



THE DM TOOL CHEST

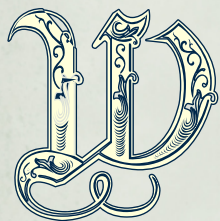
WHISPERS OF THE DARK FEY

FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE

A GRISLY MURDER LEADS TO UNCOVERING A SINISTER PLOT TIED TO THE FAERIE REALM



ADVENTURE PRIMER



Whispers of the Dark Fey is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for **three to five characters of 3rd to 5th level** and is optimized for **four characters with an**

average party level (APL) of 4. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach half of the way to 5th-level. The murder of a sylvan creature has stirred up the town of Hopewell Harbor, and a mysterious clan of dark fey is in danger of being exposed. This adventure takes place in the [FREELANDS CAMPAIGN SETTING](#) but fits into any existing campaign that has a port city with only a few modifications.

BACKGROUND

There is no more feared story in the faerie realm than that of Mother Nightwhisper and her clan of dark fey who steal away children to gobble up whole. Little fey children grow up with the superstition of never whispering her name in the dark for fear of being taken away and left on the mortal plane. The stories are not too far off from the truth.

Mother Nightwhisper and her clan do exist, and they do steal little children to gobble up, but it is mortal children who should be afraid of being stolen in the night. The clan of hags and dark fey, led by their archfey mother, work in the shadows to supply young mortal children to the faerie realm. They desire to replace them with changelings and spread the clan's influence on the material plane.

The Sisters of Mercy orphanage in the coastal town of Hopewell Harbor is a front for the Nightwhisper clan and provides a direct funnel for the kidnapped children to the faerie realm. A sylvan hunter named Amodus caught wind of the scheme and came to the material plane to hunt down those responsible. With the help of a local group of sylvan folk hiding in the nearby forest, Amodus determined that the Sisters of Mercy were not what they appeared to be. He watched the orphanage in disguise, but the Nightwhispers still managed to ambush him. The experienced hunter managed to escape but was fatally poisoned in the struggle and died while hiding.

The town guard discovered his body the next day, and it now lies in the local morgue as they investigate his death. The Nightwhispers are closing in to recover the body and retrieve information that may lead back to the Sisters of Mercy.

ABOUT THE NIGHTWHISPER CLAN

The faerie realm is home to the first sylvan beings created by the gods. Intrinsicly tied to nature's magic and bound to protect it from any who would destroy it, some of these beings resort to less savory methods to defend their realm. The Nightwhisper clan represents the worst of these beings, even as they believe their cause to be righteous.

The archfey noble Saelihn Liasatra has existed for millennia and lives a double life. She is a beloved member of the faerie Winter Court, known for her generosity and grace among the other archfey. Few know her identity as Mother Nightwhisper, the dark fey leader that terrorizes the material plane and its mortal denizens. Her exterior beauty hides a blackened heart that hates everything from the material plane with every fiber of her being.

Saelihn's daughters—twisted hags born from the darkness inside her—were sent to the mortal plane to establish strongholds for their dark clan. They have established footholds all over the continent of Astaria, in the cities, towns, forests, and hills. They have been quietly and secretly building up a network of loyal soldiers while they work to replace important officials with fey changeling replacements that are loyal to the clan. Mother Nightwhisper's ultimate goal is to push the mortal races to destroy each other and thereby protect the faerie realm from their influence forever. Her machinations inspired the Great War that has raged for hundreds of years between the two largest empires on the continent.

ABOUT HOPEWELL HARBOR

Hopewell Harbor is one of the largest ports in the Freelands and has quickly grown from a small village to a city since the treaty ended the Great War. Sitting so close to the Holy Ignis Empire has made the city a gateway for trade between the two nations. The growth has drawn people hopeful for work, and unsavory folks looking to prey upon the successful. This situation has created the perfect opportunity for the Nightwhisper Clan to take root under the guise of helping the less fortunate citizens.

Jon Garland is a former military commander, a paladin of Sylvanis, and the city guard captain.



Captain Garland's resources are stretched to their limits with the city's rapid growth, and while crime is down and the city is (for the most part) safe, he works tirelessly to ensure peace and order are maintained.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are a few ways to get the adventurers involved in this story:

An Unsolved Mystery. Rumors circulate Hopewell Harbor that the town guard found a dead body and can't identify who—or what—it is. They say the guards have few clues to solve it and are looking for any help. Perhaps the characters have seen someone like this before?

A Found Body. A back alley shortcut while heading back to their inn finds the characters stumbling upon a pair of guards and a dead body. After a quick round of questioning, the guards let them go, but they soon find themselves standing before the guard captain, who wants their help.

Detectives for Hire. Captain Garland has heard of the characters' successes and wants to hire them to help solve a murder. His resources are stretched too thin, and this situation is far from the mundane problems that his guards are accustomed to handling.

PART I: INVESTIGATION

The characters are focused on looking for clues that will lead them to discover the Nightwhisper clan's presence in Hopewell Harbor. Throughout their investigation, they are confronted by the Nightwhisper clan members who seek to stop them on their quest.

Once the characters have their reason for being involved (see Adventure Hooks), read aloud the following:

The city hall office of Captain Jon Garland is decorated much like the man himself—militant, to the point, and functional. The city guard's burly commander sits straight-backed behind his desk, peering at you over steepled fingers. He sighs quietly before saying, "Normally, this is something that I would like to keep in-house and not rely on outside help. But to be honest, we're stumped, and I don't like unsolved murders in my

city. A fresh perspective may be just what is needed." He grunts slightly and shifts in his seat. "We believe the victim to be a satyr, but we've never seen one before. I have guards keeping watch in the alley where the body was found; it's being held in the city morgue at the hospital for the moment if you wish to examine it yourself; the belongings found with it are still there."

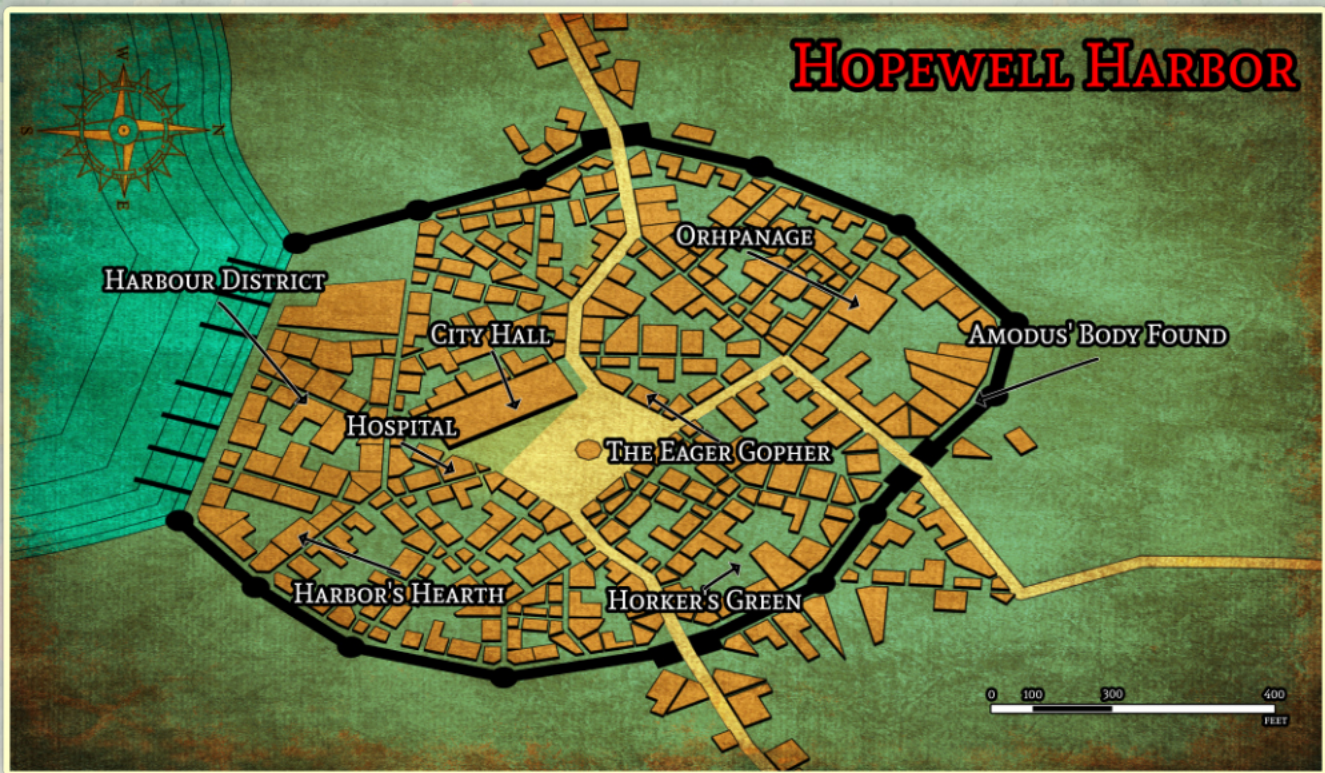
Captain Garland is not happy to rely on outside help for this quest but will answer any questions the characters may have. He hands each of them a small golden medallion bearing the tower over the waves crest of Hopewell Harbor to identify themselves as deputies. He offers a substantial reward of gold if they find the killer. The report he hands over is short and contains the following information:

- The body was found yesterday morning in the walkway near North Gate, tucked behind some crates.
- The victim appears to have been stabbed to death.
- City guards interviewed the locals, but there were no witnesses in the area who heard or saw what happened.
- No one has stepped forward with any additional information, and they do not know who the victim is or what they were doing in Hopewell Harbor.

At this point, the characters will need to decide if they wish to investigate the back alley where the body was found (location 1) or examine the body itself along with the belongings found on it (location 2). Their investigation will lead them through a series of events that will change based upon the order in which they visit each subsequent location. They are in a race with the Nightwhispers, who are trying to destroy any evidence leading back to the orphanage.

NIGHTWHISPER CLAN.

Throughout this adventure, there will be references to the "dark fey" of the Nightwhisper clan. They appear to be elves at first glance, but a closer inspection reveals sharpened teeth and slightly elongated appendages. They hide behind dark green and brown clothing and hooded cloaks while in Hopewell Harbor. When



referenced in the adventure text, they use the stat block listed along with the following additions:

- Their Type is fey.
- They speak Common and Sylvan.
- They have darkvision out to 60 feet.
- They are immune to the **sleep** spell and the charmed condition.

INVESTIGATION CHECKS.

At each location, the characters can make a series of checks to search for clues. As they search for clues, the likelihood of missing or disturbing them increases by imposing a -1 penalty to subsequent checks made in that location. The intent is to use their skills and think like investigators but discourage them from just using every check possible.

INVESTIGATION LOCATIONS

Each of the following locations is notated on the provided map of Hopewell Harbor.

LOCATION 1: BACK ALLEY

When the characters first visit this location, read the following aloud:

A small dark alley sits nestled between a ramshackle flower shop displaying wilted bouquets and an apothecary with a sour smell wafting from its open windows. The competing scents mingle in the air, fighting for your noses' attention. Old crates and barrels battle for space in the crowded alley with little room for maneuvering.

If the characters visit this location first, two human city **guards** stand watch at either end of the alley. Otherwise, skip ahead to “Back Alley Coverup.” The guards allow the characters to enter once they display the deputy medallions given by Captain Garland. If questioned, the guards only know they have not let anyone else enter the alley since they were stationed there to guard it.

Alley Clues. When Amodus fled from his attackers near the Orphanage, he managed to evade them to hide among the crates in this alley. Unfortunately, he was poisoned during the attack and only managed to scrawl a single word in blood before expiring. The following pieces of information can also be discerned through successful ability checks:

- *Wisdom (Perception) (DC 12)*: The amount of blood left by the body is far too small to account for a body bleeding out to death. There are no signs of a struggle, so the attack must have happened elsewhere.
- *Wisdom (Perception) (DC 15)*: The Sylvan word for “mercy” is written amidst a smear of blood on the wall. If the character who notices the word does not understand Sylvan, it is clear that something was deliberately written in blood here.
- *Intelligence (Investigation) (DC 12)*: Tucked behind one of the crates is a brass key bearing an engraved gopher’s head and the number five. The key is to Amodus’ room at the Eager Gopher (location 3). The gopher emblem can be recognized with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check or by asking a local such as one of the guards.

BACK ALLEY COVERUP

If the characters do not visit this location first, the Nightwhispers have already been here to clean up the evidence. They cut the throats of the two guards standing watch, stripped their bodies, and stuffed them into the crates. The blood left by Amodus’ body—including his message—has been wiped away completely. The key to his room at the Eager Gopher is also gone.

Encounter: Discouragement. Four dark fey thugs (see Nightwhisper Clan) are waiting to ambush the characters from both ends of the alley.

LOCATION 2: CITY HOSPITAL

The hospital (see Hopewell Harbor map) is a small, nondescript stone building where the citizens who are too poor to receive magical healing come to be treated. The deceased’s bodies are prepared in the basement morgue for burial or other services as required by their faith. Most of the hospital attendants are followers of Sylvanis (goddess of life) who volunteer their time to help the poor and needy.

A smiling and enthusiastic young woman named Serafin (lawful good human acolyte of Sylvanis) greets the characters at the hospital’s front doors. Read aloud the following:

A bustling young woman with short black hair and dressed in a simple white robe looks up at the opening door before flashing a dazzling smile and raising her hand in greeting. Her cheerful voice rings out, “Hello and welcome! My name is Serafin, how may I help you today?”

If the characters do not visit the hospital as their first destination, the Nightwhispers arrive before them and make off with some evidence. Serafin will profess confusion about the characters’ visit and explains that a pair of investigators already examined the body and belongings. She describes them as quiet, surly elves with strange accents who left not too long before the characters arrived. The characters can investigate Amodus’ body (see Corpse Clues), but the Nightwhispers have taken the pouch.

If the characters visit the hospital as their first destination, they arrive before the Nightwhispers and can access both sets of clues.

Eager to please and with a bubbling personality, Serafin cheerfully leads the characters down to the morgue after showing their deputy medallions. She brings them down to a small room with a stone table that holds the satyr’s body covered in a sheet. If the Nightwhispers haven’t taken it, Serafin retrieves the pouch of belongings from a cupboard near the corpse. While happy to answer any questions about the hospital, she has little information that is useful about the current situation and stands to the side, leaving them to their investigation.

If the characters attempt to use any type of necromancy on the corpse (such as a *Speak with Dead* spell), she will lose her cheerfulness as she informs them that necromancy is illegal in Hopewell Harbor. She will rush to tell Captain Garland if they insist and cast the spells anyway. This infraction will make them wanted criminals in Hopewell from thereon out.

Corpse Clues. The poison that killed Amodus causes the blood to harden in the veins, killing the victim by heart attack, and is very rare. To get close to the orphanage and hide his appearance, Amodus disguised himself as a beggar dressed in rags with a hooded cloak. He spent time among the other city beggars and became known to them.

The satyr's body is dressed in rags with blood caked to the side where it was stabbed. The following pieces of information can be discerned through successful checks while investigating the body:

- *Wisdom (Perception) (DC 12) or Intelligence (Investigation) (DC 12)*: On closer inspection, the rags the body is wearing appear to be newer clothing ripped on purpose and rubbed with dirt to appear ragged and worn. It's clear the victim was in disguise as a beggar but also wearing a very distinct green leather belt.
- *Wisdom (Medicine) (DC 12)*: The body does not look as pale as most corpses do when dying from blood loss.
- *Wisdom (Medicine) (DC 15)*: It's clear that the blade the satyr was stabbed with was poisoned from the veins and markings around the wound.
- *Wisdom (Medicine) (DC 18)*: This body was killed by "Hardheart Poison," an extremely rare poison that hardens the blood in the body and causes the victim to die of a heart attack.

Pouch Clues. Inside the pouch are the following items:

- Half a dozen small wooden tokens stamped with a boar's head emblem that Amodus earned while in his guise as a beggar; each token can be redeemed for a meal at a soup kitchen called The Harbor's Hearth (location 4). This detail can be determined by a successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check or by asking a local.
- A crumpled piece of paper has groupings of dash marks (seventeen total) under the heading of "The Sisters" written in Sylvan. Amodus was counting the number of children that entered the orphanage. If none of the characters understands Sylvan, Serafin can translate.
- A dried raspberry pastry carefully wrapped in a worn green silk handkerchief. There is a small embroidered pair of white deer antlers in the corner. Any local instantly

recognizes it as one of Alondra Stillwater's raspberry tarts from the Eager Gopher. The handkerchief was a gift from Crazy Eyes Brewster, a local burglar that Amodus befriended (see location 4). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check reveals the emblem is that of the Greenfellow noble family who resides in the capital city of Haven. They're known for their skill as hunters and archers but not for a presence in Hopewell Harbor.



LOCATION 3: THE EAGER GOPHER

The Eager Gopher is a popular Inn and Tavern in the heart of Hopewell Harbor. Alondra Stillwater (neutral good human **scout**) is a former soldier turned Innkeeper from the neighboring Holy Ignis Empire. An older woman in her late fifties, she's still spry and not slowing down in any way. Jackson Leverty (lawful good half-orc **berserker**) is a quiet and brooding guard who works for the Stillwaters as security.

The characters must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to get any information from Alondra; she is protective of and respects her guests' privacy. A failed check will result in her not offering any assistance to the characters. The door to Amodus' room (number five) is locked and can be picked by someone with thieves' tools and a successful DC 12 Dexterity check. The window to his second-story room faces the inn's back wall and can be

entered without being seen with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check. On a failed check, an onlooker will run inside to inform the staff and a nearby pair of city **guards**.

If persuaded to help, Alondra recognizes the description of Amodus in his beggar disguise, leads the characters to his room, and unlocks it. She knows little about her former guest and did not worry too much about his appearance while she thought it strange. Alondra believes his name to have been Amodus, and she has seen him in town with other beggars near the Harbors' Hearth (location 4), a soup kitchen that she donates leftover food to every morning.

If the characters visit the Eager Gopher as their second location, they arrive before the Nightwhispers. Otherwise, run the Gopher Ambush encounter below when the characters enter the room. The following clues can be found through successful checks while investigating the room:

- *Wisdom (Perception) (DC 12)*: The room is impeccably clean, and the bed is perfectly made. Amodus spent most of his evenings watching the Orphanage and never actually slept here.
- *Intelligence (Investigation) (DC 12)*: A small journal is tucked under a loose floorboard with a small pouch with 20 gp inside. Amodus' journal is written in Sylvan and details his hunt through the faerie realm to the material plane as he followed a trail of kidnapped children by a group he calls "the Nightwhispers." The last entry is just a single line underscored twice: "The Sisters have a Gateway."

Encounter: Gopher Ambush. Two dark fey **berserkers** (see Nightwhisper Clan) are still in the room after entering through the window and ransacking it. A third agent already left through the open window with the clues Amodus left behind.

LOCATION 4: HARBOR'S HEARTH

The soup kitchen is a small, partially open-air wooden building near the docks. Tokens for meals are earned by those who work around the docks. Otherwise, it is just a single copper piece for a simple meal of food donated by local

fishing boats and businesses such as the Eager Gopher. The building consists of a large open room filled with tables and chairs for the guests to sit and eat. Food is served from tables set along one wall and overlooked by Yang Shun (neutral good elf **priest** of Sylvanis), a kindly elder who runs the kitchen.

If the characters begin to ask around about Amodus, Yang asks them to please respect the folks here who are just trying to have a meal. None of the guests will speak to the characters unless they offer money and will give vague information before disappearing with their new coin. If the characters show their deputy medallions, no one speaks to them at all.

Yang's memory is not the best, and he only remembers Amodus if given a description that includes the green leather belt he wore (see Corpse Clues, location 2). He recalls Amodus being a kind person who helped some of the other folks who came to the kitchen. Specifically, he mentions seeing Amodus spend time with a group near Horker's Green (see Hopewell Harbor map) near the East Gate. He recommends they seek out their leader, Crazy Eyes Brewster.

HORKER'S GREEN

To the northwest of East Gate is ample open space between buildings used as a public park by the residents. Children play on the grass while the adults chat and share lunches in the sunshine. A group of about a dozen downtrodden citizens (various genders and races, use the **commoner** stat block) congregate in one part of the green, sitting in the sunshine and chatting with each other. They collectively remain silent and let their leader Crazy Eyes Brewster (chaotic neutral human **wererat**) speak for them.

Brewster's unsettling wide-eyed stare and rapid-fire, heavily accented way of speaking make it difficult to understand him. He wears a bedraggled outfit of rags but underneath is a tunic embroidered with a pair of (formerly) white antlers—the crest of the Greenfellow family (see Pouch Clues, location 2)—and he holds himself with a regal bearing. A former squire for the Greenfellows, Brewster ran away from home after contracting lycanthropy and has lived on the streets ever since.



**“CRAZY EYES”
BREWSTER**

Brewster knows that Amodus was working undercover while hunting down suspected kidnappers and was assisting him with the information he was gathering from his peer group. He knows that something odd has been happening with the orphan children in Hopewell Harbor but hasn't yet deduced what it is. Brewster will share this information with the characters only if they can convince him with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the characters show their deputy medallions at any time, the check is done with disadvantage. If the characters hand over the Harbor's Hearth meal tokens (see locations 2 and

3), the check is done with advantage. The check automatically succeeds if they produce the handkerchief found at the hospital (see Pouch Clues, location 2). Attempting to bribe with money will not affect the check.

If convinced, Brewster will tell the characters of how Amodus was hunting a ring of suspected child kidnappers he called the “Nightwhispers.” This group was supposed to be quite powerful and extremely dangerous (even though Brewster had never heard of them), and Amodus was very cautious in keeping his identity a secret. Brewster could tell that he was something different and not of this realm (he could smell the difference), but Amodus hid his true form too well for even the wererat to determine. The last Brewster knew was that Amodus was interested in an Orphanage on the western side of the city called the Green Road

Home run by the Sisters of Mercy, acolytes of Amber (goddess of nature).

If the characters fail to convince Brewster, the only information he'll (reluctantly) give is that he knew the man as Amodus and met him at the Harbor's Hearth (location 4). He believes he was staying at the Eager Gopher (location 3) and looking into something about missing orphans.

LOCATION 5: ORPHANAGE

The Green Road Orphanage (see Hopewell Harbor map) is a large stone structure standing next to a large ash tree in the city's northern section. The buildings here are primarily functional and straightforward residential homes, and the residents appear to be friendly and happy. There are small groups of children playing on the grassy area under the careful watch of green-robed Sisters of Mercy (acolytes of Amber).

The Green Road Orphanage was created to help take care of the children who lost their parents due to the Great War and to find homes for them. They have recently (and unknowingly) become a front for the Nightwhisper clans' operations in Hopewell Harbor. The Nightwhispers take the children to the faerie realm and replace them with shape-changing fey called changelings. These changelings then infiltrate the homes they are fostered to and provide intel back to the clan for further nefarious actions. Meribeth (**green hag**), the youngest daughter of Mother Nightwhisper, is currently posing as a Sister of Mercy to access the orphans. When she has decided on which children they will take, Meribeth leads them to the orphanage basement and through a secret passage leading to the faerie realm through the roots of the nearby ash tree.

Upon entering the orphanage, the characters are greeted by an elder Sister of Mercy named Petuna (neutral good elf **priest**) who firmly denies knowing or ever seeing Amodus. The matronly priest has no idea what is truly happening in the orphanage and politely but firmly turns the characters away. There are two dozen children of various ages, genders, and races staying in the orphanage and a dozen Sisters who tend to their needs.

UNEXPECTED HELP

After the characters leave the orphanage, they are pulled aside by a Sister of Mercy named Margerie (lawful good human *acolyte*). A kind-hearted young woman with long brown hair tied in a tight braid, Margerie is not sure what is happening at the Orphanage, but she knows something is off about the children; their behavior changes drastically overnight from unruly and rambunctious to calm and eerily tame. She notices this happens right after certain night classes take place in the basement classroom.

Margerie is easily convinced to help the characters because she is worried about the safety of the children. She tells them to come back in the evening, and she will leave the outer basement doors unlocked for them to investigate what is going on.

ORPHANAGE BASEMENT

True to her word, if the characters return that night to use the set of double doors leading into the orphanage's basement, Margerie will have left them unlocked. They open to a set of stone steps leading fifteen feet down into the pitch-black basement. If the characters have a light source or assisted sight, they find themselves in a large classroom with small desks, chairs, a chalkboard, and bookshelves filled with remedial textbooks.

Secret Door. The secret door leading to the faerie portal is hidden behind a pivoting brick wall that opens by pressing the correct brick inward. This brick is found with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Opening the door reveals a short earthen tunnel that ends with a tight squeeze through the ash tree's roots. After maneuvering through them, a character will find themselves crawling out from tree roots in the faerie realm.

Encounter: *Nightwhispers*. If the characters cannot locate the secret door, two **dark fey scouts** and a **dark fey berserker** (see *Nightwhisper Clan*) will exit the secret door, surprised at the intruders in the basement.





THE FAERIE REALM

When the gods first created the planes of existence, they first separated the things of light from the things of darkness. The things of light they placed in the faerie realm, a plane full of magic and their first creations, the fey. Here reside the ancient faerie courts and the endless forest. The faerie realm lies close to the material plane, and it is like an echo best described as a dream-like version. Where cities of stone stand in the material plane, there are ancient topless trees or towers of shimmering crystal in the faerie. In a few places, the planes overlap so precisely that one can simply pass between them as if through an open door.

THE ENDLESS FOREST

The Hopewell Harbor ash tree gateway exits through the same ash tree's roots in the faerie realm's endless forest. This ancient forest's trees are a rainbow of bright colors and unique shapes. When the wind blows, it carries the sweet smell of flowers with it, and ethereal singing faintly heard somewhere in the distance. A path leads through the forest from where the ash tree stands.

Characters will need to make three successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) checks to follow the trail of the Nightwhispers to their cave. A failed check results in a random encounter from the Endless Forest Encounters table. The fey protectors are wary of invaders and are hostile unless convinced by a character of fey descent who speaks Sylvan that they mean no harm by succeeding a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. All other attempts by anyone else automatically fail. If reasoned with, the fey will let them pass unharmed. They are unaware of the Nightwhisper clan (other than that they are supposed to be a myth), have never heard of Amodus, and refuse to involve themselves with "mortal affairs."

1d4 Endless Forest Encounters

- 1 four dryads
- 2 two dryads, and two satyrs
- 3 one fey vine strider (see Appendix)
- 4 two dryads, and one awakened tree



NIGHTWHISPER CAVE

The tracks and trail lead directly to a cave entrance nestled in a massive oak tree's roots. The Nightwhispers use this cave as a temporary staging area for the changelings to swap places with the stolen children before being taken back to the material plane.

GENERAL FEATURES

These general features are prominent throughout the cave unless otherwise noted in the area description:

Ceilings, Floors, and Walls. The cave is made of earthen tunnels with walls held together by roots. Ceilings are 10 feet high throughout.

Lighting. Phosphorus fungi provide multicolored dim light throughout the cave.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the locations keyed on the provided map of the cave:

1. ENTRANCE

Hazard: Poison Vines. The path descends through a cluster of hanging vines that lash out

at a character stepping through them. That character must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (2d4) poison damage. The vines become inert after taking one point of slashing or fire damage.

2. GUARD AREA

A pair of wooden tables with chairs sit amongst crates of supplies.

Encounter: Nightwhisper Guards. There are four **dark fey thugs** (see Nightwhisper Clan) relaxing at the tables. Stealthy characters can take them by surprise.

2A. HIDING SPOT

A **changeling** (see Appendix) served the thugs food and drinks and hides here. It takes the appearance of one of the kidnapped children and, if discovered, pretends to be scared and mute. It will lead the characters into an ambush in area 3 and then rush to area 4 to warn Meribeth. It escapes to the forest if the characters pass it by.

3. DORMITORY

This area has wooden partitions engraved with tree branches and leaves blocking off a small

living area with bunk beds and a classroom with stools and remedial books. The changelings spend time here to learn mortal activities and how to mimic their behaviors.

Encounter: Changeling Class. There are five **changelings** (see Appendix) and their **dark fey druid** teacher (see Nightwhisper Clan). The changelings are in disguise as the kidnapped children and pretend to be scared until they can surprise attack the characters from behind. If more than half of the changelings are defeated, the remainder attempt to escape into the forest.

4. HAG'S DEN

This area would not look out of place in a noble's home and stands out from the rest of the cave's simple furnishings. A four-poster bed sits against one wall alongside a boudoir, and ornate rugs cover the bare earthen floors.

Encounter: Nightwhisper Daughter. Meribeth (**green hag**) is here with a **dark fey knight** (see Nightwhisper Clan). If forewarned by the changeling from area 2a, Meribeth turns invisible and uses her Mimicry ability to lure the characters with the sound of a child pleading for help coming from the den. The knight hides beside the door and attempts to surprise the first character with a net attack. Meribeth will turn invisible and attempt to flee if her hit points drop below one-third. The knight carries an ornate wooden key to the manacles holding the children prisoner (area 5).

5. PRISON CELL

Chained to a wall with iron-wood manacles (AC 18, 15 hit points, the key is in area 4, and they can be picked with thieves' tools with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check) are six young children (various races and sexes, noncombatants) kidnapped from Hopewell Harbor. The children are frightened but eager to return home.

LEAVING THE FAERIE REALM

The characters' return through the endless forest will be unmolested and they can leave the realm through the same ash tree gateway that they arrived through.

GM'S NOTE:

The faerie realm is an unpredictable place, and traveling to and from it can sometimes cause side effects to those who travel through it. At your discretion, this may include such things as a difference in time flow between planes (e.g. an hour in the faerie realm is a week on the material plane) or amnesia afflicting any who leave, making them forget they were ever there.

AFTERMATH

If the characters discover the truth behind Amodus' death and rescue the missing children, Captain Garland praises their work and pays any promised rewards (see Adventure Hooks). The city guard begins an investigation into the Green Road Orphanage, where they discover the faerie realm gateway is gone and any remaining Nightwhispers have fled. Fostered children start to vanish from their homes, and people speculate as to if they were changelings. The characters are now known to the Nightwhisper clan, and (especially if they killed Merideth) word of their interference has reached the ears of Mother Nightwhisper herself; they have now gained a very powerful enemy.

If the characters fail in their investigation, the Nightwhispers continue to replace children with changelings. They eventually use them to manipulate events to end the peace treaty between the Holy Ignis and Z'hing-Tao Empires to bring about another thousand-year Great War. Ω

CREDITS

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APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

CHANGELING

Medium fey (shapechanger), unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +2

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Sylvan, Elvish

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Shapechanger. The changeling can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Surprise Attack. If the changeling surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 4 (1d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6) slashing damage.

FEY VINE STRIDER

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +7

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The vine strider's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The vine strider can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *druidcraft*

3/day each: *entangle*, *faerie fire*

1/day each: *barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *spike growth*

False Appearance. While the vine strider remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a tangle of vines.

Magic Resistance. The vine strider has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Tree Stride. Once on its turn, the vine strider can use 10 ft. of its movement to step magically into one living tree within its reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 ft. of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vine strider makes two slam attacks, or one thorn whip attack and one slam attack.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) bludgeoning damage

Thorn Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) piercing damage and 5 (1d10) poison damage, and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). At the start of a grappled creature's turn, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (1d10) poison damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the vine strider can't use its whip on another target.

Entangling Plants (Recharge 5–6). Grasping roots and vines sprout in a 20-foot radius centered on the vine strider, withering away after 1 minute. For the duration, that area is difficult terrain for non-plant creatures other than the vine strider. In addition, each creature of the vine strider's choice in that area when the plants appear must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength check, freeing itself or another entangled creature within reach on a success.

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