

# IN THE SHADOW OF THE WILLOW

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## Preface

This adventure is set in the domain of Tepest, and sets the characters against the three hag sisters that rule the land. It is designed for 3-5 characters of 5th-7th level. The party should contain at least one priest, but should not contain too many spellcasters. More than one mage and one priest may unbalance the adventure. A bard, while not necessary for the adventure, will receive a bonus near the end of the adventure.

Theme song: Witch's Ride, from Hansel & Gretel, by Humperdinck.

## Background

Drax, a ranger, while wandering the forests of Tepest, came across a hag who had imprisoned a young woman. The young woman's name was Elizabeth, and she comes from a moderately wealthy family that lives on the outskirts of the village of Kellee. Drax rescued Elizabeth from the hag's cottage, killed the hag and set the cottage on fire. Merrie the hag, was a child of Laveeda, who days later came upon the ruins of her daughter's cottage. Laveeda swore revenge on the one responsible but at first she did not know who to blame. She soon learned. When Drax killed Merrie, he unknowingly picked up a hag's eye gem set in a medallion, which he now wears as proof of his bravery. Through this gem Laveeda discovered his act, and keeps watch on him while planning her revenge.

Now Drax and Elizabeth are to be married. They are staying with her family. Though Drax prefers the woods but believes it is too dangerous for Elizabeth. Drax lives in a cottage recently built near home of Elizabeth's family. As the wedding approaches Laveeda makes her first attempt against the two lovers, at the same time the characters happen to be traveling through the area.

## Part 1 - Introduction

The adventure begins with the characters traveling the road from Liara in Nova Vaasa, to Kellee. As the party approaches the village of Kellee, a shout for help is heard through the woods.

Though the day dawned clear, like it has every day this week, in the early afternoon, clouds began to gathering in the sky. Now the overcast sky blocks out the sun's heat, and the strong wind that has picked up reminds you that autumn is in full swing, summer is gone, and soon winter will be here. Pulling your cloak tighter, you press on down the road. The forests grow thick to either side of the road. This road is one of the few passes through the Balinok mountains. You don't know what awaits you on the far side of the mountains, but you hope to find a way home. Before your mind can wander too far to thoughts of home, your attention is drawn to a rustling in the underbrush to the side of the road. Something is coming.

You ready your weapons for an attack, but instead of some hideous monster, a young woman rushes from the forest into the road. Breathless she holds out a hand to motion

for you to stop, while her other hand clutches her heaving breast. She is dressed in a simple white dress, that is slightly disheveled from her run through the forest. After taking a few deep breathes, she asks, "Help me. Please, if you have kindness in your hearts, please help us. Something is wrong with my finance. Please you must help him. I think he is dying."

If the characters refuse to help, she falls to her knees and begs them to help her. Once the characters agree, if they don't the adventure ends here, the woman asks them to follow her to a clearing a short distance into the forest. Along the way she introduces herself as Elizabeth, and tells the party her finance's name is Drax. She and Drax were enjoying a peaceful afternoon alone by the river when he just collapsed. As she watched he began to convulse, and sores grew all over his hands and face.

His face became a sickly green color and he seemed to lose consciousness.

When the characters reach the clearing near the river, they see Drax lying on the ground as described by Elizabeth. The sores ooze puss and some have burst. His skin is a deep green, and he appears to have thrown up a dark red vomit. A priest or a character with the healing proficiency can determine that Drax suffers from the advanced stages of a magical disease.

A cure disease spell or a paladin's ability to cure disease will remove the pox. After a few rounds, Drax will regain consciousness, and thank the party. After an hour Drax will be fully recovered from the experience. The couple will ask the party to accompany them back to Kellee, and promise lodging at Elizabeth's family's home. They are to be married in three days, and ask the characters to stay until the ceremony and experience their hospitality as reward for their actions.

Elizabeth and Drax lead the party through the village of Kellee to her father's home on the eastern side. There they characters are introduced to her family, which includes: Her father, Wallace, an easy going widower, aged 60, he is immensely protective of his daughter, but approves greatly of Drax. He will show the characters every courtesy during their stay.

Her younger brother, Stephen, 14. The boy looks very much like his father.

Stephen will become infatuated with one of the strong fighters in the party and pester that person to tell stories of his heroic acts and to teach Stephen to fight.

Elizabeth's older sister, Anna, 30, Anna's husband, Jan (It's a Scandinavian name, pronounced Yuan), 35, and their young boy Cordell, 5.

Anna looks very similar to her mother, much more than Elizabeth, but her mind is not all there (see below). Perhaps because of this, Wallace did not approve of her choice of Jan as a husband. When Jan was forced to close his tailor shop a year ago, with out a word Wallace allowed them to move into Anna's old room until he could find steady work. Now Jan works for Wallace, doing odd jobs around the house.

Cordell is a quiet child who is in awe of his uncle, Stephen. He follows the teenager around despite Stephen's protests until Stephen yells at him. Then he goes off by himself to sulk. Due to complications while giving birth to Cordell, Anna cannot have anymore children. This "defect" unsettled her greatly, and often she has "nervous attacks" when she become greatly distraught and has to be physically restrained. When six months ago, she had another attack, Jan bought her a puppy. This eased her mind, and now she has adopted the puppy as her "baby." Now the puppy, a collie, named Ophelia, is almost fully grown, but because Anna spoils it the puppy has grown over weight and has a nasty disposition.

## The House

(In place of a map, I offer the following description of the house and surrounding land, in

the hope that you can use it to reproduce a map yourself.)

The family estate sits a couple of hundred yards from the road. A path leads from the road to the two story house which faces east, towards the village, of Kellee. The house is approximately 70' wide and 40' long.

The front door opens into the family room, which contains some chairs gathered around a large fireplace on the north wall. To the south is an archway that leads into the dining room. On the back wall, the west wall, near the fireplace is a door that leads to Wallace's study, which takes up the north west corner of the house.

Across from the front door, a hallway goes deeper into the house. Between the hallway and the door to the study are stairs leading to the second story.

The hallway goes all the way to the back of the house leading to the back door. Before reaching the door on the left is the entrance to the kitchen. The kitchen contains cabinets and a cooking stove, as well as dishes, food, and drinks. A door in the east wall of the kitchen connects it with the dining room. Across the hall from the kitchen is a door.

Behind the door is a small storage area under the stairs.

The stairs lead up to a landing, at which the stairs reverse direction to continue up to the second floor. The stairs lead to a hallway on the second floor traveling west to east.

There is a door on either side of the hallway at the top of the stairs. The door to the right leads to the master bedroom, where Wallace sleeps. The door to the left is the guest bedroom where the characters will sleep. There are two full size beds, and cots will be set up in the room to accommodate all of the characters.

The hallway continues to the front of the house. There is meets another hallway running both north and south. To the left or north, the hallway leads to the bedrooms of Stephen and farther on to Elizabeth's which is at the end of the hallway. Both bedrooms are on the left-hand side of the hall, and the right side contains windows looking out the front of the house.

If the hallway is followed to the right or south, it leads first to Anna and Jan's room. At the end of the hall is Cordell's room. There is a door that connects this two rooms together. Both of these rooms are on the right side of the hall, with windows to the front of the house on the left.

From the backdoor a path leads 40 feet to a well. The area between the house and the well has been cleared of trees. Near the northeast corner of the house is a privy. Behind the well a large willow trees stands, with its branches drooping down over a large area. Behind the willow is the outskirts of the forest, which grows thicker the farther west one goes.

To the southwest of the house, about 500 yards through the forest is the one room shack that Drax has constructed. He has cleared the forest in a fifth foot area to create a small clearing around his cottage.

## Part 2 - Under the Willow

### A. First night

After the characters have been introduced to all of the family members, dinner is served in the dining room by two servants. Note that the servants do not stay at the house, but live in the village and travel back and forth each day. By the time that dinner is finished, the storm that has been building all day erupts. As the downpour intensifies, Drax says a hurried goodnight to Elizabeth, before making a run towards his cabin. The rest of the family retires to the living room, while the servants clean up. The family may ask the

characters to tell stories of their exploits while Wallace serves drinks from a small bar. Before long, the family retires to their rooms after making sure the characters will be comfortable in their room.

As the night continues, the storm builds as lightning flashes and the booming crash of thunder shakes the house. Roll a d6 for each character.

On a roll of 5 or 6 that character is having trouble sleeping because of the storm. Of the characters who are awake, pick one of the characters and tell him that he hears a scream, but that he is not sure where it came from because of the thunder. The other characters who are awake did not notice, and if asked by the character, they are not sure if they hear anything or not. The scream is not repeated.

Being unfamiliar with the house it will take the characters a couple of rounds to find and light the small oil lamp in the room. Once the lamp has been lit, and any other character aroused, the party can leave their room to investigate the noise. When they open the door to the hallway, they see Wallace, dressed in his nightrobe holding a candle. He has just left his room and is calling to a figure at the other end of the hallway, apparently Jan.

"Jan is that you."

"Yes, it's me."

"Good. O you're awake as well," Wallace says as he turns and spots the characters.

"That scream was it any of you?" he asks.

When the characters respond, no. He turns to Jan and asks, "Jan was that Anna who screamed?"

"No, and not Cordell either. We should check on the others. Come," and he motions with his hand for the characters and Wallace to join him.

As the group heads down the hall the first door they come to is Stephen's. Wallace knocks on the door and asks, "Boy. Are you all right in there?" He gets a mumbled response. Causally he opens the door. The light from Wallace's candle, and any light source carried by the characters, brightens the dark room. On the far side of the room is Stephen's bed. The covers are drawn up over him, so no part of him is showing. Wallace turns a concerned face to the party, and then turns and slowly walks to the bed. He reaches out a hand to draw back the covers.

Suddenly the covers are thrown back. Stephen seeing someone crouched over his bed, screams. The boy's scream startles Wallace, but once he recovers, he sits down on the bed and hugs his son, asking again if he is all right.

The boy responds that he is fine, but was scared by the scream that he heard, and was hiding under the covers.

After comforting the boy, the group moves on to check Elizabeth's room. Wallace again knocks on the door and calls out, "Elizabeth.

Elizabeth are you awake." No response.

"Elizabeth, it's your father, are you all right." Still no response.

Finally, "Elizabeth, this is your father I am coming in." He slowly opens the door. The light that spills into the room shines on Elizabeth's empty bed. Wallace enters the room, and calls out, "Elizabeth?" The room is empty. If the sheets are checked there are a couple of drops of what looks like blood near the headboard (Note: Neither Wallace nor Jan will do this.)

A search of the entire house ensues. The first person to check the kitchen finds Elizabeth. Dressed in her nightgown, and holding a goblet of wine, she is quite surprised by all the excitement. If asked, she says she was having a glass of wine to calm her nerves. The storm was keeping her awake. When she heard the scream, she was startled and spilt her wine. So she came down stairs to refill her glass.

"But girl, I've never known you to drink." "Oh, it's a habit that I picked up from Drax,

besides one needs it on a night like this."

"Ai. I wonder what other bad habits he'll be giving you next?" "Oh, daddy," Elizabeth responds and blushes.

(Note: This is false. Neither Drax nor Elizabeth drink. The characters will have to specifically ask at any meal if they wish to observe the two, to verify this.)

None one seems to know where the scream came from. The family comes to the assumption that the scream came from outside and is therefore none of their business. If the characters want to go outside to search for the one who made the scream, (perhaps it was one of the servants who was attacked on their walk home) the family will become very concerned and try to persuade them not to, telling them monsters and spirits rule the night.

"It is not wise to go out at night, especially on a night like this."

If the characters are persistent, Wallace will tell them that if they do go out he will lock the doors behind and will not let them back in until morning. He does not want any evil spirits coming into the house with the party.

What Wallace does not know is that evil is already in the house.

Laveeda entered the house with her two sisters and kidnap Elizabeth, who managed to let out a scream before they silenced her. Laveeda has now taken Elizabeth's place, by shapechanging into her form. She plans to act as Elizabeth until the wedding in two days. Meanwhile, the real Elizabeth is held captive by Leticia and Lorinda in a secret place.

Note on playing Laveeda. Because of her psionic link with her sisters, Laveeda can play Elizabeth very accurately. The only weakness she has is sunlight. Contact with direct sunlight only harms her slightly (1 hp/ turn), but it negates her shapechanging ability and returns her to her natural form. Thus "Elizabeth" will discreetly try to avoid sunlight, staying in doors, but remaining active, planning the wedding with her sister.

## B. Second Day

This day there are no events. The characters can spend the day as they wish. They may want to go into town, after all they will probably need to buy dress clothes for the wedding. If the characters do go into town, the DM could spread various rumors, perhaps leading to other adventures. The characters will also get different reactions from the villagers about Wallace and his family. Some people like the family, and claim Mr. Wallace helps out many in the town. Others are jealous of his wealth and claim he is an evil money grubbing man and a womanizer, and making even wilder claims such as he communes with devils, his daughters are witches, and that the ghost of his dead wife haunts the family estate.

The family members been making plans for the wedding. Elizabeth and Anna spend most of the day together planning the wedding, in doors.

Stephen will follow the characters around, as long as they stay on the estate. Cordell tries to follow Stephen, but Stephen quickly gets angry at him, and pushes him down, telling him to go away or he will tell the little beasties to take him away. Cordell spends the rest of the morning sulking, and most of the afternoon playing with Ophelia.

Drax spends the day at his cabin. While the exterior of the cabin has been finished, he is still has work to do to the inside of the cabin to make it livable for his new wife. He does come by the house for dinner, and leaves soon after.

### C. Second night

The DM should choose one of the characters to have the following nightmare. Note what transpires later in the adventure when choosing which character. He should not be the most suspicious player, but not necessarily the most gullible. A paladin would also most be a good choice.

For the rest of this section, the character who has the dream is referred to as the rescuer.

"You are outside. It is such a nice sunning day, not as cold as it has been over the past few weeks. You are seated under the large willow tree in the backyard of the house, resting in the sun after a large lunch.

Elizabeth is there, and so is Anna, and Cordell and Stephen. The two boys are playing a little ways off with the puppy. Quite surprising, the puppy seems to be in good spirits today and has not bitten either of the boys in the past five minutes. You look over at Elizabeth and she smiles at you.

You smile back realizing you like her attention on you.

Suddenly, the sky turns black. Dark clouds rolling in and cover the sky. A strong wind swirls around you rustling the branches of the willow.

Lightning flashes over head, and dark rain begins to fall. You see the two boys, Cordell and Stephen, cry out. The rain is burning them. The two boys run for the house. Cordell trips and falls into the mud. He does not get up. You turn to Elizabeth and see she is looking at you with a horrified look on her face. You look to Anna, wondering why she has not rushed to her son's aid. You see why. You stare at Anna's feet swaying back and forth three feet from the ground. She has been hunk from one of the tree branches. You can see the branch wrapped around her neck below her blotted face.

You are pulled out of your shock by Elizabeth's scream. Turning you see she has been grabbed by some of the willows branches and is being lifted off the ground. One of the tree's slim branches is coiling around her neck. As she trashes about, you try to go to her aid, but something grabs you. The willow's branches have coiled around your arms and chest and are lifting you up. You struggle to free yourself, but the branches are too strong. You feel one of the branches coiling around your neck, and try to scream.

Nothing comes out though, and you feel the branch getting tighter, tighter, and tighter."

The character awakens suddenly, to find he has entangled himself in the bed sheets. The character will not be able to get back to sleep. If the character gets up, perhaps to look out the window at the night sky, to get a drink from down stairs, or simply to take a walk to calm himself down, run the following. Note that the window in the characters' room looks out over the backyard towards the willow tree. As he passes a window, he sees a white clad figure running from the house behind some of the trees in the back off the house. (Note: the figure does not go by the willow, but into the tress on the southwest side of the yard.)

If he goes out to investigate, as the character approaches the large tree which he saw the figure disappear around, he hears a growl and then a scream. As he rounds the tress he sees Elizabeth with blood on the front of her nightgown, surrounded by 5 wolves.

5 wolves THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4+1; AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 16; MV 18; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; AL N; ML 9; XP 65.

During the battle, people in the house will begin to awaken, lights thrown on and people rush about. If any wolf receives 1/2 of its hp in damage it will flee. Once the last wolf is

gone, Elizabeth will fall into her rescuer's arms. Breathing heavily and shaking physically, she whispers, "I was so scared. Thank you. Thank you. You saved his life." She looks up into the rescuer's eyes with affection. Then people are heard rushing up, and she will break away from her rescuer's arms as they arrive. Crying that she was trying to see Drax, Elizabeth will be led by her sister back to the house to care for her "wounds." Wallace will thank the rescuer greatly. Before returning to the house to check on his daughter. If any of the characters claims to be able to heal the girl, Wallace will wave them away, saying her sister can take care of her. The wound was not as bad as it looked.

#### D. Third day

The next morning when Anna goes to check on Ophelia, she is missing.

The "little beasties" are blamed, and everyone is upset. No sign of the dog is found. Observant characters may notice that Cordell is very depressed. If asked, he claims to have had a bad dream last night, in which the king of the "little beasties" came to his room to get him.

What happened to Ophelia. Last night Laveeda grew hungry. She grabbed the dog from Cordell's room, and snuck out of the house to feed.

Cordell saw her in her true form, but when he told his mother what he saw the next morning, she told him he must have been having a bad dream.

Outside, when Elizabeth saw the rescuer approaching, she summoned a pack of wolves, and threw the remains of the puppy to them. She then had the wolves attack the character to make it look convincing.

Elizabeth spends most of the next day "recovering", more from the fright than from her injuries. Her sister looks after her, nursing her.

Drax hears about the event, and rushes over in the early afternoon to see Elizabeth.

After spending some time with her to ensure that she is all right, he seeks out the rescuer and thanks him warmly, saying if there is anything that he could ever do to repay the rescuer he need but ask.

Since the wedding is tomorrow shortly after noon, the family is busy cleaning the yard and preparing the food. Again the characters can do what they like, and any offers to chip in on the preparations will be most appreciated.

#### E. Third night

That night, as dusk falls, Elizabeth will scream. She is in her room, which is dimly lit by a single candle. The first character to answer her call will discover a "little beastie" threatening her with a dagger. The beastie is killed if attacked in one stroke. Once it is dead, it can be identified as a goblin.

Shortly after this event, the rescuer discovers he has a scarf that belonging to Elizabeth, and must have accidentally picked it up when he investigated her scream. When he goes to return it, he discovers Elizabeth lightly clad in only her nightgown. She embraces him saying she fears the beasties. "I was foolish to go looking for one with courage so far off, when there is one so near." Expressing her "love", Elizabeth kisses the rescuer, and tries to force him to spend the night, a prisoner of her affections.

That night, "little beasties" will be discovered throughout the house.

At one time during the night, in each room of the house, one "beastie" will be seen. The "beasties" don't attack anyone, but they do snatch items, throw things around the rooms, and try to frighten the family more than harm them. Only if attacked, will one draw its dagger and attack.

11 "little beasties", goblins THAC0 20; Dmg dagger 1d4/1d3; AC 7; HD 1-1; hp 4; MV 6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; AL CE; ML 7; XP 15.

Any suggestion to search the entire house that night, will be rejected by Wallace and the rest of the family. "The beasties do not like sunlight.

Best to lock your door, and wait until morning." The characters need not take this advice. However, if they do search the house, they had best avoid Elizabeth's room, or they will expose Elizabeth and one of their companions in the act of adultery. If the rescuer is so caught, he is physically thrown from the house by Wallace in a fit of rage.

The rest of the party will need to do some fast talking to calm him down or they will be forced to leave as well.

#### F. Fourth day

The next morning, a search of the house turns up nothing, and the preparations for the wedding begin. The wedding beginnings in the early afternoon, and all of the family members are busy up until then.

As the ceremony begins, the family and a small gathering of townfolks form an aisle from the house's backdoor to the well in front of which stands the minister. (Note he is a civil representative, not a religious one.) Drax proceeds from his cabin with two companions. After they take their place next to the minister, Elizabeth, veiled and clothed completely in white, appears in the door way and proceeds down the aisle to the well.

The ceremony is similar to that performed by a justice of the peace, and is over in five minutes.

At the end of the ceremony, Drax lifts Elizabeth's veil to kiss her.

The following describes the scene that follows:

"I pronounce you as one, both husband and wife. You may kiss the bride," the minister directs Drax.

Drax reaches out and lifts Elizabeth's veil, and sunlight strikes her pale face. A ripping sound fills the air. Elizabeth's pale complexion turns dark black. Boils break out across her face, and the skin of her face seems to loosen and droops down. She grows in size. Too small, tears appear on the wedding dress that struggles to contain her new form. She stands almost eight feet high despite the fact that she has developed a hump in her back forcing to hunch over. Razor sharp claws burst from her hands.

A mangled dark mop replaces the former auburn color that was her hair. She smiles down at Drax. Her large jaws too big for her mouth, turn her smile into an evil grin. She bends down and "kisses" her new husband, biting Drax viciously in the face. As Drax falls, she raises her head to the sky and cackles hideously, as blood drips from her gapping mouth.

Fear and Horror checks for everyone. All of the wedding guests fail theirs and either flee hysterically, getting in the characters' way, or remain frozen in shock. The rescuer should probably fail at least one of his checks.

Laveeda next turns and attacks the minister, mortally wounding him.

Next round, she heads for the forest to the west, attacking and killing one of Drax's companions. Once she reaches the treeline, Laveeda flees to the west. Remember that she takes 1 hp per turn when espoused to direct sunlight, so she is heading for the shade provided by the dense forest. If the characters try to chase after Laveeda, her movement rate of 18 allows her to quickly outdistance them. If one of the characters uses magic or has some magical device that will allow him to catch up with her, Laveeda

will turn back and attack. She should be more than a match for a lone character and will kill him unless the rest of his companions reach the area to intervene.

Drax survived the attack (he received 9 hp of damage from the bite), and will want to set out after Laveeda immediately, believing the hag kidnapped Elizabeth in order to replace her. Since he is a ranger, Drax can track the hag and will not lose her trail. He does not ask the characters to come with him, though he hopes they will.

### Part 3 The Chase

#### A. First night - The riddle test

The pursuit lasts throughout the rest of the afternoon and into the night. Laveeda's trail leads roughly west. Shortly after nightfall, it turns southwest towards the mountains of lower Tepest. Two hours after nightfall, when it looks as if it has become too dark to follow the trail, Drax will finally agree to stop for the night.

During the chase, remember the hag's eye worn by Drax. Laveeda and her sisters will be using it to keep track of the characters. The DM should allow the characters a 5% chance per attempt to detect the scrying.

Mages or priests should have a 10% chance. If the scrying is detected, the characters will see one of the hag's images on the hag's eye medallion. Any divination spell cast on the medallion should reveal its powers, as well as its potential as a weapon to be used against the hags.

That night, allow the characters to post a watch, then select the smartest player (player, not character) and run the following encounter when his character takes a turn at watch. Laveeda has been keeping track of the characters' progress through the hag's eye. She circles back during the night to their camp to engage one of the characters in a deadly game of wits.

You stare out at the night, straining to see if anything approaches your camp. Dark clouds obscure the sky, robbing you of the light from the moon and the stars. You realize the night sounds have grown silent, and the only sound you hear is the rhythmic breathing of your companions.

A voice suddenly pieces the silence, "Look, look, look. What tasty morsels we have hear."

Turning to the sound, you draw your weapon, but see nothing. From the other side of the camp a voice speaks, "Well, well, well. It looks as if this one thinks it can save itself from the stew pot." Twirling around to face the other direction, he strains to see the speaker, but there is no one there.

"Yes, this is a feisty one, and may think it can escape the pot, but let's see if it can think. Hmm."

>From another direction a voice says, "No, no. Silly girl, you should not talk to your food."

"We will, we will. Go ahead and ask it. Yes, ask it to see if it thinks," responds another voice from another part of the camp. All of the voices are female and have the same maniacal tone.

"I will ask it. Yes, I will. Then we'll see if it can think like us." Finally one of the voices speaks to you, "What do you say dinner, do you think? Can you play the riddle game?"

The voices all are Laveeda's. She is not very close to the camp, and uses ventriloquism to make it appear that her voice is coming from different places around the camp. If the

character tries to wake any of the others, he finds them fast asleep and cannot be aroused easily. If he tries to vehemently to awake his companions he could, but Laveeda will attack him before he can do so. Laveeda has cast a sleeping spell on the characters, making it difficult for them to wake. If combat does break out, each sleeping character should roll a Con check each round. If the character rolls less than half his Con score, he awakens. For each subsequent round of combat, give the characters a one point bonus to their rolls until they all are awake. Laveeda flees if more than 3 characters enter the fight.

If the character accepts the riddle challenge, the rules are as followed. Laveeda asks a riddle, and the character has 10 minutes to answer it. Then the character can ask Laveeda a riddle. The DM then has 10 minutes to answer the character's riddle. XP points should be awarded for correct answers and also if the character can stump the DM. Even if the DM is stumped, Laveeda will not admit to being so. If the character misses two riddles Laveeda attacks and carries the character off from the camp site, so she can kill and eat him without waking the other characters.

Laveeda will ask the following riddles in this order. The DM should feel free to replace this riddles with others, but should not make every riddles very difficult to answer.

1. "What walks on four legs when young, two when mature, and three when old?" ( A man)

2. "Blue mirror of midnight's soul, sometime half but always whole." (The moon)

As Laveeda tells this riddle the ventriloquism spell ends, and her voice only comes from one location, that appears to be about 50 yards outside the camp's fire light.

3. "A box without hinges, key, or lid, yet golden treasure inside is hid." (An egg)

When Laveeda tells this riddle she is only 10 yards outside the camp's fire light.

4. "Thirty black horses upon a red hill, now they champ, now they stamp, now they stand still." (Her teeth and tongue.)

When Laveeda tells this riddle, she is on the edge of the camp's firelight, and she can barely been seen. Her face is high lighted by the fire's glow, and the DM should emphasize her large and powerful BLACK teeth, and perhaps imitate her as she runs her red tongue across them.

Sometime after Laveeda tells the above riddle, and before the she answers the character's next riddle, the sleeping spell on the other characters wears off. One of the characters may mumble in his sleep, to alert the character on watch that the spell has worn off. Now with a shout, he can awake the entire camp. If he does so, Laveeda flees into the night. In he does not, and has gotten any of the riddles wrong, Laveeda attacks as above, after answering the last riddle.

B. Second day - the graveyard

The next day, the characters travel deeper into the mountains, the hags have had

enough fun with the party and decide to destroy the characters. Laveeda's trail leads the characters to a small graveyard.

The graveyard is surrounded by a small wooden fence, and is overgrown with weeds. It appears to have been abandoned. Many of the tombstones are so old the names are illegible and some have fallen over. There are two small mausoleums in the graveyard. A short distance into the cemetery the characters come across a large hole in the ground. The hole is 12 feet deep, 5 feet wide and 2 feet across. The hole is fresh, but there is no sign of who dug the hole or where the dirt went.

The hole was caused by a grave elemental ripping itself from the earth. The three hags have summoned the creature to destroy the party. It has concealed itself behind one of the mausoleums and will attack the party as they investigate the hole.

Grave elemental THAC0 9; Dmg 4d40; AC 0; HD 12; hp 84; MV 6; SA 1/hour sink at 12th level; SD +2 or bet to be hit; MR nil; SZ L; AL N; ML 15; XP 7,000.

### C. Second day- the cave entrance

From the cemetery, the trail leads another two miles to a cave entrance. The cave is twelve feet high and five feet wide and appears to slope downward. The characters will have to carry their own light source or they will not be able to see as they travel deeper into the earth.

While there are no encounters in the tunnel, that does not mean it is empty. Near the entrance small spiders cast their webs. Flying insects flutter about. Bats roost from the ceiling. Deeper in, worms and crawling insects scuttle out of the characters path.

### D. Optional encounter

The following encounter is optional, and can be run as the party approaches the hags' lair, or as a reward once they have faced the hags and are returning to the surface.

As the party continues down the tunnel, and they notice a small side tunnel and a flickering light coming from it. While Laveeda's tracks continue down the main tunnel, the characters may wish to investigate the side tunnel. The side tunnel, which is a side from a few twists and turns, leads 200 feet to a small chamber. Inside the chamber is a slab of granite, 2' x 2' x 2'. A sword's hilt protrudes from the top of the block, and gives off a golden glow. Attempts to pull the sword from the stone will fail no matter what the character's strength. The stone is resistant to all spells such as transmute rock to mud, or transmute stone to flesh.

If the sides of the stone are examined symbols consisting bars and dots are found. The bars and dots represent musical notes. A bard or character with a musical proficiency will recognize the symbols on a successful proficiency check. If the character then plays or sings the song, which requires another proficiency check, the sword's glow brightens and it admits a humming similar to the notes of the song. If the singing character, and only the singing character, attempt to remove the sword while singing the sound, it comes free from the block easily.

The sword has the following powers. It is a flametongue sword with +1 to hit, +2 vs regenerating, +3 vs cold, and +4 vs undead. The sword is intelligent and has a NG alignment, however it can only communicate through empathy. The sword is a long sword why considering size and damage rolls, but is considered a short sword for speed factor and weight. Anyone proficient with a short or long sword can wield it.

The sword is a holy relic of the sun god, Pelor. (From the Greyhawk campaign setting. The DM could substitute another suitable god, which could be Apollo, or Lathander from the Forgotten Realms setting.) As such the sword can be used as a holy symbol by a priest or paladin of that faith to turn undead, or can be used to keep a vampire at bay. The sword enhances all cure spells cast on the wielder. All such cure spells heal at least the medium hp per spell. Thus cure light wounds does at least 5hp, cure serious wounds 9hp, and cure critical wounds 14. If the wielder is NG, the sword reveals all of the above powers to its wielder. If the wielder is any other N or G alignment the sword's functions will have to be discovered. Evil beings holding the sword for more than one round receive 1 hp for every level they have in damage. How the sword came to be here, and what its history is will be a mystery the characters will have to discover at a later time.

#### E. The castle

After traveling two hours underneath the mountain, the tunnel opens into a huge chamber over 300' across. The tunnel opens 40' above the surface of a dark lake that fills the bottom of the cavern. The dark waters of the lake look ominous and prevent the characters from telling how deep the lake is. The ruins of a castle perch on a precipice that rises from the middle of the lake. A narrow ledge spans the distance, over 100', from the tunnel entrance with the castle's island. The span is 10' wide near the entrance but narrows to only 5' near its middle. From the castle's one remaining tower, a light glows just bright enough to barely illuminate the entire chamber. The characters have reached the hags' secret lair.

Leticia will meet the characters on the ledge that extends from the wall to the castle grounds. At the center where it is only 5' wide, Leticia waits invisible. Roll 1d6. On a 1-2 the lead character hears a cackle before Leticia attempts to push him over the edge. Otherwise the character has a -4 on his Dex check (see below).

As she appears Leticia will use her death gaze twice, before wielding her long wickedly curved dagger. Because of the treacherous footing any successful hit causes a Dex check or sends the person over the edge, a second Dex check could allow the person to grab the edge, otherwise he plummets 40' to the lake surface, taking 4d4 hp of damage, and unless he can swim he'll drown. Once Leticia is reduced to 20 or less she is knocked from the ledge and falls into the lake.

The ledge leads directly to the castle gates which lie open, the wooden doors long since rotted away. The castle takes up the entire island, so it is not possible for the characters to walk around the outside walls of the castle. Inside the castle walls, the castle looms across a small courtyard. The castle looks ancient and appears as if it will collapse into a pile of rubble at the slightest touch. The castle doors are shut, and the doors look newer than the rest of the castle. The walls of the castle connect with its back, thus there is no back entrance.

The castle doors require an open doors roll to force open. When the doors are opened dust and small pieces of plaster fall from the ceiling, emphasizing the castle's ruined state. The doors open into a large entrance hall. The glow outside is not present inside the castle and the hall is dark. A large staircase to the right leads up to a balcony which runs the width of the hall on the second story. Light comes from down that hallway. If the characters listen, they can hear two people arguing, but at this distance cannot tell who or over what. If the characters explore the first floor, they find nothing but empty rooms, filled with dust, rubble, and cobwebs.

From the top of the stairs the characters can see that the light is coming from under a pair of double doors, down the hall. If they approach the door, they can hear two of the hag sisters arguing. Lorinda and Laveeda are in the room, which is where Elizabeth is held. They never expected the characters to get this far, and are arguing over how they should handle the situation. Lorinda is blaming Laveeda for Leticia's "death" and threatening to leave and let Laveeda handle the mess. Laveeda is threatening her sister, demanding that she not leave.

#### The room

The room was the grand bedroom of the castle, and has been restored by the hags. The room is 20 feet deep and 30 feet long. Against the right wall is a canopied bed, on which Elizabeth is bound and gagged. On the opposite wall is a large fireplace where a large fire currently is burning.

Two cushioned chairs are pulled close to the fire place. Directly across from the doors is an archway that leads out onto a small balcony. The balcony protrudes from the back of the castle overlooking the lake below.

There are no other doors besides the doors the party enters by.

The two hags are standing in the middle of the room. When the characters enter, the sisters stop fighting immediately to face the characters. In the ensuing battle, the hags fight viciously, but because of their argument do not coordinate their attacks. Laveeda tries to stop any character from reaching Elizabeth and freeing her, though Lorinda will not. If the hag's eye was discovered and is now smashed, Lorinda is the hag who goes blind. She will turn into a bat, and abandon her sister.

Also, if Lorinda is reduced to 50 hp before any of the characters are down, she retreats in the same way.

Laveeda is left to fight the characters alone. The battle ranges all over the grand bedroom, but by the end of the 6th round, or when she has only 20hp left, Laveeda will be on the balcony.

On the beginning of the 8th round, Leticia in the lake below, shapechanges into the form of an adult red dragon, and raises her head to the level of the balcony. All characters must make a fear check upon seeing the dragon. Those who fail run screaming from the room, which happens to be the smartest thing to do, as Leticia will breathe fire into the bedroom on the next round. Damage from Leticia's breath weapon is 12d10+6.

Characters who do not fail can tell what she intends to do and take whatever acts they deem necessary. Note that the characters have all of round eight to act and can act in round nine if they have initiative.

But take note that the breath weapon initiative modifier is only +1.

A possible course of action is given in this example. There are three characters in the party, A, B, C. One of the characters, C, has already fallen in the battle. When Leticia rises out of the water, one of the characters, A, fails his saving throw and runs at his top speed out of the room. At 12 MV, A can easily escape the room and run down the hall far enough not to be affected by the fiery breath. The character who made the save, B, rushes from the balcony and lifts up his unconscious companion.

At the same time, Drax, who made his save, rushes to Elizabeth and lifts her from the bed. On the next round, both had better have a lower initiative roll than Leticia in order to make it out of the room in time.

Leticia's breath weapon will blow down the doors to the room as well as a 5 foot section of the wall to either side. Leticia will attempt to claw her way into the castle but will proceed to destroy the castle. In the first round the balcony breaks off with Laveeda on it, sending her plummeting to the lake. In 5 rounds what is left of the castle collapses into the lake. During this time, if the characters flee across the span, Leticia cannot see them

as she is on the other side of the castle. The party can then make it to the surface without being pursued.

#### Aftermath

In the aftermath of Laveeda's failed plan, her sisters will be very angry with her, and will probably not regenerate her for a few weeks out of spite. Lorinda and Leticia will not seek the characters out, being content to let them go their own way. After all, it was their sister who got entangled with the characters and then fouled everything up. Once they do revive Laveeda though, she may come looking for the characters. Until then the characters will have a few weeks of peace and should be able to leave Tepest for other lands.

#### Appendix

##### Hags

Laveeda is an annis

Annis THAC0 9; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8 12d4+1; AC 0; HD 7+7; MV 15; SA spells; SD spells; MR 20%; SZ L; AL CE; ML 15; XP 6,000.

Lorinda is a Green hag

Green hag THAC0 9; Dmg 1-2+6/1-2+6; AC -2; HD 9; MV 12; SA spells; SD spells; MR 35%; SZ M; AL NE; ML 17; XP 6,000.

Leticia is a sea hag

Sea hag THAC0 13; Dmg dagger 1d4/1d3 + 6; AC 7; HD 3; MV 12, Sw 15; SA spells; SD spells; MR 50%; SZ M; AL CE; ML 11; XP 975.

Drax is a 5th level ranger

THAC0 16; Dmg long sword 1d8/1d12 +1 and dagger 1d4/1d3 +1; AC 7; hp 34; MV 12; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; AL NG; ML 15; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr 12. Hide in shadows 31%, Move silently 40%, tracking (15).

Equipment: long sword, dagger, leather armor.