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A FRIEND IN NEED

a faerie tale by The Brothers Grinn

a one-round ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS(R) Game tournament  
with a happy ending

designed by Jim Wade and Michael Selinker

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Some information on the dryad is taken from "The Ecology of the Dryad," an article by Shaun Wilson appearing in DRAGON(R) Magazine #87. (C) 1984 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

Additionally, some information about centaurs is taken from "The Centaur Papers," an article by Stephen Inniss and Kelly Adams in DRAGON(R) Magazine #103. (C) 1985 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

DUNGEON MASTER'S BACKGROUND

Romance is alive in the Land of Avalon. Good Prince Gallant has searched his principedom over for the most beautiful woman in the world to take as his bride. His pronouncement has gone over Avalon, and many women have hoped to be the one he chooses. Though he has seen many beauties, he has married none of them, certain that the most beautiful woman must be in his principedom. But now, after searching so hard, he feels he has found her. Alas, if he is not careful, he may lose her before the autumn leaves turn to brown.

The disastrous turn of events has gone like this: Prince Gallant despaired that he could not possibly view all of the women in the land to decide which was the fairest. His despair turned to joy when the sorceress Esmerelda invited him to her tower to scan the principedom's lovelies with her magical mirror. He and his retinue

cut through the Peaceful Forest to her tower, and stopped to rest by a sparkling pond. Night would soon fall, and a mighty storm was coming, so the prince went for his evening swim. Unbeknownst to him, the dryad Mahogany had also come to the edge of the pond to bathe. When the handsome prince swam to Mahogany's bank, the two were captivated with each other. The two stared at each other longingly, the prince's charms enchanting Mahogany almost as much as hers attracted him. So entranced in each others' gazes were they that neither noticed the coming of the storm. When the first thundercrack resounded, Mahogany told her smitten prince that they must hurry back to her tree. The prince forgot all matters of state and moved to go with her. But at that moment, the loudest thunderclap was heard, and Mahogany collapsed in Gallant's arms.

What Gallant did not know was that Mahogany's tree, also named Mahogany, had been struck by lightning. The lightning severed a major branch on the tree, and through their symbiosis, felled the dryad as well. Not knowing the dryad was anything but a woman with red hair (the season being autumn), the prince quickly circled the pond and brought Mahogany back to his camp. Gallant's men did not understand the maiden's distress, nor could they explain the burn on her left shoulder. What they did conclude was that they needed to hie to the sorceress at once, for she could certainly cure the fallen beauty. As they went further from the dryad's tree, the dryad became sicker and sicker, and the prince feared his great love would be for naught.

When the retinue reached Esmerelda's tower, the prince threw himself on the mercy of the sorceress. He would pay any riches, he swore, to have the litesome lass restored to health. Esmerelda agreed, but she had a much more sinister plot in mind, for she, too, wished to become his bride. Though beautiful herself, Esmerelda could not tear his eyes from the stricken dryad, even with her most powerful sorcery. She resolved to capture the prince's heart by concocting a philter of love, an elixir for which she required the hair of a dryad. With the prince's permission, she snipped a lock of Mahogany's hair, promising a potion that would heal all her ills. While the prince waited in sorrow by the dying dryad's bed through the night, the evil sorceress began to brew a draught that would steal his heart forever.

The only hope to resolve this dilemma is a group of Mahogany's friends, come to visit her for a fine morning picnic. Though anything but adventurers, this group of woodland creatures must return Mahogany to her tree by shortly after sundown or she will surely die. Mahogany's friends are Cassius, the centaur; Thistledown, the sprite; Glimmerwing, the sylph (and Mahogany's half-sister); Dylandwyriel, the wood elf; Cygnythia, the swanmay; and Benthroewyn, the werebear. If they cannot find Mahogany, her prospects will indeed be very grim.



## THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The player characters for this module are sylvan creatures from the AD&D monster tomes, and so required conversion to character classes, details of which are noted below. At the start of the round, have the players select their characters by class only, as follows: a thief, a magic-user, a bard, a ranger, a fighter and a cleric. No mention of race or level should be given. Note that the characters are capable of charming and speaking to almost anything they meet. None have anything resembling currency.

THISTLEDOWN, the sprite, is a 3rd level thief. His thieving percentages reflect his race, giving him a low (72%) chance to climb walls, but a high (99%) chance to move silently. His blouse has a permanent protection from normal missiles spell on it, and his stone has a continual bluelight on it. His arrows are coated with a sleep poison, causing the victim to fall into a comatose slumber for 1d6 hours if a saving throw against poison is failed. He also has 2 applications of +1 oil of sharpness for his sword. Thistledown is 75% unlikely to be noticed by any creature if he does not call attention to himself, so those encountered may think the party contains only five members. He always can turn invisible (-4 AC), appearing only if attacking, and can detect good and evil within 5". He flies at an 18" rate, maneuverability class B, has 8 hit points and is AC 6 due to his dexterity. He speaks sprite, Common and burrowing mammal.

GLIMMERWING, the sylph, is a 7th level magic-user. She has no physical attacks at all, but can turn invisible at will (-4 AC), fly at a 36" rate with maneuverability class B, and has a 50% magic resistance. She has 3 doses of Faerie Dust that, when used on a human, demi-human, or normal animal, causes the victim to fall into a deathlike slumber for 6 hours. During this time, the subject will receive the benefits of a week's sleep, including normal healing. It also causes an aging effect of six months, although not to short-lived animals. Against other creatures of 4+4 hit dice or less, it works as a normal sleep spell. She also has a pot of Nolzur's Marvelous Pigments. She is AC 8, has 14 hit points and a 19 charisma. Once per week, she can conjure an air elemental with the following statistics: AC 2, HD 8, hp 36, MV 36" (MC:A), #AT 1, DAM 2-20, IN Low, AL N, SZ L, +1 to hit and +4 damage in air, form 8" high whirlwind in one turn causing 2-16 hp damage and killing creatures under 3 hit dice, +2 weapon or 4 hit dice or magical ability required to hit. One turn is required to conjure the elemental, which lasts 7 turns or until more than 21" from Glimmerwing. She speaks sylph, Common, and all avian tongues.

DYLANDWYRIEL, the wood elf, is a 4th level bard, per AD&D Second Edition rules. He has the following thief skills: climb walls 90%; detect noise 25%; pick pockets 40%; read languages 25%; move silently 66% (because of his race); and item lore 20%. He fights as a rogue (thief). He has memorized the following magic user

spells: 1st level -- shield and jump; 2nd level -- mirror image. Because the music, poetry, and stories of a bard can be inspirational, Dylandwyriel can rally his friends and allies. If the exact nature of a threst is known, he can inspire his companions, granting a +1 bonus to attack rolls, or a +2 bonus to morale to those involved in melee. He must spend at least three full rounds singing or reciting before battle begins. This effects those creatures within a 40-foot range of Dylandwyriel. The effect lasts four rounds. In addition, he has the standard abilities of an elf, locating secret doors on a 1 or 2. He also is 90% invisible hiding in trees. He is AC 5 with his leather armor and dexterity bonus, and has 18 hit points. His magic shortsword is +1 only against evil creatures. He speaks Common, elvish, treant, and woodland mammal.

CYGNYTHIA, the swanmay, is a 3rd level human ranger when not in swan form. She wears leather armor, a ring of protection +2, and has a dexterity bonus to make her AC 5. Her ranger abilities are: +4 to attack trolls; 20% hide in shadows; 27% move silently; surprised only on a 1 in 6; tracking 40%. Cygnythia's collar of swan feathers enables her to transform into a swan. Clothing and jewelry are included in the transformation, but armor, weapons, and other gear are not. She retains her armor class as the ring becomes a band on her leg, with movement changing to 3"/18" and maneuverability class D. She gains an 8% magic resistance, is hit only by +1 weapons or by creatures of 4+1 hit dice, and her chance to be surprised drops to 10%. Her 3 attacks do 1/1/1-2, and the entire routine has a 50% chance of disorienting an opponent, causing a loss of attacks for the rest of the round. If the collar of swan feathers is removed, she cannot change form. Only human females can use the collar. Cygnythia has 25 hit points and speaks Common, brownie, dryad, elvish, pixie, sprite, sylph, and swan.

CASSIUS, the centaur, is a 5th level fighter. His natural defense and dexterity give him AC 3. His movement rate is 18", and he has 36 hit points. He has 18/61 strength, getting his strength bonus if using his lance and club only. If he attacks with his lance or club, he also can kick twice for 1d6 damage per hoof, providing an 11' or higher ceiling exists. A foe to the rear may be backkicked twice for 1d8 per kick. He carries a composite longbow with 10 +1 arrows, and wears horseshoes of surefootedness, similar to the shoes of Fharlanghn. These shoes allow him to travel without tiring, never trip, trigger a trap, or be entangled, climb slopes easily, and traverse dangerous obstacles without slipping. He speaks Common, centaur, and elvish.

BENTHROEWIN, the werebear, is a 5th level chaotic good cleric. He has full control over his lycanthropy. In human form, he is AC 10 and has a 12" movement rate. He can cast spells, use weapons, read his scroll of speak with plants and turn undead. It takes him a round to change into a bear, becoming AC 2, MV 9", and hit only by +1 weapons or 4+1 hit die creatures. He attacks with his bite for 2d4 and his claws for 1d3+1 each, if both claws hit he hugs for



2d8. He heals at triple the normal rate and is immune to disease. If he does damage to a creature equal to or greater than 50% of the creature's hit points, he inflicts them with lycanthropy. He can summon 1d6 brown bears in 2d6 turns if any are any within a mile. In either form he has 35 hit points and can cure the disease of another creature in 1d4 weeks. He speaks Common, centaur, elvish, satyr, stone giant, and bear.

#### MAHOGANY AND MAHOGANY

(Much of the information in this section is adapted from "The Ecology of the Dryad," an article by Shaun Wilson that appeared in DRAGON Magazine issue #87, July 1984.)

Mahogany is both a dryad and a massive oak tree. They share a symbiotic relationship which is more complex than most humans understand. Mahogany is 200 years old, as evidenced by the size of the tree. The dryad is an extension of the oak tree's soul, and as such cannot survive if the tree dies or she is taken too far away from the tree itself. The dryad only can go 360 yards from the tree without feeling ill effects. The 360 yard radius is called the terel, and if the dryad goes beyond it she suffers the wasting effect called the glirgimer. The dryad becomes slightly uneasy at about 330 yards. Within five rounds of leaving the terel, the dryad rapidly suffers exhaustion, starvation, and depression. She will die in 6-36 hours if nothing is done. A heal spell which defeats her magic resistance will negate the symptoms for four hours, but afterwards the effects return if she has not returned to her tree. To transfer to another tree, a wish and an acorn from a tree to transfer to another tree.

Damage suffered by the oak affects the dryad as well, which is how Mahogany got into this disastrous situation. When the tree was struck by lightning, it severed a major branch, a strong enough shock to injure the dryad. If the tree is destroyed, the dryad will die, which is why Esmerelda has sent her gargoyle minions to find the tree and destroy it. The dryad is in a coma because she is so far from her tree and under Esmerelda's influence.

Though an extension of an oak tree's soul, the dryad is born of more familiar origins. She is the daughter of a dryad and a satyr, the same satyr (Fauneil) that sired Glimmerwing, the sylph. Mahogany has not seen her mother for almost 200 years, and her father is long gone. The dryad and the tree live as one, with the dryad merged inside the tree. She can do this at will while within the terel. She can plant door, pass plant, and dimension door at will within the terel. She can also speak with plants, commune with nature, detect snares and pits, locate plants, locate animals, entangle, and trip as a 9th level druid at will within the terel. Her relationship with nature gives her a 50% magic resistance, but this goes down 10% for each 36" beyond the terel

she goes, to a minimum of 10%.

The dryad looks like a normal human female, with the exception of her coloration. In the spring and summer, the dryad is lightly tanned with green hair and eyes. In the fall (the time of this scenario), her skin darkens to brown, and her hair and eyes turn to gold, red (Mahogany's color) or reddish-brown. In the winter, or at death, skin, eyes and hair are pale white. In wintertime, the dryad hibernates inside the tree.

The dryad's most powerful ability is her charm, which she can use three times a day. However, if she used it this often, she would be surrounded by loving suitors. The charm is like a powerful charm person or mammal, with the saving throw at -3. A successful charm is permanent 50% of the time. If a charm is not permanent, the saving throws are as normal, but on the chart in the PLAYERS HANDBOOK, months are read as years, weeks as months, and days as weeks. Thus, a charmed male with a 13 intelligence gets a saving throw at -3 every two months. Mahogany, like all dryads, prefers males of exceptional beauty (16+ charisma) and some intelligence, but not so much that they go away soon. If threatened, the dryad's charm is a powerful weapon. The charm gives a +3 saving throw bonus against charms from others, but if another succeeds, the dryad's charm is broken. Currently, Mahogany has permanently charmed Prince Gallant, and all of Esmerelda's enchantments have not countered it.

Mahogany, the dryad, is: AC 9, HD 2, hp 12, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-4, AL N, SZ M, 50% magic resistance, dimension door, spell-like powers as 9th level druid at will:

- L1: detect snares and pits, entangle, locate animals
- L2: charm person or mammal (x3, special), locate plants, trip
- L3: none
- L4: plant door, speak with plants
- L5: commune with nature, pass plant

Mahogany's normal statistics are: S 8, I 14, W 12, D 15, C 13 and CH 20, but due to her current condition, her statistics are: S 3, I 10, W 6, D 7, C 5, CH 13 with hp 4 and MV 3". She wears a short green shift with a belt of leaves and a dagger in a leather sheath. She speaks dryad, elvish, pixie, sprite, and Common.

## THE PEACEFUL FOREST

The Peaceful Forest is a massive woods in the land of Avalon. The entire forest is in the principdom of Good Prince Gallant, but he rarely comes through it. Mostly, the forest and its many inhabitants are left alone to prosper. Major habitations include several clans of elves (wood, high, and valley), a tribe of sprites, and several camps of centaurs. Some of the more exotic



inhabitants, such as sylphs, dryads, and lycanthropes, tend to live alone. There are a number of monsters in the forest, but none of major power (i.e., no dragons, giants, thessalhydrae, and so forth). No organized bands of humanoids live in the forest.

The forest is a typical temperate wilderness climate. In the autumn, the temperature is a comfortable 70 degrees. There are hundreds of encounters possible in every mile, as birds, squirrels, and plants are everywhere. Something of every basic life form should be present at all times. If a PC wants a rabbit to talk to, a chipmunk might be available instead. Anything with less than semi-intelligence will be of very limited help, however. Burrow owls might have seen someone come by, but they cannot tell human fighters from pixies except by general size and associated noises. Someone in metal armor makes a lot more racket than a brownie; several someones in armor will be a major event indeed. Plants, of course, are limited by their lack of senses. If they have been stepped on, or a shadow has befallen them, they will know; but they won't know much else. Most of these creatures are incapable of defiance, but can make great role-playing encounters nonetheless. The Dungeon Master is free to create any of these encounters as desired. If the PCs search for a specific type of animal or plant, and the conditions for locating such a thing are favorable, the DM may assign a base chance, say 15%, and adjust for specifics, like the party's noise level, searching techniques, and willingness of the quarry to be found. This is especially important since Cygnythia and Benthroewyn are capable of unbalancing the party if they can attract a few swans or bears and get them to help.

There are only two permanent buildings in the mapped section of the forest. One is Esmerelda's tower, which is location 9. The other is Benthroewyn's shack, from which the PCs set out this morning. There is nothing there that would help the PCs, as Ben lives rather spartanly. He brought his cooking pot and his picnic basket, which are the most interesting things he owns.

The PCs begin near Mahogany, the tree (1). From there, they should hear the fighting (2) between some centaurs and Esmerelda's gargoyles, who have come to level the tree. After perhaps going to the centaurs' cave (3), the PCs may go to Prince Gallant's abandoned camp (4), where the brownies Fudge and Nut frolic. From there, they should trail the prince's horsemen to Esmerelda's tower. On the way they will have an encounter with some needlemen (5), and then with Ollie Ogre (6), who is looking for his brother Eugene. Eugene will meet the PCs in the forest (7). The PCs should follow the prince to the edge of the forest, and then north along the treeline. If they make it to the tower, they will find it looks much like the forest, as Esmerelda will have cast hallucinatory terrain over the area (8). There, they should meet the prince's retinue, and go inside the tower (9) to face Esmerelda. A successful conclusion will have the PCs, and perhaps the prince, saving both Mahoganys by returning the dryad to her tree.

Tracking Mahogany is difficult, since time and rain have washed away most signs of her trail to the pond. Cygnythia's chance to track the prince's party is 58%.

However, the PCs are not limited to this course of action. They may at any time diverge from this path. If they do so, they will have an encounter every half hour from this list. If they somehow follow the escaping gargoyles to the tower, they will automatically attract some of these encounters. Of course, the PCs only have until shortly after sundown (7 p.m.) to save Mahogany, and the round begins early in the morning (9 a.m.). The other wilderness encounters, in order of occurrence, are:

1. A pair of firefriends will be playing around a tree. From a distance, it will be obvious that some lights are moving around a tree, but they could be anything from dancing lights to will-o-wisps. If the PCs get close and make any noise, the firefriends, which are 1' long intelligent fireflies, will dart into the leaves of the tree to hide. Once they have figured out that the PCs are woodland creatures, they will come out and say hello in Common. They speak Common very quickly and buzz while doing so. They will be friendly, and shine their lights on the PCs in a gesture of friendship. They know that a large group of men with exoskeletons (armor) rode by on horseflies (they don't have the distinction down yet), and can show the PCs where they saw them. They will help with anything they can, although they will not go far from their home. The firefriends will be ill at ease if Benthroewyn is in bear form. If attacked, they will fire their light beams and try to flee. The firefriends are: NA 2, AC 4, HD 1+4, hp 9 each, MV 3"/15" (MC:B), #AT 1, DAM 1-2, IN Low, AL NG, SZ S (1'), fire light beam 14' for 5-20 damage (save vs. wands to half) 1/turn, luminous abdomen, immune to fire and electricity.

2. A mountain lion is roaming the forest looking for a light snack. A swan or a sprite would do just fine. It will spring to attack, but it will not attack a bear or a centaur. It will run like a frightened kitten after first being injured. The mountain lion is: AC 6, HD 3+1, hp 16, MV 15", #AT 3, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6, IN Semi, AL N, SZ M, if both claws hit rear claws rake for 1-4/1-4, surprised on 1 only, spring 15' up or 20' ahead.

3. The PCs will come across a couple of large burrows in the earth. A small bunny rabbit wanders around the edges of the burrows, peering in. Suddenly, a very large horned rabbit pokes his head out of a burrow, frightening the bunny off. This makes the al-mi'raj skittish as it tentatively hops out. Unless the party does something to affect this, roll a d6: 1-3 it attacks, 4 it watches and fidgets, 5 it hops away, 6 it hops toward party. On the next round, five more al-mi'raj come out of the burrows, and react as a group on a d6 like before. On the next round, five more will come out, and five more the next. As soon as one al-mi'raj attacks, all will. The al-mi'raj are: NA 16, AC 6, HD 1, hp 5



each, MV 18", #AT 1, DAM 1-4, IN An1, AL N, SZ S (3' with 2' horn), acute senses. In the burrow holes, which the sprite could enter, is a bag of seven gems worth 10 gp each.

4. A thin, nearly invisible web is stretched between two trees about 4' off the ground. If a PC becomes caught in a web (preferably a PC straying away from the main group), a large spider will drop from the trees and attack the hapless victim until killed. The large spider is: AC 8, HD 1+1, hp 7, MV 6"\*15", #AT 1, DAM 1 + poison, IN Non, AL N, SZ S, poison causes save at +2 or lose 0-2 hit points each round for 1-4 rounds.

5. In a densely wooded section of the forest, eight stirges make their homes in the trees. They will attack anything warm blooded, and come from all sides. The stirges are: NA 8, AC 8, HD 1+1, hp 6 each, MV 3"/18" (MC:B), #AT 1, DAM 1-3, IN An1, AL N, SZ S, attack as 4 HD creatures, after hit drain 1-4 hp up to 12 hp.

6. As the PCs near a small clearing, they hear a loud squawk and a brief rustling in the bushes. Moments later two beady red eyes and a beak poke from the bushes. The gold-brown bird with leathery gray bat wings and a yellow-green serpentine tail gives a squawk and rushes the party. The cockatrice hen has just turned a weasel invading her nest to stone and is very agitated. She thinks the party is after her eggs, too. The hen will stop outside the bush and act menacingly, trying to drive away the PCs. The hen can be calmed a bit through conversation, but she will still be very ornery toward mammals in general, and weasels in particular. If her nest is threatened or she is attacked, the hen will attempt to petrify the offender. If a PC is stupid enough to score a hit on the hen with body weaponry (hoof, claw, wing, bite, etc.), the person doing so does normal damage, but also must save against petrification at -2. The cockatrice is: AC 6, HD 5, hp 28, MV 6"/18" (MC:C), IN An1, AL N, SZ S, touch causes saving throw or petrified. In its nest are 2 eggs, 3 gems worth 20 gp each, a healing potion, and a silver bracelet worth 50 gp.

#### PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, in a magical land called Avalon, there were seven friends. These friends lived in the Peaceful Forest, in the land ruled by Good Prince Gallant. There was Cassius, a noble centaur who was very strong; Dylandwyriel, the wood elf, who could play beautiful songs all day long; Cygnythia, a beautiful woman whose magical collar of swan feathers allowed her to turn into a graceful swan; Benthroewyn, a gentle man who could cast spells of healing and could also turn into a giant bear with big teeth; and Glimmerwing, a pretty sylph whose butterfly wings carried her to the treetops. And there also was Thistledown, a sprite who could disappear and fly just

like Glimmerwing. And, last of all, there was Mahogany, the beautiful dryad who lived in a tree that was also named Mahogany. The friends were happy, and though they lived some distance from one another, they frequently got together for picnics and frolicking.

One morning in early autumn, all the friends, except Mahogany, were gathered at Benthroewyn's spartan hut. Though a few minutes' walk from Mahogany's tree, Ben's hut was closer than any of the other friends' homes. The friends had to gather here because they knew Mahogany could not travel far from her beloved tree, for if she wandered more than a thousand feet from it, she would get sick and die by the setting of the sun. Thistledown's sprite band lived several hours flight to the south, as did Cassius' herd, so they were weary when they arrived for the picnic. Cygnythia and Dylandwyriel arrived early, too, and spent the night in Ben's hut.

As evening neared, a fierce rainstorm struck the area, and thunder shook the house. The friends were scared and worried that the next day would be gloomy. But in the morning, the clouds had disappeared, the sun shone brightly, and fresh dew was on the leaves. Glimmerwing, flying from the mountains, arrived shortly after dawn and woke the friends at the hut. Smiling, the friends packed a big picnic basket and set off for Mahogany's tree. She would be so happy to see them, like always. After a brisk walk through the woods, the friends neared Mahogany's tree. And there they found the damaged oak.

(Begin the round.)

#### 1. The Wounded Oak

The PCs begin the round coming through the trees that surround Mahogany. Morning dew is still on the ground, but the birds and animals in the area are skittish. They get a feeling that all is not right, a feeling emanating from the big oak tree. The animals are still shaken from last night's storm and know that lightning struck near here.

When the PCs come through the tree cover to the oak, they will see a sad sight. The big oak is still there, resplendent in its red and brown leaves. But a large section of the topleaves and a major branch are lying among the undergrowth, obviously broken off suddenly. Careful examination of the huge branch shows that it was cleaved off, and is seared at the break. The tree shows similar signs. Birds, animals, and other plants in the area know that the tree was struck by lightning, and that a big crash was heard when the branch hit the ground. Nothing further can be determined unless the tree is spoken with, via a speak with plants spell.



There are, of course, no other druids or dryads in the area, so the only such spell the PCs have is on Benthroewyn's scroll.

Once a speak with plants is cast, the cleric will hear the tree saying "Mahogany" and "Ouch" in long syllables. Mahogany will answer questions, but clearly is in great pain. When conversing, Mahogany speaks very slowly, roughly one syllable every five seconds. It wants to know where its dryad is, for she is needed to tend to its wounds. The oak can explain all of the information in the "Mahogany and Mahogany" section, though even a brief summary will take several hours. The dryad is not dead or exorcised, but that does not mean she is still in the terel. Most importantly, it will say that if Mahogany has left the terel and does not return by "no-more-sun," the dryad will die, leaving the tree soulless. The tree does not have the same perception of time as the PCs, so it only knows that Mahogany left during "water," and that "pain" happened during "water" as well. When "sun" came, she was not in the tree. She has not responded to the tree's calls, either. The PCs are not tree surgeons, so there is little they can do to help the tree with its pain. Cure spells will be useless, as the cleric should know. It will be grateful that the PCs are going to look for Mahogany, but it will still continue to call her name.

Buried at the roots of the tree is Mahogany's treasure cache. It contains a thick leather stringbag with 250 gp and 10 gems worth an average of 50 gp each. The tree knows where the bag is, but will not take kindly to the PCs digging it up.

Twenty minutes after the PCs find the tree and perhaps begin their search, thrashing sounds will be heard through the forest to the north. See encounter 2.

Mahogany: AC 2, HD 20, hp 120, MV 0", #AT 0, DAM 0, IN Exc, AL N, SZ L (70'), soul-linked to a dryad.

## 2. The Winged Woodsmen

The thrashing comes from a fight, if it can be called that, between three centaurs and four gargoyles. The centaurs are a mare, Cassia (no relation to Cassius), and her children, the colt Claudius and the filly Cassandra. They were all out gathering berries for Cassia's sick mate, Chiron. The gargoyles, who are named Grewsum, Ugli, Grotesk, and Meen, are all carrying hatchets. They have been sent by Esmerelda to find and chop down the dryad's tree. They are looking for a big oak tree near a pond, and have already taken their axes to a couple of likely candidates. They have not finished chopping any down, however, because they were distracted by the arrival of the centaurs. They are trying to corral and interrogate the beasts, although the centaurs are not cooperating toward this end, making the gargoyles very mad. The centaurs have no magic weapons and not enough hit dice to harm the

gargoyles, so their only defense is their knowledge of and better movement in the forest. Cassia has broken her spear on Ugli's chest, and the fight has turned into a chase.

The PCs will hear a loud rustling, the sound of galloping hooves and a startled cry nearby. Visibility is minimal. After a few moments, during which the PCs should be checked for reactions, a tall boy on a horse crashes through the bushes, hurtling headlong into the party. The boy cries, "Help! They're going to kill my mother and sister!" He then wheels perfectly, and the PCs will realize he is a young centaur. Claudius is bleeding from a wound to his shoulder. Right on his tail is a gray-skinned, muscular creature with sharp claws, teeth, and a horn on its head, wielding a hatchet. Its wings get tangled in some branches as it emerges from the trees. Seeing the PCs, the gargoyle shouts, "You tell Grewsum where be tree!" and rushes to attack. One of Grewsum's claw attacks is replaced by a hatchet swipe. Claudius is down to 9 hit points from a hatchet wound. Grewsum is hit only by +1 or better weapons, or creatures with 4+1 hit dice. He is certain that the PCs cannot hurt him, but if this proves wrong then he may try to flee toward the other gargoyles. He cannot really fly in the forest.

If rescued, Claudius will be thankful but will resist attempts at healing until his mother and sister are saved. He has seen what happens when he tries to rush a gargoyle, and will not do so again. There is more thrashing up ahead, as Cassandra and Cassia have separated, with Grotesk going after the filly, and Ugli and Meen staying with her mother. Cassandra is using her considerable dexterity to baffle Grotesk, who keeps bashing into trees. This does not hurt him, but it makes him mad. Ugli and Meen have cornered Cassia, though, and intend to fully interrogate her and then kill her. Cassandra is unwounded, but Cassia is down to 15 hit points. Ugli and Meen have gotten into an argument over which of them gets to rip the horsie to shreds, which has devolved into their usual argument over who is uglier and meaner. The gargoyles speak a twisted Common and think everyone else talks funny.

The PCs may intervene in any way they desire. The gargoyles like to rend things, but their primary task is to find the tree and chop it down. They know Esmerelda will punish them if they do not succeed. They botched their last mission, so they do not intend to screw this one up. They will interrogate anyone and anything they can, assuring that if it lives in the forest, it must know where the tree is. If all looks bleak, they will fly back to the tower, but if pursued they will deal with those first. As much as they fight, the gargoyles actually like each other and will quickly come to one another's aid. If any are captured alive, they will swear on their stone hearts that they will tell nothing, but it is easy to trick information out of them. As gargoyles go, they are really not that objectionable.



Cassia, Claudius, and Cassandra certainly think otherwise. They do not enjoy being ambushed, and if any of the gargoyles have been killed or seriously injured, all of the gargoyles must die. If she was not injured, Cassandra will be exhilarated, but Claudius will still be scared. He is likely to look at Cassius as a role model. Cassia will be very concerned about her children, and will demand that they be healed before her. Unless she is severely wounded, she will not be concerned about her own injuries. She is more concerned about her husband and the spilled bowl of berries she was bringing to him. Chiron, her husband, is lying in their cave, suffering from some disease she does not understand. The cave is at point 3, about 15 minutes away. If she knows the PCs have a healer, she will entreat him to help Chiron.

The centaurs gathered the berries by the pond, where they noticed the remains of a deserted human encampment. If told that Mahogany is missing, they will be sympathetic, but unable to provide any information. Cassia's first priority is Chiron, and she will offer to guard the tree if the PCs can help cure him. Otherwise, the centaurs will bid the PCs adieu and return to Chiron.

Cassia is a centaur mare and also a fierce warrior. She is: AC 5, HD 3+3, hp 20 (15), MV 18", #AT 2, DAM 1-6/1-6, IN Avg, AL N(CG), SZ L, broken spear. Claudius is not yet full grown, but should develop into a strapping stallion. He is: AC 5, HD 2+2, hp 14 (9), MV 18", #AT 2, DAM 1-6/1-6, IN Avg, AL N(CG), SZ L, no weapons. Cassandra is younger than Claudius and much nimbler. She is: AC 4, HD 2, hp 10, MV 18", #AT 2, DAM 1-6/1-6, IN Avg, AL N(CG), SZ L, 15 dexterity.

Grewsum, Ugli, Grotesk, and Meen are typical gargoyles who spend their days arguing atop Esmerelda's tower. They are: AC 5, HD 4+4, hp 24 each, MV 9"/15" (MC:G), #AT 4, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4, IN Low, AL CE, SZ M, +1 weapon or 4+1 hit dice to hit, hatchets (1-6/1-4) replace one claw (1-3). Their flying is severely hampered by the forest. In aerial combat, they can either use their claws, a hatchet swipe, or a horn stab.

### 3. The Centaur Cave

If the PCs follow Cassia and her children back to her cave, they will reach it in about 15 minutes. As soon as they get there, Cassia will call her mate's name into the cave mouth. Chiron cannot respond, but Cassia knows this. Inside, a very muscular centaur shivers beneath a blanket on a bed of leaves. He is afflicted with a form of horsepox, which, fortunately for his family and Cassius, is not contagious. It makes him lethargic and unable to move very far. He is unable to talk, prompting Cassia to stroke his back and speak soothingly to him. Benthroewyn may use his cure disease ability on Chiron, but it will take 1d4 weeks to

have full effect. However, Chiron will feel slightly revitalized at once and will be able to walk and talk unsteadily.

When Cassia tells him of the attack, Chiron will swear vengeance against the horrid gargoyles, wheezing all the time. If told of Mahogany's plight, he will apologize for not knowing anything and promise to come with them to skewer the kidnapper. He will, of course, be in no condition to do so, and Cassia will talk him out of it. She will instead suggest that she take his magical spear and defend the tree while the children take care of him. After some protestation, he will call her a spirited filly and accede. Cassia will thank the PCs and escort them out. Claudius will beg to come along, but Cassia will tell him his place is with his father. Cassia will take the spear, which Chiron will claim is as powerful as the one the original Chiron, the great centaur sage of Roman lore, gave the human hero Theseus. It is a +1 spear.

Chiron is very sick but is at full hit points. He is: AC 5, HD 4, hp 28, MV 18", #AT 2 or 3, DAM 1-6/1-6 + weapon, IN Avg, AL N(CG), SZ L, +1 spear.

#### 4. The Prince's Camp

If the PCs are interested in seeing the human camp, Cassia will take them to the spot where she picked berries this morning, which is very close to where Mahogany and Gallant first set eyes on each other. She will point out the camp across the pond, before going to guard Mahogany's tree. This assumes that the PCs have helped Chiron. If not, Cassia will give directions but will not accompany them. The centaurs' tracks are evident here, but the five hours of rain last night has all but destroyed the prince's trail to the campsite. The prince's trail from the campsite to the tower, however, can be picked up. The other side of the pond is definitely beyond a thousand feet from the oak tree, which the PCs will figure out if they think of it.

From a distance, the prince's camp will seem deserted. It is a collection of eight tents, one much larger than the rest. The tents contain two or three cots each, except the large one. The prince's tent contains a temporary bed with a heavy blanket. It also contains a mirror, chest of clothing, and a spare royal robe. A number of cots have been turned over, one of the tents has collapsed, and equipment is scattered all about. Currently, the camp has three inhabitants: Fudge and Nut, the brownies, and a warhorse. Fortunately, the PCs arrive just as the brownies figure out a whizbang way to use this leftover equipment.

As the PCs approach, they may hear some clanking and a whinny from the camp. Those flying overhead will see a knight in full plate armor and royal robes on his horse ready to ride out. The knight will kick the horse into ungainly movement. If there are party



members on the ground that the knight could bear, it will move in that direction. Of course, the suit of armor contains only Fudge and Nut, with Fudge controlling the suit's arms and Nut moving the legs. If Fudge and Nut see or hear someone to play with, they will move the horse toward them and stand defiantly to let the majesty of the royal robes, armor, and horse sink in. Fudge will use his ventriloquism spell to declare in a low voice, "Oho, evil varlets! Thy base magics do not impress one with my fantastical knightly virtue! Behold and tremble!"

After this impressive outburst, Nut will kick a bootspur into the horse's side, causing it to whinny and charge forward. The knight will appear to wobble as Fudge tries to spin the horseman's mace in the suit's right gauntlet. As the horse gets closer, Fudge's twirling of the mace will cause it and the gauntlet to fly off. Suddenly off balance, Fudge will crash into the left side of the breastplate, knocking the helmet and torso armor off the horse. The horse, still attached to the armor leggings, will gallop away. The helmet and torso will separate, with "oofs" and "oohs" coming from the breastplate. Momentarily, two brownies will stagger out, clutching their heads from dizziness and the ringing of the crash of metal. A blow to the mounted armor will result in the same spectacle but will not damage the brownies.

After getting their bearings, the brownies will introduce themselves: "I'm Fudge!" "I'm Nut!" "We're heroes!" and so forth. Fudge and Nut are boyfriend and girlfriend, and are brave heroes, at least by their own reckoning. They don't do like other brownies do, all sitting in lilac trees and weaving flowers and stuff. They mean no harm, as they are just out to have a little fun. They talk constantly, overlapping their speech and finishing each other's sentences. They are prone to bopping one another on the head when one thinks the other said something stupid. This occurs often.

They are out to see the world, and came here by hitching a ride with this prince's party. They climbed into a backpack a while ago and fell asleep. They are not sure where they are now, but they are certain some dragons are around to slay. They woke up when the storm began to rage, and saw the prince carry in a "bee-you-ti-ful woman," as Fudge will say. Nut will slap him on the head and tell him not to look at other women. Of course, while the female party members are there, Fudge will gaze adoringly at them. If pressed about what happened, they will say the prince brought the woman into camp, and everybody stood around her and shook their heads back and forth. (They will imitate.) They then decided to take her to the sorceress, whoever that is. Then everybody jumped on all the horses but one and rode away, leaving Fudge and Nut alone in the camp. They have found lots of neat things to play with, but must soon get about with their dragon slaying.

The brownies will provide whatever information they can about the prince, his retinue, the woman, and their many travels. They are, however, prone to much exaggeration. They have no real desire to join in the party's search as they do not understand the plight of the dryad. The concepts of agony and death mean nothing to them, but they will wish the PCs luck and give each a small sweetbread from their personal store. Besides, as Fudge will say, "We paladins have strict rules about who we can and cannot associate with." Nut will whack him upside the head at this comment. "In your dreams!" she retorts. They will continue to hang around the camp as long as they are having fun. Eventually, they will try to catch the horse and ride off. If the PCs can talk the brownies into coming along, they will find that the two are more trouble than they are worth.

The PCs will find little else of interest in the camp other than that described above. The prince's temporary bed contains a few red hairs, which the PCs will recognize as Mahogany's most recent shade. The tracks of the prince's horsemen will be easy to find, and can be kept track of by the ranger as noted in the forest section. She will be able to track the group fairly easily, though she must check every hour (58%) to see if she loses the trail. If this happens, have the firefriend encounter occur.

Fudge and Nut speak brownie, Common, elvish, halfling, pixie, and sprite. They brandish brownie shortswords, frequently using them to punctuate their tales. They are: MA 2, AC 3, HD 1/2, hp 3 each, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-3, IN High, AL LG, SZ S (1 1/2'), never surprised, save as 9th level clerics, 18 dexterity, use natural cover to become invisible, spells as 9th level magic-user:

- L1: ventriloquism, dancing lights, protection from evil
- L2: continual light, mirror image (3 images)
- L3: none
- L4: confusion, dimension door

The prince's spare horse is a white heavy warhorse named Champion. Champion is: AC 7, HD 3+3, hp 21, MV 15", #AT 3, DAM 1-8/1-8/1-3, IN Anl, AL N, SZ L.

Talking with Champion will reveal that the prince took the woman, his retinue, and rode away. Champion knows that the prince will return, as he has never left a camp untended for more than a day or two. Champion will not leave this camp on his own volition.

##### 5. Needleman Ambush

The PCs only should have minimal trouble finding the tracks of the prince's party. As they are following it, they will be attacked by four needlemen. (This encounter may be omitted entirely if the PCs are slow to leave the prince's camp.)



The needlemen look like slightly green humans suffering from both starvation and acupuncture. They are actually intelligent and disagreeable plants, which will smell the elvish and sylvan blood flowing through the PCs' veins and seethe with hatred. They will thus try to attack from surprise and all sides. Amidst the trees, they are 75% undetectable, and will achieve surprise 75% of the time. This goes down to 40% if the ranger is leading the party in human form, and 25% if she is in swan form.

In their first attacks, they will fire 1-6 needles each, as they will in every other attack. Each needle can fly up to 20', and causes 1-2 points of damage. Note that the sprite is completely immune to their needles, and can attack with impunity from a distance. However, if the sprite gets too close to a needleman, it will try to grab the sprite. If it hits, it causes 2-4 points of damage. Anyone attacking the needlemen with flesh will also take this damage, but the centaur's hooves will protect him from this damage. (The centaur, however, still can be affected by the missiles.) Though they are immune to spells which only affect mammals, such as charm person, the needlemen are triply affected by all other magic. Their saving throws are normal, but they take triple damage from damage-causing spells. They only can be communicated with through a speak with plants spell. In this case, they still will not be friendly.

The needlemen have no treasure, as they are a nomadic band. The needlemen are: NA 4, AC 6, HD 3+4, hp 18 each, #AT 1-6, DAM 1-2 each, IN Low, AL N, SZ M, 75% undetectable in forest, 75% surprise, needles have 20' range, take triple effect from magic.

## 6. The Ogre Brothers, Part I

Ollie Ogre is looking for his older brother Eugene. He and Eugene always pal around together, but lately Eugene has been hanging out with some dame. Ollie doesn't understand this; it's a fine kettle of chickens when a gal comes between a guy and his buddy, Ollie thinks. The dame, of course, is Esmerelda, and she came between them with a charm monster spell. But Ollie doesn't know this; he just misses the good old days, when he and Eugene would bash through the forest like ogres should.

The PCs will first hear of Ollie from his calls to his brother. "Yoooooooo-gene!" he calls, as he looks behind trees and under rocks for Eugene. Eugene will not answer. The PCs, if they follow the calls, will see a 9' tall muscular humanoid with yellow skin. He is definitely an ogre, but he will not appear menacing at first. If the PCs attack him, he will rush at them with his club. If they approach him, he will demand to know what happened to Eugene. He speaks in a very gruff but confused voice. Ollie is very stupid and easily manipulated, and can tell the PCs about the

woman Eugene went off with. If the PCs seem to be hiding something, he will assume they have kidnapped Eugene and will get very mad. Ollie is sexist, but no more than one would expect an ogre to be. He will go out of his way to be polite to female party members, but will ignore anything they say.

He will cooperate with the PCs if they wish to help him locate Eugene, as he is having trouble finding the tower where he last saw him. Ollie does not know an hallucinatory terrain has been cast over the area, nor would he understand, even if it were explained to him a few dozen times. He wants to find Eugene; he doesn't have time for subtleties. If the PCs go with him, then he is the leader, at least in his mind. He will have lots to talk about, especially things he and Eugene have bashed. Every now and then, a tear will well in his eye for his long lost brother. As ogres go, Ollie is a very nice ogre, which means he probably won't eat any of the PCs. If Ollie is with the group, they cannot possibly move silently. Ollie can show the PCs where Eugene went away, but they will meet Eugene first. See encounter 7.

The PCs, of course, are free to let Ollie go by. If he questions them and they honestly seem not to know or care what happened to Eugene, he will grunt and go on his way. In this case, Eugene will find the PCs shortly after Ollie leaves. See below.

Ollie Ogre carries a stone club, and a belt pouch with 35 gold pieces is on his waist. Ollie's command of Common is OK, but he is more fluent in ogrish, troll, orcish, and stone giant, the last of which Benthroewyn speaks. Ollie is: AC 5, HD 4+1, hp 27, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM 1-10 or 3-12 (club), IN Low, AL CN(E), SZ L (9'), 18(10) strength.

## 7. The Ogre Brothers, Part II

Eugene Ogre is looking for his brother Ollie, but not for the same reason Ollie is looking for him. Eugene has been summoned and charmed by Esmerelda, and is trying to enlist Ollie in the sorceress' service. Whether they are with Ollie or not, the PCs will hear "Awww-lee! Awww-lee!" and a familiar tromping. If Ollie is not with the PCs and they allow Eugene to find them, Eugene will give them the same third degree. However, he will be much less polite to them. On the slightest provocation, he will say, "Esmerelda warned me about you tree things!" and attack. If calmed, Eugene still will be gruff with the PCs, as Esmerelda's charm is very strong.

If Ollie is with the PCs, he will run through the trees to meet his brother, hooting all the way. Eugene will return the hoots, and they will embrace each other. They will perform an ogrish chant which involves some intricate hand slapping and sounds like:



"Ooog a rocka, oog a rocka, ook bokka booga rocka!" repeated three times. However, afterwards, Eugene will say in Common, "Enough that kid stuff, Ollie, we gots real work ta do!" Ollie will be baffled. It may be noted that Ollie is a lot more emotional than Eugene. If the PCs are with Ollie, Eugene will demand to know why he is hanging around with the "evil tree thingies." Eugene, being a lot smarter than his younger brother, easily can turn his mind against the PCs unless they do some fast talking. Eugene will not forgo his new loyalty to Esmerelda, despite Ollie's complaints about "dat dame you ben hangin round wit." If Eugene fights the PCs, Ollie will, too.

Of course, Eugene has been to Esmerelda's tower and knows that it has been covered by an illusion of a forest, which he has been told not to touch. He has seen the humans and their horses gathered around the tower, but does not know why they are there. When the humans arrived, Esmerelda called Eugene and told him not to let the humans see him. Earlier today, she told him to watch for woodland creatures who might attack the tower. If gargoyles made it back to the tower, she gave him a full description of what the gargoyles saw. Eugene is looking for Ollie without Esmerelda's knowledge.

The PCs should not have to kill Ollie and Eugene, but combat may ensue. In that case, Ollie will use his club and Eugene will use his battleaxe one-handed. Eugene is of leader ogre abilities due to his size and experience, and wears chain mail. Eugene is: AC 3, HD 7, hp 33, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM 2-12 or 5-14 (battleaxe), IN Avg, AL CN(E), SZ L (10'), 18(60) strength, charmed by Esmerelda.

## 8. The False Forest

Esmerelda has cast an hallucinatory terrain over the area around her tower. It affects a 110' square area, but Esmerelda has sculpted the effect so that a 70' square clearing is in the center. The tower is 40' in diameter, so the soldiers gathered around the tower have plenty of room to move. To find the edge of the terrain, the ranger must track the horseshoe prints to the edge and then touch it. The terrain will disappear, alerting everyone within. The PCs only can avoid dispelling the effect by going above the 70' high treeline and coming down the hole in the center, as the gargoyles will have done if they returned. Only intelligent creatures dispel the effect, as will a successful dispel magic spell. Otherwise, the area looks exactly like the woods that lead up to it. The tower is actually built 30' away from the edge of the forest, so PCs will be clearly visible wherever they contact the spell.

Inside the hallucinatory terrain clearing are the prince's sixteen soldiers and seventeen horses. All of the soldiers have been ordered by the prince not to go into the false forest, even though some of them distrust it. They also have been told to be ever vigilant against those who would steal his princess away. It is hard for them to be vigilant, though, as all of them have colds from riding and sleeping in the rain all night. They grumble about having to leave their warm camp for the prince's latest love, but that, after all, is why they are on this quest in the first place. Despite this grumbling, they are unswervingly loyal to Prince Gallant, and will defend him with their lives if need be.

If the forest suddenly disappears, they will assume they are under attack and take up their arms. They will be very suspicious of anyone who comes to the tower, especially if the newcomers have wings and horse bodies. None of them particularly like sorcery, and assume most of it is evil. The PCs are not safe from such a presumption. The sergeants will direct the troops to interpose between the party and the tower. They will tell the PCs to go away, then fire a volley of arrows if they do not. They will not chase the party into the woods, though if the sergeants are neutralized, the regulars will become disorganized. They can be dealt with in many ways, the most obvious being charm and sleep magic. The PCs also may try to bluff their way past the soldiers, but they will have to be very convincing to fool the skeptical sergeants. The PCs' high charismas will help them here.

If attacked, the soldiers will try to warn the prince. He will not be of much help, though, since he is magically asleep inside the tower. The soldiers only can be surprised if PCs go above the tree line and come down the hole in the hallucinatory terrain. Circling above the illusion, however, is Edgar, Esmerelda's raven familiar. Edgar is a vicious bird, contemptuous of most beings and fond of telling them so and cackling. If the PCs come over the illusion or dispel it, Edgar will notice. He will cackle once, then go in his entrance in the tower roof and warn Esmerelda. If Edgar is killed, Esmerelda suffers 6 hit points of permanent damage and will be very angry. Edgar will flee rather than risk being killed.

The two sergeants command 7 well-trained men-at-arms each. All have a +35% loyalty modifier due to the prince's charisma. The men-at-arms are at the locations marked "M" on the detail map, and the sergeants are likewise located at the positions marked "S". Each is dressed in chain mail and carries a longsword, composite shortbow and quiver of arrows, shield, and dagger. Sergeants are: NA 2, AC 4, F1, hp 8 each, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM by weapon, IN Very, AL N(G), SZ M. The soldiers are: NA 14, AC 4, HD 1-1, hp 6 each, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM by weapon, IN Avg, AL N(G), SZ M.



Their horses are medium war horses, and are at the places marked "H" on the detail map. They are: NA 16, AC 7, HD 2+2, hp 12 each, MV 18", #AT 3, DAM 1-6/1-6/1-3, IN An1, AL N, SZ L. The prince's horse, which is bedecked in purple saddlery, is a white heavy war horse named Hero, at location "PH." Hero is: AC 7, HD 3+3, hp 26, MV 15", #AT 3, DAM 1-8/1-8/1-3, IN An1, AL N, SZ L.

Edgar is a raven, and as Esmerelda's familiar he has some special characteristics. While he is alive, Esmerelda has excellent vision and can see through Edgar's eyes. Her hit points are increased by 3 if he is within 120', but if he should be killed, then she permanently loses 6 hit points. Edgar is: AC 7, HD 1/2, hp 3, MV 1"/36" (MC:B), #AT 1, DAM 1, IN Very, AL N(CE), SZ S (2' wingspan), attack has a 10% chance to poke out an eye.

#### Esmerelda's Tower

Esmerelda is the evil elven sorceress who schemes to capture the prince's love. She lives in her tower with a few magical beasts, including the gargoyles met earlier. If the PCs wish to thwart her, they must fight her here. Esmerelda knows the PCs are coming, as she has had warning from the gargoyles (especially if they did not return), Eugene, the dispelling of the hallucinatory terrain, the prince's men and/or Edgar. Depending on how early she received a warning, she may have used her magical mirror to watch the PCs' progress and assessed their strength.

Esmerelda is an 11th level high elven magic-user. She is: AC 5, M11, hp 39, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM by weapon, AL CE, SZ M (5'). Her stats are: S 8, I 17, W 14, D 16, C 15, CH 15. She is a beautiful woman dressed mostly in black. She does not look elven, as her small pointed ears are covered completely by her white hair. She carries a packet of dust of appearance, an amulet of proof against detection and location, a ring of feather falling, a black cloak of protection +3, a silver-edged dagger, and a poison apple, a special magic item which is identical to the one in alchemy. She has other items in the tower, including potions in the alchemy and a broom of flying in the roof vestibule. Her normal high elven abilities give her a 90% resistance to sleep and charm, 60' infravision and normal elven chances to move silently and find secret doors. She speaks Common, elvish, gnomish, goblin, halfling, hobgoblin, orkish, and orcish.

She has not had time to memorize spells today. She cast monster summoning III to summon Eugene and charmed him yesterday morning. Last night, she cast two unsuccessful charms on the prince, as well as a hallucinatory terrain spell today. However, she still has quite a few spells left. Her remaining spells are:

- L1: magic missile, shocking grasp, unseen servant
- L2: darkness 15' radius, web, wizard lock(x2)

L3: clairaudience, dispel magic, phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles

L4: none

L5: animal growth, passwall

If her tower is attacked, her tactics will depend in large part on the PCs' method of entrance. To Esmerelda, the PCs are only an annoyance. Her main goal is to gain the prince's love through the potion she has not yet finished brewing. Accordingly, she will do nothing to jeopardize his opinion of her as a kindly witch. When the PCs near the tower, Esmerelda will first cast her unseen servant and have it shutter and lock all the windows. Then she will give the prince a poisoned apple to knock him out. If the PCs ask for an audience, she will meet them in the entranceway, say the prince is occupied, and tell them to leave at once. If they refuse, any charmed guards get a new saving throw. In the meantime, she will slam the door, wizard lock it, and prepare her defenses as detailed below.

If the PCs quickly handle the guards and then try to attack the tower from the ground, Esmerelda will have already poisoned the prince, wizard locked the guest chamber, locked and barred the ground floor entrance, and had her unseen servant lock all the windows. She gives the unseen servant her packet of dust of appearance and has it hover over the doorway. She casts protection from normal missiles on herself, followed by clairaudience, to monitor the PCs' actions. If the PCs break down the door and enter, the servant will sprinkle the dust over them, revealing any invisible characters for 2-20 turns. Esmerelda then casts web over the PCs and opens the trap door to the basement, releasing three huge spiders. The spiders cannot move in the magical web. However, they can walk along the outside of the web and will attack the PCs as they emerge from the web. Esmerelda will not wait around to watch the combat, preferring to set up her next trap.

If the PCs enter through the roof, or Esmerelda escapes up the stairs, she will open the door to her catbox chamber. Inside the small chamber are five housecats, all black. She will cast animal growth on them and have them attack the PCs. Afterward, she will cast and maintain a phantasmal force of ten more semi-giant cats, so that PCs will have only a 33% chance of hitting one of the real cats.

The PCs have other methods of entrance, including using the sylph's Holzur's marvelous pigments. They also can combine a number of tactics, and the Dungeon Master must adapt Esmerelda's strategies to fit the situation. Her overall goal in fighting the PCs is to trap the flying creatures inside and the landbound creatures outside, neutralizing their own best abilities. If she still has a wizard lock spell left, she may use this to forcibly separate the party, having each group fight some of her pets. If all looks bad and she cannot defeat the PCs, she will go to the roof vestibule and mount her broom. She will shout, "I'll get you another time."



and fly cackling into the wind, though the PCs may still fight her there. She has six magic missiles and a shocking grasp spell in reserve (the latter works especially well with her metal dagger), but will be loath to use them except as a last resort. She can use her darkness and passwall spells to escape, although she will only damage or abandon her tower in the direst of circumstances. If the sylph sics an air elemental on her, she will use her dispel magic on it. Since Esmerelda is 11th level and Glimmerwing is 7th, Esmerelda has a 70% chance of success. If she fails this roll, however, the elemental grows to 64 hit points and attacks Esmerelda in preference to all others. If Esmerelda casts a spell while on her broom, she must make a dexterity check. A failed roll means she has fallen from her broom. She can recall the broom to her, however. In addition, if a PC successfully attacks Esmerelda on her broom, she must make the same dexterity check or fall.

Esmerelda will use as much of her tower's defenses as she can, including directing any gargoyles that have returned. Note finally that this is supposed to be a fairy tale, so do not maliciously try to kill the player characters. It is not a bad climax to have Esmerelda escape on her broom, cackling that she will be back another day. She much prefers this course of action to being killed. When the PCs get through the wizard-locked door to the guest chamber, see the section titled "Sleeping Beauties."

The stone tower is 40' in diameter, with a 5' wide stairwell with landings ringing the inside rooms. There are windows on the landings, but none in the rooms. The windows all can be shuttered and locked from the inside, which is what Esmerelda will have an unseen servant do if she fears her tower will be attacked by flying creatures. Every interior room above the cellar has several well-placed continual light spells that illuminate it completely. There are several permanent wizard locks on various doors; note that PCs with magic resistance may be able to negate these locks.

The outside of the tower contains the men, horses, raven, and the hallucinatory forest as noted above. Esmerelda can watch all of the events that take place here by looking through the windows, at her magic mirror, or from the roof. Other than the roof and windows, the only entrance to the tower is the front door.

The FIRST FLOOR has one entrance, the front door. The double doors are not normally wizard locked, but can be locked physically. The entire floor is taken up by the ENTRANCE HALL, which contains three plush chairs, a coat rack, a small table with two wooden chairs and alternating black and white wall hangings. Stairs lead up around the tower, which the centaur can navigate with his horseshoes of surefootedness. The floor is partially carpeted by an ornate rug with designs of lightning flashes. The rug covers a wizard locked trap door to the cellar.

The CELLAR is one room with a ramp leading down from the trap door. It used to contain wooden crates, winecasks and furniture, but the three huge spiders who live here have pretty much eaten it all. They are fed by Esmerelda, and cannot open the trap door. If it is opened, they will attack anyone except Esmerelda. They do not like bright light, and will not go outside. The huge spiders are: NA 3, AC 6, HD 2+2, hp 12 each, MV 18"\*15", #AT 1, DAM 1-6 + poison, IN An1, AL N, SZ M, poison causes save at +1 or 1-6 extra damage, leap 3" to attack, surprise 1-5. There are 8 gp, 7 sp, and 15 cp scattered throughout the cellar, which has a 6' ceiling.

The SECOND FLOOR contains a full stairwell circle and three rooms, the alchemy, the catbox chamber, and the library. All of the doors to these rooms are wizard locked. The ALCHEMISTRY is where Esmerelda brews all her poisons and potions. A massive black cauldron has something foul steaming in it, with various body parts of animals floating therein. On a table containing numerous beakers and alembics are some of the ingredients for a philter of love, the most notable of which are several locks of Mahogany's red hair laid neatly on a sheet of vellum. There are also jars containing eye of newt, wing of bat, and fillet of fenny snake, among other such items. Books on alchemy are spread throughout, one of which is open to the recipe for a philter of love. It begins: "This bewitching elixir will encircle the heart of even the most handsome prince around your little finger..." Also in the room are a potion of extra-healing, a philter of persuasiveness, and a poison apple. The apple is bright red and if eaten has the effect of a suggestion spell. If bitten, the eater will fall into a deep sleep for 4-40 turns. The sleeper can be awakened by a kiss from a comely member of the opposite sex.

Behind the wizard locked door, the CATBOX CHAMBER contains Esmerelda's five pet cats, as well as scratching posts and some torn up upholstery. A silver tray with milk bowls and scraps of meat is in the corner. The cats love their mistress Esmerelda but tend to hate anyone else. If Esmerelda casts an animal growth, it will affect all of them for 11 rounds. Their statistics (with statistics for those under the effect of the animal growth spell in parentheses) are: NA 5, AC 6, HD 1-1 (1+2), hp 3 each (6 each), MV 5" (9"), #AT 2 (3), DAM 1-2/1 (1-2/1-2/1-2), IN An1, AL N, SZ S (1' or 2'), if both claws hit then rake for 1-2 (1-2/1-2) extra damage, surprise 1-3, surprised only on 1.

The LIBRARY is also guarded by a wizard lock because it contains Esmerelda's spellbooks, which all have wizard locks on them as well. Also in this room are various books on magic written in Common, elvish and magical script. On a long table is a helm of comprehending languages and reading magic, and a book. The book is on woodland creatures, entitled "Mean Things You Can Do To Forest Denizens." It is open to a page on dissection of dryads, which contains most of the generic information in the "Mahogany and Mahogany" section. Many of the other books in the library have



this same tone: "How To Be A Really Evil Wizard," "Undead As Conversational Partners," "Poisons You Can Concoct." This last contains the details on the poison apple in the alchemy. The spell books contain the following spells:

- L1: charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, find familiar, magic missile, read magic, shocking grasp, unseen servant
- L2: continual light, darkness 15' radius, knock, levitate, vocalize, web, wizard lock
- L3: clairaudience, dispel magic, feign death, phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles, suggestion, water breathing
- L4: charm monster, hallucinatory terrain, magic mirror, wizard eye
- L5: animal growth, monster summoning III, passwall

The THIRD FLOOR contains the stairs and landing, an archway which leads into an inner gallery and the guest chamber. The INNER GALLERY shows a long line of family members in Esmerelda's elven family. Most of them look a lot more like elves than she does. Many of them look like sorcerers, and some look very evil indeed. The portraits are arranged along the outside wall of the gallery. The inner wall is covered in many-colored tapestries, behind one of which is the door to the guest chamber. The wood elf has his normal chance to find the concealed door, but it is just as simple to yank the tapestries down. The GUEST CHAMBER is described below, under the section titled, "Sleeping Beauties."

The FOURTH FLOOR contains Esmerelda's room and the stairwell which leads to the roof vestibule. The ROOF VESTIBULE is an empty chamber at the end of the stairwell, with the only ornamentation being a broom in a wall sconce. This is actually a broom of flying with the command phrase "my pretty." The trap door on the top has a small hatch for Edgar to enter through. Neither it nor the trap door is wizard locked, but the main trap door can be barred from the inside.

The door to ESMERELDA'S ROOM is wizard locked. Inside, the room is dominated by a huge black canopied bed against the southern wall. Next to the northern wall is a rack of black dresses, robes, cloaks and suits, a chest of drawers with shirts and underthings, three pairs of black boots, and a full-length silver mirror. On a table by the bed is a crooked witch's hat. Edgar's perch is near the mirror. The only item that is magical in the room is the magic mirror. This item is activated with the command phrase "mirror, mirror," and works as a crystal ball with clairaudience. It has no viewing limits, scrying chances are +15% and the chances of detection are one third normal.

The ROOF is a normal battlemented tower, where the gargoyles live. If any gargoyles made it back from the earlier encounter, they will be frozen in crouched positions at their normal posts as labelled. A trap door leads down into the roof vestibule. The trap

door has a smaller hatch which Edgar can open with his beak.

#### SLEEPING BEAUTIES

(This section only should be used if there is enough time to play out the ending. If not, "The Happy Ending" should simply be read.)

When the PCs find the entrance to the guest chamber on the third floor, they will have to deal with the wizard lock that Esmerelda placed there. Once the PCs enter the room, they will see a huge white canopied bed, surrounded by white curtains. Nothing can be seen or heard from inside. If the PCs round the foot of the bed, they will see the beautiful Mahogany sleeping in it, her skin and hair turning white. In a chair, an incredibly handsome man in princely purple robes is fast asleep, his outstretched arm laying across Mahogany's stomach. In his hand is a bright red apple with a large bite taken out of it. The apple is one of Esmerelda's poison apples, but the magic has gone out of it. The prince can simply be awakened by a slow poison spell or a kiss from a beautiful woman (Glimmerwing and Cygnythia qualify), but Mahogany will not respond to anything until returned to her terel.

If awakened, the prince initially will be suspicious, but will plead with the PCs to help Mahogany. He will explain what happened amid his royal sobs, and will listen to whatever the PCs have to say. He will follow their instructions if they seem to know what they are talking about. If his men are up for riding, he will tell them to follow along to Mahogany's tree. He will not, under any circumstances, let her out of his sight. If the PCs kidnap her while he is asleep, he will hunt them down when he awakens.

If Mahogany is brought to her tree by sundown or shortly after, she will become much healthier. See "The Happy Ending" below. If there is more time in the round, the PCs and perhaps the prince and his retinue will have another encounter from the list of wilderness encounters.

Prince Gallant is a stunningly handsome young man dressed in purple robes which cover his +4 chain mail. He wears a longsword +3 and a belt pouch which contains 30 pp and a 500 gp gem. He also has a brooch of shielding (77 charges) around his neck, and a potion of superheroism in another belt pouch. He is a 9th level fighter and an incredibly nice guy. His manner is very regal, as his charisma is so high. He is: AC 0, F9, hp 90, MV 12", #AT 3/2, DAM by weapon, AL NG, SZ M (6' 3"), S 17, I 11, W 12, D 15, C 16, CH 18.



THE HAPPY ENDING

(This should be read only if the PCs successfully complete the quest and find Mahogany.)

And so, the friends found the beautiful Mahogany in the evil sorceress Esmerelda's tower. They were surprised to find Good Prince Gallant asleep at her side, with Esmerelda's poisoned apple in his hand. But an impulsive kiss from Glimmerwing roused the prince from his magical slumber.

The friends, along with Good Prince Gallant and his men, took Mahogany back to her tree, where she returned to health. She was happy to see her friends, and even happier to see the handsome prince. With the color of autumn flush in her cheeks, Mahogany said that she wanted to have the picnic, and invited the prince and his men to stay. The goodies from Benthroewyn's basket were produced and everyone ate their fill of his splendidly seasoned vegetarian dishes.

All the while, Mahogany watched her dear prince with loving eyes. As he ate, the prince told everyone that after searching for a very long time, he had found the most beautiful woman in the land. Everyone listened closely as he leaned across the bowl of cherries and asked Benthroewyn if he would perform the ceremony. And all the prince's men were happy as Benthroewyn turned to Mahogany and asked her if she was going to marry the handsome prince. Mahogany just smiled, and Benthroewyn prepared for a wedding ceremony. Then the prince started talking about how he would cut down most of the Peaceful Forest to put in a palace, and a big city, and a whole bunch of roads so he could be near his Mahogany. Mahogany dropped her bowl of nuts, and took her darling prince aside. After a few moments, the prince came back, smiled dashingly and said, "Saddle up, men, we have a beautiful bride to find! She must be out there somewhere!" As the prince and his baffled men rode out of the forest, Mahogany sat back down and told the friends that nothing, not even a handsome prince, was going to come between her and a good picnic. And the seven friends finished their meals, frolicked a little more, and lived happily ever after.

THE END



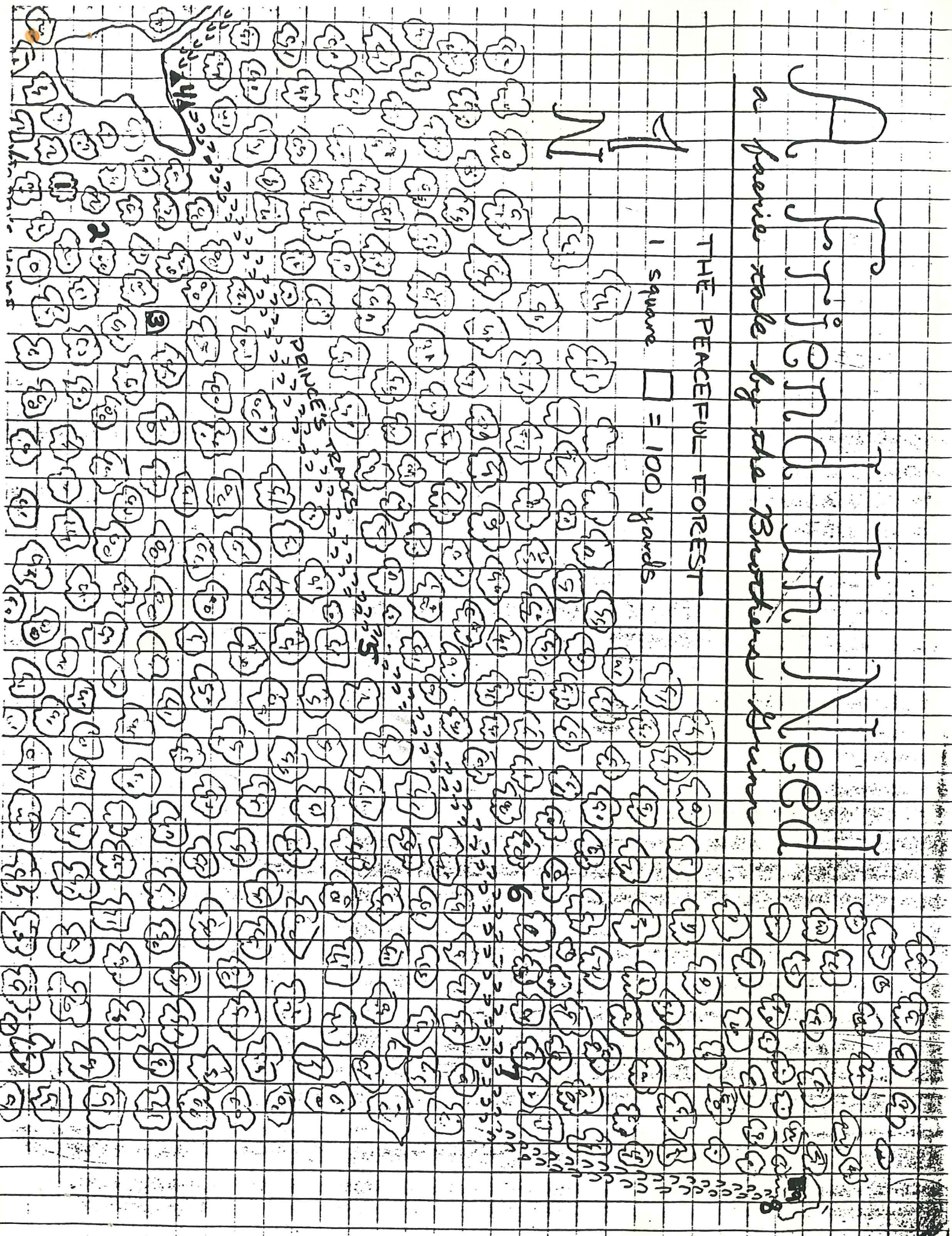
# A Friend In Need

a parable told by the Brothers Grimm

THE PEACEFUL FOREST

1 square = 100 yards

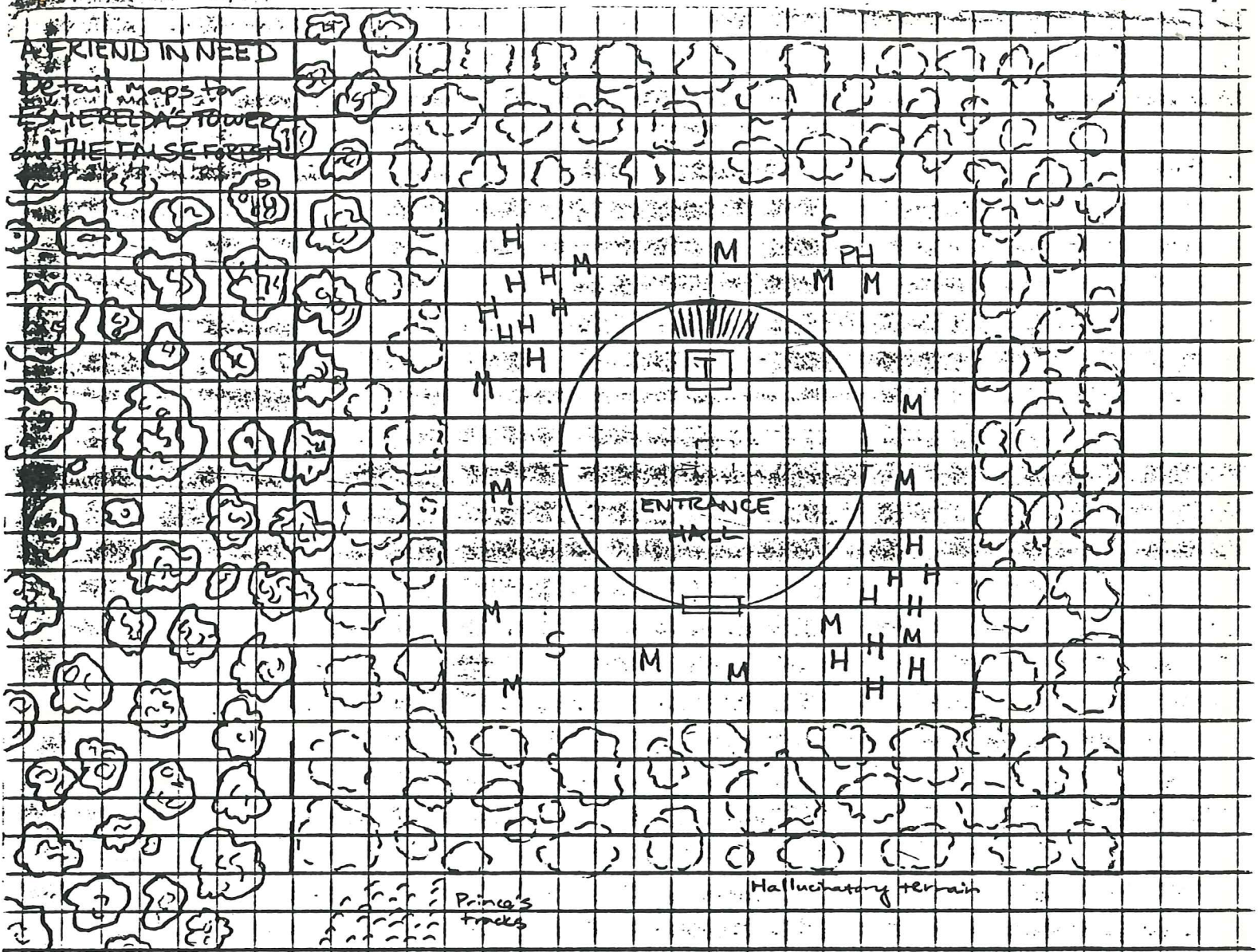
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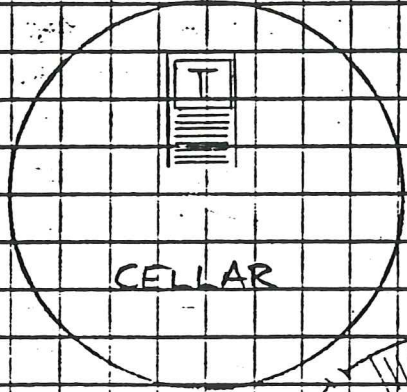


A FRIEND IN NEED

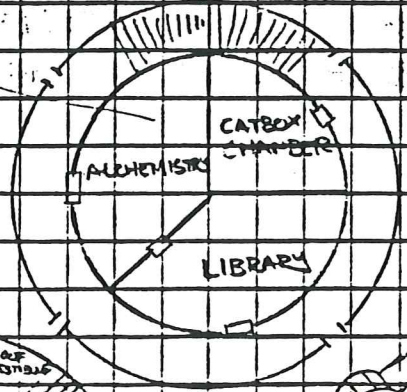
Detail maps for  
ESMERELDA'S TOWER  
IN THE FALSE FOREST



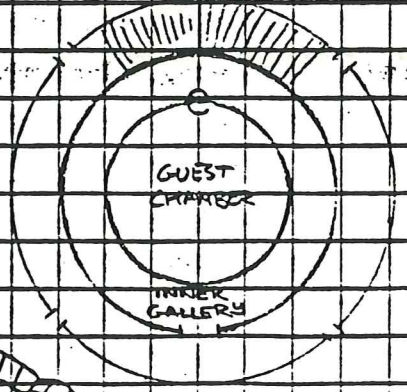
Basement



Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor

