



BLACKBRIARS



An adventure of horror and arboreal
menace for characters of 5th level

BY OLIVER CLEGG



BLACKBRIARS

“But she hadn’t been able to take root. She’d remembered the wrong things, and forgotten too much. She’d remembered how to kill and how to hate, and she’d forgotten how to grow.”

— Naomi Novik, *Uprooted*

Blackbriars is a Ravenloft adventure for characters of 5th level

Story Overview

Adventurers from a distant land find themselves swept away from the path to the gloomy village of Wayston. Soon it becomes clear that all is not as it seems, and the adventurers are swept up in a fight against a nightmarish forest that (if it remains unchecked) threatens to devour everything.

- **Prologue:** Seeds Bloom In Spring
- **Part One:** Summer Days Dying
- **Part Two:** Falling Like Autumn Leaves
- **Epilogue:** Winter’s Discontent

PROLOGUE: SEEDS BLOOM IN SPRING

Yet, no matter how deeply I go down into myself, my God is dark, and like a webbing made of a hundred roots that drink in silence.

- Rainer Maria Rilke

Overview

Blackbriars is a Ravenloft adventure in which a party of adventurers are born away from the path and deposited in the small woodside village of Wayston. They do not have to investigate long before they realise something is awry. The wood surrounding the village is alive, and it has woken from a long slumber to prey on the poor villagers.

Blackbriars is a Horror Survival adventure. Wayston is a bleak and doomed locale. As time passes, more and more of the town fall victim to the evil that inhabits the woods, until the characters themselves either take the fight to the trees or meet a similar fate.

Marks of Horror

Blackbriars uses several tropes to achieve the desired feel. They should be used liberally whenever appropriate to paint the blighted neighbourhood surrounding Blackbriars with the right levels of dread anticipation.

The Hills Have Eyes. The Blackbriars Wood has a malign sentience, and the trees are constantly watching their prey from a distance. This should manifest as a constant sense of unease.

And Then There Were None. The Blackbriars Wood chooses who it eats carefully. Slowly, the villagers all vanish to its cavernous maws, and the characters are left to themselves, to choose whether to enter the woods or be picked off one by one.

Alterations to Magic

Wayston resides in its own Demiplane, isolated from all others. No spell, not even a Wish spell, allows one to escape. Astral Projection, Teleport and all similar spells cast with the intent of leaving Wayston simply fail, as do all effects that Banish a creature to another plane of existence. These restrictions apply to magic items and artifacts. Magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal is the exception to this rule. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from the Wayston is pulled back into Wayston upon leaving that plane.

For the purposes of spells whose effects change across planar boundaries, Wayston is considered its own plane. Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes functions normally in Wayston, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such a space are subject to the same restrictions as in the rest of Wayston.

Whilst in Wayston, characters who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so. Spells that allow contact with beings from other planes receive nothing but a grim silence.

All Paths Lead To Death: No spell or ability allows a character to reliably navigate the woods surrounding Wayston.

Mists of Ravenloft

A deadly fog surrounds the Blackbriars Wood and engulfs any creature that travels more than an hour away from Wayston in any direction. Even flying creatures are subject to the fog's effects, which are as follows:

A creature that starts its turn in the fog must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion (see appendix A in the Player's Handbook). This exhaustion can't be removed while the creature is in the fog.

No matter how far a creature travels in the fog, or in which direction it goes, it gets turned around so that it eventually finds itself back in Wayston.

The area within the fog is heavily obscured (see "Vision and Light" in chapter 8 of the Player's Handbook).

ADVENTURE HOOKS

In the events that begin this adventure, the characters are snatched away by the mists of Ravenloft and placed in Wayston to unknown ends. There are many ways to effect this, but the most conventional is a variation on the Creeping Fog.

CREEPING FOG

You are traveling down a lonely road, tired from the day's exertions. Mist is creeping across the path, which is becoming littered with brambles and weeds. Your vision becomes blurry, then completely obscured.

When the fog recedes, proceed to "Approaching the Town" in Part One: Wayston.



PART ONE:

SUMMER DAYS DYING

*“I never see that prettiest thing-
A cherry bough gone white with Spring-
But what I think, “How gay ‘twould be
To hang me from a flowering tree.”*

— Dorothy Parker

Lay of the Land

Wayston is a small town surrounded by a thick, dark wood shrouded in mist. Until very recently, a path wended through the wood to Wayston, but it vanished overnight a few weeks before the adventure begins. The village itself is a collection of wood and stone houses.

Population: 600

Government: Lord Blackfeather (usually not a resident) rules the village in name, but his wife (Lady Blackwood) has taken over during his illness.

Defense: Lord Blackwood once had a guard, but they never returned from investigating the wood.

Commerce: Basic supplies are readily available at first, but soon run out. The village has enough fresh food to keep the town

Organizations: The Wayshrine, which contains small shrines to the woodland spirits. It is overseen by the elf Leora Moonshadow.

Wayston’s Past

Wayston was founded on top of an old druid circle of standing stones, which was torn down for the construction process. To appease the gods, the foundations of the town were built to mimic the stones, and angry nature spirits were thus laid to rest. Nevertheless, the town occasionally suffers from bouts of violent and unusual weather from time to time.

Soon after the town was constructed, it became apparent that the circle of stones was clearly very important to some long dead spirits of the Blackbriar wood. The insult was met with fury from the wood, which rose up to assault the town in large numbers. Only by the intervention of Saint Lucia, and the creation of the Mourning Lantern was the town saved. The lantern sat at the centre of the village, protecting the town from assault by the wood, and keeping the trees asleep with its silent lullaby for over 200 years ago. A week ago, the lantern was stolen.



APPROACHING THE TOWN

When the characters first approach Wayston, read:

The fog clears, and you find yourselves in an unwelcoming wood. Branches twisted like claws seem to catch on your clothes, as if to pull you towards them. Dark and hideous trunks stare down from on high.

Through the trees, you can see houses made of wood and stone. Dark windows of dim glass show candlelight glimmering in the half-light, offering you the reprieve of civilization.

HOUSE OCCUPANTS

If the characters explore a residence, roll a d20 and consult the following table to determine the house's occupant.

d20	Occupant
1-3	Empty House
4-5	Wayston Citizens
6-18	Abandoned House
19-20	Blights

WAYSTON CITIZENS

A house of Wayston Citizens contains 1d4 adults (LG male and female human **commoners**) and 1d4-1 children (male and female non-combatants). The citizens are fearful and weary. They warn the characters not to stray into the wood, and lament their inability to leave.

ABANDONED HOUSE

This house is furnished only with the rudiments necessary to eke out a miserable existence. There is a 50% chance when entering an abandoned house that the place is trashed, as if by violence.

BLIGHTS

Entering a house like this causes the characters to encounter 1d4 **twig blights** and 1 **vine blight** kidnapping 1d4 **commoners** from their house. The commoners are traumatized if rescued, and doomed if not.

WAYSTON LORE

Wayston's citizens know the following bits of local lore:

- The wood is eating people, to take revenge on the ancestors of Wayston who built the town on sacred ground.
- The trees are afraid of fire...just not as much as you would hope.
- The wood ate the path days ago, and now no-one can get away from the village.
- The wood was once kept at bay by a relic at the Wayshrine. Perhaps something happened to it?
- The wood rarely kills people in the village, instead they are taken one night and never seen again.
- The wood creatures are like humans, but cruel and made vines or brambles.
- If the wood gets very angry, it sends in huge animated trees to smash houses.
- The Lady Blackwood is supposed to be a great sorceress, but she's been inconsolable since her husband became unwell.
- Leora Moonshadow is an elf who has worked at the Wayshrine for as long as anyone can remember.
- Thessaly, an old woman who lives alone, is a witch who eats children.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET

d8	People on the Street (Wayston)
1	Renata, an young woman who is leaving her baby out by the edge of the wood. "It's quicker this way," she says, through her tears.
2	Tomas, a woodcutter who is breaking his axe over his knee. "Maybe the wood will forgive us," he says.
3	Hilda, a young girl who woke up this morning to find her parents gone.
4	Agatha, an old woman who seems at peace with events. "I have lived a long life," she says. "I have no regrets."
5	Jarek, a young man holding a torch. He means to head into the woods and kill the source of the evil...whatever it is.
6	Otto, a young apprentice wizard . He's sitting, watching the wood. "I know they'll come for me," he says. "I've seen it in my dreams."
7	Ettie, a middle aged woman with three children, reading a book to them on the porch. "Life goes on," she says.
8	A skeletal figure in a thick, hooded robe, stroking a cat. It doesn't speak.



AREAS OF WAYSTON

The following areas correspond to the markings on the map above:

A - Summerhawk Residence

Elias and Rowena Summerhawk are a local couple with four children - Gitta (4), Evelina (7), Donia (13) and Anya (16). It's no secret that Rowena always wanted a boy, but so far the world has not seen fit to grant her request. During the day, Elias worked as a woodcutter and Rowena takes care of the children (though rumour has it she was once a lady of some renown out in the big city). Anya, the oldest child, secretly desired to become an adventurer, and recently vanished in the night. Elias is beside himself with grief and anger at failing to protect her. He's looking for someone to blame.

B - The Wayshrine

A small, rather depressed looking stone dome lies near the center of town. There are four entrances, each marked with a 4 pointed star. Inside, four altars are draped with coloured cloth decorated with sigils representing each of the four seasons.

Tended to by Leora Moonshadow, an elf **druid** who has tended it since the village was founded, the Wayshrine is a comforting bastion of stability for Wayston. The elf retains the appearance of her youth, and bears a great love for the village, having watched many generations live, grow old and die under her careful stewardship. The shrine contains four altars, one to each season. Leora performs her rites daily as an offering to the gods, and rarely has time to leave the shrine for anything longer than a quick walk about town. She sleeps in a small room off the main chamber, and spends much of her spare time in a trance, meditating on the unseen.

THE MOURNING LANTERN

The Mourning Lantern was once kept here, under the altar to Winter. It was a sacred relic, crafted from the bones of St. Lucia, who gave her heart's blood willingly to the wood in an act of contrition. Leora is well aware that the absence of the lantern is contributing to the wood's unusually active malice. She knows how the original was crafted, and can describe the ritual to anyone who asks. It requires a living (willing candidate) to drain their heartsblood into the floor of the wood, and for their remains to be carved into a lantern in a process that takes at least 8 hours for anyone with proficiency in a relevant toolset.

Carrying a Mourning Lantern grants that character the following trait.

Blight Bane. While you carry this lantern, and it is lit, blights and other evil plant creatures don't regard you as hostile unless you harm them.

C - Thessaly's House

This wretched old hovel is dirty inside and out. A mangy black cat lies on the doorstep, and hisses at you.

A careful and foreboding woman, Thessaly (NG **commoner**) has a suspicious air about her that leads you to believe she's hiding some kind of secret. Children love to dare each other to step into her yard, whereupon she invariably steps out brandishing a broom, to the terror and delight of the children. Be that as it may, people often go to Thessaly under cover of night for stern advice or harsh truths - she's never been known to turn away someone in need.

D - The Jumping Jack

A tavern nestled at the heart of town, the Jumping Jack is Wayston's one stop shop for wine, beer and merriment. A tavern crowded nightly with people wanting to drown their sorrows, the prices are high for the low quality of drink. The proprietors, cheery halflings called the Mayspouts, love reminding people how much they have to live for. There's a stage in the corner where community theatre and performances are staged - poor performances are met with a salvo of abuse from the clients in the form of hurled food. Rooms are available on the upper floors, one of which is being let to a rather tipsy elf called Tazryn who seems to maintain a semi-permanent state of mild inebriation.

E - Linus' House

This rather unfortunate looking house has clearly seen better days. There's clear evidence of frequent repairs to the doors, windows and walls, and through the grimy windows a prying neighbour might spy a bachelor pad gone wrong. This is the accommodation of Linus the Carpenter, who is often too caught up in his craft to notice such mundane concerns as washing or tidying. He's currently renting out his spare room to a half-orc **thug** called Brontus.



F - Sanatorium

The local sanatorium is minded by Meryn (LG **acolyte**), a local doctor and hedge witch who specializes in curing ailments of the spirit. The small house has space for two patients at any one time, one of which is currently a strange lady found lying in a ditch not far from town. It seems she woke up one day without any memories, and Meryn is doing his best to help her return to living a functional life.

MEMORIES OF YESTERDAY

The tiefling woman under the care of Meryn can be aided by any character proficient in medicine, and who dares to enter the woods to gather herbs. Spending 3 days with the woman and tending to her begins to restore her memory. Fragmented memories occasionally return to her, and she warns the characters that the wood is governed by a hideous treant, a corrupted guardian of the wood blighted by unnatural forces.

G - Blackwood Manor

A small, rather depressed looking stone dome lies near the center of town. There are four entrances, each marked with a 4 pointed star. Inside, four altars are draped with coloured cloth decorated with sigils representing each of the four seasons.

Lord Blackwood maintains a large 4 story house with impressive and fortified windows in case of assault. He maintains a household staff of 10 people, who take care of the house and his personal needs. Unfortunately, he has taken sick over the past few years, and is now in the terminal stages of an incurable lung condition. In his sickness, his wife Ysabelle Blackwood (LE human **mage**) is managing his affairs, but it is common knowledge she lost their fortune trying to save her dying husband. More uncharitable rumours suggest she may have poisoned him in the first place and hidden the gold.

FIRE AND VENGEANCE

Lady Blackwood wants the wood gone, and has no time for games or relics. If approached, she does not suffer fools gladly. She prepares her spells of fire and light, and asks for an escort into the woods to find the source of the evil and vanquish it before it is too late.

PART TWO:

FALLING LIKE AUTUMN LEAVES

"Trees there were, old as trees can be, huge and grasping with hearts black as sin. Strange trees that some said walked in the night."

- Neil Gaiman, *Fables & Reflections*

The Wood Walks

Whilst the characters investigate the village, the wood moves to slowly eliminate the key players. Each night the characters spend in Wayston, the wood launches an assault on the village, aiming to kidnap a character or two from Wayston. Given the vast numbers arrayed against the village, the wood is more than likely to make off with someone each time - the characters can't be everywhere at all times. The wood always divides up the forces described below, allowing characters to avoid encountering them en masse.

THE FIRST NIGHT

The wood sends in the usual forces to scout out weak or unresisting humans and take them back into the wood. This light force consists of thirty **twig blights** and 6 **vine blights**, which are split into 6 groups. The blights arrive at midnight, and assault 6 different locations.

THE SECOND NIGHT

The wood realizes that the town might be better defended than it thought, and sends in a stronger force. This time, it sends in ten squads of blights. Each squad contains three **twig blights**, three **needle blights** and two **vine blights**.

THE THIRD NIGHT

The wood moves to cripple Wayston. It sends ten **animated trees** and thirty **animated bushes** to attack the village from all sides. The trees converge on the Blackwood Manor, and tear it down by hurling rocks and digging up the foundations. If Lady Blackwood is still alive and finds herself unaided, she is captured by the wood.

THE FOURTH NIGHT

The wood is done playing games. A **shambling mound** emerges from the treeline, and sets about destroying everything it can find. If the mound is not stopped, only a handful of villagers survive the night's events.

THE FIFTH NIGHT

The wood sends its most powerful lieutenant, a **greater blight**, to finish any resistance left at Wayston. If the village is still openly defying the wood, the blight is accompanied by 2d6 **vine blights**.

Heading into the Wood

There may come a time when the characters tire of waiting for the wood to engineer their demise, and attempt to head into it in order to solve the problem.

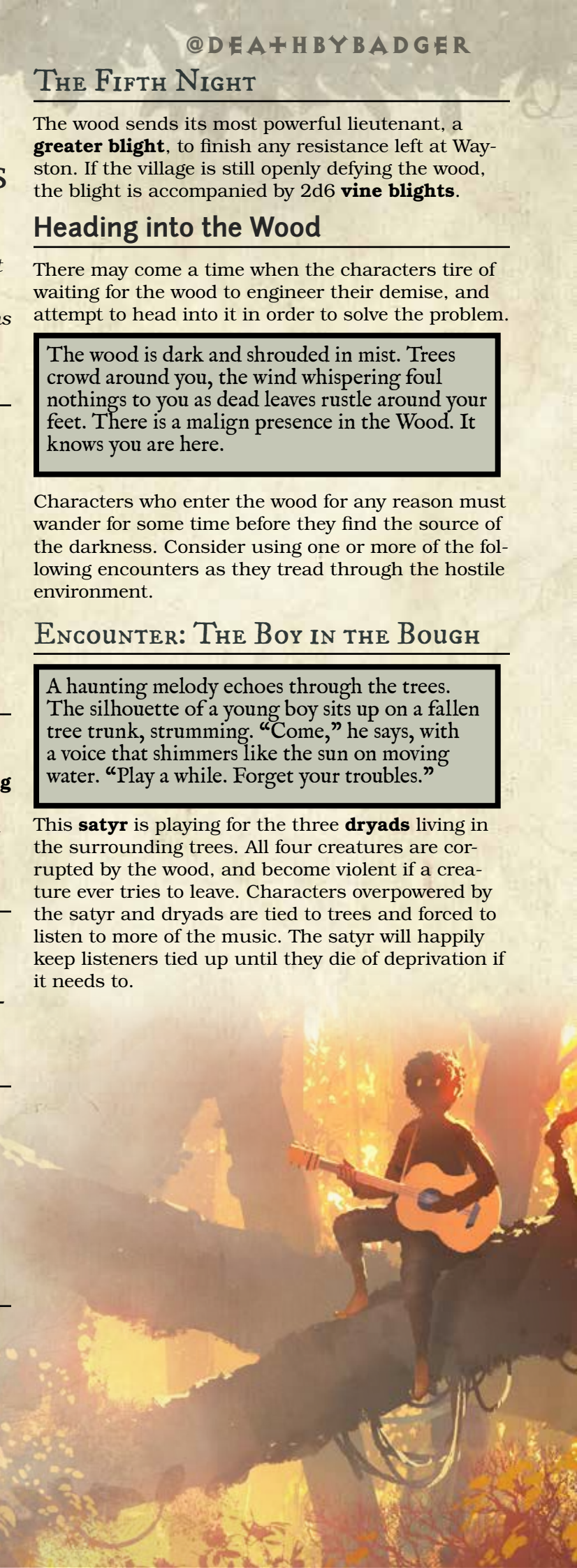
The wood is dark and shrouded in mist. Trees crowd around you, the wind whispering foul nothings to you as dead leaves rustle around your feet. There is a malign presence in the Wood. It knows you are here.

Characters who enter the wood for any reason must wander for some time before they find the source of the darkness. Consider using one or more of the following encounters as they tread through the hostile environment.

ENCOUNTER: THE BOY IN THE BOUGH

A haunting melody echoes through the trees. The silhouette of a young boy sits up on a fallen tree trunk, strumming. "Come," he says, with a voice that shimmers like the sun on moving water. "Play a while. Forget your troubles."

This **satyr** is playing for the three **dryads** living in the surrounding trees. All four creatures are corrupted by the wood, and become violent if a creature ever tries to leave. Characters overpowered by the satyr and dryads are tied to trees and forced to listen to more of the music. The satyr will happily keep listeners tied up until they die of deprivation if it needs to.



ENCOUNTER: FAMILIAR FACES

Spindly wooden caricatures of faces from the village sneak around the edges of your vision. Their faces, paralyzed in endless wooden screams, are suspiciously accurate and detailed.

These 2d6 **twig blights** are almost identical wooden replicas of creatures kidnapped from Wayston. This is what becomes of those unfortunate enough to fall to the evil of the Tree. The blights have no memories of their former lives, and cannot be saved.

ENCOUNTER: BILLOWING LEAVES

A wind picks up in the woods, and leaves begin to blow around you. A nick, then a cut, then a slash reveal the leaves to have razor sharp edges....this is a deadly trap.

Simple trap (level 5–10, dangerous threat)

The wood conjures a vicious wind, which carries razor sharp leaves to slice and dice unwary travellers.

Effect. The wind howls through the wood in one direction. Each creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or a DC 10 Nature check allows a character to recognise the signs of the breeze in time to give them advantage on the saving throw. A character warned in this way takes no damage on a successful save.

ENCOUNTER: FOR THE BIRDS

A fluttering of wings nearby alerts you to the arrival of an unkindness of ravens lurking on the branches of trees all around. “Dead,” they croak, in a sing-song chorus. “Dead as daylight.”

This 1d4 **swarms of ravens** follow the party for some distance, gauging the likelihood of securing a meal if they attack. After some time, they get bolder, which some of the larger ravens flapping in front of their faces or defecating on them from above.

ENCOUNTER: ENDLESS SLUMBER

The grim and twisted wood breaks open into a small clearing filled with bright red poppies. The smell is sweet and sickly.

The poppies are deadly poisonous. A character who steps into the field must succeed on a DC20 Constitution saving throw, or take 7d6 poison damage as the poison enters their system. A character reduced to 0 hit points by this damage dies as their heart gives out.

Eventually, the characters will stumble across the source of the wood's evil, as it leads them through danger and death to weaken them for an easy kill.

ENCOUNTER: THE GULTHIAS TREE

A black and distorted tree dominates a wide clearing littered with stones and dead leaves. Rocky ledges border it on three sides, and a stagnant pool festers at its roots. Against the tree's trunk lie grey stone inscribed with strange runes that glow with an eldritch light.

The Gulthias Tree is the heart of the evil that plagues Blackbriars Wood, pumping poisonous thoughts into the air and land. The tree is not undefended.

Awakened Trees. The Gulthias Tree is surrounded by six **awakened trees** that animate if the tree detects an assault.

Stagnant Pond. The pond near the tree's roots is deeper than it looks and hides a single **ghoul**, currently in hibernation. It emerges if the pool is disturbed, and drags a victim to a watery death.

Druidic Charms. The glowing stones at the base of the tree radiate a strong aura of abjuration and transmutation magic to abilities which can detect magical auras. There are five stones, and each is marked in druidic with markings that denote an enchantment protecting the tree from harm. Each stone has AC17 and 5 hit points. Whilst any of the charms are active, the Gulthias Tree is immune to damage. The charms extinguish all non-magical light sources (including those of a Mourning Lantern) within 120 feet of the tree.

Wood Woad. The trees most formidable defender is the wood woad that lives inside it. When it is attacked, the tree sends forth the **wood woad** to destroy the attackers and bring them back to be bound to the tree.

Under Pressure. The Gulthias Tree calls out to its hideous brethren when it comes under attack. At the start of each round, 1d4 twig blights emerge from the woods to join the melee. At the start of the sixth round, a **greater blight** lumbers out of the woods.

GULTHIAS TREE

Plant, Neutral Evil

A creeping evil which lurks away from the sunlight, the Gulthias tree can be found on any world, in a place shrouded in gloom or darkness. The original tree was a byproduct of the vampire Gulthias' staking, but more trees have been known to grow in any woodland that falls to shadow. Spreading their seeds through plantlike constructs called Blights, Gulthias trees have one need only - to spread, consume, and choke the live from anything that breathes. Blights tear down healthy plants, and spread infections wherever they tread. Weeds and mutations caused by a Gulthias tree spread incredibly quickly, turning blessed forests into horrific nightmares in a matter of days or weeks.

Objective: Cover the world in Gulthias trees, and extinguish all life.

Motivation: The Gulthias Tree is motivated by its nature, which is to consume and destroy.

Methods: Infect forests and send out blights to corrupt new areas. Acquire humanoid disciples by kidnapping them and turning them into tree thralls. Force humanoid races to abandon areas by destroying the local ecosystem.

Gulthias trees are Gargantuan plants, with an AC of 10 and 35 hit points. They have immunity to necrotic, poison, psychic damage, and resistance to piercing damage. Gulthias trees have vulnerability to fire damage.

Fruit. Two magical fruits (evocation school) ripen on the tree each year. Each fruit resembles an apple, but it slowly extrudes from the tree like a cyst. Up to a week before the summer solstice, a ruby red fruit grows. Someone other than a construct who eats a quarter or more of it regains 70 hit points. In addition, any blindness, deafness, and diseases affecting the eater end. Up to a week before the winter solstice, a sickly white fruit grows. Someone who eats a quarter or more of it takes 70 necrotic damage. Each fruit has 1d4 seeds that, if planted, grow leafless woody shrubs that animate as twig blights after one year.

Tree Thralls. If a humanoid is bound to the trunk of the Gulthias Tree, over the next 24 hours the victim is sucked completely into the tree. Once the victim is completely absorbed into the tree, it becomes the tree's thrall, and is expelled over the course of 1 hour as a **blight**. More powerful creatures might return as true thralls retaining some or all of their class abilities.





1 square = 5 feet

CONCLUSIONS:

WINTER'S DISCONTENT

"There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, a natural defect, which not even the best education can overcome."

— Austen

The Wood is Victorious

If the wood is victorious, it knocks the characters unconscious and ties them to the bark of the Gulthias Tree. This gives the characters some additional chance perhaps to escape, or find another way to kill the tree. If they fail in this, then they meet their end at the hands of the tree, and their forms are forever enslaved to the evil of the tree.

The Party is Victorious

If the party manages to destroy the Gulthias Tree, read the following.

The tree shrieks, a terrible agonizing howl that ripples through the bark and shatters the sky. Clouds boil overhead and mist billows through the clearing, sweeping you away in a rush of muffling, dense white fog. You are washed away with the tide, and darkness claims you.

Depending on where your party were before they were swept up by the woods, it is up to you where the Mists of Ravenloft deposit them. Perhaps they end up back where they came from, or perhaps they are left stranded in a greater Domain of Dread. The village of Wayston is left to an ambiguous fate...but perhaps it will fare better now that it is out from under the shadow of the Gulthias Tree.

GREATER BLIGHT

Gargantuan plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 149 (13d12 + 65)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (0)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (0)	3 (-4)

Damane Vulnerabilities fire

Condition Immunities Blinded, Deafened

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius),

Passive Perception 10

Languages understands Druidic but doesn't speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

False Appearance. While the blight remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a dead tree.

Siege Monster. The blight deals double damage to objects and structures.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the blight has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blight makes four attacks: two with its branches and two with its grasping roots. If it has a target grappled, the blight can also make a bite attack against that target as a bonus action.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Branch. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Grasping Root. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature not grappled by the blight. Hit: The target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target takes 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns. The root has AC 15 and can be severed by dealing 6 slashing damage or more to it at once. Cutting the root doesn't hurt the blight but ends the grapple..