



# Oakfell Vale

By Michael Moscrip

An adventure for Neoclassical Geek Revival  
and Old School Roleplaying Games

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## OAKFELL VALE

Oakfell Vale is a small idyllic valley along the banks of a stream. The Vale is almost entirely covered in temperate forest, and from all accounts it seems to be sunny and warm there all year, regardless of season. The woods surround a large rolling central area which stretches for about a mile along the stream. Along the left side of the map, a small river descends the valley wall to a point where it and the stream meet, after which it becomes a bit larger. The names of the river and stream, as well as the names and details of nearby villages, are left ambiguous, so as to be fitted into any small forest area of an ongoing campaign. A mountain range is assumed to be some distance far to the northeast of Oakfell Vale, but the direction may be altered with minimal adjustment.

The area is assumed to be at least a few days travel from any towns or civilization, but the nearest towns would at least know that a temple exists somewhere in the area of the vale. There are also effects going on in the nearby region that some will suspect are caused by the temple, but since one of those effects is greatly increased agricultural

production, they will be loathe to interfere with the temple in any way.

Near the middle of the grassy central region lies the The Temple of The Seasons. Emerging from the thick, 20 foot high hedgewalls of the temple, one can see from any vantage point in the vale a massive oak tree, well over 150 feet tall. In travelling around the vale, one notices something strange about the oak. When seen from the West, in any season, it is a tree in Spring blossom. When seen from the South, it is always a tree in the full leaf of Summer. When seen from the East, it is filled with the deep red and amber leaves of Fall. When seen from the North, its branches are bare and sleeping for Winter, no matter whether it is Winter in the surrounding region or not. From any of these views, it is clear that there are no divisions within the tree, but rather the entire tree seems to be in the midst of one of the four seasons.

The Temple of The Seasons is occupied by a large number of white-robed Oak Priests. They worship the Great Oak and Nature, and have the ability to use magic appropriate to that focus. Although the problems in the vale are ultimately due to their

*This adventure is designed to be used with any of the many OSR rules sets with minimal or no adjustment. Specific rules are included for use with Neoclassical Geek Revival. The recommended party is 4 to 7 characters of levels 4 through 6.*

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activities, either now or in the past, none of their actions are due to current malice. Instead, they are motivated by tradition and ritual, and they would be willing to change certain actions if convinced it would be better for Nature and the Great Oak.

### **WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON IN OAKFELL VALE**

Eons ago, during the last Ice Age, expanding glaciers fractured and devoured a titanic primeval temple of the Elder Gods, high in the mountains of the Northeast. Constructed of great blocks and slabs of greenish-black stone, the temple had even then stood long-abandoned by the primordial people or things that had sacrificed and worshipped there. As the hulking plates of ice ground down from the mountains, they carried with them remnants of the temple. One such shard is a massive boulder in Oakfell Vale (location 'a'), now mostly buried in the soil like a stone iceberg.

Several generations ago a young Oak Priest named Caddis Scrim fell victim to the dark influence still abiding in the boulder, newly wakened by a hallowed engraving. Scrim rose to become one of the most distinguished High Priests in centuries as his dark power grew. He ventured far to find more glacier-borne fragments of the primeval

temple, then seating them at The Falls and The Spring in Oakfell Vale, aided only by his closest confederates.

Perhaps at some point Scrim still thought the Elder Gods were remotely benevolent, at least toward Nature. But after the additional greenish-black fragments were placed, and secret rituals acted out, the dark corruption of the Elder Gods began to develop, fostered by Scrim himself, first in life, then later in death.

Now the current Oak Priests are entwined in a losing battle against a creeping foulness, and the possibility of its existence has not even occurred to them yet.

The corruption of the Elder Gods is slowly killing the Great Oak, which has brought unusually fecund abundance to the area for several thousand years. Although unaware of the nature of the corruption due to Scrim's secrecy and deception, the Oak Priests discovered an unrelated means of restoring some vitality to the tree, slowing its demise. This involves magically encouraging the Great Oak to drain the lives of people directly into its roots. Only a few know this is occurring, and they despise doing it, but they have been unable to discover any other means of saving the tree. More and more initiates are gathered to feed the Great Oak as time goes on.

# HOOKS

## A FLYER OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

In one of the nearby settlements, enormous bees have been known to carry off small animals on occasion. Now, however, they have flown away with a baby boy, even though piglets and chickens were in the yard as well. Although the mother is still inconsolable, the father will speak with the players. The villagers are eager for someone to hunt down these huge insects and find the baby, or at least exact revenge. They are willing to pay with whatever savings they have, and point the party toward the vale, saying they always fly away in that direction.

The party might notice that any other babies and toddlers are now being kept indoors all the time. If the party sees a few of these children, or if a member of the party knows some of the local customs, they will likely notice them wearing an armband made of gold, much like a small torc. These heirlooms are worn for their first three or four years, with the children often teething or sucking on them. Unbeknownst to the players, the bees are not attracted to this jewelry, but have recently taken a handful of male babies from the region surrounding the vale for a more bizarre purpose.

## DANCING INN: THE RUINS

A local villager has developed an interest in his great-grandfather's business, a small inn (The Dancing Man) which once stood somewhere in Oakfell Vale, and supposedly once did business with the Oak Priests. He would like the party to take him into

the vale to search for it. Like most locals he has a healthy respect for the priests, and feels they have something to do with the ages-old bounty of this whole region, yet their 'strange reclusive ways' make him anxious. He also worries that the growing supernatural troubles of the region have their source somewhere in the vale.

Secretly, he has been contacted by strange, dark cultists from a city some days away. They claim to have heard rumours of his family name being connected to old tales of enchanted ale and wine. They have offered him the exorbitant sum of 1000 silver for every barrel he can give them. If the players take him along, as he will try to insist they must, and he sees the barrels, he will begin with an offer of 100 silver for each barrel the party can manage to get back to the village unharmed.

## FEAR THE REAPER

The region is rife with tales of hauntings and other supernatural events over the last century, ranging from vegetables that look 'sick and wrong' to children disappearing in fields. One settlement is now abuzz with a tale of a pumpkin-headed scarecrow that came to life, picked up a scythe, and slaughtered an entire family. A group of neighbors hunted it down and destroyed it, but they feel there is some dark influence at the center of the region causing these problems. This center is Oakfell Vale, and they ask the party to try to root out the unwholesomeness they fear is there. However, they caution the party against offending the priests

who live there, as they believe them to be responsible for the plenty and prosperity of the whole region. For this reason, they are fairly certain it could not be the Oak Priests, whom they regard with a mix of fear, awe, respect, and thankfulness.

### **TALKING POINTS FOR NEARBY VILLAGERS**

While discovering hooks in one or more of the villages nearest Oakfell Vale, the party may garner additional information while speaking with the locals, including the details listed below. Details known by various NPCs within the Vale itself are found under their own entry.

- Small groups or pairs of Oak Priests visit the village on rare occasion. Sometimes it is for an item they don't make themselves, like glassware or cheese, but usually it is to recruit new Oak Priest initiates, or choose one or two from a handful of hopefuls.
- It is considered a great honour among the villagers to have one of their young people chosen to become an initiate. Legends abound of good luck conferred upon their families. However, only rarely are they ever seen again. One must be 18 years of age to be eligible, and show an affinity and concern for nature.
- When the oldest villagers (in their 70s) were young, Oak Priests came for initiates only once or perhaps twice a year. The frequency has increased over the years until now 6 times a year is not unexpected.
- The oldest villagers remember their own parents talking about giant bees as something new they had not seen before.
- A local innkeeper, and perhaps others, may remember old tales of an inn out in the forest. It was apparently reached by an old road from somewhere to the South, but no trace of the road has been found for many years.
- The Oak Priests seem to enter and leave the forest at many different points, but the surest way to make one's way into the Vale would be to follow the banks of a stream or river into the forest. Villagers can point the party toward one of the two watercourses that enter the Oakfell Vale map from the northwest or northeast corner, or the river which leaves the map at the southwest corner, depending on which one their village is closest to. If following the river upstream from the southwest, the party will begin to find the river water foul-smelling and musty (despite being rapidly flowing) after travelling along it into the forest for about a day.
- Strange or weird things have been happening more frequently in the last few years, such as: goats with the wrong number of horns; animals that give already-soured milk; shadows that seem to follow and watch; eggs that crack to reveal monstrous eyes. The tales are odd and numerous. Villagers feel it is likely that more Oak Priests have been needed to work against some troubling influence growing in the area.



## OAKFELL VALE AREA MAP

The floor of the vale slopes downward from the highest point in the northeast corner of the map toward the lowest point in the southwest corner. The sides of the valley rise upward toward the northwest on one side, and toward the southeast on the other. The entire area shown is slightly less than 2.5 miles from east to west, and just under 2 miles from north to south.

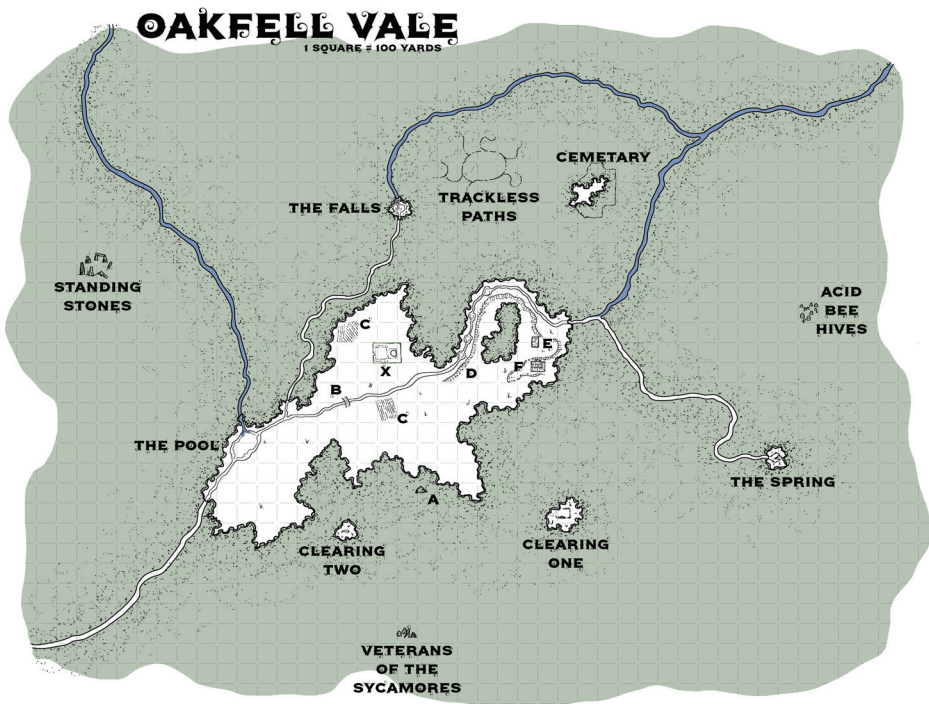
Moving through the heavy forest of the surrounding region is slower than usual, even for forest travel, and it should take at least two days for the party to reach the area shown on the map from one of the nearby villages (a distance of no less than 10, but no more than 20 miles). The stream and river courses themselves are swift, rocky, and relatively shallow in many places, making boat travel to the vale impractical. Any with the ability to take wing and attempt to fly the distance to Oakfell Vale will find it impossible to locate any sign of it, possibly unnervingly so.

Roughly halfway between Oakfell Vale and whichever village they entered from, the party will realise the forest surrounding them has

changed at some point (if it is not currently Summer in the region), and now seems to be a forest at the height of Summer, regardless of what season it was when they entered. The climate feels much like late Spring or early Fall. Even those experienced in woodlands find it impossible to mark when their surroundings began to alter. Those who insist on travelling back and forth to find the point where it began to change will eventually feel mostly satisfied that they can tell when the differences begin to appear, but this may cost considerable time, and will certainly increase the chances of dangerous encounters.

### **MOVEMENT AND VISIBILITY**

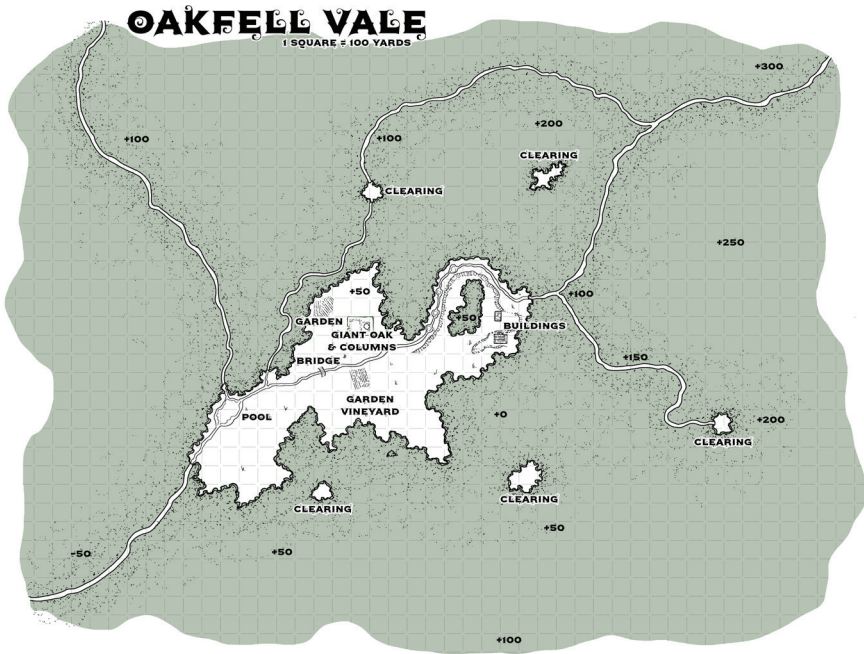
The forest starts to become increasingly more dense a few hundred yards outside the edge of the map. By the time the party has entered the Oakfell Vale area map, the rich profusion of trees and undergrowth, along with the continuing absence of any trail or path, results in them moving slowly, about 30 minutes to move through one square on the map.



Each square is 100 yards (note special movement rates and visibility).

**OSR:** Humanoids move at 1/4 speed in the dense forest. Assuming a typical human movement rate, it will take the party 3 turns to move through one square on the map while within areas of dense forest. These surroundings also make it challenging to see very far, reducing visibility to only 50 feet during daylight. Even at 50 feet, through the dense forest of the vale a creature as large as a person might only be seen as glimpses of movement or small portions of their form. Within clearings, of course, movement and visibility are as usual.

**NGR:** The dense trees and rocky uneven ground make moving at speed difficult and will cause an individual to trip and fall. If they are defending themselves, a character may make an easy (+5) agility check to avoid falling prone when they make a move action. The dense canopy also provides an equivalent darkness of 5 and gives a cover bonus of +5 when used in evasion or defense rolls as a block or equivalent action.



## OAKFELL VALE PLAYER MAP

If the party has some means of viewing the valley, such as flight, or climbing a tall tree near the valley's edge, they can make out most of the information on the player map above. Note that stream and river courses within densely forested areas will be seen only as indented lines in the forest canopy. The players may not realise these

sunken lines reveal the presence of watercourses, but any character versed in the outdoors should recognise this fact easily. The area just south of the cliff near the center of the map will be obscured when viewed from the North, but can be easily seen when viewed from the South.

# GRASSY CENTRAL AREA

## GRASSY CENTRAL AREA RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll a d12 and a d4 as a randomizer. If within 50 feet of the stream, add 3 to the result of the d12.

<i>d12</i>	<i>Encounter</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>d12</i>	<i>Encounter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	Vines of the Earth		9-10	Oak Priest	
2-3	Oakroot		11-12	Acid Bees	
4-6	Spontaneous Flowers		13	Running Water	
7-8	Insect Swarm		14-15	Crayfish	

## GRASSY CENTRAL AREA LETTER KEY

**A** About 200 feet into the edge of the woods, but just visible from the grass, sits an 8 foot high stone monument to one of the Oak Priests of the temple. It is a natural-seeming boulder, greenish-black in colour, left here in ages past by the forces of

geology. It is 12 feet wide, and its 8 foot height is merely the visible portion of its full 40 foot height, although to the casual observer it appears to sit on top of the soil.

A portion of the surface facing the temple is carved into a relief of a man's profile. Text

was carved beneath the profile in an old Oak Priest language. If translated, it gives the man's name as Edric Winterbough, and extolls his many virtues, including the "taming of the pool" and the discovery of "The Acorn". The memorial includes enough details about the "taming" that one experienced with magic could re-create the ritual involved, though the memorial does not mention the Water Spirit itself. The text intimates that Winterbough was dead several years before the memorial was carved, and states the memorial was dedicated 143 years ago.

The boulder itself was, in eons past, before arriving here from the mountains through the forces of erosion and glaciation, part of a cyclopean stone temple dedicated to the Elder Gods. The enormous boulder, only a small shard of a great temple slab, was inadvertently re-awakened to its semi-awareness by the hallowed carvings. The boulder resents the audacity and vanity of the (to it) recent carving, and occasionally spawns slime molds from its rear surface, at the ground, to go around and try to remove bits of the memorial. They accomplish very little, but have managed to dull the carvings over the years almost as much as weathering would have, had it been a normal boulder fully exposed to the sky (it is well-protected under tree cover). There is a 4 in 6 chance at any given time that one of these slime molds, much more dangerous to mortal flesh than to

stone, lurks behind the boulder. If the party digs just below the ground at the source of the slime molds, they can find a small octagonal cavity, 4 inches across, where something was carved out of the stone. This is where Caddis Scrim carved out the medallion (110 years ago) which is still on his body in The Cemetery.

Over time, the constant sublimation of these molds back into the soil has caused a taint in the deeper ground of the area, worsening the health of the Great Oak. If the party lacks the magical means to purify the ground or remove the taint in this area, a priest or priestess of the temple is able to bless and consecrate the ground, effectively removing the corruption. Another more dangerous method involves replacing Scrim's medallion in the cavity from which it came, and acting out a variation of the ritual used in the "taming of the pool". Four individuals must chant the ritual while each uses a small bundle of fallen twigs (one oak, one birch, one rowan, and one yew bundle) to draw a large square near or around the boulder. They then continue to chant while setting four vessels of holy water at the corners of the square. After 10 minutes of chanting, this will result in a massive corrupted Earth Spirit climbing out of the nearby ground and attacking anyone in the area. At least one person must continue chanting uninterrupted for 3 rounds after this, at which point the Earth Spirit will crumble into

harmless soil and dirt clods. Even if victorious, the corrupted spirit will not return to the soil, but will instead wander the Vale, wreaking havoc.

- B** A small wooden bridge over the stream. Although the stream could be forded easily, this makes it trivially convenient.
- C** The crops and vines of the Oak Priests. This is their source of food, as well as the grapes for the wine they make in building 'f'. Virtually every day initiates and brothers and sisters are at work in these fields, both physically and with various banal tending magic. They plant and pick, maintain the vines, repair the arbors, and tend the soil. One experienced with farming or vineyards might be inclined to think there is not enough land under cultivation here to support the population of the temple, even when it becomes clear that the weather is always like late Spring or early Fall, yet their stores will prove to be stocked quite well.
- D** A curving cliff that reaches as high as 50 feet at its center surrounds a small grove of isolated trees. In the center of this grove is an anvil, forge, and other smithing equipment used by Elder Burtch. Along the top of the cliff, the stream descends in four short waterfalls and shallow pools. These pools are each home to 1d6 undead moss-fungus mounds, washed downhill from the area of the cemetery.
- E** A 50 foot by 75 foot storage building is filled with enormous barrels of aging wine. The sizes range from eight huge 10 foot fermenting vats down to 50 gallon barrels. The distinct and heady scent of a winery can be smelled from anywhere nearby.



- F** An old 100 foot by 150 foot mill with a partial second story, its waterwheel long non-functional, has been converted to a wine pressing operation. The brothers and sisters of the temple are at work here year-round turning their grapes into wine and maintaining the simple machinery. One familiar with mills would guess that over 150 years ago (165 years, to be exact) the mill was used for grinding grain.

Backtracking from the old wheel, one can see the long-dry and choked water channel winding uphill. It goes up through the 10 foot high ledge at the back of the building, toward building 'e', then upward along the rising cliff to a point connecting to the current stream. Evidence can be found there that the stream was once diverted down toward the mill.

An old cart road heads downhill from the front of the building, but is clearly disused, and disappears near the edge of the trees. The ruins of a small stone bridge which once spanned the diverted stream lay fallen in the remains of the road. Although the road disappears, if the direction is followed

the party may discover it once led to the old inn in Clearing One.

- G** The stream of clean water entering the vale from the upper right corner of the map meets the musty-smelling stream from The Spring here. After the point where they join, the stream smells of rot and decay. If the corruption has been removed from The Spring, the stream below this point will soon become fresh and sweet-smelling.
- H** The dank stream coming down from The Falls joins the main

stream here. If either The Falls or The Spring remain corrupted, the water after this point, pouring into The Pond, smells rotten and foul. If the Marsh Tulpa at The Falls has been dealt with, the stream coming from north of this point is fresh and clean. If The Spring has had the stone and skeleton removed, the stream coming from east of this point is fresh and clean.

- X** The Temple of The Seasons - covered in its own section.

# GREATER FOREST AREA

## GREATER FOREST AREA RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll a d20 with a d4 for an additional randomizer. D20 result indicates encounter.

<i>d20 Encounter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1 Acid Bees	xx
2-3 Vines of The Earth	xx
4 Oak Priest	xx
5 Oakroot	xx
Undead Moss-	
6 Fungus Mound	xx
7-8 Spore Zombie	xx
9 Wanderer	xx
10 Holy Oak Sucker	xx
11 Holly Climber	xx
12 Mistletoe	xx
13-14 Fairy Circle	xx
Rushing noise under	
15-16 the ground	xx
17 Veteran	xx
18 Blue Lights	xx
19 Body	xx
Cracking wood noise	
20 under the ground	xx

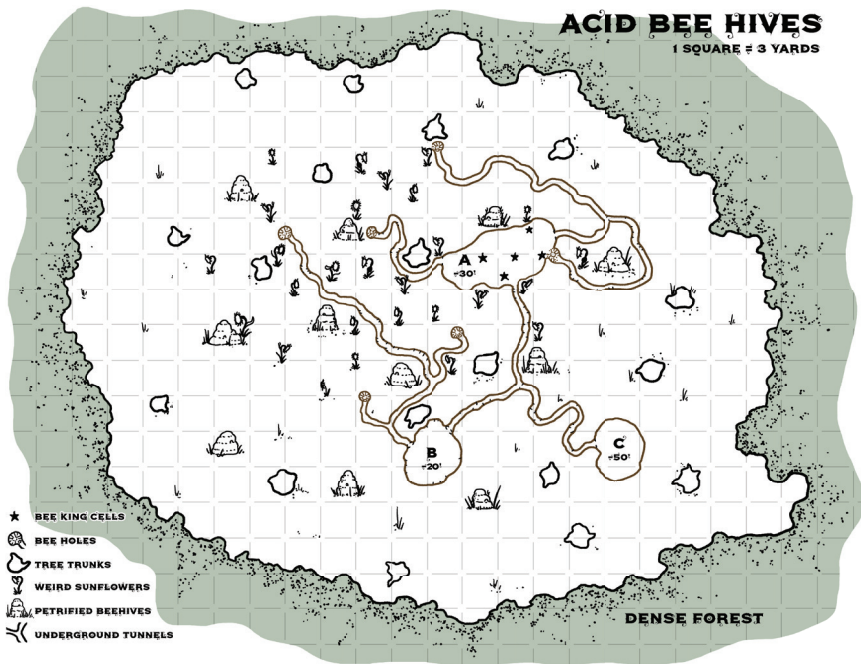
## GREATER FOREST AREA LOCATIONS

### ACID BEE HIVES

A dozen old stone beehives dot this area of the woods, but they have long ago fallen into disrepair and been abandoned, their wooden parts having mouldered away. The bees currently in residence in the area don't mind, as they wouldn't fit inside the old hives anyway. After generations of living off the pollen in the area as the vale became more corrupt, the bees are now

an average of a foot long, and their venom has become a powerful acid.

In spite of the entire area being under the canopy of the forest, a group of plants that appear to be similar to sunflowers grows throughout the area. If observed carefully for long enough, one might notice 'bumps' in the thick stems, slowly travelling up toward the flowers. The large flowers are closed, even during daylight, but there is a 1 in



6 chance that 1d6 flowers are open when the party walks into the area, releasing small Young Acid Bees into the air. Any closed flower has a 1 in 3 chance of expelling these young bees if tampered with (including, importantly, being hit by stray arrows), angering any mature bees already in the area. In either case, each flower that opens may expel 1d4+2 young bees. Anyone standing next to the flowers when they pop open should make a saving throw to avoid being sprayed by droplets of acid.

Their enormous hives are now underground, with the entrances scattered around this area, as shown in the small location map below. The holes give off a faint odor, sour and sickly-sweet. At any time during daylight 2d6 acid bees will be active in the area. Disturbing a hive hole in the ground will anger 3d6 acid bees.

If the bees have been somehow incapacitated or otherwise occupied (with smoke, for example), the party will not be attacked if they attempt to enter one of the hive holes. The holes are only 18 inches wide, however it is a relatively easy task to widen the holes with digging tools. The underground bee tunnels can be widened at a rate of 10 feet per turn to allow an unarmoured human enough room to crawl through.

### HIVE LOCATION MAP

- A Main Hive Chamber - This cavity, dug out by the bees many years ago, is just over 5 feet tall at its highest point. The chamber is heavy with a hot, cloying odor: tangy-sour, sickly-sweet, and tinged with rotting meat. The



entire floor, as well as most of the northern and southern walls, are filled with giant honeycomb cells. Most of the waxy hexagons are the same size, but a handful are more than double the size of the others.

#### **LARGE CELLS**

There are seven of the larger cells, about 2.5 feet across and going down about 5 feet into the floor. Five of these (shown on the hive area map) are covered and sealed, but some sort of movement larger than the larvae of other nearby cells can be dimly detected through the wax. If the covering seal is broken or removed, it exposes a Bee King. This abomination is a mutational result of the bees filling these large cells nearly full with their corrupted royal jelly, then submerging into them the male babies abducted from nearby villages. The sole purpose of these horrors is to mate with the queen.

Just visible in the detritus at the bottom of each cell are several (1d4+1) small gold armbands,

like those worn by small children in the nearby villages. Each is worth about 200 silver if sold.

If a Bee King is disturbed or the party tries to communicate with it, roll 1d6 for its reaction. Add +2 to the roll if they think to call it by the name of the missing baby from the village. Horribly, its vocal cords have not changed, so if it speaks, it does so with a human baby's voice.

#### **1d6 Reaction**

- 1** The Bee King attacks
- 2-3** It calls for help, drawing any nearby Acid Bees
- 4-5** It quietly mumbles and coos
- 6** It asks "mama?" or "papa?"

#### **SMALL CELLS**

Each of the smaller cells is about 1 foot across, and goes straight into the wall or down into the floor for roughly 3 feet. They are covered and sealed with thick, sturdy wax, allowing one to securely walk across the cells on the floor.

Some of the smaller cells are filled

with stored honey, which is found to be somewhat slimy, and tinged with green and black. This is the long-term result of collecting pollen from flowers tainted by the corruption of the Elder Gods. If tested, it proves to be a strong acid. Other cells are filled with tightly packed balls of dry pollen, as large as an adult fist. Unlike normal bees, they have also mixed rancid meat into the pollen.

The majority of the smaller cells contain either eggs or larvae. Unlike normal bees, they have put 2d4 bean-sized eggs in each cell, spewed several pints of a thick, viscous fluid incorporating their foul corrupted honey and pollen over the eggs, and immediately sealed it. Some of these brood cells contain grub-like larvae which have hatched from the eggs and begun eating the fluid. If the party breaks or drills into the wax seal covering one of these brood cells, they may see 1d4+2 larvae, now about 4 inches long, crawling into a hole in the back of the cell. These holes are actually the beginning of the stems of the weird sunflowers above. The larvae crawl up the long, circuitous path of these root-stems, converging with root-stems from several other cells along the way, and weirdly pupating as they undulate upward. Eventually, they arrive inside a closed flower, fully developed as a Young Acid Bee.


**B** Rendering Chamber - This cavity reeks with death, and contains piles of stripped animal carcasses. Many are from smaller forest animals, such as rabbits, squirrels, and a few birds. There are also a few remains of fawns, young giant crayfish, and smaller farm animals.

**C** The Queen's Chamber - This cavity is home to the Acid Queen. At any given time there will be 1d6 other Acid Bees here, tending and feeding her. She is 8 feet long, and as large as a full-grown farm cow. Her wings are twisted and bubbled with corruption, and her vestigial legs allow her only slow humping movement.

If sufficiently disturbed, she will begin making husky chattering moans and rasping noises. The party may realise the complex patterns are language, but without magical means they have no way of understanding it. The queen herself has no means of attack, but if the Acid Bees already in the chamber have been nearly decimated, she will begin releasing waves of odious, musty pheromones, summoning more groups of Acid Bees to her aid.

If the queen is somehow killed while other Acid Bees remain alive, they will begin preparing several more prospective queens within a few turns. This involves building large pods out of a strong papery substance. The pods will be about 2 feet wide and 4 to 5 feet long, with one pod for each Bee King cell in the Main Hive Chamber. They are each built already attached by a short, thick papery cord to the floor of the Main Hive Chamber next to one of the Bee King cells.

Note that if Oak Priests are assisting the party, or come upon the party in the area of the hives, they are not immediately certain that such bees might not develop somehow through



the processes of Nature, and will not harm them outright. If the Oak Priests see evidence of the unnatural, such as a Bee King, or the bees' weird, foul honey, they will then maintain that the Acid Bees must be destroyed.


## **CEMETERY**

An irregular area roughly 400 feet by 550 feet is bounded by a living fence of local trees. The trees and their abundant lower branches have grown into the form of many rough, twisting humanoid figures that twine together to form a fence, with sharp barbs and thorns at the top. These barbs and thorns attack anyone attempting to go over the top of the fence, stabbing with a sharp wooden shaft, possibly knocking the target back onto the ground (**OSR:** Attack as a spear, if hit the target is knocked back to the ground unless a saving throw is made. **NGR:** Attack with a medium, piercing, pole weapon. Additional successes will be used for Knockdown). If the strength of the fence is tested, the wood proves to be as tough as iron.

The opening in the fence (on the side of the cemetery facing 'The Falls') has no gate within it, and may be freely entered. Humanoid tracks show recent passage in and out. If any of the undead within are active, the opening grows sealed shut until there are no longer any currently active undead. Anyone attempting to climb out may be held fast by branching figures (**OSR:** Saving throw to avoid being grasped **NGR:** Suffer a grapple attack from an entangling weapon), or attacked by the barbs and thorns if they reach the top of the wall.

A careful observer of the dates on the monuments may notice there have been more buried here in the last ten years than one might expect, and more than in any other ten year period.

A small portion of the cemetery is open to the sky, but the remainder is wooded and under the canopy of the forest. Once the party steps out of the open area 2d4 Lichen Liches and 1d4 Spore Zombies, covered with lichen, fungus and moss, rise from concealment on the overgrown ground and around the trees, and move to



attack. Though they lie in the shadows, they will pursue into the open area. There are a total of 30 Lichen Liches and 15 Spore Zombies in the area, though only 24 are already above ground (16 Lichen Liches and 8 Spore Zombies).

Most of the graves in the wooded part of the cemetery look somehow disturbed, but not dug-up. Close investigation of a disturbed grave has a 4 in 6 chance of resulting in a strong undead hand suddenly reaching up and attempting to pull the investigator below the ground as though the ground they were standing on just swallowed them up. If they are pulled underground they must fight a Spore Zombie or Lichen Lich (equal chance of either). Once the fight is over the burying soil becomes loose and the victor may burst above ground and crawl out. (**OSR:** Make a saving throw to avoid being pulled down, on a failure they must fight in complete darkness while lying down in close quarters by using small weapons or unarmed combat only. **NGR:** They suffer a grapple ambush, if grappled they are pulled

underground to fight in a cramped environment with darkness 10).

If a character is dragged into the earth it will also anger 1-2 more Spore Zombies and 1d4 Lichen Liches still concealed nearby, who move to attack those remaining above ground.

Near the back of the cemetery, hidden from clear view by the many trees, is a monument larger than the rest. This is the grave of High Priest Caddis Scrim, a secret worshipper of dark elder gods, dead now for 87 years. Caddis is now a powerful undead corpse, patiently praying to his antediluvian deities from within his oaken coffin. If his monument, or the ground around it, is disturbed by the party, or if at least 15 undead have been defeated within the cemetery, he claws forth from the ground with startling alacrity. While attacking, he booms forth dire pronouncements such as “the Oak and the Vale are mine!” and “the Old Gods return!” He conspicuously wears a faintly glowing medallion, which examination reveals to be made from the same stone as the boulder at location

'a. If the medallion is taken to the boulder, it will fit into the cavity at the back, just below the ground.

## **CLEARING ONE - THE RUINS**

The stone foundations of an old building rest in the center of this grassy meadow, and a few deeply overgrown cart ruts can be found nearby if an examination is made of the area. The cart ruts are the last remnants of a road which once led to the mill at location 'f', and the foundation marks the site of a forgotten roadside inn.

If a rectangular depression in the ground next to the foundation is dug out, the party will almost immediately begin discovering a set of stone stairs leading downward toward the foundation. An hour of concerted effort reveals a stout wooden door about 12 feet down at the foundation's edge, requiring great effort to open (**OSR**: Open doors check **NGR**: A hard strength check, -5)

The cellar beyond the door is roughly 50 feet by 60 feet, and is walled in stone blocks. It contains various old tools and equipment common to an inn, its maintenance, and gardening. A small side dirt-room with a simple board door has shelves full of potted fruit and vegetables. A small amount is still good enough to provide food for 20 person-days. Against one wall of the main cellar room are a dozen stacked barrels of ale, wine and liquor. Several of the ale and wine barrels bear the mark of a large oak tree. All those so marked are still good to drink, as are 3 barrels of the hard liquor. A careful observer may note that all the

oak-tree ale barrels are dated older than 165 years, and all the oak-tree wine barrels are dated younger than 165 years. All the oak-tree barrels would register as enchanted if the party has the means to check.

The frame of the stout wooden door at the cellar entrance is carved with a selection of protective runes. The runes remain potent, and will prevent the entrance of any undead, vines of the earth, or oakroots.

Amongst the piles of equipment and tools is a large old weathered sign showing a man being hung by the neck, his legs kicking about in the air beneath him (The Dancing Man). Behind and under the sign there is also a locked wooden chest containing the wealth of the erstwhile innkeeper. Although the key is long gone, if opened the chest holds roughly 200 silver pieces worth of various coins and valuables. Also in the chest is the old ledger of the innkeeper.

**Innkeeper's Ledger** - This sturdy old book contains details of the day-to-day finances of the inn. The final entries were made 102 years ago. Careful study will reveal several facts:

- A** 110 years ago the innkeeper begins a monthly purchase of powerful sleeping herbs.
- B** Around the same time, an account labeled 'Scrim' begins paying for something variously labeled 'converts' or 'guests'. The purchase dates can be found to line up with Oak Priest holidays.
- C** Starting 107 years ago, the number of people staying at the inn begins to decline.
- D** Starting 105 years ago, the amount of wine and food bought from the nearby temple

begins to decline drastically.

- E 104 years ago the inn is running almost entirely on the more expensive supplies bought from the nearest town.
- F 102 years ago an angry note is added to a 'Scrim' receipt: "Rumors! Need more converts soon!"

## **CLEARING TWO - THE PRESS**


On the nights of the major Oak Priest holidays the water spirit from The Pond quietly makes its way here. It slowly smashes whatever lies upon the large, black-green stone in the middle of the clearing, then returning whence it came. The stone rises only 2 feet up from the ground, and is roughly 10 feet by 20 feet in size. It is polished to a smooth dark sheen. Surrounding this apparent slab at the level of the ground is a shallow grey stone channel, which descends gradually toward one end. At this end is a small 2 foot deep stone pool set into the ground, roughly 3 feet across. Unless found soon after a holiday, the small pool is dry and choked with grass and dead leaves. Amongst this detritus can be found a few small bones and bone fragments which careful examination would reveal are human. A worn and dim grape leaf and mistletoe motif can be detected on the rim of the pool, and the channel is stained a faint reddish-brown. If found soon after an Oak Priest holiday, traces of blood are easily spotted.

At one time the objects placed upon the slab for smashing were grapes and sometimes mistletoe. For the last 110 years, however, it has

included a human sacrifice taken from unfortunate passers-by. On the night of a holiday there will be 12 higher ranking Oak Priests in attendance, as well as 1 or 2 gagged and bound sacrifices. The initiates and brother and sister Oak Priests of the temple have no knowledge of what takes place during these rituals. It is during these rituals that the oral history known only to the High Priest and the upper echelon of the temple is chanted and reinforced.

## **THE FALLS**

In the woods and uphill from The Temple, an offshoot of the stream comes down a 20 foot waterfall. In front of the bottom of the waterfall is a small rectangular pool open to the sky, and standing in the pool roughly 5 feet in front of the waterfall is a 7 foot tall stone statue of a robed woman on a large rectangular plinth. The plinth is 8 feet from front to back and 16 feet wide, rising only a few inches above the water level of the flooded pool. It is surrounded by an overgrowth of tall grass and cattails, coming up out of the water. The ground around the pool is marshy and wet for at least 20 feet in every direction from the pool, and the stream which flows downhill from it. A few strange flowers, similar to pitcher plants, grow in the marshy areas, and if the party observes long enough they will see Acid Bees visiting them and then flying in the direction of the Acid Bee Hives. The pool itself is about 4 feet deep, though this fact is concealed by tall brown grass, bent over and slowly undulating in the current below the surface. It smells strongly of rot and decay, even though



the waterfall itself is fresh and clean.

On the second round wading through the 4 foot deep tangled mess of long grass and water the vegetation will spring to life and seek to entangle everyone in the pool (OSR: They must make a saving throw or be held fast barring outside help or an open doors check with a -1 penalty NGR: As per the priest miracle “Entanglement”).

One who has gotten close to the plinth, and is approaching from side or rear, can see that the back of the statue has been re-carved. Instead of the back of the robed woman, it now depicts the frightful countenance of one of the Elder Gods, undiminished by the primitiveness of the carving. A single massive eye glares forth from the head above a mouth ringed with rows of hooks and fangs, and the torso is carved in an explosion of corruption and rot. Even the rear surface of the upper arms have been re-carved, giving the impression that the arms bend backward. The re-carving below the waist of the statue is an aggressive horror that will test the

viewer’s sanity if such rules are used. Anyone seeing the face will notice that the single grapefruit-sized eye is made of a dark green-black stone, different than the dark grey of the rest of the statue. (NGR: This shrine has been defiled and reconsecrated as holy ground to the Elder Gods)

One round after anyone has become enmired in the grasses around the plinth, an 8 foot tall Marsh Tulpa rises from the grasses and water directly behind the statue to attack those who are held, its great eye beam quickly focusing on the nearest captive of the grasses. If defeated, the carved eye cracks and falls from the statue’s head. If, alternatively, the carved stone eye is removed from the statue, the tulpa will dissipate into mist in one round. (NGR: The tulpa is a golem and the stone eye set into the altar is its control item)

## THE POND

This 60 foot deep pond forms the confluence of the stream and the river as they both head downstream and out of the Vale. It is the ancient home of a Water Spirit, which was bound 160 years ago to various duties of the Oak Priests. The spirit spends most of its time at the very bottom of the pond, rising now only to perform its holy day duties in Clearing Two.

With the growing corruption of the vale gradually washing down the stream into the pond, the spirit has become clogged, mired and dark with physical and spiritual debris. If the water of the pond is touched, the spirit will quickly rise in anger to attack the disturbance. If the spirit is somehow cleansed or destroyed, an impossibly large pile of bones, roots, branches and other debris will fall out of it, including 1d4 Running Water and 1d3 Undead Moss-Fungus Mounds. If cleansed, the spirit itself will then retire calmly to the bottom of the pond.

If the party lacks some spell or magic to purify water, the Water Spirit may still be cleansed through other

means. Any spell caster with access to both pieces of information will realize that if the original taming ritual used by High Priest Edric Winterbough (from the memorial at location 'a') is altered slightly by using Caddis Scrim's medallion (from The Cemetery) to re-absorb the corruption of the Elder Gods, it would likely remove the corruption from the Water Spirit. Until the ritual has been completed at the water's edge, the angered spirit will try to interrupt it. Four individuals must chant the ritual while each uses a small bundle of fallen twigs (one oak, one birch, one rowan, and one yew bundle) to draw a circular border around the pond. They then continue to chant while lighting four bowls of incense on the circle around the pond. After 10 minutes of chanting, this will result in the Water Spirit rising out of the pool and attacking anyone in the area. To successfully cleanse the spirit, at least one person must continue chanting uninterrupted for 3 rounds after this, while holding Scrim's medallion under the surface of the pond (or at least dangling it in by the chain).

## THE SPRING

A natural spring spouts forth here to eventually help feed the stream downhill. The water has a distinct musty odor of decay. The spring comes from a large, rocky outcropping on a grassy hillside at the back of a very small clearing. Much of the clearing is in shadow most of the day due to the height of the surrounding trees. A shallow horizontal slab of smooth black-green stone has long-ago been laid over the source of the spring, with a carved hole for the water to bubble forth, and a shallow channel to lead the water over the edge of the stone. The hole is ringed with a carved vine motif which includes a variety of Oak Priest runes. The entire slab is about 6 feet from front to back, 12 feet across, and less than a foot thick, with the front edge hanging roughly a foot above the ground as the rest of the slab lies on the rocks of the natural spring. It seems the rocky outcropping was carved slightly in an area shaped just large enough for the slab to fit tight upon it.

If the debris of soil, twigs and dead leaves is cleared at the back of the slab, a narrow gap is revealed between the slab and the natural rocks. On this back edge of the slab are carved much different runes. These will make anyone viewing them feel uneasy and sick. They are runes in the magical language of the Elder Gods. If they are translated, they speak of 'blessing' the water coming through the slab to 'change' all it touches and feeds. However, the blasphemous and unearthly nature of the language is repulsive to the

human psyche (**OSR**: forces a saving throw to avoid a one day loss of consciousness. **NGR**: Deals !d6 stress)

Weighing nearly 14 thousand pounds, the slab will prove difficult to move, and virtually impossible to penetrate with a pick. If the narrow gap at the back edge of the slab is discovered, it might be possible to wedge the slab far enough forward (at least 3 feet) that it would tip off the front of the outcropping. A miner will realise that the rock of the natural spring could be slowly chipped away with the proper equipment. Digging down into the earth in front of the spring, where the stream begins, will reveal that the natural outcropping of rock angles back toward the hillside for at least a few feet beneath. This could offer the option of chipping away at the underside of this 'lip' of rock until the weight of the slab broke it off and tipped over.

If the party manages to move the slab, they will find a small chamber has been hollowed out underneath, next to the now-exposed natural source of the spring. The chamber takes the form of a tomb big enough for a single body, and a heavily calcified skeleton lies within it, with the water of the spring flowing over the old sacrifice. Examination will reveal a protuberance on the sternum which, with careful cleaning, proves to be a gold amulet of the Elder Gods worth 500 silver. Once the stone and skeleton are removed from the spring, the water once again has a noticeable fresh, clean smell.

## STANDING STONES


Massive overgrown standing stones 15 to 20 feet high form the remains of a stone circle in this area. Constructed long before the time of the Oak Priests, they have nonetheless used it for various rituals since soon after the founding of the temple. The area is now entirely under the canopy of the forest, and many of the stones have become entwined with the surrounding trees. Several of the stones are no longer standing, and one such stone, a shorter one just off from the center, has been used for generations as an altar by the Oak Priests. If examined, it can be seen that this henge was made from a dark grey stone common to the surrounding area, but the menhirs and lintels, as well as the altar, are inscribed with Oak Priest symbols not nearly as old as the stones themselves.

On the night of the full moon, and on Midsummer's Eve, a long candle and torchlit procession of Oak Priests makes its way from the Temple, into the woods, across the small stream coming down from The Falls, and down to the river. The Oak Priests cross the river at an area of stepping stones, and then head uphill again toward the Standing Stones. Nearly the entire Temple is emptied at such times, as the rituals include activities such as the initiation and promotion of brothers and sisters, and the cutting and blessing of mistletoe, which grows on the trees in this area. It is also during these rituals when the oral history of the temple is chanted and reinforced, except for the information known only to the High Priest and upper echelon.

## THE TRACKLESS PATHS

This dim area of the woods is heavily covered by the canopy of the forest. A roughly circular path clearly exists here, with other clear paths leading off from it. Within the circle the underbrush of the woods is considerably lower than in all the surrounding area, but is still substantial enough to be a wild forest.

After entering the area, the party will soon see a dim figure walking away from the circular trail on one of the pathways. If no action is taken, another dim figure will be seen walking away on a random pathway after several minutes, or if a path is walked down before then. If any of these seemingly humanoid figures are followed, they will remain dim and fade in and out of obscurity at the edge of line-of-sight as they continue along the path. A careful observer will notice that there are no tracks on any of the paths, and indeed the party itself is leaving no tracks whatsoever. If the party attempts to cut trail markers, as soon as the marked area is out of sight the marks disappear, and indeed the vegetation itself will no longer be the same. For every round spent walking along one of the trails which leads away from the central circle, there is a cumulative 10% chance that the path the party is on can no longer be followed back to the center. As soon as this happens, the dim figure will begin to glow with a faint blue-green light and disappear. The trail, still very clear, now leads only into random woods in either direction, regardless of the distance travelled. Climbing up into the canopy will reveal a



view of the vale and the Great Oak, but leaving the path in the general direction of the Temple will only lead the party into more random woods. Those experienced with tracking or wilderness travel will find it obvious that something unnatural is occurring.

1d10 rounds after the dim figure disappears, the party will be set upon by 2d4 Vines of the Earth. Defeating these vines will reveal that the only path now existing is the rough trail made by the party in their attempt to follow the humanoid figure. This trail can be followed back to the central circular path. Attempting to leave the area by any of the surrounding paths (including the one they went down before, which has now returned) results in a repeat of the experience, but setting off into the pathless woods will successfully allow the party to progress in their chosen direction.

Although defeating the Vines of the Earth has no direct effect on the health of the Great Oak, if the corruption of the vale is cleansed, the dim figures will stop appearing here to lure travelers into the vines.

Additionally, the paths themselves will become simple mundane trails.

## **VETERANS OF THE SYCAMORES**

A small band of 17 retired mercenaries lives in this area, trading some of the game they hunt in exchange for the Oak Priests' leave to set up camp here. Most of these men are middle-aged or older, but there are a handful of younger men among them as well. With fallen logs and branches, they have built two simple huts and three lean-tos underneath a group of sycamore trees (actually a type of maple). These veterans have tapped several of the sycamores, as well as some nearby birches, for sap that they brew into beer and spirits. Several barrels of this are kept around the camp.

Although they are wary of strangers, these men are not interested in banditry. Having returned to their homes from their time in battle, they found themselves feeling helpless and bereaved as they were forced to the edges of the society they once lived

in. After living on the edge too long, they decided to strike out into the forest to live on their own. If the party is friendly when approaching them, they will remain very untalkative, but will cautiously welcome them into their camp for some of their food and drink. They have only lived here for a few years, but if the party spends an evening drinking with them, they will briefly relate a few details about some of the Greater Forest Area Random Encounters.

Other details about Oakfell Vale known by the veterans include:

- The basics of how the Unique Mushrooms sometimes found inside Fairy Circles work, including knowledge of what one randomly determined mushroom type does when eaten.
- The basics of how the Holy Oak Sucker acorns work. Additionally, they have witnessed two different randomly determined effects from thrown acorns.
- They get part of their water from streams in the vale, and therefore know which sections of the stream are clean and which are corrupted.
- They mostly stick to the south side of the valley while hunting, and often go south of the area map to try to avoid monsters.
- The general location of the Acid Bee Hives, in the forest toward the east, and north of The Spring.

They often see bees flying between there and some location north of The Temple of The Seasons.

- Within the 7 years they have lived here, the frequency and activity of such things as the Moss-Fungus Mounds, Vines of The Earth, and Spore Zombies have increased greatly. They have no desire to fight such weird supernatural things, but rather avoid them.
- The supernatural terrors of the vale refuse to go into the main grassy clearing in the middle of the valley. Only within the last few months have even the Vines of The Earth been occasionally seen there. They assume it is due to some blessing of the Temple or the Great Oak.
- They have learned to accept that the Oak Priests seem to have no desire to drive out the undead, perhaps because the undead will not approach the Temple. When they ask older Oak Priests about the undead, they often become sad and thoughtful, as though pitying them.

Their leader is a middle-aged man named Darmid Robuck. He has pledged the band's support to the Oak Priests in cases of emergency, and they will arm themselves and leave for the Temple of The Seasons immediately if they are called for.



## THE TEMPLE OF THE SEASONS

This temple of Oak Priests has been in the vale for more than 800 years, and the great oak at its center was there long before that. The temple is built on a foundation of ancient cut stones. Thick hedges are grown and tended with the aid of Oak Priest magic to form the 20 foot high walls. Although tiny glimpses may be found in places to the opposite sides of these thick walls (5% chance at a given location if the wall is 10 feet thick or less), they are sturdy and functionally impassable. The walls are in leaf year-round. (NGR: While the Great Oak lives the temple, and a thousand feet around it, are considered holy ground as if it were a consecrated cathedral of the oak priests)

### NAVE

One enters the temple by walking down 20 feet into the nave. The walls of the sunken nave are 10 foot high cut stone retaining walls, with the surrounding hedgewalls growing

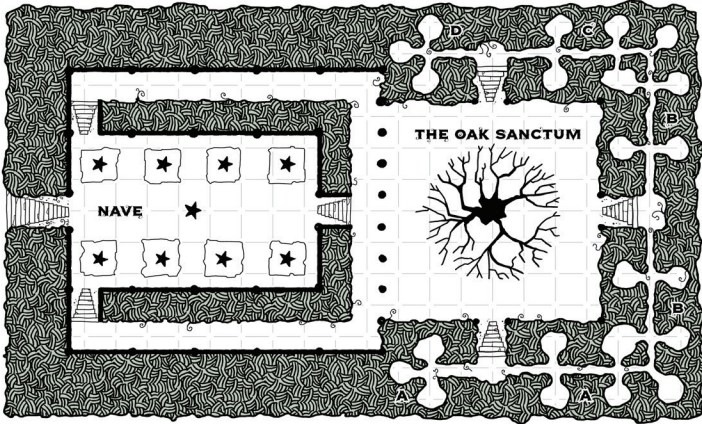
above this level. This area features 9 large Wicker-Frame Topiaries. The topiary in the center is an 8 foot tall depiction of a beneficent and well-endowed mother figure, facing the entrance. She is the embodiment of the Nature Mother who figures prominently in most Oak Priest rituals. The other 8 topiaries stand on 2 foot high stone plinths in the midst of cultivated wildflowers and other herbs and plants. They are life-size depictions of satyrs, dryads, and other sylvan figures.

At the far end of the nave, on either side of the stairs up into the sanctum, are two low gates. These bronze gates, covered with dark green verdigris, both take the form of a 4 foot tall half-circle, with the flat edge on the bottom. They are cast in the form of a large Half-Sun, with open gaps between the rays so that they serve as a radial pattern of bars.

The gate on the right bears a

# TEMPLE OF THE SEASONS

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



Sun with a tired-seeming face and downcast eyes, indicating sunset. The stairwell beyond leads ten feet down into a 20 foot wide, 30 foot long storage room. Stored here are all the usual accoutrements of a temple, including candles, torches, white robes, and more. Most of the eating utensils, plates, cups, and other dishes stored here are of wood, but there are also a few (800 silver pieces worth) crafted of gold or silver. Also here is a large disassembled scaffold and a 20 foot ladder.

The gate on the left bears a Sun with a lively-seeming face and upturned eyes, indicating sunrise. The steps beyond also lead ten feet down into another 20 foot wide, 30 foot long area, but this room holds the temple's stores of food and drink, enough to

last two seasons ahead at least. Sitting on a small altar at the back are several acorn shaped pottery bottles of 'The Acorn' (these would be highly valuable to the cultists mentioned in the hook 'Dancing Inn: The Ruins'). If a more extensive underground dungeon complex is desired, the back wall of either or both of these rooms are the location of the hidden entrance.

## SANCTUM

Above the nave, and beyond a row of columns lies the Oak Sanctum. This is the center of most activity in the temple, from daily prayers to communal meals. The Great Oak towers over 150 feet tall in the center of the area. When approaching from the nave, or standing on the West side, the massive tree appears to be in the

full bloom of Spring. As one walks around the tree, its season suddenly changes to a tree in high Summer when seen from the South, the full colors of Autumn when seen from the East, and the bare branches of Winter when seen from the North. Regardless of the view, a careful observer can see there are a few small branches up in the tree which are obviously dead.

Three 10 foot stone stairways lead upward between the hedgewalls of the Sanctum at the East, North, and West. In each case, the stairs lead to passages grown into the hedgewalls themselves. Following these passages will lead one to a number of rooms grown into the hedgewalls. These rooms and passages are the only areas of the temple not open to the sky, other than the two storage rooms in the nave. Even the floors of these areas are thick with vines and roots, and outsiders will need to be careful not to trip. The rooms do not have typical doors, but are instead obscured for the sake of privacy by encroaching growth in the side passages which lead to them. Much of the spartan furnishings of the rooms, such as the beds, are living outgrowths of the hedgewall and the roots on the floor. Each room can accommodate up to 5 people, but many are not this full.

### **THE OAK PRIESTS**

The inhabitants of the temple keep no written history, so as to prevent the uninitiated from learning their secrets, but they have a strong oral history reinforced by chants intoned during many of their rituals. Knowledge of past events is tightly held, however a combination of

investigating the surrounding area and speaking with friendlier Oak Priests can turn up several facts:

- A** Until 165 years ago the temple grounds grew a great deal of grain, part of which was used to make ale. At that point they began switching to wine production instead.
- B** About five years after switching to viticulture, High Priest Edric Winterbough bound the water spirit which had always lived in The Pond to the service of the Oak Priests. One of its tasks was to press the special holiday grapes on the stone in Clearing Two, resulting in an enchanted juice called 'The Acorn' that is then added in small amounts to all the wine vats as a first preparatory ingredient before fermenting. Unbeknownst to all but the highest ranking Oak Priests, human sacrifices joined the holiday grapes about 110 years ago (under High Priest Caddis Scrim) and blood now makes up more than half of 'The Acorn'.
- C** Because of the blessing of the Great Oak, it has always taken less land to produce great quantities of fruit, vegetables and grain. About 110 years ago, this effect began to increase for some reason, but this increase only lasted 10-15 years, after which production started waning to less than it had ever been. Then about 80 years ago, the priests realized the Great Oak had begun to die. However, within 10 years production started to rise again, in spite of the damage to the tree, and in the last 50 years even less land has

been needed than before. The area under cultivation at the temple has decreased by more than half. This effect extends for roughly 24 miles in every direction, lessening somewhat in efficacy with distance from the oak.

- D** Before becoming High Priest, young Caddis Scrim spent a great deal of time at the memorial in location ‘a’.
- E** At the end of a High Priest’s tenure, there is a long ceremony during which the office of High Priest is passed on to the next leader of the Oak Priests. The old High Priest then climbs up into the Great Oak, disappearing in the branches “to walk the World Leaves”, never to be seen again. Of all the High Priests in the history of the Temple of The Seasons, only Caddis Scrim did not climb the Great Oak. Scrim said that he loved Oakfell Vale so deeply that he would sacrifice his opportunity to walk the World Leaves, so that he might remain in the Vale forever.
- F** On certain holy days, a ritual dance is performed around the enormous base of the Great Oak. Many pairs of Oak Priests, often one a woman and the other a man (but not necessarily), hold a 70 foot long strip of white cloth between them as they stand on opposite sides of the tree. With all the Oak Priests arranged in a circle, this creates a spoke-like horizontal disc of cloth around the base of the Great Oak, filling the Temple Sanctum.

As they begin to dance in a complex and specific pattern,

the linen strips are gradually woven together in a gradually shrinking net about the trunk. During the weaving, one or more additional celebrants dance about among the turning spokes of cloth, their own long strip of white linen (“The Weft”) flying freely behind them, held only by them. These lone dancers make certain to travel around the tree in only one direction.

The Oak Priests say that when the circle of paired dancers have completed the weaving, they stop and look toward the Great Oak. The white Wefts carried by the lone dancers are intricately woven amongst the others, but the dancers themselves are nowhere to be seen. Tradition holds that they have faded into a different time.

Note that if the traditional belief is in fact true, two important factors would affect this temporal shuttling. First, the time-wefting dancer (not a term the Oak Priests would use) will travel forward if they go around the tree counter-clockwise, and backward through time if they dance clockwise. This follows the procession of seasons displayed by the Great Oak, but the party will have to come to this conclusion on their own, as the Oak Priests do not know what the choice of direction does, only that a single direction must be chosen and kept. If one changes direction during the dance, it is possible they will disappear from existence entirely. Secondly, it is possible the distance shuttled through time might be controlled through some

intricacy of the dance, but such knowledge is not possessed by the Oak Priests. The amount of time woven through will be random, but it would prove impossible to arrive in a time when the corruption of the Elder Gods is active anywhere in Oakfell Vale.

**G** The Oak Priests' doctrine prevents them from harming animals, but they accept meat from the Veterans of the Sycamores, and do not deride them for hunting. If asked about this seeming inconsistency, they will explain with an aphorism such as "we will take no animal's life for our own comfort, but refusing the venison will not bring back the deer", or "should I stop the fox when he hunts the rabbit? If he ate too many, perhaps, but only then."

**H** All of the dead coming from the Cemetery are former Oak Priests. There is considerable debate about why they have been awakened, but the prevailing opinion for many years now has been that Nature had some further purpose for them; a purpose which it would be presumptuous of them to guess. As soon as they are aware that Scrim has been creating them through the dark power of the Elder Gods, however, they will sadly assist in their destruction.

Although a great deal of time has been devoted to discovering a means of restoring vitality to the Great Oak, the relationship between the blight of the tree and the other symptoms of corruption in Oakfell Vale has remained unsuspected by the Oak Priests. Many outsiders might find

these symptoms very troubling, but to the ponderous and tranquil perspective of the Oak Priests, these conditions have not advanced far enough to warrant their interference.

- One of the strongest parts of their faith is a doctrine of nonintervention. It is against their nature and teachings to try to change something that has been that way as long as they can remember, or that could possibly be part of the natural progression of the world.


- In emulation of trees, patience is one of the greatest aspirations of the Oak Priests. Their assumption about change is that with enough time, conditions will cycle naturally back around to how they once were.

- If it involves something they realise Scrim did, they still see him as one of their most esteemed High Priests until being shown reasonable evidence of his corruption.

- Rain storms created by Elder Derwin fill rain barrels, and water all the crops and vines. This is the only water they use, declining to disturb the streams for their own convenience, and therefore not suffering any ill effects from the corrupted water.

- The Great Oak is still healthy enough to keep hostile creatures tainted (or created) by the corruption from coming into the main clearing of the Vale.

The Oak Priests are unlikely to attack the party for doing things like moving the greenish-black slab off The Spring, removing the Elder God eye from the statue at The Falls, or examining the



grave of High Priest Scrim. They will certainly be curious why the party would want to do these things, and will want a reasonable explanation.

- They see people and their actions as being a part of the whole of Nature as well. “Are you not born? Do you not live and have offspring? Do you not pass away and return to the Earth?”
- Even though events might work counter to the efforts of the Oak Priests, they try to remain philosophical.
  - “If beavers damned the stream and made a lake, I would not stop them. I would find a way to live beside a lake.”
  - “If a bird plants a rowan seed on the statue of the Nature Mother, and she is cracked by the growing rowan, I do not stop loving her. Do I curse the bird? Do I curse the tree? No. I celebrate the tenacity of the rowan.”
- The Oak Priests will generally not attack the party unless

they ignore warnings against harming the forest or the balance of nature, or if they attack the Temple, the Great Oak, or the Oak Priests themselves.

#### **(A) INITIATES**

Areas marked ‘a’ are rooms for initiates. This is also where any outsiders would be housed if they stayed at the temple. These initiates do not know about the holiday sacrifices in Clearing Two, and are unaware of what is causing the draining deaths in some of their rooms. There are currently 20 initiates living in the temple.

#### **(B) BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

These areas hold rooms for the brothers and sisters who make up the majority of the temple. The larger room at the inside corner of this area can accommodate up to 12 people. They do not know about the holiday sacrifices in Clearing Two, and are unaware of what is causing the draining deaths in the initiates’

rooms. There are currently 41 brothers and sisters living in the temple.

### **(C) PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES**

These rooms are occupied by the higher ranking Oak Priests who supervise and organize most of the day-to-day functioning of the temple and its environs. Most of these rooms are home to no more than 3 Oak Priests each. These priests and priestesses know about, and usually attend, the holiday sacrifices in Clearing Two, but do not know what is causing the draining deaths in the initiates' rooms.

There are currently 18 priests and priestesses living in the temple.

### **(D) ELDERS AND HIGH PRIEST**

These three rooms are home to the High Priest and his two immediate underlings, The Elders. Although these rooms do not have doors, strong branches grow entwined at the far end of the side passages, barring entrance. Those who live in the rooms may cause these obstacles to retreat or return by uttering a swift charm known only to them. Any belongings (including magical items) not carried by these three can be found in their rooms, secured in the iron-like grasp of various branches, roots, and vines. All three know about, and always attend, the holiday sacrifices in Clearing Two, and also know what is causing the draining deaths in the initiates' rooms.



### **ELDER BURTCH**

Taran Burtch is extremely old, even for an elder. He doesn't resent the somewhat younger Davath being chosen as High Priest, as he prefers a more background role. Any metalwork done around the temple or the winery is handled by him, along with a handful of smithing students from the ranks of the priests and brothers. A few priestesses are irritated that he refuses to take on female students. If members of the party can help convince him to teach sisters and priestesses, and potentially female initiates as well, this will earn them many friends among the Oak Priests.

When he isn't actively working at his smithy, or making the occasional barrel, he can often be found whittling small figures and wands. Many Initiates would say that when having a conversation with Elder Burtch, he is "senile, yet somehow still cagey". If they speak with him, the party will see this effect in action. However, it is merely the result of Taran no longer feeling either the need or

inclination to explain what he says, regardless of whether the listener might understand his references. Contrary to the typical hardness of blacksmiths, his extreme age has left him quite vulnerable to physical damage, but he will employ spells to great effect if drawn into combat.

**OSR:** Level 7 (14 hit points), AC as cloth unless modified by magic.

**NGR:** Taran is very sickly and frail (8 strength and health) but is both determined (12 will) and perceptive (12 perception). He is a 4th level with 500 piety and 2 fate points. He is 2 parts priest (Miracles, True Belief, Exorcism) and 1 part wizard (Mysticism).

**Treasure:** He carries a Rowan Staff and has a Transforming Wand. A Divining Wand is kept in his room for when he wanders around the vale looking to replenish his stores of raw metal.

In his room he has accumulated roughly 1000 silver pieces worth of copper, bronze and silver trinkets and art objects, many made by himself. Most have an astrological or 'Sun' theme. One of these is a small bronze box where he keeps old wands that he has whittled. It contains 7 Transforming Wands, 5 Healing Wands, and 4 Protecting Wands. Each of these is heavily worn (**OSR:** Only 1d6-3 charges **NGR:** The carvings are faded and would require a sage to decode even if one knows the druid mysteries). If he has reason to reward the party for their actions, he will often (in addition to a trinket or two) gruffly tell them to look in the box and "take one or two of them".



### ELDER DERWIN

Brigid Derwin is the clear choice for who will become High Priestess after Davath. She is a physically strong and imposing older woman, and a powerful spellcaster. If approached with even one piece of evidence regarding the corruption of the Elder Gods, she will encourage further investigation. She will not travel about the vale with the party, but if presented with evidence of the runes of the Elder Gods on the stone at The Spring, she is willing to help them move the stone. Though she will not immediately reveal the holiday sacrifices or initiate drainings to the party, she will be forthcoming with other history regarding the temple and the vale, if she believes it will aid the investigation. Ultimately, she is also willing to help present the full evidence of corruption to High Priest Woodbine.

**OSR:** Level 6 (32 hit points), AC as cloth unless prepared to fight. Melee damage is +1 due to strength.

**NGR:** Brigid is very strong (16

strength), stubborn (12 will), and has an imposing presence (12 charisma). She is a 4th level and has 250 piety and 3 fate points. She is 2 parts priest (Miracles, True Belief, Fervour) and 1 part wizard (Mysticism).

**Treasure:** She carries a Rowan Staff and has a Protecting Wand.

Her room also holds approximately 750 silver pieces worth of glass and crystal valuables. Although the crystals and crystal objects are not enchanted, she will maintain that each has unique beneficial properties. Additionally, if appropriate for the campaign world, she has a simple telescope worth 250 silver pieces.

### THE HIGH PRIEST

Davath Woodbine, the High Priest of the temple, is not a worshipper of the Elder Gods, but rather a faithful servant of Nature and the Great Oak. His participation in rituals such as the human sacrifices in Clearing Two are the result of several generations of tradition. As the 5th High Priest to preside over these sacrifices, he would prove difficult to dissuade from these practices, but it is possible. If he is somehow given evidence of the Elder Gods influence at location 'a', The Falls, and The Spring, as well as the now-blatantly sinister nature of Caddis Scrim, Davath will have a life-changing epiphany. He will destroy the currently stored bottles of The Acorn, and will no longer add people to the mix of things crushed by the water spirit in Clearing Two.

Davath is also the source of the



enchantments causing fine roots to drain some of the initiates, as detailed below. He continues the guilt-inspired practice begun by his immediate predecessor of having these fine roots drain himself at night as well. Due to the great fortitude of any achieving the rank of High Priest, this is not fatal to him, but he is tired and worn. A careful observation of Davath will show a few tiny pinpricks on the backs of his arms and legs, but these disappear by midday.

The High Priest is deeply distraught by the drainings, and continues them only because he knows of no other way to bolster the health of the dying tree. None of the Oak Priests are aware of Caddis Scrim's past (and current) worship of the Elder Gods, or of the nature of the corruption eating away at the vale. Importantly, if the Great Oak's health is restored, Davath immediately stops all the drainings.

If Davath feels the temple is in danger from a substantial threat, he will send a message via a bird to Darmid Robuck to bring his Veterans of The Sycamores to its defense.

**OSR:** Level 8 (20 hit points), AC as cloth unless modified by magic.

**NGR:** Davath is severely weakened by the drainings (6 health) but is still in possession of an iron resolve (20 will) and a magnetic personality (16 charisma). He is a 5th level character with the elite training trait. He is a 2 parts priest (Miracles, True Belief, Dogma), 1 part wizard (Mysticism), and 1 part bard (Leadership). He has 400 piety and 2 fates.

**Treasure:** He carries a Rowan Staff and has a Healing Wand, as well as a Transforming Wand.

Davath's room contains nearly 1500 silver pieces worth of finely crafted objects and valuables. Many are made of wood or bone, and take the form of green men, trees, and animal figures. He also has two golden sickles (worth 100 silver pieces each) used in mistletoe rituals and other harvesting ceremonies. If used in battle, the sickles will be damaged beyond repair.

### **THE GREAT OAK**

This enormous tree affects the health and productivity of the surrounding area for 24 miles in every direction, stronger in the immediate area of the temple. More than 110 years ago, before the corrupting influence of the Elder Gods began, its blessing resulted in productivity in the larger region of nearly 3 times normal, and 4 times normal within the vale itself.

As corruption gradually began to sicken the oak, this abundance also began to slowly wane. Then, about 70 years ago, the High Priest of that time discovered a series of enchantments that would encourage the oak to extend fine roots into people sleeping in the temple, feeding on them to bolster its health. He restricted these roots to the newest of the initiates in the areas labeled 'a' on the temple map, extending from the very root and branch-made beds on which they slept. These drainings staved off much of the ongoing damage from the corruption, but not completely. They also quickly became fatal.

The number of drainings necessary to bolster the oak's health has by now increased to 24 per year. This is enough to overbalance the corruption for purposes of the productivity of the region, but the tree is still dying. It is also enough to cause the upper echelon of the Oak Priests to recruit new members voraciously, and to cause rumors in the countryside about the disappearance of wanderers. The initiates and brothers and sisters of the temple are quite worried about the drained husks of their fellows occasionally found in the morning, but have not figured out the cause. A very careful examination of the husks will result in the discovery of tiny pinpricks on one surface of the body.

If the party decides to take the expedient of destroying the oak, they will have a difficult time in front of them. Not only would it take an enormous amount of damage to burn or chop it down (the trunk of the 150

foot tree is 10 feet thick at the base), any direct attack against the tree will muster the Oak Priests of the temple against them, as well as animating and angering 2 Wicker-Frame Topiary per round from the Nave.

Additionally, if attacked, the Great Oak itself will apply an effect to anyone in the sanctum based on which season of the tree they may currently see:

**Spring** - Grow 1d4 years younger per round.

**Summer** - Suffer 1d6 heat damage per round.

**Fall** - Age 1d4 years per round.

**Winter** - Suffer 1d6 cold damage per round.

If the Oak Priests are soundly winning a battle, Elder Derwin or High Priest Woodbine are likely to offer a chance to surrender. If this opportunity is taken, the Oak Priests will pray for the Great Oak to cease the effect detailed above within a few rounds.

# THE SIX FACTORS OF CORRUPTION

There are six fundamental things a party can do to improve the overall health of the Great Oak, and by extension the vitality of the whole region. For each of these ailments the party rectifies, the High Priest and the two elders will recognize a positive change in the tree, and reward the party commensurately. (Note that other accomplishments, such as destroying the Acid Bees, might have a definite positive impact on the Vale and its environs, but would not directly affect the health of the Great Oak.)

## “MAKE ROCK NOT WAR”

*Location ‘a’:* If the memorial is expunged from the face of the boulder, the boulder will no longer produce slime molds, and will return to a dormant, harmless state.

## “THE POWER UNDERNEATH DESPAIR”

*Location ‘a’:* The soil beneath and surrounding the boulder will eventually become free of corruption (roughly 2 months) if the slime molds are stopped, but if the taint is somehow removed by the party an immediate improvement in the Great Oak will be apparent.

## “A CAREER OF EVIL”

*The Cemetery:* The destruction of Caddis Scrim will stop the creation of undead in the area, including the mounds. Any already animated undead are not deactivated, however.

The complete eradication of his body is not necessary, and it may be retained as evidence for the Oak Priests.

## “HARVESTER OF EYES”

*The Falls:* The removal of the huge stone eye from the back of the statue will stop the corruption of the stream at this point.

## “PERFECT WATER”

*The Pond:* The cleansing or destruction of the water spirit will both result in an immediate improvement in the Great Oak. However, the water spirit has become a vital part of the rituals of the temple, and if it is destroyed there will be no reward for this factor. In fact, High Priest Davath and the other Oak Priests may be quite upset with the party.

## “TAKE ME AWAY”

*The Spring:* If the stone slab and skeleton are both removed from the spring, the stream will no longer be tainted from this source.

If all six factors are successfully dealt with, without angering the Oak Priests in the process, the party may find themselves the recipients of virtually all of the treasure held by the Elders and the High Priest. These rewards may include some of the wands and staffs they carry, as these items have been made by themselves, and can be replaced at some point in their annual ceremonies. Any magical items will be in the



possession of the High Priest and the two Elders, and they will use them judiciously if the opportunity arises.

As more of these factors are resolved, the Great Oak requires less and less 'supplemental nutrition' to stave off its demise. Four yearly fatal drainings can be avoided for each fix. Once all six are rectified, the oak returns to full health quite quickly (overnight), and no drainings are then necessary. In such a case, the productivity of the land around the temple, and for about 24 miles in every direction, will be roughly 3 times what it would normally be

(as it was roughly 110 years ago).

Currently, with the drainings still overbalancing the corruption, the area enjoys nearly 5 times the productivity of normal land of this type (6 times in the immediate vicinity of the temple). However, there are occasionally disturbing mutations in a handful of the crops, and worrisome events have been known to occur with such things as scarecrows. Any farmer who knew all of the details would know that in ten years time (if nothing is done) productivity will fall to half normal for land of this type, due to the oak's rapidly worsening health.

# MONSTERS AND ENCOUNTER EVENTS

## ACID BEES

Huge, bulbous bees, over a foot long. They are quick, but erratic flyers. Their stinger is the size of a dagger, and fills the wound with corrosive acid. Only heavy armour is thick enough to catch the barbs on the stinger, pulling it from the bee's abdomen after it attacks. The bee falls to the ground, incapacitated, and soon dies. The stinger remains in the victim pumping more corrosive acid into the wound for several moments afterward. The stinger and its bulb are coated with acid, making it more effective at penetrating armour, and challenging to remove. If the victim wears less than heavy armour, the stinger withdraws after filling the wound with acid, and the bee remains alive and able to attack again.

Each bee can lift up to 10 pounds, and several may work together to lift heavier loads.

Smoke will calm bees that have not yet been damaged, and prevent them from summoning more. It also starts a feeding response, and the bees will soon make their way down into their hive to gorge heedlessly on honey for several turns. Mist or rain will cause the bees to land and make their way back down into their hive to wait until their wings have dried.

After a random encounter, surviving bees will fly back to the Acid Bee Hives.

**OSR:** 2hd, AC as chain, damage 1d4+2 plus 1d6 acid damage per round. Treat armour as one type less protective, e.g. plate as chain, chain as leather, leather as unarmoured. Make a saving throw to remove the stinger without permanently damaging whatever was used to remove it.

**NGR:** The Acid Bees are size  $\frac{1}{4}$  and are quick (13 Agility) with limited cognitive function, even for an insect (1 Intelligence). For their size, their stinger is huge (large, piercing) and deals 1d6 acid damage if it successfully punctures a target (by dealing actual damage).

## YOUNG ACID BEES

A smaller, young version that appears in larger numbers. Unlike ordinary bees, acid bees continue to grow after emerging from their pupa, shedding their skin several times before reaching full size. Due to the smaller size of young acid bees, about four inches, they can be more difficult to hit effectively.

**OSR:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  hd, AC as plate, damage 1d4 plus 1d4 acid damage per round.

**NGR:** The Acid Bees are size  $\frac{1}{8}$  and are insanely quick (20 Agility) with limited cognitive function, even for an insect (1 Intelligence). For their size, their stinger is huge (large, piercing) and deals 1d6 acid damage if it successfully punctures a target (by dealing actual damage).



### BEE KING

A Bee King is composed entirely of human tissue, but horribly grown and mutated into a huge bee-like form, 2 feet wide and almost 5 feet long. The overlarge head is covered in small human eyes, one large mass on each side, like a bee's eyes. Multiple (6 or more) limbs grow from the body, each looking like an infant arm and hand, but as large as an adult's. It is without wings, but the torso is horribly grown and extended. Most horrifically, due to the Bee King's purpose and its transformation to the proportions of a drone-like creature, it has grown a male bee's enormous, twisted, angular phallus, nearly half again the size of its body. Rather than being kept in wait inside the abdomen as in a normal bee, the appendage is already outside.

In the unlikely event that a Bee King becomes enraged, its attacks take a disturbing yet predictable form. Male bees have no stinger. Thus, it will attempt to grab one member of the party and then attack them with its acid-coated phallus, all the while

crying and screaming with the voice of a human baby. If the enormous appendage is somehow cut off, the Bee King will immediately flee back into its cell and curl up, incapacitated, to die several minutes later. If the appendage is somehow forcefully pulled from the Bee King's body, this will also split open the thing's abdomen, killing it in only one round.

**OSR:** 8hd, AC as leather. A successful attack by the Bee King means it has grabbed on to the individual. In the next and succeeding rounds it automatically bashes for 1d6 damage, plus 1d6 acid damage. If both damage results are 6, the Bee King has forced part of its appendage into crevices in armour, or into a wound. It then instinctively and immediately explodes the phallus, doing another 2d6 damage. A successful saving throw reduces the explosion damage (only) by half. The Bee King then falls back, dead.

**NGR:** They unwholesome creatures are somewhat quick (12 Agility), but their main defense is their layers of tough fibrous flesh (DR 10) and their fanatical drive (Zealous Trait). Their multiple grasping arms give their unarmed attacks the “entangling” tag. If they have grappled a target they may bludgeon it with their member (large, blunt weapon) which deals an additional 1d6 acid damage. This bludgeon scores at least one success unless it fumbles, meaning it automatically scores a success even if it misses against a grappled target. On any epic success it has forced part of its appendage into crevices in armour, or into a wound. It then instinctively and immediately explodes the phallus, doing another 2d6 acid damage before dying.

### **BLUE LIGHTS**

These small dim lights are non-corporeal and average about 3 inches across. Appearing in various shades of blue, they will move quickly to avoid being closely approached.

### **BODY**

A dead humanoid body of random race and gender. They have an equal chance to be victims of acid bees, oakroots, or any other dangerous creatures in the vale. Roll again to determine what killed them.



### **CADDIS SCRIM**

The past 87 years have worked a considerable change on the corrupted old High Priest. His face is dried into a permanent scowl, and the sunken, squinting eyes glow with a pale greenish-white light. His teeth and nails have become fangs and claws. A shock of white hair sticks out in a ring around his head. His grey skin is pulled tight against dry, hard sinews, and his white robes hang tattered and grey from his gaunt form.

**OSR:** As a wight, but with 6 hit dice, and using spells as a 6th level Oak Priest. He may only be harmed by magical weapons, spells and silver weapons. If wights in the campaign drain levels on a successful melee hit, then so does Scrim.

**NGR:** A supernaturally strong 7th level undead (Priest 2/ Bard 1). It has 100 piety and the following class powers: Miracles, Fervour, Exorcism(Haunting), Leadership

**Treasure:** He wears a Crown of Mistletoe. He also wears a

medallion of The Elder Gods, cut from the boulder at location 'a', and useable in rituals to cleanse the Water Spirit at The Pond and the soil corruption at location 'a'.

Scrim's coffin contains roughly 1500 silver pieces worth of other jewelry and valuables.

### **CRACKING WOOD NOISE UNDER THE GROUND**

The party hears this deep sound coming from some distance below them. Investigation beneath the ground may result in being attacked by oakroots.

### **CRAYFISH**

These large crustaceans look similar to 6 foot long, fat, grey lobsters. Normal reddish-brown versions, only a couple inches long, are found near the stream as well. They will usually only attack if disturbed. Once the corruption is removed, these monstrosities begin to regain their normal colouring and shrink in size.

**OSR:** 2hd, AC as Chain, attack with pincer for 1d8. There is a 5% chance they will latch on with a successful attack (automatic damage each round), and continue to attack with their other claw.

**NGR:** These creatures are size modifier 1 and heavily armoured with chitin (as bone reinforced plate with a full helm). They attack with pincers (large, slashing, exotic) and their claws score a free grapple on any epic success (as if a combat trick). Out of water they are very clumsy (6 agility) but they are deft in water (16 agility).

### **EARTH SPIRIT**

An enormous worm-like mass of dark soil and dirt, 8 feet across and 24 feet long. 8 pairs of appendages run down its length, each 3 feet long and in the form of a thick human arm and hand made of hardened dirt. Tumbling rocks can be seen slowly rotating inside the gaping maw at the front end. A smoking, greenish-black fluid



leaks from various places along its length and from the maw, giving off a powerful acrid stench of rot and decay.

Although the Earth Spirit can be harmed with non-magical weapons, if such weapons hit successfully, they are exposed to enough of the greenish-black fluid to be destroyed by it after 2 rounds. The spirit attacks by rising up on multiple rear appendages and slamming down onto its target. If an opponent is defeated by the spirit, it will use one of its enormous hands to pick up their largest weapon (at least the size of a mace), gaining one additional attack per round each time this occurs. If large projectiles, such as spears, land near it, or if there are heavy branches on the ground nearby, it will pick these up as well. It can gain up to 4 weapon attacks in this way. Although the spirit has no eyes, it can perfectly sense anyone standing on the ground. If an opponent has some way to float or fly disconnected from the ground, they become effectively invisible to the spirit.

**OSR:** 14 HD, AC as plate, slam attack for 2d8 damage, possible weapon attacks (melee only) for weapon damage+1 from strength. If the slam attack is successful, there is a 5% chance the target is taken into the maw for an additional 1d8 grinding damage per round until freed. Anyone in physical contact with the boulder (location 'a') will be the spirit's primary target, followed by those directly on the ground, and finally anyone who has clambered up into the trees.

**NGR:** The earth spirit is a large (size modifier 4) supernatural elemental spirit of great strength

(16 strength). Its body is armoured by stones and hardened dirt clods that count as stone mail with a helm. It will attack by either slamming its body (a large, blunt attack) or with items held in its hands. Up to four hands may attack as if the earth spirit had an improved version of dual wield. The earth spirit is considered a *regional threat* (3d6 luck, 3 fates).

### **FAIRY CIRCLE**

A 3 to 15 foot circle of pale mushrooms. There is a chance that a more visually striking Unique Mushroom (such as red with white spots) lies in the center if the d20 was a 13 and the d4 result was not 4. This central mushroom conveys a temporary random magical effect when eaten. All other normal abilities are unaffected, unless specifically stated. (**OSR:** This lasts for 1d4x10 minutes **NGR:** You suffer 1 point of intoxication, the effect lasts until you cease to be intoxicated)

### **Unique Mushrooms (roll a d20)**

- 1 Red with White Spots - become huge, growing to double normal size, along with equipment. A 6 foot human would become 12 feet tall.
- 2 White with Red Rings - become tiny, shrinking to one-twelfth normal size, along with equipment. A 6 foot human would become 6 inches tall.
- 3 Blue with Orange Spots - sprout large dragonfly wings. The wings magically grow through any clothing or armour on the back, but such things cannot be removed until the



- wings go away. (**OSR:** fly at half current movement rate  
**NGR:** They take an additional action to remain flying).
- 4 Glossy Orange - become immune to cold, including magical cold.
  - 5 Glossy White with Bumps - become totally blind.
  - 6 Tall, Pointy Blue - one's perception becomes confused, so that left is right, forward is backward, and vice versa. Only with great mental effort (impossible in combat or hectic situations) can a desired action be taken by attempting the opposite.
  - 7 Light Orange - similar mushrooms grow all over one's body, covering armour or clothing as well. Become ignored by all undead.
  - 8 Blue with White Spots - see in normal darkness or shadow as well one sees in light.  
(**OSR:** darkvision up to 60 feet  
**NGR:** vision as if a dwarf).
  - 9 Tall, Pointy Red - grow large claws and become able to burrow through the ground.
- Go through dirt at normal movement rate, or through stone at one quarter of normal.
- 10 Tall, Pointy White - become transparent and able to move through solid objects.
  - 11 Orange with Blobs of Red Fluid - one's flesh and skin transform into orange mushroom flesh, which then gives off large spores. In one round, 2d10 of these spores become tiny versions of oneself. These mushroom miniatures share the mind of whoever ate the mushroom, attempting to do their bidding without need of commands or concentration.
  - 12 Violet - transform into a Slime Mold, as detailed in their own entry below. Some equipment may be damaged before one can crawl clear of it.
  - 13 Glossy Light Blue - teleport to a random location in Oakfell Vale, then spend a few rounds incapacitated with vomiting.
  - 14 Flat, Curling Yellow - see parts of the future coming for a short time (**OSR:** automatically succeed



at your next saving throw **NGR:** Gain a temporary fate point for the duration of the intoxication).

- 15 Tall, Pointy Yellow - become stupid. Or stupider. (**OSR:** lose half your intelligence score **NGR:** Gain a negative re-roll on all intelligence checks and intelligence die rolls for the duration).
- 16 Black Honeycomb Ridges - become a shadow, along with equipment, able to flow and jump across surfaces as a shadow would. Magical light or darkness will end the effect on contact.
- 17 Tall Hairy White - become immune to normal and magical fire and heat.
- 18 Tall Thin Grey - limbs such as arms, legs and even neck can stretch at will to a length of 20 feet each. Stretching or retracting takes only a round.
- 19 Light Blue with Brown Edges - hear the thoughts of anyone in sight, one individual at a time. It takes a round of concentration to focus on a different individual.

- 20 Violet with Yellow Spots - become protected from magic spells (**OSR:** the next spell cast on whoever ate the mushroom is reflected back onto the caster **NGR:** The next spell cast upon whoever ate the mushroom is automatically countered).

### **HOLLY CLIMBER**

A woody holly vine grows on a tree here. If the region outside Oakfell Vale is in winter, it will be replete with bright red berries. Holly is always a vine in this area, never a bush or tree.

### **HOLY OAK SUCKER**

Over the course of several minutes, an oak shoot grows here to a height of 4-6 feet, quickly blossoms and produces tiny leaves, then forms a single acorn at its peak. After a few moments, the leaves rapidly begin to turn brown and drop from the shoot, followed a short time later by the acorn. The shoot then rapidly withers and dies. If the acorn is allowed to fall off the stem rather than being picked, it crumbles to dust when touched. However, if the acorn is plucked directly from the shoot, it can be saved for an indeterminate length of time. It will burst in a random magical effect if opened or thrown, with an impossibly large volume of the listed substance, items, or effect exploding out of the shell. The individual in contact with the acorn when it opens suffers the effects detailed in the entry, except in the case of Tree Seeds. These fall to the ground, and a Tree Spirit begins to rise from the earth, taking only a few rounds to fully emerge. (**NGR:** These are holy items)



### What Bursts from the Acorn? (roll a d12)

- 1 Flames - the subject is engulfed in flames and then set on fire (**OSR:** 2d6 damage, **NGR:** 6 fire damage)
- 2 Fur - the subject becomes a chipmunk for an hour (**OSR:** make a saving throw with a -2 penalty **NGR:** Take !d20 mutation)
- 3 Binding roots - the roots grow and expand as they fall around the subject's feet and legs, burrowing into the earth and holding them in place (**OSR:** Immobilized for 1d4 rounds **NGR:** Unless either cut free or possessing supernaturally strength, unable to move or dive for ?d4 rounds)
- 4 Biting grubs - the subject is covered in hundreds of tiny biting grubs, suffering 1d6 damage each round. At least 2 quarts of wine or vinegar will wash them off in one round. After 3 rounds, they all grow into squirrels and run off.
- 5 Splinters - the subject's flesh becomes wood for an hour (**OSR:** Natural AC as chain
- 6 Leaves - the subject grows green leaves all over their body, even covering armour and clothing, and only takes half damage from fire. The leaves change colour and fall off an hour later.
- 7 Sap - the subject can 'melt' into and out of trees for the next hour, hiding within if desired, as long as the tree is large enough to physically hold their mass (**NGR:** As if they were possessing the tree). One could, for example, melt into the base of a tree, then melt out at the top.
- 8 Pollen cloud - the subject is engulfed and choking in a cloud of pollen that surrounds them to a distance of 2 feet from their body. (**OSR:** The subject moves at half speed and is otherwise incapacitated for 1d4 rounds, but is difficult to see and is attacked as one armour type more protected, e.g. cloth as leather, leather as chain, chain as plate; anyone in melee range must save or suffer the negative effects **NGR:** The subject is blinded and must spend an additional action simply trying to breath each round. They also count as having heavy cover, +5, and deal 1d6 -weapon reach points of poison to anyone attacking them in melee. This effect lasts for ?d4 rounds)
- 9 Cloud of butterflies - they disperse harmlessly.
- 10 Spiderwebs - the subject is encased in strong, sticky webs.

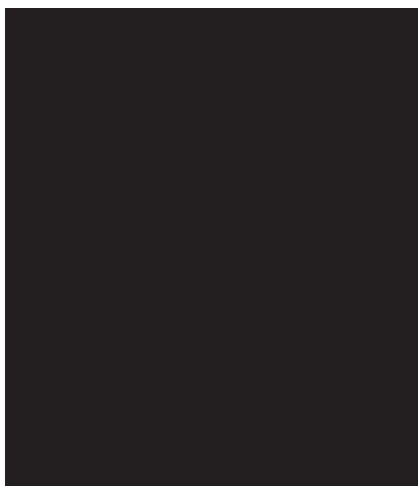
They are immobilized for the duration unless the webs are burned or cut away. Fire will consume the webs in a round, but may burn the subject. Cutting the webs away will take half as long as waiting for the effect to end on its own (**OSR:** 2d6 rounds **NGR:** ?d12 rounds).

- 11** Tree Seeds - a Tree Spirit is summoned to the spot where the seeds fall, fully emerging in a few rounds. If the seeds do not make contact with at least 1000 cubic feet (enough to fill a 10 foot cube) of some sort of dirt, soil, or even rock (or any combination of these) within 1 turn, they wither and become useless. Note that the Tree Spirit will most likely damage or destroy at least the surface of whatever it emerges from.

- 12** As 11.

### **INSECT SWARM**

A typical swarm of normal flying insects, but if the party has raised the ire of the Oak Priests at the temple,



the swarm will be hostile and attack.

**OSR:** Filling an area 20 feet across, the swarm can take 4hd worth of damage before dispersing. Anyone in the swarm will take 1d4 damage per round. Weapons have no effect against the swarm, but area effects and open flame will damage it, and smoke will drive it off.

**NGR:** The swarm fills the area, crawling underneath armour and dealing 1 damage per round (regardless of size, larger creatures are covered in more bugs). The swarm can move 1 area per round. The swarm can take 10 points of area effect damage before dispersing. Large open fires deal 1d6 points of damage per round to the swarm.

### **LICHEN LICHES**

Shambling undead skeletons armoured by the presence of heavy layers of lichen and growths of fungus. The fungus on these horrors is in a stage which does not release spores. A rare few will have a small amount of mistletoe growing inside the rib cage. This mistletoe will have extra efficacy if used in spells against the undead.

**OSR:** 2hd, AC as chain. Attack with scratch (d3) or weapon \*Mistletoe is found in the ribcage of any with maximum hit points

**NGR:** These mindless (1 intelligence and charisma) undead are very strong (16 strength) and their thick encrusting of lichen counts as reinforced light armour. Any Lichen Lich has a 1 in 12 chance of having a growth of mistletoe inside its rib cage. They will either

attack unarmed, or with a weapon.

### **MARSH TULPA**

An 8 foot tall gangly horror, with a single enormous eye a foot wide. It bites with its too-wide mouth filled with 6 inch fangs and hooks, and claws with talons at the end of arms that bend backward at the elbow. Additionally, every other round it will shine a pale, nauseating beam of light from its great eye, potentially incapacitating any one foe.

**OSR:** 13hd, AC as plate due to supernatural toughness. 2 claws per round for 1d8+2 damage each, and one bite for 1d10+2 damage. The eye beam hits automatically, but the victim may save to avoid being incapacitated.

**NGR:** The Tulpa is a size modifier 2 golem created by a priest with a faith of 9. Its eye is a magical item which can be used every other round for a missile attack that deals 1d6x4 stun damage on a successful hit. Its mouth is a medium, vicious, piercing attack while its long limbs can slash with talons (medium, slashing, vicious, reach). Its control item is a stone set in the back of the plinth.

### **MISTLETOE**

A small growth of mistletoe sits in the branches of a tree here.

### **OAK PRIEST**

A group of 1-4 initiates (based on the d4 result) or brothers and sisters from the temple. If there are 4 initiates they are accompanied by one priest or priestess.



If roused to battle and given time to prepare, the initiates, brothers and sisters will don animal masks and attack with longbows. The brothers and sisters will alternate their longbow attacks with any appropriate spells they have available. Priests and priestesses will focus on spellcasting if they are able, but will engage in melee using their yew staffs if necessary. There are currently only two elders, and they are detailed in their own section.

If the Oak Priests find the party to be non-hostile, they will invite them to the Temple of The Seasons, but will not insist. If the party has not visited the Temple by the next day, a group of Oak Priests (as the group detailed above) will be sent out into the Vale to find them and speak with them again. The invitation to the Temple will again be proffered, but the leader of the group will attempt to converse with the party about who they are and why they are in the Vale. If the party's reasons seem sound to the Oak Priests, especially involving care for nature, but including concern over the welfare of villagers, they will offer to



All wear simple white robes rather than armour. They should be treated as druids or clerics of a nature domain depending on system.

**NGR:**

Initiate	Level 0
Brother/Sister	Level 1
Priest/Priestess	Level 2
Elder	Level 3

All wear simple white robes rather than armour. If any have levels they are two parts priest (Fervour, Dogma, Miracles) and one part wizard (Mysticism) with 10 piety per level.

accompany the party and assist them. If this group of Oak Priests consists of at least 3 members, the leader will send one back to the Temple to inform them of what they are doing.

If given time alone with the party, Initiates may share their concerns about the recent draining deaths at the Temple. If the party seems trustworthy, they will ask them to investigate.

As long as at least a Brother or Sister is with a group of Oak Priests, they are able to move through dense forest at a normal walking pace. If they accompany the players, they are unable to confer this benefit to them, and will merely walk along at the party's pace without mentioning it.

**OSR:** Oak Priests are promoted for service and dedication, so ranks are not necessarily tied to character level, and there is some overlap, but in general:

Initiate	Level 0-1
Brother/Sister	Level 1-3
Priest/Priestess	Level 4-5
Elder	Level 6-7

**OAKROOTS**

A group of far-flung roots of the Great Oak in the temple rise up looking for sustenance. Varying in size and power from thumb-thick to as substantial as a person's wrist, these roots attempt to grab members of the party and drain them of their precious bodily fluids. If the High Priest stops the temple drainings, these are no longer encountered.

**OSR:** The group has 1 to 4 hit dice (based on the d4 result). AC as chain. Weapons are ineffective, except those that can be used to slash or chop, and even these will only cut back the roots temporarily, with any damage done by them regrowing in two rounds. Magical and area attacks (cold, acid splash, etc.) affect them normally, and fire does double damage. A successful attack by the oakroots means they have grabbed on to the individual, draining



them for 1d6 damage per round until cut away, or until the group of roots is destroyed. A group of Oakroots can drain a number of people at once equal to its hit dice.

**NGR:** The swarm of roots will attack as a size modifier 1 creature with with entangling pole weapons. It can grapple multiple targets and anyone grappled by the swarm will suffer 1d6 points of stun each round as their fluids are drained. The swarm will continue to attack until it takes 10-40 points of damage (based on the d4 result). The roots are resistant to bludgeoning and piercing attacks (DR 10) but take double damage from fire. The roots will regenerate 2 points of damage each round with the exceptions of fire, acid, or magic.

### **RUNNING WATER**

This appears to be a puddle of dank, putrid water, 2 to 5 feet across. It flows like water running downhill toward any animal life within 30 feet, dousing

any normal fire it comes in contact with. Weapons merely splash into it, doing no damage. Like water, if exposed to enough cold it will freeze, and if exposed to enough heat it will boil (damaging it). Once it reaches its target, it begins to flow over them in a thin wet film, searching for airways. If the puddle encounters something particularly absorbent, such as padded cloth armour (or if the adventurer has remembered their towel) it can become trapped in the item. If the item is then destroyed, the Running Water will be destroyed as well.

**OSR:** 2 to 5 hit dice. Weapons have no effect. If an amount of cold damage equal to its health is dealt to it, it will freeze solid, but will gradually thaw over time, unharmed, even if the ice is broken. Heat will gradually evaporate it, doing half damage, though open non-magical flame will merely be extinguished on contact. Electricity will damage it normally, but divide it into multiple puddles, as well as damaging anything the water is touching. If it comes in contact with something absorbent, it must make a saving throw or become trapped in the item. Its attack does no damage, but the next round after it hits, the victim must successfully make a saving throw as they sputter and fight to avoid having their airways filled with water. This is repeated each round until the save is failed. At that point, the victim will drown in 3 rounds, unless the water is destroyed or somehow removed. A survivor

of such an attack will likely be nauseous for up to an hour.

**NGR:** The small puddle is between size and  $\frac{1}{2}$  (the inverse of its size in feet). It should be considered an incorporeal supernatural corruption of the elder gods. Its body is a naturally entangling weapon and it will deal 1d20 potential damage each round to any grappled target as it attempts to enter their airways. If this would be enough damage to kill the target, it deals no damage but it instead has entered the victim's lungs and will deal 1d6 stun each round that cannot be absorbed through luck (assuming the victim does need to breathe) until it is either removed or slain. Exorcising the creature while it is in in someone's lungs will also injure the person as the puddle boils away into scalding steam.

### **RUSHING NOISE UNDER THE GROUND**

Sounding perhaps like slithering, or a subterranean stream, this noise may presage the appearance of Vines of The Earth at this location shortly if the d4 result was even.

### **SPORE ZOMBIES**

Shambling corpses with growths of fungus, mushrooms and moss pushing out from gaps and rents in their anatomy to spread partly across their hard, leathery skin. The moss and fungi range throughout the interior of their bodies, reinforcing their internal structure with a tough network of rhizomes and mycelium. Any successful hit by one of these



undead may infect the victim with deadly spores. These spores mature quickly, and within an hour will begin growing, damaging the afflicted unless somehow cleansed or removed. If left unchecked, the growth will turn the victim into a Spore Zombie several minutes after death.

If encountered randomly in the Vale, their tracks eventually lead back to The Cemetery.

**OSR:** 4hd, AC as leather. Attack with bite (d3) or weapon (+1 damage from strength). All weapons do only half damage to Spore Zombies due to their resilient internal structure. Suffering any successful hit from a Spore Zombie has a 15% chance of infecting the target with spores. After one hour, the spores begin growing, inflicting 1d6 damage every 10 minutes.

**NGR:** These mindless (1 intelligence and charisma) undead have insane strength (20 strength) from their resilient internal structure and their moss covered

bodies count as bulky light armour and a leather cap. They are relentlessly aggressive and ignore injuries (Zealous Trait). Each melee attack deals 1d4 points of additional disease. They will shuffle (8 Agility) towards targets were they will either attack unarmed, or with a weapon.

### **SLIME MOLD**

This small crawling slime is 1-2 feet across, an inch thick, and pale greenish-white in colour (one experienced with the wilderness will note that natural slime molds are never green). It is very slow, but persistent and highly caustic to flesh. Normal weapons have no effect against it, and in fact must save to resist having any organic parts destroyed by it if they touch it. It will only attack those who directly physically disturb it in some way, and it does so by extending a thin pseudopod from its surface toward the victim, with a range of only 2 feet. (**OSR:** It will deal 1d6 continuing acid damage per round to anyone hit, until the wound is somehow washed out **NGR:** It deals 1d6 acid damage on a hit). Fire, cold, and other such attacks affect it normally. It can absorb 100 points of damage before expiring (**NGR:** It is a supernatural corruption of the elder gods and can be harmed by exorcism).

### **SPONTANEOUS FLOWERS**

A small area of wildflowers, no more than 20 feet across, springs from the ground and blooms in a matter of minutes.



### **TREE SPIRIT**

These intelligent nature spirits appear from the midst of trees when summoned, rising up from the ground or from bushes if no trees are present. They are 15 to 20 feet tall and at least 3 feet thick, appearing as a variety of different types of trees (an unusually wide one in the case of normally thin species). Their trunks do not split into legs, but rather they move on thick, heavy roots, and use their largest branches as arms (1d3+1 branches are large enough). About halfway up their height, and below the level of the branches, the wrinkles and cracks of the bark form a large unmistakable face, with dark cavities for eyes.

If summoned for the purpose of divination or elucidation, these spirits are happy to converse with respectful petitioners. They can take a long time to arrive at the salient points of a conversation, but for those patient enough to have in-depth discourse, a Tree Spirit will know many things about the typical daily occurrences of the immediate vicinity where it was summoned. It will also know something of major events in this area over the last 100 years or so, especially events that affected trees or the soil. It can also

predict how various circumstances will affect trees in the future.

If summoned with a Holy Oak Sucker acorn, the Tree Spirit is likely to ask those nearby why they have summoned it. It will not attack those it does not see as a threat, but will attack anything that tries to harm it. It will also immediately attack any undead or creature of the Elder Gods.

**OSR:** 10HD, AC as chain, 2 to 4 branch attacks per round for 2d6 damage each. Blunt attacks do only half damage to the Tree Spirit, but fire inflicts double damage.

**NGR:** The tree spirit is a large (size modifier 4) supernatural creature whose woody body counts as bulky wooden plate armour. It will have 2 to 4 suitable limbs (medium blunt weapons) which it may clumsily (8 Agility) attack with similar to dual wield (allowing all limbs to attack). It is vulnerable to fire which deals double damage. The tree spirits are very wise (16 intelligence) and can be quite affable (12 charisma) though above all they are supremely patient (20 will).

### **UNDEAD MOSS-FUNGUS MOUND**

A sloppy, 4 to 8 foot humped wet mass of fungus, moss, and the fluids, plasma, bone, and other materials of dead bodies. Its soggy form is immune to physical assault and causes organic material to rot on contact. Although it gives off the chill of death, any form of cold will damage its structure and harm it normally. Any liquid thrown or poured on it



will be immediately absorbed, and its characteristics added to those of the mound. For example, if flammable oil is absorbed, the mound becomes highly flammable. It would burn anything it touches if set alight, but could now be hurt by any sort of flame.

**OSR:** 4-8HD, AC as leather. It attacks by forming rough appendages with which it bashes for 1d8 damage, plus 1d4 damage from rot. If a successful attack roll is a natural 19 or 20, the mound overruns the victim, trapping them beneath it and dealing 1d6 rotting damage per round until they are freed. Weapons, even if magical, serve only to divide it into multiple mounds (freeing anyone trapped beneath it). Electricity will only heal it and speed it up. Unless modified, its wet nature makes it immune to all fire. Any successful hit by the mound has a 20% chance to infect the victim with deadly spores, as detailed under Spore Zombies. It can be turned as a zombie.

**NGR:** This mound is a size 1 creature that is immune to physical attacks, though dealing more than 10 slashing damage will split it into two size ½ mounds (or a half

sized mound into two quarter sized mounds). It is incredibly wet, and so normally has a DR of 5 versus fire. Its magical nature allows it to heal itself by absorbing electricity. It attacks by attempting to envelop its victims (its body is a large, blunt, entangling weapon) and it deals 1d8 points of disease each round to anyone in contact with it. It is a supernatural corruption of the elder gods and is vulnerable to exorcism.



### VETERANS

One or two fighting men (based on the d4 roll) hunting for game. The Veterans of The Sycamores are all equipped with chain mail and shields. 8 of them have spears as well, while the other 8 have longswords. In their camp are two bows used for hunting. Their leader, Darmid Robuck, is armoured with chain mail and shield, and wields a longsword.

**OSR:** Veterans - Level 2-3, AC chain with shield, damage by weapon.  
Darmid - Level 4, AC chain with shield, damage by weapon.

**NGR:** 3 part warriors, level 1. Equipped with a helm, mail and a medium shield. Specialist in either spear or longsword as appropriate.

### VINES OF THE EARTH -

Appearing as part vine and part tentacle, and up to 20 feet long and the thickness of a human thigh, these growths are a product of the corruption of the Elder Gods. 1-4 vines (based on the d4 result) burst forth from the soil and attempt to bash and grab anyone nearby, crushing them with their great strength. They can then be thrown, manipulated, or hit by another vine if more are present. If grabbed by another vine, the victim runs the risk of being ripped apart. If the Vale is entirely cleansed of Elder God corruption, this encounter no longer occurs after 2 days.

**OSR:** 6 HD, AC as leather, bash for 1d8 damage. On a successful hit there is a 25% chance the victim is grabbed. If grabbed, a variety of things may happen in the next round:

- 1 Automatically squeezed for 1d6 damage per round
- 2 Thrown 1d3x20 feet. 1d6 damage for every 20 feet thrown
- 3 Used to bash another target, doing 1d8 damage to both if successful





- 4 Attacked by another vine at +2 to hit (re-roll if only one vine)

If held by one vine and successfully attacked by another, there is only a 10% chance the second vine grabs on as well, but if it does the victim must make a successful saving throw or be torn in two next round.

**NGR:** The vines are larger than a man (size modifier 2) and both extremely quick (16 agility) and strong (16 strong). They attack by whipping their blubbery (counts as light armour) tentacled bodies (large, reach, blunt, ineffective). They can use an equivalent of the “Brute Throw” combat trick and if more than one tentacle grapple the same target they may each spend an action to automatically do an additional strength die of stun damage as they attempt to pull the unfortunate soul in twain.

**WANDERER**

This can be a randomly generated NPC from anywhere in the campaign world, but otherwise treat this result as a peasant from a nearby settlement. Most wanderers in the area will be here seeking the Temple of The Seasons for some reason, usually with

a goal of becoming an initiate. Others may be here to ask questions of the Oak Priests on behalf of a nearby town or settlement, and likely come bearing gifts. They will be aware of the widespread positive effect of the Great Oak, as well as the presence of something ‘wrong’ in the larger area within the last few generations. They believe that if the oak is somehow in danger, this might lead to famine and disaster in the region.

**WATER SPIRIT**

A large and ancient spirit of great power, having lived in The Pond since long before the construction of the Standing Stones. It takes the form of an enormous woman’s face, 12 feet high and composed of rushing, churning water. Her countenance prior to being cleansed is dark, forbidding and angry. When attacking, it appears to open its mouth wide in an angry shout and spew forth a massive unending blast of water (though very little water actually leaves the water spirit), crushing any within a ten foot area with great force.

If cleansed, the face is composed of calm, clear water, and will converse languidly with those who approach it respectfully at the bottom of The Pond. Its knowledge is limited to



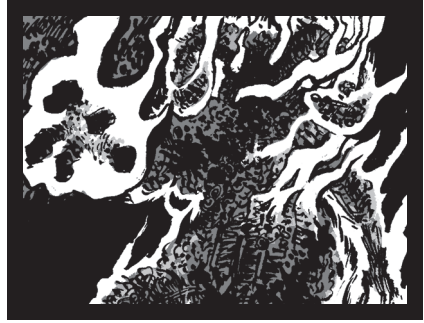
its own experiences, and things and events directly affecting the water upstream from it. It is also quite glad to be rid of the corruption.

**OSR:** 12hd, AC as chain. Attacks a 10 foot circular area for 3d6 damage, save for half. It is entirely immune to non-magical weapons, and cold will only slow it.

**NGR:** The water spirit is a large (size modifier 3) supernatural elemental spirit of considerable intellect (16 intelligence, will, and charisma) that should be treated as incorporeal when attacked with weapons. It is immune to mundane weaponry and cold will only deal stun damage to the being. Its blast of water should be treated as an innate cone spell (Mouth of the river). The water spirit has 100 mana and is considered a *regional threat* (3d6 luck, 3 fates).

### **WICKER-FRAME TOPIARY**

These powerful statues consist of a sturdy wicker frame and thick growing vines and greenery. They take no damage from missile weapons. In addition, they are impervious to all heat and flame. When attacked or angered, they burst into flames and move to attack, doing additional fire damage with each hit, and constantly burning anyone in melee combat with them. The topiary of Mother Nature in the center of the Nave is larger, stronger, and can wield magic (**OSR:** As a 5th level druid



or nature cleric. **NGR:** It has a faith of 5 and 200 piety for use with the Miracles power) After combat, surviving topiary will return to their roots and extinguish their flames.

**OSR:** 10hd, AC as chain, damage 1d8+1d6 fire. They deal an additional 1d6 fire damage per round while in melee range. Mother Nature topiary: 12hd, AC as plate, damage 1d10+1d6 fire, and an additional 1d6 fire damage per round while in melee range.

**NGR:** The topiaries are much larger than a man (size 2), and engulfed in flame that deals an additional 1d6 fire damage on contact. They are surprisingly very quick and strong (16 strength and agility). Attacking the topiaries in melee also deals 1d6 fire damage, less the reach of your weapon. The “Mother Nature” topiary is even larger (size 3). Their nature as animate topiaries makes them extremely resistant to blunt and piercing damage (DR 10). Each topiary is a *local legend* (1d6 luck, 1 fate).

# MAGICAL ITEMS



## **CROWN OF MISTLETOE**

A small mistletoe wreath that fits over the head, enchanted in a ceremony on the night of the Winter Solstice. The one worn by Caddis Scrim consists of bare, dry mistletoe twigs. When removed from his head, the mistletoe twigs turn green, and leaves and white berries quickly grow as its healing magic returns.

**OSR:** The wearer is rendered immune to poison, and any living being wearing the crown will heal 1 additional hitpoint each day at dawn.

**NGR:** The wearer cannot accrue additional poison and all existing accrued poison is harmlessly removed. A living wearer automatically passes healing checks while the crown is worn. It is also a relic and grants +1 to faith when worn by Oak Priests.



## **DIVINING WAND**

A short carved length of rowan wood charged with divination magic to find metal deposits.

**OSR:** If held out, it will begin to point down as the wielder approaches deposits of metal in the ground. This wand can be used by any spellcaster.

**NGR:** The wand is an intricate spell component for scrying or detection spells related to mineral or other resource deposits. Anyone with skill in the oak priest's mysteries can read the spell "Divine Ore" from its carvings.

## **HEALING WAND**

A short carved length of hazel wood that has been imbued with healing magic.

**OSR:** This wand can be used by any spellcaster. For each charge expended, it will heal 1d6 hit points. One received by the party will have 1d6 charges remaining.

**NGR:** The wand is an intricate spell component for regeneration spells. Anyone with skill in the oak priest's mysteries can read the spell "stream of life" from its carvings.



### **PROTECTING WAND**

A short carved length of hawthorn wood which contains protective magic against harm.

**OSR:** This wand can be used by any spellcaster. Each charge used protects the wielder from both physical and magical attacks, improving saving throws and armour by +1 for a full turn. One received by the party will have 1d6 charges remaining.

**NGR:** The wand is an intricate spell component for armouring spells. Anyone with skill in the oak priest's mysteries can read the spell "living armour" from its carvings.



### **ROWAN STAFF**

The peeled branch of a 'flying' rowan tree, enchanted in a ceremony on an Oak Priest holy day between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. They are as tall as a person, plus the distance from the elbow to the middle finger, and are used for walking and magical protection. While within Oakfell Vale, the staff can also be struck into the ground upright to summon a Tree Spirit.

**OSR:** +0 to attack rolls, but can harm those only affected by magical

weapons. It also improves saving throws and armour class against spirits, otherworldly creatures, and evil beings by +2. Once per day it may be used to summon a tree spirit.

**NGR:** This is a staff made of flying rowan that also doubles as a holy symbol to the Oak Priests. Anyone with skill in the oak priest's mysteries can read the spell "Conjure Tree Spirit" from its carvings.



### **SCRIM'S MEDALLION**

A thick, flat, octagonal stone, 4 inches across. It was carved out of the greenish-black boulder at location 'a'. It has the ability, if activated and controlled by the proper rituals, to serve as a conduit for the corrupting energy of the dark Elder Gods.

If Scrim is defeated, and it is removed from his neck, the medallion's faint glow stops. If left on his neck, it will continue to glow, and continue to channel energy into him. It will eventually bring him back if nothing else is done, but that would take at least 3 months.

The medallion can also channel the corrupt energy the other direction, if conditions are right, pulling it out of certain things and sending it back to its origin. If used in conjunction with the Ritual of Binding, it is able to draw out the corruption from The Pond and the Water Spirit that lives within, as

well as from the corrupted soil under and around the boulder at location 'a'.

### TRANSFORMING WAND

A short carved length of ash wood that has been empowered with transformation magic.

**OSR:** This wand can be used by any spellcaster. If the wielder successfully hits a target with a melee attack using the wand, the target must make a saving throw or be transformed into a normal medium-sized animal. Possibilities include swans, deer, pigs, wolves, and others. Spirits, undead, and otherworldly creatures cannot be transformed.



A transformed individual gets another saving throw every day at sunset to return to their true form. One charge is used for each successful melee hit, whether the target's saving throw is successful or not. One received by the party will have 1d6 charges remaining.

**NGR:** The wand is an intricate spell component for polymorph spells. Anyone with skill in the oak priest's mysteries can read the spell "Wild Hex" from its carvings.

## SPELLS

### RITUAL OF BINDING

Enough clues and details exist in the memorial text on the boulder at location 'a' for one experienced with magic to reconstruct this ritual. It was originally used to bind the Water Spirit from The Pond, but can be modified and combined with Scrim's medallion to drain the corruption from the Water Spirit and from the soil around the boulder.

Four individuals must chant the ritual while each uses a small bundle of fallen twigs (one oak, one birch, one rowan, and one yew bundle) to draw a large border around the target area.

The shape of the border depends on the elements and conditions involved; round for water, square for earth, triangular for fire, and pentagonal for air. The four individuals then continue to chant while setting four items at equidistant points around the border. The items are incense for water, holy water for earth, bonfires for air, and stone statues or monoliths for fire. After 10 minutes of chanting, the magic begins to have an effect. At least one of the four individuals must continue chanting for 3 minutes after this point for the ritual to complete successfully.

## **SPELLS (NGR)**

### **MOUTH OF THE RIVER**

Template: Cone  
Difficulty: 3 per power level  
Cost: 4 per power level  
Range: 5 feet per power level or 1 Area

The caster spews forth a spray of churning water at a target from their mouth. The spray will have a diameter at any point equal to the distance from the caster. So 5 feet out from the caster, the cone will have a diameter of 5 feet. The spell will force a knockdown check and deal 1d6 of damage per power level of the spell, reducing by both 1 check and 1 die for every five feet from the caster, until it reaches 0 dice. If you are using abstracted movement, this should hit one person in your area for full damage and knockdown checks and/or 1 person per power level for 1 check and a single die of damage in a neighbouring area.

### **STREAM OF LIFE**

Template: Regeneration  
Difficulty: 2 per power level  
Cost: 5 per power level  
Range: Touch

This spell allows the target to heal supernaturally fast. The target immediately makes a number of weekly healing checks equal to the power level of this spell with a bonus equal to the power level of the spell.

### **LIVING ARMOUR**

Template: Armouring  
Difficulty: 1(cumulative) per power level  
Cost: 3 per power level  
Range: Self

This spell grants the caster a DR against attacks equal to the spell's power level as the caster's skin and muscle harden. This spell will last for 10 minutes per power level and its benefits do not combine with worn armour, use the better of the two in any instance.

### **CONJURE TREE SPIRIT**

Template: Summon  
Difficulty: 1d8 per power level  
Cost: 5 per power level  
Range: Touch

The spell allows the caster to summon a tree spirit to possess a nearby tree or wooden object sticking into the ground (the vessel is a spell component). The tree spirit is not under the control of the caster and will remain in the mortal realm so long as it stands overtop the roots of a magical tree (such as the entirety of the Oakfell Vale).

## **WILD HEX**

Template: Polymorph  
Difficulty: 2 per power level  
Cost: 4 per power level  
Range: Touch

This spell allows the caster to transform the target into a normal medium-sized animal. Possibilities include swans, deer, pigs, wolves, or other animals. Mystical or Supernatural creatures cannot be transformed. The target maintains their intelligence when transformed, though that may degrade/upgrade over time. This spell will last for one day normally, unless altered by spell components or made permanent. The spell deals a d10 mutation points to the

## **DIVINATION**

If magic is used to speak with various plants and trees, animals, rocks, or corpses throughout Oakfell Vale, they might only know relatively mundane information about their immediate area, but some might have useful information for the party.

Animals will speak highly of the Oak Priests, but some will be afraid of the Veterans due to their hunting. Any that range throughout the Vale will know which parts of the streams are clean water and which are corrupted, and might know where some of the Greater Forest Area Locations are. They may know the general area of the Acid Bee Hives and the Veterans of the Sycamores, but not their exact locations. Hunted animals avoid the Veterans' area for obvious reasons, and all animals give a wide berth to the Acid Bees' area. Most also avoid The Falls, since Acid Bees visit that

target per power level. These represent the individual being converted (growing fur, a tail, wings, whatever).

## **DIVINE ORE**

Template: Scry  
Difficulty: 1 per power level  
Cost: 2 per power level  
Range: 1 (doubling) miles per power level

This spell allows the caster to sense nearby deposits of metal, including direction. The caster senses the metal with a mix of size of the deposit and distance (very similar to sight). This spell has a duration of 1(cumulative) minute per power level.

location frequently. They will, of course, have only a vague idea of the difference between other areas, in most cases just saying there are "rocks moved by people" at them.

Rocks will have limited information, as usual, but most rocks know they were either carried here long ago by ice, or carved and gouged by passing ice. The exception is any of the greenish-black stone, which are all fragments of the primeval Elder God temple in the mountains. Attempts to magically communicate with them will fill the caster's mind with visions of a dark and sinister high mountain temple, a sky filled with black clouds, and the feeling of a yawning, formless, black void pulling at their consciousness. Most will be knocked unconscious for several hours.

Plants will know that it slowly keeps getting a little more difficult to

grow. They feel poisoned, but they don't know by what. Older trees will have an excellent memory of the changes in fertility which have occurred in the Vale over the last 100 years, but they too will be unsure of the cause. The exception here is the Great Oak. If the party is permitted to try to communicate with it using magic, the caster will instead receive a vision of an incomprehensibly enormous tree, branching off into thousands of directions in space, with no ground or even world in sight. Impossibly, they will seem to 'see' branches connecting with many distant stars, and will intuitively feel the vast, mind-numbing distances

involved. The nearest branches are afflicted with a slowly growing, oddly formless, black rot. The vision then passes, leaving most in a tranquil but insensate daze for up to an hour.

Dead bodies found in the forest will remember how they died, and in the case of either Oak Priests or Veterans causing their demise, it will become clear that the now-dead individual attacked them for some reason. Those buried in the cemetery within the last few months will be several former Oak Priests, mostly Initiates. Some will remember going to sleep and feeling a prickling sensation all across the side they were lying on.

## **POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**


If the party doesn't eliminate all the corruption, but the Oak Priests have accepted the fact that High Priest Scrim committed heresy and set it all in motion, the Oak Priests will remedy the situation themselves in the succeeding weeks.

Once all the corruption has been cleansed, and if the Oak Priests and the Great Oak still endure, a great celebration will be held in the Temple of The Seasons. Part of the preparation for this involves setting up a tall ladder and scaffold at the Great Oak. During the ceremonies, Davath Woodbine passes the High Priesthood on to Bridig Derwin. He then climbs up to the scaffold, gives a farewell speech, and begins climbing up into the Great Oak.

After a while he is entirely obscured from view, and is never seen again.

If the corruption of the Elder Gods is dealt with, but the Great Oak is also somehow destroyed, the region within 24 miles of the vale may be driven into famine. This will likely have far-reaching effects, as this area will likely have been relied upon for its uncannily high agricultural production for centuries. Surviving Oak Priests will try to find some means of re-growing the Great Oak, but a few will leave Oakfell Vale and return to wandering.

If the party doesn't rectify all the corruption, and the Oak Priests have not been made aware of or accepted the fact that High Priest Scrim committed heresy and set it all



in motion, the Oak Priests do not act until the Great Oak is so far gone that hostile creatures of corruption have begun coming into the main clearing and attacking the Temple grounds. This is at least many months and possibly a few years away. By this time, however, it's not just corrupted local flora, fauna, and awakened remains. Actual horrors of the Void will be leaking through into this reality, and

these creatures of the Elder Gods will prove too powerful for the Oak Priests to cope with. They will attempt to send for aid, but if none is forthcoming, the entire region (about 50 miles across) will gradually but inexorably become a dark spawning ground for eldritch horrors. At some point, nearly all of the surrounding villagers who have not fled the region will have become wicked cultists of the Elder Gods.

# OAKFELL VALE HISTORY

The approximate length of time or number of years before the present when major events happened that had an impact on Oakfell Vale.

## *Years Ago Events*

**Eons**    Glaciers fracture the mountain temple of the Elder Gods, and fragments are carried down from the mountains. The boulder at location 'a' is deposited in Oakfell Vale.

**Millennia** - The Great Oak begins growing in the valley, extending into this reality as an outgrowth of the pan-dimensional World Tree.

**800**    - A small band of wandering Oak Priests discovers the Vale and the Great Oak. They gather more Oak Priests to the valley, and build the Temple of The Seasons. They also find the Standing Stones, raised centuries earlier by some previous and long-gone group of worshippers, and incorporate them into their rituals.

**170**    - Edric Winterbough becomes high priest.

**165**    - Temple production changes from ale to wine.

**160**    - The Water Spirit is tamed and 'The Acorn' ritual is started.

**150**    - Edric Winterbough dies.

**140**    - The Memorial to Winterbough is carved into the boulder at location 'a'.

**110**    - Scrim becomes high priest, human sacrifices are started in Clearing Two, and changes are made to The Acorn, The Falls, and The Spring. The Effect of Scrim's Elder Gods adds to the effect of the Great Oak, increasing agricultural production beyond previous levels.

**100**    - The inn at Clearing One is abandoned. Corruption of Scrim's Elder Gods begins outpacing all positive effects, harming the tree, and reducing overall agricultural production.

**90**    - Scrim dies.

**80**    - Priests realize the Oak is dying.

**70**    - Draining enchantment discovered. The Oak's health is bolstered, and in combination with the Elder God effect, agricultural production rises again to levels not seen since Scrim's heyday.

**15**    - Davath Woodbine becomes high priest.