

Campaign/Game: The Statue Garden - D&D 5e

Date: June 19th, 2024

The Statue Garden

Campaign Date: The Age of Barbarians and Pirates

Characters

The Short Kings

Charr, Lizardfolk Battlesmith Artificer/Ranger (Danny F)

Hank, Landshark Steel Defender (NPC)

Denthir Elmheart, Half-Orc Paladin of Mielekki (Danny)

Pockets, Kobold Artificer (Jack)

Ryvia, Teifling Twilight Cleric (Karen)

Tempest, Tempest Cleric of Umberlee (Declan)

Zothar, Halfling Beastmaster Ranger (Carter)

Zanthir, Pterosaur animal companion (NPC)

GM: Rew

A local noble has recently taken an interest in ruins hidden in the midst of the magically enchanted Whistling Woods. Long before the Empire of Civorea was founded, this territory just outside of the cursed city of Glimmerford was the domain of the dark druid Valedan. Those who visit this forgotten cairn return with tales of a garden of horrific life-like statues, posed as if they were turned to stone mid step by some unknown force. Who dares take the noble's riches in exchange for one particular artifact rumored to be held there?

Six adventurers known as the "Short Kings" answered the call. Tempest, a short pirate with an eyepatch who met Denthur, a half orc with an annoyingly cheerful bent, through their shared love of water deities. Denthur reveres Mielekki, a god of forests and ponds, while Tempest serves Umberlee, a vengeful lord of the seas. Charr and Pockets immediately bonded over their love of learning how things work and making new things. Their shared vocabulary as artificers building magical devices allowed them to speak in short-hand. Charr shows off Hank, his small Bulette steel defender companion, while Pockets, a failed genetic experiment married with dark arcane magics, demonstrates his remote cannon that would frequently sit on his shoulder and fire autonomously. Zothar and his flying dinosaur companion Zanthir, met Ryvia as they were sneaking through the forest hunting a bounty. This group of misfits had been a solid party, adventuring together for about eighteen months by the time they arrived at the noble's doorstep.

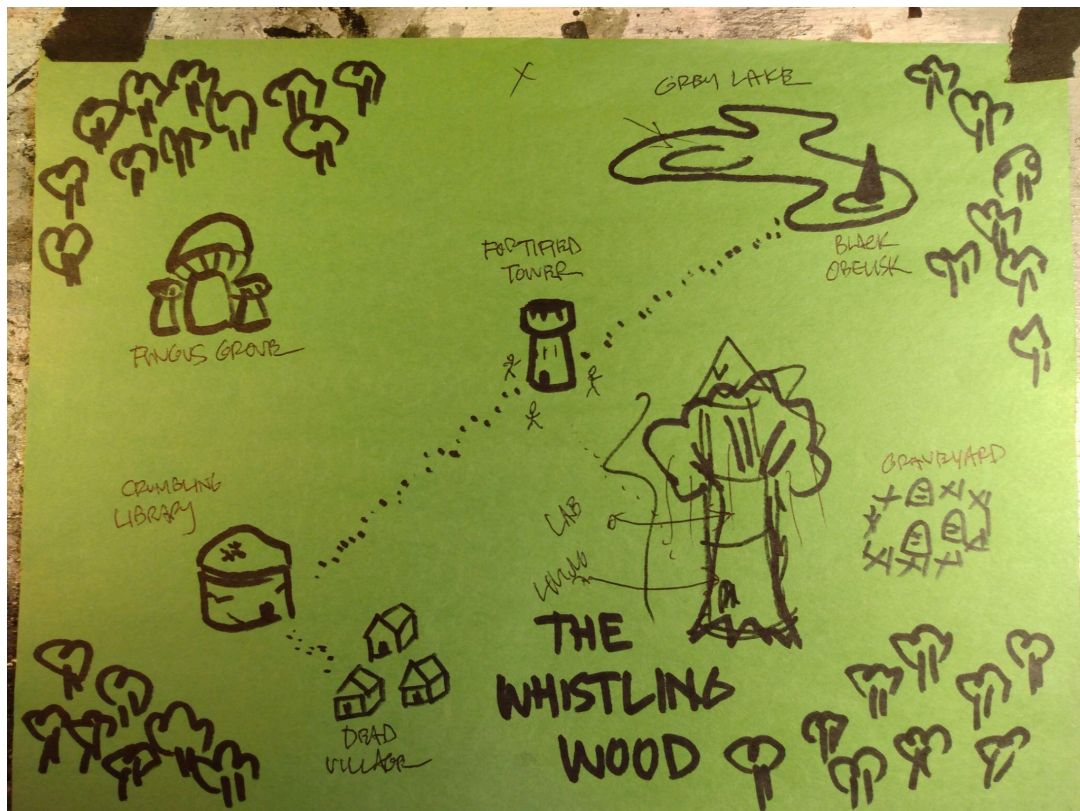
Lady Cordelia of Remi recruited them to recover The Robe of Davion Rose, an artifact created and worn by one of the most accomplished archmagi Aperta-Mundi had ever known. The Short King's patron only knew that this artifact could be found at "the tower" in the protected vale known as the "Whistling Woods." Only a vibrant mage at the height of their power could pierce the tower's powerful protective charms and defenses and allow entry. Lady Cordelia was one such spellcaster. In the olden days of the Empire of Civorea, she might have been branded a

witch and heretic for her use of arcane powers. Now, following the complete collapse of the empire, she practices her magic openly.

She warned the Short Kings her magic would only allow access to the woods for eight hours. After the sun goes down, they would find the area “slip away” from beneath them and they would be forced out. With this in mind, the six began their journey through the entrance their patron’s magic opened.

As they approach the woods, they are challenged by a monstrous woman with a head covered in snakes instead of hair with the lower body of a giant, bloated worm. She declares herself Mistress Malodonna and she warns them not to trespass in “her” grove. The party replies that they will leave once they locate the robe. Surprisingly, she is satisfied by this and disappears just as mysteriously as she appeared.

Arriving in the Whistling Woods, the Short Kings discover there is much more to this forest grove than they originally thought. They see a variety of points of interest. A Gray Lake lay to the northeast of the complex. A black obsidian obelisk stands on an island at one end of this body of water. To the northwest, a grove of giant solemn mushrooms loomed. The tower in the center of the complex is an unimpressive structure. It is squat and simple and made of stone. To the southwest, a crumbling library dominates a village that looks burnt out and abandoned even from this distance. To the southeast, a giant tree stands over a quiet graveyard. A subtle wind kicked up, as if by magic. A voice in their heads calls to them from the lake, “Please, you must free me!”



The Short Kings cautiously approach the Grey Lake, the apparent source of the pleading. The party could not reply to the telepathic communications, but the urgency of the request was real enough. However, the party soon realize that the help the disembodied voice was looking for is to help spread its ilk outside the Whistling Wood by implanting its spawn in the Short Kings. Mungum the Aboleth Mastermind lures Denthir close enough to blow a conch shell it had left to trap its victims. Mungum and its two tadpoles attack, but they are no match for the party. After a messy and spore-covered battle the Short Kings turn their sights toward the Fortified Tower to fulfill their mission.

Inside the squat tower, they find nothing but destruction. Headless stone “statues” stand everywhere. It appears that mortals were petrified and then their heads shattered so that they could never be revived. The first level of the tower holds a teleportation circle to the Red Moon Keep. A picture of some stereotypical Lunast Krakozhian named Ivan hangs nearby. At the top of this small tower, one petrified body has been decapitated and then given a mocking head of melted rocks that resembles that of a rabbit. As the heroes leave the tower, they discover a child, with his head intact, who was petrified and forgotten, still holding a dog with his head intact.

The heroes decide to inspect the titanic tree. Charr touches it and discovers that it was not a tree at all. The vision of the tree was an illusion. This “tree” is actually a wizard’s tower! The tower once belonged to the gnomish archmage Gadri Quilldwadle. He shared this vale with the druid Valedan, but it appears that another being named Lonnel had taken residence. The entire place has been ransacked by someone—presumably someone looking for the Robe of Davion Rose.



A note left where all could find it contains a cryptic message:

Dearest Ara,

In the womb of the Whistling Woods, where the pines sing secrets, a treasure lies cloaked in the petals of the Davion Rose. Seek it, if you dare, but know this: only a soul unburdened by avarice may unveil its resting place. The bitter and vengeful will find naught but shadows.

Your selfish heart, forever isolated, will be your eternal barrier. The melody of the ancient oak will forever elude those who live for themselves alone. The guardian of the amber veil will recognize only the pure of intent.

Bound by your greed, you shall roam, forever lost, forever alone.

In wistful regard,
Lonnell

Just as Ryvia discovers a hidden compartment containing three potions, including a potion of Stone to Flesh, two monstrous aberrations attack! One attacker is Shrak the Observer, a toothy maw of a creature with a single central eye with nine other eyes on eyestalks. His companion, whom he refers to as his “horny friend,” has a similar single central eye and savage jaws, but instead of eyes on stalks sports wicked tusks. The Short Kings, working together, manage to defeat them both.

The heroes return to the squat tower and use the potion of Stone to Flesh to free the boy and his dog from petrification. They learn his name is Billy and his companion is Rex the dog. He laments the death of his mother, but is momentarily heartened by being restored to flesh by the Kings. He says that he is friends with many of the children of Heartsong House orphanage located in the village nearby. Charr doesn't help the boy's grief by revealing that everyone there is dead. The heroes hide Billy until they can safely get him and Rex to safety. Then they head to the graveyard. There, they find only one monument of significance.

Here lies Archmage Gadri
Professor at the Glimmerford Academy, member of The Beacons, and our dear friend. He will truly be missed.

After a moment or two, a ghostly elven druid approaches and beckons them to a particular tree. Once again, Charr identifies that it is not a tree but instead a veiled entrance to an underground lair. Here, they find the dead body of Valedan the druid, still wearing the Robe of Davion Rose. By saving the boy and his dog, they have earned their reward. A notebook lays open nearby with a touching final phrase.

I, Valedan of the Whistling Wood, write this entry as I draw my last breath. If you are reading my message, it means that you have just done a truly selfless act proving to Lonnell and I that you are worthy. Please use the Robe of Davion Rose wisely, as Gadri would have wished. Best of luck, and know that the future of Aperta-Mundi is in your hands.

As the heroes finish reading the note, they are attacked! An iron bull rushes down the stairs of the druid's lair, nearly gores Ryvia and threatens to breathe enough petrifying gas to fill the entire chamber. At the top of the stairs, Mistress Malodonna and two fungus folk appear to block

the Short King's exit. Thanks to some quick thinking by the Short Kings, Charr uses Hank as an improvised bulwark, Ryvia heals the party as damage is dealt, and Zothar's shoots a perfect bullseye with his Void Bow. Mistress Malodonna is destroyed and the heroes take the robe and escape with Billy and Rex in tow.

The party decides to fulfill their quest. [Lady Markessa Cordelia](#) accepts the Robe of Davion Rose from the party and pays them handsomely.