

Verdant Bonds

(Interlude for level 1–3 characters)

Goblins (MM pg. 165) x7–13, Giant Rat (MM pg. 327) x1

Synopsis

The party encounters a dryad named Seriana while traveling through the Verdant Woods. A band of goblins kidnapped Seriana's husband, Renauld, a month ago and is holding him ransom. The dryad uses her charm ability on any who pass by to steal their money to meet the goblin demands.

Seriana attempts to charm the PCs when they pass through her woods and tasks them with returning her husband safely.

Introduction

You have traveled along a game trail for most of the day when you chance upon a clearing in the forest. A stream feeds a large verdant pool, and a massive oak tree stands on the far bank of the pond.

Seriana the dryad observes the PCs. She approaches if they seem likely to help her. The dryad first attempts to persuade the party to aid her without her charm ability. Should that fail, she then uses her magic. Seriana flees if the party becomes hostile toward her.

"My husband's been kidnapped and is held hostage by goblins. They have threatened to torture him if I do not pay them weekly. I hate preying on those who travel these woods, but I can't bear the thought of harm coming to my husband. Please, you must help."

Seriana cannot offer a reward other than safety in her forest. She reveals that the goblins possess a great deal of money, and Seriana does not make any claim on it. If asked, she will direct the PCs to the goblins' hold.

Around the Goblin Lair

The following encounters may be added before or after entering the lair at the GM's discretion.

Forest Shrine

You arrive at a small clearing in the forest with a tall stone pillar at the center. Its pockmarked surface tells the tale of centuries. Several flowers of varied hues grow at the pillar base.

This area was once the shrine of a druidic circle. The pillar itself is not dangerous, however, if any PC touches the pillar or the flowers that grow at the base, six twig blights (*MM* pg. 32) rush from the forest to attack the intruders.

If Detect Magic is cast on the pillar, it radiates a light aura of restoration magic. Anyone resting at the pillar for at least a half hour will gain the benefits of a long rest (effective once per week).

Hunter's Trap

A local hunter has dug a well-concealed pit trap here. As the PCs approach allow each a chance to spot it [DC 15]. If no one notices the trap, the first person to step on it falls 10 feet for 1d6 points of damage.

The trap has been constructed in such a way as to make climbing out incredibly difficult. Any character attempting the climb must roll a Strength (Athletics) check [DC 20] or fall back into the pit, suffering 1d3 points of damage.

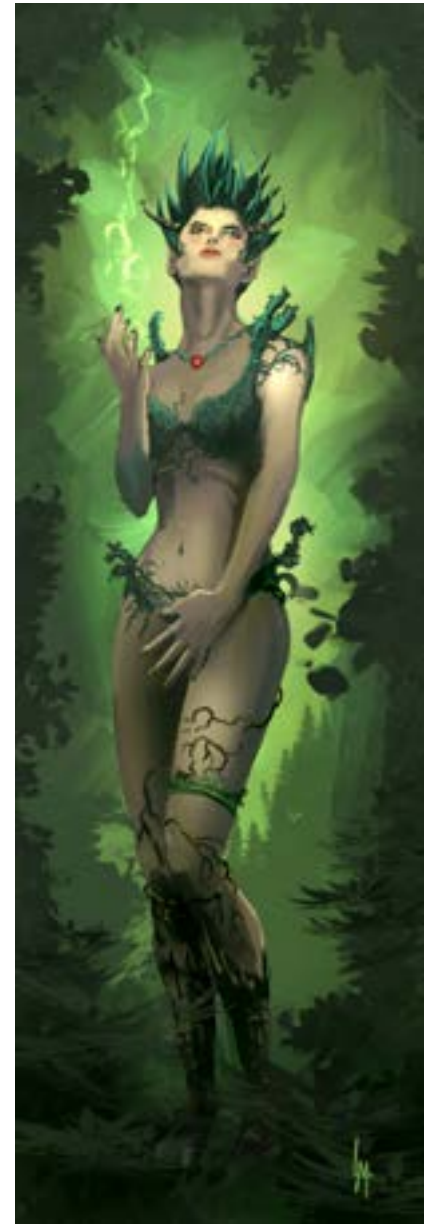
If some item such as a rope is used to aid the climb, the difficulty of the check falls to DC 5.

Goblin Patrol

The goblins often send out a patrol of 4 goblins to look for possible threats. The goblins have become lazy because they seldom find anything. Once the patrol is within 150' of the PCs, roll passive Perception checks vs. the party.

A success indicates the goblins are aware of the party and will attempt to establish an ambush by hiding behind trees. The goblins attack when the party comes within 60' of their ambush.

It should be noted that these goblins do not count for or against the total of goblins found in the lair.



If the battle turns against the goblins, they will attempt to surrender. Goblins that have surrendered will give the party information about the lair if allowed to live. Any information provided should not be overly detailed.

Whether the goblins tell the truth or not is also up to the Game Master. These goblins are not brave and are quite willing to sell out members of their tribe. Patrol goblins fear their leader a great deal and may choose to mislead the party in order to avoid his ire.

Goblin Lair (see map)

It takes half a day to travel to the lair. As the PCs approach the lair, read the following.

“You see a small hill with a steep cliff face. Two goblins sit on either side of a cavern entrance.”

Any character approaching the entrance gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks because of the goblin’s lack of vigilance. If the goblins detect a character, they shout out a warning before engaging in combat.

1) Entrance

This small room is empty except for a small box containing a key hidden among some rubble. The key has no designated lock here; it may be used at GM discretion.

2) Main Den

Furs and blankets lie in haphazard piles against the stone walls of this cavern. The stench of several unwashed bodies is very strong. Stacks of barrels and crates lean precariously against the far wall of this cavern.

This room is the goblins’ communal living quarters. 2d4 goblins are encountered here at any time.

If fighting breaks out, roll Wisdom [Perception] checks [DC 15] for both Panaki (see Room 3) and the jailer (see Room 4). Success indicates that the fight is heard. It takes either goblin 2 rounds to reach this chamber.

3) Leader’s Room

A chest rests at the foot of a grand bed that dominates the chamber. A bright red, ragged banner, decorated with goblin scrawls, hangs haphazardly on the far wall.

Goblin Leader Panaki calls this room home. He stores most of the loot acquired by his small band in the chest at the foot of the bed. His most treasured possession is the dagger he

calls “Fang”. It is a hollow-bladed +1 Dagger that carries 4 doses of paralytic poison. Constitution save [DC 10] on hit or become paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.

The chest contains 79 CP, 52 SP, 60 GP, and a small cask of fine elven wine (50 GP value).

4) Prisoner Cell

The far end of the cavern is barred by a latticework of wood sticks and logs that creates a crude cell. A dirty human male cowers in the cell. A filthy bedroll and an even dirtier pile of furs suggest that whoever calls this room home is living in their own filth.

This cavern is used as a makeshift jail cell for the cleric Renault. One goblin and his giant rat companion guard the room.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have freed Renault and returned him to his dryad wife, the adventure is over. Renault and Seriana are both thankful to the PCs. They will aid them with rest, food, and protection within their forest at any time.

