
GUILD
DOWN THE GARDEN PATH
TRIALS OF WONDER
Purge the hidden terrors of the Garden of Knowledge found within Kyptgarden Forest in the world's greatest roleplaying game

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A Letter to the Dungeon Master from the Honorable Scholar Rohricht W. Deepbranch of Candlekeep, attaché for the High House of Wonders in Baldur's Gate, overseer and purveyor of Gondian research and innovation.

My apologies for the weight bestowed upon you.

I write to you, weaver of fate, to heed my warnings about looking too deep into knowledge laid dormant and left forgotten aeons. And for good reason, as the revelations my team and I have uncovered during our research could bring about cataclysmic circumstances.

If you are reading this I, Professor Rohricht W. Deepbranch, and my team are racing against unknown forces to stop the assembly and activation of ancient relics we have identified across Faerûn. The research of timeworn texts on ancient geographies and historical ritual has unearthed arcana - stark mysteries of a most frightening future.

The Gondian research hypothesized that ancient religious practice paired with the use of magic and machina-based relics may have played a role in ritualistic worship towards the pursuit of knowledge. I shudder to think that our time delving through old tomes and maps could have shed light on the location of ancient conduits used to draw energy from realms unknown.

Yet, there are those in Candlekeep who worship dangerous entities in secret. Those who seek to commune with knowledge horrific. Those who have found out about our work and are hunting members of our academic team and myself as we move to collect these relics - saving Faerûn from an ill-omened reveal and a fate so terrifying I dare not write.

My research team has been asked to leave Candlekeep at once as a newer team of unknown, ne'er-do-wells replace us looking to continue the study and put it into action.

I cannot deny my part in opening this wound.

We are now considered researchers emeritus to the library, but we are quietly moving to action. I will do my best to stop those who seek to corrupt with our study and leave buried those elder things which should never have been disturbed.

I have the greatest hope our emeritus clerics of Gond will locate and destroy these devices. If not, all may be lost.

Sincerest apologies with haste,

Cleric of Gond
Rohricht W. Deepbranch

Adventure Summary

Birds sing as the sun rises over the green hills of a small woodland, a light wind carries the scent of fresh beginnings in the summer air. A band of adventurers start out on the forest trail from their overnight in Red Larch, well-stocked and prepared for the journey ahead to their new destination in the southern edge of the Sword Mountains. The group treks deep into the undergrowth, certain an old logging trail will shave half a day off their travels, unaware of the change in the foliage around them, the sweet smell of floral distracts as the thick vegetation becomes a more guided path. The time for exits is over, as dense greenery blocks any escape for the adventurers, making their only way forward down the garden path...



Adventure Background

Abandoned to the wilds and left unchecked for millennia, Shesh Ath Menatu was once a sacred place of communal intellect, life-giving energy, elevated learning, and natural beauty.

The Garden was known for its cognitive ability to call those who came near, appealing to their inner sensibilities and elevating their minds to achieve the impossible. For years, many came and for years Faerûn was better for it, with those who learned from Shesh Ath Menatu serving as enlightened guides to the people of the surrounding lands.

The true gift of Shesh Ath Menatu lay within the ancient mechanisms that have sustained the Garden since before recorded history. These pillars of knowledge, called the Nar Ath Menatu, are a mystical combination of magic and machine of a civilization that was deeply connected to the elements over an aeon ago. These instruments were created to help balance the natural energies within the Kryptgarden Forest, focusing the essence of life, touch, and earth through these conduits. And in these conduits, the shared experiences and memories of all living things that have passed through the area are preserved, a massive natural repository of knowledge giving the Garden life and breath. This true gift to the future of Faerûn is Shesh Ath Menatu and the three Nar Ath Menatu, a place of eternal light with the pillars of knowledge to guide the way for all.



The first mechanism represents creation: **Ivae Nar**, Pillar of Life in Elvish translated to common. The first milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced through the gift of life, by tending to the Garden itself and growing with it.

The second mechanism represents calibration, **Haran Nar**, Pillar of Touch in Elvish translated to common. The middle milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced through exploration in the natural world.

The third mechanism represents land, **Erek Nar**, Pillar of Earth in Elvish translated to common. The final milestone in the Garden acknowledges the learnings that are experienced by returning to earth.



These ancient Pillars were the roots from which the Shesh Ath Menatu grew and flourished, teaching those who entered its nurturing essence, and sharing in the histories and memories of those who lived and taught within it.

That was until the Great Tear, when ancient knowledge was beset upon by a primordial hunger.

A deafening rupture across the surface of Kryptgarden Forest fractured the grounds of the ancient Garden of Knowledge. An earthquake of such rending force it left a permanent hole in the garden, a cavity so deep that it became a monument to the power of the elements and the importance of paying careful attention to boundaries of the known and the unknown.

The advent of the Great Tear brought tension to the Garden, fiery debates about the origins of the event, what its purpose was, and what should be done about the tear, a growing concern as whispered voices and glowing lights of yellow, red and blue were observed.

About the Clerics of Gond

The Clerics of Gond can be seen across the Sword Coast, plying their ability in unique machinery learning and developing new technology, and documenting their findings to share amongst the Gondar community for the betterment of all. A group of these Clerics has focused solely on the study of ancient relics, lost to the everyday world.

The Clerics of Gond at Candlekeep have discovered something frightening within the past that may have severe repercussions in the present if not sought out with urgency. Under a hood and hammer, Rohricht has sent Grey Ryanne, an incredibly sharp Cleric with deep experience in ancient relic technology to investigate the first location that the research team has identified. Hidden within Kryptgarden Forest lies a place of learning, lost to time for reasons unknown, with a mysterious tie to an elder past by way of a strange piece of technology - one that this group of Clerics must obtain to save the Garden and possibly the fate of Faerûn itself.



About the Druids of the Dusk Circle

The only beings with true understanding are the Druids of the Dusk Circle. This group of naturists has lived in isolation within the Tsordvuud, amongst its denizens, for hundreds of years. The Dusk Circle lives in a symbiotic balance with the forest, helping tend to its natural processes of life and keeping it healthy for those who live within it. The druids are fully aware of the Garden of Knowledge and live in its presence, taking care to nurture this ancient entity of aeons passed, until the time when new seekers of truth and light need a place to commune, to learn and to live from its ancient memories. The Members of the Dusk Circle are aware of a deceptive foe, an enemy

that has taken from their ranks without being seen and haunted them with copies of the dead, and brought about a rising threat within their sacred ancient forest.



About the Oblex and their Colonies

The Great Tear was a deep earthquake that stretched from the surface of Faerûn to the depths of the Underdark creating only one opening on the surface located to the west side of the the interior Garden. For the beings of Faerûn, this fissure between worlds is nearly impossible to navigate as there is very little space for movement of any kind including descension. Only an amorphous being could move through the cracks.

The malleable bulk of an Oblex is one such entity.

Shesh Ath Menatu has slowly been taken over by an Elder Oblex. The elder has made the Garden of Knowledge home, consuming those who live within it and feasting on the memories held within this ancient place and those who dare to visit.

Still, the colony grows. The Elder Oblex has spawned new ones within the walls of the Garden of Knowledge, drawing their prey in by impersonating those it has consumed, engaging with the adventurers in ways that might be useful to them and luring others to their end.

More information about Oblexes can be found in Mordenkainens Tome of Foes.

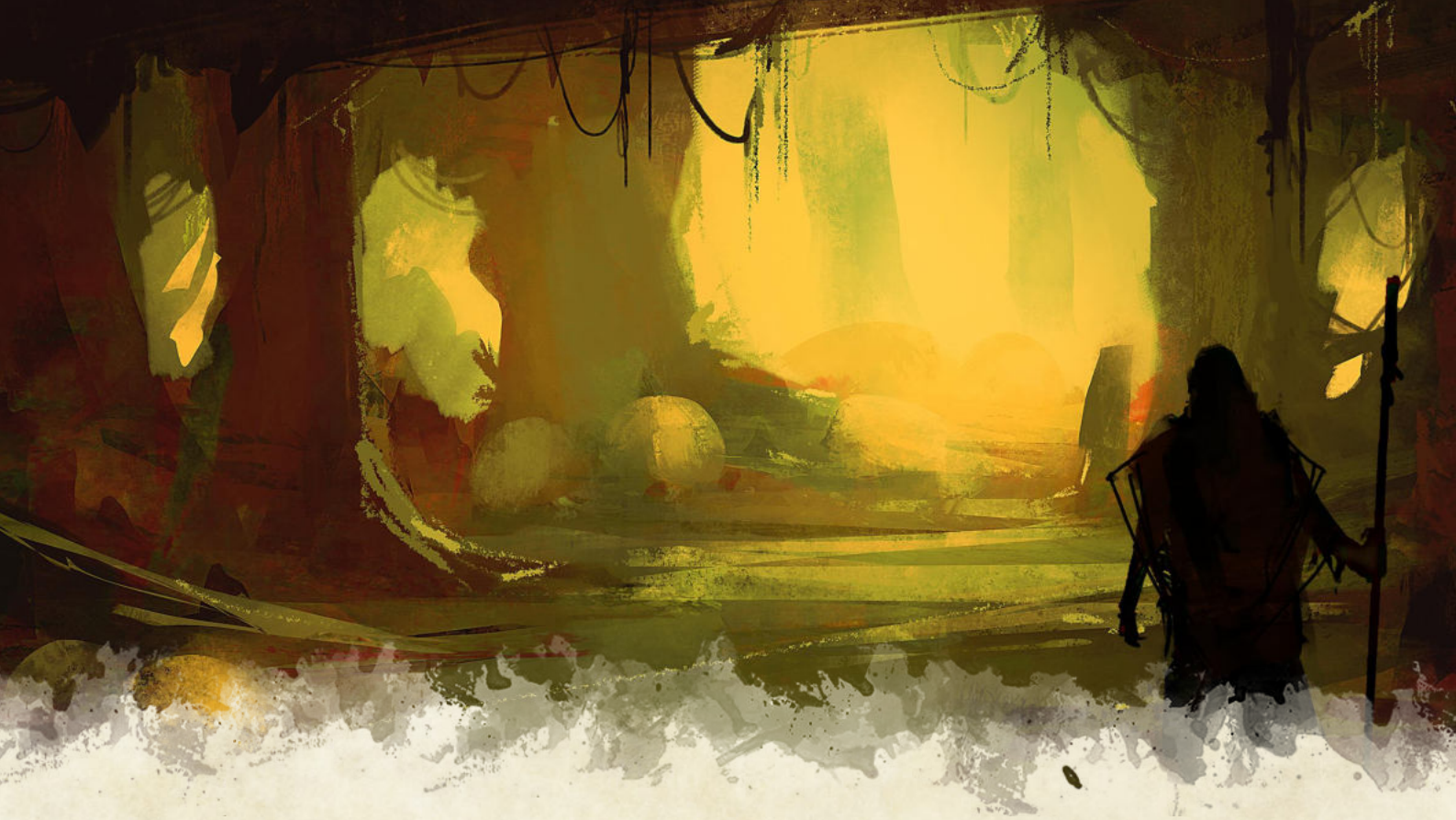
About The Key

The ancient origins of the Key and how it came to the Garden are not fully documented, even in the texts found within the libraries of the ruins. The Key itself is quite large in size, barely fitting most leather satchels, and is unique as the runes that cover its surface are not of any known language across Faerûn. The special research group of Gondar Clerics led by Rohricht have been able to identify these runes as Elder in nature, from realms beyond the stars, and linked to other relics bearing similar markings across all of Toril. The Key is the critical piece in activating the three pillars within the Garden, understanding the correct sequence of its unknown runes will turn on each of them and restore the life essence back to this ruin. Beware of their purpose though, as these relics are not made from the mortal realm (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11D33e1oof0&list).

About the Unknown Masked Acolyte

The Garden has many incredible and terrifying experiences lying in wait for those who come to its aid, but no secret is as horrifying as that of the body of the unknown acolyte. The twisted body of an unidentified mage is found within the Garden, mangled by the tearing forces of vines, dark coloured and rippled skin, the remnant of an unspeakable event leaving only its green hooded cape, a leather satchel with a note warning of eerie prophecy and wearing a white mask of unknown origin. Little evidence is left to fully understand the intention of this forgotten soul or how it came to be in the Garden, navigating many terrible obstacles only to succumb to the wild within this ancient ruin. The rot of time has eaten away many answers to questions that would shine light on this enigma but none more so than the date of the letter, much closer to the present than might seem possible.





Part 1: Ivae Nar, Pillar of Light

The adventure begins when the players unknowingly enter the Garden of Knowledge (Shesh Ath Menatu) along an overgrown logging trail through Kryptgarden Forest. The Garden has quietly called them to its aid as something deep inside it has drained this once sacred place of its essence infecting its vast stores of knowledge and contorting the nature around it. Exploring the front hall of this forsaken place, the characters become quickly aware of a Cleric of Gond who is being held captive by several well-hidden Blights, saving her for a terrible fate. As the pack of unholy wood is cut down, Grey Ryanne, the Gondar Cleric, informs the adventurers of her mission to restore the life essence to Shesh Ath Menatu and safeguard the Key to the Nar from darker hands. The only thing standing in the way of turning on the Pillar of Light is figuring out how to use the first key and battle a surprisingly aggressive, and alive, Hobgoblin search party, long thought to have gone missing. These three events, walking into the garden, saving the cleric, and battling the search party are no mere coincidence, rather a hint at the truth beyond these infected walls.

Public Noticeboard at the Highsun Tavern

First note: In the Helm at Highsun tavern, the characters are privy to a note hanging in an envelope with the symbol of Gond stamped on the front. The letter is written by Grey Ryanne and she insists that this letter be delivered to the head of her research team, Rohricht Deepbranch, should she not return from her mission to locate the Garden of Knowledge. The letter simply states: Rohricht, I have found it, yet I have failed in securing this hallowed ground. Please send help, my life may depend on it and so will the fate of Faerûn.

Second note: A curious "Missing Persons" note has been put up at the Highsun tavern. The request asks for any and all help locating a hobgoblin search party that was hunting Blight in the Kryptgarden Forest and has not returned in over two months. There is a 250 gp reward for any proof of what has happened to the team and proof of their whereabouts. Let the Tavern owner know and you will be put in touch with those looking for them.

Exploring Shesh Ath Menatu

The Garden of Knowledge lives deep within the Kryptgarden Forest, not far from the southern reach of the Sword Mountains and northeast of the town of Red Larch. The woodlands that make up Shesh Ath Menatu are so densely overgrown that the air barely moves, the sun struggles to breach the canopy and the forest seemingly speaks to itself through deep wooden groans.

A Sense of the Tsordvuud – A Hidden Message

A secret message in the language of the Druids has been left deep along the old logging trail into Kryptgarden Forest. If there is a Druid in the group they automatically spot the message that has been left by their kinsman. If any other members of the group speak Druid they will be able to see the secret message left within the woods.

The woodlands are in danger. The Garden is sick and it calls to all who can help. Be on your best guard, all for one but trust no one.

All other members of the party can spot the presence of the secret message with a successful DC15 Wisdom (Perception) check but can't decipher it without magic.

Heed the call of Shesh Ath Menatu

A forest lives and breathes with all the life that is a part of it, and so communicates to all matter of beings that make it. The Garden was known for calling to those who came close to its doors, welcoming those that it deemed worthy-minded and virtuous enough to enter its camouflaged gates. The invitation is subtle, meant to invoke a sense of hope, comfort and safety to its potential guests, always appealing to their senses, as they walk down the garden path and towards its sacred inner sanctum. The call of Shesh Ath Menatu always references a sensory experience to any and all who are within reach of the gates. Feel free to creatively come up with your own calls of the garden. Or use the table below.

The Garden of Knowledge Calling to Your Senses

d8	Sensory Experience
1	The light scent of spring fills the air and with it the soothing aroma of lilac, reminding you of your childhood adventures in the woods.
2	You get goosebumps on your arms as you feel the comforting heat of the sun on your face and walk through the woods, a heightened confidence in yourself and your abilities.
3	The sound of multiple songbirds singing in unison throughout the forest lifts your spirits and lightens your step for the adventure to come.
4	Your eyes light up as the forest around you is vibrant with colour that seems to beckon you onward.
5	Pausing for a break on your hike, you grab some blueberries from a bush at the side of the path. A sense of reinvigoration washes over you. You feel ready for everything.
6	The wind gently brushes against your cheek leaving you self-assured.
7	You watch as colourful hummingbirds flit back and forth across the path as the sun filters through their technicolour wings seemingly calling you forward through the forest. You feel compelled to follow.
8	Wildflowers appear surrounding the path ahead and fill you with a sense of awe and wonder that pulls you forward down this deep forest trail.

Down the Garden Path we go…

As the adventurers unknowingly walk into Shesh Ath Menatu, read the following:

The dense logging trail opens up to a natural rise bordered by thick, dew-covered bush, shielded by the canopy of two ancient trees towering above. The path begins slowly descending into a beautiful clearing stepped with an intricately cut stone floor of unknown artistry that looks elvish in its marriage of elegant design and the natural environment surrounding it. Tall arches rise above this clearing covered in old vines with massive leaves that show the tightly woven vegetated fabric of natural flora that has been here for what must be several hundred years. As you look around the clearing from the stone-cut floor you notice carved statues that resemble all manner of beings across Faerûn. They're covered in assorted greenery. You notice the figures hold books in one hand while the other hand motions towards a grand doorway, whose gates are open with an entryway that appears to have not been traipsed in a very long time. Looking back up the rise you notice that the trail opening has closed, covered with intertwined muscular vines, knotted tree root and rolling moss. The only way to go is forward through the stone-cut archway.

With a successful DC10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, characters exploring the front atrium and grand doorway of the ruins also spot the following:

- A raised inscription sits on the top of the Grand Archway in ancient elvish and simply says "Shesh Ath Menatu" which translated into common means "Garden of Knowledge".
- Strange prints mark the dusted floor from the foyer and track to beyond the grand archway into the garden. There appear to be four sets of them leading into Ivae Nar, the ruins for the Pillar of Light.
- Of all the hints that show how ancient this place is, perhaps the most unusual is the series of clear water channels, no longer running but immaculately clean and smooth.



Shesh Ath Menatu Key Rune Player Difficulty Level

Level 1 Difficulty - Key Runes are exactly as listed in the combination below and Grey is familiar with their sequence to activate the Pillar (located on page 17).

Level 2 Difficulty - The Runes are spread out across this ruin for the players to find. Regardless of where they find them, the combination is listed on page 17.

Ivae Nar Key Combination - Check here for puzzle section

Ivae Nar Random Encounters

The ruins of the Pillar of Light have many hidden creatures that have made the dark recesses of its halls there home. Roll a D20 every 15mins (outside of an encounter below) an encounter occurs on a roll of 16-20. Determine the encounter by rolling a D4 with the reference table below:

Ivae Nar Encounters

Encounter	Location	Rounds
Swarm of Rats	Great Hall	3
Swarm of Insects	Great Hall	3
Swarm of Bats	Pillar Room	3

Overnight within the Garden

A possibility not to be considered at any cost as the Garden holds many dark & terrifying secrets within its cursed walls, but a risk brave adventurers may be willing to make.

Evening Visitation & Sulfurous Impersonation

The Oblexes will make copies of the former students of the Garden of Knowledge in order to wreak havoc on the players across the Garden, especially when they are vulnerable during a period of rest. Actively use the short and long rest rules for the Adventurers playing through downtime within the Garden and reference the encounter below.

Suggested use of characters for the Dungeon Master as they would relate to the Garden of Knowledge are the following (stick to the rules of the number of copies allowed in Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes):



- Dwarven Cleric
- Orc
- Elf
- Tabaxi
- Druid
- Any of the Players who were held by the Oblex more than once.
- Grey Ryanne

Into the Ruin

1. A Veiled Threat

The building is the Hall of Embrace, the welcoming atrium for all those who came to Shesh Ath Menatu. Vaulted ceilings and rays of sunlight peeking through thick vines show ornately detailed walls with scripture written on them, lessons to learn on the path to enlightenment.

> The silence of the main foyer begs the question – what has happened in this sacred entranceway? The surrounding area has weaponry scattered across the floor and up the stairs through the ancient, vaulted archway. It's an odd setting as there are no bodies of the fallen, no trace of skeletons or bones laying claim over these arms.

Ordinance from cultures spread across Faerûn seems to have found their unusual resting places well into the first building where small columns of light show a Hobgoblin party of five that is quietly rummaging through the blades on the ground. The party is unaware of the adventurers but seems quite nervous as four of them attempt to stock up on what armament they can use while the fifth Hobgoblin scout, blade drawn, looks nervously down the ill-lit hall, away from your party. The Hobgoblins may attack if they see or hear you, triggering a fight in the front vestibule of the hall.

Based on how the adventuring party decides to engage with the warrior group there are three potential experiences, each resulting in a fight.

1) Offer Help: Clearly in distress, the Hobgoblin party keeps looking into the next Hall with uneasy breath and darting eyes. The adventurers call out to them in peace and notice their leader is critically wounded. The team offers help and the hunting party shares its lessons learned. Two of the Hobgoblins, the scout and one warrior are taken out with a flurry of unseen maneuvers from the darkness in the next room. The scout is dragged into the ruin screaming for his life and the warrior is pitted with arrows, mouth agape in shock.

2) Sneak up closer: Seemingly, a quiet approach towards the hobgoblins goes well. That is until one person in the adventuring party steps on an old dagger making a loud scraping sound. All goblins turn, wild-eyed, blades drawn. The adventurers can offer to help or if they attack the leader yells at your group: "BE GONE TRICKSTERS. YOUR DOUBLES DON'T FOOL US!"

3) You Attack. The hobgoblins turn, wild-eyed, blades drawn. The leader, already critically wounded, yells at your group: "CUT DOWN THE COPIES! THEY MOVE IN THE CHANNELS!"