

## Meadow Ruins

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Picturesque, emerald meadows are home to the ruins of an old village. But there are creatures that would use the location as bait for unwary travelers.

### Describing the ruins...

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A soft wind rolls across the plains, shifting the grass in sprawling, green waves. The steady gusts rustle your clothing and cool your skin, perfectly balanced with the warming rays of a cloudless sky. They fill the air with a soothing whisper and the smell of fresh grass and flowers. These plants brush past your knees as you walk through the meadow, calmed by its idyllic beauty.

Rising from the grass like the broken bough of a shipwreck, you see the ruins of buildings. Stone perimeters mark where the walls of a village once stood. No roofs or signs of life remain. The structures have broken away, leaving only the foundations surrounded by loose bricks, paving slabs, and fallen, wooden supports. The crests and mounds of old homes are long overgrown, with the meadows' grass slowly swallowing the buildings and their many memories.

You step through the forgotten husks of the buildings. Looking around, you scarcely see evidence of their purpose or a reason for their abandonment. You imagine the structures that these borders were once part of, brimming with life and community. But now, they are quiet and empty. There is no sound, save for the wind whipping through the grass; not even birds. Yet, there should be.

The feeling of peace quickly becomes dread. Listening closely, you hear an irregularity below the rustling of grass. You turn to investigate and hear another, in another direction. Before you can react with a call or attack, you see furred, humanoid forms emerging from the grass and ruins, bows in hand.

## The Gnoll Greensage

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One of the gnolls is twisted and green. It wears draping leathers and furs, like the others, but the skin beneath bares signs of decay. Patches of the otherwise healthy creature show visible necrosis, from which winding plants grow. Exposed bone is bound in sickly roots beneath the flesh. What you first believed to be green-stained fur, you now realize is grass, growing from its back. Were it not standing and gnashing its teeth, you might have believed it to be a fresh corpse. And in its hand is a staff, gnarled and decorated with bones and grass.

The Gnoll Greensage is a relatively simple gnoll spellcaster. It began as the basic gnoll, before adjusting its ability modifiers and skills to be close to that of a priest. It shares the priest's spellcasting level but draws from the Druid spell list, based around the manipulation of animals and plant life.

While the Greensage will not deal significant damage on its own, its ability to control the battlefield and summon beasts make it a powerful support unit.

## The Greensage's Tactics

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The Greensage is a supportive unit to gnoll ambushes on plains, meadows, or grasslands. It is physically weak but supplements this weakness with powerful, controlling spellcasting.

Before an ambush, the Greensage will use its Staff of the Grassland to hide.

The Greensage will most likely use its opening round to cast *entangle* on as many targets as possible, allowing archers and other gnolls to attack while it takes cover.

It will attack with its longbow but will make sure to end its turn in cover to avoid taking damage or losing concentration. Other gnolls will try to prevent players from reaching or targeting the Greensage.

This encounter, description, and monster were written by me, Troy McConnell. If you enjoyed them, you can support my work and gain exclusive bonuses on my [Patreon](#). Until next time!

Once its accompanying gnolls begin falling, the Greensage will cast *conjure animals*. It will use the beasts to swarm the party with superior numbers and to protect itself.

As the Greensage continues to lose allies and its own hit points, it will call for a retreat. It will cast *plant growth* as an action to create a wide plain of overgrowth that impedes the party's ability to pursue. It will then cast *longstrider* on itself (and others, if possible) and flee out of the party's range before taking a Hide action and continuing.

If you do not include the Staff of the Grassland, replace the Greensage's weapon with a quarterstaff and its *resistance* cantrip with *shillelagh*.

## Staff of the Grassland

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*Staff, uncommon (requires attunement)*

This staff can be wielded as a quarterstaff.

While holding the staff, you can cast the *druidcraft* and *shillelagh* cantrips, using your spellcasting ability modifier. *Shillelagh* can only be cast on the staff itself.

Additionally, while holding the staff, you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in grass, vines, or similar plant growth, as the plants around you move to cover your location.

The Staff of the Grassland was created with both the Greensage and players in mind. It acts as an extension of the Greensage itself by reflecting its tactics and abilities as a fitting 'signature' weapon. The Staff may be a result of the gnoll's power or a symbol of its rank.

For players, the Staff is a good way to supplement a Druid or similar class. Part of its purpose is to remove the near-necessity of the cantrips it grants. This should hopefully give Druids and certain Clerics more freedom of choice without too much of a power boost. Other classes are able to fulfill the flavor of a Druid without needing to multiclass or take a feat.

If you wish to limit the Staff's power for classes such as Warlocks or Paladins, simply limit its attunement to Druids and Clerics or change 'using your spellcasting ability modifier' to 'using your **Wisdom** ability modifier'.