

The Crystal Tree

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Designed for **Cast World**
(short for “**C**an’t **A**nyone **S**ave **T**he **W**orld?”)

Credits

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Sequence of Acts:

Act 1: The party is tasked by a god to retrieve a magical crystal tree from the great western wood.

Act 2: Entering the wood, the party finds a series of strange animals, altered by the tree.

Act 3: The party must decide whether they save or doom the tree's worshippers.

Background

Vurdite, the god of medicine is one of many gods who choose to manifest themselves among mortals. Vurdite in particular aids those who are sick, and prepares for plagues and other such epidemics. They can, however, become quite vengeful if crossed.

The crystal tree is Vurdite's new desire – a tree grown of pure mana, which may solve a coming epidemic. But the tree is needed by others – hollows who gather near the crystal tree find themselves rejuvenated for a time, staving off their eventual deaths. It's the closest thing the hollows have to a home, and Vurdite wants it uprooted...

Scenario Outline

The following is a list of how the adventure should play out at your table but be prepared to adjust 'on-the-fly' based on what your players choose to do:

- **Combat.** The party is travelling, when they are attacked by a group of Phantom Undead.
- **Roleplay.** Vurdite, god of medicine reveals themselves, and assigns the party the task of felling and retrieving a magical tree.
- **Challenge/Combat.** After entering the great western wood, the party encounters a number of strange creatures and phenomena.
- **Roleplay.** The party will find a tribe of hollows worshipping the magical tree for its unique properties.
- **Combat/Combat.** The party will fight either the ethereal hollows, or Vurdite's now very real Undead.

Act 1

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Your group is travelling along a back road through Strey; the westernmost human kingdom before the great western wood. Your travels have been relatively easy as of late, with little to no problems. This thought is dashed against sharp rocks, just as a group of Undead appear from thin air, completely surrounding you.

Create a number of **Phantom Undead** surrounding the party, equal to the number of party members plus two. As these monsters die, be sure to emphasise that they disappear into a cloud of mist.

Starting from the beginning of round two of combat, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You feel a kind of pressure, as though the air around you has become as thick as water. You can still move normally; it seems to be a trick of the senses.

Starting from the beginning of round four (or after combat), read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The feeling of pressure has increased, but it is not unpleasant. You are still not physically impacted by it.

After the monsters have been defeated, Create **Vurdite, God of Medicine** near the party. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Suddenly the source of the pressure – and apparently the phantoms – becomes visible. Radiating out from them, as though they were a fire, is a kind of presence that you have never felt before, but one which is unmistakable.

You are in the presence of a god.

Vurdite, god of medicine and healing contemplates your party before, with a snap of their fingers, you are fully healed.

Restore the party's HP values to their maximum value. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Vurdite, who has no preferred gender, but always takes the form of an elderly healer, stands before you as a wizened old woman.

“Now then.” their brisk voice snaps you out of your reverie. “Your group has proven itself capable of handling my little task. In the forest to the west is a crystal tree. It’s made entirely of mana, so I can’t touch it. Go cut it down, and bring it to the village east of here. It’s likely the only remedy for an epidemic that will break out there soon. And please be quick, I can’t wait forever. Well, I can, I just don’t want to.”

With that, they turn and disappear without giving you a chance to respond.

Vurdite is known for giving tasks this way, and to fail them means you’ll lose the ability to heal naturally. Good Luck.

Act 2

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Entering the forest known as the great western wood, you wonder if you'll be able to find the crystal tree. You ponder this as you follow a wide path.

At this point, ask the players if they wish to continue following the path. If they do, magic will turn them eastward (the other direction); they won't realise this until they reach the point where they originally entered, about an hour later.

When they re-enter, repeat the above process until they leave the wide path.

Next, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you make your way through the dense forest, you come across two massive rats eating something that they've obviously killed. One hisses a warning at you.

Create two **Mana Rats** here. The party may engage them, give them a wide berth, or something else.

Next, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Some time later, you spy a large male deer; it hasn't seen you. It's antlers glint in the sunlight.

Create a **Brandishing Buck** here. Again, what the party does here is up to them.

Finally, after the above three encounters, read or paraphrase the following:

There seems to be less light filtering through the trees.

Any party member that succeeds an ability challenge (**WIS +0**) will realise that webbing is blocking the sun. Anyone who succeeded the above roll by 3 or more will realise that the party is walking into a carefully designed trap made of webbing. Knowing about or deducing the existence of a trap, the party may spend half a day travelling around the web.

If the party reaches the centre of the web, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun is completely blocked by the thick webbing. In the centre, you see a massive spider, the size of a horse. It chitters as you approach.

Create one **Spider Queen** and one concealed **Spider Prince**. The queen has used its call ability once. The party must now fight for their lives.

If the party manages to survive all of the above challenges, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

You stumble into a clearing. In the centre of the clearing is the small crystal tree that Vurdite wanted, and around it, several hollows.

Act 3

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

One of the hollows – an elderly looking one given by how transparent he is – steps forward.

“Welcome, travellers,” he begins, “to our safe haven. You are welcome to stay, eat your fill and sleep soundly, so long as you do not touch the crystal tree.”

The crystal tree is made of a blueish crystal that seems to glow in the shade. It’s about as tall as a human adult, and the hollows surrounding it seem to almost revere it.

The elderly hollow’s name is **Cinder Dancer**, a hollow **Commoner** (Verona Village p.8). He acts as the de facto leader of this tribe of hollows. Any player who succeeds an ability challenge (**INT +3**) will know that hollows do not form tribes like this.

When asked about the tribe, or the tree, Cinder Dancer will reveal the following:

“The tree gives us vitality; it restores our strength and staves off the horrible death that awaits for all hollows. Rather than fading away, as long as we remain here, we may die of old age instead.

A god died on that spot, you know. The god of mercy. Her mercy continues to aid us, even in death.”

When asked about the animals, Cinder Dancer will reveal the following:

“The animals are affected by the tree as well. Enhanced or distorted, it’s not for me to say.”

From here on, it’s a decision as to what the party does about the tree, and the potential loss of healing that they may face.

If the party threatens the tree, create 12 **hollow Commoners**; they will fight unarmed to defend the tree with their lives. Once the hollows are defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

The hollow tribe lays at your feet, bleeding their strange ichor, some already fading completely. Felling the tree is relatively easy, as is carrying it; the crystal it’s made of is lighter than it appears.

You leave the hollows to their fates. The scene fades to black.

If the party agrees to leave the tree as is, create a number of **Undead** (Core Rules p.22) equal to the number of party members around the clearing; it seems Vurdite was listening.

The hollows will gather around the tree in fear until the Undead are dispatched. If necessary, some of the hollows, including Cinder Dancer, can join in the fight to adjust the difficulty.

If the party fails, the hollows will be killed. If the party succeeds, they will be hailed as heroes by the hollows.

If the party survives the Undead attack, they all gain the attribute “Vurdite’s Ire: Resting does not heal you.”

Appendix A: New Magic

Spell Name	Cost	Details	Effects
Summon Phantom Creature (Skill: 2 XP)	10 MP	Magic Type: Divine Spell Duration: 1 hour Choose a phantom creature to summon as you learn this spell. This spell can be learned multiple times with different phantom creatures (the spell's name should change to reflect your choice).	Create one phantom creature to do your bidding. It lasts until the spell ends, it is killed or is countered.
Raise Undead (Forbidden)	12 MP, 1 dead humanoid body	Magic Type: Divine Spell Duration: 1 hour	The the component body animates, becoming an Undead (Core Rules p.22).

Appendix B: New Monsters

Phantom Undead

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
5	7	16	3	10	9	6	6
HP	AP			MP	WS		
10	11			0	20		

Attributes

This is a phantom creature.
Phantom Undead do not have a soul.
Phantom Undead can't speak.

Attacks

Slam: DMG: 1d6

Description

Similar in appearance to regularly raised Undead, these illusory monsters only exist for a short time before dissipating into mist.

Mana Rat

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
8	10	9	4	7	3	8	3
HP	AP		MP		WS		
12	10		?		30		

Attributes

When the Mana Rat dies, increase the MP of all surrounding creatures to its maximum value.

Attacks

Bite: DMG: 1d6-3
Scratch: DMG: 1d6-3
Mana Spit: DMG: 1d6-1 earth damage (cost: 2 HP, Range: 15ft)

Description

This rat has gorged itself on a vein of mana, growing to the size of a medium-sized dog. On death, that mana is released as a burst of light.

Spider Queen

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
6	14	10	6	12	4	3	16
HP	AP		MP		WS		
12	9		0		25		

Attributes

Call the Children: Create 1 Spider Prince concealed within the Spider Queen's web. She can use this ability up to 4 times until she finishes a rest. (This makes a chittering sound.)

Attacks

Bite: DMG: 1d6-3

Description

An enormous female spider who weaves large, maze-like webs in tight spaces to catch human-sized prey. She can lay hundreds of eggs at once, but only once in her life, so she guards and feeds her children for the rest of her days.

Spider Prince

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
3	7	5	3	6	3	3	8
HP	AP		MP		WS		
3	6		0		25		

Attributes

Venom: When bitten by a Spider Prince, creatures are blind, and must succeed an ability challenge (CON -3) to prevent themselves from falling over due to dizziness. The poison lasts for 6 turns (36 seconds).

Attacks

Bite: DMG: 1d6-3, target is poisoned by Venom

Description

A newly hatched spider the size of your hand. More dangerous than his mother, as the males are venomous.

Brandishing Buck

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
11	16	11	4	14	5	9	10
HP	AP		MP		WS		
4	9		8		50		

Attributes

Charge: If the Brandishing Buck takes the dash action, moves at least 30ft and ends their turn next to a target, then they automatically use the Impale attack on all adjacent targets.

Attacks

Antler Swing: DMG: 1d6

Impale: DMG: 3d6 (Only usable after a Charge)

Description

This male deer has mana infused antlers that have been honed to sharp edges on every spike. It can slash as though with a shortsword simply by waving its head.

Appendix C: New NPCs

Vurdite, God of Medicine

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	PIT	BIR
?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
HP	AP		MP		WS		
?	?		?		?		

Attributes

Vurdite is a god. Gods can be killed, but it's unknown how. Although powerful, gods are not omnipotent or omnipresent.

Attacks

Spell: Summon Phantom Undead

Spell: Raise Undead

???

Description

Vurdite is the god of medicine and healing. Although ageless and genderless, they choose to present themselves as an elderly human or woodfolk healer.