

VINE AND WILLOW

Poisoned Pages for Shadow of the Demon Lord

Many rural villages and urban neighborhoods throughout Rûl still have one or more resident wizards who serve their communities as counselors, apothecaries, physicians, and (when necessary) protectors. These individuals usually lead humble existences, bartering their broad knowledge of the world (backed by just a smidgen of magical talent) for the necessities of life and perhaps a few modest comforts. Some, however, wield power that belies their unpretentious ways.

One such pair of (apparently) unassuming magical practitioners does business out of an old farmstead under the sign of the Vine and Willow. The proprietors, two ancient clockworks, share their names with their business. Vine looks tall and gangly; he has a silvery body marked with blue-black whorls and bands. Willow has a broader, stockier build than Vine. Her body looks like a collection of bronze plates and bars, covered in leafy patterns of greenish verdigris.

Vine and Willow have lost track of just how old they are; their creator built them during the Empire's heyday and set them to work in Rûl's forests, cutting timber and clearing land for settlement. After a century or so, the area where the pair labored became fully settled leaving Vine and Willow to fend for themselves. Both took up magic, and neither forgot their original attachments to the land and to wild places.



~CREDITS~

WRITING AND DESIGN: SKIP WILLIAMS

EDITING, DEVELOPMENT, AND ART DIRECTION:
ROBERT J. SCHWALB

GRAPHIC DESIGN, LAYOUT, AND PROOFREADING:
KARA HAMILTON

ILLUSTRATION: KIM VAN DEUN

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SCHWALB ENTERTAINMENT, LLC



PO Box #12548, Murfreesboro, TN 37129
info@schwalbentertainment.com www.schwalbentertainment.com

The premises at the Vine and Willow look much like its sign; there's a weather-beaten house (really a cottage with a couple of extra wings added) and a tumbledown barn. Between the two lie a garden and a pond dotted with lily pads. A band of patchy grass surrounds the garden and pond. Flocks of ducks and geese keep the grass short. Nearly a score of willows, from saplings to hoary old trees, interspersed with mossy boulders, surround the property. Wild grape vines wind through the trunks and boulders like green cobwebs. A winding rivulet wanders from the pond to a local stream.

The terrain serves as a natural defense against wandering bandits, raiders, shadow cultists, and even the occasional crusader of the New God. Because they're clockworks, Vine and Willow do not eat. They keep their waterfowl as a natural alarm system.

Vine and Willow use the barn as a workshop. Inside are writing desks, vats and barrels of fermenting or ageing liquids, racks of tools, and a few rusting farm implements. The pair also keeps a wagon and a quartet of horses for riding or pulling the wagon.

The pair lives in one wing of the house, and they use the rest for their business. The public areas in the house are crammed with spotlessly clean shelves bearing rows of clay or glass jars filled with wares for sale. Here and there, animal skins, complete with heads, are draped over the tops of the shelves. The heads have glassy eyes that seem to glow faintly, and they have the unsettling tendency to suddenly turn and stare at visitors.

Wares for sale at the Vine and Willow include beer, ale, mead, and wine all made on the premises. Also for sale are herbs and fungi gathered from the land around them. The cellar has a locked room stocked with potions (also made on the premises), incantations, and a few special concoctions of their own invention. The inventory at the Vine and Willow includes all beverages and potions described in *Shadow* and all the items described here. Incantations for all the spells introduced here are for sale as well. Other incantations might be available, too.

In addition to their formidable selves, Vine and Willow keep a number of constructs (the aforementioned animal skins) for defense. There are always at least six of these guardians in the house and barn at any given time. Use statistics boxes for **medium** or **large animals** with the following adjustment:

Size 1 or 2 construct

Immune damage from disease or poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned.

NEW POTIONS

Vine and Willow created several potions, all derived from their knowledge of the natural world. The duo generally has one or two of each potion described here on hand at any given time along with whatever other potions you choose.

POTIONS

Potion	Price	Availability
Burn Balm	1 5S	Exotic
Faerie Grace	10 gc	Exotic
Magus Draught	10 gc	Exotic

Burn Balm: The liquid in the potion is thick, green, and cloudy. It smells faintly acrid. When the potion takes effect, the creature heals damage equal to half its healing rate. If any of the damage sourced from heat or fire, the creature instead heals damage equal to its healing rate and removes any affliction it gained from taking that damage.

Faerie Grace: This potion looks as green as spring leaves. Threads of blue and gold spread through it, and it smells like summer lightning. When the potion takes effect, the creature gains a +1 bonus to Agility and a +2 bonus to Speed that last for 1d3 hours. As well, the creature can take a fast turn and a slow turn each round. If the creature takes two turns, though, it takes 1d6 damage at the end of the round.

Magus Draught: The liquid in this elixir looks inky black, shot through with sparkling motes. It smells faintly of fungi and wet stone. When the potion takes effect, the creature gains a +1 bonus to Power that lasts for 1d3 hours. If the creature casts spells while under the effects of the potion, it expends castings gained from the bonus to Power before expending the regular castings.

NEW SPELLS

Vine and Willow developed these spells. They might teach them to students who visit or sell them as incantations recorded on vellum scrolls.

AIR SPELLS

WIND DISC

AIR UTILITY 2

Duration 1 minute

A thin disc of swirling wind springs into existence around you and remains for the duration. The disk moves with you, remaining in your reach. It helps deflect attacks, granting a +2 bonus to Defense. In addition, the wind imposes 1 bane on attack rolls against you made using bows, crossbows, slings, or thrown weapons from Size 1 or smaller creatures.

Until the effect ends, you can use an action, or a triggered action to attack one creature you can reach with the disc. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Defense. On a success, the wind buffets the target for 1d6 + 1 damage. On a success or a failure, you lose the spell's defensive benefits until the end of the round.

EXPLOSIVE EXHALATION

AIR ATTACK 2

Target One living, breathing creature within short range. You cause the air to burst from the target's lungs. Make a Will attack against the target's Strength. On a success, the target exhales with such force that it takes 1d6 + 3 damage. As well, a target that takes this damage must get a success on a Will challenge roll with 1 boon or become stunned for 1 round.

Attack Roll 20+ The target takes 2d6 extra damage.

CLOAK OF AIR

AIR UTILITY 3

Duration 1 hour

You cloak yourself in a continuing eddy of wind that lasts for the duration. Until the spell ends, the wind imposes 1 bane on attack rolls against you made using bows, crossbows, slings, or thrown weapons from Size 1 or smaller creatures. The wind also pushes smoke, mist, gas, and vapor 1 yard away from you. Finally, you can breathe normally even when underwater or in an otherwise airless space.

EARTH SPELLS

EARTH WAVE

EARTH ATTACK 2

Area A cone, 5 yards long, originating from a point on the ground within short range

Waves ripple through the ground, beginning at the origin point and moving across the area. Each creature on the ground in the area must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or fall prone and be moved 1d6 yards across the area away from the origin point. Roll once for each creature affected. A creature takes 2 damage per yard it is moved in this way.

Unattended, unsecured objects of Size 1 or smaller on the area topple over and roll away, just as creatures do, but objects take no damage. Structures, objects of size 2 or larger, and objects anchored to the ground take 2d6 points of damage. A structure destroyed by this damage collapses, and everything inside or under it takes 4d6 + 10 damage. Creatures on top of the structure might take falling damage when it collapses.

EARTHY FOUNTAIN

EARTH ATTACK 2

Area A hemisphere with a radius of 5 yards, centered on a point on the ground within medium range

Duration 1 minute

A churning spray of dust and dirt or gravel flies up from the area's center in all directions, which causes the area to become difficult terrain until it's cleared away after the spell ends. For the duration, the area is heavily obscured. As well, the flying debris deals 1d6 damage to each creature in the area when you cast the spell and deals damage to each creature that enters it or is in it at the end of each round. Any sighted creature that takes this damage must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or become blinded and impaired for as long as it remains in the area.

VORACIOUS EARTH

EARTH ATTACK 4

Area A circle on the ground with a radius of 10 yards centered on a point within medium range

Duration 1 minute

Dozens of biting mouths appear all over the surface of the area, turning it into difficult terrain. Each creature in the area when you cast the spell that enters the area or is already in the area at the end of the round for the duration must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, the creature is bitten and takes 2d6 damage.

FIRE SPELLS

FLAME TO SMOKE

FIRE UTILITY 1

Target Any number of nonmagical fires within short range whose total Size can fit inside a cube of space, 5 yards on a side

You extinguish each target. Smoke spreads out in all directions to a number of yards from the space each target occupied equal to its Size \times 10. The area of smoke is heavily obscured and lasts for 1 hour or until dispersed by wind.

EMBER SPRAY

FIRE ATTACK 2

Target One fire you can reach

You touch the target but take no damage. Instead, fiery cinders fly from a point you touched across a 5-yard-long cone and deal 2d6 + 5 damage to everything in the area. Creatures take half damage with a success on an Agility challenge roll. Combustible objects ignite and catch fire, taking 1d6 damage each round until extinguished.

FIERY HENCHMAN

FIRE UTILITY 2

Target One Size 1 or larger nonmagical flame within short range

Duration 1 hour

A fiery figure steps out of the target and remains for the duration. The figure is a compelled **small construct** with the following modifications:

Immune damage from fire

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fiery Appendage (melee) +3 (1d3 plus Ignite)

Ignite The target must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or catch fire.

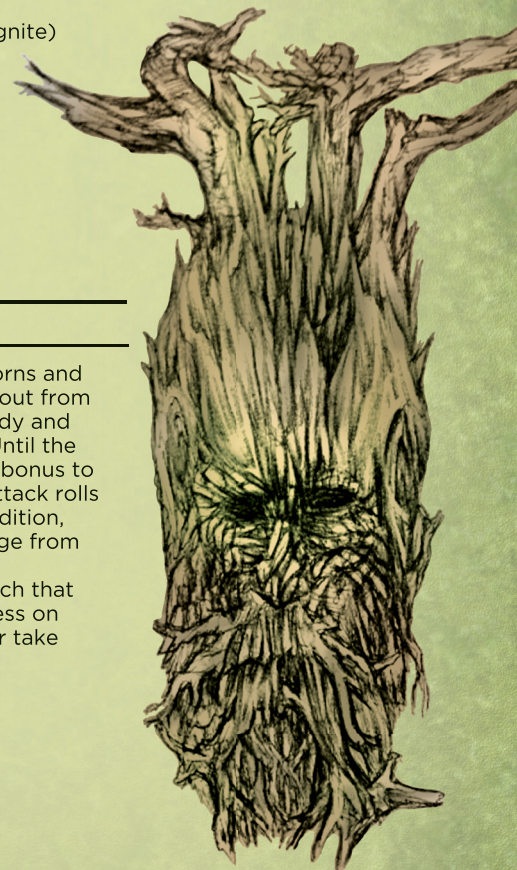
NATURE SPELLS

THORNY SKIN

NATURE UTILITY 2

Duration 1 hour

A profusion of wicked thorns and writhing, thorny vines sprout from your skin all over your body and remain for the duration. Until the spell ends, you have a +2 bonus to Defense, and you make attack rolls to grab with 1 boon. In addition, whenever you take damage from an attack made by a creature you can reach that creature must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or take 1d3 damage.



TOXIC GROWTH

NATURE UTILITY 4

Requirements The area must contain living plants rooted in the ground

Area A circle on the ground with a 10-yard radius centered on a point within medium range

Duration 1 hour

You make leaves, stems, vines, and flowers in the area thicken and grow, turning the area into difficult terrain for the duration. If the area was already difficult terrain, creatures attempting to move across the area must get a success on a Strength challenge roll when they enter the area or become immobilized for 1 round.

The plants in the area also exude toxins. At the end of each round, each living creature must get a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or become poisoned for 2d6 hours (roll once for each affected creature). A creature already poisoned takes 1d6 damage and extends the duration by 1d6 hours. While poisoned in this way, the creature is slowed.

When the spell ends, the affected plants return to their normal size and nature.

BRAMBLE HEDGE

NATURE UTILITY 5

Area Up to 10 cubes, each 4 yards on a side, originating from points you choose within long range; you can arrange the cubes as you like, provided they form a continuous barrier. You can place the cubes in a single layer or stack them two high.

Duration 1 hour

You create a thorny hedge that totally covers and obscures everything behind it. A creature can enter the hedge by getting a success on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane and then treats the area as difficult terrain. Alternatively, a creature can climb the hedge and move over it with a success on a Strength challenge roll. Creatures moving through or climbing the hedge must get a success on an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 + 1 damage if it moved through the hedge or 1d3 damage if it climbed the hedge. When the spell ends, the hedge withers, leaving behind a pile of dry leaves and twigs.

PRIMAL SPELLS

WILD BEAST

PRIMAL UTILITY 3

Target You or one animal you can touch

Duration 1 minute or until the target becomes incapacitated

The target becomes tougher, stronger, and more ferocious. Until the spell ends, the target gains a +2 bonus to Speed and Defense, and it makes Strength attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon. Finally, at the end of each round, the target can use a triggered action to heal damage equal to half its healing rate.

WRATH OF THE WILD

PRIMAL UTILITY 5

Duration: 1 minute

Rage builds within you as the spell takes hold, transforming you into a wild and violent thing. Until the spell ends, you gain all of the following benefits.

- You gain a +10 bonus to Health
- You gain a +4 bonus to Speed
- Your melee attacks deal 1d6 extra damage
- Whenever you would take damage from an attack, you can use a triggered action to make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, you halve the damage.

TRANSFORMATION SPELLS

DEVOLVE

TRANSFORMATION UTILITY 2

Duration 1 hour

You revert to a more primitive state for the duration. Until the spell ends, you have all the following benefits and drawbacks.

- You make Strength and Agility attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon
- You make Intellect and Will attack rolls and challenge rolls with 2 banes
- You cannot cast spells
- You ignore difficult terrain from climbing and swimming.

WATER SPELLS

CLOUDBURST

WATER UTILITY 1

Area A cylinder, 3 yards tall with a 5-yard radius, centered on a point within medium range

Duration 1 minute

Drenching rain falls down from the top of the area for the duration. The precipitation partially obscures the area and extinguishes non-magical fires and magical fires created by spells of rank 1 or less.

WATER BURST

WATER ATTACK 1

Target A cube of water, at least 1/2 yard on each side, within short range

The target erupts with explosive force moving each Size 1/2 or smaller unsecured object within 3 yards of it 1d6 yards in a straight line away from the target's center. As well, each creature within 3 yards of the target must make an Agility challenge roll. A creature takes 1d6 + 2 damage and falls prone on a failure, or just takes half the damage on a success.

HARDEN WATER

WATER UTILITY 3

Target A cylinder of water, 2-yards tall with a 3-yard radius, centered on a point within short range, or a cone of water 10 yards long originating from a point within short range

Duration 1 minute

Water in the area becomes as stone for the duration. A hardened watery surface can bear weight just as a stone floor does. Creatures floating or wading at the surface wind up atop the hardened surface. A hardened sphere of water fills with a mass of pellets like pea gravel. A swimming creature within a hardened cylinder when you cast the spell or that enters it must get a success on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or become immobilized. Otherwise, it moves at half Speed through its area.

PARCH

WATER ATTACK 5

Area A sphere with a 5-yard radius centered on a point within short range

You draw the water from the air and from living creatures in the area. This clears non-magical fog from the area and destroys magical fog created by spells of rank 4 or less. As well, each living creature in the area must make a Strength challenge roll. A creature takes 3d6 + 3 damage and becomes impaired until it completes a rest on a failure, or it takes half the damage on a success.