

Fifth Edition Compatible

The Tree of Blight

An Adventure by Glen Cooper

From Dreadful Dungeons

Cover Art by @Kirisute

Adventure module for 4-5
players between levels 1-5
V.2.00

The Tree of Blight



Introduction

Encounter Levels

This 'one-off' encounter is designed for a party of four to five adventurers of levels one through to five.

Preparation

Before beginning play, it is recommended that the Dungeon Master (DM) read through this entire module several times. This is to understand and prepare for the challenges which the player characters (PC's) will face, and gather all the materials necessary for the encounter to run as smoothly as possible. As per usual, it will be helpful to have all the PC's characters fully prepared in advance, so that the DM understands all the PC's strengths and weaknesses.

Adventure Overview

Backstory

Deep in the wilderness, and only a few short hours travel from a remote human settlement; a passing druid tending to the forestry came upon a beautiful glade. In it's centre a solitary majestic tree topping a lush grassy mound, bearing irresistibly ripe fruit. The druid sat for a moments rest to eat a piece of the fruit, and fell asleep under the shade of its cool leafy canopy.

Ten years later the unkempt mound is blighted with dry, brown, lifeless grass and bracken. The tree, a blackened, twisted, barren, shadow of its former self. Creaking in the wind like an abandoned ship in the fog, the mound is now adorned with viciously hooked, thorny bushes. The smell of decay radiates from the darkened glade warning all animals and beasts to stay away...even goblins have learned to avoid this area of the forest.

Ever since the human druid Nereza fell asleep under the tree that lazy summers afternoon, she has been under the spell and supplicated to one of the most evil trees to have ever existed - the Gulthias Tree. She has been magically nurturing the growth of this abomination whilst commanding tree blights to wander out late at night to attack animals, beasts and travellers camps. Dragging their victims, dead or unconscious body to tunnels under the tree and allowing its roots to feed off their blood.

After many years of trying, Nereza finally found a way to invoke an evil Demon Blight and is planning to use it to inseminate another tree and plague this entire region.

Adventure Hooks

How to get your plucky group of adventurers hooked into this encounter. I have come up with several ideas as to why your adventurers might be in the area:

1. The party is travelling and come across an abandoned camp site during an evening. There are signs of a fight, no bodies, some half eaten provisions and a few hand weapons cast aside during an attempt to flee... and then a horrible scream in the distance is heard in the direction of strange tracks heading towards the glade.
2. The adventurers are settling down at a roadside tavern, in a village/town, and hear that a particular stretch of the trail has become very dangerous to travel lately. The locals will pay a small sum of gold to brave adventurers who would go and investigate why, and put an end to this nonsense.

“There be trouble out there, bad for our businesses. You take care of yourselves and bring us back some good news. You hear?”

3. The druid in the party who is a member of the Emerald Enclave is given a mission to continue the search for a promising young druid initiate called Nereza who went missing over 10 years ago. Reports say that she recently turned up in a remote village, just a few hours travel from the glade and where the PCs are now.

“Nereza was a fine, and promising druid from the Circle of the Swords in Neverwinter. My, she was a pretty young thing too. She did love to travel alone though... it's time we found out what really happened.”

4. The parties campsite is attacked at night, by strange twig like beings. The twigs will not flee, but their tracks lead off into the wood and towards the glade.
5. A rather strange unkempt druid has been spotted around the village/town at night. Everyone is warned off from approaching her and as soon as they get chance, they decide to hire a band of adventurers to go and investigate the glade from where she seems to have come from.

“A strange druid keeps coming from that thar glade. Go tell her to move on would you?”

Further Knowledge

In this adventure, the tree is not 'awakened' or mobile. It is non-sentient but has powers which help it to survive and reproduce. The tree does this by supplicating up to 4 individuals to protect to it, nurture it and help it to spread its evil seeds. If the tree is cut down, then all its supplicants will die unless the tree has borne a fruit in the last few weeks.

On levels one to three, Nereza is out exploring. She will have in her possession one of the tree's 'fruit' and therefore any supplicants will be immune from dying if the tree is chopped down or destroyed during the adventure.

Running the Encounter

Setup

Monsters per PC Group level:

Level 1's - 4 Twig Blights (hidden outside [9]), 2 Needle Blights (hidden in cave [3]), 4 Twig Blights & 1 Vine Blight (cave [5]).

Level 3's - 4 Twig Blights & 1 Needle Blight (hidden outside [9]), 2 Needle Blights & 4 Twig Blights (cave [3]), 2 Twig Blights, 1 Vine Blight [hidden] & 1 Demon Blight (cave [5]).

Level 5's - 6 Twig Blights & 2 Vine Blights (hidden outside [9 & 1]), 6 Needle Blights & 2 Vine Blights (cave [3]), 1 Evil Druid, 2 Vine Blights [hidden] & 1 Demon Blight (cave [5]).

Demon Blight - Kaolahr

Medium Fiend, Neutral Evil

Armour Class: 16 (natural barkskin)

Hit Points: 72 (9d10+27)

Speed: 20 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
17(+3)	9(-1)	17(+3)	8(-1)	13(+1)	8(-1)

Condition Immunities: blinded, deafened

Senses: blindsight 60 ft., passive perception 12

Languages: understands common, infernal (but doesn't speak)

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multi-attack: the Demon Blight can make 2 melee attacks per combat round OR 1 ranged attack.

Claws: Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Constrict: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage. If target is medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and pulled 5 ft. toward the Demon Blight. Target is restrained until grapple is broken.

Needles: Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Entangling Plants (Recharge 5-6): Grasping roots and vines sprout in a 15 ft. radius centred on the Demon Blight, withering away after one minute. For the duration, that area is difficult terrain for non-plant characters. In addition, when first invoked, each creature (as chosen by the Demon Blight) must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature restrained may take its action to free itself with a DC 12 Strength check, freeing itself or others entangled within reach on a success.

False Appearance: When the Demon Blight is motionless, it is indistinguishable from dead shrub.

Description: Kaolahr moves in an almost bi-pedal fashion, its long branch like arms and fists pushing and pulling it along with its trunk like legs. When hunched over the Demon Blight is approximately 6ft. in height, but when it stands up tall, and fully extends its body, it is more like 9 ft. Its appearance is very much a mass of animated branches, twigs and vines with pseudo wings and long twisting horns on its forehead.

It does not speak, but it makes a clacking sound, which speeds up as it coils up ready to attack. This sound can be perceived on a DC 10 perception roll, but its source cannot be determined, especially if Kaolahr is motionless in a large shrubs.

Evil Druid - Nereza Saphiran

Medium Human (female), Neutral Evil

Armour Class: 16 (natural barkskin)

Hit Points: 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed: 30 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
10(+0)	12(+1)	13(+1)	12(+1)	15(+2)	11(+0)

Skills: Stealth +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses: passive perception 14

Languages: common, druidic and infernal

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Quarterstaff: Melee Weapon Attack: +2 (+4 with shillelagh) to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage two-handed, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

Spellcasting: 4th Level Caster with ability of WIS (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips: druidcraft, shillelagh, mage hand.

1st Level (4 slots): create/destroy water, fog cloud, witch bolt, expeditious retreat

2nd Level (2 slots): spike growth, misty step

Description: Nereza is a human, standing 5'7" in height, with long black hair under a hood covering half her alluring face. Her build is slight, and her skin is flawless and very pale. She squints at bright light, and thinks of the glade as her home. Any mention that she might be under the control of a tree will make her laugh out loud in denial, maniacally.

The Monster Manual

For the remaining monsters please refer to the following pages in the Monster Manual for their stats too:

Twig Blight, Needle Blight, Vine Blight - Pages 31 & 32



The Demon Blight, Kaolahr



Evil Druid, Nereza Saphiran

Movement and Combat

Traveling:

- Moving around or over the mound when it is not raining is muddy and hard going. But no change to movement.
- As soon as the rain starts, all outside surfaces become difficult terrain and halves movement distances. Players can take a dash action to move their normal speed.
- Cave areas [2] and [3] are difficult terrain. No penalties other than half speed. If anyone wishes to move full speed [by dashing], then a DEX save with DC 12 will need to be made unless they fall prone for this round.
- Cave areas [4], [5] and [6] are difficult terrain. No penalties other than half movement. If anyone wishes to move full movement [by dashing], then a DEX save with DC 15 will need to be made unless they will fall prone for this round.
- Areas [4], [5] and [6] also have vines and roots hanging down in front of players faces. If they ever fall prone, roll 1d6 [1-3 = restrained by roots if fail a STR check with DC of 14]

Prone:

- Prone creatures only movement option is to crawl or stand up. Standing up takes up half movement for that round.
- Attack rolls against a prone creature has advantage (i.e. roll 2d20's and pick the higher result)
- Creatures has disadvantage on any dexterity rolls.
- The creature has disadvantage on attack rolls.

Restrained:

- Restrained creatures and characters speed immediately becomes '0' until they are able to free themselves.
- Attack rolls against a restrained creature has advantage (i.e. roll 2d20's and pick the higher result)
- Creatures has disadvantage on any dexterity rolls.
- Freeing a creature from being restrained takes a STR check against the appropriate difficulty class. Most instances in this encounter, the DC will be 12.

Entangled by plants:

- Creatures entangled by plants have half cover - which gives them +2 AC bonus.
- Any creature entangled by plants will automatically be 'restrained'.

Grappled:

- Grappled creatures and characters speed immediately becomes '0' until they are able to free themselves.
- Attack rolls against a grappled creature has advantage (i.e. roll 2d20's and pick the higher result)
- A grappled creature cannot attack, only free themselves.

Obscured and light conditions:

- Dim light, patchy fog and moderate foliage gives disadvantage to any creatures who attempt to perceive using WIS that rely upon sight.
- Darkness, dense fog and heavy foliage effectively make creature which rely upon sight, blind.

DM Fun (because you're worth it)

The following game mechanics are entirely optional. I personally love to have a bit of fun with my players and build interesting mechanics which helps everyone to understand the rules of a new system or get them into or stay in character for longer.

To begin all you need to do is agree on a particular behaviour which your players are struggling with, for example 'checking phones', 'meta-gaming' or 'staying in character'. Then during the encounter, as soon as they first violate this agreed upon behaviour; either begin the rain, or add a flash of lightning and say that the rain becomes heavier. THEN, and this is very important - place a d8 on the table in front of them all at '8'.



Each time they infringe the group set rule, reach over to the d8, say you hear/see more lightening/thunder and rotate it slowly to the next lowest number, and continue all the way down to '1' each time they do this. As the dice approaches '1', gradually increase the perceived rain fall.

If the PC's are deep in the caves, just mention that you hear thunder and see that the ground under foot is getting wetter. If they are able to see any of the passages (areas [6] & [2]) then let them witness the trickle of water visibly become stronger. Use words like stream... then running... then gushing... then....of course....flooding.

Once the the d8 has passed '1', remove it from the table and announce that they hear a low rumble and the sound of water crashing down the passage. At this point you can begin counting the d8 back up to '8' as the chamber and caves below the Gulthias Tree steadily begin to fill up with water from a river which has bursts its banks further up stream. Then begin counting up the number on the d8 when they begin to waste time or it becomes fun to do so.

The sudden tunnel flood will immediately force the PC's to roll a DEX save (DC 13) to grab a root or vine. NOTE: If they are already entangled, then they automatically fail PLUS be torn free from any creature or spell which has them restrained.

Once their bodies are on the move then one final STR save (DC13) will prevent them from taking damage as they brace for impact against other roots, rocks, and walls. Damage taken by PC's is 1d4+1.

When (if) they finally make it to the surface then they will see that mound has now become an island in the glade, surrounded by marshy water. The water is only a few feet in depth.

The trick here is to watch out for roleplaying infringements and change the number on that d8 dice as soon as it happens with lightening and a crack of thunder. Let them know that there is a direct correlation between the two and watch them squirm.

Try not to cackle or laugh too much when this happens.

NOTE: This is a great mechanic if your PC's are literally being killed to death in the caves. The flood will put a distance between them and the creatures, perhaps large enough for them to beat a hasty retreat?

The Glade

The time of day in which the PC's arrive could be important. Since the majority of the monsters all have blindsight, they will have a huge advantage over any PC's without darkvision. If you wish to make this encounter harder for the PC's then have them arrive in late evening, just as the darkness is arriving. To add an even bigger disadvantage then have the area overcast with dark clouds and raining (image provided).

When the PC's first arrive at the glade the read aloud the following:

As you move along a trail, you follow the tracks through a short amount of disturbed undergrowth which suddenly opens up onto a large glade. Centred in the glade is a rather ghastly sight. You see the twisted lifeless silhouette of a tall tree upon a mound of darkened grass. From this distance you can just make out the forms of several crows pecking at its gnarled branches.

You see that a path has been lightly worn by strange tracks up to the front of the hill.

From the entrance to the glade the PC's will see that the hill before them is approximately 25 ft. in height, and 160 ft. wide x 200 ft. long. The tree stands approximately 30 ft. tall.

If the PC's go towards the mound then they will notice the path begins to fork. Right in front of them will be a gnarled wooden door into the side of the mound. Behind the door are rough carved earthen steps disappearing into the black (see [2] Cave Entrance). The other path appears to run counter clockwise around the hill for about 25 ft. then it twists and turns it's way up the side of the hill past thorny bracken [9] and onwards to the tree on top and areas [8] and [1].

Should the adventurers decide to scout around the mound and further investigate the area, they will eventually come across a stagnant pool of water to the west of the site (see [7]). The pool appears to become very swamp-like as it continues north west towards the far edges of the glade. From either side of the pool, or even standing above area [7] on the mound, the entrance to area [6] is incredibly well camouflaged. The PC's will need to be a maximum of 10 ft. away and make a DC20 perception roll. This will increase to DC25 then DC30 on second and subsequent checks, as disbelief at anything being missed sets in. The rear entrance/exit could also be guarded by a Twig Blight if you wish to push the PC's even harder on this encounter, or if they find this entrance a little too easily ;)

If they encounter a Twig Blight for first time here, then see [9] for a great description.

1. The Gulthias Tree

The route up to the tree can either be a brittle ashy track with dry thorny blackened bracken OR a heavy wet muddy trail if you chose to introduce this encounter during a down pour of rain. Either way the sky should be over cast and the sounds of creaking timber should grow louder as they close in on the hill top. When the PC's approach the tree for the first time, read this aloud:

A sight of pure dread befalls your eyes as you at last manage to clearly see the tree up close. The bark appears to be soft and spongy with some kind of dark resin running through deep crevices of the bark skin.

A half dozen crows caw at you as you approach and flap open their wings. They idly claw and peck at loose pieces of bark on the black twisted branches. There are no leaves, and no fruit on this tree... just loose pieces of bark, and thin slivers of a membrane like material curled up and dry at the edges.

Thick gnarled roots crank down into the earth at awkward angles, like they are punching down into the barren earth below. An odd creaking and clattering sound grows for a second as a small rush of wind sweeps its way past you.

On closer inspection (Investigation roll of DC 11) the PC's will realise that the thin membrane like material is the skin of various creatures. Some quite fresh, some perhaps days old. Until they touch the tree they will not see that the resin on the soft bark of the tree is a very dark and congealed blood. It stinks of decomposing flesh. Roll a CON save with DC 12 for each PC that gets up close to prevent them from almost being immediately sick.

Before the PC's decide to move away, they will have an opportunity to roll for perception [DC 15] to reveal any hidden creatures on the mound as the blights slowly uncoil from their hiding places amongst the bracken and brush to attack them.

If the PC's fail, then they will be surprised as the creatures launch themselves towards them with either ranged attack, or melee attack.

NOTE: Detect evil will immediately light the tree up like a beacon of evil. Plus if they suddenly decide to begin chopping down the tree, this will wake up ALL the blights in this encounter, who will storm the mound to protect it from further damage. This includes the druid and demon.

2. The Cave Entrance

The PC's arrive at a gnarled wooden door. The entrance is not camouflaged or hidden. For the complete information on the door, see page 19.

Directly in front of you there is an oval door set back into the mound. It is 5ft wide and 7ft tall, and leaning backwards at the same angle as the mound it provides access to.

The door is made from wood, it looks weak but is heavily obscured by branches, blackened leaves and roots. They all seem to weave themselves into the door, holding it closed.

If the PC's are able to enter the caves without breaking the door - then they may continue on down the passage and on to the cave without alerting its occupants, yet...

However, if the PC's are noisy and end up breaking the door then the creatures in The Cave (3), will automatically be alerted and will lay in wait for them. In this instance, +5 to all the creatures initiative rolls. If they are able to attack first, then +1d4 damage to their first attacks only.



Read this passage when the adventurers manage to enter into the passage beyond the door first time.

As you step inside the mouth of the passage you see that tree roots, small in size curl their way down the carved soil and rock steps.

The steps continue down into the darkness reaching around to the left.

As you continue along the passage the earth is roughly dug and thin tree roots seem to weave their way in and out of the walls.

This passage which is 8 ft. high and 4ft. wide continues on for 30 ft. and drops down around 20 ft. It then meets with forked passage-way. By the time it reaches the fork, the passage is about 10 ft high. There is little to no light. Assume that the PC's are now in complete darkness from this point onwards. The passage to right will go to area [8].

If they press on forward, the ground gets damper, as they descend further into the cave and towards area [3].

3. The Cave

The PC's will be in complete darkness by now and if they have dark vision or created their own light source by magical or other means, they will be able to see the passage-way open up into a cavern 55 ft. long x 25 ft. wide x 20 ft. tall.

As soon as they approach to within 10 ft. of the entrance to this cave the blights in here will be able to roll for perception. The blights have a passive perception of 10 but will roll a d20 if the adventurers approach the cavern with artificial light of some kind.

If the PC's surprise all of the inhabitants of this cave, then they will not see any Twig Blights [who are invisible so long as they don't move], and will detect any Vine or Needle Blights on passive perception or Wisdom (Perception) with DC15.

If they fail to stealth their way in, then any monsters with ranged attack will immediately launch at them and a Vine Blight will use its 'entangle plants' ability.

Stepping inside the elongated large cavern from the passage-way you feel that the ground is squishy from rotten damp roots and the walls also have medium to small sized roots growing out from them.

At the far end of the cavern, you see two openings, one a long thin crack and the other a large roughly square opening. There are also two thick roots which grow down from the ceiling to the floor of the cave.

A strong odour of decomposing flesh is in the air and a strange timber knocking sound can be heard...

Due to the damp conditions, it is incredibly hard to light a fire or propagate one (DC 20). All the creatures in this cave will fight to the end and not try to run or warn anyone else.

4. The Passage

This passage leads to the main chamber [5].

As you step into this passage-way, you can see it begin to slowly taper toward a natural opening, a short distance away.

You can no longer see the walls and floor as the roots are covering all the surfaces like dense curtains and carpet. Half way along the passage, there is a thick root which again reaches down from the ceiling all the way to the wet floor of the passage.

The smell of rotting corpses is very strong, and a slight movement of air is felt coming from directly ahead.

If the PC's fail any Dexterity save DC10 whilst travelling through this passage they will see roots on the floor and opposite wall twitch. This is due to all the roots being so heavily tangled with one another. This should get them feeling rather paranoid. Have a play with that ;) Also a failure to save against Dexterity DC10 will result in alerting the creatures in the main chamber ahead of them. These creatures now gain a +5 to initiative and a +1d4 to first attack damage IF they attack before the PC's.

5. The Main Chamber

As you enter a cavernous room, you see the walls, floor and ceiling are deeply interwoven with soil and thick tree roots, The chamber is like a domed cathedral made from entangled roots and vines. The stench of death in here is awful.

Treading on the floor you see that water is a few inches deep beneath a rotting carpet of tree roots.

In the middle of the chamber is a large pile of twigs, vines and roots which all curl up into one gigantic nest. Adjacent to them is a roughly chopped tree stump, roots still attached acting like legs to a table.

On top of this altar-like table, is what looks to be a humanoid figure laying flat on it's back with roots protruding out from all over its body. It's arms and legs are spread wide and contorted in an unnatural fashion, reaching up into the air as if they were trying to rip themselves free from its own body.

You hear whispering clacking of wood, and the roots themselves seem to twitch as you enter the chamber. It suddenly goes deathly quiet apart from that dull clacking of wood against wood. The sound quickens...

If the creatures in here were forewarned then the PC's will need a passive wisdom/perception of at least 20 to see all the monsters apart from any Twig Blights or the Demon Blight who will be invisible whilst motionless. If the druid has been placed due to this being a level 5 adventure, then she will be standing at the altar, with 2 flaming torches, watching the PC's intently, as they enter. (dim lighting conditions)

It is very unlikely that the PC's will get the drop on these creatures, BUT if they do, all the creatures will be perceived apart from any Twig Blights or the Demon Blight who automatically hide until called for.

Level 1 Group:

Both the Demon Blight and Druid will be away from the mound searching for the next site in the forest to bring life to another Gulthias Tree. The Twig Blights will be hiding in the tree roots along with the Vine Blight. Once the PC's have searched the room, but not yet reached the hidden passage behind the altar, the Vine Blight will unleash its special ability of 'entangling plants' to ensnare as many of them as possible.

Once this has been carried out it will then use its constrict melee attack to finish off the players who are restrained. Meanwhile the Twig Blights will come to life in their turn and also try to attack the players who are already restrained.

If somehow the PC's are able to restrain the Vine Blight and question it, they may learn about the druid and the demon. They are both not expected back for another few days/weeks. Charisma (Intimidation/Persuasion) DC15.

Level 3 Group:

As with level 1 but the Demon Blight is laying in wait for it's turn to attack inside of the twig nest in the middle of the chamber. At first it will use the same ability that it shares with the Vine Blight, 'entangling plants', and use it to pin down as many of the players as possible, before attacking the restrained ones from range.

Level 5 Group

Once the PC's have finally all entered, and the druid is present, then she will courteously address them after looking coldly at each one of them, weighing them up.

Nereza asks if they have had a long journey, and waits for them to state their intentions or try to attack her.

If the PC's force combat and initiative is rolled, Nereza will cast spike growth on the area immediately between her and the PC's, then use misty step to teleport as close to the hidden passage [6] OR passage [4] if the PC's arrived that way.

The rest of the blights will immediately begin to attack, giving Nereza a chance unleash witch bolt on any PC's who try to rush towards her [holding her action]. If the fight seems to be going badly or the Demon Blight is destroyed then she will cast expeditious retreat and head towards the hidden doorway at the rear of the chamber. Unless anyone sees Nereza escape via this exit, it will take a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to realise that it is even there.

There is a 3 ft wide hidden passages around the entire room. It is obscured by dangling tree roots. A Passive Wisdom or Wisdom (Perception) check with DC20 will reveal the fast lane around the room. The ground is normal soil, and easy to move across. Access to the hidden door to the rear of the chamber is granted via this passageway too. Easy to spot.

Nereza Sephiran

This druid both cunning and beautiful. She has a false appearance enchantment which disguises the permanent bark skin given to her by the Gulthias Tree. It's not that she is particularly vain, it's just she likes to get as close as she can if she needs to.

Nereza will fight until 10 hit points left and then make a run for it. She already has the tree's 'fruit' and if she feels that she has been beaten, then she will beat a hasty retreat to implant a new Gulthias Tree, well away from prying eyes.

She remembers little of her past life in the Circle of the Swords or the Emerald Enclave, since she was only a member for a year before the tree supplicated her. All that she does remember though is feeling more alive now than she ever did. She has a purpose in life now - and no one can stop her from spreading the Gulthias seed all over Neverwinter Wood.

If there is a druid in the PC group, Nereza will direct her words and attention towards them most of all. She smiles and speak of her love for wildlife, plants and all trees.

Treasure

In amongst the rotting roots and soil of the curved northern alcove, you are able to recover the following treasure and items gathered from unlucky travellers over the years:

Level 1 Party

- 50 gold pieces
- 30 gold pieces worth of gems and stones

Level 3 Party

- 150 gold pieces
- 80 gold pieces worth of gems and stones
- Potion of resistance

Level 5 Party

- 250 gold pieces
- 130 gold pieces worth of gems and stones
- Potion of resistance
- Potion of growth

6. The Secret Passage

The entrance to this passage from the main chamber is hidden and can only be detected with a Perception roll of a DC 20. The camouflage is made from tree roots growing over the opening.

Heading away from the main chamber the passage way rises pretty fast and the steps are once again cut from earth and tree roots. This time there is a steady trickle of stagnant water which cascades down the faces of the steps towards the main chamber.

Direction of Travel: towards area [7], stagnant pool.

Pushing aside the dense curtain of roots and vines, you enter into a narrow passage which steepens and winds upwards and around to the right further along. The floor is roughly carved from soil and rock, and a thin trickle of stagnant water trickles down in-between rocks and roots, carving it's way past you and towards the main chamber behind.

Along the passage the roots appear to grow from long crevices in the soil wall and the ceiling itself.

As the PC's continue on towards the stagnant pool, area [7]

Direction of Travel: towards area [7], stagnant pool.

The passage-way narrows again slightly and begins to switch back to the right and left as it steeply rises.

Moving up only a half dozen steps, you can see a tiny amount of low light which reaches down the passage and you see what looks to be a curtain of roots and thick foliage which hide the exit from this passage.

If the PC's were able to access this passage -way from area [7], then read the following:

Direction of Travel: towards area [5], main chamber

As you push past the highly packed roots and foliage, you see a passage descend into the dark.

The walls and floor are made from roughly dug soil, and the steps formed from rocks and tree roots. At the end of the passage it turns sharply to the right.

As the PC's continue on towards the main chamber, area [5]

Direction of Travel: towards area [5], main chamber.

The passage way drops steeply once again and switches back twice before it widens slightly and it looks to end further along with another curtain of dense roots.

The floor is roughly carved from mud, and a thin trickle of stagnant water from the pool behind trickles down in-between rocks and roots, carving it's way past you and towards the end of the passage in front of you.

NOTE:

If the PC's arrive at this location from the pool area [7], then they may have skirted around most of the creatures. In this instance, it may be prudent to introduce at least one Twig Blight here, hidden in the entrance canopy of roots and vines.

As the lead PC's push through into the passage-way, scratches over his or her armour and skin become intense and suddenly they are attacked by a hidden Twig Blight!

Vision:

The PC's can only see in low light conditions so long as it is still evening, and they are standing in the entrance to this passage from area [7], the stagnant pool. If it is dark out and if the PC's are a few steps into the passage, there will be no light, and just the sound of a thin trickle of water splashing down the steps in front of them.

7. The Stagnant Pool

It is possible that the first time the PC's reach this area is via the secret passage [6]. In which case, read aloud the following:

As you squeeze by the roots and foliage covering the exit of this passage, your feet immediate begin to sink further in the mud and you see that you are on the very edge of a pool of water which seems to stretch on for quite a distance into the woods beyond.

A slight hazy fog appears to stick to the surface of the pool and you realise this is the source of the stagnant water running down the passage and into the mound behind you.

If the PC's arrive at this location by scouting around the mound then you can refer back to **The Glade** encounter earlier for a description.

If the adventurers approach closer, they will see that the pool is lifeless and stagnant. A thin hazy fog sticks to its surface.

A DC 15 Perception/Survival check will reveal a light set of tracks which seem to lead around the pool and towards the wood. They are approximately 4-5 days old.

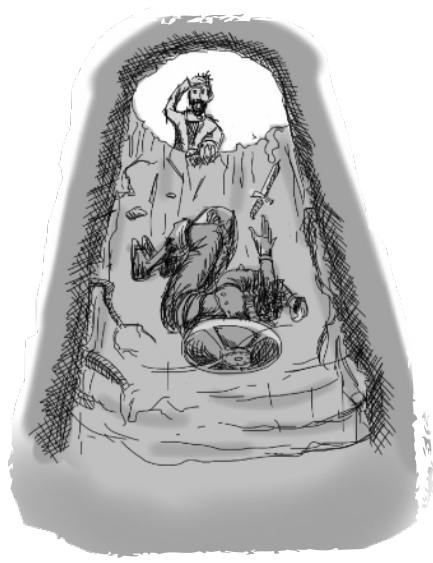
The tracks appear to be humanoid, unless the PC's are Level 1, then they appear to be shambolic and indiscernible.

8. A Long Drop

Half way long the track which winds up to the tree is trapped with a pit drop into the cave below. The pit was dug by the blights and the druid to trap passing travellers. The pit drops 20 ft. first before opening up into an underground passage for another 25 ft.! This trap will require a passive perception of 18 or a perception roll with a DC 18 if actively searching.

The pit has a 5 ft. diameter and any creature medium size or above can immediately roll a DEX or STR save with a DC of 13 to brace against the wall and slow their fall for the first 20 ft. Check one final time to halt their fall before the pit opens up into the passage below. Roll a 1d10+10 for how many feet they travelled downwards. They will discover that they were saved by an 'Immovable Rod' (see Dungeon Masters Guide [DMG], p175). Disengaging the rod by pressing its button, means falling into passage [8], but at least they have the rod!

Once halted, then the player can climb up the shaft of the pit with a DC 12 check for STR or athletics (half speed). A fail will result in the player falling 25 ft into the passage below.



If none of the above checks are successful or PC is *small*, then they will fall a total of 45 ft to the floor of the passage below for 4d6+2 damage (halved if a DEX save with DC 15 is passed),

If however the PC is able to slow their fall for the first 20 ft., then the damage will be 2d6+2 (halved on DEX DC 15).

If a PC falls in, then read them this passage aloud:

To your surprise the ground beneath your feet collapses under your weight and you begin tumbling into a dark pit, lined with tree roots and loose rocks.

Finally if the PC fails his or her STR and DEX checks and falls down into the passage below, read the following aloud:

You tumble down into the darkness, spinning and bouncing off tree roots as you go. Just as you right yourself and reach out to halt your fall, the pit opens up wide and you begin a long fall into a passage below.

Landing on the rough ground, amongst gnarly roots, soil and rocks, you slowly begin to take in your surroundings.

Before you is a narrow passage which quickly shortens in height and leads off into the blackness.

If the PC decides to search the area before moving off, they will find the following:

DC 10 = a purse with 3 gold coins

DC 15 = as above plus 2 rubies, worth 20 gp's each

DC 20+ = as above plus a rather muddy set of 'Goggles of Night' (DMG p172), left over from an unlucky adventurer who met with a grisly end late one night.

9. Blighted Bushes

At several spots around the glade are dead looking shrubs clumped together. These are the hiding places of the Twig Blights.

The Twig Blights are impossible to see until they move, and will surprise the PC's if they fail a Perception check using a DC 20. Once one Twig Blight has been uncovered, then the mound will come alive with all the other blights which are hidden, as they rush to attack any living thing which is in their territory.

The first time they see a Twig Blight, read this aloud:

Before you is the strangest looking thing ever. The shrub reaches out to rake its sharp thorny branches across your skin.

The bush then unsteadily stands on two legs as what appears to be a crooked 3ft tall humanoid form; scampering along the ground in jerky fast and slow motions.

It makes the most odd sounds as it moves, of clattering and knocking pieces of wood. A truly evil looking creature.

The End?

At this point, the PC's would have either discovered most of what the glade has to offer or dispatched a few of the creatures and escaped the caves under the tree.

There are many ways that you can end this encounter, but here are a few ideas I have thought of to get you moving towards the next adventure:

1. After cleansing the cave of all the creatures, they decide to destroy the tree too. The Gulthias Tree has an AC of 14 due to its bark (but PC's have an advantage to hit it). It is resistant to all but magical weapons. Even to fire due to its heavily damp state. Lightning will do full damage. The tree has 55 hit points. Once the tree is destroyed, then the druid and all other supplicants will immediately die too UNLESS the fruit has been harvested by the druid.
2. If the PC's did not destroy the tree and were Level 1 or 3, then 2 weeks later the druid will return to the site and see the horror of what the PC's have done. She will travel to the nearby village and begin her investigations to find out who and what the PC's really are...
3. Upon returning to the village/town, for payment for dealing with the monstrous tree in the glade, they are thanked and paid by the villagers. Unknown to them though, one of the elders is also a supplicant, and becomes very interested in where they are going next. He/she will send blights/assassins/evil doers after them when they leave.
4. The PC's could very well try to track the druid and/or the Demon Blight through the forest. This could be an add on adventure, but be sure to give them a chance to earn more experience and level up before they are able to face the evil druid and demon.
5. **NEW CAMPAIGN ENDING.** So you can use this ending for any level group who cuts down the Gulthias Tree before the fruit has been harvested. The druid is not ready to shake-off her mortal coil quite yet. Due to the evil yet 'odd' sentience of the tree, Nereza becomes a Revenant [MM p.259] and after a month of recomposition or searching for a body to inhabit, she detects the location of the PC's and sets off to take dreadful revenge upon those who caused her to be set adrift in a world in which she loved so much...

Experience Point Awards

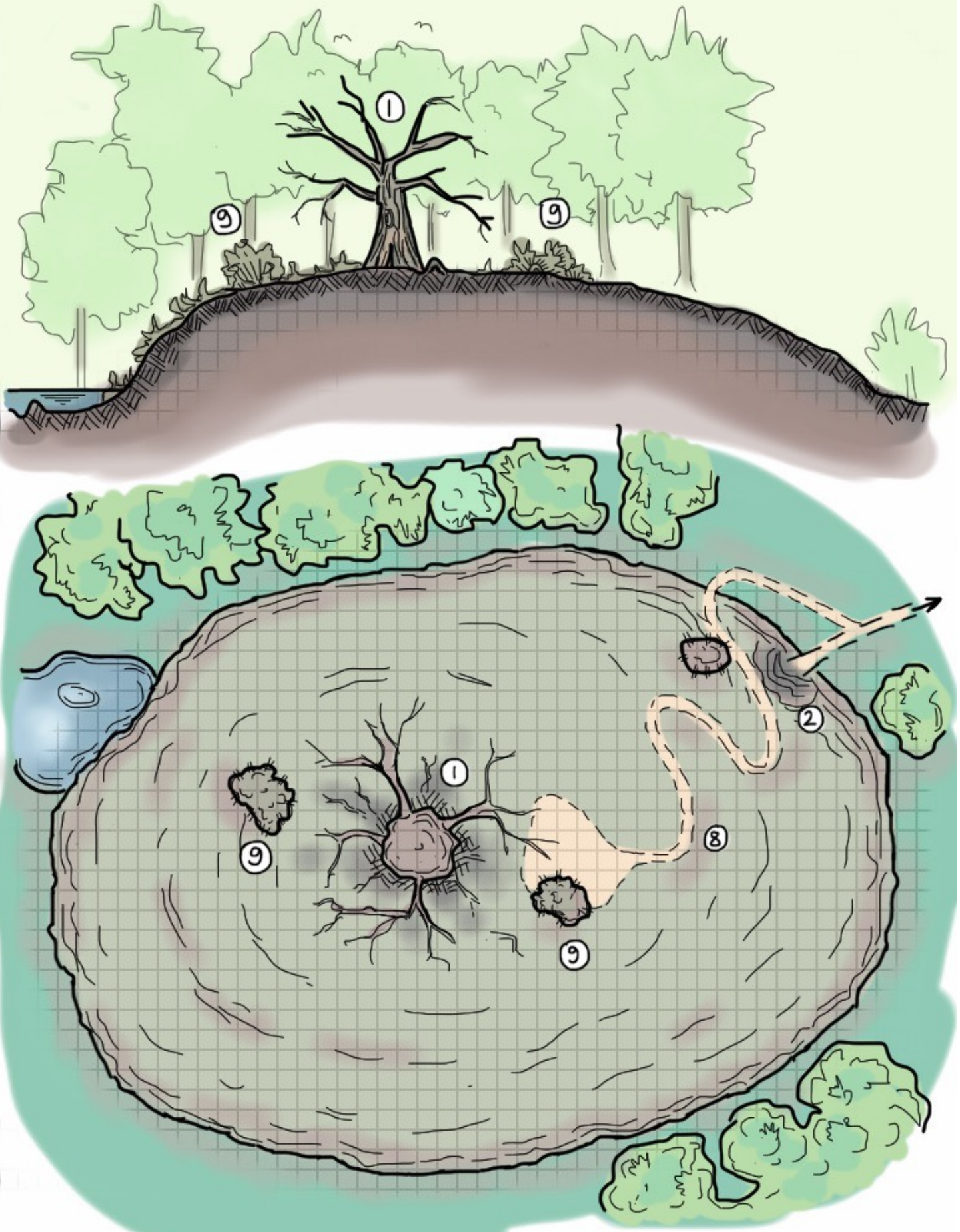
Dependant upon what the players are able to do, here are the experience awards up for grabs (Lvl1 / Lvl 3 / Lvl 3):

- Destroy the blights in areas [1] and [9] then share (100 XP's / 150 XP's / 350 XP's)
- Discover hidden Rear Passage [6] (50 XP's each)
- Destroy the blights in area [3] then share (100 XP's / 200 XP's / 500 XP's)
- Destroy the blights in area [5] then share (200 XP's / 850 XP's / 1350 XP's)
- Destroy the Gulthias Tree (200 XP's each)

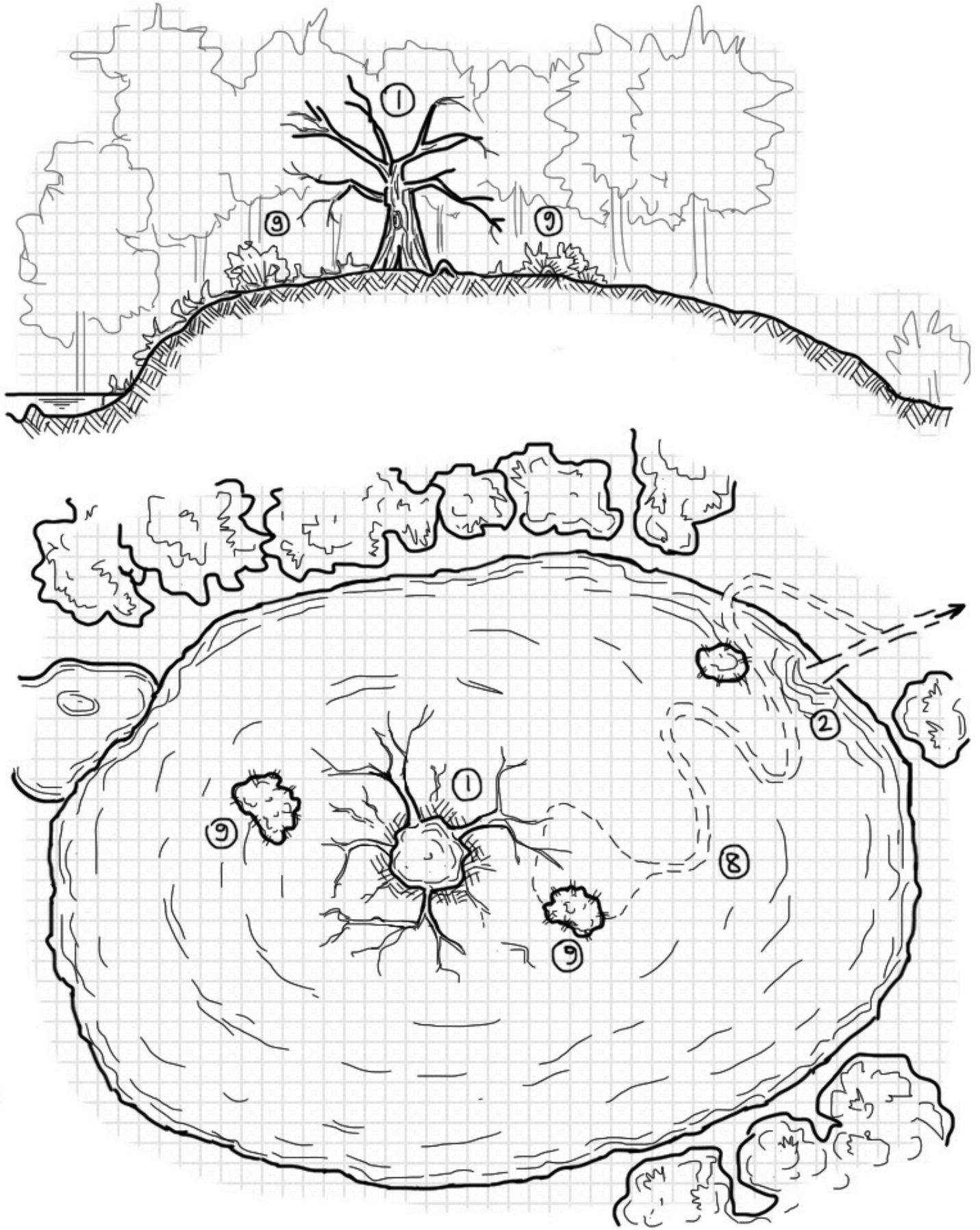
Additional experience awards:

- For excellent roleplaying (50 - 200 XP's each)
- Inspiring ideas (50 XP's per idea)
- Class activities specific to own class (+10% to total)

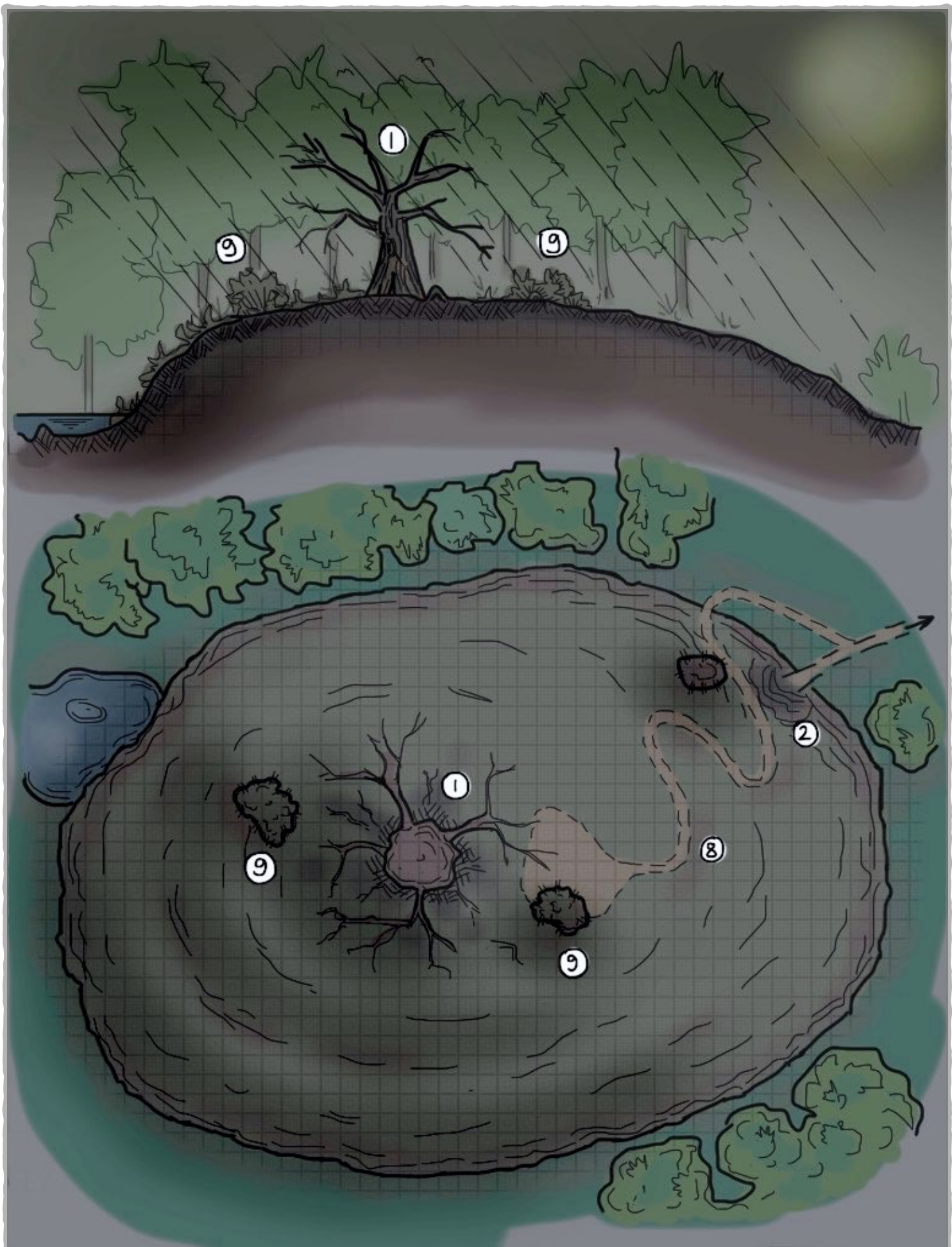




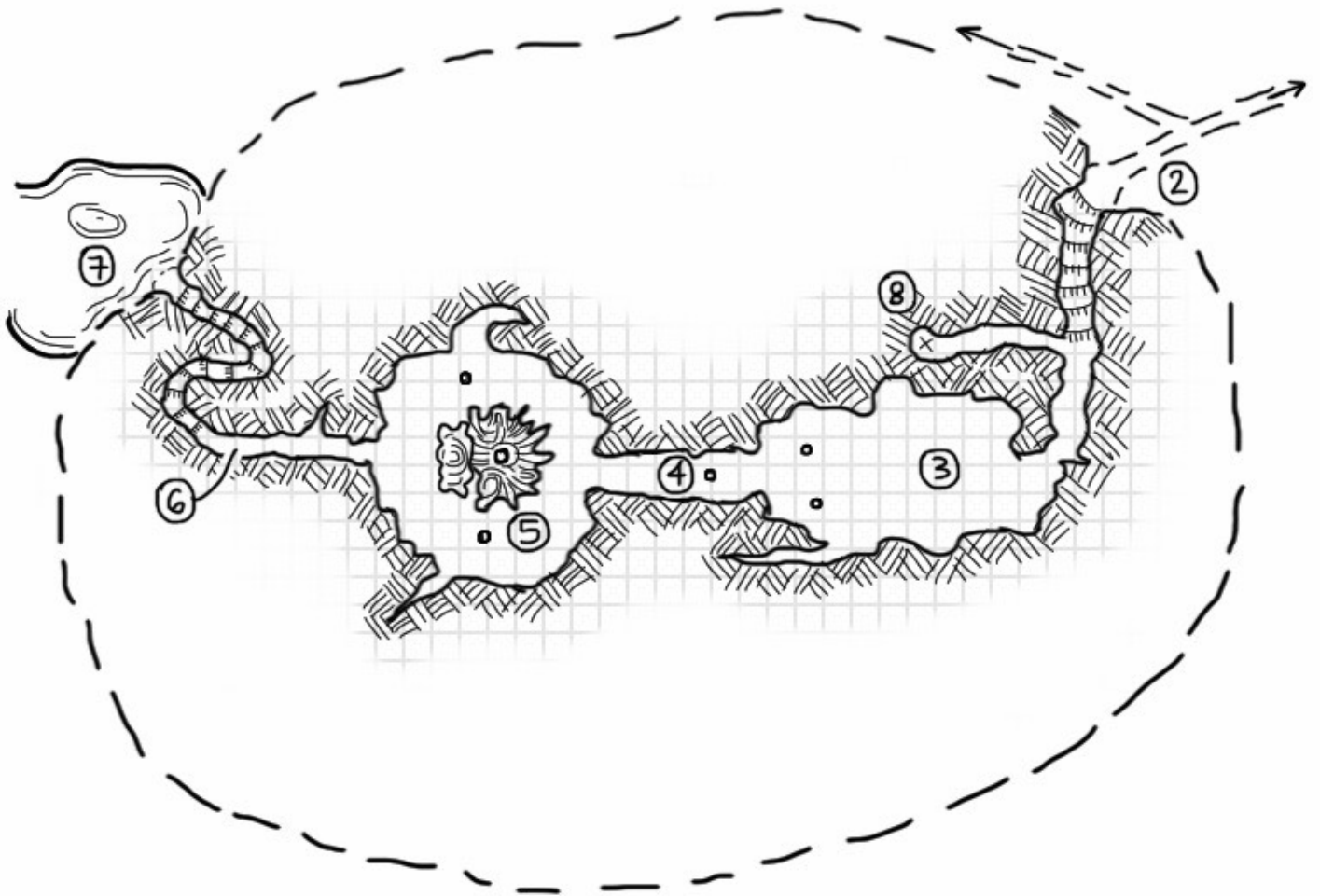
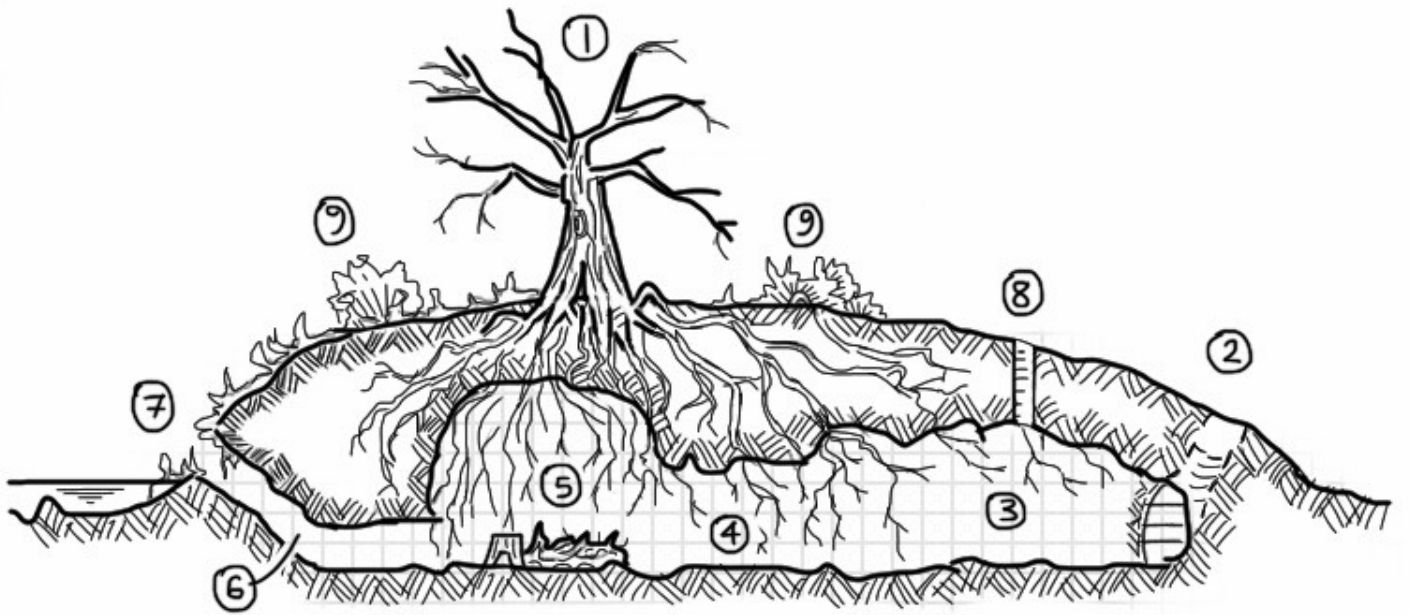
The Glade - 1 sq. / 5 ft.



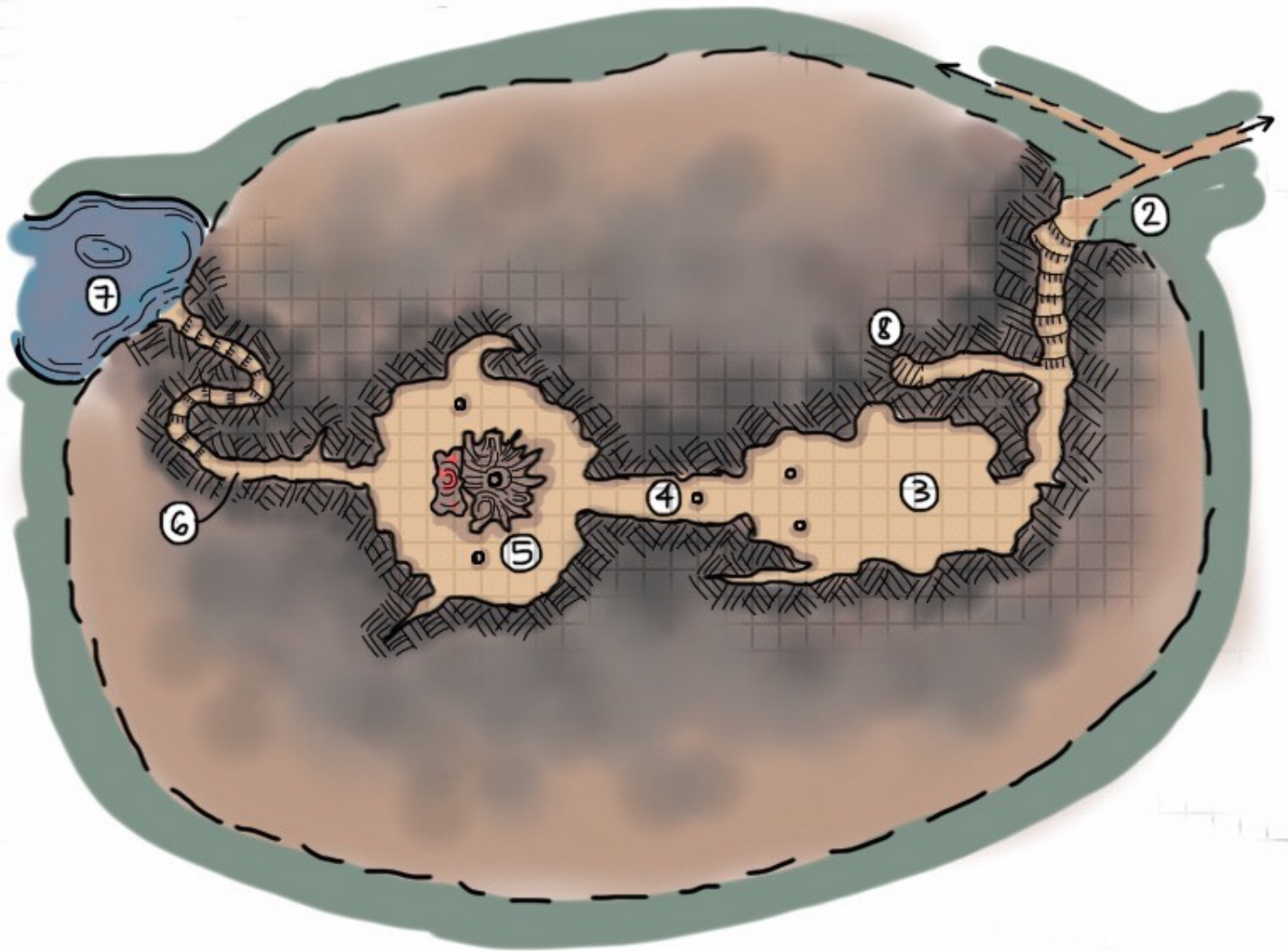
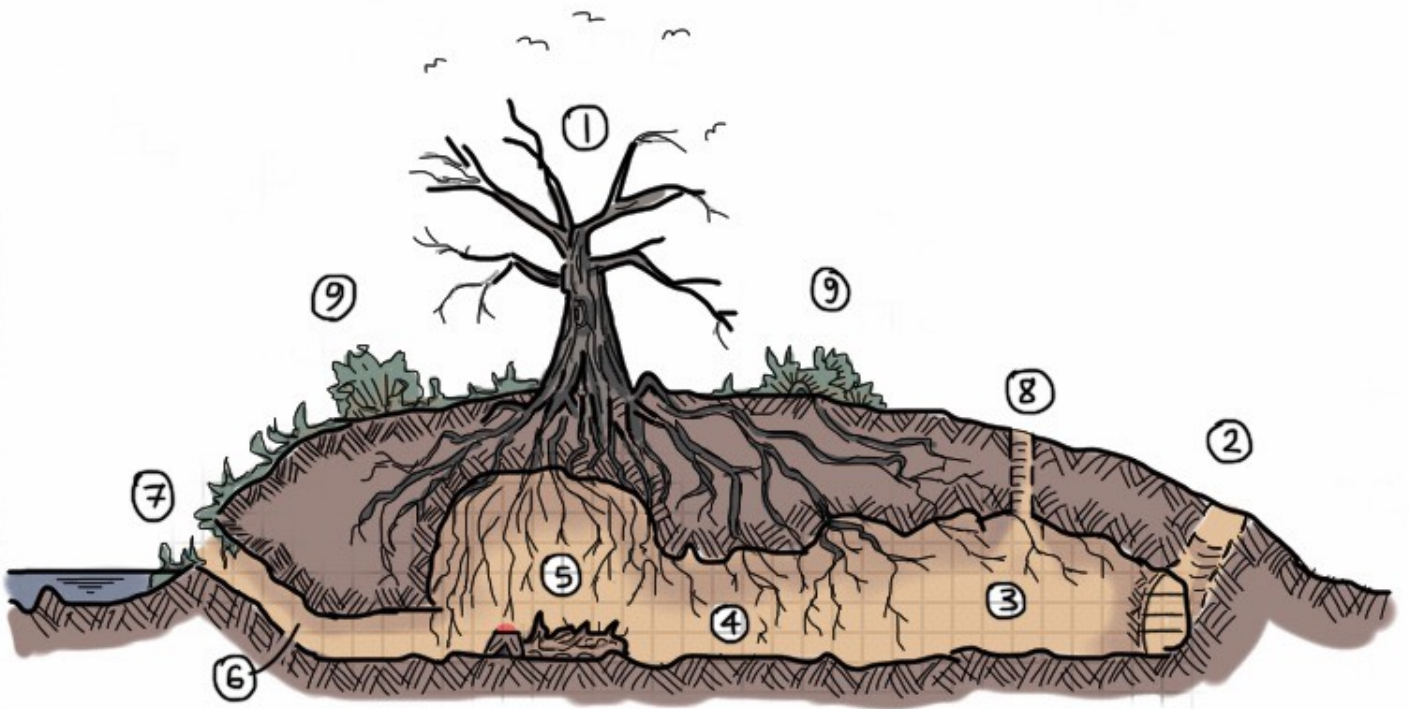
The Glade - 1 sq. / 5 ft.



The Glade @ Night - 1 sq. / 5 ft.



The Caves - 1 sq. / 5 ft.



The Caves - 1 sq. / 5 ft.

THE DRUID DOOR

All you needed to have done is knocked on my door, and I would have let you in..."
- Nereza Sephiran (Dark Druid)

The origins of this legendary door can be traced back to a time when druids were found to be even more secretive than they are now.

It takes powerful magic to keep a druid door's enchantment from not fading over time.

Material: Wood (damaged)

Toughness (AC): 20 (10+10)

Hit Points: 10

Size: Regular.

Description: The door looks weak and damaged. There are roots and branches growing through gaps in the door, and surrounding the portal. No lock or door handle can be seen.

Lock: The door has an Arcane lock (+10 Toughness). A successful Intelligence (Arcane) check with a DC12 will identify the barely noticeable aura of an enchanted door. The door cannot be unlocked without the arcane lock being dispelled first, or Knock/Druidcraft being cast on the door, then it will open it for 10 minutes before closing once again.

Trap: The trap can be detected using a successful Intelligence (Arcane/Nature) check with a DC14. By leaning against the door a PC will notice that some of the roots shift towards them a very small amount. A successful dispel magic with a DC15 will dispel the trap.

If someone tries to break down the door, then grasping vines will reach out and attack any creatures attacking the door for up to 20ft away. It can attack up to 2 creatures at once.



The attack bonus are given below. Once a hit has been successful, then bludgeoning damage is done - halved with a successful Dexterity save. Then a Strength (Athletics) save must be made or the creature is considered 'restrained' and damage is done each turn automatically until a restrained creature has passed the Strength check to escape. If at anytime **Entangle** or **Plant Growth** is cast on the door - use the **DANGEROUS** damage severity table below.

DAMAGE TABLE

Level Damage Severity - Setback

1-4 1d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC10, +3 Attack

5-10 2d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC10, +4 Attack

11-16 4d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC11, +4 Attack

17-20 10d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC11, +5 Attack

Level Damage Severity - Dangerous

1-4 2d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC12, +6 Attack

5-10 4d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC13, +7 Attack

11-16 10d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC14, +7 Attack

17-20 18d10 bludgeoning damage, Save DC15, +8 Attack

...Loved the Druid Door?

Deadly Dungeon Doors



Term	Description & Rules	DM's Use References
Rolling Door	1. A sliding door set in a track and lock on one side or a roller that rolls on a track. 2. It may have a Strength (Dexterity) check using the door's toughness as the DC to slide open.	
Pressure	1. A pressure door operated by raising up and lowering down. On its other side, the pressure is increased with weight, which causes the difficulty to increase. 2. It may have a Strength (Dexterity) check using the door's toughness as the DC to lift it up. They drop back down in a single turn if released.	
Panel Door	1. A false door is usually flat, a small amount of three materials attached to the back of a wall or floor and designed to look like a fully operational door. 2. They do not lock or unlock like a door. They can only be broken through as a wall. 3. Each false door can be opened when it deals with a Spot DC10 (see Opening Trap/Lock).	
Hidden Door	1. Hidden doors are doors obscured by another object in a room. 2. You can try to find a hidden door by being close and using the Spot DC as found in table D1 in Chapter 3. 3. The object which obscures the door can also be used to solve D1, Chapter 3. 4. A hidden door is "found" by moving the object obscuring it. Then it becomes a normal door.	
Secret Door	1. Secret doors are designed to look like the wall/ceiling or of the room, which they are built. 2. The door is made from the same material as what they are built on, and they are not "found" by using the Spot DC as found in table D1, Chapter 3. 3. A secret door can be "opened" using the Spot DC as found in table D1, Chapter 3. 4. Once searched, a secret door usually also has a "secret" way to open it. The difficulty to discover this, also known as the Open DC, is found in table D1, Chapter 3.	

THE DOOR YONDER

When people show you who they really are, then believe them." - Maya Angelou

Legend has it that a prisoner named *Yonder* who was considered too stupid and without hope to escape his cell at *Black DC* did what he had to do. He was able to take his cellmate's key from him and use it to unlock his cell. The guards were so shocked by his actions that they had to execute him. The gods were so impressed by his actions that they gave him a special gift to reward him.

If you need that each door is used for one purpose, or any other who look for a secret way to escape.

Material: Wood
Toughness (AC): 25 (15-10)
Hit Points: 50
Size: Small
Lock: Arcane Lock (4-10 Intelligence, Keyed Lock) Spot DC10 (Arcane/Intelligence), Keyed Lock DC15 (Dodge)
Trap: A Day in the Life of Trap (See Sewer Trap) only. If the trap marks are spotted, then an Intelligence (Investigation) check with DC15 will reveal that the trap marks do not look like a trap. The trap is a door, which Arcane Lock with DC15 and lock for 1000.

If however the adventurers cannot unlock the door using magic, and choose to dash through the door then this triggers the trap. The first obstruction will need to be removed. If it is or is transformed into one of the creatures in the **TRANSFORMATION TABLE**, for 24 hours. This trap turns the creature into a normal creature with the creature's own abilities from the **MONSTER MANUAL**. The creature's intelligence, its saving throws, and its hit points, if they do not gain any bonuses that are granted by the creature, it has become a creature that is not a creature. A creature that is not a creature, although these are not creatures and can be used often the creature's own abilities are not used.

Once the trap is removed, the door's name and stats are as follows:

Level	Material
1-10	Wood
11-20	Iron
21-30	Steel
31-40	Adamantium
41-50	Dragonhide
51-60	Dragonhide
61-70	Dragonhide
71-80	Dragonhide
81-90	Dragonhide
91-100	Dragonhide

ON SALE NOW!

From **Dreadful Dungeons**



Extra Lovely Stuff

This is a final section for all you DM's who love to immerse your PC's in the wonderful stories you all come up with. Maybe you use music already, maybe not, but for all you music lovers out there I have generated a series of suggestions from my own library of tunes; and where they could fit in rather well with this encounter. Enjoy.

The Glade

1. Whilst the adventurers track and travel towards the encounter in the glade, play the following music:

Tooth and Claw - The Elder Scrolls V:Skyrim

2. As soon as they see the glade open up in front of them:

Hideout - Assassin's Creed 2

3. Approaching the fork in the path into the mound and around it:

Cityscape - Assassin's Creed Rogue

4. As the PC's track around the mound from a distance, exploring the glade:

Approaching Target 3 - Assassin's Creed 2

5. Adventurers taking a look down into one of the passages from the mound or stagnant pool:

Into Darkness - The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

1. The Gulthias Tree

1. As the adventurers head up the mound towards the Gulthias Tree, or away from it:

Approaching Target 3 - Assassin's Creed 2

2. When the PC's first approach the tree up close::

Night Without Stars - The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

3. After playing the previous track, then ply this music as the PC's investigate the tree closer:

Prosperity and Decay - Assassin's Creed Rogue

4. Just as the Blights first attack, play this music through the combat encounter::

Run, Shay! Run! - Assassin's Creed Rogue

2. The Cave Entrance (Secret Passage [6] & Long Drop [8])

1. Entering the cave passage way:

Northern Lights - Assassin's Creed Rogue

2. Reaching the end of the passage as it joins onto Cave [3]:

Approaching Target 1 - Assassin's Creed 2

3. The Cave

1. Entering into cave [3]:

Approaching Target 1 - Assassin's Creed 2

2. As soon as the PC's encounter the creatures and combat begins:

Run, Shay! Run! - Assassin's Creed Rogue

3. (Optional) When the PC's first begin to look like they are going to kill all the creatures, boss minion dies:

Wetlands Combat - Assassin's Creed 2

4. The Passage

1. Steeping into the passage between caves [3] & [5]:

Dominant Species - Assassin's Creed Rogue

5. The Main Chamber

1. As they first arrive in the main chamber, while reading them the description. Used with druid too:

Ezio Confronts Lucrezia - Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

2. Combat kicks off! Play this!:

Fight of the Assassins - Assassin's Creed Brotherhood

3. As the adventurers get the upper hand in combat, when the main boss is almost dead or about to take the final blow. How do you want to do this?:

One They Fear - The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

4. If they are getting kicked and killed and decide to try to escape, or the flood happens and the chamber begins to flood:

Run, Shay! Run! - Assassin's Creed Rogue

Tooth and Claw- The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

5. Should the PC's decide to speak with Nereza, play this track whilst conversation is happening:

Darkness Falls in Florence - Assassin's Creed 2

Credits and Acknowledgements

This entire encounter module has been inspired by the many other Gulthias Tree projects and documents already out there, too many to mention apart from the ones already referenced at the beginning of this module.

A special thanks to Neil Jary (@Kirisute) for his artistry and illustrations. Also an extra thank you to the Dungeons & Dragons 5e Facebook group for their input and advice!

A big mention to Nahuel Operto for proof reading, play testing and translating this adventure to Spanish for us!

All the music reference in this document isn't owned or licensed by us. It is downloadable from all good music download and subscription sites.

Further Reading

On page 31 of the Monster Manual (MM) you will find a small piece on the Gulthias Tree. This is a great way to introduce yourself to this entity and the blight monsters.

There is also further reading material available online, which will reveal several past instances when this diabolical tree has been used to great effect. Examples below:

A past adventure module - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sunless_Citadel

A blog post - <http://ageofbeckoning.blogspot.co.uk/2014/06/the-gulthias-tree.html>



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

IS IT GAME NIGHT YET?

HELLISHLY CREEPY ONE-SHOT
ADVENTURES



FIND US @[DreadfulDungeons](https://www.dreadfuldungeons.com)



Dreadful Dungeons