

Gorgon Breath A dventure

Lost in the Forest of Gloom



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Lost in the Forest of Gloom

A FANTASY RPG ADVENTURE FOR 4TH LEVEL CHARACTERS

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Introduction

Lost in the Forest of Gloom is a short adventure for four level 4 characters.

The PCs, following the directions of the town drunk, will search a nearby forest for a lost hoard that may or may not be guarded by dark forces.

This adventure can be easily inserted into any medieval fantasy setting.

Adventure Start

While stopping in a village, the player party witnesses a drunk man named Bunder being thrown out of the local inn. Cursing the village for fools, he'll tell the PCs a story if they try to talk to him.

Bunder will tell them that he used to be part of a "slightly illegal wealth sharing" group that operated out of a cave in a nearby forest. Members of the group started dying, however, without explanation. After seeing what looked like a "moving darkness" in the grove near the cave, Bunder decided to flee. He never heard from the other bandits again, and suspects they're all dead. He should especially sad when relating this to the PCs. He was in a relationship with one another bandit, Garald, and couldn't convince him to leave.

If the PCs ask about the location of the forest/cave, the GM can have Bunder direct them to a convenient location near whatever village they're currently in. If they ask other

locals about Bunder's tales, the villagers should warn the PCs to stay out of those woods. "I don't know for sure if everything he says is true, but people go in there and don't come back."

(2) The Mysterious Forest

When the player party approaches the forest, the GM can read the following:

An eerie quiet takes hold as you near the edge of the woods. While you can hear signs of life, a sense of tension hangs in the air. It leaves you ill at ease.

After the PCs enter the Mysterious Forest, the GM should have them perform a **Survival** roll to reach the dark grove described by Bunder. They need to perform three successful Survival rolls to successfully navigate their way to the forest's center. Any roll of **10 or higher** will count as a success.

When they succeed at a roll, the GM can tell them they're proceeding deeper into the forest. The deeper they go, the darker and eerier the woods become. Animal life seems to thin out and the air takes on a tinge of decay. After they roll three success, the GM can proceed to **(2) The Dark Grove**.

If they fail a Survival roll, the GM should roll a D6 encounter die. Depending on the result, one of the following things might happen:

1. The PCs get lost in the woods, but nothing happens. They wander aimlessly for an hour.
2. Read result 1.
3. The PCs stumble into a patch of thick thorn bushes. Everyone suffers 1d4 damage as they make their way through. Everyone must also perform a Strength DC. If they roll below an 8, they get stuck in thorns and suffer an additional 1d4 freeing themselves.
4. The PCs encounter a Dire Wolverine. (p.6)
5. The PCs encounter a pair of Brown Bears. (MM p.319)
6. The PCs encounter a pair of Giant Spiders. (MM p.328)

If the PCs encounter two monsters in a row, they earn an automatic Survival success and may move deeper into the forest. With the exception of result 1, the GM should not repeat any of these encounters. If they roll the same twice in a row, they should reroll until they land on one they haven't used yet.

In the unlikely case that the PCs fail so consistently at their Survival rolls that they use up all of the encounters, the GM should let them advance immediately to **(2) The Dark Grove**.

(2) The Dark Grove

When the PCs reach the Dark Grove, the GM should read the following:

As you venture into the forest, the canopy of the trees above you grows so thick that all but the faintest slivers of the sky are blocked from view. All around you the forest falls under a gloom of thick shadow. You get the feeling it'd be dark here even on a bright, sunny day.

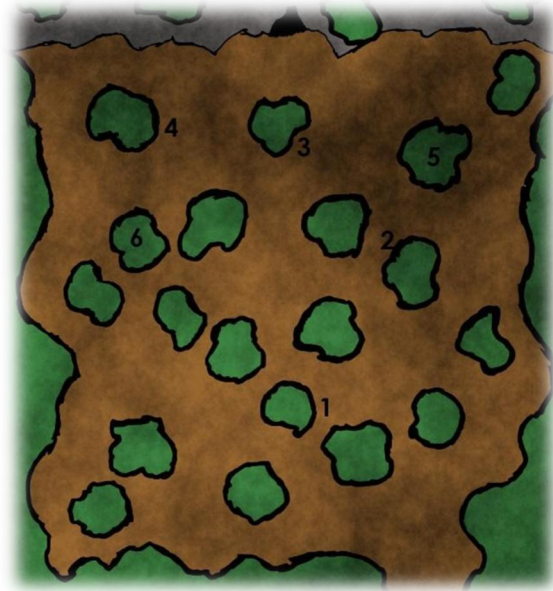
The Dark Grove is a shadowy part of the forest where most of the light is blocked out by the interwoven branches of tall, ancient trees. The largest trees here rise more than 100 feet above the PCs. Even the smaller ones are impressively large.

At the northern edge of the area is a small cliff face, at the base of which is the opening to **(3) The Bandit's Cave**.

If the PCs don't just head straight to the Bandit's Cave and opt to explore the area, they'll find dead human bodies at positions 1, 2, 3, and 4. All save the one at position 4, are completely desiccated and holding nothing of value. The body at position 4, however, is fresher and looks to have only been there for a few weeks. The body has a short sword, a potion of Cure Minor Wounds, and a coin purse containing 83 gold pieces.

Even if the PCs find the four bodies, they might not suspect that there's any actual danger currently lurking

in the Dark Grove. They'd be wrong, of course.



Standing near two trees (position 5 and 6) are a pair of Grooms (p.6). Their Sphere of Darkness ability will create two sixty-foot domes of impenetrable darkness. From a distance, the PCs shouldn't notice much. If they draw closer to the Grooms, however, the GM can ask the PCs to perform a Perception check. If they roll of 12 or higher, they'll notice the difference in lighting.

If they enter one of the Gloom's Spheres of Darkness domes, any active light source they're using, natural or magic, will be extinguished and cannot be relit until they move away from the Gloom. If they perform another Perception check inside the affected area, a result of 15 will allow them to see the dark shape of the Gloom's body at its center.

If this happens, both Grooms will immediately use their aptitude at stealth to flee the Dark Grove. Neither of them are interested in a confrontation just yet. If the PCs manage to force a confrontation, they'll immediately be reinforced by six more Grooms who will enter from the edges of the area and surround the PCs.

(3) The Bandit's Cave

When the PCs enter the Bandit's Cave, they'll initially find themselves in a long, narrow, and winding tunnel. While there are a few short branching pathways, everything eventually leads to a larger chamber where the party will uncover the remnants of the bandits that once lived here. The GM can read the following:

You enter a large chamber filled with rough furnishings. A few simple shelves are pressed against one of the walls. They're filled with foodstuffs so overgrown with mold that they're unrecognizable.

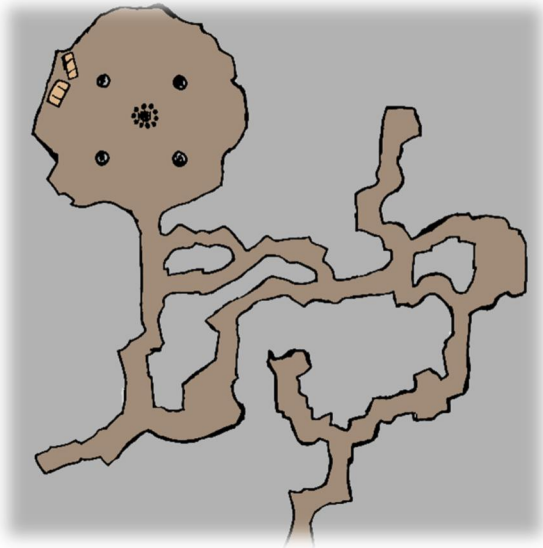
A cold firepit sits at the chamber's center and the area is dotted by rusted braziers.

Scattered around the chamber are skeletons garbed in moldering patchwork armor. Most are lying on dusty bedrolls, as if they died in their sleep.

One is slumped against the chamber's north-most wall. Its gnarled fingers are wrapped loosely around the hilt of a tarnished sword.

This chamber was once home to a group of bandits who robbed

travelers on the nearby road. While it's not immediately clear what happened to them, they're clearly all dead.



If the PCs search the room they'll find little of use on the dead themselves, just some rusted weapons. The only one that has anything of value is the skeleton leaning against the wall in the northern part of the chamber. Gripped in its left hand is a small bundle of papers that provide a brief journal of the bandit's time here.

This journal details how the area is infested with Gloom and how they eventually started preying on the bandits living in the cave. The contents of the journal can be found on page 5.

In the northeastern corner of the chamber, the PCs will find a pair of large, locked chests. The key is nowhere to be found, but the lock can be picked with a Lockpicking DC of 10. The padlocks holding them

can also be broken off with a crowbar or weapon and a Strength DC of 12.

Chest 1: 800 GP, 1,500 SP, 20 PP, Bracers of Defense

Chest 2: 1,200 GP, 2,500 SP, Gems (Value 500 GP), Gem of Brightness

As soon as the PCs decide to leave this chamber and exit the Bandit's Cave the GM should read the following:

A chill fills the air and shadow fills the chamber. Your eyes are drawn to the tunnel leading out, but all you see is blackness.

The Gloom that inhabit this area have decided to take advantage of the player party's presence for a quick meal. Two Gloom will enter the chamber with the PCs and attempt to stealth their way into attack range. Given the darkness and the Gloom's natural stealth advantages, it may be difficult for the PCs to detect them before they're able to attack.

Four more Gloom are waiting in the tunnel leading into the chamber and can be positioned wherever the GM feels they'll be most effective. There will also be four Gloom waiting for the PCs when they return outside to the Dark Grove.

If the PCs can defeat or escape the Gloom, they'll be able to escape the forest safely. The GM can then award each player with 400 XP.

Bandit's Journal Entry #1

I'm not so sure about setting up so deep in the woods like this. Seems like a bleeding waste of time and effort. Hells, it took a few hours just to find our way back out to the road this morning. Jessep's convinced, though. Says that no one would think we'd set up camp somewhere so inconvenient. There's a stupid kind of logic to it, I guess.

Bandit's Journal Entry #2

I'm downright sick of this dank cave, and the dank damn woods all around them. Near twisted my foot on a fallen branch the other day. The sooner we're done here, the better.

Much as I hate it here, though, I've got to give Jessep credit. He was right. We've been here for months and no one's come looking for us. We've seen the locals out scouting for us and even seen a few of them coming into the woods. None of them come deeper than the edges, though

Bandit's Journal Entry #3

We lost one of our boys today. Damned fool stumbled into a spider's web and wound up as its breakfast. We heard them screaming, but didn't get their fast enough to do much more than kill the spider and cut him down.

We've been really careful up until now. Only leaving the cave or

venturing out into the woods in groups. Lad must have just gotten sick of it, though. I can't say I blame him.

Just a few more months of this place and we'll all be set for years.

Bandit's Journal Entry #3

Two more of us died today. Funny thing is, we can't figure out why. They went out to drain their piss and when they didn't come back we went to check on them. Both of them were just laying on the ground, blue as death without a scratch on them. Jessep told everyone to start pissing in the cave.

Bandit's Journal Entry #4

People have get antsy after the last two died. Bunder especially. He keeps talking about and shadows. He says he woke up and swore he saw a shape gliding across the floor of the cave, just looking everyone over. I think Bunder needs to lay off the drink.

Bandit's Journal Entry #5

Bunder's left. No one saw him go, but he slipped out last night. He didn't even bring Garald with him, and I thought they were tight. I would call him a fool, but I'm not sure anymore. I was on patrol this morning and I saw something... Something I can't explain. I didn't bring it up to Jessep, he'd just think I was mad. But I'll be sleeping with my sword in my hand tonight.

GLOOM

Medium, Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 8 (natural armor)

Hit Points 3 (1d6-1)

Speed 20 ft.

STR 8 (-1) **DEX** 10(+0) **CON** 8 (-1) **INT** 6 (-2) **WIS** 14 (+2) **CHA** 8 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities divine

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Midnight Stealth. In nighttime conditions or areas of darkness, the Gloom blends in almost perfectly and receives a +8 bonus to Stealth actions.

Sphere of Darkness. A sphere of total darkness surrounds the creature. While walls and natural barriers can block it, it will extend outward up to 60 feet in an area without obstruction. Any light source that enters the affected area will be completely extinguished until the PC leaves or the creature is destroyed.

PCs entering a Sphere of Darkness will not automatically see the creature creating it. A Perception DC of 15 or higher will allow them to see the Gloom's body at the center of the sphere; a shape darker than the shadow surrounding it. Every time it moves locations, the PCs may make another Perception DC.

Light derived from Divine magic can be sustained within the Sphere of Darkness if the caster succeeds in a concentration DC of 12.

Actions

Squeeze Heart. *Melee Weapon Attack.* *Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Necrotic damage.

The Gloom reaches through its target's armor and chest to squeeze their heart. This attack ignores the target's AC. The Gloom only has to succeed in an attack roll of 10 or higher. If that happens, the GM can roll a D6 and use the chart below to calculate damage.

Dice Result	Damage
1	2d4
2	2d6
3	2d6
4	2d8
5	2d10
6	2d12

DIRE WOLVERINE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (5d10 + 15)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 18(+4) **DEX** 10(+0) **CON** 16(+3) **INT** 8(-1) **WIS** 14(+2) **CHA** 6(-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages -

Proficiency Bonus +2

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Underdog Muscle. The Dire Wolverine gains Advantage when entering a Strength contest with a PC or creature with a higher Strength score.

Scrapper's Fortitude. If the Dire Wolverine is struck by an attack that drops its HP below 0, it doesn't die. Its HP instead only drops to 1. It may only do this once per day and will be killed if it again takes damage without healing.

Actions

Multiattack. The Dire Wolverine can make two attacks per round.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 +4) slashing damage.

Grappling Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, the GM should request competing Strength DCs. If the target loses, it's grappled (escape DC 12). The Dire Wolverine may continue biting the restrained PC until the grappled ends.

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