

# Pawns of the Chessboard Forest

New occupations, backgrounds, drives and rituals.

# The Forest's Creed

Taboos and geas from a mercurial forest.

# Rosewald

A curiouser and curiouser adventure  
into the many-thorned home of roses.



# TROPHY

BLAINE MOORE

# Pawns of the Chessboard Forest

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The following are new options for treasure-hunters for use with the IncurSION *Rosenwald*, or any other session of Trophy.

## OCCUPATIONS

Barrister (*skilled in contracts, language, persuasion*)

Footman (*skilled in orders, waiting, wrestling*)

Herbalist (*skilled in medicine, plants, poison*)

## BACKGROUNDS

Awakened Dreamer (*skilled in confusion*)

Violent Queen (*skilled in execution*)

White Rabbit (*skilled in running*)

Wizened Haberdasher (*skilled in madness*)

## DRIVES

Obtain a stay of execution for your sister in Ambaret

Recover a long lost artifact of the Queen of Roses

Find the mad prophet of the woods

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## RITUALS

Beastform (*take a form halfway between human and animal*)

Doom (*make a non-monstrous creature feel a sense of impending doom*)

Scale (*double or halve the size of an object you touch*)

Topsy-turvy (*briefly change the orientation of gravity for something you touch*)

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# The Forest's Creed

Those who skirt the edge of the forest, or—if they are lucky to live long enough—those who brave its depths, may occasionally glimpse its nature. It is cruel. It is malevolent. It is insidious, and ever grasping, clawing, dragging those who venture too close further and further into its depths, never to return. And yet, it is not without amusement or joy. The spirits of the forest, or perhaps even the forest itself, may sometimes grant favor to the rare mortals that please them in some way. Alas, the forest is fickle, and some unfortunate souls may by their actions stir greater ire than would otherwise be earned for the mere sin of their trespass.

The following system is directed at the GM, and can be used to characterize the whims of the forest.

Select one Taboo from the table below, roll two dice to determine randomly, or come up with your own.

The first time a treasure-hunter violates the Taboo, they anger the forest and its spirits, causing a retaliation that will induce a Ruin Roll. If the treasure-hunter's Ruin goes up as a result, inflict a condition on them. While continued violations of the Taboo will anger the forest, a treasure-hunter only suffers one Ruin Roll as a result of violating the Taboo.

## TABOOS



Eating of the forest's bounty

Drinking of the forest's streams

Spilling blood upon the forest floor

Baring iron in the heart of the forest

Turning your back on the heart of the forest

Kindling fire within the wood



Resting while the forest wakes

Speaking lies

Indulging in vice within the wood

Taking that which is not yours

Desecrating the ruins claimed by the forest















This far and no further; do not enter the heart of the wood

## THE FOREST'S CREED

Select one Geas from the table below, roll two dice to determine randomly, or come up with your own.

Fulfilling the Geas will please the forest and its spirits, which will result in a boon of either a Treasure, a Ritual granted by a spirit, or a clue towards fulfilling a Drive. If there are any Rituals published with the incursion you are playing, it is recommended the Geas Rituals be chosen from those—these are local spirits, adapted to the forest around them.

### GEAS

  or 	  or 
 Punish the wicked	 Teach someone the meaning of pain
 Consecrate the dead	 Wreak vengeance on those who have harmed the forest
 Invite a stranger to share your fire	 Disrupt the natural way of things
 Face the unknown without flinching	 Slake the forest's thirst for blood
 Respect a god long thought forgotten	 Drive an interloper from the forest
 Trick a fool in an amusing way	 Show mercy to the undeserving

Some of the Taboos and Geas contradict one another; what pleases the forest one day may anger it another. If you randomly select two contradictory items from the tables, simply pick one to re-roll as needed, or leave both in place if you are feeling particularly capricious.

Finally, it is recommended that the players be made aware that the forest is awake and their characters are subject to its whims. However, you may choose to keep the Taboos and Geas secret. If the Taboos and Geas are kept secret, you should have a knowledgeable side character hint at their nature or otherwise give the players some clues during the course of the incursion.

## INCURSION

# Rosenwald

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*In black forest, find white a rose  
Seek ye the object of your greed  
At risk of assuming death's repose  
To claim a Trophy of the lost*

*Forlorn wand'rer, you'd best take heed  
Your base desires come with cost  
Unless you keep the forest's creed  
Become a trophy of the lost*

*Be peaceful here in all you do,  
or else by sin your fate is signed  
only the virtuous through and through  
their desired trophy can safely find*

*But should your stars be twice aligned  
and be your fortune with gold emboss'd  
pay your debts to all mankind  
AND CLAIM A TROPHY OF THE LOST*

Deep within the forest, beyond where the way turns weird, all that is lost may be found amidst the roses of the Rosenwald. Priceless art, forgotten relics, and even the souls of those separated from the mortal coil. But the roses cling tightly to their prizes, and one must brave the thorns to pry them free...

### THEME

Wonderland

### MOMENTS

- ◇ You look back the way you came after cresting a small hill and are struck by vertigo; you stand atop not a hill, but a mountain, with an ocean of trees stretching to the horizon behind you.
- ◇ A skull the size of a boulder sits on the forest floor, a massive oak splitting its dome and rising into the canopy.

## INCURSION: ROSENWALD

- ◇ A small lake provides a reprieve from the trees. Its waters are clear and uninhabited. A desiccated corpse lays at the edge of the water, flaked with salt.
- ◇ A table laid with all manner of game dressed up to serve, from the minuscule to the grotesque, in a procession from smallest to largest. A dormouse is followed by a snake, a pigeon, a hare, a chicken, a turkey, a pig, a man, a deer, and, finally, a bear.
- ◇ The screech of an owl is mixed with a shrill scream. The owl lands on a branch with a person the size of a child's doll clutched in its talons. A moment more and the person is gone, swallowed whole.
- ◇ The burnt out husk of a village. Some of the charred timbers are so massive they must have been whole trees. Others could easily have been kindling.
- ◇ A bridge cobbled together from pebbles stretches across a creek. A fat toad takes shelter in its shade.
- ◇ A thicket of rose bushes, white, but painted red with the blood of the fresh corpse that litters the pathway.
- ◇ A hazy glade filled with sweet smelling smoke that fills your lungs with pleasant warmth.
- ◇ Thousands of milk-white cocoons hang from the canopy on streamers of silk.
- ◇ A flock of flamingos stand placidly around a pond. They scatter as the treasure-hunters approach.
- ◇ A stump stained with blood, a headsman's axe lodged deeply in the wood.

## CONDITIONS

- ◇ Your hands contort and become misshapen. Before long they are like the paws of beasts—fierce, clawed, but only able to hold your accustomed tools with great effort.
- ◇ Your feet are wracked with pain, and wearing your boots becomes torturous. What creature's feet are these that now are yours to tread the earth?
- ◇ You find yourself swaddled in your clothes, and realise you are shrinking.
- ◇ Your very clothes and equipment constrict you, unless you shed them or make frequent adjustments. Minute by minute, hour by hour, you are growing. Each new inch added to your height is an extra ache in your bones as they become more strained.
- ◇ It is a struggle to maintain focus; you are overcome with an intense feeling of impending doom.
- ◇ Intense vertigo plagues you. It is difficult not to run into things when it seems like the ground ought to be a wall or the trees the floor.

## INCURSION: ROSENWALD

- ◇ You have become jumpy. Every shadow seems to hold a vast monster that might swallow you whole.
- ◇ Thorns have begun sprouting from your skin.
- ◇ You cannot trust your eyes; colors and shapes have become distorted, shifting into each other
- ◇ You have the strangest sensation that you have begun a metamorphosis, that you are changing into something. Perhaps something beautiful. Perhaps something terrible.
- ◇ Smoke emanates from your nose and mouth with every exhalation. Your lungs feel uncomfortably warm.

### RING 1

**TERRORS:** There is no sudden transition, but at some point you notice that wild roses have come to dominate the undergrowth. The absence of their thorny brambles marks out a path deeper into the wood. A woman's voice is carried on the wind, punctuated with raucous laughter. The treasure-hunters come across a clearing where several bandits are gathered in a mockery of a justicar's court. Presiding over the court is a woman in a lavish but filthy red dress, perched on a crude wooden throne set atop an overturned wagon. The would-be defendant appears to be an unlucky traveller, kneeling before a bandit that is half beast and half man. The woman pretends to read a list of crimes from a scrap of paper. "His nose is too long!" she says, eliciting a laugh from the bandits sitting on a fallen log in lieu of a bench. "Being too poor to pay the toll!" she says to more laughter. "Wearing an ugly shirt!" The list goes on.

The treasure-hunters can easily sneak past the proceeding, but if they linger and watch they may be called upon as witnesses in the trial, or may ultimately witness the traveller's execution. If they interfere, they may find themselves on the stand facing similar charges if they cannot overpower or outwit the bandits, or amuse the bandit queen.

**TEMPTATIONS:** More "criminals" are seen tied to the trees at the edge of the court. One is recognized by a treasure-hunter as someone important to them. Another whispers promises of treasure to any that will set them free, claiming they know how to convince the forest to let them pass unhindered. If you are playing with Taboos or Geas, this second prisoner can warn the hunters of them, even if they don't know all the details. The Bandit Queen wears a simple golden circlet that bears a single heart-shaped ruby of considerable size.

## INCURSION: ROSENWALD

### RING 2

**TERRORS:** The treasure hunters have come to the end of the rosy path, which opens up into pond-strewn woodland. The pond water is black and thick, and churns constantly with bubbles that fill the area with a noxious haze that disorients the treasure-hunters both by obscuring the environment and each other, and by leading them astray with ghostly hallucinations. The ponds, should they fall into them or attempt to drink from them, prove caustic, and will severely damage equipment and may cause horrific acid burns. As the treasure-hunters drive deeper into the forest, the haze thins out and hangs closer to the ground, but it doesn't go away.

**TEMPTATIONS:** An old and decrepit town square can be found hidden in the haze. Broken cobbles and a few remains of long-rotted timbers lead up to an untouched fountain that yet holds clean water. The centerpiece of the fountain is a rose bush of wrought iron brambles encircling emerald leaves and silver roses. A ray of light breaks through the canopy to strike a larger rose at the top of the bush, making it shine a resplendent silver-white.

### RING 3

**TERRORS:** The way forward lies through a foggy cave with many twisting paths. The hunters encounter several bodies in the darkways beneath the earth, each bearing the face of one of the bandits encountered at the start of their journey. Whichever path or paths the hunters take, they arrive at a field of corpses scattered in groups of two or three. Ghosts in the fog play out a thousand betrayals, collapsing into mist when they meet their corpse on the mossy ground. Some of the faces are familiar; how does each treasure-hunter see one of their companions betray them?

**TEMPTATIONS:** A hallucination of the past—a phantom that fades in and out of the fog—haunts each of the hunters, reminding them of their drive. It follows them even to deeper rings, and whispers to them in words just beyond comprehension. The lilting voice of the bandit queen echoes on the wind, naming each of their sins.

## **INCURSION: ROSENWALD**

### **RING 4**

**TERRORS:** The dense underbrush grows thicker and taller until eventually it becomes overbrush, and crowds out the view of the forest until it is as dark as a cave. Whatever their current relative sizes may be, in the final rings of the forest the hunters find themselves of a humble scale, those of average height becoming no taller than a squirrel. The animals here are misshapen and twisted. Thorns poke out between the birds' feathers, and their beaks and legs are black. The fur of the other critters is oily and matted, and their teeth are needle-sharp and too many for their mouths.

A fat cat slumbers on the path. When the hunters come upon it, they only have a brief moment to consider whether they can sneak past it before its mouth opens in a wide grin full of dozens of needle-like teeth. Its eyes open and shine like lanterns, then its fur ripples, and it slowly fades from view. The cat is interested less in hunting and more in harrying and toying with the hunters, appearing suddenly to bat them and send them flying into the thorny brush, separating them.

**TEMPTATIONS:** The thorns of the brambles ahead are littered with what appears to be the bodies of a well-equipped travelling group. Who among the hunters recognizes one of the bodies? What visible sign does this person have that is tied to another treasure-hunter's drive? A shrike rests lightly on a nearby branch, ready to snap prey from the forest floor and add them to the collection of its victims impaled upon the thorns.

### **RING 5**

**TERRORS:** The treasure-hunters, still at their reduced size, come across a bush bearing a single rose as white as the new-fallen snow amidst dozens of roses flecked red with stains of blood. The thorns of the bush are black and dripping with ichor, tangled around the corpses of all who came before. Those unfortunate souls are pale as the rose itself, their blood having been drained to sustain the rose bush that rules over the heart of this wood. It is too late now to retreat; the brambles have blocked the path. Do the treasure-hunters submit to their judgment? Or do they fight their fate? The whispers of the rose entreat each hunter to deliver the others for their judgment, so that they alone may be spared.

## INCURSION: ROSENWALD

The judgment of the rose is harsh, but it may occasionally be satisfied. Any treasure-hunter that suffers its justice has their actions and their history considered by the players at the table, and if they are considered “sinless” they may yet escape the forest alive. All others are drained of both their blood and sanity in measure equal to their sins. For each treasure-hunter killed by the bush, the white rose is stained with their blood, and a new white rose blooms from a bud elsewhere on the bush.

TEMPTATIONS: Each hunter knows with certainty that their deepest desires can be satisfied by the rose, if only they are pure enough. They are not pure enough, but their companions are more impure, and their own purity can be enhanced by slaying the impure. Perhaps then they may be found worthy.

