



# TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

*A Shadow of the Weird Wizard* Quest for Expert Heroes



No good comes from dealing with the faeries. Certainly, many of the Fair Folk intend no harm to the mortals they encounter and all they do they do in the spirit of good fun. But faeries have nothing to fear from time, sickness, or infirmity. They live

forever and often overlook the fact that their membership in the society of immortals is unlimited and that mortals must ever contend with their own finitude. As a result, many actions faeries undertake lead to mortal suffering, hardship, and loss—thus ever should people tread with care when traveling through the lands of the fae. In *Trip the Light Fantastic*, the characters become enamored by a charming tune and find themselves caught in dance from which there might not be an escape.

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## THE PLACE BETWEEN

On the border between the mortal world and a faerie kingdom stands the Small Wood. Here, faeries move back and forth between the two worlds, unhindered by the barrier that aims to keep out the enemies of their kind. The faeries lived in peace for a time, but people came from faraway lands and settled the lands around the modest forest. Rather than dig up the stones from the earth, these newcomers turned to the wood. They felled trees and used the timber to construct their homes.

Mortals with blades of reeking metal dare come to the verge of their home? Such an act demands answer. So the faeries emerged to teach these people a lesson. Wild hunters spilled out from the Small Wood, struck the fledgling town, and carried off its people, back beyond the borders between worlds. And the fate of these prisoners? The fell creatures of the Shadow Market pay a good price for mortal flesh.

The faeries emptied the settlement of all its people, leaving a curious ghost town in the middle of nowhere. The faeries see the problem solved and have resumed their revelries. A few, though, recall the lessons of old, when the loss of some mortals drew others. Thus do some faeries prepare their instruments, waiting for the first dancers to arrive, and, when they do, lead them to their ruin.

## GETTING STARTED

Place the Small Wood somewhere in the borderlands wherever the group happens to be after their previous quest. During the last downtime, the characters might have made a supply run for the settlers and return to find the community empty. Or, the characters could happen upon the village after undertaking a minor adventure in the region.

## THE GHOST TOWN

The quest begins when the characters arrive at the edge of an abandoned town. A temple of the Old Gods stands at the center, surrounding by ten huts and two larger buildings made from timber. A stream trickles out of the woods and runs alongside the community.

All signs indicate the people quit the place in a hurry. Washing hangs from the lines, mugs hold tepid beer, flies buzz around food left on plates. Pens and pastures lack the livestock one would expect. Even pets vanished. Characters do spot a few clues, as follows, revealed whenever you choose:

- A bent, partly melted iron horseshoe lays on the ground in front of a home.
- Lots of small footprints dot the ground and lead off toward the woods.
- Icons of the Old Gods in the temple have all been shattered.
- The milk in jugs throughout the town has spoiled.
- Any character with Keen Hearing catches the sound of children's laughter coming from the woods.

## THE SMALL WOOD

A grove covers a roughly circular area about 150 yards across. The trees grow close together, with gaps between the trunks averaging about 1 yard. Any characters who come to within a few yards of the woods can hear sounds of laughter and conversation. Ribbons hang from trees and the sweet smell of honey fills the air.

## THE ATOMIES

The sounds come from a great many atomies at play in the woods. They mind their own business, but notice when the characters come to the grove's edge. Once they notice the intruders, the atomies plot to snatch something of value from them and lead the mortals across the border to a faerie realm.

After a few steps inside the woods, a character can spot the diminutive faeries at play, laughing, point at each other, holding their tiny bellies. Once a character comes to within 5 yards of the atomies, the faeries gather up into 4 **swarms of atomies** and then dive toward the group to snatch items from them before retreating deeper into the woods. Any character who gives chase crosses over from the mortal world to the faerie realm after about 10 yards, seeming to disappear to people who remain in the mortal world. As long as the atomies lure one mortal into their realm, they drop the stolen items and then disperse. Each character that makes the crossing makes a Will roll. On a failure, the character becomes confused (luck ends) from the disorientation caused by the transition.

If the characters attack the atomies and manage to destroy one swarm, the remaining atomies call out for help. Reinforcements arrive in 1d6 – 3 rounds (minimum 1 round), and take the form of 2 additional **swarms of atomies**, a surly **bauchan**, and a talking **bear**. These newcomers see the characters as a significant threat and fight to knock them out. If the characters are defeated, they are whisked away to the Shadow Market, where they are sold to the fiends. Whether or not the group can escape such a predicament is up to you.

## THE LAND OF THE FAERIES

The faerie realm exists outside the boundaries of reality and covers an oval area roughly 60 miles long and 30 miles wide at its widest point. Enormous trees, sized like redwoods, grow everywhere. They have birch bark in which faces sometimes appear. Glowing motes drift in the air, shedding dim light. Sounds of birds, squirrels, distant, muted conversation, and breeze-stirred leaves fill the air.

Leaving the enchanted forest involves a bit more than simply turning around and going back the way one came. If the group goes this way, they emerge from the top of the map. Similarly, if they venture off the map in any direction, they reenter it from the opposite side. Each time the group does this, characters make Will rolls. On a failure, the character becomes confused (luck ends).



The map shows a few important locations where interesting things can happen and places the characters need to go to return to the mortal world. Magic makes traveling through the woods weird; it takes 1d6 hours to reach any location toward which the group travels.

## A. THE STRANGER

A **korrigan** by the name of Myxlix sits on a rock at the spot marked on a map. When the characters first encounter him, he weaves a shirt from spider silk, donated from a friendly **giant spider**. The korrigan has long clumps of bright red hair that stick out from the sides of his head, a large bulbous nose, and no chin, really. He wears a red robe trimmed in yellow.

Myxlix seems friendly and helpful. He explains the characters have entered the Sky Pillars, named for the tall trees that hold up the heavens. He's willing to answer questions, but knows little. If asked for directions about how to leave, Myxlix considers for a moment, thinking how to profit from this situation, and sets for them five tasks, as follows:

- Bring him the Golden Bird, caged by the Great Mean Man (Location C).
- Fetch the mirror from the bottom of Starry Pond (Location E).
- Free Old Man Time from the witch (Location G).
- Pluck a pink flower from the swimming hill (Location H).
- Bring a favor from Ompha, who wanders these woods.

If the group does these things, the korrigan promises to show them the way out of the wood. If the characters attack him, he tries to flee, but, if prevented, turns into a fell beast and fights back.

Myxlix knows how to get back to the mortal world as does every faerie who lives here. However, no one tells the characters how to escape once the group makes the bargain with the korrigan. The method of escape involves turning around three times, widdershins, and speaking aloud the following phrase at the start of each rotation, "By the Weeping Prince's tear, let me out of here!"

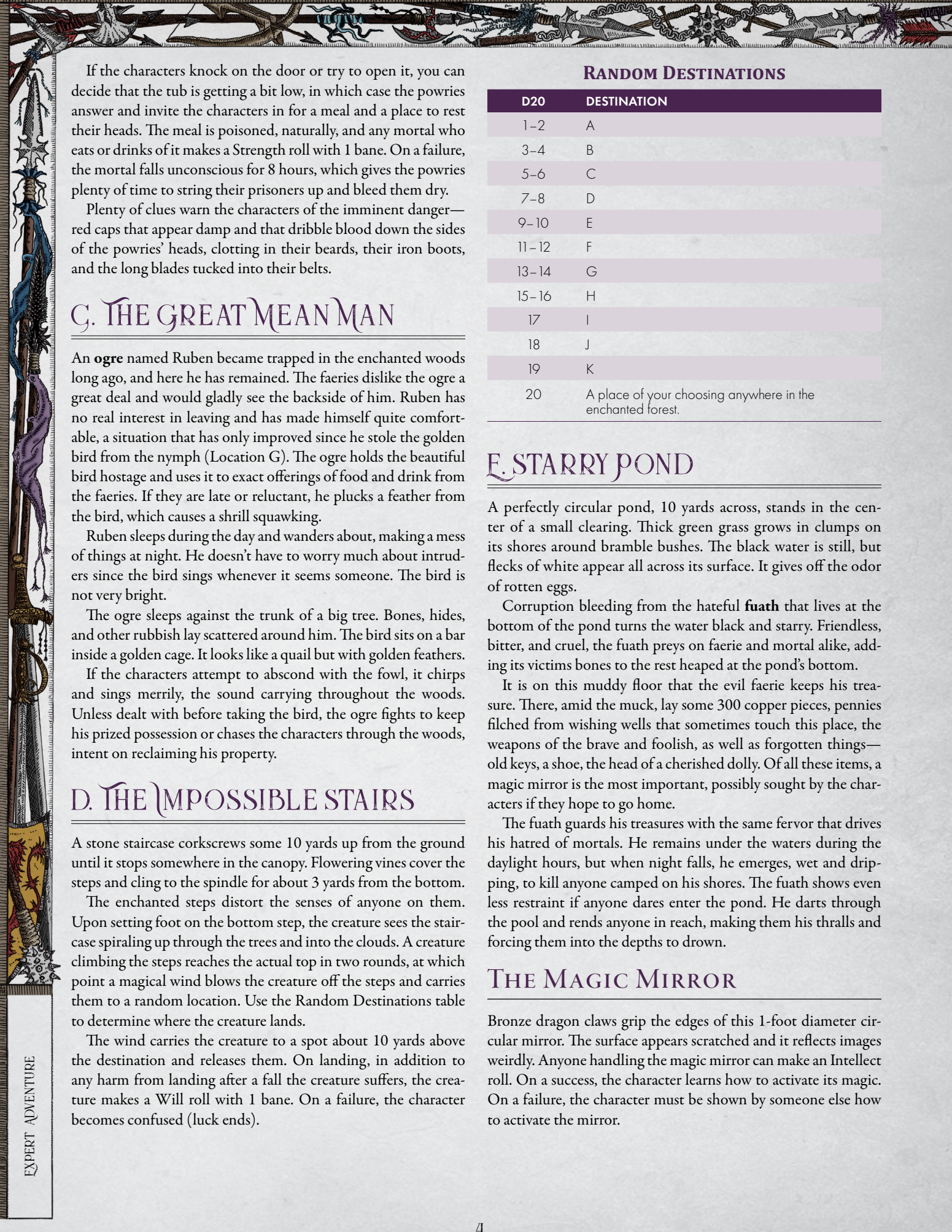
## B. THE DOOR IN THE STONE

A boulder stands in the middle of a small clearing. Moss and lichen compete with each other to cover its surface. At night, a Size 1/2 door appears on the boulder's side and remains there until sunrise.

The boulder belongs to 4 **powries** who live inside the rock, which, thanks to magic, is far more spacious than the outside would suggest. Cursed by a powerful elf, the powries rarely stray far from the tub of blood at the center of their home. They dunk their hats in it to keep them moist.







If the characters knock on the door or try to open it, you can decide that the tub is getting a bit low, in which case the powries answer and invite the characters in for a meal and a place to rest their heads. The meal is poisoned, naturally, and any mortal who eats or drinks of it makes a Strength roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the mortal falls unconscious for 8 hours, which gives the powries plenty of time to string their prisoners up and bleed them dry.

Plenty of clues warn the characters of the imminent danger—red caps that appear damp and that dribble blood down the sides of the powries' heads, clotting in their beards, their iron boots, and the long blades tucked into their belts.

## C. THE GREAT MEAN MAN

An **ogre** named Ruben became trapped in the enchanted woods long ago, and here he has remained. The faeries dislike the ogre a great deal and would gladly see the backside of him. Ruben has no real interest in leaving and has made himself quite comfortable, a situation that has only improved since he stole the golden bird from the nymph (Location G). The ogre holds the beautiful bird hostage and uses it to exact offerings of food and drink from the faeries. If they are late or reluctant, he plucks a feather from the bird, which causes a shrill squawking.

Ruben sleeps during the day and wanders about, making a mess of things at night. He doesn't have to worry much about intruders since the bird sings whenever it seems someone. The bird is not very bright.

The ogre sleeps against the trunk of a big tree. Bones, hides, and other rubbish lay scattered around him. The bird sits on a bar inside a golden cage. It looks like a quail but with golden feathers.

If the characters attempt to abscond with the fowl, it chirps and sings merrily, the sound carrying throughout the woods. Unless dealt with before taking the bird, the ogre fights to keep his prized possession or chases the characters through the woods, intent on reclaiming his property.

## D. THE IMPOSSIBLE STAIRS

A stone staircase corkscrews some 10 yards up from the ground until it stops somewhere in the canopy. Flowering vines cover the steps and cling to the spindle for about 3 yards from the bottom.

The enchanted steps distort the senses of anyone on them. Upon setting foot on the bottom step, the creature sees the staircase spiraling up through the trees and into the clouds. A creature climbing the steps reaches the actual top in two rounds, at which point a magical wind blows the creature off the steps and carries them to a random location. Use the Random Destinations table to determine where the creature lands.

The wind carries the creature to a spot about 10 yards above the destination and releases them. On landing, in addition to any harm from landing after a fall the creature suffers, the creature makes a Will roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the character becomes confused (luck ends).

### RANDOM DESTINATIONS

D20	DESTINATION
1–2	A
3–4	B
5–6	C
7–8	D
9–10	E
11–12	F
13–14	G
15–16	H
17	I
18	J
19	K
20	A place of your choosing anywhere in the enchanted forest.

## E. STARRY POND

A perfectly circular pond, 10 yards across, stands in the center of a small clearing. Thick green grass grows in clumps on its shores around bramble bushes. The black water is still, but flecks of white appear all across its surface. It gives off the odor of rotten eggs.

Corruption bleeding from the hateful **fuath** that lives at the bottom of the pond turns the water black and starry. Friendless, bitter, and cruel, the fuath preys on faerie and mortal alike, adding its victims bones to the rest heaped at the pond's bottom.

It is on this muddy floor that the evil faerie keeps his treasure. There, amid the muck, lay some 300 copper pieces, pennies filched from wishing wells that sometimes touch this place, the weapons of the brave and foolish, as well as forgotten things—old keys, a shoe, the head of a cherished dolly. Of all these items, a magic mirror is the most important, possibly sought by the characters if they hope to go home.

The fuath guards his treasures with the same fervor that drives his hatred of mortals. He remains under the waters during the daylight hours, but when night falls, he emerges, wet and dripping, to kill anyone camped on his shores. The fuath shows even less restraint if anyone dares enter the pond. He darts through the pool and rends anyone in reach, making them his thralls and forcing them into the depths to drown.

## THE MAGIC MIRROR

Bronze dragon claws grip the edges of this 1-foot diameter circular mirror. The surface appears scratched and it reflects images weirdly. Anyone handling the magic mirror can make an Intellect roll. On a success, the character learns how to activate its magic. On a failure, the character must be shown by someone else how to activate the mirror.



A character holding the mirror can cut themselves on one of the claws, losing 1 Health as a result. On doing so, the character chooses a spot within 100 yards, which causes the reflective surface in the mirror to fade and create a portal to the chosen spot. Anything able to pass through the mirror emerges from the spot. A character reaching through the mirror can grasp anything in reach of the target spot. At the end of each round the portal remains open, make a luck roll. On a failure, the portal closes, severing anything reaching through it, and the magic loses its power for 24 hours.

## F. CAMP OF THE WILD HUNTERS

Several elves live in this enchanted wood. No friends to mortals, they prowl the lands in search of intruders. When found, the wild hunters capture and drag them to the Shadow Market.

Here the wild hunters make their camp, sleeping in hammocks suspended from the tree's lower branches. The faeries sleep during the day and hunt at night. If the group comes to this place during the night, make a luck roll. On a success, the place is empty. On a failure, 1d6 of the 10 **wild hunters** are present.

If the group has lost any members, you can have a replacement character be the wild hunters' prisoner, held in a cramped, wooden cage. The elves keep the character's equipment in a bag hung on a broken branch.

Unfriendly, hostile even, to mortals, especially humans, the wild hunters attack if disturbed. Note that they have Keen Vision and Keen Hearing. Characters attempting to sneak up on the elves make their rolls with 2 banes.

Wild hunter prisoners talk freely about anything the characters want to know. Death for faeries means oblivion and the hunters are in no hurry to meet this fate. If asked about how to escape this place, a captured wild hunter tells them (though not if the group made a bargain). And if released, the wild hunter shows gratitude by leading a large force of wild hunters, perhaps in the company of a fey knight or two, to ambush the group at some point in the future.

For more information on the Wild Hunters, see below.

## G. THE WITCH'S HOLE

Anastasia cherished her golden bird above all her other companions, for it sang the sweetest song and greeted her whenever she returned. The loss of this wondrous creature sent her spiraling into such intense grief that she has become a **hag**.

She lives in a cave underneath the stump of an old, lightning-struck tree, and there plots vengeance against all good and true things in the forest. When not stewing on her misfortune, she uses her magic to lure mortals into her clutches and torment them until they succumb to their wounds or their minds break.

The hag's malevolence killed all the grass around the tree stump, and even the trees growing nearby seem to stretch away from the entrance. The cave is small, cramped, and filthy. Bones cover the floor and rags serve as bedding.

Out front, a **carnivorous tree** watches over the hag's current plaything, an aged, broken **knight** (half normal Health) chained to a large rock. He's dying of thirst and hunger. The tree attacks the group if they try to free the knight. If they defeat the tree and rescue the knight, he becomes a loyal follower of his rescuers, serving until the end of their next quest. However, his suffering has taxed his mind such that when a combat begins, make a luck roll. On a failure, the knight becomes stunned (luck ends), gibbering and acting in a strange manner until the fit passes.

## DEALING WITH THE HAG

The hag spends her time inside the cave, muttering and cursing, or roaming the woods around her cave, calling for her bird. If the characters spot the hag at a distance, she notices them and uses Comely Form to turn them into her allies.

The hag sees in the characters an opportunity to regain the stolen bird. She presses them about information they might have regarding her feathered friend. If the characters have the bird from the ogre and offer it to the hag, she becomes friendly to the characters and offers them a gift. If they don't have the bird, but suggest they might know where to find it, she vows to give them a gift if they bring it to her.

Gifts the hag can offer include a way back to the mortal world—using the method described above, the old man's freedom, or 50 gp worth of treasure.

Attacking the hag almost certainly produces disastrous results and could very well bring the quest to an end if the characters stand and fight. The hag does not pursue fleeing characters, preferring instead to return to her plotting.

## H. THE SWIMMING HILL

Water floods an irregularly shaped depression 100 yards at its widest, but is generally 40 yards across. Hillocks push up from the algae-choked waters and beneath the scum skin, the murk creates heavy obscurity throughout. In the waters float dead things, the skeletal remains of hunters, charcoal burners, and other woods folk. If the characters linger in this area for more than an hour, 2d6 **medium animated skeletons** crawl out of the waters and attack.

The characters likely come here to fetch a pink flower from the back of the "swimming hill." Grass and wildflowers cover the mounds where they break the water, but none appear to swim. Characters watching the marsh can make luck rolls. The one with the highest result sees one hillock move a few feet. This mound is 3d6 yards away from the characters. If they approach it, the hill rises up to reveal itself as a **bog beast**.

A dozen magical flowers, all pink, grow in the slime covering the beast's back. A flesh and blood creature can consume a flower and gain its choice of the following benefits: heal 2d6 damage or regain 1d6 Health. A creature can benefit from just one flower per 24 hours.



## I. WISHING WELL

A simple stone well stands in the middle of a clearing. The blocks forming the lip rise about 3 feet and form a ring. Moss grows on the sides and orange fuzzy caterpillars crawl all over the surface. The insects turn to watch the character nearest to them.

The first character to toss a coin into the well gains a blessing that lasts 24 hours. While blessed in this way, the character makes attribute rolls and luck rolls with 1 boon. Once the well grants this blessing, it loses this power for 24 hours.

The well's mouth is about 3 yards across, and a wall of stone blocks surrounds the hole, which drops down to the still water 3 yards below ground level. A creature can make a Strength roll to climb the well's wall. A success indicates the creature climbs to the bottom or out again. A search of the well's bottom reveals 33 sp and 66 cp. However, if even a single coin is taken from the well, the creature becomes cursed until some effect ends it or the creature replaces the coin and offers 1 gold piece in amends. While cursed, the creature makes a Will roll every 24 hours. On a failure, all coins within 5 yards of the creature turn into worthless wooden tokens.

## J. CAPTIVES

A dozen captives (**peasants**) from the nearby town sit inside crude wooden cages assembled by the wild hunters. These prisoners await transport to the Shadow Market where they can expect to find a terrible fate. The captives remain in these cages with access to meager supplies of food and water for 24 hours after the characters arrive. After this time, they are carried off.

The wild hunters enlisted 2 **boggarts** to watch over the prisoners. The boggarts hide in a nearby cave, where they feed on one of the prisoners. This poor person's screams carry for about a mile before going silent.

There are two prisoners to each cage. A beetle, specially bred to act as a lock, holds the doors shut. The beetle has Defense 20 and Health 5. A drop of blood offered to a beetle causes it to release its hold on the doors.

The six cages form a crescent around the smoldering remains of a cook fire. Large trees stand all around. The boggart's cave can be found about 10 yards away.

## K. SWORD IN A STONE

A bronze-colored sword sticks out from a rock in the center of this small clearing. Sunlight falls on the sword during the day, while moonlight shines on it at night. The blade has a wavy edge, its grip wrapped in wood carved to look like an eagle's claw. A bronze crossbar extends out to either side of the handle.

The sword once belonged to a powerful elf knight poisoned and murdered by goblins at this very spot. To prevent the goblins from taking his most prized possession, the Orichalcum Blade, a magical weapon that was forged at the dawn of creation, he plunged the blade into the rock and cursed it to remain there until drawn from the stone by someone worthy. The rock into which the sword has been wedge is impervious to damage.

A character can attempt to pull the sword free from the rock by making a Will roll with 1 bane and getting a result of 20 or higher. If the character has killed a goblin within the last year, the character rolls with 1 boon instead of 1 bane. On a failure, the character is found unworthy and the sword will never come free for them.

## TRANSFORMATIONS

D20	EFFECT
1	The character has the ears and tail of an ass.
2	The character's head transforms until it resembles that of a tortoise.
3	The character's body inflates until they become quite round. Such a character cannot squeeze through openings smaller than its size.
4	The character's eyes widen to saucers. The character gains Keen Vision, but is weakened while in bright light.
5	The character's ears become enormous. The character gains Keen Hearing, but takes 1d6 damage whenever they become deafened.
6	Fine fur grows all over the character's body.
7	A pair of vestigial wings unfold from the character's back. The wings grant no special ability to fly, but the character does lose half as much Health when landing after a fall.
8	Woody growths that look like bark appear all over the character's body. The character takes an extra 1d6 damage whenever they take damage from fire.
9	The character gives off a strong, musky odor.
10	The character shakes uncontrollably, becoming Agility-impaired.

D20	EFFECT
11	The character gains the eyes, whiskers, ears, and tail of a cat.
12	The character transforms into a talking bear and uses its rules in place of their own.
13	The character becomes drowsy. Whenever the character becomes injured, the character falls prone and becomes unconscious until no longer injured.
14	The character appears two-dimensional. When viewed from the side, the character is invisible.
15	The character's legs grow to an enormous length. The character's size increases by 1 (round down to the nearest whole number).
16	The character turns a bright shade of blue.
17	Horns sprout from the character's head. Each time the character knowingly tells a lie, the horns grow a bit longer. If the character tells three lies, they become slowed. If they tell six lies, they can move only by crawling.
18	The character's voice becomes high-pitched and grating. Anything the character says, even at a whisper, carries as if it was shouted.
19	The character experiences dizziness and nausea. The character is Intellect-impaired and Will-impaired.
20	The character emits bright light.



The weapon bonds with whoever drew it from the stone. If the bonded character is alive, anyone else carrying or wielding the weapon is cursed until it leaves their possession. The weapon grants 1 boon on rolls to attack with it or 2 boons against goblins, attacks with it deal an extra 1d6 damage, and attacks against objects always deal the maximum damage. Finally, the weapon emits dim blue light whenever within 50 yards of a goblin.

## OTHER EVENTS

The following events can occur at any time or under particular conditions as noted in their descriptions.

### FORAGING

The woods offer plenty of edible roots, nuts, and berries to eat. A character makes a luck roll whenever they eat or drink anything from this place. On a failure, the character becomes cursed for as long as they remain here. Until the affliction ends, the character's body transforms. Roll a d20 and consult the following table.

### HUNTING

Squirrels, rabbits, birds, deer, and more live in this land, and behave in a manner similar to those found in the mortal world. However, all these animals can talk and speak in a manner and with knowledge appropriate to their kind.

If even one character kills an animal here, the entire group gains the enmity of the realm. All animals here become hostile to the characters and might attack if they believe they have a reasonable chance to do so and survive. All forage and water become poisonous such that a character ingesting the substance loses 1d6 Health and becomes poisoned (luck ends).

### WILD HUNTERS

A band of 10 **wild hunters** prowl the woods. They despise humans and attack on sight to capture rather than kill. The hunters smear the tips of their spears and arrows with a toxin. Any creature of flesh and blood that takes damage from these poisoned weapons makes a Strength roll. On a failure, the creature falls prone and becomes unconscious for 1d6 hours. If the creature takes damage or loses Health, the unconsciousness ends. The wild hunters drag prisoners off to the cages at their camp.

## OMPHA

A talking **bear** named Ompha roams the enchanted wood and, generally, minds his own business. He eats fish, honey, and roots, but cannot bring himself eat the flesh of a person and he considers all the beasts of the air and fields and forests as people. The bear is on friendly terms with almost everyone in the wood, though he dislikes the wild hunters. The characters can encounter him whenever you choose, as they need to earn his favor if they would find their way free with the korrigan's aid.

If the characters attack the bear, he fights with all the fury of his kind and, likely, attracts aid in the form of swooping birds, aggressive deer, wolves, and other creatures of the forest who come to aid him. Ompha never forgives people who attack him and thus no favor from him is possible.

If, though, the characters treat the bear kindly and offer him honey, fruit, nuts, and bread, he befriends them and helps them during the rest of their time in the enchanted wood.

## CONCLUSION

The quest ends when the characters win their way free from the enchanted wood, which remains there and might be reentered in future quests. If the characters fought the wild hunters and left any alive, these elves become the group's bitter enemies and they speak ill of them throughout the lands of the fey folk. Such slander could result in a fey knight challenging the characters or the characters gaining the enmity of a highborn elf, who might decide to teach these mortals a lesson by harrying them with magic, leading them into danger, or manipulating circumstances against them to make their quests even more dangerous.

