



CLAW / CLAW / BITE!

ISSUE #5 - DEC / JAN 2007



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CLAW/CLAW/BITE

ISSUE 5 – DECEMBER 2006

Hail and well met, fellow roleplayers! Welcome to *Claw/Claw/Bite*, a new resource for storytellers and gamemasters to create thrilling worlds of adventure for your players to test their mettle in. Every day or two, we post an article containing at least one new character, creature, magic item, encounter or area description (on the scale of a farmstead, inn, or small town) for use in your campaigns. We also include little nuggets that will enrich your campaign setting with cool details and intriguing features. These articles are posted on our blog site, clawclawbite.blogspot.com many of which are collected in these monthly issues.

Our goal is to be a "one-stop shop" for you, the gamemaster. All of our creations are designed for d20 3.5 rules. Many of the game elements that you see in this periodical will find their way into modules published by Unicorn Rampant, which will be available for sale on our site:

www.unicornrampant.com.

So welcome to our phantasmagorical multiverse, traveler. Strange treasures, cunning adversaries, powerful adventurers, and mystic realms are waiting for you. Enjoy your stay, but don't venture too deep in the woods.

Credits

Claw/Claw/Bite is the brainchild of Adam Thompson and S.D. Hilderbrand. Additional material has been contributed by Frank J. Kim.

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CHARACTERS

Témas Falkor (Lvl 4)

Témas considers himself a survivor. He's been through a lot of trauma in his short 18 years -- orphaned at age 5, he has lived a life on the street ever since. His malnutrition led to poor vision, so he wears spectacles to see distance. And distance he travels, far and wide, spreading his own version of the gospel.

Témas Falkor

Medium-size Male Human

Bard3 Cleric1

Hit Dice: (3d6)+(1d8)+8

Hit Points: 31

Initiative: +2

Speed: Walk 30 ft.

AC: 17 (flatfooted 15, touch 12)

Attacks: Sword, Short +3;*Crossbow, Light +4; ;

Damage: Sword, Short 1d6+1;*Crossbow, Light 1d8; ; Vision:

Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

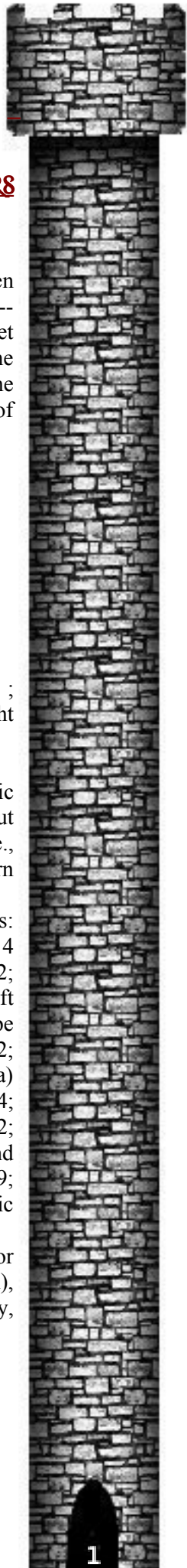
Special Qualities: Bardic knowledge (+5), Bardic music 3/day, May wear light armor without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance., Spontaneous casting, Turn Undead (Su) 5/day (turn level 1) (turn damage 2d6+3)

Saves: Fortitude: +5, Reflex: +5, Will: +7 **Abilities:** STR 12 (+1), DEX 15 (+2), CON 14 (+2), INT 14 (+2), WIS 14 (+2), CHA 15 (+2) **Skills:** Appraise 2; Balance 2; Bluff 2; Climb -1; Concentration 9; Craft (Untrained) 2; Diplomacy 2; Disguise 2; Escape Artist 0; Forgery 2; Gather Information 2; Heal 2; Hide 4; Intimidate 2; Jump 4; Knowledge (Arcana) 4; Knowledge (History) 4; Knowledge (Local) 4; Knowledge (Religion) 4; Listen 5; Move Silently 2; Ride 2; Search 2; Sense Motive 3; Sleight of Hand 6; Speak Language(Elven, Dwarven) 2; Spellcraft 9; Spot 5; Survival 2; Swim -3; Tumble 5; Use Magic Device 6;

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Spell Penetration

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Chaotic Good





Possessions: Bolts of Cold Feet +2 (Crossbow/10/Frost); Sword, Short; Crossbow, Light; Elven Chain; Eye Lenses of Correction Skill Bonus (Competance) (Spot +3); Outfit (Entertainer's); Ring of Sustenance;

Deity: None

Domains: Travel, Weather

Spells: Spells per Day: (3/2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0) DC:12+spell level) Bard – Known:

Level 0: Flare, Know Direction, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Summon Instrument Level 1: Expeditious Retreat, Obscure Object, Ventriloquism

Spells per Day: (3/2+1/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0) DC:12+spell level) Cleric – Known:

Level 0: Create Water, Cure Minor Wounds, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Guidance, Inflict Minor Wounds, Light, Mending, Purify Food and Drink, Read Magic, Resistance, Virtue

Level 1: Bane, Bless, Bless Water, Cause Fear, Command, Comprehend Languages, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Chaos, Detect Evil, Detect Good, Detect Law, Detect Undead, Divine Favor, Doom, Endure Elements, Entropic Shield, Hide from Undead, Inflict Light Wounds, Longstrider, Magic Stone, Magic Weapon, Obscuring Mist, Obscuring Mist, Protection from Evil, Protection from Law, Remove Fear, Sanctuary, Shield of Faith, Summon Monster I

Témas is often followed by his dog, Home.

Home

Small-size Male Dog

Animal 1

Hit Dice: (1d8)+2

Hit Points: 10

Initiative: +3

Speed: Walk 40 ft.

AC: 15 (flatfooted 12, touch 14)

Vision: Low-light Face / **Reach:** 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Animal Traits, Scent (Ex) **Saves:**

Fortitude: +4, Reflex: +5, Will: +1 **Abilities:** STR 12 (+1), DEX 16 (+3), CON 14 (+2), INT 2 (-4), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 6 (-2)

Skills: Appraise -4; Balance 3; Bluff -2; Climb 1; Concentration 2; Craft (Untrained) -4; Diplomacy -2; Disguise -2; Escape Artist 3; Forgery -4; Gather Information -2; Heal 1; Hide 7; Intimidate -2; Jump 9; Listen 1; Move Silently 3; Ride 3; Search -4; Sense Motive 1; Spot 1; Survival 1; Swim 1;

Feats: Track

Challenge Rating: 1/3

Alignment: Chaotic Good



Wallis Dal Grof (CR 6)

A pretty-boy by half-orc standards, Wallis sees himself as the ultimate half-orc swinger. In reality, his intimidating presence usually dictates how his actions turn out, which is usually for the worse. He always wanted to be a bard, but realized he couldn't sing or play any instruments, so he's made a living starting fights at taverns. Somehow he's kept up his pretty boy appearance, despite being half orc and half manic thug. He's now picked up the drums a little, but still prefers to beat on the heads of his opponents. Wallis usually attacks with dual shortspears, but occasionally opts for the longspear, especially when besieged by creatures larger than himself.

Wallis Dal Grof

Medium-size Male Half-orc

Fighter 6

Hit Dice: (6d10)+18

Hit Points: 63

Initiative: +2

Speed: Walk 20 ft.



AC: 19 (flatfooted 18, touch 11)
Attacks: Longspear +1 (two handed) +11/+6; *Shortspear +4; *Shortspear (Thrown) +9/+4; *Shortspear +1 +6/+1; *Shortspear +1 (Thrown) +10/+5; ;
Damage: Longspear +1 (two handed) 1d8+7; *Shortspear 1d6+2; *Shortspear (Thrown) 1d6; *Shortspear +1 1d6+5; *Shortspear +1 (Thrown) 1d6+1; ;
Vision: Darkvision (60')
Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Qualities: Orc Blood
Saves: Fortitude: +8, Reflex: +4, Will: +4
Abilities: STR 18 (+4), DEX 14 (+2), CON 16 (+3), INT 14 (+2), WIS 14 (+2), CHA 8 (-1)
Skills: Appraise 2; Balance -3; Bluff -1; Climb -1; Concentration 3; Craft (Untrained) 2; Craft (Weaponsmithing) 5; Diplomacy 0; Disguise -1; Escape Artist -3; Forgery 2; Gather Information -1; Heal 2; Hide -3; Intimidate 6; Jump -7; Listen 2; Move Silently -3; Ride 2; Search 2; Sense Motive 2; Spot 2; Survival 2; Swim -6;
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Cleave, Great Cleave, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Multiattack, Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Tower Shield Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Shortspear, Spear)
Challenge Rating: 6
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Possessions: Dragonhide Plate; Longspear +1; Outfit (Traveler's); Shortspear; Shortspear +1;



Torsten Danattaway (Lvl 6)

Torsten is a dancin' fool who also plays the flute and sings songs of youth. Though he's no spring chicken, he has strut his stuff on stages across Onuago and his new home in the upcoming town of Arowynne. He often performs in feathers, earning him the moniker "springin' chicken!" In combat, he tends to remain out of the fray, slinging stones at his enemies. When forced, he draws his longsword, shouts obscenities and charges.

Torsten Danattaway
 Medium-size middle-age Male Human
 Bard6
Hit Dice: (6d6)+6
Hit Points: 35
Initiative: +3
Speed: Walk 30 ft.
AC: 17 (flatfooted 14, touch 13)
Attacks: *Longsword +1 -1; *Sling +1 -2; ;
Damage: *Longsword +1 1d8+1; *Sling +1 1d4+1; ;

Vision: Normal
Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.
Special Qualities: Bardic knowledge (+10), Bardic music 10/day, Countersong (Su) for up to 10 rounds, Fascinate (Sp) can effect 2 creatures for up to 6 rounds, Inspire Competence (Su) +2 to skill checks for up to 2 minutes, Inspire Courage (Su) +1 to saves against charm or fear effects and +1 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls., May wear light armor without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance., Suggestion (Sp) Will DC 17 negates - does not count against Bardic Music uses
Saves: Fortitude: +5, Reflex: +8, Will: +6
Abilities: STR 10 (+0), DEX 17 (+3), CON 13 (+1), INT 19 (+4), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 18 (+4)
Skills: Appraise 6; Balance 6; Bluff 15; Climb -3; Concentration 1; Craft (Untrained) 4; Decipher Script 12; Diplomacy 14; Disguise 10; Escape Artist 5; Forgery 4; Gather Information 13; Heal 1; Hide 2; Intimidate 8; Jump 4; Listen 1; Move Silently 0; Perform (Dance) 13; Perform (Sing) 13; Perform (Wind Instruments) 13; Ride 3; Search 4; Sense Motive 6; Sleight of Hand 5; Spellcraft 9; Spot 1; Survival 1; Swim -6; Tumble 2; Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Diligent, Extra Music, Great Fortitude, Persuasive, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency





Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral Good

Possessions: Arrows (50); Musical Instrument (Flute); Boots of Striding and Springing; Bullets, Sling (50); Gloves of Dexterity +2; Leather +2; Longsword +1; Traveler's Outfit; Sling +1;

Spells:

Spells per Day: (3/4/3 DC:14+spell level) Bard – Known:

Level 0: Daze, Detect Magic, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, Read Magic, Summon Instrument

Level 1: Charm Person, Confusion, Lesser, Feather Fall, Magic Mouth

Level 2: Heroism, Mirror Image, Sound Burst



Torsten Danattaway

Elfis Pressleaf (Lvl 4)

Always shakin' his hips, this crazy elf speaks only out of the side of his mouth. Still, he's a good ole boy, and people love him. He's not much of a fighter (more of a lover); most of the time he spent in the elven army he posed for paintings and entertained the other troops, earning him his nickname "tha que'eng," elvish for "sequined leader" and often quoted "thenq'u, thenq'u faer'e u'mush," elvish for "pompadoured and pampered i am." Though no one would say it to him (in fact many adore him for it), many despise his fashion sense. Still, this guy sings himself into everyone's hearts, his long,

flowing sideburns hypnotizing as they sway with his hips in tune with the music. Elfis' favored songs include:

- * blue suede boots
- * alehouse rock
- * hunka hunka burnin' hands
- * i can't help feather falling in love with you

Elfis Pressleaf

Medium-size Male Elf

Bard4

Hit Dice: (4d6)

Hit Points: 21

Initiative: +3

Speed: Walk 30 ft.

AC: 18 (flatfooted 15, touch 13)

Attacks: *Longsword +1 +5; ;

Damage: *Longsword +1 1d8+2;

Vision: Low-light

Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects., An elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it., Bardic knowledge (+7), Bardic music 8/day, Immunity to magic sleep effects., May wear light armor without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance.

Saves: Fortitude: +1, Reflex: +7, Will: +4

Abilities: STR 13 (+1), DEX 16 (+3), CON 11 (+0), INT 16 (+3), WIS 11 (+0), CHA 20 (+5)

Skills: Appraise 3; Autohypnosis 3; Balance 5; Bluff 11; Climb -2; Concentration 0; Craft (Untrained) 3; Diplomacy 12; Disguise 7; Escape Artist 7; Forgery 3; Gather Information 10; Heal 0; Hide 0; Intimidate 7; Jump -2; Listen 3; Move Silently 0; Perform (Dance) 6; Perform (Sing) 6; Perform (String Instruments) 6; Ride 3; Search 5; Sense Motive 7; Spellcraft 10; Spot 2; Survival 0; Swim -5; Tumble 4; Use Magic Device 11; **Feats:** Armor Proficiency (Light), Combat Casting, Extra Music, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral



Elfis Pressleaf

Possessions: Chain Shirt; Cloak of Charisma +2; Disguise Kit; Longsword +1; Musical Instrument (Lute); Outfit (Entertainer's); Shield, Light;

Spells:

Spells per Day: (3/4/1 DC:15+spell level)

Bard – Known: **Level 0:** Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Message, Prestidigitation, Read Magic, Summon Instrument
Level 1: Grease, Hideous Laughter, Magic Mouth

Level 2: Entrhall, Glossolalia

Morbane the Mad Monk of Elsemere (Lvl 3)

A prodigious youth, Morbane became too powerful too fast and it drove him slightly mad. He spends much of his time pacing the tree line to the west of present-day Elsemere. It is said that his parents are buried in the mausoleum that the forest has grown over, and that this is what has driven him mad. Who is to say, really. As the other kids used to joke, "Perhaps plawing in da deep, dawk fowest has fweigtened wittle bitty Mowbane..." This scorn led him into the Shada Monastery where he trained for a few years before returning to Elsemere to seek his parents' graves. There are also those humans who say he is a Wyndm, and that's also compounding his insanity. Still others think he knows too much about the Old Ones and that that's also weighing upon his fragile soul.

Needless to say, everyone agrees that he's slightly "touched."

Morbane the Mad Monk of Elsemere Medium-size Male Human

Monk3

Hit Dice: (3d8)+6

Hit Points: 27

Initiative: +2

Speed: Walk 40 ft.

AC: 13 (flatfooted 11, touch 13)

Attacks: *Flurry of Blows +3/+3; ;

Damage: *Flurry of Blows 1d10+3; ;

Vision: Normal

Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Evasion (Ex), Flurry of Blows (Ex), Still Mind (Ex)

Saves: Fortitude: +5, Reflex: +5, Will: +2 **Abilities:** STR 17 (+3), DEX 14 (+2), CON 15 (+2), INT 12 (+1), WIS 9 (-1), CHA 7 (-2)

Skills: Appraise 1; Balance 5; Bluff -2; Climb 10; Concentration 4; Craft (Untrained) 1; Diplomacy -2; Disguise -2; Escape Artist 7; Forgery 1; Gather Information -2; Heal -1; Hide 4; Intimidate -2; Jump 12; Knowledge (Arcana) 2; Knowledge (Local) 2; Knowledge (Nature) 2; Knowledge (Religion) 2; Listen 2; Move Silently 8; Ride 2; Search 1; Sense Motive 1; Spot 2; Survival -1; Swim 8; Tumble 8;

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Snatch

Challenge Rating: 3

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Possessions: Belt, Monk's; Boots of Elvenkind; Gloves of Swimming/Climbing; Flurry of Blows; Outfit (Monk's Robes);



Morbane the Mad Monk of Elsemere





Pava the Wise (CR 4)

Pava is a druid who has set up shop outside of east Onuago. Friend of the Wyndm folk and Yevgeny Divoký the Fierce. Occasionally seen wandering the rocky moor lands along the shore of the bay muttering to the gulls and controlling the flow of the Swift River, she has been blamed by some townfolk for the changes in the Lazy River, but is not actually connected. Her wolf companion helps protect her from the creepy-crawlies of the moors.

Pava the Wise (CR 4)
Medium-size Female Human Druid

Hit Dice: (4d8)+8

Hit Points: 35

Initiative: +2

Speed: Walk 30 ft.

AC: 14 (flatfooted 12, touch 12)

Vision: Normal

Face / Reach: 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Animal Companion (Ex), Nature Sense (Ex), Resist Nature's Lure (Ex), Trackless Step (Ex), Wild Empathy (Ex) +5, Woodland Stride (Ex)

Saves: Fortitude: +6, Reflex: +3, Will: +7

Abilities: STR 13 (+1), DEX 15 (+2), CON 15 (+2), INT 11 (+0), WIS 17 (+3), CHA 9 (-1)

Skills: Appraise 0; Balance 2; Bluff -1; Climb 2; Concentration 3; Control Shape 6; Craft (Untrained) 0; Diplomacy -1; Disguise -1; Escape Artist 2; Forgery 0; Gather Information -1; Handle Animal 5; Heal 3; Hide 10; Intimidate -1; Jump 1; Listen 7; Move Silently 4; Ride 4; Search 1; Sense Motive 4; Speak Language 0; Spot 7; Survival 11; Swim 1;

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Endurance, Shield Proficiency, Stealthy

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: True Neutral

Possessions: Bracers of Armor +2; Brooch of Tangents; Cloak of Elvenkind; Hat of Disguise; Signet Ring;

Spells:

Spells per Day: (5/4/3 DC:13+spell level)

Druid -

Known:

Level 0: Create Water, Cure Minor Wounds, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Flare, Guidance, Know Direction, Light, Mending, Purify Food and Drink, Read Magic, Resistance, Virtue

Level 1: Calm Animals, Charm Animal, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Animals or Plants, Detect Snares and Pits, Endure Elements, Entangle, Faerie Fire, Goodberry, Hide from Animals, Jump, Longstrider, Magic Fang, Magic Stone, Obscuring Mist, Pass without Trace, Produce Flame, Shillelagh, Speak with Animals, Summon Nature's Ally I

Level 2: Animal Messenger, Animal Trance, Barkskin, Bear's Endurance, Bull's Strength, Cat's Grace, Chill Metal, Delay Poison, Fire Trap, Flame Blade, Flaming Sphere, Fog Cloud, Gust of Wind, Heat Metal, Hold Animal, Owl's Wisdom, Reduce Animal, Resist Energy, Restoration, Lesser, Soften Earth and Stone, Spider Climb, Summon Nature's Ally II, Summon Swarm, Tree Shape, Warp Wood, Wood Shape



Pava the Wise

Godan

Wyndm-Wolf Companion

Godan means "seaside" in the Wyndm forest tongue. Pava's first love is the land near the ocean, where she can feel the gentle breeze. Godan is a friendly cub, but fully capable of launching into action when needed.



The Hamlet of Elsemere

Population 90

Wealth: Gold Piece Limit: 100 gp

Ready Cash: 450 gp

Power Center: Magical: chaotic evil priest of St. Cuthbert and Shada Monks

Community Authority: 2nd level warrior

Highest level NPCs in the community:

Barbarian: 1st

Bard: 2nd

Commoner: 9th

Druid: 4th

Expert: 7th

Fighter: 3rd

Rogue: 4th

Sorcerer: 1st

Warrior: 2nd

Over the past few years, part of the village of Elsemere has been reclaimed by the encroaching forest. The mausoleum was once the edge of town, but it is now hundreds of feet inside the forest. If the party investigates wilderness long enough, they will find old tracks leading into the forest - what was once the road through town. The present town is surrounded on three sides by farmland and on one by Elsemere Wood. Corrupted fey creatures have their own nefarious names for the dark forest they call home.

Notable locations:

C: Once the center of town, the Cathedral of St. Carlos has been taken defiled and corrupted by a priest of St. Cuthbert.

F: The Fallen Lumber Inn is the last operating inn in this dwindling economy.

M: This makeshift mill processes the remaining lumber produced by the townspeople of Elsemere.

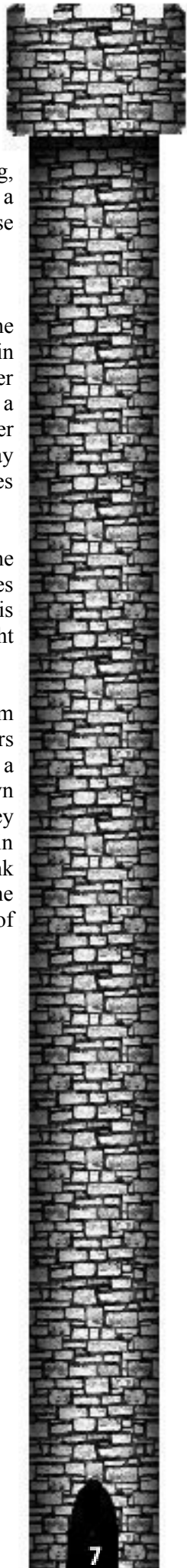
Entrances to the Wood: Dark and foreboding, these narrow creases in the forest provide a crawlspace into the interior. Characters taking these paths should beware.

Notable characters

Morbane the Mad Monk (CR3) wanders about the edge of town, muttering strange utterances in multiple languages under his filthy breath. Another important person in town is the scholar's mentor, a 4th level druid who is studying the forest. Another is Ernardus, a tainted 10th level cleric. His level may be adjusted +2 for the begotten of the old ones template.

Pava the Wise occasionally visits this hamlet, so she may be present. Also Temas Falkor sometimes makes his bardly way here to gain knowledge. He is writing a song about the encroaching forest brought on by the sadness of the Elsemereans.

Other: If the characters seek a vantage point from which to view the forest, they spy the stony towers of the Shada Monastery which from its position on a hill in the Wood peeks through the overgrown canopy. If the characters ask around enough, they may learn some facts about the monks who study in the monastery, including Morbane, the Mad Monk of Elsemere, who splits his time between the hallowed halls of Shada and the muddied streets of Elsemere.





The Great Elsemere Wood

In the Great Elsemere Wood the forest is so thick that it is almost as dark as night. No sounds echo through the underbrush; no sky is visible through the tightly-woven canopy which towers fifty feet above. Cedars and other trees are leafless except in the canopy; the dry limbs in the interim have grown craggily and with sinister corruption. A fire could easily destroy the forest in a matter of moments, but luckily in the rarefied air of the wood, there is little oxygen to keep a flame aflame.

The soil in the forest is primarily dry earth, with substantial cracking and exposed root systems gasping for sustenance, except along the river, where the soil is muddy and in parts swamp-like. Along the river, thick spanish moss dangles from the drooping limbs, which seem to bend over the water as if to take a sip.

A small maze of a trail leads through the forest. It is by and large the only path through the thick undergrowth. The path is the above-ground manifestation of the paths the underground river has taken through the wood, attempting to avoid the evils within.

Notable Locations in Elsemere Wood

Mausoleum

Once a part of Elsemere, this mausoleum is now overgrown by forest underbrush and is barely noticeable.

Fitted stones and mortar poke through the exposed root system of a stand of trees, revealing a weathered structure. There is no obvious entrance.

If the characters search around enough (DC 20, with bonuses for wilderness lore), they'll discover what was once the door, now overgrown with exposed roots. After hacking some wood, they may enter the structure, discovering a single 25'x25' room, which has been overgrown (or undergrown) by some sort of plant life, as there is significant foliage in the chamber.

Creatures: The plants are undead, having consumed the haunted souls of the living. Use stats for an Umbral Bryant (CR 10, Manual of the Planes) for these hungry plants. The plants will attack once the characters are fully within the structure.

Treasure: After dispensing of the plants, the characters discover coffins lining the outer walls. In

two of the coffins, the characters find skeletons that have not been consumed. One one's finger, there is a ring of protection +2 and on another's in a rotting bag, there is a dagger+2.

If the party casts *speak with dead* they will hear a first hand account of the forest's consumption of the northwest edge of Elsemere. The people became so downtrodden that many succumbed to mental illnesses, which, after burial, led to an undead state. The plants sucked the undead out of the corpses and fed on the moonlight streaming in through cracks in the ceiling, becoming the monstrosities that the characters so recently encountered.

Clearing

During certain seasons and to commemorate certain holy and unholy days, the tainted Shada Monks perform their ritual acts in the only clearing in the forest. An encounter with these devotees on a holy occasion is detailed below.

Small Temple

Four adepts care take this small temple to Nerull.

Shada Monastery

This tall, dark building built over an underground cistern is where the Shada Monks hone their nefarious craft. The monastery will be detailed in a later post. The black squares on the map in the wood are huts of monks and adepts who have moved out of the monastery for one reason or another. Most of them just prefer living outside the overcrowded monastery, but a few wish to leave the ranks of Shada. They may be conscripted or convinced to leave the wood altogether if the party plays their encounters right.





ENCOUNTER

The Ritual in the Woods (EL 13)

This encounter is the climax of the second part of the Horror of the Old Ones, a D20 fantasy adventure for 10th level characters. At this point the party has entered the Elsemere woods in search of the village priest. Eventually they will find their way to a clearing with some ancient ruins. When they do, read or paraphrase the following text:

This large field is dotted with the remnants of ancient stone buildings or walls, mossy, overgrown and half buried. A group of people are gathered around a large flat stone, chanting along with a hooded figure standing before the stone.

Then the sky takes on a startling transformation. The clearing darkens and stars shine in the sky, however none of the familiar constellations are visible. A transparent creature appears in the sudden darkness. Its enormous lumpy head, shoulders and membranous wings occupy a third of the sky, looming over the horizon.

This enormous shape begins to draw closer, becoming smaller as it does so. Soon it hovers above the altar, silently regarding the Priest with its alien eyes. He draws back his hood, revealing himself as Ernardus, Elsemere's Priest of St. Cuthbert. His eyes wild, he beseeches the apparition in strange words with arms upraised.

The phantom reaches out with its long arm, its rubbery digits squirming. Dark energy passes from its grotesque hand to the priest's head and a horrible transformation overtakes the man. Ernardus' features are twisted as his skin turns a mottled green-brown and his mouth and jaws widen unnaturally. In his gaping maw are revealed rows of pointy teeth, like a lamprey's mouth. As his body runs like wax at the apparition's touch, the cleric begins to scream in terror. His eyes blank and glassy, he

begins pleading towards the horror in the sky to stop drinking his soul. His tortured pleadings are punctuated with sobbing cries of, "It doesn't even know I'm here! It doesn't even know I'm here! I'm an insect! A mote! It's eyes!!!" before trailing off into incomprehensible bumbles and croaks. Similar changes turn half the cultists into vaguely reptilian or amphibian mockeries of their former selves. Their screams and groans create a symphony of anguish that echoes throughout the clearing.

The transformed priest, or whatever is now pulling the strings of his mind, straightens up and seems to recover his composure somewhat. Speaking with a strange slurring voice that is not entirely human, he orders the destruction of the nonbelievers who have profaned this holy moment.

Creatures: Ernardus, Begotten of the Old Ones (5), Shada Monks (5) and a projection of the Old One. The cultists are enacting a ritual they hope will bring forth the unknown source of dark power they've been worshipping. They will attack any who is profaning this sacred moment. The Old One is here in a special projected form, and so is not able to act with its full strength or enjoy the benefits of its reality-warping. Use the stats below for this form.

Projected form of the Old One (CR 11)

Chaotic Evil Outsider

Size Large Aberration (incorporeal)

Init: +0

Senses: Darkvision 120

Listen +20 Spot +20

Languages: Telepathy 500'

AC: 28 (+19 natural, -1 size) touch 14, flat-footed 33

HP: 140 (HD 16d8+96)

Resist: Incorporeal (50% miss chance)

Saves: Fort: +14 Ref: +5 Will: +14

MV: 30 ft, fly 40 ft (perfect)

Attack: claw +19 (1d6+8)

Full Attack: 2 claws +19 (1d6+8) and 8 tentacles +17 (1d6+4)

Space / Reach: 10' / 10'

Base Attack: +12

Grapple: +24





Abilities: Str 26(+8), Dex 10, Con 24(+7), Int 21(+5), Wis 19(+4), Cha 23 (+6)

Feats: Multi-attack, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Cleave, Improved Sunder, Great Fortitude

Skills: Concentration 23, Knowledge (Arcana) 20, Knowledge (Planes) 21, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) 21, Listen 20, Spellcraft 21, Spot 20

Ernardus, the Corrupted Priest (CR 11)

Chaotic Evil human cleric 9

Size Medium Aberration

Init: -2

Senses: Darkvision 60' Listen Spot

Languages: common, telepathy 60'

AC: 22 (+5 armor, +5 natural armor, +4 deflection) touch 12, flat-footed 22

HP: 73 (HD 9d8+24)

Resist: DR 5 / lawful, SR 15

Saves: Fort: +11 Ref: +3 Will: +9 MV: 20'

Attack: +11 appendage 1d6+5

Full Attack: +11 / +8 appendage (1d6+5)

Space / Reach: 5ft / 5ft

Base Attack: +6/+1 **Grapple:** +8

Abilities: Str: 14 Dex: 10 Con: 14 (16) Int: 10 Wis: 16 Cha: 12

SA: Lightning Touch, Otherworldly Gaze, Spell-like abilities (see below)

Feats: spell focus enchantment, scribe scroll, power attack, lightning reflexes, great fortitude

Skills: concentration +10, knowledge (religion) +8, spellcraft +8

Spells Prepared (DC 13 + spell level)

1st: 4+1: cure light wounds, doom (2), shield of faith, protection from good*

2nd: 4+1: cure moderate wounds, hold person, silence, sound burst, blindness*

3rd: 3+1: cure serious wounds, dispel magic, prayer, contagion*

4th: 2+1: cure critical wounds, greater magic weapon, unholy blight*

5th: 1+1: flame strike, feeblemind*

* domain spell

Domains: corruption (ignore hardness when attacking an object 1/day), evil (evil spells are cast at 1 higher caster level)

Spell-Like Abilities: blur 1/day

Possessions: breastplate +1 (200 gp), Amulet of Health +2 (4000gp), Lesser Rod of Metamagic (Empower) (9000 gp), scroll of symbol of pain, potion of cure moderate wounds, brown robes.

3 Shada Cultists (CR 5)

Chaotic Neutral human monk 5

Size Medium humanoid

Init: +3

Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: common

AC: 16 (+3 monk bonus, +3 dex), touch 16, flat-footed 16

HP: 21, 20, 27 (HD 5d8+5)

Saves: Fort: +4 Ref: +4 Will: +4

MV: 40 ft

Attack: +5 unarmed strike (1d8+1)

Full Attack: flurry of blows +4 / +4 unarmed strike (1d8+1)

Attack Options: stunning fist (DC 14 Fort. or stun for 1 rd.), improved grapple, improved trip (+4 on Str check)

Space / Reach: 5ft / 5ft

Base Attack: +3 **Grapple:** +8

Abilities: Str: 13 Dex: 15 Con: 12 Int: 10 Wis: 14 Cha: 8

SQ: evasion, still mind

SA: flurry of blows, ki strike (magic), stunning fist

Feats: stunning fist, combat reflexes, weapon focus unarmed strike, improved grapple, improved trip

Skills: +10 listen, +10 spot, +11 tumble

3 Begotten of the Old Ones (CR 5)

Chaotic Neutral with evil tendencies
Medium Size Aberration

Init: +2

Senses: darkvision 60'

Listen +7 Spot +7

Languages: Telepathy 60' common

AC: 17 (+2 dex, +5 natural armor), touch 12, flat-footed 15

HP: 54, 65, 68 (HD 9d8+27)

Defenses: SR 15, DR 5 / lawful

Saves: Fort: +6 Ref: +5 Will: +5



MV: 30, swim 30 or fly 30'
Attack: +10 appendage 1d6+4
Full Attack: +11 appendage (1d6+4), and +11 appendage (1d6+4)
Attack Options: Lightning Touch
Space / Reach: 5ft. / 5ft.
Base Attack: +6 **Grapple:** +10

Abilities: Str: 18 Dex: 15 Con: 17 Int: 9
Wis: 12 Cha: 6

SQ: DR 5/lawful, SR 15, darkvision 60'
SA: spell like abilities: blur Feats: weapon focus (appendage), power attack, ability focus (Otherworldly Gaze), quicken spell-like ability (blur)

Feats: Power attack, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills: +7 listen, +7 spot

Lightning Touch (Su): Begotten of the Old Ones can generate, as a free action, a burst of electricity from within their bodies that damages and may stun their victims. The touch deals 1d8 points of electricity damage and stuns the target for 1d4 rounds. A DC 17 Fortitude save avoids the stun effect - the save is constitution based. They may use this ability once per round, delivered by melee attack.

Otherworldly Gaze (Su): As a standard action begotten can focus their otherworldly gaze upon a mortal creature and create a haze of confusion as the spell. A DC 17 will save is required to avoid this confusion (save is wisdom based), which lasts as long as the begotten concentrates upon it.

Spell-like abilities: blur 1/day. Caster level 5th.

DR: 5 / lawful (axiomatic)

SR: 15

Tactics: The Shada monks will attack immediately, charging the nearest party member and attempting to flank her while the Begotten will use their otherworldly gaze on the nearest targets. The projected Old One will float into the midst of the party and lash out with its claws and tentacles at opportune targets.

Ernaldus will prepare with the following spells before joining the fray. First will be a symbol of pain from the scroll he carries. Anyone approaching within 60' must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or suffer -4 to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. After that he will cast prayer, shield of faith, and greater magic weapon (on his appendage). His statistics are altered to include these effects. He will then cast hold person on a warrior before casting feeblemind, flame strike (empowered) and unholy blight (empowered) on any spellcasters before supporting the monks and begotten with empowered healing.

Treasure: The altar is covered with offerings for the Old One amounting to 9 gems worth 2600 gp total. There are also five minor magic items: Amulet of Mighty Fists +1, Elixir of Sneaking, Boots of Elvenkind, Dust of Illusion, and a Swan Boat Feather Token.

Development: Once the party defeats the priest and his twisted worshipers, Ernaldus will fall to the ground and regain one last moment of lucidity as his former self. As his life slips away, he will gasp out a gurgling, mostly incoherent rant, that will contain one clue for the party to continue on to the next phase of their mission.

“No light...only darkness and hunger...I didn't know... How could I have known?... It sleeps and dreams...under Harpy's Point...I know its secret now...oh the horror! The horror! We are all doomed...we have always been doomed...death without end...eons without hope...oblivion...”





CREATURES

Glacial Frost Worm (CR 20)

Glacial Frost Worm (CR 20)

Glacial Frost Worm Gargantuan Magical Beast (cold)

AC: 28 (+1 dex, -4 size, +22 natural armor) touch 7

HD: 36d10+252

HP: 450

Saves: Fort: +22 Ref: +16 Will: +12

Immunities: Cold

Vulnerabilities: Fire

MV: 30 ft, burrow 10 ft

Full Attack: +46 bite (4d6+17 plus 2d8 cold)

Grapple: +61

Abilities: Str: 36(+13) Dex: 12 Con: 24(+7) Int: 2
Wis: 11 Cha: 12

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite), Improved Natural Armor x 8.

Skills: +11 hide, +10 listen, +10 spot.

A frost worm cannot burrow through stone, but can manage ice and frozen earth. When moving through such hard materials it leaves behind a usable tunnel about 5 feet in diameter.

A frost worm is about 40 feet long, 5 feet in diameter, and weighs about 8,000 pounds.

Combat

Frost worms lurk under the snow, waiting for prey to come near. They begin an attack with a trill and then set upon helpless prey with their bite.

Trill (Su) A frost worm can emit a noise that forces its prey to stand motionless. This sonic mind-affecting compulsion affects all creatures other than frost worms within a 100-foot radius. Creatures must succeed on a DC 24 Will save or be stunned for as long as the worm trills and for 1d4 rounds thereafter, even if they are attacked. However, if attacked or violently shaken (a full-round action), a victim is allowed another saving throw. Once a creature has resisted or broken the effect, it cannot be affected again by that same frost worm's trill for 24 hours. The effect's caster level is 14th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Cold (Ex) : A frost worm's body generates intense cold, causing opponents to take an extra 2d6 points of cold damage every time the creature succeeds on a bite attack. Creatures attacking a frost worm unarmed or with natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Breath Weapon (Su) : 30-foot cone, once per hour, damage 15d8 cold, Reflex DC 32 half. Opponents held motionless by the frost worm's trill get no saving throw. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Death Throes (Ex) : When killed, a frost worm turns to ice and shatters in an explosion that deals 12d8 points of cold damage and 8d8 points of piercing damage to everything within 100 feet (Reflex half DC 32). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills

A frost worm, due to its coloration and its affinity for burying itself in the snow, has a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks in its native environment.

Cold Subtype: A creature with the cold subtype has immunity to cold. It has vulnerability to fire, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.



MAGIC ITEMS

Paddle of Punishment

This paddle has been used to render punishment for past, shall we say, improprieties. Often kept behind the counter by more benevolent shopkeepers to deal with meddling kids, this paddle does 1d2 damage to those who receive the business end in the behind. In addition, upon a successful hit, if the creature hit has less HD than the attacker, it deals a round of stun followed by a round of confusion, then 1d10 rounds of guilt. This is usually enough to teach 'em a lesson! For those with equal HD, only 1 round of confusion is dealt. For those targets with more HD, the result is usually anger.

Optional addition: 1-3 spikes can be added for real punishment (1 spike adds +1 damage, so all three makes the paddle 1d2+3).

The price of the paddle is never spoken of outside merchant's circles, so it's up to the DM to scale the price based on appropriate "market forces."



Spell Resistance: no

This spell allows the caster, through long and careful study, to gain portents regarding developing or distant events. Through the careful study of the stars, or the throwing of yarrow sticks, or the study of sacrificial entrails, or the drawing of runes, or the study of cards, or the throwing of bones, or the entering of sacred trances, or some similar activity, the caster may be able to gain knowledge of important events that are of interest to him. As a secondary effect, the caster may know weather certain mundane events will come to weal or woe, such as the prosperity of a wedding, weather the establishment of a certain field will be fruitful or some other such events.

The knowledge so divined is limited to vague portents, easily misunderstood. At 3rd level it is limited to knowledge regarding a single town or county not more than one month in the future. At 6th level it can relate to a kingdom for a year, and at 9th can regard a world for a decade. Information and prophecy gained can be misunderstood, and is not necessarily foolproof (the future is not set), or can be self-fulfilling (aka, you can't escape fate). The specific information given is left to the discretion of the DM.

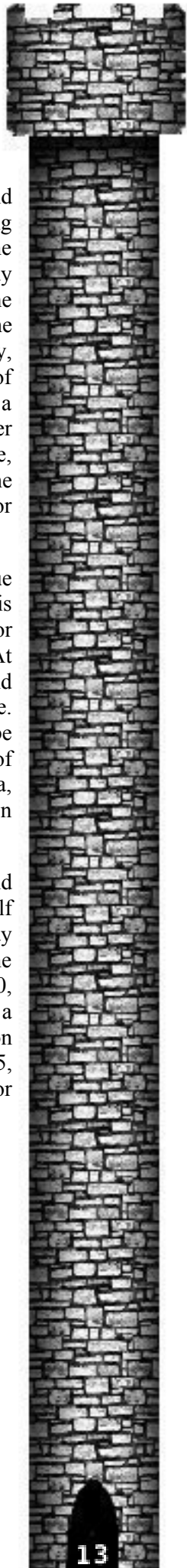
The casting of this spell requires it's preparation and casting every day for a month. The casting itself requires a quiet place of study where the caster may examine the signs for the required four hours, the divination objects themselves (which cost 500, 2500, and 125,000gp at the respective levels), and a successful knowledge arcana, nature or religion check at the end of the casting (DC 15, 25, and 35, respectively). Failure represents a confused or unclear interpretation of events.

SPELLS

Studied Divination

Studied Divination is a spell that allows the caster to gain insight into future events. It is especially useful for the DM to introduce a threat that the players must eventually face, as it gives vague warnings about a future threat.

Studied Divination (Divination)
Level: Clr 3, 6 and 9, Drd 3, 6 and 9, Sor/Wiz 3, 6 and 9.
Components: V, S, M/DF, F
Casting Time: 1 month of 4 hrs/day
Range: See text
Effect: self
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)





Map of the Elsemere area