

# The Circlet of Life

## Starting the Adventure

This scenario is intended for 4 to 6 characters, based on Dungeons & Dragons 3.0 edition and all characters should be on levels 4 or 5. D&D version 3.5 can be also used, but scenario might require a little bit modification with it. You need Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide and Monster Manual to play this scenario. You also should print handouts at the rest of the scenario beforehand for players. You need four to six nature oriented characters, like druids, rangers, barbarians or perhaps shamans.

This is a story about young druids, barbarians and rangers finding their place among the great druidic circle. On their way they will learn about life itself, importance of living and also will prove their courage in battle. Scenario also includes some puzzles and riddles, but DMs are encouraged to help players solve them easy enough, so they can proceed with the adventure.

## Introduction

When springtime comes, it is the time for great druidic circle, the Blackwood Circle to accept new members to their society. Young members must pass the test of initiation and there has been rumours circling among candidates only strongest and smartest will pass. Alas, as in nature, only fittest will survive and there cannot be any compassion for the weak. Such is the way of the wild.

Players are all young apprentices of mysterious Blackwood Circle and now they have finally completed their basic training. Time has come to prove their skills and rise to higher positions in circle – or die trying.

## Starting the scenario: Meeting on the Hilltop

At sunrise on a beautiful late-spring day, Arch Druid Dunmar summons the players to the circle of menhirs, located on the bare top of a small hill called the Wind's Nest. Characters can take a look at menhirs and they will see many names written in runes to the stones. If players will later on ask about these names, Dunmar tells them those are the names, who are members of the circle. Dunmar beckons players to come forth and starts speaking.

"My young friends. For many years you have been studying nature, its ways and customs. You have been learning names of animals, plants and all living things. You have learned how to coexist with nature and skills to survive. Now, the time has come to prove you wisdom for us, The Elder Druids, if you are wise enough to join our ranks. You have to pass the test of initiation and after, if you survive, you will be granted the title of Guardian (for barbarians), Keeper (for druids) or Seeker (for rangers) of the Circle. Do know, however, that some of our young disciples that have taken this journey have not returned. This journey will be dangerous and you will need all your wits to survive.

You must find three pieces of the circlet of life and bring them to me. Pieces have been hidden around our valley and you will receive a piece as a reward from well completed task. We, the Elder Druids, have prepared you challenges you must

complete to prove your worthiness. These challenges will test your knowledge, bravery and intelligence. Go forth and make us proud, young ones. Combine the Circlet of Life. You will find the first challenge from the location indicated in this scroll.”

Dunmar gives the players **handouts number 1 and 2**, the map of the valley and a scroll with mirrored letters. The scroll reads “The first challenge will be on shore of Winterlake.”

## Challenge One: Hunt or Be Hunted Instead

”After while travelling in the wilderness, you finally arrive to a small and serene lake in the forest. From the lake you spot a beautiful swan swimming about. As you approach, it suddenly turns into an elderly woman, with long white hair and green eyes. Her voice is melodious and she sings a little merry tune. As she wades to the shore, she introduces herself as Calla, Swanmaid.”

”Congratulations, young ones, you have found the first place. Here your first task is to answer me to this question. As you know, the balance of nature is the most meaningful thing we must uphold. If something threatens it, we must act to preserve it. But you also know that every living thing has its own place in nature. Let us take for example griffons. Now I will ask a question about them, to what you must answer.”

At this point, players should use their common knowledge about D&D. It is always better for players to roleplay situations. But in case answering is very hard for them, you can allow Knowledge (nature) or Wilderness lore skill check (DC 15) and give some hints.

”A merchant caravan was strolling along the road with horses pulling wagons. They had packed finest livestock like chicken, pigs and goats in small cages. They also had many chests of gold and jewels. Since the merchant was stingy, he had hired most cheap, inexperienced and young guards to travel along. Suddenly guards heard a screech of a griffon in sky. What guards should have done, if they were smart?”

Right answer is release the horses from wagons and let them run. Griffon's favourite food is horse and they always attack them on sight. This way merchant would have been able to keep at least his merchandise and guards their lives. Later they probably would have to figure out how to tow the wagon back to town without horses. If players make some creative answer that sounds about right to you allow them to use it.

”Your task now to gain first piece of the Circlet of Life is to hunt a rogue griffon that has been pestering this valley for a while now. Unnaturally it does not seem to fear nearby villagers at all and they are afraid it will attack children soon. Besides, population of wild game has gone down. Hunt this griffon and bring its' head to me and I will reward you with a piece. If you find the reason for why it has been so bold, that would also help for future cases should more rogue griffons appear.”

Now it is up to players to find the griffon. You can see its location on the map for the DM. Hunting the griffon requires roleplaying. Good ideas include using Wilderness Lore to track the griffon (characters can find droppings, fallen feathers, pieces of kills and scratching marks)

- DC 16 in daylight.

- modifiers to the DC are: moonless night +6, fog or precipitation +3, moonlight +3. If characters fail a Wilderness Lore check, they can try again after an hour has passed. Allow characters to track for couple of times or as long as players find it interesting.

Characters can also gather information from villagers of Homwick. (Gather information check, DC 10). Villagers tell players they have been avoiding a place, where "old creature spirits reside imprisoned in stone", since that's the place where griffon has been seen. Villagers can be also persuaded (Diplomacy 15, if you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff or Sense Motive, you get +2 synergy bonus to diplomacy check) to escort characters near the place, but they are not very eager to go. Characters can also try bluffing, bribing or intimidating villagers to help, but since druids probably hear about this, characters will get scolded about this in the end of scenario by Archdruid Dunmar.

Griffon's nest is in the top of a small and strange-looking limestone formation called Spirit's Rest. Inside these limestones, characters can see lots of peculiar fossils of the animals. Fossils include skulls, claws and skeletons. The nest itself sits comfortably in an open mouth of a gargantuan reptilian skull.

Now characters can again use creativity how to slay the griffon. Good ideas include using a horse as a bait, climbing to the nest, hide and ambush the griffon or trap it somehow. Use appropriate DC for these checks, it should be somewhere between 10-15. Getting the griffon to fight shouldn't be too hard for characters. If characters have a rope along, they can of course use it while climbing. If players decide to create a trap for griffon, keep in mind it is a flying creature so digging a pit in ground doesn't help much. Once griffon has come, fight will start.

## Griffon

### Large Beast

Hit Dice: 7d10+21 (59 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

AC: 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 Natural)

Attacks: Bite + 8 melee, 2 claws +3 melee

Damage: Bite 2d6 + 4, Claw 1d4 + 2

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 10 ft. / 5ft.

Special attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6 + 2

Special qualities: scent

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8

Skills: Jump +8, Listen +6, Spot +11

Challenge rating: 4

Alignment: neutral



### Combat:

Pounce (Ex): If a griffon dives or leaps upon foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

Rake (Ex): A griffon that pounces on an opponent can make two rake attacks (+8 melee) with its hind legs for 1d6 + 2 slashing damage each.

Skills: Griffon receive a + 4 racial bonus to jump checks. They also receive a + 4 racial bonus to Spot checks in daylight.

By searching griffon's nest and corpse, characters will be able to determine that griffon was a single, lone female and it has a young cub in the nest also. Griffon has been forced to feed youngling alone and it has attacked whatever it can find. Now it is up to players if they show compassion. Sometimes young griffons can be trained as mounts, and some people pay as much as 7000 gp for a young one. Young griffon can be killed with a single sword swing, so it is non-combative creature. Whatever players decide to do with the young griffon, druids will go along with it, as long as they do not torture the poor creature in vain and prolong its' suffering.

Once characters bring the head of the griffon to Calla the Swanmaid, she will compliment them on their success. She will also hand them the first piece of the Circlet of Life and a hint how to find the next task. She will also ask what characters learned during the test. Whatever characters may answer, Calla will tell the next:

"In nature, there is no compassion, nor anger. There is only the eternal hunt, to be killed or to live. But as creatures of higher comprehension, we are capable of mercy. If the circumstances were different, we would have allowed this noble creature, the sole female griffon to live. But now we must send its spirit to the netherworld as it was a stout-hearted adversary. Go now and I will perform the required rituals."

Calla stays behind to appease the spirit of the griffon as characters will continue with their mission.

A hint how players find the next challenge, Calla will tell only *"It is a place where the hill breathes air and drinks water"*. Players should figure out this is the place in the upper right corner of the map, with a small river coming out of the hill.

## Challenge Two: The Great Variety of Life

"You approach an old and moist cave in the hillside. Walls are made of white limestone and look natural. You can still see some small stream coming out of walls of hills right here. Plant life here is abundant, hillside is full of different types of moss, ferns and vines. You have to crawl through the opening and shove plants aside to get inside. A distant dripping sound echoes from deeper down. Cave has an earthy smell, but it doesn't feel bad. After a while, the cave broadens allowing you to walk upright. It feels like someone is watching. You arrive to an opening that has no visible exits."

Give players the handout **number 3** (A wind chime). In the roof of the cave, there is a wind chime hanging from a rope. There are five bells, and ropes they are attached to and a small baton laying on the ground. Each ropes have knots tied to them. The secret to this puzzle is, players have to ring the bells in right order, as shown by knots. First the bell with upmost knot, then the next and so on. Once they have figured this out, read the following. (You can allow an intelligence roll to give hints, if they seem to get stuck.)

"You see a small spider skittering on the wall. Suddenly it grows bigger and bigger and you hear swooshing sound and its' form starts to change. At last you see a lean dark skinned man standing crouched beside you. He has no hair and dark, gleaming eyes, that remind you of that spider. He carries only a ragged robe and a staff."

"Ah, you must be the initiates Dunmar spoke of. Welcome to my humble cave. My name is Makal and I am here to teach you about the importance of variety of life. Better yet, you get to try it yourself how it feels to be small and ... "insignificant". (menacing laughter) And afterwards, perhaps you realize nothing is truly meaningless in nature. Your task is to go through this labyrinth of caves and find me, once you have finished."

Makal gives characters the Bauble of Shapeshifting, which only works on willing characters. This is a special bauble that can be used by any character and it turns user into any non-magical animal. User can either decide, whether he will keep the bauble along or drop it to the ground once he has shapeshifted into an animal. The bauble disappears into some

pocket universe alongside any other items character may have once they use shapeshifting power. The purpose of this bauble is that players will be able to use animal forms during this task, you can take it away from them once task is done and the bauble is designed to work only in this cave. Characters do not need to make any skill checks to use this device, it will work automatically. Returning to human form is automatic and character can choose when to turn back to human, but it takes five rounds and during rounds characters are unable to take actions. The Bauble will be found from the items of a character who was last to use it. Characters cannot change from one animal into other instantly, but they must always take human form first during changes.

Makal sends the characters on their way and their first task is to figure out how to continue out from this cave without visible exits.

There are exits on this cave, though small. Characters can notice small holes on the ground leading forward with successful spot check (DC 12). They can also study Makal himself, as he cannot hide his excitement once characters go near the holes, sense motive (DC 12). They can also smell where small air current is coming from with Wilderness Lore (DC 15). Once characters have noticed the holes, they should turn themselves into some small animals, like beetles, spiders or ants. Depending on animal, use the description below about how the characters feel as an animal or create your own. Note that hole is too small for a mammal, like mouse, players have to choose an animal that is even smaller.

*"You feel like chamber suddenly disappeared and you are standing in a vast space filled with strange new smells. Your eyesight has changed and you see the world through compound eyes. It is a strange feeling to see behind back. The world is suddenly filled with all kinds of details you never noticed before. The colour and warmth of that little pebble you used to set your feet on, the strange vibration of the ground that you can feel with your jointed appendages. As you wiggle your antennae, you note a light breeze coming from hole on the wall. Perhaps it is time to skitter forward with those six (eight if they are spiders) jointed legs of yours."*

Characters will crawl through small holes in the wall and they cannot shift back into their human form until they have come out. Their stats and attacks will change accordingly: Str 1, Dex 17, Con 1, AC 21 (Dex +3, Size (Fine) +8). Attack: Bite, use characters base attack bonus (-5 for decreased str). Damage: 1. Character retains her Int, Wis and Cha, base saves and hit points. They can cast spells without verbal or somatic components.

Character will encounter a medium monstrous centipede during molting and if disturbed it will be very angry and attack. Characters will be able to hide and circle around it. The centipede will reside in an opening large enough for it but too small for a human, so characters cannot turn into their own shape during this encounter. Rest of the hole is large enough for medium-sized centipede to scuttle through.

## **Monstrous Centipede, Medium**

Medium-Size Vermin

HD: 1d8 (4hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft

AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 Natural)

Attack: Bite +2 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6-1 and poison

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft.

Special attacks: Poison

Special qualities: Vermin

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +8, Spot +8  
Feats: Weapon finesse (bite)  
CR: ½  
Alignment: neutral

After a while, a passage broadens into a natural tunnel. On the wall loads of lichens grow and characters can see some strange glowing mushrooms also. All kinds of small animals scitter among mushrooms. There is a large underground pond on the room. Water is cold and dark, only occasionally rippling from a small drip from tips of stalactites hanging from the ceiling. Cave has a strange hum, which can be barely heard and air smells dank and mouldy.

Characters should turn themselves into a watery animal, like fish, gilled lizard, squid or jellyfish. Read the lower flavour text or create appropriate one for your players.

*"You splash into water and new sensations fill you. Water does not feel cold anymore, as your body temperature gets accustomed your surroundings, as being a cold-blooded animal. Water reaches your gills and suddenly you do not feel like drowning, but water gives you much needed oxygen to live. With a swift kick of a tail and wave of fins, you dart forward. Water is so dark, you would be completely blind without lateral line system on your side, which allows you to navigate in total darkness."*

Characters should notice small water tunnels in the bottom of the pond leading deeper to the caves. They can reach next point by swimming into these tunnels. Swimming in tunnels can be hard even if they are water creatures. Stalactites on the ground and stalagmites on ceiling form a sort of a maze inside these watery tubes. There are dangerous water currents that can take characters far away from the safe route.

Refer to **handout 4** for a safe route. Do not give map straight to players but draw it for example to the cross-ruled paper while they go. This handout is for your eyes only, not for players.

Characters have to take some extra care while navigating in here, and you can allow Swimming checks (13 DC) to dodge pillars, Spot checks (DC 15) to notice tight spots and loose stalactites in advance and Listen checks (DC 15) to hear the rushing of water currents to avoid too fast-moving water (yes, fish can hear too, as we humans can, they just don't have external ears). Characters must also Move silently (DC 12) to avoid loose stalactites dropping on their heads. If they fail on the check, stalactite drops to ground, lowers the visibility (couple of next spot checks -2 on the dice throw) and harms the character, dmg 1d10.

Allow players to roleplay the situation and if they manage to find some things to help them, give plusses to dice throws as a reward. Good ideas include, eg. making clicking sounds to help to keep the party together while they swim, using lateral system line to navigate between obstacles and following the smell of other characters in the dark, as fish have a good sense of olfactory. As players have finally finished the underwater maze, read the following.

*"You follow the underwater tunnel and suddenly you feel the water getting fresh and little bit warmer. Your bulgy eyes sting a little as light gets stronger and you follow the light up. As you rise, you see a small waterfall cascading to a small pool. Falling water splashes into pool, making water bubble in all colours very beautifully. Now it is good time to turn back into a human. "*

Characters are standing in a large, round cavern, with lots of mosses and some lich growing on the wall. Little fruit bats are hanging from the ceiling, making quiet peeping and screeching sounds. Water falls down on a little vertical shaft and light shines from far up on the surface. Shaft's diameter is too small and slick for a human to climb, but a small flying creature like bat

could make it through. Characters can see outside a little bit and use Spot check (DC 12) or Listen check (DC 12) to notice sound of little bats as they gather together soon to fly out of the shaft. They also notice by looking up shaft that shadows of scary vultures can be seen circling high up in the sky and when one of them screeches, bats start to shiver in fear. Knowledge nature check (DC 12) will tell players that vultures hunt flying bats for food. Knowledge nature check (DC 12) will tell characters bats eat mostly fruits and insects and are harmless to humans, but sometimes carry infectious diseases.

Characters have to fly out of the cavern, but they can only assume form of a very small flying creature, small enough for vultures to hunt (shaft is so narrow, that they cannot take any big form). It would be smart for characters to assume same shape as fruit bats on the ceiling as they can fly out in the centre of the bat swarm and not get caught as vultures start hunting bats coming out of the hole. Characters can assume some other animal form also, but then bats will not accept them as part of their swarm and characters get attacked by flying vultures. Characters can, however, try Animal Empathy skill check (DC 15) to make fruit bats accept other small flying creatures as part of their swarm. If players try to shapeshift into flying insects, bats suddenly get hungry and start eating the characters, so that's not a very good option for them. If the characters are stupid enough to shift into flying insects, you can tell them bats have a feast and they lose 2d10 hit points before they get to shift back to humans.

If characters are flying as part of the swarm, they will not get attacked while you can although describe bats screeching in fear and panic spreading in swarm while some of bats get snatched. If characters fly alone, they certainly get attacked by 1d10 vultures, since these birds always hunt those bats that get separated from group. If characters get attacked, allow them to roleplay themselves out of the situation. Good ideas include summoning rest of the bats around them with calling screeches or flying down and trying to hide in trees. However, in nature, if bat gets separated from its group, it gets eaten and doesn't have a lot of chance to survive alone. If characters can take five rounds of polymorphing back into human and they have enough hits, they can also "take hits" from vultures and try to stand it. Vultures will scatter scared as soon as characters are back to being human.

Here are stats for a bat that the characters can use. As a DM, you can use these same stats, even if players shifted into some another form than a bat. Same rules apply as before in polymorph self. Hit points, Int, Wis, Cha, level, class, base attack bonus, base saves and alignment will remain same as characters. (New Str, Dex and Con will affect saves.)

## **Fruit Bat**

Diminutive Animal  
Initiative: +2 (Dex)  
Speed: 5ft., fly 40 ft. (good)  
AC: 16 (+4 size, +2 dex)  
Attacks: Bite (basic attack bonus for character)  
Damage: 1  
Face/Reach: 1 ft. by 1 ft.  
Special attacks: -  
Special abilities: Blindsight  
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2  
Abilities: Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4  
Skills: Listen +9, Move silently +6, Spot +9  
CR: 1/10  
Alignment: neutral

Blindsight: Bats can "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allow them to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. A silence spell negates this ability.

## **Vulture**

Small animal  
Hit dice: 1d8 + 5  
Initiative: +2 (Dex)  
Speed: 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)  
AC: 14 (+1 size, +2 dex, +1 natural)  
Attacks: 2 claws +3 melee, bite -2 melee  
Claw: 1d3, bite 1d4  
Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft.  
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2  
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6  
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6  
Feats: Weapon Finesse (claw, bite)  
CR: ½  
Alignment: neutral

Read aloud after the danger has passed.

"As the bat swarm reaches the safety of the forest, some of the bats have disappeared into the tummies of hungry vultures, but you wisely remain alive. Bats start looking for juicy fruits and hunting for insects using their ultra-sounds and you return back to humans. You notice you have landed on a small clearing filled with wild flowers. Behind the clearing there is a stony hillside and you can see some birds circling high up the sky. On the ground there is a stone tablet filled with runes. As you look at the tablet, you can form words of runes. It says:

Who speaks all languages, but never listens to anyone?

Who never starts the conversation but always gets the last word?"

Players should figure out the answer, which is: The echo.

If players get stuck to this riddle, you can perhaps give some hints for them, for example a bird lets out a screech and it echoes from the hillside. Let players ponder the riddle for a while however, do not give the answer for them too easily. The riddle isn't supposed to be a total game stopper however, so if players still don't figure it out, let Makal appear from forest, laugh at characters a bit sarcastically and tell the answer finally. Makal says:

"So, our younglings have finally surpassed themselves, eh? So, what did you learn on your journey? (chuckling)"

Whatever players do answer, Makal will nod occasionally and finally says:

"Now you do realize, that each creature has its' own place in the nature and many deeds can be accomplished by animals that us humans cannot do. We can only stand in awe as we study a bird circling in the sky, how elaborate and swift its flying is. Therefore we must respect every creature of the wild, for only it can fulfill certain place in the circle of life. The circle of life is somewhat a chain. If you break even one link in the chain, it can break wholly."

Makal will ask the bauble back from the characters and gives the second part of the circlet of life and tell them last part of the task can be completed at the Mistmoor Fen.



## Challenge Three: Betrayal at the Fen

Lastly characters arrive to perimeter of the Fen and spot a path that leads forward. Path is dark (multi-layered trees create dark shadows even in daylight) and very perilous and characters must be careful not to fall into bogholes. You can allow players to throw Balance check (DC 12) to stay on the right path or Jump Check (DC 14) to jump over dangerous looking places. They can use Knowledge nature, Wilderness lore or Spot (DC 15) to gain +2 synergy bonus to first throws (this way they will notice dangerous looking places beforehand or just know such things exists and take actions not to fall).

You can allow players also to roleplay themselves through such a situation, good ideas include:

- Attach a rope to tie themselves together, so if one character falls into a boghole, others can pull him back up.
- Use a lantern or some other light source to see better.
- Use a long stick to poke the ground and see if the path is durable and good to walk, so they won't sink into swamp.

Random encounter:

If you have time, you can run this random encounter in the swamp. This encounter is optional and in no way compulsory to complete this quest. You can make players to roll Spot check (DC 12). Players see strange lights in the swamp, perhaps coming from a torch or a lantern, like there was another group of travellers in the middle of the swamp. If players throw a Listen check (DC 15), they can even hear someone was shouting to another person, calling for help perhaps, although sounds are muffled. With successful knowledge nature check (DC 15) characters will know about evil will-o'-wisps residing in the swamp. These creatures try to lure adventurers away from path to deadly peril and then absorb the negative feelings of fear and panic, while adventurers sink into the swamp. Wisps are made of semisolid glowing vapour. Characters can investigate these lights but they would do wiser if they completely ignored them and continued on their journey. They can also attack wisps, if they want to, but will-o'-wisp is a dangerous adversary and might be, that some of the characters might really die in this battle. If they manage to flee from the battle, wisp will leave them alone after harassing them a bit. If they manage to kill wisp, throw in a little bit treasure.

### Will-o'-wisp

Small Aberration (Air)  
Hit Dice: 9d8 (40 hp)  
Initiative: +13 (+9 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)  
Speed: Fly 50 ft.  
AC: 29 (+1 size, +9 Dex, +9 deflection)  
Attacks: +16 melee  
Damage: Shock 2d8  
Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft.  
Special qualities: Spell immunity, natural invisibility  
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +9  
Abilities: Str - , Dex 29, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 12  
Skills: Bluff +11, Listen +17, Search +14, Spot +17  
Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved initiative  
CR: 6  
Alignment: chaotic evil

Finally characters arrive to a small cottage, where someone seems to live, Old Sybil. She looks like a lovable old lady, with gray hair and crooked nose, and eyes green as forest. She looks like a bit of a hermit and keeps hundreds of frogs in the cages, since she loves to cook froglegs as her dinner.

"At last you arrive to a small pond in the middle of the swamp and see a small turf-roofed cottage on the shore. Someone's singing inside and you hear also splashing of water, like that someone was doing dishwashing. Alongside the cottage, there must be tens of little cages filled with all kinds of frogs. Their incessant croaking fills the air as you walk cautiously closer. "Ah, visitors! Do come in", she yells, as the old lady continues to wash her dishes. You notice a couple of old dishes on the table and some scraps of food on it."

Spot check (DC 12) tells characters they are cooked frog legs, half-eaten.

"So, you must be the young druidlings, yes? I have just the task for you, here. Be warned if you fail, you will end up as a frogs... and as my new culinary delights (a cackle). Just go behind the cottage, you will find instruction there."

Spot check (DC 12) lets characters also notice, that one of the frogs look a bit different from the rest. It is purple coloured and its' skin in very old and wrinkled. Characters can make Animal empathy check (DC 14) to notice that there is something different with this frog and it looks sad and croaks almost quietly. It stares right in the character's eyes too. But before characters manage to study it more, Sybil ushers heroes outside.

The frog is really one of the rangers, a circle member. Old Sybil is disguised as the last task-giver and has turned the real member of the Blackwood Circle into a frog. Sybil is really an evil green hag living in the swamp and now attacked the ranger in this cottage, since she hates druids. Old Sybil plans to ambush heroes behind the cottage while they are unaware and unprepared to battle.

Characters find a stone tablet with runes and five keys made of iron, copper, silver, gold and lead. There is also a stone menhir with a keyhole in the middle of it. A riddle on the stone tablet reads:

First is the metal that runs in blood,  
Next one is poisonous to heart,  
Third is one that turns to green,  
Fourth is one where tarnish can be seen,  
Noblest of them all, will be last one to go.  
Door will open if right order is known.

Players should insert the keys into the keyholes in this order: iron, lead, copper, silver and finally gold.

A small secret locker opens from menhir and players find a scroll. Scroll says: What reads here? Scroll has an anagram written into it (don't tell it to the players though, it'll spoil the fun) and players must figure out what is written on it. If anagrams are too hard for players, allow them to make Concentration or Spot check (DC 12) to give them some hints and also tell players words are anagrams and they have to rearrange letters to form real words.

Ranged (Answer = Danger)  
stack at (Answer = attacks)  
form (Answer = from)  
bind he (answer = behind).

As players are trying to find out the answers for these anagrams and just when they have figured the last one (Danger attacks from behind!), Old Sybil ambushes the party. Battle

starts. You can allow players to spot or listen checks to avoid ambush or if they have been cautious about Old Sybil and didn't trust her completely.

## Old Sybil, the green hag

Medium-Size Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 9d8+9 (49 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft., Swim 30 ft.

AC: 22 (+1 Dex, +11 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +13 melee

Damage: Claw 1d4+4

Reach: 5ft. by 5ft.

Special attacks: spell-like abilities, weakness, mimicry

Special qualities: SR 18, Darkvision 90 ft.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills: Concentration +13, Craft or Knowledge (any one) +5, Hide +11, Listen +11, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat casting, Great Fortitude

CR: 5

Alignment: chaotic evil

Green hags prefer to attack from hiding, usually after distracting foes. They often use darkvision to their advantage by attacking moonless nights.

Spell-like abilities: At will – change self, dancing lights, ghost sound, invisibility, pass without trace, tongues and water breathing. These abilities are cast like an 8th-lvl sorcerer (save DC 10 + spell level).

Weakness (Su): The green hag can weaken foe by making a special touch attack. The affected opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take 2d4 points of temporary Strength damage.

Mimicry (Ex): Green hag can imitate sounds of almost any animal found near their lairs.

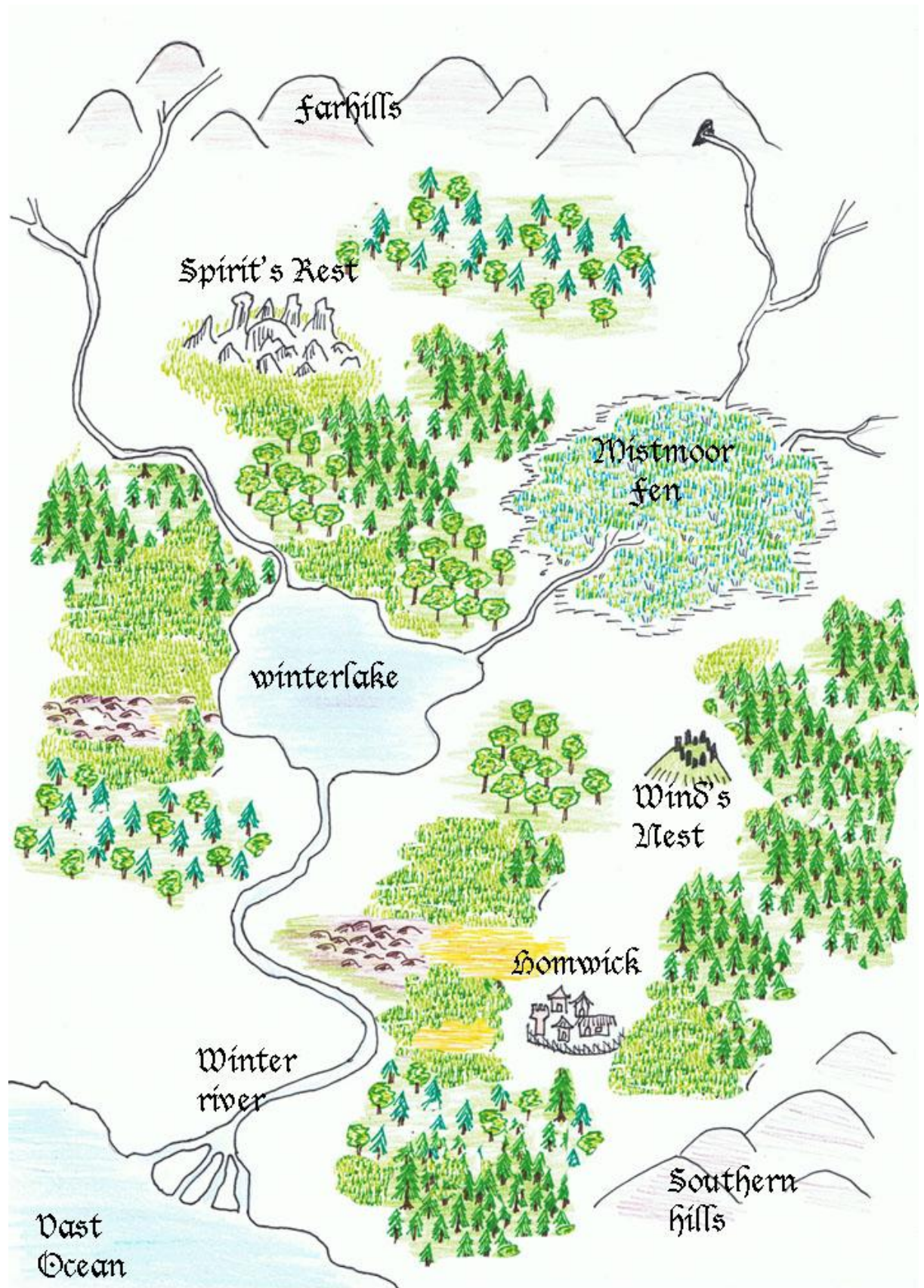
Polymorph other: Old Sybil has studied this spell and is able to cast it twice per day to opponent. It is cast as a 8th-lvl sorcerer (save DC 10 + spell lvl). Sybil will use this to turn heroes into frogs.

Once Old Sybil has been destroyed or she has fled to the swamp (she will flee when her hit points go under 10), hag's spells are broken and all those turned into frogs will return back to human. Heroes will meet the human ranger Olaf, who thanks them heartily and offers them the last piece of the Circlet of Life. Olaf tells hag managed to surprise him completely and turned him into a frog a while ago. Then she moved in into his house and started cooking her frogs, waiting more victims to appear. Olaf asks players to report everything that has happened to Dunmar.

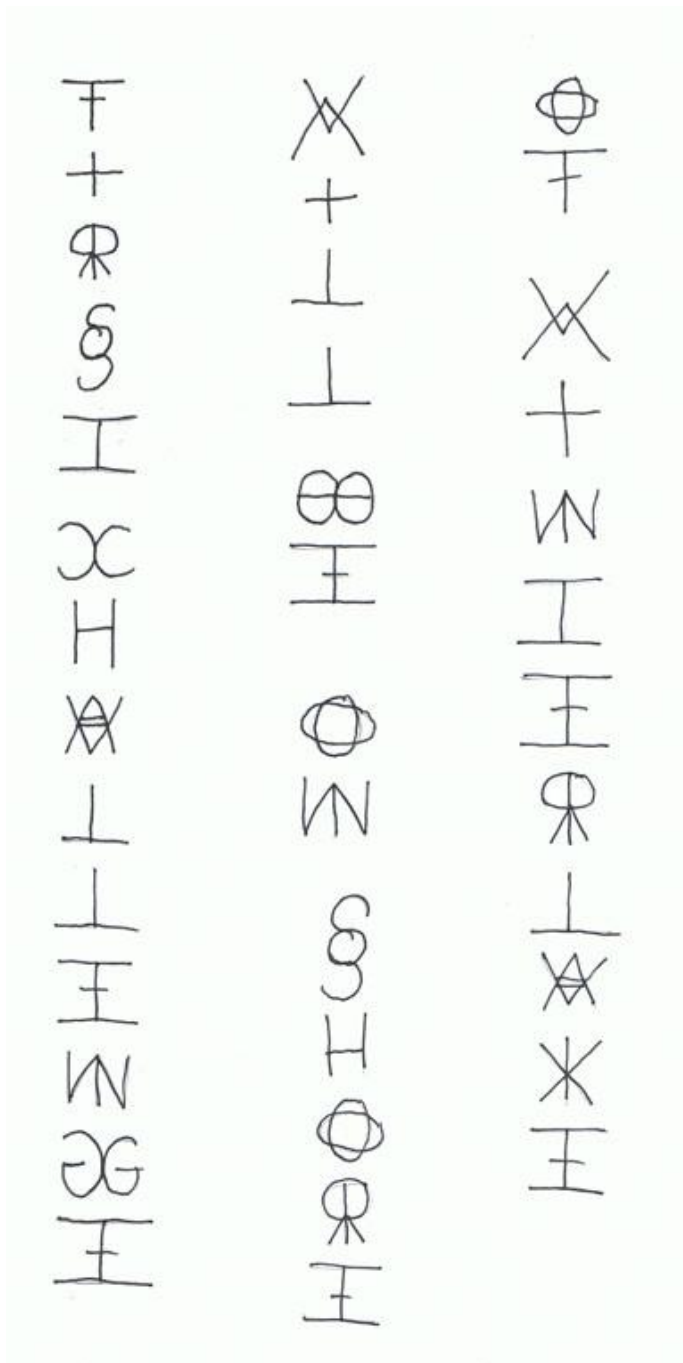
## Completing the quest

Once the heroes take all three pieces of the circlet to Arch Druid Dunmar, he is more than happy to accept them as members of the Blackwood Circle. He also congratulates heroes for quick actions once they realized what was really going on in the hags' cottage and thanks them for helping Olaf the ranger. Dunmar will take the pieces from heroes and attaches them together. Circlet flashes and heroes' names will mystically appear in menhirs, as they are now part of the Blackwood Circle. They hear birds singing nearby and wolves howling in the wilds for their honor as sun sets and stars appear in the night sky. The Valley has now new defenders!

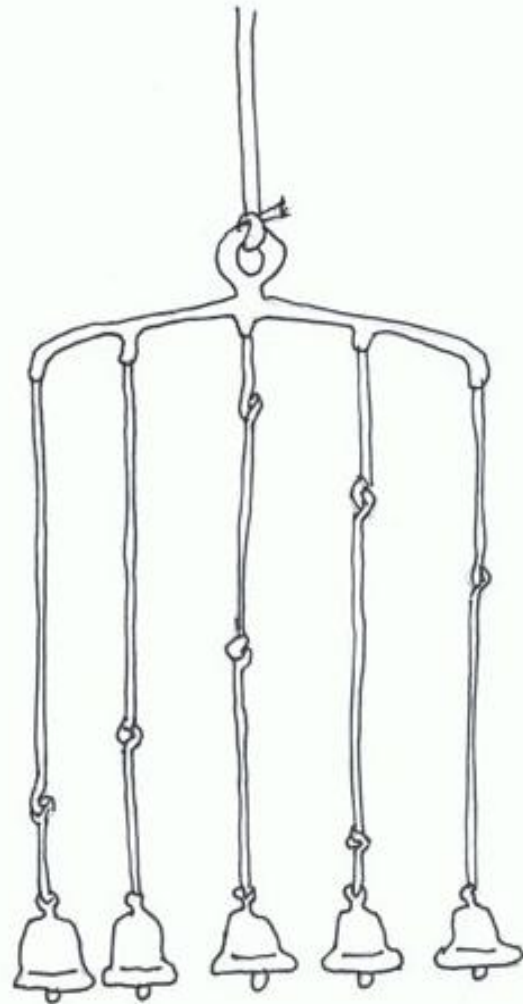
Handout 1: Map of the Valley



## Handout 2: The Strange scroll



### Handout 3: A wind chime



A WIND CHIME



BATON

# Handout 4: Water tunnel map

