

Within a Dark Forest

Random encounters, events, and characters set in a dark forest, controlled by malevolent forces.

Roll d20

(1) Dancing party of Satyrs, drinking wine mixed with blood. 50% chance of the Satyrs actually being humans dressed in costume, and a 50% chance one of the Satyrs is one of the missing people from the nearby town. They have no intention of leaving and don't remember who they were and shrug off any suggestions otherwise.

(2) Four braying donkeys, mules, or horses inhabit a clearing. Each one of them has one of their legs tied to a post, but the leg seems so weakened or infected they will be lame and unable to walk even if removed. Careful observers will notice that each horse has one leg of a full set bound; one horse has front left, one has front right, etc. 50% chance for this to be the sight of a ritual now interrupted, the cultists nearby in watching in the trees. Otherwise, it is seemingly a mindless and pointless cruelty.

(3) Insane, naked man biting the nape of a wolf, growling like an animal. It seems to have died days ago. It will attack the party unless scared off with fire or a loud/flashy magical display or the blast from a firearm; running off into the woods. He is wearing a silver ring with no inscription.

(4) The party finds themselves going in circles. Their tracks are getting filled with extremely dark and dirty water each time they circle; until eventually they can see ghoul-like looking men in the reflected water of their footsteps. These attack like bandits, but are invisible except for *True Sight* or reflected surfaces.

(5) The broken remnants of a sailing ship, found in the middle of the woods. Its supplies are strewn about the trees it was seemingly impaled on. The crew is skeletal, but can be awoken with the beating of a special drum found in the cargo hold. The crew will pantomime the motions of running the broken ship and will not stray from the ship, but will protect the party if they stay in the ship to make camp from wandering monsters.

(6) Several wooden chimes have been set up among the trees here, making quiet noise from the wind. This wind is supernatural in nature however, and the chimes will stop making noise if any party member speaks above a whisper or the spell is ended in some way. If the chimes are stopped, roll on the wandering monster table.

(7) Bloody stone in the middle of the woods, several human (and a few crushed skulls) bones scatter the area with some stained flecks of blood upon the rock. Someone observant can tell the skulls were smashed against the big rock there. This area is frequented by an ogre who is fittingly named 'Facesmash'. He wears a collar and has four golden earrings, three on one ear and one on the other. 25% chance for the ogre to be at the stone when the party encounters it, but he will return within 24 hours if they stick around.

(8) Within the trees are several old and collapsed houses and huts. Close inspection reveals it looks to be a town that has been intentionally ruined and covered up (the paths between houses are intentionally cluttered). There are no corpses, but several ghosts seem to haunt the area at night or whenever the party finds something valuable. Roll 1d6 on the sub table and get a ghost encounter each time this area is searched;

1. Gold pitcher of water which is somehow pure. Minor magical item. Owner was a retired priestess. The Ghost summoned here has access to a few cleric and illusion spells and will curse the party; turning all their carried drink foul if they run.
2. Five copper wedding bands.
3. Silver arrowhead tucked under a bed; paranoid owner.
4. Several silver coins with the face upon the coin's eyes scratched out. The ghost summoned here is blind but savage.
5. Small pile of luxurious clothing. Wild boar sleeps underneath the pile instead of a ghost and wakes up when enough is taken.
6. Silver ring, glows when nearby the naked man's ring of (2); If Identified; *Ring of the Wildling*; gives the owner bestial senses and night-vision, but can only control themselves if wearing both rings.

(9) Large beastman named Garma. His hands are tied together in front of him and around the area are several large statues made of mud, sticks, rocks, and the beast's own antlers that he snapped off his head (they grow back). As long as the party approaches with their weapons sheathed he will be friendly and will go on and on about the historical figures and epic heroes his statues represent, though they look primitive at best. It is obvious he has an active but childlike and dull imagination. On any positive reaction roll or if enough time is spent speaking to him will also ask the party to free his hands and cut his bonds, as the Wizard bound them so he could not continue his passion with making sculptures, but the beast is very dull and fails to mention that the sight of a naked blade makes him fly into a horrible rage. Smashing a statue while he is enraged will stun him for 1 round. There are 2d4 statues around the area.

(10) Dark crows fly on the horizon or watch from the treetops. They are spies for the thaumaturge that lives in the woods. They will follow the party and watch them at each encounter after this unless some of the crows are killed. Any magic spells, items, or special abilities the party uses during the next few encounters will be relayed back to the Wizard and he will prepare countermeasures.

(11) Five goblins that creep along the ground in wolf skins. They pretend to be wolves and even howl and bark punctuating by swearing. They are stalking several regular deer in a clearing. If ambushed or the party gets close, the deer reveal they are actually wolves under the effects of illusion magic. If this is revealed in front of the goblins or the party plays along the goblins may become allies against the dark Wizard.

(12) Random marble pillar in the middle of a small patch of grass. A woman stands chained to the pillars, begging for someone to release her. (She will use any method to try and get something to touch her, such as having an item in her pocket or seduction). Upon being touched, she will transfer all of her days of exposure and hunger to the one who touched her, restoring her in the process. After this happens she will apologize profusely for lying, but claims she cannot escape the chains and

needs to trick others to survive. Killing her will won't restore your party member, but her curse will be lifted. The young woman's name is Adelen and she has a few social skills benefiting a Rogue.

(13) Four wardens of the forest appear before the party and ask if they have seen any goblins, claiming them to be poachers. If the party has any members carrying pelts, meat, or other products made from animals they will assume they too are poachers and will try to kill the party instead. The wardens have mostly normal personalities but look extremely thin, pale, and their teeth shows signs of wearing from gnashing. Upon death, they have a look of relief upon their face.

(14) Pond in the middle of the woods. Fresh water, peaceful atmosphere and fishing. If time is spent here or the party appears Good and/or Lawful, a spirit of the pond will appear and offer the party a magical weapon or armor. 50% chance it's cursed.

(15) Merchant in the woods with a small wagon of goods he's willing to trade. He offers to sell you several rations and general goods at surprisingly fair prices. He also offers to sell you 'magic dirt' that looks the same as regular dirt. The dirt actually is magical and animates trees, flowers, grass and so on. Usually these plants do nothing with the animation but people stepping on or near the plants they may be entangled instead. Druids are not entangled by the plants.

(16) Several brightly colored baboons stalk the treetops here. They do nothing except yell and throw stones at the party, but around the area are several brightly colored 'stones', if these are picked up the baboons will attack ferociously. These are actually the baboon's 'eggs', an experiment by the Wizard. Each one is worth several gold if traded by a proper trader or alchemist interested in it.

(17) Small sandcastle build underneath a tree's gnarled roots. The sand is extremely fine, from a beach, but there is no telling how it got here. If any part of the sandcastle is destroyed, the party will experience a nightmare where they are trapped in a collapsing castle, giving a poor night's sleep.

(18) Wizard robes and several arcane instruments laid up against or hanging from a tree, as if doing laundry. Nearby is a small collection of notes about the dark Wizard ruling the forest; it is by far the best information the party will find on the Wizard and his weaknesses. The owner of the diary is nowhere to be found.

There is a 50% chance he is dancing with the Satyrs. He is mentally delirious, but can still cast *Color Spray*.

(19) Small, dry marble fountain with several fertility and protection symbols. The statue has the picture of a Goddess engraved upon it, but her name has been scratched away. The only way to find her true name is to find it hidden away in the Evil Wizard's personal library. Speaking the name of the Goddess at the fountain will make it spring forth clean water which will either grant an extra saving throw against any diseases the person has and granting a +1 permanent Wisdom.

(20) Roll 1d4 on the Rival Adventurer groups and then again on a d20, you both show up at about the same time.

Wandering Monsters

Roll d6

[1] 1d6+1 Satyrs. Bandits with +1 HP; when they reach half health they get +2 to hit. They are trying to gather a captive to bleed for their bloodwine; if you sacrifice a follower, retainer, or party member willingly they will leave you alone.

[2] Three poachers (Bandits; with bows) One of them has milk-white splotches on his hands. He can touch people and heal them as *Cure Light Wounds* once per day. He would fetch a high price as a slave. He gains +1 use per day every 4 levels. The poachers attack from distance and run at the first sign of tough resistance, using their healer to help them out whenever they are injured. May stalk the party for days.

[3] Autumn Golems (HD 3, AC 12, d6 Pitchforks) Two Autumn Golems from last year, really showing their age. Made of cloth and stuffed leaves, have a pungent dusty odor that makes let's you surprise or avoid them easily. Servants of the

Wizard, extremely weak to fire.

[4] Beastmen 1d12 (As Orcs, +1 to hit). If approached quietly, can be heard making jokes about Garma and planning on how they are going to smash his statues the next time they patrol around his camp. If you leave out alcohol and they find it they will gladly share it among themselves and get drunk enough to sneak past.

[5] Grizzly bear with inward sparked collar, mad with pain and rage. Fights to the death.

[6] Forest Witch (level 5 MU) with 1d4 charmed goblin slaves. Casts *Ray of Enfeeblement* and *Charm*, but knows other spells. Seems to want to take over this forest as her own domain.

Rival Adventuring Parties

Roll d4

[1] Worshippers of a far away cult named 'The Segmented', each one of them (except Mary) has at least a finger removed, believe this will grant them a form of immortality.

Gab the fighter. High strength (+3 to hit and damage with melee). Has removed his earlobes.

Sir Menta the fighter. Disgraced knight for his religious beliefs, skilled rider, fights with horse.

Teegon the Terrible (fighter). Extra HD and carries several large metal stakes. Threatens to crucify people against trees. Seven toes.

Lim Sherra (fighter) uses a falchion and has high quality armor (+2 AC). Scarification tattoos on his face, hidden healing potion on his person.

Mary the thief. One of the missing local girls, in a whirlwind romance with Castil, doesn't want to fight, hesitant to mutilate herself to join the cult.

Castil the thief. Left foot removed with a secret compartment containing 2d6 silver. Womanizer.

[2] Group of Fortune seekers. Currently interested in finding any lost members of the nearby town as well as gold, to which the mayor has promised them (and only them, not the player's party) extra gold for their safe return. If you take the written agreement of this, the party will get the gold instead upon returning any lost villagers.

Thunderson the Cleric. Leader of the group, slightly unhinged worshiper of sky God. When

first hit and on deathblow, releases a bolt of electricity dealing d4 damage to attacker.

Kimar Ironsmith (fighter). Maintains equipment, if friendly will restore party's equipment for coin.

Neemis the Cleric. Young, optimistic acolyte of Thunderson, follows the same religion. Can channel electricity in his mace dealing +1d4 lightning damage. Thunderson is secretly jealous of this ability and plots against the young acolyte.

Old Man Meager (Magic User) Experienced and unassuming old man who dresses as a guide or commoner. The true brains behind the operation. Prefers to cast divination or luck-based spells to keep his profile low.

[3] Forgotten men of the forest who have been cursed with being lost here. Can guide the party to any landmarks (ruined village, fountain, beastman cave and camp), but cannot find the way out of the woods. They prefer to retreat and set up traps.

Frankus the thief. Thick, calloused hands skilled at picking pockets and disarming foes before they can react. Leader.

Tommnus the Thief. Runt of a boy, highly stealthy and skilled with bows. Surprisingly strong.

Younger brother of Frankus. Tommnus secretly believes his brother hates him, Frankus actually loves him and wants to protect him fiercely.

Amiya the Fighter. She wears no armor but has high dexterity (+3) and is skilled with a short bow. Uses a clouding poison (save vs poison or partially blinded for 1d4 hours).

Loper the Cleric. Knows a technique to purify food and drink; doubles effectiveness of the spell if you learn the method either from him or from his clerical notes. Secretly happy he is lost in these woods; his God thinks the lost are blessed.

[4] Survivalists who wish to hunt and kill the dark Wizard. They have a small caravan with them and animals to draw it, but are constantly seeking food and medicine for their animals and have to protect them. Carts contains 2d6 minor treasures like statuettes, books and luxury goods.

Borus Min (fighter) owner of the cattle that drive the caravan. Woefully unprepared for this duty, barely keeping his group's morale in control.

Balgram Kupe (fighter) extremely high constitution (+5), trained by slave-gladiator

combat. Doesn't talk much, but apparently owes Borus his life.

Jager Gimbol (thief) Dashing rogue of middling fame. Offended if you don't recognize him.

Worships a Goddess of fame and fortune, can actually cast a single first level cleric spell a day, but cannot turn undead or use other cleric powers.

Penny the thief. Skilled with crossbow and traps/devices. Constantly hen-pecks Borus and threatens to leave the group if her demands aren't kept. She is close friends and controls both the caravan driver and two assistants in the convoy, using them as bargaining chips. She

Imp-Fucker (magic user) Conjurer who summons several demonic imps for battle. His name is an unfortunate nickname that stuck after he got caught doing something very wrong.

Pou the Sorceress (Magic user) Young and promising sorceress who is skilled in Evocations and casting under pressure and combat. Craves talking to a fellow colleague of the magical arts, but cannot stand Imp Fucker.