

# The Forest

a scenario for b/x and similar games





# The Forest

In the rural reaches only recently recovering from a disastrous war, there is a dense wood where even the conifers seem to be in a perpetual autumn.

Here the towering spruces and fir trees grow in rich reds and golds and browns, and pilgrims once more seek to worship at a nearly-forgotten shrine to a devout girl who traded her life for those of her neighbors.

Unfortunately, those pious souls who seek to reclaim this piece of their canon never seem to return, and the woods have earned a reputation for being haunted.

## Background

The forest lay south of a village, and north of a major road. It is dense and separates those two things completely in this area.

A hundred years ago, a plague raged. Many here died. When all hope was nearly lost, a young woman prayed night and day, refusing food or rest. She swore she would not stop until the gods spared her village from the plague, even as she wasted away from her fever and hunger. It is said the gods were so impressed by her devotion, they rewarded her with the secret of **salvation bloom**, a curative plant, which she passed on to her people before dying. She has been venerated as a saint here ever since.

The village was sacked about a decade ago, and its people fled. It has recently been reoccupied by new settlers now that the bad times are past. They are rebuilding much of the town, but refuse to go south to the "haunted" forest, from which pilgrims, merchants, and well-meaning adventurers do not return.

Rumors of monsters, spirits, wolves, and worse abound.

## Now You Know Some Proper Nouns

**Morjana:** The martyred saint of the village. Her piety in a time of plague delivered her people from devastation when she retrieved the secret of salvation bloom from the gods.

**Dorian:** A traveler on the south road who is now lost in the forest.

**Elliasa:** Dorian's estranged fiancée, suffering from lycanthropy.

## Running The Forest

This scenario is probably suitable for small parties of first level. I say probably because I absolutely have not play-tested it whatsoever. Good luck.

The forest is dense and difficult to traverse outside of the clearings. Treat it as a point crawl. Read through it once, it's not long.

Player parties may be sent south into the woods by townsfolk hoping for a path to the south road or seeking a missing relative.

Alternately, player parties may enter from the south road, after seeing strange tracks, a dead wolf, and Dorian's scattered belongings leading up an overgrown trail into the woods.

Roll encounters as frequently as you like, but probably at least once every time the party transits between clearings. Feel free to cross off encounters and replace them as they are presented to the players.

If the party completely "solves" the forest - saves Elliasa and reunites her with Dorian, evacuates them to safety, restores the tomb, and (optionally) deals with the owlbear, maybe find some additional reward somewhere.

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NORTH  
EXIT

1

2

5

3

4

7

6

8

SOUTH  
EXIT



## 1 The Bonepile

Incomplete skeletal remains of man and beast. Stag skulls rest on human femurs. Many have been cracked for the marrow within. Some serve as perches for buzzards, others teem with centipedes. The misty silence of the forest is punctuated here by the squabbling turkey vultures.

Turning through the cadaverous bits quickly reveals that the majority of the dead are unfortunate pilgrims, none of whom appear to be **Elliasa** (see **#7 Encampment**). It will also result in the discovery of the following mundane items:

- Pilgrim's Guide to The Martyr, which tells the tale of Morjana, who discovered the cure of an unspecified plague through prayer.
- Stained hair ribbon, ruined by gore.
- Linen handkerchief.
- Several simplistic lead pilgrim badges in a burlap pouch. They depict a hooded woman holding a flower.
- A half-burned candle.
- A set of iron cutlery and a cracked wooden bowl.

## 3 Statue of the Martyr Morjana

Here an old granite figure of a robed, weeping woman is fixed atop a large pedestal and base. They are worn by time, mostly covered now with moss and lichen, which grows especially thick on her cheeks where tears would stream were she alive.

The pedestal is inscribed thus:

*For our sacred martyr Morjana, who was born in our village in the time of the plague, who gave her life to the gods in exchange for the secrets of the salvation bloom.*

An inscription at the rim of a moss-covered stone offering bowl at the base dates the dedication of the monument to nearly a century ago.

Cleaning the moss out of the bowl reveals discoloration from years of small fires in the basin. If the petals of the salvation bloom are burned in this offering bowl, a holy glow briefly fills the clearing, granting a curative boon to the supplicants.

Any present in the clearing when the salvation bloom is burned are cured of any active or latent disease, infection, or personal curse. Cursed items are not affected.

## 2 The Sett

Sparse vegetation covers a warren of excavated earth. It reeks of beastly inhabitation, urine, and dung. Tunnels are lined with destroyed clothing and moldy pelts as bedding. A side tunnel here becomes damper the deeper and further it is traveled, and lets out into the broken subterranean wall of the well at **#6 Ruined Homestead**.

Searching the remains littering the sett can be profitable; the various tattered clothes contain **10-200** copper pieces and mundane religious icons. None of the belongings appear to be those of **Elliasa** (see **#7 Encampment**).

Within the barrows dwells the **Owlbear**. Its monstrous sounds terrify those who near the forest. It patrols the upper clearings of the forest. The Owlbear resides in the lowest den, an area roughly **10'** wide by **20'** long, with only one entrance and piled ankle-deep with dry leaves.

### Owlbear

HD <b>5</b> (HP <b>37</b> )	Morale <b>9</b>	Atk <b>2x</b> Claw <b>1d8</b> , 1x Bite <b>1d8</b>
AC <b>5</b>	Alignment <b>N</b>	Move <b>120'</b> ( <b>40'</b> )
SV Fighter <b>3</b>	The owlbear is <i>ornery</i> , <i>hungry</i> , and <i>territorial</i> .	

**Lair treasure:** Slain would-be adventurers crushed into the clay walls of the den wear pouches and packs containing **8000** copper pieces, **2000** silver pieces, **3** pieces of electrum jewelry **25** gold piece each.

## 4 Spoor

This corner of the clearing is filled with signs of a struggle. There are footprints going in many directions, and some of them are decidedly inhuman. Closer to the treeline, only the inhuman prints remain, along with crushed grasses and muddy tracks indicating something heavy being dragged into the dense woods.

The path into the woods is dangerous and there is sign of dried blood on the ferns and branches. Deeper in, corpses are half-heartedly laid to rest in a pile.

This area is home to **Elliasa**, formerly the companion of **Dorian**. She is a werewolf, and hides here between feedings. If it is not a full moon, she can be spoken to. She will try to drive visitors away to save them from her predations. She is terrified of endangering her former lover, **Dorian**, at **#7 Encampment**, and will reward a successful cure with her buried treasure totaling **2000** silver pieces, amassed from her few victims.

If it is a full moon, she will be in wolf form, and cannot be reasoned with.

### Elliasa, the Neophyte Werewolf

HD <b>4</b> (HP <b>22</b> )	Morale <b>8</b>	Atk <b>1x</b> Bite <b>2d4*</b>
AC <b>5</b>	Alignment <b>N</b>	Move <b>120'</b> ( <b>40'</b> )
SV Fighter <b>4</b>	*Taking <b>&gt;50%</b> HP damage from her infects with lycanthropy, see <i>Moldvay Basic</i> p. <b>B38</b>	

She can be cured by the magic of the statue at **#3 Statue of the Martyr**.





## 5 Spoor

As #4 **Spoor**. Here are signs of a struggle, where human and beastly footprints circle overtake each other. Close to the treeline, only the inhuman prints remain, dragging something heavy into the dense woods beyond. The path into the woods is dangerous. The foliage is spattered with blood and many branches are broken here.

This area is home to **Elliasa**, missing fiancée of **Dorian** at #7 **Encampment**. She is a werewolf, and hides here between full moons, during which time she can be spoken to. She will try to drive visitors away to save them from her predations. She doesn't want to hurt her lover, **Dorian**, but can't bear to leave him. She'll reward a successful cure to her lycanthropy with her buried treasure totaling **2000** silver pieces, amassed from her few victims.

If it is a full moon, she will be in wolf form, and cannot be reasoned with.

Elliasa, the Werewolf

HD 4 (HP 22)	Morale 8	Atk 1x Bite 2d4*
AC 5	Alignment N	Move 120' (40')
SV Fighter 4	*Taking >50% HP damage from her infects with lycanthropy, see Moldvay Basic p. B38	

She can be cured by the magic of the statue at #3 **Statue of the Martyr**.

## 7 Encampment

**Dorian** lives here, in a sturdy tent built from the remains of his broken-down traveler's wagon. He was once a traveler moving through the area with his fiancée, **Elliasa**. They were driven into the woods to escape wolves which attacked them on the roadway south of here. Soon after, his wounded horses perished and **Elliasa** disappeared.

**Dorian** is a kind-hearted man. He vacillates between grieving for **Elliasa**, who he believes to be dead, and hopeful that she merely went to get help and will someday return. Though his supplies are beginning to dwindle, he fears leaving.

He has heard eerie sounds in the night which scare him. He believes he saw an owlbear to the north of his position during the days he went to #8 **The Lost Cemetery** and the nearby clearing (#5) in search of food or aid; for this reason, he will not venture northward/westward until the coast is clear. Because he was attacked by wolves on the road to the south, he will not go back that direction, either, and cannot carry enough supplies to do so anyway.

**Dorian** is not familiar with the area or its lore, but recognizes that the nearby #6 **Ruined Homestead** once housed a woodcutter. He does not know **Elliasa** is a werewolf and remains nearby. He will ask visitors to keep an eye out for **Elliasa**, and her recognizable red dress.

## 6 Ruined Homestead

Once, the home of a woodcutter and his family stood here; now only the rubble and scorched timbers remain. Clay brick and sound granite riverstones once used for walls crumble, tangled with ivy that grows around the ruined floorboards. It was abandoned when the nearby village was sacked about ten years before.

Searching the rubble turns up whittled wooden icons of the martyr **Morjana**, a saint venerated locally for treating the ill amidst a plague a century ago. A few felling axes and splitting mauls in various states of rusted disrepair can be found here in plain sight, as can a broken grindstone and numerous ruined chisels.

Prying up the few remaining floorboards will reveal **300** copper pieces, **50** silver pieces, and a copper torc in a sodden maple box.

The clearing surrounding the home was once a yard, and overgrown soil still shows signs of having once being a family farmyard. Dilapidated, wood planks were once a chicken coop, and beams once there was a pen for goats. Several flowerbeds of **salvation bloom** still grow here.

A damaged well is nearby. Deep inside the well, grunting can be heard, and water drawn from it tastes stagnant and filthy (if consumed, **save vs poison** or become sick for a day). A tunnel breaks into the wall of the well a dozen feet down, near the water table, and leads to #2 **The Sett**. This can be seen from ground level.

## 8 The Lost Cemetery

Once, this was the consecrated burial ground of the old village to the north before it was sacked. The village's new inhabitants are not keen to reopen and tend to the cemetery, dreading the dangerous woods.

At the center of the cemetery, a porcelain-white **spirit elm** rises above the headstones. It is *unnatural* and *eerie* and its roots are tangled around the gravestones.

At one grave, splattered with dry bloodstains, a **damaged map case** contains a letter which reads:

*Take an offering to the shrine of the martyr Morjana and burn it there. Take those ashes and distribute them on the grave of my father, which you shall find north of that place. I fear that if we do not honor these rites before my illness takes me, then he will be waiting for me at the river of spirits and drag my soul to a restless fate with his.*

Next to the grave and **damaged map case** is a **filthy leather pouch** filled with ashes which smell a lot like **salvation bloom**.

If the ashes are distributed on the tombstone, a weary death rattle is heard. The **spirit elm** creaks and groans, seeming to shrink, and its roots unwrap from the sanctified grave. Repeating this process on all of the headstones will kill the **spirit elm** and release the ghostly echoes of the buried from their restless torment.





## Roll 2d10

## Forest Encounters

- 2** 2d4 aggressive, howling wolves - HD 2+2 (9HP), AC 7, Move 180' (60'), SV Fighter 1, Morale 8 (6 if ≥50% pack slain), Attack 1x Bite 1d6, Treasure Nil.
- 3** Loud baying of a great wolf pack fills the chill air of the forest.
- 4** 1d4 greater buzzards circle overhead, and attack if any player appears weak or ill. HD 2 (7HP), AC 6, Move 180' (60') Fly, SV Fighter 1, Morale 8, Attack 1x Bite 1d4, Treasure Nil.
- 5** Ghostly voices wail on the wind, hissing threats - or warnings - that trespassing in the forest will ensure a restless fate in the prison of the spirit elm.
- 6** A terribly wounded deer wanders briefly into view, dragging its entrails into the woods.
- 7** The birds begin to shriek and take to the sky en masse.
- 8** A high-pitched shriek pierces the stillness behind the party. When they look, the trees are still swaying, though nothing is obviously amiss and no trail can be found.
- 9** Ravens caw a staccato laugh in the branches of nearby trees.
- 10** The forest remembers - a fading, ghostly echo of the forest before it was abandoned, a scene of life here in the times of plague, in the times of peace, in the times of war.
- 11** The sound of wood being split in the distance echoes briefly.
- 12** The breeze becomes cool, far too cool. Unnaturally cool, exposing the party's breath, for just a few moments.
- 13** The eyes of the forest are upon the party. An intense sensation of being watched settles upon them.
- 14** A group of 1d4 terrified pilgrims (as commoner or peasant) who, in their panic, are stumbling through the forest, trying to leave in a hurry.
- 15** The birds grow silent - eerily silent.
- 16** A restless spirit floats lazily towards (or from) location #8: The Lost Cemetery. It laments the spirit elm's torment, asking why its sons and daughters do not tend its grave.
- 17** The croaking of frogs and toads takes on a sinister bent, and begins to sound like words - Run! Leave! Dead! Meat!
- 18** 1d8 giant rats are driven out from the underbrush. HD 1/2 (3HP), AC 7, Move 120' (40'), SV Fighter 1, Morale 8, Attack 1x Bite 1d4, Treasure Nil.
- 19** Ghastly shrieks in the distance, and ravening sounds of wild beasts.
- 20** Owlbear! The owlbear which resides in #2: The Sett. Use your discretion - roaming owlbears may be part of a family, or you can elect to have one owlbear only, regardless of location. See stats under location #2 The Sett.









thank you for venturing into

# The Forest

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