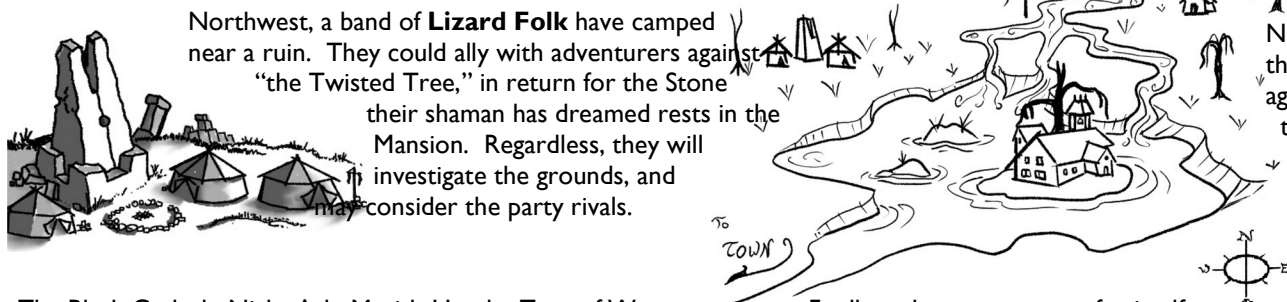


Overview: The Alchemist's quest for the Tincture of Life led him to neglect his only child, who perished.

Mad with grief and shame, he interred her below the manor, then hanged himself. The house eventually sank into the mire. Recently, foul miasmas have leached from the swamp into local wells, sickening many. Engineering mages have managed to lower the waters, exposing the house...but not for long.

Conditions: The Mire is a dangerous shortcut, crossed by old trappers' paths, haunted by quicksand and fen-lights. Travelers are urged to use newer, better routes. Random encounters include (1) giant mosquitos (2) carnivorous lilies (3) muddy sinkholes (4) ghoulish bogwights

Northwest, a band of **Lizard Folk** have camped near a ruin. They could ally with adventurers against "the Twisted Tree," in return for the Stone their shaman has dreamed rests in the Mansion. Regardless, they will investigate the grounds, and may consider the party rivals.



Northeast squats the cottage of **Sour Nell**, the bog hag. A potent (if untrustworthy) ally against "Old Knotty." Her price: "A mere trifle, dearies!" She could wring terrible hexes from the innocent soul she has sensed crying out under the manor.

Even if declined, she will doubtless be sneaking about, awaiting her chance...



The Black Cudgel. Night Ash, Merith-Un, the Tree of Woe.....Foulknot has many names for itself.....though most swamp-dwellers simply call him "The Twisted Tree," or "Old Knot." Poisoned as a sapling by alchemical sludge, in the bitter shadow of that haunted place, **Foulknot** considers itself the "owner" of the manor, and lord of the marshland. In truth, he is more like a cranky old neighbor yelling at passing children. Most swamp denizens have simply avoided the cantankerous old rootball...

~~~~~ Pt. 2: the Tragic Manor ~~~~~

Rising Tide: as you approach, the water begins its inexorable return. For every few rooms searched, the water rises: (0) underground stair and tomb are underwater, ground floor puddled with water....2-3 explored: first floor now under 4 feet of water.....5-6 rooms explored, 1st floor entirely underwater, 2nd floor up to knee-height....7+ rooms, 2nd floor up to 5 feet, only the top level (Tower lab & nursery) above water...

Nursery – slimy growths mar lavender walls. Shattered children's bed, broken toys. Wardrobe undamaged, with a valuable enchantment: able to shrink to pocket size! Opening it releases **animated child's dresses** which haunt it, several stitched with the name "Filia."

The Parlor floor creaks ominously. Crossing risks breaking through **rotten floorboards**. Against the far wall, the remains of an end table hold a valuable clockwork carousel music box.

Great Room carpet has rotted away, revealing a trapdoor with a padlock. Getting to it requires avoiding **Foulknot's slimy roots and branches** on the floor.

Rough stairs lead to a hardened steel door, etched with alchemical symbols. Pressing "F"ire, "I"ron, "L"ead, "I"ron and "A"ir, opens it, to reveal...



Tower Laboratory shelves spill broken glass & rusty metal. **Foulknot** glares through broken windows.

His snatching branches (and mud) obscure one intact lead case, containing The Basking Stone, sacred to Lizard Folk, a source of perfect, stable heat (& very valuable to any alchemist).

Master Bedroom furniture is rotten wreckage. Under the collapsed bed, a sealed casket (smeared with **contact poison**) holds the alchemist's diary (see Overview), and key to the Great Room padlock.

Store Room holds several intact barrels, filled with:
(1) random alchemical dregs (2) dangerous **undead frogs**
(3) potent, aged brandy (4) pure mercury (valuable/toxic)
(5) **carnivorous** (but slow) **snails** (6) pure methane

...Within, an everburning lamp gutters over a child-sized casket, its top breached by dozens of roots. . Decayed remains swim in chemicals, pierced by sucking vines. The incomplete Tincture of Life has kept the sad spirit tethered to its mortal shell, as the casket leaks toxins. Purifying (or destroying) the goo should end both problems....and Foulknot.