

SANCTUM DECORUM

Episode #27

The King of Elfland's Daughter

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Episode #27 Companion

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Curses

Witches in the regions bordering Elfland have rare curses at their disposal that other witches have rarely, if ever discovered. These powers range from inconveniencing to catastrophic. It is never wise to meddle in the affair of witches.

Curse of Impotent Fuel

This moderate curse prevents burning wood from providing warmth or illumination: oil does not ignite, torches and lamps are extinguished, etc. This curse, expressing grave displeasure, is commonly used by witches against those whom they feel do not treat them with appropriate respect.

*Eyes of scholar, cap of fool
By the workman's broken tool
Air grows cold as heat denies
Rooms grow dark as lantern dies*

The curse carries with it the inability to possess any item that emits heat, giving foes a +2 bonus to backstab attempts in the gloom. The curse may be broken by eating the unused wick of a 30-year-old lantern.



Curse of the Mislaid Broom

Among witches, the most common form of magical transportation is flight via their broom. The witch's broom, commonly found next to the hearth of the crone's residence, plays a number of roles in securing home and hearth, as well as its supernatural duties. It is for this reason that, when witches have a falling out amongst themselves, this minor curse is often the first uttered.

*Sweep no more betwixt the space,
Run no more the witch's race
Race no more across the sky
Be not found by mortal eye*

Once this minor curse is laid, the target's broom vanishes from sight, becoming invisible and being whisked to a different area within 300'. To break the curse, the witch must pluck three pieces of straw from the broom of the witch who leveled the original enchantment, burn those, and allow the smoke to reveal the presence of the hidden broom.

Curse of the Faerie Ring

This major curse is capable of delivering ruination upon its chosen target. To enact the curse the witch must not only recite the curse, but the victim must be within a faerie ring, stone circle, or other similar place associated with powerful magic.

*Rise Erl King from long ago
Dividing out Time's passage flow
Keep my foes locked far away
Trapped in Time, hours turn to day*

This potent curse traps the target within Elfland, where a year passes for each hour of time in the normal world. Breaking the curse requires the direct intervention of a deity hostile to the King of Elfland, via a successful divine aid check. This curse is not cast lightly, as the witch invoking the power also ages ten years.

Fiction

The Blood-Drinking Box

Part 3

Decisions

Serak Varan slept uneasily. He rose from the down bedding and found cakes and wine set for him. A tremendous darkwood wardrobe stood open and a set of fine brown breeches and tunic was laid out. It occurred to him, after years of growing up with nothing, this was simply a dream; everything, anything, whenever he wanted. He then decided he would do whatever he had to to get this, for his father and for himself.

He dressed and walked through the manor into the foyer finding Gamma, in the now familiar Blackjacket armor.

"Serak, good morning?" Gamma began.

"Shouldn't it be Master Varan, Gamma?"

Serak countered smiling.

"It will be once you've completed fulfillment of your father's will." Gamma smiled.

Serak grinned anew, "Let's get started."

The escort departed soon afterward.

Serak Varan walked into the wharfs and quickly found Dougal staring him down.

Serak was followed by Gamma and the other Blackjackets that had collected him from the docks yesterday. Feeling smug, he walked to the mooring where the Cinmora rocked lazily. Captain Gault and Elviodia were at the brow waiting for him.

Captain Gault nodded respectfully, "Serak Varan, if you're ready, the crew awaits?"

Serak nodded and followed Captain Gault aboard, Elviodia walked up behind them. Gamma Thendl signaled the other Blackjacket's away, and departed with them.

Serak looked the Captain Gault over carefully. This man; does he truly understand what this encounter is about.

The deck of the Cinmora revealed a relaxed atmosphere as several crewmembers turned to see Captain Gault and Serak come aboard with Elvee in tow. Captain Gault called out loudly, "Mates, gather 'round."

Once the crew assembled Gault started, "Mates, this is Master Serak Varan, new owner of the Cinmora, he'll be joining us for a time as we have new tasking." He turned slightly to Serak, "Master Varan, you've already met me and the ship's first mate, Elvee...er, Elviodia." He waved a hand to a few of the folks gathered about, "the other notable jobs on the Cinmora are handled by Rappi Periobo, ship's cook," he noted a skinny, dusky-haired Halfling with no shirt. "Sevoi Coreseth, ship's sailmaker and our voice to Gozreh," a Kellid, decorated in a thick silver-tinted torq. "Our new engineer, Glimyr Oweoraent...", Gault noted the gnomish woman.

"...and wizard", Elvee interrupted.

Captain Gault turned to Elvee adding, "and wizard." He finished, "Lastly would be our smith, Blacyn Raedoc, another resident practitioner but he covers our pledges where Torag is concerned," Serak found a stout, nearly hairless, dwarf grunting something to him. "Our remaining crew; Z, Frila Rhaledus, and Madis Welmeneas, you've had the pleasure of meeting already; Ceann Craleand would finish our introductions." Serak noted those he'd met already,



on the docks or at the reading of his father's testament. The last individual possessed nothing particularly interesting save a sash, dark as pitch with a satin sheen.

Serak wondered if any of these humanoids understood what their new goal was.

Captain Gault turned to Elvee, "Elvee, have the party you selected ready themselves. I will meet with them shortly." Elvee nodded and stepped toward the crew uttering orders. Gault turned to Serak, "Master Serak, please come with me, we must speak of money concerns."

Serak cocked his head to the side, but followed the Captain to his quarters. He wondered what money concerns could there be? According to what he had been told last night, he was provided 150 gold coins every month, provided he could reach one of the ports where his father possessed property. He was soon to find the truth of what had been told.

Entering the Captain's quarters Serak took an offered seat. "Do you have any questions Serak? I assume you have quite a few."

Finally Serak had a moment to ensure a few things would be understood. "Uh, yeh, does everyone here know what they will be expected to do. What I am going to aim to achieve here?"

Captain Gault pulled two silver goblets from a cabinet and an opaque bottle of wine. "Serak, I understand what you aim to achieve. The crew will do what needs to be done when the time comes to do it. I was there when you were given the list of your siblings and we will back you in that endeavor."

"Understood Captain," Serak answered, finding Gault's words to his liking, "what were you saying about the coin?"

"As a measure of the testament from our old master, your father, you are provided 150 gold coins; however, the cost for running the Cinmora will take all of that, or more. The payment for captain and crew are substantial. I would like to propose an alternative to this sum. Since we will be traveling from port to port and the Cinmora is already a trade vessel, we just continue to do trade to bring in further coin?" Captain Gault questioned.

Serak took a goblet and countered, "Perhaps, I release the Cinmora from this obligation. I can use the gold and hit the trails for adventure, finding these supposed siblings of mine. I have up to twelve years to do this? That is a pretty long time." Serak took a drink of the tart wine.

Captain Gault nodded understanding, "You could. The Cinmora is a part of your father's estate; it would go back into its usual routine of bringing in more coin for the estate. The point I was trying to make was not to be meant as a threat, if you release the Cinmora to its regular tasking you will not see any of those riches made until you take possession of the estate. Using the Cinmora for your trials, you will be able to take part of any of the riches that are earned by the Cinmora as they are earned."

This got Serak's attention, riches, "What kind of riches are we talking about?"

Captain Gault took a drink from his wine, gauging the price of his new master, "Depends on where we land. My crew seeks out certain quality goods to transfer and we handle the issue of transferring these goods. Profits from this venture are shared among the crew and the estate."

Serak smiled, "So you're a smuggler?"

"Smuggler is not an exact word for what we do; I prefer to be called a free-trade merchant vessel."

Captain Gault countered. Gault was beginning to feel a kindred spirit. He raised his goblet to toast, "To business, Master Varan?"

Serak raised his goblet in response, "To business, Captain Gault."

A knock came to the door.

"Bring'em in Elvee." Captain Gault called.

The elven marksman entered alone and stood before both men.

Captain Gault looked from her to the door and back again, expecting to see at least three more figures enter the Captain's quarters. The Elvee answered his question.

"Captain, aside from yourself and the gnome and Ceann, I'd like to take all the others. The Cinmora will have a few members for security and we should have enough to get the..." she stopped talking casting a look at Serak, which Gault answered with a nod of approval, "...the box."

"Consider it done, Elvee." Gault answered, knowing both Glimyr and Ceann were the Cinmora's newest additions, aside from Serak. "What did you tell Blacyn?"

"Everything but the reasons behind the item we'll be getting in return. He was more than willing to vanquish another evil from Golarion." Elvee added.

"When will the party be leaving?"

Elvee countered, "The party will be ready to hit the highway to the south in an hour's time."

The kindling thirst for adventure and the proposal of riches nagged at Serak's mind. Years of working on the docks meant so much restriction to the young man.

"Could I join in on this adventure?"

Captain Gault answered, "You are both this ship's master and now part of the crew; you're certainly invited if yer' willing to meet the possibility of treasure or death...or both."

Serak smiled and looked at the beautiful elf. "When can we go?"

The Bear and the Waterfall

The gargantuan stones of Boulder Cliff loom ahead. The shadows of cracks and crevasses seem to form jagged faces that gaze down upon the approaching party. A waterfall plummets from above, feeding a dark pool from which a river continues its course along the base of the cliff and into a tributary of The Great Goldpan River. The sun was climbing to its apex on the third day since setting trail to the south.

The crew of the Cinmora made their way along the south highway, and onto a smaller trail, still wide enough for the simple cart the crew used to haul their gear. Frila was the first to be aware of the creeping, sweet-copper odor of death and decay that drifted through the forest. She made mention to Elviodia and the elf signaled for everyone to be on guard.

At the base of the cliff, the crew discovered the source of the horrid smell. The decaying remains of a large brown bear lay surrounded by the shredded corpses of several hunters in a clearing. Though the clearing was serene and a bit overgrown, the grizzly scene spoke otherwise.

The Cinmora's crew spread out keeping a cautious eye to corpses, wary of tales of an undead ambush, and the surrounding forest.

Serak, donning new leather armor and armed with two sets of long daggers, the same style Gamma had trained him on, offered, "Rumors say these forests are haunted by wild fey."

Madis knelt down to one of the slaughtered hunters, bracing his weight against his falchion, "Didn't know fey could do this?" He cast a glance at the elf.

"There are many kinds of fey," Elviodia noted as she glanced around, javelin in hand and at the ready.

Sevoi noted, "These kills look fresh."

"They ain't fresh," the stout dwarf kicked at the rustic and crumbling armor that lay strewn about. "If the hunter's wuz' wearin' this degraded scrap, no wonder they died.

This metalwork must be decades old." He observed.

Madis and Sevoi nodded.

Rappi, "Elviodia, you said this was a mages' sanctuary. Think this'd be some kind'a twisted riddle." He looked about fearfully, "Maybe he was a necromancer?"

"Nay, Rappi," Blacyn spat, "a vile diabolist."

Rappi considered the dwarf's comment and looked about cautiously.

Elviodia recalled what Rhalabast had said, 'go to the waterfall at Boulder Cliff, when the dead look to the sky.' She thought on the phrase silently as the others kept guard. "Mates, face all the bodies to the sky."

The crew set to moving the shredded bodies as best they could with a moderate amount of complaining. Elviodia did not start into repositioning bodies as the others were doing, she was the Cinmora's first mate, thus of a higher rank. She observed Serak was not moving to help the others and stepped nearby.

"Good form, Master Varan." Elvee started, "You are the ships master, you, the Captain, and myself are above the menial labor of the Cinmora. That is a task for our crew."

Serak nodded with a smile. He could certainly get used to this treatment. The young man was content to never return to his old life.

"Gah!"

Both Elvee and Serak snapped their heads back to the task at hand.

Frila jumped up from the body she was moving, her broadsword toppled aside, "What the hells!" She was looking at her hands and then began to wipe them off on one of several animal skins decorating her body.

Sevoi, the war priest, jumped up from his work with another body, "Frila! Woman, what are you screaming about?"

Frila was frantic, "Something is wrong, my skin is burning." Glancing at her hands they formed small blisters within a few short seconds like cooking meat. Tears began to fill the corners of her eyes. Everyone else immediately stopped moving the bodies stepping back with a start.

"Cursed!" Blacyn growled.

Sevoi got to Frila at the same time as Elvee and Serak. A quick look from the war priest, "Give me your hands. Did your skin touch the body?" Frila nodded.

Taking her scarred hands into his, he murmured a few words to Gozreh and with a shimmer of bluish light the scars and decay was removed. Frila looked at her hands and winked to Sevoi.

Serak asked excitedly, "What was that?"

Sevoi said with a look at the bodies, "They must be cursed, I would say. I recommend we move the bodies without touching them. Should you choose for us to proceed?"

Elvee spoke to no one in particular, "Everyone, move this filth with your steel. Get those bodies into place."

"Aye," came the response from someone that sounded like Blaycn.

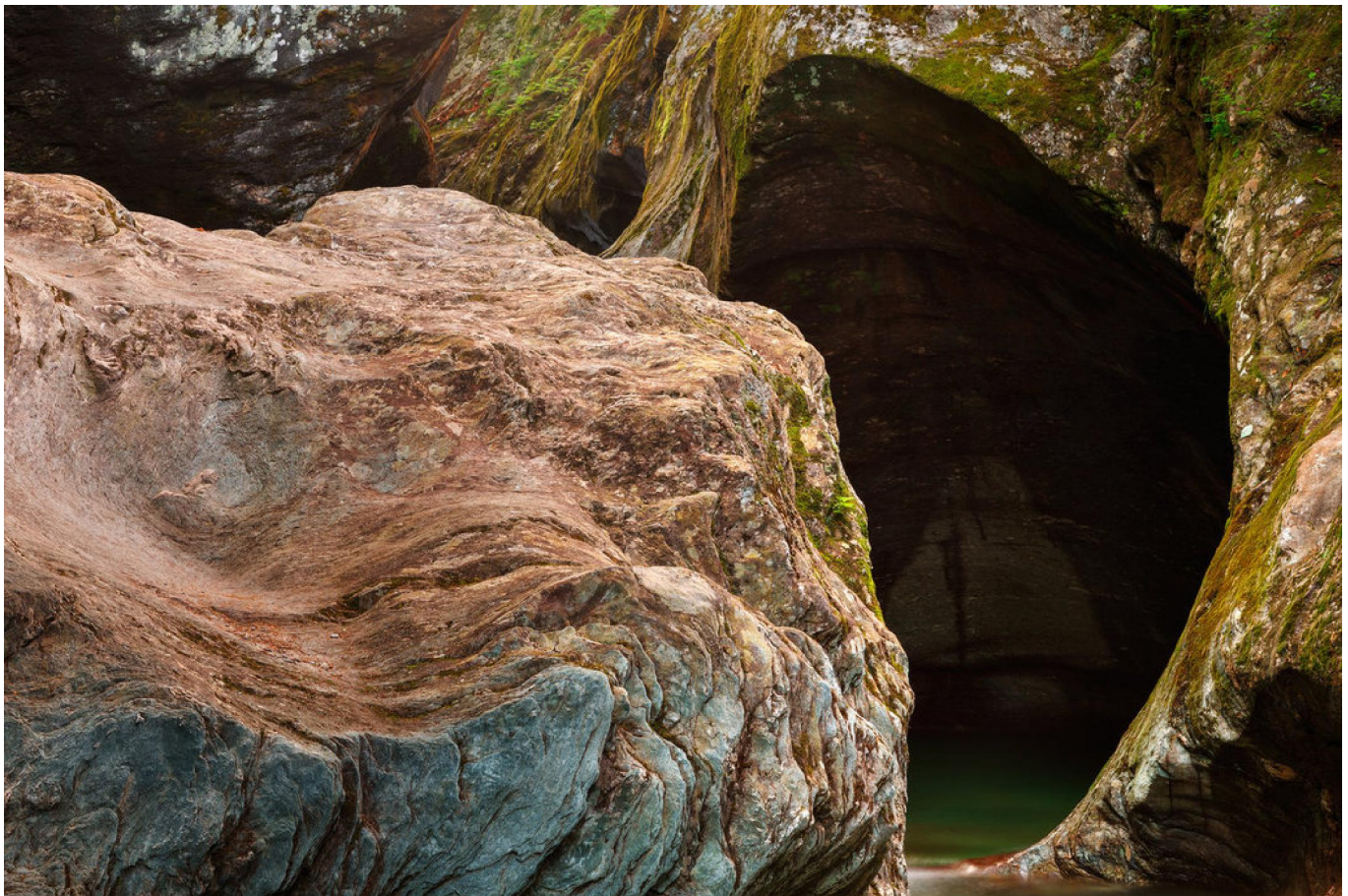
After a few long moments, a grinding sound began to fill the area. The crew looked about; a large boulder at the base of the cliff began to sink into the ground revealing a sloping grade leading down into the darkness.

Elvee and Serak peeked over the edge of the secret doorway. Their silhouette was joined by the others of the crew.

"So, who first?" asked Rappi.

Serak was skilled at close combat and stealth, if untested, both were valuable tools and his imagination ran wild with the opportunities to use them in a place such as this. But, Madis beat him, stepping through the door with an agility that belied his size.

The fighter said to the darkness, "Let's see wha' we can get our hands into."



To Be Continued



Magic Items

Black Stick of Ziroonderel

The witch Ziroonderel's ebon stick – the scepter of witches – has a number of practical powers. The *black stick* channels the force of the witch's personality so that it bends the surrounding world to her desires. If wielded as a weapon, it is treated as a club with a +1 bonus to attacks and +1d bonus to damage rolls.

Calm draft: With a DC 12 Personality check, the witch can halt any draft entering an enclosed room. This also negates the ability of animals to track scents exuding from an area.

Dancing flames: The witch may control the flames of a fire to entertain or to horrify. If the witch is using the fires to delight, a successful DC 10 Personality check grants a +1d bonus to rolls while interacting with the fire's audience. If using the flames to spread unease, the target makes a Will save (DC equal to the witch's Personality score). Victims failing suffer a -1d penalty on all actions against the witch for 3d5 rounds.

Enchant log: Enchanted logs burn with green flame that creates comfortable warmth for all within 50'. Those within the radius are effectively immune to cold.

Repel vermin: The witch may use the staff to ward a threshold against the passage of certain types of creatures (such as mice, rats, ants, bats, etc.) as well as all forms of swarms consisting of lower life forms.

Broom of Flying

There is no magic item more firmly entwined through the everyday life of a witch than her broom. While she may, depending on her region, possess a Black Stick as a badge of authority, her true power lies in the ability to fly away and simply leave problematic mortal world matters behind. Only useable in the light of a full moon, the broom is capable of amazing speeds (up to 300' per round). For every 100' per round that the broom travels, an untrained rider must make a DC 13 Reflex save to remain atop it. A DC 13 Reflex save is also required to prevent oneself from being scooped up by either the broom or its rider.

Each witch enchants her own broom via connection through everyday uses. The frequent physical contact, coupled with the residual energies of a witch's curses, imbues the broom with magic over time. When a young witch's broom becomes capable of flight, her apprenticeship has ended and she is considered a full-fledged witch in her own right.

Sword of Alveric

"And when Alveric could no longer come near the fire, and the witch was some yards from it shouting her runes, the magical flames burned all the ashes away and that portent that flared on the hill as suddenly ceased, leaving only a circle that sullenly glowed on the ground, like the evil pool that glares where termite has burst. And flat in the glow, all liquid still, lay the sword."

- Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*

Using runes forged of fallen thunderbolts, the witch Ziroonderel crafted this magical blade, capable of standing against all but the mightiest runic magics of Elfland.

The Sword of Alveric, artifact, +2 longsword: Int 9; AL N; banes: clerics and demons; communication: empathy (joy); special purpose: to carry out an esoteric task, achieve perfect self-harmony; SP detect enemies/hostile intent within 10', read any non-magical map at will, thunderblade, dispel enchantments.

Dispel enchantments: Spells and spell-like effects are reduced or negated by physical contact with the blade. Spells of 1st and 2nd level are instantly negated, while spells of 3rd and 4th level are reduced by one spell result with each stroke from the blade.



Kevin 08.03.14.13

Monsters

Hounds of Erl

Fierce and sleek, the hounds of Erl have been specially bred for the hunting of unicorns. Despite the fleetness of the horned equine, the hounds are both faster and fiercer than their majestic prey. Often controlled by trolls employing them as riding animals, only the rarest of humans can maintain control over a pack of the King of Elfland's hunting companions.

Hounds of Erl: Init +5; Atk bite +5 melee (1d7+1); AC 14; HD 2d6; MV 70'; Act 1d20; SP pack animals; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; AL C.

Pack animal: Skilled at attacking in unison, hounds of Erl increase their damage by +1 for every hound involved in the attack.



Knight of Elfland

"And then there appeared those knights who guard that palace lest any should come through the enchanted wood. Four of them they came shining over the lawns in armour, their faces not to be seen..."

- Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*

The guardians of the most important treasure of Elfland, the king's daughter, the might of the four knights of Elfland are fueled by the ancient runes and magic of their king. Unflinching in the pursuits of their duty, these warriors fear no wound, nor death; they exist solely to mete out the will of their king.

Knight of Elfland: Init special; Atk longsword +7 melee (1d8+2) or bite +8 melee (1d12); AC 16; HD 6d10; MV 40'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP prescient initiative, thunderous strike, undying rune, immune to fear, immune to non-magical weapons; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10; AL C.

Prescient initiative: While in Elfland, knights of Elfland are always first in initiative order, overriding all other such effects unless bestowed by the King of Elfland.

Undying rune: Even if slain, these knights serve at the pleasure of their king who may revive them. The King of Elfland may summon one of his knights from beyond the veil of death, tugging at the old magics that surround the soul of his chosen knight.



Troll, Dunsanian

"Far over the moors of the trolls slept the calm of the King of Elfland, where the smoke from their queer habitations hung stilled in the air; and in a forest wherein it quieted the trembling of myriads of petals or roses, it stilled the pools where the great lilies towered, till they and their reflections slept on in one gorgeous dream. And there below motionless fronds of dream-gripped trees, on the still water dreaming of the still air, where the huge lily-leaves floated green in the calm, was the troll Lurulu, sitting upon a leaf."

- Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*

The mischievous servants of the King of Elfland, trolls are cunning and capable of disguising themselves to fool other members of the fae races. Additionally, they can leap 10' into the air to avoid obstructions and traps.

They are known to use hounds of Erl as mounts, using whips to maintain control of the hounds. Trolls have a fondness for hunting unicorns and for

tricking will-o'-the-wisps.

Troll, Dunsanian: Init +2; Atk whip +0 melee (1d3 + DC 12 Agility save or entangled), or as weapon +0 melee; AC 10 + armor; HD 1d6-1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', nimble, runic sense; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -2; AL L.

Nimble: Because of their quick reflexes and high agility, trolls receive a +1 bonus to their AC when attacked with missile fire. Ranged spell attacks against them are made at -1d.

Runic sense: The troll is capable of recognizing magic and its use from up to 50' away.

Unicorn

"And this evening just as he hushed a hound with his hand, just as all our fields went dim, there slipped a great white unicorn out of the border, still munching lilies such as never grew in any fields of ours. He came, a whiteness on perfectly silent feet, four or five yards into the fields we know, and stood there still as moonlight, and listened and listened and listened."

- Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*

With a glowing horn that carries enough enchantment to strike virtually any foe, the unicorn represents the wildest spirit of the woods of Elfland.

Unicorn: Init +1; Atk hoof +5 melee (1d6+3) or horn +5 melee (2d4+2); AC 14; HD 4d8; MV 60'; Act 1d20; SP fleeting memory, horn of purity, tireless; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.



Fleeting memory: As a creature native to Elfland, the unicorn carries some of that realm's magic with it. Within 1 turn after an encounter with a unicorn, memories of the meeting begin to fade. Clinging to the memories requires a DC 20 Will save; failure results in the memories being wholly gone within an hour.

Horn of purity: The horn of a unicorn, if harvested and carried, makes one immune to poison and disease (it also converts all alcohol into water). The bearer of a unicorn horn is unfortunate and is at a -1d penalty for all other saves.

Tireless: The unicorn may run without resting for two days.

Will-o'-the-Wisp

"And as soon as they felt that thrill in the deep of the marshes the will-o'-the-wisps soared up from their fathomless homes, and waved their lights to beckon the traveller on, over the quaking mosses at the hour when the duck were flying."

- Lord Dunsany, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*

The smallest of the swamp-folk of Elfland, the will-o'-the-wisps are tricksters of a particularly deadly variety. Using their moonlight lamps to confuse and lead travelers astray deep into the hungry swamps, these fae have long memories and mercurial temperaments. Being quick to anger, and quick to forget what caused their ire, these creatures enjoy the joke, even when it is on them. While those encountering the fae of the swamps remember them simply as balls of light, will-o'-the-wisps are perfectly humanoid, if small.

These small creatures will only engage in physical combat in defense of their lives. No "joke" is worth risking one's well-being.

Will-o'-the-Wisp: Init +1; Atk claw +2 melee (1d3-1); AC 13; HD 1d4+1; MV 40' or fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP *cantrip* (+2 spell check), collective, moonlamp, vulnerable to earth; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

Collective: For each additional will-o'-the wisp in a group, the DC of the Will save vs. their moonlamp increases by 1.

Moonlamp: The pale glow of the moonlamp sows confusion among non-fae subjected to its glow. Targets within 40' must make a DC 8 Will save per round or be drained of 1 point of Intelligence. Targets whose Intelligence is reduced to 3 wander blindly into whatever death trap awaits them.

Vulnerable to earth: When traveling over dry land as opposed to the waterlogged ground of a swamp or fen, actions made by the will-o'-the-wisp are made at -1d.



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Coming Soon
Episode #28

The Raven

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