

# ELVES OF THE VALLEY

## A CHAOS SCAR ADVENTURE

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HEROIC

1-10

“Elves of the Valley” is a short adventure for five 1st-level characters that takes place in the Chaos Scar, in a wood not far from the King’s Wall. “Elves of the Valley” pits the adventurers against fey bandits corrupted by a demonic entity recently escaped from deeper within the valley. To defeat the growing evil, the adventurers must confront the bandits, navigate an enchanted wood, and confront the darkness staining the copse’s heart. If you’re not playing a Chaos Scar campaign, you can tie the adventure to any wilderness setting not far from a frontier settlement.

For more details on the Chaos Scar, be sure to read the [Chaos Scar introduction](#) and check out its map.

## BACKGROUND

The darkness within the Chaos Scar waxes and wanes, and from time to time, when evil is at a peak, some malign intelligence slips free, scuttling through the ruined landscape to visit trouble and mayhem onto the surrounding countryside. Many months ago, such an entity quit the valley’s depths at great cost and traveled some distance before its strength ran out. It took refuge in a small copse not far from the Old Gate and has spent the days and weeks since trying to recover its spent energy. Although much diminished, its presence alone has poisoned the land around its lair, twisting the hearts and minds of those who live in the wood. With their corruption complete, these new thralls look through insane eyes beyond their lairs and carry forth their master’s dark message.

The presence in the woods, known as the Voice in the Darkness, compels the corrupted elves and other villains to strike at travelers, caravans, and even into the surrounding countryside. Burned-out farms and bloated corpses reveal the sort of mercy one might expect at their hands, so local militia from Restwell Keep has been roused to combat the threat. The trouble is that the brigands attack with no rhyme or reason, and often take nothing from their victims, leaving valuables where they lay amid ashes and cooling blood. The militia’s impotence spreads a chilling fear throughout the adjacent lands, and the common folk now look to heroes with the pluck and courage to confront the raiders and put an end to their depredations.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

While the corrupted brigands are at large, the characters pick up a trail left by the raiders near a burned-out farmstead and follow them beyond the King’s Wall and into the untamed wilderness surrounding the Chaos Scar. As they near the woods where the evil festers, the heroes are caught in an ambush, where they get their first glimpse of the killers. Defeating these enemies carries the adventurers into a macabre and strange world where all is illusion. Cunning and determined characters may find their way through these pitfalls to face the terrible Voice in the Darkness and his dark champion.

## INVOLVING THE HEROES

“Elves in the Valley” takes place in the Chaos Scar. You can use a presented hook to get the characters into the valley and to the first encounter. These hooks also include minor quests that can provide an extra incentive.

### HOOK 1: RESCUE MISSION

A character’s mentor, sibling, friend, or loved one was swept up in an attack and has now gone missing. As there is no one else with the wherewithal to rescue the abducted, it falls to the party to undertake the mission. Alternatively, you can easily turn this into a revenge scenario by having the NPC killed rather than taken. Any prisoners the raiders take can be recovered in the “Eyes in the Forest” encounter.

**Minor Quest XP:** 125 XP

### HOOK 2: A SECOND MISSION

If the PCs defeated the Brothers Gray (see *DUNGEON Magazine* #172) they might have come to the attention of a noble in a nearby barony. After the heroes’ success against these renegades, the noble funds their expedition to wipe out these ruthless killers.

**Minor Quest XP:** 100 XP plus 200 gp (parcel 5).

### HOOK 3: HAPPENSTANCE

While on the way to or from another expedition into the Chaos Scar, the characters run afoul of the ambush. Perhaps one of the blackleaf snipers steals something from the characters and flees into the woods, or maybe the adventurers simply recognize the threat these killers pose.

**Minor Quest XP:** 100 XP

## TREASURE PREPARATION

The characters should gain a total of four treasure parcels in this adventure. You can place these parcels wherever you like or you can use recommendations on the following table for placement and composition.

Parcel	Location	Composition
1	Eyes in the Forest	10 gp, <i>potion of healing</i>
2	Voice in the Darkness	Level 3 magic item
3	Voice in the Darkness	Level 2 magic item
4	Voice in the Darkness	1,500 sp, 3,000 cp

## GETTING STARTED

The adventure assumes the characters pick up the trail at a burned-out farmstead a few miles from the King's Wall, but you can use a different opening that fits better with your campaign. If you want to jump into the action, begin with **Tactical Encounter 1**.

*The farmstead's smoldering remains fills the air with acrid smoke. Bloated cows litter the fields around. A few corpses, some burned, reveal only that the attackers were wanton and merciless villains.*

The house is ruins and ash. No survivors remain, as every man, woman, and beast was put to the sword or filled with arrows. The muddy ground, however, holds prints, and characters searching the area find them easily. Following the prints requires two DC 15 Perception checks, one made just outside the farmstead and the other just across the King's Wall. The killers didn't use the Old Gate, instead climbing over the wall and resuming their journey into a small copse. A successful check by 5 or more also reveals the attackers included four quadrupeds, likely wolves, and four lightweight humanoids. Should the characters fail

either check, they can still follow the tracks, but the enemies in "Eyes in the Forest" automatically have surprise against the characters.

**Tactical Encounter 1:** "Eyes in the Forest," see page 8.

## NAVIGATING THE WOODS

The inoffensive small copse is but a façade for the brooding darkness haunting this place, a fact revealed when travelers cross its borders to enter a realm of madness and shadow. Paths shift and change, landmarks vanish, while laughter fills the air. For the heroes to reach the malign presence, they must enter the woods and survive the many perils awaiting them.

The following skill challenge describes the journey to the dark heart of the forest. The journey should take about 6 hours. Each hour, the characters must overcome a new challenge, usually resolved through a group skill check. The characters make progress whether they succeed or fail on the check, but each accumulated failure allows the Voice in the Darkness to make an attack against each character that failed the check.

**Maddening Whispers** (when the characters fail a group skill check made during the "Enchanted Wood" skill challenge)

◆ **Psychic**

Targets each PC in the woods; +5 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty on all skill checks until the party makes a successful skill check during the skill challenge. Penalties don't accumulate.

## ENCHANTED WOODS

*Distances stretch, trails shift, trees move, rocks dance: Finding your way through this wood will not be easy.*

**Level:** 1

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

**Special:** The characters can attempt a maximum of two skill checks each hour, except in hour 3, which is a separate encounter that can earn them a success toward completing this skill challenge. But they can earn only a maximum of 1 success each hour. This means they have the option to make a second attempt in an hour if they fail at the first, but they still need 1 success each hour of their trip through the woods to successfully complete the skill challenge.

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Insight, Nature, Perception, Stealth, other

**Hour 1:** Arcana or Insight

*Arcana, Insight (DC 15):* The woods' strange character reveals itself in haunting laughter and flitting shadows. The party makes a group skill check using Arcana (to perceive the magical effect) or Insight (to rely on instinct), with a success gained if at least half the PCs succeed on the check. If at least two characters succeed by 5 or more, the party gains a +2 bonus on skill checks made during the next hour. The characters can earn only one success, and a maximum of 1 success, in this hour during this skill challenge.

**Hour 2:** Acrobatics or Athletics

*Acrobatics, Athletics (DC 10):* Thorn bushes, bracken, and small trees block the party's progress. The party makes a group skill check using Acrobatics (to wriggle through the tangles) or Athletics (to bull through the tangles), with a success gained if at least half the characters succeed on the check. In addition to counting as a failure, if half the party fails

the check, every character loses 1 healing surge from injuries sustained from the hostile environment.

**Hour 3: Other**

*Other:* The party comes upon a bog in the forest. Proceed with Tactical Encounter 2: “Boggy Down,” see page 11. If the party defeats the enemies, they gain 1 success. If they retreat, they gain 1 failure.

**Hour 4: Endurance or Nature**

*Endurance, Nature (DC 10):* Bloodsucking midges attack the party. The characters make a group skill check using Endurance (to resist the insect clouds) or Nature (to use a balm or some other protection that repels the vermin), with a success gained if at least half the characters succeed. If half the characters fail, the characters take a -2 penalty on all skill checks made for the remainder of the encounter in addition to counting as a failure.

**Hour 5: Perception**

*Perception (DC 15):* Several paths through the woods reveal themselves to the party. The characters make a group skill check to find the tracks and identify false ones. The party gains a success if at least half the characters succeed.

**Hour 6: Stealth**

*Stealth (DC 15):* The adventurers close in on the heart of the woods. If they would approach undetected, they must be quiet. The characters make a group skill check with a success gained if at least half the party succeeds.

**Success:** The characters overcome the woods’ strange magic and proceed to Tactical Encounter 3: Voice in the Darkness (see page 13). The characters have surprise for this encounter.

**Defeat:** The characters are thoroughly confused by the wood’s strange magic. They proceed to Tactical Encounter 3, as above, but are themselves surprised.

## RESTS

The characters can take short rests in the woods without trouble, but extended rests beneath the strange canopy invite danger. Each hour the characters spend in one place, there’s a cumulative 10% chance per hour that something finds them. In the event that this occurs, you should run a level 1 encounter using a mix of creatures drawn from this adventure. A sample encounter would be:

**Level 1 Encounter (XP 550)**

- ◆ 1 blackleaf sniper (level 1 artillery, see page 9)
- ◆ 3 elf scouts (level 2 skirmisher, see page 11)
- ◆ 4 hunting wolves (level 1 minion skirmisher, see page 9)

## 1. EYES IN THE FOREST

Encounter Level 1 (575 XP)

### SETUP

**Phystal** (P)

**3 blackleaf snipers** (S)

**4 hunting wolves** (W)

Cruel bandits take positions in the forest and watch for intruders. The bandits and wolves are all hidden until they attack or are detected.

**When the characters near the woods' edge, read:**

*The tracks end not far from the woods' edge. Birch, elms, and maples combined with underbrush and bracken conceal much of what the grove contains.*

**If the enemies have surprise, read:**

*Black arrows hiss out from the foliage signaling an attack!*

### Perception

**DC 15:** *You notice three concealed pits in the clearing along the forest's edge.*

**DC 18:** *Faint movement reveals a slim humanoid's shape in the foliage.*

## TACTICS

The bandits have surprise against the characters unless they succeeded on both Perception checks. With surprise, they are also hidden from any character with a passive Perception score of 17 or less. During the surprise round, Phystal uses *raining arrows* against obvious defenders, while the snipers use *blackleaf arrows* against any targets they are hidden from.

The hunting wolves join the fight during the second round. They protect Phystal first, but if he's not adjacent to any characters, they target isolated characters instead, such as ranged strikers and controllers. The wolves flank their opponents to knock them prone.

For the rest of the combat, the snipers choose different targets, making *shortbow* attacks against any dazed targets. They switch to *blackleaf arrows* only when primary targets save against the dazed condition or when an individual sniper faces a different enemy.

Phystal follows a similar pattern. Once he contains the defenders, he uses *shortbow* attacks or *blackleaf arrow* attacks to slide dazed enemies together until he can use *raining arrows* again. Like the snipers, Phystal makes Stealth checks to hide whenever he can.

<b>Phystal (P)</b>		<b>Level 2 Controller (Leader)</b>
Medium fey humanoid, elf		XP 125
<b>Initiative</b> +3	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6; low-light vision	
<b>Watcher of the Woods</b> aura 10; all allies in the aura gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls against targets from which they are hidden.		
<b>HP</b> 35; <b>Bloodied</b> 17		
<b>AC</b> 16; <b>Fortitude</b> 15, <b>Reflex</b> 15, <b>Will</b> 16		
<b>Speed</b> 7; see also <i>wild step</i>		
⬇ <b>Scimitar</b> (standard; at-will) ⬆ <b>Weapon</b>		
		+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.
⚔ <b>Shortbow</b> (standard; at-will) ⬆ <b>Weapon</b>		
		Ranged 15/30; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage. If Phystal has combat advantage against the target, he can slide the target up to 3 squares.
↘ <b>Blackleaf Arrow</b> (standard; requires shortbow; 3/encounter)		
⬆ <b>Poison, Weapon</b>		
Phystal makes a shortbow attack. On a hit, Phystal makes a secondary attack against the same target.		
<i>Secondary Attack:</i> +6 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed and takes ongoing 3 damage (save ends both).		
✦ <b>Raining Arrows</b> (standard; requires shortbow; recharge ☒ ☒) ⬆ <b>Weapon</b>		
Area burst 1 within 10; targets enemies; +6 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 2 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
<b>Elven Accuracy</b> (free; encounter)		
The elf can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.		
<b>Wild Step</b>		
The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +8		
<b>Str</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Wis</b> 11 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 11 (+1)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> hide armor, scimitar, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows		

**3 Blackleaf Snipers (S)** **Level 1 Artillery**  
 Medium fey humanoid, elf XP 100 each

**Initiative** +7 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision  
**HP** 32; **Bloodied** 16  
**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13  
**Speed** 7; see also *wild step*

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
 +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
 Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.

↘ **Blackleaf Arrow** (standard; requires shortbow; 3/encounter)  
 ♦ **Poison, Weapon**  
 The sniper makes a shortbow attack. On a hit, the sniper makes a secondary attack against the same target.  
*Secondary Attack:* +6 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed and takes ongoing 3 poison damage (save ends both).

**Elven Accuracy** (free; encounter)  
 The elf can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.

**Wild Step**  
 The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven  
**Skills** Athletics +4, Stealth +8  
**Str** 9 (-1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)  
**Con** 10 (+0) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)  
**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

**4 Hunting Wolves (W)** **Level 2 Minion Skirmisher**  
 Medium natural beast XP 31 each

**Initiative** +5 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision  
**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.  
**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13  
**Speed** 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)  
 +7 vs. AC; 4 damage (5 damage against a prone target).  
 If the wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target falls prone.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** –  
**Str** 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)  
**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

### Concealed Pit

*The ground gives way and drops you into a pit.*

**At-Will**

**Opportunity Action** **Melee**

**Trigger:** A Medium or smaller character enters a square containing a pit.

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** +4 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** The target falls 10 feet into the pit, takes 1d10 damage, and is knocked prone. A target can climb out of the pit with a DC 10 Athletics check

**Miss:** The target returns to the square it last occupied and its move action ends.

## INTERROGATING A PRISONER

The elves prove uncooperative if captured, but persistent characters might be able to ferret out information about their purpose and master. Phystal, however, cannot be interrogated.

## INTERROGATING THE PRISONERS

*To learn something from the prisoner, you must get past the defiance revealed in its soulless black eyes.*

**Level:** 1 (100 XP)

**Complexity:** 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate

*Arcana (DC 15, 1 success, maximum 2 successes):* The first successful check identifies the magical curse afflicting the prisoner as having an elemental origin. Success by 5 or more also grants the character a +2 bonus to the next Arcana check made. A second successful check lifts the curse. In addition to counting as a failure, a failed Arcana check also deals 5 psychic damage to the character that made the check.

*Diplomacy (DC 10, 1 success, requires 2 successes from Arcana, maximum 2 successes):* The first successful check calms the prisoner. The second successful check helps the elf set aside the crushing guilt for the crimes he or she committed. Diplomacy checks attempted before gaining the requisite number of Arcana checks result in automatic failures.

*Insight (DC 10, 1 success, maximum 1 success):* A successful check reveals the elf is ensorcelled and opens up the Arcana skill.

*Intimidate (DC 17 or 5, 1 success, maximum 4 successes):* Use the higher DC if the PCs have not yet accumulated 2 successes from Arcana. Each successful check breaks down the prisoner's will.

**Victory:** The characters lift the enchantment corrupting the prisoner's mind. The freed elf reveals, "There is evil in these woods, ancient and abominable. It whispers in the darkness, poisoning our minds with its vile words. Beware, friends, lest you succumb to the same corruption." The elf warns the adventurers that others haunt the woods. All is not as it seems in the forest, and it's easy to become turned around. The elf offers to lead the characters to the Voice in the Darkness, granting the characters a +2 bonus on any skill checks related to the "Enchanted Woods" skill challenge. However, the elf flees at the start of any combat encounter.

**Defeat:** The elf explodes in a burst of harmless, disgusting black filth.

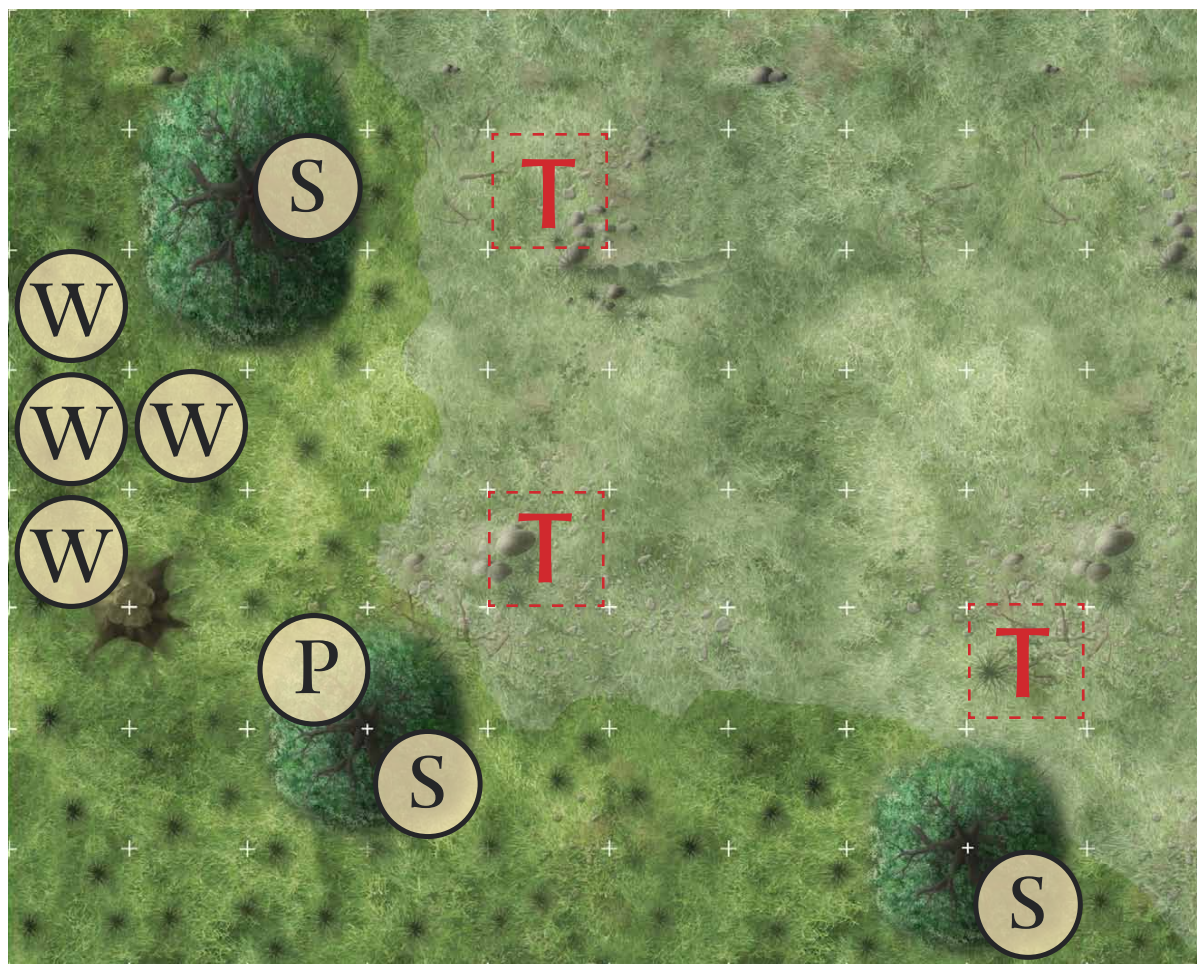
## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Light Forest:** Underbrush and low-hanging branches make light forest squares lightly obscured. An attack that deals 5 or more points of fire damage to a lightly obscured square clears away the foliage.

**Underbrush:** Squares containing underbrush are difficult terrain.

**Concealed Pits (T):** Three pits protect the forest's edge.

**Treasure:** Phystal carries a leather belt pouch containing parcel 1, which consists of 10 gp and a *potion of healing*.



## 2. BOGGY DOWN

Encounter Level 1 (550 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 mud lasher (M)
- 3 elf scouts (E)

The three elf scouts hide in dense forest squares. The mud lasher lurks beneath the black scum covering the bog. Do not place hidden enemies on the map until they attack or are detected.

When the characters enter this area, read:

*Pockets of dense forest mingle with the rest of the woods but you can still make out a small clearing containing a bog in its center.*

### Perception

DC 20: *Slight movement reveals a slim form hidden in the trees.*

### TACTICS

The mud lasher emerges from the bog when any creature enters the clearing. It uses *drowning slam* and *slam* against any enemy it can reach, switching to *mud ball* when there are no nearby enemies.

The elves remain hidden until the characters are within attack range of the mud lasher. Once the elemental attacks, they leap from their perches in the trees and attack with surprise, unless they were spotted. They use *wild step* to shift through the thick, cloying mud of the bog, making *two-weapon rend* attacks as often as possible, and trying to flank with one another and then mud lasher.

Mud Lasher (M)		Level 4 Brute	
Medium elemental magical beast (earth, water)		XP 175	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +9; low-light vision		
HP 63; Bloodied 31	AC 16; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison			
Speed 5			
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will)			
+7 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage.			
⊕ <b>Drowning Slam</b> (standard; encounter)			
+5 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage.			
↘ <b>Mud Ball</b> (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; the target is slowed (save ends). If the target is already slowed, it is instead immobilized (save ends).			
<b>Amorphous Body</b> (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee attack; encounter)			
The mud lasher shifts 3 squares.			
<b>Relentless Assault</b>			
A mud lasher gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against slowed or immobilized creatures.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Primordial	
Skills Stealth +9			
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 13 (+3)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 11 (+2)	

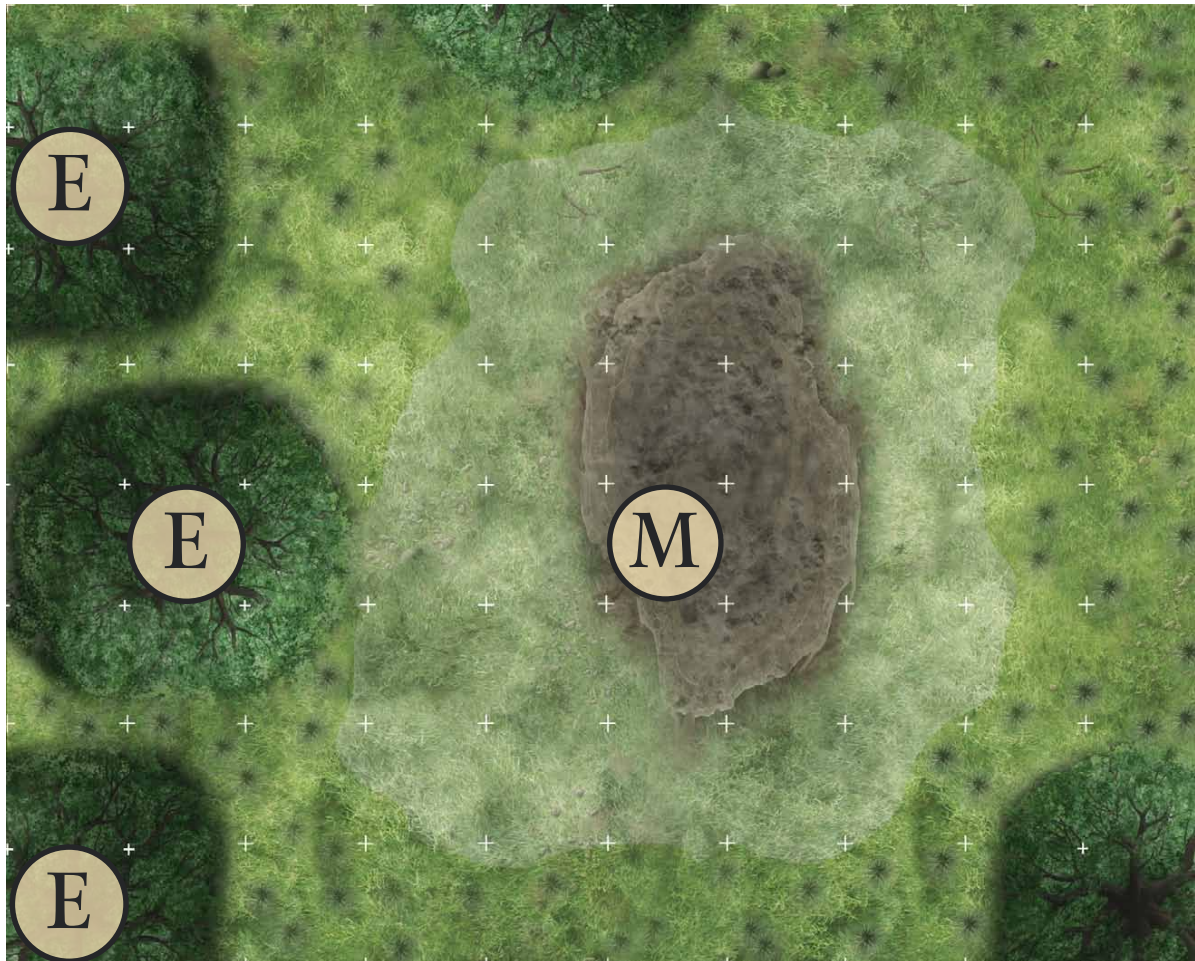
Elf Scout		Level 2 Skirmisher	
Medium fey humanoid, elf		XP 125	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +10; low-light vision		
<b>Group Awareness</b> aura 5; non-elf allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to Perception checks.			
HP 39; Bloodied 19			
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 13			
Speed 6; see also <i>wild step</i>			
⊕ <b>Longsword</b> (standard, at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b>			
+7 vs AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.			
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard, at-will) ◆ <b>Weapon</b>			
+7 vs AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.			
⊕ <b>Two-Weapon Rend</b> (standard, encounter) ◆ <b>Weapon</b>			
The elf scout makes a <i>longsword</i> attack and a <i>short sword</i> attack against the same target. If both attacks hit, the elf scout deals an additional 4 damage.			
<b>Elven Accuracy</b> (free; encounter)			
An elf can reroll an attack roll. It must use the second roll, even if it's lower.			
<b>Combat Advantage</b>			
An elf scout that has combat advantage deals an extra 1d6 damage on its attacks.			
<b>Wild Step</b>			
An elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.			
Alignment Any		Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Nature +10, Stealth +9			
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 14 (+3)	
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)	
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, longsword, short sword			

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Dense Forest:** Squares containing dense forest are heavily obscured and count as difficult terrain.

**Light Forest:** All other forest squares are lightly obscured.

**Bog:** A small bog covered in foul scum stands in a clearing. Squares containing the bog are difficult terrain. A character knocked prone in the bog cannot stand unless he or she first succeeds on a DC 10 Acrobatics or Athletics check.



### 3. VOICE IN THE DARKNESS

Encounter Level 4 (950 XP)

#### SETUP

Anise (A)

1 fey panther (P)

3 bloodthorn vines (B)

Voice in the Darkness (V)

A clearing in the woods' heart is home to the diseased entity behind the area's corruption. The Voice in the Darkness is a demonic entity which recently escaped from deeper within the Chaos Scar. It hid in a mighty tree but was so weak that it became bound to the wood and is now unable to escape. The situation suits it, however, as it can work its evil through the fey creatures that serve it. Anise and the fey panther are hidden behind the ruined walls, so don't place them yet. The bloodthorn vines and the tree, however, are visible.

**When the characters enter this area, read:**

*You emerge from the malicious woods and find yourselves in a wide clearing littered with ruins. Evil radiates from a large tree with black bark and bare branches that rises from a depression in the clearing's center. Tangled, thorny vines twitch and creep around the tree. Across the clearing, an old monolith crawling with runes stands atop a bare hillock.*

**When the characters see the fey panther, read:**

*A sleek panther with tufted ears and striped fur fixes you with baleful eyes.*

**When the characters see Anise, read:**

*A pale warrior comes into view wielding two blades and wearing black mail. His face is twisted into a hateful mask. He screams shrilly, causing the air to bend and waver around him.*

**When the characters see the tree, read:**

*Swirling mist issues from a dark crevice in the tree's trunk, and from with the stinking expulsion you hear a faint and terrible voice.*

**Arcana**

**DC 10:** *Strange portals hang in the air. Moving through them will teleport you to a random location.*

**DC 15:** *Magical energy wells up from the monolith, power that could aid you in the struggle here.*

<b>Anise the Chaos Warrior (A)</b>	<b>Level 1 Elite Brute</b>
Medium fey humanoid, elf	XP 200
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; low-light vision
<b>Destructive Wake</b> aura 5; any enemy in the aura takes a -5 penalty to saving throws against ongoing damage.	
<b>HP</b> 70; <b>Bloodied</b> 35	
<b>AC</b> 13; <b>Fortitude</b> 12, <b>Reflex</b> 14, <b>Will</b> 12	
<b>Resist</b> 5 variable (1/encounter)	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6; see also <i>wild step</i>	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage.	
⊕ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.	
‡ <b>Two-Weapon Rend</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> Anise makes a <i>longsword</i> attack and a <i>short sword</i> attack against the same target. If both attacks hit, Anise deals 4 extra damage.	
↩ <b>Destabilizing Breath</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Varies</b> Close blast 5; +4 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage of that type and a -2 penalty to AC and Fortitude (save ends both).	
<b>Elven Accuracy</b> (free; encounter) Anise can reroll an attack roll. He must use the second roll, even if it's lower.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b> Anise's deals 1d6 extra damage on all attacks against targets he has combat advantage against.	
<b>Devastating Assault</b> When Anise hits with a charge attack or hits a creature granting combat advantage to him, the attack also deals ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
<b>Wild Step</b> Anise ignores difficult terrain when he shifts.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Elven
<b>Skills</b> Nature +9, Stealth +13	
<b>Str</b> 12 (+1)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 15 (+2)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+0)
	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+1)
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, longsword, short sword	

<b>Fey Panther (P)</b> Medium fey beast	<b>Level 4 Skirmisher</b> XP 175
<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses</b> Perception +8; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 54; <b>Bloodied</b> 27	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 16, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 15	
<b>Speed</b> 8, climb 6; see also <i>fey step</i>	
⊕ <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the fey panther shifts 1 square.	
<b>Charging Pounce</b>	
When the fey panther hits with a charge attack, it deals 1d6 extra damage and knocks the target prone.	
<b>Fey Step</b> (move; encounter) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>	
The fey panther teleports 5 squares.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +11	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+6)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 13 (+3)
	<b>Cha</b> 11 (+2)

<b>3 Bloodthorn Vines (B)</b> Medium natural beast (plant)	<b>Level 2 Soldier</b> XP 125 each
<b>Initiative</b> +3	<b>Senses</b> Perception +3; blindsight 10
<b>HP</b> 41; <b>Bloodied</b> 20	
<b>AC</b> 18; <b>Fortitude</b> 15, <b>Reflex</b> 12, <b>Will</b> 14	
<b>Speed</b> 5 (forest walk)	
⊕ <b>Striking Vine</b> (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
† <b>Impaling Thorn</b> (standard; recharges when the bloodthorn vine doesn't have a creature grabbed) ♦ <b>Healing</b>	
The vine impales the target's flesh with a thorn: +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed.	
<i>Sustain Standard:</i> The vine sustains the grab, the target takes 2d8 + 4 damage, and the vine regains 5 hit points.	
<b>Pulling Vines</b> (minor; at-will)	
The bloodthorn vine shifts 1 square, pulling any creature grabbed by it into a space adjacent to it.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Str</b> 17 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 10 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+3)
	<b>Cha</b> 6 (-1)

<b>Voice in the Darkness (V)</b> Large elemental magical beast (blind, plant)	<b>Level 1 Elite Controller (Leader)</b> XP 200
<b>Initiative</b> -1	<b>Senses</b> Perception +2; blind, blindsight 10
<b>HP</b> 60; <b>Bloodied</b> 30	
<b>AC</b> 15; <b>Fortitude</b> 14, <b>Reflex</b> 13, <b>Will</b> 15	
<b>Immune</b> blinded, gaze, sleep; <b>Vulnerable</b> 10 fire	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 0	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Grasping Roots</b> (standard; at-will)	
Reach 3; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed. The voice can grab up to two creatures at one time.	
✂ <b>Twisted Nature</b> (minor 1/round; at-will)	
Reach 10; targets a twig blight ally; the target makes a melee basic attack with a +2 bonus to the attack roll.	
↖ <b>Psychic Lance</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic</b>	
Close burst 10; one or two creatures in burst; +5 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.	
↖ <b>Insidious Whispers</b> (standard; recharges when the voice has no spawned twig blights) ♦ <b>Psychic</b>	
Close burst 3; enemies in burst; +5 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a creature the voice chooses.	
✱ <b>Blightborn Calling</b> (minor; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ)	
Close burst 5; The voice spawns four blightborn twig blights in unoccupied squares within the burst, and the twig blights act immediately. The twig blights remain until destroyed or until the end of the encounter. The twig blights act on the voice's turn. The voice can have up to six twig blights at a time.	
↖ <b>Abyssal Cry</b> (free, when damaged by an attack; recharges when a bloodthorn vine drops to 0 hit points)	
Close burst 10; targets non-minion allies; the target gains 10 temporary hit points and a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
<b>Fear of Annihilation</b> (while bloodied)	
The voice gains a +4 bonus to damage rolls.	
<b>Threatening Reach</b>	
The voice can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares).	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Abyssal
<b>Str</b> 13 (+1)	<b>Dex</b> 8 (-1)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+2)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+2)
	<b>Cha</b> 17 (+3)

<b>Blightborn Twig Blight</b> Small fey humanoid (plant)	<b>Level 1 Minion</b> XP –
<b>Initiative</b> +3	<b>Senses</b> Perception +6
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
<b>AC</b> 15; <b>Fortitude</b> 11, <b>Reflex</b> 15, <b>Will</b> 13	
<b>Speed</b> 7 (forest walk), climb 5	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison</b>	
+6 vs. AC; 2 poison damage (3 poison damage with combat advantage).	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Elven
<b>Skills</b> Perception +6, Stealth +16	
<b>Str</b> 7 (-2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 7 (-2)	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+1)
	<b>Cha</b> 10 (+0)

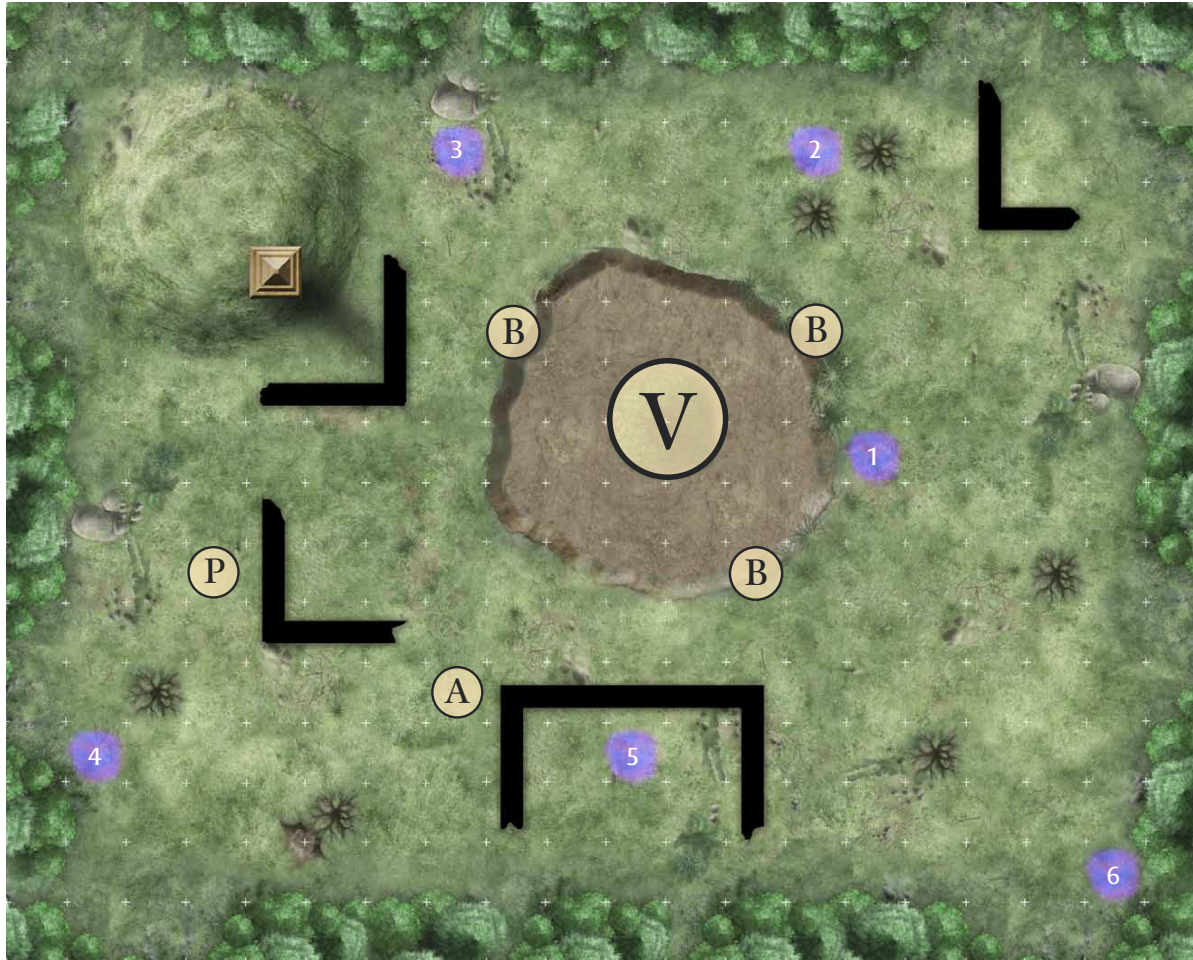
## TACTICS

The creatures regard the characters' intrusion as the worst affront and fight to the death to protect the tree.

The Voice in the Darkness uses *blightborn calling* on its first action, then follows up with *psychic lance*. On its next turn, it uses *psychic lance* and then spends an action point to use *insidious whispers*, provided several characters are in range. The voice can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 3 squares thanks to *threatening reach*, and it directs its minions to target grabbed melee strikers. Whenever it recharges *blightborn calling*, it refreshes its minions. Should it become imperiled, it uses *desperate cry* to invigorate its allies.

The bloodthorn vines protect the tree, using *impaling thorn* to grab and drag attackers away from the tree and then move back to stay within 3 squares of the hazard.

Anise and the fey panther close on the characters, using twisted space squares (see Features of the Area) to attack the characters from unexpected directions or simply closing the distance through movement. They focus on characters that hang back, the panther charging when possible, and Anise hitting groups with *destabilizing breath* and then charging.



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Hillock:** A small hill rises from the clearing. Slope squares leading up the hill are difficult terrain.

**Monolith:** A stone monolith stands atop the hill, a vestige from another time. The first character to touch the stone regains the use of an expended encounter attack power.

**Ruins:** Pitted and crumbling walls still stand in this clearing. The walls count as blocking terrain. The

walls are 8 feet tall. A character can climb a wall with a successful DC 10 Athletics check. A square of wall has AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; hp 40.

**Warped Trees:** The Voice in the Darkness corrupted the few trees in the clearing, giving them fleshy bark, leathery leaves, and blood for sap. Any creature starting its turn in a square adjacent to a warped tree is slowed until the start of its next turn.

**Twisted Space:** The demonic entity's mere presence has weakened reality in places, opening unstable portals around the battlefield. Whenever a creature enters a square containing warped space, roll 1d6. The creature teleports to an unoccupied square adjacent to the portal corresponding to the result on the die.

**Sinking Pit:** The massive tree holding the Voice in the Darkness rises from a shallow depression in the clearing's center. All squares in the depression and around the tree count as difficult terrain. Creatures with earth walk or forest walk ignore this difficult terrain.

**Treasure:** Scattered among the roots at the base of the tree are three parcels including two magic items (level 2 and 3), 1,500 sp, and 3,000 cp.

## CONCLUSION

Upon destroying the Voice in the Darkness, the woods return to a normal and natural state. The remaining bands still at large in the countryside separate in confusion as the enchantment breaks. Many are overcome with shame and grief at what they have done. Some return to the Chaos Scar to seek vengeance against the more powerful terrors and others leave the region altogether. At your discretion, the contamination might linger in a few elves. Such enemies would undoubtedly seek revenge on those who destroyed their master.

### About the Author

**Robert J. Schwalb** is an award-winning game designer whose work can be found in numerous roleplaying sourcebooks and accessories. His most recent work can be found in the *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*, *Dark Sun Creature Catalog*, *Monster Manual 3*, and the *Player's Handbook 3*. Robert lives in Tennessee.