



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A Short Adventure for Four
8th-Level Player Characters

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Environmental Impact is a short D&D adventure for four 8th-level characters. Consult the Scaling the Adventure sidebar for ways to modify the scenario for higher or lower levels of play.

This scenario can be incorporated into any style of campaign. Since the adventure takes place in a forest and includes plant creatures, any party that chooses to undertake the mission would benefit from the presence of a druid.

PREPARATION


You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks, including the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. This adventure also uses monsters from *Monster Manual II* and information from *Masters of the Wild: A Guidebook to Barbarians, Druids, and Rangers*, but all information from those books that is needed to run the adventure has been provided.

You can place this adventure in any section of your campaign world that features a forested area with at least one small human village. Adapt the material given here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

To get started, print out this module (including the map). Familiarize yourself with the descriptions of the tendriculos, assassin vine, and shambling mound from the *Monster Manual*. Also, read over the monster descriptions and statistics provided in the text for the needlefolk (from *Monster Manual II*) and the root of all evil, a monster that appeared in the regular *Monster Mayhem* feature on the Wizards of the Coast website (<http://www.wizards.com/dnd/article.asp?x=dnd/mm/mm20021221a>).

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A mad druid named Drylle holds a grudge against the forest village of Sumpter, which he views as an unlawful encroachment of civilization upon wild lands. In an effort to drive the villagers away, he has brought unseasonably hot and rainy weather to the area. As a result, the nearby river and lake have flooded several times, and crops in the village gardens and orchards have rotted from excessive moisture. Rising temperatures, high humidity, and disease brought by insects attracted to the standing water have already caused the deaths of several villagers, and more may follow any day. Still, the villagers have held on, demonstrating the characteristic stubbornness of pioneers.



Frustrated by his lack of success and determined to put a stop to humankind's constant expansion, Drylle has spent the past few weeks traveling far and wide, collecting a veritable army of hostile plant creatures to bring back to his forest. Some he has brought through coercion, using his Plant Control feat (see *Masters of the Wild: A Guidebook to Barbarians, Rangers, and Druids*); others have joined him willingly, lured by the promise of rich feeding grounds. With these troops, he plans to lay siege to Sumpter, preventing the residents from going into the forest for food. Once starvation and disease have weakened them enough to prevent effective resistance, he will send in his troops to finish them off.

But the best-laid plans are bound to go awry. Shortly after Drylle returned to the forest outside Sumpter, he fell victim to one of his own recruits—the root of all evil. Without their leader, the plant creatures mill about the forest, gorging themselves on forest denizens and the occasional villager who braves the wilderness in search of food. With no one to command them, they cannot execute the druid's well-thought-out plan to overrun the village, but their presence in the forest serves much the same purpose—preventing the villagers from leaving or seeking aid. Eventually, the plant army will exhaust the resources of the forest ecosystem and descend on the town in a series of uncoordinated raids. Although their attacks would be much more effective with Drylle to guide them, the hostile plants may yet prevail over the hapless villagers—unless the PCs can intervene to save the day.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

Environmental Impact is designed for a party of four 8th-level adventurers, but it can easily be modified to present an appropriate challenge for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows.

Four 6th- and 7th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following changes:

- ¥ Halve the number of needlefolk wherever they appear.
- ¥ Remove the assassin vine from encounter 4.
- ¥ Halve the number of shambling mounds wherever they appear.
- ¥ Halve the root of all evil's hit points (the result of damage it took in combat with Drylle).

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs arrive in Sumpter the night before Drylle's return to the area. They wake the next morning to the sound of screams from the street below. Two young men who had set off into the woods at dawn in search of game have been killed by a gang of needlefolk within sight of town. Other villagers who tried to rush to their aid were driven back by still more needlefolk. Villagers attempting to leave town by other routes met with similar fates. One or two scouts who did manage to make it back to the village alive report that hordes of vicious plant monsters have surrounded the village overnight.

The villagers beg the PCs for aid against this new threat. To save Sumpter, the characters must either clean all the plant monsters out of the forest or lead the villagers to safety elsewhere. Ultimately, they must face the root of all evil, now the *de facto* leader of the plant army.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

As DM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

- A week ago, a group of NPC adventurers from Sumpter were due to arrive in the town of Lerick to pick up supplies. They never arrived. The merchant providing the goods asks the PCs to deliver them to Sumpter and find out what happened to the NPC party. (It was waylaid by Drylle's army while *en route* to Lerick.)

Four 9th- and 10th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following changes.

- ¥ Add four needlefolk to any encounter in which they appear.
- ¥ Add three assassin vines to encounter 4.
- ¥ Add one more shambling mound to any encounter in which they appear.
- ¥ Don't allow the PCs time to rest and regain spells between encounters; instead, have the plant monsters seek them out relentlessly.
- ¥ Add four shadows or four wights to encounter 7. They can provide flanking opportunities for the root of all evil and benefit from its magic circle against good ability.

- A young woman asks the PCs to escort her to Sumpter to see her parents. She was traveling with a bodyguard, but he went out to ask questions of a local druid a few days ago and didn't return (another casualty of Drylles advancing forces).
- Any druid traveling with the party senses that a terrible tragedy is about to befall a nearby woodland area. Worse, the imbalance in the natural world may begin to spread outward from the area like a cancer. Quick action is needed to restore the balance.
- The characters encounter a lone traveler who was waylaid by Drylles forces two days before. Though he somehow managed to escape, he is wounded and hungry. He begs the PCs to intercept the plant army before it can wreak havoc on a populated area.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Environmental Impact consists of one or more encounters in town and a free-form hunt through the wilderness.

The adventure begins the morning after the PCs reach the village of Sumpter. Once the plant monsters make their presence known, the characters are in the same predicament as the villagers—unable to leave without hacking their way through hordes of enemies.

Without the NPC party that went on the ill-fated supply run to Lerick, the villagers have no heroes of their own. Once it becomes clear that they will die without aid, they beg the PCs for help, offering to give them every material possession they own. The total reward comes to 1,500 sp worth of goods, loose coins, and cheap jewelry.

No Gather Information checks are necessary for gaining the following information from the villagers; they are more than happy to tell the PCs anything they wish to know. If the characters choose to conduct their own investigations via Knowledge (nature) or bardic knowledge checks, the appropriate DCs are given below where applicable.

- **No Check Required:** Two young men tried to enter the forest this morning to hunt for game, but they were attacked and killed by some horrible, humanoid creatures that resembled walking, tree-like bugs.
- **No Check Required:** The villagers have enough food and water to last three more days at half rations.
- **Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge (nature) DC 10:** The rainy weather and extreme heat are completely unexpected. These conditions have been in effect for months.
- **Bardic Knowledge DC 15:** A crazy hermit named Drylle used to live in the woods. He cursed and spit whenever he encountered any of the villagers, claiming they were ruining the forest by building homes in Sumpter.
- **Bardic Knowledge DC 20:** Drylle claimed to be a druid. He sometimes threatened woodcutters and foragers with terrible retribution if they did not depart from his forest.
- **Bardic Knowledge DC 20:** Drylle was seen in the forest not too long before the rain started. He grinned wickedly at a group of foragers and said, "The end will come soon, now."

PC OPTIONS

It's up to the characters to decide how they wish to tackle the problem of saving Sumpter. Their primary choices are to roam the forest and clear it of monsters, or try to lead the villagers out to safety in another town.

CLEARING THE FOREST

Except for the roadways, the forest is too thick to move through on horseback. The PCs must explore the forest around the village on foot, seeking out and destroying pockets of monsters as they encounter them. If they miss a particular encounter area, you can (if desired) bring that encounter to them instead. Any monster they fail to locate and destroy will continue to pose a danger to the villagers.

ESCAPING WITH THE VILLAGERS

Forty-five villagers remain in Sumpter: fifteen men, ten women, and twenty children. After the deaths of the hunters, all of them flatly refuse to enter the forest. Changing their minds requires either strong persuasion or magical compulsion.

Persuading a villager to accompany the party on an overland trek requires a successful Diplomacy check (DC 25). Once one has agreed to go, the DC for subsequent checks against other villagers drops to 20.

If the PCs attempt to get their way through the use of *charm person*, treat each villager (adult or child) as a 1st-level commoner. Each child has half the hit points of an adult. Unless the PCs have access to the *mass charm* spell, they probably can't convince all the villagers to accompany them through magical means.

Any villagers who do agree to accompany the PCs attempt to flee at the first sign of combat. Any monsters not engaged with characters pursue fleeing villagers, forcing the PCs to give chase as well. Be sure to make the

most of the added drama and tension introduced by the presence of helpless villagers in harms way. In each combat, have a villager get into trouble at an appropriately dramatic moment. For example, a young mother and her baby could be snatched by the assassin vines, or an old man could be surrounded by needlefolk. Don't be afraid to kill off a villager or two, and be sure the PCs (at least the ones with good alignments) feel terrible about it.

DELAYING

If the characters wait more than five days to take action, the plant monsters exhaust all the food in the forest and begin raiding the village in small groups. Simply move the encounters to the edge of town and use the monster groupings as given.

PLANT TACTICS

Two of the plant monsters—the tendriculos and the assassin vine in encounter 4—have agreed to share territory because their combined abilities allow them to exploit their environment more effectively than either could alone. For the most part, however, the plant monsters do not coordinate their attacks beyond the level noted in the encounter descriptions, nor do they engage in any sort of complex, cooperative behavior.

IN THE FOREST

The following encounters take place at the corresponding numbered locations on the map.

ENCOUNTER 1: PINS AND NEEDLEFOLK (EL 8)

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the party reaches this area.

Yellow sunlight filters through the tall trees. Under your feet, the ground squishes, the fallen leaves a mass of damp, rotting compost from the excessive rain. Molds and moss grow in profusion everywhere—both on the ground and on the tree trunks. Wildflowers are showing signs of overwatering, and some plants have even begun to rot where they stand.

Creatures: There are nine needlefolk in this area.

Needlefolk (9): CR 2; Medium-size plant; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Atk +2 ranged (1d4+1, needles), or +3 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SQ low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0 (or +8 when moving at half-speed through forest, or +16 when stationary in forest).

Plant Traits: A needlefolk is immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects.

Tactics: The needlefolk attack the PCs from hiding, shooting volleys of needles and then retreating as best they can if their opponents attempt to close for melee. Fleeing needlefolk give the areas occupied by the tendriculos and the root of all evil a wide berth, even if driven toward them by the PCs. If cornered against the boundary of either plant monster's range, the needlefolk turn to face their opponents and continue to attack with their spines for as long as possible before resorting to their claws.

Needlefolk do not coordinate their attacks with one another. However, they have a strong hatred of elves and will attack one in preference to any other target.

ENCOUNTER 2: HUNGRY NEEDLEFOLK (EL 8)

A needlefolk that has caught a rabbit sits feasting on it in the middle of the road. Make a Listen check for the needlefolk when the PCs approach; on a success it drops the rabbit and hides among the trees. Read or paraphrase the following aloud if this occurs.

The partially devoured carcass of a rabbit lies in the middle of the forest path. The trees overhead are eerily silent.

If the needlefolk fails its Listen check, read or paraphrase the following aloud instead.

AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE

Industrious PCs with the proper spells or equipment may attempt to fly over the forest on a reconnaissance mission before entering the woods. Unfortunately, the plant monsters blend in well with the

forest and are difficult to spot in the dense foliage and heavy tree cover. Each plant monster in the adventure gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Hide checks made to oppose Spot checks by airborne PCs. The root of all evil has burrowed underground and so is not visible from the air at all.

A vaguely humanoid-shaped creature sits in the middle of the forest path, devouring the carcass of a rabbit. Its green body resembles that of an insect and is covered with needlelike spines.

Creatures: Seven needlefolk roam this vicinity.

Needlefolk (7): CR 2; Medium-size plant; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Atk +2 ranged (1d4+1, needles), or +3 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SQ low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0 (or +8 when moving at half-speed through forest, or +16 when stationary in forest).

Plant Traits: A needlefolk is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects.

Tactics: If caught in the road, the needlefolk drops the rabbit and runs as soon as it sees the PCs. The remaining six needlefolk are hiding at various spots around the path. All seven attack with their spines as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

ENCOUNTER 3: NEEDLEFOLK IN A HAYSTACK (EL 8)

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters enter this area.

So dense is the foliage here that the sunlight slants down through the trees in only a few spots. Rustlings in the underbrush indicate the presence of some relatively large forest denizens.


Creatures: There are eight needlefolk in this area, hiding among the trees.

Needlefolk (8): CR 2; Medium-size plant; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Atk +2 ranged (1d4+1, needles), or +3 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SQ low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0 (or +8 when moving at half-speed through forest, or +16 when stationary in forest).

Plant Traits: A needlefolk is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects.





Tactics: The needlefolk do not crowd together needlessly, but they may congregate if forced to retreat by the PCs, or if they spot elves within the party and wish to stage a massive assault against them.

ENCOUNTER 4: VINES AND MORE VINES (EL 7)

This territory is claimed by a tendriculos and an assassin vine. The vine curls up through the branches of a nearby tree, but a few of its tendrils hang nearly to the ground. Next to the vine, the tendriculos waits in hiding for prey to approach. The creature resembles a mossy hummock until it attacks. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters enter this area.

A strange odor like that of rotting meat fills this section of the forest. A faint rustling from the nearby trees quickly grows into a tremendous roar as the forest floor itself seems to surge upward.

The sound is the result of the normal plants rising up to entangle the PCs at the command of the assassin vine.

Creatures: The tendriculos and assassin vine are the only creatures other than normal plants within a 200-foot radius of this spot.

✦ **Assassin Vine (1):** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*, page 20.

✦ **Tendriculos (1):** hp 94; see *Monster Manual*, page 175.

Tactics: The two creatures have developed a rudimentary alliance that comes into play whenever creatures approach in groups. The vine uses its entangle ability to catch and immobilize as many creatures as possible, then both monsters use their improved grab abilities to seize any creatures that can still move. Opponents snared in the assassin vines entangling vegetation are ignored as long as any other foes remain free to attack. The tendriculos attempts to grab and swallow stronger-looking foes, leaving the weaker ones for the assassin vine to slay by constriction. Only after all mobile foes are dead do the two plants turn their attention to entangled creatures.

Development: Because of the tendriculos's regeneration ability, the PCs may manage to incapacitate it without actually killing it. In that case, the creature waits until it is back at full hit points, then begins seeking a new location with a better food supply. It moves closer to town if the villagers are still there, or follows the group if the villagers are with the PCs. It does not enter the territory claimed by the root of all evil, but it may take up a position just outside that area.

ENCOUNTER 5 (EL 8) SHAMBLING MOUNDS

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter this area.

This area reeks of mold, mildew, and a thousand other musty scents reminiscent of rot and decay. The source of the smell seems to be a pile of rotting vegetation that lies directly in your path.

Creatures: The vegetation is actually a pair of shambling mounds. The tendriculos and the root of all evil have been outcompeting the shamblers for food, and the PCs represent a welcome respite from hunger.

✦ **Shambling Mound (2):** hp 60 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 162

Tactics: The shambling mounds demonstrate no tactics beyond waiting until prey comes within reach before attacking. If they are attacked before this occurs, they give up their attempts to hide and rush into melee.

ENCOUNTER 6: MORE SHAMBLING MOUNDS (EL 8)

Another pair of shambling mounds inhabits this area. These two are about 10 feet apart, just within the cover of the trees beside the road.

The stench of rotted flesh is strong here, as though someone left a corpse out in the sun for weeks. The road is clear except for a few puddles drying in the hot sun.

Creatures: Two shambling mounds have taken up temporary residence here.

✦ **Shambling Mound (2):** hp 60 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 162.

Tactics: The two shamblers ambush the party as soon as a clear opportunity presents itself. Should the PCs attempt to flee the encounter, any shamblers left alive give chase. They stop short of encroaching on the territory claimed by the root of all evil, but they attempt to follow the PCs anywhere else on the map.

ENCOUNTER 7: ROOT OF ALL EVIL (EL 8)

This territory is claimed by the root of all evil. All the other plant creatures in the forest respect the power of this creature and do not encroach on its area, even if pursued. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach this area.

This portion of the forest seems strangely peaceful. Not a sound disturbs the stillness not the call of a bird nor the crack of a twig. Gentle rays of sunlight filter through the treetops.

A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) reveals that this extreme quiet is unnatural. It is not the restful quiet of a healthy forest; it is more like the silence that envelops the natural world moments before some terrible disaster strikes. In this case, disaster is about to strike in the form of the root of all evil.

Creature: The root of all evil hates life and seeks to kill all living, blood-bearing beings that it encounters. Odd in appearance, a root of all evil resembles a large parsnip with a vicious maw surrounded by green, ferny foliage at the top. A root of all evil feeds primarily on blood, but it also needs at least two hours of sunlight per week.

Root of All Evil: CR 8; Huge plant; HD 13d8+65; hp 123; Init—1; Spd 20 ft., burrow 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20; Atk +17 melee (2d6+13 plus 2d6 unholy/19—20, bite); Face/Reach 15 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, smite good, swallow whole; SQ blood scent, DR 10/+1, magic circle against good, plant traits, SR 19, tremorsense, unholy bite; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 28, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4*, Listen +13, Spot +13; Improved Critical (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (bite).

Improved Grab (Ex): If the root of all evil hits a Large or smaller opponent with a bite attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +26). If it gets a hold, it can attempt to swallow on the next round (see below). Alternatively, the root has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its jaws to hold the opponent (—20 penalty on the grapple check, but the root is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals bite damage.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, a root of all evil can make a normal attack to deal +13 points of damage to a good foe.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A root of all evil can swallow a Large or smaller grabbed creature by making a successful grapple check (grapple bonus +26), provided that it already has that opponent in its maw (see Improved Grab, above). Once inside the root, the opponent takes 2d6+13 points of bludgeoning damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage per round from

hundreds of tiny, biting and sucking mouths. A successful grapple check allows the swallowed creature to climb out of the interior and return to the roots maw, where another successful grapple check is needed to get free. Alternatively, a swallowed creature can try to cut its way out with either claws or a light piercing or slashing weapon. Dealing at least 25 points of damage to the interior (AC 20) in this way creates an opening large enough to permit escape. Once a single swallowed creature exits, the hole seals; thus, another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The roots interior can hold 1 Large, 2 Small, 4 Tiny, 8 Diminutive, or 16 Fine opponents.

Blood Scent (Su): A root of all evil can sense the presence of all animals, beasts, dragons, fey, giants, humanoids, magical beasts, monstrous humanoids, outsiders, and shapechangers within 60 feet. (This ability does not detect constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, undead, and vermin.)

Magic Circle against Good (Su): This ability continuously duplicates the effects of the spell of the same name. The root of all evil cannot suppress this ability.

Plant Traits: A root of all evil is immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-affecting effects.

Tremorsense (Ex): Roots of all evil can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.


Unholy Bite (Ex): A root of all evils bite attack functions as an unholy weapon and deals +2d6 points of bonus unholy (evil) damage against any creature of good alignment.

Feats: A root of all evil gains feats as though it were an undead.

Skills: A root of all evil receives skill points as though it were an undead. *It has a +20 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas with other vegetation.

Tactics: The root of all evil possesses a vile cunning that allows it to utilize rudimentary battle tactics. It directs its initial attacks at the weakest or most injured PCs (or NPC villagers, if present). Should the PCs begin to gain the upper hand, it burrows into the earth to escape, only to return again later and seek out the party using its *tremorsense* and blood sense abilities. The root continues to use hit-and-run tactics such as these until it or the PCs are dead.

Development: The root of all evil does not communicate with the PCs, even if they manage to speak with it. The creature is interested only in slaying as many creatures as possible.



A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a broken staff lying in a bush. Once magical but now ruined, the staff is all that remains of Drylle, the mad druid. He became the first victim of the root of all evil after he escorted it to its new home.

ENCOUNTER 8: DEADFALL TRAP (EL 2)

This section of forest is the former home of Drylle. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the area.

In the center of this forest glade is a small lean-to made of twisted branches and leaves. No smoke issues from the firepit out front, and the area seems strangely quiet and deserted.

This lean-to was Drylle's primary dwelling. Here he hatched his plot to raise a vegetable army and lead his troops to victory against the encroaching sentient races.

Trap: A deadfall trap protects the structure. Anyone who comes within 20 feet of the lean-to without activating the bypass mechanism releases a huge tree trunk that sweeps down from the forest canopy, striking every creature within 20 feet of the lean-to that fails a Reflex save.

Deadfall Trap: CR 2; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 15); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; falling log (1d12, slam); multiple targets (all within a 20-ft. radius); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). *Market Price:* 4,400 gp.

Development: Inside the lean-to, a successful Search check (DC 15) reveals jewelry, gems, and coins worth a total of 1,000 gp. A second successful Search check (DC 20) reveals an indentation in the floor. Digging here unearths a small chest containing Drylle's *druid vestment* and a *rod of wonder* that he acquired shortly before his untimely demise.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

The inclement weather ceased with Drylle's death. If the PCs stop short of clearing the monsters out of the forest, those left alive return to their former encounter

areas within two days and resume harassing the villagers. Should this occur, the villagers ask the PCs to come to the rescue once again.

Drylle's attitude toward the advance of civilization is rare but not unheard of in druidic circles. If desired, you could base another adventure on the idea that he had a partner or even a superior in his mission. This other druid, named Tursk, is 10th level and neutral evil. Tursk and his minions are dedicated to removing the taint of civilization from the natural world by any means necessary.

The first clues that the PCs receive about the presence of a new enemy are the reports of other small villages on the outskirts of civilization being overrun by plant creatures. If the PCs do not intervene, Tursk begins to gain ground, pushing the boundary of the forest farther and farther into formerly inhabited areas. He makes little distinction among humans, halflings, dwarves, or elves—all intelligent races are putrid cancers that must be swept from the world.

Over time, Tursk begins to move against even larger towns and cities. If not stopped, he eventually amasses a huge army of needlefolk, shambling mounds, and other plant creatures and leads them against the greatest capitals of the campaign world. By this point, he has drawn many more druids to his cause, as well as a number of clerics who have access to the Plant domain, and a contingent of neutral evil rangers. Such a military campaign pits the destructive forces of nature against the strongest fortresses of the civilized races.

The PCs must discover Tursk's plot and find a way to stop him before the verdant tide of his advancing army overwhelms the entire world. The longer they take to unravel and foil the evil druid's plan, the harder it becomes to stop him.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ramon Arjona is a software developer with Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His work has appeared in *Strange Horizons* (www.strangehorizons.com), *The Absinthe Literary Review* (www.absinthe-literary-review.com), and ZZYZYVA. He would like to dedicate this miniadventure to the all the designers and editors who have made D&D a great game, both in print and on the Web.