

THE BOG MOTHER'S MALODOROUS MUCK



Synopsis

A foul and sudden corruption spreads from the Whitehart forest. Local townsfolk are telling old tales of older evils buried deep within the wood, and rumors of a missing alchemist's apprentice add to the mystery. The townsfolk need your heroes to journey deep into the plagued forest and unearth its secrets to save all of Whitehart! This forest adventure can be placed into any fantasy setting.

Quest Summary

1. Hear **Rumors In Whitehart** of the forest's sickness and the missing alchemist's apprentice.
2. Enter the forest on **A Wicked Hunt** to find the apprentice and the source of Whitehart's evils.
3. Face the living muck, seal the **Portal of Corruption**, and return to Whitehart as heroes!

Background

Untold centuries ago a loathsome Faerie sovereign known as **The Bog Mother** crossed into this plane through an ancient oak and claimed the surrounding forest as her own. Born of the Faerie's wicked nature, a monstrous muck sickened the land and nearby living creatures, warping the forest to resemble The Bog Mother's domain. Fortunately, powerful mages among the White Heart elves who traveled throughout this region were able to seal the crossing with a radiant crystal, banishing The Bog Mother and reversing her vile corruption. Eventually, these events faded into legend, but the forest and a small town raised at its edge still bear the name of Whitehart.

The night before last, a summer storm in Whitehart forced the alchemist's apprentice, **Adelaide Sunbreeze**, to seek shelter while she was foraging deep in the forest. There in a huge hollow oak, Adelaide found the elven crystal, and she took it. Immediately wretched living muck erupted from the unsealed crossing and as Adelaide ran into the stormy night, her human form hybridized into that of a fawn. Afraid to return home, Adelaide now hides in the forest as it grows more dangerous and the corruption quickly creeps toward town. With livestock already succumbing to the strange illness, messengers have been sent throughout the land carrying pleas for aid, and your heroes have answered!

Rumors In Whitehart

The adventure begins as the party arrives in the town of Whitehart. Read or paraphrase the following text, then share several rumors listed below as the player characters explore, leading them toward Vedrah Kildare, the alchemist.

As you walk the cobbled streets of Whitehart, your footsteps echo among closed stalls and boarded-up shops. Usually known for their rustic hospitality, the sparse townsfolk nod but barely offer a smile as you make your way down the main thoroughfare. Most seem to be nervously speculating about recent events.

Vedrah is a slouched human woman with a wispy mane of graying hair topped with a pair of goggles. Wearing simple clothing and a stained apron, Vedrah pokes at a lump of the black scum with a stick and looks up briefly to introduce herself, then back down as she helps clarify the rumors. Vedrah informs the party that her apprentice Adelaide went foraging two nights ago for Twilight Sorrell: a rare herb found deep in the woods that can be used to produce a sleep aid.

>>>> "You touch the goo, you get sick!" a burly dwarf woman explains to her child. Then she continues, this time shouting down the street, "You'd think Vedrah would've whipped up a cure by now!"

>>>> "250 gold is an awful lot of coin for the merchant's guild. Almost makes me want to go searching in the woods, but I'd rather live!" an elderly halfling mutters at the party and laughs heartily.

>>>> "Is anyone even looking for Adelaide anymore?" a frustrated adolescent human questions her parents and shouts before stomping away, "Does silly old Vedrah even care about her!? AHRHH!"


>>>> "It's too much like that old story, but there's no White Heart elves around to save the day this time," a half-orc woman shrugs to a friend and shoulders a pack. "I'll be back when it's safe. I wish you'd come too."

>>>> "It started before!" "No, no, it started after she went missing!" a young half-elf man argues with a young human of indiscernible gender, referring to the alchemist's missing apprentice and the first appearance of the sickening muck.

If the party does not visit alchemist Vedrah Kildare's home, she approaches them on the street.

If the party decides to visit Vedrah, they find her home to be the most notable building in Whitehart:

Near the end of the cobblestone street, you see a squat stone building with a sloped green-patinated roof, and a round stove pipe emitting oddly bluish smoke. A carved wooden sign marks the building "Kildare's Concoctions."



A storm struck that night, Adelaide didn't return, and reports of the poisonous, foul-smelling slime began the next morning. Then Vedrah asks the player characters to journey into the forest, find the source of the muck, and find out what happened to Adelaide. She reminds them of the 250 gold reward for stopping the growing goop, declaring that she is authorized to give it out as a member of the merchant's guild. As further incentive, Vedrah offers to brew the party one potion of their choice (rarity: uncommon) if they return Adelaide to safety.

She also has 2 potions of healing for sale at 40 gold each, but player characters who succeed at a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** check get a 25% discount.

What Does the Goo Do?

Any creature who consumes or touches the fetid muck with bare skin must succeed at a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or suffer the poisoned condition until healed. **Awakened mucks** that characters may encounter in the forest are tiny ooze creatures with AC 5, HP 5, speed 15 ft., and one attack: **Smack (A)** 5 ft. +5, 1 poison damage. Any monsters of the GM's choice corrupted by the muck deal an additional 1d4 poison damage on nonmagical attacks.

A Wicked Hunt

Trees carrying the weight of centuries climb skyward, forming a thick, twisted canopy over the matted foliage below. Leaves churn underfoot and the sickening odor of rot hangs in the still, humid air as you make your way beneath the gnarled, ancient branches, occasionally spotting patches of the black, tar-like substance described by the people of Whitehart.

As the party enters the dimly lit forest, read the above text aloud. Then ask one player character to make a **DC 13 (Wisdom) Survival** check to determine the efficiency of the party's search for Adelaide and the source of the heinous sludge. With a successful check, that character readily finds a trail of worn footprints and carefully clipped herbs leading them into the woods and to one encounter from the **Forest Dangers** table determined by the player or gamemaster rolling 1d6. On a failed check, the party struggles to find traces of Adelaide, and instead faces two encounters from the table determined by both the player and the GM rolling 1d8--for the possibility of other exciting outcomes! After those two encounters, the player character with the highest Passive Perception notices Adelaide's dropped basket of herbs.