

THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Title: The Forgotten Gardens

Theme/Genre: Fantasy Mystery with touches of Whimsy and Danger

Tone: A mix of eerie and enchanting, with moments of lightheartedness amidst the danger.

Target Level for Players: Level 3

Expected Duration: 2 hours

Player Focus Preferences:

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

BACKSTORY AND SETTING

OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD/SETTING

In the verdant kingdom of Lynthoria, tales have long circulated about the “Forgotten Gardens,” ancient botanical sanctuaries once tended by the druids of the Verdant Circle. These druids mysteriously disappeared after a failed magical ritual, leaving the gardens engulfed in both wonder and curses. Now, the gardens

are hidden behind veils of enchantment, known only through legend and whispers.

LOCAL AREA

The adventure begins in the village of Briar Glen, shadowed by the dense Evergrowth Forest. Once prosperous, the village now struggles, flowers wilting without cause, wildlife retreating, and strange whispers haunting its streets. Villagers speak of the Gardens as their last hope to restore life and prosperity.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Centuries ago, the Verdant Circle attempted to merge nature’s vitality with arcane power, aiming to create an unblemished Eden. However, the ritual failed catastrophically, spreading chaos and hiding the gardens behind powerful enchantments.

IMPORTANT NPCs

1. Elder Myria Wenlake:

- **Role:** Leader of Briar Glen.
- **Traits:** Wise, hopeful but weary. Believes breaking the curse will save her village.
- **Quote:** “Our hope lies buried amidst ancient roots. Will you brave the unknown for us?”

2. Erwin Thornscribe:

- **Role:** Paranoid herbalist and local cynic.
- **Traits:** Suspicious, secretive. Knows more about the Gardens than he reveals.
- **Quote:** “Some things are forgotten for a reason. Best leave them lost.”

3. Dara Silvershard:

- **Role:** Wandering bard with an interest in the Verdant Circle.
- **Traits:** Curious, energetic. Hears music in her dreams, linked to the Gardens.
- **Quote:** “The music of dreams... it’s a guide, a key—and perhaps a warning.”

4. Amarion, the Bloomkeeper:

- **Role:** Spirit trapped in the Gardens.
- **Traits:** Ethereal, guilt-ridden. Desires connection but is torn by past failures.
- **Quote:** “I am bound by vine and time, seeking release or ruin.”

PLOT HOOK

As the players arrive in Briar Glen, rumors of its plight draw them in. They witness a startling spectacle in the town square: flowers burst from the ground, vibrant and breathtaking, only to wither to reveal a chilling sigil burned into the earth.

Villagers gather, awash with fear, as Elder Myria pleads for aid. She reveals that the “awakening” of the Gardens is tied to their salvation. Myria presents a half-completed map to the Gardens, left by a reclusive mapmaker, urging the party to find a way to the hidden sanctuary and cleanse its corruption.

Primary Objective: Venture to the Forgotten Gardens, uncover their secrets, and purge the corruption healing Briar Glen.

KEY LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: VILLAGE OF BRIAR GLEN (STARTING AREA)

Atmosphere:

The village of Briar Glen is steeped in a somber quiet. Cottages are veiled in dead vines, and villagers roam with a haunted look, burdened by the forest’s whispers. The air is dense with anticipation.

Notable NPCs:

- **Myria Wenlake:** Quest-giver, diplomat, her expressions shift between hope and fatigue.
- **Erwin Thornscribe:** Hostile but knowledgeable, constantly warns against disturbing the Gardens.
- **Dara Silvershard:** Would join the party to the Gardens’ edge, hums strange tunes she claims are keys to secrets.

Possible Encounters:

- **A Social Conflict:** Erwin, stirring fear, gathers villagers to oppose the adventurers, accusing them of threatening the village’s safety. The party must employ diplomacy or stealth to defuse tension and proceed without further disruptions.

LOCATION 2: OBSCURED PATH & THE SINGING SPRINGS (INTERMEDIATE AREA)

Atmosphere:

The Evergrowth Forest envelops the players as they wade through a tapestry of vines and shadows. The air carries a melody, subtle yet growing in intensity as they approach the Springs—a serene clearing dominated by a crystal-clear pool whose waters hum with an ancient tune.

Key Features and Challenge:

- **Environmental Puzzle:** To pass, the party must harmonize with the springs’ melody, either using Dara’s dreamsongs or their instruments (Performance or appropriately thematic skills, DC 14). Errors unleash shockwaves, alerting nearby predators or dealing force damage.
- **Combat Encounter:** If the harmony falters or time is wasted, a corrupted treant and vine blight minions emerge. It’s vulnerable to radiant damage, testing both tactical acumen and party coherence.

LOCATION 3: THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS (FINAL AREA)

Atmosphere:

The Forgotten Gardens unfold in breathtaking surrealism: floating soil islands host a wealth of colors and wildlife, while an ominous miasma weaves decay through beauty. Vexing and beautiful, the Gardens challenge and lure the heart.

Key Features and Challenge:

- **Final Encounter:** Amarion, the Bloomkeeper Spirit
 - Once a protector, now Amarion grapples with corruption and madness. They offer dialogue first—a chance to learn and potentially avoid combat through successful group checks (Insight, Persuasion, or Arcana, DC 15).
 - **Boss Battle Tactics:** If diplomacy fails, Amarion summons thorn walls to separate adventurers and spreads decay, dealing a mix of physical and necrotic damage. Their allies and spells transform standalone vines or flowers into persistent threats.

ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

- **Corrupted Treant (Mini-Boss):**
HP: 45, **AC:** 13
Stats: Use Awakened Tree as base, add nature-based lair actions.
- **Boss Fight - Amarion, the Bloomkeeper Spirit:**
HP: 90, **AC:** 15
 - **Multiattack:** Vine Whip (1d10+3 damage) and Corruption Bolt (2d8 necrotic).
 - **Reaction:** Summons poison brambles on taking fire damage, forcing players to maneuver or take periodic damage.

ROLEPLAY ENCOUNTERS

- **Amarion's Memories:** Through dialogue, unravel Amarion's past. "Why do I hear them call? Do they seek my forgiveness or retribution?"
- **Information Gathering:** Dara assists in gathering lore, translating songs into clues without full understanding.

PUZZLE/TRAP

- **The Singing Springs:** Perform harmonious tunes or mimic cosmic resonances. A Musical Instrument (use Performance skill, DC 14) provides guidance, with each failure escalating the challenge through tougher environmental responses.

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

Success in calming or defeating Amarion restores the village to its bloom over time, earning the adventurers fame and gratitude. Elder Myria hosts a grand celebratory feast, while Dara immortalizes the event in song.

Success:

- Village revitalized, new trade prospers.
- Hero's recognition, updates from Myria, and Dara's ballad spreading adventurer's fame.
- Potential for future campaigns.

Failure:

- Gardens left in decay, miasma worsens, threatening survival.
- Villagers despondent, potential plot twists for continued adventure.

REWARDS

- **Loot:**
 - **Ring of Nature's Attunement:** Cast Detect Magic once daily.
 - **Gold:** 150 total, split among party.
- **Story Rewards:**
 - Favor with Elder Myria, promises of support.
 - Bard's songs spreading tales of heroic deeds.
- **Experience:** Appropriately gain roughly 900 XP per player.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Custom Stat Blocks: Include the Treant and Amarion, detailing damage, resistances, and abilities.

Maps: Simplified layouts for Briar Glen, Singing Springs, and Gardens. Essential for visual understanding.

Handouts: Fragile map fragment, Dara's dream music, enchanted plant samples blossoming in the Gardens' wake.

Atmospheric Suggestions: Use ambient forest recordings, escalating tension with dissonant chimes during battles.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- If sparing Amarion, they attempt to stabilize the Gardens with assistance, hoping respite or companionship averts full decay.
- Destroying the Gardens may trouble druidic circles in your next adventures, testing peaceful resolutions or diplomatic extensions.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP

1. Discuss highlights and what resonated with each player.
2. Reflect on game balance and challenge levels—was anything unbalanced or exceptionally clever?
3. Consider further adventures in Lynthoria; tap into hints given by Myria regarding other disturbances.

Epilogue Options: Myria or Dara could entice players with deeper mysteries and threats, hinting at ongoing curses or revelatory elements poised to change Lynthoria's future.