

A THOUSAND DEAD BABIES

BY ZZARCHOV KOWOLSKI

A LOW LEVEL ADVENTURE FOR
NEOCLASSICAL GEEK REVIVAL
AND OSR ROLEPLAYING GAMES

**THE VALE OF
CORROC
& THE
THOUSAND
ACRE
WOOD**

SCALE: 1" = 1/2 MILE

CORROC

**OLD
MACDONALD'S
FARM**

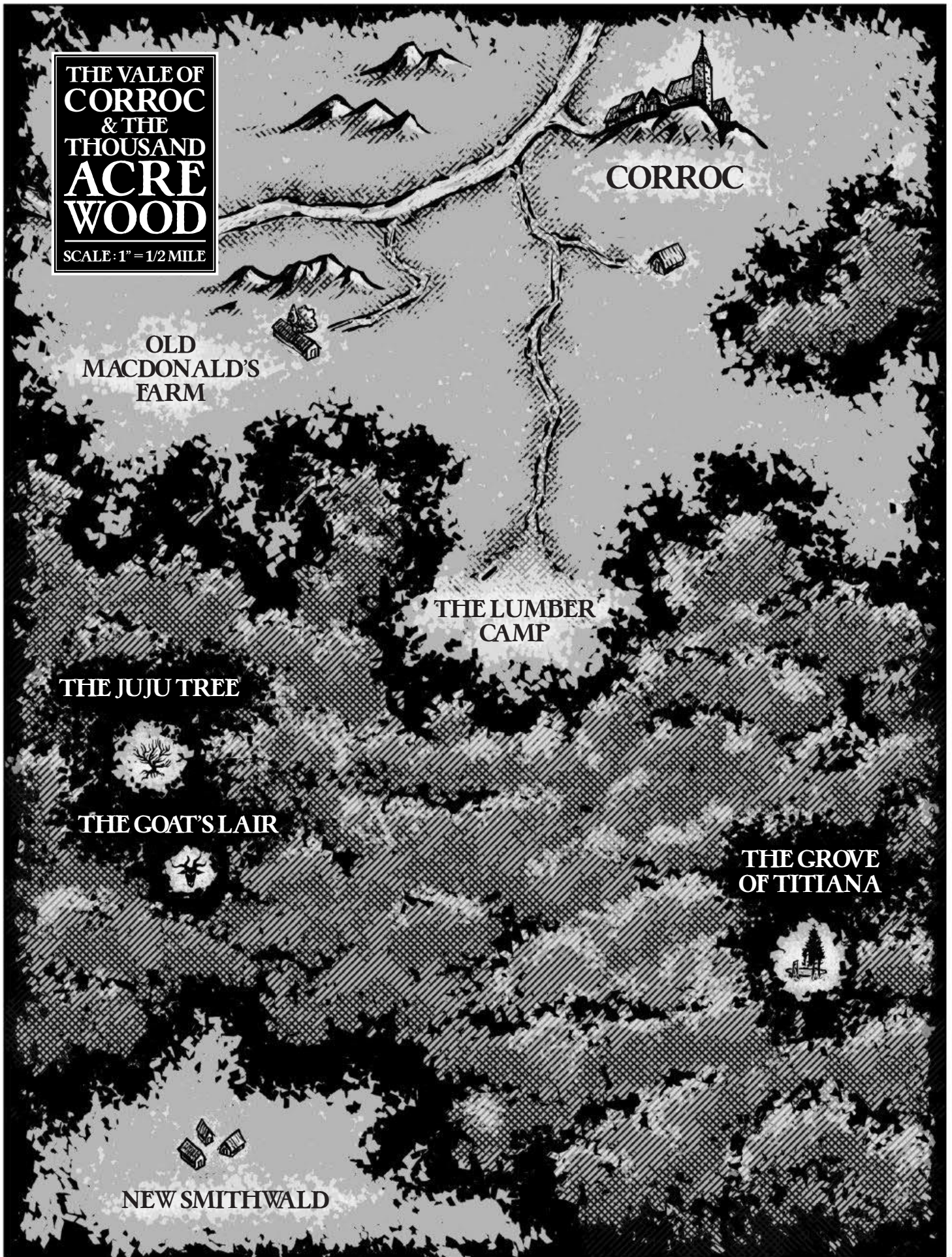
**THE LUMBER
CAMP**

THE JUJU TREE

THE GOAT'S LAIR

**THE GROVE
OF TITIANA**

NEW SMITHWALD





**A
THOUSAND
DEAD BABIES**
BY ZZARCHOV KOWOLSKI

COVER PAINTING TAKEN FROM "AQUALARRE" BY FRANCISCO GOYA
ILLUSTRATION, CARTOGRAPHY & DESIGN BY JEZ GORDON

© ZZARCHOV KOWOLSKI 2013

PRINTED IN CANADA

ISBN 978-0-9920472-2-1

INTRODUCTION

This is a very simple introductory adventure about a small little town in the grips of some religious turmoil. It switched to follow the Holy Church about a generation ago, throwing off their ties to the Old Gods (mostly). There are some hold outs. Recently however, **tales of demon worship and witchcraft have begun to flourish**, leading the young and inexperienced priest to enter a panic.

The town is at a crossroads and the players can influence what happens to the very souls of the town's inhabitants. Will they let the witches and warlocks rule the night? Crush the pagans once and for all? Overthrow the oppressive Holy Church or perhaps just keep everyone from killing each other and hopefully get along?

The answer is probably whichever one occurs as a side effect of stripping the place of everything valuable that isn't nailed down.

THE TOWN OF CORROC

The small town of Corroc is both backwater and unimportant. It is located on a rolling hill that was claimed from the great boundless forest to the north. It overlooks fields and pastures, the bog to the east, and a small river and marsh a few hours to the west. South is the Thousand Acre Wood (also unoriginally called the South Wood), a small lot that was kept when the area was cleared and settled. The town is fairly even mix of cracked field stone huts and log

cabins clustered together, their brushwood roofs giving the hill a slight resemblance to a muskrat lodge. The hill itself is surrounded by a small stone fence no more than four feet in height. **A single limestone church** juts out from the town to cast a long shadow on the fields below, acting almost as a sundial. The only other noticeable building being **a sturdy two story inn** that has a noticeably different construction of plaster and timber. It appears to be of Bavarian design.

THE PEOPLE OF CORROC

The people of Corroc lead a simple agrarian existence and generally exhibit a friendly, outgoing demeanour. While Corroc is out of the way, it is not isolated. A handful of visitors will pass through each month and a rather large community of Travellers always stops here for a couple weeks during harvest season to trade. Most of the townsfolk will continue with their day to day routine and never interact with any of the Player Characters but there are several key participants in the town's current troubles who almost certainly will.

Non-humans in the party may receive a slightly mixed welcome. The more pious individuals tend to be disrespectful to halfings and wary (bordering on afraid) of elves. The situation is almost reversed for

those who still cling to elements of the Old Gods. Dwarves are regarded as a curiosity with no real bias by either group. That isn't to say Dwarves aren't associated with a whole host of bizarre stereotypes, merely that they are neither reviled nor adored by the townsfolk. Other less common races will also be seen as curiosities, but may arouse fear depending on exactly how unusual they are.

Should (or perhaps when) the players get into trouble, **there are no watchmen or police to enforce order**. The Reeve maintains order with the backing of the peasants in a makeshift mob. If things get out of hand or people are killed, they may send someone to fetch the men from the local lord a few hours to the north. This is a last resort as the knights tend to enforce order harshly and indiscriminately.

ROBERT DOYLE

The Town Reeve

Robert Doyle (or Bobbie as the locals call him when he isn't around) is the elderly and dour faced reeve of this small town. He keeps the records of the turnip and barley harvest, the sheep and the lumber tithes. While people rumour that he'll fudge the records in one's favour for a split of the take, it is false. He is actually impeccably loyal to the local lord and wouldn't think of cheating him. He is generally unconcerned with the religious goings on, but he is quite eager to find someone to capture the black knight and is authorized by the local lord to pay the reward for doing as such:

- 100lbs of turnips,
- 2 rams,
- 6 ewes, and
- 2 acres of pasture.

Note that this is property ownership not mere usage rights, in essence turning a simple serf into a yeoman.

FATHER MCKENZIE

The Village Priest

Father McKenzie is a young priest in his early twenties. He has been in Corroc for just over a year and is deeply concerned about its pagan history and the rumblings of there being diabolists practising in the woods. He knows there are still secretly pagans in the town, and others openly in New Smithwald on the other side of the Thousand Acre Woods, but he hopes kindness, reason and prayer can convert them. He is also unable to live up to his own ideals, and he is filled with guilt. He has been sneaking out at night to have an illicit affair with the yeoman's daughter, Marilyn. He is gone from an hour after sunset until midnight each night. Father McKenzie has offered his church's entire savings of 17 golden crowns, 45 silver shillings and 112 copper pence if anyone can slay whatever demonic creature has been leaving bipedal hoof prints in the forest.

OSR: Level 1 cleric, 3 hp.

NGR: Level 0, 2 part priest. Dogma, True Belief, Exorcism. 100 piety. 900xp. No milestone.

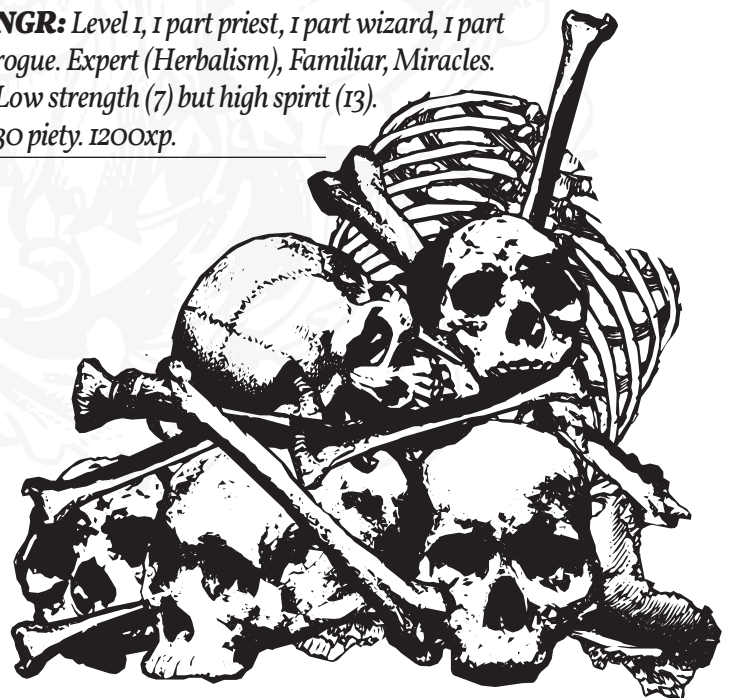
JULIE O'RANNIGAN

The Herbalist

Julie O'Rannigan is an ageing spinster whose fiery red hair is beginning to turn white. She is independent minded, single, no children, works as an herbalist, and has a black cat for a pet. The townsfolk think she is a witch and more than a few want to burn her at the stake. It is only at the urging of Father McKenzie that they do not. He is young and idealistic and sick of what he sees as persecution of single women. He is of course wrong, she is indeed a witch. The signs are all there. She is a member of the cult of Baphomet and sneaks out to frolic nude with the devil's minions and sacrifice babies unto his glory. Also she sells a variety of soothing ointments and herbs for 2 shillings a dose. Applying a dose of her ointments before sleeping will ease pain and relax muscles (NGR: +2 to healing check OSR: +1d6-3 hp regained overnight, minimum of 0). She has 45 shillings and 202 pence in her stone cottage just outside of town. If the players start interrogating her about witchcraft she will claim to have seen a robed figure congregating near the MacDonald house at night.

OSR: Level 1 witch, chaotic evil cleric, or failing that magic user who knows "charm person"

NGR: Level 1, 1 part priest, 1 part wizard, 1 part rogue. Expert (Herbalism), Familiar, Miracles. Low strength (7) but high spirit (13). 30 piety. 1200xp.



“SCABS” DUNCAN

The Lout

“Scabs” is a short little toad of a man with beady eyes and a terrible comb-over. He makes his living running games of chance and (if rumour be told) pinching things not nailed down. No one in the town particularly likes him, but the Duncans used to have a good family name so folks just hope he’ll keel over one day and be a bad memory. Scabs is the only person in Corroc who has a set of the specialized tools needed to perform certain illegal activities. He also has a set of loaded dice and a deck of trick playing cards (in addition to the regular variety).

If someone breaks into his house they would find his savings of 23 gold crowns, 11 silver shillings and 340 copper pence. They would also find an amulet bearing the mark of Baphomet, a bloodstained iron knife with a bone handle, and a set of concealing robes. Scabs is the current leader of the cult that operates in the woods.

OSR: *Level 2 Thief, Specialist or failing that Cleric. Whatever you would use for a cultist.*

NGR: *Level 2, 2 part rogue, 1 part priest. Detect Traps, Jack of All Trades, Parkour, True Belief, 400 piety. 2000xp. Great Intelligence (16), Poor Social (7), Good Agility (13), Poor Strength (7)*

ALLY MAC’OBAN

The Berry Picker

Ally is a young blonde waif of a girl barely past sixteen. She is an orphan and has lived on her own for the past 5 years. She is generally pleasant but appears to be a bit slow. The townsfolk think she has been touched in the head and are fairly protective of her.

She is in fact extremely clever but merely puts on a show to keep the townsfolk from accusing her of witchcraft. She is the leader (and currently only active human member) of the coven of Titania that operates in the South Wood.

She lives in a fairly sparse house and has little for possessions on her person beyond a cloak and walking stick.

OSR: *Level 1 Druid, Cleric or Magic User as appropriate. Intelligence of 18.*

NGR: *Level 1, 2 part priest, 1 part wizard. True Belief, Exorcism, Miracles, Vulgar Magic Amazing Intelligence (20), Poor Strength (7), Good Spirit (13). 750xp, 600 piety. Memorized: Wall of Thorns, Bee Swarm, Faerie Sense Walking stick is a Talisman with 3 benefit levels.*

HUNTER JON

The Leatherworker

Hunter Jon is an ill tempered man with a weather beaten visage. He has a license to hunt game in the South Wood in exchange for working the village’s leather. He is usually found by his straw hut (the only one in the village) just past the little stone wall, elbow deep in entrails or faeces as he butchers meat or works leather. He does not wash his hands when he switches tasks. He is pretty bitter at the village and no one there really likes him. When he was a younger man, a bear wandered into the village and he wrestled it with his bare hands before killing it with a cheese knife. No one fucks with Hunter Jon.

He knows a bit about the goings on in the South Wood, he can be convinced (with difficulty) into mentioning he has seen an elf in the eastern half of the woods and heard the cries of infants in the western half. He tries to stay closer to the eastern half.

OSR: *Level 1 Ranger. 12 strength, 16 wisdom, 5 charisma.*

NGR: *Level 1, 2 part rogue, 1 part warrior. Expert (Hunting, Tanning), Specialist (Tracking, Hiding), Jack of all trades, Weapon Specialization (Bow). Great awareness (16), Good Strength (12), Shitty Social(5).*

SIRIS MACDONALD

The Yeoman

Siris is both one of the least and most important people in the region. On the one hand he is just another farmer, and not a terribly well off one at that. On the other hand he actually owns his land, harvest and livestock. He is one of the few people who does not have to bow to the local lord, though he tends to out of respect for the late lord, who made him a yeoman in exchange for bravery in a petty cattle raid. Siris is actually the holder (and owner) of the only cattle in Corroc; 1 bull and 3 cows. He also has 20 golden crowns and 120 copper pence in his home.

Sadly Siris is a widower and has no sons to pass on his title to; instead he merely has three increasingly beautiful daughters Grace, Sue and Crushertron. I mean Marilyn. The third daughter is named Marilyn. Marilyn has been having a secret affair with Father McKenzie. If this is brought to light Siris will disown his daughter.

OSR: *Siris is a level 1 Fighter with 16 strength.*

NGR: *Level 1, 3 part warrior. Great strength (16)*

DARCY SMITH

The Smithy

Darcy is a young lad of 15 who has just started a smithy in the town. He worked as an apprentice smith for two years in the lord's keep and is just starting out on his own in Corroc. He is not skilled at his trade. Anything complicated or that requires a sharp edge is beyond him for the moment, but he will not admit to it. He is desperate for business and will tell the players anything he thinks they wish to hear to try and encourage them to buy or commission something from him. This includes implying people may be witches, especially if he thinks the players will then want to buy hot irons. He can make those.

THE INN

The inn stands in stark contrast to the rest of the town. It has wooden shingles, a brick chimney and a heavy timber frame. The windows have shutters and a lantern hangs on an iron hook by the heavy oak door. The walls have a thick coating of plaster, giving it a very bright and clean look. Above the door is a wooden sign carved in the shape of a donkey. Painted on the sign is a silhouette of a rooster.

Inside, the place appears as a dimly lit German beer hall. The hearth is supplemented with candles to give the place a dim amount of flickering light. Several large casks are on display behind the bar and the smell of roast pork seems to constantly waft through the area. Ale, mead, and fancy wines are available here, as is food and lodging. There are five rooms available, each with two single beds and a washbasin. **The rooms are 5 shillings a week for room and board.**

The Innkeeper is Otto Van Kaus; his wife Sheila works the kitchen. They are in their late thirties but do not appear to have any children. They moved into this area 10 years ago and opened an inn, apparently having had to abandon a similar inn in their last home. They refuse to speak on the matter but rumours spread. They are curt and distant, but provide everything they promise. They are honest if abrasive. The cellar is strictly off limits, they store their finer wines down there. Much of the town will frequent this establishment, "Scabs" Duncan is known to frequently run games of chance in the evenings.

The inn's lock box (stored under Otto and Sheila's bed) has 1278 silver shillings and 532 copper pence.

THE CHURCH

The church is a simple limestone building consisting of an offset bell tower and a large hall with an adjoining private rectory. The roof has expensive lead work and the windows have actual glass. The glass is a bit wavy with the odd bubble, but it is still an expensive sign of wealth and power. There are three entrances: a large set of oaken double doors on the front of the church, a small oak door off the rectory that leads to the graveyard, and the pine trap door in the bell tower.

Inside, the pews are smoothly sanded pine but the pulpit itself is stained oak. The rectory is simply a small bed and dresser for the priest to sleep in, with an extra door leading outside. Behind the the altar however, lies a trapdoor leading into the basement, which contains catacombs and the black library.

NGR: *The Church and grounds are consecrated and count as holy ground.*

THE BLACK LIBRARY

Underneath the rusty trapdoor behind the altar is a mouldy, wooden, open backed staircase leading into the dark basement.

OSR: *1/6 chance of being heard by priest if opened*

NGR: *d6 suspicion if opened*

Following it straight will lead into a twenty foot stretch of catacombs along the walls, leading to the tombs. To the right however is a rickety plank wall and a simple locked door with an iron cross hung upon it. The key to the door is kept in the rectory.

Inside the room is a small lead chest tied to a large rock (some 400lbs) and a small cherry wood writing desk covered in extinguished candles. The desk drawers are locked, but inside them are several dangerous artefacts. A bone dagger, the book of Aarrgh, a golden coin, a small leather pouch filled with teeth (most of which are charred), and a rolled manleather scroll. Inside the lead chest is a stone hammer affixed to a carved ivory hilt with ornate beaten copper wires. These items

will be described in the reference section.

Any forbidden artifacts (grimoires, unholy items or the like) that are confiscated from those in the village (or turned in willingly) will probably end up here. While of little use at the moment, trained monks and inquisitors deconstruct these items to build proper defences against these black arts.

THE CATACOMBS AND ROYAL TOMBS

If one bypasses the sad and rickety excuse for a black library this church maintains, they will be forced to wander down the catacombs. The passage is twenty-ish feet long and features carved recesses into the wall, five high. Each recess contains a withered corpse in a simple linen robe that was probably once white. Each one clings to a simple iron cross and wears a thin gold necklace that loops through a silver ring. Each set of jewelry is worth 20 silver shillings, half for the necklace and half for the ring. There are thirty corpses in the catacombs. At the end of this small hallway is a round room with two ornate stone sarcophagi and a bubbling stone fountain on the back wall.

One of the stone sarcophagi has a carved lid featuring a thin woman in simple robes holding a rose. The other features a man wearing wolf skins adorned with a crown and holding a cross with one hand and a sword in the other.

The sarcophagus carved with the image of a lady is the tomb of Lady Gwyngyll, a pagan who long ago settled here with her husband who was an early member of the church long before it was established in the region. She was a sorceress in life, though she loved her husband dearly. Should anyone who is not a pagan open her sarcophagus she will rise up in anger. Her body still clutches a strangely vibrant rose (detailed in **The Vibrant Rose**, p.14).

The other sarcophagus is that of her husband St. Ysgythrog, who built the first church in these lands. It didn't take. He and his followers were buried in this tomb, and later his widow joined them (though she had never converted). His body has not decayed at all and smells faintly of flowers. He wears a silver crown adorned with amethyst upon his head (worth 1000 shillings) and holds **the Sword of St. Ysgythrog** in his hands (detailed on p.14). Should anyone other than a priest, paladin or devout follower of his religion open his sarcophagus all thirty of the corpses in the walls will awaken and attempt to slay the trespasser. Those of the appropriate faith will see a translucent ghost animating the skeletons.

NGR: *St. Ysgythrog was in a state of grace upon death. The undead are simple 0 level undead. Lady Gwyngyll is a ghost with 15 luck, +2 presence and 16 intelligence. Local Legend.*

OSR: *Skeletons which can be controlled by a good cleric or turned by an evil. Lady Gwyngyll is a wraith.*

THE FOUNTAIN OF BAACHUS

In the back of the room is a small and ancient fountain that predates this tomb, it is about knee high and two feet around. This is the only reason why Lady Gwyngyll had ever stopped here. It is a fountain dedicated to Baachus. The first man and the first woman to drink from the fountain each year receive a blessing (as per bless spell/miracle) until they next have (forgive my tawdry language) physical relations. They are also guaranteed to conceive a child. This assumes their liaison is with each other. If their liaisons are not with each other, a child is still guaranteed but the magic might be a bit... wonky. Who will become pregnant in such a liaison is even money. This does mean that a man could become pregnant.

NGR: *Destroying the fountain counts as destroying a small shrine.*

THE LUMBER CAMP



At the edge of the South Wood is a motley collection of shacks and tents amidst a field of tree stumps. Taxes tend to be paid in terms of days of labour owed to the local lord, and many pay by working at the lumber yard. Once the sun rises the sounds of axes on trees and saws on logs will rapidly begin to fill the air. The smell of boiling stews will waft along the breeze. Many young men choose to sleep at the camp rather than return home, so they can earn a little extra in the hours when others are walking back to Corroc.

SAM

The Cook and Foreman

Sam is a heavyset man in his early forties. He may have been a strapping young lad once, but his career as both cook and foreman means he has had a few too many extra portions over the years. He lives in a log cabin at the edge of the forest, the only truly permanent building in the lumber camp. He has been awarded the authority by the reeve to pass out wooden tokens denoting a days labour. He awards these to the workers at the end of each day (assuming they showed up on time and worked hard) who in turn pay them as taxes (or trade them to craftsmen in the town). A wooden token can be sold in town for somewhere between 5 pence and 2 shillings, depending on how many people have been working at the lumber camp this week. Sam doesn't work himself, but rather spends the day cooking stews and soups to feed the workers. He also has a bit of a side business, where he lets workers get an extra hour or two in before darkness, gathering sticks and tinder to sell in town. They get a third, he gets a third and a third is put aside for the local lord. Sam will offer 50 wooden tokens if anyone can find out why they hear the cries of infants at night and make them stop. He is terribly troubled and frightened by the matter.

NEW SMITHWALD

The hamlet of New Smithwald is on the southern side of the Thousand Acre Wood and consists of about a dozen huts with cobb walls and thatch roofs, lined up along the small river that flows from the Applemarsh. The only other building is a large wooden hall with a sod roof. That is the home of the last remaining pagan knight in the local lord's service, Sir Gallan Darnan. The village itself herds a few pigs and keeps a few rabbit hutches, but mostly grows vegetables and fishes in the river. The village has only been here maybe two years, since old Smithwald burned to the ground due to an unfortunate accident. The ruins of old Smithwald are a couple miles to the east, away from the river.

SIR GALLAN DARNAN

The Bear Knight

The banner of the Darnan line does not feature a bear, nor has Sir Gallan ever slain a bear. No part of either his personal history or the history of his line involves a bear, yet he is known as the Bear Knight. He is an immensely large man. While the local lord's father converted away from the old faith late in life, Sir Gallan refused. While lesser knights may have been punished, Sir Gallan's otherwise impeccable loyalty and his immense value in defending the realm has allowed him to remain unperturbed in his little hall with a few dozen fellow pagans. In his hall Sir Gallan keeps a golden goblet (worth 2500 shillings), two small rubies (worth 1000 shillings each) and 670 copper pence. He also has an iron helm adorned with a set of antlers, a coat of scale armour and a large two handed sword of exceptional quality. He has a single old nag for a horse that he cannot afford to replace and would not be the most suitable mount in a battle. It remains as a pet and a relic of his spent youth.

OSR: *Sir Gallan is a level 3 fighter with 18 strength, 18/00 if you use it. He has a Constitution of 13, but intelligence and charisma of 7.*

NGR: *Level 3, 2 part warrior, 1 part priest. Weapon Specialization (greatsword), Combat Tricks, Combat Awareness, Fervour. Muscle Bound Trait. Superior strength(20), good health (13), great spirit (16), poor intelligence (7), poor social (7)*

Knows: Sunder, Pommel Strike, Stomp, Riposte

THE GROVE OF TITANIA

Tf any time is spent methodically searching the eastern half of the Thousand Acre Wood it is possible someone may be able to stumble across the hidden grove of Titania. Unless they are specifically sneaking about it is likely they will probably first be ambushed by its three elven guardians. Two of them wield granite hand-and-a-half axes and large wicker shields, woven from briar. The third has a longbow and a quiver of jagged obsidian arrows. All three wear specially woven leaf cloaks that help them in remaining hidden.

The grove itself is a clearing maybe 40 feet in radius, centred around a large pine tree growing next to a bubbling spring that forms a pond. The pond is surrounded by three standing stones, carved with ornate runes and sigils. The area is an ancient place of worship to Titania and the cones from the sacred pine count as holy symbols. Each of the standing stones contains a sacred spell: *Wall of Thorns*, *Bee Swarm*, and *Faerie Sense*.

OSR: *Magic users require read magic to read any given stone*

NGR: *It is consecrated holy ground, counts as a small temple.*

Should anyone enter the grove without the backing of Ally Mac'Oban, the elves will attack.

OSR: *Elves are level 1 elves, or elven rangers, or elven fighters as appropriate.*

NGR: *Level 1, 2 part warrior, 1 part rogue. Combat awareness, Weapon specialization (longbow or battle axe as appropriate), Guard, Parkour. Superior Awareness(20), Good Agility (13), Poor Health (7).*

Knows: Fire Control, Feint



THE JUJU TREE

J deep in the western half of the forest lies a desolate grove of sandy, lifeless earth with the dead and grey husk of a once mighty oak overlooking it. A great stone slab that is stained with blood sits at the base of the oak tree, and five fire pits filled with ash and charcoal line the perimeter of the clearing.

Every night for weeks cultists have crawled out to this dead grove to celebrate their dark rites. The fires burn, the cultists dance naked but for a sack that covers their head, and the black knight holds court with the goatman while the high priest sacrifices a new born baby to the dark lord Baphomet. During the day however, the clearing is empty.

NGR: *This is unholy ground, counts as a small temple to Baphomet.*

The roots under the JuJu tree lead to a small fungus-riddled cavern system (detailed in **The Rot on the Roots** on p.11). Clearing out this “dungeon” should act as a way to cleanse the JuJu Tree of the corrupting influence of Baphomet.

The pagans would love to reclaim this sacred grove and reconsecrate it, while the church would love to see it set aflame (and the grove of Titania while you are at it). Of course to truly stop the cult requires exposing and killing them all.

Julie and Scabs are the leadership in town, there are also 8 other male and 2 female followers who make their way here for the dark rites. Outside of the townsfolk, there is also the Black Knight who rides in each night, and of course the Goat in the Woods, who brings with him a fresh newborn infant each night.

THE BLACK KNIGHT

The Black Knight has never been seen outside of his armour. He simply rode in one day, burned a couple huts and has otherwise remained a bogey man to the locals. He wears a full suit of heavy mail, a bucket shaped great helm, and rides upon a large black stallion. His shield and tabard are both black save for a red inverted pentagram. He has a lance, but does not bring it into the woods, keeping only his broadsword as a weapon. He almost never speaks except to utter single word commands with a deep and somewhat distorted voice. He moves constantly across the fields and moors, the only consistent place he can be found is in the presence of the JuJu tree when the cultists congregate.

OSR: *Level 4 Cavalier, Anti-Paladin or Fighter with 16 strength and maximum hit points.*

NGR: *Level 4, 2 part warrior, 1 part priest. Guard, Weapon specialization (broadsword), Combat Tricks, Fervour. Great Strength (16), Good Agility (13), Poor Awareness (7), Good Luck (13)
Knows: Riposte, Shield Punch, Coup De Gras, Feint*

THE GOAT IN THE WOODS

The so called “Goat in the Woods” is a fearsome creature, to call it half man and half goat would be to understate matters. It has the head of an enormous black goat with a glossy ebony mane, that is true. However its maw is filled with fangs and razor sharp teeth of a dull ashen grey, with a great black tongue that writhes and twirls as it lets out its unnaturally deep and throaty bleats. Its upper body is similar to that of a man, but with massive rippling muscles and massive hands; with its matte black skin a gorilla might be a more apt comparison. Its lower limbs are covered in more shiny black fur, ending with cloven hooves for feet.

This creature lives a short distance away in a small earthen cave under the roots of a long collapsed tree in the southern portion of the Thousand Acre Woods.

The cave is filled to the brim with the bones of small infants, the only other item of note is a wicker bassinet containing a small blanket. If one roots through it they will also find a folded and blood-stained slip of paper containing the following words in a foreign (though still modern) tongue:

“I could not handle the responsibility any more, tonight I take my life. I only hope whoever takes the burden after me has a pure heart and a stronger will”.

If anyone grabs the bassinet after the goat is slain, make note of it (even if they put it down) for it is cursed. Nearby there is a palanquin chair buried under a pile of pine boughs and grass.

OSR: 3 hit dice, AC as leather, Attack as weapon or gore for d6.

NGR: Skin is as tough as light armour, horns count as helmet. Incredibly strong and healthy (20), quick reflexes (agility 13) but low intelligence and easily lead (7 intelligence, 7 social).
Local Legend.

THE NIGHTLY RITUAL

Every night as the sun goes down, the cultists make their way to the JuJu tree. Two men from New Smithwald, two men from the Lumber camp, four men and two women from Corroc proper along with Julie and Scabs. Father McKenzie will also head out to visit Marilyn at the same time.

Julie, Scabs, and the cultists from Corroc will arrive first. The cultists will strip down to nothing but a sack with eye-holes cut out that they wear over their head. They will begin to chant and dance and frolic in the nude as Scabs and Julie stoke the fire pits. Scabs and Julie remain in their robes.

The two men from Smithwald and the two men from the lumber camp head to the Goat in the Woods to fetch him on a palanquin chair, they remain in their robes. The black knight will ride into the clearing next and dismount. He will stand in stern silence, watching over the proceedings.

A few minutes later the cultists carrying the Goat in the Woods upon the palanquin chair will move into the clearing.

The goat will hand a crying newborn to Scabs, who will bow and bring it over to the stone slab. There he will ritually butcher it and smear the blood over the altar, before returning the remains to the goat. The goat will eat some, and then the orgy will begin, with only the black knight remaining out of the festivities.

The goat is quite rough and indiscriminate. If the players are ambushing this coven's activities though, they probably ambushed earlier, with the whole baby sacrifice thing. After that, the Goat is hauled back and the cultists and black knight return from whence they came.

THE ROT ON THE ROOTS

AREA A:

This is the entry. The area is an earthen tunnel with long rotted roots sprawling across the ground. Small mushrooms of all shapes and sizes (the occasional patching being phosphorescent) litter the area. The tunnel forms a ring around where the JuJu tree is up top, blocked off by two cobblestone walls with a healthy dose of crumbling clay plastered over them. The clay is covered with fading cave paintings and scorch marks. The only way out is back through the tangled roots 7 feet above, one person at a time.

AREA B:

The walls of this largely spherical room are made of spongy fungus. Anyone that has recently died who gets any of this fungus on their body will immediately rise as a fungal zombie and burrow into the spongy fungus. There are 7 zombies burrowed into the floor, walls, and ceiling already. If anyone either brings light into the room, digs into the fungus, or starts a large fire anywhere underground (such as throwing flasks of burning oil) the zombies may awaken and attempt to spread their contagion through murder.

OSR: *1/6 chance per action they will awaken.*

NGR: *d6 suspicion per action*

AREA C:

A pile of valuable and shiny looking material is at the back of this long, narrow and cramped tunnel (about two feet wide). The walls are covered in a thick layer of fungal slime that acts as a powerful numbing agent with slight acidic properties (dissolving flesh over the course of a week). Contact with the slime will leave the exposed area paralyzed for several hours, assuming they can remove the slime.

OSR: *Save vs paralysis.*

NGR: *d6 stun damage per round*

Covered in the transparent slime at the end of the tunnel are 3 steel swords as well as piles of gold and silver jewellery (worth 150 gold crowns). Two rubbery and partially dissolved skeletons are also present, laying on top of a giant puffball. If the puffball is touched with anything sharp or pointy it will explode in a cloud of corrosive enzymes for 3d6 damage.

AREA D:

Getting into this sealed area requires knocking down the cobblestone walls with heavy tools. Unless care is taken (by someone who knows about stone working or architecture carefully examining the walls), this will cause a partial cave in for 2d12 damage. The inside of the room is full of salt lines and ash. In between the salt lines are dozens of neolithic weapons (such as bone clubs, flint spears, and daggers made from carved antler), and hundreds of puffballs. Accidentally stepping on a puffball releases a cloud of corrosive spores (1d4 damage to all present). Characters must make an agility/dexterity check for each thing they wish to handle or closely inspect to avoid triggering a cloud of spores.

In the center of the area is a stone hearth containing three small clay statues of stylized imps buried under a layer of ash. Each statue contains the spirit of a dire animal from neolithic times. Breaking one will cause the spirit to attempt to possess the nearest being in a burst of pent up psychic energy.

OSR: roll above level on d6 to possess.

NGR: d20 stress.

The spirits are quite mad and wish to return to the sunshine above ground.

A clay slab several inches thick and covered with ancient pictograms blocks access to AREA E, though it has several obvious cracks in it. A sledgehammer will easily break the clay slab but will also generate a lot of noise.

NGR: d20 suspicion

AREA E:

This chamber contains the heart of the tree, resembling a grey and faintly beating ox heart. It is covered in toadstools and mould. Scraping it clean with a non-iron implement and splashing fresh blood on the heart will get it pumping again. The tree will quickly return to life and release antibodies to kill off the demonic fungal infection within ten minutes. Stabbing it with an iron implement will kill the tree. Entering this room summons the slime mould from the well in AREA F.

NGR: This counts as either building or destroying a small temple as appropriate to your actions

AREA F:

This region has a cobblestone well in an otherwise bare area. The well looks at least 20 feet deep with liquid in it. That liquid is a massive slime mould that can only be harmed by flaming oil, acid vats and similar sorts of things, requiring 100 points of damage to kill and dealing 1d6 damage per round to any characters in the same area as it. The slime mould is demonic and is possessed with a low cunning but will avoid sunlight, which deals 1d12 damage per round to the slime mould.

NGR: It may also be harmed by exorcism.

At the bottom of the well are literally buckets full of shiny metal trinkets (bronze cloak pins, silver coins, etc) worth 100 gold crowns. The slime mould will head to AREA E if the players break the clay slab. It flows like water and will arrive in 3 rounds, pouring into any opening. It will reinfect the tree heart with its touch.

CONSEQUENCES



orroc is at a crossroads. It could be destroyed, have the pagan elements finally stamped out or return to the town and drive out the church.

The Town is Destroyed

If either Ally Mac'Oban and the Grove of Titania are destroyed, or Father McKenzie is disgraced or slain, without the cult of Baphomet also being routed and destroyed then the town will be destroyed by a supernatural curse and legends will speak ill of the dark monsters that now haunt its shell.

Back to the Status Quo

If the cult of Baphomet is destroyed and no other major factions are disrupted, things will just keep carrying on. Father McKenzie will inform the Witchfinder he had sent for that local heroes routed out the problem before he could arrive, thanking him for his journey thus far but letting him know he can return to other business. The players may have earned the rivalry if not enmity of a Witchfinder without even knowing it though.

Pagans Driven Out

If Ally Mac'Oban and Sir Gallan Darnan are slain or driven out, and the cult of Baphomet is routed, then the last remnants of the old faith will also be driven out and the church will permanently take hold. If Father McKenzie has not been disgraced by outing his affair he will take it as a sign he has divine sanction to overlook a few minor faults. This line of rationalization will lead to truly dark times in this village a few decades from now. Corruption is like a worm that conquers the weakened heart.

Pagan Revival

If Ally Mac'Oban is still alive, the cult of Baphomet has been routed, and Father McKenzie has been disgraced then the townsfolk will throw off their ties to the church and revert to following the old ways. The church will be sacked. However unless the JuJu tree was reclaimed without being burned (so it can be reconsecrated to Titania) the Elves will have left. Unless Sir Gallan Darnan is still alive and at least two elves are alive, the Witchfinder that Father McKenzie wrote to will arrive with his retinue and violently purge the area of all pagans, which is largely the entire town, due to player involvement.

MAGICAL ITEMS

THE BONE DAGGER



his is a thin bladed stiletto carved as a single piece from a human femur. The "handle" is carved with the smiling face of a pagan huntress deity. The weapon doubles as a holy symbol and counts as a +1 weapon.

THE BOOK OF AARRRGH

This book has a simple black leather cover with heavy brass buckles and a title that seems to trail off. The pages inside are crisp and fresh should someone open it. The first few dozen pages are two spells: *Keeper of Forbidden Knowledge* and *Screams of Anguish*. After that, the book continues into cursed text. Reading the text will cause it to vanish from the book and release a bound demon from within its pages. The demon is a twelve foot tall nude woman with red skin and the horns of a ram.

OSR: 6 hit dice, AC as leather, 1 attack for d8+1 damage. Requires magic to harm.

NGR: Size modifier 2, 12 strength, 13 agility, 5 social. Requires magic to harm.

THE SCROLL OF MANLEATHER

This is a two foot tall rolled up piece of human leather, tied shut with a bloodstained piece of twine. It contains a spell to enlarge a goose into a monstrous bloodthirsty... goose. The spell appears to have originally been recorded as a tattoo that someone decided to remove from its previous owner. The spell is called *Dire Goose*.

THE STRANGE GOLDEN COIN

This strange gold like coin features a crescent moon image on one side and a full moon on the other. Being near the coin gives a -2 to any health/constitution checks. The metal it is made out of does count as magical, and it could easily be forged into an arrowhead, bolt or shot.

A SMALL LEATHER POUCH FILLED WITH TEETH

The teeth in this bag are all from an adult human (or humanoid). There are 23 teeth in total, all but 4 are charred. Burning a tooth will cause a billowing cloud of fog to fill the area with 75 cubic feet of fog. They quickly become damaged if exposed to light.

NGR: A sage could destroy a tooth to potentially learn "Breath of the Moors" and "Bane of Mush'kar". They are power level 5 each.

THE STONE & IVORY HAMMER

The hammer is a smooth rounded piece of basalt that is affixed to a shaft of carved mammoth ivory with an intricate weaving of copper wire. The hammer was a religious icon to long gone stone age deity of which no one remembers the name, if ever the deity had one.

OSR: An Intelligent +2 hammer, has an intelligence of 5 and an ego of 10.

NGR: +2 bonus from divine blessing. each point of damage dealt also deals 1 point of influence to wielder. The influence wears off as soon as the wielder sleeps. If the wielder is under the influence they will go on a mad berserk rampage.

THE STORK'S BASSINET

Although it appears as a simple wicker bassinet with a wool blanket, it is a cursed item. Every day it teleports to its owner. It then produces a new healthy baby. Every day. Forever. The bassinet can only switch hands when its last owner is killed. Its current owner is the Goat in the Woods. Note that if it has no owner the babies simply pile up. The bassinet cannot be destroyed either, it simply re-appears the next morning. Perhaps there is some sort of mountain where it can meet its doom, but a regular fire will do nothing permanent to it.

OSR: A remove curse will strip an individual from being the basket's owner, but it is not destroyed.

NGR: This item cannot be reverse engineered by a sage as it keeps re-appearing the next morning.

THE SWORD OF ST. YSGTTHROG

The blade is an older style steel arming sword with a simple silver cross set into the blade.

OSR: +2 if wielded by paladin, otherwise +0.

NGR: This is a religious relic for the holy church, with a +2 benefit.

THE VIBRANT ROSE

This is a long stemmed red rose that, despite the obvious age it must be, appears to be freshly cut. Unless destroyed or damaged (by say burning it) this will always be the case. It radiates magic.

OSR: Any magic user brandishing the rose counts as 2 levels higher for purpose of determining the effects of a cast spell.

NGR: This was Lady Gwyngyll's talisman. It has a +5 benefit.



SPELLS

BANE OF MUSH'KAR

NGR

Template: Spell Storage

Difficulty: +1 per power level

Cost: +1 per power level

Range: Touch

Memory: 1 memory slot

Effect: This spell allows the caster to store another spell into the removed tooth of a (currently) still living person. The stored spell will be activated when the item is burned under a flame or when a trigger (see trigger spell) is activated (if it was attached at the tooth's creation). The spell will treat the person who burned the tooth as both the 'caster' and the target. The spell stored in the tooth will weaken by 1 power level for every 10 minutes the tooth is exposed to light. If the caster chooses not to store a spell, the cost paid may be converted into mana, which can be gained when the tooth is burned.

BREATH OF THE MOORS

NGR

Template: Obfuscation

Difficulty: 1 per power level

Cost: 1 per power level

Range: 5(cumulative) cubic feet per power level

Memory: 1 memory slot

Effect: This spell creates a billowing bank of thick fog to fill the area. This causes no breathing difficulties but blocks normal vision. Strong winds or other similar actions can quickly dissipate the effects of this spell.

BEE SWARM

OSR

Magic User Level 1

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 5 feet/level

The caster emits a horrendous swarm of bees from her mouth in a devastating cone with a radius at any given point equal to the distance from the caster. Anything living takes 1d4 + the caster's level in damage from bee stings. They may save for half damage.

NGR

Template: Cone

Difficulty: 3 per power level

Cost: 3 per power level

Range: 5 feet per power level

Memory: 1 memory slot

Effect: Using the rules in 'Cone' deals 1d4 damage per power level with a sharpness of 1, decreasing in damage by 1d4 every 5 feet and expanding outward to have a width equal to its length at any given point.

DIRE GOOSE

OSR

Magic User Level 3

Duration: Permanent

Range: 5 feet/level

The caster causes a target goose to grow into a primal 250lb dire goose, an enraged monster with 3 hit dice, AC as leather, and two wing attacks for d6 damage

NGR

Template: Embiggen

Difficulty: 4(cumulative) per power level

Cost: 5(cumulative) per power level

Range: Short Missile Range

Memory: 1 memory slot

Effect: This spell causes a target goose to grow to be at least a size modifier equal to the power level of the spell and suffer 5 stress per power level of the spell. The stress will drive the goose into a violent rage.

FAERIE SENSE

OSR

Magic User Level 1

Duration: 1 minute/level

Range: Olfactory

The caster gains the ability to smell magical items, beings and effects for the spell's duration. They will give the odour of cinnamon.

NGR**Template:** View Veil**Difficulty:** 1 per power level**Cost:** 1**Range:** Visual**Memory:** 1 memory slot**Effect:** This spell allows the caster to detect magical auras and pierce the veil over the mundane world. The caster will detect any magical beings (including other wizards) items or spells. Creatures or items that currently lack mana or magical power will not be detectable by this spell. The caster is able to detect through the power of smell. Anything magical will have the strong odour of cinnamon. This spell will last for 1 (cumulative) minute per power level.**KEEPER OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE****OSR***Magic User Level 5***Duration:** Permanent**Range:** 10 feet

The caster marks an extra-planar or ethereal being. If that being fails a saving throw they are trapped inside an empty tome (a required spell component) which instantly fills with cursed text. The creature will be bound there until the book is either read or destroyed.

NGR**Template:** Imprison**Difficulty:** 5 per power level**Cost:** 10**Range:** Touch**Memory:** 4 memory slots**Effect:** This spell potentially locks a mystical or incorporeal creature (such as a ghost, demon, djinn or dryad) into a blank tome, which will fill itself with cursed text. The being is trapped and powerless in the item until the book is destroyed or the cursed text is read. To be bound, the creature must be defeated within 1 (cumulative) round per power level of being touched.**SCREAMS OF ANGUISH****OSR***Magic User Level 1***Duration:** Instantaneous**Range:** 100 feet/level

The caster summons a disembodied scream that echoes from somewhere in the spell's area.

NGR**Template:** Cantrip**Difficulty:** +0**Cost:** +1**Range:** N/A**Memory:** 0 memory slots**Effect:** This spell creates a disembodied scream somewhere off in the distance. This can be cast alongside another spell by increasing that spell's difficulty by 1.**WALL OF THORNS****OSR***Magic User Level 2***Duration:** Permanent**Range:** 5 feet/level

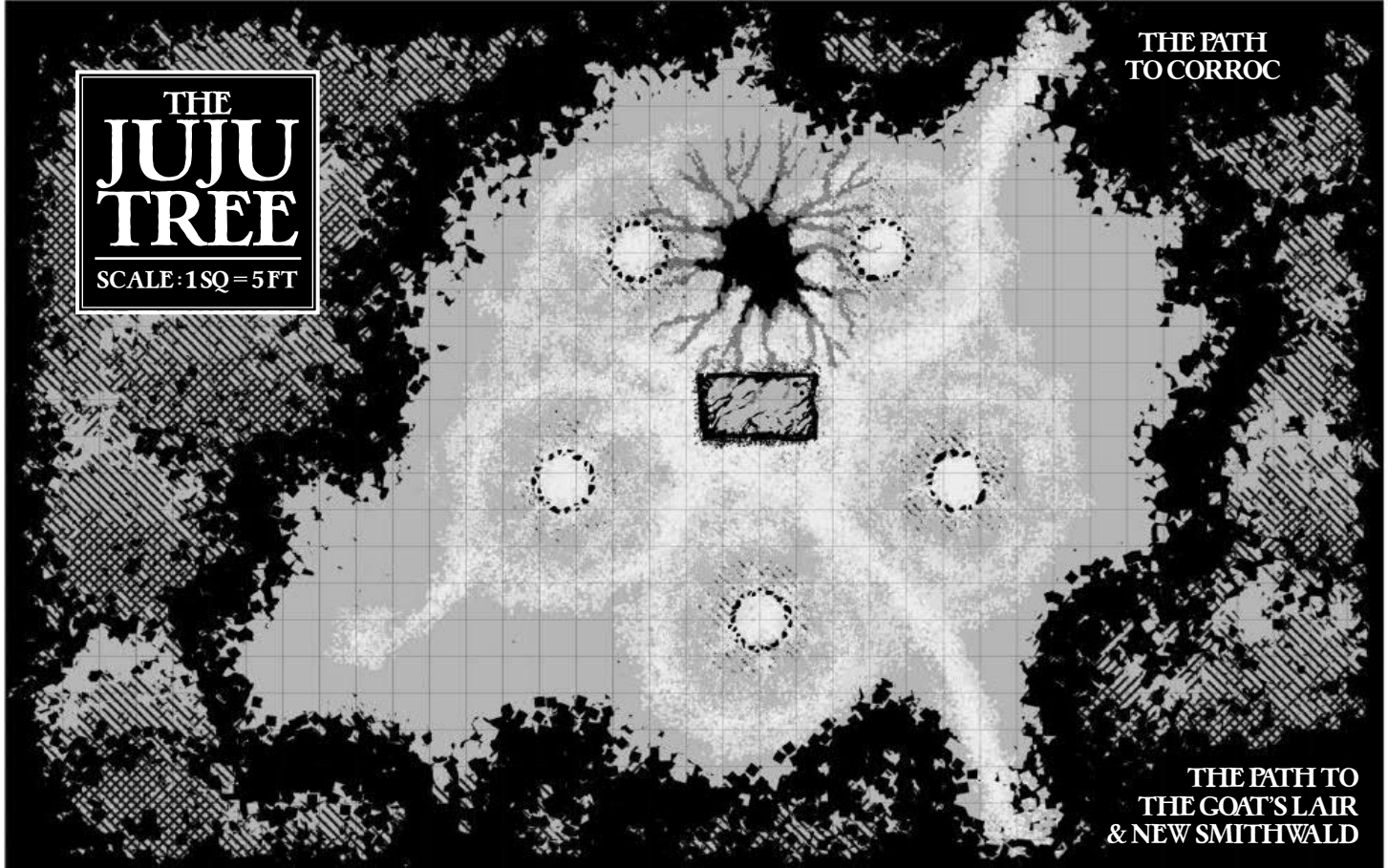
The caster summons a tangled mass of briars to form a wall. It takes 10 points of slashing damage to hack through a five foot chunk of briars. Anyone not wearing metal armour that attacks the briar must save each round or take d4 damage.

NGR**Template:** Barrier**Difficulty:** 2 per power level**Cost:** 6 per power level**Range:** Short Missile**Memory:** 1 memory slot**Effect:** Creates a wall of briars and brambles with a length of up to 5 cumulative feet per power level and a height of 5 feet per power level. Can absorb 10 damage per power level with a DR of 1 per 3 power levels. Attempting to climb or handle the razor sharp thorns deals 1d4 damage. This spell has a duration of 15 cumulative minutes per power level, after which point the wall remains as normal thorns (and may tip over).

**THE
JUJU
TREE**
SCALE: 1SQ = 5FT

THE PATH
TO CORROC

THE PATH TO
THE COAT'S LAIR
& NEW SMITHWALD



**ROT
ON
THE
ROOTS**
SCALE: 1SQ = 5FT

C

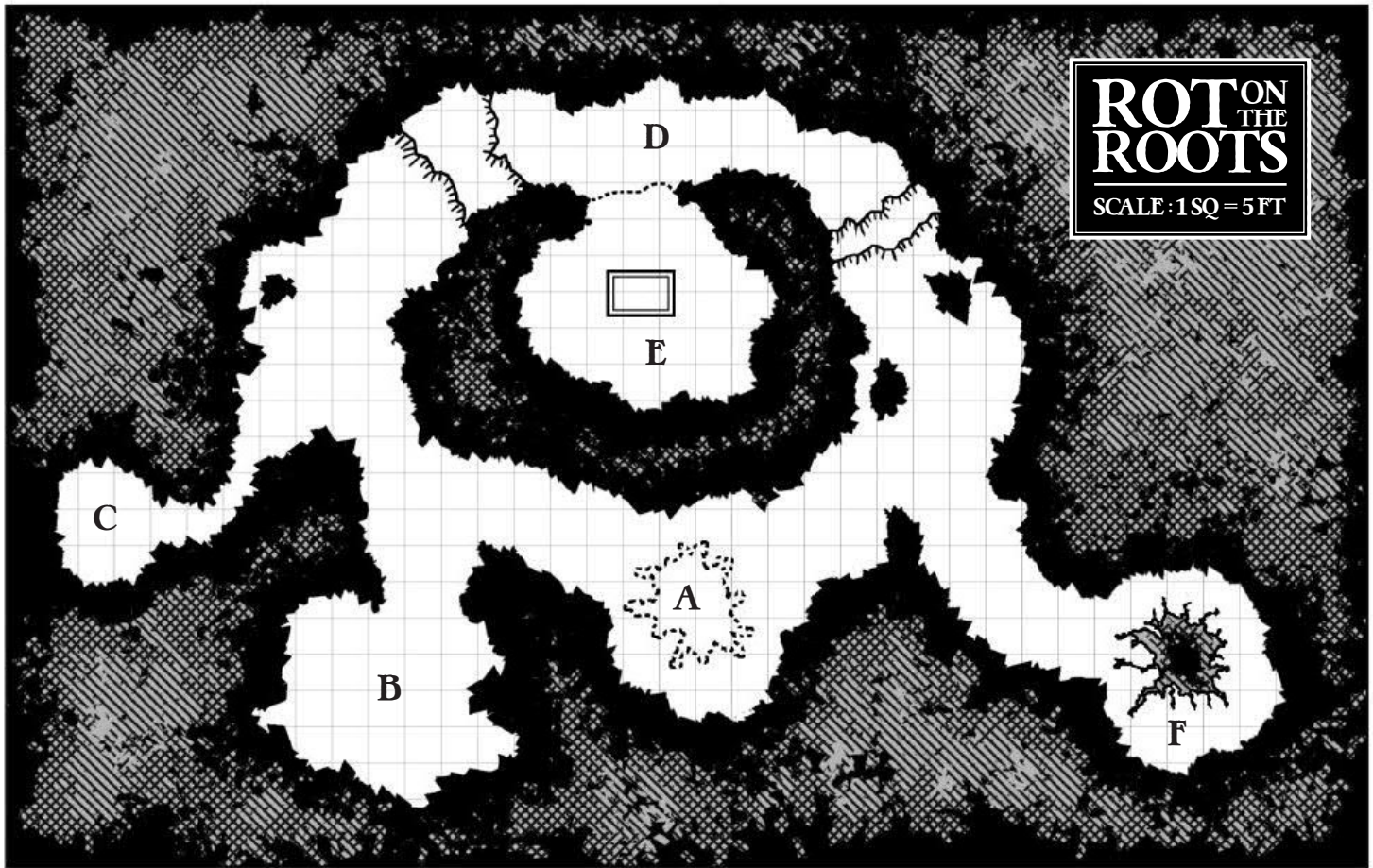
D

E

A

B

F





© ZZARCHOV KOWOLSKI 2013

ISBN 978-0-9920472-2-1