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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

AUGUST 2017





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: AUGUST 2017

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own Borderland of Adventure campaign, the GM's Monthly Miscellany series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign, this instalment of GM's Monthly Miscellany presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **Village Backdrop: Needlebriar** John Bennett.
- **Places of Power: Oleander's Sanctuary** Thilo Graf.
- **100% Crunch: Goblins** Creighton Broadhurst.

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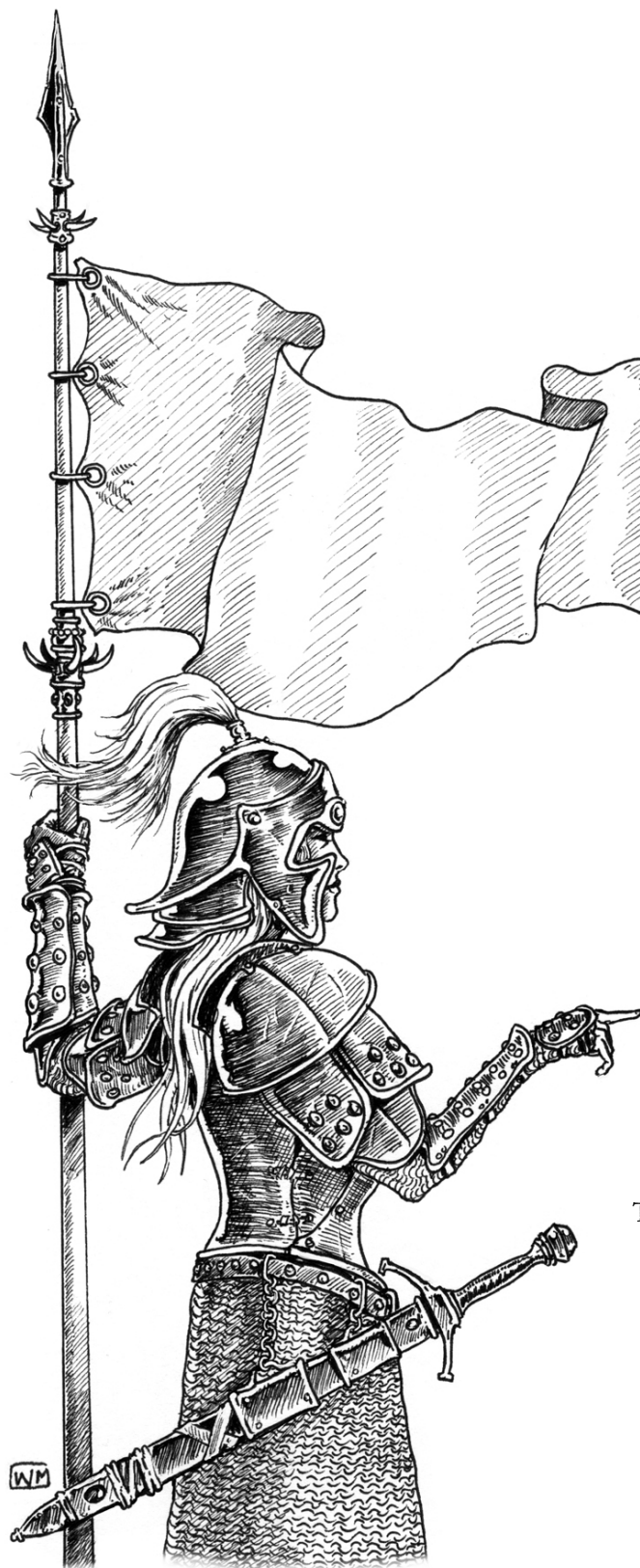
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Hopefully by the time you read this several things will have come to pass. We will be enjoying proper summer weather (can you tell I'm English?), the renovations to Global HQ will be well underway and my broken ankle will be fixed and I'll be out and about again on my amazing adventures!

On the plus side, the busted ankle means I have more time to write (something I love doing) and I'm a firm believer in finding the positive in any given situation. It's amazing how productive you can be, if you have no choice.

It's shaping up to be a cracking year at Raging Swan Press (except for the aforementioned ankle) and I hope your year is going similarly well. I also hope the material in these GM's Monthly Miscellany helps you run a more awesome campaign. Why not drop me a line and let me know!

And finally, Raging Swan Press now has a newsletter. Keep up with our news and get free stuff by email—you can sign up at our site.

PATREON

You might be aware Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April 2015, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already massively increased our word rate to 11 cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in supporting us, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

THANK YOU!

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign.

If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.

Giant lumbering savages, ogres are ferocious and dangerous opponents for neophyte adventurers. Violent and cruel they are capable of unimaginable savagery and depravity.

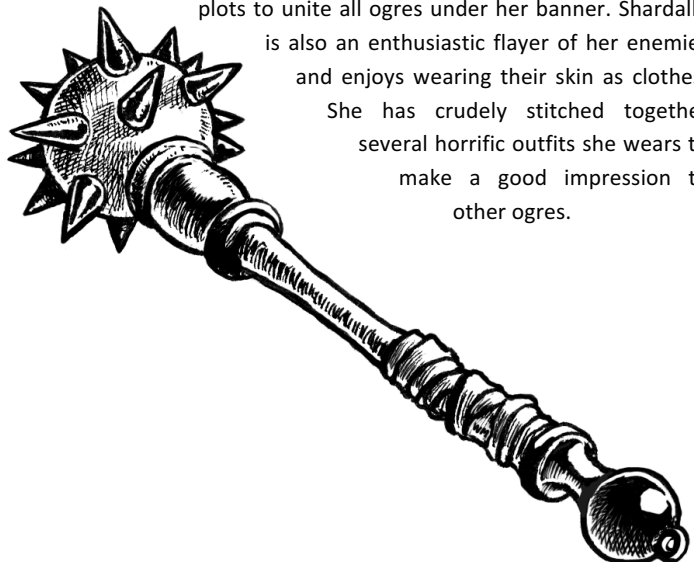
Large groups can also pose a significant danger to more powerful and experienced adventuring parties, making ogres the perfect foes for a low- to mid-level campaign.

Use the ogres below, to inject some flavour and character into your PCs' adventures:

1. **Snurg Nashalface:** Hideously ugly, even for an ogre, Snurg is a "nashalface"—whatever one of those might be. He wears a voluminous, stained brown hooded cloak to hide his hideous deformed face. One of his eyes is partially covered by a huge growth that also extends over much of his forehead.
2. **Targ Whacker-a-Gnome:** Targ hates gnomes, after a gnomish hero stabbed him in the bottom. He slew the upstart, but never forgot the insult—particularly as several of his kin joyfully repeat the story, when drunk. Sometimes, when it rains, it hurts to sit down and Targ falls into a foul mood. Woe betide anyone falling into his clutches, then. Prisoners are often stabbed in the rear with his wickedly curved dagger to, "See how they like it."
3. **Grak:** Grak lived with goblins for several years serving as a mercenary and tribal champion. She has a goblin's hatred of dogs (and wolves, which she has trouble distinguishing) and can speak Goblin (badly). She wears a filthy, ragged dog- and wolfskin cloak, which is her pride and joy. Anyone damaging the cloak faces her full—impressive—wrath.
4. **Barg the Basher:** Barg wields a massive club. Little more than a thick tree branch with iron spikes nailed through its head, the weapon is a fearsome object capable of inflicting horrific wounds. Barg likes to use it on helpless or unconscious foes to see how far the blood and gore flies. Even for an ogre, Barg is an odious individual, capable of literally any imaginable depravity. Consequently, few creatures dwelling nearby willingly have anything to do with him. Indeed, they might even hire the PCs to slay their terrifying neighbour.
5. **Warg:** So named for his savage anger and hunger for raw flesh, Warg has filed his teeth to sharp points. Paranoid enemies might even think he is a vampire. Dried blood—from his last meal—cakes his chest and shirt. In battle—when the fury overwhelms him—he tries to grapple his foes and rip their throats out.
6. **Cag Fal:** Intelligent for his kind, books fascinate Cag. He has amassed a small library from travellers he has slain, but is unable to read. He spares any "clever types" who

fall into his clutches so they can read to him. Of course, if he doesn't like the books' contents the reader could be in serious trouble.

7. **Lell:** With long black hair and rippling muscles, Lell is devastatingly attractive to male ogres. She knows it, and likes to dress up and wear her best skull necklace when at home. Initially she welcomes intruders and tries to put them at ease...before pouncing. Her lair is festooned with gifts from male ogres—crushed skulls, crudely carved bone implements and more.
8. **Frel Stumpy-Leg:** Early in life, Frel suffered a horrific injury, and lost her left leg below the knee. She gets around by strapping thick branches to the stump and hopping/staggering about. Consequently, her approach is often heralded by a curious thumping sound. She has a beloved cat—a spiteful, lazy moggy, imaginatively named, "Dog." Because it's hilarious...
9. **Gark Shivershadow:** Gark's fellows snigger behind his back that he has goblin blood flowing through his veins. It is true, Gark is smaller than his kin and lacks the savage, imbecilic bravery of his heritage. However, he is clever and quick and not above turning on his fellows if doing so gives him an advantage. Gark has mastered the use of the heavy crossbow and has such a weapon sized for a giant. Sadly, he has but six bolts remaining. Consequently, he chooses his targets carefully.
10. **Sharldalla Skinwearer:** Sharldalla dreams strange, fantastical dreams of a forgotten time when ogres ruled great swaths of the world and all the little races served and lived at their pleasure. In short, Sharldalla is hopeless and irredeemably mad. She is also charismatic (for an ogre) and plots to unite all ogres under her banner. Sharldalla is also an enthusiastic flayer of her enemies and enjoys wearing their skin as clothes. She has crudely stitched together several horrific outfits she wears to make a good impression to other ogres.



NEEDLEBRIAR AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Boram Thornnuggle (but really Rillka Thorngaggle)
Government: Secret syndicate
Alignments: N, CN, NE, CE
Population: 156 (156 halflings)
Notable Folk: Fosco Mooncaller (Thorn Island), Maara Thornhill (Maara's Apothecary)
Languages: Common, Druidic
Qualities: Insular, notorious; **Disadvantages:** Cursed
Corruption: +2; **Crime:** +1; **Economy:** +1; **Law:** -7; **Lore:** 0;
Society: 0
Danger: +10

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry: Brewing, farming, fishing, leather working, pigs
Base Value: 650 gp; **Purchase Limit:** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting:** 3rd (Fosco Mooncaller at location 4, Maara Thornhill at location 5); **Minor Items:** 2d4; **Medium Items:** 1d4; **Major Items** –

Needlebriar takes its name from the thorny hedgerows snaking along its streets and coiling about the earthen halfling homes whose windows stare outward like cold, dead eyes. The village air feels hot and moist, like the open jaws of a predator while its citizens shuffle about in thick leather cloaks pulled tight about them to hide the tell-tale shaking resulting from cannibalism.

Generations ago, a duke forced Needlebriar's able-bodied halflings to fight in his war. While the men-folk were off dying as fodder, the young, weak and old fell prey to bandits and monsters. When the few survivors returned close to winter, they found their loved ones on the verge of starvation. To survive, the remaining villagers began to consume the flesh of their dead. As they feasted, a feral howl ripped through the village, emanating from an ancient, worn stone altar on an island in the middle of Needlebriar Lake. The villagers had inadvertently awoken an ancient, corrupted animal spirit imprisoned in the altar. The spirit, Hunger Devours Moon, granted the villagers the power to transform into animals and hunt their prey as long as they continued to practise cannibalism and ritualistic sacrifice.

The halflings continue to serve the fell spirit, conducting raids on the nearby human lands to bring back prisoners to feast upon, all the while making the attacks seem like the predations of animals or monsters. The halflings try to hide behind a veneer of civility and decorum to waylay suspicion, yet fall further into depravity. Needlebriar's ruler Rillka Thorngaggle, the Moon Matron, pushes Needlebriar's citizens into increasingly violent raids, supported by the druid, Fosco Mooncaller. Rumours are beginning to crowd thickly about the village as an increasing number of visitors and tax collectors are reported missing.

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Needlebriar. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 10: Needlebriar is renowned for its thorny hedgerows festooned with bright red flowers.

DC 15: The village fell into decline years ago during a war and has not recovered well.

DC 20: Several prominent merchants have disappeared near the village lately.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: Needlebriar's citizens are often thin for halflings, with hard, wiry bodies. Both men and women wear their hair long. Fingernails and toenails are untrimmed and filthy.

Dress: To hide the effects of cannibalism, many of the citizens wear heavy, leather cloaks. Jewellery consists of bits of bone and any gems or golds stolen from their victims.

Nomenclature: *male* Cade, Miro, Osborn, Surnak; *female* Anafa, Reenee, Verna, Yoneedall; *family* Bristlebrow, Huskwallow, Needlesticks, Thornhumper

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Needlebriar and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which the check result exceeds DC 10. Use the table below, to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

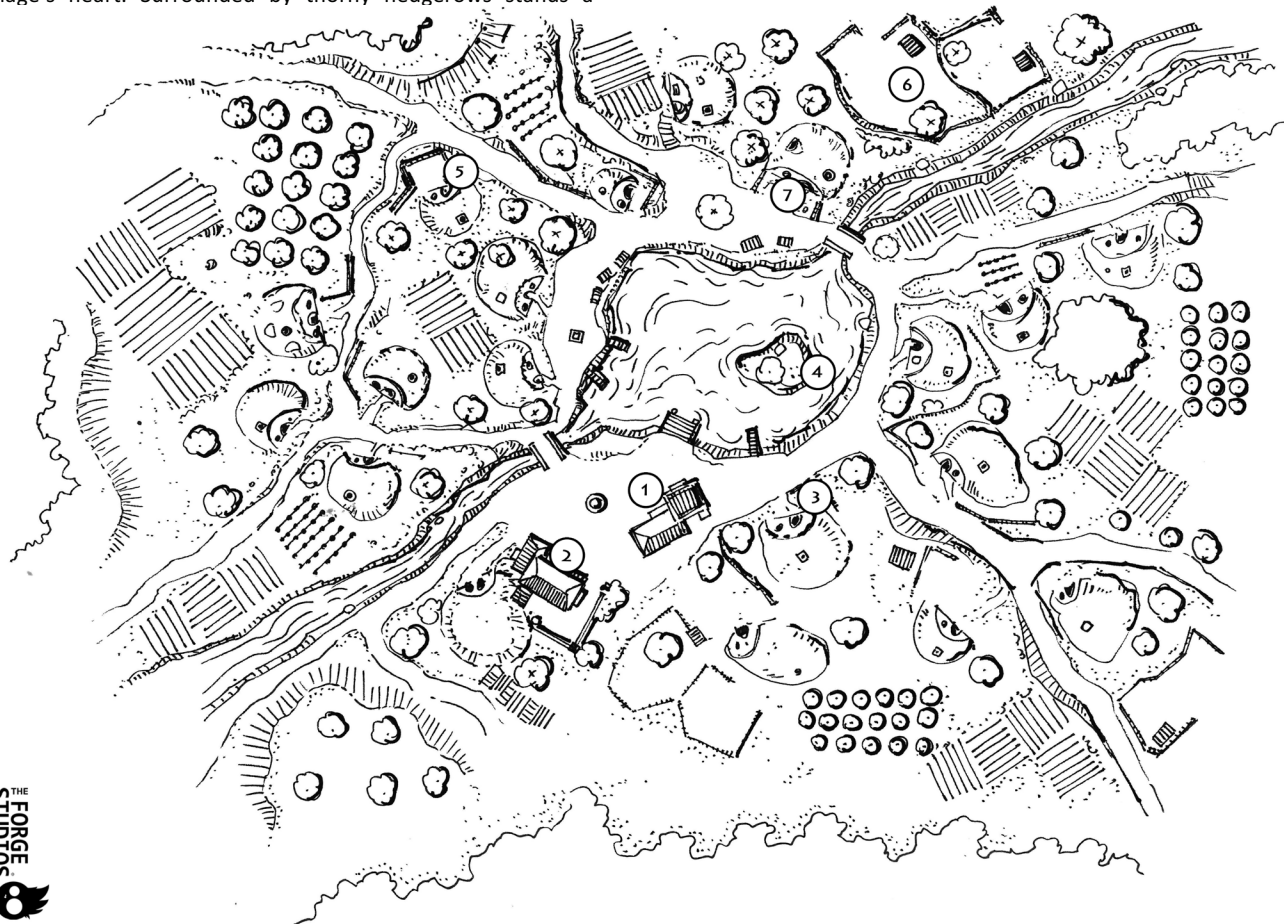
D6	RUMOUR
1*	The bodies of Needlebriar's citizens are buried under the hedgerows which is why the flowers bloom red.
2*	The halflings of Needlebriar wear heavy cloaks because they are ugly and deformed by disease, possibly a plague or leprosy.
3*	Needlebriar never recovered from the war many years ago in which most of its citizens perished. To survive, they practiced evil sorcery. They wear the skin of those they defeat in spell duels.
4	Though remote, Needlebriar is known for its apothecary shop and its marrow bone brewed beer.
5	Needlebriar's citizens are not known for their hospitality and seem to dislike humans. Most think this stems from how they were treated during the war many years ago.
6	Needlebriar is in a wild, remote country so it's not uncommon for people to go missing in that area. Bandits and monsters abound in the region.

*False rumour

NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of Needlebriar comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Prickly Pixie:** Kaleb Greenbottle runs Needlebriar's one inn and tavern. The quaint faux inviting attire masks its sinister nature. Many a visitor has been poisoned and captured here only to end up in a halfling stew pot. Tunnels beneath the inn connect to Needlebriar Wares and Needlebriar Jail, allowing the halflings to move prisoners in secret.
2. **Needlebriar Wares:** This general store carries common items, farming and fishing equipment, as well as some adventuring gear, but not armour or weapons. The owner and operator is Etune Goodbarrel, a mean, violent halfling woman. Underneath the store is a storehouse with weapons and disguises used in the halflings' raids. Tunnels connect to the Prickly Pixie and jail.
3. **Needlebriar Jail:** This mostly empty jail serves as a front. The real jail is below where prisoners are kept before they are sacrificed and eaten. Needlebriar's leader, Rillka Thorngaggle, spends most of her time here.
4. **Needlebriar Island:** The island rests in a small lake at the village's heart. Surrounded by thorny hedgerows stands a
- decrepit stone statue. The statue serves as a prison for the ancient animal spirit Hunger Devours Moon. The spirit can warp a few worshippers into animals if it's appeased with blood. Fosco Mooncaller, serves as the spirit's emissary.
5. **Maara's Apothecary:** Needlebriar's renowned apothecary sits at the edge of the village. Maara Thornhill, an expert herbalist but impatient wizard, runs the place. She keeps out of Rillka's and the village's machinations, instead focusing on how to bind Hunger Devours Moon for her own ends.
6. **Bone Pit:** Whatever the halflings cannot eat of their victims, and the pigs do not want, gets buried in this field. Usually, a few halflings are posted here to keep an eye out. Strange sights and sounds occur in the Bone Pit regularly and occasionally some foul creature emerges from the pit to terrorize the surrounding countryside.
7. **Mayoral Residence:** Needlebriar's puppet mayor, Boram Thornnuggle, operates from this modest home. He acts as the face of Needlebriar, ensuring outsiders do not get too suspicious of what occurs in the village. Boram knows his survival depends on doing his job well. If he does not, he will be Rillka's main course for dinner.



OLEANDER'S SANCTUARY AT A GLANCE

Ruler Oleander

Population 5 (1 mysterious entity, 1 intelligent bear, 1 intelligent hamster, 1 intelligent owl, 1 intelligent wolf)

Alignments LG, NG, N, CN

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnomish, Halfling, Sylvan

Resources & Industry Animal healing and transmutation

Protected to the south by massive cliffs, hidden deep within the forest and guarded by a plethora of grizzled old wolves, bears and worse, few visit the sanctuary looking for trouble. Oleander's Sanctuary is an obscure legend at best, and that is just how Oleander likes it. People in the closest town, regard the prospect of visiting the place with abject horror. Those that know of the sanctuary remember all too well Oleander's displays of power, whispering the witch in the woods has tapped into ancient and primordial ley lines. The sanctuary indeed seems to allow for unique transmutations, but it remains to be seen whether this is due to its mistress, a ley line or a stranger reason yet undiscovered.

MARKETPLACE

The following services are for sale:

- **Spellcasting:** Arcane and divine spellcasting of up to 15th level

LORE

A PC may know something about Oleander's Sanctuary, its history and surrounds. A PC making a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check knows one or more pieces of information from the list below. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 20: Well-concealed in the wilderness, few know about this place, where pawed and taloned animal companions receive care and recover from all but the direst of curses. Oleander does not take gold, only favours in return for her service.

DC 25: The site is whispered to be situated atop an ancient ley line, struck by a stone from the skies in dark ages ill-remembered. The magic of the place can radically change creatures treated there. Some druids consider the transmutations to be abominable violations of the natural order.

DC 30: Oleander talks to the animals while treating them and has been known to punish cruel masters. More than one rich owner has left the sanctuary with a cursed cloven foot, a regrowing feather on the head or an annoying habit of bleating once in every seventh sentence.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy or Handle Animal (provided the PC can speak with animals) to gather information about the sanctuary and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below, to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Old Garm was supposedly once a deadly companion of a particularly vicious raider.
2*	Oleander is a sentient swarm of squirrels, cloaked in illusions!
3	Oleander can be just as poisonous as her namesake. If you have exotic poisons to peddle, this is a good place to sell them.
4	Master Petz has an irrational hatred of lumberjacks and wyverns and has clashed with them more than once.
5	Syrouc has a spy network of mice, songbirds, spiders and scorpions. They are always watching.
6*	Never touch the tea or the food! That place has been touched by horrors from the void between the stars and seeks to spread a mutating contagion!

*False rumour

USING OLEANDER'S SANCTUARY

Oleander's details are deliberately kept vague to suit your campaign's needs and theme. Oleander could be one entity or a male and a female individual, posing as the same being. She could be fey, a creature from the stars, an eccentric spellcaster or something else entirely.

Her transmutations, while benevolent and helpful for the subject, could be a source of conflict between traditionalist druids and Oleander. Think of what would happen if you'd cross animal rights questions with the central transhumanist conundrums—Oleander has only the best interest of the patients in mind, but does she have the right to "violate" the natural order? Tonally, this can be played for laughs, but at the same time, most aspects of this place and its inhabitants can have a sinister edge as well. The inhabitants deliberately evoke the tropes of childhood fairy tales and their visuals, but tints them with an uncanny valley edge that allows a GM to turn the proceedings strange, alien...horrific, even!

If your campaign has a down to earth tone, consider making this location a semi-real psychedelic hallucination generated by a non-carnivorous version yellow musk creeper. Alternatively, Oleander's could be a bridge between the fey realm and the Material Plane.

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the residents are animals and magical beasts, but they share some general characteristics:

Appearance: Animals are well-groomed, unless contrary to the animal's nature, and they live in peace with one another

Dress: Oleander always has calloused hands, stained a vibrant green, but keeps her green-brown robe in immaculate condition.

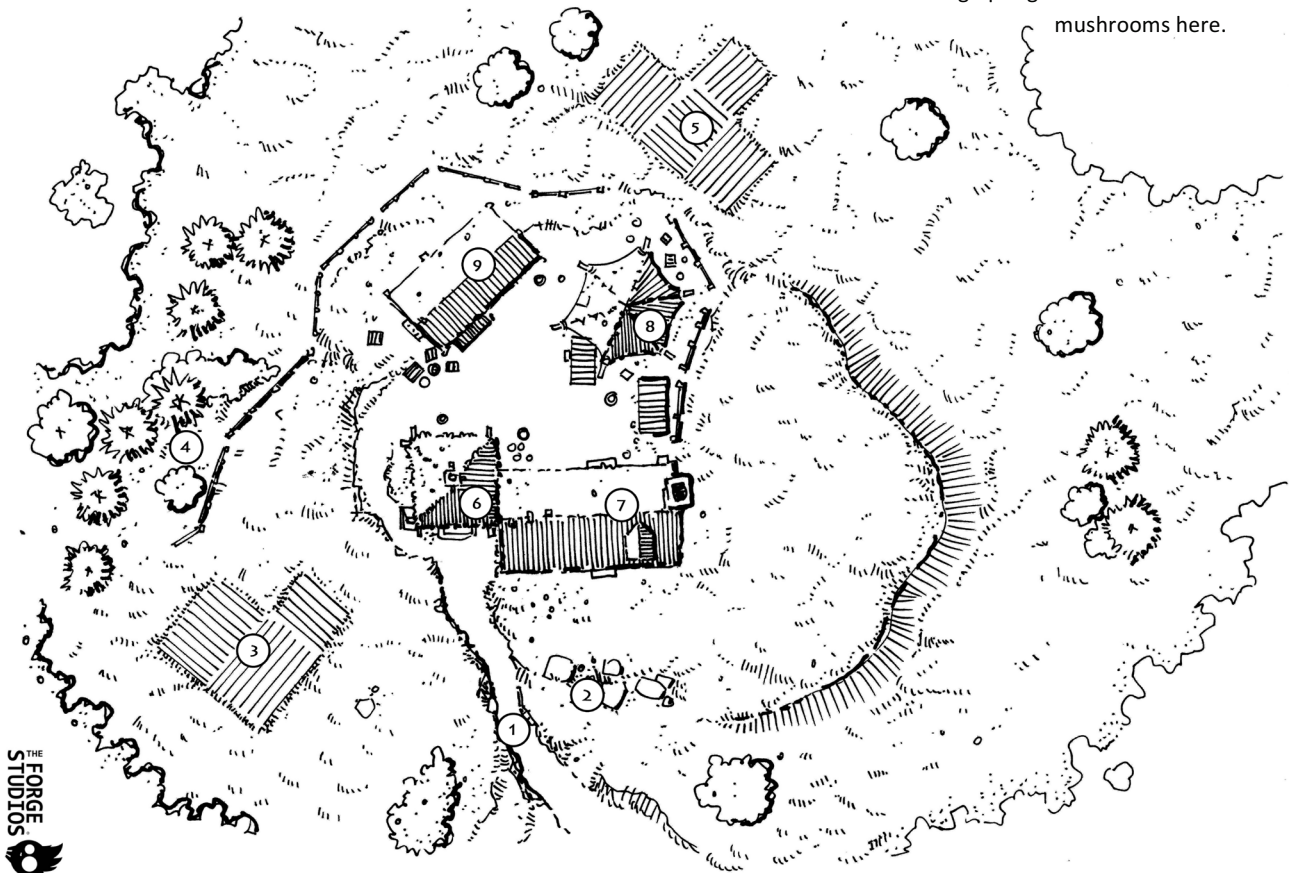
The permanent residents of the sanctuary comprise:

- **Oleander** (anywhere, N androgynous mysterious entity) Oleander is always busy, tending to wounds, brewing strange draughts or drying herbs.
- **Master Petz** (location 3 or 9, CN very old awakened dire bear barbarian 5) Master Petz is very strong, but very sleepy.
- **Old Garm** (location 6, NG venerable awakened wolf sorcerer 8) The old wolf acts as Oleander's apprentice and assistant.
- **Syrouac Fortescree** (location 4, CN awakened owl rogue 8) An owl clad in ill-fitting finery half of the time, Syrouac acts as the sanctuary's greeter and spymaster.
- **Aasic "Wooly" Movasi, the 13th** (location 4, LG awakened hamster paladin 1) Aasic is an eccentric silver-grey hamster who claims to be a champion from outer space.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Oleander's Sanctuary and its surrounds comprise locations of little interest to adventurers. A few locations, however, are notable:

1. **Main Approach:** This well-concealed trail leads to the sanctuary. Steep inclines flank the trail.
2. **Targeting Rocks:** Here animals suffering injuries to their fine motor skills learn once again to precisely strike their foes.
3. **Daylight Garden:** This field contains a variety of potent, exotic herbs that should not grow in these climates and soil.
4. **Aviary:** Here grow unruly trees and bushes, weaving a dense web of branches; the perfect spot to train aerial agility.
5. **Northern Field:** Here grows food for the sanctuary's guests and the ingredients for Oleander's spiced bread.
6. **The Witch's Tower:** The impressive annex of the sanctuary's main building contains Oleander's private quarters as well as a perpetually locked cellar door and acts as Old Garm's library.
7. **Main Building:** Here Oleander meets guests for herbal tea.
8. **Treatment Tent:** This massive gazebo, allows for the treatment of animals that are more confident outside.
9. **"The Stables":** This massive building is the home and living quarters for larger animals.
10. **Night Garden:** Below the main building, lies a subterranean cavern with a bubbling spring. Oleander cultivates medicinal mushrooms here.



GOBLIN CRUNCH

GOBLIN FEMALE

CR 1/3 (XP 135)

This small, scrawny humanoid is barely 3 ft tall. It has a wide, angular head seemingly too big for its body.

Female goblin commoner 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Ride +6, Stealth +10

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; **CMD** 12

(+2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge], +1 size)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

hp 4 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -1

Melee dagger +1 (1d3/19-20)

Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +3 (1d3/19-20)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6

Feats Dodge

Skills as above

Languages Goblin

Gear as above plus 1d6 cp, 1d4 sp

GOBLIN CHILD

CR 1/4 (XP 100)

This tiny, scrawny humanoid is barely 2 ft tall. It has a wide, angular head seemingly too big for its body.

Young goblin commoner 1

NE Tiny humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Ride +8, Stealth +16

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; **CMD** 11

(+2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge], +2 size)

Fort -1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

hp 2 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -4

Melee dagger (reach 0 ft.) +0 (1d2-2/19-20)

Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +6 (1d2-2/19-20)

Abilities Str 7, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6

Feats Dodge

Skills as above

Languages Goblin

Gear as above

GOBLIN WARRIOR

CR 1/3 (XP 135)

Clad in leather armour this dirty, skinny humanoid carries a shortbow and short sword.

Male goblin warrior 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -1; Climb +3, Ride +6, Stealth +10

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 13

(+2 armour [leather], +3 Dex, +1 shield [buckler], +1 size)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

hp 6 (1 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0

Melee short sword +5 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged shortbow (range 60 ft.) +5 (1d4/x3)

Combat Gear arrows (20)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6

Feats Weapon Finesse

Languages Goblin

Gear as above plus belt pouch, 1d6 sp

GOBLIN SCOUT

CR 1/3 (XP 135)

Male covered in mud and with many twigs stuck to its leather armour, this small skinny humanoid looks vaguely ridiculous.

Goblin expert 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5, Sense Motive +1

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -1; Acrobatics +6, Climb +2, Ride +6, Stealth +14

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 13

(+2 armour [leather], +3 Dex, +1 shield [buckler], +1 size)

Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

hp 5 (5 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -2

Melee light mace +0 (1d4-1)

Ranged light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +4 (1d6/19-20)

Combat Gear bolts (20), tanglefoot bag

Abilities Str 9, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills as above plus Survival +5

Languages Goblin

Gear as above plus backpack, belt pouch, 2d6 sp



GOBLIN BATTLEDANCER

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This small humanoid has a flat face, squashed nose and a wide mouth full of fangs.

Male goblin warrior 1/expert 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3, Sense Motive -1**Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** 0, Acrobatics +8, Climb +5, Ride +7, Stealth +15, Swim +4**AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 13

(+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +3 Dex, +1 size)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1**hp** 11 (2 HD)**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0**Melee** kukri +2 (1d3/18-20) or**Melee** kukri +0 (1d3/18-20) and

kukri +0 (1d3/18-20)

Combat Gear Small centipede poison**Abilities** Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6**Feats** Two-Weapon Fighting**Skills** as above plus Perform (dance) +7**Languages** Goblin**Gear** as above plus belt pouch, sack, 15 sp**GOBLIN CLERIC**

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This small, bald humanoid has a flat soot-stained face, squashed nose and a wide mouth full of fangs.

Female goblin cleric 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2, Sense Motive +2**Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** -1; Escape Artist +4, Ride +6, Stealth +12**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; **CMD** 13

(+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +3 Dex, +1 shield [buckler], +1 size)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4**hp** 10 (1 HD)**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -1**Melee** morningstar +0 (1d6-1) or**Melee Touch** *touch of evil* (3/day) +0 (sickened [1 round])**Ranged** light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +4 (1d6/19-20)**Special Actions** channel negative energy (3/day, DC 10, 1d6), copycat**Copycat (Sp [standard; 3/day])** The goblin cleric creates an illusionary double of herself (as a single *mirror image*); duration 1 round (or until destroyed).**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 1st; concentration +3, Evil, Trickery; spontaneous casting [*inflict* spells])1st—*bless*, *cause fear* (DC 13), *protection from good*^D0—*bleed*, *detect magic*, *resistance***Combat Gear** bolts (10), *potion of cure light wounds*, smokestick, tanglefoot bag**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 11**SQ** evil aura (faint)**Feats** Stealthy**Skills** as above plus Knowledge (religion) +3**Languages** Goblin

Gear as above plus wooden holy symbol, spell component pouch, belt pouch, 2 gp, 15 sp

GOBLIN DRUMMER

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This short, scrawny humanoid clutches a large drum.

Female goblin bard (savage skald) 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3, Sense Motive -1**Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** -2; Ride +6, Stealth +14**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15; **CMD** 13

(+4 armour [chain shirt], +4 Dex, +1 size)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1**hp** 10 (1 HD)**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +0; **CMB** -1**Ranged** shortbow (range 60 ft.) +5 (1d4/x3)**Melee** short sword +1 (1d4/19-20)**Special Actions** bardic performance (11 rounds; countersong, distraction, inspiring blow [1 hp], inspire courage [+1])**Bard Spells Known** (CL 1st; concentration +2)1st (2/day)—*cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*0—*dancing lights*, *lullaby* (DC 11), *message*, *resistance***Combat Gear** arrows (20)**Abilities** Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13**SQ** bardic knowledge (+1)**Feats** Extra Performance

Skills as above plus Bluff +5, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +1, Knowledge (engineering) +1, Knowledge (geography) +1, Knowledge (history) +1, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +1, Knowledge (nobility) +1, Knowledge (planes) +1, Knowledge (religion) +1, Linguistics +4, Perform (percussion) +5

Languages Common, Goblin**Gear** as above plus spell component pouch, drum, 12 sp, 4 gp**GOBLIN GUARD**

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

This small humanoid is clad in studded leather armour and carries a heavy wooden shield and longsword.

Male goblin warrior 1/expert 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4, Sense Motive +3**Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** -2; Climb +3, Ride +5, Stealth +13, Swim +1**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; **CMD** 13

(+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +3 Dex, +2 shield [heavy wooden], +1 size)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1**hp** 11 (2 HD)**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0**Melee** longsword +3 (1d6/19-20)**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds***Abilities** Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6**Feats** Weapon Focus (longsword)**Skills** as above plus Knowledge (religion) +4**Languages** Goblin

3 THINGS NOT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR DUNGEON DESIGN

I've previously written loads of articles about good dungeon design. However, I haven't thus far listed the things you absolutely should not include in your dungeons. Here—in no particular order—are three things you should avoid in your dungeon design.

UNAVOIDABLE, UNKILLABLE MONSTERS

There's nothing wrong with having unavoidable encounters in a dungeon. (Often the "boss" encounters falls into this category). I'm also not particularly fussed about the inclusion of unkillable or virtually unkillable opponents (balance isn't all its cracked up to be, after all and there is always someone tougher than yourself).

However, unavoidable, unkillable encounters are terrible design.

Designing encounters the party cannot win and cannot avoid is a spectacularly bad idea. (Particularly if you are deliberately designing the encounter to kill characters; some GMs do this for "story reasons"—sob).

Such encounters degrade the players' ability to make meaningful choices and lead to frustration and anger. Normally in such encounters, the party are wiped out or only survive through the GM's clumsy intervention. (Perhaps the GM has an NPC in the party who saves the day or the monsters inexplicably stop attacking because the GM is merciful).

Players love to win against the odds. Some of my most memorable gaming encounters come from clever tactics or heroic sacrifices. None of my most favourite gaming memories come from the GM saving the day.

"IT'S JUST MAGIC"

Areas that make no logical sense—except in very narrowly defined situations such as in the lair of a mad archmage—are normally a bit pants (that's a

technical phrase meaning bad design).

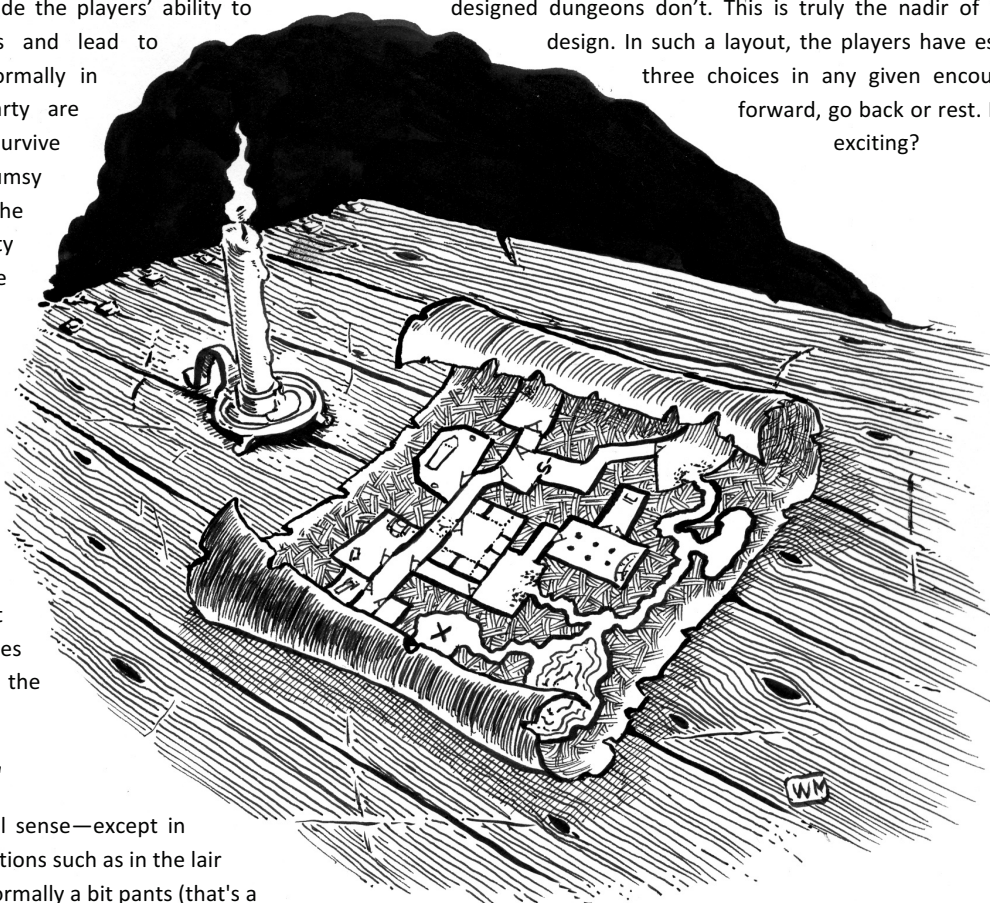
You should have a rational explanation for notable effects or strange locations in your dungeon. The PCs might not always figure out the details (and that's fine). But, if the effect doesn't make sense to you, describing it accurately and engagingly becomes that much harder. The rationale that "it's caused by magic" can also crush the players' suspension of disbelief which is—obviously—a bad thing.

LINEAR LAYOUT

Sure—of course—sometimes small sections of a dungeon are linear. Perhaps the dungeon entrance leads to a guardroom or you have to go through the torture chamber to get to the cells. That's all well and good.

Some dungeons, though, are so linear they remove all meaningful choice from the players. This is terrible design. If there is only one way to go, that's the way you'll go. Too much of this can get incredibly frustrating, for players. A well-designed dungeon provides the players with meaningful choices. Badly designed dungeons don't. This is truly the nadir of dungeon

design. In such a layout, the players have essentially three choices in any given encounter: go forward, go back or rest. Isn't that exciting?



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