

Christopher Clark's **Forest of Deceit**

Who knows what abides within, where the deep shadows lie...



For use as a stand alone adventure, or as part of the
Strange Allies, Hidden Prince, and Bastion
adventure series published by Eldritch Enterprises.

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Forest of Deceit



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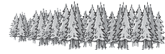
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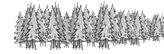
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Introduction



Introduction

The Forest of Deceit is a ready-made area that can be tossed in as a random encounter area for any party exploring a coniferous forest. It is also part #1 of a 4-part adventure, and some references are made to plots that continue in these companion modules. If, as Game Master, you have no plans for using these adventures, feel free to adapt the adventure seeds herein in whatever fashion best suits your campaign.

All of the adventures in this series are designed with few specialty encounters in order to facilitate this adaptation. **Forest of Deceit** is further designed without direction; the characters will determine in what order, or in what fashion, they approach the encounters detailed herein.

The party may, therefore, enter the map at any point. There is no 'starting area' and it is the choice of the game master as to what map edge should constitute the beginning of this adventure. To the northwest lies a bane of the forest, a demon that is attempting entrance to this plane of existence. To the northeast lie a group of marauding goblins and the evidence of their depredations on local human settlements. To the west, character parties will find, for the most part, standard woodlands while directly to the east reside the forest's most fearsome predators; the lair of a pride of hunting cougars. To the south, although off the map, is a road that leads to a local town, and of course, the welcoming though intrigue-filled promise of civilization. The town to the south is better enumerated in another adventure, but may also be a town that is already part of your campaign.

The choice is yours: ease the party into this adventure by having them approach the map from the west, start them on familiar ground by approaching from the south, or begin the action immediately by starting them in any other area you decide. The possibilities for adventure are numerous, and entirely subject to your direction.

Statistics are provided should the characters wish to join a hunting party in order to obtain in-game employment. It is for this reason that the non-player characters are detailed in terms of their likes and dislikes rather than simply their abilities and weaponry/equipment. This is the first in a series I am working on that will be conjoined into a small campaign setting; but again, these individual adventures are designed to be flexible – usable in whatever fashion works best for your game.

The **Forest of Deceit** map covers a square area of about six square miles, while the camp proper is actually much smaller than it appears on the map, measuring a mere 200 yards in depth with a width of cleared (deforested) area varying from 20 to 40 yards. The entire region depicted is otherwise heavily forested, although game trails also dominate the landscape, allowing humanoid progress at a fairly rapid pace for those with experience (abilities related to) in the woods. Those without experience will find the woods confusing and a barrier to normal movement. They might also, at the discretion of the Game Master, become quite easily lost. The trail that leads towards town from the hunter's camp (Area B), however, is a wide trail that has been lined with bits of gravel, and so is easily discernible to even the least skilled at navigating woodlands.



The Use of Statistics In This Adventure

Forest of Deceit is designed for use with a variety of fantasy role-playing systems, and, as such, a definition of the statistics outlining the combat capabilities of the monstrous encounters contained within these pages is necessary. All statistics are expressed as a percentage (0 being low 100 being high), and should be easily converted to any game system (for example, if using d20, each pip is 5%). In addition the appellation AH gives the rating for an Average Human's innate rating in any given statistic for baseline purposes.

Those statistics that are not self-explanatory (like 'name') include:

Power (Pow): describes the summary skill rating of a creature or encounter and reflects their level in terms of comparative ability. AH power is 1-5%.

Health: indicates the amount of damage a creature can endure before dying. Normally, this means 1-2 points per point of Power. AH: 6

Defense: is a measure of the ability a creature has to protect itself against attack. A defense score of 50 would indicate that only a perfect unmodified roll of the dice would indicate success. A Defense of 100 would require any successful attack to have significant bonuses. AH defense is 0-5%.



Init: indicates the bonus a creature receives in terms of the speed of its attack; whether its attack would occur prior to that of its opponent. In many systems, this is referred to as an initiative bonus. It is based upon a 100 point scale with 100 being the largest bonus available, and that being reserved for adversaries that are blindingly fast in their attacks. AH init is zero.

Damage: is the amount of damage caused when the creature successfully attacks an opponent. Multiple numbers following this statistic indicate that the creature has more than one type of attack. Parenthetical numbers (X2) following this statistic indicate multiple attacks of the same type. AH damage with fists or feet is 1-2 points.

Special: is a listing of any special abilities, attacks, or defenses the creature might possess, to be used at the discretion of the game master. Again, a superlative expert in any special ability listed here would have a score of 100% listed for said special ability.

Demeanor: describes the general attitude and intelligence of the creature.

Move: describes how far the creature moves per second, as measured in feet. AH=8-12

Set the Mood

Familiar forests are pastoral settings that inspire both a love of nature, and great peace within most of us. Unfamiliar forests, conversely, often inspire the darker aspects of our imagination, and are filled with unknown threats, unexplained sounds, and partially glimpsed adversaries of both natural and supernatural origin. Play upon this paranoia as you describe the encounters of this module to your players. Intensify the snapping twigs, darting shadows, and unknown smells of the unfamiliar forest. Keep your players on the edge of their seats.

Forest Encounters

Random Forest Encounters

The following encounters will be randomly discovered every 100 yards of travel within the area outside of Forest of Deceit (Area C&D), and are divided into two sets of differing encounter types: Aggressive and Hunt encounters. Hunt encounters are non-aggressive, and the entities encountered will always seek escape when confronted by the party, while aggressive encounters should be handled by the Game Master as combative encounters, with attacks and initiative as per a normal monstrous encounter. Characters may choose to ignore Hunt encounters, but will be attacked by Aggressive encounters.

As the forest in which this module is set is sparsely populated with humanoid creatures, encounters here may occur more frequently than in the woods that you, as Game Master, may desire. If such is the case, please feel free to adapt the frequency with which the party will encounter woodland creatures. Otherwise, the Game Master should roll a percentile for every 100 yards of forest traversed by the party, and consult the chart that follows. Note also that these encounters are predicated upon a daytime exploration of the forest.

For those needing a ready statistical record for the encounters listed below, a short bestiary is included at the end of this adventure.

Random Forest Encounters

Number Rolled	Encounter
01-69	Hunt Encounter (see table on next page)
70-73	Bear, various*
74-75	Big Flying Beetle
76-78	Boar, wild
79-80	Poisonous Plant
81-83	Cougar/lynx (1 in 20 will be a sable)
84	Griffin
86-86	Thorny Plant
87-88	Carnivorous Plant
89	Sasquatch
90-92	Giant Stag
93-94	Unicorn
95-97	Wolf, various*
98-99	Wolverine
00	Werebeast (Canine, Feline, or Ursine)*

*The Game Master may choose what creature of this type is most appropriate to the adventure or campaign being run.

All of the animal encounters listed below may be killed with a single successful attack against a defense of 10% by any weapon generating more than 2 points of damage. The further statistics contained within the chart are explained below, and illustrate the commercial viability of the animals encountered.



Hunt Encounters (roll %)

Number Rolled	Encounter	Feeds (meals for one)	Tasty	Pelt Value (in silver)
01-06	Badger	2	1	1sp
07-12	Beaver	2	2	6sp
13-25	Deer	12	4	20sp
26-31	Duck	2	6	n/a
32-35	Ferret	1	1	1sp
36-37	Fox	1	1	35sp
38-43	Pheasant	2	10	n/a
44-51	Muskrat	1	1	5sp
52-61	Opossum	2	2	2 for 1sp
62-73	Rabbit	1	5	2sp
74-83	Racoon	2	2	3sp
84-85	Skunk	n/a	yuk	1sp
86-93	Squirrel	1	4	5 for 1sp
94-00	Woodchuck	2	3	1sp

The **Tasty** statistic is used to describe the palatability of the creature when cooked. Skunk are inedible, Badger, Ferret, Fox and Muskrat are unpleasant but can be eaten, while pheasant is a delicacy. The higher the number, the better tasting the animal, and the fewer the spices required in order to get others to eat the meat. Tastier meat may also be sold more readily in any nearby town, provided that pains are taken to preserve its freshness.

The **Pelt Value** of the fur obtained from the various creatures listed above is based upon the proper removal and drying of the skin; a talent that your characters may or may not possess. Pelts should be dried and salted over a period of several days, and Forest of Deceit (see Area 'C') has drying racks and facilities for this purpose as it is a common activity there. The value listed, for the purposes of comparison, is based on a market where a night's lodging would normally cost- 6 silver pieces per night.

Forest Description

Standard Forest Description

For the ease of the Game Master, a standard description is here provided for any party traveling the woods. The description assumes a daytime exploration, as the forests are far more dangerous, and confusing, after dark.



Visibility here is dappled and shadowy, as the obviously ancient trees of this forest absorb much of the sunlight before it can penetrate to the level of the ground. This lack of sunlight leaves much of the forest floor barren, and bushes and scrub appear only at the sites of fallen trees, which are rare. Animal sounds are prevalent, from the twittering of songbirds to the raucous screech of the hawk, and the scuffling noises of small animals scurrying through the undergrowth. In spite of the gloom, the forest seems quite healthy, and you almost feel the intruder in this natural nirvana.

The trees are of prodigious height and girth, most towering to more than 50 feet, and with trunks that would require the use of two men's arms to encircle. Pine needles and the occasional leaf pile cover the forest floor and dampen any sounds made by your intrusion. Roots protrude through this carpet on occasion, but it is the roots that are instead covered that cause you to occasionally stumble. It is quite obvious that this forest, or at least this portion of it, has been but little disturbed by the depredations of humanoid kind.

General Encounter Areas

The following areas on the map have special significance, and are here described in detail.



A) *The Road to Town*

This area is a good place to start your adventure, but the description that follows is equally appropriate should your party stumble upon this place unexpectedly.

A hard-packed gravel road stretches before you running from south to north. You can see several hundred yards of it to the south, and more than one hundred yards to the north before the road becomes lost in the foliage of the surrounding woods. The road is 20 feet wide, and is obviously well-maintained; the forest having been cut back from the road to a distance of 15 feet.

This road is not only maintained, it is also patrolled 50% of the time as there have been attacks by goblins from the north (see Area H) and highwaymen, while uncommon, also accost travelers. If the players originated (used as a base) from the local town, any of the town watch encountered here will know them, and this is simply an opportunity for some quick trading (at the game master's discretion). If the party has never been to the local town, the watch will treat them with suspicion, and may even attempt to arrest the characters. They will ask several questions, and, as the game master, you will need to decide the response of the guards on patrol.

“What are you doing in the forest? What are your names and occupations? Zin dejah forgun? (goblin)”

If any of the characters speak goblin, and respond in kind, the guards will attack immediately, supposing them to be either goblin spies or allies. If the characters are evasive in their answers, the guards will attempt to arrest them. Should the characters (any!) resist arrest, the watch will attack!

Patrol Guards (6) – Human – Males

Power: 5%

Defense: 25 (chain mail, no shield)

Health: 8,8,7,7,6,6

Move: 8

Init.: 0

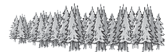
Damage: sword (1d8) or crossbow (1d6 - range 180 feet)

Special: One guard will attempt to escape and warn the local town watch while the others engage the characters

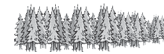
Demeanor: Suspicious, but intelligent and potentially amenable

Appearance: The Patrol Guards are all garbed similarly, and thus will appear to be a unit. Any description beyond that is at the discretion of the game master, and women may indeed be a part of this patrol, although they will also be accoutered as guards.

If the party defeats the guards, they each carry about a week's salary, roughly 45gp worth of small copper, silver, and gold coins. Their weapons can also be salvaged, but their chain mail may be destroyed during the combat.



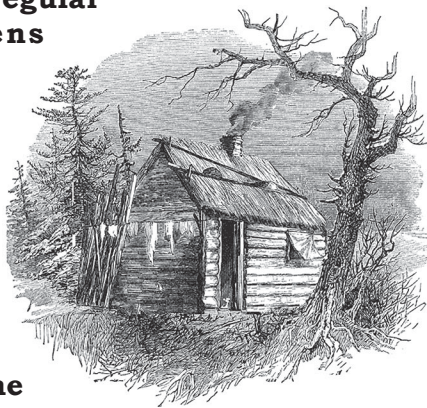
Seasonal Cabins



B) Hunter's Seasonal Cabins

There two cabins here with wooden floors and fireplaces, but there lack of insulating material, and thin walls, make them unsuitable for use during the cold winter months. In spring summer and fall, however, these cabins are occupied by hunters from the local town on a regular basis, with generally two to four hunters per cabin. As the characters approach, relate:

A large but irregular clearing opens before you, perhaps 100 feet deep, from which several paths lead. Two low buildings with thatched roofs occupy the center of the clearing. They are



constructed of wood and mud wattle (other than the roofs) and wooden doors with simple rope-drawbar latches bar your view of the interior. They seem sturdy, but lightly constructed, and are obviously not intended for any prolonged use. Each has a fieldstone chimney that rises to some ten feet from the forest floor, this still clearing the low roof of each building by more than a foot. You notice that smoke comes from one of the chimneys, and the fine smell of burning hickory wood.

The two buildings are used only during the summer months by the local hunters, providing some shelter from wind and rain, and, more importantly, some security against the predators that prowl the woods by night. They have dirt floors and no windows, but firewood is always found within. It is an unspoken law that any may use the firewood, but that before leaving the area, the wood is to be replaced. Beyond this stacked firewood, there is no furniture within the summer huts.

The hut that has a fire going also contains two hunters, Orswen Torg and Larmon Updike. They are drying venison over the smokey fire in the hearth in order to preserve it for later sale.

Orswen Borg

Power: 7%

Defense: 15 (hardened leather armor, no shield)

Health: 9

Move: 10

Init.: +10(%)

Damage: short sword (1d6) or large recurve hunting bow (1d8 +2 points - range 360 feet)

Special: Orswen is an accomplished hunter and is capable of tracking both man and beast in the forest with an accuracy of 85%. He knows a great deal about preparing and dressing the hides and meat of his kills, and he is capable of repairing all of his equipment and clothing, and in fact leather goods of any kind (including armor). Orswen's pronounced skill with a bow allows him to add +10% to any roll made to determine the success of his firing the bow as well as +2 points to the damage it causes (calculated above).

Demeanor: Orswen is 37 years old, and is beginning to tire of the outdoor life, especially during the winter. He is fastidious with his money as a result, and will make frequent trips to the local town to the south in order to exchange his hunting trophies for cash. The innkeeper in town is a close friend of Orswen, and is keeping his money safely sequestered for him. Orswen is polite to strangers, and friendly, as he sees any new acquaintance as a potential customer for either his skills, or his kills.

Appearance: Orswen is a human and stands nearly six feet in height. He has a rangy yet powerful build (210 pounds) and lithe, graceful movements. He wears soft-soled leather boots and while not stealthy, makes little noise as he traverses the forest. Orswen carries a short sword, a long knife, and a large recurve hunting bow.

Forest of Deceit

Larmon Updike

Power: 6%

Defense: 10 (soft leather armor, no shield)

Health: 9

Move: 11

Init.: +15 (%)

Damage: rapier or thrown knives (1d6 +2 points) or large hunting bow (1d6 points - range 300 feet). Larmon carries a bandolier of six knives.

Special: Larmon is a stealthy hunter and is able to move soundlessly (95%) and blend into the surrounding forest, or, in fact, any area where there are significant shadows (80%). He will surprise opponents, or quarry, therefore, 85% of the time. Larmon can also be quite brutal when necessary and thus adds 2 points to any damage he causes using melee weapons. Larmon is skilled in both dressing and tanning the hides of the game he kills (70%).

Demeanor: Larmon is a secretive sort, and will not welcome repeated questions concerning his past. He will either prove or teach his skills if there are coins to be had, but will otherwise avoid those he does not know.

Larmon is not terribly handy with a bow, but has some prowess with a thrown blade. He will not speak of his previous life, but his friend Orswen will remark, in confidence, that he believes Larmon is laying low in the forest, pretending the part of a career hunter until he can escape his past.

Appearance: Larmon is a mixed breed human (Orswen will swear there is Kobold in his ancestry when Larmon isn't listening) standing 5' 5" in height and weighing a spare 140 pounds. His movements are graceful, almost catlike, and little escapes his constantly shifting gaze. Close-lipped and introspective, Larmon is yet quite confident and prideful, and will react if sufficiently provoked. He dresses in dun clothing and wears his leather armor whenever he is out of doors.



Orswen will offer to hunt with avatars, showing them the various lairs of the forest and congregating points of its creatures, but will expect either to be paid or granted a portion of the kills made by the avatars should he provide them this assistance. Larmon will go along with his friend, begrudgingly, but will offer no assistance unless prodded by Orswen.

Both Orswen and Larmon know of Torgen Rath (Area C) and avoid him whenever possible. Both men know folks in town, and both are very familiar with the innkeeper. Neither has knowledge of any neighboring kingdoms and it is recommended that the game master play these non-player characters as extremely colloquial local color residents that never stray more than ten miles from the local town.

Orswen and Larmon carry between 40-100gp worth of mixed coins on their persons at any given time. Within the cabin they occupy are stored supplies of food and water great enough to last two men for about one week.

A difficult to find path to the south leads to area C from here. The other paths shown on the map (heading nw and se) are readily discernible, and the main road (described under area A) ends at the clearing here.

Spy's Cabin

C) *Spy's Cabin*

A small, circular clearing about 65 feet across is to be found here, and it is the lair of a spy from a neighboring, and rival country masquerading as a hunter. The thick forest growth masks two well secluded paths from this clearing, one to the north leading towards area B, and one to the southeast that leads back to the main road. A sturdy fieldstone and heavy log cabin rests near the northeast corner of this clearing. As the party enters the area, describe:

A small circular clearing some 65 feet in diameter suddenly appears from between the heavy undergrowth of the surrounding forest.

The northeastern corner of the clearing contains a substantial structure made from stone and logs that is both large and sturdy. It has an 18-foot stone chimney, a thatched roof, a reinforced wooden door with a padlock, and two windows. While not luxurious, it is obvious that this cabin is designed for use year-round.

Should any character manage to defeat the lock on the door, continue.

The interior of the cabin is not spacious, measuring only 12 by 15 feet, but it has cupboards, a table and chairs, and an attic-loft that functions as a second floor sleeping area. The floor is made from rough-sawn-wood, and the interior contains several hammocks in the loft area. A locked steel strongbox rests near the hearth of the fireplace.



Forest of Deceit

Characters entering the cabin will either find its current occupant (at the discretion of the GM), **Torgen Rath**, or some of his supplies including:

Sewing kit	Soap
Cooking utensils	Hammer and nails
Wood saw	Axe
Spade	Three flasks lamp oil
A bullseye lantern	Tinder box
Whetstone	Two coils of 50' of rope.
Longbow	3 square yards of canvas
One bag of acorns	Three bowstrings
Several butchering knives and a cleaver	
One bag of wild potatoes and carrots	

Should any character manage to defeat the lock (standard) on the strongbox, within they will find:

A leather drawstring pouch with 5 turquoise gems worth 45gp, 70gp, 90gp, 100gp, and 110gp, respectively.

A stack of papers in a strange language that will need to be deciphered either magically or by someone with skill in deciphering code. These papers are reports to the neighboring rival kingdom that Torgen has made over the last several months. They detail that he has several spies in place in the local town, and that "We should be ready to make our move at the end of the month."

A bag containing several large gold coins (400gp) that are known to the locals as being the common (though large denomination) currency of the neighboring rival kingdom.

Several sheets of parchment and writing materials.

A strange iron symbol on a leather thong, obviously meant to be worn as a necklace.

Should the game master decide that Torgen Rath is home when the characters enter his cabin, he will resent the intrusion and demand that they leave. Torgen is an accomplished master spy, and the party will find him a tough adversary, even when greatly outnumbered.

Torgen Rath

Power: 22%

Defense: 35 (soft leather armor, no shield, martial skills)

Health: 22

Move: 12

Init.: +25 (%)

Damage: long sword (1d8 +4 points) and large dirk (1d4 points plus poison for 1d6 more per turn until cured) or heavy crossbow (1d8 - range 150 feet).

Special: While not an assassin, Torgen is well versed in many of the clandestine arts. He is able to become invisible 90% of the time (unless he is attacking), and knows many dirty tricks when fighting hand-to-hand. He uses a long sword and a poisoned dirk for close quarters combat, and is familiar with the use of a heavy crossbow as well.

His dirty tricks when melee fighting cause any opponent scoring a hit against him to possibly fumble, dropping their weapon and falling to the ground (25% chance).

Torgen is also capable of using a minor teleport spell if he feels overmatched, and is capable of instantly transporting up to fifty feet away should he use his entire combat round or turn to so do.

Demeanor: Torgen is overwhelming in his arrogance, but is also a crafty individual that understands the meaning of restraint. He views all new acquaintances as fitting into one of two categories: potential assets, or enemies to be eliminated. During most of the day, unless it is raining, Torgen will be out in the forest. In bad weather, or in the evening, he will be found within the cabin, and will greet visiting characters cautiously, but with a grace that belies his rough exterior. He will feel the party out through guarded conversation, attempting to enlist the characters in some unwitting way to help him with his clandestine schemes (explained below). He will avoid answering any questions about himself in any sort of useful way, but will respond to questions in a general manner, saying little but talking much.

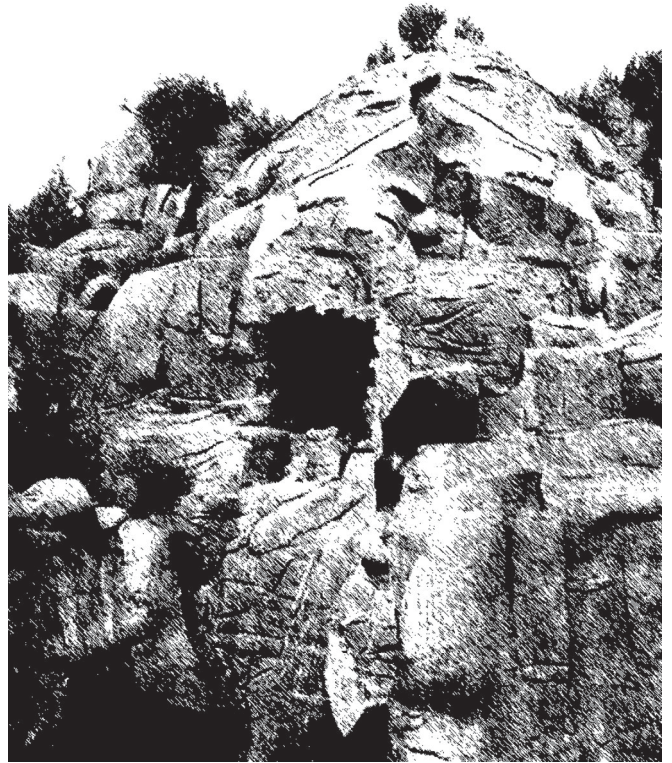
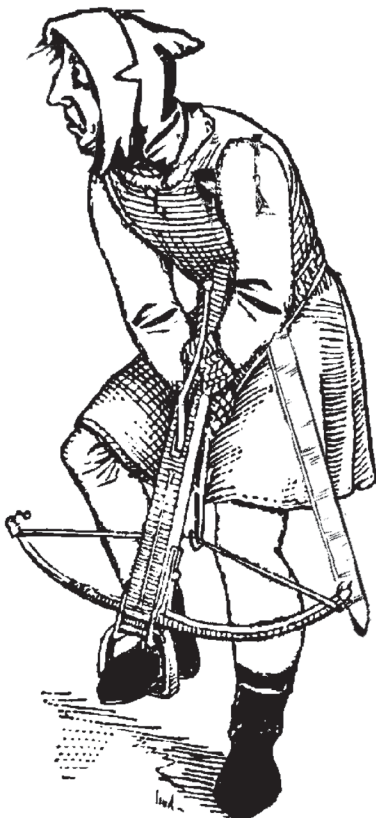
The Cougar's Lair

Appearance: Torgen is a large human-orc crossbreed, standing 6'4" tall and weighing 265 pounds. His clothes fit well, but are of dark colors, and his cloak has a hood that covers his entire face. This cloak, worn at most times, conceals both his long sword and his dirk, while his heavy crossbow is usually attached to his back by a leather strap.

Torgen is a spy for a neighboring kingdom (Olema in this campaign, although this can be listed as any kingdom in order to better fit your campaign). He has several subservient and completely loyal spies in the local town and has been trying to enlist the help of the goblins that have a lair to the north (see area H). His purpose, and that of the nation he serves, is nothing short of the conquest of the local town, which, once seized, will become a forward base for the capture of the rest of the surrounding territory.

Torgen will attempt to silence, permanently, any character that learns his true purpose for being in the forest.

The cabinets within the cabin contain several pounds of salt, and several bottles of serviceable maple vinegar.



D) Cougar's Lair

This area contains an active pride of highly territorial cougars. The aging cougar at area F has been recently deposed as the alpha male of this pack, and the new leader is young, inexperienced, and spoiling for a fight. As the party enters this area,

While the undergrowth is still thick here, you notice a preponderance of game trails crisscrossing the narrow spaces between the trees. A small ridge or rocky outcropping rises before you, its height just clearing the tops of the trees (45-50 feet). The forest here is quiet, and peaceful, a truly idyllic setting.

If anyone in the party has hunting or tracking skills add:

The forest is also strangely quiet. No birds call from the trees; no small animals scurry through the undergrowth.

Forest of Deceit

Allow those with hunting or tracking skills to make a check against those skills. If they fail, the cougars will attack, and will achieve surprise (one free combat round before the characters can reply). If not:

You hear a terrific growl as the hunting pack of cougars betrays their position to your keenly honed woodland senses!

Cougars (7)

Power: 15%

Defense: 20 (speed and thick hide)

Health: 17,17, 18,18,19,19,21

Move: 14

Init.: +15 (%)

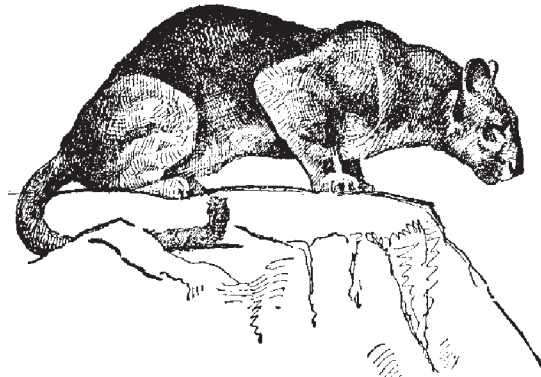
Damage: claws (1d6X2) and bite (1d10)

Special: Any uninjured cougar may choose to forego its bite attack to 'pounce'; leaping into the air and landing on its prey with the full force of its body weight in a claw attack. This adds 10% to the creature's ability to score a successful hit against an opponent and also adds 2 points of damage to each and any successful claw attack.

Demeanor: This particular hunting pack has just acquired a new alpha male, and as such, the male is spoiling for a fight and is fiercely territorial. Should the character party leave a large pile of raw meat for the cougars, they might decide not to attack immediately, but the party will need to make a hasty exit for this forbearance to continue. Cougars are of above average animal intelligence should any of the party have the ability to speak with them. Conversationally, they are crafty, and will attempt to both trick the party into becoming easy prey, and get them to surrender any food they might have.

Should the alpha male be killed (21 Health), the pack will immediately cease the attack and run for the safety of the surrounding woods. If he is wounded, the rest of the pack will protect him at all costs, stepping between this male and any potential attackers.

Appearance: Cougars are feline hunters measuring up to six feet in length (plus tail) and weighing between 140 and 300 pounds. Their coats range in color from tawny to coal black, and they are nearly silent in their approach. Cougars, especially near their lair, do have a distinctive smell.

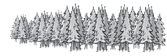


Should the party defeat the cougars, and be capable of rendering the hides of those that were vanquished, the cured pelt of a cougar will bring between 100gp and 600gp at any local trading post. The meat can be eaten, but is quite gamey, and will bring little or no money if sold.

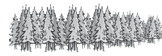
A quick, perfunctory search of this area will reveal the mouth of the cave that is the cougars' lair. As no human-made path leads to it, the game master may wish to ask the characters to make a climbing check of some sort in order to determine their ability to access the mouth of this cave.

You can see the mouth of a small cave 45 feet above you, in the center of a rocky outcropping; an irregular circle measuring no more than 6 feet in diameter. Only blackness is currently visible within, and it will require something of a climb to get to the cave entrance. The slope of the rocky outcropping is covered in loose shale, and it is apparent that no path leads to the opening above.

Should the party gain the entrance to the cave, they will find that it is much larger within than it appears from without. The cave is but a single chamber, an irregular sphere with a flat floor that extends some 60 feet into the rocky hillside.



The Cougar's Lair



The ceiling climbs to 14 feet in the center, and is high enough throughout to eliminate the need for stooping on the part of all but the tallest characters. If they decide to explore the interior, they will need a light source, or the ability to see in near darkness.

Once you have gained the entrance to the cave, you discover that it is much larger within than it appears from the outside. Roughly circular, the cave leads back into the rocky hillside some 60 feet, and the ceiling arches overhead to 14 feet in the center. Tufts of cougar fur dot the place and you can see a pile of well-picked bones near the back of the cave.

If the characters investigate the bones,

The bones have no smell and many show signs of having been gnawed, as does the ruined clothing and the occasional destroyed backpack you discover in your search. A fair quantity of coins lies near the bottom of the pile, as well as a serviceable bow, several arrows, and a cloth satchel. The satchel contains a note written in a strange language. One of the skeletons, that nearest the satchel at the bottom of the pile, also wears a golden ring inset with a small reddish stone.

The note is written in a demonic language that may be readable, at the discretion of the game master, by any character with clerical or arcane skills, or via the intervention of a spell or other arcane means. Should a character decipher it, they will understand that the language is demonic. It reads:

"I will meet you tonight at the Cave of Delights, and my delights shall be yours to command."

Any character that is of a holy nature will take a point of damage once they have translated the missive. Those not of holy persuasion will feel an immediate need to travel to the northwest. They are, in fact, drawn to area G, The Cave of Delights. This draw is not overpowering, but it does not recede with either distance or time.

The coins found amidst the bones have a total value of 289gp.

The arrows are of fine quality, and will add 40 feet of range to any bow, as well as a bonus of +1 to any damage normally caused by an arrow shot from that bow.

The Bow is magically enchanted to grant a bonus of +10% to the attack of any character using it.

The golden ring worn by the skeleton is a Ring of Protection from Demons, and it prevents any demon or demonic entity from physically touching the character when worn. It does not make the wearer proof against demonic magic or ranged attacks.

The satchel has no special properties, and is made of linen. It is no larger than a modern wallet.

Note to the GM:

The satchel belonged to a now-dead townsman that was a member of a cult that called forth the demon in area G, for base, carnal purposes. He was to be her next "victim" but the ring he wore prevented the demoness from touching him, and thus her magic was foiled. Filled with fear, however, the townsman ran off into the forest, his terror unchecked until he strayed into the hunting grounds of the band of cougars. There he was killed, dragged to the cave, and eaten.

Forest of Deceit



E) The Dryad Tree

The area of the Dryad, and her Golden Ironwood Tree, is fairly secluded, but as the characters enter this hex/area, the dryad will sense their approach and will do her best to dissuade them from approaching near enough to discover the tree she protects. The area has but a single, somewhat broad, game trail, and the surrounding foliage will block any view of the Golden Ironwood tree until a character approaches to within thirty feet. As the party enters this hex, they will be 250 feet from the dryad tree, regardless of the direction from which they enter the area. As they enter, the dryad will attempt her first bit of trickery.

The forest seems suddenly quiet. The great trees tower above you as though nothing is amiss, but the sentient creatures of the wood seem to hold their breath, waiting for disaster. Suddenly a great roar breaks the stillness, followed by a short, agonized scream. The sounds come from somewhere nearby, close, but far enough away that you can see naught of the source. A great thumping, like heavy footfalls, and a second roar break the stillness. Whatever is making that sound, it is undeniably large.

The Dryad (full statistics described next page) is able to create auditory illusions at will. She will first, as described above, attempt to scare the characters off by imitating the sounds of a giant attack, but should this fail and the party continue to move towards the sounds (towards the center of this area), She will continue on to plan “b”, the creation of a concealing mist.

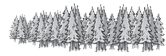
As you proceed towards the source of the roaring sound, a great mist spreads towards you hugging the base of the tree, but rising quickly to near waist height. Tufts also float upwards, and vision is soon restricted to a mere 30 feet. The roaring continues, seeming almost to form words, but the screaming has ceased.

Unfortunately for the dryad, she is capable of summoning the mist but once per day, and it may be readily dispelled by any counter-magic that involves wind, the dissipation of magical energy, or weather control. If the characters proceed further towards the center of this area (now a mere 100 feet from the golden ironwood tree), the dryad will attempt her final ploy.

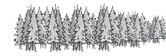
The forest thins a bit up ahead, but the source of the roaring is still masked from your view. In horror, you realize that you can now make out words amidst the din thus created. “Intruders! You shall Die! Arrrgggghh!”

The dryad now shoots her Fairy Bow, a magical bow that shoots incorporeal arrows that always hit, but cause no damage, instead merely sending the intended target into an immediate but temporary sleep. This sleep lasts for five minutes, after which the victim will awaken, completely unharmed. The Fairy Bow is capable of 12 such shots per day, and recharges within one day when not in use. Characters that are immune or resistant to sleep magic will suffer no effect if targeted by the dryad.

If the characters continue onwards after this ruse, the dryad will admit defeat. The party is now a mere 50 feet from the base of the golden ironwood tree that she protects.



The Dryad Tree



The mists part before you and a small, 25-foot deep clearing greets your gaze. At the far side of this clearing stands a massive tree that seems to glow with a golden light. Before it stands a maiden, perhaps a fairy, definitely female, and provocatively so, standing about four feet in height with gossamer wings sprouting from her back. She is garbed in what appears to be tree bark. And she hovers several inches from the ground, a small bow at the ready. Before you can decide upon a course of action, she speaks.

“Please come no closer. I wish you no harm, but I will not allow this tree to suffer in any way.”

If the characters attack:

Dryad

Power: 12%

Defense: 20 (adept at dodging)

Health: 15

Move: 16

Init.: 5 (%)

Damage: sleep.

(The dryad will cause no real physical harm to intruders but will ask her friend, a Sasquatch from area I, to remove the sleeping bodies of the characters to near area B).

Special: The Dryad’s arrows always hit their intended target, but those immune to sleep magic will suffer no effect whatsoever. The dryad is incapable of causing further harm to her attackers, but will rely upon the help of her allies to remove any threat once it has been put to sleep (see above). The Dryad may shoot her bow but once per round/turn of combat.

Demeanor: The Dryad is concerned only for the safety of the Golden Ironwood tree as its pain, and death, are her own. She will bargain with characters if they are crafty, and has a small supply of dead golden ironwood limbs she will share if the party promises to keep the location of her tree a secret. The Dryad is extremely fearful and distrustful, however, and would rather remove the party than entreat it.

Appearance: The dryad will appear to be a well-endowed female of petite status with gossamer wings at her back. She stands 4 feet tall, and is garbed in a tight-fitting dress that appears to be bark. This is in fact her skin, and can not be removed.

The dryad will do her best to dissuade the characters from approaching her tree, but, failing this, will offer them four dead limbs from the tree that she has sequestered in the undergrowth. These limbs comprise the entirety of her available treasure, and she will not part with her bow.

The golden ironwood limbs are large enough that a skilled craftsman could fashion either a longbow or a staff from each, and are of sufficient strength, density and arcane disposition that they may then be enchanted by a mage with the power to so do.

If the characters are kind to the Dryad, they will find the Sasquatch(s) at area I are far more trusting, and perhaps even friendly (at the discretion of the GM). These Sasquatch are the allies of the dryad, and will view any kindness towards her as an indication of a being worthy of respect (see area I).



Forest of Deceit



F) The Spring

A clearing in this area holds a small pool (an irregular circle roughly 60 feet in diameter) fed by a spring that bubbles forth from a rocky outcropping. It is also the current home of an aging male cougar that was ousted by the new alpha male from the pack at area D. The water here is pure and clean, and the pool varies from 8 to 12 feet in depth with a rocky bottom. The water is clear enough that any unaided character should be able to see the bottom if they stand at the edge of the pool. The southeastern corner of this pool is shallower, and is choked with cattails and marsh weeds, but this area is small as the overflow water that feeds it quickly soaks into the surrounding soil.

Before you the several trails meet at the edge of a small pond. The northwestern edge of the pond is a small rocky outcropping from which water trickles; a spring that feeds the crystal clear pond. Game trails lead south, north, and east from the edge of this 60-foot circular pool.

Should any of the characters possess tracking or hunting abilities, and search the edge of the pool add:

There are paw prints in the soft soil near the water's edge. They appear to belong to a cougar or similar hunting cat.

The prints belong to the former alpha male from the cougar pride at area D. This male is now aging, injured, and desperate. He will attack the party three combat rounds after they arrive at the spring, but they have until that time to identify his presence from the tracks left near the side of the pool. Those with forestry, tracking, or hunting skills may be able to identify this threat before it materializes, but barring this sort of intervention, the cougar will spring from concealment, surprising the party.

Aging Cougar

Power: 15%

Defense: 15 (speed and thick hide)

Health: 19

Move: 12

Init.: +5 (%)

Damage: claws (1d6X2) and bite (1d10)

Special: none

Demeanor: This cougar is starving, and desperate, and will not talk to any of the characters that might have the ability to speak to animals. He will continue his attack unless given food, at which point he will take the food provided and slink off into the forest. He will then remain a threat to future hunting parties and explorers. Note: cougars can only be bribed with food that is meat or protein.

Cave of Delights

Appearance: This aging cougar is a feline hunter measuring five and a half feet in length (plus tail) and weighing 125 pounds (due to starvation). His coat is tawny and mottled with age, but he retains the ability to make a nearly silent approach.

While old and worn the pelt of this cougar is still worth 175gp-180gp if properly removed and tanned.



G) Cave of Delights

The forest here is darker, almost sinister, and a sense of evil pervades this entire area. The plants here all have dead leaves or limbs, and the undergrowth contains more thorns and brambles. The evil of this place emanates from a well-concealed cave. It appears to be little more than an 8-foot high pile of rocks until the party is almost on top of it, at which point a dark opening will become visible.

The forest before you seems unhealthy in some way, and a grim sense of foreboding lies over all. There seem to be more thorns and brambles scratching at your legs, and even the wildlife, although present, seems somewhat subdued. A large rock pile looms ahead of you in the tangled undergrowth, and the game trail that you are following seems to lead directly to it. As you approach, you can see the dim outline of a small cave opening.

The sense of evil will intensify if the party tries to enter the cave, and any holy characters will have extreme difficulty entering (a check is applicable). Once inside, a light source will be required for characters incapable of seeing in the dark, as it is pitch black within.

As you stoop to enter the cave, a musty, putrid smell assaults your nose, while your eyes immediately protest the blackness within. After your eyes adjust you can see that the cave is more of a tunnel leading steeply downward. It is choked with fallen rock and dirt, and leads downwards at nearly a 45-degree angle. It appears to level out after ten or twelve feet, and you can see nothing beyond the floor that lies below.

The floor of the tunnel levels out into a small, irregular limestone cavern some 40 square feet in size. The roof is a claustrophobic 5-6 feet in height, and small stalactites dot the ceiling. Near the back of the cave there is a natural rock formation that bears a strong resemblance to an alluring humanoid female. This is not an accident.

As the tunnel becomes level it broadens outward into a small, 40-square foot cave with a low ceiling (5-6 feet). There is little rubble here, and only the occasional loose stone lies upon the floor. Near the back of the cave, however, is an intricate natural rock formation that suggests the form of an enticing humanoid female!



Forest of Deceit

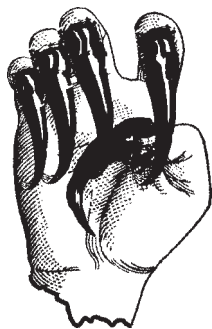
In the nearby town of Namar (the GM may change this name to suit his campaign, but it will appear in other adventures in this series) a local group of hedonists formed a cult several months ago. This cult, in turn, performed various sorceries with but a single goal in mind: to summon forth a demon to satisfy their prurient needs and desires. The summoning was successful; the rites performed obscene...

...and then it came time to pay for those services that had been rendered. A payment was demanded in both blood and souls.

The cult did their best to reverse the summoning, and were partially successful, trapping the demonic mistress between the two realms. The 'natural rock formation' at the back of the cave is, in point of fact, the prime material projection of this demonic succubi. Although she is unable to move, she is able to drain the life force of any living being foolish enough to touch the rock formation within the cave.

Two hunters have previously fallen victim to this hellish event, their naked bodies crumbling to dust as their souls were consumed. Their clothing and gear lies beneath a clump of bushes outside the cave. There is little there of value.

The trapped demon requires the energy of just one more soul (she needs to drain only one level of experience or skill – the equivalent of 6 Health - from one of the characters) in order to become fully corporeal once again. In addition, if any blessing that might either heal, or remove curses is cast upon the stone, or any magical energy expended that is meant to drain or dispel magical energy, these actions will also release the demon. Should this occur, the demon will attack!



The She-Demon of Namar

Power: 24%

Defense: 25 (scaley hide)

Health: 23

Move: 10

Init.: +10 (%)

Damage: 1d6 +1d6 Health drain (see below)

Special: Any successful attack by the claws of the she-demon will drain the life energy of her opponent for an additional 1-6 points of permanent health loss which is then transferred to the health of the She-Demon. This additional damage may be avoided, at the discretion of the Game Master, if a check is made against a character's appropriate statistic or skill. The claws of the she-demon carry an arcane and chaotic enchantment, and provide her with a magical bonus of +10% to her attacks.

As this creature is a demon, it takes but half damage from fire and cold-based attacks, and may only be harmed by weapons that are enchanted in some way.

Demeanor: The She-Demon of Namar wants only two things; revenge, in the form of the souls of any that live on the material plane, and to return to her own plane of existence. She may be parlayed with, but only should one of those two goals be offered by the negotiating party.

Appearance: The She-Demon is exotically attractive, and males will find her lure nearly irresistible. She stands five foot 4 inches in height and is curvaceously, but powerfully, built. Her skin is comprised of small red scales, and she wears no outer garments. Her long fingers end in wicked curved claws that measure 6 inches in length.

If the She-Demon is defeated in combat, her body will petrify in death. While a difficult operation, her hands may be removed and used as weapons, maintaining both their +10% attack bonus, and their ability to drain and transfer the Health of any opponent. There is no other treasure within this cave.

Any character that is wearing the Ring of Protection from Demons found in the cougar lair at area D will be completely impervious to any attack from the She-Demon.



H) The North Trail

The game trail here widens and shows signs of greater travel. It is the main path of travel used by the goblins to the north (the ones that Torgen Rath hopes to turn into allies – see area C), and shows signs of both recent use, and of those who have used it. The party may notice these obvious signs as they enter this area.

The trail ahead becomes broader and smoother, and the forest recedes a bit from its edge. If you didn't know better, you'd think this was a recently abandoned road.

If any of the characters posses forestry, tracking, or hunting skills, and make a detailed study of the trail in this area, add:

There are tracks here. They are small, definitely humanoid, and numerous.

If any character is particularly successful in studying these signs, continue.

With a start you realize; these are goblin tracks, and some of them are mere hours old.

If the party follows the trail (within the hex) for a ways, they will notice further signs of the goblins visitation.

Near the edge of the road, 60 feet from your current position, a crumpled form lies. Its unnatural pose confirms that it poses no threat to any living creature, but it is impossible to further identify the corpse at this distance.

The corpse is that of a guard from the local village (Namar) that was out hunting for clues concerning several recent goblin raids in the area. He has been despoiled of all valuables, but any character with sufficient skill will be able to determine the cause of his death; violence at the hands of goblins. The body has been left here as a trap by the goblins, however, and a goblin outpost keeps watch over it in the event that any further guards from town come looking for their comrade in arms.

Two combat rounds after any character approaches the body, the goblins will attack from the cover of the forest near the road, 50 feet from the location of the body.

Goblins (6)

Power: 4%

Defense: 10 (hide armor)

Health: 6,6,6,7,7,7

Move: 10

Init.: 0

Damage: shortbow (1d6)

Special: One of the goblins, at the discretion of the Game Master, may be sent for help/ reinforcements. This goblin will run on the second round of combat, sticking to the road but moving north, away from the characters. If this goblin succeeds in getting away, it is entirely possible that a full goblin raiding party will return 15 minutes later.

If the battle is going badly, any surviving goblins will do their best to disappear into the woods after the 5th round of combat. They will wait there until reinforcements arrive 15 minutes later.

Demeanor: The goblins here will believe that they have caught the party flat-footed, and will rain arrow fire down upon them for the first several rounds. If the party charges them, or returns fire in a successful manner, the goblins will be dumbfounded, and unsure of how to react. It is possible to capture one or more of these craven warriors, and they will respond to requests for surrender positively should the offer be made in obviously good faith. Such prisoners would have considerable value back in the local village considering the recent goblin raids.

Appearance: Goblins are 3-4 feet tall and are of slim build. They wear motley armor made from animal hides, and use daggers, short swords, and short bows. Their pointed ears and teeth brand them as other than human, and their guttural version of human speech makes it difficult for them to pass themselves off as humans. The average goblin weighs 60-70 pounds, and is hairless.

Forest of Deceit

The goblins carry little of value, a handful of assorted copper, bronze, and tin coins valued at 36gp (total for all goblins), and a few bits of cheap jewelry that might bring as much as 25gp more. Their bows are serviceable, however, and each carries twenty arrows. Their daggers are also of respectable quality, and will bring 25gp-30gp from a weapons merchant.

The goblins here are an outpost of a goblin band that lives in a cave several miles to the north. Currently, these goblins are held in check by a group of friendly Sasquatch (see area I) that abhor their violent and destructive ways. The Sasquatch, however, have little love for many of the townsfolk as well, as they, too, have a tendency to abuse the bounty of the forest.

The goblin's lair, and a furtherance of the story of their interaction with Torgen Rath and his ilk, is more fully enumerated in *Strange Allies*, although it may also be fleshed out by the Game Master if desired.



Sasquatch Clearing

1) Sasquatch Clearing

This area is used by a local band of Sasquatch (Big Foot?) as a rest and meeting area during their visits to this portion of the forest. They are familiar and friendly with the Dryad at area E, and maintain a presence here at all times as part of their self-imposed duty to guard the forest. There is little brush here, although there are piles of soft bracken used by the Sasquatch as rest areas, and flowers are more abundant here than in other partially open areas of the forest. The clearing here is an irregular circle of 65 feet in diameter, and numerous small game trails lead away from this clearing. The party should note the lack of underbrush the moment they enter this area.

The forest before you suddenly seems less dense, and the typical thorny bushes, honeysuckle, and smaller growth is notably absent, having been replaced instead by soft grass and flowers. Several piles of bracken can be seen scattered about the place, but there is no other evidence of a gardener.

A close inspection of the bracken piles will show the presence of Sasquatch hair, an item that might be recognized by a character with hunting or forestry skills. The Sasquatch are nearby, and will be watching the party as they inspect the area. If the party has made contact with the dryad, and has harmed or killed her, they will choose an opportune moment to attack. If the party has not yet met the dryad, the Sasquatch will attempt to gauge their intentions, and may react in a non-aggressive fashion if the characters appear to be respectful of the forest.

If the party has met the Dryad, and has not harmed her, the Sasquatch will attempt to communicate the moment any of the party members investigate one of the bracken piles.

As you explore the clearing, you are suddenly shocked by an eerie, and haunting voice that seems to come from the very air.

“Fendorfo! Fendorfo?!”

The Sasquatch hope to communicate with the characters, convincing them to become friends of the forest, respecting its plants and animals and forswearing both hunting and logging. Their speech is slow, and slurred, but is fully comprehensible if the characters have the patience to listen carefully to it. If the characters refuse, or lack the patience, they will be allowed to leave, but the Sasquatch have a certain pride in their mission, and will tolerate rude behavior quite poorly. It is the Game Master's choice as to when an attack might occur, or when an alliance might be forged, but the party's current behavior, and perhaps their previous means of dealing with the Dryad, will have an enormous effect on the outcome.

Should the Sasquatch attack:

Sasquatch (3)

Power: 31%

Defense: 10 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 40,42,44

Move: 9

Init.: 0

Damage: claws (1d6X2) and bite(1d8)

Special: If at any time both claw attacks from a single Sasquatch hit, the beast will hurl its target up to 20 feet (1d20). The target will then land, disoriented for one full round, and accrue an additional 1-6 points of damage from the impact. Any attack made against a target that has been hurled (and is now prone as a result) automatically hits for full damage.

Demeanor: Sasquatch are distrustful of non-woodland beings, but are slow to anger. Once angered, however, they will fight to the death. They shun the organized societies of other beings, however, and will never venture from the woods they both love and protect.

Appearance: Sasquatch are large apelike humanoids, standing 8-10 feet tall and weighing 400-600 pounds. Their muscular bodies are covered in thick, greenish grey hair that blends in so well with the surrounding forest that they become invisible 90% of the time when not moving.

Forest of Deceit

Game Master Adventure Seeds

Many expansions of the material provided are possible, and are left to the discretion of the Game Master crafting a tale for his players. A few ideas are here suggested for the benefit of the Game Master.

Bestiary

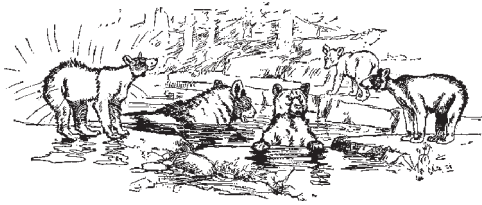


If the characters gain the Sasquatch as allies, the Sasquatch will reveal the location of the goblin's lair to the north, and will also reward the party with two dozen Sunberries, a fruit that grants anyone that is injured eating it from 1-3 Health within 5 minutes. The fruit lasts for quite a while with preservation via magic or other means, and will remain potent for up to three weeks.

Should the Sasquatch become truly good friends with any character (at the discretion of the Game Master), they will reward that character with a whistle that, when blown, seems to make no noise, but that will call for the assistance of any Sasquatch within 2 miles of the characters location.

- 1) Torgen Rath hopes to, with the aid of any allies he might find, subdue the local village. This will earn him great rewards from the rulers of his own country which lies to the west. As the character party explores the Forest of Deceit, Torgen might be working to recruit and organize an impromptu army to attempt this attack. Any characters that get in the way will, of course, need to be eliminated.
- 2) Within the local village the hedonistic and chaotic demon-summoning cult is still active. They might seek revenge upon any that meddle in their affairs. They might also seek to reopen the gateway to the demonic realm by punishing any that had banished previous demonic visitors (like the characters).
- 3) The Sasquatch are powerful allies, and might be convinced to help out on a raid of the goblin lair to the north.
- 4) The She-Demon of Namar may only be banished, and her revenge would be horrific. It is entirely possible, given the unwitting support of the cult in town, that she could return... with friends.

Bestiary



Bear, various

Power: 10%

Defense: 10 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 12-14

Move: 9

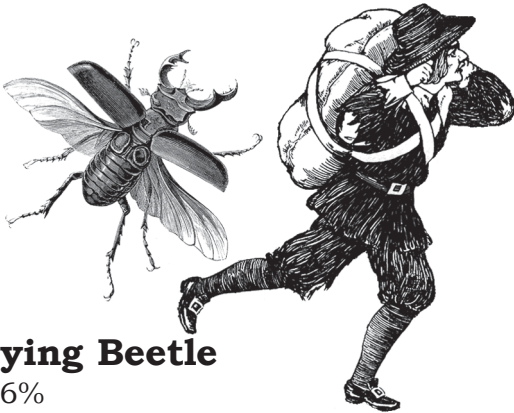
Init.: 0

Damage: claws (1d4X2) and bite (1d6)

Special: none

Demeanor: Bears are curious to the point of being gregarious, and are often moderately territorial. They will most often avoid a fight, however, with any opponent that they feel might cause them grievous physical harm, and so are easily dissuaded from combat by more aggressive opponents.

Appearance: Bears vary in both size and ferocity, but are universally of human or larger size, with four appendages that they may use either as would a quadruped, or bipedally during combat. They have canine snouts and jaws, and are entirely covered by thick insulating fur that ranges from light brown to black in color.



Big Flying Beetle

Power: 6%

Defense: 20 (carapace)

Health: 6

Move: 6/12 (flying)

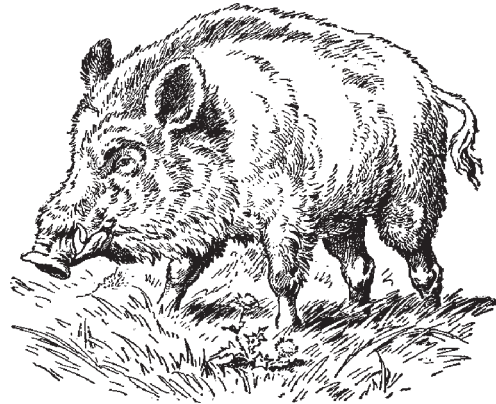
Init.: 0

Damage: bite (1d6)

Special: none

Demeanor: Big Flying Beetles are mindless, but always hungry, and will always attack with food procurement as their only motivation.

Appearance: Measuring from 1.5 to 2 feet in length, the Big Flying Beetle is one of the most rapacious predators in the Forest of Deceit. Its 6-inch mandibles and tough chitinous carapace make it a formidable opponent and a frightening sight to behold. Giant Flying Beetles are brown with transparent, almost gossamer wings.



Boar, wild

Power: 8%

Defense: 20 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 8-9

Move: 9

Init.: 0

Damage: gore (1d8)

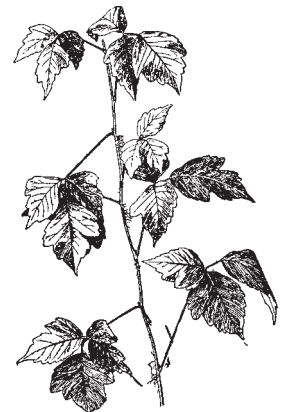
Special: due to their size and short legs, boars are somewhat slow when attacking. Subtract -5% from all attacks made by a boar as a result.

Demeanor: Boars are moderately territorial and will always attack initially, but will run if faced with a strong opponent or predator. Although animals, Boars are also quite intelligent and so are not easily snared or trapped.

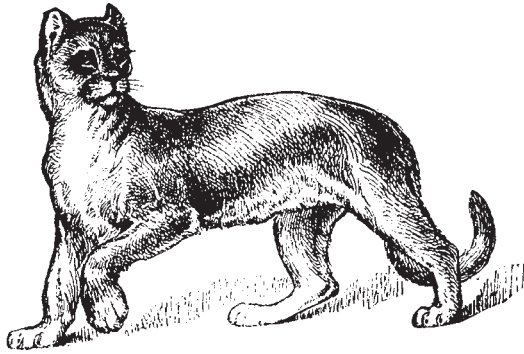
Appearance: Boars are wild pigs and weigh from 150-400 pounds when fully grown. Their hides vary in color from a whitish grey to full black, and are covered in a fine but bristly hair.

Poisonous Plant

Special only: avoid contact or suffer 1-4 points per minute until poison is cured or 12 points of damage accrue.



Forest of Deceit



Cougar/lynx

Power: 15%
Defense: 20 (speed and thick hide)
Health: 17-21
Move: 14
Init.: +15 (%)
Damage: claws (1d6X2) and bite (1d10)

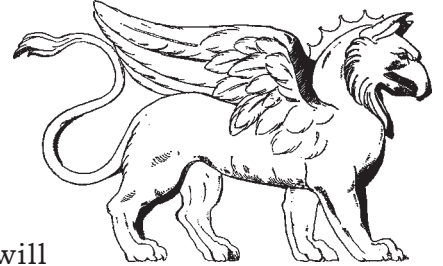
Special: Any uninjured cougar may choose to forego its bite attack to 'pounce'; leaping into the air and landing on its prey with the full force of its body weight in a claw attack. This adds 10% to the creature's ability to score a successful hit against an opponent and also adds 2 points of damage to each and any successful claw attack.

Demeanor: Cougars are ambush predators with lightening fast reflexes and will attack whenever hungry, even when their prey is of much greater size. They hunt in coordinated packs, and are extremely stealthy. Cougars are of above average animal intelligence should any of the party have the ability to speak with them. Conversationally, they are crafty, and will attempt to both trick the party into becoming easy prey, and get them to surrender any food they might have.

Appearance: Cougars are feline hunters measuring up to six feet in length (plus tail) and weighing between 140 and 300 pounds. Their coats range in color from tawny to coal black, and they are nearly silent in their approach. Cougars, especially near their lair, do have a distinctive smell.

Griffin

Power: 33%
Defense: 20 (speed and thick hide)
Health: 45
Move: 7/14 (flight)
Init.: +5 (%)
Damage: claws (1d8X2) and bite (1d10)
Special: Surprise attack – dive bomb for +20% to attack and double claw damage (no bite attack possible on dive bomb)



Demeanor:

Griffins are irascible, arrogant, semi-intelligent beasts. They will attack both anything that appears to threaten them, and anything that they feel might be tasty. Griffins are generally hungry, and difficult to dissuade once they have chosen a given prey.

Appearance: Griffins are conglomerate creatures with the body and rear claws of a lion, and the wings, head, and forelegs of a monstrous eagle. They are larger than the average horse, and have an extended wingspan from 25-40 feet. Griffins have dark brown or black feathers with tawny brown to near blonde fur on their bodies.

Thorny Plant

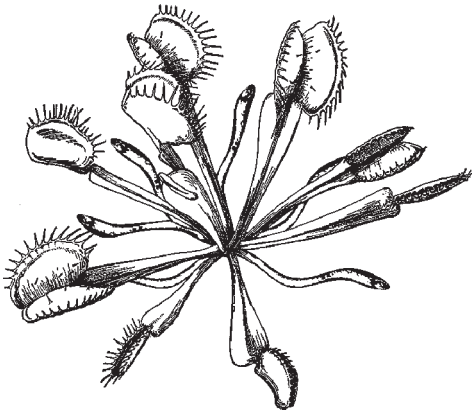
Special only: avoid contact or suffer 1-4 points of Health damage.



Carnivorous Plant

Power:
Defense: 5
Health: 11-14
Move: 0
Init.: +5 (%)
Damage: tendrils (1d4X2) plus immobilize, and 3 per turn if swallowed

Bestiary



Special: Any opponent hit by a tendril will suffer an attempt by the carnivorous plant to swallow them whole. The tendril remains attached until the plant is killed, and each tendril that attaches itself to an opponent causes the initial 1-4 points of Health damage and then remains stuck to the opponent. Each tendril stuck to an opponent grants the Carnivorous Plant a bonus of +5% to its swallow attack.

Swallowed characters lose 3 points of Health from digestive acids and suffocation each combat round until either they have expired, or the plant is killed. Once a character has been swallowed, the plant will cease further attacks.

Demeanor: Carnivorous plants are mindless, and hunt by their ability to scent the surrounding area, as well as to detect vibrations through both the air and ground. As such they may be easily fooled through distractions and misinformation. Carnivorous plants are always hungry, and will attack any prey that comes within range of their tendrils.

Appearance: Carnivorous Plants vary in size from 2 feet tall to the size of a small tree (12-15 feet tall). They have few leaves but broad stalks that end in toothed maws capable of snapping shut on a captured victim. Each plant also has from 4-6 tendrils that end in sucker-like cups for seizing prey. The plant is only capable of coordinating 2 of these tendrils for any given round of attacks.

Sasquatch

Power: 31%

Defense: 10 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 40-44

Move: 9

Init.: 0

Damage: claws (1d6 X2) and bite (1d8)

Special: If at any time both claw attacks from a single Sasquatch hit, the beast will hurl its target up to 20 feet (1d20). The target will then land, disoriented for one full round, and accruing an additional 1-6 points of damage. Any attack made against a target that has been hurled (and is now prone as a result) automatically hits for full damage.

Demeanor: Sasquatch are distrustful of non-woodland beings, but are slow to anger. Once angered, however, they will fight to the death. They shun the organized societies of other beings, however, and will never venture from the woods they both love and protect.

Appearance: Sasquatch are large apelike humanoids, standing 8-10 feet tall and weighing 400-600 pounds. Their muscular bodies are covered in thick, greenish grey hair that blends in so well with the surrounding forest that they become invisible 90% of the time when not moving.



Forest of Deceit

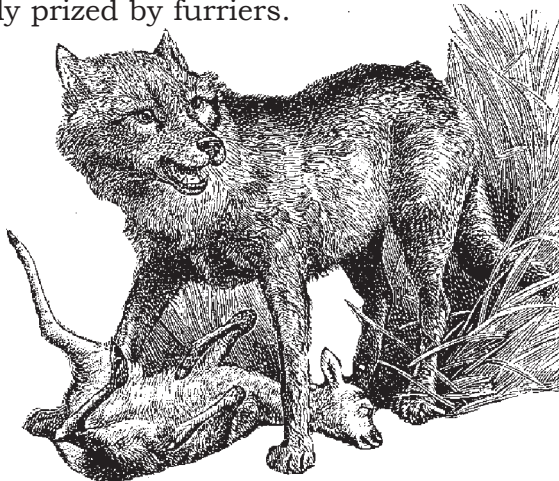


Giant Stag

Power: 8%
Defense: 5 (thick fur/hide)
Health: 6-10
Move: 11
Init.: 0
Damage: antler rake (1d12)
Special: none

Demeanor: Giant Stags are highly territorial but only moderately aggressive. They will attack any creature that intrudes into their grazing range unless they are presented with overwhelming force or if they are wounded. Once wounded, a giant stag will always choose to flee.

Appearance: Giant stags appear much the same as regular stags but are of a much larger stature. They range in size from the bulk of a standard horse to that of a large moose. Their coats range from chestnut brown to almost blonde and are highly prized by furriers.



Unicorn

Power: 40%
Defense: 35 (magical hide)
Health: 60
Move: 16
Init.: +15%
Damage: hooves (1d4X2) and horn (1d20)
Special: Unicorns will flee whenever possible, but if injured, will respond with ferocity to an attack. They are 90% immune to magical attacks, poisons, and diseases of all kinds, and are completely unaffected by mind control attacks of any kind.

Demeanor: Unicorns are highly intelligent, and are rumored to understand human speech. They avoid contact with humanoids, but will assist any creatures (humanoids included) that they find to be 'worthy', that they have either witnessed committing acts of selfless kindness, or that radiate an aura of goodness.

Appearance:

Unicorns are roughly the size of common horses, although their legs are thicker and more powerful, and they stand somewhat taller. The average unicorn stands 6-8 feet in height at the shoulder. Their coats are either white, or white dappled with grey, and their horns range from 6-18 inches in length, and range from pearly white to a golden metallic color.



Wolf, various*

Defense: 5
Health: 4-8
Move: 11
Init.: +10%
Damage: bite (1d6)

Special: Wolves are often encountered in packs numbering from 2-8 individuals. Due to their intelligence, they will concentrate their attacks on wounded adversaries in order to complete a kill and cause others to retreat.

Bestiary

Demeanor: Wolves are wily, crafty predators with a fierce loyalty towards members of their pack. They hunt only when hungry, but will defend a wounded pack mate to the death. Wolves are very curious, but will remain hidden, investigating anything that arouses their curiosity using stealth, and running away if discovered.

Appearance: Wolves look very much like large dogs, but with heavier shoulders and jaws. The wolves of this forest have coats ranging from mottled brown or grey to solid black.



Wolverine

Power: 5%

Defense: 10 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 5-6

Move: 10

Init.: +20%

Damage: bite (1d6)

Special: Wolverines surprise their opponents 25% of the time.

Demeanor: Wolverines are territorial near their burrows, and will defend these burrows even when confronted by opponents of much larger size (they have been known to attack bears). They will allow trespassers to back slowly away from a confrontation, but actual running often inspires them to a limited pursuit.

Appearance: Wolverines seem to the casual observer to be a cross between a small bear and a badger. Averaging 2-3 feet in trunk length, they measure 4-5 feet from their nose to the tip of their tail. The forms are stocky, and muscular, and the fur is dark brown to nearly black.

Wolverines have large front and rear claws designed for both digging... and rending.



Werebeast

(Canine, Feline, or Ursine)*

Power: 18%

Defense: 10-20 (thick fur/hide)

Health: 12-24

Move: 9-11

Init.: +10%

Damage: claws (1d6/2X) and bite (1d10)

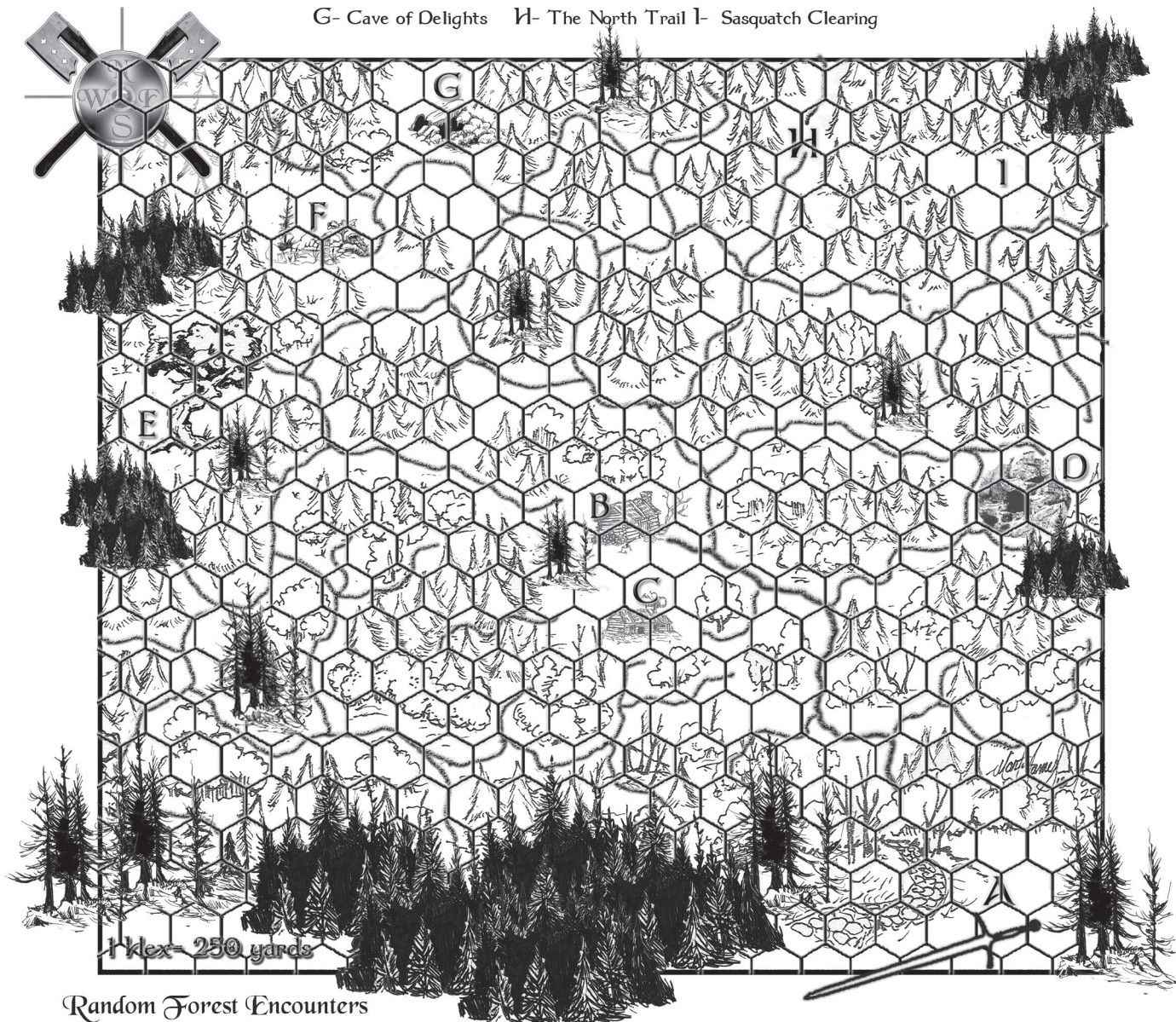
Special: The bite of a werebeast carries with it the infection of lycanthrope which will cause an additional loss of one health per hour until such time as the victim is either cured, or succumbs, becoming a werebeast in need of fresh blood at the rising of the next full moon. Until the rising of the moon, the victim will appear to be deceased, although their body will not putrify.

Demeanor: Werebeasts are static, motionless unless it is the time of the full moon. If the moon is full, however, they have an insatiable appetite, and will attack any warm-blooded creature within range of their senses. Although they retain the intelligence of their initial form (whether that be humanoid, or animal) their single-minded need for carnage causes them to attack without reason. It is not possible to negotiate with a werebeast.

Appearance: All werebeasts appear to be humanoid versions of the were animal type which has infected them. They are all capable of walking upright, and will mimic the facial expressions of their former lives. Werebeasts have large claws and teeth (larger than their animal, and of course humanoid, counterparts), and thick, matted fur.

Forest of Deceit

A- Road to Town B- Hunters Cabins C- Spy's Cabin D- Cougar's Lair E- The Dryad's Tree F- The Spring
G- Cave of Delights H- The North Trail I- Sasquatch Clearing



Random Forest Encounters

Number Rolled Encounter

01-69	Hunt Encounter
70-73	Bear, various*
74-75	Big Flying Beetle
76-78	Boar, wild
79-80	Poisonous Plant
81-83	Cougar/lynx (1 in 20 will be a sable)
84-85	Griffin
86-86	Thorny Plant
87-88	Carnivorous Plant
89	Sasquatch
90-92	Giant Stag
93-94	Unicorn
95-97	Wolf, various*
98-99	Wolverine
00	Werebeast (Canine, Feline, or Ursine)*

*The Game Master may choose what creature of this type is most appropriate to the adventure or campaign being run.

Hunt Encounters (roll %)

Number Rolled	Encounter	Feeds (meals for one)	Tasty	Pelt Value (in silver)
01-06	Badger	2	1	1sp
07-12	Beaver	2	2	6sp
13-25	Deer	12	4	20sp
26-31	Duck	2	6	n/a
32-35	Ferret	1	1	1sp
36-37	Fox	1	1	35sp
38-43	Pheasant	2	10	n/a
44-51	Muskrat	1	1	5sp
52-61	Opussum	2	2	2 for 1sp
62-73	Rabbit	1	5	2sp
74-83	Raccoon	2	2	3sp
84-85	Skunk	n/a	yuk	1sp
86-93	Squirrel	1	4	5 for 1sp
94-00	Woodchuck	2	3	1sp

The primordial north woods, a vast, unspoiled wilderness

Some come for the valuable hardwoods found within.
Some come to gather the rich furs.
Still others come merely to explore.

But the forest is neither innocent nor defenseless.
Predators abound, both natural and arcane.

Some would hide secrets within the tangled glades.
Betrayals are hidden here.
Lies are buried here.

Every explorer soon learns
that the bountiful north woods
comprise nothing more than a
Forest of Deceit

*Forest of Deceit is a fantasy adventure
designed for use with most fantasy role playing systems.
It is suitable for exploration
by parties of two or more characters
of novice experience.*



Fatality Rating :30%

Recommended for 3 or more players
ages 12 and up.

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