

The Ironbound Druids

©2024 BrazenWolfe Tabletop, All Rights Reserved, Permission Granted to copy for personal use.



Introduction

A TTRPG adventure compatible with Dungeons and Dragons 5e adventure for a party of level 5+ characters.

The problem with farming has always been the land required to create those crops and feed those beasts. Crakenburg finds itself at the foot of mountains and nestled amongst the rough wilds around it and it has had to prove itself stubborn and durable enough in the past to earn its place in the world.

But not all of nature's wilds share this sentiment. Despite the rock slides, ambushes and raids from orcs and gnolls, earthquakes and worse, nature still demands a toll to pay. As the village prepares for its harvest festival where they harvest the wheat and straw darkness descends on millions of wings.

Will the adventurers be caught in the crossfire between nature and the village or will they find a way to divert the ravenous swarm?

The Ironwood Forest

Passing Through



"The Ironwood forest is an ancient place ruled by a conclave of druids who have protected the lands for generations. The woods themselves have trees that grow into the sky and boast the strongest wood that you can find in the content. That's the main reason why the Druid conclave protects these woods.

They need to protect these lands from the people in the neighbouring kingdoms from harvesting the trees for their own use."

The travelling bard that the party had met up with had not stopped talking since they met along the road heading towards Crakenburg to assist in carting grain out as part of a job from a few wealthy merchants. Despite the party liking company the bard had personally alerted bandits to their position, a pack of wolves had followed his noise and no game dared to stay nearby as they travelled through the woods.

But the party stopped him talking as up ahead the forest was silent and they could see a few humans standing perfectly still as if they were in trouble.

As soon as trouble starts the Bard runs off towards Crakenburg and leaves the party.

Encounter: Random Encounters x2

Creature: 10 bandits, 6 wolves (1 dire wolf)

Map - N/A

The bard draws attention to the party as they travel. The bandits can be reasoned with but the bard decides to talk smack to them IF they are able to negotiate passage past them. This re-ignites the tension and combat ensues.

The other encounter is where the wolves stalk the party at dusk or dawn as the bard is loudly singing about the adventures he has supposedly been on. He yelps and climbs a tree with an arcane mutterance and leaves the party to deal with the beasts.

Sweat beaded down Kevin's nose as he paused amongst the trees waiting for something to lunge outwards. They had been travelling towards the druids grove, at the centre of the Ironwood forest when they had found something. Drag marks in the earth, fresh ones, that looked like someone was pulled into the bushes ahead and with Kevin and his Carters he didn't want to be next.

As they stopped and waited the feeling of being watched to pass it only increased and the forest became full of noise. Movement in the bushes, a shriek or call in the distance in one direction then a heavy thud in the soil elsewhere. Soon the resilience of the Carters was wavering and it was not long until one panicked and ran forward out from their cover and into the clearing in front of them.

Immediately one of the Carters fell over and was dragged backwards into the brush as tentacle like vines thrashed at them trying to get purchase on their limbs.

As they rushed forwards they were just in time to witness vines launch downwards towards the man who moved first to constrict and haul him upwards into the branches ahead. Slashing and sawing at vines and branches they tried to free their friends, briefly, before having to change the heroic rescue into an effort of self preservation. The vines lashed out, twisted and wrapped as branches slammed into the bruising carters.

Though the men had some experience fending off wild beasts and smaller hostile humanoids on the road their experience only lasted so long and they were tiring. Kevin struggled to free himself to begin cutting at the vines that had taken his last fellow Carter, Joel, into the brushes when he became aware of another presence, a group of adventurers launched forward to begin attempting to free him and his men.

The battle was brief yet ferocious as the newcomers' blades, projectiles and magic made short work out of the living forest. But, it was not enough. Out of the five men he entered with, three could not be recovered, one would not see the night through and the other was unconscious and bleeding profusely. exhausted and thankful for being alive Kevin looked up at his heroes and knew, this is what would bring him glory. Travelling with and helping these heroes as a full time adventurer.

NPC's:

- Kevin

Encounter: Encounter in the Forest

Creature:

Level 5 - 14 Ironwood Vines

Level 6+ - 14 Ironwood Vines and Awakened Tree

Map - 410ThIrFoPa

The canopy and clouds above gave the ground a patchy and mottled appearance. The dense bushes were smattered with flowering plants, occasional berries but also a richer, deeper and greener grass. It was evident that there were a few paths that moved through the forest in different directions. However, there was a heavy oppressive feeling in

the air which made travelling through the Ironwood forest tense to say the least.

The encounter revolves around freeing the farmers (Carters) from the Ironwood Vines and/or Awakened tree. These are focusing on the farmers initially but as soon as the party enters the area the plants attack the party.

Afterwards Kevin explains what is happening (see **lore**) and asks the party to escort him and his remaining fellow carters to the Druids to ask for help.

The Ironbound Druids

After the conflict with the woods themselves the party find themselves following Kevin in the direction of the druids enclave. The druids are the only ones who could deal with that many locusts and protect the job that the party were here for - escorting the caravan and its harvest of grain and straw back to the merchants.

It's not long until the party is walking towards a giant Ironwood tree. Where its roots and trunk meet has formed a hollow under its massive form and stairs have been shaped out of the earth leading upwards to the space in the tree. Stone carvings of animals line the pathway and the sense of them watching the party as they move upwards follow them even until they are stepping into the hollow.

The area within is sparse with a single man kneeling at a short wooden table as he works a mortar and pestle.

NPC's:

- The Druid

Encounter: Social

The Druid simply goes by "Druid" and welcomes the party warmly into the space. He offers them a tea that is mainly created from lichen. After discussing the locusts he looks puzzled for a moment and explains that the other Druids has left for a pilgrimage up north and have left him in charge. He is not an Arch Druid or even a protector of the forest - but he believes that he will be able to help but with a catch. The Druid asks for a pact, a favour that will be witnessed by the Great Ironbound tree - the one that they reside within now. The tree and its speakers will then send them

word, a messenger to call upon this favour and in doing so they will be released from the pact. If they refuse to honour their deal then the affront to nature, the refusal to meet balance will quickly spread and they will find themselves barred sanctuary from all enclaves and all of the wilds will rise against them as agents of chaos.

The Druid will darken, his eyes sinking and the smell of ozone and rotting wood will radiate from him as he explains the pact. However after that is completed he will smile and all foreboding aura's will disappear.

Crakenburg

Entering the Town



With the help of the druid they make their way back to the village of Crakenburg in a surprisingly speedy time. Several paths reveal themselves and it's as though the forest and its animals have cleared a path for them to pass. Entering the town the party and druid are welcomed eagerly but a sense of urgency hangs heavy in the air.

The swarm has seen fluttering in the hills near the village and the farmers have managed a few of the large locusts already but it's not enough. The druid takes to the fields and examines one of the locusts explaining that it has been bewitched and he will need to break the spell that has corrupted balance.

As he starts the ritual he commands the party to defend him as he can not be interrupted. As

they start to chant a cloud rises from the hills and rushes towards them and the druid.

NPC's:

- Druid

Encounter: N/A

Creature:

Level 5-6 : 2 swarm of insects per party member

Level 7+ Then 3 swarm of insects

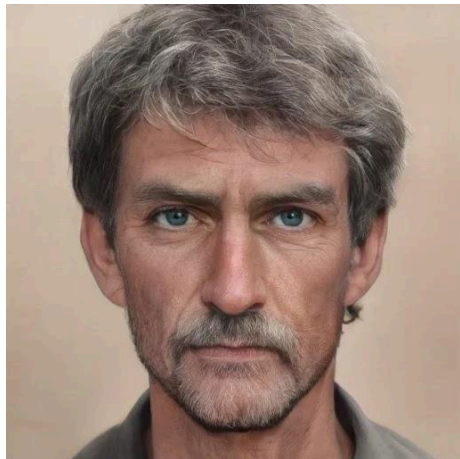
Map - N/A

The Swarms will rush at the party in three waves. Each wave is three minutes apart which gives the party time to regroup, ready actions, drink potions and prepare for the next wave. They can see the warm gathering, rising and falling like a flock of birds before they rush at the party again. Once the swarms are dealt with they retreat for a bit.

After the 3rd wave is defeated the druid will finish his spell and the locusts will disappear, flying away from Crakenburg and over the hill. "I have sent them back to whoever summoned them. They can appreciate balance now" the druid will say with a smile. "Don't forget our bargain. We will send a messenger, do not forsake the call to the wild" he says as he turns to talk to some of the villagers before transforming into a fox and making his way back towards the druids Ironbound tree.

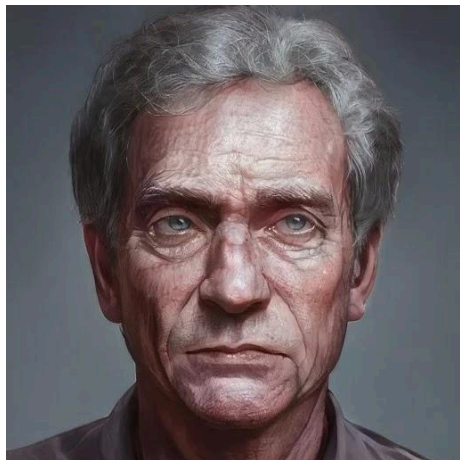
Lore & NPCs

Kevin Bruce



Never really amounting to anything and having dreams of adventure and heroic deeds Kevin has been stuck in Crakenburg waiting for something, anything to rock his world so he can find what he was meant to do.

Reeve O'leary



Reeve has been a farmer for most of his life and, as such, doesn't want to be involved in the fighting, conflict and war of the world.

The Swarm

The sun set down behind the Crakenmoore mountains as evening spread its tendrils of restfulness across the valley beyond. As shadows from the mountain mingled with the shapes of trees, rocks and buildings the people of Crakenburg hurried to usher their animals within the large barns as oil lanterns were lit across the village's streets in a mimicry of the sun's warm embrace.

As Reeve O'leary finished locking up the barn with his pigs safely within he moved contently across his paddocks and watched as a distant flock of birds took flight from deep within the Ironwood forest as dusk began to fall. The vast fields of wheat lay before him, the result of a hard season of labour and good weather which he could only thank the druids for. The stalks swayed in the cool breeze that descended from the mountains and as he looked outwards at the village he could not help but sigh with contentment.

The distant watch tower already had people watching over the plains around the valley. Over the years orcs, gnolls and other roving raiders had caused trouble for the village. Last year though they had an earthquake that shook great chunks of mountain down, crushing houses and flattening crops and animals alike. However they had recovered and shown their durability. As the flock of birds weaved through the dusk sky the way they moved drew Reeve's attention. Soon he was having to squint as the distant sound of thrumming wings could be heard.

Slowly like a cloud, the once-birds-now-creatures descended towards the crop of wheat next to his and landed amongst the stalks. The sound of chirping, flapping-skittering wings and thrumming could be heard as the creatures feasted on the crops. A few of the creatures flew into his paddock and he crossed the wooden fence to go and investigate. Pitchfork in hand he approached the buzzing creatures but it would do little for him as a large locust the size of his hand jumped out and landed on his pants. Crawling up his leg and chirping soon more were jumping towards him and he turned and fled.

The creatures hung onto him for a few strides before sharp and aggressive swats dislodged them. As he ran towards the Tavern, the Lonely Goat, he looked

down at his hand where he had grabbed one of the creatures. The still twitching corpse of the locust lay in his outstretched fingers as the other farmers, merchants and guards fell in to gaze upon its rigid ugliness.

"The paddocks are filled with them..." Reeve got out as the others looked between it and him. "Hundreds of them. Chewing on the wheat..." Soon several farms were taking large sticks, swatters, to go and investigate the fields. The locusts were gone but a large portion of the wheat field they landed in was also missing. They would need a miracle, or a brave group of adventurers to travel into the Ironwood forest to request aid from the Druids of the woods.

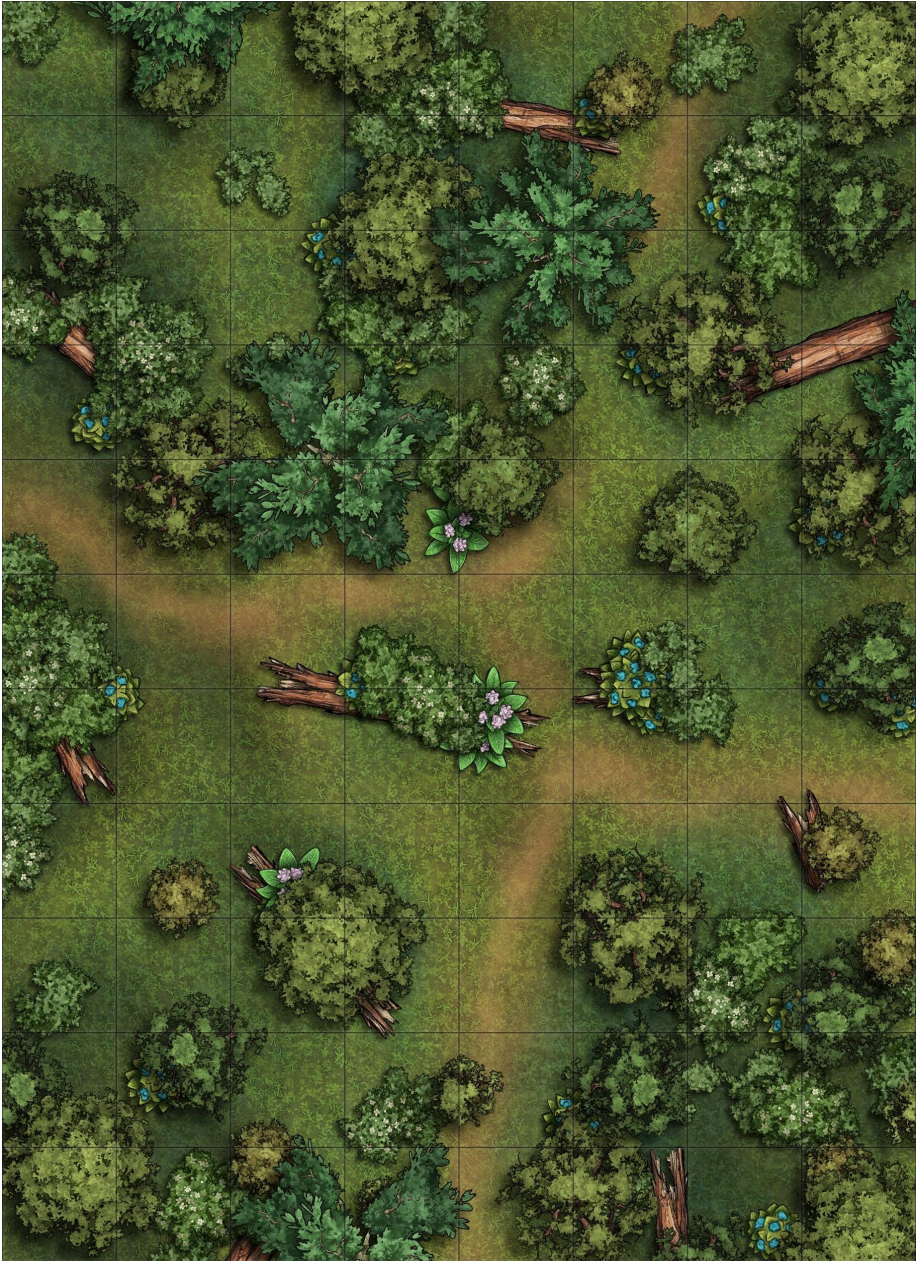
Kevin looked across the tables in the Lonely Goat and shook his head at the farmers who shook with fear. "We don't have no choice. We need to cut n' store the wheat now," one farmer proclaimed as he sipped on his ale. Some farmers agreed, the tired ones who spent half the night shooing the locusts from the crops to no avail. "But half the crops aren't ready yet!" another protested, which was met with cheers from other farmers.

"Mine won't be ready for weeks. If I cut them now then I won't have anything!" another said loudly which gained both ire and support from the others. "Well if you don't do anything about it you will lose it all. Damned if you do damned if you don't" Reeves said as he looked up from tired hands. "We have two options. Burn them out or we get the help from the druids" he continued. This drew the quiet from everyone in the inn.

"I'll do it. I'll seek the druids out and if they won't help us willingly I will make them!" Kevin called out as he stood up. He had listened to these farmers for hours now and none of them were taking any action. " Standing up he slammed his third empty tankard on the table and stormed out of the inn. A few of the others, The Crakenburg Carters, stood up to go with him and with a group of five they left to seek out the druids for help.

Maps

Map Reference 1



Monsters

Adventure Encounters

Ironwood Vine

IRONWOOD VINE
Small Plant, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances piercing
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

False Appearance. While the Ironwood Vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal plant.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and it is grappled (escape DC: 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 5 (2d4) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The vine can constrict only one target at a time.

The ironwood vine is a stealthy opponent. When it's not rushing its tentacles forward to strangle its prey it looks like any other vine or bush in the forest. It can go months without eating, depending on its last meal of course, but as soon as it realises it needs food it is a voracious and non-fussy predator.

The sound of rushing, slithering vines is the first thing that its prey hears before vines constrict them, strangling and slowly digesting them with fluids that aid in digestion. But they are just a plant after all. By pulling its plant base and step forward it can move slowly but always towards where it's starting to digest its prey. It doesn't move as long as there is life in the creature it has entangled and for this reason it's difficult to pinpoint.

Awakened Tree

AWAKENED TREE
Huge Plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 59 (7d12 + 14)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages one language known by its creator
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While the tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

The larger assassin of the forest is a sentinel from the druids. The awakened tree protects the forest based on its creator's wishes and it is able to understand language but it will rarely be convinced or swayed from its duty. Otherwise indistinguishable from other trees nearby it smashes down upon its prey when they are within range of its branches. Strong and resilient bark resists arrows and clubs but, like most plants, fire will make short work of it.

Insect Swarm

SWARM OF INSECTS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Random Encounters

Bandits

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Wolves

WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Dire Wolf

DIRE WOLF

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.