

# THE WOE IN WEALWOOD



By Nathan Ross

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# Background

**Several centuries ago, the vast stretches of the Wealwood were spoken of only in hushed, fearful tones. Dark fey ruled the woods, slaying any mortal who dared approach their domain. That was until a group of sibling adventurers entered the Wealwood and treated with the fey lords, and with wit, grace and bravery brought peace bound with pacts and bargains. With the threat restrained, the siblings claimed the lands that bordered the Wealwood, to rule and protect the people that would settle there. This was the founding of the Vilruk family line, which rules to this day.**

Over time, the lesser fey grew to accept the mortal settlers and forged relationships with them, developing traditions and pacts of their own with the common folk. Meanwhile, the fey lords and ladies remained bound within the Wealwood, limited in their power.

Andres Vilruk, the last heir of the Vilruk line, returned to his ancestral home with his young wife, Elene, to take up his duties to both the people and the Wealwood after his father died. For several years they lived happily, deeply in love. They had a son they both cherished. But one year ago, Andres unknowingly woke a malicious fey entity in the wood. It stalked him, following him back to Wealwood Manor and in the dead of night, attacked. For two nights, Andres Vilruk drove back the creature but on the third, it overwhelmed him. It slew his wife and took his son.

Andres spent months in mourning, haunted by Elene's shade, until he found a diary belonging to one of his ancestors who tamed the Wealwood. It described a hidden and protected ring of stones, deep within the forest. It also told of the power they possessed to bridge the gap between life and death and the price that must be paid to do so. Grief-stricken but resolved, Lord Vilruk knew that he must seek these stones and bring back his family.

To accomplish this, Lord Vilruk confided in his trusted manservant, Bors Hannov, and recruited the services of Anika Fane, an ambitious changeling witch. Together, they abducted several townsfolk from the nearby village of Orrer's Haining and, by ritually murdering them in the woods, created powerful haunts to drive out the fey guardians protecting the stone circle.

They now make their final preparations for an occult ritual at the stone circle that, if successful, will resurrect Lord Vilruk's wife.

## *Book references:*

In the following you'll see certain annotations.

These refer to these books as appropriate:

APG- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
Advanced Player's Guide

ARG- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
Advanced Race Guide

B1- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary

B2- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 2

B3- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 3

B5- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 5

GMG- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
GameMastery Guide

HA- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
Horror Adventures

NC- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
NPC Codex

OA- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
Occult Adventures

UM- Pathfinder Roleplaying Game:  
Ultimate Magic

# Overview

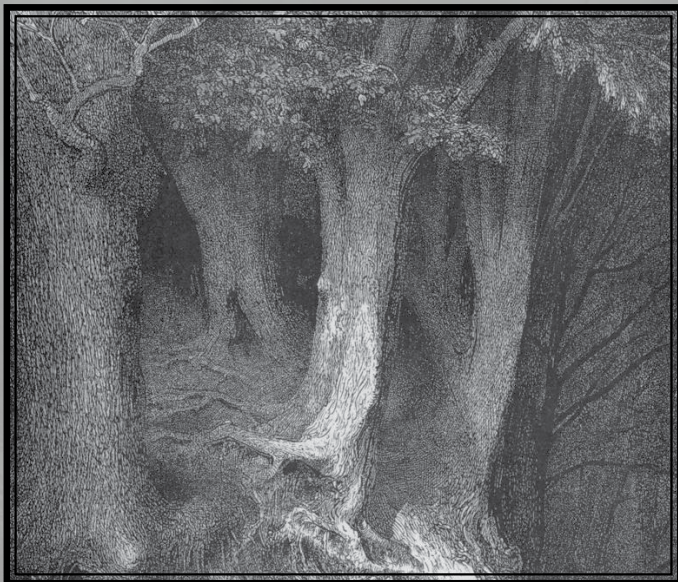
The *Woe in Wealwood* has the PCs investigating the disappearances of several townsfolk in the township of Orrer's Haining. As they do, they uncover the tragic events that drove Lord Vilruk to his current course of action and attempt to prevent him from bringing doom down upon the entire region. The *Woe in Wealwood* is an adventure for four to six 4th-level characters; the PCs should reach 5th level by the end of the adventure.

## This module's events are detailed in three acts.

The first act covers the PCs' arrival in Orrer's Haining, meeting the inhabitants and pursuing clues. These encounters point the PCs into the Wealwood.

The second act describes the PCs' journey through the Wealwood. They discover what has happened to the missing townsfolk and for what purpose. They also learn of the dangers posed to everyone should they fail to stop Lord Vilruk.

Finally, the third act brings Lord Vilruk's plans to a head, revealing his actions, plans, and motivations to the PCs. The adventure concludes with a final confrontation between Vilruk and the PCs.



# Hooks

One of the PCs is friends with Cerianna, a local druid in Orrer's Haining. She invites them to take part in the town's winter solstice celebrations.

The PCs have heard of the blessings and cures bestowed during the annual winter solstice celebrations in Orrer's Haining. They have been hired to escort Ertor Waxlow, who suffers from a minor curse, to the town. Alternatively, consider replacing Ertor with a previously established NPC or letting a PC suffering from a curse learn that the festival's blessings could remove it.

The town of Orrer's Haining trades in a variety of rare herbs and magical reagents, harvested from the Wealwood. A nature-oriented PC has learned of the abundance of herbs and rare plants in the area, providing an opportunity to pick up some rare ingredients.

# Act 1

*The goals of Act 1 are three-fold.*

**First, Act 1** introduces the location, setting and feel of the adventure. The town of Orrer's Haining is a small, pastoral community that has grown for centuries in the shadow of the Wealwood. It has deep ties to the region's fey that have influenced its development and traditions and this should be used to give the town its own unique feel. Colorful bowls on doorsteps that contain gifts of food, a lack of iron tools, and roads that wind inconveniently around trees and boulders sacred to various fey spirits are examples of descriptive elements that can be used to help create this feel.

However, even at the beginning of the adventure, the tranquility of this small town has been disrupted and this tension should only deepen as the PCs conduct their investigation. Further, the Wealwood itself should loom over the investigations in Act 1. Not only do many of the encounters in Act 1 directly point the PCs towards the Wealwood, but it acts as a thematic focus and background for the adventure as a whole: A dark and foreboding wilderness where mere mortals fear to tread. Those who dare enter often disappear or are changed by the Wealwood's sheer otherness.

**Second, Act 1** introduces the major NPCs in the adventure. Allow the players plenty of opportunity to get to know the major NPCs, in particular Bors and Fanya. The establishment of Bors as a friendly and sympathetic character in Act 1 increases the pathos of his confrontation in Act 3, while building the relationship between the PCs and Fanya adds to the sense of urgency when she is later abducted.

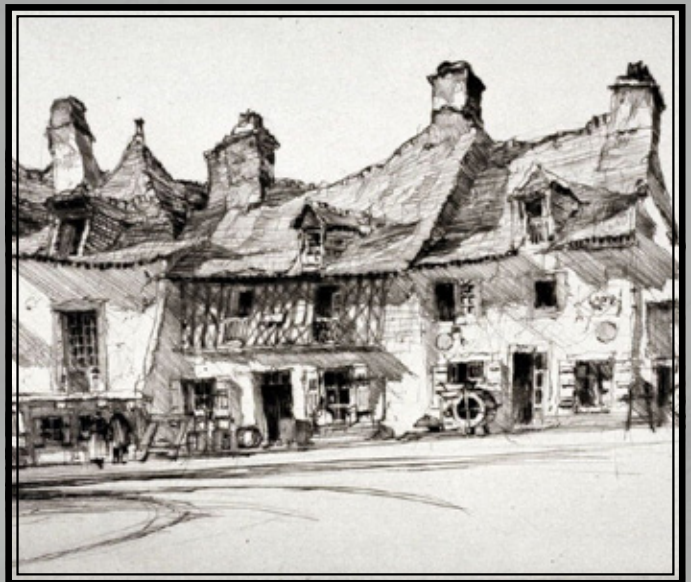
**Third, Act 1** confronts the PCs with the problem (the disappearances of the townsfolk) and then allows them to investigate. The PCs are quickly introduced to the problem with the disappearance of Cerianna. The remaining encounters in Act 1 should be introduced organically, allowing the players to approach the investigation in the manner and pace that suits them. Rumor and gossip amongst the townsfolk can be used to great effect to introduce encounters to the PCs,

provide them further background knowledge of the region, and increase verisimilitude.

Over the course of the investigation, the tone should become grimmer. While the townsfolk may initially believe the PCs are going to find and rescue their missing friends and family, this hope is lost by the end of Act 1. The encounter involving Zolya and the seance is a particularly useful turning point for this mood shift, as information about the seance (and the dead townsfolk) spreads. The meeting with Lord Vilruk at Wealwood Manor should signal the end of Act 1 and spur the PCs to journey into the Wealwood.

## *Arrival in Orrer's Haining*

The PCs arrive as the sun sets in Orrer's Haining, which has only one inn, the Greenwood Bower. The local druid Cerianna invites them to join her for a meal (either because they are old friends or simply as a gesture of welcome if they arrived with Ertor Waxlow, another NPC, or on their own, depending on the hook used) and is happy to explain that the village's annual winter solstice rites begin the following morning before dawn. Cerianna further explains that the ritual involves the sacrifice of a white cow and ensures prosperity and good



luck for the coming year. Further, if the fey of the wood are particularly pleased, they grace the participants with fairy liquor, which has potent magical effects, including the ability to remove curses and other harmful magic. A successful DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that Cerianna is preoccupied (by the village's recent troubles); if questioned, she informs them that the village has had a difficult year, and she hopes this ritual will put an end to its troubles. She demurs on saying anything further before the ceremony for fear of attracting ill fortune. The innkeeper's daughter, Fanya, serves them throughout dinner and offers to wake the PCs and escort them to the ceremonial site the following morning.

## Winter Solstice Ceremony

When the PCs arrive at the ceremonial site the next morning, read or paraphrase the following:

*Tangled thickets of gorse and heather, their flowers still in bloom, ring the grove. More than a dozen local townsfolk are gathered and an undercurrent of worry and agitation is evident in their tense whispers. A white cow tethered nearby chews at the thickets. However, Cerianna is nowhere to be seen.*

If a PC enquires about the ceremony, they discover that Cerianna is missing and the townsfolk are unsure whether to proceed without her. If one of the PCs appears to be nature-oriented (such as having an animal companion or familiar that isn't a domestic animal or wearing hunting garb), one of the townsfolk asks that PC to perform the ritual in Cerianna's stead. Further, if the PCs escorted Ertor or another NPC to Orrer's Haining, he also urges them to conduct the ceremony (see below).

If the PCs decide to conduct the ceremony, they are provided with a book containing details on the ceremony and a ceremonial sledge (each providing a +2 circumstance bonus on their respective checks). Otherwise, the townsfolk conduct the ritual themselves (with a +5 modifier on each check).

As the ceremony begins, the PCs notice nearby fey spirits gathering to watch within the thickets. These spirits attempt to interfere with the proceedings and a successful Perception or Sense Motive check (DC 13) by one of the PCs allows them

to notice this. Failing this check imposes a -2 circumstance penalty on the ceremony's skill checks as the celebrants are caught unaware by the fey interference. Midway through the ceremony, the same spirits attempt to spook the cow. A PC must succeed at a Handle Animal check (DC 15) or suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on the Strength check.

## Faerie Steward Cr 3

### XP 800

CG protective coterie loci spirit (15-ft. radius centered on ritual stone)

Caster Level 3rd

hp 6; Weakness susceptible to corruption; Ceremony Heal or Knowledge (nature) DC 23, Strength DC 16

**Effect** The celebrant offers the fey spirits of the grove the sacrifice of a calf in return for the spirits' blessings. If the ceremony is successful, the cow is slain with a single hammer blow and the body swallowed by mist. A pixie bearing a small oak cask appears. It fills the cask with nectar from the surrounding flowers and presents it to the celebrant. The cask contains 12 draughts of fey liquor that can be drunk any time within the next year. Each draught bestows *heroism* upon the drinker. Consuming four draughts from the cask at once instead bestows a *remove curse effect*.

**Corruption Effect** When the cow is slain, its body rapidly putrefies and is the center of a *stinking cloud* (DC 14).





If the PCs succeed, the townsfolk heartily thank them. The 12 doses of fey liquor are given to the PCs, who may share them with the townsfolk as they wish. The townsfolk have no problem with the PCs using some of the draughts to cure Ertor (or another cursed PC or NPC) and keeping a draught each for themselves but if the PCs choose to keep all 12 draughts, the townsfolk see them as excessively greedy, changing their attitude from friendly to indifferent. A successful DC 13 Sense Motive check allows the PCs to realize that the townsfolk will be offended in time to avoid that by sharing the liquor. Failure to successfully complete the ceremony causes the site to become corrupted. The townsfolk flee the grove, coughing and retching from the noxious fumes.

**Story Award:** If the PCs participate in and successfully complete the Faerie Steward ceremony, award them 800 XP.

The townsfolk are worried about the interference with the winter solstice ceremonies. If the PCs participate in the ceremony, they tell the PCs that several people have gone missing (in addition to Cerianna) in recent weeks and beg the PCs to help locate the missing townsfolk and put a stop to who or whatever is taking them. (If the PCs don't participate, they can overhear worried townsfolk talking about the disappearances.) Fanya offers to assist the PCs in any way she can, showing them around and introducing them to the locals.

As the PCs investigate Orrer's Haining and its surroundings, they hear a variety of rumors and gossip. This may lead to the PCs' investigating some of the encounters described below, e.g. gossip gets the PCs to investigate the witch Anika. However, successful Diplomacy checks can also provide PCs with the following information:

**DC 10+** The lord of the land is an expert on the fey of the Wealwood and a good source of information regarding them.

**DC 15+** The ruling lord, Andres Vilruk, lives alone in Wealwood Manor. His wife and son used to live with him in the manor but vanished roughly one year ago.

The townsfolk don't know why they disappeared and have endless theories and speculation from a torrid affair to murder or disease.

**DC 20+** For several months, a thief has been occasionally stealing food and fine clothes. A few of the townsfolk recall that stories of a strange figure on the roads that pass near the Wealwood began at this time.

Given the town's close relationship with the fey, both iron and cold iron are rare commodities. PCs trying to acquire a cold iron weapon must succeed on a DC 25 Diplomacy check to find someone who owns any. Even with a successful check, the supply is limited to only a dagger and 10 arrows or bolts. Further, if a PC is seen wielding a cold iron weapon by any townsfolk, their attitude worsens by one step.

## *Daalov Mill (CR 4)*

One of the missing townsfolk is Sird, the son-in-law of Pyotr Daalov, a farmer on the outskirts of Orrer's Haining. Pyotr has moved his family into the town proper, fearful for his family's safety. He tells the PCs of a temperamental but protective fey creature that lives in his mill that they call Auntie. It possesses a small talent in divination and may know something of the goings-on among the fey. He suggests they bring a present to offer the ovinnik to placate it, a black rooster is a particularly favored gift.



When the PCs enter the mill, read or paraphrase the following:

*The mill door opens with a creak, allowing beams of light to spill into the darkened building. Flour dust hangs heavy in the air and covers every surface in sight. From some darkened corner, a voice purrs, "Who are you, and where are mine?"*

**Creature:** Auntie is an advanced ovinnik (*Bestiary* 5) that has lived in the Daalov Mill for several generations. Though it is ornery and ill-tempered, it cares deeply for the family that it has claimed for its own and is particularly upset at the disappearance of their son-in-law. Auntie bears the PCs' presence with ill grace, secreting any gift they offer it in some hidey-hole before deigning to talk with them. Auntie tells the PCs that several sprites and minor fey have fled from the Wealwood in recent weeks; something has been hunting them and a strange madness afflicts many that remain.

If the PCs brought it an offering, Auntie grudgingly offers to perform a divination on their behalf. Read or paraphrase the following result:

*Woe they seek and woe they'll bring*

*And naught will come up good*

*Through love will ruin come to ring*

*There's death within the Wood*

Unless the PCs succeed a DC 25 Diplomacy check, Auntie interprets this as a warning that the PCs pose a danger and attacks. If the PCs brought Auntie a gift, they gain a +2 bonus on this check. Auntie tries to sneak attack the character failing the Diplomacy check but if that PC bears weapons, retreats to the rafters to fling fire at them. If the PCs convince Auntie not to fight, it grants one PC the benefit of its luck touch ability.

**Environment:** The mill is dimly lit and filled with flour dust. GMs should place isolated patches of light around the encounter area and the thick dust should grant concealment beyond 10 feet even for those with low-light vision or darkvision. The flour dust is also extremely flammable and could cause an explosion. Any source of flame created in the mill (non-magical or magical) has a 50% chance of triggering an explosion, creating a fireball (5d6, Reflex DC 14 half) centered on that point. Anyone failing the save is also

knocked prone. The fireball deafens any creature in its radius for 1 minute (or 1 round for creatures that successfully saved). For Auntie's own flame attacks, treat the square it is targeting as the center of the fireball effect. When a flour explosion occurs, the mill creaks ominously as the building becomes unsteady. If a second explosion should occur, the building creaks again, pieces of roof and wall collapsing and allowing light to spill into the mill, increasing the light level to normal.

**Story Award:** If the PCs avoid combat with Auntie, award them 1,200 XP, as if they had defeated it in combat.

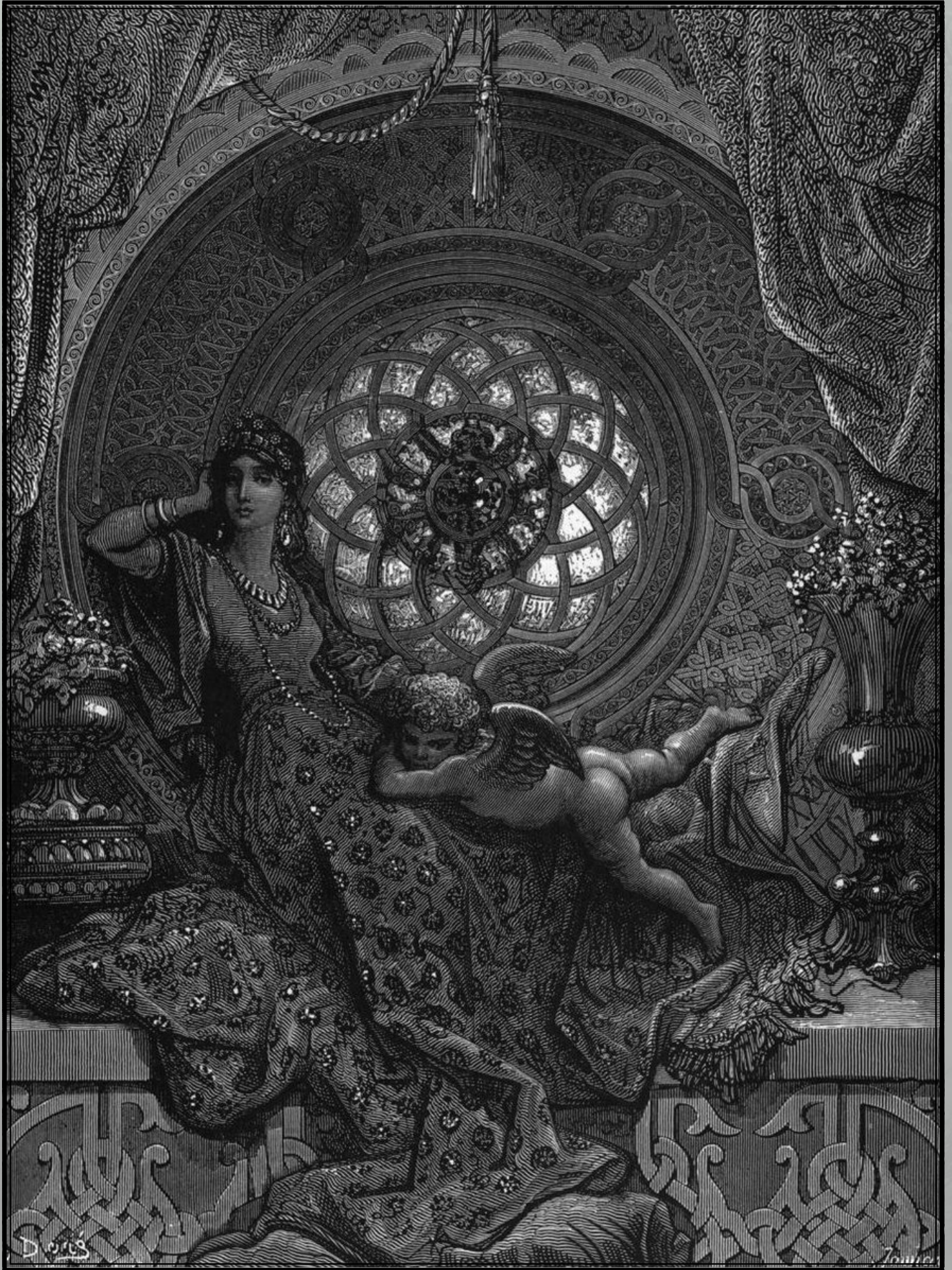
## *Seance*

The PCs are approached by a local medium, Zolya Wynn. She explains that she has been having strange dreams recently and fears the worst may have happened to the missing townsfolk. She asks the PCs to help her conduct a seance to contact the spirits of the dead and allay her fears. She wishes to have the PCs on hand in case the spirits are angry, which, given the violent imagery of her dreams, they might well be.

When the PCs go to Zolya's home and are ready to conduct the seance, read or paraphrase the following:

*The heady and overpowering scent of incense and aromatic herbs hangs in the air as Zolya instructs you to link hands in a circle. On the table lies a tarnished silver ring, a wedding band. Zolya begins to chant, beseeching the spirits of the dead as she sways back and forth. The ring begins to rattle across the table as Zolya's chanting grows louder and louder, her voice a bellow, when she stops. Her eyes are open but unseeing and in a quiet voice she states, "They are here."*

The seance has summoned a rapping spirit<sup>OA</sup> with which the PCs may try to communicate. The spirit is initially unfriendly, loudly banging upon surfaces and throwing small objects about the room when someone speaks. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can improve the spirit's attitude to friendly. The summoned spirit does not know who kidnapped it, but does know that it was slain within the Wealwood and cannot rest until its remains have been recovered. Allow players a great deal of freedom in devising their own means of communicating with the spirit. Devising codes to interpret



the spirit's knocking, using talking boards to spell out answers, even upgrading the haunt to a demanding dead and allowing it to briefly speak through one of the PCs or Zolya are but a few options. Once the seance is concluded, Zolya thanks the PCs and pleads with them to get justice for the townsfolk and bring their spirits peace.

**Development:** After the seance, rumors begin to spread through the town that the townsfolk are not just missing but dead. The mood of the town worsens and the townsfolk become more desperate for the PCs to put a stop to the situation. Interactions with townsfolk that have an attitude of indifferent or worse (such as if the PCs had chosen to keep all of the draughts of fey liquor) worsen from this point; PCs suffer a -2 penalty on Diplomacy check in convincing townsfolk to offer assistance or favors.

## *Travelling Hedge-witch*

Following the directions of several townsfolk, the PCs can find a brightly painted caravan and the campsite of the changeling hedge-witch Anika Fane, who has been travelling between nearby villages selling cures and remedies for the last several months. The townsfolk make it clear to the PCs that she is not a local and that they would not be surprised if she were involved in the disappearances.

Anika greets the PCs warmly, trying to get them interested in the various wares she has for sale. If asked about the missing townsfolk, Anika admits that she has heard rumors and blames her racial heritage on the prejudice she faces.

[Among her wares (mostly alchemical cures and 1st-level potions), Anika sells a number of charms that she has crafted to protect against fey magic. These grotesque amulets appear to be the mummified remains of sprites, though Anika claims that they are carved from mandrake roots. The charms provide a +2 luck bonus against the first enchantment or illusion spell cast on the wearer. However, they provide a -4 penalty on Diplomacy checks against fey creatures. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that the charms ARE the mummified remains of sprites and the full abilities of these items (including the penalty to Diplomacy).

## Anika Fane

Anika (female adult changeling witch 5) has long faced the prejudice and mistrust of other people due to her hag heritage and over time this has warped her sense of morality. She views the lives of others as tools to further her investigations into primordial secrets and mysteries. While she is mostly able to conceal her contempt and disdain for others under a mask of civility, she is quick to lose her temper when she feels persecuted or when others engage in foolish behavior. At these times, she exhibits a scathing and incendiary wit with which she lambasts those who have drawn her ire.



If confronted with this knowledge, Anika implores the PCs to keep quiet about the matter. If the PCs attempt to attack or restrain her, a charm upon her wrist burns to ash and she is swallowed by mist and teleported to safety.

**Treasure:** Should the PCs threaten Anika with their knowledge of the sprite charms, she offers them *2 potions of cure light wounds, a potion of mage armor and a potion of alter self* for them to keep their silence on the matter. Should she be forced to flee, the PCs can search her caravan for the same, as well as uncover enough cold iron weapon blanchAPG for two doses.

**Story Award:** If the PCs learn that the charms are made from the remains of fey, award them an additional 400 XP.

## *Cerianna's Home*

If PCs decide to search Cerianna's home for clues, read or paraphrase the following:

Cerianna's home appears to have been ransacked. Reams of parchment are scattered across every surface. Some of the pages are attached to the walls, and while in a jumble, it's clear that some of them have been hanging there a while, from the dust and cobwebs.

The copious papers strewn across her home contain records of Cerianna's own investigations into the missing townsfolk; lists of the missing and where they were last seen and a list of various fey creatures that themselves have gone missing. Cerianna's papers also indicate several individuals that she suspected might be involved in the disappearances including Anika (an outsider to the town with strange magics), the innkeeper of the Greenwood Bower (trying to attract business from out of town), Bors (seems to be one of the first to know when someone disappears) or the villagers themselves (under a strange fey compulsion).

A successful DC 20 Perception check uncovers a dagger-sized thorn within the mess, the tip of which appears to be smeared with blood. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the thorn as belonging to a species of plant that secretes a powerful paralytic poison.

Asking any of the townsfolk about the thorn eventually leads back to Fanya, the innkeeper's daughter, who the villagers know is an expert on local flora. She identifies the thorn as belonging to a plant that grows in the Wealwood. Further, Fanya has access to the psychometry skill unlockOA and is happy to attempt to read the thorn on the PCs' behalf (she possesses a +9 modifier on Appraise). If successful, Fanya tells them that she sensed two beings wielded this thorn, one full of love and one of anger. She also tells them that she felt a burst of recognition from Cerianna when she was stabbed. If any of the PCs belong to a class with psychic spellcasting or possess the Psychic Sensitivity feat, they may perform this skill unlock instead.

## *To Wealwood Manor*

Several of the townsfolk mention that the local lord, Andres Vilruk, is an expert on the Wealwood and the local fey and urge them to consult him if they plan to enter the wood. He lives in his family home of Wealwood Manor. They can find Lord Vilruk's chief man-at-arms and servant, Bors Hannov, in the Greenwood Bower, sitting down for a meal before returning to the manor with supplies. He offers to take the PCs to Wealwood Manor and make introductions.

The PCs have the opportunity to talk to Bors, both at the inn, and if they take him up on the offer to escort them to the manor, and discover more about his master, Lord Vilruk, and any rumors they may have heard about town. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy check prompts Bors to share some of his memories about Lord Vilruk's wife, Elene, and reveal that she died one year ago due to "something from the wood." If the PCs share stories from their own lives, particularly relating to the loss of loved ones, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus on this check. Further conversation is interrupted as the cart is halted by a figure in the road.

**Creature:** The figure standing in the road is a fey creature known as a heart-shorn. These creatures spend most of their existence as incorporeal spirits of the forest, unable to meaningfully interact with the world. However, they have the ability to create a wooden totem that allows them to possess the body of another creature and twist it into their own. They

## Bors Hannov

Bors (treat as an old grizzled veteran [*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*]) has remained a faithful servant and man-at-arms for the Vilruk family his entire adult life. He is intensely loyal and dedicated to Lord Vilruk, the last scion of the family line, though he has severe misgivings and regrets about the plot to resurrect Elene Vilruk. GMs should portray Bors as a quiet, introspective old man past the prime of his life.



use this ability to indulge in physical vices such as gorging on food and drink. This totem also makes it impossible for them to be truly destroyed, their bodies reforming near the totem if they are slain. As such, they often hide their totem away in a secret location. A heart-shorn's possession of a creature is imperfect though, and the continued mental resistance of its host slowly causes erratic and unpredictable behaviour. As

a result, heart-shorn often take the young or mentally infirm as hosts.

The heart-shorn confronting the PCs attacked Wealwood Manor one year ago, slaying Lord Vilruk's wife Elene and abducting his son Kostas, whose body it now possesses. It has taken the child's name as its own (introducing itself to the PCs as Kostas) and issues increasingly outlandish and impossible demands from Bors and the PCs (fine food and wine, rich silks and fabrics, jewels etc).

If the PCs refuse its demands, it becomes enraged and attacks. If the PCs try to trick the heart-shorn, perhaps by promising to bring back the demanded goods, the heart-shorn asks them to swear it. Bors cautions the PCs against this as agreements with fey are often magically binding. Otherwise, Bors exhorts the creature to leave them be in the name of the pacts with the Vilruk family. This also enrages the creature, which then attempts to attack Bors. Bors uses full defense actions if being attacked or aid another actions to assist the PCs in fighting the heart-shorn. The heart-shorn fights until slain, its body collapsing into a pile of leaves and sticks as its spirit returns to its totem to regenerate. After the encounter, Bors seems particularly shaken and if the PCs query further, he mentions that Lord Vilruk's son was also named Kostas.



## KOSTAS, HEART-SHORN CR 4

**XP 1,200**

CE Medium fey

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +10

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

**hp** 45 (7d6+21)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

**DR** 5/cold iron

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +9 (1d4+5)

**Special Attacks** incorporeal lunge

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The heart-shorn leaps into combat with little regard for its safety, using its incorporeal lunge to close with lightly armored and seemingly vulnerable enemies.

**Morale** The heart-shorn fights until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Cleave, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +11, Climb +15, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +12

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Sylvan

**SQ** maddened mind, rejuvenating totem

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Incorporeal Lunge (Su)** As a full-round action, a heart-shorn may perform the charge action, gaining the incorporeal quality during its movement and attacking with both claw attacks at the end of its movement.

**Maddened Mind (Su)** Once per day, when a heart-shorn fails a saving throw against a mind-affecting

effect, as an immediate action it can shunt that effect into a possessed creature's consciousness instead. When it does so, it is not affected by the mind-affecting effect, but for the normal duration of the effect, the heart-shorn loses any penalties to Wisdom and Charisma from rejuvenating totem and gains a +1 bonus on damage rolls.

**Rejuvenating Totem (Su)** A heart-shorn is capable of creating an intricate totem to house its incorporeal spirit. Once created, a heart-shorn is capable of permanently possessing a single creature and reshaping their flesh into a body of its own. Without such a totem, a heart-shorn is only capable of manifesting its corporeal form for 1 minute each day, forced to spend the rest of its time as an invisible and incorporeal spirit.

A heart-shorn's totem prevents its corporeal form from truly dying. If a heart-shorn is reduced to 0 hp, its body collapses into a bundle of leaves and branches while its soul returns to its totem where a new body forms over the next 24 hours. In addition, each time this occurs, the heart-shorn gains a cumulative -2 penalty to Wisdom and Charisma (minimum 1) as the possessed creature fights to reassert control.

If a heart-shorn's totem is destroyed, the possessed creature is immediately freed from its control and their body slowly reverts to its original appearance over several rounds.

## Wealwood Manor

The PCs arrive at Wealwood Manor, a crumbling and decaying manor home, partially overgrown by the Wealwood, which the estate abuts. Bors invites the PCs into the front hallway

and bids them wait there while he fetches Lord Vilruk (male human ranger [trapper] 5/spiritualist 3), see page 28 for his full statistics.





## Andres Vilruk

Lord Andres Vilruk is the titled lord of most of the lands that adjoin the Wealwood and his family line are the self-appointed keepers of the wood, maintaining the peace between fey and mortal. Once, Andres was a firm and just ruler, but the loss of his family at the hands of a strange fey creature, a heart-shorn, cast him down into blackest despair. Andres withdrew from the world, wallowing in his memories and his loss, speaking to none but the phantom of his dead wife, Elene.

It is only with the discovery of a circle of stones deep in the Wealwood that Lord Vilruk has emerged from his ennui. He is now driven by a single-minded determination borne of hope: that he can resurrect his wife and together they can find what became of their son.

When interacting with the PCs, Lord Vilruk presents himself with an air of grave courtesy. However, his attention waxes and wanes between apathy and intense focus, depending upon how closely the topic of conversation relates to his goal of bringing back his family. He is prone to lapse into periods of brooding silence and if thwarted, moments of wild temper.

GMs should feel free to showcase these aspects of Lord Vilruk's personality using the interactions between Vilruk and Bors. For example, Bors may express misgivings when Lord Vilruk offers the PCs a 1,000 gp reward for information, as the estate is running perilously low on money, causing Lord Vilruk to lash out at him.

GMs can further highlight Lord Vilruk's strange nature by making use of his psychic abilities. The phantom of his wife Elene can allow him to possess seemingly uncanny perceptive abilities as she also watches through his eyes. While mage hand may be a common and ubiquitous spell, a psychic spellcaster requires neither verbal nor somatic components to cast it, making it seem a strange and unsettling ability when used sparingly. This can be further utilised if Lord Vilruk loses his temper, as loose objects may shaken or be thrown about, calling to mind stories of poltergeists.

When Bors returns with Lord Vilruk, they retire to the kitchen (as much of the manor is unfit for human habitation) and Lord Vilruk listens to the PCs. He tells them that the depths of the Wealwood are an unsafe place and that the fey that live within are not like the half-civilised creatures in the town. If, during the conversation, the PCs mention the encounter with Kostas, Vilruk starts and immediately inquires further. Otherwise, Bors mentions the encounter to his lord. He identifies the creature as a malevolent fey spirit and implies that this creature might be responsible for the disappearances. Lord Vilruk offers the PCs 1,000 gp if they are able to discover any clues as to the location of its lair.

In addition, Lord Vilruk offers the PCs the following advice:

Nothing is freely given. The PCs should not accept any gift or favor, no matter how freely given, but insist on offering a token in trade. This advice goes the other way as well; the PCs should not offer favors or gifts without expecting something in return. A successful DC 13 Knowledge (nature or local) check allows the PCs to recall similar traditions and folklore about the fey and reveals the risks of not following these traditions as outlined in Act 2.

There are more than just fey in the woods. The magic of the fey has imbued many of the animals and plants within the woods with strange abilities and a kind of sentience. These creatures can be just as dangerous as the fey themselves.

Be wary of kindness. Lord Vilruk tells them stories of travellers who found themselves lost in the Wealwood and were led into its depths because they listened to the directions of kind fey.

Should any of the PCs sneak off and explore the manor without Bors or Lord Vilruk, refer to the detailed description of Wealwood Manor in Act 3. If they are discovered, the entire party will be thrown out and warned not to return. Lord Vilruk is greatly angered by this and appears on the brink of violence, held in check by Bors. Bors is also upset by the PCs actions and breach of trust but as he sees them from the estate, seeks to explain his lord's anger, stating that he still grieves for Elene and his son.

# Act 2

Act 2 commences as the PCs conclude their investigations in Orrer's Haining and venture into the Wealwood. An ancient place where the fey rule, the Wealwood is a place of perpetual twilight, the ancient trees that tower overhead allowing only feeble rays of sunlight to reach the forest floor. As such, the tone of the adventure should shift markedly from Act 1. The PCs are constantly being watched by the inhabitants of the Wealwood and a constant sense of danger and tension should pervade this act, a pressure driving the PCs to find out as much as they can before leaving the woods. This is also reflected in the pacing of Act 2 in comparison with Act 1. Whereas Act 1 can proceed at a pace set by the players, GMs should drive and control the pace of Act 2, alternating between moments of discovery (the encounters below) and exploration as they seek them out.

GMs should feel free to vary the order in which the players proceed through the encounters of Act 2 to suit the actions the PCs may take as they explore the Wealwood. Some examples of how encounters may be linked are found within the encounter descriptions. Further, GMs wishing to expand Act 2 further can insert additional haunts for the PCs to encounter throughout the forest, giving the PCs a secondary quest to recover the bodies of all the missing townsfolk, that they may be put to rest.

The haunts created by Lord Vilruk have driven away many of the local fey and animals inhabiting the area. As the PCs approach each of the following encounters, a successful DC 20 Perception or DC 16 Survival check allows the PCs to realise that the silence of the forest is unusual, allowing the PCs to plan and prepare before reaching these encounters. If additional haunts are being placed into the woods, allow a cumulative +1 bonus on these checks each time they encounter a haunt.

The primary goal of Act 2 is to allow the PCs to uncover four pieces of crucial information that inform the choices they make in Act 3. The first is that the missing townsfolk have been taken to drive the fey of the Wealwood away from an

ancient stone circle. Second, that the use of the stone circle will taint the surrounding land for miles around. The third piece of information is the crucial link between the Vilruk family and the peace between the fey of the Wealwood and the surrounding peoples. The final piece of information is the location of Kostas' totem.

The warnings of Lord Vilruk should not be dismissed by the PCs. Throughout Act 2, whenever the PCs accept a gift or a favor without offering something in return, they receive a cumulative -1 penalty to their saving throws for the next 24 hours as ancient fey magics of obligation adversely affect them.

PCs can also find a variety of rare plants and herbs throughout the Wealwood. If PCs forage or search for profitable plants, a successful DC 15 Survival check allows the PCs to find 1,200 gp worth of rare herbs during their exploration of the Wealwood.

## *Haunted Grove (CR 6)*

The PCs enter a small grove, the body of one of the missing townsfolk lying in the open. The man was slain by Lord Vilruk in order to create a whispering dead haunt, driving off all the animals and fey inhabiting the area. Those that didn't flee in time have been driven mad by its presence, grouping together in a self-destructive swarm. As the PCs approach the slain body, read or paraphrase the following:

The body of one of the villagers lies in the center of the grove. On his face, strange runes and sigils are painted in dark ink, spilling across his cheeks and down his throat. Though the air is still, a susurrations like faint, indistinct whispers can be heard.

## WHISPERING DEAD CR 2

XP 600

NE spiteful haunt (10 ft. radius)

**Caster Level** 4th

**Notice** Perception DC 13 (to hear unclear whispers)  
hp 4; weakness susceptible to cold iron; trigger proximity; reset 1 day

**Effect** When this haunt is triggered, unceasing whispers of surrounding dangers target any creatures in its radius with *paranoia* (DC 15 Will to negate). In addition, a target that fails this saving throw cannot forego saves against harmless or beneficial effects while under this effect. Surrounding creatures' appearances appear warped and monstrous to the victim's eyes.

**Destruction** Burning the villager's remains on a pyre of green wood from the surrounding area brings peace to these restless spirits.

**Creatures:** The haunt's triggering attracts two nearby fey swarms and a grig. The fey swarms attack the PCs while the grig uses its fiddle supernatural ability throughout the encounter against all targets, including the swarms. The individual fey that make up the swarms are filthy, covered in muck, gore and suppurating wounds, crawling over one another in a single heedless mass.

The swarms attack the PCs relentlessly within the confines of the grove but doesn't pursue beyond the grove unless attacked from outside the borders, with the swarm dispersing rapidly when it leaves the grove. After the encounter, the PCs can find a couple of the individual sprites that made up the swarm. Interaction with these sprites reveals them to be driven irrevocably mad by prolonged exposure to the haunt.

## FEY SWARM CR 3

XP 800

CN Tiny fey (swarm)

**Init** +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 size)

**hp** 30 (5d6+10)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** +4 bonus on saves against mind-affecting effects, resist cold and electricity 5, swarm traits; DR 2/cold iron

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** swarm (2d6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 13)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +7)

3/day – *dancing lights*

1/day – *entangle* (DC 13), *faerie fire*, *glitterdust* (DC 14)

### TACTICS

During Combat The fey swarms use their long step ability as often as possible to keep themselves on top of their enemies.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 1, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 3, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

**Skills** Fly +22, Perception +13

**Languages** Sylvan

**SQ** long step (30 ft., once/1d4 rounds), swarm traits

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Long Step (Su)** A fey swarm can teleport up to 30 feet as a move action. It may use this ability once every 1d4 rounds.

## GRIG CR 1

(Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2)

**XP 400**

**hp 4**

**Development:** PCs seeking further haunts within the Wealwood may use either Survival (DC 20) or a combination of detect magic or detect undead and Perception (DC 15). Successfully tracking the spread of the haunts across the forest leads the PCs to the guardian of the stones instead of it finding them, as well as running across several more whispering dead or demanding dead hauntsOA.

## *Kostas and the Hangman Tree (CR 6)*

Fey are not the only creatures that can pose a danger within the Wealwood. Many animal and plants have grown and been changed from the constant presence of the fey.

**Creatures:** Hangman trees hide among the normal trees of the Wealwood, waiting for meals to wander past. As the PCs explore the woods, they are ambushed by a young hangman tree.

While the PCs are fighting the hangman tree, the heart-shorn Kostas intervenes, recovered from being slain, and assists the PCs in the fight. The heart-shorn has begun to lose control of its possession of Kostas and the boy's personality has begun to bubble to the surface. As a result, the PCs find the heart-shorn much friendlier and less aggressive than in the previous encounter and with a more childlike demeanor.

## YOUNG HANGMAN TREE CR 6

(Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2)

**XP 2,400**

**hp 68)**

**Development:** Should the PCs attempt to talk with Kostas in an effort to find the location of its lair, or how it is still alive, the heart-shorn informs them of the existence of its totem and that it cannot be killed because the totem is hidden away in a place where no one will ever find it.

PCs can cajole the location of the totem from Kostas with a successful Bluff or Diplomacy check against Kostas' Sense Motive (+13). A successful DC 10 Sense Motive check by the PCs gives them the sense that the creature is incredibly vain and that by praising and complimenting the creature, they may attempt aid another checks to provide assistance on the Bluff/ Diplomacy check.

### **The location of Kostas' totem is as follows.**

*Deep in the wood, there is a waterfall. Above that waterfall, there is a stony crag. Upon that stony crag grows a gnarled tree. On that gnarled tree is a knot hole. It is within that my totem lies.*

When providing this information to players, provide each sentence individually as Kostas prompts the PCs to enquire further, that it may show off its own cleverness.

The heart-shorn then bids the PCs to chase it, telling them that it is too fast for them to catch. The PCs may make a DC 20 Acrobatics check in order to follow. Failure indicates that the PCs lose the heart-shorn, wandering lost until the guardian of the stones finds them. A successful check allows the PCs to follow the heart-shorn until they reach the grove of the sleeping king. They may either explore that encounter or attempt a Stealth check against Kostas' Perception to follow it back to its lair.

**Story Award:** Though Kostas may help the PCs in the fight against the hangman tree, award them XP as if they had defeated it on their own. If the PCs talk to Kostas after the fight and determine the location of its totem, award them a further 500 XP.

## *The Sleeping King (CR 4)*

The PCs discover a sleeping fey king and his attendant. The king has been asleep for many centuries since it struck a bargain with the first Vilruks, that it should remain in slumber until the last of the Vilruk line was no more. Read or paraphrase the following:

From a massive and ancient tree grows a wooden throne. A figure, wearing a crown of intertwined greenwood and antler, sits there, asleep. The sleeping figure is attended to by a pixie, which flits about, brushing away dirt and chattering to itself.

Upon noticing the PCs, the pixie bids them bow before his majesty before offering them a cup of wine from a silver platter. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (nobility) check or DC 15 Diplomacy check allows the PCs to impress the pixie with their courtly manners. It introduces itself simply by the name Attendant and proves happy to converse with the PCs and answer any questions they may have, as it has gotten somewhat lonely.

It knows little about the haunts inhabiting the surrounding woods but does remark that far fewer of his majesty's subjects have been attending court to pay homage to him. The key piece of information for the PCs to learn here is that if the Vilruk line were to end, many bargains and pacts, such as the one made with the fey king, would be broken and the fey of the Wealwood would likely attack the settlements that now exist upon its borders.

### **ATTENDANT CR 4**

**PIXIE XP 1,200**

*(Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary)*

**hp 18****Story Award:** If the PCs are able to get the information the pixie is trying to convey, award them 250 XP.



## Guardian of the Stones (CR 7)

As the PCs continue to explore the Wealwood, something searches for them. A nymph guardian of the stone circle has been forced from her home and role by the haunts created by Lord Vilruk. Unable to stop him himself, the guardian approaches the PCs in an effort to gain their assistance.

**Creature:** The guardian of the stone circle is a nymph bound by earlier members of the Vilruk family to protect the site and prevent any from discovering it or utilising its magical power. As a result, it cannot reveal the location or precise abilities of the stone circle to the PCs nor can it reveal that Lord Vilruk is the one responsible.

Asking the PCs for their help, the nymph speaks in an oblique manner in an effort to reveal the following:

Within the Wealwood lies a stone circle, a site of great magical power.

Haunts are being used to drive fey away from the stone circle and prevent the guardians of this site from protecting it.

If the stone circle is used for a dark purpose (which includes the ritual Vilruk is planning to resurrect his wife), it would taint the surrounding area for many miles with dark, corrupting magic.

If the PCs try to directly gain answers from the guardian, it becomes agitated and pained, telling them that it is oath-bound not to speak on the matter. Continued direct pressure by the PCs causes the guardian to attempt to flee in an effort to keep its oaths, though it will continue to follow them through the wood and try to subtly convey the information. The PCs can interpret the guardian's subtle clues with a successful DC 20 Sense Motive check with good roleplaying providing a +2 bonus on this check or eliminating the need for one entirely.

If the PCs agree to assist the nymph, it bestows its favor upon one of the PCs, using its inspiration ability.

## GUARDIAN OF THE STONES

### NYPH CR 7

(Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary)

XP 3,200

hp 60

**Story Award:** If the PCs are able to get the information the nymph is trying to convey, award them 1,000 XP.



# Act 3

As the PCs emerge from the Wealwood, the events of Act 3 drive them toward a conclusion. While the pacing of the adventure should slow as the PCs return to the safety of the village and are given the opportunity to share the information they discovered about the heart-shorn with Lord Vilruk, the following events should then proceed at a rapid pace as the PCs are forced to abandon caution if they are to stop Lord Vilruk and save Fanya.

The information that the PCs learned in the Wealwood should pose a clear dilemma to the players: While Lord Vilruk is engaging in evil and will bring great harm the surrounding area if he succeeds, his life and continued rulership prevent an ancient fey ruler from rising up and destroying the people settled around the Wealwood. Further, the exploration of Wealwood Manor should allow the PCs to sympathise with his motives, even though they seek to stop him. One potential solution to the dilemma facing the PCs is presented in this module (the rescue of Lord Vilruk's son from the possession of the heart-shorn). However, GMs are encouraged to allow the players to explore this dilemma and come up with alternative solutions.

## *Midnight Kidnapping* (CR 3)

The PCs emerge from the Wealwood and are able to quickly return to Wealwood Manor with news about the heart-shorn's totem if they choose. Lord Vilruk thanks the PCs for their assistance and pays them the agreed 1,000 gp. He suggests that they retire back to the village; he will consult his ancestors' records for mention of such a location and will contact the PCs if he needs their assistance in tracking the creature further.

When the PCs return to the inn to rest, they are woken in the middle of the night by a muffled scream. Upon coming downstairs, they find the common room in disarray and Bors standing over the unconscious body of the innkeeper. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Knuckles white upon the haft of his weapon, Bors looks up with hooded eyes. "Please, just let us finish this. Let us bring Elene back, so that my lord may have some peace."*

### **BORS HANNOV CR 3**

(grizzled veteran *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*)

**XP 800**

**LN old male human warrior 6**

**hp 39**



Bors attempts to stop the PCs if they try to leave the inn and pursue Lord Vilruk, who has kidnapped Fanya. However, if confronted with the actions of Lord Vilruk, the trauma and pain that he has caused, a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check causes Bors to lay down his weapons. Further, mentioning the dangers the ritual poses to the region as a whole grants a +4 circumstance bonus on this check.

**Development:** The PCs learn from either Bors (if he's not slain) or the innkeeper (after he's been treated and regained consciousness; he's been knocked unconscious with nonlethal damage and can be roused with a successful DC 10 Heal check or any magical healing) that Lord Vilruk has taken Fanya and returned to Wealwood Manor.

**Story Award:** If the PCs gain Bors' cooperation without combat, award them 800 XP as if they'd defeated him in combat.

## *Wealwood Manor*

Upon arriving at Wealwood Manor, two new details are obvious to the PCs. Anika's caravan stands outside the manor stables and the front door of the manor hangs open. The PCs can explore the manor, encountering a number of haunts that reveal Lord Vilruk's motives and the details of what occurred to his family. A description of the key areas within the manor has been provided and while it is not necessary, GMs are encouraged to map the manor for themselves, adding their own creative flair. Otherwise simply play the "encounter areas" in order, i.e. first Scene 1, then Scene 2 and so on.

### **Front Hall and Corridors**

The front hall of Wealwood Manor is furnished in dark tones and displays some of the wealth that the Vilruk family has accumulated over many generations. However, it is evident even in the front hall that there has been little effort to maintain the home. An odor of must is palpable and rugs appear frayed. Several items are clearly missing from display cases or wall mounts. These items have been sold over the past year by Bors to help pay for food, supplies and Lord Vilruk's efforts to resurrect Elene.

**Hazard:** The large stairwell leading upstairs is particularly dilapidated and has partially rotted through. A successful DC 21 Perception check allows the PCs to notice and avoid the rotted stairs. Otherwise, the staircase collapses when a Small or larger creature ascends halfway up, sending any creatures on the staircase at that time falling to the first floor, and inflicting 1d6 points of damage on them (Reflex DC 13 negates). This also renders the stair unclimbable; a successful DC 13 Climb check lets a PC ascend the remains of the staircase to the second floor.

### **Kitchen**

The large kitchen remains one of the few rooms within the manor that still sees frequent use by both Bors and Lord Vilruk. As such, it is clean and well-maintained and stocked with food and other sundry supplies. A locked door (Disable Device DC 18) allows access to outside. A servant's stairwell also provides an alternative route upstairs.

### **Dining Room**

The dining room has fallen to neglect much like the rest of the manor. However, it also appears to have been a scene of violence some time in the past, with chairs thrown or shoved to one side though the film of dust suggests that it was not recent. This has created a clear path across the room to a liquor cabinet, which has been thoroughly ransacked.

### **Study**

After the attacks by the heart-shorn, Lord Vilruk began sleeping and living out of his study. As a result, the room is cluttered and cramped; a chest of clothes and a small camping bed squashed into one corner of the room. Among the papers on the desk, the PCs can find a letter from Anika Fane stating that she "would be pleased to visit with him and discuss further a mutually beneficial relationship."

### **Scene 1: Ballroom (CR 5)**

*This once grand ballroom now lies in ruins. A gnarled and twisted tree erupts from the wooden floorboards, its spiky branches loom over the room and throw strange shadowy silhouettes across the floors and walls. Large glass shards*





lay scattered across the dancing floor. Behind the tree yawn large empty window frames that stretch from floor to ceiling, allowing the wind outside to blow through the hall.

When they moved to Wealwood Manor, Lord Vilruk enlarged the home, commissioning the construction of a large open ballroom as a gift to his bride. The ballroom now sits empty and abandoned, the doors to the room barred. PCs can also enter the ballroom through external doors which are overgrown with vegetation (requiring a successful DC10 Strength check to clear).

The ballroom is where the heart-shorn first attacked the Vilruk family and was driven off by Lord Vilruk.

## BLOODY WALTZ CR 5

**XP 1,600**

CE persistent, chained haunt (35-ft. radius around tree, filling ballroom)

**Caster Level** 5th

**Notice** Perception DC 10 (to hear faint musical laughter as the tree sways in a non-existent breeze)

**hp** 22; **trigger** touch; **reset** 1 day

**Effect** The haunt remains dormant unless one of the PCs touches the tree. Upon touching the tree the ghostly figure of Elene Vilruk (visible only to those affected by

the haunt) steps forth from the tree at the center of the ballroom, offering her hand to the victim and targeting them with an *irresistible dance* (save DC 19). Those who fail the saving throw feel a compulsion to kick off their shoes as they dance across the ballroom with Elene.

Each round, the faint laughter becomes louder and increasingly manic and deranged (audible to all in range) and the haunt targets a new victim to join the dance. As the dance continues, the tree appears to reach and snatch at the figure of Elene and the face of the heart-shorn seems to form from the knots and whorls on the tree's trunk. Each time a creature is targeted by this effect, they gain a cumulative +2 bonus on their saving throw.

**Hazard:** Glass shards from the broken windows cover the ballroom floor. These shards act as caltrops, dealing 1d4 damage each round to targets affected by the haunt.

**Treasure:** Abandoned by Lord Vilruk in his grief and in his anger at the fey of the Wealwood are two armbands, the *Bindings of Sylvan Union*. These magical items were created by the fey of the Wealwood and given to Lord Vilruk as a gift when he returned with Elene. One of the armbands can be found caught upon a tree branch in the ballroom.

## Bindings of Sylvan Union

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 10th

**Slot** wrists; **Price** 26,000 gp; **Weight** –

### DESCRIPTION

This pair of delicate wristbands are woven from flowering vines that still bloom brightly as they curl around the forearm.

### BENEFITS

When both wristbands are worn by the same creature, these bands provide a +2 sacred bonus to Fortitude and Will saving throws. However, when two creatures

each wear a single band, the magic within the bands connects the two creatures, providing different benefits.

First, one of the wearers gains a +2 sacred bonus to Fortitude saving throws while the other gains a +2 sacred bonus to Will saving throws.

Second, once per day, one of the wearers may step into a tree and teleport to another tree within 10 ft. of the second wearer as the spell *tree stride*.

Finally, as an immediate action, if both wearers are within 50 ft. of one another, a wearer may sacrifice up to 20 of their hit points to grant the second wearer 20 temporary hit points. These hit points last for up to one hour and no more than 40 temporary hit points can be granted per day.

### Construction

### Requirements

Feats Craft Wondrous Item; Spells life conduit or shield other, tree stride; Cost 13,000 gp

## Servant's Quarters

Two servant's bedrooms are behind the main staircase. One of these bedrooms belongs to Bors and appears well lived-in while the other has been unused for some time.

## Scene 2: Sitting Room (CR 4)

*A large bay window dominates the room with an ornate bookshelf against one wall and several plush chairs. What should be an airy and open space however, seems small and stifling as the darkness that fills the room seems tangible and presses upon the skin.*

The sitting room lies in eerie shadow, regardless of any light provided by the PCs. The room appears neglected but undamaged. The heart-shorn snuck in here after being repelled the first night and abducted Lord Vilruk's son, Kostas, whose body it now uses to manifest its own.

After the haunt below has triggered, GMs should first focus on the reactions of the PCs at the sudden disappearance of one of their own, before they are located beneath the floorboards, which must be torn up to free the trapped PC.

## SNATCHING DARKNESS CR 4

**XP 1,200**

NE spiteful chained haunt (entire sitting room)

**Caster Level** 6th

**Notice** Notice DC 17 (to notice an unnatural dimness that seems to drink in the light from the corners of the room)

**hp** 8; **trigger** proximity; **delay** 1 round **reset** 1 day

**Effect** The entire sitting room is filled with deeper darkness and a woman's voice screams, "Kostas! Kostas! Andres, it's taken our son." One round after the darkness envelops the room, at initiative count 0, a 5-foot-wide pit opens beneath the feet of one living creature within the room dealing 3d6 damage as they fall (save DC 15 reduces damage to 1d6 nonlethal). The pit closes over its victim, sealing them beneath the floorboards (break DC 20, hardness 5, hp 30) as the deeper darkness effect dissipates within 1 round.

## Upstairs Living Room

Since the attack by the heart-shorn, the upstairs rooms of the manor have rarely been entered and neglect and dust hang heavy in the air. Several portraits of members of the Vilruk line hang in the upper landing. Examining these portraits allows the PCs to find a portrait of Andres Vilruk with his wife and son. A successful DC 22 Perception or DC 15 Craft (painting) or Knowledge (history or nobility) check allows the PCs to notice a resemblance between the painting of Kostas (Lord Vilruk's son) and Kostas (the heart-shorn they have encountered).

Tracks can be seen on the dusty floor, leading from the servant's stairwell to the master bedroom, though they do not enter the bedroom.

## Bedrooms

The upstairs bedrooms are empty and show no signs of life. One of the bedrooms contains a variety of clothes and toys suitable for a small boy while the remaining bedrooms seem to have been used as guest rooms.

## Scene 3: Master Bedroom (CR 1/2)

The air in this large bedroom hangs heavy and still, and dust coats every surface. A large, dark stain mars a rug in the center of the room.

No-one has entered the master bedroom since the night of Elene's death. If the PCs enter the room the spectral remains of Elene Vilruk become visible, prone in the center of the stained rug.

## SPECTRAL REMAINS CR 1/2

**XP 200**

N chained haunt (5 ft. emanation from a spectral body in the middle of the room)

**Caster Level** 1st

**Notice** Sense Motive DC 12 (to notice the look of grief and sadness on the body's face)

**hp** 2; **trigger** proximity; **reset** 1 day

**Effect** The spectral remains of Elene Vilruk locks its gaze with an approaching creature, pleading. As the creature stares into her eyes, they see back to the night of her death; a shadowy fey creature leaping at her with claws bared, wearing a twisted, half-transformed caricature of her son's face. As the creature disappears into the darkness, it is followed by the entrance of her husband who slumps over her whispering, "No please, I can't lose you too." A PC who witnesses this vision gains a +4 bonus on their next Will save but becomes dazed for one round when they do.

**Treasure:** The second armband of The Bindings of Sylvan Union can be found on a dresser in the master bedroom.



## Stable

While horses had once been kept in these stables, Lord Vilruk has since allowed Anika free use of the building as a place to study and experiment on the creatures of the Wealwood. Within the stalls are a number of cages of various sizes, constructed from cold iron and a number of fey creatures and animals have been imprisoned (if it is necessary to specify the trapped creatures, use the equivalent of CR 2 worth of fey creatures and animals with the fey template [*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*] in addition to the dryad mentioned below). The trapped fey tell the PCs that they had been captured by Lord Vilruk and subjected to cruel experiments at the hands of the witch, Anika Fane. They also confirm that Lord Vilruk left a short time ago, carrying a human woman and taking with him one of the dryads he had captured.

In the loft above, the PCs can find Anika's cauldron, numerous fetishes and her notes on her studies of the fey, as well as keys to the cages.

Upon being freed, one of the imprisoned fey (a dryad, the sister of the one found at the Ancient Stones) offers to lead the PCs to the stone circle, that they might stop Lord Vilruk and rescue her sister. The dryad herself cannot assist directly due to the haunts still surrounding the area.

**Story Award:** If the PCs free the fey from the cold iron cages, award them 500 XP.



*The Ancient Stones*



As the PCs approach the stone circle, they can hear a female voice and the ritual to resurrect Lord Vilruk's wife is moments from completion. The stone circle is on a hilltop and Lord Vilruk guards the main path leading up to the circle. If the PCs told Lord Vilruk the location of Kostas' totem, he is assisted by Kostas and has the totem in his possession. On an altar in the center of the circle lie the insensate forms of Fanya and the dryad taken by Lord Vilruk from the stables. Anika stands over them. Should she succeed in the ritual, she sacrifices Fanya and resurrects the phantom of Elene Vilruk in the body of the dryad.

## ANDRES VILRUK CR 7

### XP 3,200

Male adult human ranger (trapper<sup>UM</sup>) 5/spiritualist  
3OA

NE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 74 (5d10+3d8+29)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8; +4 vs.

mind-affecting effects

**Defensive Abilities** shared consciousness

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** +1 *short sword* +11/+6 (1d6+3), +1 *short sword* +11/+6 (1d6+2)

**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +12/+7 (1d8+2/19-20/x3)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (fey +4, humans +2)

**Class Spells Known** (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st (5/day) – *anticipate peril*<sup>UM</sup>, *expeditious retreat*, *sanctuary* (DC 13), *touch of gracelessness*<sup>APG</sup>

0 (at will) – *detect magic*, *grave words*<sup>OA</sup>, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*

### TACTICS

Before Combat Vilruk casts *anticipate peril*<sup>UM</sup> and *expeditious retreat* on himself, then drinks his *potion of bear's endurance*. He also casts *sanctuary* on Anika.

During Combat Vilruk opens combat by sending the phantom of Elene to deliver *touch of gracelessness*<sup>APG</sup> on his opponent. He then recalls the phantom and uses *bonded manifestation* to increase his AC to 23. Vilruk attempts to disable his enemies and prevent them from approaching Anika while she completes the ritual, using *Stand Still* to prevent them passing him.

**Morale** Vilruk fights until the ritual is completed or stopped. If Elene is resurrected, he immediately stops fighting and moves to embrace her. If the ritual is stopped, he surrenders, having lost hope.

**Base Statistics** *Without anticipate peril*<sup>UM</sup>, *bear's endurance* and *expeditious retreat*, Vilruk's statistics are **Init** +4, **hp** 58, **Fort** +8, **Speed** 30 ft, **Con** 12.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Skill Focus (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Stand Still, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (geography, nature) +11, Linguistics +5, Perception +13, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +14, Survival +13

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Sylvan; link

**SQ** bonded senses, bonded manifestation (6 rounds/day), etheric tether, favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), knacks, phantom, shared consciousness, track +2, trap (poison and snare; 4/day; DC 14), trapfinding +2, wild empathy +4

**Combat Gear** *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 short swords (2)



## ELENE VILRUK

NE Medium outsider (phantom)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft; Perception +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 dodge)

**hp** 24 (3d10+3)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** incorporeal

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 35 ft.

**Melee** touch +5 (deliver touch spell) or 2 slams +5 (1d6+1) (only vs incorporeal creatures)

**Special Attacks** deliver touch spells (30 ft.), dutiful strike

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Fleet, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Sense Motive +6

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Sylvan; link

**SQ** emotional focus (dedication), share spells



## ANIKA FANE CR 4

**XP 1,200**

Female adult changeling witch 5<sup>APG</sup>

NE Medium humanoid (changeling)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 33 (5d6+13)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +3 (1d4-1)

**Class Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd – *deep slumber* (DC 17), *heroism*

2nd – *haunting mists* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 16), *web* (DC 15)

1st – *command* (3, DC 15), *mage armor*

0 – *detect magic*, *light*, *message*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Anika casts *heroism* and *mage armor* on herself. She also casts *web* on the surrounding area.

**Morale** If Lord Vilruk is defeated and she is surrounded with no way of escape, Anika agrees to surrender in exchange for healing from the ritual backlash.

**Base Statistics** Without *heroism* and *mage armor*, Anika's statistics are **AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12, **Fort** +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5, **Melee** 2 claws +1 (1d4-1), **Skills** Craft (alchemy) +15, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (nature) +14, Spellcraft +11

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Skill Focus (Knowledge[nature]), Spell Focus (enchantment)

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +17, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (nature) +16, Spellcraft +13

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Elven, Giant

**SQ** familiar (toad), hexes (cackle, cauldron, evil eye [DC 15]), mist child

**Gear** *ring of protection* +1

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mist Child (Ex)** When Anika has concealment or total concealment, the miss chance of attacks against her increases by 5%.





The area surrounding the stone circle has been heavily fortified by Vilruk and Anika. Vilruk has laid several ranger traps across the path and Anika has cast a web spell to further delay the PCs. There are several methods of reaching the stone circle and/or preventing Anika from completing the ritual and slaying Fanya. These include:

A long path winds up the hilltop, providing a clear and unobstructed path to the stone circle at the summit. The limited time and length of the path may require the use of the run action to reach the top in time.

A successful Perception check (DC 22) locates a hidden animal track that provides a much more direct route to the stone circle.

A successful Climb check (DC 15) allows PCs to scale the 20 ft. hillside at one-quarter speed.

Using ranged attacks to disable Anika. She receives partial cover from any attacks made from more than 30 ft. away.

## Resurrection Ritual

By the time the PCs arrive at the stone circle, the ritual to resurrect Elene Vilruk is nearly complete. The PCs have 10 rounds to reach the stone circle and prevent Anika from completing the ritual.

At the end of the 10 rounds, Anika attempts a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 30, with a total modifier on the check of +22) as she sacrifices Fanya. Regardless of success or failure of the ritual, both Anika and Lord Vilruk take 4d6 damage and become exhausted. Should Anika succeed, Elene Vilruk is resurrected in the body of the captured dryad and Lord Vilruk loses all special abilities related to the phantom class feature.

## Delaying the Ritual

Each round Anika does not spend a full-round action performing the ritual the DC of the Knowledge (nature) check increases by one. The following events cause Anika to temporarily stop performing the ritual to perform other actions.

Should the PCs take the main path up to the stone circle, she casts deep slumber (Will DC 17 negates) when they are roughly halfway up.

Anika takes one round to cast command (Will DC 15 negates) at one of the PCs when Lord Vilruk calls for assistance when he is reduced to half hit points and again if Lord Vilruk or Kostas are reduced to 0 hp.

Anika moves to a position of total cover should she take more than 10 points of damage from a ranged attack (interposing the stones between herself and her attacker).

## Attracting Attention

The PCs' efforts to reach the stone circle may attract her attention, causing her to speed her efforts. The following events cause Anika to hurry with the ritual and reduce the time it takes to complete the ritual by 1 round.

Failing a Stealth check against Anika's Perception (+1) while taking the hidden animal track up to the stones.

Failing a Climb check by 5 or more and falling while attempting to scale the cliff up to the stones.

Getting caught in one of the traps set by Lord Vilruk.

## Conclusion

Should the PCs fail to prevent the ritual, Elene Vilruk is resurrected and Lord Vilruk flees with her and Kostas back to Wealwood Manor. He plans to find a way to free his son from the heart-shorn's possession before taking his family away to start a new life with them. However, he soon finds that his wife is now bound to the Wealwood in the same way that dryads are bound to a single tree. Meanwhile, the corrupting magic released by the ritual causes the land to sicken; crops and livestock wither and die and the town of Orrer's Haining is abandoned as the blight begins to spread to both mortals and fey. This is beyond the immediate scope of this adventure, but any GMs wishing to explore this path should have the PCs seek out powerful druidic magic or artifacts to stop the spread of the blight.

If the PCs are able to prevent the ritual, they have saved the Wealwood and the surrounding communities from the taint of the dark magic that would have been released. The question of what happens to Lord Vilruk remains uncertain. His death, as the last of the Vilruk line, would mean an unravelling of the pacts that bind some of the fey rulers of the Wealwood, who would likely plague the surrounding countryside. If the PCs decide to destroy the heart-shorn's totem however, the creature is banished and its body quickly transforms back into that of a child, Lord Vilruk's son, Kostas. With Kostas freed, the Vilruk line can continue and Lord Vilruk can face justice. As the child stirs, the phantom of Elene Vilruk reappears, holding her child one last time and giving the PCs a look of thanks before disappearing.

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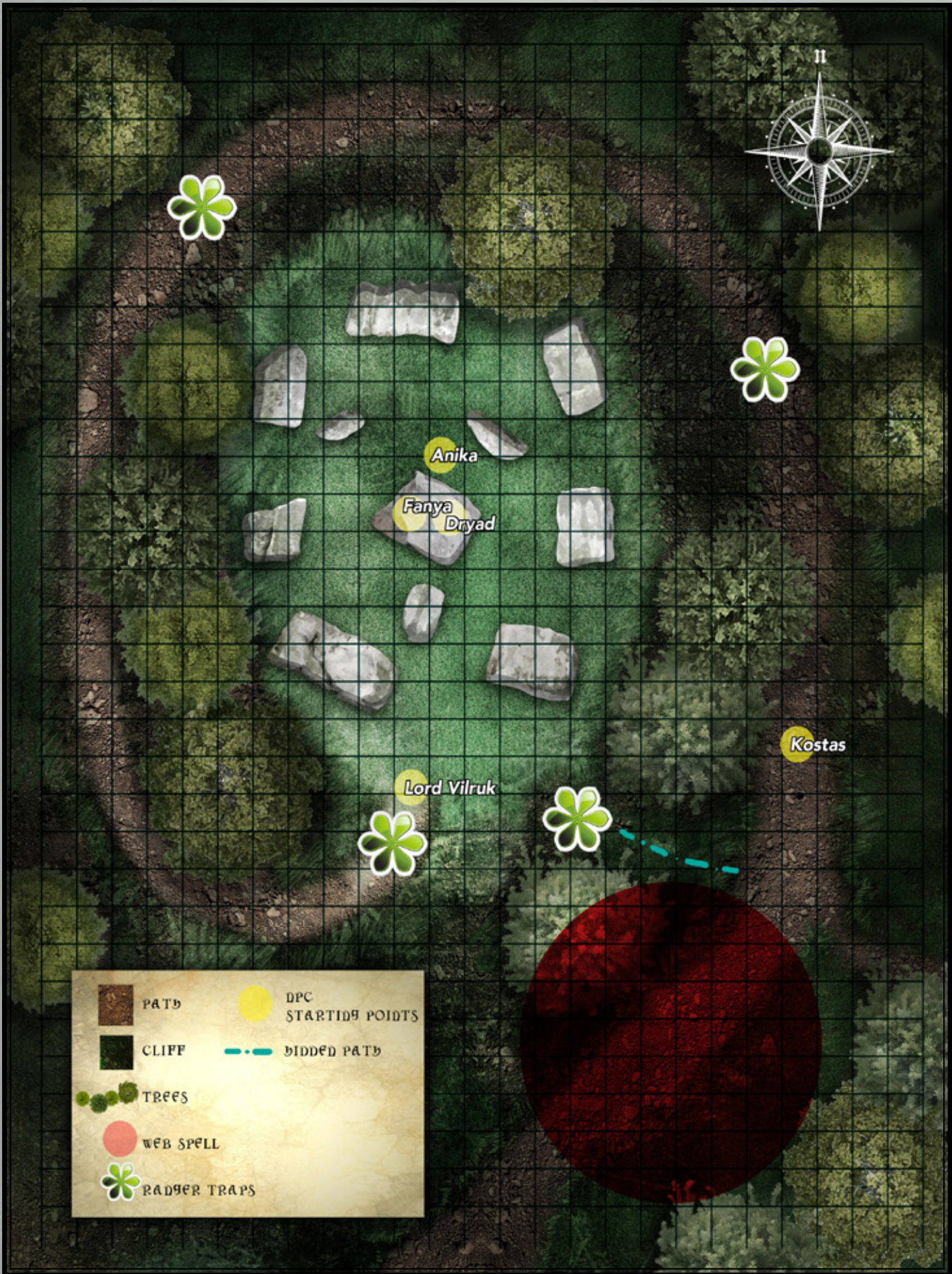
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	PATH		DPC STARTING POINTS
	CLIFF		BIDDEN PATH
	TREES		
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