

THE STEALER OF CHILDREN



**A Labyrinth Lord adventure designed for
3-6 characters of 1st level**



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Labyrinth Lord
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THE STEALER OF CHILDREN

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THE STEALER OF CHILDREN

The Stealer of Children is a **Labyrinth Lord™** adventure designed for 3-6 characters of 1st level. A diverse range of classes is recommended, with the typical 1st level party having limited or no access to magical items or weapons. The adventure is set in the small village of Leandras Row in the Duchy of Valnwall, but the Labyrinth Lord is free to substitute any small frontier village from his own campaign world.

The Stealer of Children involves a mixture of roleplaying, investigation, dungeon crawling, and wilderness exploration, with combat encounters spaced out to accommodate the party's low level. The adventure pits the characters against a creature that cannot be easily overcome by brute force, so characters who rely too much on their combat abilities may be in for a tough time.

Note: Tips for scaling the adventure for higher-level characters are included later in this text.

Adventure Background

Hundreds of years ago, the frontier village of Lansings Row suffered a rash of mysterious child disappearances. The local noble, a widower named Lord Albert Lansing, put curfews in place and organized armed patrols while the local priest of the Old Gods led the terrified villagers in nightly prayers—all to no avail.

Then one night, Lord Lansing's own son, Evan, disappeared. Driven by grief, Lord Lansing entered the Tanglewood seeking help from the forest spirits that were said to dwell

within. Meanwhile, his most loyal man-at-arms, Sir Gilroy, took up the search for the missing boy. This Sir Gilroy had watched over young Evan his entire life and loved him as he would his own son.

Lord Lansing wandered the ancient forest for days until at last he came upon a bubbling spring and a kindly forest spirit named Meritt. Meritt took pity upon the nobleman and told him that an ancient and evil faerie creature known as a grombel was responsible for his son's disappearance. Meritt revealed the location of the grombel's lair, but warned Lansing that the grombel was beyond the power of ordinary men to harm. In order to defeat the grombel, she gave Lansing two things—a magical acorn and the recipe for a magical potion. The acorn, when planted, would contain the grombel in its lair, while the potion, once brewed, would give him the power to destroy the creature.

Lord Lansing returned to the village and told Sir Gilroy what he had learned. As Meritt had instructed, he planted the acorn at the entrance to the grombel's lair and Sir Gilroy vowed to keep watch over the lair while Lansing brewed the potion.

The villagers were furious to learn that Lansing had entered the Tanglewood. When shipments of strange ingredients began arriving at the manor, rumors began to circulate that Lansing was in league with the dark forces that had stolen their children. Led by the priest of the Old Gods, the angry mob attacked the manor and put it to the torch. Lansing died in a

last ditch attempt to escape the fire, but not before finishing the potion.

Sir Gilroy saw the fires and was overcome by grief and rage, but remained at his post guarding the entrance to the grombel's lair. The villagers thought him crazed and finally stoned him to death when he refused to renounce his allegiance to Lord Lansing. However, such was Sir Gilroy's devotion that not even death could force him to break his vow, and he rose again as an undead and drove the villagers from the forest.

Within days, the magical acorn sprouted and grew into a giant oak tree that enveloped Sir Gilroy within its trunk and completely covered the entrance to the grombel's lair. With the grombel contained, the child disappearances ceased and the remaining villagers seldom spoke about Lord Lansing or the darkness that had touched their lives.

Many years passed and in time, the Church of Law and Order replaced the worship of the Old Gods. The Sisterhood of St. Leandra was eventually given stewardship of the village and they renamed it Leandras Row after the Lady of Blossoms. Under their guidance, the orchards

were cultivated, crops planted, and the village began to prosper once again.

And still, the loyal Sir Gilroy waited inside the ancient oak. . .

Managing the Adventure

The Stealer of Children is a freeform adventure that starts with a chain of events that are set into motion as the characters arrive in the village of Leandras Row. Why the characters come to the village is for the Labyrinth Lord to decide. They may be visiting a friend or relative, they may have been sent to pick up or deliver an item for the church, or they may simply be wandering the land in search of adventure.

The adventure is designed to take place over the course of several days, but may take longer, depending on the characters' actions and involvement (if any). The characters are thrown into the initial encounter (see **The Restless Dead**, pg. 6), but afterwards, they may not realize that more is going on until bad things start to happen. The Labyrinth Lord is therefore encouraged to let the characters roleplay their arrival at Leandras Row just as they would any other small village or town.



Leandras Row

Leandras Row is a typical medieval fantasy village that is home to about 60 families (about 350 people total) in the village and surrounding area. A stone abbey dedicated to St. Leandra the Lady of Blossoms dominates the north side of the village. Crop fields lie to the south while cherry orchards stretch for many acres to the northeast. A ruined manor, forgotten and overgrown, overlooks the village from atop a hill on the northwest side of the village and beyond that lies an ancient and trackless forest known as the Tanglewood.

Leandras Row has no central marketplace; vendors normally display their wares directly in front of their homes during the day. Most of the homes are narrow one- or two-story cottages of wood construction, with upstairs living quarters, downstairs shops, and a shed or root cellar out back.

The village of Leandras Row is most famous for a week-long springtime celebration known as the Cherry Blossom Festival that brings vendors and visitors from all over the Duchy of Valnwall. The festival is marked by singing, dancing, merriment, and games (including the famous cherry grog-drinking and cherry pie-eating contests), all in celebration of the Lady of Blossoms.

The Abbey of St. Leandra

The Abbey of St. Leandra is a sprawling compound comprised of a main chapel, library, personal quarters for the sisters, and two storage warehouses that hold grain, surplus crops, and other communal goods. The abbey bustles with activity during the day, as sisters and acolytes perform their duties and visitors stop by to worship and pay their respects. At night, the abbey is peaceful and quiet with only one of the sisters remaining awake to make the

rounds, check on the acolytes, and sound the alarm in case of trouble.

Cemetery

This ancient cemetery contains a dozen crypts and hundreds of grave markers. The cemetery was absorbed by the abbey and is tended by the sisterhood. The double doors of the largest crypt contains the cherry-tree standard of House Lansing. A concealed trapdoor in the crypt's floor opens onto a stone staircase and a passage that eventually leads to a collapsed tunnel beneath the Ruins of Lansing Manor (see **Collapsed Tunnel**, pg. 11).

The Red Smile

The Red Smile is a one-story tavern owned and operated by the tavernkeeper Drumas Long. It is famous for its frothing cherry grog which stains teeth red and leaves the drinker happy until morning. A separate two-story building around back contains a stable and a dozen second-story rooms that are usually empty except during festival times.

The Red Smile serves Lunch and Dinner which consists of the meat of the day (pork, fish, chicken, or goat), two sides of seasonal vegetables (green beans, corn on the cob, potatoes, mushrooms, celery, etc.), and one seasonal fruit (apples, oranges, cherries, etc.). A mug of ale is served during Lunch while a mug of ale or grog and a slice of pie (usually cherry) is served during Dinner. Lodging at the Red Smile costs 2 sp per night and includes Dinner.

Price List

Lunch	6 cp
Dinner	1 sp
Pie (slice)	1 cp
Pie (whole)	4 cp
Ale (mug)	1 cp
Cherry Grog (mug)	4 cp
Wine (glass)	1 sp

Leandra's Square

This grassy square is used for picnics, festivals, and other village functions. Its numerous pavestone paths are lined with exotic plants, bushes, and flowers that are tended daily by the abbey's acolytes. A 9' tall statue of St. Leandra the Lady of Blossoms sits inside a fountain in the center of the square.

During the Cherry Blossom Festival, the fountain's waters are dyed pink, the footpaths are filled with entertainers and other visitors, and the nearby streets are lined with vendors.

The plants found alongside the paths were imported and planted by Sister Carlena and provide some of the key ingredients needed for brewing the **Dryad's Potion** (see pg. 25) and defeating the grombel. At least one acolyte can usually be found here during the day, watering plants, weeding gardens, and shaping bushes. If asked, she can (silently) point out specific plants and shrubs.

The Lady's Orchards

This vast cherry orchard is managed by the abbey, tended by villagers, and the whole village benefits from its profits. The orchards bustle with activity during the day as the sisters oversee village workers and prepare for the next harvest.

Crop Fields

These crop fields are divided into sectors that belong to the whole village, the local abbey, and individual villagers. The fields bustle with activity during the day as the villagers prepare for the next harvest or planting (depending on the time of year).

Cherry Creek

Cherry Creek is a slow-flowing stream that runs north-south along the eastern side of Leandras Row. During springtime, the creek is blanketed by pink cherry blossoms, and its peaceful banks are frequented by young lovers.

Cherry Creek Bridge

This ancient, moss-covered stone bridge was built long ago. A close inspection of its weathered sides reveals a stone engraving of the cherry-tree standard of House Lansing.

Ruins of Lansing Manor

These ancient ruins are the former home of House Lansing. See **Into the Ruins of Lansing Manor** (pg. 11) for more detailed information on the Ruins of Lansing Manor.

Tanglewood

The Tanglewood is a trackless forest with a dark history and an evil reputation. Legends say it is full of mythical creatures and that any who enter its borders are doomed to wander aimlessly forever. Although the outskirts of the Tanglewood are no more dangerous than any other forest, the villagers have shunned the forest for as long as anyone can remember. See **Entering the Tanglewood** (pg. 13) for more detailed information on the Tanglewood.

Other Places of Note

The following places are located in the area of Leandras Row. None of these areas are shown on the main map.

Cherry Creek Mill

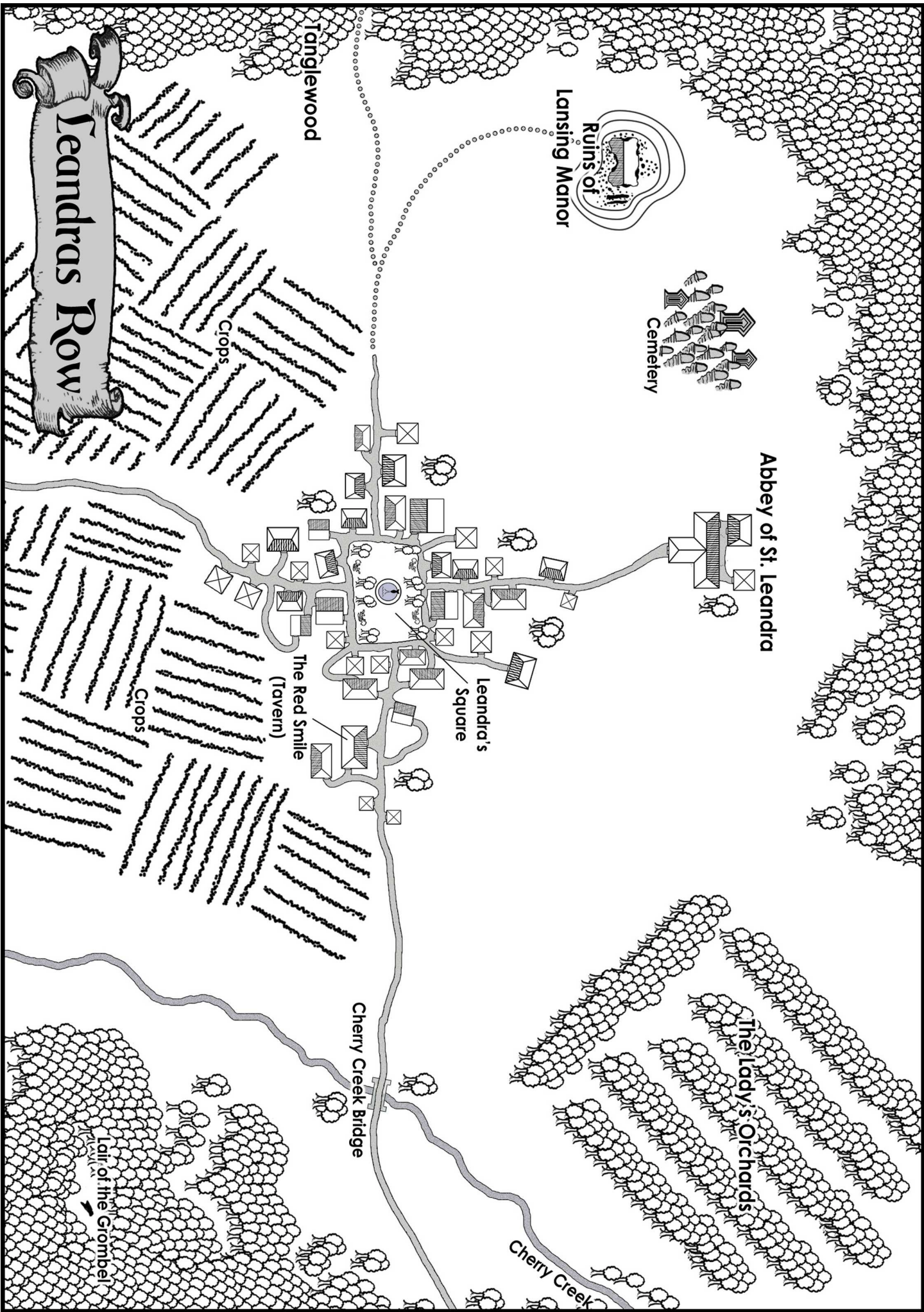
This gristmill is a large stone structure located just downstream. The mill processes grain and corn from local farmers. It is owned and operated by Miller Marc. The mill's dank sublevels are subject to occasional giant rat and other infestations.

Caves of Callos

This natural cave complex was once home to several different humanoid tribes that fought amongst themselves and occasionally raided the village of Leandras Row. When a charismatic evil human cleric named Callos tried to unite the tribes, the Sisters of St. Leandra hired adventurers to handle the threat. Callos escaped, but many believe it is only a matter of time before he and his humanoid followers return.

Forbidden Spire

This 30' tall stone spire located north of the orchards resembles a unicorn's horn. The spire is shunned by the adult villagers, however, children often come here to climb the spire and slide down the spiral horn. Whether the spire is a mystical site or just part of a buried statue is left for the Labyrinth Lord to decide.



Major Events

The characters are on the road to Leandras Row within sight of Cherry Creek Bridge when they hear shouts for help and see a terrified farmer running across a field towards them. Behind the farmer, a man in an antiquated suit of armor follows at a steady pace with a long sword raised over his head.

The farmer is Ben Atkins. Ben went into the forest to collect firewood and came upon an oak tree that had recently been struck by lightning. This tree was the same tree that had sprouted from the magical acorn, enveloped Sir Gilroy, and covered the entrance to the grombel's lair.

As Ben began cutting down the tree, he saw the gleam of metal from inside. It was then that the undead Sir Gilroy sprang to action, cutting his way out from within the tree and attempting to slay the farmer who had disturbed his rest.

The Restless Dead

The undead Sir Gilroy pursues the farmer relentlessly. If the characters do nothing, Sir Gilroy kills the farmer and then returns to his post at the entrance to the grombel's lair. The villagers eventually discover Farmer Ben's hacked body on the road and the warder Arlen Travers begins his investigation (see **The Villagers Take Charge**, below). The characters most likely have some explaining to do if the villagers ever learn that they ignored Farmer Ben's cries for help and they are very likely to find themselves unwelcome in Leandras Row.

If the characters intervene to save Farmer Ben, Sir Gilroy fights until destroyed. The undead man-at-arms wears rusted plate mail armor and wields a long sword. Although the vow he made long ago is still strong, the power

of the Old Gods he swore by has grown weak and feeble.

It should be apparent after just a round or so of combat that the man-at-arms is no longer human—its eyes glow with a pale light, pieces of armor fall away to reveal mummified flesh, and wisps of white beard and hair protrude from beneath its helm.

Sir Gilroy suffers half damage from bludgeoning weapons (clubs, maces, quarterstaves, etc.), 1 hp of damage from piercing weapons (spears, arrows, etc.) and full damage from slashing weapons (swords, battle axes, etc.). If Turned by a cleric, the undead Sir Gilroy returns to the burned oak. Once at the oak, Sir Gilroy can no longer be Turned.

Sir Gilroy (undead man-at-arms): AL N; MV 90' (30'); AC 5 (rusted plate mail); HD 2; hp 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (long sword); SA immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, resistance to weapons (see above); SV F2; ML 12; XP 38.

Unanswered Questions

Once the characters destroy the undead man-at-arms, Farmer Ben thanks the characters profusely and explains to them what happened. Characters who examine the body find a mummified corpse inside a suit of armor bearing the stylized cherry-tree standard of the House of Lansing. The characters can discover the origin of the standard by speaking with any of the Sisters of St. Leandra, by exploring the **Ruins of Lansing Manor**, or by visiting the **Cemetery** and discovering it on the crypt of House Lansing.

If the characters ask, Farmer Ben can give them directions to the burned oak where he first encountered the undead warrior, but he is

too scared to go there with them. His back trail is easy to follow, however, and the characters can reach the burned oak in less than two turns if they are so inclined (skip ahead to **Into the Grombel's Lair**, below).

The Villagers Take Charge

If the characters are not interested in investigating this event, they may proceed to the village of Leandras Row and the Labyrinth Lord may skip ahead to **Settling In**, below. Farmer Ben is shaken and asks if he can accompany them. Once back at the village, Farmer Ben heads straight to the Abbey of St. Leandra and tells the sisters what happened.

The sisters then call the warder Arlen Travers and he and several villagers retrieve Sir Gilroy's body and return it to the abbey. The sisters examine Sir Gilroy's remains and Sister Allisen recognizes the cherry-tree crest of the fallen House of Lansing.

Meanwhile, Travers and his company retrace Farmer Ben's path to the burned oak. Travers examines the burned oak and determines that the oak is of a type that is normally only found deep within the borders of the Tanglewood. He does not discover the entrance to the grombel's lair.

Arlen Travers calls a meeting with the Sisters of St. Leandra and the Village Council while a crowd of villagers gathers around the Red Smile tavern. Travers then tells the villagers what has happened. All of this takes place over the course of a few hours and the whole village is soon abuzz with nervous speculation. If the characters express interest in learning more, see **Rumors and Information** on pg. 10.

Although his primary concern is the safety of the village, Arlen Travers is not equipped to deal with the supernatural threat that is later posed by the grombel. He is happy to assist the characters at any time they decide to take an active role in the investigation or other events as they unfold over the course of the next few days. Travers can be counted on to stand watch, gather information, or even step in to cover the characters' escape, but neither he nor any of the other villagers are willing to go poking around into locations such as the

Tanglewood, the Ruins of Lansing Manor, or the Grombel's Lair.

Such is the life of an adventurer. . .

Into the Grombel's Lair

If the characters retrace Farmer Ben's steps after their encounter with Sir Gilroy, they arrive at the burned oak and discover the entrance to the grombel's lair simply by searching the base of the tree. The destruction of the oak (by the lightning strike and Farmer Ben's axe) effectively broke the enchantment that contained the grombel in its lair, however, the grombel and its grubs do not actually awaken until after night falls (see the **Grombel Awakens**, below). Characters who enter the lair before then find that everything within, including the grombel and its grubs, has been turned to gray stone statues covered by an eerie blanket of light mist.

An elf character may make an Intelligence check at -4 while a magic-user character may make an Intelligence check at -6 to recognize the grombel as an evil child-stealing fairy that is immune to normal weapons. Nothing the characters do at this point can harm any of the petrified creatures inside the lair, but this information may come in handy when the characters finally confront the grombel and its brood.

If the characters tell the villagers about the lair, Mother Millis and Arlen Travers check it out for themselves. After a brief look inside the entrance, Mother Millis leads the sisters in prayer while Arlen Travers, Bryan the Smith, and a few other fearful villagers place several large rocks on top of the slab.

Settling In

The characters should be given some time to settle in, meet the villagers, and handle whatever business brought them to Leandras Row. The talk that night is all about the undead man-at-arms, the lair (if the characters discovered it), and the evil spirits of the Tanglewood. Inquisitive characters may take this time to make acquaintances and learn more about the village, its history, and its surroundings (see **Rumors and Information**, pg. 10).

The Grombel Awakens

As night falls, the grombel and its minions awaken from their enchantment, and the grombel sets out in *gaseous form* in search of young prey.

Missing Child

Later that night, the grombel abducts Talia Baler, the 7-year-old daughter of the haycutters, Gerald and Elizabeth Baler. The sleeping child is taken to the **False Bedroom** (pg. 19) where she spends the next five days as the grombel slowly drains her life energy. On the morning of the sixth day, the child's remains are thrown to the grombel grubs in the **Grub Chamber** (pg. 18) and the sated grombel retreats to the **Main Lair** (pg. 19) to digest its evil meal. If the characters move quickly, five days should be plenty of time to track down a draught of the **Dryad's Potion** (pg. 25) and confront the grombel.

Misery Strikes

In the morning, the distraught Balers ask around for anyone who may have seen Talia. They say that the doors and shutters to their simple cottage were locked and that they heard no sounds of anyone entering or leaving during the night. Any character who searches the cottage sees no sign of any struggle.

Mother Millis organizes a search of the town while Arlen Travers enlists volunteers to scour the forest. If the entrance to the grombel's lair was previously sealed by the villagers, Arlen Travers reports that the stones are still in place and appear undisturbed. If the characters enter the lair, skip ahead to **Against the Grombel**.

Unadventurous Adventurers

If the characters are either unwilling or unable to help stop the grombel's depredations, the creature abducts a new child every few weeks and the village is thrown into an uproar. Mother Millis eventually asks the characters directly to help find the children and expose the abductor. This is basically the final chance for the characters to become involved in the adventure. If they refuse, they are shunned by

the villagers and are no longer welcome in Leandras Row. If the characters insist on staying, rumors may begin to circulate that they are somehow behind the disappearances.

Mother Millis quickly sends word to the capital city of Dolmvey and another group of adventurers arrives a few weeks later to tackle the problem. It is up to the Labyrinth Lord to determine the makeup of the new party and decide whether or not they succeed. In any case, word of the characters' cowardice is sure to spread, seriously hindering their adventuring careers.

Tracking Down Leads

If the characters decide to investigate the disappearance(s), it should be obvious that the undead man-at-arms is somehow involved. The characters may return to the burned oak where Sir Gilroy was initially discovered or they may investigate its connection to House Lansing.

Arlen Travers can tell the characters that the oak itself is of a type that is normally found deep in the Tanglewood, which may point them in that direction. The characters may also speak with the villagers and the Sisters of St. Leandra to discover more about the village and its surroundings (see **Rumors and Information**).

Tending the Wounded

If the characters are injured while investigating the child disappearances, Sister Carlena seeks them out as soon as they return to the village and applies a smelly poultice made of roots, mud, and other herbs to their wounds. The poultice immediately restores 1 hit point to the characters and restores an additional 1 hit point after a full night of rest. More importantly, this introduces Sister Carlena to the characters as a skilled herbalist who might know where to locate the exotic ingredients needed for the **Dryad's Potion**.

Against the Grombel

The characters should eventually locate the entrance to the grombel's lair. Any character who enters the lair after the first night must face the awakened grombel and its vicious grubs. The grombel grubs attack anyone who enters the lair. The commotion attracts the

grombel who watches the battle in gaseous form. If the characters kill the grubs, the grombel materializes and attacks. The Labyrinth Lord should read over **Grombel's Tactics** (pg. 20) to determine the grombel's actions.

If the characters have not identified the grombel before now, an elf character may make an Intelligence check at -4 while a magic-user character may make an Intelligence check at -6 to recognize the grombel as an evil child-stealing fairy that is immune to normal weapons.

The characters may be unable to defeat the grombel outright at this point in their careers and this should become painfully obvious once they engage it in combat. Flight is the best option, as the grombel is unable to pursue characters who flee its lair during the day.

There is a slight chance the characters can rescue Talia Baler during this encounter. If this happens, the grombel simply abducts another child on the following night.

If the grombel is somehow killed, the whole village rejoices and the characters are treated as heroes (see **Concluding the Adventure**, pg. 20).

Magical Brew

If the Labyrinth Lord sticks to the level requirements for this adventure, the dryad's magical potion is very likely the only way the characters can defeat the grombel (see **Dryad's Potion**, pg. 25).

A finished draught of the potion may be found in the tunnels beneath the Ruins of Lansing Manor (see **Collapsed Tunnel**, pg. 11) along with Lord Lansing's private journal detailing the potion's origin and use. Otherwise, the characters must journey into the Tanglewood, get the recipe for the potion from the dryad Meritt, and then collect the ingredients from the plants lining the paths in Leandra's Square (see **Oak Grove Spring**, pg. 16).

Characters who take an active role in the investigation should eventually uncover enough clues, rumors, and other information to lead them to one of these two places.

Tiny Terrors

Once the characters possess the **Dryad's Potion**, they are ready to face the grombel. One dose of the potion turns the character into a child for a single day (see pg. 25 for specific effects).

As children, the characters now have the ability to harm the grombel and its grubs with normal weapons (or hands, feet, teeth, etc.). However, the characters are more than likely ill-equipped to fight and protect themselves in their current form.

Small-sized weapons such as slings, clubs, daggers, short swords, etc. may be wielded normally. Medium-sized weapons such as long swords, maces, flails, etc. must be wielded with two hands. Larger weapons such as polearms, two-handed swords, longbows, etc. are entirely unusable.

The villagers can supply the characters with several small wooden shields and child-sized suits of leather armor that were pieced together by local boys to play at soldiering. Bryan the Smith can also provide the characters with one child-sized suit of chain mail and a metal shield that had been commissioned for the son of a local noble.

The Labyrinth Lord should be sure to reward players who come up with other interesting ways to outfit themselves with useful arms and armor.

Against the Grombel: Take 2

Once the characters are suitably equipped, they may confront the grombel in its lair. The Labyrinth Lord should read over **Grombel's Tactics** (pg. 20) to determine the grombel's actions.

This is most likely the characters' final encounter with the grombel for the purposes of this adventure. With any luck, the characters kill the grombel and recover the missing child. If not, the grombel continues its depredations, sowing misery throughout the village before eventually moving on. See **Concluding the Adventure** (pg. 20) for more information.

Rumors and Information

The key to solving this adventure is rooted in the history of Leandras Row. The characters can learn some of this history by speaking with the villagers and the Sisterhood of St. Leandra. As it turns out, neither source is entirely accurate, however, the information they provide should point the characters in the right direction.

The Tanglewood

Any villager knows that the Tanglewood is a place of danger, where evil forces lurk and plot the downfall of the village. It is said that those who enter the Tanglewood seldom return, and the few who do are never quite the same. When the child abductions begin, most of the villagers suspect a monster from the Tanglewood is responsible.

The Sisterhood of St. Leandra know that the Tanglewood was once a haven for faeries and other unholy creatures. The sisters doubt that any evil creature would dare enter the village while it is under the protection of the Church of Law and Order.

House Lansing

According to the villagers, House Lansing was a family of nobles who once ruled the village of Lansings Row. Legends say that the last Lord Lansing was in league with the dark forces that dwell in the Tanglewood.

The Sisters of St. Leandra know that the village of Lansings Row once suffered a rash of child abductions and that Lord Lansing was said to be behind the disappearances. The cherry-tree standard on Sir Gilroy's armor convinces the sisters that the answer to their troubles most likely lies with House Lansing.

Another interesting bit of information about House Lansing may be discovered from Sister Allisen. Apparently, she once spoke with an "old timer" who passed away years ago, and he told her the story of how Lord Lansing's son was abducted and how he actually entered the Tanglewood seeking help from the spirits who were said to dwell within.

Rumor Table

1. "You know about the treasure hidden under Lansing Manor, right? No matter. You wouldn't live to spend it. That place is cursed."
2. "Nice to see newcomers to the village. You're a good looking lad. Best steer clear of the miller's wife, hur hur hur."
3. "Have a drink on us, good sirs. Adventurers are always welcome here, especially now. Did you cross the bridge on your way in? I've seen strange shapes hanging out beneath it these past few nights. Might be something worth checking out."
4. "I can tell you what I know. The sisters can tell you more. Especially Sister Allisen."
5. "I had a talk with Crain. Seems his boys paid Drunk Laurens a mug of cherry grog to hit his own hand with a hammer. That man'll do just about anything for a drink."
6. "I saw one of "Ogre" Biggums's band crossing the southwest hayfield and entering the Tanglewood. Warder Travers thinks that's where they're holed up and he's gathering volunteers to help track them down."
7. "I have a lot of respect for the sisters, but that Seledy can be a mean one. I'd much rather talk to Sister Allisen."
8. "Sister Carlena knows more about crops than any farmer here, including Hamel. I don't know how she keeps all those foreign plants in the square alive."
9. "They say an immortal witch dwells deep in the Tanglewood and charms men to stay with her."
10. "Lord Lansing was a sorcerer who dabbled in black magic and blood sacrifices. That's why our ancestors burned him out."
11. "We've been keeping our livestock indoors at night after a few sheep were killed and eaten. Tracks looked like those of a mountain lion, but we lost the trail at the edge of the Tanglewood, so there's no telling what the creature really is."
12. "Nice sword you've got there. Bryan the Smith can put a keen edge on any blade."

Into the Ruins of Lansing Manor

This impressive manor home was once the seat of House Lansing. The main building was gutted by fire and has now mostly collapsed and is overgrown with creeper vines. The grounds have gone untended for years and are littered with rubble, debris, and the remains of statues, fountains, and outbuildings. The villagers believe the ruins are still haunted by Lansing ghosts and ancient curses.

1. Ruined Study

This chamber is open to the elements and overgrown with vines and brush. A search of this area reveals an ancient trapdoor in the floor, concealed beneath several weathered beams. The beams require a Strength check to move. Each character that assists with moving the beams adds +1 to the check. If the check fails, each character participating suffers 1 hit point of damage from the strain.

The trapdoor splits and crumbles when opened revealing a 10' shaft to the **Underground Study**. The ladder to the study has long since rotted away.

2. Underground Study

This chamber contains rotted furniture including wall shelves lined with moldering books that crumble when touched. A secret door in the form of a revolving bookshelf is hidden in the western wall. The passage beyond has suffered a major collapse and clearing it is beyond the scope of this adventure.

3. Converted Laboratory

This chamber appears to have been some sort of laboratory with thick wooden tables and

benches, and wooden shelves lined with an assortment of bottles, jars, and vases. The furniture crumbles when touched and the ingredients found in the jars and other containers are no longer usable. A secret door in the form of a sliding wall is hidden behind a cabinet in the southeastern wall. The passage beyond has suffered a major collapse and clearing it is beyond the scope of this adventure.

A giant 3' long cockroach has wandered into this chamber and is rummaging through the shelves in search of food. The cockroach freezes in place when the characters enter the chamber and can only be spotted with a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. If approached, the cockroach springs into action, leaping onto a character and attacking with its bite, possibly with surprise.

The cockroach fights until reduced to half its hit points before making a morale check. If the check succeeds, the cockroach fights to the death. If the check fails, the cockroach flees beneath the secret door and then through a crack in the collapsed tunnel.

Giant Cockroach: AL N; MV 120' (40')/climb 120' (40'); AC 6; HD 2; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA fight until reduced to -10 hit points, 5% chance bite causes disease that kills in 2d4 days if save vs. poison not made; SV F1; ML 9; XP 47.

4. Collapsed Tunnel

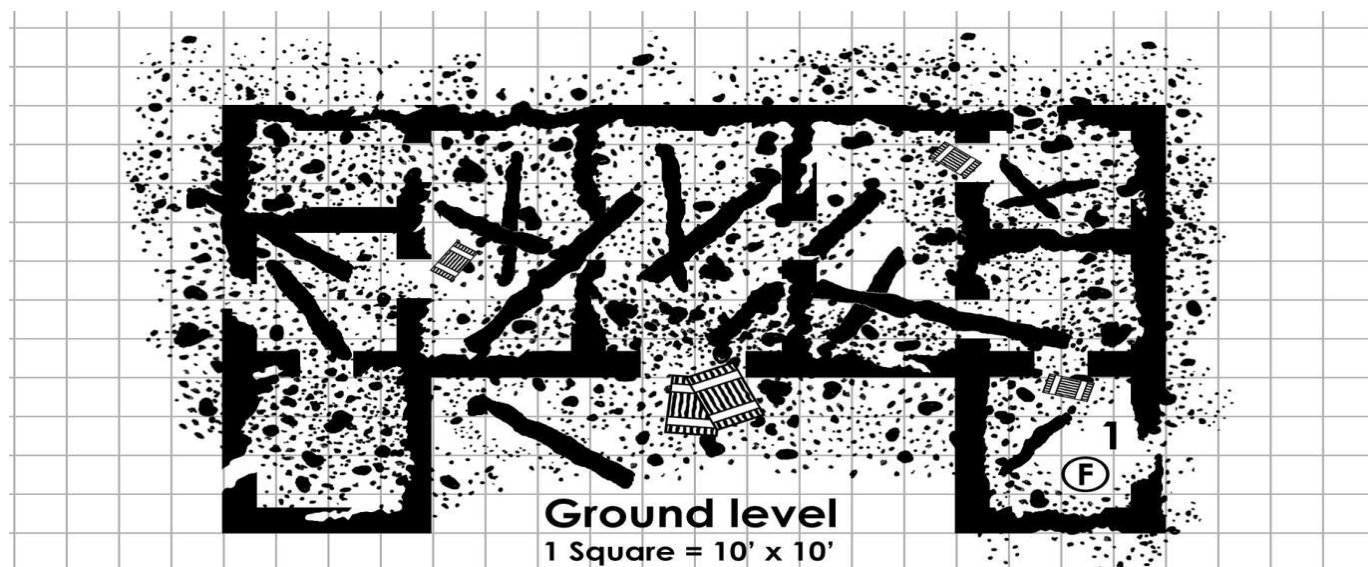
This escape tunnel leads to the family crypt of House Lansing located in the **Cemetery**. The tunnel collapsed during the fire, killing Lord Lansing as he tried to escape. Lansing's skeletal

remains can be seen sticking out from under several fallen beams, with the gleam of gold coming from one of its fingers. The gold is actually the signet ring of House Lansing (bearing the cherry-tree standard) and is worth 250 gp (or more to a collector).

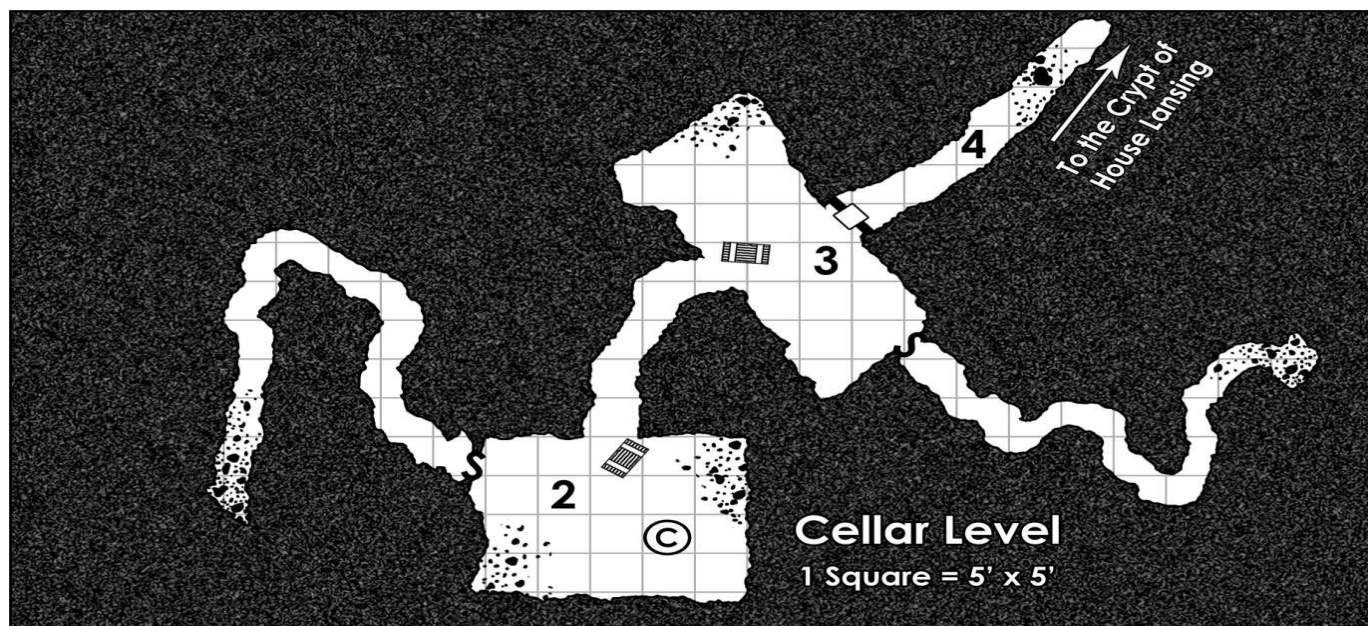
Characters who retrieve the ring realize that the skeleton's bony fingers are wrapped around a small wooden box banded with aged bronze. The box contains the **Dryad's Potion** (see pg. 25) as well as Lord Lansing's private journal. A *comprehend languages* spell is required to read the journal, which details his son Evan's

abduction, his journey into the Tanglewood, and his meeting with the dryad Meritt. The journal's final entry is a scribbled note that reads:

"The servants are all gone except for Old Cookie. She fears for my life and begged me today to flee the village. May the Old Gods bless her for the years she spent raising me as a boy, but I cannot go. Not while there's still a chance I can save Evan and the other children. The faerie potion will be finished in just a few short moments. I'm writing this while I wait. I can only hope that—"



Ruins of Lansing Manor



Entering the Tanglewood

The Tanglewood is an old and ancient forest that is steeped in history and legend. Abrupt silences, strange sights, lightless glens, and a host of mystical places and creatures make the forest appear unwelcoming to visitors. Travel throughout the forest is unpredictable at best. Time moves differently within its borders so a journey that may take a day one week, may take a month the next.

The Tanglewood is protected by an ancient treant named Ciurlencaarmin who uses his ability to animate trees to close paths, wreck campsites, and otherwise discourage unwanted intruders.

When the characters first enter the forest, Ciurlencaarmin discretely follows the party and listens to their conversations to determine their intentions. Once he learns that the characters seek to destroy the grombel, he animates the trees to open a path to the **Oak Grove Spring**. The characters should reach the spring in 1d2 days, providing several chances for random encounters.

Ciurlencaarmin (treant): see pg. 24 for statistics.

Tanglewood Random Encounters

The Labyrinth Lord should roll 1d6 twice per day for each day the characters wander the Tanglewood. A roll of 1 or 2 means the characters experience a random encounter. The Labyrinth Lord may either choose an encounter or roll 1d20 and consult the table below. Most of these encounters do not involve combat and only serve to highlight the magical nature of the Tanglewood.

Tanglewood Random Encounters

1. Bandit Camp
2. Dark Cave
3. Elvish Feast
4. End of the Rainbow
5. Faerie Mushroom
6. Faerie Song
7. Giant Boot
8. Goodberry Cluster
9. Grave Marker
10. Hidden Snake
11. Not Human
12. Old Manor
13. Odd Rain
14. Sated Spider
15. Slippery Slope
16. Trees that Move
17. Unlucky Artist
18. Unseen Stalkers
19. Unseen Talkers
20. Watch Your Step

Bandit Camp

The characters come across the camp of three local bandits that were outlawed for various crimes and have taken refuge on the edge of the Tanglewood. Their leader is a large, unruly man named "Ogre" Biggums who is Wanted for assault and armed robbery. The bandits are filthy, underfed, poorly equipped, and have already lost several companions to the dangers of the forest.

Ogre and his band are currently making plans to raid Leandras Row and then move out of the area. If approached by the characters, the bandits attack. If Ogre is killed, the remaining bandits either surrender or attempt

to flee. Captured bandits tell of the horrors of the forest including ghostly lights, trees that move, and the lair of a man-eating spider (see **Sated Spider**).

"Ogre" Biggums: AL C; MV 120' (40'); AC 7 (leather armor + shield); F1; hp 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2(long sword + Str), 1d6+2 (spear + Str), 1d4+2 (dagger + Str); S 17, D 10, C 17, I 12, W 9, Ch 8; SV F1; ML 7; XP 19.

Bandits (3): treat as 0-level humans with 3 hp, shields (AC 9), spears, daggers, and 1d4 cp each, worth XP 5.

Dark Cave

The characters see a natural cave inside a small hill. If they investigate, they find a spectral human imprisoned inside a slab of jagged glass. The man claims to be a noble prince named Grant Woorlin who was imprisoned by the wicked oak sorceress Meritt who dwells deep in the Tanglewood.

Woorlin is in fact an intelligent and evil spectre who once terrorized the more peaceful denizens of the forest. Woorlin begs the characters to shatter the glass and free him from his prison. If the characters seem reluctant or ask too many questions, he demands that they free him immediately and then threatens them with horrible death if they refuse.

If the characters release Woorlin, he laughs at their foolishness and attacks. Woorlin does not pursue the characters if they flee the cave, preferring to wait and plot his revenge against the dryad Meritt and her allies.

Grant Woorlin (spectre): AL C; MV 150' (50')/fly 300' (100'); AC 2; HD 6; hp 32; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 + special; SA drain 2 levels with touch, immune to normal weapons, immune to *charm*, *sleep*, and *hold* spells; SV F6; ML 11; XP 1,070.

Elvish Feast

The characters see a small clearing beside the path that contains life-sized wooden sculptures of a group of elves enjoying a sylvan feast. There is nothing of value to be found within the clearing, leaving the characters to wonder whether or not the statues are the work

of a master woodcarver or a group of elves under a magical spell (or curse).

End of the Rainbow

The characters see a rainbow that ends in a clearing where all of the grass, plants, bushes, trees, etc. are made of gold. Any gold removed from the clearing immediately turns to glittery dust.

Faerie Mushroom

The characters come upon a pavestone path leading to a giant toadstool in the center of a small clearing. The toadstool is the size of a small cottage and is equipped with a round wooden door and two small round windows. The interior of the toadstool is warm and comforting, with halfling-sized furniture, a fire burning in the hearth, and food laid out on the table. The characters are free to eat the food and spend the night in the cottage if they desire. Those who do regain 1d6 lost hit points overnight.

Faerie Song

The characters hear the sounds of laughter and someone singing a merry song in the faerie language. If they investigate, the characters are unable to locate the source of the singing.

Giant Boot

One character chosen at random sees the shape of something manmade beneath a tall clump of creeper vines. If the vines are cleared away, the characters find a leather boot approximately the size of a small cottage. The boot was used as a dwelling by some sort of humanoid creature. The characters find an old bed, firewood, firepit, and a brittle table and chairs within. The boot contains nothing of value, but would be an ideal place to shelter for the night.

Goodberry Bushes

The characters happen upon a clump of goodberry bushes. The berries are plump, tasty, and surprisingly filling—a handful of berries provides the equivalent of one day's rations. The bushes contain about 3d4 handfuls of berries, which spoil within a week of being picked.

Grave Marker

The characters see a rusted sword sticking out of a rock cairn on the side of the path. This is the ancient grave of a soldier who died in the Tanglewood long ago. The cairn is under the protection of the Old Gods. If disturbed or desecrated, all food and drink items the character possesses become spoiled. There is nothing of value to be found amidst the soldier's remains.

Hidden Snake

A tree has fallen across the characters' path. The first character to cross it must make a Wisdom check to see the copperhead snake lying on top of the log. If not, the character is automatically bitten and must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or die in 2d4 turns. This would be a good time to introduce the characters to the healing powers of the **Oak Grove Spring**. The snake can be easily killed by a to-hit roll against AC 5 (10 XP).

Not Human

The characters happen upon a naked man kneeling by a stream to drink. With a snarl, the man stands up, changes into a black panther, and then bounds off into the forest. It is unlikely that the characters can catch up to the werepanther, but if they do, the Labyrinth Lord should use the Monster Reaction Table (see the **Labyrinth Lord™** core rulebook) to determine its reaction to the characters.

Wassek (werpanther): AL N; MV 210' (70')/climb 90'(30'); AC 5 (9); HD 5; hp 30; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8 (claw/claw/bite); SA immune to normal weapons, vulnerable to silver, summon 1d2 normal panthers, surprise on 1-4 on 1d6; SV F5; ML 9; XP 650.

Old Manor

The characters see half a dozen crumbling, overgrown chimneys of what appears to have once been a large manor home. A stylized wolf's head is emblazoned on the weathered stone of one of the hearths. The symbol has no meaning to the characters or any of the villagers, but the Labyrinth Lord can use it (or replace it with another) to foreshadow a future adventure.

Odd Rain

The sky darkens, thunder booms, and it begins to rain. The characters soon realize the rain is traveling upward into the sky. The rain lasts for 1d3 turns before dissipating, leaving everyone drenched.

Sated Spider

The characters enter a forest clearing filled with wisps of spider web and the cocooned carcasses of several humans and forest animals. Close inspection of the clearing reveals a large bloated spider hanging from one of the webs. The spider has recently fed on an unfortunate bandit (see **Bandits**) and is not interested in fighting. It defends itself if attacked or if its web is damaged, but otherwise lets the characters pass by in peace. The spider possesses no treasure.

Giant Spider: AL N; MV 60' (20')/web 120' (40'); AC 6; HD 3; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6 + special; SA poison; SV F2; ML 8; XP 80.

Slippery Slope

The path the characters are traveling wends up a small forested hill. The characters come to an area where the path has been washed out by recent rains and the footing is treacherous. Each character must make a Dexterity check to safely cross the washout. Any character that fails, slips down the side of the hill, twisting his ankle, and reducing his movement rate by 2" (20') for the remainder of the day or until healed by magic such as *cure light wounds*.

Trees that Move

The characters have been under the treant Ciurlenkaarmin's observation since the moment they entered the Tanglewood. Although Ciurlenkaarmin prefers to remain hidden, one character chosen at random may make a Wisdom check to determine that something is "not right" about one of the "trees" in the nearby wood. An elf character immediately recognizes the treant's true nature. The Labyrinth Lord may use the Monster Reaction Table (see the **Labyrinth Lord™** core rulebook) to determine Ciurlenkaarmin's initial reaction to the characters.

Ciurlenkaarmin (treant): see pg. 24 for statistics.

Unlucky Artist

The characters come to a small stream and see the skeletal remains of an artist named George Creswell lying on the bank. Creswell was a friend of the forest denizens and often traveled into the Tanglewood until he slipped, knocked himself unconscious, and drowned in the stream during a heavy rain.

A search of Creswell's skeleton reveals a sketchbook wrapped in oilcloth containing several sketches of the **Old Manor**, the **Elvish Feast**, the **Giant Boot**, the dryad Meritt at the **Oak Grove Spring**, and any other images the Labyrinth Lord desires. Any of the villagers at Leandras Row recognize his sketchbook and knew him as an odd man who seldom stayed in one place long.

The sketches would be worth 25 gp each to a collector in a large city such as Dolmvey and may lead to future adventures. One of the buyers may even try to hire the characters to capture the dryad or any of the other fantastical creatures depicted in the book.

Unseen Stalkers

The characters glimpse dark shapes flitting through the trees and hear strange rustling sounds in the brush as they walk down the path. Characters who investigate find nothing out of the ordinary.

Unseen Talkers

The characters hear the sound of voices speaking in low whispers. If they investigate, they come across a beaver, a frog, and a turtle sitting on a log in the middle of a small pond. All three animals turn to look at the characters and then dive into the water.

If the pond is searched, the characters find three ancient gold piece coins scattered on the bottom, but are unable to locate the animals. One of the gold pieces depicts a beaver, one a frog, and the last a turtle. The gold pieces are nonmagical, unless the Labyrinth Lord wishes to foreshadow a future encounter or adventure.

Watch Your Step

The path leads the characters to a swift-flowing stream bridged by several algae-

covered stepping stones. The stream is about fifteen feet wide and waist deep in the center.

Crossing the stepping stones requires a successful Dexterity check to avoid falling into the stream. Any character who falls in or any character who tries to wade through the stream is swept off his feet, suffers 1d2 hit points of damage from being bounced over the rocks, and is deposited on the shore about a hundred yards downstream near the skeletal remains of a traveling artist named George Creswell (see **Unlucky Artist**).

Oak Grove Spring

The Oak Grove Spring is a mystical place that lies deep within the Tanglewood. It consists of an ancient oak tree whose roots straddle the rocks of a freshwater spring.

The waters of the spring contain healing properties. Once per week, any character who drinks water directly from the spring receives effects similar to that of a *heal* spell. Once removed from the spring, the water becomes nonmagical.

The oak is the home of a dryad named Meritt. Ages ago, Meritt sensed the presence of the grombel when it moved into the area of Lansings Row. When Lord Lansing entered the Tanglewood seeking help, she took pity upon him and gave him the means to defeat the grombel. Lord Lansing promised to visit her afterwards, but never returned.

Meritt has sensed the grombel's reawakening and wishes to help the characters destroy the creature. Dryad legends describe the grombels as a race of evil creatures that prey upon humans and faeries alike. It is said that the grombels stole the last of the dryad's boy children and that no male child has been born to a dryad since. Whether this is true or merely a legend is left for the Labyrinth Lord to decide.

The Labyrinth Lord may choose to roleplay the encounter with Meritt in order to portray her personality and her loneliness, or the Labyrinth Lord may use the following scripted encounter:

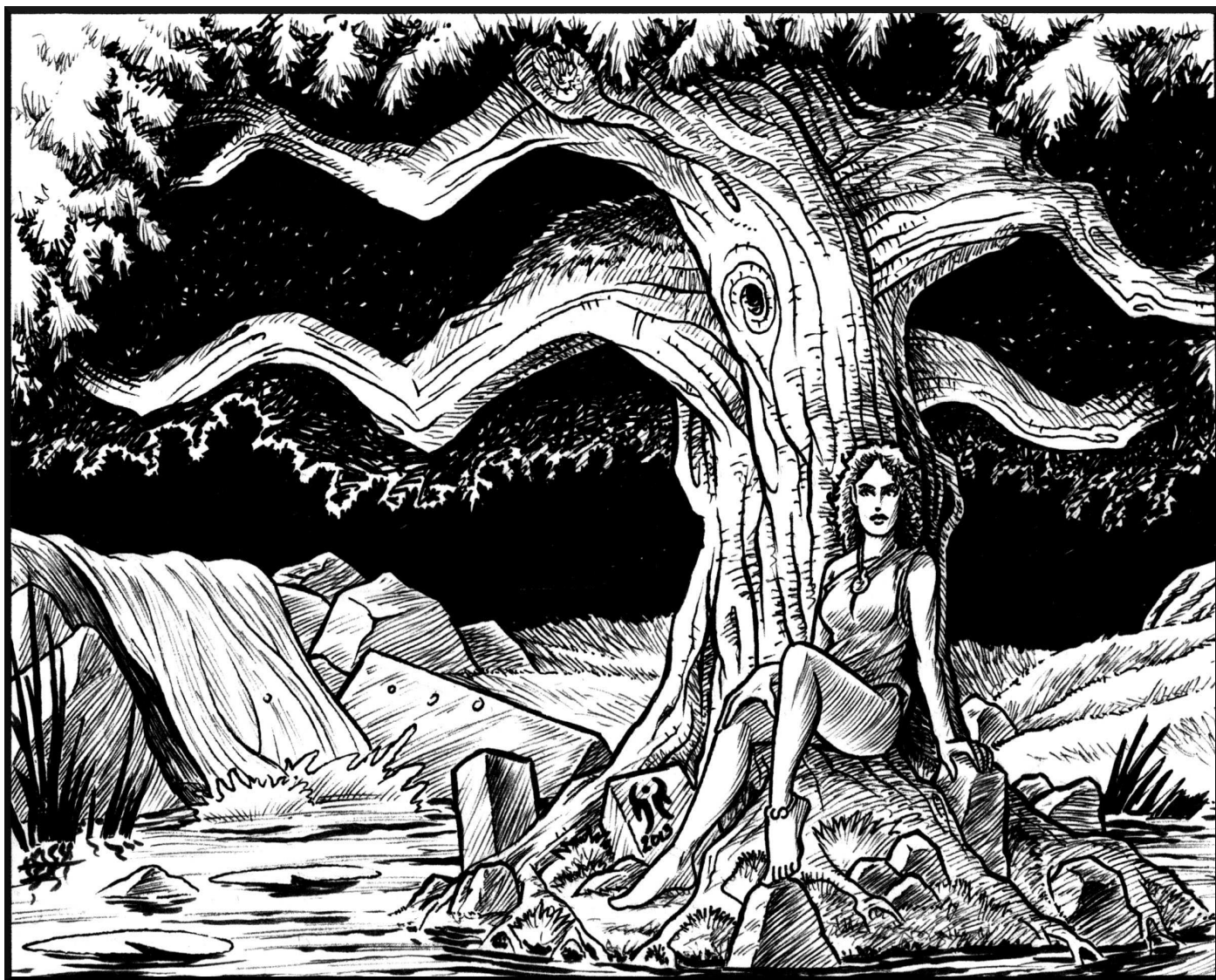
When the characters arrive at the spring, Meritt steps out of her oak and says:

"I am Meritt, Guardian of the Oak Grove Spring, and I bid you welcome to the Tanglewood. Your quest is known to us. You have come seeking a means to destroy the grombel, the Stealer of Children, he who dwells in the dark chambers beneath the blighted oak. Take the water from this spring. Mix the water with petals of rose, stalk of flax, seeds of peony, and wormwood root, and let it be blessed by the light of the rising sun. Drink this potion and the power to destroy the grombel will be in your grasp. I can help you no more. May the Gods of the Blessed Earth guide your hands."

With that, Meritt retreats back into her oak and the characters are free to take water from the spring. The Labyrinth Lord should refer back to **Magical Brew** (pg. 9) once the characters try to track down the potion's other ingredients.

If, for some reason, the characters attack Meritt, she retreats inside her oak and the characters experience the full wrath of the treant Ciurlencaarmin and other denizens of the forest. It is up to the Labyrinth Lord to decide whether or not they make it out of the Tanglewood alive.

Meritt (dryad): see pg. 24 for statistics.



Lair of the Grombel

The grombel's lair lies in a natural cave system beneath the burned remnants of an ancient oak tree. The destruction of the oak effectively broke the enchantment that contained the grombel in its lair, however, the grombel and its minions do not actually awaken until after night falls (see the **Grombel Awakens**, pg. 8).

Characters who enter the lair before then find everything within has been turned to gray stone statues and covered by an eerie blanket of light mist (see **Into the Grombel's Lair**, pg. 7). Characters who enter the lair after the grombel awakens must face the full might of the grombel and its grubs (see **Against the Grombel**, pg. 8).

1. Ruined Oak

This oak tree was recently struck by lightning and split down the middle. The tree was further damaged when the undead Sir Gilroy burst forth and tried to kill Farmer Ben (see **The Restless Dead**, pg. 6). An elf character may make an Intelligence check while a magic-user character may make an Intelligence check at -2 to realize that the oak is of a rare type that is normally found only in magical forests (such as the Tanglewood).

Any character who examines the tree closely finds a thick stone slab in the ground that opens onto a natural stone staircase. If the characters told the villagers about the lair, this slab is covered by several large stones that can only be removed with effort.

Any light or noise on the staircase alerts the grombel grubs below, who ambush the characters as soon as they enter the **Grub Chamber**.

2. Grub Chamber

This chamber is littered with scraps of child's clothing, an assortment of broken toys, and piles of grub droppings. The bones of young Evan Lansing may be found here dressed in tattered bedclothes. An antique silver locket bearing the cherry-tree standard of House Lansing and containing images of Lord Albert Lansing and his wife Mara lies near the child's skull. This locket is worth 100 gp (or more to a collector).

If the characters are too late to save Talia Baler, her partially eaten remains are also found here.

Two grombel grubs dwell amidst the refuse and attack any who enter the chamber. The grubs focus their swarming tactics on a single character. Any commotion here draws the grombel from the **Main Lair**, who takes gaseous form and arrives in 1d4 rounds. The Labyrinth Lord should read over **Grombel's Tactics** (pg. 20) to determine the grombel's actions.

Grombel Grubs (2): AL C; MV 90' (30'); AC 7; HD 1d4 hit points; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA camouflage surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, vulnerable to sunlight; SV F1; ML 10; XP 7.

3. Refuse Chamber

This chamber is littered with rotting scraps of cloth, broken toys, and thousands of child-sized bones that have been picked clean. These are the grisly remains of the grombel's past victims. A search of the chamber turns up nothing of value, but the experience is so heart wrenching that any Lawful character participating in the search must make a saving throw vs. spells or suffer a -1 to-hit, -1 to AC, and -1 to all ability checks for the next 1d4 days.

4. False Bedroom

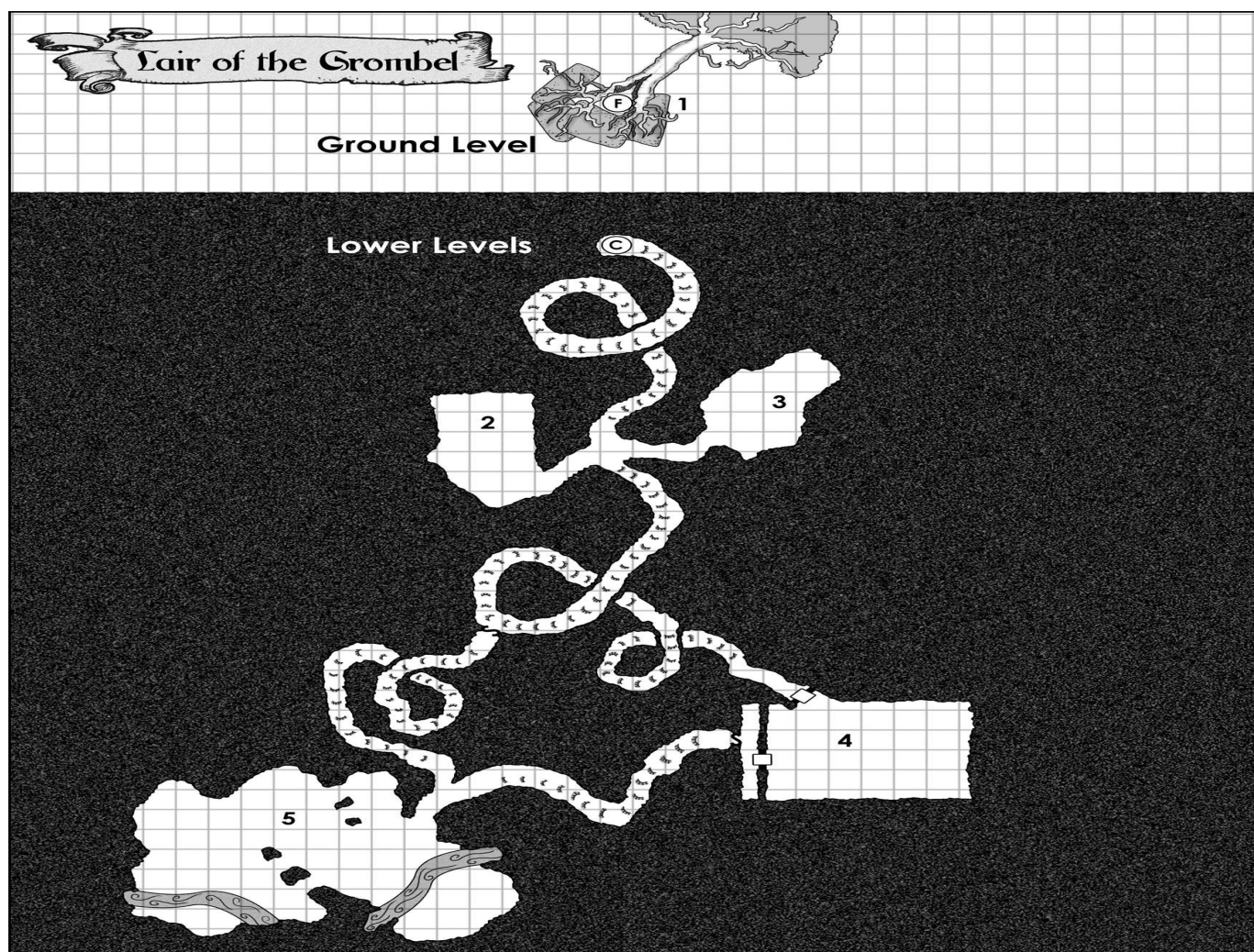
This room is decorated as a child's bedroom with a canopy bed, dresser, mirror, and lots of story books and small toys. Tapestries on the walls depict elves, pixies, sprites, and other faerie-type creatures that appear to be fearfully avoiding some of the darker parts of the forest. The tapestries are worth 200 gp (or more to a collector), but are difficult to transport. A walk-in closet in the west wall contains an assortment of boy and girl clothing as well as a secret door that leads to the **Main Lair**.

This is where the grombel keeps Talia Baler after her abduction. Each night, the grombel enters the room via the closet, creeps up to the foot of the bed, and feeds on her fear until her body becomes a lifeless husk. On the morning of the sixth day, the grombel takes Talia's remains to the **Grub Chamber** and then retreats to the **Main Lair** to digest his wretched meal.

5. Main Lair

This natural cavern is where the grombel sleeps on a nest of toys, picture books, locks of hair, bundles of pretty ribbons, antique coins, and other trophies taken from his previous child victims. A small underground stream trickles through the cave and the light mist rising off the water blankets the floor of the entire chamber.

In addition to the personal items and mementos mentioned above, a search of the grombel's nest reveals the following items of value: a gold *ring of protection +1 vs. ESP, charm, and hold person spells*, an antique silver mirror (35 gp), an antique silver and gold inlaid hairbrush (50 gp), a spinning top dipped in silver (5 gp), a rare antique porcelain doll (100 gp to a collector), an expertly carved wooden figurine of a dragon with eyes made of inlaid onyx (155 gp), and 7 gp, 3 sp, and 12 cp in assorted coins.



Grombel's Tactics

The grombel attacks any character who enters its lair, but uses slightly different tactics, depending on whether or not it faces adults or children. The grombel is confident in its immunity to normal weapons and laughs wickedly as it attacks, however, its laughter turns to howls of rage if it is injured.

If the grombel is injured by adults, it immediately takes gaseous form. The grombel then uses a combination of its camouflage ability as well as its ability to take *gaseous form* to perform hit-and-run tactics to attack and harass the characters until they leave its lair. If reduced to 5 hit points or less, the grombel assumes *gaseous form* and flees along the path of the underground stream. The grombel returns to the area of Leandras Row a few days later, sets up a new lair, and then abducts the child of an NPC the characters have befriended in order to have its revenge.

If the grombel is injured by children (including characters who have been turned into children after drinking the **Dryad's Potion**), the grombel attacks head-on. The grombel's combination of instinct and pride does not let it retreat from children and the grombel fights until destroyed.

Grombel: AL C; MV 90' (30'); AC 5; HD 3; hp 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (fist/fist) or 2d4 (roar); SA +1 or better weapon needed to hit, camouflage surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, gaseous form at will cause *fear* in children, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, vulnerable to sunlight; SV MU3; ML 9; XP 140.

Scaling the Adventure

If the Labyrinth Lord is running this adventure for a higher-level group, the following statistics should be used for the grombel and its grubs.

Grombel: AL C; MV 90' (30'); AC 5; HD 5; hp 28; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (fist/fist) or 2d4 (roar); SA +2 or better weapon needed to hit, camouflage surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, gaseous form at will cause *fear* in children, immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, vulnerable to sunlight; SV MU5; ML 9; XP 1,100.

Grombel Grubs (6): AL C; MV 90' (30'); AC 7; HD 1d4 hit points; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (bite); SA camouflage surprise on 1-4 on 1d6, vulnerable to sunlight; SV F1; ML 10; XP 7.

Concluding the Adventure

If the grombel kills or drives off the characters, it remains in the area indefinitely. At the Labyrinth Lord's discretion, the grombel may relocate to a new lair (possibly in the **Cemetery** or beneath the **Ruins of Lansing Manor**), and continue to prey upon the village children.

If the grombel is killed, the villagers rejoice, especially if the characters were able to rescue Talia Baler (or the latest kidnapped child). The characters are treated as heroes and receive free room and board whenever they return to Leandras Row. Mother Millis asks Sister Allisen to write a song about their heroic deeds and the characters may hear the song played by a wandering minstrel.

A number of adventure opportunities may present themselves to characters who choose to stay in the area and use Leandras Row as a base of operations. The Ruins of Lansing Manor may be further cleared out and explored. Arlen Travers may ask for help tracking down "Ogre" Biggums and his bandit gang. The Sisters of St. Leandra may contact the characters about strange sights or sounds coming from the Cemetery. The characters may recognize a visiting "friend" of Drumas Long as a known criminal. Or, the characters may become involved in the preparations for the next Cherry Blossom Festival, providing opportunities for roleplaying and hooks to more distant adventures.

The characters may even choose to reenter the Tanglewood where they can make friends with (or enemies of) some of its denizens. They may witness a meeting between Wassek the werepanther and his human lover Sarah Tenson. Ciurlenkaarmin may ask for help eliminating a dangerous threat such as the spectre Grant Woorlin. Or they may decide to join Galler Cage on a hunt for unicorns.

NPCs and Factions of Note

The following NPCs and factions may be encountered in the area of Leandras Row.

The Sisterhood of St. Leandra

The Sisterhood of St. Leandra is a religious order devoted to the Lady of Blossoms. Sisters of St. Leandra take vows of chastity, poverty, and humility, and work to guide young women into adulthood. They are trained in all manner of languages and courtly arts including weaving, history, singing, music, poetry, and proper etiquette.

The sisterhood is based in the capital city of Dolmvay where the order vies with other factions for influence in the Church of Law and Order. The local Abbey of St. Leandra lies in the village of Leandras Row, under the leadership of Mother Millis, where the sisters see to the spiritual needs of the community and oversee the church's orchards and fields.

Mother Millis

The abbess Mother Millis is a distinguished elderly woman who runs the Abbey of St. Leandra in Leandras Row. Mother Millis is wise, intelligent, kind, and outspoken. She was born in the capital city of Dolmvay and has served the Church of Law and Order almost all of her adult life. Mother Millis works closely with the Village Council and Warder Travers to settle disputes, ensure the safety of the village, and the prosperity of the villagers. Mother Millis is a skilled healer who is said to have the "healing touch".

Mother Millis: treat as 0-level human with Int 15 and Wis 15. If the *Chronicles of*

Amherth™ setting is being used, treat Mother Millis as a latent spellcaster.

Sister Seledy

Sister Seledy is a brusque, elderly woman who is in charge of day-to-day operations at the abbey. She is known to have a sharp tongue and very little patience with those who act rudely or inappropriately. As a young girl, Seledy was married to an abusive husband until she escaped and joined the sisterhood. Sister Seledy is known to be a strict disciplinarian, but always has the best interests of the sisterhood at heart. She has an extreme dislike for boisterous and aggressive men, especially large fighter-types.

Sister Seledy: treat as 0-level human.

Sister Carlena

Sister Carlena is a plump, matronly woman who is in charge of the abbey's gardens, orchards, and crop fields. Sister Carlena's parents were killed by ruk raiders when she was just a girl and she was taken in by the Church of Law and Order. She has rosy cheeks and a friendly disposition and may often be found helping workers in the orchards and fields. Sister Carlena's knowledge of herbalism and local flora may provide the key to defeating the grombel (see **Magical Brew**, pg. 9).

Sister Carlena: treat as 0-level human with Wis 15.

Sister Allisen

Sister Allisen is a young, attractive woman who acts as the primary liaison between the villagers and the abbey. She is a skilled singer with a beautiful voice, whose smile has won the hearts of men for miles. Sister Allisen

occasionally sings at the Red Smile in the early hours of the evening, especially when wandering minstrels come to town. She has spent much of her time learning the village's history and, if befriended, may be able to provide the characters with a key piece of information regarding House Lansing (see **Rumors and Information**, pg. 10).

Sister Allisen: treat as 0-level human with Cha 16.

Acolytes

Acolytes of St. Leandra are mostly orphaned young women who have dedicated their lives to the service of St. Leandra. Acolytes spend their days in study, training, and performing menial tasks (cooking, cleaning, gardening, etc.) around the abbey. They are forbidden to speak to outsiders until they have taken their final vows. There are a total of ten acolytes currently living at the abbey.

Acolyte (10): treat as 0-level human with 2 hp.

The Village Council

The Village Council is a group of influential villagers who act as the unofficial voice of the common villagers. The Village Council is comprised of the warder Arlen Travers, Bryan the Smith, the farmer Carlton Hamel, Kalen the Butcher, and Miller Marc. The council usually meets once a month in a backroom at the Red Smile. The tavernkeeper Drumas Long is occasionally allowed to sit in and comment on village policy during these meetings along with Mother Millis or one of the senior sisters.

Arlen Travers

Arlen Travers is a broad-shouldered woodsman who has lived in Leandras Row all of his life. He serves the village as Head Warder and works to keep the peace and organize militias to help drive off ruk raiders and other wandering monsters. Travers has a great deal of respect for the Sisterhood of St. Leandra and works closely with Mother Millis to ensure the safety of the community. Travers has a strong dislike for the tavernkeeper Drumas Long, but knows that Long is smart and well-traveled and occasionally gives good counsel.

Arlen Travers: AL L; MV 120' (40'); AC 5 (studded leather + shield); F2; hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (long sword + Str), 1d6 (short bow), 1d4+1 (dagger + Str); S 15, D 13, C 13, I 12, W 14, Ch 13; SV F2; ML 10; XP 56.

Bryan the Smith

Bryan is a jovial bear of a man who runs the village smithy assisted by his wife, three sons (age 16, 14, and 10), and a tom-boy daughter (age 11) that he loves dearly. Bryan is a simple, family-oriented man who is the winner of many games of strength during the Cherry Blossom Festival, but is always gracious in defeat. He is a skilled blacksmith who, for a price of 5 cp, can expertly sharpen any blade, giving it a +1 to-hit for the first successful strike. Afterwards, the blade acts as normal.

Bryan the Smith: treat as 0-level human with hp 7 and Str 17 and Con 17.

Carlton Hamel

Carlton Hamel is a respected farmer who owns the rights to a large tract of local farmland. Hamel was born and raised in Leandras Row and his opinion carries a lot of weight among the villagers. Hamel lives in a modest home along with his wife, four sons (ages 14, 12, 10, and 5), and two daughters (ages 9 and 6). He respects the Sisters of St. Leandra and works closely with Sister Carlena to oversee the harvest and distribute the village's crops.

Carlton Hamel: treat as 0-level human with Int 13 and Wis 13.

Kalen the Butcher

Kalen is an aging widow who took over the family business after her husband (the former butcher) died last Fall from natural causes. Kalen is polite, softspoken, and a devoted follower of St. Leandra and the Church of Law and Order. She gets along well with others and can often be found buying rounds of drinks at the Red Smile after work.

Kalen the Butcher: treat as 0-level human with Cha 13.

Miller Marc

Miller Marc is a balding, middle-aged blowhard who owns and operates the Cherry Creek Mill which lies further downstream. He is intelligent, but miserly, small-minded, and cares only for wealth and property. Marc's wife, Kari Miller, is an attractive, but unhappy woman who wishes she had never married. Marc has one son (age 7), but rumors suggest he is not actually the boy's father.

Miller Marc: treat as 0-level human with Int 13 and Cha 8.

Drumas Long

Drumas Long is the owner of the Red Smile tavern. He is charming, intelligent, and always seems to have a friendly smile. Long's real name is Mannock Everl and he is actually a high-ranking member of the Thieves' Guild who is wanted for murder and other crimes in the City by the Bay. Long fled to Leandras Row years ago and established himself with the locals. He respects the warder Arlen Travers, but suspects he may have to kill him in the future. Long is known to have many strange friends who occasionally come to visit and stay with him for a time. These "friends" are actually guild members in need of a temporary place to hide.

Drumas Long: AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 7 or 6 (unarmored or leather armor); T5; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (short sword + Str), 1d4+1 (dagger + Str); S 13, D 17, C 13, I 15, W 13, Ch 12; SV T5; SA backstab, thief skills; ML 8; XP 800; pick locks 35%, find/remove traps 33%, pick pockets 40%, move silently 40%, climb walls 91%, hide in shadows 30%, hear noise 1-3; *potion of poison*, *potion of healing*, thieves' tools, 27 gp, 34 sp, 13 cp.

Villagers

The villagers of Leandras Row tend the village crop fields and the church orchards during the day. In the evening, most of the men and some of the women stop by the Red Smile tavern to socialize before heading home. Many of the villagers also have secondary skills (weaving, leatherworking, etc.) that they use to supplement their income, especially during

festival times. The villagers are accustomed to visitors and are generally friendly towards outsiders.

The following villagers may be introduced over the course of the adventure to help the players better identify with the plight of the village.

Villagers: treat as 0-level humans. Woman and boy children under age 12 are generally noncombatants who pose no threat to the characters. The men carry daggers at all times and, in times of trouble, may equip themselves with leather or padded armor, shields, spears, hand axes, and/or short bows.

Davod and Lisette Embry

A newlywed couple. Davod is a skilled tanner and Lisette a weaver.

Drunk Laurens

The town drunk whose teeth are stained red from cherry grog. Laurens lives on the kindness of other villagers and occasionally spies for the tavernkeeper Drumas Long.

Garen and Myrna Alson

A farming couple with a son (age 13) and two daughters (age 12 and 9). Garen is also a skilled hunter and tracker who assists Arlen Travers in times of trouble.

Gerald and Elizabeth Baler

Haycutters and farmers with one daughter (age 7) named Talia. Talia Baler is the first child abducted in this adventure (see **Misery Strikes**, pg. 8).

Hannah Sole

A widowed seamstress with two sons (age 13 and 10) and one daughter (age 5). Her husband was killed by bandits several years ago.

Jessa Morl

An orphaned waitress who works at the **Red Smile**. Jessa is torn between her loyalty to Drumas Long and her desire to join the Sisterhood of St. Leandra.

Jon and Dana Cropper

A farming couple with a son (age 13) and daughter (age 9). Dana is also a skilled baker.

Lorek and Mela Crain

A farming couple with four sons (age 16, 14, 13, and 10) and two daughters (age 12 and 9).

Sarah Tenson

Sarah is an unmarried shepherdess who seems to have an affinity with wild creatures. She is the occasional lover of a reclusive werepanther named Wassek (see below).

Parl and Tyra Felton

Parl and Tyra are skilled cooks with three daughters (age 13, 10, and 8). Parl and Tyra work at the **Red Smile**. Their oldest daughter is secretly meeting the Cropper boy at night, usually beneath **Cherry Creek Bridge**.

Willem Tanting

A lone hunter and woodsman who often assists Arlen Travers in times of trouble. Tanting is skilled with a shortbow (to-hit as F2).

Denizens of the Tanglewood

The Tanglewood is home to many mythical creatures including unicorns, a dragon, a tribe of pixies, several treants, and many others. Only the dryad Meritt is meant to be encountered during the course of this adventure, although the characters may meet Ciurlenkaarmin and some of the other denizens through random encounters (see **Tanglewood Random Encounters**, pg. 13) or if the Labyrinth Lord desires.

Ciurlenkaarmin

Ciurlenkaarmin, a.k.a. "Sir" for short, is an ancient and extremely large treant who watches over the borders of the Tanglewood. Ciurlenkaarmin is a sworn protector of the forest. Anyone who enters the Tanglewood with evil in his heart must face his wrath.

Ciurlenkaarmin (treant): AL L; MV 120' (40'); AC 2; HD 8; hp 60; #AT 2; Dmg 2d6/2d6 (fist/fist); SA surprise on 1-3 on 1d6, animate normal trees; SV F8; ML 8; XP 1,560.

Meritt the Dryad

Meritt is an ancient and beautiful dryad and guardian of the **Oak Grove Spring** (pg. 16). Meritt is driven by loneliness, but has learned that her ability to *charm* men is no substitute for true love. Ages ago, Lord Lansing shared her loneliness and agreed to return to her if she would help him save his son.

Meritt (dryad): AL N; MV 120' (40'); AC 5; HD 5; hp 29; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA *charm person*; SV F4; ML 8; XP 350.

Wassek

Wassek is a lone werepanther who roams the Tanglewood. Wassek avoids contact with most of the people of Leandras Row, but has marked the area as his territory. A few weeks ago he was attacked by a pair of mated phase tigers that have moved into the region and he has been hunting them ever since. Wassek is particularly protective of the shepherdess Sarah Tenson (see above).

Wassek (werepanther): AL N; MV 210' (70')/climb 90'(30'); AC 5 (9); HD 5; hp 30; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8 (claw/claw/bite); SA immune to normal weapons, vulnerable to silver, summon 1d2 normal panthers, surprise on 1-4 on 1d6; SV F5; ML 9; XP 650.

Xandral and Wielann

Xandral and Wielann are a mated pair of intelligent unicorns who have recently given birth to a foal. An exotic game hunter named Galler Cage has been secretly stalking the unicorns. Cage is wary of Ciurlenkaarmin and the other denizens of the forest and has thus far managed to evade detection. He plans to butcher Xandral and Wielann for magical ingredients and capture the foal to sell to the highest bidder in the City by the Bay.

Xandral and Wielann (unicorns): AL L; MV 240' (80'); AC 2; HD 4; hp 29, 26; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d8 (hoof/hoof/horn); SA *teleport* 360' once/day; SV F8; ML 8; XP 135.

APPENDIX

New Magic Items

The following new magic item may be encountered in this adventure.

Dryad's Potion

The potion that can defeat the grombel is a mixture of several leaves, roots, and spices taken from exotic plants and mixed into water taken from the **Oak Grove Spring** (see pg. 16). Anyone who drinks the potion becomes a child of 12 years old. This reduces the character's Strength by 5 points (minimum of 3), but increases the character's Dexterity by 2. The effect lasts for an entire day.

A finished draught of the potion may be found beneath the Ruins of Lansing Manor (see **Collapsed Tunnel**, pg. 11). If the characters are forced to brew their own potion, the recipe must be obtained from the dryad Meritt while the other ingredients may be found in the exotic plants lining the paths of Leandras Square (see **Magical Brew**, pg. 9).

New Monsters

The following new monsters may be encountered in this adventure.

Grombel

No. Enc.: 1
Alignment: Chaotic
Movement: 90' (30')
Armor Class: 5
Hit Dice: 3-5
Attacks: 2 (fist) or 1 (roar)
Damage: 1d4/1d4 or 2d4
Save: MU3-MU5
Morale: 9
Hoard Class: VII
XP: 140/410/1,100

A grombel is an extremely rare and cruel faerie creature that feeds on the life force of children of all races. In its natural form, a grombel appears as a squat, gnome-like creature with knobby horns, long arms, a bulbous nose, and large luminous eyes. Its skin color is gray but it has the ability to camouflage in any surrounding, surprising on a 1-4 on 1d6.

Grombels are solitary creatures that possess a crafty, animal-like intelligence, similar to that of a man-eating ape (average Int 8). Grombels are either unable or unwilling to communicate with other creatures, even other faeries.

A grombel prefers to flee if attacked, but fights if cornered, attacking with blows from its powerful fists. Once per day, a grombel can emit an ear-splitting roar that causes 2d4 hit



points of damage to any creature within earshot (saving throw vs. breath weapon for 1/2 damage). Grombels are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells.

A grombel has the innate ability to take gaseous form at will and can extend this ability to one other creature, usually a sleeping child. Grombels are immune to normal weapons, except weapons wielded by the hand of a child. They are extremely vulnerable to sunlight and bright lights. Direct exposure to sunlight inflicts 1d10 hit points of damage per round. Exposure to a *continual light* spell causes the grombel's skin to start smoldering and forces it to take gaseous form in 2d4 rounds. Grombels may be harmed by normal fire.

A grombel carefully selects its victims, entering the child's bedroom at night and waking it up with a gravelly muttering sound that vaguely resembles its name ("*grombelgrombelgrombel*"). Any child UNDER 12 years of age who sees a grombel is frozen by fear (no saving throw allowed). The grombel then feeds on the child's fear, completely draining the child's life force over the course of the next five to seven days. Any child who is lucky enough to be rescued before this happens is weakened and emotionally scarred, but eventually recovers.

A grombel normally uses its gaseous form to kidnap its victims and take them to a secluded lair, but sometimes the grombel chooses to visit the child in its own home over the course of several nights. In this way, the grombel can feed on several children over time without risking undue exposure by adults.

The most powerful grombels have 5 Hit Dice and are immune to normal and +1 magical weapons, unless those weapons are wielded by the hand of a child. These grombels are considered to be kings of their kind and are responsible for the deaths of thousands of children.

Grombels are hated and feared by humans, demihumans, and humanoids alike, and are hunted and killed whenever they appear.

Grombel Grubs

No. Enc.: 2d4
Alignment: Chaotic
Movement: 90' (30')
Armor Class: 7
Hit Dice: 1d4 hit points
Attacks: 1 (bite)
Damage: 1d3
Save: F1
Morale: 10
Hoard Class: XX
XP: 7

When a grombel becomes filled with the life energy of dozens of children, a tumor-like, pus-filled growth begins to form on some part of its body. This tumor eventually ruptures, giving birth to a grombel grub. Grombel grubs appear as tiny, bloated and misshapen grombels. They are vicious creatures of pure instinct who feed on carrion, usually the remains of the grombel's child victims. Grombel grubs eventually mature into full-sized grombels.

Grombel grubs have the ability to camouflage in any surrounding, surprising on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6. They share the grombel's vulnerability to sunlight and bright lights. Direct exposure to sunlight inflicts 1d10 hit points of damage per round. Exposure to a *continual light* spell causes the grub's skin to start smoldering and inflicts 1 hit point of damage per round after 2d4 rounds. Grombel grubs are also susceptible to normal fire.

Grombel grubs are extremely aggressive and attack en masse, trying to overwhelm their opponents. The grubs concentrate their attacks on a single foe, swarming up the character's arms and legs and delivering a vicious bite. Every grub attacking the character imposes a cumulative -1 to-hit, -1 AC, and -1 to all ability checks because of their swarming tactics. A character may shake the grubs off by making a successful Strength check, but the character can take no other action during the round.

END

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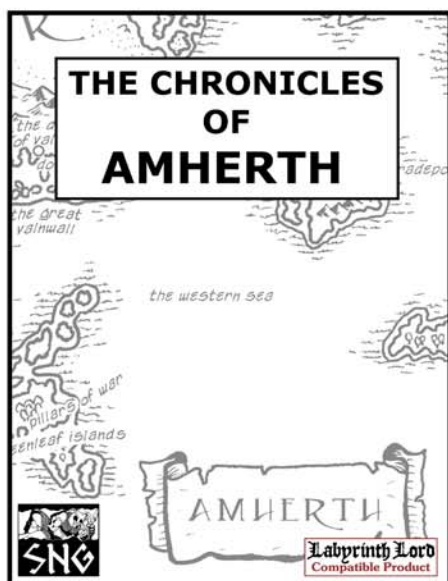
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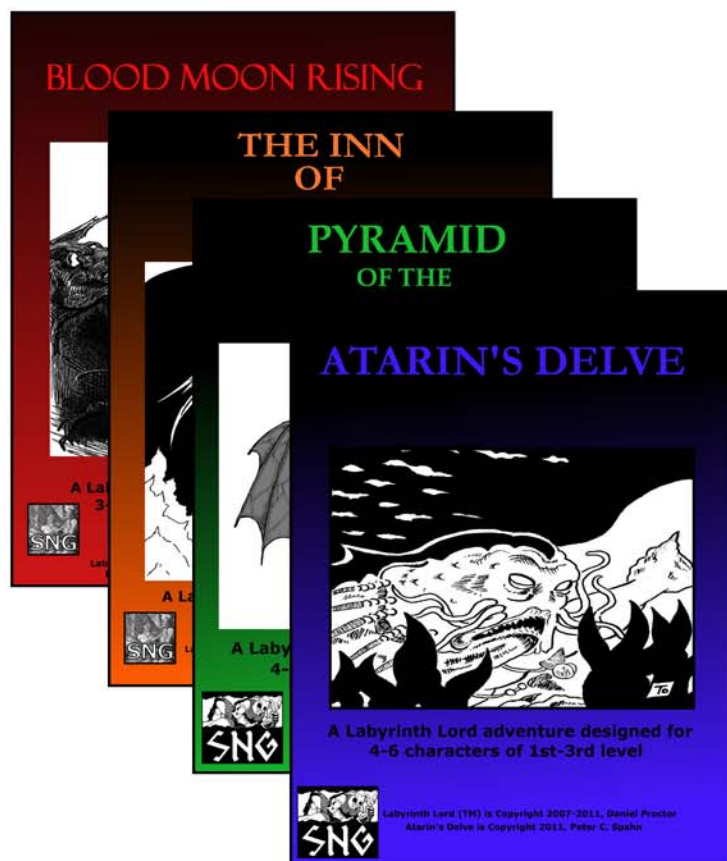


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