

THORIWHRY FURY



BANDITS MOVE INTO AN ABANDONED DRUID ENCLAVE UNAWARE OF THE TWISTED HORROR TRAPPED BELOW



THORNWALKER'S FURY

hornwalker's Fury is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for three to five characters of 5th to 6th level and optimized for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 6. An old druid enclave hides a dangerous creature locked away deep underground. A crew of bandits has moved in, and it's only a matter of time before they find the danger beneath their feet. This adventure takes place in the Freelands campaign setting but fits into any existing campaign with a mystical forest with only a few modifications and name changes.

BACKSTORY

The Shimmering Forest once spread across the entire continent of Astaria, an untouched woodland filled with extraordinary creatures and plant life. The forest once spread across the whole continent of Astaria, a wild woodland filled with fantastic beasts. The Thornwalkers were a group of dedicated druids who were not afraid to experiment with nature.

No one knows what happened to the Thornwalkers; some say they scattered to the winds and were never heard from again, others that they fell victim to their hubris and their creations ate them. However, they left behind their hidden outstation, where remnants of their experimentations still reside. A bandit crew that stalked the nearby roadways stumbled into this enclave, and it's now their base of operations to conduct their raids.

The bandits do not know that there is an even greater danger lurking below in the hidden depths below the outstation—a fury-filled creature created to be a

weapon of pure destructive force against the forest's enemies. It has waited centuries to appease its bloodlust, and the magic blocking its cell has almost weakened enough to let it free.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters arrive at an ancient druidic enclave hidden in the Shimmering Forest. They find a crew of bandits with strange plants and a ritual puzzle chamber. They learn that the outstation was once used for experimentation on plants and animal life, turning them into living weapons of war. A kidnapped herbalist recounts how the bandits took her to help them with the puzzle room and tame the living plant life. The puzzle room protects a secret prison, where a mutated creature has been locked away for thousands of years, waiting to unleash its fury upon the world.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are a few ways to get your characters hooked into this adventure:

AMBUSH SITE

As the characters are traveling through the Shimmering Forest, they come upon what appears to be the wreckage of an ambushed merchant caravan. A cart sits overturned, goods are missing, and tracks lead into the woods—something or someone was dragged a reasonable distance away. With such clear markings, it's not long before the party is led directly to the Thornwalker enclave.

NATURE'S CALL

A character with a deep connection to nature (such as a druid, ranger, or elf) begins to have strange dreams of a disturbance in the nearby Shimmering Forest. They see flashes of a garden filled with strange plants, glowing eyes filled with rage, and hear the sounds of silent screaming. The forest is calling out to them, crying for help as the bandits explore the abandoned enclave and further weaken the monster's prison trapped within. The character feels an internal pull that unerringly leads them directly to the Thornwalker enclave.

FEEDING THE GREEN

Valda Singlebraid is a wealthy—if minor—noblewoman of her house, known mainly for her deep interest in political intrigue and even more excellent skills in exotic gardening. A book detailing a garden of previously unknown plants recently came into her possession, but she is too embroiled in her current machinations to pursue their retrieval. Valda reaches out to the characters to hire them to travel to the location marked in the book and safely transport the plants back to her with a reward for each one successfully retrieved.

THE SHIMMERING FOREST

The Shimmering Forest is home to many wild and exotic flora and fauna and covers the western half of the continent of Astaria. The forest is named for the multicolored sparkling leaves of the unique trees found only here. It is the home to the elven Z'ing-Tao Empire, and there is a distinct lack of trust among the locals for any type of "civilization" that encroaches upon their territory. The people of this forest pride themselves on living in tune with nature and their surroundings.

ABOUT THE BANDITS

Led by a charismatic half-elf named Zandithas Whistle-down (called Zan by her friends), the bandits are a mot-ley crew of elven and human mercenaries. Many of them had military experience during the Great War but found civilian life lacking once the peace treaty was signed over twenty years ago. They found the bandit life suited them better in their boredom and frustration, and they have been raiding caravans for over a year now. They stumbled upon the old enclave a month ago and have made it their base of operations ever since.

OUTSIDE THE ENCLAVE

Once the characters have arrived, read aloud:

This part of the forest is thick with underbrush that slows down travel significantly. Working your way through, you find yourself under the golden leaves of a massive oak tree whose roots form an archway partially hidden with colorful flowers and plant growth. Clear drag marks move through the archway and down a flight of earthen stairs leading into darkness.

Characters with passive Wisdom (Perception) scores of 13 or higher or who succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notice that this area is deathly quiet save for a gentle breeze through the treetops. A close look at the surrounding plant life reveals something wrong with them—spots of an unknown disease and rot are starting to appear.

THORNWALKER ENCLAVE

The Thornwalkers used their magic to move the earth under the roots of a massive oak tree deep in the Shimmering Forest. They knew their experiments and mutations were controversial, so they hid their enclave underground and out of sight. Their goal was to win the war against deforestation across the continent and protect nature with their fury.

Using their powers and experiments on various plant life, they infused their essences into a merged creature they grew in the darkness. Despite their best efforts, the Thornwalkers barely escaped its fury despite their best efforts after it tore through their ranks. The survivors were able to lock the beast away and laid wards to protect it before fleeing before they could be discovered.

The bandits recently kidnapped a local herbalist named Rita Loudwater to help them learn the strength of the plant life in the underground garden and help train the plant creatures still living there. They are unaware of the danger beneath their feet and how tearing out the garden weakens the prison wards.

GENERAL FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions, these general features are prominent throughout the enclave.

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The enclave was made using nature magic to shift earth and roots beneath a giant oak tree. Hard-packed dirt floors hold up earthen walls supported by roots shaped to form beams and supports. Ceilings are 10 to 12 feet high in the rooms and 8 feet tall in the hallways.

Doors. Doors in the enclave are formed from intertwined flexible roots that are easily opened and swing closed of their own accord after a moment.

Lights. The ceiling is home to a phosphorus fungus that provides dim light throughout the entire enclave. A few sconces enchanted with *continual flame* spells are still operating in the upper levels and in the captain's quarters (areas 1, 2, and 5)

Climate. The air is cool and filled with the musky scent of earth mixed with the sweetness of the plants growing below.



Nature's Pain. Any character attempting to use magic to communicate, influence, or interact with the plant life in this enclave has an innate feeling that the spell will fail. If they proceed anyway, they lose the spell slot as the spell fails. They also must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw against the painful screams of the forest, taking 18 (4d8) psychic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the keyed locations on the provided map of the enclave.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

Spotty patches of grass cover the otherwise dirt floor of this broad chamber. Softly glowing phosphorescent mushrooms grow along the ceiling, giving off a soft light, and a sweet scent fills the air. Haphazard piles of crates, barrels, and sacks of goods lay scattered against the walls. Descending staircases lead to the west and northeast.

The bandits have been using this area as their storage room for all their stolen goods. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check can hear them celebrating their recent raid in area 2, their laughter ringing up from the steps.

Encounter: Sleeping Guard. One of the bandits (an elven bandit captain) was left on guard but fell asleep while tucked behind a crate. He awakens with 2 rounds if the characters are not moving stealthily. He immediately shouts to alert the two bandit captains in area 2, who rush into the room to join him in fending off the characters.

If the characters restrain the guard and he's left awake, he escapes his bonds after an hour and rallies others from area 2 (if alive) to come after the characters.

Treasure. The merchant goods weigh roughly 5,000 lbs and consist of various mundane textiles, basic tools, and foodstuffs worth 1,000 gp. Opening any of the containers without alerting the guards in area 2 areas requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

2. LIVING QUARTERS

The bandits quickly moved into the old living quarters of the ancient druid circle. They have not been kind to the natural beauty of the former occupant's furniture—

most surfaces bear knife scars, scorch marks, and other blemishes from their roughhousing.

Once the characters enter the room, read aloud:

This once ornate chamber is a chaotic mess of empty wineskins, ripped tapestries, and odd smells. A cluttered wooden table sits in the center, and six tightly shut doors ring the walls. The current occupants do not seem to care much for its former beauty.

Development. If the guard in area 1 cries an alarm, the two bandits (they both use **bandit captain** statistics) grab their weapons and rush to his aid. Otherwise, the bandits are seated at a table, laughing and passing a wineskin back and forth. They have disadvantage on perception checks made against stealthy characters. If combat ensues, after 2 rounds, the four sleeping bandits (they use **spy** statistics) burst from their rooms.

2a. SLEEPING CHAMBER

These rooms hold sleeping bandits resting after their raid, and only the sounds of continued combat in area 2 awaken them. Each room contains a simple bed and a few personal belongings.

Treasure. For each room, roll a 1d8 and consult the Bandit Loot table to determine what is found in each room, rerolling on duplicates.

2B. DRUID REMAINS

A thick layer of dust covers everything in this room, including a skeleton dressed in scraps of cloth lying on an old bed. These are the remains of a Thornwalker druid who died after being mortally wounded by the creature below. Their journal can be found hidden behind a knot in a root above the headboard with a successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A golden medallion shaped like an acorn on a silver chain worth 200 gp is in the space with the journal.

Druids Journal. The journal is severely decayed from time, but the last passage says in Elvish, "We thought we were doing what was best for the forest. We felt the pain and knew we must act quickly. But what we birthed with our rage... this is not right... What horror have we wrought upon the world?"

3. CENTRAL GARDEN

A heavy scent of flowers wafts through the air as you descend into a large chamber overgrown with colorful vegetation. The atmosphere is damp, warm, and filled with the buzz of insects flitting around. Curved arched doorways exit to the east and west.

This garden is filled with exotic plants that the Thorn-walker druids cultivated for their various experiments. If the characters are here to gather plants for Valda Singlebraid (see Adventure Hooks), this is where they are

BANDIT LOOT

d8 LOOT

- A pouch filled with ten marbles, a small canvas doll stuffed with straw and missing an arm, and a silvered shortsword with a sterling silver snarling wolf's head pommel (100 gp).
- 2 4d8 gp, 6d8 sp, and 10d6 cp are hidden inside various articles of clothing and stuffed into a pair of boots.
- A twisted and carved wooden ring that appears to have a single edge. Anyone wearing the ring cannot rest easily and does not benefit from a short or long rest.
- A red leather-bound journal written in barely comprehensible Common detailing each of the bandits' attacks interspersed with attempts of horrible poetry.
- A set of thieves' tools and a pair of loaded bone dice that always come up as sixes.
- A silver and glass potion bottle with an amber liquid inside.

 Anyone drinking the potion comes under the effects of a spider climb spell for 1 hour.
 - A book containing various pressed flowers with neat handwriting detailing their species and multiple uses in medicine and poisons. A character proficient with
- 7 alchemist's supplies can spend 1 hour and 10 gp of common ingredients along with the dried flowers to craft a potion of healing or a potion of poison.
- 8 A cracked, 1-foot-tall stone statue of the goddess of autumn inlay with gold and silver chasing worth 100 gp.

found. It takes 10 minutes of searching through the vegetation to find the described plants Valda wants.

Encounter: Corrupted Gardener. The Thornwalkers created gardeners out of plantlife to assist with taking care of this area. After they abandoned the enclave, they remained, slowly falling into corruption over the centuries. The bandits managed to kill off most of them and were able to tame one through the help of their kidnapped herbalist. The remaining corrupted gardener resembles and uses shambling mound statistics, and it understands but cannot speak Elvish. The gardener avoids leaving this room unless to defend itself. Rita Loudwater (see area 5) used her herbalism and knowledge to pacify the gardener from attacking the bandits. It now attacks anyone other than elves or bandits who enter the garden. An elf character who attempts to calm the gardener in Elvish and succeeds on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check can convince the gardener to treat the party as allies and the bandits as enemies.

Treasure. Among the exotic plants is a plant whose berries have the same effect as those made by a *goodberry* spell. A character proficient in Nature or who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Nature) check recognizes them and knows their properties. A total of 10 berries can be harvested.

4. TRAPPED HALLWAY

This short hallway descends to the former head druid's office, and its walls are covered in flora. A character searching for traps who succeeds on a DC 15 Widom (Perception) check notices a tripwire halfway down the hall tied to a bundle of purple flowers. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check knows these flowers as having pollen that can cause temporary blindness. Triggering the trap releases pollen into the hallway, and any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become blinded for 1 hour or until they complete a short or long rest. The tripwire also alerts the bandits in area 5, and they prepare to attack.

5. Captain's Quarters

If the tripwire in area 4 was triggered, Rita is bound and gagged while the bandits prepare defenses. Otherwise, Rita and Zan can be heard eating and conversing about exotic plants through the closed door with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check.

An elegant carpet with a twisted thorn pattern covers what appears to be a newly installed wooden floor. Ornate furniture fills the chamber. A redwood bed sits in one corner next to an ornately carved maple desk covered in papers and notes. A small table with dinner settings for two stands against one wall.

Zandithas Whistledown has turned this chamber into her living and working quarters. She spends most days—when not on raids—learning everything she can from the herbalist Rita Loudwater.

Encounter: Captain & Captive. The bandit leader Zandithas (she uses gladiator statistics), and one bandit (bandit captain) are guarding Rita, the captive herbalist (druid). Zan is more interested in escaping with her life than facing the characters in a toe-to-toe fight and uses her wiles to convince them to let her leave with her lockbox (see Treasure below) in exchange for the herbalist's life. If allowed to leave, she hastily retreats in search of the rest of her crew in area 2 to return with backup. If the bandits in area 2 were defeated, she leaves the complex, vowing revenge.

Treasure. An iron lockbox (DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to open) can be found under the bed. Inside is Zan's portion of the raiding loot, which amounts to 300 gp, 250 sp, a gold snake armband (50 gp), and a *potion of climbing*.

Development. Once Rita is freed, she expresses her gratitude and explains how she was kidnapped while traveling with a caravan the bandits attacked. She helped Zan tame the corrupted gardener in area 3 but did not tell her about the secret door in the ritual room. Rita discovered the hidden door while looking through the area. She shows the characters, staying with them for safety but unwilling to join in combat.

THE BANDIT & THE HERBALIST

Zandithas Whistledown is a perky, slender half-elf with short-cropped red hair and swirling blue tattoos covering her face, chest, and arms. She has a mischievous nature with wits as sharp as her blade—both of which she uses in equal measure. Her charm has enabled her to gather a loyal band of rogues that follow her lead. Zandithas does not let anyone or anything get in the way of what she wants.

Rita Loudwater is a short and portly human woman with a ruddy complexion that brings out her freckles. Her long, brown hair is kept in a neat bun, and her meticulous nature is apparent in her clipped way of speaking and her attention to detail.

6. RITUAL ROOM

Deep scratches that appear to be claw marks cover the rocky floor of this oddly cold room. Painted clay pots fill dozens of niches in the vine-covered earthen walls.

The Thornwalkers used this room to experiment with nature magic and combine plant and animal life to create new creatures.

Painted Pots. Characters who inspect the pots quickly notice they are painted with scenes of druids using magic on animals and plants. A druid or ranger character instantly knows these acts are considered abhorrent to good-aligned creatures. If Rita is with the characters, she can also explain this to the characters. This story they tell is of the Thornwalkers' attempts to create living weapons to fight in a long-forgotten war and includes some hints as to the methods used.

Secret Door. A character searching the walls who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the secret door leading to area 7 behind a cluster of vines. A loose stone in the wall can be pressed to reveal the passage leading down. If Rita is with the characters, she knows exactly where the door is and opens it for them.

7. SLEEPING GARDEN

The air is thick with the perfume of the many flowers growing along the edges of this chamber. A pair of skeletons lay curled next to each other in the center of the room. A stone archway with thick stone doors sits on the eastern wall. The flowers around the edges of the door are black and withered.

The skeletons are the remains of a pair of druids who sacrificed themselves to grow the flowers in this room before the creature in area 8 escaped. They fell victim to

the eternal slumber but were successful. The flowers have been slowly rotting over the decades, and the beast will be freed once enough wither away.

Hazard: Sleepy Time. Anyone who enters or ends their turn in this chamber and breathes the flowers' pollen must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or fall immediately into a deep sleep. The flowers are flammable, and a 5-foot section can be burned away in 1 round. If removed from the room, the sleeper awakens after 1 hour.

Development. If all of the flowers are burned away, the creature in area 8 breaks through the stone door and rushes to flee the complex, only engaging with the characters if they block its path.

8. THE DARK LAIR

Every surface of this rocky chamber is covered in soot and scored with deep claw marks. A pool of rank-smelling water sits in a corner next to a vine-covered mound. Suddenly, the vegetation unfurls and lumbers to its feet, revealing a horror with three heads! Every surface of this rocky chamber is covered in soot and scored with deep claw marks.

The Thornwalkers created a nature-infused creature with rage for all living things but could not control the beast. It rampaged through the druid circle before they could lock it deep within this chamber. The creature has

been trapped in this room, waiting for its chance to escape.

Encounter: The Failed Weapon. The creature is an amalgamation of living creatures with a body of sickly-looking vegetation. It uses **chimera** statistics with the following modifications:

- It has the maximum 168 (12d10 + 48) hit points.
- It is CR 8 (3,900 XP).
- It can innately cast the *entangle* and *thunderwave* spells 2/Day each.

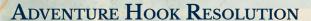
Treasure. The bones of the ancient druid circle the chimera killed can be found in the bottom of the pool of water. Along the bottom are a silvered dagger with a deer antler hilt (100 gp), a gold torc engraved with vines (50 gp), and a *staff of the woodlands*.

Conclusion

If the characters defeat the chimera hidden within the enclave, Rita Loudwater brings news of its defeat to the other druids within the Shimmering Forest. They pledge to use their magic to remove any trace of the enclave and make sure the Thornwalkers' research is eradicated.

If the chimera escapes the enclave, it begins to wreak havoc throughout the forest, attacking villages and infecting other wildlife with its corruption. This could be a way to lead the characters onto further adventures while they hunt down the creature. Perhaps another organization manages to capture it and learns how to make more, building a new threat to the realms.





The resolutions to some of the provided adventure hooks are as follows:

NATURE'S CALL

The characters pulled to the forest can feel it breathe a sigh of relief if the chimera was destroyed or its horror if it escaped. The character may be visited by another in tune with the forest, who might guide them further along their path or render aid in whatever way is needed.

FEEDING THE GREEN

Each exotic plant returned to Valda Singlebraid is paid for as promised (the number of plants and their value will be determined by you as GM). She is very interested to hear about the further experiments made in the enclave and pays extra if the characters bring back the chimera's body for her to experiment with. What could go wrong?



CREDITS

Author: TJ Phoenix

Production & Design: THE DM TOOL CHEST Cartography: TJ Phoenix, Inkarnate Cover Illustration: Shutterstock Interior Illustrations: Shutterstock

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