray renders, and owlbeats all present dangers here.

Constructs

The sheer amount of magic that haunts the Hornsaw almost guarantees that someone will have the knowledge to create and unleash these animated horrors into the world. A myriad of golems have been seen in these woods, including bone, wood, serpent, and venom golems — and not all of them under the control of some magician. Additionally, servants of Mormo create the totems of Mormo and infuse them with powerful spells, turning them loose to follow the strange primal commands that drive them, gained from the essence of Mormo within the very loam and sticks that make up a totem's body.

Dragons

Dragons are thankfully rare in the Hornsaw. Such was not always the case, though; once the Broadreach hosted a number of great drakes. The remains of these dragons — along with the psychically and magically disturbed detritus of the Divine War — have at times fused together into wrack dragons, especially the horrific woodwrack dragons. In modern days, though, even these wrack dragons are rare; about the only dragons yet surviving in the Hornsaw are the wyverns, possibly degenerate cousins of true wyrms.

Fey

The fey of the Hornsaw have become as tainted as the wood in which they dwell. Murdersprites, dananshee, pilfer sprites, and sundered women all haunt these woods, inflicting their inexpressible rage on those unfortunate enough to cross paths with them. Other fey dwell here, some of whom even managed to resist the taint to their spiritual source: river nymphs, dryads, nymphs, satyrs, and all manner of sprites. Unique to the forest are the two breeds of avixes: the ordinary avix, who work closely with the Broadreach elves, and their deadly enemies the serpent avixes (see the Appendix).



Humanoids

The true evils of the Hornsaw are found among these beings. Most often, humanoids cannot claim the same excuses for their atrocities that other creatures might: these creatures are given the same will as all other beings, and they simply choose to work evil in the world. From the lowliest goblins to the morgaunts and asaathi, the Hornsaw contains beasts of which one must be cautious.

Perhaps best known of these beasts are the hags. Several breeds of hag dwell in the Hornsaw, especially among the Dar al Annot, gathered under the banner of the Blood Crone. Cavern hags seek for the viscera of Mormo that has sunk beneath the crust of the diseased earth. Storm hags call up great and powerful gales with which to fight their battles, and the moon hags bring confusion and madness to those who cross them.

Magical Beasts

All manner of strangeness dwells within the Hornsaw. Perhaps the best known of the magical beasts of these woods is the Hornsaw unicorn, for which this forest is named. Yet more await: basilisks, displacer beasts, behir, digesters, krenshar, wyrmspawn, cockatrices, and worgs all reside in the Hornsaw. Phase spiders and spider eaters are known to haunt those areas under the influence of witchspiders, as well. The hex creatures of the hags are often sighted here, though most of them simply watch, reporting their findings directly to their twisted mistresses.

Not all the Hornsaw's beasts are malevolent, however. Giant owls can be found here, as well as dream snakes, both signs that lead some to believe that Erias holds some kind of stake in the forest's survival. Pegasi were, until recently, unknown here, but the return of the Broadreach elves brought with it a reappearance of these majestic winged beasts.

Monstrous Humanoids

These creatures, too, are threats to those who would venture into the Hornsaw. Though some monstrous humanoids (such as the charfiend) do not overtly serve Mormo, most of the creatures here do: from high gorgons and Red Witch slitheren (as well as their more mundane ratman cousins) to medusas and the creatures that either serve the hags (such as the haglings) or were once hags themselves (such as the dark womb).

Outsiders

Mormo's taint draws even creatures from other planes to the Hornsaw. This forest has known the tread of such monstrosities as howlers, ravid, shadow mastiffs, vargouille, and yeth hounds. Yet the gods, too, have sent their servitors to this place, and some of them have stayed to carry out their masters' (or their own) ends: the savant hydra of Chardun and ferals of Vangal fall into this category.

Undead

The undead of the Hornsaw frequently come from the Specters' Wood, a place of some strange energy. Some say that if the rest of the Hornsaw is

Table 2-1:
Hornsaw Forest Wilderness Lore Tasks

These tasks can be achieved with a successful Wilderness Lore check in addition to the tasks listed in the *PHB*, Chapter 4, "Wilderness Lore."

DC	Task
10	Get along in the wild. Move up to one-half your overland speed while hunting and foraging (no food or water supplies needed). You can provide food and water for one other person for every 2 points by which your check result exceeds 10. Identify potential deadfalls.
12	Tell what the weather will be like 24 hours in advance.
15	Identify forest fires in the distance, shriek flowers, shard trees, slime-root blighted deadfalls. Provide yourself protection against insects for one day of travel through the Hornsaw. You can provide protection for one other person for every point by which your check result exceeds 15.
20	Identify disease carrying vermin, bloodberries, dream poppies. Identify a serpenthoid.

tainted by what Mormo was during her existence, the Specters' Wood is where her death is echoed. All manner of undead abound, from memory-eaters, allips, shadows, and skeletons to ghouls, ghosts, mohrgs, specters, wights, and wraiths. Zombies, ghosts, chardun-slain, bonewings, and corpse whisperers can also be found here.

As well, the necromancers of Glivid-Autel are responsible for much of the undead activity in the forest, for they often send hordes of their skeletal or zombie servants to seize slaves or experimental subjects. So far, the necromancer city's isolation and near-unassailable position have kept it safe, but the Blood Crone and other foes continue to plot the necromancers' downfall.

Other Monsters

There are other kinds of creatures within the Hornsaw, from the bane clouds and their strange association with acid shamblers, to the stick giants and forest walkers that once served Denev and her elves here. Trolls, lycanthropes, undead ooze, and phasms have all also been seen here.

Survival in the Hornsaw

Surviving a trip through the Hornsaw can often mean far more than simply surviving the creatures that one might encounter. Forest fires, deadfalls, and insects — even the simple task of finding food and water — can all lead to the demise of those who are unprepared for the rigors of this wood.

Weather in the Hornsaw

The weather in the Hornsaw can turn in an instant, though those skilled in Wilderness Lore (DC 12) can foretell these changes to some extent. The table below may be used to determine what the weather will be like on a day-to-day basis; see the *DMG*, Chapter 3, "Weather Hazards," for more information on these entries.

Hazards of the Hornsaw

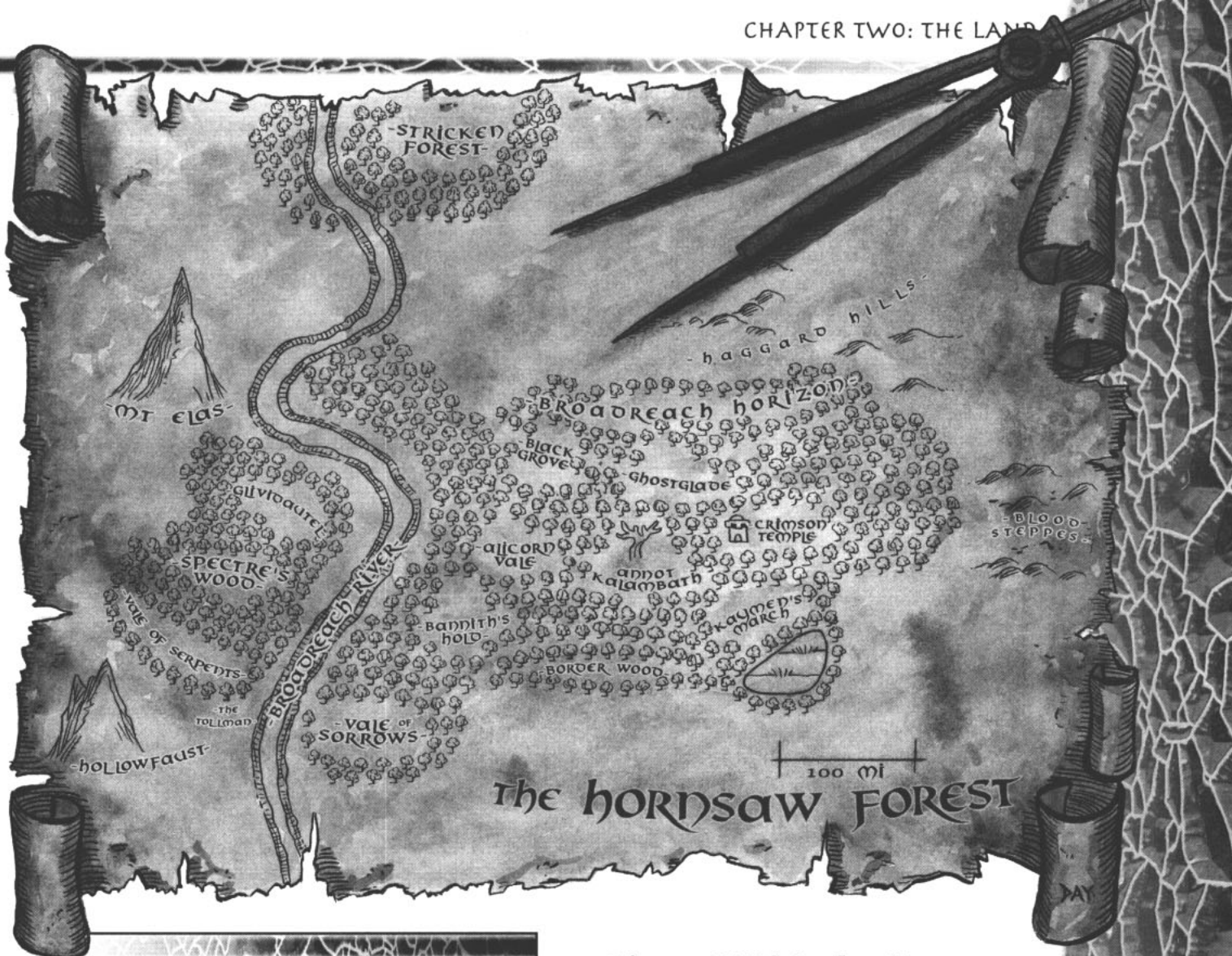
A number of hazards await in the Hornsaw, and not all of them come from monsters or adversaries. The very nature of the Hornsaw is dangerous — most forests hold ample danger for the unwary, but such places cannot compare to a forest touched by the dying curse of a titaness of serpents, magic, and venom.

Fang-leaves (Hazard; CR 3): A strange affliction only seen in the Hornsaw, fang-leaf causes trees to develop wicked thorns at the very tips of their leaves that drip with a venomous sap, like the hollow fangs of an adder. Those brushing through the overhanging of a tree inflicted with fang-leaf are invariably stung. Those so struck must resist the poison of the tree, which is treated as giant wasp poison (see the *DMG*, Chapter 3, "Poisons").

Slime-root blight (Hazard; CR varies): Slime-root blight causes the roots of a tree to decay rapidly, turning them into a slimy morass insufficient to hold up the tree any longer. In game terms, it turns perfectly normal, healthy seeming trees into deadfalls. The Reflex save DC to avoid damage from the deadfall is increased by +2. Just to recognize these signs requires a Wilderness Lore check (DC 15). The DC for this hazard is the same as the deadfall, with a +1 bonus for the difficulty in avoiding it. (See *Wilderness & Wasteland*, page 26, for more information on deadfalls.)

Table 2-2: Hornsaw Forest Weather

D%	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
01-70	Moderate, calm	Warm, calm	Moderate, calm	Cool, calm
71-80	Heat wave (01-40) or cold snap (41-00)	Heat wave (01-70) or cold snap (71-00)	Heat wave (01-60) or cold snap (61-00)	Heat wave (01-30) or cold snap (31-00)
81-90	Rain	Rain	Rain	Snow
91-99	Thunderstorm (01-80) or snowstorm (81-00)	Thunderstorm	Thunderstorm	Snowstorm
00	Windstorm	Windstorm	Windstorm	Blizzard



Other Hazards

The hazards from *Wilderness & Wasteland* can also be used for the Hornsaw Forest. The following hazards (noted by CR as well as page number in the book) are particularly appropriate:

- Bats (CR 1/2; page 19)
- Bloodstools (CR 3; page 44)
- Blood Moth Swarm (CR 5; page 10)
- Blood-sucking Vermin (CR 2; page 47)
- Carnivorous Beetles (CR 7; page 19): this hazard can be used to represent any of a number of carnivorous insects that dwell within the Hornsaw.
 - Deadfalls (CR 1-8; page 26)
 - Dream Poppies (CR 2; page 24): apparently acquired from their cousins in the Ganjus, the Broadreach elves have begun cultivating these flowers as a form of passive defense for their territories.
 - Forest Fire (CR 7; page 26): these are actually rare in the Hornsaw, though they rage monstrously when they do occur.
 - Shard Trees (CR 5; page 24)
 - Shriek Flowers (CR 3; page 24)
 - Stinging Vermin (CR 3; page 47)

Places Within the Hornsaw

The Hornsaw holds a number of notable places within its borders, from sinkholes of absolute terror to the rare oasis of peace.

Alicorn Vale

Legends of the Broadreach tell of the Graveyard of the Unicorns, where the eldest of unicorns congregated when their time in service to Denev was over and died, their bones protected by a guardian spirit from those who might try and find the place and steal the alicorns.

The Alicorn Vale yet exists, though like all places in the Broadreach it was inevitably touched by Mormo's destruction. Mormo's death shriek made the guardian spirit that acted as the Vale's defender unwholesome and corrupt. Its vital essence was ripped asunder and the bones of generations of unicorns disturbed.

Now, the Alicorn Vale still serves its purpose, but the bones that lie atop the osseous mounds here are the bones of Hornsaw unicorns. Occasionally, a visitor is permitted to come here, especially

if accompanied by one of the unicorns, but for the most part, it is absolute death for those who are not so invited.

The guardian spirit, unable to regain its strength, drew upon the remnant magics in the bones of the unicorns to restitch its essence together, resulting in an abomination driven by madness and a single-minded rage to defend the vale at all costs. Those who have seen it and lived say that it is a beast similar to the bone lord found elsewhere in the Scarred Lands (see the **Creature Collection Revised**), save that it is many times the size of a normal bone lord and appears to have the ability to teleport from place to place within the Vale, much as the unicorns of Denev were said to do.

Annot Kalambath

From nearly anywhere in the entirety of the Hornsaw that one looks, the deathly tree-citadel of the Dar al Annot rises on the horizon, a sickly clawed hand reaching skyward as though it would rend the very heavens in the throes of its suffering. Many have seen this place, if only from afar, but few know its secrets, for it guards them well.

Once the tree-citadel capitol of the Broadreach Elves, Mormo's viscera made this tree dark and twisted. Where once its broad boughs supported the interwoven wicker-like construction of the Broadreach Kingdom's palace halls, the warped branches of Annot Kalambath now swarm with fat crows and other carrion birds that feed on the corpses that swing in the charnel breeze, hung from the highest points of Annot Kalambath as a warning to those foolhardy enough to dare its demesne.

Though the Broadreach elves (like the elves of Vera-Tre, who shared their knowledge of tree-dwelling with their cousins to the west) would never have dreamed of actually harming the tree in their residence, the Dar al Annot hold no such compunctions — assuming the tree even lives still. Like maggots in the flesh of the newly dead, the witches and hags of the sisterhood have bored dwellings into the black tree's very surface.

Around Annot Kalambath

The tree-citadel of the Dar al Annot is patrolled by all manner of foulness, from serpent golems and Mormo's witches to the slitheren and asaathi that serve the various coveys of the Dar al Annot. Serpents of all kinds are also attracted to this place, one of the mightiest of serpentholds on the face of Ghelspad. The terrain on which Annot Kalambath sits is much lower than the surrounding forest; the tree itself rests in the center of a bowl-like impression that once served to channel the fallen rain to the thirsty roots of the great tree-citadel.

This very same lay of the land served to make this citadel a place of corruption, for the depression in which it rests became the final resting place for much of Mormo's blood and gore in the wake of her destruction. A sickly green pall often rests around the citadel, a miasma that drives serpents into near frenzies. In addition to the normal beasts of the Hornsaw and the Dar al Annot, Annot Kalambath attracts all manner of ophidian monstrosities.

The Mightiest of Serpentholds

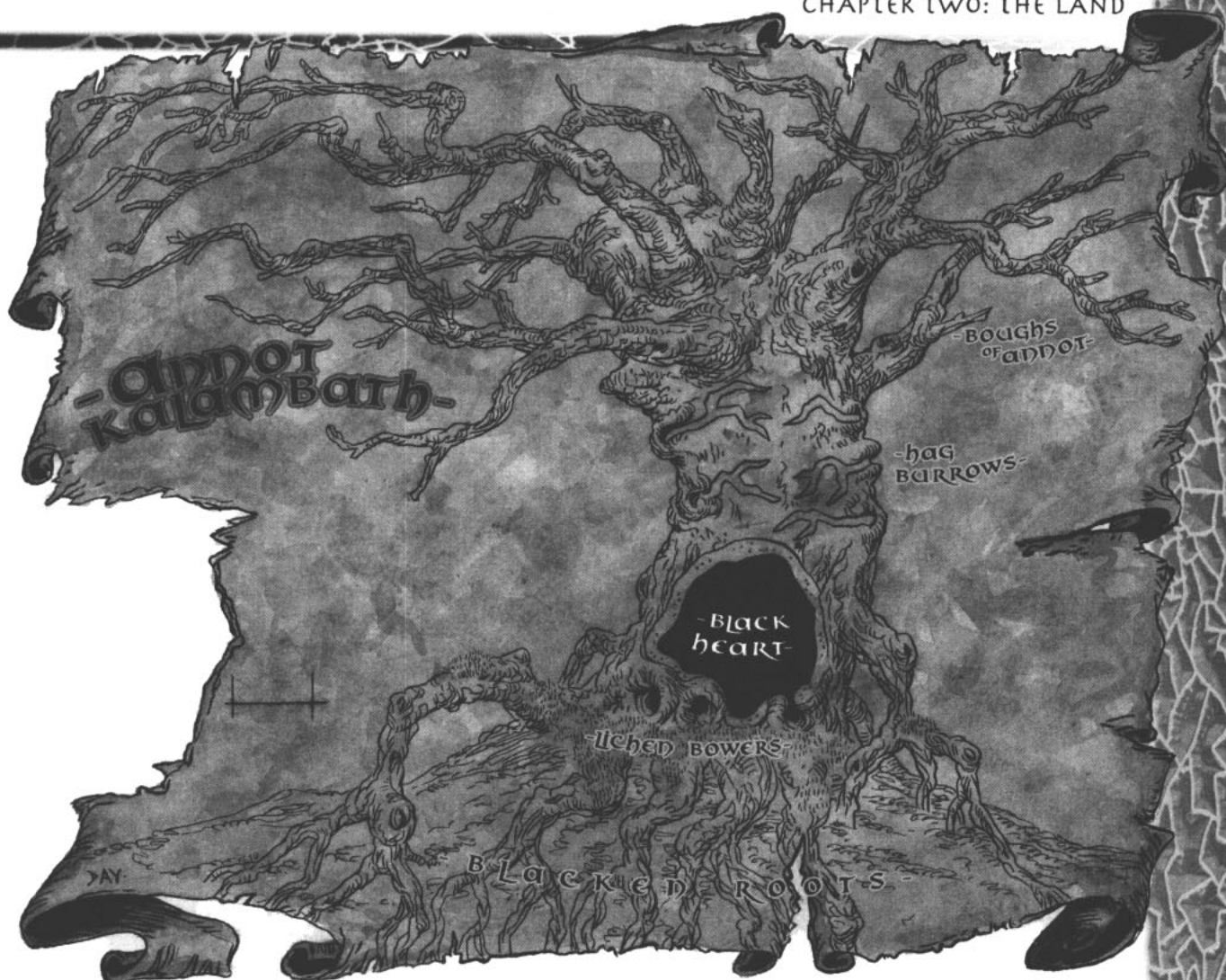
The Annot Kalambath is arguably the mightiest of all serpentholds in the Scarred Lands (see **The Divine and the Defeated**, page 210, for details on serpentholds). A place of power nearly without compare, it possesses a number of unique traits:

- As a place of power, druids of Mormo may actually feed their True Rituals with part of the ineffable power of the Serpentmother that has seeped into this place. In game terms, druids who worship Mormo pay only 75% of the XP cost for True Rituals cast here.
- Poisons have their resistance DC increased by +4.
- Spells that summon serpents call twice the number of serpents as normal (as per normal serpentholds).
- Spells that inflict poison effects or acid damage have their spell save DC increased by +4.

The Blackenroots

Even the massive roots that anchor the Annot Kalambath to the putrid earth in which it sits are not let alone. Extensive burrows exist within and beneath these roots. A seemingly endless array of cellars, dungeons, and caverns have been hollowed out of the great tree's underside, which sits as sturdily as ever it did in the times before the Divine War. In essence, the Dar al Annot has co-opted a variety of subterranean tunnel systems and caverns for a myriad of uses — prisons, laboratories, mortuaries, breeding pens for slaves, slitheren warrens, and the like. Most of these constructions are solitary; that is, they each have their own entrances, and few of them connect.

In recent days, a company of adventures seeking some prize or another violated one of these subterranean mazes. The precise nature of what the adventurers took is unknown, save that its loss infuriated the Blood Crone (who was absent from the Annot Kalambath at the time of this theft). Three new corpses — the bodies of those responsible for maintaining the security of the tree-citadel in the Blood Crone's absence — are now spiked above the entry to this treasure-lair, animated by arcane powers and clawing hungrily at any who dare to near it.



The Lichen Bowers

These bowers, once made of the unique “wicker” crafted out of yet-living branches, are no longer the gentle resting place of the lower courts. Rather, this construction, which clings to the base of the Annot Kalambath like unwholesome bloated fungus to the roots of a normal tree, has grown over with tough, thorny vines and dusty lichens and molds. These small, curving dwellings now serve as the homes to many of the Dar al Annot’s lesser witches and servants. Most of these bowers simply function as the entrances to deeper lairs, carved out of the sturdy base of the Annot Kalambath.

The Black Heart

Just above the arch of the foundation upon which the lichen bowers rest are the entrances that lead to the hollowed out heart of Annot Kalambath, the Black Heart. The entrances here are massive, large enough to permit flying creatures easy access and guarded by both spell and beast. These entrances are not accessible from the bowers below, but rather only by the winding staircases that spiral around the putrid trunk of the tree-citadel.

The Black Heart’s ceiling arches upward for quite a distance, harboring all manner of perches and ledges for the various creatures of flight that serve the Dar al Annot. In the center of the chamber rises a great dais, hewn from the blackened heartwood of the great tree-citadel. It is upon this dais that the leaders of the Dar al Annot gather to debate their strategies, speak to their assembled followers, and threaten one another.

This dais itself is in actuality a capped well or cistern wherein is stored all the viscera of Mormo found to date by the Dar al Annot (save, of course, any that particularly enterprising members may have put to their own uses). The top of the dais is a cap upon the well and in its center rises a wooden statue of Mormo in her serpentine glory, mouth hungrily agape. When new viscera of the Queen of Hags is found, it is poured or forced into the statue’s maw, to slide down the false gullet therein and join the putrid, stinking mass within the cistern. Rumors suggest that some serpentine mass dwells within the well-dais, prepared to rise up and defend the coagulate from those who would steal it — a serpentine mass that the Blood Crone is known to have spoken with reverentially in the past.

The Blood Crone often spends time here, as well as the myriad leaders, witches, and hags of the Dar al Annot. At any time, a number of servitors of the witches of Annot Kalambath may also be found here, from hex creatures and viper familiars watching for interesting goings-on for their mistresses to haglings and other servitors prepared to defend the well-dais.

The Hag Burrows

Like wood-worms delving deep into the heart of an otherwise healthy tree, the hags of the Dar al Annot have burrowed themselves far into the heartwood of Annot Kalambath. The hags have claimed this area for themselves, viciously attacking any other witch who would dare to claim it for herself without undergoing the Elixir of Metamorphosis. Some of the burrows here are the demesnes of single hags seeking solitude in which to work their curses, transformations, and hex-craft. Others serve as the burrows for the various coveys of hags.

The Boughs of Annot Kalambath

The boughs of Annot Kalambath are a charnel canopy, made up of reaching, dead branches (most of which are as wide around as entire trees) from which hang corpses like worm-eaten fruit, waiting for a strong wind to drive them to the ground below. Corvid beasts dwell here, from dread ravens and dire ravens to the monstrous crebain-druids of Mormo that sometimes meet in these boughs.

Bannith's Hold

The keep of an adventuring company based out of the Broadreach in pre-Divine War days, Bannith's Hold is once again home to a party of adventurers, the Ophidian Guild. A group of Mormo-touched adventurers, the Ophidian Guild is not, as a group, particularly interested in worshipping the Serpent Mother, much less seeing her resurrected. Rather, it is a company of outcasts who see the Queen of Hags as a source of power — power that they crave.

The Ophidian Guild

A company of adventurers drawn together by a mutual immersion in the powers of either Mormo or simply the Hornsaw, the Ophidian Guild takes advantage of its image as "titanspawn" to frighten others into doing its bidding. The Guild has come into conflict with some of the other power groups of the Hornsaw, but it represents a potent enough force (between the personal power wielded by the Guild and the number of followers gained through the Leadership feats of several members) to be left pretty much to its own ends.

Amabria Venomfang (human female, Drd8, NE): A druid of Mormo, Amabria originally discovered the essence of Mormo residing in the cellars of Bannith's Hold and its burgeoning power. A woman with contacts among the asaatti of the area, Amabria is usually accompanied by multiple serpent animal companions.

Jeraphus (wood elf male, Rgr7/Hsn2, CE): One of the rare Hornsaw sentinels, Jeraphus often spends his time patrolling the Hornsaw around the Keep. Accompanied by Bonewind, a Hornsaw unicorn, Jeraphus is a strong warrior on behalf of the Guild, and many of the creatures of the area know to fear his approach. Jeraphus refuses to speak of his past, but the Guild generally agrees he was probably cast out of Vera-Tre for his reverence of Mormo, as his hatred of most wood elves demonstrates.

Kallian (halfling male, Rog3/Drd4, N): The halfling druid Kallian is something of a mystery to the others of his adventuring company. He is plainly a worshipper and druid of Mormo; additionally, he seems to suffer from occasional visions that leave his head aching and nose bloody. His prophecies involve the rebirth of Mormo, and he has in the past ventured among the other worshippers of Mormo in the Hornsaw from time to time to deliver them his visions.

Syrallyn (human female, Sor8, CN): Syrallyn discovered her predilection for sorcery early in her life as a tribal Albadian. Sadly, her tribe's elders discovered the source of that power shortly thereafter: Syrallyn was a witch of the old blood, holding some of the witch-power of Mormo within her veins. Unwilling to permit this legacy to taint their tribe, the elders cast Syrallyn out. She has since joined the Ophidian Guild and puts her magical prowess to good use. She is covered in tattoos, though she takes pains to hide her outcast mark.

Zaria al'Ayasha (human female, Rog5/Los4, LE): A Zathiskite woman, Zaria was raised in slavery. When she was young, she was purchased by a noblewoman who practiced strange arts of alchemy and poison. The noblewoman was harsh but fair and doted on the young girl; when the noblewoman's husband accused her of being a worshipper of Mormo, Zaria's testimony in court saved her. Impressed with the young girl's loyalty, the noblewoman taught Zaria her own arts of assassination and intrigue, eventually inducting her into the ranks of the ladies of serpents, Mormo's elite assassins. Zaria was released from slavery after her initiation and became an adventurer.

Notes: Jeraphus is a member of the Hornsaw sentinel (Hsn) prestige class, (see page 91). Syrallyn possesses the scion feat Witch of the Old Blood, from **Relics and Rituals II: Lost Lore**. Zaria is a member of the lady of serpents (Los) prestige class (**Relics and Rituals II: Lost Lore**, page 34).

The keep itself is built over a serpenthole and is invariably crawling with the seemingly innumerable serpents that tend to infest such a place. The Guild does not see this situation as a hindrance; in fact, it derives chortling delight when one of its number is bitten by one of the serpents on those rare hot days that drive the serpents into a frenzy. The deepest cellars of the keep now function as a blood-soaked ritual space for Amabria and Kallian, the Guild's druids.

The "Between" Regions

The Scorpion and Wolverine clans are the only two whose movements and true familiarity with the Hornsaw Forest actually span all three of the regions known as the Elven Lands. Every year, both clans travel in a wide circuit that traverses each region. These regions are not connected to one another by safe or elf-guarded territory, however, and the nomadic clans must make their way through some of the worst areas of the Hornsaw to complete their annual circuit.

Because of the great dangers, the nomadic clans rarely rest long in any one place between elf-watched territories, so encountering them there is unlikely except for very brief windows. The narrow finger of woodland that separates the Broadreach Horizon from the Broadreach River sees Clan Scorpion passing through in the first 10-12 days of Corot and the first 10-12 days of Chardot. Clan Wolverine might be found there only in the last week and a half of Vangalot or the last week and a half of Corer. The much larger region between the Broadreach Horizon and the Border Wood takes Clan Scorpion close to the entire months of Vangalot and Corer to traverse, while Clan Wolverine makes the same treks in Corot and Chardot.

Outside those fleeting windows, during which the "between" regions briefly achieve something vaguely resembling security, the areas quickly return to normal. The efforts of the nomadic elves keep large groups and nests of titanspawn and Mormo's faithful from settling or entrenching themselves there, but other than such efforts these regions are as dangerous as anywhere else in the Hornsaw.

The only way the elves could ever hope to take and keep these regions as safe or as elven lands is if they could find enough people to settle and guard them year round. In fact, one of the many reasons the Broadreach elves give for their obsessive reverence for mothers is their hope that such reverence will ensure their people of many children in coming generations, eventually swelling populations enough to expand their territory. In the meantime, for a few months a year one can expect these stretches of forest to be a tiny bit less lethal.

The Black Grove

The Black Grove is a small grove of trees overgrown with black-red berry choking vines and all manner of poisonous blossoms. Only the occasional sound of something scaled slithering among the grass and roots of the oaks here drowns out the buzz of poisonous insects.

The Black Grove actually lies within the domain of the Broadreach elves, who have positioned guardians at its borders with orders to slay anything ophidian that attempts entry. Regardless, its depths are invariably haunted by serpentine things. The elves seek a way somehow to cleanse the taint of Mormo from the place, in hopes that success will take the first step toward cleansing the Broadreach as a whole.

The Border Wood

This region is among the safest places in the Hornsaw Forest. Whether because of sheer luck or because it lies between woods and steppes, where the trees grow less thickly (and tend to be neither intelligent nor evil), the Border Wood simply has avoided the full effects of Mormo's corruption.

If one counts evil titanspawn as inhabitants, the Border Wood is also — oddly enough — the most sparsely populated section of the forest. It can claim no cities or villages of any race, though the few settlers and homesteaders in the area do converge to trade with each other and with the nomadic Broadreach elves twice a year in a large clearing in the northern Border Woods typically referred to as Woodmoot.

These homesteaders are mostly of human and halfling stock, and as far as the Wolverine and Scorpion elven clans can determine, there are less than 150 of them total in the entire region, though living as far apart and being as antisocial as most of them are, making an accurate accounting of their populations proves difficult. Certainly, the chaotic Scorpion and Wolverine clans feel no inclination to keep track of them all.

Many homesteaders are refugees from Calastian lands, preferring to endure the harsh wilderness of the Border Wood rather than the laws and practices of nations loyal to King Virduk. These folk have endured much hardship at the hands of civilization and tend to be highly distrustful of other members of the divine races. Others are die-hard elven loyalists who have lived in the forest for generations and intend to do so until the end of time, come Virduk or the Blood Crone. These hearty woodspeople tend to be a bit more hospitable to outsiders, but still quite wary. With either type of homesteader, however, once a person proves herself trustworthy, she has earned a loyal — if rough mannered — friend and ally for life.

In addition to the significantly more natural state of the Border Wood, the region is also patrolled twice a year by bands of Broadreach elves (Clan Scorpion in

fall and Clan Wolverine in spring) for dangerous and evil creatures that might threaten the healthy natural life of the woods. During these patrol seasons, the population of the Border Wood multiplies to a total of about 750 inhabitants, 80% of whom are fierce and tattooed elves. Unless they hear of a specific threat such as a marauding monster or titanspawn attack, the elves usually remain in the northern part of the Border Wood only until the time comes to return to the Broadreach Horizon for the summer or winter. These patrols provide isolated elven communities with news, trade, and defense, making them invaluable to the survival of elven society in the forest.

In the southern Border Wood, even without the regular patrols of the Broadreach elves, life is still relatively safe and ordinary, largely due to the Wood's proximity to the Heteronomy of Virduk. In spite of their other faults, the Calastian Hegemony's armies are scrupulous about purging the region of anything that could prove dangerous to their people and lands.

In an attempt to establish further the safety and order of the Border Wood's southernmost region, rumors say that King Virduk is actually sponsoring a continent-wide search for the scions of noble families who dwelt in the southern Hornsaw Forest before the Divine War. Hearsay would have it that Calastian messengers have been dispatched to round up said scions and return them to their ruined ancestral homes with gifts and promises of aid in exchange for loyalty and the restoration of order to the region.

In spite of the increased safety and tranquility promised by such developments, these rumors make the Broadreach elves and the other Border Wood inhabitants nervous for several reasons. If Calastia takes an interest in the Hornsaw, how long will it be before Virduk's law begins to impinge upon their freedoms? Indeed, can a ruler as grasping and manipulative as Virduk really be trusted not to ally himself with titanspawn to attain his goals? Worst of all, many of these lost families bore the nastiest of evil reputations when they held power. Locals certainly have no wish to see them return, and with family names such as Serpente and Slith, it is unsettlingly likely that these households may have cultivated connections with Mormo before the Divine War brought the twisted remnants of her power to a focal point in the Hornsaw. Even if Virduk really does have the best of intentions and only his people's safety in mind, what evidence exists that these young scions will not prove every bit as rapacious, immoral, and titan-associated as their ancestors?

Rumors of a Clan Treesnake survivor, which originally began in the Ganjus among Broadreach elven visitors to Vera-Tre, have somehow connected themselves with the southern Border Wood and the gossip about Calastia. Some suggest that this woman is merely calling herself Treesnake and bears neither relation to the Broadreach elves nor any idea what the name might mean to them. Such logical sugges-

tions rarely have any effect on the speed or power of a rumor, however, and curiosity and suspicion abound surrounding both the Treesnake woman and the other newcomers suspected of working with Calastia.

The Broadreach Horizon

The heart of elven territory, the Horizon is fiercely defended and largely free of Mormo's taint. Outsiders are not necessarily welcome here, but if they show no hostile intent, they are at least tolerated. A few individuals have even managed to earn the friendship of the elves and wood dwarves who live here.

The Horizon is comprised of 28 settlements: 27 for the wood elf clans and 1 for the wood dwarves (see Chapter Three: The People for information on these clans). Very little happens in the Broadreach Horizon that at least one elven clan does not learn of almost immediately through the watchful eyes of elven scouts or the aid of the avixes who help guard the region. Though titanspawn are not tolerated and are instantly attacked should they enter the area, other dangerous creatures such as assassin vines and shambling mounds are usually left alone unless they present a direct threat to the Horizon's inhabitants. Travelers should therefore be wary, as the elves' protection is not absolute.

In addition to the dangerous creatures of the Broadreach Horizon, unwary travelers may blunder into the many traps that the elves have set to catch marauding titanspawn. These traps are most common near elven settlements and include sleep powders, unbreakable cages, deadfalls, entanglements, poisoned darts, and spiked pits. Spells such as *entangle*, *wall of thorns*, and *enduring web* are also common. Though many traps are triggered only by the presence of evil-aligned creatures, others are set to catch any sufficiently large intruder.

The Broadreach River

Though the water of the Broadreach River remains clear and drinkable throughout its course, it nevertheless presents one of the most dangerous waterways in Ghelspad. Many of its threats are subtle, however, making them all the more deadly to the unwary and all the more difficult for the Broadreach elves to control or stamp out.

The Broadreach River is divided into two distinct regions, the upper and the lower. The upper region extends from where the river enters the forest in the north, between the Hornsaw and the Gascar Peaks, to the great curve in the river where its tainted waters flow between Glivid-Autel and the Hornsaw's twisted heart. The lower region extends southward from that same curve until about a day's journey north of the border of the Heteronomy of Virduk, where the river is once again sandwiched between the Hornsaw and the Gascars.

Though patrolled twice yearly by Clans Wolverine (fall) and Scorpion (spring), and also inhabited by the nomadic Lizard clan, the upper Broadreach is still extremely treacherous, certainly one of the most difficult segments of the Wolverine and Scorpion clans' annual journeys. Many dangerous plants, including poisonous serpentberries, wistful reeds, and even assassin vines grow along the river banks here, a constant threat to unwary travelers.

Creatures include various mundane animals such as frogs, salamanders, mice, otters, and mink, as well as aquatic serpents (found on the river in abundance). Chuul, river trolls, and the dangerous rumbler make travel here hazardous. Several river nymphs are said to live along the river, but they apparently keep themselves scarce.

On the positive side, no evil titanspawn have established themselves in this region, and the uneasy truce between the titanspawn and Glivid-Autelserves in the elves' favor here as well. The titanspawn fear the necromancers and their undead more than they fear the elves and so rarely come here. For their part, the necromancers sometimes send patrols into the forest to capture slaves and new victims for experimentation and conversion into undead, but the growing ferocity of elven resistance has caused them to cut back their activity near the river.

During the spring and fall, travelers are likely to encounter patrols by the Scorpion and Wolverine clans, respectively. These patrols keep the region relatively free of hostile creatures, and so encounters with dangerous monsters will be less frequent. They will not be especially friendly to outsiders, but will not act overtly hostile unless attacked first. If asked, they will aid travelers against evil creatures, but after such encounters will insist that the outsiders leave the area immediately. In the summer and winter, more dangerous monsters such as trolls and dire monitors are likely to be encountered, but for the most part the titanspawn steer clear of the upper Broadreach.

Throughout the year, small bands of Clan Lizard elves enter the upper Broadreach. They are truly wild looking individuals, covered in tattoos and piercings. Clan Lizard elves usually treat all outsiders — travelers, monsters, or titanspawn — with equal hostility and tend to behave as if mad or under the influence of exotic narcotics.

Clan Lizard elves are far more common in the lower Broadreach. As can be expected of a place guarded only by this band of mad elves, the lower Broadreach is even stranger and deadlier than the upper. The Broadreach rapids reach their frightening peak in the lower region west of the Vale of Sorrows. Boats get smashed to kindling, swimming proves all but impossible, and even shallow backwaters conceal predators such as chuul.

The very rocks of the lower Broadreach seem to conspire against travelers. A strange accident of Mormo's corruption has made it so that many of the largest and most jagged rocks in the Broadreach River are hidden by illusions of varying types. The two most common rock illusions are similar in effects to a *displacement* spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer or a *minor image* showing smooth water where the rock should be, as if cast by a 1st-level sorcerer. Other illusions and deceptive spell-like effects such as *hallucinatory terrain* and *mass invisibility* also conceal and displace the location of treacherous rocks, and only the most foolhardy or heavily magically-equipped party will risk these deadly rapids.

Dangerous monsters are rare in the vicinity of Clan Lizard bands, since the elves take special care to keep their immediate surroundings safe and free of threatening creatures. This is not to say that no monsters inhabit the lower Broadreach — the more intelligent or cunning ones simply give Clan Lizard a wide berth or hide from patrols until the elves have gone. Those areas not actively protected by the mad Lizard elves are likely to contain various hostile predators.

Perhaps the most frightening creatures in the lower region, however, are the elves themselves. Savage, half-mad, and hostile to anyone but elves from the other rogue clans, believing that the elves of Clan Lizard are truly on the side of the divine races proves difficult. More alarming rumors spread about them every year, from tales of the brutal torture of titanspawn prisoners to disturbing blood rituals and dabblings in dark magics. (See Chapter Three: The People for more information on the elves of Clan Lizard.)

One of the most upsetting recent rumors is the suggestion that Clan Lizard has made treaties and even trade agreements with Mormo's followers. This treaty, so goes the rumor, is why titanspawn such as gorgons and hags are rare in Clan Lizard lands, and it is also the reason for the Lizard elves' increasing fascination with dark rites and evil magic. Clan Scorpion emissaries were recently sent to question the Clan Lizard mothers on behalf of all the other Broadreach clans, but they must still return to make their report.

Yet whatever the actual policies of Clan Lizard, it cannot be denied that small groups of intelligent titanspawn can be seen passing through the area unmolested on their way to other parts of Ghelspad and that parties who tangle with such titanspawn are unlikely to receive aid from Clan Lizard elves. Indeed, even the elves will probably treat outsiders with almost as much hostility as would a group of Mormo's creatures.

The Crimson Temple

In the deeps of the Hornsaw sits a scarred and devastated hilltop. Here, upon this hill, Mormo faced down her children Madriel, Belsameth, and Chardun,

who were aided by Denev. In the end, this hilltop was drenched in the vital essence of Mormo, who was sundered into a thousand thousand pieces by the gods.

Now, the vines grow thick upon this hill and the trees around it lean inwards, as though seeking to reach closer to the rich soil that covers it. Standing alone upon the top of the hill is a plinth of rough marble, supposedly erected by asaatthi and scribed in the Dark Speech of Mormo with the words:

Upon this hill fell the Ineffable Mother.

At the western foot of the hill is a well concealed stone-edged door crafted of venomwood (Spot or Search DC 20 to discover). This door, at which sits several large serpents almost as though guarding the portal, leads to the Crimson Temple, the mighty cavern temple beneath the Hill Where Fell Mormo.

No site has been more hotly contested in the Hornsaw's history. Over the century and a half since its making, the Crimson Temple has changed hands no less than a dozen times, usually among druids of Mormo, blood witches, a coven-nest of Red Witch slitheren, asaatthi, and gorgons. Those who have held it the longest — and who seem more than capable of holding it for the foreseeable future — is the gorgon cabal known as the Cult of the Serpent Ascendant. The temple's interior is simply one massive room, lined with stone and shards of bone. A massive serpent pit mars the very center of the room, wherein twist and writhe innumerable serpents of all shapes and sizes. The apex of the ceiling drips a slow, red-brown liquid that some say tastes vaguely of Mormo's blood.

The Ghostglade

In the central eastern region of the Broadreach Horizon lies a plot of sacred ground. While overgrown and largely indistinguishable from the rest of the eastern Horizon, an outsider can find no better way to offend the Broadreach elves than to enter this holy place. Even aside from what the elves will do to a character when they learn of about the trespass, however, the resting place of Clan Unicorn is also quite hazardous in its own right. Assassin vines (see MM) and carnivorous trees (see **Creature Collection II**) have actually been planted around the area in addition to the many hidden traps set by the elves to keep intruders out of their sacred cemetery.

Inside, one finds a ruined and overgrown wood elven village, more closely resembling the open and organic structures of the Ganjus elves than the tiny fortresses favored by the elves of the Hornsaw today. In the center of this village is a circle of standing stones that the elves keep clear of all trees, vines, and tall grasses. The circle is full of old, bleached elven bones, where Clan Unicorn perished in an apparently futile attempt to save the Broadreach from corruption. Once called Misty Glade, it was joyfully shared by the elves

and their unicorn companions, but today it is called only the Ghostglade, and it is a place of sadness.

Many ghosts dwell here, most of neutral alignment. How they would react to unknown visitors is uncertain. They never harm the elves that maintain their gravesite. No one knows why the ghosts have not moved on to their next existence. The Broadreach elves might be better disposed to a trespasser who could provide clues as to how to free Clan Unicorn from a century and a half of unlife.

Kaymen's March

With the fall of Mormo, the Broadreach was not given up for lost immediately. There were those who tried to stem the tide of corruption, but to no avail. One of the last who tried to win these broad forests back from the taint of Mormo was Lord Kaymen of Zathiske, a general of great courage who served his god Enkili not as a master of troops, as but an inspiration to them.

Unwilling to see the Broadreach lost, a forest that he remembered fondly from hunting expeditions into its expanses during his youth, Lord Kaymen led his men into the boughs of the rapidly warping forest.

He was never heard from again.

In truth, Lord Kaymen led his men into the forests and ran afoul of a tribe of witchspiders dwelling in a marshy forested region (see Chapter Three: The People and the Appendix for more information on witchspiders). His men were cut down at nearly every turn by the spell-weaving witchspiders, and their spell-traps decimated his forces even when the eight-legged witches were already slain. Though they were badly outnumbered, it seemed that the spiders knew nothing of tactics or battle.

In time, though, Lord Kaymen won his way into the heart of the witchspiders' domain to find their queen-mother — the fat, bloated dark womb known as Uriaglasha, her pustulent abdomen bloated with writhing, unborn witchspiders. (See **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie** for more information on the dark womb.) As his men held off the hordes without, Lord Kaymen fought the hag Uriaglasha. He prevailed against her, but not before the poisons she treated her claws with took effect. He fell to the ground, dead, shortly after she breathed her last.

Outside, the witchspiders withdrew rapidly from the cavern entrance. Though Kaymen's men believed that they were fleeing the death of their mother, the truth was actually much worse: the witchspiders were finally released from the tactically idiotic commands of their hag-mother and were free to pursue their own methods of destroying the invaders. In the end, their subtlety and cunning did what Uriaglasha's foolish horde tactics never could: they destroyed an army of men. Not one man departed the marshy region now known as Kaymen's March.

To this day, any who enter here but the witchspiders face death. Titanspawn or beloved of the gods, none come here, save to beg the favor of the Eightfold Curse, the twisted sisterhood of witchspiders who are willing to trade their magical knowledge and even awaken the latent powers of sorcerers... in exchange for the expansion of their influence in the world outside of the March.

Hazards of Kaymen's March

A number of hazards are unique to the spider-infested Kaymen's March. These hazards are treated like any other that might be found in the wilderness (see *Wilderness & Wasteland* for more about wilderness hazards).

Spiderpits (CR 4): Spiderpits are large pits in which the witchspiders cultivate huge colonies of tiny spiders; in truth, these tiny spiders are their young. In a standard pit, which is about 10 feet deep by 10 feet wide by 10 feet long, thousands of the tiny spiders will, after nearly a decade of growing larger and molting well over two dozen times, become full grown, sentient witchspiders. Falling into these pits, which are often covered over with a thin layer of silk and then with leaves and loose soil, can be very hazardous indeed, for the young witchspiders are incredibly venomous and do not hesitate to attack any creature that breaks their webs (as anything larger than a Diminutive size creature is bound to do when falling into these pits).

Because the average spider in such a pit is no bigger around than a man's thumbnail, the spiders ignore items such as armor and the like, though they cannot harm anything with a natural armor of +2 or higher. Also, magical force effects that completely surround the character will protect him (but only if the effect was active before he fell into the pit), and area effect attacks that do more than 3 points of damage will kill all the spiders in the area.

Spiderpits can be spotted with a Spot or Wilderness Lore check (DC 20); anyone stepping into the top of one is permitted a Reflex save (DC 18) to avoid plummeting into the pit. Those who end up in the pit are invariably bitten; on the round after a character falls into the pit, he must resist being poisoned.

Witch-eggs (CR varies): The witchspiders of the Eightfold Curse pepper their domain with witch-eggs, cocoons of witchspider-silk woven around material components or droplets of witchspider ichor and set with various runic interweavings. These witch-eggs are sometimes simply left alone in areas that cannot spare constant witchspider scrutiny, which may be used to infiltrate their domain. Witch-eggs are essentially magical traps; see the description of witchspiders (see Appendix) for more information on witch-eggs. A witch-egg has a CR equal to the level of the spell placed within it +1; thus a *fireball* witch-egg is CR 4.



Spiderpit Venom

Young Witchspider Venom (multiple bites): Injury: Fort DC 13; *Initial Damage:* 1 Con + shaken (1 minute); *Secondary Damage:* 1d3 Con + unconsciousness.

The venom of the young witchspider is nowhere near as potent as that of the adult witchspider, though it does cause some minor fear in those who succumb to it and can lead to unconsciousness.

Pits of Venom

Around the Hornsaw (and in some areas outside of it) are found serpentholds, those places that resonate with the power of Mormo, usually because particularly large amounts of her viscera landed and stewed there, causing the surrounding land to take on some aspects of her power. These places are invariably rich in plant and animal life, even if that life is dangerously poisonous. Malevolent and carnivorous plants, massive serpents, and venomous spiders all can be found here, drawn by the call of Mormo's blood. Serpentholds are also often rich in plant life that bears sweet but poisonous sap, bloody red-black blossoms, and choking creepers and vines.

Serpents of all kinds — intelligent and otherwise — are drawn inexorably to those sites where Mormo's remains have tainted the land. These serpents seem naturally attracted to these places, and on hot days, when the musky smell of Mormo's ichor is strongest, the serpents are driven into a frenzy, and they writhe and intertwine madly.

Mormo's druids, Red Witch slitheren, hags, and other spellcasters are also attracted to these places, for these sites resonate deeply with her power. In these places, Mormo's worshippers often dig great pits to house the holy serpents that arrive there. Such pits are also used in a number of Mormo's rituals. Newly consecrated druids of the Queen of Hags are lowered into them on the dark night of the Nameless Orb. If they are still alive when dawn comes, they are considered to have been accepted by the Serpent Mother. Some of these pits are used to grow massive

Powers of the Serpenthold

Serpentholds thrum with the energies of Mormo, acting as places of power (see **Relics & Rituals**, page 132) for the purposes of casting True Rituals there — but only for druids of Mormo.

Additionally, poisons have their resistance DC raised by +2 in a serpenthold, and spells that summon serpents call twice the number of serpents as normal. A *summon swarm* spell always calls vipers, which inflict double normal damage while in the miasma-filled serpenthold.

serpents, which are then crafted into the coveted *snakeskin armor* (see **Relics & Rituals**, page 156) and others serve for the basis of serpent golems (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**, page 83).

In addition to the tree-citadel Annot Kalambath, a number of other serpentholds are scattered throughout the Hornsaw. Some of the best known ones follow.

Specters' Wood

Across the Broadreach River lies the Specters' Wood, a dark, mist-filled pit of ghosts and walking corpses that are only glimpsed among the sickly trees. The intelligent titanspawn of the Hornsaw know enough to be thankful that the river is there to separate them; the less-intelligent creatures simply shun those few areas where the river might be crossed.

Though the great basalt pillar of Mesa-Karaday raises the city-state of Glivid-Autel above the Specters' Wood, the masters of that blighted domain are not fool enough to believe that they are its only masters. Indeed, there is a reason why Glivid-Autel proves so difficult to reach: the unsure means of scaling Mesa-Karaday are for more than keeping the denizens of Glivid-Autel in. The necromancers of the Society of Immortals watch carefully by night for any incursions of their city by the undead that lurk below.

The Specters' Wood is a truly dark place, the rich loamy scent of a normal forest replaced with equal parts charnel rot and the dry dust of a mausoleum. Beasts such as carrion hounds and corpse whisperers (with their packs of shambling undead) are relatively common in these misty reaches, as are packs of ghouls, ghosts, wights, and other corporeal undead. Packs of shadows led by shadow lords haunt the night as well, and the ghosts of the Divine War, slain at the hands of god or titan, have congregated here to reenact their incessant battles. Many believe that where the life-force of Mormo poisoned the other parts of the Hornsaw, the power of her death corrupted what has become known as the Specters' Wood.

Yet the forces of Glivid-Autel are indeed also present here. Glivid-Autel troops frequently patrol the areas around the pillar that supports their demesnes, and wirebound berserkers are often released into the forest in order to slay those threats that they are capable of laying hands upon.

The Vale of Serpents

In a small, stream-fed valley between Hollowfaust and Glivid-Autel there lies the Vale of Serpents, a dark place shielded from the sun's touch by a lattice-work of interwoven willow branches and clinging vines. In the center of this depression in the surrounding land lies a small greenish pond whose idyllic purity is marred only by two things — the occasional ripples of cottonmouth vipers and the strange bubbles of red-black ichor that roil to the surface and gout

there, filling the air with the stink of blood and poison and then, heavier than the surrounding water, sinking back down into the deeps.

The Vale of Serpents is the lair of The Keeper of Atrocity, a massive hollow naga (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**) bloated on the power of the Lady of Serpents. The Keeper has gathered to itself a coven of other nagas, notably three water nagas, a dark naga, a spirit naga, and a pair of crown nagas. In addition to the highly intelligent nagas, a huge variety of serpents is found here, including a mated pair of blade hoods that serve the coven as defenders.

The Keeper of Atrocity is known to have lived since the Divine War, feeding upon the bubbling ichor at the bottom of its sacred pool and guarded by the serpents and naga drawn to the spot. Its intentions and purposes are its own, and it is as likely to slay someone who comes to speak with it as it is to reveal any of its secrets. What is known, however, is that its range of knowledge extends far past the Hornsaw's borders: it obviously has means of keeping track of what goes on in the world despite never leaving the Vale.

Vale of Sorrows

Tales describe the prefecture called Lyria, in Veridan Province of the Ledean Empire. None of these legends matter, in actuality, save to note that at some point in the past, the Vale of Sorrows witnessed a great tragedy. Animals avoided it and mortals could not help but notice the melancholy of the place.

With the destruction of Mormo and the great wash of her blood, the lower ground of the Vale became a resting spot for hundreds of tons of shattered trees and boulders, destroyed during the battle between god and titan and washed away in its aftermath. Debris and detritus came to rest here, a silent graveyard to an entire forest.

Yet the tale of the Vale of Sorrows was hardly done, for its aura of misery drew on those Broadreach elves that became horribly deformed and tainted by the essence of Mormo. Mothers with scaled, clawed babes in arm; warriors missing limbs and families from the poisonous nature of the forest; children who watched their mothers and fathers washed away by poison or slain by deformed, pain-maddened beasts: all of these found their way here, drawn by the psychic residue from the days of the Ledean Empire.

And in this place where the Broadreach was laid to rest, they killed themselves, unable to bear the horrors that sprouted up around them that they were somehow expected now to treat as day-to-day life. The waves of sorrow and anguish mixed with the sheer elemental power that comes with the death of a primeval forest and the sundering of a titan. In the great piles of animal corpses, splintered trees, shattered boulders, and the dead and dying bodies of those simply unable to continue, some-

thing stirred. With a mighty roar, the woodrakk dragon called The Scourge of Lyria rose, its voice the screaming of misery-wracked elves and the roar of breaking trees. The fertile wrack that served as its birthplace, nursery, and lair now served to feed it, and the Scourge of Lyria grew mighty, drinking deep of tears, eating heartily of the corpses of elf, titan, and forest alike.

To this day, the Scourge of Lyria remains here, whispering to itself the words of despair that formed it, adding to its litany only when fools trespass on its domain. After all, the suffering that mortals can endure at the Scourge's claws is certainly worth the kind of misery that formed it.

The Tollman

At the southern edge of the Specters' Wood sits a small cottage along the Broadreach River. In this cottage dwells a necromancer of Glivid-Autel, a man by the name of Corinthus (*human male, Nec 11/Cld 4, LE*). Corinthus acts as a tollman for the Broadreach River, charging those few merchant boats that come down from Khet, the Gleaming Valley, and the scattered settlements along the Broadreach River north of the Hornsaw.

Those who approach the tollman's cottage find their boats stopped by a "chain" crafted of vertebrae to which skeletal hands have been fashioned. The chain rises from the water as craft near it and pulls them to a stop with extraordinary strength. At that point, Corinthus steps into his small black punt and pushes himself out to the boat until he is within speaking range.

Those boats that are obviously merchant boats or otherwise carrying goods, such as adventurers with their newly acquired treasure hoards, are charged 10% of whatever goods they have aboard. All other boats, such as those that are simply bearing passengers, are charged 5 gp for permission to pass. Corinthus is a gentleman and will not threaten; he will also usually not bother actually to tabulate the worth of items aboard the ship, instead relying on his own Appraise skill and the *wand of enumerate* that he bears with him.

Those who refuse to pay Corinthus's toll earn only a heart-felt request that they amend their decision. Those who still refuse or who threaten with violence are attacked: suddenly, undead boil up from the river bottom. Corinthus keeps a dozen Medium-size skeletons, a half-dozen Large skeletons, and the Huge skeleton of a hydra in the mud beneath the river. By simple command, the hydra's skeleton raises the other skeletons aboard the vessel and combat ensues, with Corinthus providing back-up, often by bolstering the undead with spells and his rebuke undead ability.

Note: Corinthus has levels in the crypt lord (Cld) prestige class, found in **Relics & Rituals**.

Chapter Three:

The People

The Hornsaw is a place of fearful contrast, where the evil of Mormo's taint has overwhelmed the goodness of its ancient peoples, where once benign creatures appear twisted into strange and horrific shapes, and where wicked beings search for the essence of a slain titaness. Sorely tested, the people of this land have emerged as hardy and resourceful masters of the wilderness, skilled guerilla fighters, and potent defenders of the land. They are opposed by one of the most frightful arrays of creatures in all of Ghelspad, and in many cases they survive seemingly by will alone.

The Divine Races

When the Hornsaw was known as the Broadreach Forest, a myriad of races called it home — elves, humans, fey, and even a nation of forest-dwelling dwarves. Today, most of those old inhabitants are gone, slain or fled in the face of the fanatical titanspawn. In the region known as the Broadreach Horizon, however, the newly returned elves and the remnant of their old dwarven allies fight on, hoping against hope that they can someday restore the Broadreach to its old state and drive out Mormo's foul followers.

The Broadreach Elves

When the Hornsaw was known as the Broadreach, three particular elements distinguished the elves who lived there from their relations of the Ganjus. First, Broadreach food was the spicier of the two and so intricately prepared that many Broadreach chefs were often bards who considered food preparation a form of artistic performance. Second, the always highly magical Broadreach provided its elves with a wide variety of brilliant and superior tattoo dyes, so the tattoos of the Broadreach elves were always more colorful, more detailed, and possibly even more socially symbolic than tattoos in the Ganjus.

Third and most significant, the Broadreach elves were very closely allied with the Broadreach dwarves, and their cultures intermingled to create fashions, music, architecture, and magnificent weaponry entirely unique and unequaled on all of Scarn. In truth, the elves of the Broadreach had far more effect on their dwarven neighbors than vice versa in the years before the Divine War. The Broadreach wood dwarves were widely known as the most artistic, carefree, and nature-loving dwarves in all of Ghelspad, while the elves were mostly known for pretty tattoos and spicy food.

Then everything changed.

After the Broadreach became the Hornsaw, most of the wood dwarves fled and moved to Burok Torn. The majority of those who stayed were wiped out or enslaved by the necromancers of Glivid-Autel in 31 AV. One might note, however, that since the Broadreach elves rejoined the rest of the world, they have, on the advice of their elders, begun to employ more and more wood dwarven customs with every passing year. Due to dwarven smithing technology shared with them before the war, the Broadreach elves now produce some of the most remarkable weapons on the continent, and the adoption of dwarven architecture and modes of dress has proven far more practical for a people almost constantly at war.

Perhaps most notably, the Broadreach elves were deeply spiritually transformed by binding themselves to such a harsh and twisted land. Upon returning to the ordinary world, they found themselves awash in violent nightmares, wild emotional tides, and even cruel pleasures — all traits no elf was ever raised to confront. To control this new and frightening aspect of their natures and allow themselves to stay true to all that they believe in, the once carefree Broadreach elves have taken a page from the dour and stolid traditions of their former dwarven neighbors (for even the most carefree and artistic dwarves in the world cannot help but be reliable and stern). So now the roles have reversed, and the Hornsaw elves are known as the grimmest and most determined elves ever seen on Ghelspad.

Playing a Broadreach Elf

Broadreach elves are physically indistinguishable from wood elves; their differences are mostly cultural. Any wood elf raised from infancy in the Broadreach culture would grow up with Broadreach elven racial abilities. Similarly, any Broadreach elf raised from infancy away from the Hornsaw (even among members of some other race) would instead have the racial abilities of a normal wood elf. A few exceptions to this rule are listed after the racial abilities.

Hornsaw Elves Racial Traits

- **+2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma.** The rigorous childhood training of the Broadreach elves makes them much tougher than the average elf, but their otherworldly savagery and their dour single-mindedness make it difficult for them to communicate effectively with others.

- **Medium-size.**
- **Elven base speed is 30 feet.**
- **Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects.**
- **+2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects.** Their magical nature makes elves highly resistant to spells that would cause them to lose their way.

- **Low-light Vision:** Elves can see twice as far as humans in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

- **Broadreach elves are proficient with the sickle, double sickle, roundknife, and both the melee and ranged aspects of the razor bow (see "Equipment," below). The double scythe, roundsword, and throwing disk count as martial rather than exotic weapons for Broadreach elves, but all martial pole-arms and lances (except scythes, which are common weapons among the Broadreach clans) are considered exotic to a Broadreach elf.**

- +4 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks while within the borders of a forest. A Broadreach elf who passes within 5 feet of any concealed object that is unnatural or constructed is entitled to a Search check to notice it, as if she were actively looking for it. Broadreach elven senses are finely attuned to the natural world of the Hornsaw Forest. They lose these bonuses in any non-forest terrain.

- +2 bonus on all Craft (tattoo) checks. Broadreach elven culture marks rites of passage and similar important events with highly ritualized skin-art. In addition, Broadreach elves use this art form for improving their ability to conceal themselves in the forest.

- Any Broadreach elf with ranks in the Craft (metalworking) skill gains a +2 competence bonus to all Craft checks involving metal. Elves without ranks in the skill do not have the bonus. While not naturally attuned to metal, the elves' long friendship with the wood dwarves has taught them a few tricks of the trade. Therefore, though they receive no natural racial bonus to working with metal, any Broadreach elf who chooses to study metalworking will have an easier time mastering metal related crafts than most races do.

- +2 bonus to saves versus any poison that originated in the Hornsaw Forest. Through repeated exposure, the Broadreach elves have developed some resistance to all poisons touched by the blood of Mormo.

- +1 bonus to any roll involving plants or natural animals, due to the elves' especially strong connection with nature.

- *Automatic Languages:* Ledeana and Middle Elven.

- *Bonus Languages:* Any language spoken within the Hornsaw Forest.

- *Favored Class:* Druid or Ranger. A multiclass Broadreach elf's druid or ranger class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing. The choice of druid or ranger as a Broadreach elf character's preferred class must be selected as soon as the character acquires a level in either the druid or ranger class and does not change thereafter.

All of the differences from wood elves listed above are purely cultural rather than genetic. The Broadreach elves who originally participated in the century-long merging with the Hornsaw and all of their blood descendants have the following traits no matter which culture they are raised in.

Hornsaw Nightmares: All Broadreach elves are plagued by debilitating nightmares. Every time a Broadreach elf character sleeps, there is a flat 10% chance she will have a nightmare (this

chance is never cumulative). Similar in effects to the spell *nightmare* (see *PHB*, Chapter 11: Spells), these supernatural nightmares prevent restful sleep and leave the subject tired and unable to regain arcane spells for 24 hours. Unlike the spell, these nightmares deal only 1 point of damage, an important difference since even little children are visited by these monstrous visions.

In addition to the effects that resemble the *nightmare* spell, these nightmares bear two other consequences. Any elf who experiences such horrifying dreams for three nights in a row must make a Will save (DC 15) or go mad for 1d4 days. While a Broadreach elf is mad, players and GMs have several options. For example, GMs may choose to use mad Broadreach elf characters temporarily as NPCs until they regain their sanity, or players of Broadreach elf characters can decide on a form of madness at character generation and roleplay that affliction whenever necessary. Sample forms of madness include multiple personalities, which may lack some or all of the normal character's skills and memories or may be of a different alignment; hallucinations that seem completely real to the character; near catatonia; or severe amnesia, temporarily negating magical abilities and bonuses from Intelligence- and Wisdom-based skill ranks. Madness should make life difficult for characters but should not make them unplayable.

In spite of the inconvenience, the physical discomfort, and the constant threat of madness, however, the nightmares of the Broadreach elves often prove useful. The visions the elves see in these nightmares are always true. They are always somehow related to the health of the Hornsaw, but though this relationship is sometimes obvious, it is also sometimes so oblique that characters find it impossible to comprehend the connection. The events in the dream may be from any time period — past, present, or future — but they are always correct. Nightmares of the past never go back further than the day Mormo was defeated during the Divine War and may sometimes portray well-known events. Nightmares of the future are always very vague and difficult to understand. If interpreted correctly, events in nightmares of the future can indeed be prevented, but correct interpretation is usually difficult. GMs are free to give as many or as few details as seems appropriate to the circumstances.

Since most elves are immune to magical nightmares, any wood elf who suffers from this affliction can be assumed to be descended from the Broadreach elves.

New Feat: Resist Nightmares

You can resist the effects of Hornsaw nightmares.

Prerequisites: Must be one of the original participants in the merging with the Hornsaw Forest or a blood descendant thereof. Must have at least 4 ranks in Concentration.

Benefit: When a Broadreach elf with this feat is affected by Hornsaw nightmares, she may perform a brief ritual (lasting no more than five minutes) upon waking. This ritual may involve chanting, meditation, rigorous training, self-inflicted pain, or any number of other centering activities of the player's choice. Should the elf have nightmares for three or more nights in a row, requiring a save versus madness, she can add a +1 bonus to her saving throw for every consecutive morning that she performed her ritual. For example, if a character religiously meditates after every single instance of Hornsaw nightmares and then must make a Will save to avoid madness, she receives a +3 bonus to her save. Should she succeed and have nightmares again the next night, she can save at +4, and so on. There is no limit to the bonus that can be gained through this feat, but the ritual may only be performed once a day and only on waking from a nightmare. These bonuses apply only for consecutive daily rituals; if an elf has nightmares for two nights and performs her ritual, then has a night free of nightmares, the +2 bonus that she would normally receive to her Will save is lost.

Normal: Without this feat, any centering rituals an elf performs will have no effect on her ability to resist the madness that comes from her nightmares.

New Feat: Rite of Tattoos

You have endured the most difficult of all Broadreach elven tattooing ceremonies, and much of your body is now covered in tattoos.

Prerequisites: Must be a fully recognized adult in a Broadreach elf clan.

Benefit: The ritual and ceremony involved in the tattooing process for Broadreach elves is so intense and profound that, even though it is entirely non-magical, all who undergo it emerge with a +1 bonus to all Will saves. In addition, tattoos applied in Broadreach ceremonies are specifically designed to conceal the recipient in a forest setting, granting a +3 competence bonus to all Hide checks within any forest. This Hide bonus applies only if 25% or less of the elf's body is covered in clothing, however, but as most Broadreach elves wear little more than loincloths, this is not normally an issue for them.

These tattoos cover half or more of the elf's body, but do not interfere with the application of magical tattoos (see **Relics & Rituals**, page 197) or Broadreach ritual tattoos (see Chapter Four: Secrets of the Forest).

Normal: Non-magical tattoos applied outside an official Broadreach elven ceremony do not aid in Hide checks or have any lasting effect on the recipient's willpower, no matter how extensively they cover the body.

The Clans

There are 28 villages in the Broadreach Horizon: 27 for the so-called "rooted" elven clans and one for the wood dwarves. The elven clans are reconstituted from the original groups that lived in the Hornsaw before the Divine War.

Plant Clans

In the northeast of the Broadreach Horizon dwell the eleven plant clans. Of the newly returned elven communities, the plant clans are the only group that retained all eleven of their pre-Titanswar families. The wildlife of the plant clans' region is often bizarre and magical, but not always dangerous. Members of plant clans are the least friendly toward outsiders (save for the hostile Clan Lizard) and are most likely to have retained the elves' pre-merging neutrality. Plant clan elves

are vegetarian, and each specializes in seeing to the health and restoration of the plants for which they are named.

Apple Clan elves are known for their generosity toward other clans and are friendlier toward outsiders than other plant clans. Most are neutral good.

Members of the **Ash Clan** are considered to have bad tempers and are among the most martial of the plant clans. Many are lawful neutral.

Hazel Clan elves are known for their wisdom. Nearly all members of Clan Hazel have retained their neutrality.

Holly Clan elves are less bound by the Broadreach elven obsession with motherhood and have a ritual of honorary motherhood that can be enacted for a man or childless woman if he or she exhibits particularly wise and nurturing

tendencies. Only two men have served as clan mothers thus far, and such office carries a stigma with most other clans. Clan Holly elves are rarely lawful in alignment.

Ivy Clan is one of the few rooted clans that openly accept the wilder religions of the nomadic elves. Though most are neutral and neutral good Denev worshippers, they have more chaotic good followers of Tanil than any other non-roving clan.

Morning Glory Clan elves are known for their idealism. Many are neutral good followers of Madriel, and a few are lawful good. They often accompany war-parties as healers, but many are pacifists and refuse to fight save in self-defense.

Oak Clan is in some ways the unofficial leader of the plant clans, the one around which they all rally in times of need. Most are neutral and are frequently asked to serve as judges in disputes between clans.

Reed Clan elves are known to be stubborn and dour even among Broadreach elves. Many practice druidic magic. Most are lawful neutral.

Elves of the **Rose Clan** are known for both their beauty and their vanity. Most are neutral.

Rowan Clan members are known for the clarity and accuracy of their Hornsaw nightmares. Sorcerers among the Broadreach elves are more apt to be born into Clan Rowan as well. Most are neutral.

Willow Clan elves are known as the best herbalists and healers. Many are neutral good, and a substantial majority worships Madriel.

Beast Clans

The nine surviving beast clans make their homes in the far northwestern corner of the Broadreach Horizon. Beast clan lands are among the healthiest portions of the Hornsaw, where Mormo's taint is minimal or even entirely absent. The beast clan elves bear little tolerance for dangerous and destructive predators, no matter their alignment. Rather than show active hostility to outsiders, beast clan elves are apt simply to hide until intruders go away. These clans are known as the most lawful among the Broadreach elves. Most beast clan members are vegetarian, but a few hunt and eat animal flesh (though never the flesh of their totem animal). As with the plant clans, each beast clan takes responsibility for the health and replenishment of a different forest animal.

Bee Clan elves are known for their exceptionally productive garden houses, the fruits of which they share generously with other clans. Most are neutral or lawful neutral.

Boar Clan elves are stubborn and idealistic warriors. The mere presence of a mighty Boar Clan warrior is often enough to restore flagging morale or stir reluctant warriors to acts of heroism. Lawful neutral and lawful good are both common alignments.

Members of the **Butterfly Clan** have a reputation for open-mindedness. Though as shy as any other beast clan, once contacted, Clan Butterfly elves are likely to be unusually friendly and hospitable with outsiders (for Broadreach elves) — almost like ordinary wood elves. Most are neutral good Madriel worshippers, and a few also revere the demigoddess Syhana.

Deer Clan elves are known for compassion and love. On occasion, other clans have criticized them for being too soft on titanspawn, though what the Broadreach elves consider soft might curl Hedrada's hair. Most are neutral good or lawful good.

Elves of the **Fruit Bat Clan** have something of an obsession with death. They have spent more time studying Glivid-Autel than most other clans, which makes all but the nomadic clans (who travel near the fortress of necromancers at least once a year) very nervous. A few Fruit Bat members are said to have dabbled in necromancy, though this form of magic is nearly universally shunned by other clans. Most are lawful neutral.

Horse Clan serves as the unofficial leader of the beast clan region. Before the Divine War, this position was held by Clan Unicorn, but in their absence Clan Horse has shouldered the responsibility. Members of this clan are highly admired as priests, spellcasters, and warriors. Lawful neutral and lawful good are both common alignments.

Hummingbird Clan is one of the two lost beast clans. Best known for their optimism and creativity, they all died of disease during the destruction of the Broadreach Forest. They no longer have clan lands set aside for them.

Elves belonging to the **Porcupine Clan** are known as particularly adept archers and crafters of fine razor bows. Most are lawful good followers of Madriel.

Rabbit Clan is known as the most prolific. Clan Rabbit women seem always to be pregnant, and a barren woman in this clan often leads a difficult and depressing life. Indeed, Clan Rabbit is known for being the most dismissive and condescending toward its men, the most downtrodden of whom are often found petitioning entrance into Clan Holly. Clan Rabbit elves are almost all neutral or lawful neutral, and worship of anyone but Denev is almost unheard of.

Squirrel Clan elves are known for being prepared for anything. They carry the most supplies with them wherever they go, and they usually have more spare food stored for emergencies than other clans would ever bother with. Most are lawful neutral.

Unicorn Clan is the other lost beast clan. Unlike most clans, however, the lands maintained for them are still the same ancestral lands they held even before the Titanswar. These lands are the site of Clan Unicorn's final and possibly fruitless sacrifice for the land, and the other beast clans take turns carefully maintaining this region near the center of the beast clan lands as their gravesite.

Hunter Clans

In the central section of the Broadreach Horizon, spanning from the Hornsaw Forest's northernmost tip down to the most dangerous and battle torn section of the area, dwell the hunter clans. Both the elves and the monsters of this region are the most savage and deadly in all of the Broadreach Horizon. Hunter clans are also the most likely to deal reasonably with outsiders. As the Broadreach elves' greatest warriors, they know first hand how badly they could use any help. They are also the clans least likely to be lawful in alignment, and all three of the nomadic clans originated among the hunters. Seven of the ten surviving hunter clans, as well as the village of

the wood dwarves, are located in this region. Hunter clan members have no qualms about eating animal flesh, but will only eat prey that they bring down themselves, and then only after a brief invocation to the animal's spirit. Each hunter clan considers itself the guardian of its totem animal and tries to emulate the animal's style of hunting and fighting.

Bear Clan elves are known as wise and taciturn rangers, as well as fierce and highly protective warriors. Most are neutral.

Eagle Clan is the unofficial leader of the hunter clans. The elves of this clan are perhaps the fiercest warriors in all the Hornsaw, specializing in a wide range of fighting styles. Clan Eagle elves are also striking in appearance, with feathered decorations and naturalistic tattoos. Most are neutral good.

Fox Clan elves are known as the sneakiest and cleverest Broadreach elves. They are highly prized as scouts and spies. Clan Fox fighters specialize in hit-and-run tactics, bleeding their enemies dry before they can be drawn into battle. Though most are lawful, a large number are chaotic good.



Frog Clan makes its home in the northernmost tip of the Hornsaw Forest, and its members are the least warlike of the hunter clans. Clan Frog elves concern themselves more with healing than battle, and most are druids or clerics of Madriel or even Tanil. Rather than healing elven bodies, however, Clan Frog concentrates on healing the land and the soul. Most are neutral good.

Lizard Clan has never maintained clan lands among its fellow hunters. They hold to a nomadic lifestyle, and other clans avoid contact with them. Some say that Clan Lizard elves associate with titanspawn and may themselves be corrupt (see below).

Raven Clan elves, like those of Clan Rowan, are more apt to be born sorcerers. In addition, the only wizards in all the Broadreach Horizon come from Clan Raven. The majority of Clan Raven members become druids rather than arcane spellcasters, however. Arcane spellcasters lose their effectiveness when fighting hand-to-hand, which the Broadreach elves simply cannot afford. Most members of Clan Raven are neutral.

Upon their return to the Broadreach, members of the **Scorpion Clan** chose not to maintain their own lands among the hunters. Instead, they patrol the entire northern Hornsaw in a wide annual circuit, passing through the hunter clan lands at both midsummer and midwinter when they meet and trade with the third nomadic clan, Wolverine. Clan Scorpion elves are easily distinguishable from all but the Lizard clan by their many body piercings. Most Clan Scorpion elves are chaotic and many are good. Other Broadreach clans consider them slightly mad, but good to have on your side in a fight.

Always mysterious agents of change and chaos, **Treesnake Clan** is the only hunter clan that has actually been lost. When Mormo's influence overcame the forest, the connection between this clan and Mormo's serpents proved too strong, and all were lost to madness or corruption. Recent rumors claim that a few escaped to the Ganjus and that a half-elf scion has emerged and returned to the Border Wood, but these claims are unsubstantiated and make little sense. Clan Treesnake has no lands of its own.

Spider Clan members are the only hunter clan elves likely to be lawful neutral in alignment. They believe strongly in fate and predestination. In addition, they are excellent warriors and also known for their fine cloth and strong rope. They are skilled scouts and saboteurs, often trapping foes in nets, deadfalls, and other hazards.

Wolf Clan is by far the friendliest toward outsiders. Powerful warriors, Clan Wolf elves are also devoted to healing through education, and a few members of this clan have even traveled

widely in other realms, learning and teaching whatever and wherever they can. They have made some contact with the Accursed, a group of good-aligned shapechangers dwelling in the Hornsaw. Clan Wolf is largely neutral good.

Wolverine Clan originally had a place in the hunter clan region of the forest, but wanderlust claimed them within a decade of settling there. Since Clan Scorpion's movements had already proven useful to the other inhabitants of the Broadreach Horizon, Clan Wolverine chose to follow their example and mirror their yearly trek, always approximately eight months ahead of and behind them. From a distance, Clan Wolverine elves look like any others, but on closer inspection one finds that their tattoos are almost always outlined or emphasized by careful and artistic scarifications. Most are chaotic good and worship Tanil.

The Arts

Clothing and Personal Decoration: Like most wood elves, the Broadreach elves prefer to wear as little clothing as possible when the environment permits, so they use their extensive tattoos to help hide in the dense forest. The style of these tattooed images is usually very organic and plantlike, and bright colors are much rarer than in the days before the Titanswar. Typical of the elves' newfound attitude of practicality, their new style in tattoos is intended to help them to blend into the forest even when they wear very little.

Another practical reason for their extensive tattoos is the focus granted to the elves by the act of enduring the tattooing process. Even when they are not magical, Broadreach elf tattoos are applied in a very reverent and ritualistic manner, and each new tattoo is treated like a rite of passage. In some of the more outré social groups, scarification and extensive body piercing are combined with the pain of the tattooing process. This ritualistic application of pain teaches young elves self-control and centering.

Architecture: Gone forever are the open and delicately plantlike structures of pre-war Broadreach architecture. In their place, Broadreach elves now construct low and sturdy stone buildings that are easy to defend for long periods. Ganjus elves who have recently visited the Hornsaw are often horrified by the unnatural and claustrophobic nature of the Broadreach elves' extraordinarily practical dwellings. Dwarves, on the other hand, have described these small fortresses as "cozy" and usually express great admiration for the quality of the metalwork in the intricate hidden traps that surround elven villages in the Hornsaw Forest.

Traditional elven architecture is not completely lost in the Hornsaw, however. The outer walls of elven fortresses are carved, painted, and covered in trained vines to make them less noticeable to outsiders. Once one finds a Broadreach fortress, though, one cannot help but be dumbfounded by the incredible and intricate beauty of this camouflage. Also, in order to help the elves adapt to life indoors, fortresses and dwellings have dirt floors and are filled with live plants in every corner and covering every wall. These plants keep the air clean and fragrant, and they are carefully chosen for being used to the forest floor and very little direct sunlight. Whenever possible, these plants are also practical, serving as sources of food, medicine, and bedding.

Art and Music: Music and artwork for their own sake are less prized in the culture of the Broadreach elves than among probably any other elves on Scarn. Bards are rare, and though many craftspeople, druids, and rangers play instruments or practice other art forms, individuals who wish to devote their lives purely to creative endeavors usually find life in the villages of the Broadreach elves overly strict and severe for their tastes. These individuals usually end up in Vera-Tre, where they have made the haunting and mournful rhythms of Broadreach music quite popular among the more rebellious youth of the Ganjus. The occasionally disturbing religious sculpture of Denev's Hornsaw-born followers is often popular outside with worshippers of Tanil, especially the Handmaidens of the Huntress.

As one might guess, the cuisine of the Broadreach elves is hardly recognizable since their return to this world, but a single inn located in West Ontenazu boasts authentic Broadreach performance cooking. The elves that run this establishment are thought to be the last living masters of the art. In the Hornsaw, elven food is simple and nutritious, but remains fabulously spicy. Some joke that the Broadreach elves' fascination with ritual pain extends even to their food consumption.

Religion

Most of Broadreach elven religion is much more dour and practical than the religious practices of other wood elves. Though a majority of the Hornsaw's elves still worship Denev, nearly half of Denev's worshippers are lawful neutral rather than true neutral like the Ganjus elves. Neutral good and even lawful good followers of Madriel are not uncommon either.

Yet in spite of the surprisingly common emphasis on law and discipline, worship of Corean or Hedrada is unheard of. The matrilineal

Broadreach elves would find it all but impossible to revere any being that was not a mother, and the inherent civic, city-based mindset in the worship of both Hedrada and of Corean strikes the elves as contrary to their devotion to nature and the land. Even the devotees of Madriel remain committed to the land above all else. After all, as a people, the Broadreach elves spent a century actually merged with their precious forest. No deity or titan could ever be more important to them than the Hornsaw itself.

Instead of the grand cities and elaborate social hierarchies of the lawful deities, therefore, law in the minds of the Broadreach elves takes the form of fanatical asceticism and a never-ceasing struggle for perfection and self-control. Fasting, hours of still and silent meditation, vows of self-deprivation, and solemn endurance of all manner of pain are the norm for religious devotees among the Broadreach elves. Young children are put through difficult rites of passage before they can be called adults, and many adults have willingly submitted to more trials and challenges than most people — even living in a ravaged world like Scarn — ever see in their lives.

Religion in the Periphery

Broadreach elven religious traditions as they are described above apply to approximately ninety percent of all elven religion in the Hornsaw, and it is certainly what one is most likely to encounter in the Broadreach Horizon region of the forest. In outlying villages and in the Border Wood, however, elven faith takes on a wilder and more primitive guise.

The most profound difference between the typical Broadreach elven religious practices and those of the periphery groups is alignment. Lawful beliefs are unheard of here, and chaos is actually even more prevalent than neutrality. Though Denev is still the most commonly worshipped deity, Tanil is a close second, and chaotic neutral worshippers of both are not at all unusual.

The preponderance of chaos in these religious communities lends a much different mood to the rituals and practices. A very primal and almost dangerous feel differentiates these rites, as well as a great deal of rhythmic drumming, chanting, and wild, half-entranced dancing. Regular use of pain, animal blood, or mind-altering plants is common, and such rites sometimes even have magical elements. In some cases, elven blood is used in rituals by these strange and extremist groups, though this is always the blood of a fallen comrade or a small and safe voluntary donation from a living clan member.

Asceticism is all but unknown in these fringe groups. Though they do use pain and sometimes even fasting or other deprivation as part of their rituals, these elements are not seen as a means of refining and controlling a tainted soul. Rather, they are implemented for the purpose of inducing a spiritual ecstasy or trance state, so that the elves may commune more deeply with their marred souls and the marred forest around them. Rather than rejecting Mormo's taint, they embrace it as a clue toward the eventual healing of the forest itself.

Such practices make the rest of the Broadreach elves very nervous, and in the Ash and Reed clans, practitioners of such rites and beliefs are asked to leave and join one of the three nomadic clans that embrace such traditions. Most clans, however, are tolerant if the participants are subtle and respectful. More than two or three such practitioners in any but the wild nomadic clans are rare, but religion in these wilder clans is composed mostly of fringe sects.

Holidays and Rituals

The most important holidays and rituals in the lives of the Broadreach elves are the four ancient days that once honored Denev all over the land.

The Carnival of Flowers is the holy day most recognizable to outsiders as a celebration. On this day, if at all possible, the elves do no battle or hard work and instead devote the day to the creative endeavors at which they so excelled before the Divine War. It is not a noisy and cheerful festival, for even the loveliest songs in honor of Denev's bounty carry a sad ring to them when played by the inhabitants of the Hornsaw. Nevertheless, the elves do relax for a day if they possibly can, and many elven children are conceived during this auspicious time. This is also the holiday most important to the occasional followers of Tanil among the Broadreach elves.

The summer solstice is another auspicious time for unions and conception; yet while wilder and more frenetic than the Carnival of Flowers, the celebration of midsummer is grim compared to other places in Ghelspad. It is a day of contests and trials and of the rites of passage for the clans' youth. All those who can be spared from the needs of protecting their beloved homeland end up exhausted by the end of the day due to the solstice's many tests and races. Those unsatisfied with their own performances often spend the coming year in rigorous training, so that they will not disappoint themselves at the next summer solstice. Among the Broadreach elves who worship Madriel, this is the most important holiday of the year.

The autumnal equinox is a time of harvest, modest feasting, extensive gratitude to Denev for her generous bounty, and honor for all those who have died in the war to reclaim the Hornsaw. It is spent largely in solemn prayer with a handful of one's very closest relatives, and the entire clan comes together only in the late evening for a quiet and meditative feast. Madriel and Tanil are also honored on this day.

Grim Day also marks the anniversary of the Broadreach elves' departure from and return to this world, so more than anything this day reminds them of what they once were and the joy and beauty their homeland once enjoyed. It is a day of solitude and quiet meditation, of repenting past mistakes, and of occasionally severe self-punishment. Most adult and adolescent elves fast from sundown to sundown on this day and abstain from alcohol and sweet foods for at least a month afterward.

Because these festivals honor the land, the elves are willing to follow the new calendar and the new flow of the seasons for all four holidays, but for one particular holy day the Broadreach elves painstakingly keep track of the days of the old calendar. Because the weeks and months of the old system no longer apply to the reordered world, this day is a different one every time it comes, but in the minds of the Broadreach elves, it is unquestionably the darkest and most evil day of the year. This day has no name for the Broadreach elves, but they all know it to be the day that Mormo was defeated and the beautiful Broadreach Forest forever transformed into the Hornsaw. If at all possible, no Broadreach elf will utter a sound all day long, in mournful honor of every living thing that died that day and every creature that day and since that has been twisted by the foul blood of Mormo — or of any titan for that matter.

In addition to the five holidays, Broadreach elves also observe five sacred rites.

The End of Childhood at a girl's first menstruation or when a boy's voice first begins to deepen marks a period of training during which children begin to take on the responsibilities and learn the skills required of adults. Children receive their first tattoos during this ritual.

The Rite of Adulthood takes place when those between childhood and adulthood undergo their first summer solstice trials and are accepted as full members of the clan — usually at around 100 years of age but varying with the skills and talents of each individual youth. Those who fail to overcome the challenges of a Rite of Adulthood are not yet considered adults and must attempt the rite again the following year.

The Clanmate Ceremony is the ritual at which an adult is adopted into a new clan. This is usually a male elf from a neighboring clan who fancies the women better in this new village or is closely related to too many of the women in his home village to allow for romantic involvement. Sometimes, however, this rite is combined with an altered version of the Rite of Adulthood to admit a foreign elf or even a member of another race.

The Rite of Motherhood is the least strenuous of all the great rituals of the Broadreach elves, the reasoning being that the poor woman has experienced enough of a trial in going through labor. In any case, this rite takes place immediately after the birth of a woman's first child and marks her as one of those eligible for tribal authority in her old age.

Finally, the Death Rite is usually performed at the bedside of a dying elf or over the bodies of those fallen in battle. This rite teaches the elves not to fear death, since their souls are only leaving one body to be reborn in another. In most cases, it is a solemn but hopeful rite, and it is viewed as simply a rite of passage like all the others.

The Broadreach elves practice other rites and rituals, such as the Rite of Tattoos and the Rite of Banishment, but they are not as common and many have magical elements. A few of these rites are described in careful detail in the section on Elven Magic.

Leaders and Society

The Broadreach elves have no central government, since communication is difficult between villages in the chaos of the Hornsaw, but they do not seem to need one. Each elven village consists of a single concealed fortress that houses a single extended family of up to 700 members. These fortress-villages are very loyal to each other, since most of them are connected by marriages and old favors as well as councils and treaties. The lack of central government has so far proved an asset in their covert war against the evil titanspawn and the followers of Mormo. Each town must be capable of acting independently of the others when necessary.

Though villages often differ significantly due to isolation and cultural tradition, Broadreach elves maintain a matrilineal culture. Property and clan name pass from mother to child, and for a woman to move to a new village and adopt a new clan is almost unheard of. Marriage and establishment of paternity are both alien concepts among the elves of the Hornsaw as well. All elves are free to love where they choose, and the clans raise

children as a collective effort, rather than leaving it up to only two parents. Men are free to move from village to village as they please and have few social responsibilities but few social powers as well, and older childless women are sometimes treated as if they were men.

The Ganjus elves believe that in binding themselves to the land as they did, the Broadreach elves have also bound themselves more closely with Denev the Mother. Their culture is now far more mother-oriented than before the merging ritual, and they usually revere only mothers. Indeed, some have suggested that their undying hatred of Mormo is mostly because they see her as a perversion of motherhood, the most sacred thing to them in the world. Others have also said that the Broadreach elves hate Mormo because they see in her a reflection of themselves and the soul taint they carry from their union with the wounded forest.

In any case, the Broadreach elves are undeniably obsessed with motherhood, and their villages are usually governed by the five oldest mothers in the clan. Villages being as small as they are, no other government is necessary. All physically mature elves are warriors of some variety, and every adult clan member helps to enforce the strict and extensive laws and traditions that help the tainted Broadreach elves to maintain their identity in spite of the corruption within them. Punishments for the slightest infractions are swift and usually highly ritualistic and painful, but self-discipline is so deeply instilled into the Broadreach elven psyche that breach of law or tradition is extremely rare. Though gruff in mannerisms and often highly judgmental in outlook, the Broadreach elves are one of the most trustworthy groups of people in the Scarred Lands.

The Rogue Clans

Exceptions to these generalizations exist, however. Three Broadreach clans do not follow this basic outline of social structure and traditional government. These three "rogue" clans, whose names translate into Ledeas as Lizard, Scorpion, and Wolverine, feel that repression of feelings and instincts through severity and self-control can only distance them from their forest and their ability to protect and heal it. They embrace their tainted souls in the belief that they can only heal the Hornsaw if they fully share its twisted suffering.

The rogue clans do not live as extended family units in camouflaged fortresses. Indeed, not one of these three clans has a specific home or village to call its own. Clan Scorpion and Clan

Wolverine are nomadic hunter-gatherers who seasonally patrol the borders of the Broadreach Horizon from the upper regions of the Broadreach River, through the Horizon lands, and around to the outside edges of the forest with a brief period spent each fall (Scorpion) or spring (Wolverine) in the northern Border Wood. The movements of these two clans are actually a great boon to the other 27 clans as they often provide important news as well as extra scouts and warriors for a few months out of each year.

Clan Lizard is also nomadic, but moves up and down along the lower portions of the Broadreach River. Their movement is less predictable, and individuals or small bands can sometimes be found a long way from the rest of the group. Even the other Broadreach elves really know very little about Clan Lizard, and it is impossible to tell where one might find them during any given season. Indeed, finding them at all is nearly impossible, unless they wish to be found. They travel light and arrange their camps so that they can disappear without a trace in mere seconds. Only a skilled tracker can hope to follow their movements.

Still fascinated with pain, the three rogue clans take it to a higher art form, and rather than finding it ritualistically centering and using it to amplify their asceticism, these elves seem to take great joy and pleasure in their pain. To them, it is merely a form of excess and self-indulgence. It is these clans that are most apt to display intricate and beautiful scars and piercings interlaced with their tattoos. Pain is only one of many forms of excess practiced by these clans, however, and their strange and often disturbing religious and artistic practices have become somewhat legendary, especially in Shelzar.

The Lizard, Scorpion, and Wolverine clans are organized in the same manner as the rest of the Broadreach elves — by matrilineal inheritance and leadership in the form of the five oldest mothers in the clan. Yet traditions and laws are almost non-existent among these peoples. They keep only two rules by which they live unerringly: never harm any Broadreach elf or natural living thing, and never fail to help any Broadreach elf or natural living thing if help is possible. Interpretation of these rules is left up to the individual, but any Broadreach elf of any clan may appeal to the clan leaders and present a case that an individual of that clan has broken the rules. If the clan mothers decide in favor of the petitioner, the offender is punished.

For the Wolverine and Scorpion clans, this system seems to work fairly well. In spite of their chaos, they maintain close relations with the rest of Broadreach culture and are known as basically

fair and honorable peoples. Clan Lizard, on the other hand, causes great worry to the rest of the elves of the Hornsaw. Chaotic neutral is the most common alignment in this clan, and most people outside Clan Lizard find them at best to be incomprehensible and mad. At worst, they are seen as a menace and as the recipients of the largest portion of Mormo's taint. "Lizard is too close to snake," some have said. In any case, the five mothers of Clan Lizard are not known for their fairness with other clans' complaints. Lizard clan elves do whatever they wish with no regard for the consequences, so long as they can creatively rationalize how it helps and does not hurt the land or the Broadreach elves.

The Law and Outsiders

When it comes to the law, good and neutral strangers and travelers are treated exactly as if they were fellow Broadreach elves, even if they do not understand the proceedings or their error. Painful and frightening as they are, though, the punishments of the Broadreach elves are never lethal and rarely physically scarring. Also, they typically require at most a few hours to complete, since the elves have neither the time nor the resources to enforce long prison sentences. The worst that the elves will do to any good or neutral offender of any race or nationality is to banish him from contact with elven society. Of course, enforcing this punishment often leaves the offender alone and without supplies in the Hornsaw Forest, and even in the elven lands, this may very well prove fatal in the end, so staying on the elves' good side is important. Evil interlopers are attacked and slain without mercy.

No Broadreach elf — outside the relatively friendly Clan Wolf — will ever waste time on diplomacy, and many members of Clan Wolf also care very little for the opinions of anyone who does not share their desire to restore the Hornsaw. Even the Ganjus elves can no longer truly count the Broadreach elves as allies. They are too busy fighting in the Hornsaw to come to the aid of anyone else, and they tend to be rude to any elf who does not choose to move to the Hornsaw and join one of the 27 Broadreach clans. Of course, almost any able bodied warrior will be accepted as a clan mate if he is sincere, and a token human or halfling here and there can be found living and fighting with these strange and dour elves. One must simply be willing to play by their rules.

Leaders

Listing the leaders of a people without any central government is difficult. Certainly, it would be rather redundant to list the five mothers from

each of the Broadreach elven clans, and no single individual holds any authority over all of the clans. Yet a few individuals are well known and either respected or infamous throughout the elven communities of the Hornsaw, even if they hold little or no official authority. Three of the most important of these individuals are listed below.

Sema

Sema of Clan Oak is one of the oldest living druids among the Broadreach elves. He fought against the forces of Mormo in the Divine War and was one of the casters of the ritual of merging, so his word is highly respected among the divine races of the Hornsaw. Thought to be over six hundred years of age, very few living beings can remember a time when Sema was not old and wise. He has seen much sorrow in his life, and the older he gets the less he seems to care for the rules and taboos of Broadreach elven culture. His occasionally scandalous ideas and blasphemous tales are very popular among some of the Broadreach's fiery youth, the three rogue clans, and especially the humans of the Border Wood who treat him with all the awe and deference of a living legend, which, within the Hornsaw, is exactly what he is.

Sema of Clan Oak, Male Broadreach Elf, Drd20: CR 20; Medium-size humanoid (5 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 20d8+20; hp 124; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 *amulet of natural armor*); Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+7, +3 *slitheren-bane double sickle*) or +22/+17/+12 ranged (1d4+8, +4 *sling*); SQ a thousand faces, animal companion (owl), Broadreach elf racial abilities, Hornsaw nightmares, nature sense, resist nature's lure, sense blood taint, *tattoo of silence* (see Chapter Four), timeless body, trackless step, venom immunity, wild shape (Tiny, Huge, and dire animals 6/day; elemental 3/day), woodland stride; AL NG; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +20; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 24, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +24, Craft (gardening) +14, Heal +19, Hide +7, Intuit Direction +16, Knowledge (nature) +17, Listen +13, Move Silently +7, Profession (herbalist) +17, Search +5, Spellcraft +15, Spot +13, Swim +11, Use Rope +6, Wilderness Lore +29.

Feats: Alertness, Brew Potion, Extend Spell, Resist Nightmares, Rite of Tattoos, Still Spell, Track.

Possessions: +3 *slitheren bane double sickle*, +4 *sling*, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *monk's belt*, *staff of swarming insects*.

Druid Spells Per Day: 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/5/4/4 (base DC 17 + spell level).

Balshum

Balshum is the oldest mother in Clan Wolf and has held her position of authority since before the Broadreach elves entered into their ritual merging with the forest over thirteen decades ago. Since the Broadreach elves' return to the physical world, Balshum has led her fellow Clan Wolf council mothers to become the only Broadreach elven clan council actively interested in contact and diplomacy with peoples and governments outside the Hornsaw Forest. Though Clan Wolf cannot speak for all Broadreach elves and therefore cannot enter into alliances or other official agreements, Balshum has nevertheless done much to inform the rest of the world about the plight of the Broadreach elves and the reasons behind their dour isolationism. She has traveled to Vera-Tre and Amalthea and toured most of Vesh gathering support and donations for the elves' struggles to restore the Hornsaw, and in both Vesh and Vera-Tre she is becoming a popular cultural icon for radical followers of Tanil.

Within the Hornsaw, she is criticized for spending too much time away from the forest and for associating with peoples who do not understand or care sufficiently about the Hornsaw's many troubles, but Clan Wolf loves and supports her even if the other clans occasionally grumble. Certainly, the outside world greatly appreciates her efforts and thinks better of the Broadreach elves for her pains. For any and all who need to visit the Broadreach Horizon, it is highly recommended to contact Mother Balshum or another member of the Clan Wolf council, as Clan Wolf elves are the most likely to be hospitable to outsiders.

Balshum, Mother of Clan Wolf, Female Broadreach Elf, Rgr13/Brd7: CR 20; Medium-size humanoid (4 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 13d10 + 7d6; hp 96; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +6 *bracers of armor* +6); Atk +19/+15/+14/+9/+4 melee (1d10+3, +4 *roundsword*; 1d6-1, double sickle) or +19/+14/+9/+4 ranged (1d6, double sickle); SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge, Broadreach elf racial abilities, favored enemies (hags, serpent avixes, *slitheren*), Hornsaw nightmares, sense blood taint, *tattoo of wisdom* (see Chapter Four); AL NG; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +13; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Appraise +8, Concentration +7, Handle Animal +11, Hide +9, Intuit Direction +9, Jump +6, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +16, Perform (public speaking) +14, Search +13, Spot +16, Tumble +8, Use Rope +8, Wilderness Lore +13.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Resist Nightmares, Track.

Possessions: +4 roundsword, bracers of armor +6, rod of absorption (6 stored spell levels, 37 charges), python rod, wand of cure moderate wounds (6 charges).

Ranger Spells Per Day: 2/2/1 (base DC 12 + spell level).

Bard Spells Known (cast per day: 3/4/3/1; base DC 13 + spell level): 0 — detect magic, flare, light, mending, open/close, resistance; 1st — message, silent image, sleep, ventriloquism; 2nd — cure moderate wounds, misdirection, sound burst, tongues; 3rd — invisibility sphere, major image.

Seyahto

Seyahto is generally thought to be a troublemaker. She has never born children and thus can never have any sort of official authority in Broadreach elven society, but it cannot be denied that Seyahto holds more than a little sway in the minds and hearts of the infamous Clan Lizard. Charismatic and arguably a little insane, Seyahto's influence is sometimes blamed for the increasing strangeness and distance in Clan Lizard since it began to patrol the lower Broadreach River only a few decades ago. Others insist that Seyahto's recklessness is merely a symptom of Clan Lizard's ills, not a cause. In any case, the feral and beautiful (and, according to rumor, sexually insatiable) Seyahto is best known among the Broadreach elves for two actions.

Though not proven, some say that she gruesomely and unnecessarily tortures the evil titanspawn that she captures, viciously fascinated by their pain and terror. Even preoccupied as they are with the healing power of pain, such practices are highly distasteful to the Broadreach elves, and there has been speculation for some time as to Seyahto's actual alignment. Some fear that rather than healing the Hornsaw Forest, such acts of wanton cruelty may serve only to drag the Broadreach elves further down into the twisted pit of the forest's ills. One man recently adopted into Clan Wolverine was a refugee from Seyahto's growing band. He has told his new clan council that every single one of his nightmares for nearly a year has revolved around Seyahto. To the Broadreach elves with their terrifyingly oracular nightmares, this development could indeed be very significant.

The other action for which Seyahto is infamous among the Broadreach elves involves her recent covert campaign against the armies of the Calastian Hegemony. On moonless nights, Seyahto and her renegade band (mostly young Clan Lizard ruffians) will trek downriver to the Heteronomy of Virduk, ambushing army outposts and secretly destroying

supplies. Thus far her raids have proven flawlessly successful, and Hegemony officials have yet to link these mysterious acts of rebellion with the Broadreach elves or other denizens of the Hornsaw Forest. As her raids continue, however, the rest of elven society wonders how long her luck can last and when the vengeful and greedy eye of King Virduk will fall on their already beleaguered homeland.

Already a few halfling refugees are asking questions in the Border Wood, seeking to join the "brave hero" that fights for their people. It can only be a matter of time before Calastian officials make the connection. Indeed, Calastia has shown more interest than usual lately in the southernmost lands of the Hornsaw, and rumor has it that they are trying to establish some authority there (see Chapter Two for more details on Calastia's recent incursions). The elves of the Broadreach Horizon are feeling very nervous about this entire sequence of events, and the general consensus is that, no matter how much the elves may dislike the Calastian Hegemony, they have their hands full now with the Hornsaw's ever-plentiful population of titanspawn. The last thing they want is to attract the attention of yet another enemy. Seyahto's motives generate sympathy in most circles, but her actions are considered highly irresponsible and utterly reckless. As usual, the Clan Lizard mothers cannot be moved to act against her, insisting that she is merely young and idealistic and will grow wiser with age.

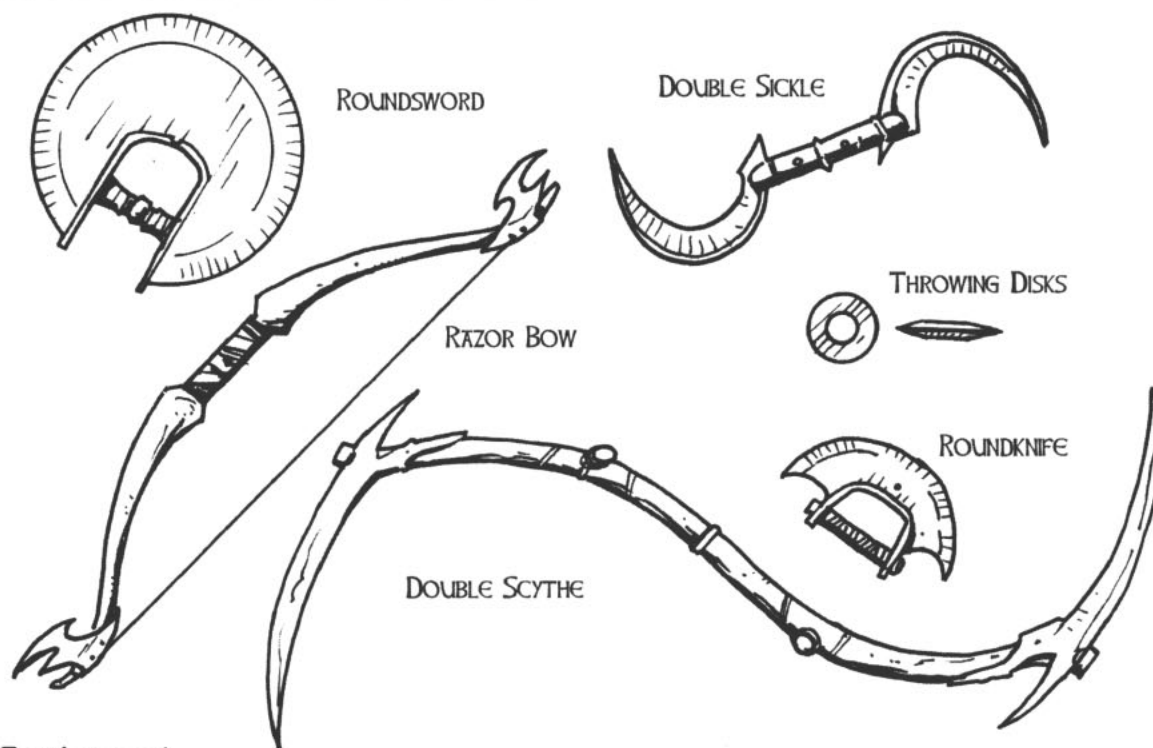
Seyahto of Clan Lizard, Female Broadreach Elf, Rgr6/Rog5: CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 6d10+12 plus 5d6+10; hp 77; Init +5 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 Dex, +1 ring); Atk +15/+10 melee (1d4+2, +1 razor bow) or +16/+11 ranged (1d6+1, +1 razor bow); SQ Broadreach elf racial abilities, evasion, favored enemies (low gorgons, zombies), Hornsaw nightmares, sense blood taint, *tattoo of blending* (see Chapter Four), uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +10, Bluff +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +12, Heal +6, Hide +18, Innuendo +7, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +12, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +11, Perform (public speaking) +14, Search +12, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +6, Spot +12, Swim +7, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +9, Wilderness Lore +8.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Point Blank Shot, Rite of Tattoos, Track, Weapon Finesse (razor bow).

Possessions: +1 razor bow, ring of protection +1, amulet of proof against detection and location, manual of quickness in action +1 (used), wings of flying (look like an ordinary dark brown cloak).

Ranger Spells Per Day: 2 (base DC 11 + spell level).



Equipment

Though they live a very bare (and some might say savage) existence, the Broadreach elves are in many ways the technological equals of civilized countries such as Vesh and Darakeene. They are masters of indoor gardening and concealment of even very large objects, and they are most known for being highly proficient at metalworking. Though they cannot claim to approach the skill level of the dwarves, they are nevertheless known for their fine metalwork, especially for their unique and beautiful curved weapons.

Broadreach Elf Weapons

Double Scythe: As the name implies, this weapon looks very much like a scythe with a second blade at the opposite end. In reality, these weapons

are not very useful as farm implements, and no elf would ever dream of dulling her blade on a field of crops. The double scythe's relationship to its scythe ancestor is more in appearance and metaphorical connection to Mother Denev than actual purpose. A character may fight with the double scythe as if wielding a double weapon, but all normal penalties for two-weapon fighting apply.

Double Sickle: Possibly the most creatively deadly of all the Broadreach elven weapons, the double sickle looks like two sickles attached together to form an "S" shape. Though it is not designed for use as a double weapon, the second blade still adds to the double sickle's effectiveness. The extra sharp edge increases the chance of a critical hit, and when such a hit is achieved, this

Broadreach Elf Weapons

Melee Weapons*	Size	Cost**	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Double Scythe	L	200 gp	2d4/2d4	x2	—	20 lbs.	Piercing and Slashing
Double Sickle	S	36 gp	1d6	18-20/x3	10 ft.	6 lbs.	Slashing
Razor Bow	M	210 gp	1d4/1d4	x2	60 ft.	3 lbs.	Slashing
Roundknife	T	24 gp	1d4	x2	—	2 lbs.	Slashing
Roundsword	M	90 gp	1d10	x2	—	13 lbs.	Slashing
Ranged Weapons*	Size	Cost**	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Throwing Disk	T	7 gp	1d2	x2	5 ft.	0.3 lbs.	Slashing

* All weapons in this table are considered exotic melee weapons outside Broadreach elven culture. For those born and raised among the Broadreach elves, different rules apply, as noted in the "Playing a Broadreach Elf" section, above.

** Cost listed is what characters outside the Hornsaw would pay to acquire one of these exceedingly rare weapons. The Broadreach elves are usually given weapons by their clans rather than needing to buy them.

extra blade comes into play to add significantly to the damage inflicted. In addition, the S curve of the double sickle gives it a +2 bonus to opposed attack rolls when attempting to disarm an opponent (this bonus does not apply if the sickle wielder is the one being disarmed). Finally, the double sickle can be thrown in a spinning arc that can go around corners, striking even opponents who are behind cover. In game terms, this gives anyone throwing a double sickle a +1 bonus to attack opponents behind 3/4 cover or less. There is no bonus for hitting foes behind greater than 3/4 cover. Most Broadreach elves carry a double sickle as a symbol of loyalty to Denev. A common enchanted weapon among the Broadreach elves is the *double sickle of returning*.

Razor Bow: With life in the Hornsaw as dangerous as it is, the Broadreach elves have found most ranged weapons to be prohibitively dangerous to use. One simply never knows when the next evil beast will drop from a tree directly behind a bowman, neatly slitting his throat with blade or claws while the unfortunate victim tries to drop his bow and fumble for his sword. To prevent such occurrences while still permitting the strategic use of arrows, the Broadreach elves devised the razor bow.

A razor bow is a finely crafted short bow with a small curved blade at each end. It can be used like any other short bow for ranged attacks and also as a melee weapon when necessary. When used in melee, the razor bow may be grasped with both hands, allowing both of the bow's blades to be used as if the wielder bore a double weapon, though all normal penalties for two-weapon fighting apply. The Weapon Finesse feat may be used with the razor bow as well, due to its light weight and slender form. Among the Broadreach elves, the razor bow is actually more common than the short bow.

Roundknife: The roundknife is a small, curved slashing weapon that is held in a similar manner to the punching dagger. Yet instead of the direct, piercing motion employed with the punching dagger, the roundknife is handled with graceful slashing arcs (or simply used to clean and dress tonight's dinner). The Broadreach elves prefer roundknives to ordinary daggers and hunting knives because the sturdiness of the grip makes it difficult to disarm a roundknife wielder (+4 bonus in an opposed attack roll when attempting to defend from a disarm strike; no bonus if using a roundknife to attempt to disarm another).

Roundsword: A roundsword is something like a larger roundknife. It has a similar but even better protected grip, allowing for a +5 bonus in an opposed attack roll when defending from an at-

tempt to disarm (again, no bonus applies if using the roundsword to disarm another). Because of the blade's shape, anyone attempting to wield a roundsword without being proficient in its use has a certain chance in every attack of accidentally striking herself instead of her opponent. If a non-proficient roundsword wielder rolls a natural 1 to hit, then she must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take normal damage from the roundsword. This danger is negated once a character becomes proficient with the weapon.

Throwing Disk: The throwing disk is a tiny, perfectly round, razor-edged disk that the Broadreach elves often use as a ranged weapon. Though one must be fairly close to one's target due to the throwing disk's short range, this weapon is still prized for its total silence while flying through the air. Silence can often make a life or death difference in the dangerous Hornsaw. Though somewhat larger and more effective than shuriken, throwing disks are still small enough to be thrown three at a time in the course of a single attack action, so long as all three are already held in the thrower's hand, and so long as all three are directed simultaneously at the same target.

Allies

Few members of the divine races live beyond the frontiers of the Broadreach Horizon. In general, the few humans and halflings who live on the edges of the Border Wood are merely refugees from somewhere else even more unpleasant and are far too preoccupied with bare survival to be of much use as allies. A handful of families have lived in the Hornsaw for generations and have fierce loyalties to their homes and to the elves, but these brave souls are few and far between.

More for the sake of the forest itself than for the Border Wood's often desperate inhabitants, the Broadreach elves do what they can to keep this section of the Hornsaw free of titanspawn influence, and these efforts generally ensure that elven relations with the Border Wood's denizens are positive, but the elves are not fooling themselves. They know that they can expect little real help from the brave few who live there.

As for those peoples outside the Hornsaw Forest who might lend their strength to the cause, only Vesh and Vera-Tre have both the capability and the philosophical inclination to be very beneficial to the Broadreach elves as allies. Unfortunately, Vesh already has its hands full trying to aid in the defense Burok Torn and to stem the Calastian tide while defending their own lands against the ratmen and other titanspawn.

Vera-Tre, on the other hand, is very nervous about the Broadreach elves. The elves of the Hornsaw returned to the physical world less than a tenth of an elven lifespan ago, and it cannot be denied that they have acted very strangely ever since. Several diplomatic misunderstandings have offended the Vera-Tre elves, and the behavior of Clan Lizard alone may be enough to keep the cautious Ganjus elves away from the Hornsaw for centuries. Relations are not quite strained between the two peoples, but the old sense of being two sister-cultures, bound together by their wildness and love for trees, has long past. Any substantial help from Vera-Tre will take patience and persistence to acquire.

However grim and lonely their situation seems, the Broadreach elves can count on three small groups when situations get difficult. Though none of these groups is particularly numerous, all have proven themselves to be irreplaceable in the unending battles against the titanspawn.

The Accursed: Mostly followers of Madriel and all touched by the hand of Belsameth, the Accursed may not realize how much they have in common with the Mormo-tainted, Denev worshipping Broadreach elves. All that matters to the elves, though, is that this small society of good and neutral lycanthropes has made the Hornsaw home, and now they fight tooth and nail to protect it. Tides of battles have several times now been turned by the arrival of a handful of snarling werewolves, fighting — wonder of wonders — on the side of life and nature rather than corruption and destruction.

The Accursed are more interested in freeing the souls from hopelessly corrupted or evil-controlled bodies than being specifically devoted to healing the forest. After all, the strangeness and danger of the Hornsaw bears little threat for a fortress full of werebeasts, and it is this very strangeness that protects the Accursed from the uncomprehending prejudice of most of the followers of the good gods. Nevertheless, the goals and actions of the Accursed fit closely enough with elven ideals that the elves are beginning to view the lycanthropes as kindred misfits.

In any case, the elves have only recently encountered these new and ferocious allies, so they know very little about them as yet. The relationship promises to be a lasting and fruitful one, however. Many of Madriel's followers among the elves insist that it was the goddess herself who guided the first Accursed to make their homes in the Hornsaw, knowing that the two groups were meant to fight side by side.

For more information on the Accursed, see **Secrets and Societies**.

Avixes: Avixes are petite fey creatures considered annoyances by the Broadreach elves before the Titanswar. Avixes have experienced their share of grief in the century and a half since their homeland was warped and poisoned, and when the elves returned from their mysterious ritual, they found the beautiful little avixes humbled and desperate, on the very brink of annihilation at the hands of their Hornsaw-twisted relatives, the cruel serpent avixes. The elves took pity on them and have since generously helped to protect and aid them in rebuilding their strength.

Fortunately for the elves, however, the now much more populous avixes have proven to be quite prolific when granted a few years of safe respite, and though before the great war they were known only for their chaotic silliness, they are showing to have within them depths of loyalty never before suspected. No elven clan is without a small family of avix scouts and guardians, and both the Scorpion and Wolverine clans have enough avix companions for most of the smallest children to keep their own fey bodyguards.

The avixes are rarely seen, as they can become invisible at will and often spend weeks at a time without appearing, but the elves always know that they are present. Hundreds of times already have these diminutive winged beings made themselves useful to the Broadreach elves as scouts and messengers, and their alliance has fast grown from a charity case to a symbiotic relationship. The rousing success of the elves' efforts on the avixes' behalf brings hope to the somber souls of the Broadreach elves. Perhaps one day their efforts for the forest at large will bring similarly uplifting results.

The final group of allies is the wood dwarves, the remnants of a once-numerous community that dwelled here before the catastrophe. Loyal and resourceful, these dwarves live in a single community of the Broadreach Horizon, and are fully detailed in the following section.

The Wood Dwarves

A growing community of dwarves has taken up residence in the Broadreach Horizon, and they now make up 2% of the Hornsaw's divine race population. These dwarves are mostly either recent immigrants from Burok Torn, come to rejoin distant relatives, or freed slaves from Glivid-Autel. Their leaders are made up almost entirely of both slaves and Burok Torn dwarves who were born in the Hornsaw and are just old enough to remember what wood dwarf culture was like before the elves enacted the merging. Even though, culturally speaking, the wood dwarves are still a little uncertain (and are borrowing more and more from their much-admired elven neighbors), they are loyal and devoted allies, and — being dwarves aside from all else — they are still plenty useful in a fight.

Playing a Wood Dwarf

Broadreach dwarves are slightly taller than their mountain cousins, but wood dwarves and mountain dwarves are still basically the same race. The dramatic differences between the two peoples are entirely cultural. The culture in which a dwarf was born and raised determines his abilities, and his ancestry determines only his looks. Dwarves raised among the Hornsaw dwarves would grow up to behave and think like wood dwarves. Dwarves raised in any other culture will more closely resemble mountain dwarves in attitude and behavior.

Wood dwarves tend to be neutral good rather than lawful good, and almost as many of them worship Madriel as Goran. They also have a much higher appreciation for art and music, and in spite of their less than hospitable home in the Hornsaw, the mountain dwarves often look down on wood dwarves for being "soft." Of course, because most of the dwarves currently living in the Hornsaw Forest — even though they are descended from wood dwarves — were raised in Burok Torn and have actually only recently moved down from the mountains, true adult wood dwarves are currently rare. Most of the Hornsaw's dwarves will have the stats and abilities of mountain dwarves in spite of the cultural differences. Only dwarves raised wholly in the Hornsaw have wood dwarf abilities.

Wood Dwarf Racial Traits

The only two differences between wood dwarves and mountain dwarves in racial abilities are that instead of the stonecunning ability, wood dwarves have a choice between metalcunning and woodcunning, and instead of a +2 racial bonus to Handle Animal checks with dwarf

hounds and +4 racial bonus to resist a dwarf hound's bark, wood dwarves have an additional +2 racial bonus to Craft (metal sculpture) and Craft (metal musical instruments).

Wood dwarves are not surrounded by stone as are mountain dwarves, so they have lost much of their connection to it. Yet they cannot completely deny their dwarven natures, so all of their stoneworking senses and talents have focused instead on the metals that the dwarves brought with them out of the mountains. Also, wood dwarves have almost no contact with dwarf hounds and spend more time at artistic and musical endeavors than any other group of dwarves in the Scarred Lands. They were always well known throughout Ghelspad for their artistic abilities with metal.

Hornsaw dwarves are especially skilled in working both metal and wood — a new wood dwarf character may choose between the *metalcunning* and *woodcunning* abilities. A wood dwarf may have one or the other, never both.

Metalcunning: Metalcunning grants wood dwarves a +2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual metalwork, such as metalwork traps, patched weaponry or armor (even if skillfully done), rare metals, old and weak metal, and so on. Metal disguised to look like something else or some other material disguised to look like metal both also count as unusual metalwork. A wood dwarf who merely comes within 10 feet of unusual metalwork can make a check as if she were actively searching, and a wood dwarf can use the Search skill to find metalwork traps like a rogue. A wood dwarf can also intuit the type and age of metal, even if the appearance is deceiving, though magical illusions may confuse this ability. Wood dwarves can also sense by touching and closely examining a metal object how far it has traveled from the tunnels where it was first mined and how many times it has been forged. Wood dwarves always instinctively sense the perfect temperature for any forge-fire.

Woodcunning: Woodcunning grants wood dwarves a +2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual woodwork, such as traps, new construction, unstable trees, carved woodwork, and the like. Wood disguised as something else counts as unusual woodwork. A dwarf who merely comes within 10 feet of unusual woodwork can make a check as if he were actively searching, and a dwarf can use the Search skill to find woodwork traps as a rogue can. A dwarf can also intuit the age of trees or woodwork, even if the appearance is deceiving, though magical illusions may confuse this ability. Wood dwarves can also sense by touch how far a piece of wood is from its place of origin.

Culture and Society

In the minds and hearts of the Broadreach elves, especially the hunter clans among whom the dwarves have made their home, the wood dwarves are fast becoming simply another allied clan — a particularly short, broad, and hairy clan, but a clan nonetheless. Several councils now have included five dwarven leaders among the clan mothers, and this development is having far-reaching effects in elven society.

Though they seem largely to agree with the Broadreach elves in laws and values, the dwarves cling to their own traditions in many respects. Many honor Denev in prayer and song, but few actually worship her, for example, and most still count Goran among their primary deities, a strange concept for the elves, since Goran is anything but motherly. The almost perfect gender quality among the dwarves is also strange, as is the fact that the dwarves keep track of the lineage and parental responsibilities of both a child's mother and father and generally practice monogamous marriage.

The elves are intellectually familiar with these concepts from before their merging, but spiritually many Broadreach elves now find them discomfiting somehow. Many elven men are trying to regain the rights and responsibilities of fatherhood in recent years, where determination of such is possible, and dwarven men have been politely and discreetly asked not to be so free with their opinions in public. This in turn confuses the dwarves, who usually ignore such requests completely.

The admiration and affection between Broadreach elves and wood dwarves is quite mutual, however, and ever since the elves rescued the dwarven slaves from Glivid-Autel, they have labored consistently to incorporate more and more dwarven concepts into their culture — architecture, weaponsmithing, asceticism, steadfastness, loyalty, a warrior code, and many other aspects. Therefore, they have a much easier time accepting the social quirks of their dwarven friends, even in the areas they do not yet feel the need to adopt themselves.

Wood dwarven culture can be considered a fairly even mix of wood elven culture from both the Ganjus (incorporated into the wood dwarven psyche before the Divine War) and the Broadreach Horizon (learned recently) and mountain dwarf culture from Burok Torn. These three cultures, however, are so vastly different from one another as to make wood dwarven society and traditions unique indeed.

The Titanspawn

The Hornsaw is as sacred to the titanspawn as it is to the elves, albeit for very different reasons. Here it was that their beloved patroness, Mormo the Serpent Queen, was treacherously attacked and dismembered, her foul blood and entrails raining down upon the peaceful forest, twisting and transforming it into the nightmare realm that it is today. The titanspawn are ascendant in this blighted place — the hags, asaath, Red Witch



slitheren, gorgons, and other creatures search out the strange and cursed things that hide among its tortured trees and benighted glades. Some seek the return of Mormo, whose flesh lies scattered about the region, while others are simply greedy for power. All are bitter foes of the Broadreach elves and of the divine civilizations that lie beyond the forest.

Cult of the Serpent Ascendant

Number of Members: 1,200, including gorgons, asaathi, humans, and other titanspawn.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Regions of Influence: Headquartered in the Crimson Temple, with protected serpenthold shrines scattered throughout the Hornsaw Forest and adherents seeking to spread the worship of Mormo elsewhere.

Primary Activities: The establishment of the Crimson Temple as the primary place of worship for Mormo, as well as the collection of the pieces of the Serpent Queen for the purposes of returning her to life.

Description

The Cult of the Serpent Ascendant is the foremost religious gathering worshipping Mormo in all of the Scarred Lands. Even the Dar al Annot cannot claim to be an exclusively reverential gathering — they are her servants, rather than her worshippers.

Not so the Cult. The Cult actively works to promote the worship of Mormo in both the Hornsaw and abroad, though ultimately, this is a secondary goal. No, the first goal of the Cult of the Serpent Ascendant is to see Mormo returned to life and full power, regardless of the cost involved. To this end, they maintain the Crimson Temple atop the very hill that was soaked with the blood of Mormo when her essence was locked into her body and then ripped apart by the gods. This hill — and the hollow beneath it — soaked up more of that titanic ichor than any other place within the Hornsaw. It is here that the Cult, led by Lysear, who has plumbed the secrets of the Dar al Annot, created the true ritual that will enable them to form the viscera of Mormo into the reborn titaness of serpents.

Organization

The Cult of the Serpent Ascendant is overseen by a single patriarch, the high gorgon Lysear. Under him is a small cabal of high priests, all of whom consider themselves the sons and spiritual

lovers of the Hag Queen, waiting loyally for their beloved to return. No females can be found among these druids, adepts, and sorcerers, and many have delved into the secrets of blood witchery, taught to them by Lysear.

The Crimson Temple is guarded by an elite order of asaathi and human warriors; these fierce combatants have developed a fighting style that mimics the speed of a fierce serpent, and they favor the use of poison. Calling themselves the Brotherhood of the Crimson Temple, some say that the primal warriors who dedicate themselves to the initiatory secrets of this brotherhood develop other, stranger powers.

Finally, beneath the military and religious membership are the “congregation” — those who have given themselves to the worship of Mormo according to the Cult’s dogma. Most of these creatures live in lairs around the Crimson Temple or serve to defend the other shrines of the Cult around the Hornsaw, as well as make up the membership of subversive cults around Ghelspad.

High Gorgon Blood Witches

The high gorgons seem particularly predisposed toward becoming part of the blood witch prestige class. Indeed, with their natural spellcasting ability and permanent titanic taint, they are practically tailor made for it — which may, in retrospect, be precisely what Mormo intended. High gorgons that advance in HD through maturity may concentrate on fulfilling the requisites for the blood witch prestige class (see **Relics & Rituals**). This is the only class in which high gorgons may break their normal advancement rules; normally, high gorgons simply increase in HD as monstrous humanoids.

History

The Cult of the Serpent Ascendant was founded by the high gorgon blood witch Lysear after his flight from the Dar al Annot for fear of being discovered as a gorgon and thusly dissected. He fled Annot Kalambath with but one thought in mind: he could bring Mormo back — all he needed was time.

Shortly thereafter, he gathered to himself a number of other, like-minded high gorgons, many of whom had already suffered at the hands of Mormo’s hags. Though several of them heeded Lysear’s call out of a desire for revenge, most of them came to believe that he held the ability to return Mormo and that doing so was, perhaps, the best vengeance they might wreak.

In 103 AV, the Cult discovered the existence of the Crimson Temple, then held by a coven of Red Witch slitheren. The coven, allied with the Dar al Annot, refused to surrender the temple to the Cult and was slain in a terrible sorcerous battle. The Dar al Annot have never forgiven Lysear and his Cult for this slight — especially once they realized that he was not simply a renegade blood witch from their ranks, but a high gorgon.

Locations

The Cult of the Serpent Ascendant is situated in the Hornsaw Forest, at the site known as the Crimson Temple, where Mormo fell in combat with the gods. Though the temple possesses warrens where many creatures have made their homes, many of these warrens now serve as the elaborate quarters for the high priests of the Cult as well as barracks for its defenders. While the Cult numbers slightly over a thousand, no more than a hundred or so are ever present at the same time, with others on expeditions seeking to destroy enemies of the Cult, find pieces of Mormo, or other such missions for the faith.

Members

The members of the Cult of the Serpent Ascendant come from all manner and breed of titanspawn, from the monstrous low gorgons to the cultured asaath and high gorgons. One thing is certain, though: its membership is made up of those alienated or persecuted by the Dar al Annot in their pursuit of their goals and dogma.

Leaders

The undisputed leader is Lysear (see *The Wise & the Wicked*, page 68), the high gorgon blood witch that serves as the patriarch of this faith. His own goals and intentions seem motivated purely by his desire to see Mormo returned; indeed, some say that Lysear served during the Divine War at Mormo's side and was her most favorite of sons.

Dar al Annot

Number of Members: 450 witches, plus approximately 4,000 others, including various spies, servitors, and minions.

Alignment: Any evil.

Regions of Influence: Based out of the Annot Kalambath in the Hornsaw Forest, the Dar al Annot has servants and operatives in nearly every major city in Ghelspad.

Primary Activities: Searching for and recovering the pieces and artifacts of Mormo in an effort to bring about her resurrection.

Description

In the depths of the Hornsaw is a gathering of some of the most vicious and bloodthirsty witches of Mormo, dedicated to seeing their Mother reborn at any cost. The servants and witches of the Dar al Annot (a phrase that means “Those Who Will Find” in the Dark Speech of Mormo) have scoured nearly every inch of the Hornsaw, seeking those pieces of Mormo that were scattered in the wake of her sundering.

The Dar al Annot also maintains a network of spies and operatives in most of the large cities and important areas of Ghelspad. These operatives watch for any sign of the things the Dar al Annot has ordered them to observe — adventurers or armies moving into the Hornsaw, relic hunters who have discovered holy artifacts of Mormo, or even those who have discovered pieces of Mormo or samples of her ichor.

Yet all of this serves only one purpose: to see the Mother of Witches reborn. In the towering pestilential tree-citadel of Annot Kalambath, the hags, witches, and druids of Venom's Dam seek a way to reconstitute their patroness. A myriad of rituals, spells, and relics have been crafted with this purpose in mind, and many more will be created. When the Mother of Serpents has finally been resurrected, the Dar al Annot will be there to serve her, the foremost of her minions.

Organization

The Dar al Annot has several tiers within its organization. At the very top is the Coven Dar al Annot, the circle of thirteen witches of Mormo dedicated to bending all their efforts and powers to bringing about her resurrection. This council consists of only thirteen at any one time, though each witch of the thirteen maintains a retinue of servants, apprentices, and supporters within the structure of the organization.

The next tier consists of the other witches of Mormo, all of whom seek one day to be part of the Coven proper. These witches — all of whom must be hags, Red Witch slitheren, sorcerers, adepts, or druids — align themselves with one or more of the witches in the Coven council, hoping to become the next member of the council, for the Dar al Annot is led by the strongest in the Coven. Over the years since its founding, hags, sorcerers, and druids alike have led the Coven, all of whom challenged their predecessors to ritual magical combat, with the blessing of the rest of the Coven.

council. When one of the Coven council thus elevated herself, it was her right to appoint a new witch to the Coven.

Below the witches are their servants, a motley crew of ratmen, asaathi, goblinoids, and other creatures dedicated to the Dar al Annot's goals. Among these servants are a number of male spellcasters dedicated to Mormo's service, as well, for only females are permitted among the ranks of the true Coven.

Finally, at the very bottom tier are the various sell-swords, thieves, informers, spies, and assassins that make up the information and burglary network that constitutes the Dar al Annot's hands in the world outside of the Hornsaw.

History

The Dar al Annot was founded at the end of the Divine War. A covey made up of three hags — Agarada, a cavern hag; Mahashia, a storm hag; and Lithacha, a moon hag — survived the final divine onslaught that destroyed their Mother. Seething with vengeance and sure that

her sundering was merely temporary, the covey searched for the pieces of their mother that she might be reconstituted. They renamed themselves the Dar al Annot and set out to accomplish their purposes.

In time, they gathered to them a following of other witches and servitors with the same intent. As was inevitable, conflicts rose about whose methods were superior in accomplishing their goals. Agarada was slain in the conflicts, Mahashia sided with other storm hags, and Lithacha fled the Dar al Annot, lest she be slain alongside her sister Agarada.

For a time, a covey of three storm hags ruled the Dar al Annot, but even they fell to infighting and were eventually overthrown by witches and druids who themselves were then overthrown. Indeed, the concept of leadership within the Dar al Annot became something of a joke among its operatives who were not at all affected by the incessant power struggles; by the same token, many of Mormo's faithful lost their lives in the useless in-fighting.

Coven Operatives

The operatives of the Dar al Annot can be found nearly everywhere. What follows is but a partial sampling of those who sell their information to the Dar al Annot.

Bridged City: Adessun Machra (*male human, War3, CG*), a member of the city guard of Bridged City, owes the Dar al Annot his mother's life. One cold winter night in Mansk, as the adolescent Adessun and his mother were staying at an inn on their way to meet the boy's father in Mullis Town, Adessun's mother fell ill with the bloody flux. The country healer that was staying there offered to help, but the boy and his mother could not pay, so she made Adessun swear to some future favor in return for his mother's life immediately. Now, he is a member of the Bridged City guard and delivers messages to the druid who healed his mother. He fears his treachery may some day doom the city, but he equally fears refusing, for the druid has threatened to "retake" the life she gave his mother.

Durm, Lageni: The midwife Calaphria (*female human, Adp7, N*) was trained in her youth by a witch of the Dar al Annot and now knows that her debt to Mormo — in exchange for granting her the power to heal and defend herself and her children from those who seek to abuse them — is a constant stream of information. She pays this tithe gladly, for her experiences at the hands of Chardun's clergy (who slew her husband for daring to object to their cruelty to one of the family's livestock) have taught her nothing but hatred for the gods.

Durrover City, Durrover: The sell-sword Vaunde Tedan (*male human, Bbn2/Ftr3, CN*) learned to fear the agents of the titans in his youth among the steppe barbarians. When a witch of the Dar al Annot placed a wasting curse upon him, however, he begged her to remove it — at any price. She simply demanded that he tell her all things of import that he came across, and so he does, though he travels often in an attempt to keep them from finding him. It never works, and they always know where to send their accursed ravens, even in bustling Durrover City.

Fangsfall: In Fangsfall dwells simple Melka (*female half-elf, Com2, NG*), the daughter of a sea-captain, wooed by the handsome face and warm affections of a traveling warrior, even though others might call her homely. This warrior, who travels much, but always comes back to her arms and departs with promises that the next time he returns it will be to take her away from her life in Fangsfall, stays in contact with her through his pet ravens.

Hedrad: Ceala (*female human, Ari2, N*), the wife of Donius of the Hammer, one of the deacons of the church of Hedrada, also gives information to the witches of Mormo. Once the very loyal wife of Donius, Ceala eventually grew weary of the off-handed nature of marriage and relationships in Hedrad — it was all less about love and too much about "filial duties" for her taste. So, when a woman

This all changed with the coming of the Blood Crone. At this time, the Dar al Annot was ruled by the druid Rigishia, a half-elven woman of some powerful magic. During a gathering of the Coven council, the Blood Crone teleported into the Black Heart of Annot Kalambath and challenged Rigishia to ritual combat for the leadership of the Dar al Annot. The druid replied that the Crone was not part of the Coven, and thus ineligible for challenge. "Then defend thyself, witchling," the Blood Crone cackled at the obviously frightened druid, "for thy doom is at hand, whether for ritual challenge or no. And woe betide any who interfere in this battle."

The druid died horribly shortly thereafter, unaided and unmourned by the rest of the Dar al Annot. Only five of the witches on the Council recognized the claim of the Blood Crone to the leadership of the Coven. Two others made the mistake of attacking her and died for their folly. When confronted by the storm hag Hielaa, the Blood Crone gladly presented proof of her dedication to serve and destiny to lead — she vomited

forth a thrumming lump of gristle that somehow beat in time to the hearts of all of Mormo's witches present.

All instinctively knew the Heart of Mormo.

The Blood Crone stretched her jaws wide and swallowed the bloody lump of flesh again, choking it down a gullet seemingly too small for the vile thing, and again proclaimed herself the mistress of the Dar al Annot. This time, none would gainsay her, and she has ruled the Dar al Annot ever since.

Locations

The Dar al Annot sit, powerful and eldritch, in their mighty tree-citadel, Annot Kalambath (see Chapter Two for more details on Annot Kalambath). This citadel, visible for leagues around, is a reminder to all who see it of the Dar al Annot's power. The direct influence of the Dar al Annot is felt keenly around it, as groups of asaathi and ratmen patrol the surrounding wilds.

Yet the Dar al Annot, unlike many of the groups of the Hornsaw, does not limit its influence to the Hornsaw. In nearly every city and

approached her and offered her a simple philter to put the fire of passion back in their marriage, Ceala gladly accepted and reveled in the way her husband doted on her. Eventually, though, the potion wore off and she found her husband's returned diffidence simply intolerable. So, she readily agreed to the demands of the witch who supplied her with the potions and continues to do so, as long as she uses the renewed love of her husband to find out the important occurrences in the city.

Hollowfaust: The butcher Orshel of Hollowfaust (*male human, Com3, LN*) is another informant of the Dar al Annot, though his whisperings are given to a cloaked and hooded man that comes at the dark of every moon to his shop to share a cup of wine. The man plays on Orshel's terror of the creatures that lie within the Hornsaw, saying that any day now they will rise up and destroy all of Hollowfaust, though Orshel might be saved if he continues to provide information.

Lave, Vesh: The stunningly attractive Zimra (*female wood elf, Brd6/Los3, CE*) has become quite the hit in Lave and its surroundings, packing every inn at which she plays. She also seems to enjoy the company of some of the more important guards and nobility of the cities in which she stays; in truth, she finds them to be a source of information useful to her mistresses in Annot Kalambath, who trained her in the ways of the Ladies of Serpents. (*Note: The Lady of Serpents [Los] prestige class is found in Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore.*)

Mithril: In Mithril dwells the fish-monger Ydisha (*female human, Adp4/Bwt3, NE*), a blind old woman whose cry of "Fish! Not too old, these fish! Fish!" can be heard at any time of the day in nearly any place in Mithril. By doing so, she manages to hear all manner of interesting things — and those things she might otherwise normally miss might still be heard with the discreet use of her magics. (*Note: The Blood Witch [Bwt] prestige class is found in Relics & Rituals.*)

Thurfas, Albadia: The city-born Heigmir (*male human, Exp6, CN*) drank in Mormo's lore with his mother's milk. The son of a Helliann witch cast out of the Witchmount for her worship of Mormo, Heigmir was born a year after she settled in the newly founded city of Thurfas as a washerwoman and herb mistress. She gained the money to see Heigmir gain an apprenticeship as a smith. When she died several years ago, one of the witches at the funeral told him that the money had come from the witches in the Hornsaw, and Heigmir, anxious to prove himself a good son, promised to repay that debt — and far more — by acting as the eyes of the Dar al Annot in Thurfas.

Vashon, Calastia: Some say that many eyes of Mormo operate within the Realm of the Black Dragon, but Chardun's clergy should be most horrified to learn how close to the throne do some of those eyes lie. Among them is Vritiri Sedas (*male human, Sor4, LE*), the effeminate eunuch who serves Geleeda's palace as Major Domo, as well as serves the queen herself as erstwhile confidant.

large town, at least one midwife, one butcher, or one sell-sword reports to the Dar al Annot when the crows bearing the serpent scrimshawing on their beaks come at midnight. Those who serve do so for many reasons — money, favors owed the Dar al Annot, promises of power, and many other temptations.

Members

The Dar al Annot are a collection of druids, sorcerers, and adepts, all dedicated to proving themselves loyal to Mormo and the Dar al Annot (and not always in that order) and to mastering their magical abilities. While the infighting among the witches of Annot Kalambath is nowhere near as extreme as that found in other places such as Glivid-Autel, all of the witches here claim some measure of combat experience, for fear of being removed by a rival or simply to make themselves more useful to the Coven Council.

All of the witches of the Dar al Annot have aligned themselves with one (or sometimes more) of the thirteen witches that sit upon the Coven Council, for it is only through the support of a witch of the Coven that one might sit at the Coven table itself. Thus, the goals of the witches are often influenced by what their patrons desire and seek.

Additionally, some servitors are not witches proper. The Witches of Venom are a circle of assassin-seductresses in the service of Mormo who happily lend their skills to whichever of the Coven Council best favors them, though they must be cautious to avoid overtly playing one of the thirteen against any of the others, for fear of angering both. As well, numerous small clans of asaathis serve various witches of the Dar al Annot; the most exalted of these asaathis are the Hassha-Vash'iss, the Liberators of the Mother, who serve the hag Bahakcha. Finally, several clans of ratmen serve the Red Witch called Vision of Flame as well as other lesser witches of the Dar al Annot.

Leaders

Thirteen leaders rule the Dar al Annot, though a single witch dominates them utterly. Please note that several of the hags below are noted as possessing class levels; this is in keeping with the presentation of hags as a template, rather than a monster (see the Appendix for more information on the hag templates).

The Blood Crone: This ancient hag's true identity is unknown to the rest of the Dar al Annot, though some among the storm hags seem to feel that they know her from somewhere. In

truth, the being now called the Blood Crone (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**, page 19) was once the moon hag Lithacha.

Aragrima Malithsim (female human, Adp8/Bwt6, CE): Aragrima, sometimes called Fangtooth by the witches of the Dar al Annot (for her filed-down, meat-tearing teeth) is an absolute madwoman with an uncanny nose for blood. She always eats her meat raw, and she believes that by consuming the wombs of women she has sacrificed to the Serpent Mother, she might cause Mormo to be somehow reborn into the world. She often suffers from seizures that bring her visions of something she calls the Womb of Mormo. As well, she keeps a number of contacts among the witches of Geleeda's Grove. (Note: Aragrima is a member of the blood witch [Bwt] prestige class, found in **Relics & Rituals**.)

Bahakcha (female cavern hag, Sor13/Sum3, LE): The hag Bahakcha is a vicious crone constantly accompanied by a pair of asaathis warrior-wizard bodyguards, taken from the Hassha-Vash'iss clan that serves her. The sole cavern hag currently on the Coven Council, Bahakcha is unfailingly loyal to the Blood Crone, seeing her as something of a bloody messiah heralding Mormo's return. Bahakcha is an acknowledged master of the summoning arts, as well, known for burying her foes in swarms of summoned beasts. (Note: Bahakcha is a member of the summoner [Sum] prestige class, found in **Relics & Rituals**.)

Bhatespara (female moon hag, Sor11/Drd6, LE): Foremost among the moon hags, Bhatespara first led the Dar al Annot, in its nascent days after the sundering of the original covey, to the shattered Grandfather Tree of the Broadreach. Bhatespara is always hidden beneath dark robes and a diaphanous veil, with only her pearlescent eyes showing through the strange, swirling patterning on the veil. Bhatespara often tests the Blood Crone's commands — and strangely, she has not yet been slain for her temerity. This may have more to do with Bhatespara's command of many covens of lesser witches and hags than with any real affection between the two hags, however.

Iranxani (female moon hag, Sor12/Drd4, NE): A bringer of madness and insanity, Iranxani loves nothing so much as destroying the minds of those whom she considers beneath her — which includes everyone, quite frankly. When she deigns to speak to those around her, her words rarely make any sense, though they do often carry some (often prophetic) meaning. Worshipped by several tribes of bat devils, Iranxani's goals are known to none but herself,



though the Blood Crone has personally stepped in to prevent enemies from harming the mad hag before, so many of the witches in the Dar al Annot speculate that the two keep some kind of link between them. In truth, Iranxani was the first of Lithacha's "granddaughters."

Jandemma (female wood elf, Drd8/Bwt6, N): The druid Jandemma is not driven by the same wicked impulses as seem to motivate many of the other witches of the Dar al Annot. Rather, she firmly believes that the titanic cycles are shattered and even now the wheel upon which the world's well-being spins is grinding to a halt beneath the tread of godspawn, threatening the very existence of everything. Though she once served Denev in Vera-Tre, she left when the elves permitted the worship of Tanil among their numbers. Though she holds no genuine love for Mormo, she seeks to see the Serpent Mother brought back in order to allow the cycle to continue on and feels that of all the sundered titans, Mormo has the best chance of being reconstituted — though Jandemma does keep an ear to the ground, willingly helping the servants of other titans who may have a chance of bringing back their own masters. Though she tells no one, she has experienced the dreams that mark her as an incarnate soul, but she refuses to pursue that path until the cycle is safe once more. Instead, she has consumed some of the blood of Mormo and

learns the powers inherent in the blood of all living things. (Note: Jandemma is a member of the blood witch [Bwt] prestige class, found in *Relics & Rituals*.)

Macha-Kaia (female storm hag, Drd17, CE): The Crebain Queen Macha-Kaia, known for being surrounded by great numbers of crows, is the foremost of the storm hags among the Dar al Annot — even Urgamba received her place through Macha-Kaia's influence. Macha-Kaia commands huge flocks of corvids and has trained most of the Dar al Annot's crebain-druids that can often be found in the highest reaches of Annot Kalam bath. Macha-Kaia considers the Blood Crone her equal, and the witch-queen of the Dar al Annot treats Macha-Kaia with respect in return.

Randa (female half-elf, Sor11, NE): The daughter of Jandemma, Randa worked her way into the Coven Council against her mother's wishes — indeed, it is generally agreed that Serangrana sponsored Randa solely to spite Jandemma. Unlike her mother, Randa is a fanatical follower of the Serpent Mother, believing that her mother, while correct, is blinded by simple necessity. Randa is, in many ways, the archetypal witch of Mormo, given to the use of serpentine spells and motifs in her dress and body adornment. Because her mother drank the ritual chalice of Mormo's blood upon becoming a blood witch

while pregnant, Randa has the old blood of Mormo's witches in her. (Note: Randa has the Witch of the Old Blood feat, from **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**.)

Serangrana the Spider-killer (female wood elf, Sor15, LE): Known for her hatred of the witchspiders that often oppose the Dar al Annot, Serangrana has made her reputation as a slayer of these monstrosities. Armed with spells that protect herself and her troops from hostile magics and movement inhibiting webbing, Serangrana often leads her ranger-hunters — an elite force of asaath, ratmen, and humans accompanied by a trio of blood reavers — into battle against the Eightfold Curse and other witchspider cabals.

Urgamba (female storm hag, Drd13, CE): Though Macha-Kaia is the acknowledged Queen of Storm Hags in the Hornsaw, none can deny Urgamba's sheer destructive power. Urgamba has little use for anything that cannot survive the savagery of the lightning storms she weaves; she is always accompanied by a pair of adult arrowhawks and often flies in the company of several shockbats. Urgamba, though less skilled in the wielding of magic than many of the witches, is perhaps the most combat savvy of the Dar al Annot. She is served by various hags, storm-witches, and spider-eye goblins.

Ulithiashria (female human, Drd8/Lor6, LE): The Lorekeeper of the Dar al Annot, Ulithiashria tends to keep to her quarters, a large wicker-work series of chambers that house the lore of the Dar al Annot as a whole (as compared to the individual stores of knowledge kept by some of its members). Ulithiashria's position as a leader hinges on her duties as Lorekeeper — anyone wishing to challenge her for her seat must be willing to take on those duties. As such, few do. Ulithiashria can often be found recording the findings of the Dar al Annot's member or bargaining for the right to copy some member's scrolls and books, hoping to add that lore to the Dar al Annot's store.

Vision of Flame (female Red Witch slitheren, Ill14, NE): The red-eyed albino slitheren known as Vision of Flame is something of an anomaly among the Dar al Annot. Her spells are — as with many of the Red Witches — prepared by rote and sigil, rather than harnessed naturally. She has studied these ways beyond the proficiency that her breed gives her, though, and ascended into mastery of woven illusions and glamers. Vision of Flame is the first Red Witch slitheren to hold power in the Dar al Annot, and she commands many nests of ratmen, Red Witch and otherwise, on behalf of Those Who Will

Find. She is close allies with Ulithiashria, depending on the Lorekeeper's stores of knowledge for the development of new spells and rituals.

Ythshia Malass'tiss (female medusa, Sor14, NE): Ythshia comes from something of an exalted lineage: she is of the Serpentkiss clan, a family of medusas from Khirdet in the service of Mormo. Ye she completely failed to demonstrate any kind of proficiency in the druidic arts, which marked her as an outcast from her family, despite her skill in sorcery. She fled her family — lest she be offered up as a sacrifice and ritual meal to the family's next generation as an example of what happens when you fail your familial destiny — into the Hornsaw, where her proficiency and nearness to Mormo's blood made her a favored witch among the Dar al Annot. She now sits on the Coven Council and plots against her relations in Khirdet.

Eightfold Curse

Number of Members: Approximately 30 witchspiders.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Regions of Influence: Kaymen's March, though slowly extending influence into other areas of the Hornsaw.

Primary Activities: Consolidation of power, seizure of control of serpentholds.

Description

The Eightfold Curse is the coalition of witchspiders — many of whom are descended from the dark womb Uriaglasha — that has banded together in order to ensure the survival of its members. The Eightfold Curse was properly formed even before the death of Uriaglasha by the hag's witchspider spawn, but they were effectively powerless to disobey her. Now the Eightfold Curse protects its own, making Kaymen's March a genuinely dangerous place to venture into if one is not a witchspider (or a servant thereof). The purpose of this organization is very simple: to acquire those things that ensure the survival of the witchspiders.

First among these things is hunting territory, which Kaymen's March provides in abundance. Witchspiders are terribly territorial and known to defend their hunting grounds fiercely; indeed, the witchspiders developed their means of communicating with one another through their webbing because they are loathe to leave their territory, and no witchspider would permit another entry into her lair.

Second to this need for territory, however, is the need for some kind of essence of Mormo for their spawn. Witchspiders are all female; they

Life Cycle of the Witchspider

Witchspiders breed through mating with other large spiders, usually either giant wolf spiders (see **Creature Collection Revised**) or monstrous spiders (see MM, Appendix 2: Vermin). All witchspiders are female, and the female spawn of these unions are also witchspiders; male spawn are of the father's breed, save that they are usually eaten by their more aggressive and more intelligent female siblings.

Witchspiders are raised in massive, hidden pits, usually old animal lairs dug up by the mother (or her charmed servants), or other naturally occurring holes. These pits are created in early spring and covered by a thin layer of sticky cob webbing, with dirt and debris deposited atop as camouflage. The corpse of a creature is usually placed at the bottom of this pit, the eggs laid within it and then wrapped in spider silk.

Once the young hatch, they flee the corpse-lair and scurry away into the rest of the pit to spin their own webs and begin growing. Over the next two seasons, the spiders eat any creatures that wander into the web-filled pits, as well as one another. By the end of this period, most of the spiders have either been eaten or driven from the pit; the males are usually driven away, for the females tend to cooperate fiercely, though eventually the females come to compete and form alliances against one another as well. By this time, the witchspiders are the size of a human hand.

When autumn comes, the few remaining spiders in the pit cocoon themselves and enter their final molt, growing throughout the winter. When spring arrives, the witchspiders awaken ravenous and immediately fall into a feeding frenzy from which only a few of their number survive. Those that do are usually the size of small dogs, and all flee the pit to go their separate ways.

Afterward, it usually takes about another year for the young witchspiders to grow to full size; during this time, they are considered small monstrous spiders (see MM, Appendix 2: Vermin), with the poison of a witchspider (making them a CR 1 creature, though the Fortitude save DC against their poison is only 11). After they have reached full maturity, the witchspiders usually begin developing sorcerous powers.

For witchspider statistics, see the Appendix.

breed through contact with other giant spiders (usually consuming their mates afterwards) and lay eggs in the body of a creature created by the touch of Mormo. For this, their favorite prey includes hags, gorgons, and other such creatures. Most coveted of all, however, are actual pieces of Mormo, which are said to ensure the spawn of many young witchspiders.

Of recent interest, the most powerful witches of the Eightfold Curse believe that by creating their spawning pits in the places known as serpentholds, more of the spawn will be born as witchspiders and more will survive, feeding on the bodies of the serpents that visit these places rather than on one another. They also believe that doing this will allow their young to ingest the essence of Mormo more potently, becoming more adept in sorcery. Apparently, some of these beliefs are proving true: offspring from two spawning pits situated in serpentholds seem more inclined toward sorcery.

Though they seek out the relics, holy places, and even viscera of Mormo, the witchspiders do not worship the titaness, despite their roles as her handmaidens in the past. Now, the witchspiders support only themselves, and their goals are simple — to see the entirety of the Hornsaw eventually under their sole dominion.

Organization

The Eightfold Curse includes essentially all the witchspiders in or around the large swathe of Hornsaw Forest known as Kaymen's March. The witchspiders' lairs are all interconnected to one another through the use of the sound-sensitive webbing that they spin, allowing them to communicate with each other. Otherwise, the witchspiders each maintain their own lairs, dwelling in solitude unless forced out to hunt or mate. These sites often attract the presence of giant spiders that dwell just outside of the periphery of the witchspiders' lair. Additionally, many of the witchspiders charm or otherwise control servants to aid them in their endeavors.

History

Only those scholars of titan lore know this history of witchspiders: they were created by Mormo from venomous giant spiders and given the ability to confuse the senses of their enemies and to cast spells, all so that they might serve the Mother of Venom as handmaidens (or so the legends say).

Many of these witchspiders died during the Divine War, fighting on the side of their titaness. Indeed, save for perhaps a few remote locales,

witchspiders were all but extinct. Only through the machinations of the dark womb Uriaglasha did the witchspiders remain in existence. With the death of the hag-mother who spawned them, the witchspiders of (the newly-dubbed) Kaymen's March began to organize themselves, seeking ways of not only dwelling in safety but of ensuring that they had plenty of means to breed and see that their kind not only survived, but prospered.

The Eightfold Curse, as an organization, was founded in 38 AV by three elder witchspiders: Abrith-Latha the Spider-Mother, Thyrochala of the Boughs, and Imbriaa the Foul. Fighting their natural instincts to attack one another, the three met on neutral territory that was the hunting grounds of a great hydra and deliberately worked together to slay the eight-headed beast known to other witchspiders as the Eightfold Curse.

As they gorged themselves on the hydra's Mormo-tainted blood, the three discussed the problems that made life difficult and how best to deal with them. By the end of the week, Thyrochala and Imbriaa left the grounds that Abrith-Latha had claimed for herself, trailing with them bits of Abrith-Latha's spidersilk that they might communicate with one another. Their numbers then grew as individual witchspiders realized that to attack one of the trio was to attack them all and so chose to avail themselves of the alliance rather than run afoul of it.

Locations

The Eightfold Curse is found in Kaymen's March, in the Hornsaw Forest, though its members now tentatively venture outward, seeking new serpentholds and places where the power of Mormo is strong so that their young might grow powerful. Most of the time, these forays meet with disaster, for it is invariably the young witchspiders that seek out new territories and are rarely powerful enough to hold them for any length of time, especially given the knowledge other intelligent denizens of the Hornsaw have of the witchspiders — most druids and other servants of Mormo hate the creatures violently.

Members

Only witchspiders become members of the Eightfold Curse. All a young witchspider need do to gain acceptance is willingly venture peaceably into the territory and very lair of another witchspider, bringing with her a strand of her lair's spidersilk so that she might be part of the organization. Witchspiders very rarely actually meet one another in the flesh, though they do

spend large portions of their waking hours in communication with one another, relaying messages between far-flung witchspiders.

Leaders

The only witchspiders to wield anything like the influence of true leaders in the Eightfold Curse are the three founders that braved destruction actually to meet one another away from their lairs, joining forces to slay a beast none of them could have destroyed alone.

Abrith-Latha the Spider-Mother (*female witchspider*, Sor12, LE) lairs at the very center of Kaymen's March, nesting in a cavern lined with the bones of the eight-headed hydra that once bore the name that the three claimed for their own fellowship. Thyrochala of the Boughs (*female witchspider*, Sor10, LE) dwells in the northern reaches of the March in a huge lair spun among the boughs of blood-tainted oaks and elms. Together, these two are known for their interactions with the other witchspiders — at least, in comparison to Imbriaa the Foul (*female witchspider*, Sor9/Bwt4, NE). This awful and bloated witchspider lives at the bottom of a pit where a large amount of Mormo's viscera settled. Imbriaa has begun to explore the powers of blood (through the blood witch [Bwt] prestige class, from **Relics & Rituals**) and only rarely bothers to raise her swollen body — crusted with vile slimes and clotted blood both titanic and mundane — from the pit in the eastern reaches of Kaymen's March.

Abrith-Latha, The Spider-Mother

Abrith-Latha is a massive witchspider, much larger than many of her sisters. The Spider-Mother was one of the first witchspiders in the Hornsaw born independently of the dark womb Uriaglasha, and Abrith-Latha reserves a great deal of hatred for hags. She has gathered around her a tribe of spider-eye goblins that serve and worship her as they would a god. She is very protective of this tribe, the Children of the Red Mother, and while she is willing to see them die in order to accomplish her ends, she wreaks bloody vengeance on those foolish enough to kill them. A massively bloated witchspider, Abrith-Latha has intricate red and black swirling designs on her abdomen and head that induce vertigo in her enemies. She is constantly guarded by the First Child, a venom-using spider-eye goblin barbarian.

Abrith-Latha, The Spider-Mother, Female Witchspider, Sor12: CR 17; SZ Large aberration; HD 6d8+18 plus 12d4+36; hp xx; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft., climb 25 ft.; AC 20 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural);

Atk +15/+10 melee (1d4+1 and poison, bite); SA Poison, vertigo, spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., webbing, witchblooded, witch-eggs; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +15; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills: Concentration +14, Hide +4*, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +4*, Scry +9, Spellcraft +12, Spot +2.

Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Still Spell, Weapon Finesse (bite; no longer used at this size, as Abrith-Latha is stronger than she is fast).

Languages: Dark Speech of Mormo, Ledean.

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 16); initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution and frightened for 1 minute; secondary damage 1d4 temporary Constitution and unconscious.

Vertigo (Ex): Provide full explanation of this ability.

Sorcerer Spells Known (cast per day: 6/7/7/7/5/3; base DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*; 1st — *cobwebs***, *field of razors***, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *web sphere***; 2nd — *cat's grace*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *rope trick*, *summon swarm*, *web*; 3rd — *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *manaspear**; 4th — *enduring webs***, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *persistent missiles***; 5th — *dominate person*, *mana sink***; 6th — *guards and wards*.

(Note: Spells marked with * are from **Relics & Rituals**; spells marked with ** are from **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**.)

Glivid-Autel

Number of Members: Approximately 300.

Alignment: Most members of the Glivid-Autel are of evil alignment, though many are neutral.

Regions of Influence: The Specters' Wood, Hornsaw Forest.

Primary Activities: The Glivid-Autel have no goals as a group, save the acquisition and maintenance of power and the pursuit of immortality.

Description

High atop Mesa-Karaday sits the city of Glivid-Autel. Yet this vast necropolis is named for the Society of Immortals that founded it. A magocracy of the vilest necromancers, diabolists, and sadists in Ghelspad, Glivid-Autel is perhaps its own greatest limiting factor — for if the Society's twisted wizards did not have one another to plot against, surely they would turn their sights outward.

Glivid-Autel is a blighted society sprung from the outcasts of Hollowfaust found guilty for experimenting upon the still-living populace of their city. The remnants of the Society of Immortals fled into the Hornsaw's depths and eventually found the Specters' Wood. It is a testament to the vast powers of the leadership of the Glivid-Autel that they survived long enough to discover the necropolis ruins of Amanosyan.

Now, the Society of Immortals abides as a constantly bickering and in-fighting cabal of wizards, each determined to be the mightiest and to rule over the others. To this end, in the search of power, most of the Glivid-Autel seek out mastery of the undead and the techniques for achieving immortality, whether true immortality or the transformation into lichdom.

Organization

The Glivid-Autel are organized very loosely. Eschewing the strict limitations of Hollowfaust's guild-organizations, the Glivid-Autel are instead structured into loose followings led by the most charismatic (and usually most powerful) of their numbers. A master necromancer demands absolute loyalty from his apprentices; an up-and-coming charismatic young wizard collects to him sycophants and followers; a skilled researcher discovers a powerful new spell or procedure and bargains knowledge of it away for favors and debts. All of these are methods by which power is maintained, shifted, and used in the Society of Immortals.

Outright violence is avoided, if only because blatant violence will likely cause others to mark one as a threat. As such, backstabbing (sometimes literal) and poisonings occur behind closed doors and in the middle of the night. The one unspoken agreement is that the city's non-wizards not be used in such instances — their numbers are few enough without having them slain trying to kill one's enemies. Besides, practically speaking, the use of citizenry to slay a necromancer plants the idea that the ruling class is somehow mortal and killable, a deadly idea to foster.

History

The Glivid-Autel have evolved through three incarnations. The first was as a small gathering of necromancers, apprentices to the master Ahrmuzda Airat. Airat encouraged his apprentices and followers to compete against each other, seeking to make them stronger through their infighting and power plays. The only true goal for a wizard, he believed, was immortality, for the powers of wizardry gave one everything else one

might wish for. The Society of Immortals was among those who helped to found the city of Hollowfaust on the ashes of Sumara, with Ahrmuzda Airat as one of its Seven Pilgrims.

The second incarnation of the Society of Immortals was as one of the ruling guilds of Hollowfaust. These wizards still sought the means by which arcane magic users might achieve immortality, though they were expected to do so within the auspices of Hollowfaustian law while also acting as rulers and guardians of the populace. One might argue that the Glivid-Autel got their taste for rulership over others here; regardless, they were ill-suited for the benign rule espoused by the guilds of Hollowfaust, for their experimentations required living subjects. They were discovered breaking the laws that prevented the torture and abuse of the populace and expelled from the city.

The third and current incarnation of the Glivid-Autel comes as a result of their expulsion from Hollowfaust. Those who were redeemable chose to stay in Hollowfaust; only the truly wicked and depraved were cast out of the First Gate forevermore. The Society was accustomed by now to ruling over a populace, to having ample fodder for their experimentations, to having a safe workspace deep beneath the earth, and to dwelling within a city. It was inevitable that they should found a new city.

In the travels now called the Second Pilgrimage by the Glivid-Autel (as well as those members of the Disciples of the Abyss who were cast out and folded seamlessly into the Society of Immortals), many died. The Glivid-Autel were far more interested in preserving their own hides, and many of the non-wizards who followed the Society's wizards died in the travels. Some of them did survive, however, and were present when the Society's necromancers discovered the ruins atop Mesa-Karaday. Harried on all sides by titanspawn and undead, the Society created a means for their citizenry to get atop the huge mesa, and the process of recovering the ruins of Amanosyan began.

In time, the numbers of citizens in Glivid-Autel (as the new city was named) grew, bolstered by refugees from the druidic theocracy of Khirdet and travelers lost in the Hornsaw "rescued" by Glividian patrols. Indeed, to this day, the Glivid-Autel are known to send undead into the Border Wood to capture those who have lost their way thanks to the uncanny plants there.

Glivid-Autel has not exactly remained aloof from the goings-on of the rest of the Hornsaw Forest, though. A number of years ago, it was

attacked by the Blood Crone and her minions, following rumors that the necromancers had discovered a large cache of Mormo's blood. Though Lucian Daine's last-minute military leadership proved to be enough to weather the assault, rumors that the Blood Crone has taken over the Dar al Annot give cause for some concern, for though the necromancers of Glivid-Autel managed to turn back the forces of her minions, they would surely be overwhelmed if the full forces of the hags and witches of Annot Kalambath were brought to bear.

Locations

Though they like to claim the entirety of the Specters' Wood as their own, in truth, the only place that the Glivid-Autel rule in its entirety is their city atop Mesa-Karaday. They do regularly send patrols deep into the woods around their city, patrolling as far as the Broadreach River, but they hardly control the woods there – instead, powerful undead and titanspawn slay the patrols, or the less-powerful hide until the patrols pass on.

The city of Glivid-Autel, however, is ruled utterly by the Society of Immortals, and woe betide those who would assault it. The humans there hope that one day they will prove worthy of being granted the immortality that the Society promises and even grants to some of its worthier citizenry. The living do not cavort with the undead here, for the living are sequestered into the ghetto known as the Civilian Quarter, a mass of hovels and ramshackle tenements where the are strong take from those who are not and all hope to avoid the ire of any of the Society's necromancers. They are given their entertainment in the form of the Coliseum Exaltatis when they do not slave away tending to the vine crops and slaughter-pens that feed the city.

The lairs of the Society are found beneath the city proper. Many of these lairs are vast dungeon complexes dug out in the same fashion as the Underfaust in Hollowfaust, generally through the use of specialized undead created for the purpose. The leadership of the Glivid-Autel, however, dwells in their opulent palaces above ground, literally looking down on their subject both living and undead.

Members

All that it takes to be counted among the Glivid-Autel is a willingness to travel to the city deep in the Specters' Wood and present oneself to any of the Society there. As such, the ranks of the Glivid-Autel swell with outsiders; only the rare necromancer actually hails from the populace of the city itself.

There is a dichotomy in the acceptance of those cast out from Hollowfaust: on one hand, the Glivid-Autel are suspicious of those who come from the city of their hated enemies; on the other hand, they are always anxious to hear of current events and research breakthroughs from Hollowfaust. As such, those who come to the Society from Hollowfaust are often welcomed, but watched closely. Many of the influential necromancers vie to include the newcomer among their retinues or allies, not for the dubious honor of teaching the newcomer, but rather to learn from the newcomer, who may be armed with magics yet unseen.

Leaders

The leaders of the Glivid-Autel are leaders because they invoke fear or worship in those beneath them. Few are the leaders, for necromancers of that kind of power do not live easily with peers — everyone in the world is either a minion or an enemy to such people. There are, however, exceptions.

First among the Glivid-Autel is Credas, the Necrotic King. A necromancer from the Second Pilgrimage, Credas is recognized as the heir to Ahrmuzda Airat's rule of the Society, and he knows secrets known only by Airat; surely, then, he is Airat's chosen heir — or at least, that is what many of the elder necromancers who knew the founder believe. (For more information on Credas, including his secret, see *The Wise & the Wicked*, page 26.)

Also of note is the Black Messiah himself, Lucian Daine, a man of great charisma and cunning who never involves himself in Credas' affairs. The exact relationship between Credas and Daine is strange: they seem to ignore one another pointedly, as though their spheres of influence do not intersect. Perhaps they do not, for Daine is involved with the secretive Obsidian Pyre and holds the loyalty of many of Glivid-Autel's necromancers as a result. (For more information on Lucian Daine, see *The Wise & the Wicked*, page 30.)

Liliandeli

Number of Members: Approximately two dozen.

Alignment: Most of the members of the Liliandeli are of good or neutral alignments, with neutral good and chaotic good prevailing.

Regions of Influence: Vesh, Vera-Tre, and the Broadreach Horizon of the Hornsaw

Primary Activities: Working to destroy the creatures and worshippers of Mormo in the Hornsaw.

Description

The Liliandeli are a reborn brotherhood of archers, rangers, bards, and worshippers of Tanil dedicated to healing the Broadreach and destroying the tainted beasts and worshippers of Mormo that dwell within the Hornsaw's depths. Seemingly returned from the ashes of the Divine War, the Liliandeli are committed to seeing the Hornsaw freed and healed.

Loosely organized, the Liliandeli are the inheritors of a much older legacy that dates from before the Divine War. When the Broadreach was lost to Mormo's viscera, the Liliandeli were also thought lost. One of Liliandel's blood survived in the Ganjus, however, and with the return of the Broadreach elves, he has emerged from the solitude that he has sought since the Divine War to help them wage war against the Hornsaw itself.

The Liliandeli take upon themselves many tasks: spying, scouting the terrain of the forest, following the movements of major tribes of monsters, and even the outright hunting of some of the Hornsaw's more monstrous beasts. The Liliandeli are also only too happy to help those who come to the Broadreach with ill-intent toward the gathered forces of Mormo within. Ultimately, the Liliandeli, once a noble brotherhood of defenders, now lead a vicious guerilla war against the witches, druids, and servants of Mormo within the forest.

Organization

The Liliandeli were always a loosely organized brotherhood. A single figurehead effectively leads the Liliandeli, though this leader is hardly autocratic, relying upon wisdom and a reputation for heroism. In the past, this leader was Liliandel; now, it is Liliandel's son Marillus.

The Liliandeli grow as a brotherhood through shared goals and experiences. No solemn initiation or official ceremony marks membership in the brotherhood; one is a Liliandeli because one knows other Liliandeli, has learned from other Liliandeli, and simply identifies oneself as such.

Most of the Liliandeli are students of Marillus or other Liliandeli who survived the Divine War and passed their teachings and ethics on to other sympathetic archers and worshippers of Tanil. This is how most folk become Liliandeli — they meet one of the Liliandeli, travel with them, and learn from them. This process lends a very close web of relationships to the organization unmatched by many other similar organizations.

Though many bards and rangers make up the ranks of the Liliandeli, the group is hardly limited to their numbers. Clerics of Tanil, fighters, wizards, sorcerers... all that is necessary is a willingness to die cleansing the Hornsaw to mark oneself as a Liliandeli and to gain acceptance by the rest of the brotherhood.

History

At first, there was only Liliandel and Thoresk, known to most bards as defenders of the Broadreach and creators of the spell *Liliandel's flurry*. Liliandel was an elven bard of the Broadreach tribes, and Thoresk was a half-elf ranger raised in the great Broadreach. Against all odds, the two fell in love, united in their worship of the goddess Tanil and the Broadreach forest. Eventually, their fellowship to defend the wood grew to include their children and other students who sought them out to learn the secrets imparted to them by Tanil. By the time of the Divine War, Thoresk had already died, and Liliandel remarried the razor-bow master and Liliandeli initiate Erunn.

The Liliandeli were on the front lines of the war against Mormo's forces, harried into retreat into the depths of the Broadreach. They were also among those on hand to lead the assaults against the arrayed forces of Mormo, a series of battles that took a heavy toll on both sides. Few Liliandeli remained by the time Mormo rose among her forces and was met by the gods. Only Liliandel is known to have survived long enough to see Mormo slain (see her account in *The Serpent in the Fold*).

The Liliandeli Reborn

With the destruction of the Broadreach, the few remaining disciples of the Liliandeli disbanded, disillusioned and bitter. Several of the Broadreach elven Liliandeli were among those who committed suicide in the Vale of Sorrows. Others simply skulked away, changing their names and refusing to speak of their past, blending easily into the chaos of post-Titanswar Ghelspad. Many of them were trained in the mysteries of the Liliandeli archer (see page see Chapter 4 for details on this prestige class). In time, some of them passed their lore on to those they found worthy, keeping the brotherhood's secrets and knowledge alive, even if the organization itself was no more.

Yet all this changed with the coming of Arelei to Vera-Tre. A half-elven druid recently awakened to her incarnate soul, Arelei sought out the reclusive archer Marillus and asked him why he shirked his responsibilities. A short while

later, Arelei and Marillus departed together, bound for the Hornsaw. No one knows if Marillus and Arelei had any hand in the return of the Broadreach elves. What many do know, however, is that shortly after the elves returned, others who had received some kind of training in the ways of the Liliandeli archer began arriving in the Broadreach Horizon, seeking Marillus. This small group together re-sanctified the oath that Liliandel and Thoresk had sworn centuries earlier.

Locations

The Liliandeli are a small group. Situated primarily out of the Broadreach Horizon, the Liliandeli also count allies in a number of places. Authorities in Vera-Tre hold Marillus in high esteem and are likely to give what aid they can to those who they know belong to this organization.

Vesh's Home Command knows of the Liliandeli by reputation, and indeed holds them to be heroes of the Divine War. The Home Command was informed of the Liliandeli's return by members of the Ganjus Vigil, notably the archer-vigilant Demynal Razor's branch, who sent a letter of resignation to the Home Command when he received Marillus' summons. The Home Command's reaction, however, is unknown.

Members

The Liliandeli are few in number. They are made up of mostly rangers and bards, though some clerics of Tanil, druids, wizards, and others can be found among them. All members of the Liliandeli are capable in their chosen field, and most of them have some level of combat prowess. A large portion of them are also spellcasters.

Becoming one of the Liliandeli is easy: one need only be accepted by a current Liliandeli as a friend or apprentice and express an interest in returning the Broadreach to its previously uncorrupted state. The life of the Liliandeli is hard, though; little time is available for luxuries or laziness. A Liliandeli is always busy, always has something going on. Some say that the only time the Liliandeli are not involved in something up to their eyebrows is when they are dead.

Notable Members

Arelei (female half-elf, Drd6/Inc3, N): A druid recently awakened to her Incarnate soul, Arelei has memories of lives whose forms she cannot assume — among them, the elf Illia, a daughter of Liliandel who died during the Divine War. Arelei has experienced the memories of Illia's death with terrifying clarity. She sought out Illia's brother Marillus and spoke to him in Illia's

voice, asking him why he had forsaken the Broadreach and his vows as a Liliandeli. Through her resolve and his knowledge, the two of them have restored the Liliandeli from obscurity and allied themselves with the newly returned Broadreach elves. Arelei has dark brown hair and has taken to dressing in the manner of the Broadreach elves when she is not armored for a mission somewhere. (Note: Arelei is a member of the incarnate [Inc] prestige class, found in *Relics & Rituals*.)

Chandratha the Huntress (female human, Clr5/Lar2, CG): Chandratha the Huntress had always heard stories of the Liliandeli, growing up as an acolyte in one of the Veshan temples to Tanil. When the Home Command received word that the Liliandeli were reborn, she immediately left the temple life and sought them out. Chandratha has long blonde hair and wears buckskins and leather. Her bow is always to hand, and she delights in trick-shots. (Note: Chandratha is a member of the Liliandeli archer prestige class, found in Chapter Four: Secrets of the Forest.)

Torbis Leaf-tear (male wood elf, Brd4, NG): A newly awakened bard of the Broadreach folk, Torbis was listless and melancholy upon his awakening. Like the rest of his people, he wanted to see the forest restored; frankly, though, he had no idea how to do so. With the coming of Arelei and Marillus, however, he found new purpose. Marillus and Torbis have become very close of late; Marillus has begun to teach Torbis not just the mysteries of Liliandeli archery, but also the songs and tales of the years since the Divine War.

Leaders

In the history of the Liliandeli, this brotherhood has only ever had two leaders: Liliandel herself and now her son Marillus. It would seem that each of the leaders also had a lieutenant of some kind — Liliandel had her husband Thoresk (and later, Erunn), and Marillus has Arelei.

Marillus, the Son of Liliandel

The quiet and withdrawn son of Liliandel, Marillus never thought he would find himself at the head of a newly reborn Liliandeli. Not until Arelei's coming did he realize that he was not in fact mourning the death of his family — he was mourning his own loneliness and solitude, refusing to see the world around him. Now, he is intent on making up for those lost years by seeing the Hornsaw freed of the taint that corrupts it, but he secretly fears that even if he were somehow to kill every horrific thing in the Hornsaw's reaches, Mormo's taint would remain, mocking both him and his life's work.

Marillus is tall, with dark mahogany colored hair, though a few streaks of whitish-grey show through the long braids in which he holds them back. Though, like most elves, his face does not betray his age, lines of care have developed around his eyes. He carries with him a spirit of great weariness, but dogged determination.

Marillus, male wood elf, Brd7/Lar10: CR 17; SZ Medium-size humanoid (wood elf) (5 ft. 8 in.); HD 7d6+7 plus 10d10+10; hp 124; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 24 (+4 Dex, +7 armor, +3 natural); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+3, +1 short sword) or +20/+15/+10 ranged (1d8+5 plus 1d6 cold and 2d6 holy vs. evil, *Deathwhisper*); SA Hornet shot, kiss of the Huntress; SQ Bardic knowledge (+9), bardic music (7/day), Broadreach training, invest the bow, SR 15, Tanil's blessing, wood elfen traits; AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +16, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +16, Concentration +5, Craft (bowmaking) +15, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +2, Hide +12, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Perform +10, Speak Language +4, Spellcraft +1, Swim +5, Tumble +5, Wilderness Lore +10.

Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Track, Weapon Focus (composite long bow).

Languages: Calastian, Darakeene, Dark Speech of Mormo, High Elven, Ledean, Middle Elven, Veshian.

Hornet Shot (Ex): Preparing this shot requires a move-equivalent action; only one such arrow may be fired in a round. Marillus deals +2d6 damage with this shot if he hits.

Kiss of the Huntress (Su): Seven times per day, Marillus can bless his arrows so that they act as +3 weapons solely for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Broadreach Training (Ex): Marillus has the brachiation, camouflage, harrying shot, and whisper-foot abilities of the Liliandeli archer prestige class (see Chapter Four).

Tanil's Blessing (Su): Marillus can cast the following bard spells as if they were one level lower with regard to spell slots used: 1st — *feather fall*, *magic weapon*; 2nd — *cat's grace*, *Liliandel's flurry**, *shocking missile***; 3rd — *greater magic weapon*, *haste*.

Possessions: Leather traveler's clothing, Liliandel's shirt (+3 mithral shirt of spell resistance 15), *Deathwhisper* (+3 holy mighty composite longbow of frost [Str 14]), +1 short sword, boots of speed,

*amulet of natural armor +3, bracers of archery, wood elf fetish (hawk)**.*

Bard Spells Known (cast per day: 3/4/3/1; base DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic, dowsing**, *light, mage hand, mending, resistance*; 1st — *cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, feather fall, magic weapon*; 2nd — *cat's grace, Liliandel's flurry**, *mirror image, shocking missile***; 3rd — *greater magic weapon, haste*.

(Note: Spells marked with * are from **Relics & Rituals**; spells and items marked with ** are from **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**.)

Torn Womb

Number of Members: The actual numbers fluctuate greatly, but usually average between 3,000 and 5,000 troops at any one time.

Alignment: Any evil.

Regions of Influence: The Hornsaw Forest.

Primary Activities: To raise a mighty empire dedicated to the memory and legacy of Mormo and lay waste to the godspawn nations of Ghelspad.

Description

The undisputed leaders in the arena of open warfare in the Hornsaw Forest are the gorgons and war-masters of the Torn Womb. The Cult of the Serpent Ascendant certainly wields great clout by virtue of its teachings, and the magical superiority of the Dar al Annot is absolute, but the sheer military might of the Torn Womb is a force not to be ignored.

Founded by high gorgons consumed with bitterness and hatred, the Torn Womb holds no illusions of the possibility of returning Mormo to life. "Once the womb is torn, never again can it harbor the mother's children," is the philosophy behind the Torn Womb's stance. With the destruction of Mormo at the hands of the gods, how can mortals possibly hope to return her? No, better by far to gather those resources available and secure a place of power in the post-Titanswar chaos and exact revenge for the slaying of their mother. Thus, driven by thoughts of revenge and hatred, the Torn Womb musters its forces to strike out against the godspawn.

For the now, the Torn Womb seeks to defend the Hornsaw against incursions by the slaves of the gods. Though the group has often found itself at odds against the other factions of the Hornsaw, it will not stand to see the faithful of Mormo — regardless of how misplaced that faith is — put to the swords of the divine races. Many times when a shrine of the Cult of the Serpent Ascendant was

threatened by adventurers or others, only the timely arrival of Torn Womb packs rescued it. Only the Dar al Annot and Eightfold Curse receive no such aid, by order of the high gorgons of the Torn Womb.

Organization

The forces of the Torn Womb are disorganized at best. They are set into packs of between five and a dozen, each led by a packmaster. These packmasters rise to their positions through charisma, combat prowess, and their ability to impress other packmasters. The packs are a strange, always-shifting phenomenon, with infighting among them to determine dominance, packmasters battling one another for the "right" to have certain warriors in their packs, and fierce rivalry brewing on all sides. The packmasters form a council that receives its orders from the high gorgons, the undisputed masters of the Torn Womb: while the packmasters lead their packs into battle, the high gorgons are the generals, tacticians, and sorcerers of the savage forces.

History

The Torn Womb was founded shortly after Mormo's destruction. Indeed, it might be said that the Torn Womb existed before then, for it emerged from the remnants of Mormo's forces during the Divine War. They fought against the forces of the gods in the last great battle in the Broadreach and, with the death of their Lady of Serpents, simply never left the forest.

The Torn Womb is not, however, the heir to Mormo's army. If anything, it might be considered comprised of deserters and traitors, for they formed when the invariable infighting broke out among the survivors of Mormo's forces. After the fall of the Serpent Mother, several of the high gorgons and other servitors believed that the newly proposed intent to restore Mormo back to life was folly. They had seen the power of the gods firsthand, and that which the gods sundered could not be restored by mere mortals, no matter how favored of the Queen of Hags.

For years, the Torn Womb mustered its forces, resorting even to press gang techniques to recruit titanspawn such as asaathi, ratmen, and the like. Then, in 30 AV, they discovered the presence of humans within the outer reaches of their patrol, in the undead haunted Specters' Wood. They marched on Mesa-Karaday, but were met by a party of necromancers intent on parleying. Though none remain who remember the precise details of the negotiations involved, the Torn

Womb turned its fury on the city of Hollowfaust. Thus began the Second Siege of Hollowfaust. In the end, the necromancers of Hollowfaust defeated the Torn Womb, using tactics learned dearly at the hands of sutak forces years prior. The Torn Womb was nearly utterly decimated for its efforts and slunk back into the Hornsaw to lick its wounds.

In the years since, the Torn Womb has seen many leaders. It is with their most recent, Yumeriful, a high gorgon skilled in subterfuge and hiding among humans (more so even than his people are normally), that the group's tactics have changed. No more do members of the Torn Womb gnash their teeth in impotent fury at enemies such as Glivid-Autel and Hollowfaust. Now, they plan for the day when these places might be destroyed. No more do the high gorgons serve as only leaders, either. Now, they are trained by Yumeriful to hide among the humans and detect the weaknesses of their settlements' defenses, in preparation for destroying such places.

Ner Akem (see **Hollowfaust: City of Necromancers**, page 86) is one such plant, and others are in Glivid-Autel. Even now, Yumeriful collects the information that these spies send him, and he has begun organizing the downfall of the city of Hollowfaust. The time is almost at hand.

Locations

The Torn Womb operates in small cells scattered throughout the Hornsaw, usually two or three packs overseen by up to three high gorgons. It has no headquarters, believing that a beast with no head cannot be decapitated.

Members

The packs that make up the majority of the Torn Womb are incredibly diverse, comprised of various breeds and races of titanspawn that can be recruited, whether through inspiration, fanaticism, press gang techniques, or even blackmail and magical coercion. Most of the packs are made up of goblins, ratmen, and asaathi, as well as ogres and humans both barbarian and mercenary. Some of the packs are known for their elite troops, whether dire wolves, nests of hollow nagas, or blood reapers. Most of the packs include low gorgons, technically under the command of the packmasters, but always obedient to the high gorgons that command the Torn Womb.

The packmasters themselves share only one element in common: they have served in the packs and rose through the ranks by charisma, bravery, cunning, wits, viciousness, or sheer com-

bat prowess. The Torn Womb has all manner of packmasters – nagas, asaathi mages, barbarian chieftains, orc cut-throats, ratmen assassins, and all manner of creatures in between.

Leaders

While variety among leadership is a hallmark of the packs of the Torn Womb, such is not the case with those to whom the packmasters answer. One fact is constant: the high gorgons rule the Torn Womb utterly. They encourage rivalry and competition among the packmasters, fostering division among their subordinates while themselves uniting to destroy utterly any who would strike out against the high gorgons.

Other Organizations of the Hornsaw

Though the organizations, cabals, and conspiracies above are perhaps the most powerful in the Hornsaw, they are far from the only ones. Every season, it seems, some new cult forms within the reaches of the Hornsaw. Most of the time, these groups are destroyed by the more powerful forces mentioned above, wiped out by the simple dangers of the Hornsaw or absorbed into other groups. A rare few, however, have survived long enough to warrant mention.

Plague Eye

Number of Members: About a dozen high gorgons and approximately 300 Diseased ratmen.

Alignment: Any evil or neutral.

Regions of Influence: Small nests in the Hornsaw Forest and Mourning Marsh.

Primary Activities: Attempting to combine the pieces of Mormo with those of Chern, in hopes of raising a composite titanic entity.

Founded by the high gorgon Mizzenath, the Plague Eye teaches its adherents that the destruction that the gods wrought upon the titans is too great for mere mortals to repair; only through the efforts of the titans themselves might they be returned to their strength and wholeness. The problem is, the only titan yet alive who might be able to set everything aright is Denev, the traitor.

Yet all is not lost. The elemental nature of the titans means that they share a common source of power and essence. As such, if a great enough quantity of the essential components of multiple titans were somehow merged, the resultant being would be more than capable of restoring the titans.



To this end, Mizzenath and his high gorgon followers traveled to the Mourning Marshes, where popular legend holds that Chern's remains were interred by his son Vangal. Contacting several nests of the Diseased, Mizzenath spread his blasphemous intentions to them. Several times, they were nearly slain: the Diseased had no intentions of setting aside the titan's flesh when it was found instead of ritually consuming it, as was their wont. In time, though, Mizzenath converted many of the priestly caste of the Diseased to his way of thinking. He took several of the nests with him back to the Hornsaw, leaving some of the high gorgons, led by his lieutenant Alkashraa, to act as liaisons among the converted Diseased in the Marshes.

Now, in both the Mourning Marshes and the Hornsaw Forest, gorgons and ratmen seek out the viscera of Mormo and Chern, intent on gathering enough of the pieces to allow them to create a mighty amalgam-titan, bound up with the power of the titans and driven by hatred of the gods.

Serpentskull Heresy

Number of Members: Approximately 20.

Alignment: Any evil.

Regions of Influence: Glivid-Autel and the Specters' Wood.

Primary Activities: Research into the possibility of raising Mormo as an undead creature rather than a living titan.

In the wake of the Titanswar, the changes wrought on various areas of the Broadreach were terrible indeed. One might, however, argue that some of the most drastic changes were those wrought on the Specters' Wood. Among those who might argue so is Xanathia, a high gorgon sorcerer who was sorely wounded at the death of Mormo and fled to a deep subterranean cavern on the other side of the Broadreach to hide and heal her wounds.

While hiding, she fell into a deathly sleep from which she may not have normally awoken, save for the vision she experienced. Her frame was wrenched by horrific pains emanating from her abdomen, and when she split apart the seam

that hides the serpents of the high gorgons, rattling, clattering serpentine snakes emerged. A voice from above said to her, "As my daughter is, so must I be."

When she awoke, the seasons had turned, and she lay in deep mud that had slowly seeped down through the weeks. The woods outside of her cave had changed and twisted, somehow infused with the energies of death — much like herself. Xanathia had become a lich, though precisely how she did not know.

In time, she has come to understand that her nature reflects that of her titaness mother — or rather, how she should be. Xanathia now leads a heresy, scattered among humans of the Glivid-Autel, necromancer-witches among the Red Witch slitheren, and certain high gorgons who hold that the way to raise Mormo is not to return her to the way she once was. The gods, after all, have already proven that they can destroy her in that form. No, instead, as much of Mormo must be gathered as is possible and animated with the darkest necromancies. When this occurs, her spirit shall seize the body and take it for a new existence, as a being never before seen in all of the world — an undead titan.

The Phylactery of Xanathia

Xanathia has studied the lore behind her new nature, owing to contacts in Glivid-Autel and among the Red Witches. She has discovered that she is indeed a lich; this is cause for some consternation, however. A lich's life force is nestled away within a phylactery, usually hidden by the lich in order to prevent its death.

The problem is, Xanathia cannot find her phylactery.

Indeed, Xanathia has no idea how precisely she became a lich — and the truth is one with potentially dire consequences for all of the Scarred Lands. By the very power of the demigod Otossal was Xanathia made a lich. The Bone Master seeks to elevate his power by raising something of titanic potency as an undead creature, and then using his mastery of the undead and necromancy to siphon off the creature's power for his own.



Chapter Four: Secrets of the Forest

The ancient Broadreach was once a place of magic, harmony, and beauty where elves worked great spells and passed their blessings on to all those who lived in the forest. Today, the woods are dark and wicked, and while the elves live on, their numbers and power are both greatly reduced. All the same, they still command unusual magic, and their power is embodied in great community rituals and the strange tattoos that grace their flesh.

Elsewhere in the forest, a small band of heroic archers battles the titanspawn along with a twisted order of wicked rangers whose love for the forest has transformed into an almost psychotic hatred for outsiders and a desire to defend the Hornsaw at all costs.

New Spells

The following spells include several new rituals. These rituals result in the creation of magical tattoos that aid Broadreach elves, but do not follow the same rules for magical tattoos described in **Relics & Rituals**. This change is because the application of tattoos among the Broadreach elves is a community effort, and so more appropriate as ritual magic. It also gives Broadreach elves with lower Constitution scores a chance to receive magical tattoos, though in a much more limited fashion than those who receive tattoos in the usual fashion.

Outcast Mark

Allows a Broadreach druid to mark a person permanently as an outcast.

Universal

Level: Drd 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target: Person touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Description

The harshest punishment among the Broadreach elves is to declare a clan member outcast and to abandon him without supplies in the deadly Hornsaw Forest. Once outcast, a person can never return to elven society without first atoning for the wrongs he has committed. Because the Broadreach elves have no central government, however, one clan has no way of knowing whom another clan has banished, and outcasts are known simply to move on to another clan village and there gain assistance for departing the forest unharmed, effectively circumventing the punishment completely. To avoid this situation and to ensure that once banished a person stays well away from all Broadreach elven culture, clan druids have developed a simple and effective way to make certain that all Broadreach elven clans can see who has committed the worst sorts of crimes: the *outcast mark*. Every clan has its own well-recognized outcast symbol, and the secret of how to cast such symbols is closely guarded. No member of a Broadreach clan has ever allowed an outsider to learn the secrets of the *outcast mark*. Only a druid from the same clan as first cast the spell can ever erase the mark.

Spell Effect

This spell is similar to the 0-level wizard spell *arcane mark*, but with several differences. It can only be cast on a sentient creature (usually on the forehead), and it never wears off. A caster can only make

a mark associated with his clan. Once cast, the mark is normally only visible to other druids who have learned this spell, but any *detect magic* spell will make it glow like an *arcane mark*. Druids who can cast *outcast mark* can always see the previously cast marks of other druids, even without a *detect magic* spell. *Outcast mark* cannot be disguised, dispelled, or erased by magic, save by a druid who knows how to cast the exact same mark as the original. Any druid who can cast the same symbol can erase it easily, however, by casting a reversed version of this spell.

Material Component: A hair from the target's body.

Broadreach Elven Ritual Tattoos

In addition to other forms of Scarred Lands tattoo magic, such as the crafting of magical tattoos or the spell *tattoo item* (**Relics & Rituals**, pages 118-19), the Broadreach elves have developed their own way of incorporating magical elements into their tattoos. Broadreach tattoos are cast by an entire community in a ritual setting and so use different rules from ordinary magical tattoos.

All of the following rituals have tattoo inks among their material components, all have tattoo needles as a focus component, and all have a somatic component that includes actively tattooing the subject with the ink and needles (making the ritual exactly as painful as a non-magical tattoo). They may have other magical components aside from these required three.

Another element they all have in common is that they grant a permanent (until the tattoo is removed) supernatural ability to the subject. Any humanoid subject can bear one of these tattoos, but it is impossible to bear more than one at a time. To acquire a new ritual tattoo, the old ritual tattoo must first be removed. Any of these rituals tattoos can be removed by the true ritual *remove ritual tattoo*, described below. Removal of a ritual tattoo for any reason other than replacing it with a new ritual tattoo is a common element of punishment for shameful misdeeds in Broadreach elven society. The presence of a ritual tattoo does not affect the number of ordinary magical tattoos that a Broadreach elf can have, as described in **Relics & Rituals**.

The Broadreach elves will not enact these rituals save for clan members or occasionally for wood dwarves. They never teach them to outsiders. Thus far, only druids have developed tattoo rituals, but nothing prevents other types of spellcasters eventually learning to mimic these methods in their own ways.

Though the tattoo rituals could easily be performed with the required number of casters and no more, the Broadreach elves culturally prefer to work with five actual casters and the rest replaced by proxies when possible. Community is important to

the elves, and they prefer to have large portions of the clan involved in every ritual tattooing.

A few of the best known tattoo rituals are detailed below, but the Broadreach elves have many such rituals, and most of the clans also have one or two secret, clan-specific tattoo rituals. All tattoo rituals follow the guidelines above, and high-level rituals (over 5th level) are usually only enacted for the community's most important and highly respected members. Because they grant a permanent magical ability to the target, the spell level of a tattoo ritual is never below 4th.

Tattoo of Blending

Target receives bonuses or lowered penalties to Hide checks.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 4

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casters Required: 10

Proxy: Yes: 50 followers per caster

Casting Time: 3 hours

Range: Touch

Target: Person touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Description

An extremely common tattoo ritual among the Broadreach elves, this one resembles the eyes of a raccoon peering through leaves.

Spell Effect

Three times per day, the target can take on the colors and textures of the forest around her. Only her eyes are visible, and these will vanish if she closes them. If the character is moving up to one-half normal speed, she receives a +1 bonus per character level to all Hide checks. When moving at one-half to full speed, she suffers no penalty to her Hide checks, instead of the normal -5 penalty. If running or charging, she suffers only a -10 penalty, rather than the standard -20. This ability only works within a forest or similar group of trees, such as an orchard. The effect lasts for 1 minute per character level. This ability can only be removed with a *remove ritual tattoo* true ritual. The target of this ritual may not have any ritual tattoos at the time this tattoo ritual is performed.

Material Components: A mask created by the target from raw materials worth at least 10 gp and 1 ounce of specially mixed and prepared tattoo ink (see *tattoo of community*, below).

Focus: 3 tattoo needles.

XP Cost: 50 XP each caster. Special — the target can pay the experience cost for any number of casters.

Blood Dreams

Participants experience spiritual hallucinations with a chance of both positive and negative lasting effects.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 3

Components: V, S, M, F, XP

Casters Required: 9

Proxy: Yes: 100 followers per caster

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Personal (all participants)

Target: All participants

Duration: Special — see below

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Description

Only Clan Lizard is known to use this ritual, and many other Broadreach elven clans see it as unhealthy and disturbing. Clan Lizard members are quite open about the ritual, however; any adult ally or member of any Broadreach clan is always welcome to participate in a *blood dreams* ritual.

At the beginning of the ritual, each participant cuts herself and bleeds into a large vat of boiling stew. After one hour, all participants eat a serving of the stew to complete the ritual. Clan Lizard views this act as a form of sacred community sharing and will perform the ritual as often as three times a year, usually on a holy day or at a time when the entire clan requires great wisdom. In most cases, a few dozen responsible adults in the clan choose not to participate, in order to care for and protect both the clan's children and the many participants until the effects wear off.

Spell Effect

This ritual causes all participants to hallucinate for 1d4 hours + 1 hour/caster level. Hallucinations vary widely but are all-encompassing and leave the character effectively helpless until they stop. Hallucinations are always slightly different for each participant. For 1d4 days afterward, all participants receive a 1d4-2 bonus to Wisdom and a 1d4-2 penalty to Intelligence. This bonus and penalty should be rolled individually for each participant. When the 1d4 days are over, each participant has a 1% chance of the Intelligence penalty becoming permanent and a 3% chance of the Wisdom bonus becoming permanent. Each participant should roll these two chances separately. A *restoration* spell can reverse the effects of the Intelligence loss, but has a 25% chance of reversing the Wisdom gain as well.

Material Components: 1 hp worth of blood from each participant, and enough soup or stew for all participants.

Focus: A giant cauldron crafted of materials worth at least 500 gp.

XP Cost: 100 XP each caster.

Tattoo of Community

Enables recipient to know the direction to her clan village wherever she is.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 4
Components: V, S, M, F, XP
Casters Required: 10
Proxy: Yes: 50 per caster
Casting Time: 2 hours
Range: Touch
Target: Person touched
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Description

This tattoo is always the very first that a young Broadreach elf receives. Performed as part of the End of Childhood initiation rite, this tattoo signifies a time of increased freedom for a young Broadreach elf when she may begin to explore the forest on her own. The tattoo produced in this ritual is always formed in the shape of the clan sigil for whichever clan the casters, proxies, and target belong to, and it can only be performed on a member of that clan. At the Rite of Adulthood, this tattoo is removed and replaced. Young elves are cautioned not to become too dependent on the powers granted by this ritual and are taught to use it only when absolutely necessary. One of the trials of the Rite of Adulthood is to prove, after having the *tattoo of community* removed, that one can still find one's way in the forest.

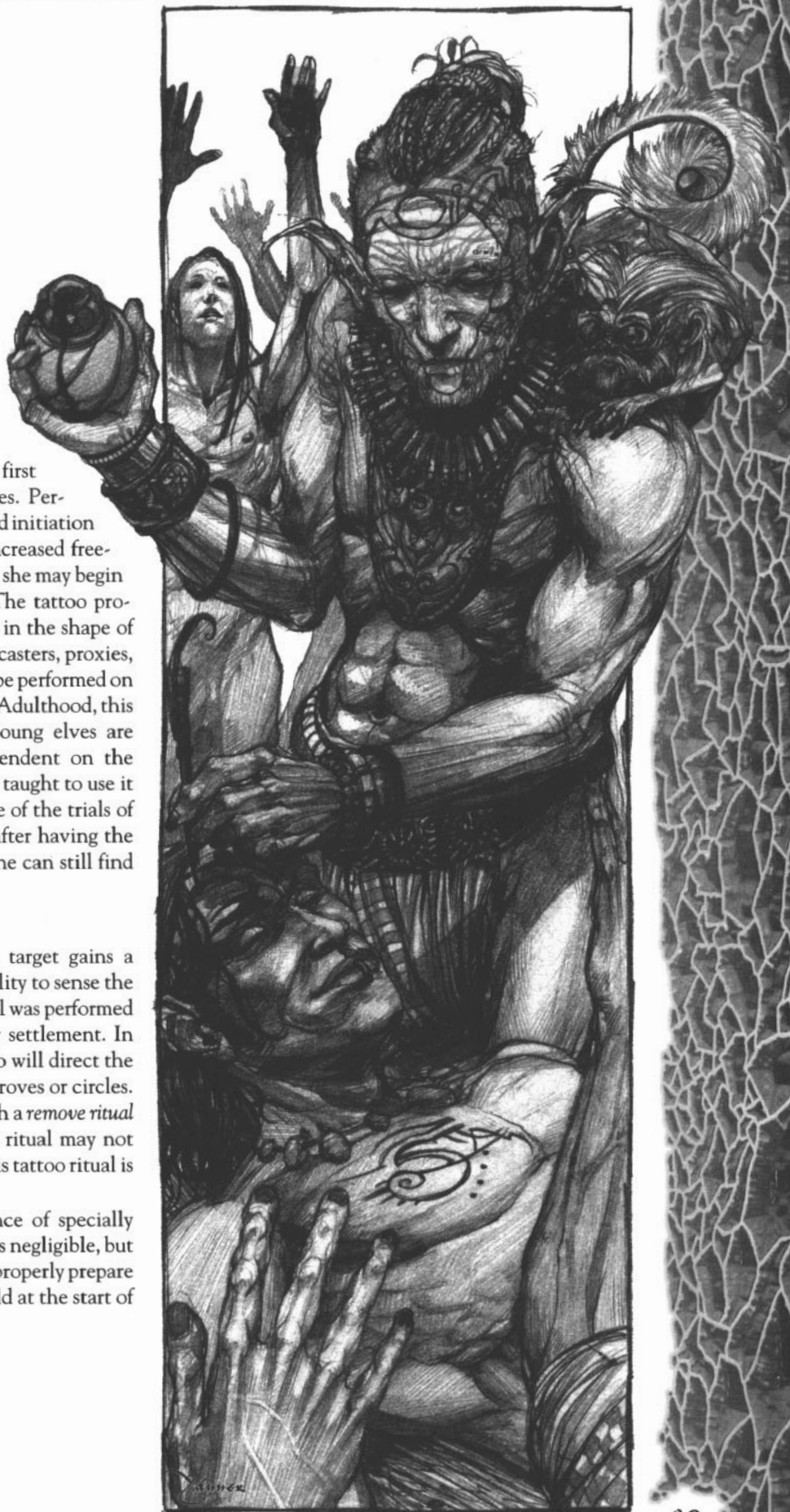
Spell Effect

At the end of this ritual, the target gains a permanent tattoo and the innate ability to sense the direction of the place where the ritual was performed — almost always the clan's primary settlement. In the case of nomadic clans, this tattoo will direct the recipient to one of the clan's ritual groves or circles. This ability can only be removed with a *remove ritual tattoo* true ritual. The target of this ritual may not have any ritual tattoos at the time this tattoo ritual is performed.

Material Components: One ounce of specially mixed and prepared tattoo ink (cost is negligible, but 1 ounce takes a full week to mix and properly prepare and must be no more than 10 days old at the start of the ritual).

Focus: 3 tattoo needles.

XP Cost: 10 XP each caster.



Remove Ritual Tattoo

Removes a ritually created tattoo from a target.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 7

Components: V, S, M, F, XP

Casters Required: 10

Proxy: Yes: 50 followers per caster

Casting Time: 3 hours

Range: Touch

Target: Ritual tattoo touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Description

This ritual is performed whenever a ritual tattoo must be removed. The casters wash the tattoo that is to be removed with pure water and then tattoo over it with clean and ink-free needles. This true ritual is usually twice as painful for the target as receiving a non-magical tattoo. At the end of the ritual, the tattoo is gone. Normally, this ritual is performed only to allow a person to receive a new ritual tattoo, but sometimes it can also be performed as a punishment, especially in the case of shame or a misuse of a tattoo's power.

Spell Effect

Aside from erasing all physical evidence of a ritual tattoo, this true ritual also removes all of the tattoo's benefits. Any ritual tattoo may be removed in this manner, though the casters' levels must be at least high enough to cast a given ritual tattoo before they can remove it.

Material Components: A cup of fresh spring water.

Focus: 3 tattoo needles.

XP Cost: 100 XP each caster. Special — the target can pay the experience cost for any number of casters.

Tattoo of Silence

Target gains silence 3/day as a spell-like ability.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 4

Components: V, S, M, F, XP

Casters Required: 10

Proxy: Yes: 50 followers per caster

Casting Time: 3 hours

Range: Touch

Target: Person touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Description

One of the more common ritual tattoos among the Broadreach elves, this tattoo resembles a feather when complete.

Spell Effect

Upon completion of this ritual, the target gains the ability to surround himself with a 10-foot radius sphere of absolute silence (as the 2nd-level cleric spell *silence*) 3/day. This effect lasts for 1 minute per character level of the target. This ability can only be removed with a *remove ritual tattoo* true ritual. The target of this ritual may not have any ritual tattoos at the time this tattoo ritual is performed.

Material Components: The feather of an owl and one ounce of specially mixed and prepared tattoo ink (see *tattoo of community*, above).

Focus: 3 tattoo needles.

XP Cost: 50 XP each caster. Special — the target can pay the experience cost for any number of casters.

Tattoo of Wisdom

Target gains the ability to add a bonus to Wisdom-based rolls.

Level: True Ritual — Drd 7

Components: V, S, M, F, XP

Casters Required: 10

Proxy: Yes: 100 followers per caster

Casting Time: 4 hours

Range: Touch

Target: Person touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Description

Though very well known, this tattoo ritual is not nearly so common as the others listed here. This is a special ritual performed only for an elf who is becoming a clan mother. Like the *tattoo of community*, the appearance of the *tattoo of wisdom* varies from clan to clan. In the case of the *tattoo of wisdom*, the clan sigil is surrounded by a circle and a five-pointed star, to represent her connection to the community and to the four other mothers in her clan's council. All participants in this ritual are always from the same clan as the target. The other four clan mothers for this clan never participate in the ritual unless absolutely necessary.

Spell Effect

The target gains the ability, once per day, to add a +10 bonus to her Wisdom modifier for a single roll. This ability can only be removed with a *remove ritual tattoo* true ritual. The target of this ritual may not have any ritual tattoos at the time this tattoo ritual is performed.

Material Components: A lock of hair from each the other four clan mothers and 1 ounce of specially mixed and prepared tattoo ink (see *tattoo of community*, above).

Focus: 3 tattoo needles.

XP Cost: 100 XP each caster. Special — the target must pay the experience cost for all casters.

Hornsaw Sentinel (Hsn)

The Broadreach sentinels were originally founded during the Ledean Empire, a troop of wardens who patrolled the forests of the Veridan Province. They evolved from a simple military organization into a true brotherhood and continued to adhere to their duties despite the fall of the Ledean Empire.

In the times before the Divine War, the Broadreach sentinels helped patrol the forests of the Broadreach, defending it with the aid of the Liliandeli archers, as well as the warriors of the now-vanished Clan Unicorn. The Broadreach sentinels were a proud brotherhood of rangers and woodsmen, willing to sacrifice everything to keep their protectorate safe from those who might despoil it.

The sentinels held the unicorn to be the soul of the forest and were dedicated to defending the creature to the utmost of their ability. It was a death sentence to be a slayer of Broadreach unicorns, for even if the villain managed to get away with the deed, the Sentinels would track him to the ends of the earth and make him pay for the affront.

Unfortunately, they were not able to sacrifice enough.

Mormo's destruction warped and twisted the Broadreach and most of the brotherhood's adherents died horribly in the battles that slew her. Many others were caught in the resultant wave of titanic ichor and found themselves strangely mutated and twisted. Several of them killed themselves rather than allow the taint of Mormo to continue on in them.

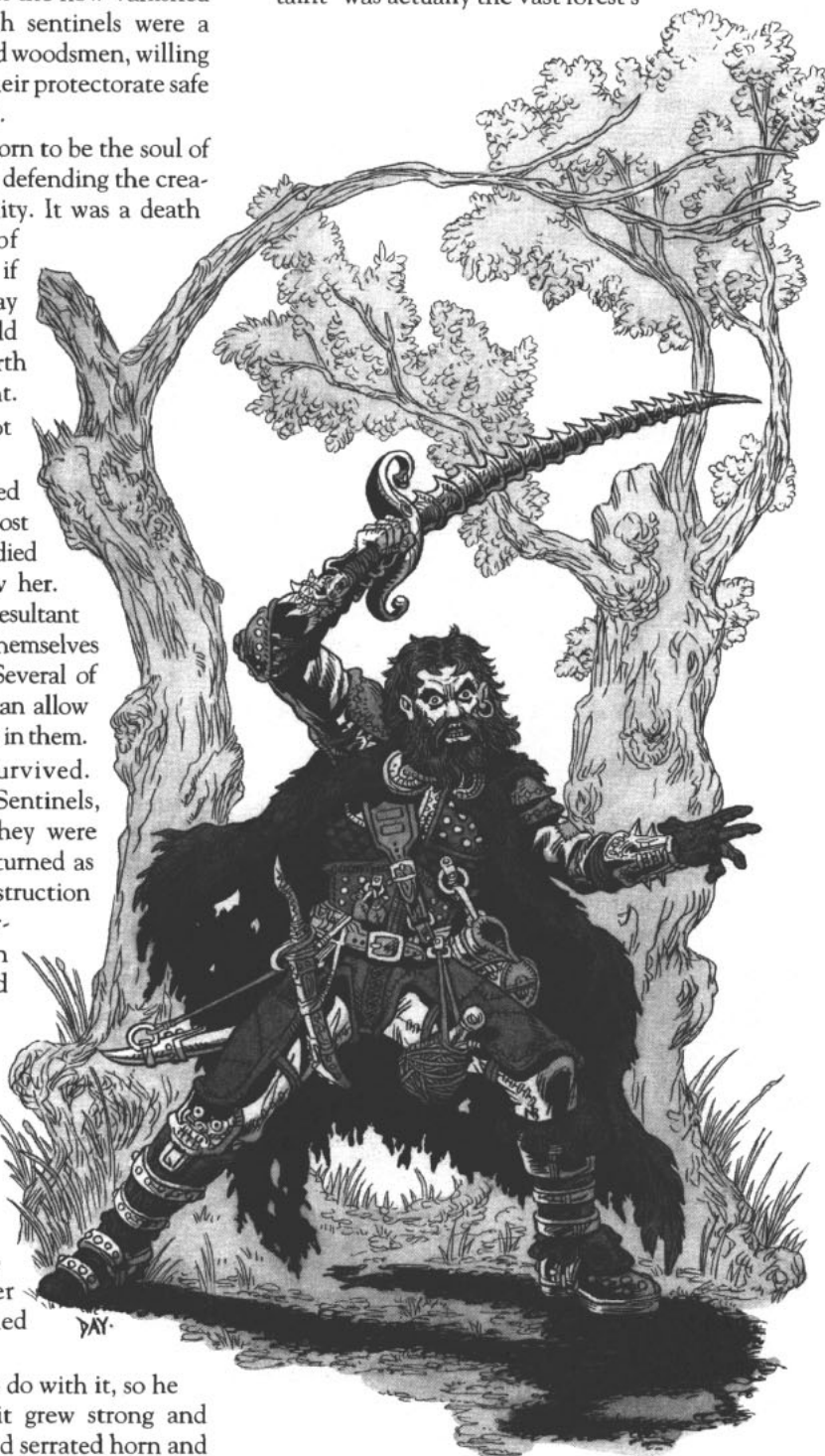
In the end, only one survived. Elitoran, a junior member of the Sentinels, was not in the forests when they were warped and transformed. He returned as soon as he heard of Mormo's destruction and found his beloved forests horribly twisted. He collapsed in despair at the roots of a tree he had grown up climbing and wept.

He awoke hours later to find himself surrounded by a trio of unicorns, badly wounded from the war. One of them was pregnant and in labor, and the unicorn that was born was strange and different. The mother died giving birth to it, torn from within, and the other two unicorns panicked and fled when they scented the foal.

Elitoran was unsure what to do with it, so he cared for it and marveled as it grew strong and powerful, equipped with a wicked serrated horn and

sharp hooves and fangs to defend itself against the forest's dangers. His solitude and grief eventually drove him mad, and he realized that while the nature of the forest had certainly changed, but yet had oaths to maintain. So, he continued his guardianship of this new forest, soon dubbed the Hornsaw.

Today, the Hornsaw sentinels are a brotherhood of wicked rangers who guard the Hornsaw as fervently as their previous incarnation guarded the Broadreach. They will gladly give their lives to prevent anyone from changing the Hornsaw; they believe that the "taint" was actually the vast forest's



true destiny, unlocked by the touch of Mormo. Though they rarely worship Mormo per se, many certainly do ally themselves with her servants. Just as many, however, see Mormo's touch as merely the catalyst for change and hold Mormo's servants in disdain, for their activities often threaten the health of the Hornsaw as well.

Hornsaw sentinels are usually bitterest enemies with both Renewers and the Liliandeli.

Hit Die: d10.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Hornsaw sentinel, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Any non-lawful, non-good.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Feats: Alertness, Track, Weapon Focus (scimitar).

Skill: Knowledge (local — Hornsaw Forest) 3 ranks, Wilderness Lore 9 ranks.

Spellcasting: The ability to cast *magic fang* using titanic magic (ranger or druid).

Class Skills

The Hornsaw sentinel's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha, exclusive skill), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local — Hornsaw Forest), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Hornsaw sentinel prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Hornsaw sentinels are proficient with simple and martial weapons and light armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor

heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

Spells per Day: Hornsaw sentinels continue to advance in ranger spellcasting ability. When a new Hornsaw sentinel level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in ranger. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have acquired. This essentially means that he adds the level of Hornsaw sentinel to the level of ranger, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

Unicorn Companion: The Hornsaw sentinel attracts a Hornsaw unicorn companion. Though it will occasionally permit the sentinel to ride it, the beast is not a mount. See the "Hornsaw Unicorn Companion" sidebar for more details.

Hornsaw Blade: At 2nd-level, the Hornsaw sentinel is led to a site where Hornsaw unicorns have fallen and guided through the sacred process of harvesting two of their curved, serrated alicorns for the purpose of crafting Hornsaw blade scimitars. The process of actually sanctifying the alicorns takes a full month, though it need not be performed on-site; many Hornsaw sentinels harvest the alicorns and then return to their lairs to work on the blades. In the Hornsaw, the most common place for this activity is Alicorn Vale, though of course there are many other places where smaller groups of unicorns fell.

Once the process is completed, the alicorns are considered to be masterwork scimitars; though they are crafted of alicorn, they are as hard as the finest steel and treated as masterwork steel scimitars in terms of hardness and hit points.

The process of sanctification also grants one of the blades an enhancement bonus or special weapon enhancement. At 2nd level, this bonus is +1. At every other level, this increases by an additional +1 until the total bonus is +5 at 10th level. These bonuses may apply to a single blade, or may be divided between the twin Hornsaw blades wielded by the sentinel.

Table 4-1: Hornsaw Sentinel

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Unicorn companion	+1 level of ranger class
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Hornsaw blade (double, +1), Hornsaw proficiency	+1 level of ranger class
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Favored enemy	+1 level of ranger class
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Hornsaw blade (+2)	+1 level of ranger class
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	<i>Magic fang</i> skill	+1 level of ranger class
6th	+6	+5	+5	+2	Favored enemy, Hornsaw blade (+3)	+1 level of ranger class
7th	+7	+5	+5	+2	Venomous blade	+1 level of ranger class
8th	+8	+6	+6	+2	Hornsaw blade (+4)	+1 level of ranger class
9th	+9	+6	+6	+3	Favored enemy	+1 level of ranger class
10th	+10	+7	+7	+3	Hornsaw blade (+5)	+1 level of ranger class

Hornsaw Unicorn Companion

The Hornsaw unicorn that comes to the Hornsaw sentinel retains its independent thought and will. Though some sentinels do mercilessly dominate these unicorns (and some sentinels are themselves mastered by particularly cunning and vicious Hornsaw unicorn companions), the bond is a close one and tends to create alliances between the sentinel and unicorn. Rarely if ever are these companions used as mounts, save in the direst of emergencies.

Table 4-2: Hornsaw Unicorn Companion

Hornsaw Sentinel Level	Bonus HD	Special Ability
1–2	+1 HD	Empathic link, improved evasion, share saving throws, share spells
3–4	+2 HD	Track, sensitivity
5–6	+3 HD	Share resistance
7–8	+4 HD	Bond of rage, unerring tracking
9–10	+5 HD	Share immunity

Bonus HD: As the sentinel increases in class level, his Hornsaw unicorn companion gains HD as specified on the table.

Empathic Link: The sentinel has an empathic link with his Hornsaw unicorn companion out to a distance of 1 mile (though this distance is doubled within the Hornsaw Forest). The sentinel cannot see through the companion's eyes, but the two of them can communicate telepathically. This is a supernatural ability.

Because of the empathic link between the companion and the sentinel, the sentinel has the same connection to an item or place that the companion does. For instance, if his companion has seen a room, the sentinel can teleport into that room as if he also has seen it (assuming he has the ability to do so, of course).

Improved Evasion: If the companion is subject to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes the saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share Saving Throws: At the sentinel's option, any saving throw that he makes can also affect his unicorn companion as if it had rolled the same number. The companion must be within 5 feet of the companion at the time, and the decision to share a saving throw must be made before the die is rolled.

Share Spells: At the sentinel's option, he may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his companion. The companion must be touching the sentinel at the time. Unlike familiars, however, if the spell has a duration other than instantaneous, the spell does not end if the familiar moves further than 5 feet away. The sentinel and companion may share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the companion's type (magical beast).

Track: The companion receives the Track feat. Additionally, it gains a number of ranks in Wilderness Lore equal to its HD. Most of the time, the sentinel's ranks are better, so Hornsaw unicorn companions often prefer to use the Aid Another action to augment the sentinel's roll rather than make one of their own.

Sensitivity: While within the Hornsaw Forest, both the Hornsaw unicorn and the Hornsaw sentinel receive a +4 circumstance bonus to all Listen, Search, and Spot checks. They also receive a +4 circumstance bonus to all Wilderness Lore checks made while tracking.

Share Resistance: The Hornsaw sentinel gains a +4 bonus against poisons and diseases. In addition, he ignores the first two points of ability damage from poisons and diseases that he may succumb to.

Bond of Rage: The Hornsaw unicorn may also rage when the sentinel to whom it is bonded is wounded. The unicorn will never harm the sentinel to whom it is bonded during its rages. See below for details on a Hornsaw unicorn's rage.

Unerring Tracking: The sentinel's roll to track his Hornsaw unicorn companion is always considered a 20, if the actual die roll is lower. The companion may track the sentinel in the same fashion. Should either the Hornsaw sentinel or the Hornsaw unicorn be killed, the other will be able to track the killers with the same ability.

Share Immunity: The Hornsaw sentinel gains immunity to poisons and disease.

Hornsaw Unicorn

Use the following statistics for the Hornsaw unicorn. A complete description of the creature is available in **Creature Collection Revised**.

Hornsaw Unicorn: CR 5; SZ Large Magical Beast; HD 8d10+48; hp 92; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 80 ft.; AC 20 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural); Atk +13 melee (1d8+6, horn) and +11 melee (1d6+3, bite) and +11 melee (1d6+3, 2 hooves); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Enhanced natural weapons, rage; SQ Immunities; AL CN; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 23, Dex 17, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 24.

Skills: Animal Empathy +10, Hide +2, Intimidate +12, Jump +13, Listen +13, Spot +13.

Feats: Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Enhanced Natural Weapons (Ex): The horn, hooves, and teeth of a Hornsaw unicorn are treated as +4 weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Rage (Ex): When wounded, Hornsaw unicorns become maddened, gaining a +4 bonus to all attack and damage rolls for a combat's duration.

Immunities (Ex): Not subject to poison or disease. Immune to *charm* spells and effects.

Each time the bonus increases, the sentinel must perform again the sanctification ritual. During this time, the bonuses may be shifted about. For instance, upon achieving 6th level, a sentinel that had previously invested a +1 bonus in each of his blades may now transform one of his blades into a +3 weapon, leaving the other a masterwork item.

Items empowered in this fashion are treated as magical only for the Hornsaw sentinel who created them; all others use the items as though they were masterwork weapons. Weapons empowered in this fashion may not be enhanced through normal item creation feats; if this is done, the item loses its qualities granted through this class.

Hornsaw Proficiency: At 2nd level, the Hornsaw sentinel's paired Hornsaw alicorn scimitars are treated as though they were both light weapons for the purpose of fighting with two weapons. This ability is only gained by characters of Medium-size or larger.

Favored Enemy: At 3rd level, the Hornsaw sentinel may choose an additional favored enemy, adding to any favored enemies granted by the ranger or other classes. This is treated as the ranger special ability in all aspects, save that the sentinel must choose an enemy that somehow has to do with his guardianship of the Hornsaw forest. The Hornsaw sentinel gains an additional favored enemy at 6th and 9th level, as well.

Magic Fang Skill: At 5th level, the Hornsaw sentinel's use of the *magic fang* and *greater magic fang* spells improves. When casting such spells on his Hornsaw unicorn companion, the bonus gained increases by +1, and his caster level is considered to be his total ranger plus his Hornsaw sentinel levels, rather than what is normal for a ranger.

Venomous Blade: At 7th level, the Hornsaw sentinel gains the ability to imbue his blade with a virulent venom. This venom is made by spreading some mud from the rich loam of the Hornsaw forest and the sentinel allowing his own blood to drip over it. If the sentinel is unwounded, this is a full round action; if he has taken wounds and has some of the loam to hand (either at his feet, or in a pouch at his belt), it may be done as a move-equivalent action. In no case does it provoke an attack of opportunity.

This poison causes severe loss of muscle control and eventual erosion of health to those it affects.

Injury: Fort DC varies; **Initial Damage:** 1d3 temporary Str + 1d3 temporary Dex; **Secondary Damage:** 1d6 temporary Con.

The Fortitude save DC is 10 + the Hornsaw sentinel's class level + the character's Constitution modifier. The poison may be created a number of times per day equal to one plus the Hornsaw sentinel's Constitution modifier (minimum of 1/day).

In addition, when applying poison to his sanctified blades, a Hornsaw sentinel does not risk accidentally poisoning himself.

Liliandeli Archer (Lar)

Before the Divine War, there stood the Broadreach Forest. Though it is now the bastion of horror known as the Hornsaw, once the Broadreach was a place of great beauty, a haven for many sylvan creatures. The Broadreach boasted many defenders, both from among the elves and dwarves that dwelt there to the small gatherings of outsiders who took on guardianship of the wood. One such pair was the wood elf bard Liliandel and her husband the half-elf Thoresk, a ranger of some repute.

Liliandel and Thoresk were both archers of great skill; they were also staunch worshippers of Tanil. Stories tell that the Huntress herself came to Liliandel and imparted upon her secrets of archery, which she then taught her husband and their children. By the time of the Divine War, those who had heard of her prowess and come seeking training in her archery skills numbered in the dozens. They were known as the Liliandeli in honor of their teacher.

Though many of the Liliandeli died during the Titanswar as part of Tanil's forces, several survived the great tumult. Some think that Liliandel herself died defending the Broadreach from Mormo's forces. The tales of bards recount that though the archer was mortally wounded in battle with the Hag Queen's forces, she did see the titaness die and warp her beloved forest. Liliandel died with a sob on her lips. To this day, most Liliandeli work to free the Hornsaw of Mormo's corruption.

In this era, the Liliandeli are a broken fellowship. Their secrets are not passed on as part of a fraternity or collegium of archers any longer. Rather, individuals who have been taught the ways of Liliandeli archery now pass the secrets on to those they find who are worthy. Rumor places a small gathering of Liliandeli in Vesh or Vera-Tre somewhere, but that is hardly surprising, given the reverence that both of those places hold for Tanil. That one or more of Liliandel's offspring may have survived the Divine War among the elves of the Ganjus, however, is entirely possible.

Hit Die: d10.

Requirements

To qualify to become a Liliandeli Archer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Climb 6 ranks, Craft (bowyer/fletcher) 8 ranks, Wilderness Lore 4 ranks.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow, composite longbow, short bow, or composite short bow).

Special: The character must have created a masterwork bow entirely on her own in order to gain entry into the order.

Class Skills

The Liliandeli Archer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha, exclusive skill), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Liliandeli archer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Liliandeli archer is proficient with all simple weapons, plus the long bow, composite long bow, short bow, and composite short bow, as well as



Table 4—3: Liliandeli Archer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Archer Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	+0	Liliandeli archer feat, kiss of the Huntress (silver)
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+3	+0	Broadreach training, Tanil's blessings
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+3	+1	Liliandeli archer feat, kiss of the Huntress (+1)
4th	+2	+4	+1	+4	+1	Broadreach training
5th	+2	+5	+1	+4	+1	Hornet shot (+1d6)
6th	+3	+6	+2	+5	+2	Liliandeli archer feat, kiss of the Huntress (+2)
7th	+3	+7	+2	+5	+2	Broadreach training
8th	+4	+8	+2	+6	+2	Broadreach training
9th	+4	+9	+3	+6	+3	Liliandeli archer feat, kiss of the Huntress (+3)
10th	+5	+10	+3	+7	+3	Hornet shot (+2d6), invest the bow

light armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble.

Archer Base Attack Bonus: Liliandeli archers focus on archery, to the near exclusion of other kinds of combat. To this end, they have two separate Base Attack Bonus progressions—one for the use of bows (longbows, composite longbows, short bows, and composite short bows) and one for all other kinds of weapons.

Liliandeli Archer Feat: The Liliandeli teach their archers a number of tricks and skills. Much like the bonus feats gained by fighters, Liliandeli archers gain bonus feats from the following list at 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels. These bonus feats are Alertness, Blind Fight, Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, and Track. The GM is encouraged to add any other archery feats used in his campaign to this list.

Tanil's Blessings: The following cleric, bard, and ranger spells are considered to be one level lower when prepared or cast by a Liliandeli archer. Though the class itself does not grant any ability to cast spells, Tanil does make those capable of casting spells more adept at certain spells as part of the mysteries she revealed to Liliandel; note that these spells still fill bard spell slots of the appropriate level, but only use up a lower level spell per day when cast. Thus, *blur* still fills a 2nd-level slot in the bard's Spells Known table, but only uses a 1st-level slot when cast. Clerics and rangers must be of a level to have prepared the spell at its original level before they may prepare it at the reduced level. Also, levels of Liliandeli archer stack with cleric (Tanil), bard, and ranger levels for the purposes of determining caster level.

• **Bard:** 1st — *alarm*, *feather fall*, *locate water***, *magic weapon*, *message*; 2nd — *blur*, *cat's grace*, *continual heat***, *Liliandel's flurry**, *shocking missile***, *whispering wind*; 3rd — *assassin's senses**, *displace-*

ment, *earthen screen***, *greater magic weapon*, *haste*; 4th — *eagle song***, *hallucinatory terrain*; 5th — *mislead*; 6th — *mass haste*.

• **Cleric:** 1st — *detect shapechangers***, *locate water***, *magic weapon*, *obscuring mist*, *Tanil's touch*; 2nd — *animal messenger*, *assassin's sense*, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd — *animal spy**, *curse of the firefly***, *ricochet***, *sacred weapon**, *speak with plants*; 4th — *bloodied blade***, *enhanced senses***, *greater magic weapon*, *Tanil's purging**; 5th — *brothers in arms**, *commune* (with Tanil only); 6th — *find the path*.

• **Ranger:** 2nd — *bladethirst***, *circle of sounds**, *earthen screen***, *hunter's stalk**, *Liliandel's flurry**, *shocking missile***, *snare*, *Tanil's touch**; 3rd — *animal infusion**, *animal spy**, *enhanced senses***, *Tanil's spectral archers***, *tree shape*; 4th — *freedom of movement*, *ricochet***, *Yaral's totemic transformation**.

(Note: Spells marked with * are from **Relics & Rituals**; spells marked with ** are from **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**.)

Broadreach Training: The Liliandeli learn to work well in trees; it is part of their heritage as a fraternity of forest defenders. The Liliandeli learn a number of techniques as they advance in skill: at 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 8th levels, the Liliandeli archer may choose one of the following benefits:

• **Brachiation:** The character gains a +2 bonus to Climb checks involving trees. Additionally, the character does not lose his AC bonus when climbing trees.

• **Camouflage:** Liliandeli who learn the secrets of camouflage gain a +5 competence bonus to Hide checks while within a forest.

• **Harrying Shot:** The character learns to use the foliage of a tree for maximum advantage during combat. While in a tree, he increases the concealment gained from the tree's branches by 15%.

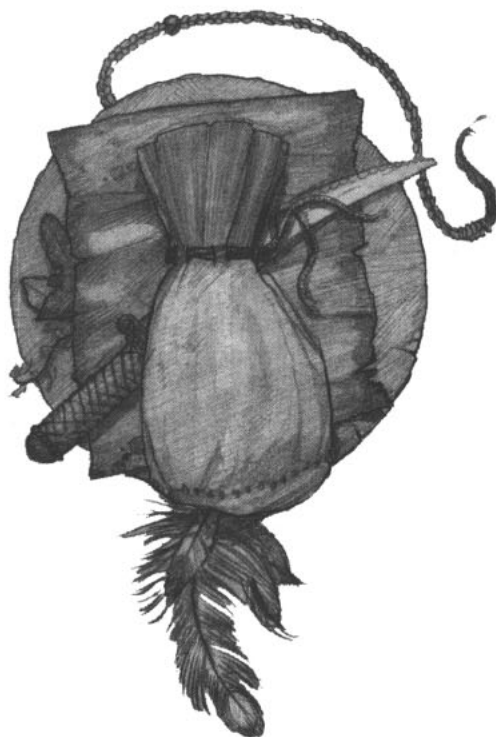
• **Whisper-foot:** Liliandeli who learn the secrets of walking with a whisper-foot gain a +5 competency bonus to Move Silently checks while within a forest.

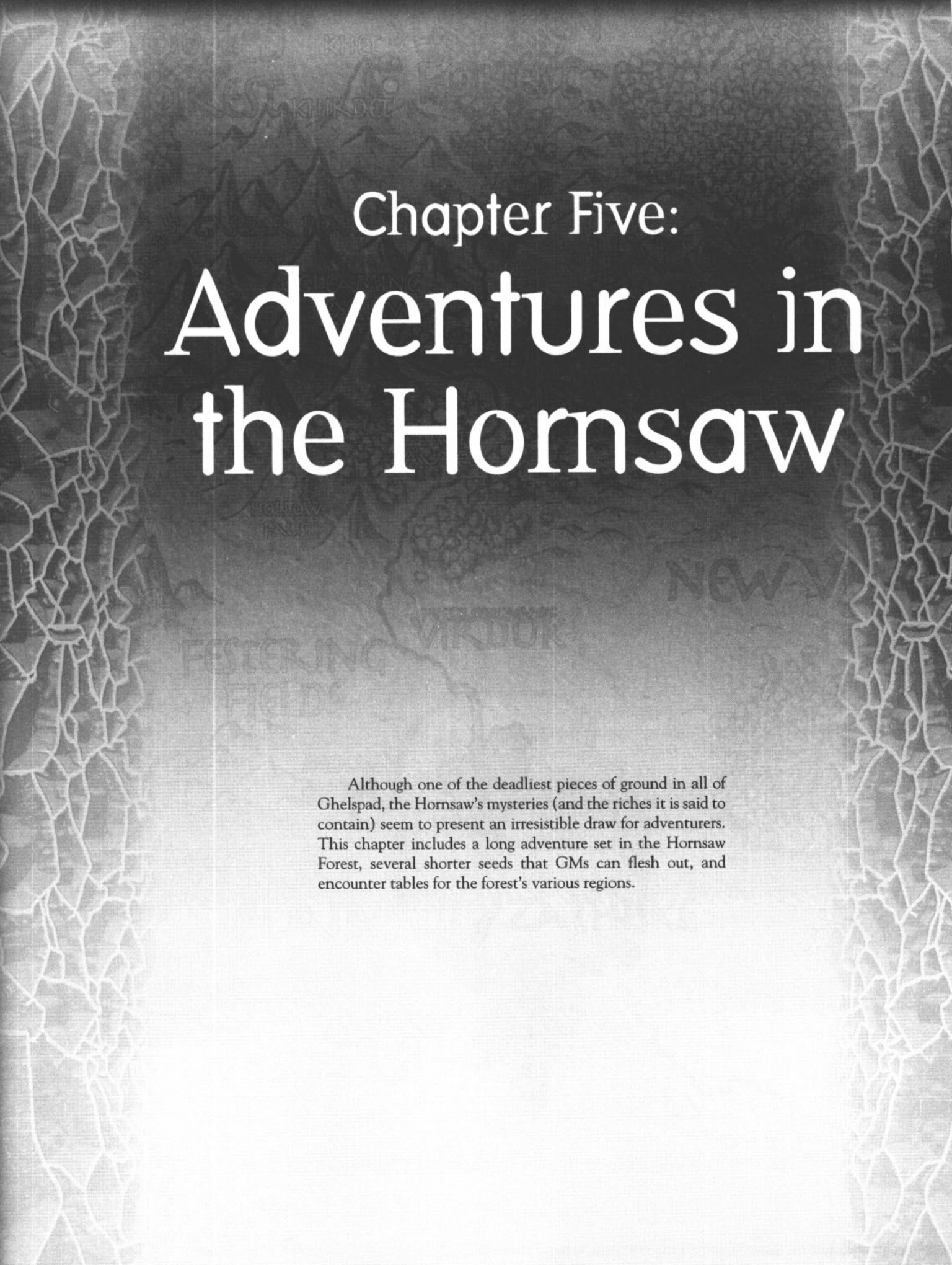
Kiss of the Huntress: Tanil grants the Liliandeli the ability to bless their arrows in her name, imbuing them with a subtle silvery radiance (only really noticeable at night) that allows them to ignore damage reduction. A Liliandeli archer can do this a number of times per day equal to $3 +$ her Charisma bonus. At 1st level, this aura allows the arrow to act as though it were silver; at 3rd level, the arrow strikes damage-resistant targets as if it has a $+1$ enhancement bonus; this enhancement bonus increases as the Liliandeli archer gains class levels (see the level advancement chart below). This bonus only functions in regard to overcoming damage reduction; it does not grant any actual bonuses to attack or damage rolls.

Hornet Shot: At 5th level, the Liliandeli archer learns the signature arrow strike of the Liliandeli. The archer rips part of the fletching of his arrow before he fires it and strings the arrow, giving a particular twist to the string. Preparing this shot requires a move-equivalent action. When the arrow is fired, it buzzes with a sound like a swarm of hornets, twisting in its flight and literally drilling into enemies it impacts. This inflicts

an amount of extra damage as indicated on the level advancement table below. Though only one arrow may be so fired in a round, the Liliandeli are known to put this technique to great benefit through the use of such spells as *Liliandel's flurry*.

Invest the Bow: At 10th level, the Liliandeli archer reaches the heights of the teachings of Liliandel, involving the investment of part of the archer into a bow that she herself has crafted. Known as investing the bow, the Liliandeli learns to craft magical bows, arrows, and quivers through investing part of her own power into the item. This ability is treated as having the Craft Arms and Armor and Craft Wondrous Items feats, but only with regards to creating bows, arrows, and quivers. The base cost of the item remains the same, but the Liliandeli archer's XP cost is double that normally involved in the creation of such a magical item. The Liliandeli archer, however, is assumed to meet any spell requirements (though she must still abide by level limits, stacking her Liliandeli archer, cleric of Tanil, bard, or ranger levels). Items of evil or law cannot be created in this fashion.





Chapter Five:

Adventures in the Hornsaw

Although one of the deadliest pieces of ground in all of Ghelspad, the Hornsaw's mysteries (and the riches it is said to contain) seem to present an irresistible draw for adventurers. This chapter includes a long adventure set in the Hornsaw Forest, several shorter seeds that GMs can flesh out, and encounter tables for the forest's various regions.



Lair of the Witchspider

This adventure takes the PCs deep into the lair of the witchspider Aaphembia on the outskirts of Kaymen's March, though the GM should feel at liberty to place Aaphembia's lair wherever best suits the needs of her campaign.

Set-up

Lair of the Witchspider is an adventure for four characters of 8th level. The PCs are contacted by one or another of their allies for help. Apparently, a sorcerer of their acquaintance was attacked by some unknown force, save that it seemed to use magic.

Getting There

Getting to Aaphembia's lair is a task in and of itself. It is undoubtedly most easily found through the use of the Track feat (Wilderness Lore DC 17), which leads the PCs right to the entrance of her lair. PCs can also notice one of the many filaments that line Aaphembia's territory (Spot DC 22, made once per hour or so) and follow it (Search DC 17). Care must be taken not to touch the filament, however, for doing so would alert Aaphembia to the presence of intruders.

Depending on the needs of the GM's game, there may or may not be a number of defenses along the way, from witch-eggs that summon creatures to attack those who invade the area, to monstrous spiders in service to Aaphembia.

Scaling the Adventure

In order to scale *Lair of the Witchspider* for lower level adventurers, reduce Aaphembia's levels in the sorcerer class, as this will also reduce the number of traps with which she is capable of lining her lair. Also, reduce the number of spiders found in the beginning parts of the lair, and reduce the bull spider (in Area 3) to a Medium-size monstrous spider with full hit points.

In order to scale *Lair of the Witchspider* for higher level adventurers, change the spiders in the beginning of the lair to giant wolf spiders from the **Creature Collection**. Also, increase Aaphembia's levels in the sorcerer class, which will give her additional spells to work into witch-egg traps.

Aaphembia's Lair

Aaphembia's lair is built in an old grove of dead trees, heavily overgrown with thick masses of brambles. Parts of this mass are cleared away, creating small chambers and tunnels lined with webs to keep the brambles from harming those within or continuing to grow into the chambers. The mass of brambles itself is huge, towering at least 30 feet into the air, having grown along the ground, up the sides of the trees in the grove (eventually killing them), and then piling atop itself.



The intertwining brambles are dark red-brown vines festooned with black, needle-sharp thorns (some of which grow as large as 3 inches in length). Within the lair itself, these brambles are barely visible over the webbing woven to cover them, creating cocoon-like chambers and tunnels. During the day, the lair is very shadowy within, as the sunlight barely filters in through the combined brambles and webs; at night, the lair is absolutely pitch black within.

In game terms, the walls are made up of two layers—the webs and the brambles. Chopping all the way through the brambles that make up the walls might theoretically be possible, but unleashing that kind of destruction invariably causes the lair's denizens (including, ultimately, Aaphembia herself) to come running.

Webbing: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 6 hp; Break DC 26.

Brambles: Hardness 1 (7 vs. bludgeoning weapons); 36 hp per foot; note that it takes about 180 points of damage to clear a single 5-foot square section of all brambles in it.

The brambles are also not very flammable. The application of fire will normally burn away however much is indicated by the damage inflicted, smolder for half that amount of damage again for the next round, and then die out on the third. Area of effect spells deal their damage to the brambles by the foot, rather than by 5-foot squares.

Thus, a *fireball* that targets the brambles and does 20 points of damage deals 20 points of damage to each section of the brambles, reducing the hit points of those sections to 16 hp/foot. The next round, it smolders for another 10 points and then dies out, leaving only 6 hp/foot in those sections, requiring only 30 points of damage to be inflicted to each of those areas in order to clear them out.

Certain sections of the lair are protected with stretches of webbing meant to conceal openings. The spider denizens of the lairs know how to part the strands in groups large enough to permit themselves entry, though doing so is a move-equivalent action. These thickly woven “web-doors” have the following stats:

Web-doors: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 6 hp; Break DC 26; Search DC 15 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to “squeeze through” without destroying the web.

The Entrance to the Lair (Area 1)

Encounter Level: 3

The outer sections of the mass of brambles are sporadically covered with webs. The actual entrance to the lair is a thickly woven section of webbing that can be easily spotted with a successful Search check (DC 12).

Entrance Webbing: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 20 hp; Break DC 30; Search DC 12 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to “squeeze through” without destroying the web.

This entrance, however, is also set with a witch-egg trap woven into the webbing itself. Managing to squeeze through (using Escape Artist) will not set off the trap, but failing to do so or simply inflicting damage on the door will.

Web Witch-egg Trap: CR 3; unleashes a *web* spell that fills a 20-foot radius centered on the entrance webbing; Reflex save (DC 13) avoids; Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27).

If this trap is sprung, it alerts the monstrous spiders from Area 2, which emerge to investigate.

Monstrous Spider Lairs (Areas 2A–2C)

Encounter Level: 4

The monstrous spiders attracted to Aaphembia's lair as potential mates have made their own lairs in this section. The actual entrances are walled off by web doors, and the spiders do not usually have much to do with one another; while they will attack to defend their lairs, they are unlikely to cooperate or use flanking and such tactics.

Web-doors: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 6 hp; Break DC 26; Search DC 15 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to "squeeze through" without destroying the web.

There are three chambers here, and each is the home of a pair of Medium-size monstrous spiders.

Area 2A: This chamber is home to probably the two weakest spiders; indeed, they bear the chitin-scars of numerous battles with the others. They have

Spiders of Aaphembia's Lair

The monstrous spiders that dwell in Aaphembia's lair share the following statistics:

Monstrous Spider, Medium-size: CR 1; SZ Medium-size vermin; HD 2d8+2; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d6 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +10 (+18 in web)*, Jump +0, Move Silently +3 (+11 in web)*, Spot +7.

Feat: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d4 temporary Strength, secondary damage 1d4 temporary Strength.

Web (Ex): Can cast a web 8/day, similar to an attack with a net but at a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and effective against targets up to Small size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20) or Strength check (Break DC 26). Each 5-foot section of the web has 6 hp.

Vermin: Immune to all mind-influencing spells and effects.

Skills: Monstrous spiders receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Spot checks. *Monstrous spiders also gain a +8 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

"The Bull Spider," Monstrous Spider, Large: CR 2; SZ Large vermin; HD 4d8+4; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Vermin; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +6 (+14 in web)*, Jump +2, Move Silently +3 (+11 in web)*, Spot +7.

Feat: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 16); initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 1d6 temporary Strength.

Web (Ex): Can cast a web 8/day, similar to an attack with a net but at a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and effective against targets up to Medium-size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 26) or Strength check (Break DC 32). Each 5-foot section of the web has 12 hp.

Vermin: Immune to all mind-influencing spells and effects.

Skills: Monstrous spiders receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Spot checks. *Monstrous spiders also gain a +8 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

Young Witchspiders: CR 1; SZ Small aberration; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4–2 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., witchblooded; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +5*, Listen +1, Move Silently +5*, Spot +1*.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 11); initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution + unconscious.

Web (Ex): Can cast a web 8/day, similar to an attack with a net but at a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and effective against targets up to Tiny size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 18) or Strength check (Break DC 24). Each 5-foot section of the web has 4 hp.

Witchblooded (Su): Witchspiders can begin gaining sorcerer levels upon reaching full growth.

formed a tentative alliance and are far more likely to aid one another; however, should things go ill for them both, they are just as likely to abandon one another. The spiders here have 10 hit points each.

Additionally, scattered amid the carcasses of both beasts and intelligent humanoids is the following: 10 gp; a tarnished arm circlet worked in the shape of a serpent (Appraise DC 15; silver with small emerald eyes and fine pre-Titanswar craftsmanship, worth 1,850 gp); and a small cup (Appraise DC 12; darkwood cup inset with silver filigree, of Broadreach elf craftsmanship, worth 35 gp).

Area 2B: This chamber is home to a pair of spiders that has worked out a relationship of absolute dominance: the stronger of the two will check out potential threats, anxious to assert its claim over the shared space. One possesses 15 hp; the other has 10 hp.

Tucked away beneath a pile of rotting leather saddle-gear, where it fell from the back of one of the saddles, is a small wooden coffer. The impact of its fall split the wood, spilling the 2,871 sp within it in a 5-foot radius. Also scattered about the room, among the cocooned remains of meals past, are the following: a suit of full plate armor that will require some work to remove the accumulated rust and wear (Appraise DC 12; worth 800 gp, or 1,500 gp with three days of work); and the rotted remains of a pouch, with two cork-stoppered porcelain bottles (Alchemy DC 12 to identify as antitoxin).

Area 2C: This chamber harbors perhaps the two strongest of the males gathered in this part of Aaphembia's lair. Both of them bear the lightest of swirling red patterns on their abdomens — they are the rare males born of a witchspider that managed to survive the spawning pit. Though no different from other monstrous spiders of their size, they are more given to cooperation. They both have 16 hp.

The treasure found here is carefully secreted away in a web-covered pit in the ground, through some hoarding instinct on the part of the males. This pit is treated as a "web-door," above, including the Search DC to find it. Within this pit are the following items: 24 gp and a small pouch with four ceramic bottles (Alchemy DC 10 to identify as alchemist's fire).

The Bull Spider (Area 3)

Encounter Level: 2

This chamber is home to a massive monstrous spider, the beast that has sired Aaphembia's last two spawnings. It is insanely protective of its mating rights and will rush out to attack anything it detects in the corridor outside of its chambers.

Web-doors: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 12 hp; Break DC 26; Search DC 15 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to "squeeze through" without destroying the web.

The remains of many meals hang from the webbed walls of this chamber, including the corpses of asaathi,



humans, elves, horses, and even other monstrous spiders, as well as things that are less recognizable.

Littered about the room are 12 gp and a worn, foot-long iron rod marked with dwarven runes (which indicates the item as the property of one Khaluvan). On a Search check (DC 12), the rod's clever series of latches and screws may be found and opened, causing the rod to open to reveal a scroll (upon which is written the arcane version of *summon monster I*, 1st-level caster). The cleverly wrought rod itself is worth about 25 gp.

The Dead-end (Area 4)

It would appear that the lair itself ends here, right up against an old, massive tree thoroughly strangled by the growth of the brambles decades ago. In truth, however, the strange webbing-doors scattered throughout the complex hide the passages into the rest of the cavern.

Web-doors: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 12 hp; Break DC 26; Search DC 15 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to "squeeze through" without destroying the web.

If the side of the tree itself is investigated (Search DC 15), a passage hidden by a web-door is revealed in the trunk, some 7 or so feet up (see Area 4A, below).

The Abandoned Lair (Area 4A): This large hollow is not readily obvious from outside of the tree. It once served as Aaphembia's lair before she extended the reach of the bramble-caverns to suit her growing needs. The lair still smells heavily of her (at least to the senses of other spiders), which is why the other spiders in the complex have not taken up residence here.

There are also what appear to be the remains of a number of strange spiders with odd swirling red and black markings on the abdomen. A Knowledge (nature) or Wilderness Lore check (DC 13) reveals that these are not corpses after all, but molts, long since abandoned.

The Mating Lair (Area 5)

This cavern is where Aaphembia acknowledges the courting of the male spiders that dwell just outside her lair. They often come to deliver tempting meals here, in the hopes that their gifts will attract her attentions. When this happens, she comes and dines, and then plucks parts of her webbing that indicate her willingness to... entertain.

The carcasses of many meals are here, including erstwhile would-be monstrous spider mates. This section is unoccupied save for the grim reminder of the courting meals that occur here. Nothing of any worth can be found here.

The Spawn Labyrinth (Area 6)

This confusing sprawl of tunnels bored into the mass of brambles and lined with webbing serves only one purpose: a maze in which several pits for the spawning of young witchspiders have been created. These pits are well hidden, as per the description of the spiderpits (see Chapter Two). Should a PC fall into one of the pits, consult "The Spiderpits" sidebar to determine the result. Once a named encounter has been rolled, treat any subsequent results as "Empty Pit." The details of several of these pits (and other labyrinth features) follow; if they are not specifically placed in the text, the GM is encouraged to place these in the labyrinth as he sees fit.

The Spiderpits

Most of the spiderpits in the Spawn Labyrinth are empty. When the PCs encounter a spiderpit, roll on the following table to determine what the pit holds.

d%	Result
01-20	The Cocoon Nest
21-40	A Feast of Goblin
41-60	Remnants
61-80	Spiderpit (see Chapter Two)
81-00	Empty Pit

The Cocoon Nest: In the bottom of this pit lies a Large cocooned creature — a Hornsaw unicorn that was killed and is preserved in the spider silk in which it is wrapped. Between the spider silk and the unicorn's flesh is a layer of fluffy white balls, like balls of fluff. In actuality, these are witchspider eggs waiting to hatch.

A Feast of Goblin: In the bottom of this pit lies a Small cocooned creature — a spider-eye goblin that was killed and is preserved in the spider silk in which it is wrapped. Unlike the Hornsaw unicorn above, however, the eggs here have hatched; if the cocoon is undisturbed, a Search check (DC 12) will allow someone examining it to see the thousands of tiny black bodies squirming beneath the thin layer of spider silk.

If the cocoon is violently disturbed (such as by falling upon it), it will likely split open and reveal a swarm of witchspider young. In this instance, though, the spiders are still too small actually even to bite.

Anyone who falls into the pit may make a Reflex save (DC 10) in order to avoid hitting the cocoon as they fall.

Remnants: The pit is empty, though it does hold the remains of some creature or other placed within as the gestation food for the witchspiders.

Spiderpit: This is treated as a CR 3 trap. See Chapter Two for more details on these hazards.

Empty Pit: The pit, though covered, is empty; it has no indication that it was ever used to hold young, in fact.

Witch-eggs of the Spawn Labyrinth

Two kinds of witch-eggs can be found in the Spawn Labyrinth. The first kind (marked 1) casts *field of razors* (see **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**). The second (marked 2) casts *summon monster I*.

Field of Razors Witch-egg: CR 2; casts *field of razors*; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 26).

If this trap is triggered, it causes a 5-foot wide by 20-foot long area centered on the witch-egg to sprout magical caltrops (see PHB, Chapter 7, "Adventuring Gear"), save that the caltrops deal 1d4 points of damage rather than 1, and the caltrops cannot be swept aside. This field lasts 4 rounds.

Summon Monster I Witch-egg: CR 2; casts *summon monster I* (summons a fiendish dog that attacks immediately); Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 26).

If this trap is triggered, it summons a fiendish dog in the same square where the witch-egg was. The beast attacks anyone in the area, spider or otherwise. It remains in the area for 4 rounds.

Fiendish Dog: CR 1/3; SZ Small magical beast; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Smite good (1/day); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance (5), scent, SR 2; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +1.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the fiendish dog can make a normal attack deal +1 damage against a good-aligned foe.

Tree Full of Spiders (Area 6A; Encounter Level: 4): In the large, rotted oak that dominates this part of the bramble-patch, a small collection of young witchspiders have taken up residence. The pit where they hatched lies nearby, with the stripped-bare skeleton of a ratman at the bottom of it. Four of the creatures are in the webbed tree, and they have not yet grown to consider one another as rivals; thus, the little beasts will cooperate, but only so far as instinct and their limited intelligences will permit.

The stats for these creatures can be found in the "Spiders of Aaphembia's Lair" sidebar. They have no treasure.

The Lair-bottom (Area 7)

This section of the lair is hidden, like so many areas, by a web-door. It is not, in actuality, a room; in truth, it is the bottom of a hole in the bramble growth.

Aaphembia has made her lair in the trees above the actual brambles. Unlike most of the walls of this lair, the brambles here are not covered in webbing.

To access the upper reaches of Aaphembia's lair requires actually climbing the walls or traversing the 40 feet magically. Climbing the brambles is a Climb check (DC 15); doing so, however, deals 1 point of damage per 5 feet traversed. Succeeding at this roll by 5 points or more negates any damage that may have been suffered. Climbing with a rope halves the damage, though the rope takes 1 point of damage per round of climbing from rubbing against the razor-sharp thorns (most ropes have the ability to take 2 points of damage before they are severed).

Aaphembia has, however, criss-crossed this area with various fine filaments strung tightly, causing them to vibrate and warn her in the event that someone steps on or trips over one of them. Finding these filaments requires a Search check (DC 22), and successfully disarming them requires a dagger or other sharp instrument and a successful Disarm Device check (DC 14).

Web-door: Hardness 5 (except against fire); 12 hp; Break DC 26; Search DC 15 to detect; Escape Artist DC 20 to "squeeze through" without destroying the web.

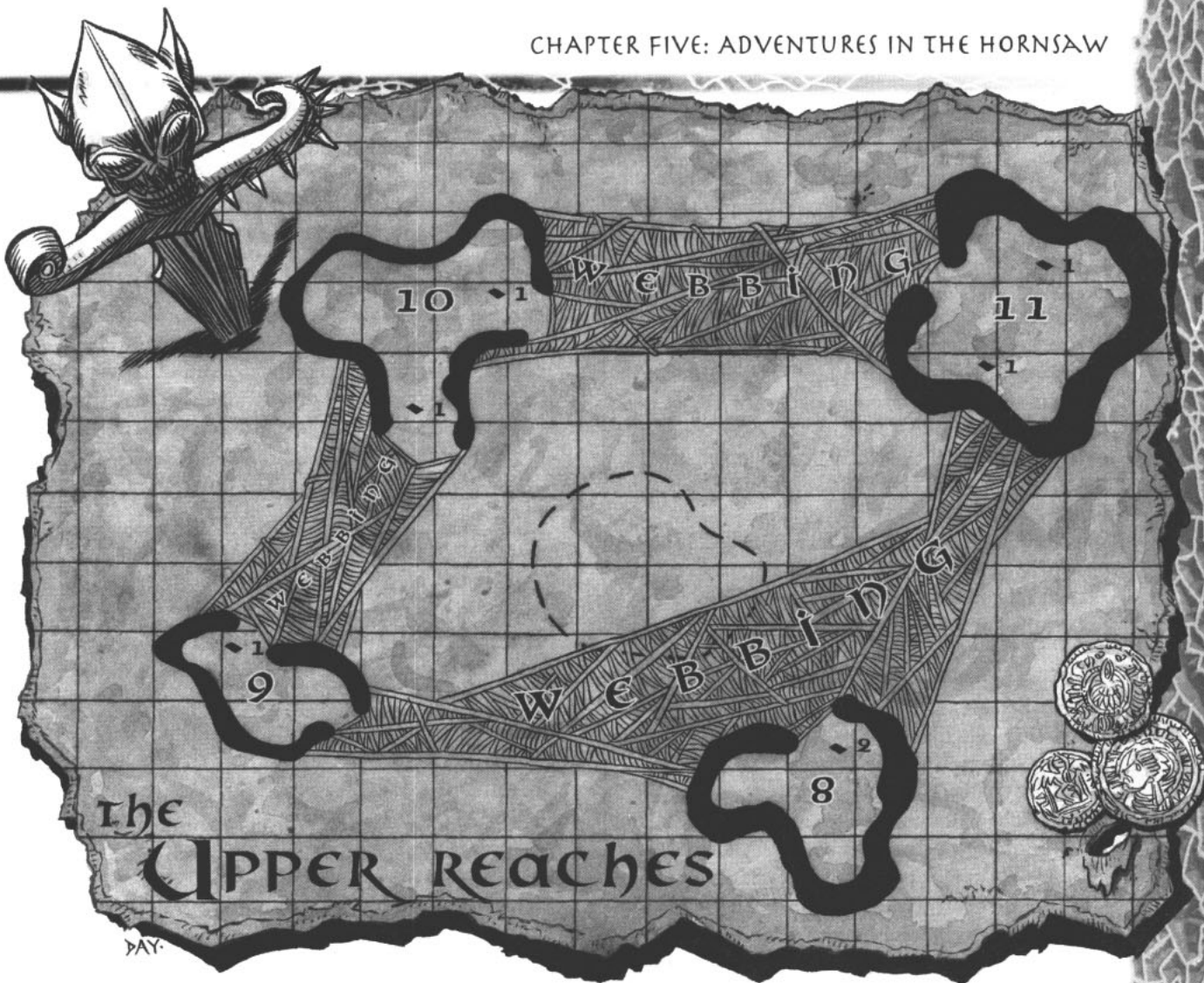
The Upper Reaches

Aaphembia's lair proper is not found within the brambles. Rather, it rests in the trees above the bramble patch, granting her a superior vantage point from which to watch what goes on below. By the time enemies arrive at this spot, she likely knows that they are coming — the only way to avoid this is to make little sound in traversing the lair (a difficult prospect at best, given the amount of combat that might conceivably occur) and to avoid the lair bottom (Area 7, above) without triggering any of her warning lines.

Moving from the lair bottom to the top of the lair requires climbing the bramble-walls, as described in the section above.

Once the top of the brambles is reached, it is still another 10 feet to the lengths of webbing strung among the trees that look down on the hole in the brambles like a catwalk. The brambles are tenuous and cannot be really walked upon for fear of falling through them, ripping oneself up in the process.

Once the first PC catches hold of the webbing, Aaphembia automatically knows that intruders are present, even if they have so far managed to hide themselves. If she knows that intruders have come, Aaphembia will await their arrival from her perch (Area 8, below). If she does not know, she will be found in her lair, though she is likely to rush out and attack immediately from there.



Aphembia has trapped the upper reaches of her lair with a number of witch-eggs. These witch-eggs are identical to those used in the Spawn Labyrinth, above.

Aphembia's Perch (Area 8)

This section of hollowed tree is where Aphembia monitors what occurs in her lair and territory. All of the lines that extend throughout these areas terminate here; by positioning herself so that she touches all of the strands in this chamber, she can monitor unusual movement and intrusion to them. It is also in this chamber that those lines which connect her with the rest of the Eightfold Curse terminate.

Aphembia's Larder (Area 9)

Aphembia stores her future (and current) meals in this chamber. Its walls are thickly spun with webbing, allowing Aphembia to adhere a new acquisition to the walls by wrapping it in filament and then securing it to the walls.

Several corpses adorn the walls here, including a trio of humans, an elf, and two asaathi. Additionally, however, three other forms seem to be still alive. One of them is a Red Witch slitheren, badly wounded and mad from pain, weakness, and the length of her impris-

The Zombie

In truth, the zombie found within these chambers is a scrying focus for a necromancer of Glivid-Autel, who intends to create some kind of alliance between himself and the Eightfold Curse. Yet first he must learn more about the creatures that make up its numbers, so he sent this beast into Aphembia's territory. With his knowledge of the creature, he can use it as a "center" upon which to spy with his scrying.

Zombie: CR 1/2; SZ Medium-size undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ Undead, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feat: Toughness.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. Immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save, unless such an effect targets objects.

Aphembia the Bramble-Queen

Aphembia was born several decades ago and consumed all but two of her pit-siblings. The three were too evenly matched in might and went their separate ways shortly thereafter. Aphembia wandered for a season before finding the bramble-patch that she transformed into her lair.

Aphembia is cold and cunning, with a sharp mind for tactics and trap-making. She knows the value of having lair-guardians and so has collected to herself a small group of male spiders who live in the outer reaches of her lair, providing both mates and guardians in one fell swoop.

Aphembia the Bramble-Queen, female witchspider, Sor4: CR 9; SZ Medium-size aberration; HD 3d8+3 plus 4d4+4; hp 38; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft., climb 25 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +5 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, vertigo; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., webbing, witchblooded, witch-eggs; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +13, Concentration +8, Hide +8*, Listen +5, Move Silently +8*, Spellcraft +11, Spot +5*.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Languages: Dark Tongue of Mormo, Ledean.

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution + frightened, secondary damage 1d4 temporary Constitution + unconscious.

Vertigo (Ex): The patterns on Aphembia's body can work like a gaze attack, with a range of 30 feet and requiring a successful Will save (DC 14) to avoid its effects. [What are the effects?]

Web (Ex): Aphembia can cast a web 8/day, similar to an attack with a net but at a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and effective against targets up to Small size. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20) or Strength check (Break DC 26). Each 5-foot section of the web has 6 hp.

Sorcerer Spells Known (cast per day: 6/7/4; base DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *ray of frost*; 1st — *field of razors***, *mage armor*, *summon monster I*; 2nd — *web*.

(Note: Spells marked with ** are from **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**.)

onment. The second is actually a zombie that wandered into Aphembia's domain that she has taken to studying. She has found the taste of the beast not at all to her liking, though she intends to try and discover how the creature is made, in the hopes of creating zombie servitors for herself. The creature is relatively fresh and thrashes about when it detects movement in the room — in the gloom of this chamber, its actions might easily be mistaken for someone trying to free itself. If it is freed, however, it attacks anyone around it. Finally, the sorcerer for whom the PCs are searching can be found here as well, though in better shape than the Red Witch slitheren.

Aphembia's Lair (Area 10)

This chamber, another hollowed-out tree, is where Aphembia makes her lair. It is heavily webbed, providing various nooks and crannies among the shadowed recesses. Aphembia has turned this area into a very defensible site, with web-crafted ledges and barriers; while battling in here, Aphembia is able to give herself one-half concealment (20% miss chance). Anyone entering the area risks being caught up in her webbing (as per monstrous spiders; see MM).

Aphembia's Treasury (Area 11)

Aphembia keeps her treasure in this area, which is defended by a pair of *field of razor* witch-eggs. She knows the worth of her valuable and is not above trading for or outright purchasing what she needs.

She keeps the actual coin that she has accumulated woven into small pockets of webbing concealed in the wall. Discovering these pockets requires a Search check (DC 18) for each one, and there are a total of five of such pockets. Each one holds 200 gp. As well, another 87 gp is scattered around the chamber in small, easily spotted piles, in hopes that any thieves might think they have found all the treasure.

Finally, Aphembia keeps a *wand of magic missiles* (3rd-level caster, 42 charges) in a hidden space. She will not hesitate to rush back to this place, seize up the wand, and use it in combat, though she does not routinely carry it with her.

Other Adventures in the Hornsaw

The following short adventure descriptions can be fully fleshed out by the GM.

Lost in the Border Wood

The Border Wood is seen as a refuge of last resort to those in grave distress. For most people, if they can survive the wood, they will be safe there from whatever pursues them. From time to time, however, someone's return is so fiercely sought-after that pursuers will even follow into the Hornsaw to catch up.

Set-up: Characters are hired or assigned to retrieve a man last seen buying supplies in the Heteronomy of Virduk with the intention of hiding out in the Border Wood indefinitely. This man may be an important criminal or simply a spoiled young runaway from a significant family. All the characters need do is follow him to the Border Wood and return him alive to their employers or superiors.

Complications: Pursuing their quarry, the characters are forced to face the strangeness and danger of the Border Wood on their own. Otherwise harmless plants and animals may confuse the party with false trails or other distractions, or they may discover that their quarry mistakenly consumed serpentberries and plunged into the depths of the Hornsaw. Either way, in order to complete their mission, the PCs must track the man into the Hornsaw itself, where they find him enslaved for the purpose of magical experimentation by a Red Witch slitheren and its cohorts. If the party takes too long to defeat this ratman, it is likely to contact a whole tribe of its friends for help.

Difficult Diplomacy

Relations between Vera-Tre and the Broadreach elves have been awkward and strained ever since the elves of the Hornsaw returned from their great merging ritual. The Broadreach elves know that they need help in their struggle with the titanspawn, so a few stubborn souls continue to try to improve cultural and political relations with their Ganjus-based cousins — sometimes with disastrous results.

Set-up: The last council between wood elven leaders of the two separate nations went particularly badly. The Vera-Treans made what they considered a highly generous offer: a formal alliance, plus a delegation of druids and healers to aid the Hornsaw elves in their war effort. The Broadreach elves spurned the offer, however, and demanded warriors and the return of several powerful magic items that they felt belonged in the Hornsaw. Shocked at their cousins' presumption, the Ganjus elves returned to Vera-Tre in anger.

After a time, tempers cooled. Now, the Ganjus elves feel they owe it to their cousins to try to mend the rift, and they are sending a young diplomat named Adona to serve as permanent ambassador to the Broadreach Horizon and so hopefully improve relations. The characters are hired to serve as bodyguards, assistants, or other support staff for Adona. They must escort the ambassador through the wilderness to the Broadreach Horizon, help her to contact the Broadreach elves, and guard and advise her while she confers with the Broadreach elven councils. The PCs know that their professional reputations are on the line if anything bad happens to Adona. In addition, the GM might include an extra incentive to be awarded to the PCs only on successful completion of the mission.



Complications: Adona was chosen for her youth and willingness to take on a mission to the dangerous Hornsaw, rather than for her specific experience with the Broadreach elves. She is eager to prove herself, but not necessarily always wise in her methods. She quickly offends several different groups of extremists (refusing to treat with Clan Lizard war parties, ignoring other groups of Broadreach elves in her haste to reach the Broadreach Horizon, and so on), and the PCs must guard her and themselves from retaliation. Perhaps she gets the entire party lost in the forest, causing them to wander into the Clan Unicorn resting place. After tangling with its traps and guardians and a frightening encounter with the restless ghosts, characters and ambassador are caught and arrested by the living Broadreach elves. The PCs may have found a clue toward helping the Clan Unicorn ghosts rest in peace, however, and this might not only inspire the elves to free them from punishment but also spark a whole new adventure. This adventure could involve a quest for a lost magic item, the destruction of a specific evil artifact, or maybe retrieval of the text of some ancient scroll that could help with the healing of the Hornsaw. Worse yet, the party may be accidentally led into Alicorn Vale and attacked by its terrifying guardian.

Alternatively, Adona may insist on visiting every single Broadreach elven clan in turn, including Clan Lizard. This process will involve guarding her on the dangerous trek through the Hornsaw itself in order to reach the Broadreach River, which in turn promises its own dangers. Finding and treating with Clan Lizard should provide an adventure in itself, and GMs can decide whether to portray these elves as twisted and dangerous traitors to the cause of the gods or merely irresponsible and unpredictable recluses.

Hero or Villain?

The Broadreach elves feel very nervous about the activities of Clan Lizard and particularly about a band of renegades under the leadership of a woman named Seyahto (see Chapter Three: The People), about whom all manner of wild rumors are circulating. Clan Lizard is not being helpful with either information concerning this woman or efforts to discipline her, and Seyahto has thus far proven extremely unfriendly to anyone who comes to look for her unless seeking to join her band.

Set-up: This adventure is for Broadreach elves only and would be easiest for elves from Clan Scorpion or Clan Wolverine. The party is chosen by the clan councils to infiltrate Seyahto's band and finally find out for certain what she is doing.

Complications: Once the characters are accepted as new members of Seyahto's band (which might even involve some kind of blood oath), Seyahto turns out to be extremely charming and seemingly quite

reasonable and even heroic. Characters have trouble figuring out how she developed her reputation. Later, the party catches a member of her band consorting with titanspawn. When Seyahto finds out about it, she appears horrified and punishes the offender severely. The GM should decide early on whether Seyahto is genuinely loyal to the forest and the Broadreach elves with no greater flaw than being extremely unpredictable, or if she is truly the half-mad danger to her forest and her people that the other clans fear. The rest of the adventure rides on the answer to this question. What do the characters eventually find out?

Hornsaw Forest Encounter Charts

The Hornsaw Forest is a deadly place, filled with peril for those who are not prepared for its rigors — and dangers even for those who think they are.

What follows is a collection of encounter charts, giving random encounter tables for the following areas:

Substituting Hazards or Monster Encounters

The GM is encouraged occasionally to replace rolled encounters with an appropriate hazard instead, in order to represent that other dangers lie in wait for those unfamiliar with the Hornsaw Forest. Below is a list of hazards, their CRs, and their sources so that the GM may replace a rolled encounter with a hazard of appropriate strength. Those hazards with a source marked "WW" can be found in **Wilderness & Wasteland**.

CR	Hazard	Source
1/2	Bat swarm	WW, pg. 19
1	Deadfall, Medium-size	WW, pg. 26
2	Blood-sucking vermin swarm	WW, pg. 47
2	Deadfall, Large	WW, pg. 26
2	Dream poppies	WW, pg. 24
2	Slime-root blight, Medium-size	See Chapter 2
3	Bloodstools	WW, pg. 44
3	Deadfall, Huge	WW, pg. 26
3	Fang-leaves	See Chapter 2
3	Shriek flowers	WW, pg. 24
3	Slime-root blight, Large	See Chapter 2
3	Stinging vermin swarm	WW, pg. 47
4	Slime-root blight, Huge	See Chapter 2
5	Blood moth swarm	WW, pg. 10
5	Deadfall, Gargantuan	WW, pg. 26
5	Shard trees	WW, pg. 24
6	Slime-root blight, Gargantuan	See Chapter 2
7	Carnivorous beetles	WW, pg. 19
7	Forest Fire,	WW, pg. 26
8	Deadfall, Colossal	WW, pg. 26
9	Slime-root blight, Colossal	See Chapter 2

Table 5-1: Hornsaw Forest, General Encounters (CR 8)

Encounter Chance: 8% per hour; 8% per hour at night (48% per six hours; 48% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encount.	CR	At EL	Source
01-03	01-04	Assassin vine	1d3+3	3	8	MM
04-05	05	Bitter tree	1	10	10	CC2
06-07	06-07	Blade beast	1d6	3	6	CC2
08-09	—	Blade hood	1d3	3	5	CC
10	08	Blood reaper	1	10	10	CC2
11-13	—	Bloodfly	5d6	1	8	CC2
14	09	Bloodman	1d4+4	5	10	CC2
—	10-11	Bonewing	1D4	3	5	CC2
15-16	12	Carnivorous tree	1d3	6	8	CC2
17-18	13-14	Chuul	1	7	7	MM
19	15	Dark womb hive	*	*	10	CC2
20-24	—	Dar al Annot	**	**	8	**
25	16	Dragon, woodwrack	1	12	12	CC
26-27	17-20	Gallows eye	1	8	8	CC2
28-31	—	Giant constrictor snake	1d3+1	5	8	MM
32-33	21-22	Goblin bear	1	6	6	CC
34-35	23	Golem, serpent	1d3+1	6	9	CC2
36-38	—	Gore beetle	2d4+4	1	7	CC
39-42	24-28	Gorgon, low	1d6	5	8	CC
43-44	29-30	Gorgon patrol	+	+	11	CC
—	31-32	Hag, moon++	1	13	13	CC
45-47	33-35	Hag, storm++	1	8	8	CC
48-50	36-39	Hagling, moon	1d3+5	2	8	CC2
51-54	40-44	Hagling, storm	1d3+5	2	8	CC2
55	45	Hex creature	++	++	5	++
56-60	46-50	Hornsaw unicorn	1d6	5	8	CC
61-62	51-53	Howling abomination	1	8	8	CC2
63	54	Leeching willow	1d3	7	9	CC2
64-66	55-57	Medusa	1d3+1	7	10	MM
—	58-63	Naga, dark	1	8	8	MM
67-68	64-65	Naga, hollow	1	9	9	CC
69-70	66-67	Naga, spirit	1	9	9	MM
71-72	68-69	Narleth	1	5	5	CC
—	70	Owlbear	1d4+4	4	9	MM
73-74	71	Rast	1	5	5	MM
75-77	72-77	Ratman patrol	^	^	8	^
78-79	78	Sagon	3d6	1/2	6	CC2
80-82	79-81	Serpent root	1	4	4	CC
83-84	82-83	Shambling mound	1	6	6	MM
85-86	84-85	Skiver	2d4	3	7	CC2
—	86-88	Stirge	1d6+7	1/2	6	MM
87-88	89-90	Sundered woman	1	5	5	CC2
89-90	91-92	Tendriculos	1	6	6	MM
91-92	93-94	Totem of Mormo	1d6	2	6	CC2
93-94	95-98	Troll	1d3+1	5	8	MM
95-00	—	Viper swarm	^^	^^	8	MM
—	99-00	Wyrmspawn, adult	1d6+1	2	6	CC

* *Dark womb hive*: Dark womb hives consist of the dark womb hive mother (CR 6) and up to EL 9 of cloned "children."** *Dar al Annot*: Dar al Annot groups consist of 1d3+2 witches (CR 2 spellcasters, usually a mix of 2nd-level druids, 2nd-level female sorcerers, and 3rd-level adepts), led by a 7th-level druid or female sorcerer.+ *Gorgon patrol*: Gorgon patrols consist of 1d3 low gorgons (CR 6 each), 2d6 ratmen (CR 1/2 each), and 1d3 Red Witch ratmen of 3rd level (CR 4 each), led by a single high gorgon (CR 9).++ *Hags*: The typical moon hag encountered in the Hornsaw is a Drd4/Sor4 with the moon hag template applied (see the Appendix). The typical storm hag encountered in the Hornsaw is a Drd6 with the storm hag template applied (see the Appendix). *Hex creature*: A hex creature is any normal animal/vermin or group of animals/vermin with the hex creature template applied (see CC2). Examples include 1d3+1 boars, cougars (use leopard stats), or wolves; 1d8+1 hawks, ravens, or owls; 1d3 black bears; 1 brown bear; or 1d3+1 Large monstrous centipedes.^ *Ratman patrol*: Ratman patrols are made up of 1d10+5 normal ratmen (CR 1/2), led by a pair of 3rd-level Red Witch ratmen (CR 4).^^ *Viper swarm*: Viper swarms are a mass of frenzied poisonous serpents made up of 1d8+4 Tiny vipers (CR 1/3), 1d8+4 Small vipers (CR 1/2), 1d6+2 Medium-size vipers (CR 1), 1d3 Large vipers (CR 2), and 1d3 Huge vipers (CR 3).

• *The Hornsaw Forest (General)*: This chart is often referred to by the other charts. Additionally, use this chart when the PCs are in the Hornsaw, but not in any of the other, more specific areas. CR 8.

• *Broadreach Horizon*: This chart is used when in the northern parts of the Hornsaw reclaimed by the Broadreach elves. CR 6.

• *Border Wood*: This chart is used when in the southern stretches of the Hornsaw, in the Border Wood proper. Additionally, this is a good chart to use for just a day or two worth of travel into the Hornsaw. CR 3.

• *Kaymen's March*: This chart is used when in the spider-infested Kaymen's March, or for any other area where witchspiders hold sway. CR 10.

Table 5-2: Hornsaw Forest, Broadreach Horizon (CR 6)

Encounter Chance: 3% per hour; 5% per hour at night (18% per six hours; 30% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-02	01-02	Ankheg	1	3	3	MM
—	03-04	Aranea	1	4	4	MM
03-04	05	Assassin vine	1d4	3	5	MM
05-06	—	Avix	1d6	1	1	(See Appendix)
07-08	06	Behir	1d2	8	10	MM
09-10	07-08	Black bear	1d2	2	4	MM
—	09-10	Brewer gnome	1d10+4	1	7	CC
11-14	11-15	Brown bear	1d2	4	6	MM
15-17	16-17	Centaur	1d4+4	3	8	MM
18-19	18-20	Dryad	1	1	1	MM
20	21	Emperor stag	1	6	6	CC
21-23	22	Ethereal marauder	1	3	3	MM
24-25	23	Forest walker	1	10	10	CC2
26-30	—	Giant bee	1d20	1/2	6	MM
31-32	—	Giant eagle	1d2	3	5	MM
—	24-25	Giant fire beetle	1d10+1	1/3	2	MM
—	26-31	Giant owl	1d4+1	3	6	MM
33-37	32-36	Goblin bear	1	6	6	CC
38-39	37	Grippett	1d2	2	4	CC
40-41	38-39	Hamadryad	1d6+1	4	8	CC
42-43	—	Hippogriff	1d2	2	4	MM
44-45	40-41	Krenshar	1d2	1	2	MM
—	42	Lillend	1d4	7	9	MM
—	43-44	Mistwalker	1	3	3	CC
46-50	45-47	Nymph	1	6	6	MM
51-53	—	Pegasus	1d10	3	8	MM
54-55	48	Phase spider	1	5	5	MM
—	49	Phasm	1	7	7	MM
56-57	50-52	Pseudodragon	1d2	1	2	MM
58-59	53	River nymph	2d8	3	9	CC
—	54-55	Satyr	1d10	4	9	MM
60	56	Serpent avix	1d6	1	2	(See Appendix)
61-63	57-60	Shambling mound	1	6	6	MM
64-65	61	Slarecian worm	1	4	4	CC2
—	62-63	Spider eater	1	5	5	MM
—	64-68	Sprite, grig	1d10+1	1	6	MM
—	69	Sprite, pixie	1d10+1	4	9	MM
66-67	70-71	Stick giant	1d3	10	12	CC
68-69	72-74	Tanil's fox	1	5	5	CC
70-73	75-77	Treant	1	8	8	MM
74-75	78-79	Unicorn, Hornsaw	1	5	5	CC
76-79	80-84	Willow tree warrior	1	6	6	CC
80-81	85-86	Wolf spider, giant	1	3	3	CC
82-96	87-96	Wood elf	*	*	6	*
97-00	97-00	Wyvern	1d2	6	6	MM

* *Wood elf*: The wood elves of the Broadreach are likely to be found in groups. There is a 25% chance that the group is made up of 1d8+6 characters of 1st level in an NPC class; there is also a 25% chance that the group is made up of 1d6+3 characters of 1st level in a PC class or 2nd level in an NPC class. There is a 25% chance that the group will be a smaller group with a leader, such as a 4th-level PC class character and 1d3+1 characters of 1st level in a PC class, or a 5th-level NPC class character and 1d3+2 characters of 1st level in an NPC class. Finally, there is a 25% chance that a single CR 6 character is encountered, be it a 6th-level PC class character or a 7th-level NPC class character.

• *Ophidian Vale*: This chart is used when within two days of Annot Kalambath; it represents the heightened patrols and general watchfulness of the Dar al Annot in the area. CR 12.

• *Specters' Wood*: This chart is used when in the Specters' Wood, along the western side of the Broadreach River. CR 9.

• *Vale of Serpents*: This chart is used when within one day of the Vale of Serpents, the naga-hold of the Keeper of Atrocity and its vassals. CR 8.

Table 5-3: Hornsaw Forest, Border Wood (CR 3)

Encounter Chance: 5% per hour; 5% per hour at night (30% per six hours; 30% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-07	01-10	Ankheg	1	3	3	MM
08-10	-	Avix	1d6	1	1	(See Appendix)
-	11-12	Basilisk	1	5	5	MM
11-13	-	Berserker wasp	1	5	5	CC
14-23	13-22	Blade beast	1	3	3	CC2
24-38	23-32	Blade hood	1	3	3	CC
39	33	Bloodmare	1	6	6	CC
40-41	34-35	Bone lord	1	6	6	CC
42-44	36-38	Carnivorous tree	1	6	6	CC2
45-47	39-40	Cathedral beetle	1	4	4	CC
48-52	41-45	Dire badger	1	2	2	MM
-	46-50	Dire bat	1	2	2	MM
-	51-52	Dire wolverine	1	4	4	CC
-	53-54	Goblin bear	1	6	6	CC
53-55	55-59	Hookwing	1d4+3	1/4	1	CC
56-59	60-62	Hornsaw unicorn	1	5	5	CC
60-62	63-67	Krenshar	1	1	1	MM
63-64	68-70	Serpent avix	1d6	1	2	(See Appendix)
65-74	71-75	Skiver	1	3	3	CC2
75	76-84	Stirge	1d4+2	1/2	3	MM
76-80	85-88	Vengaurak	1	4	4	CC
81-88	89-92	Viper, large	1	2	2	MM
89-95	93-96	Viper, medium	1	1	2	MM
96-00	97-00	Wood elf	*	*	6	*

*See Table 5-2.

Table 5-4: Hornsaw Forest, Kaymen's March (CR10)

Encounter Chance: 4% per hour; 5% per hour at night (24% per six hours; 30% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-10	01-10	Howling abomination	1d3+1	8	10	CC2
11-15	11-15	Monstrous spider, small	2d12	1/2	6	MM
16-25	16-25	Monstrous spider, medium	1d4+3	1	6	MM
26-30	26-30	Monstrous spider, large	1d4+3	2	8	MM
31-40	31-40	Witchspider, young*	1	6	6	(See Appendix)
41-50	41-50	Witchspider*	1	10	10	(See Appendix)
51-60	51-60	Witchspider, elder*	1	14	14	(See Appendix)
61-65	61-65	Witchspider, arch-elder*	1	20	20	(See Appendix)
66-00	66-00	Hornsaw Forest Chart (Table 5-1)				

* *Witchspider*: The average witchspider is a Sor5. Young witchspiders are usually Sor1; elder witchspiders are usually Sor9; and arch-elder witchspiders are usually Sor15.

Table 5-5: Hornsaw Forest, The Ophidian Vale (CR 12)

Encounter Chance: 10% per hour; 10% per hour at night (60% per six hours; 60% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-05	01-05	Bitter tree	1d3	10	12	CC2
06-10	06-10	Blood reaper	1d3	10	12	CC2
11-20	11-20	Dar al Annot	*	*	8	*
21-30	21-30	Dar al Annot, elders	*	*	12	*
31-33	31-33	Dragon, woodwreck	1	12	12	CC
34-36	34-36	Giant constrictor snake	1d3+1	5	8	MM
37-39	37-39	Golem, serpent	1d3+1	6	9	CC2
40-44	40-44	Hag, moon**	1	13	13	CC
45-49	45-49	Hag, storm**	1	8	8	CC
50-52	50-52	Hagling, moon	1d3+5	2	8	CC2
53-55	53-55	Hagling, storm	1d3+5	2	8	CC2
56-60	56-60	Hex creature	**	**	12	**
61-65	61-65	Hornsaw sentinel	+	+	12	+
66-70	66-70	Medusa	1d3+3	7	12	MM
71-75	71-75	Naga, hollow	1d3+1	9	12	CC2
76-82	76-82	Ratman patrol	++	++	12	++
83-85	83-85	Totem of Mormo	1d6+4	2	8	CC2
86-00	86-00	Hornsaw Forest Chart (Table 5-1)				

* *Dar al Annot*: Dar al Annot groups consist of 1d3+2 witches (CR 2 spellcasters, usually a mix of 2nd-level druids, 2nd-level female sorcerers, and 3rd-level adepts), led by a 7th-level druid or female sorcerer. *Dar al Annot, elder*: Elder Dar al Annot groups consist of 1d3+2 witches (CR 6 spellcasters, usually a mix of 6th-level druids, 6th-level sorcerers, and 7th-level adepts).

** *Hags*: The typical moon hag encountered in the Hornsaw is a Drd4/Sor4 with the moon hag template applied (see the Appendix). The typical storm hag encountered in the Hornsaw is a Drd6 with the storm hag template applied (see the Appendix). *Hex creature*: A hex creature is any normal animal/vermin or group of animals/vermin with the hex creature template applied (see CC2); examples include 1d3+1 dark nagas or dire tigers, 1d8+1 goblin bears or wyverns, or one 12-headed hydra.

+ *Hornsaw Sentinel*: A Hornsaw sentinel is usually an 11th-level character (often a Rgr7/Hsn4), accompanied by a Hornsaw unicorn.

++ *Ratman patrol*: Ratman patrols are made up of 1d10+5 normal ratmen (CR 1/2), led by a pair of 9th-level necromancer or illusionist Red Witch ratmen (CR 10).

Table 5-7: Hornsaw Forest, Vale of Serpents (CR 8)

Encounter Chance: 8% per hour; 8% per hour at night (48% per six hours; 48% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-05	01-07	Assassin vine	1d4	3	6	MM
06-10	—	Blade hood	1d3	3	5	CC
11-15	08-12	Naga, crown	1	5	5	CC2
16-20	13-17	Naga, crown nest	*	*	7	CC2
21-24	18-22	Naga, crown nest	*	*	9	CC2
25-28	23-26	Naga, dark	1d4	8	11	MM
29-32	27-30	Naga, hollow	1	9	9	CC2
33-36	31-34	Naga, spirit	1d4	9	12	MM
37-40	35-38	Naga, water	1d4	7	10	MM
41-45	39-46	Serpent root	1	4	4	CC
46-50	47-50	Snake, giant constrictor	1	5	5	MM
51-75	51-75	Viper swarm	**	**	8	MM
76-00	76-00	Hornsaw Forest Chart (Table 5-1)				

* *Naga, crown nest*: An EL 7 crown naga nest is made up of one adult crown naga and 2d6 newborn crown nagas. An EL 9 crown naga nest is made up of one adult crown naga and 2d6 young crown nagas.

** *Viper swarm*: Viper swarms are a mass of frenzied poisonous serpents made up of 1d8+4 Tiny vipers (CR 1/3), 1d8+4 Small vipers (CR 1/2), 1d6+2 Medium-size vipers (CR 1), 1d3 Large vipers (CR 2), and 1d3 Huge vipers (CR 3).

Table 5-6: Hornsaw Forest, Specters' Wood (CR 9)

Encounter Chance: 8% per hour; 8% per hour at night (48% per six hours; 48% per six hours at night)

D% Day	D% Night	Encounter	No. Encountered	CR	At EL	Source
01-08	01-03	Bitter tree	1	10	10	CC2
09-11	04-05	Blood reaper	1	11	11	CC2
—	06-07	Bodak	1d3+1	8	11	MM
—	08-09	Bonewing	1d4	3	5	CC2
12-17	10-12	Carnivorous tree	1d3+1	7	8	CC2
18-23	13-15	Carriion hound	1d6+4	3	9	CC2
24-31	16-17	Chuul	1d4+1	7	10	MM
32-35	18-19	Corpse whisperer	*	*	6	CC2
36-40	20-22	Fleshcrawler	1d6+2	4	9	CC
41-44	23-24	Gallows vine	2d4	1	5	CC2
—	25-26	Ghast	1d3+1	3	6	MM
—	27-30	Ghast pack	**	**	9	MM
45-47	31-33	Ghost	+	+	9	MM
—	34-35	Ghoul	1d6+6	1	7	MM
48-57	36-40	Glivid-Autel patrol	++	++	9	++
58-62	41-43	Hornsaw unicorn	1d6	6	9	CC
63-65	44-45	Krenshar	1d6+4	1	7	MM
66-70	46-48	Leeching willow	1d3	8	9	CC2
71-73	49-51	Mistwalker	1d3+5	3	9	CC
—	52-54	Mohrg	1d3+1	8	11	MM
—	55-56	Mohrg mob	^	^	11	MM
74-78	57-59	Monstrous centipede, Large	2d6+2	2	9	MM
79-81	60-62	Monstrous spider, Large	2d4+2	3	7	MM
82-84	63-64	Murdersprite	1d6+4	1/2	5	CC
—	65-66	Naga, dark	1d3+1	8	11	MM
85-86	67	Serpent avix	1d6	1	2	(See Appendix)
—	68-70	Shadow pack	^^	^^	9	^^
—	71-73	Shadows	1d6+5	3	9	MM
87-89	74-75	Skiver	1d3+2	4	8	CC2
90-92	76-77	Skull king	1d3	3	5	CC2
—	78-80	Spectral treant	1	11	11	MM/CC2#
—	81-83	Spectre	1d3	7	9	MM
93-96	84-85	Stirge	1d6+7	1/2	6	MM
—	86-87	Undead ooze	1d3	4	6	CC
—	88-90	Wight	1d6+5	3	9	MM
—	91-94	Will-o'-wisp	1d3+2	6	9	MM
97-99	95-96	Wirebound berserker	1d3+1	3	6	CC2
00	97	Woodwrack dragon	1	12	12	CC
—	98-00	Wraith	1d4+1	5	8	MM

* Corpse whisperer: Corpse whisperers (CR 4) are accompanied by 1d6+4 zombies (CR 1/2 each).

** Ghast pack: Ghast packs are made up of 1d3+1 ghasts (CR 3 each), plus 1d6+7 ghouls (CR 1 each).

+ Ghost: Ghosts around Glivid-Autel are very strong; those encountered will either be the ghosts of powerful creatures (such as dire bears, chuul, medusas, or taurons) or those of powerful characters (usually of 7th level, often necromancers or clerics).

++ Glivid-Autel patrol: Glividian patrols consist of 1d3+2 Large skeletons (CR 1), 1d6+6 Medium-size skeletons (CR 1/2), two junior necromancers of 3rd level (CR 3), and a senior necromancer of 7th level (CR 7).

^ Mohrg mob: Mohrg mobs consist of 1d3+1 mohrgs (CR 8), plus 1d6+4 zombies (CR 1/2).

^^ Shadow pack: Shadow packs are made up of a shadow lord (CR 5) accompanied by 1d3+3 shadow minions (CR 3 each).

Spectral treant: Spectral treants are considered treants (as per the MM), with the abilities of the spectral plant hazard (as per CC2).



Appendix:

Monsters of the Forest

Avix

Hit Dice:	Diminutive Fey (sprite) 1/2d6+1 (2 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (Dex)
Speed:	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)
AC:	18 (+4 size, +4 Dex)
Attacks:	Dagger +8 melee; or blow darts +8 ranged
Damage:	Dagger 1d4-3; or blow darts 0 (see sleep darts below)
Face/Reach:	1 ft. by 1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks:	Spell-like abilities, sleep darts
Special Qualities:	SR 17, natural invisibility, fading illness
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 4, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 19
Skills:	Animal Empathy +6, Bluff +8, Concentration +3, Disable Device +2, Escape Artist +10, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Perform (any one) +6, Pick Pocket +7, Spot +4, Search +2, Wilderness Lore +3
Feats:	Dodge, Weapon Finesse (dagger)
Climate/Terrain:	Any forest
Organization:	Solitary, family (2-9), or band (6-25)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	No coins; 50% goods; 50% items
Alignment:	Always chaotic, usually good
Advancement Range:	1-2 HD (Diminutive)

Description

The smallest known fey creature in the Scarred Lands, avixes rarely stand more than nine inches tall. Like most fey, they are humanoid, appearing as miniature, winged elves. The feathered blue and black wings of male avixes resemble those of a blue jay, while female avix wings look like the shimmering black and white feathers of a magpie. Avixes are rarely seen, however, as they become invisible at will and can remain so indefinitely.

Highly chaotic, mischievous, and terribly charismatic, avixes were once considered a pest in the Broadreach Forest, thoughtfully helping inhabitants one day and stealing from them the next. Since the Divine War, though, the carefree world of the avixes has changed forever, and in recent decades — for their own safety — they have been forced to ally themselves much more closely with the Broadreach elves. While their personalities and mischievous habits are largely unchanged with regard to everyone else, no good avix would ever dare cause harm to any Broadreach elf. The avixes know to whom they owe their continued existence.

The avixes' connection to the physical world seems even more tenuous than that of most fey, and all avixes are afflicted with a strange fading illness. A sick avix will find that reappearing from invisibility gets increasingly difficult, until it eventually becomes permanently invisible and then, shortly afterward, simply ceases to exist. The only way to stave off this affliction is to consume regularly the fruit of the magical whisper tree.

The whisper tree grows only in the Hornsaw Forest and nowhere else. Before the Divine War, this situation was no particular problem for the avixes, who liked their Broadreach Forest just fine. When Mormo's blood tainted the forest's heart, however, everything changed. More than half of all living avixes and whisper trees were forever twisted, along with the rest of the Hornsaw. The new, larger serpent avixes delighted in nothing more than the hunting, torture, and even consumption of their untainted cousins, and the fruit of the new hissing trees — outwardly identical to that of whisper trees — was deadly poison to all untainted avixes who mistakenly tasted it.

The avixes were at the very brink of extinction by the time the Broadreach elves returned to the world and could help them. Now, the elves have allowed all remaining avixes to take shelter near the outskirts of their settlements, and they help their tiny allies to maintain small groves of untainted whisper trees for their use. In return, avixes serve as scouts and messengers for the elves and can be found as the constant and ferociously protective companions of many elfen children.

The ever-beautiful avixes do not age once they have reached maturity, so their potential lifespan is limitless, and some avixes alive today are old enough to remember the world before the Divine War. Yet the average avix lifespan is only a few decades, as the chaotic little avixes must constantly guard against depression and hopelessness. Once an avix gives in to despair, he often loses his will to consume his daily dose of whisper tree fruit. Many a despondent avix has been lost to the fading illness as a form of slow, painless suicide.



Combat

Rarely visible in any situation, an avix is almost never seen in combat. Like their distant cousins the pixies, avixes take full advantage of their invisibility and other abilities during combat and fight ferociously against any creature that threatens them or their loved ones.

Fading Illness: Any avix who goes more than three days without consuming whisper tree fruit must make a successful Will save (DC 10) in order to become visible. Every additional day that the avix is deprived of this fruit adds +1 to the save DC. If an avix fails more than three of these Will saves in a row, she becomes permanently invisible and will cease to exist in 1–10 days. While still capable of visibility, a single bite of whisper tree fruit instantly erases all fading illness effects, but a permanently invisible avix must have a diet of nothing but whisper tree fruit for 1d6+2 days before she will be fully cured.

Natural Invisibility (Su): An avix remains invisible even when it attacks. This ability is constant, but the avix can suppress or resume it as a free action.

Sleep Darts: Avixes make toothpick-sized, needle-sharp blow darts. These tiny darts are too small to do physical damage, but instead are coated with a sleep poison made from the juice of whisper tree fruit. Any creature whose skin is pricked by an avix blow dart must, regardless of HD, make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be affected as if by a *sleep* spell. These darts are deadly poison to serpent avixes, who instead die if they fail their Fortitude save.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day — *charm monster*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *Enkili's prank**, *ever scent**, *intoxicate**, *unbuckle**; 3/day — *charm person*, *ventriloquism*; 6/day — *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *sneeze**. These abilities are as the spells cast by an 8th-level sorcerer. (Note: Spells marked with * are found in *Relics & Rituals*.)

Whisper Tree

Whisper trees are lovely deciduous trees that magically stay green and bear fruit all year round. They get their name from the oddly musical sighing sound that surrounds them at all times. The deep purple fruits of these stately trees look like small cherries and taste sweet and pulpy. To non-avixes, this fruit acts as a mild hallucinogen, and both avixes and the Broadreach elves look very unkindly on those who gather whisper tree fruit for distillation and recreational use. To serpent avixes, whisper trees (and avix blow darts) are a deadly poison, and they are known to harm or destroy unguarded whisper trees whenever they can.

Serpent Avix

Hit Dice:	Diminutive Fey (sprite) 1/2d6+3 (4 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (Dex)
Speed:	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)
AC:	18 (+4 size, +4 Dex)
Attacks:	Dagger +8 melee; or blow darts +8 ranged
Damage:	Dagger 1d4–2; or blow darts none (see poison darts below)
Face/Reach:	1 ft. by 1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks:	Spell-like abilities, poison darts
Special Qualities:	SR 16, natural invisibility, crumbling illness
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 15
Skills:	Bluff +6, Concentration +3, Disable Device +2, Escape Artist +10, Hide +12, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Pick Pocket +7, Spot +4, Search +2, Wilderness Lore +3
Feats:	Dodge, Weapon Finesse (dagger)
Climate/Terrain:	Any forest
Organization:	Gang (2–4), band (6–11), or tribe (20–80)
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	No coins; 50% goods; 50% items
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement Range:	1–2 HD (Diminutive)

Description

Serpent avixes are both taller and far more sturdily built than their feather-winged cousins. Their wings are still a rich blue for males and an iridescent black for females, but instead of having soft feathers, serpent avix wings are more like those of a bat or small dragon. In addition, serpent avixes are covered in delicate and shining scales, while their originally elflike ears have grown long and dragonish as well. Some serpent avixes are born with serpentine tails, and these individuals are even more feral than usual. In spite of these changes, however, serpent avixes retain the inherent beauty and charm of all sprites, and a tiny dragon-winged beauty has lured many a fascinated traveler into a deadly trap.

Serpent avixes love nothing more than to torture and discomfit sentient creatures. Though they usually attack in packs and take joy in the slow and painful defeat of thinking beings much larger than themselves, the one creature that serpent avixes love to kill more than elves and humans is an untainted avix. Why the serpent avixes hate their untainted cousins with such a passion is a mystery, but serpent avixes would need to be badly outnumbered before they would even consider avoiding a battle with the dwindling ranks of the true avixes. They are cannibalistic and will steal and eat the infants of the Broadreach elves when they can.



Like ordinary avixes, serpent avixes are not as connected to the real world as other fey, and they too are born with an odd illness. Unlike the fading sickness of their cousins, however, afflicted serpent avixes find it more and more difficult to utilize their powers of invisibility at all. Instead of the painless departure from life of their lovely cousins, serpent avixes who cannot become invisible begin a slow and painful process of crumbling away until nothing is left but a pile of iridescent dust. To prevent this unpleasant end, serpent avixes must regularly consume fruit from the hissing tree. In addition, they must take great care not to ingest fruit accidentally from the outwardly identical whisper tree fruit, for to them it is the deadliest of poisons. Perhaps understandably, serpent avixes find whisper trees even more abhorrent than they do untainted avixes, and they actively seek to wipe out the species.

Combat

Like their avix and more distant pixie cousins, serpent avixes prefer to use their magical abilities, especially invisibility, to their best advantage in battle. Unlike other sprites, however, serpent avixes deliberately hunt and attack sentient prey of any alignment, so long as they feel the creature will make good sport. They try to kill as slowly and painfully as possible and will dance and laugh with delight at the sound of screams and pleas. When possible, serpent avixes set up elaborate traps for unwary humanoids, using the most attractive and charming of their shimmering number as bait.

In smaller groups, these evil fey usually content themselves with cruel works of mischief, such as maiming or debilitating livestock. If they feel an opponent is too great a challenge, they simply vanish and fly away, showing little concern for trapped or wounded companions. A lone serpent avix will never willingly fight anything but a much weaker true avix.

Crumbling Illness: Any serpent avix who goes more than three days without a bite from a hissing tree fruit must make a successful Will save (DC 10) in order to become invisible. Every additional day that the serpent avix is deprived of this fruit adds +1 to the save DC. If a serpent avix fails more than three of these Will saves in a row, she becomes permanently visible and will slowly and painfully crumble to dust over a period of 1–10 days. While still capable of invisibility, a single bite of hissing tree fruit instantly erases all crumbling illness effects, but a permanently visible serpent avix must have a diet of nothing but hissing tree fruit for 1d6+2 days before she can fully regenerate from her affliction.

Natural Invisibility (Su): An serpent avix remains invisible even when it attacks. This ability is constant, but the serpent avix can suppress or resume it as a free action.

Poison Darts: Like avixes, serpent avixes make toothpick-sized, needle sharp blow darts that are too small to do ordinary damage. Serpent avix blow darts are made of the wood of hissing trees and soaked in the juice of hissing tree fruits. Any creature whose skin is pricked by a serpent avix blow dart must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be paralyzed with pain for 3d4 rounds. Secondary damage for this poison is 2d4 temporary Constitution.

Hissing Tree

Hissing trees are identical to whisper trees in almost every way. The leaves, bark, and fruit are totally indistinguishable from one another by sight and smell. As far as the Broadreach elves can determine, there are only two ways to tell the difference between the trees. One, if you are not an avix, is to taste the fruit. Hissing tree fruit is somewhat sweeter and more flavorful than whisper tree fruit and is popular with elven children. The other difference is even more subtle and usually apparent only to musicians: unlike the oddly musical whisperings of the whisper trees, hissing tree sounds are vaguely discordant. Anyone with a Perform (sing or instrument) skill can make a check at DC 14 to distinguish between the trees. To all but avixes, this fruit acts as a mild stimulant. Broadreach elves enjoy hissing tree fruit and eat it regularly with no ill results. To true avixes, hissing trees are deadly poison, requiring a Fortitude save (DC 16) to avoid death if the fruit is consumed or if the avix is struck by a serpent avix dart.

Spell-like Abilities: 1/day — *Belsameth's strife**, *charm monster*, *confusion*, *ever scent**, *intoxicate**, *rainbow pattern*; 3/day — *charm person*, *ventriloquism*; 6/day — *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*. These abilities are as the spells cast by an 8th level sorcerer. (Note: Spells marked with * are found in *Relics & Rituals*.)

Blood Maw

	Gargantuan Aberration
Hit Dice:	20d8+140 (230 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	20 ft.
AC:	16 (–4 size, +10 Dex)
Attacks:	6 tentacle rakes+13 melee, bite +6 melee
Damage:	Tentacle rake 2d6+13, bite 4d6+6
Face/Reach:	30 ft. by 30 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, constrict, swallow whole
Special Qualities:	Damage reduction 10/+1
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12
Abilities:	Str 35, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills:	Listen +8, Spot +12
Feat:	Multiattack
Climate/Terrain:	Any forest
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	12
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement Range:	21–24 HD (Colossal)

Description

Two of these creatures participated in the Blood Crone's siege of Glivid-Autel. No one knows for certain how they were created — whether they were spawned by the destruction of Mormo, summoned by the Blood Crone herself, or created by a titan for his own perverse amusement. One rumor claims that the Blood Crone made the blood maws by casting a powerful spell that literally sucked the blood from every living thing for miles around, combining them together into vast, bloated bags of living blood, set with flailing tentacles and a great, gaping maw.

Regardless of their origins, blood maws represented one of the greatest threats to Glivid-Autel, one which Lucian Daine the Black Messiah took very seriously. When the maws shattered several legions of his skeletal soldiers, he called upon the city's clerics, who appealed to Vangal, god of slaughter. To appease the Reaver, they gave daggers to 100 slaves, telling them that they could go free if they won their way through the Blood Crone's siege. Of course, none of the slaves survived (they were slaughtered brutally), but the act caught Vangal's attention, and he granted the city a single boon. Together, the clerics cast an especially powerful version of *Vangal's wounding*, drawing the essence from the blood maws. Struck

by the spell, the two monsters shrank and shriveled and were destroyed by a counterattack personally led by Lucian Daine.

The blood maws have not been seen since, though rumors continue to circulate that the Blood Crone wishes to summon another for a new assault on Glivid-Autel. She believes, probably correctly, that Vangal will not bother to aid the necromancers a second time.

Combat

Truly fearsome monsters, blood maws attack with whipping tentacles made of semisolid blood, entrapping foes, strangling them, and dragging them to their doom in the beast's gaping gullet. Swallowed foes are quickly smothered and dissolved into the blood maw's body.

Blood maws are not especially intelligent, but seem to have a special enthusiasm for attacking the servants of the gods, this trait often cited as evidence of their titanic origin. A blood maw will always attack a worshipper of the gods before attacking one who still reveres the titans.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the blood maw must hit an opponent of up to Huge size with a tentacle attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A blood maw deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check against Huge or smaller creatures.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A blood maw can attempt to swallow a grappled opponent of size Huge or smaller. This action requires a second successful grapple attack. Once swallowed, a foe must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 22) or take 4d6 points of acid damage per round. A new save is required each round that the foe is swallowed.

A swallowed creature can get out of the blood maw with a successful grapple check. This gets it back into the creature's mouth, where another grapple check is required to get free. A swallowed creature can also cut its way out using natural weapons, or a Medium-size or smaller weapon to inflict 50 points of damage to the maw's interior (AC 20). Each swallowed victim must cut its way out individually.

A single blood maw can swallow up to two Huge, four Large, eight Medium-size, 16 Small, or 32 Tiny or smaller creatures.

Hag Templates

The hags of Mormo are more than simple creatures with the innate ability to cast spells: they are true witches, with the ability to master even the mightiest of enchantments and dweomers. To this end, the hags are rewritten as templates, though they do have requirements (similar to those of prestige classes). Among these requirements is the necessity of ingesting a strange concoction created by another hag and then being subject to a True Ritual unique to the particular type of hag.

Hag, Cavern

Description

Cavern hags are those hags who went underground and learned the secrets of earth and stone. By the time she attains full hag status, a cavern hag's eyelids have permanently grown together, making her blind — but no less dangerous. A cavern hag can smell an enemy's whereabouts to within inches.

The cavern hag devotes much of her time to her alchemy; her acute sense of smell allows her to distinguish one material from another easily, thus negating any handicap her blindness might otherwise cause her. A cavern hag is torn between hate and resentment for all mortals and a buried longing for human companionship; most cavern hags compromise by making their lairs in deep caves near human settlements, where they can capture humans to torture and devour when the loneliness grows too acute. Subterranean beasts are the closest thing to a cavern hag's friends, particularly monstrous vermin; some cavern hags have even managed to tame barrow worms as pets.

Combat

In combat, a cavern hag generally prefers to ambush her victims. She almost always has means to extinguish intruders' light sources (particularly spells). Once her prey has been blinded, she sends in any pets she might possess to attack, hurling more spells as she advances. If a group seems particularly strong, she shadows it as it passes through her territory, picking off any stragglers one by one.

Prerequisites

Gender: Female.

Race: Dwarf, human, half-elf, or half-orc.

Spells: Must be able to cast spells as a sorcerer.

Special: The would-be cavern hag must be fed a special concoction known only to cavern hags, which triggers the transformation into a cavern hag. Treat this concoction as dark reaver powder poison (see the DMG, Chapter 3, "Poisons") for those who do not meet the rest of the prerequisites noted above. Once the potion begins to take effect, the would-be cavern hag is subject to the Ritual of the Earthen Womb.

Creating A Cavern Hag

"Cavern hag" is a template that can be added to any creature that meets the prerequisites noted above (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). The base creature's type changes to "monstrous humanoid." A cavern hag uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size: Increases to Large (the ability modifiers for this size increase are already figured into the modifiers given under Abilities, below).

Hit Dice: Increase to d8. This increase only applies to HD gained from the sorcerer class, however.

Speed: Increase to 50 ft., climb 60 ft.

AC: Natural armor increases to +12.

Attacks: The cavern hag retains all the attacks of the base creature. In addition, she gains a bite attack and two claw attacks.

Damage: The cavern hag's bite attack and claw attacks both inflict 1d6 points of damage.

Special Qualities: A cavern hag retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

Blindsight (Ex): The cavern hag can sense her surroundings and nearby creatures in total darkness by scent, hearing, and the vibration of the air (which she detects through the fine hairs growing from her moles). She suffers no penalties in melee combat and can detect all foes within 120 feet as would a sighted creature (beyond that range, targets count as totally concealed). Negating the cavern hag's sense of hearing or smell reduces her blindsight's range by half, although she still fights as if using the Blind-Fight feat.

Damage Reduction (Su): The cavern hag's stony hide gives her damage reduction 5/+1.

Immunities (Ex): Immune to illusions, visual effects, gaze attacks, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Saves: Same as base creature.

Abilities: The cavern hag gains +7 Str, +3 Dex, +7 Con, and +5 Cha.

Skills: Cavern hags gain a +4 racial bonus to Alchemy checks.

Feats: Cavern hags gain Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Iron Will, and Power Attack, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any underground.

Organization: Solitary or pair.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +3.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Usually lawful evil.

Advancement Range: Same as base creature.

Hag, Moon

Description

The most powerful of all the Scarred Lands' hags, moon hags hold dominion over nature, madness, and night. These monstrous crones stand twice the height of a human when they draw themselves fully upright; their dark skin gleams with strange oils, and their wide eyes shine with madness. They typically prefer to live in high, craggy mountains or deep woods. They choose only the bitterest and most magically apt women as candidates for the metamorphosis.

A moon hag's boundaries are often marked with piles of blood-stained stones and odd bundles of bones and sticks. Anyone who wanders past these signs, whether from ignorance or recklessness, takes his life into his own hands. Moon hags have a powerful affinity for the beasts of the night; their allies can include bat devils, murdersprites, and even high or low gorgons. Coal goblins, werewolves, harpies, and other night beasts faithful to Belsameth avoid moon hags, who in return hate the newcomers and their goddess.

Combat

In combat, a moon hag likes to enthrall her victims with spells before she closes in for the kill. She takes a deep delight in sowing terror and confusion in her enemies. She frequently enters the presence of her enemies unseen, then begins using her spells and magic items to best effect. After her allies have scattered her foes, the moon hag attacks physically, slashing with her huge claws and biting with her enormous teeth.

Prerequisites

Gender: Female.

Race: Elf, human, half-elf, or half-orc.

Spells: Must be able to cast spells as a sorcerer and druid.

Special: The would-be moon hag must be fed a special concoction known only to moon hags, which triggers the transformation into a moon hag. Treat this concoction as dark reaver powder poison (see the DMG, Chapter 3, "Poisons") for those who do not meet the rest of the prerequisites noted above. Once the potion begins to take effect, the would-be moon hag is subject to the Ritual of the Dark Moon.

Creating A Moon Hag

"Moon hag" is a template that can be added to any creature that meets the prerequisites above (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). The base creature's type changes to "monstrous humanoid." A moon hag uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size: Increases to Large (the ability modifiers for this size increase are already figured into the modifiers given under Abilities, below).

Hit Dice: Increase to d8. This increase only applies to HD gained from the sorcerer class, however.

Speed: Increase to 60 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.

AC: Natural armor increases to +12.

Attacks: The moon hag retains all the attacks of the base creature. In addition, she gains a bite attack and two claw attacks.

Damage: The moon hag's bite attack and claw attacks both deal 1d6 points of damage.

Special Attacks: A moon hag retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Stunning Touch (Ex): Anyone hit by a moon hag's claw attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 22) or be stunned for 1d2 rounds. Multiple hits require multiple saves.

Special Qualities: A moon hag retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

Damage Reduction (Su): The moon hag's preternaturally tough hide grants her damage reduction of 10/+2.

Greatest of Witches (Ex): Moon hags are the undisputed mistresses of witchery among the hags. Every time a moon hag increases a level in either sorcerer or druid, her effective level in the other class increases as well. Thus, a Sor5/Drd4 moon hag casts spells as a 9th level sorcerer and a 9th level druid.

Spell Resistance (Ex): Moon hags gain Spell Resistance 16.

Saves: Same as base creature.

Abilities: The moon hag gains +5 Str, +4 Dex, +8 Con, +3 Int, +5 Wis, and +5 Cha.

Skills: Moon hags gain a +4 racial bonus to Alchemy and Spellcraft checks.

Feats: Moon hags gain Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Empower Spell, Iron Will, and Power Attack, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any mountains and underground.

Organization: Solitary or pair.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +5.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Usually lawful evil.

Advancement Range: Same as base creature.

Hag, Storm

Description

Storm hags are horrible crones that have shrugged off the tyrannical grip of gravity and mastered the secrets of the air. Once a storm hag reaches the point in her maturation process where she takes to the air, she dislikes touching the ground again; she will only do so in order to instruct a “granddaughter” or to brew a potion. Storm hags sleep in dark clouds during the day and come out to hunt at dusk. Their skin is a silvery, dusky gray like that of a storm cloud, their yellow eyes flash like lightning, and their long white hair balloons out around them as if constantly stirred by wind.

A storm hag hunts her prey from above, swooping down to carry off children or other small creatures to devour. Storm hags are leaner and more agile than their sister hags, granting them the ability to soar and swoop as nimbly as bats. Of all the hags, the storm hag is least likely to have animal or beast allies at her beck and call; few creatures can keep up to her liking.

Combat

In combat, storm hags are prone to flying down, catching their prey in their hair, and then swooping back up into the sky, where they maul their opponents one-on-one with their cruel claws and terrible teeth. If a storm hag is not happy with the way a struggle is going, she lets her prey drop to the ground and tries again after the fall has softened it up a bit.

Prerequisites

Gender: Female.

Race: Human, half-elf, or half-orc.

Spells: Must be able to cast spells as a druid.

Special: The would-be storm hag must be fed a special concoction known only to storm hags, which triggers the transformation into a storm hag. Treat this concoction as dark reaver powder poison (see the DMG, Chapter 3, “Poisons”) for those who do not meet the rest of the prerequisites noted above. Once the potion begins to take effect, the would-be storm hag is subject to the Ritual of the Ineffable Gale.

Creating A Storm Hag

“Storm hag” is a template that can be added to any creature that meets the prerequisites above (hereafter referred to as the “base creature”). The base creature’s type changes to “monstrous humanoid.” A storm hag uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: As the base creature.

Speed: 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good).

AC: Natural armor increases to +5.

Attacks: The storm hag retains all the attacks of the base creature. In addition, she gains a bite attack and two claw attacks, as well as a grapple with her prehensile hair.

Damage: The storm hag’s bite attack and claw attacks both deal 1d6 points of damage, and her hair is used to grapple (see below).

Special Attacks: A storm hag retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the storm hag must hit an opponent of up to Medium-size with a hair attack. If she hits, she can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A storm hag deals 1d6+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Special Qualities: A storm hag retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

Damage Reduction (Ex): The preternaturally tough skin of the storm hag grants her damage reduction of 5/+1.

Resistance to Energy (Ex): Storm hags ignore the first 20 points of electricity damage in a round.

Saves: Same as base creature.

Abilities: Storm hags gain +3 Str, +7 Dex, +3 Con, and +5 Wis.

Skills: Same as base creature.

Feats: Storm hags gain Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, and Fly-by Attack, assuming the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any land.

Organization: Solitary or pair.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Usually neutral evil.

Advancement Range: Same as base creature.

Witchspider

Hit Dice:	Medium-size Aberration 3d8+3 (17 hp)
Initiative:	+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	50 ft., climb 25 ft.
AC:	18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +5 melee
Damage:	Bite 1d4+1 and poison
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison, vertigo
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., webbing, witchblooded, witch-eggs
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15
Skills:	Hide +3*, Listen +2, Move Silently +3*, Spellcraft +2, Spot +2
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bite)
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate and warm forests and swamps
Organization:	Solitary or nest (1d4+1)
Challenge Rating:	5 (+1/level in the sorcerer class)
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Usually lawful evil
Advancement Range:	4–5 HD (Medium-size); 6–9 HD (Large); 10–12 (Huge)

Description

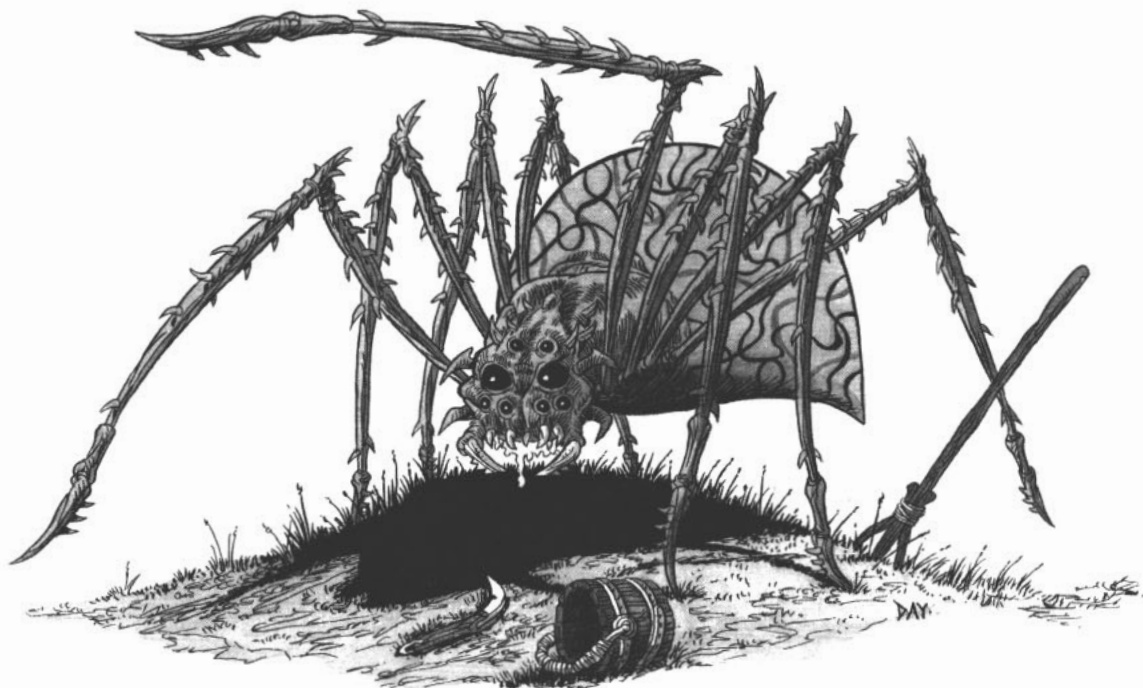
Old stories tell of the strange witchspiders, monstrous bloated arachnids capable of casting spells. Created by Mormo, the witchspider is an incredibly intelligent arachnid creature that once served as Mormo's handmaidens. Witchspiders are capable of not only spinning webs, but of using those taut strands to communicate. By manipulating and plucking the strands in a certain fashion, witchspiders can mimic

human speech, though no one who hears the droning words could possibly mistake it for anything other than what it is – a clever imitation of humanoid communication by a creature that is anything but humanoid.

Witchspiders appear to be massive spiders some 6 feet across, with black and red markings that shift and writhe as one gazes upon the witchspider. This strange shifting can cause a sense of vertigo in some folk, and the effect strengthens as the witchspider becomes agitated. In combat, witchspiders rise up on their back legs, raising their forelegs in the manner of a threatening spider. From that pose, a witchspider either begins to writhe its legs to perform spell casting or pounces and delivers a venomous bite.

Witchspiders can also weave strange cocoon-like pods of spider silk that surround their territories. These pods are about the size of a loaf of bread and, to the knowledgeable, appear to writhe with arcane symbols and sigils inlaid in the silk. These are called witch-eggs, and they are usually connected to the greater body of the witchspider's web through tendrils of spider silk. Such cases contain small bundles of material components enwrapped in them or bits of the witchspider's own ichor. These witch-eggs are essentially spell traps, waiting for someone to trip one of the trigger lines, or for the witchspider to vibrate one of the lines that connects to her web. In this way, a witchspider may launch spells from a distance or trap the entrance to her lair.

Witchspiders favor consuming arcane spellcasters in particular, believing that magic is inherent in the blood and that – since they, like most spiders, consume the vital juices of their prey – they will ingest this power with their meal.



Witchspiders are usually found in the Hornsaw Forest or the Swamps of Kan Thet. Some evil sorcerers will strike deals with witchspiders in exchange for tutoring them in new and strange magics. Indeed, rumors tell of the Venom Queen of Kan Thet, an ancient witchspider who maintains a network of sorcerers owing her favors and sometimes even serving as her minions.

Combat

Witchspiders prefer to begin combat with their vertigo attacks, then follow up with spells on those too strong-minded to be affected with that ability. They will only resort to the use of their poisonous bite if they wish to flee the combat or if they begin to run out of spells.

Poison (Ex): Bite — Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution + *frightened*; secondary damage 1d4 temporary Constitution + *unconscious*. Note that the conditions that come with the damage (*frightened* and *unconscious*) occur only if the saving throw against the damage is failed. Victims that fail the first saving throw are frightened for 1 minute.

Skills: Witchspiders gain a +8 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

Vertigo (Sp): A witchspider can use this ability at will and may maintain it for as long as it is conscious. Those within 30 feet of the witchspider who look directly at it must succeed at a Will save (DC 14) at the beginning of their turn or be *nauseated* (see the DMG, Chapter 3, "Condition Summary"). Use the rules under gaze attacks (see the MM, "Introduction") for those who avert their gaze or wear a blindfold or somehow close their eyes.

Webbing (Ex): Witchspiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the witchspider and one creature of the same size.

Witchspiders can cast a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size smaller than the witchspider. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check or burst the web with a Strength check. Both are standard actions whose DCs are listed in the accompanying table.

Witchspiders often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square, depending on their size. They usually position these sheets to snare flying

creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise, they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free.

Each 5-foot section of web has the hit points listed on the table below, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/fire. A witchspider can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

Additionally, witchspider webbing has unusual sound conduction qualities, allowing witchspiders to pluck strands of it like the strings on a harp in order to make varying sounds. Witchspiders use this to do such things as mimic spoken speech by plucking the strands or communicate over long distances with other witchspiders via buried strands of the stuff.

Witchblooded: Though their advancement range above has witchspiders increasing in size and HD, witchspiders can also gain levels in the sorcerer class. As such, they are considered to be multiclassed characters; for the purposes of gaining new feats, the witchspider is considered to be of a character level equal to its witchspider HD plus its sorcerer levels.

Thus, a 3 HD witchspider with 3 levels of sorcerer is considered to be a 6th-level character and is eligible for an additional feat. Note that these levels do not add to the witchspider's effective HD for the purposes of determining such things as poison save DCs and the like.

When casting spells, witchspiders do not need to use verbal components, but they must still adhere to any somatic components. They must use Material and Focus components, but the items need only be attached to their webs somewhere within 20 feet. Additionally, witchspiders may cast True Rituals as wizards and druids. They are limited to casting True Rituals of levels equal to the level of spell they can cast in their sorcerer class.

Witch-eggs: Using the Craft Wondrous Item feat (a feat most witchspiders learn as they advance in sorcerer levels), witchspiders can craft witch-eggs, woven cocoons of spider silk, material components, and the ichor of the witchspider. These items are considered to be single-use, use-activated magic items (see DMG, Chapter 8, "Creating Magic Items"). A witchspider may activate witch-eggs from anywhere in her web, as long as the witch-egg is attached to her web structure.

Witch-eggs may also be constructed as traps, triggered by any disturbance of the tripwire like web strands that activate them.

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Appendix

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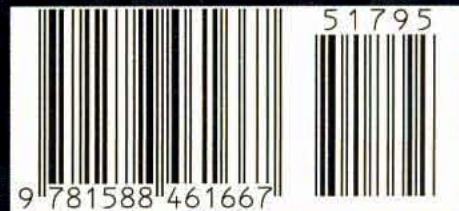
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