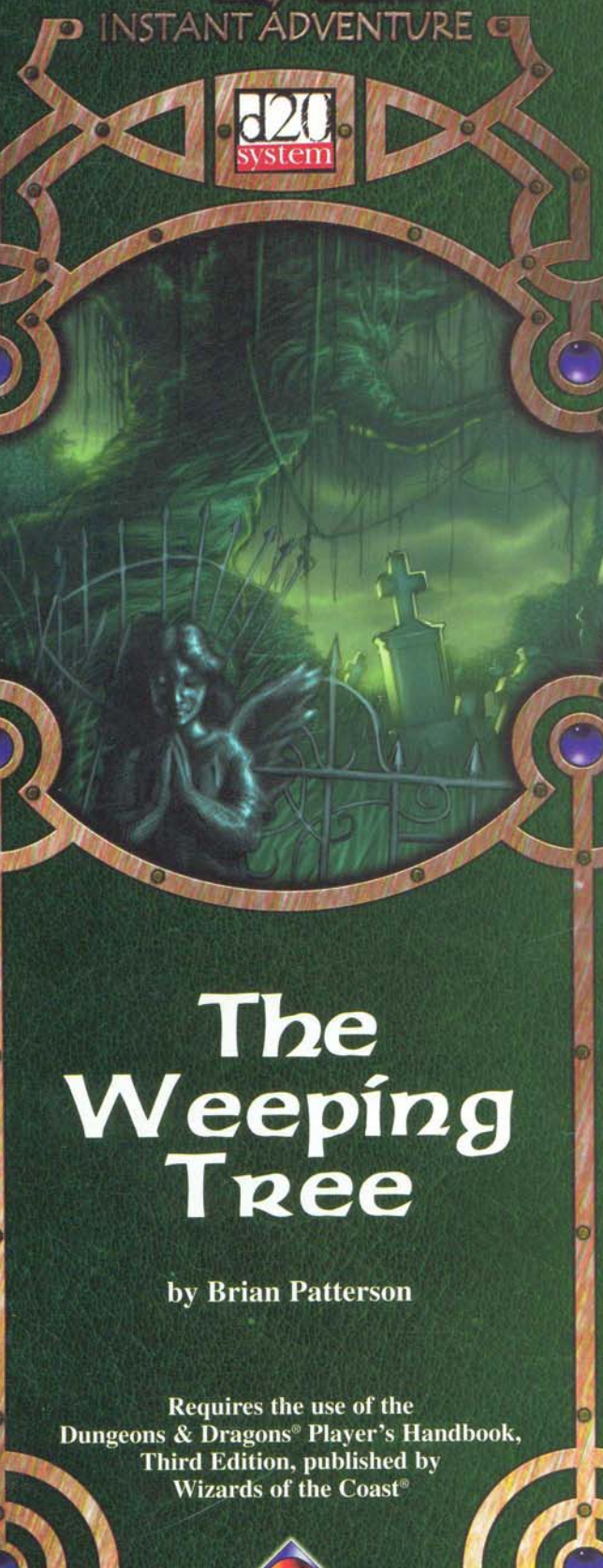


LEGENDS & LAIRS

INSTANT ADVENTURE

A central illustration within a decorative Art Deco frame. It depicts a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark, form-fitting dress, standing in a dark, misty forest. In the background, a tombstone with a cross is visible among trees and hanging vines. The scene is lit with a greenish, ethereal glow.

The Weeping Tree

by Brian Patterson

Requires the use of the
Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by
Wizards of the Coast®



How to Use This Product

This adventure is specifically designed to be easily incorporated into any existing D&D campaign. Feel free to alter the names of places and characters and customize the details of the adventure to fit your own world.

You should be able to run this adventure in a single game session. You should read it through at least once and study those sections you will need to know well. In particular, you should familiarize yourself with the features and capabilities of any new monsters, spells, and magic items introduced in the adventure.

You can get the adventure started quickly and easily by reading the intro on the back cover to your players. You may also wish to photocopy the map on pages 8 and 9, both for your own reference and to show to the players, if appropriate.

Dungeons & Dragons®

This adventure requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.®

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THE WEEPING TREE

By Brian Patterson

DM BACKGROUND

The village of Blackbrook has experienced its fair share of tragedy recently. A month ago, the small village was plunged into terror as a passing band of vampires descended upon the villagers. Thankfully, a brave band of adventurers pursued the evil coven and destroyed it, allowing the villagers to pick up the pieces and carry on. The carnage left in the vampires' wake was hard felt by the surviving villagers, as the remains of friends and loved ones were put to rest in the local cemetery located just on the edge of the village.

Weeping Tree cemetery was named years ago for the large weeping willow tree that stands in the middle of the small cemetery. This tree is far older than the village and has always stood as a symbol of mourning to each passing generation in Blackbrook. It gives the bereaved a sense of comfort, as the old tree stands sentry to all of the village's fallen loved ones.

In reality, this sentry is an old treant named Willowus who guards the villagers in payment of a debt owed to one of the village's founders. Willowus has chosen to conceal his true form from the villagers for fear of drawing unnecessary attention, electing instead to be a silent guardian of the people when needed.

During the vampire coven's reign of terror, Willowus was assaulted and injured by several of the vampire's minions. A curse laid upon him by the coven's vampire mistress prevented the treant from lifting his roots from the cemetery and aiding the villagers. Slowly, the taint of undeath seeped into the treant's bark and limbs and began to corrupt him. What was once a symbol of strength and comfort has become one of fear and death, all due to the evil efforts of a dark druid, Malik Dreadwood.

Malik Dreadwood was a humble woodsman who made his home in the thick woodlands that surround the village. Malik was known as a druid and would occasionally visit the village to trade his wares with the locals and to aid the sick and injured with his magic. Malik was respected and appreciated—even loved—by the people of Blackbrook. They considered him one of their sworn protectors.

This would all change when the vampires descended upon Blackbrook. While traveling through the woodlands, Malik was ambushed, and though he fought bravely, was slain and left lying in the tangled thickets. Two days later, Malik awoke.



He awakened to find himself transformed, thirsting for a form of nourishment that would once have been repugnant to him. Malik had become a vampire. Fighting the ravenous hunger, Malik staggered through the woods, trying to reach Blackbrook in hopes of finding aid and answers. He arrived at the edge of Weeping Tree cemetery as the villagers laid to rest their fallen loved ones. The villagers cursed him and branded him a coward for not coming to their aid. His heart and mind broken, Malik succumbed to the evil hunger and began to plan his revenge.

Using his druid magic and new abilities, Malik completed the transformation of Willowus and made the dark treant his minion. In the months that have passed, Malik has created several of these doom trees, taken villagers as vampire spawn, and established a small lair under the cemetery that connects to the village's supply of well water. He plans to pollute the well water with a concoction that will transform all of the villagers into his undead minions, and thus exact his revenge.

GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED

As the PCs travel through the area, it will be fairly obvious that something is not right with many of the villagers. Malik has already begun to slowly poison the village's water. The villagers look sickly and weak, with an almost distant look in their eyes. If the local officials receive word of the PCs' arrival, they will immediately ask for aid and offer to pay a handsome reward if the PCs can discover the truth behind the polluted water and the location of the missing villagers.

A NEAR RIOT

As the PCs arrive in the village (no matter the time of day or night) read the following aloud:

Walking along the trail leading into the center of the village, you can feel the sense of doom that shrouds this village and its people. The villagers seem weak and underfed, and they stare distantly into nothingness. You hear a commotion coming from the center of the village, at the small community well. Several villagers surround a young woman in robes who frantically pleads, "You must listen to me! It is the well water that pollutes this village, and all of you must stop drinking from it! Please listen to me!"

The young woman is Lana, a cleric of light and healing. She alone realizes the dangers of the well water but cannot convince her fellow villagers of the risks. Several of the villagers have gone for days without fresh water and have lost their patience with the young woman. The stress of the village's situation is getting to many of them, and the nearest viable water supply is two days away. If the PCs do not resolve the situation soon, the villagers will harm Lana to get to the well. The PCs have one round to react or the angry mob will attack Lana.

There are 15 villagers but they are not skilled in martial combat. Each villager carries a crude weapon of some sort (such as a pick-axe, shovel, or torch) and wears no armor. The villagers have an average of 3 hp each. They will attempt to flee if attacked by the PCs.

Hopefully, the PCs will try to reason with the villagers and offer to assist in uncovering the mystery of the polluted well water.

A DESPERATE PLEA FOR HELP

With the situation calming and Lana tending to any injuries the villagers may have sustained, the village spokesman, Terias Stronghand, asks the PCs to find an explanation for the polluted water and the mystery behind the missing villagers. He offers to pay what the village can afford, which is only 100 gp. The villagers are desperate and need any and all aid the PCs can provide.

Terias gives the PCs the full story of the village's recent troubles, from the vampire coven a few months ago to the recent ordeals. He informs the PCs that most of the disappearances have occurred at night and seemingly near the old cemetery at the edge of the village in the surrounding woodlands. Terias tells the characters that the cemetery has been closed off as a precautionary measure, and he alone has entered the cemetery during the daylight hours. Terias found a large hole burrowed into the center of the cemetery (the entrance into Malik's lair). He was also shocked to discover that the old willow tree was missing.

WEeping TREE CEMETERY

The narrow path leads from the main trail and disappears into the dark thickets of the woodlands. Along the path, the PCs may notice that the trees and flora seem to be darkened and withered, and that a sense of dread seems to hang over the woods. The dark, tangled woodlands seem to block out the sunlight that would nor-



mally illuminate the path and the cemetery.

1. AMBUSH ON THE TRAIL

Following the trail twisting deeper into the woodlands, the PCs finally approach the gates of Weeping Tree cemetery. Waiting to strike in the brush along the trail are two villagers who have become vampire spawn. A PC who makes a successful Spot check (DC 23) will notice the vampire spawn before they are able to ambush the PCs. If the PCs fail the Spot check, read the following aloud:

With the thick overgrowth dampening the sunlight, the usual sounds of the woodlands are strangely absent as the trail leads up to the foreboding entrance of Weeping Tree cemetery.

A large, black iron gate is all that stands between you and the grounds of the cemetery. The gate creaks quietly in the strong breeze that occasionally gusts through the trees. A chill runs down your spine as the uncomfortable silence is suddenly broken by the sound of two creatures crashing through the brush.

Vampire Spawn (2): CR 2; Medium-size Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); +5 melee (1d6+4 plus energy drain, slam); SA Charm, energy drain, blood drain; SQ Undead, +2 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/silver, cold and electricity resistance 10, gaseous form, spider climb, fast healing 2; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +8, Craft (blacksmithing) or Profession (farmer) +10, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Search +8, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Move Silently).

2. THE FOREBODING ENTRANCE

As the PCs enter the cemetery, read the following aloud:

An eerie wind blows through the cemetery. Numerous headstones mark the final resting places of deceased villagers. Two of the markers show signs of recent upheaval. In the center of the cemetery, a large hole burrows deep into the soil, and this too appears to be a recent addition to the cemetery's landscape.

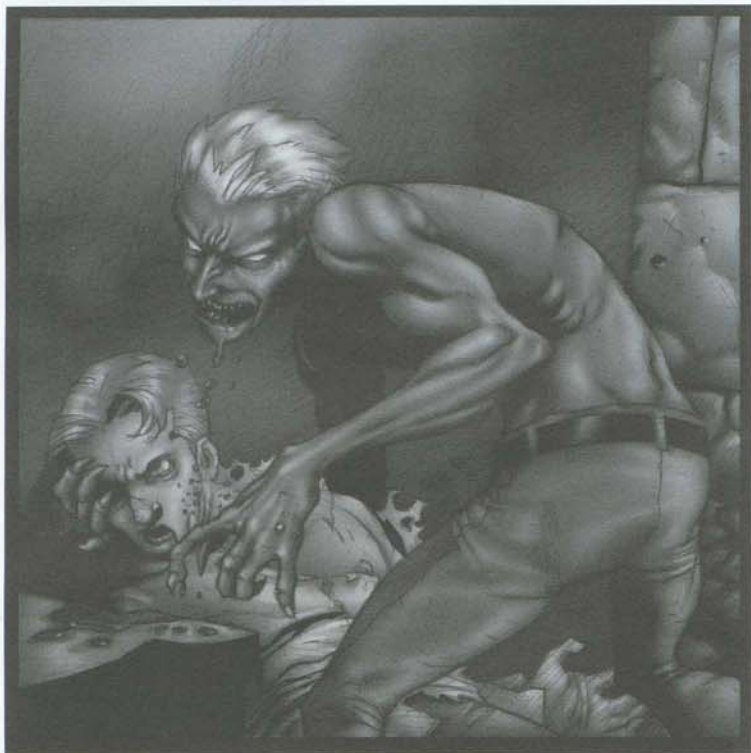
3. THE PASSAGE

From the hole in the cemetery, there is a 30-foot decent into the darkness of the newly crafted passageway. The decaying soil is moist from the underground stream that flows into the village's well, and PCs attempting to climb down the 30-foot hole must make a successful Climb check (DC 20) or fall to the passage floor. PCs that fall the full distance suffer 3d6 points of damage.

At the bottom, the passage is carved from the earth itself and is roughly 10 feet high and 10 feet wide. The passage is concealed in complete darkness. When the PCs reach the bottom of the passage read the following aloud:

This roughly carved passage smells of wet soil and rotting flesh. The earth beneath your feet is wet, as a small stream trickles down the center of the passage into the darkness. In the distance ahead you hear the echoes of maniacal laughter.

The laughter, of course, comes from Malik, who is poisoning the town's water supply in the water chamber (see location #6). The small stream is barely five inches deep and extends the full length of the passageway, flowing into the pool in the water chamber.



4. A SECOND AMBUSH

As the passage continues forward, the PCs will come upon a second tunnel that branches off to the left. This smaller passage is only five feet wide and roughly six feet high, making it a tight fit for large-framed characters. The passage leads to the vampires' coffin chamber (see location #5).

Hiding in the darkness of the passage are two vampire spawn, created from the missing villagers. A PC who makes a successful Spot check (DC 23) will notice the vampire spawn before they are able to ambush the PCs. The vampire spawn will attempt to warn Malik of the characters' presence if possible.

If the combat spills further down the passage or if area-effect spells (such as *fireball*) are used, Malik may notice (Spot DC 15) and take action against the PCs. Alternatively, you may decide that he begins preparing his own ambush.

Vampire Spawn (2): CR 2; Medium-size Undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); +5 melee (1d6+4 plus energy drain, slam); SA Charm, energy drain, blood drain; SQ Undead, +2 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/silver, cold and electricity resistance 10, gaseous form, spider climb, fast healing 2; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +8, Craft (blacksmithing) or Profession (farmer) +10, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Search +8, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Move Silently).

5. COFFIN CHAMBER

The small passage leads directly into the coffin chamber of Malik and his vampire spawn minions. If the PCs enter the chamber, read the following aloud:

This rough-hewn chamber measures roughly 30 feet by 25 feet, with a 15-foot-high ceiling. The room smells of rancid meat and stale water. Lining the far wall of the chamber are six coffins. Four of the coffins show signs of age and obvious water damage, while the two coffins in the center appear to be relatively new.

The center coffin is Malik's and is locked (there are small holes on the bottom of the coffin for Malik to enter through). Inside the coffin to the left, Malik has placed a few of his extra belongings that he has acquired over the past few months as well as the fresh corpse of a young girl abducted from the village. The beautiful girl is not a vampire spawn but serves merely as a source of "entertainment" for Malik.

The coffin also contains the following items of interest: three small cloth bags that contain 200 gp each, four emeralds worth 100 gp each, one antique onyx statuette (a hooded man) worth 100 gp, and a *staff of nature's gainful bounding* (see New Magic Item).

6. WATER CHAMBER

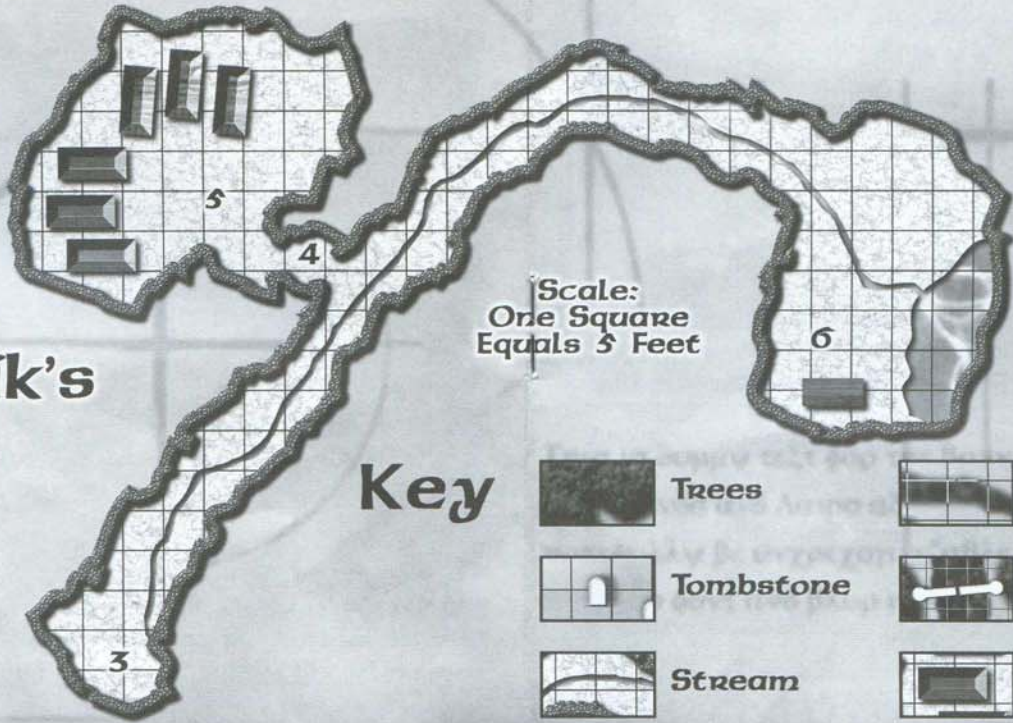
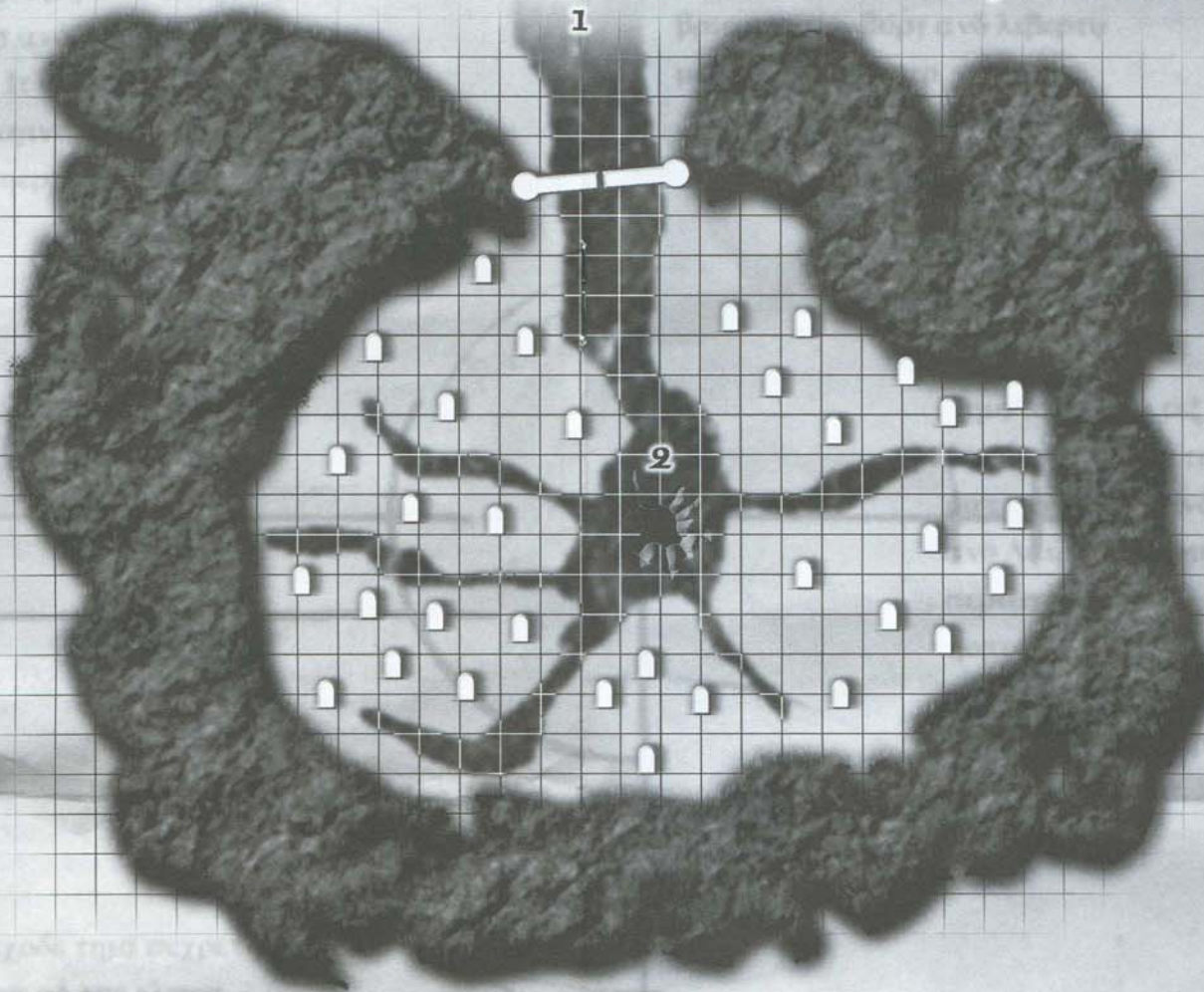
Depending on whether or not Malik was alerted to the combat in the passage with the vampire spawn, and what action you chose for Malik to take, read the following aloud to the PCs as they enter the chamber. Obviously, if Malik is aware of the characters and has decided to attack with surprise, he won't make any maniacal speeches.

Rounding a slight bend in the tunnel, you see the faint glow of torchlight as you enter this large chamber. The sound of rushing water echoes in the chamber and you see a small, dark pool in the earthen floor on the far side of the chamber. To the right, a small wooden table is littered with several tomes and unlabeled bottles that reek of toxic fumes. Giggling quietly to himself is a tall man with long, tangled black hair and dirty clothing. He stands in the center of the pool as he pours the last contents of an unlabeled bottle into the water. With a maniacal calm, he looks up at you and says, "Too little, too late my friends. The deed is done. Soon the villagers will follow Willowus into doom and fall under my control. My revenge will be complete!"

With that, Malik will attack the PCs, making full use of his vampire abilities. If the situation seems dire, he will attempt to make it to the surface, where Willowus is now waiting. If this is not possible, he will assume his gaseous form and retreat into his

The Cemetery







Scale:
One Square
Equals 5 Feet



Scale:
One Square
Equals 5 Feet

Malik's Lair

Key

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|---------|
|  | Trees |  | Path |
|  | Tombstone |  | Gate |
|  | Stream |  | Coffins |

locked coffin in location #5. If he makes it to Willowus, he will stand and fight to the death. The next scene, Willowus the Doomed, will proceed as written, only now Malik will aid Willowus in attempting to destroy the PCs.

Malik Dreadwood, Male Vampire Drd4: CR 6; Medium-size Undead; HD 4d8+1d12 (vampire); hp 34; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +3 leather armor); Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, +1 scimitar), +3 melee (1d6 plus energy drain, slam); SA Domination, energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn; SQ Undead, damage reduction (15/+1), turn resistance, resistance, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Animal empathy +7, Craft +8, Diplomacy +8, Handle animal +9, Heal +9, Hide +10, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +12, Move silently +10, Perform +4, Profession +9, Spot +12, Swim +3.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (scimitar).

Spells (5/4/3): 0—*detect magic, flare, light, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*entangle, faerie fire, obscuring mist, summon nature's ally I*; 2nd—*barkskin, summon swarm, tree shape*.

Possessions: +1 scimitar, leather vest, darkskull on neck chain (DMG 214).

Description: Malik is a tall human male with long, black, unkempt hair and a thin black beard. His skin is now pale and several stark blue veins are noticeable along his neck and on the sides of his face. He wears the rotten and ravaged clothing of a druid, with a loose fitting shirt, breeches, boots, and a mangled brown leather vest. He uses his vampire powers and his +1 scimitar to dispatch any who might stand in his way. Malik is insane. The transformation into a vampire combined with the painful accusations of the villagers he once adored has driven him to a frenzied paranoia. He will stop at nothing to doom the villagers he once swore to protect.

Malik has poured the last component into the water supply that flows to the village's well. Any villagers who drink from the well within the next two days will suffer from the doomed effect. However, the use of a *remove disease* spell and a *remove curse* spell will cure those infected with the doom effect. If a PC can cast *remove disease* and *remove curse* on the tainted pool within two rounds, the doom effect will be neutralized before it can reach the village well.

WILLOWUS THE DOOMED

As the PCs emerge from the passage read the following aloud:

For a moment, there is a sense of relief as you breathe in the cleaner surface air and feel a cool breeze on your face. This sense of ease is destroyed as the ground trembles with the force created by the large tree creature that crashes through

the iron fencing on the far end of the cemetery. Its treelike features are blackened and its leaves are dry and dead. The tree creature stands ominously as it scans the area, looking at each of you. After what seems an eternity, it speaks in a woe-ful, hollow voice that seems to rattle your soul. "What have you done with the master? If he is harmed, I will punish you in ways that the devils themselves will envy..."

The PCs may attempt to fool Willowus with Bluff checks or subtle *charm* spells, but these will prove to be ineffective as Willowus shares a dark bond with Malik and will know if he has been slain. Only if they managed to capture or subdue the vampire will the characters be spared the dark treant's attack.

WILLOWUS THE DOOMED

Huge Doomed Plant

Hit Dice: 7d8+35 +1d12 (doomed template) (75 hp)

Initiative: -1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 25 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +18 natural) +5 natural armor bonus from "doom"

Attacks: 2 slams +12 melee

Damage: Slam 2d6+9 plus 1d4 Constitution

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Animate trees, trample, double damage against objects, doom glare

Special Qualities: Plant, fire vulnerability, damage reduction (15/+1), half damage from piercing

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +6

Abilities: Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Hide -9*, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (any one) +8, Listen +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +9

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will, and Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral evil

COMBAT

Unlike normal treants who prefer to watch potential foes carefully before attacking, Willowus has succumbed to the doom effect and has become an aggressively evil creature.

Animate Trees (Sp): Willowus can animate doom trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes a full round for a normal tree to uproot itself. Thereafter it moves at a speed of 10 and fights as a doomed treant in all respects. Animated doom trees lose their ability to move if Willowus is incapacitated or moves out of range. The ability is otherwise similar to *liveoak* as cast by a 12th-level druid. All trees animated by Willowus have the doomed template added to them.

Doom Glare (Sp): A doomed creature possesses the ability to cast a *doom* spell once per day as a caster equal to its Hit Dice.

Trample (Ex): A treant or animated tree can trample Medium-size or smaller creatures for 2d12+5 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the treant or animated tree can attempt a Reflex save (DC 20) to halve the damage.

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex): Doomed trees and treants that make a full attack against an object or structure deal double damage.

Plant: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): Doomed trees and treants take double damage from fire attacks unless the attack allows a save, in which case they take double damage on a failure and no damage on a success.

Half Damage from Piercing (Ex): Piercing weapons deal only half damage to Willowus or doom trees, with a minimum of 1 point of damage.

Doomed Appearance: Willowus does not receive the normal +16 racial bonus to Hide checks made in forested areas for treants, as his sickly and blackened appearance sets him apart from other trees.

This is a serious encounter for the PCs as Willowus is an extremely tough opponent. The PCs can always attempt to defeat him in combat, but this will be difficult given the high CR. The easiest way to end the encounter is to cure Willowus of the doomed affliction by using *remove disease* and *remove curse* spells in sequence. A paladin's cure disease ability will also work in removing the affliction.

If Malik is dead when the PCs encounter Willowus, the dark treant will pursue the PCs until they escape or are slain. If need be, the creature will chase the PCs into town and destroy anything in its path to catch them.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Hopefully, the PCs will manage to destroy Malik and cure Willowus without destroying the cursed creature. If this occurs, Willowus will explain what happened, reveal itself to the villagers, and vow to protect the village from harm in the future.

After a few days, the polluted well water will return to normal and the villagers will lay their fallen friends and loved ones to rest. Willowus will thank the PCs and give the villagers assistance in repairing the damaged cemetery.

Many of the villagers will choose to erect a small shrine to Malik as a way of forgiving the village's former protector, as they now understand that his tragic death and rebirth were beyond his control.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

STAFF OF NATURE'S GAINFUL BOUNDING

Created by ancient druids of the woodlands, Malik was given this item as a rite of passage from his mentor, Lorum Oakenwood, a master druid of the Wildwood forest. According to legend, Lorum once loved a mysterious young woman who could leap from shadow



to shadow as easily as one would pass through a door.

For several years, Lorum studied his lover's art, working to adapt it to his druidic teachings. With the woman's assistance, Lorum devised a magical creation, the *staff of nature's gainful bounding*. This gnarled wooden staff grants the user the ability step into the trunk of a tree and jump instantaneously to another, emerging from the trunk of the distant tree as if stepping through an insubstantial veil of fog. The item is similar to a shadowdancer's shadowjumping ability (or a *dimension door* spell) and allows jumps up to a distance of 60 feet. The hindrance is that the user must be able to pass through and emerge from a tree trunk large enough to hold him. *Caster Level:* 9th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *dimension door*; *Market Price:* 50,000 gp; *Weight:* 3 lb.

NEW TEMPLATE

THE DOOMED

"Doomed" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature of any alignment (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Beasts or animals with this template become doomed magical beasts, but otherwise the creature type is unchanged. With a combination of curses, poisons, and diseases a creature succumbs to the darkness of near undeath. This transformation makes the doomed creature very similar to the living dead in some ways, while granting the creature a semblance of freewill.

A doomed creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

A doomed creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Doom Glare (Sp): A doomed creature possesses the ability to cast a *doom* spell once per day as a caster equal to its Hit Dice.

SPECIAL QUALITIES

A doomed creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following ones.

- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Their newfound affinity for the dark grant doomed creatures increased vision in the darkness.
- Damage reduction of 15/+1.
- +5 natural armor bonus to the base creature's AC.

If the base creature already has one or more of these special qualities, use the better value.

Saves: +5 bonus on all Will saves

Abilities: Same as the base creature, but Intelligence is at least 3

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Endurance, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Same as the base creature

Challenge Rating: +1 to existing challenge rating of base creature

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Any evil

Advancement: Same as the base creature

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Patterson lives in Nashville, Tennessee, where he works as a technician for a silk screen printing company and a freelance graphic artist while still pursuing his love of game design. He has written material for the RPGA's campaign websites, contributed to *Sword and Sorcery's Relics and Rituals*, and has written articles for several gaming magazines. His work for Fantasy Flight Games includes the Legends & Lairs adventures *The Weeping Tree* and *The Punishing Passage*, as well as several contributions to *Traps & Treachery*, *Mythic Races*, and the upcoming *Seafarer's Handbook*.

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DRAGONSTAR

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THE WEEPING TREE

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Instant Adventure for 4–6 characters levels 4–6



Your long journey is coming to an end, at least for one night. You approach the woodland town of Blackbrook, a small village you've passed through before.

Walking along the trail leading into the center of Blackbrook, you can feel the sense of doom that shrouds this village and its people. The villagers seem weak and underfed, and they stare distantly into nothingness.

You hear a commotion coming from the center of the village, at the small community well. Several villagers surround a young woman in robes who frantically pleads, "You must listen to me! It is the well water that pollutes this village, and all of you must stop drinking from it! Please listen to me!"

The villagers pressing in around her look tired, ill, and desperate. They're obviously no warriors and their pitchforks, woodsman's axes, and broomsticks make poor weapons. But they just as clearly mean to do the young woman bodily harm if she remains standing between them and the well.

The woman looks hopefully at you as you approach, worry etched in the lines of her face.

"I've tried to tell them! The well water is poisoned, corrupted by some terrible evil! But they won't listen to me . . . please help us!"

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