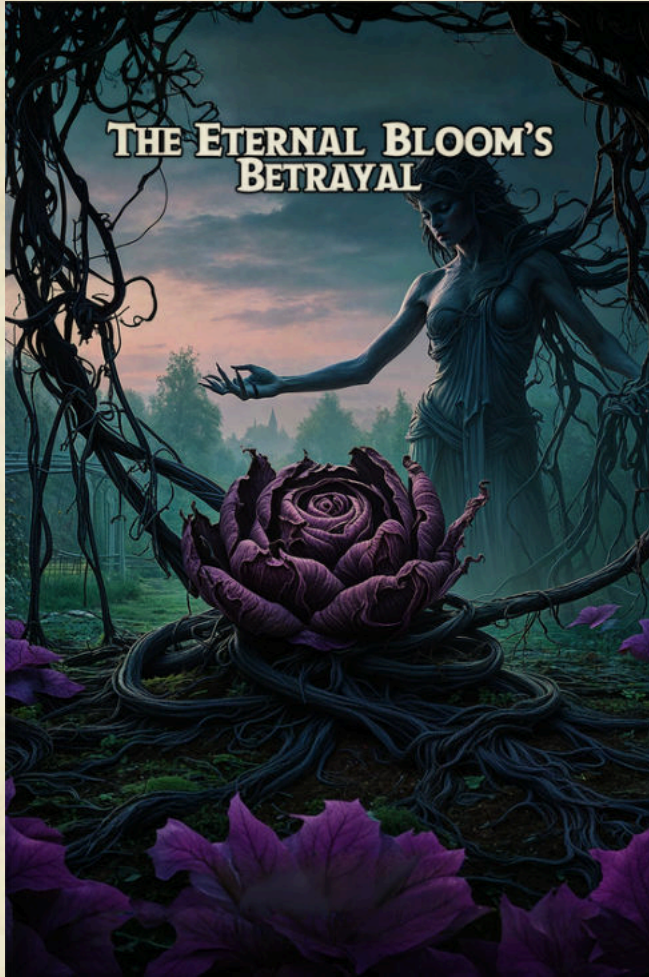


THE ETERNAL BLOOM'S BETRAYAL



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW:

Theme/Genre:

Fantasy Mystery with elements of Political Intrigue and Betrayal.

Tone:

Suspenseful and bittersweet, with moments of wonder mixed with tragic revelations.

Target Level:

Level 5.

Expected Duration:

2 hours.

Player Focus Preferences:

- Combat: Medium
- Roleplay: High
- Exploration: Medium

BACKSTORY AND SETTING:

THE WORLD

Nestled in the heart of the verdant continent of Osilian lies Eldervale, a flourishing region famed for its magical botanicals. The most storied of these is the Eternal Bloom: an undying flower displayed within the town square of Glimmerhold. The Bloom is said to be a gift from an ancient deity, ensuring bountiful harvests and warding off decay in the land. For centuries, the people of Eldervale have prospered under its influence.

However, the recent season has turned ominous. Crops are wilting overnight, an unnatural chill has gripped the region, and the lands that once thrived are becoming lifeless. Whispers of divine disfavor and curses have taken root. Town leaders claim the Eternal Bloom's power is fading, though no one knows why.

THE LOCAL AREA

The adventure begins in Glimmerhold, a vibrant town of merchants, herbalists, and druids who revere nature. Its center is dominated by the Eternal Gardens, where the sacred Bloom rests on a pedestal surrounded by meticulous landscaping. That peaceful charm now feels frayed, with tensions rising between townspeople and fearful murmurs spreading through the market square.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT RELEVANT TO THE ADVENTURE

Long ago, the eternal life of the Bloom was ensured by an ancient pact between the druids and their deity, Zephyra. This bond required not just reverence but regular rituals to honor the goddess. Secretly, the rituals included a grim caveat: once every seventy-five years, a vessel of pure spirit must be sacrificed to maintain the goddess's favor. The druids of old have long since kept this detail a secret. The current generation knows nothing—or so it seems.

IMPORTANT NPCs:

1. Harken Velris (Human, Mayor)

- *Affable but stressed*, Harken is doing his best to maintain order in the face of chaos. Deeply believes the party might solve the mystery of the Bloom.
- **Motivation:** Protect his town and reputation.

2. Elyssia Mossheart (Half-Elf, High Druid)

- Keeper of the Eternal Bloom and leader of the druids in Glimmerhold. *Calm but secretive*, Elyssia knows far more about the fading Bloom than she lets on.
- **Motivation:** Protect the druidic traditions at all costs, even the dark ones.

3. Kaelen Morek (Tiefling, Archeologist)

- A visiting scholar investigating ancient rituals of the land, *cheerful and overly curious*. Unknowingly holds a piece of vital information about the Goddess Zephyra's pact.
- **Motivation:** Find the truth in history and satiate their insatiable curiosity.

PLOT HOOK:

The campaign begins as the adventurers visit Glimmerhold, either as visiting travelers or hired by Mayor Velris to assist with the strange events afflicting the region.

In the marketplace, the party witnesses a heated argument between farmers blaming the druids for recent disasters. Suddenly, the earth trembles, and a sudden pulse of dark energy erupts from the Eternal Gardens. When the party investigates, they notice something is terribly wrong. The Bloom's once radiant petals are tinged black, curling as though withering.

Mayor Velris pleads with the party to investigate the fading of the Bloom, assuring them they will be rewarded handsomely. Elyssia Mossheart insists the druids have done everything in their power, though she grows noticeably tense when asked about ancient rituals. The archeologist, Kaelen, suggests there may be clues within an ancient druidic ruin an hour's travel from town, implying there's more to the story than even the druids let on.

Primary Objective:

Discover the cause of the Eternal Bloom's decay and prevent disaster before the land is consumed by blight.

KEY LOCATIONS:

LOCATION 1: ETERNAL GARDENS (STARTING AREA)

Atmosphere:

A once-lush garden slowly succumbing to rot. The air smells faintly of decay, and the vibrant colors of the land are dimmed. Flowers droop, and the ground feels cold.

NPCs:

Mayor Velris, Elyssia Mossheart, townsfolk.

Encounters:

- **Investigating Arcane Residue:**
Arcana or Nature checks reveal the Bloom has been influenced by a foreign, necrotic magic. High rolls may hint at its divine connection weakening.
- **Rising Panic:**
Distraught townsfolk bicker over who might be responsible. This is a valuable roleplay opportunity to calm tensions.

LOCATION 2: THE VERDANT GROTTO (INTERMEDIATE AREA)

Atmosphere:

A druidic altar hidden deep in a cave overgrown with lush vines, glowing mushrooms, and trickling streams. Here, the party encounters remnants of the old rituals.

Encounters:

- **Puzzle:**
A locked stone door leading to the altar. The solution lies in arranging stone tiles to depict the phases of the Bloom (seed, sprout, flower, decay, rejuvenation).
- **Combat:**
Animated Root Guardians (CR 2 x2), ancient constructs set to defend intruders trying to access the altar.
- **Lore Find:**
The players discover an old druidic journal mentioning "a sacrifice to seal the bond with Zephyra." (This raises questions about the druids' true intentions.)

LOCATION 3: THE WITHERING GLEN (FINAL AREA)

Atmosphere:

A corrupted clearing, where twisted vines and blackened trees encircle an ancient stone shrine. At its center stands an avatar of Zephyra, now twisted by neglect and betrayal.

Encounters:

- **Boss Fight:** Zephyra's Fallen Avatar (CR 6)
 - **Abilities:** Conjures corrupted roots to entangle players, casts necrotic blasts. At 50% health, summons blighted creatures (CR 1 x3).
 - Zephyra's dialogue reveals her rage at broken promises and forgotten sacrifices.
- **Environmental Hazard:**
Corrupted vines ensnaring players at random intervals (Dexterity save DC 15 prevents).

ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES:

COMBAT ENCOUNTER STATS:

- **Root Guardians**
 - **AC:** 15
 - **HP:** 60
 - **Multiattack:** 2x Slam: +5 to hit, 1d8+3 damage
- **Zephyra's Fallen Avatar**
 - **AC:** 16
 - **HP:** 120
 - Uses Legendary Actions to cast Entangle or summon Blighted Sprites (stats as Mephits).

PUZZLE/TRAP MECHANICS:

- The Verdant Grotto Puzzle requires insight into the natural life cycle to align stone tiles. Intelligence or Nature checks (DC 14) offer hints, with failure causing magical thorns to deal minor damage.

ROLEPLAY PROMPTS:

- Elyssia grows defensive if the party accuses the druids, eventually breaking and revealing her knowledge of the pact if pushed.
- Kaelen might propose alliances with the party to unearth the rest of the ritual truth.

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION:

THE FINAL CHALLENGE:

The party can defeat Zephyra's Fallen Avatar through combat, or they may attempt divine persuasion to offer a new pact. Success requires creative player action and Charisma checks (DC 18).

STAKES OF FAILURE:

Zephyra fully corrupts, bringing her destructive wrath to Eldervale. Crops die, and townsfolk scatter as famine spirals.

RESOLUTION:

If the Bloom's power is restored, the party becomes heroes of the town. If they condemn the druids' practices, it sparks a reckoning amongst the townsfolk and clergy.

REWARDS:

LOOT:

- **Amulet of Flora's Grace:**
Grants once-per-day casting of "Cure Wounds" at Level 2.
- **Gold reward:**
100 GP each.
- **A coil of enchanted vine rope (50 ft.):**
Immune to fire damage.

STORY REWARDS:

- Reputation boost in the region.
- Permanent favor from Elyssia if the druids are redeemed.

SUPPORTING DETAILS:

STAT BLOCKS:

- Custom Root Guardians and Zephyra's Fallen Avatar provided in DM's tools.

MAPS:

- Sketches of Eternal Gardens, Verdant Grotto, and Withering Glen. Include environmental hazards like thorn traps.

PLAYER HANDOUTS:

- A fragment of the old druidic journal and notes on Zephyra's divine nature.

ATMOSPHERE ENHANCEMENTS:

- **Music:**
Gentle forest tunes for Glimmerhold, eerie wind chimes for the Grotto, escalating ominous strings for the final encounter.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES:

- If the players decide to side with Zephyra, they could permanently reshape Eldervale into her domain of nature's harsh supremacy.
- Allow alternate routes to restoring the Bloom, such as finding a relic or different deity.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP:

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- What was your favorite moment or twist in the story?
- Would you have made different choices if given more information upfront?
- How do you feel about the moral implications of the druids' rituals?

This one-shot campaign is designed to immerse players in a fantasy mystery that seamlessly blends intrigue with opportunities for rich roleplay and tactical challenges. The resolution offers players a significant impact on the world, with choices that resonate beyond the game. Enjoy bringing The Eternal Bloom's Betrayal to life at your table.