

The Thren of Sarkret Forest - 432SuThSaFo

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When a disease starts to spread through the small city of Wellspring the party are tasked with the impossible task. Replenish the alchemical supplies that the herbalist needs to create a cure for the Elves of Wellspring. The master herbalist is afflicted by the disease and the apprentice thinks that they know what the missing ingredient is. What is clear is that it lies in the deeper, older parts of the forest and that it will be a dangerous trek to reach the plant that is required for the cure. But the apprentice does not have the full information as part of pages that contained the cure was missing. A warning of the dangers of the cure was missing and only half the story was told, a sketch of a plant and indications that the root was the key to the cure.

DM: (The Thren are a race of sentient fungoid like plants that create host bodies to lure more victims to their dens. The roots are quite hard to get but because the warnings are missing from the book and the chief alchemist isn't conscious due to the illness the assistant, Tyreal, doesn't know to warn them)



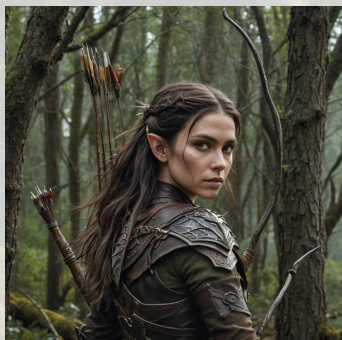
The party arrives in the beautiful yet eerily quiet elven city of Wellspring, known for its vibrant arts and bustling streets. However, they find the streets deserted and the elves fearful. They reach the Moonbow Herbalist & Alchemical Supplies shop, where a young elf named Tyreal greets them nervously. He explains that the head alchemist is unavailable and reveals that the city is plagued. Tyreal is

attempting to create a cure but is missing a crucial ingredient, Thren Root. He asks the party for help in retrieving it, promising a reward from the king and queen.

DM: (Tyreal doesn't know to warn the party about the Thren, the sentient plant creatures that will likely pose a very real threat to the party. Several other elves went in search of the Thren Root but were unfortunately killed but the plant and their forms taken over by the Thren. Tyreal will reveal that others went missing when searching for them but doesn't know the cause. Refer to **432MoSaFo** for more details)



As the party leaves the alchemist's shop, Tyreal adds more items to their list, including Lilly-heart leaves. They head through the desolate streets to the north gate, where their path diverges into the dark, twisted Sarkret forest. The road becomes rougher and signs of civilization vanish, replaced by an ancient, worn path overtaken by massive tree roots. As they travel deeper, they hear a curious whistling bird, leading them to something unexpected.



DM: (The Thren are tricky and devious creatures, their true nature rarely if ever discovered - taking extraordinary or divine intervention to generally reveal one within the midst of their prey. (refer to **432TuHeHu**))

The party encounters a wild elf woman named Thren, who is protective of the forest's balance. She warns them against harming the woods and reveals that the Thren plant they seek is elusive and hidden. Thren offers to guide them to the plant if they promise to respect

the forest. After agreeing, the party follows her deeper into the woods, quickly losing sight of her until she calls out to them.

DM: (Thren explains that her people name themselves after plants and animals in the woods, she appears, sounds, bleeds and passes as a human but she is a Thren hunter that is seeking more hosts to come and inoculated with the Thren spores to spread and grow outside of their grove.. (refer to **432TuHeHu**))

"It's not much further. You will see the Thren soon." the elf called Thren; a namesake of the plant she had explained when asked, called back. The

party had been walking for the better part of a day and into dusk and they were searching for a place to set up camp. Thren often disappeared nearly into thin air before appearing again to guide them deeper into the woods. The party had once or twice marvelled at how stealthily she moved, leaving not a single trace of her passing, taking nothing and weaving through the woods like they were an extension of her being. She had led them to water, fruits and berries and even stopped them from encountering a pack of monsters from selecting the party as the target of their hunt. But as the sun set Thren had looked for a small clearing and with the parties help had selected space for them to set up camps. She shied away from the flame as the fire was lit and instead chose to climb into the branches of a tall nearby tree. "There are many things that stalk the woods at night and the smell of food, the light of the fire and the heat from it will attract things that you wish you hadn't. Do as you wish but I want to see the Thren in the morning." she had called down as she unslung her bow and her form all but disappeared into the trees.

She was right of course, the night was filled with creatures appearing at the edge of the firelight, a few arrows darting from a nearby tree saw the creatures fleeing into the night, limping, crawling or stampeding away. Dawn saw that wherever blood was spilt from these brief encounters small sprouts of plants were pushing through the dirt. "The forest feeds on itself, the balance is maintained and we can continue on in peace" Thren would comment whenever another sprout was found.

DM:(Several trivial or low-challenge encounters appear)

The party's supplies had also suffered and so they relied on Threns' knowledge of the forest and its paths to find food that morning, but it was a limited affair of bitter berries that left their tongue numb and small seeds that did nothing to sustain those with larger appetites.

After a few hours Thren gestured forwards, "The Thren are through there, in the grove amongst the dark trees. I will be there shortly but there is something I must prepare for." she announced as she took out a small blade and knelt nearby. As the party entered the edges of the grove the few shafts of direct sunlight revealed a low grassy clearing with several large plants nearby. A heart-shaped leaf stood out near the light shaft which matched the description Tyreal provided them.

As they moved towards the leaf something bright white caught the sun's beam next to the leaf. A human skull.

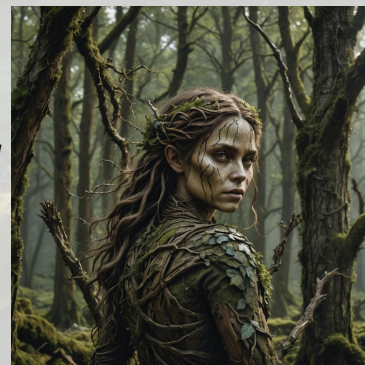
Looking around the clearing several more bleached white skeletons were scattered amongst the grass and near each of them another tall plant grew nearby. Looking back towards Tyren the elf was gone but it wasn't long until an arrow was fired at the adventurers. A figure stepped out of the woods, Tyren's form was now made from bark, moss and vines and her skin had a mushroom-like texture.

"The Thren need to feed and need a place for their spores to burrow into.

You will feed the Thren for weeks and we are tired of waiting." she said as several more figures lurched into the clearing.

DM:(Refer to map on next page, see also **432ThThDe**. There would be several creatures, one or two per party member. The fight is a **Challenging encounter**, refer to **432FrThren** for guidance. The Thren attack in ambush using their stealth. When a creature falls they will rush to drag it over to the Thren Plants where they will start

to be inoculated by the spores. After combat the Thren root can be harvested easily from the plants and it's an uneventful trek back to Wellspring.)



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