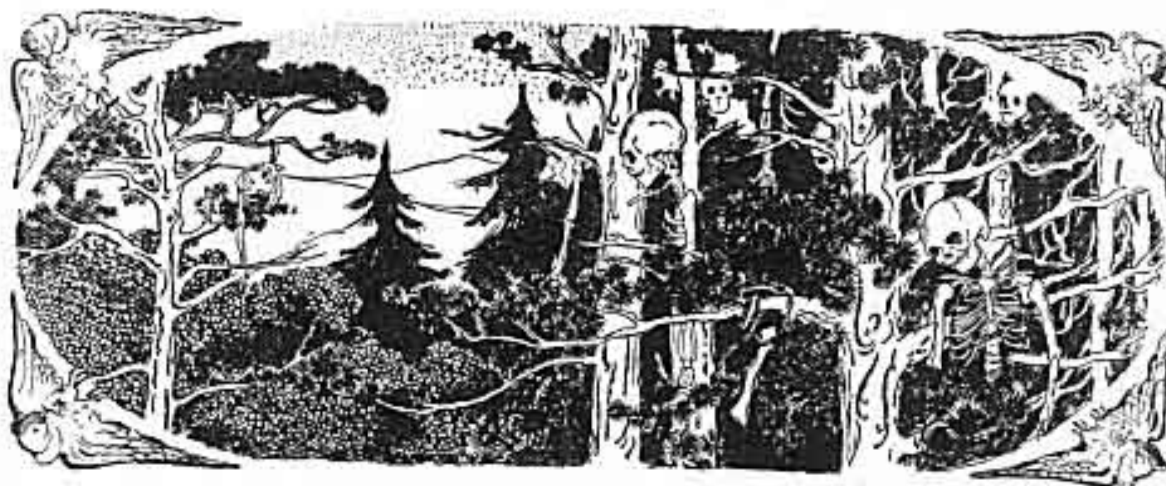


INTO THE WOODS

Three Low-Level Adventures for Mazes & Minotaurs



From the pages of the *Minotaur* webzine

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The Green Minotaur

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All adventures written by **Olivier Legrand**

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FURY OF THE BOARMEN

A not-so-classic cavern crawl scenario for beginning characters by **Olivier Legrand**

Fury of the Boarmen is a short scenario for a small party of first level adventurers. It works well as an introductory adventure and can easily be run in a single, 3 to 4 hour gaming session. Depending on the importance given to the character of Lelios and his tragic story (see below), there are two ways of running this adventure : either as a fast-paced, classic cavern crawl or as a more involved story about rejection, blood ties and betrayed feelings. This scenario was actually created with the Adventure Plot generator given in the *Maze Masters Guide* (p 34-35), with the following rolls :

Adventure Patron = 3, a noble person / family.

Main Location = 1, deep caverns.

Adventure Goal = 5, rescue important captive(s).

Complication = 1, foul play.



Lord Joris, the worried father

The Mission

As they are travelling throughout the Land of the Three Cities, the adventurers come across the villa domain of Lord Joris, a local Noble. Here, they are greeted by two household guards who take them before Lord Joris himself. An ageing, melancholy man, Joris soon tells them the following tale : his only living child, his beloved daughter Veda, who has just turned 19, has been abducted three days ago by a marauding band of brutish Boarmen.

Veda was taking a walk in the woods to collect various medicinal plants, accompanied by two of her father's retainers, when the Beastmen ambushed them. One of the retainers was killed by the Boarmen ; the other one was grievously injured but lived long enough to return to Joris' house and raise the alarm : before drawing his last breath, he explained how Veda was captured by the beastly marauders and was taken away, alive and kicking, as if the Boarmen were following specific orders...

A small rescue party composed of soldiers and woodsmen was quickly organized. After a full day of tracking and scouting, the trail of the Beastmen led Joris' men to the Caverns of Voros, which are said to be cursed and are viewed with considerable fear by the superstitious locals. As the men were arguing among themselves about whether or not they should enter the caves, they were ambushed by Boarmen, who slaughtered them all – except for one of them, who was lucky enough to escape and returned to Lord Joris' house to tell the tale...

Joris desperately needs the adventurers' help and asks them to rescue his beloved daughter before the Boarmen kill her (or make her suffer "a fate worse than death"), the nobleman will reward them with his eternal gratitude and all the money he could gather, a total of 3000 silver pieces (which is quite a sum, enough to buy a small ship).

A Family Secret

As implied by the Complication roll (Foul Play) of this adventure, the story told to the adventurers by Lord Joris is NOT the whole truth : it does not include any outright lie but it purposefully omits some very important facts... Alert adventurers will have noticed that Lord Joris referred to his daughter as "his only living child". If this topic is raised during conversation, Joris will reply in a very cold manner that his only son, Veda's twin brother, has been "taken away from him" by the same foul creatures that now have captured his daughter. Lord Joris will not discuss the matter further but the adventurers may have the familiar feeling that "something isn't quite right" here. If they question servants about Joris' son, they might learn his name (Lelios) but will not get any substantial information about his fate, as if Joris' people had been explicitly ordered to avoid this subject with strangers – in fact, their Lord has expressly forbidden them to even mention his son's name in his presence. If hard pressed, they will use euphemisms like "Lord Joris has lost his son", never explicitly telling whether Lelios is alive or dead.

The young man is, in fact, very much alive... but he has been disavowed and banished by his father because he is... a Shapeshifter !

The Fate of Lelios

Lelios first discovered his shapechanging powers 6 years ago, at the age of 13; he didn't tell anybody about his prodigious, newfound abilities in total secrecy, (rightfully) fearing the reaction of his father if he ever found out his son was a "freak of nature".

Lelios kept his secret to himself – he would have loved to share it with his dear sister Veda, but he also feared her reaction and did not want to run the risk of being rejected by the person he loved the most in this world... but this secrecy caused a lot of

tension in Lelios. This emotional stress, as well as the necessity of being alone to explore his new powers, gradually eroded his relationship with Veda, who never understood why her beloved brother had changed so much and why he no longer seemed interested in her confidences or in her company.

The only one who knew about Lelios' magical gifts, unbeknownst to Lelios himself, was Euryskos the Satyr - see below for more details on this character and his possible role in the adventure.

Then, one year ago, a local hunter wandering in the nearby woods unwittingly witnessed one of Lelios' transformations (from Stag back to his human form). Believing that some evil forest spirit had somehow taken possession of his lord's son, he ran to Joris' house and told him what he had seen.

When Lelios, who was unaware that he had been observed, returned to his father's estate a few hours later, he was confronted by Joris and several of his most faithful retainers, who all thought that Lelios was in fact some malevolent, appearance-stealing creature in the guise of Lelios : the men quickly restrained him and a local Priest was called to the rescue. In fear and confusion, Lelios managed to take the form of a hawk and fled for his life...

During the following night, a naked, exhausted and terrified Lelios sneaked back in his father's house; he went to his sister Veda and told her the whole truth. As the young man was weeping in his sister's embrace, their father burst in, mad with rage and anger. *"It's me, father ! I am your son !"* cried Lelios.

Veda tried to reason her father but he refused to listen to her desperate pleas and drew his sword... Lelios could only save his life by taking once again the form of a bird... While transforming, he heard his father utter these fateful words, which left no doubt in his mind : *"You are no longer my son !"* Lelios fled away and was never seen again.

Lelios lived in the wilderness. He survived as he could, spending most of his time in various animal forms, which made hunting and feeding easier. It also allowed him to remain completely undetected by his father's men, who had been ordered to search the nearby woodlands for the "degenerate freak". His new way of living gradually changed Lelios, hardening his heart and darkening his soul.

Meanwhile, Veda sank into despair and melancholy, blaming her father for having forsaken her beloved twin brother. She tried to run away a few times, so Lord Joris had her watched and guarded at all times by two of his most loyal retainers.

But let's get back to Lelios. A few weeks ago, during one of his "animal trips" in a nearby forest, he saw a group of three brutish Boarmen hunting in the woods and followed them back to the Caverns of Voros. When he realized that there was at least a dozen of other Boarmen living here, he began to think about a plan...

Lelios



Level 1 Shapeshifter, age 19, rejected son

Personality : Used to be a bright, promising boy; a bit shy, perhaps, but full of life; since his rejection, he has turned into a bitter, callous, vengeful soul.

Attributes : Might 10, Skill 13, Luck 15, Wits 16, Will 13, Grace 14.

Combat : Initiative 13, Melee +3, Missile +5, Basic Defense Class 14, Hits Total 8.

Saving Rolls : Athletic Prow +3, Danger Evasion +5, Mystic Fort +4, Physical Vigor +3.

Personal Charisma : +4.

Magic : Protean Repertoire 4*, Power points 6.

Background Talents : Actor, Woodsman.

** His Protean Repertoire includes the four following nonhuman forms, with their Power costs : Hawk (5), Fox (5) Stag (4) and Boarman (4).*

*See the **Mazes & Minotaurs Companion** (p 20-22) for more about Shapeshifters and their powers.*

My Son... the Shapeshifter

It might seem odd that, in a magically-rich world such as Mythika, a Shapeshifter should be rejected as an "unnatural freak" by his own father... but Joris' reaction is actually quite symptomatic of the social stigma against Shapeshifters. Sure, magic is part of life on Mythika... but Metamorphosis is something of a special case, since its very nature points to the taint of Chaos – something that Mineans tend to view as "inherently bad". Furthermore, Metamorphosis is a very mysterious form of magic : it is neither learned nor granted by the Gods and seems to be more a "twist of nature" than anything else – that plus the fact that the power of Shapeshifting is usually thought to be a hereditary gift... Since nobody in Joris' family has ever exhibited such a power, the shock and repulsion he felt when faced with his son's "coming out" can also be interpreted as a rejection of the boy's paternity. In other words, Joris is really convinced that Lelios *cannot be his son* – and since Joris' wife died several years ago, all the terrible questions that this revelation brought to Joris' mind are bound to remain unanswered.

Lelios' Revenge

Returning to the forest, Lelios practiced his shapeshifting and was soon able to turn into a very convincing Boarman. Being far more clever than the real pig-faced brutes, Lelios joined their band without arousing their suspicion and quickly became their leader, after killing the former "top hog" in single combat (thanks to his high Luck and Wits, which allowed him to use Subterfuge tactics in a very efficacious manner). Having submitted the Boarmen to his command, he then led a small group of them to the borders of his father's estate. As soon as the opportunity arose, Lelios and his Boarmen abducted Veda, killing one of her chaperons in the process before fleeing back to the Caverns...

As the leader of the Boarmen, Lelios claimed the captive for himself, making sure that no other Boarman would harm her. At first, Veda was terrified... but the strangely clever Boarman leader made her understand who he really was.

For Lelios, Veda's abduction was just a way of declaring war on his father. The next stage of his plan is to organize a massive raid on his father's land and destroy everything he has. Lelios has not decided whether or not he will kill his father : for now, he just want Joris to suffer and despair. That's the real reason why he abducted Veda, even if he prefers to believe (and have Veda believe) that he was driven by the need to have his beloved sister at his side. His grief, humiliation and loneliness have changed him, turning him into a bitter, hateful, callous creature – or, in his own view, into the fiend that his father wanted him to be. Veda has only begun to realize this and is becoming more and more afraid of her brother, despite her love for him.

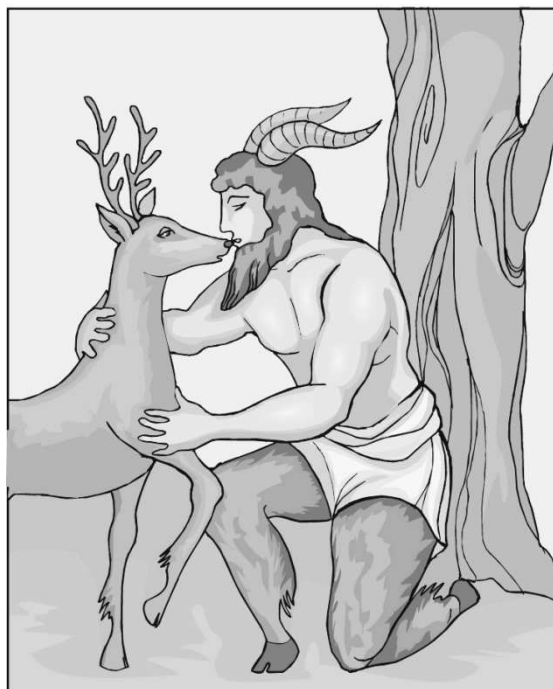
The Trip to the Caverns

If the characters accept to rescue Lord Joris' daughter, he will order some of his most trusted retainers to lead the party through the woods – but none of them will dare enter the Caverns.

The trip takes slightly more than one day of travel and, aside from the optional encounters detailed below, should be largely uneventful – unless the Maze Master wishes to spice things up with one or two extra encounters, preferably with wild beasts and other woodland creatures.

The Dryads

Maze Masters may consider adding an encounter with a few curious young Dryads who might heal, help or even hide wounded adventurers once they are out of the Caverns – especially if they are chased by those nasty, brutish Boarmen... but under no circumstance will these frivolous Nymphs accept to venture into the Caverns themselves. This optional encounter will be especially appropriate if the group does not have access to magical healing (or has never met Nymphs before).



Euryskos the Satyr and one of his Forest Friends

Euryskos the Satyr

If the Maze Master wishes to emphasize the tragic dimension of Lelios' character, the party should meet the Satyr Euryskos on their way to the Caverns – see below for more details about this encounter. Maze Masters who prefer to run this scenario as a classic, fast-paced cavern crawl should simply leave the Satyr out of the story.

Euryskos the Satyr is a really nice guy and, as far as Satyr standards go, a bit of a hermit. Unlike most other Satyrs, Euryskos is a thoughtful, meditative and sensitive type : he likes watching the stars at night and listening to the quiet music of the forest. He lives in the woods, among the local animals whom he considers as his friends, and has no contact with other members of his kin. Euryskos is on friendly terms with the local Dryads (see above) but, oddly, has never really tried to seduce anyone of them – much to the young Nymphs' surprise, given the behavior of Satyrs in general. The Dryads have accepted the fact that Euryskos was "special" and have developed a unique friendship with the lonely Satyr, whom they see as a sort of elder brother and confidant.

Euryskos knows everything that happens in the woods. Unbeknownst to Lelios, the Satyr has witnessed several of his transformations, including the first few ones, and has kept a watchful eye on the young lad, wisely sensing that terrible trouble would erupt when Lelios' gift would be discovered by his father, the haughty Lord Joris. Many times, Euryskos was tempted to make his presence known to the troubled Lelios but he never did – perhaps because of his shyness... or perhaps because he felt that his intervention would only make things even more complicated for the young man.

Aside from Veda and Lelios himself (who has never even suspected the Satyr's presence), Euryskos is the only one to know that the Boarman leader is in fact the shapeshifted Lelios. Euryskos also knows that Lelios and the Boarmen have abducted Veda; he has even witnessed the slaughter of the search party by the pig-faced brutes. Euryskos now feels he has to intervene before this whole story ends up in blood and tragedy for everyone – which is the reason why he will approach the adventurers.

Euryskos will come to the party in a peaceful and straightforward manner. He will welcome them to the forest and tell them he has some very important information to share with them. Then he will reveal the truth about Lelios : his shapeshifting debuts in the forest, how he was banished from his home, how he assumed the form of a Boarman to take control of a band of Boarmen marauders and how they abducted poor Veda. Once his story is told, Euryskos will ask the adventurers to spare the life of Lelios, who is, according to him, *"more troubled and misled than truly malevolent."* Euryskos even thinks he could help the young Shapeshifter to start anew, once this whole sorry business is over. Whether or not the adventurers intend to spare Lelios is up to them... and whether or not Euryskos is right about Lelios is up to the Maze Master, as detailed under the *Aftermath* section at the end of the scenario.

Euryskos the Satyr

Euryskos has the usual game characteristics of his kin, with a few extra special abilities (Sharp Senses and Stealthy) that reflect his special personality and way of life. His only weapon is a sling. He will try to avoid any form of combat.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Peaceful

Cunning : Clever

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 80'

Initiative : 18

Melee Attack : +1

Missile Attack : +2

Damage : 1d6

Defense Class : 15

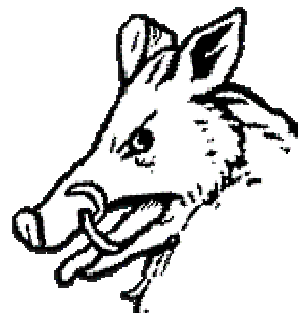
Hits Total : 8

Detection / Evasion : +8 / +10

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Abilities : Grapple (16), Lightning Fast, Missile Weapon (sling, 150'), Sharp Senses, Stealthy (18) Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Killing this well-meaning, non-violent Satyr will bring neither Glory nor Wisdom.



A brutish Boarman – or is this Lelios ?

Caves of the Boarmen

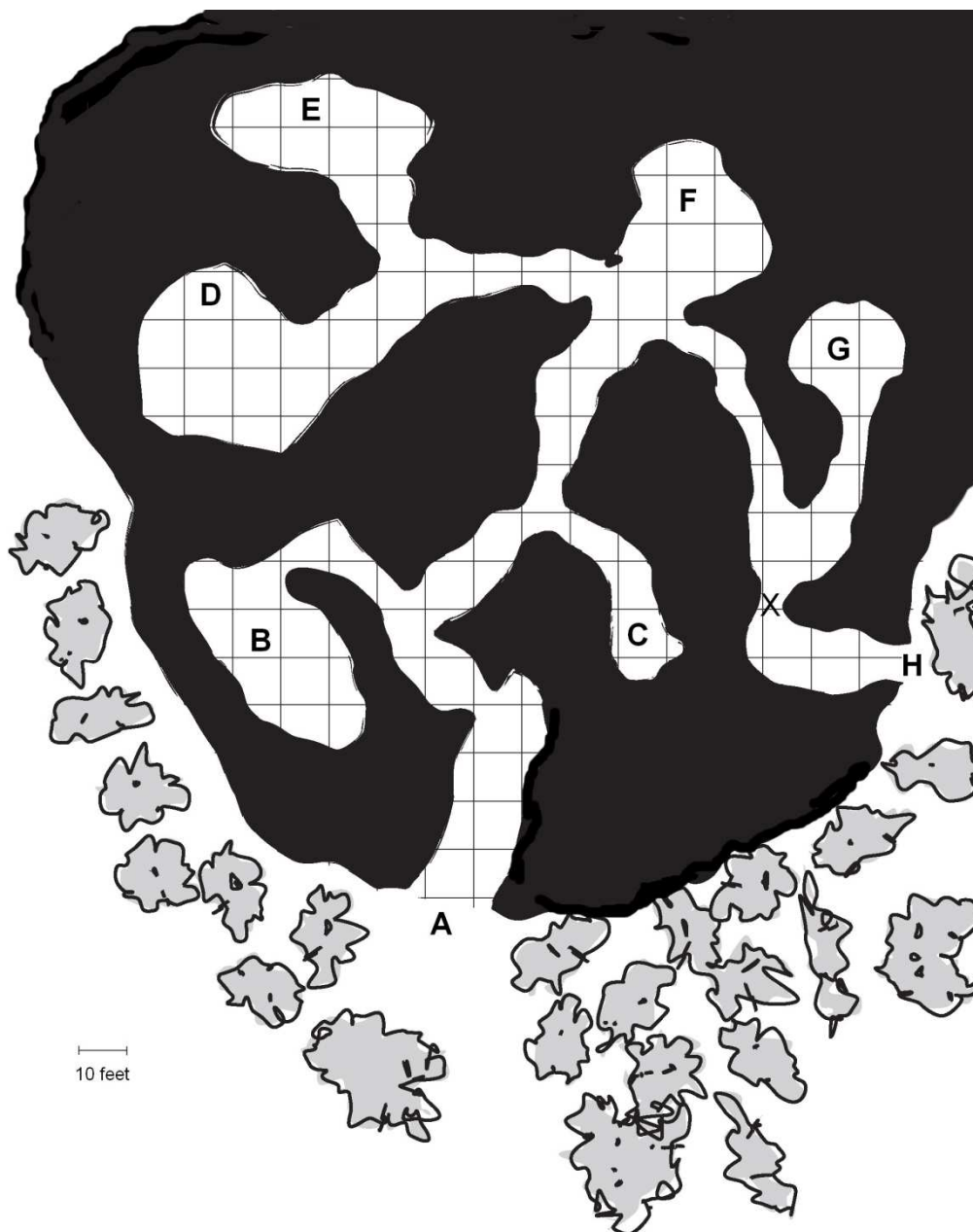
The number of Boarmen in Lelios' force should depend on the number of player-characters. To get this number, Maze Masters should multiply the number of adventurers by 3 and add 1d6 to this total. Thus, if you are running this scenario with four players, Lelios will have either 13 to 18 (1d6+12) Boarmen under his command.

All are standard members of their race, as described in the *Creature Compendium* (p 16). None of them carry shields and they all fight with one-handed weapons, mainly spears and crude axes. Like all Boarmen, they are very aggressive and will tend to attack all intruders on sight. They are fanatically loyal to their new cunning and ambitious leader... but they would certainly try to kill him on sight should they realize his true nature.

Even as Beastmen go, Boarmen are not very bright, disciplined or vigilant creatures. One or two easy victories are enough to make them believe in their own invincibility and these particular Boarmen have no reason to believe that Joris could send them men brave enough to venture into their Caverns. All this to say that Boarmen do not keep well-organized turns of watch duty and are likely to be surprised by any reasonably fast strike on their lair.

The Maze Master should place the Boarmen as he sees fits inside and around the Caverns, using the map given next page. The Boarmen are the only menace awaiting the adventurers in the caves : despite what local legends may imply, there are no fiendish traps, hidden dangers, ancient curses or wandering monsters in the Caverns, nor do they hide any treasure worthy of note – unless of course the Maze Master decides otherwise.

Maze Masters who want to make things tougher for the adventurers should feel free to add a few extra perils and denizens to the Caverns of Voros : perhaps some frightful Giant Spiders lurk in some unexplored, deeper level of the Caverns (which would explain the ill repute of the place), guarding some ancient, undiscovered treasure... or perhaps a few mythic items are scattered among the bony remains of their ancient victims (adventurers from an earlier, forgotten era). Another possibility could be an entrance to the realms of Hades, guarded by Charonts and other evil Spirits.



CAVE OF THE BOARMEN

Map Key

A) Main Entrance : This is the entrance used by the Boarmen themselves. It is likely to be guarded.

B) Empty Cavern : As shown on the map, the access to this chamber is extremely narrow, which explains why the Boarmen have left it unoccupied. At the Maze Master's discretion, this could also be an access to a deeper, more dangerous level of the caverns (see previous page for a few possibilities).

C) Dead End : Nothing of interest here.

D) Communal Cave : This is where the Boarmen gather to eat, feast, sleep etc. The only item of note here is the severed head of their previous leader, which has been left to rot in a small niche as a remainder of who is in charge now.

E) Leader's Lair : This is where Lelios (in his Boarman form) is most likely to be found. It is also there that Veda has been ordered by her brother to remain, under the "protection" of two Boarmen.

F) Storage Cave : There the Boarmen store their food, findings, extra weapons and other junk. There is absolutely nothing of real value here.

G) Boar Shrine : This small chamber holds a crude, 2' tall, wood-carved statuette of Og, the beastly god of Boarmen, surrounded by various offerings (mainly the remains of dead forest animals).

H) Hidden Entrance : The Boarmen don't know about this entrance nor do they know that the X-marked spot is actually a huge stone that can be moved away with a successful Feat of Strength.



Is fair Veda a Shapeshifter, too ?

The Fate of the Twins

While masquerading as the Boarman leader, Lelios will always let his warriors fight for him, unless someone manages to grab Veda, in which case he will attack that someone in mindless fury. At the Maze Master's discretion, such a crisis could also trigger an uncontrolled reversion of shape to Lelios' true form, with all the dramatic consequences that may ensue. Lelios' fate is pretty much into the Maze Master's hands : if wounded, he will either fight to the death in a blind, desperate rage... or turn into a hawk (which takes him one full battle round and costs him 5 Power points) and fly away – perhaps to return in a later scenario (see *Aftermath* below).

Veda's behavior and fate also depend on the tone you wish to give to the end of the adventure : she could either try to plead mercy for her misled brother or be grateful that the adventurers have freed her from the callous fiend her brother has become. In all cases, though, she is unlikely to forgive her father, whom she blames for rejecting Lelios and turning him into something else. (*"Nature or magic may have made Lelios different – but YOU, father, you're the one who really turned your son into a monster !"*)

Maze Masters might also consider the following twist : since Veda was Lelios' twin and since the power of shapeshifting is thought to be (at least partly) genetic in nature, then she too could well be a Shapeshifter – albeit a latent one, who has not yet discovered her powers. In this case, the major crisis of her abduction by Lelios could be the "trigger event" that unlocks her true heritage...

See *Aftermath* below for more details on possible endings and their consequences.

Aftermath

Although the plot of this scenario is very linear and straightforward, its ending is extremely open-ended. Here are a few possibilities :

The Death of Lelios

The Shapeshifter is killed by the adventurers or by the Boarmen themselves when they realize he was an impostor. Depending on her reactions to her brother's actions, Veda will either return to her father, saddened by the death of her brother but grateful to have escaped from his clutches... or escape to the forest to lead a new life under the protection of Euryskos and the Dryads.

Revenge of the Shapeshifter

Lelios manages to escape with his life and swears revenge against his father and those damned, meddling adventurers. His vengeance plans will also include his sister, if he feels she has forsaken or betrayed him. Depending on her reactions to her brother's actions, Veda may either return to her father's domain or decide to live on her own, in which case Euryskos will ask the local Dryads to help and adopt her.

Happy Ending

Lelios is spared by the adventurers and realizes all the harm he has done. Still forsaken by his father, he takes up residence in the forest under the tutelage of Euryskos the Satyr, who becomes his friend and mentor. Depending on how she reacted to Lelios' actions, Veda may either return to her father or take up residence in the woods too, living with her brother, Euryskos and the local Dryads.

Revenge of the Father

If, for some reason or another, Veda does not return home Lord Joris is likely to hold the adventurers responsible for the loss of his daughter and may try to get back at them later... Perhaps he becomes mad and hires an evil Sorcerer to Enslave them...

Unhappy Reunion

Veda does return home... but since she was Lelios' twin, her father begins to suspect that she too might not truly be *his* daughter. Perhaps he tries to kill her in a fit of blind rage... and she manages to escape and catch up with the adventurers and asking them to take her back to the safety of the woods, where the Dryads and Euryskos will help and protect her.

Fury of the Boarmen, the Sequel

Some Boarmen have survived and, in their beastly rage, decide to take revenge on Euryskos and the Dryads... Will the adventurers be there to defend the forest friends from the fury of the Boarmen ?

Olivier Legrand (2008)

TEMPLE OF THE BLACK GOAT

A *Revised Mazes & Minotaurs* mini-scenario for novice adventurers, by **Olivier Legrand**

Temple of the Black Goat is a short scenario for a small party of first level adventurers. It can easily be run in a single, 3 to 4 hour gaming session and can fit smoothly in any ongoing campaign.

An Auspicious Encounter

During the course of their travels, the adventurers meet a young Priestess of Artemis named **Keira**. The best way to introduce her is to have her come to the adventurers' help – perhaps she suddenly appears to assist them with bolts of Divine Wrath while they are fighting a dangerous beast or monster or perhaps she arrives after the fight to heal them with Divine Vitality. Whichever way the Maze Master sets things up, the overall idea is to have Keira befriend the characters by helping them in a tight spot.

Keira will then explain to the characters that she also happens to be on an adventure of her own – no better than an adventure, a *divine mission*. And now that she thinks of it, perhaps her chance encounter with the adventurers was in fact predestined by the goddess Artemis herself ! She will tell the following story to the characters...

Deep in a nearby forest lies an abandoned temple of Artemis. Some thirty years ago, it was raided by a savage horde of Tragos and other Beastmen, who slaughtered its priestesses and desecrated the sacred place by their foul deeds and odious habits. Their descendants are still occupying the former temple and their vile presence is an insult that the goddess Artemis can no longer bear.

Through a Divine Vision, the goddess Artemis has sent one of her most devoted young priestesses (that's Keira herself) on a sacred mission : journey to the lost temple, drive away (or, preferably, exterminate) the foul Beastmen and reclaim the place on behalf of her goddess. Of course, young Keira cannot be expected to carry such a heroic task all by herself so she will need the help of brave and bold adventurers such as the player-characters.

If the adventurers seem too greedy to be content with intangible rewards like glory or the personal satisfaction of helping to execute a deity's will, Keira will explain to them that the high priestess of her temple has promised a vast financial reward to those who would help young Keira to carry out her sacred mission. This is of course a complete lie, since Keira embarked on her divine-inspired quest without the permission (or knowledge) of her high priestess (who also happens to be her aunt, but that's somewhat irrelevant). In other words, Keira is an adventurous (read : runaway) young priestess who got bored with sacerdotal duties and decided it was time to "really do something for the goddess" – like, for instance, reclaiming a long lost temple.



Keira, a young Priestess of Artemis

Keira the Priestess

Level 1 Priestess of Artemis, age 19

Attributes : Might 8, Skill 12, Luck 17, Wits 15, Will 17, Grace 16.

Combat : Initiative 12, Melee +2, Missile +5, Basic Defense Class 15, Hits Total 7.

Saving Rolls : Athletic Prowess +2, Danger Evasion +8, Mystic Fort. +8, Phys. Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma : +8 (+9 with reputation)

Weapons : Bow, dagger.

Magic : Divine Prodigies of Artemis, Spiritual Aura +6, Mystic Strength 18, Power 7.

Note : Using the optional variant formulas given in previous issues of the *Minotaur*, Keira's Danger Evasion would be +5 instead of +7. Her Mystic Fortitude would be unchanged.

Suspicious adventurers may also wonder why, in the last 30 years, the priestesses of Artemis haven't tried to reclaim the temple before. If they question Keira about that, she will reveal the ugly truth : a few years after the tragic event, her own temple did send an expedition to the lost temple but these priestesses and the adventurers who escorted them were never heard from again...

Trail of the Black Goat

The abandoned temple of Artemis has been colonized by a band of evil Beastmen (actually a pack of Tragos) led by an unusually charismatic (and mystically inclined) Caliban.

Under the Dark Satyr's tutelage, the goat-heads have turned the place into a temple dedicated to their own deity, a malevolent earth spirit known as the Black Goat of the Woods. Over the years, the odious orgies and foul sacrifices performed by the Tragos in the lost temple has attracted other followers to the cult of the Black Goat – including local Degenerate Men and a few perverted Silenes. Of course, the worshippers of the Black Goat do all the things that one might expect from mad, degenerate cultists, including bloody sacrifices, gratuitous torture, bestial orgies and other things better left to the imagination.

The Caliban "priest" now rules over a small force of fanatically loyal (and completely crazed) adepts, who have managed to exterminate (or drive away) the former inhabitants of the woods, including Bee-folk, Sylvans and Acteons (who fought with utter courage but were eventually butchered by the servants of the Black Goat).

As a consequence of the cult's growing menace, the nearest human villages have been deserted for several years – and of course those rare wayfarers who are foolhardy enough to venture into that part of the woods usually end up as the main course (or worse) in the next orgy of the Black Goat's minions. It is to bring an end to this insufferable situation and to reclaim the lost temple in the name of Artemis that Keira needs her newfound friends' help. Of course, from this point on, we shall assume that the adventurers do accept to help Keira in her daring mission, otherwise there would not be an adventure. If you feel like your players need some extra persuasion, have their characters ambushed by a few Tragos sent by their Caliban master to purge the forest of their unwelcome presence.

The trip to the ruined temple should be pretty uneventful, since the activities of the cult have driven away most of the denizens of the forest (including most wild animals). The Maze Master should insist on the eerie, gloomy silence of the woods – as if *something* had driven away all life from the area... If you want to accentuate the dark tone of the adventure, the characters could stumble on the grisly remains of a few Acteons – severed heads impaled on tree branches, garlands made of entrails – you get the idea.

The cultists have grown lax in their surveillance of the woods – they simply can't believe anyone would be stupid or crazy enough to venture so deep in their territory... so unless the adventurers do something really stupid, they should be able to approach the temple undetected. If you want to spice things up a bit, have them encounter a few marauding Tragos, Degenerate Men looking for hallucinatory mushrooms or even some drunken Silenes having bestial intercourse in the woods.

The Cultists

The size of the cultists' force should depend on the might of the player-characters' party and should be calculated as follows, with "X" corresponding to the total number of levels in the group, including Keira.

One Caliban cult leader

2X Tragos

3X Degenerate Men (and 2X Degenerate Women who never fight and behave like scared beasts)

1X Silenes

Thus, if the party is made up of four 1st level player-characters plus Keira, there will be a total of ten Tragos, fifteen Degenerate Men and five Silenes.

These creatures' stats can be found in the *Creature Compendium*. The Tragos are unarmored, do not carry shields and are armed with swords or spears, while the Degenerate Men and Silenes are armed with clubs and stone axes. All these creatures are crazed fanatics and will fight to the death, except for the Silenes who are just cowardly bullies.

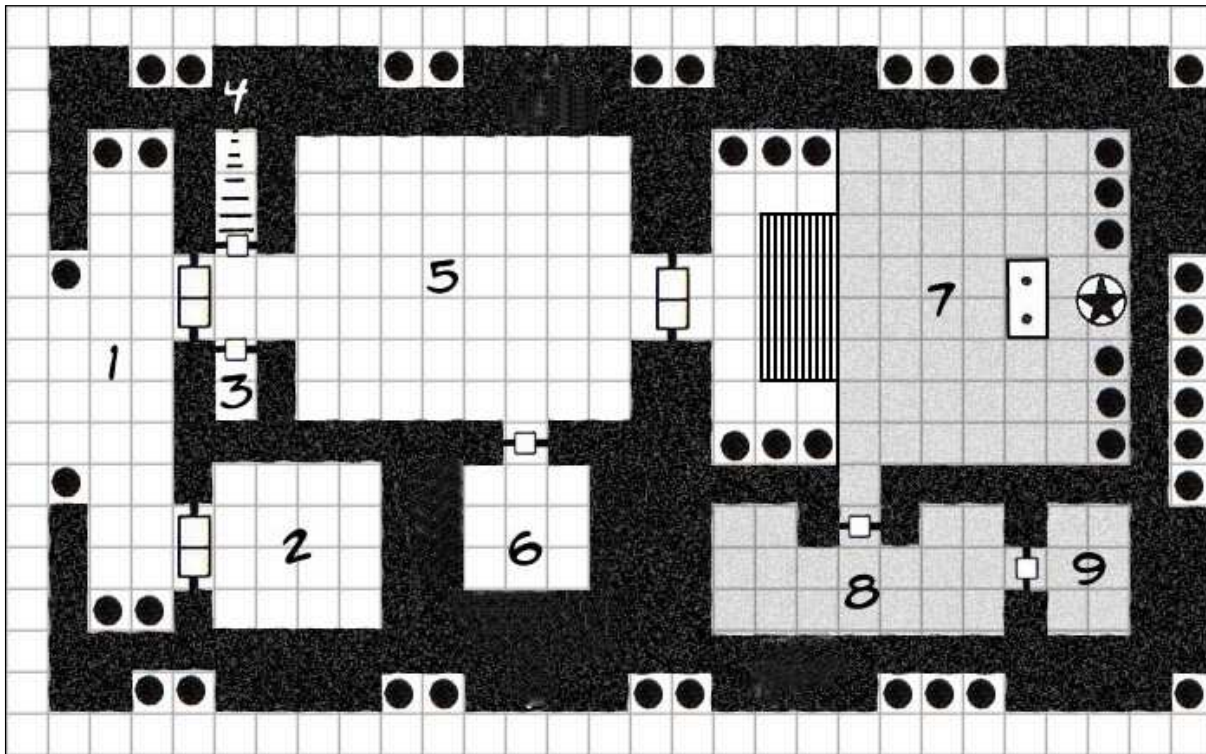
The Caliban 'priest' is armed with a vicious sickle and a magical thyrsos staff (see p 11).

The Lost Temple

Once the adventurers get near the temple, the sight which awaits them will depend on the moment of their arrival. During daytime, most of the cultists are in the large communal room (see map) - either asleep, drunk or otherwise trying to recover from last night's debauchery (-4 to detection rolls).

Then, as dusk draws closer, they begin to grow more and more restless, starting to chant, feast and otherwise worship their foul goddess in ways which are, again, better left to the imagination. Things culminate to a paroxysm of collective frenzy at midnight, the hour at which the Caliban usually leaves his private premises in the temple to join his "flock" in their bestial orgies which take place in the worship chamber (see map). These "revels" then proceed until dawn, at which point most of the celebrants start to doze off into sleep or drug-induced stupor; during their orgies, they ingest enormous amounts of hallucinatory mushrooms which are regularly collected by the Silenes.

MAP OF THE LOST TEMPLE



 = 10 ft. x 10 ft.

1 : Entrance

This location is usually guarded by 1d3+1 Tragos (see *Creature Compendium*, p 118). Like all the other Beastmen met in this adventure, they are unarmored and do not carry shields.

2 : Storage Room

This is where the cultists keep their food – including the partially dismembered carcasses of a few fellow cultists and perhaps one or two unwary adventurers.

3 : Mushroom Storage

This closet is filled with heaps dried hallucinatory mushrooms. Anyone foolish enough to eat these things will have to make a Physical Vigor saving roll (target number 15) for each handful. Failure means that the character will suffer from hallucinations, disorientation and warped perception for the next three hours (-2 to Danger Evasion, Melee, Missile and Initiative). Effects are cumulative. Note that the cultists are accustomed to the ingestion of these mushrooms and do not suffer such penalties.

4 : Stairway

These stairs originally led to a lower (underground) level but access has long been blocked by stone boulders and rubble. It would take three Feats of Strength to clear the way. What awaits below is left to the imagination of the Maze Master.

Alternatively, the stairs could be unblocked and lead to a large chamber filled with the grisly remains of dozens (hundreds ?) of victims, in which case a nauseating stench should logically emanate from the stairs : anyone trying to go downstairs will have to make a Physical Vigor saving roll (against a target number of 10) or throw up after the first two or three steps (make the same saving roll for each minute spent below). Characters who throw up will immediately and instinctively retreat upstairs.

5 : Large Communal Room

This is where the members of the Black Goat cult sleep, eat and spend most of their non-ceremonial time. Depending on the time of the day, it may be completely empty, filled with sleeping cultists or occupied by roughly one-half of them (plus most of the Degenerate Women).

The Caliban Priest

The Caliban 'priest' has the same stats as a standard member of his race, except for his **Mystique**, which is Eldritch, reflecting a special psychic connection with unseen forces.

The Caliban also carries three mythic items on his person : an **Amulet of Protection** and a **Ring of Good Fortune** (both stolen from adventurers who were killed and eaten a few years ago by the cultists), which give him various saving roll and Defense Class bonuses, and the **Thyrsos of Pain**, a staff with special properties (see below for more details).

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Aggressive

Cunning : Clever

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 80'

Initiative : 19

Melee Attack : +3

Damage : 1d6 (weapon ; a vicious sickle)

Defense Class : 18 *

Hits Total : 12

Detection / Evasion : +6 / +12 *

Mystic Fortitude : +6 *

Special Abilities : Grapple (M = 16), Lightning Fast, Stealthy (18), Supernatural Vigor, Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 75*, Wisdom 10.

** These scores take into account the bonuses granted by the Caliban's Amulet and Ring.*



The Caliban, leader of the Black Goat cult

6 : Prison

This is where the cultists keep their prisoners before they butcher them during their demented orgies.

The heavy barred door is always guarded by two **Tragos** armed with spears. The cell currently holds one **Acteon** captive named Kernos, who is the sole survivor of his tribe (see *Creature Compendium*).

Kernos is down to 5 Hits because of various injuries inflicted on him before and after his capture. The cultists intend to sacrifice (and devour) him during their next full blown orgy. If he is given a weapon, Kernos (who, like all Acteons, is a devotee of Artemis) will gladly join the adventurers in their search-and-destroy mission. Keira will heal him back to his maximum Hits total of 12, which will cost her 3 points of Power.

7 : Worship Chamber

This is where the cultists of the Black Goat celebrate their foul ceremonies during night-time.

The star mark on the map indicates the location of a man-sized statue which once represented Artemis but has been defaced and mutilated by the cultists and now acts as a grotesque representation of their dark deity : the arms of the statue are missing and its head has been crushed and replaced by the horned skull of a dead goat. The body of the statue is covered with dried blood and other yucky stuff best left to the reader's imagination.

Thyrsos of Pain

This magical thyrsus staff (Enc = 2) is the most prized possession of the Caliban. It gives him the power to cause excruciating pain (but no physical damage) to a single target of his choice within 20', simply by pointing the staff in the victim's direction.

The target must make a Mystic Fortitude saving roll against a target number of 15 or writhe in helpless agony for the rest of the battle round. While in this state, characters are completely unable to act and suffer the same penalties as for being prone (-4 to melee EDC).

This sacrilegious vision will cause the righteous fury of any Priestess or devoted worshipper of Artemis (included, of course, Keira herself); such characters will receive a +2 bonus to their Melee attacks when fighting the cultists. This bonus lasts for the rest of the adventure and only applies to characters who have chosen Artemis as their patron deity.

8 : Caliban's Private Apartments

This is where the Caliban leader of the cult usually spends his daytime. This room is separated from the Worship Chamber by a reinforced door which the Caliban closes with a very strong bar when inside (he doesn't trust his 'flock' that much – especially the Silenes, whom he wrongfully suspects of plotting his demise); the barred door can be broken down with a successful Feat of Strength or by doing it a total of 10 Hits of damage using axes, maces and other similar weapons.

Unlike the rest of the temple, the Caliban's living quarters are well-kept and even have some decent pieces of furniture. The room contains nothing of real interest... except for a hidden door leading to the Secret Treasure Room (see below).

This hidden door can only be found by characters who conduct a careful search of the room and make a successful detection roll (target number 15). It is protected by a trap (Concealment 17, Danger 15) : a poison-coated needle (death in 1d6 battle rounds).

9 : Secret Treasure Room

This concealed room contains all the treasure the greedy Caliban has managed to amass since the temple was taken. It includes **200** silver pieces worth of gold, silver, bronze coins and jewels for each character in the party (including Keira) as well as several mythic items (all of which are detailed in the *Maze Masters Guide*) :

3 amphorae full of **Wine of Dionysus**

3 phials of **Potion of Healing** (3 doses per phial)

1 phial of **Potion of Celerity** (3 doses)

1 **Aegis**

1 **Sword of Ares**

1 **Bow of Artemis** and 1 **Quiver of Artemis**

1 **Harp of Poetic Insight**

1 **Flute of the Shepherd**

Options & Complications

Maze Masters who wish to make things tougher or trickier for the poor adventurers might consider the following complications or alterations :

The Caliban Sorcerer

The Black Goat has granted the Caliban priest full Psychic Powers. In this case, his Thyrsos becomes either a Staff of Power or a Staff of Command and he will also have some Enslaved creatures to his service, such as several Acteon warriors, a Dryad (who could use her powers to lure new victims to the temple) or perhaps even some Large Monster with a suitable theme, such as a Moon Spawn, a Wood Titan or even a Capricorn Horror.

Dark Festival

The adventurers have chosen the worst moment to raid the temple – that of some dark festival which attracts many other worshippers of the Black Goat to the lost temple in the woods. Such evil pilgrims could include more Calibans, Silenes and Tragos, as well as humans who have secretly converted to the cult (such as, say, a local Noble or his son).

More Crawling Chaos

Guided by dark visions sent to him by the Black Goat and thanks to a foul ritual involving a massive blood sacrifice, the Caliban is about to summon a Crawling Aberration onto the mortal plane as the messenger of the Dark Goddess of the Woods.

The Mad Old Crone

The priestesses of the previous expedition were NOT all slaughtered by the Beastmen – one of them survived and was kept alive by the foul creatures, who inflicted such horrors on her that she became hopelessly insane. In her madness, she had a vision of what she thought to be a darker, more primitive aspect of Artemis and joined the Beastmen cult as the Caliban's consort.

She is now a raving mad, withered old crone who has forgotten her true past – so the fact that the real Artemis has stripped her of her Divine Prodigies does not worry her at all... especially since her new goddess has granted her new powers, similar to those of a Priestess of Cybele (see *M&M Companion*, p 25), including the dreadful prodigy of Divine Emasculation.

Written by **Olivier Legrand** (2009)

Temple map by **Tim Hartin**

Visit Tim's great cartography site at <http://paratime.ca/cartography/>

THE GREEN MINOTAUR

A not-so-classic monster hunt mini-scenario for low level characters by **Olivier Legrand**



The Green Minotaur – fact or fallacy ?

Introduction

The Green Minotaur is a short scenario for a small party of level 2-3 adventurers. The adventure will work best if there is a Hunter in the party. *The Green Minotaur* can easily be run in a single, 3 to 4 hour session and can fit smoothly in any ongoing campaign. This scenario was created with the Adventure Plot generator given in the *Maze Masters Guide* (p 34-35), with the following rolls :

Patron = 4, populace of a village, town or city.

Main Location = 4, a dangerous forest.

Adventure Goal = 2, defeat a mythic monster.

Complication = 5, obstruction/interference from an unrelated third party.

Masks & Minotaurs

During the course of their travels, the adventurers come across a small isolated village located near a dense (and ominous-looking) forest. As soon as the locals realize the strangers are actually heroic adventurers, they will request the player-characters' help against the terrible menace that has been plaguing their village for many months : a band of savage Green Minotaurs. Several farms have been raided, livestock stolen and villagers killed over the last few months, including several young girls and boys whose bodies were found horribly mutilated and partially devoured in the woods.

If the players ask the Maze Master what a Green Minotaur is supposed to be, they should be told that their characters have never heard of such creatures before... but that the existence of a previously unheard-of or unique type of Minotaur is always a

possibility : more than any other Monster, Minotaurs do seem to come in a wide variety of breeds.

If the characters ask the villagers to describe these mysterious Green Minotaurs, the locals will seem surprised that seasoned, well-traveled adventurers would know nothing of such creatures and will then proceed to describe the foul monsters as, well, Minotaurs whose heads seem to be covered with foliage rather than with the usual bovine hair. There are apparently half a dozen of them, armed with clubs, axes and other weapons.

At this point, clever adventurers might suspect that the whole story seems to be a classic Impostaur case (see *Creature Compendium*, p 79)... and indeed a group of local brigands have recently begun to masquerade as the infamous "Green Minotaurs", exploiting the villagers' fear of the monster to cover their own misdeeds.

There is, however, a catch – or rather *two* catches.

Two Monsters Too Many

The first catch is that the Green Minotaur actually exists - a relatively harmless creature, who lives in the deepest part of the forest under the protection of the local Hamadryad and who has nothing to do with the Impostaurs... nor with the horribly mutilated corpses (including several children) which have been found in the woods over the last few months.

The second catch is that the Impostaurs themselves have nothing to do with these mutilated, half-eaten corpses : the villains DID kill several persons during their farm raids but the people found dead (and horribly mutilated) in the woods were actually slaughtered by another, very real Monster...



A cleverly (?) disguised Impostaur

A Sorrowful Tale

There once was a young Dryad called Lyra ; like so many young Nymphs, she was a romantic and adventurous soul; she quickly grew bored of living in her mother's woods and was eagerly awaiting her chance to "see the world" and "live her own life"...

When a small band of adventurers crossed her mother's domain on their way to some perilous destination, Lyra seized the opportunity and, against her mother's best advice, left the woods with her new friends to lead a life of excitement and adventure, travelling around Mythika in search of adventure, glory and treasure...

But one day, while exploring a lost labyrinth, the fellowship of brave maze delvers met a tragic end at the hands of a clan of brutish Minotaurs, who slew all of Lyra's companions, sparing the Dryad's life only for the fun of raping her over and over again.

Weakened by injuries, bound in chains and horrified by her friends' cruel demise, the hapless Nymph suffered the bull-headed brutes' beastly assaults before coming back to her senses and using her last drops of Power to summon a Wood Titan which promptly killed the Minotaurs. Alone, in a state of utter shock and confusion, the Dryad started to wander the wilderness, trying to make sense of what had happened to her – in vain.

As if her fate had not been tragic enough, she soon realized that she was pregnant. Not only had the Minotaurs defiled her soul and body... but they had impregnated her with some monstrous spawn.

Wracked with despair and shame, she eventually sought refuge in the forest where the scenario takes place. There, she decided to meld into a tree forever, probably as a desperate attempt to end her constant suffering... and perhaps to prevent her monstrous child from ever coming to life, trapping it forever in the essence of the tree.

But things did not work that way. After a few months, the Green Minotaur baby did come to life, wracking open its mother-tree and killing its now unconscious mother in the process...

Left alone to survive in the forest, the baby became a beastly creature, solely driven by primal urges of hunger, violence and destruction. Thus was born this unique monster, the Green Minotaur. This sorrowful birth took place three years ago.

The monstrous Green Minotaur baby survived on its own like a wild creature of the forest, well away from the local human villagers, who lived on the other side of the great woods and remained unaware of the Green Minotaur's existence – until recently.

In the deepest parts of the forest, far away from the dead, wracked tree that has once been its mother, the small Minotaur soon came under the attention of Maedra the Hamadryad (see *Minotaur* n°3, p 31).



The real Green Minotaur

The forest nymph sensed that, somehow, this odd creature was "kin" and soon came to the correct conclusion that this being could only be the result of the rape of a Dryad by a Minotaur.

The wise Hamadryad sensed that the poor creature was just a lost, confused child; using her magical powers, she managed to charm the monster and calm his inner rage and primal urges. Under her protection and tutelage, the Green Minotaur seemed to find the attention and love it never had received.

A few months ago, another, far more dangerous Monster settled in the area and began to prey upon the local animals and humans alike, leaving horribly mangled, half-eaten bodies in the forest.

The bravest men of the village eventually mustered their courage and decided to track down the foul beast responsible for those horrors and put an end to its reign of terror. They ventured deeper into the woods than they were used to... and when they stumbled upon the Minotaur child, *they just knew they had found their monster*. They only caught a glimpse of the shy creature – enough time to shoot an arrow at him, to see a green-hued Minotaurian head... but not enough time to see that the creature was no taller than a small human child. Or perhaps they just didn't want to notice this, anyway - they were looking for a monster, after all.

Thanks to its camouflage powers, the terrified and wounded child creature managed to elude pursuit. Thanks to its Supernatural Vigor, the arrow that had hit him did not kill him...

Full of fear, pain and confusion, the Green Minotaur retreated to the deepest parts of the woods and to its Hamadryad protector, the only being who has ever helped and loved him...

When they got back to the village, the hunters told their tale to the other villagers.

This tale began to spread and grow and soon, *everybody knew* that the deepest parts of the forest had become home to a whole clan of fearsome, man-eating, flesh-rending Green Minotaurs...

This rumor eventually came to the attention of some local outlaws, who decided to exploit the situation to raid several local farms wearing green Minotaur masks. And the victims who survived their attacks helped to spread and reinforce the tale of the dread Green Minotaurs.

Meanwhile, an unseen, unknown and very bloodthirsty Monster still roamed free in the forest...

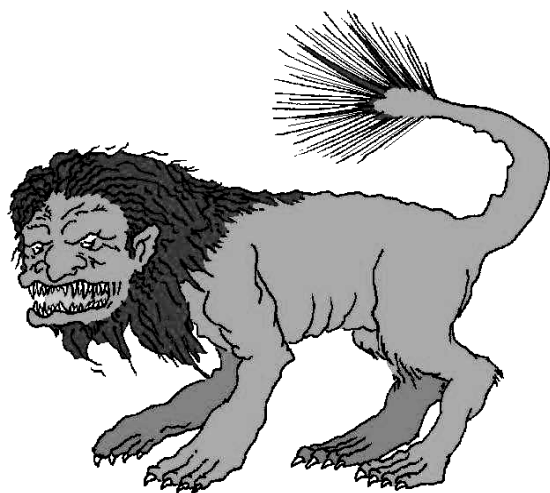
Enter the adventurers.

Monster Hunt !

Much of the action of this scenario will depend on how the adventurers interact with the various NPCs and creatures involved in the current situation : the villagers, the Impostairs, Maedra the Hamadryad, her Green Minotaur child protégé... and, of course, the real Monster of the story. As detailed in the *Options & Complications* section (p 39-40), Maze Masters may even add another intervening party to the situation – the local Sylvals who, depending on the adventurers' behavior, may help, hinder or oppose their chosen course of action.

The Villagers

The local villagers' perception of the situation is pretty simple : they want to get rid of the Monster(s) responsible for the grisly killings of the last few months... and since adventurers obviously have far more experience than them in the perilous business of monster-hunting, they will beg the heroic player-characters to come to their rescue and put an end to the Green Minotaurs' reign of terror.



The big, bad Manticore

These poor country folks have nothing substantial to offer in terms of financial or material wealth – but are desperate to get help. If they get the feeling that the adventurers are more motivated by greed than by heroic altruism, they may concoct a tall tale about some “lost treasure” hidden in the forest, somewhere in that part of the woods where - what a coincidence - those darned Green Minotaurs seem to have settled. Of course, only very stupid and greedy adventurers will believe such a story.

If the adventurers do seem to need some extra incentive (other than the selfless satisfaction of protecting helpless, desperate folks from some foul Monster and gaining a few Glory, Wisdom or Experience points in the process), the Maze Master may even choose to make this “lost treasure” a reality (see *Options & Complications* below).

The Impostairs

These six men are actually escaped slaves from the nearest big city; they arrived to this area some three months ago, a few weeks before the first sightings of the real Green Minotaur by the locals and its consecutive killings of some villagers who foolishly ventured inside what the creature perceives as its territory. The villains first heard about this “Green Minotaur nonsense” while spying on a group of local hunters who were camping near their cavern lair; they then decided to turn these half-understood fragments of an eavesdropped conversation into a “cunning plan” to disguise their own activities as the doings of an imaginary monster.

The Impostairs do not live in the forest itself but in a small network of caverns located just between the forest and the village. Thus, they have never come into contact with the real Green Minotaur or with the local Sylvals (see *Options & Complications* below). For the Impostairs, the Green Minotaur is just a silly (but very convenient) local rumor. They know that some horribly mangled corpses were found “*in some other part of the woods*”, probably killed by “*some sort of wild beast*” but are too proud of their own stratagem to actually connect the dots here (well, nobody said that Impostairs were *that* clever).

The stats for the Impostairs can be found on page 79 of the *Creature Compendium*.

The Real Monster

As mentioned above, the various killings which have been blamed on the creature by the villagers were actually performed by the Impostairs... and by another, far more dangerous menace : a vicious Manticore, which, unbeknownst to the villagers, the Impostairs and most of the forest denizens, has recently moved to the area, after being driven out of its mountain lair by a band of adventurers.

See the *Creature Compendium* (p 73) for stats. This particular specimen is of the wingless variety.



Maedra the Hamadryad

Maedra the Hamadryad

Maedra the Hamadryad is the local wood nymph. She protects the Green Minotaur, whom she sees as a confused, lost orphan and will not hesitate to intervene directly, using her magical powers to their full extent, if she sees the Green Child (as she calls him) threatened in some manner – but her ability to intervene directly is limited by the fact that, like all Hamadryads (see *Minotaur* n°3, p 31-32), she is rooted in the ground and thus cannot act (or sees what is happening) beyond her immediate vicinity.

If it feels threatened, the Green Minotaur will usually flee to Maedra's grove, which the creature perceives as the safest place in the woods – see *Tracking Down the Monster* below.

If the adventurers come into contact with Maedra, she will at first try to avoid any form of bloodshed, using her magical powers to calm down aggressive characters; she will then explain that the Green Child is under her sacred protection and has nothing to do with those grisly killings; if the adventurers refuse to listen to her and try to attack her or her ward, however, she will not hesitate for one second before calling a Wood Titan to the rescue.

If the adventurers trust Maedra (and she feels she can trust them in return), she will offer them some very useful information about the true perpetrator of the gruesome killings – “*not those stupid mortal brutes with their stupid masks but a far more dangerous predator, a vile Manticore, which has recently come to these woods from the East.*”

Indeed, since she became aware of the Manticore's presence (reported to her by various animals of the forest), Maedra has been looking for some brave and strong allies to help her defeat the Monster or, at least, drive it out of her forest. She would have gladly used her own magical powers to get rid of the fell creature but, as mentioned above, her absence of mobility seriously limits her ability to intervene and the Manticore has, of course, wisely avoided the vicinity of the Hamadryad's grove.

If the Maze Master uses the *Watchers in the Woods* option detailed below, Maedra's grove will also be placed under the constant watch of four hidden Sylvans armed with bows and poisoned arrows.

The Green Minotaur

Maedra the Hamadryad is absolutely right about the Green Minotaur : it is just a lost, confused child... for now - but who knows what it will grow into, especially if it is driven or taken away from Maedra's soothing, benevolent influence ? This question could easily turn into an interesting moral dilemma, for players who like to explore such themes in play.

Since it is only a child, the Green Minotaur is not very dangerous in a fight. When faced with a fight-or-flight choice, he will always use the flight option... unless the player-characters make the mistake of attacking Maedra while in its presence, in which case it will enter into a blind, berserk fury and fight to the death to protect the Hamadryad.

The Green Minotaur

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : A green-hued Minotaur, with the size of an eight-year old human child.

Size : Small

Ferocity : Aggressive

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 45'

Initiative : 11

Melee Attack : +2

Damage : 1d3 (horns)

Defense Class : 15

Hits Total : 6

Detection / Evasion : +4 / 0

Mystic Fortitude : +6

Special Abilities : Camouflage (18, forest), Charge into Battle (Initiative 12, Melee +3), Magic Resistance, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards : None. This monster is just a lost child.



A stealthy Sylvan scout

Tracking Down the Monster

The easiest way to track down the Green Minotaur is to have a Hunter in the party (as per the regular tracking rules given in the *Players Manual* p 45).

Alternatively, some hunter NPCs from the village could be persuaded to join the adventurers in their exploration of the deepest parts of the woods to help them follow the trail of the monster... but there is a good chance that these tracks will be those left by the Impostaur after one of their farm raids; any true Hunter examining those tracks will quickly come to the conclusion that they are just human footprints (no roll needed here). Following this trail will require a successful tracking roll (see *Players Manual* p 45) against a target number of 15 and will lead the party to the cavern hideout of the Impostaur.

Depending on how long or complicated the Maze Master wants the adventure to be, the Impostaur may be waiting in ambush, drunkenly celebrating their latest farm raid, arguing over the spoils... or perhaps they have already been slaughtered by the real monster, the Manticore. A Hunter examining the tracks left by the Manticore will identify them as those of a huge, probably monstrous quadruped; following them will require a new tracking roll, but with a much higher target number of 20 (10 + the monster's Evasion mod of +10).

The characters could also stumble upon the real tracks of the real Green Minotaur, which definitely look like the footprints of a child-sized but quite heavy humanoid. Following those tracks require a tracking roll, against a target number of 1d6+9 (this randomness reflects the fact that some of these tracks may already be quite old) and will eventually lead the party to Maedra's grove.

Last but not least, the adventurers' search through the woods may also draw the attention of the local Sylvans (see below)... or of the Manticore itself.

Whichever sequence of events is chosen by the Maze Master, the adventurers should eventually encounter the true monster of the story, the fell Manticore. How and when this happens depends entirely on the players' course of action (and on the whims of fate, a.k.a the Maze Master).

Interesting possibilities include joining forces with the Sylvans to track down and confront the monster in its lair, stumbling upon the Manticore while it is attacking some villagers, Impostaur or Sylvans (or perhaps the poor, terrified Green Minotaur child !) or simply being ambushed by the vicious, wicked predator itself.

Options & Complications

The Maze Master may choose to weave some of the following options into the plot in order to make the scenario more complex, more dangerous – or both !

Watchers in the Woods

As mentioned above, the deeper parts of the woods may also be home to a small colony of Sylvans (see the *Creature Compendium*, p113).

These beings are loyal allies of Maedra the Hamadryad but have deep reservations about her monstrous child protégé, whom they view as an unwelcome source of trouble; they are fully aware, however, that the poor creature has absolutely nothing to do with the gruesome killings perpetrated by the newly-arrived Manticore.

The elusive, wary Sylvans normally prefer to keep a safe distance from humans but the threat posed by the presence of the Manticore may prompt them to seek an alliance with the adventurers, perhaps with some mediation from the Hamadryad.

They know that is only a question of time before the monster decides to prey upon them and they are fully aware that their poisoned arrows will have little effect on the monster, since its Supernatural Vigor makes it immune to toxins. They will nevertheless make useful allies against the Manticore, especially if the party does not include a Hunter.

Monster in Distress

What if the darn Impostaur had stumbled upon the Green Minotaur and captured it, taking it back to their cavern lair ? The masked brutes could decide to torture it for fun – or perhaps try to tame it by force in order to use it as a scout or decoy for their future farm raids. This option could add an interesting dose of drama (and confusion) to the plot, especially if the party finds the Impostaur's lair before having a chance to meet Maedra and learn the truth about the Green Minotaur...



Bregos the Monster Slayer

The Great Monster Hunter

The adventurers are not the only monster hunters around ! Rumors of the gruesome killings have caught the attention of an expert, high-level Hunter known as **Bregos the Monster Slayer**, who will arrive in the village shortly after the characters, with his trusty hunting dog Rantanos.

Bregos will quickly take things into his own hands, telling impressive tales of his past exploits, bossing the “natives” around and dismissing the adventurers as “bloody amateurs” whose lack of experience in such matters will only be an extra source of danger for everybody involved and who should leave the “job” to the “real professionals here”.

Depending on how the adventurers react to Bregos’ attitude, this complication could create extra tension or add a degree of comic relief to the whole story – especially if the so-called great hunter turns out to be little more than a bragging buffoon who runs away in terror when the true monster finally appears. Regardless of his actual level of expertise, Bregos will most certainly pose a direct threat to the Green Minotaur, whom the party may have to protect or rescue at Maedra’s request.

Too Many Manticores !

What if there were *two* Manticores involved ? A male Manticore and its “Manticoress” could have chosen the forest as their new territory and as the place to watch their Manticore cubs grow up, which would be *very bad news* for the villagers, the Sylvans and pretty much everybody in the area...

Of course, this option is only recommended if your party’s level of power does seem a little too high for the basic version of this adventure...

The Lost Treasure

Remember the highly dubious tale about a “lost treasure” hidden somewhere in the forest ? What if this rumor was actually based on some true facts ? Perhaps it was those same rumors that drew the Impostars to that particular area... and perhaps they did manage to find the lost treasure (or at least some of it) in one of the local caverns.

This treasure, a suitably sizeable amount of coins and gems, could be the long-lost spoils of some long-forgotten marauders (adventurers ?) who met their doom in the woods... perhaps at the hands of the local Sylvans, who protected their homes and families from those unwelcome intruders and dumped their “shiny trinkets” into one of the nearby caverns, away from the sacred ground of their beloved forest.

Written by **Olivier Legrand** (2010)

Only the bravest heroes dare enter the...

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