

ISSUE VIII

The fourth installment of the *High Bridge Road* adventures for my *Ashford Valley Labyrinth Lord* setting involves a new investigation near the *High Bridge Road*.

THE RETURN OF THE BROTHERS ELVES

In STG issue #5, a group of elves were searching for their kidnapped brother. This issue, I return those elves, with a problem of their own.

WE TREE KINGS OF ...

Lalme (“elm tree”), Neldor (“beech tree”), Norno (“oak tree”), Ercasse (“holly tree”) and Fine (“larch tree”) were five elven brothers that sought after their kidnapped sibling Aicasse (“pine tree”). Now, whether they were treated well by the PCs or not, some of them were bound to survive, either to hold a grudge or to be fast friends with the PCs.

Elf; Alignment: Lawful. Armor Class: 6 (leather armor & shield); Hit Dice: 1d8, Hit Points: 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 4. Attacks: longsword (1d8), longbow (1d8); Special Abilities: +1 initiative, elf magic (1 spell each, GMs choice).

The story opens a few weeks after the events of issue #5. If the PCs became friends with the elves, then the interaction will be smoother—the elves will straight up approach them with their problem. However, if the PCs are/were unfriendly, the elves will either taunt them, trying to get them to chase them further into the woods and into the adventure or bully them into helping them out by threatening the *High Bridge Road* with banditry again ala “If we're stuck here, rather than at home, we'll get into mischief. And it's a very long road to guard.”

WITH THE ELVES AWAY, THE BUGBEARS WILL PLAY

While the elves were away from their home, a small band of Bugbears took over their tree-cave and now refuse to leave. Normally 'bears are satisfied to stay in one place for years and years, expanding their lair and subjugating the surrounding areas but these 'bears were driven from their original lair by a bunch of undead.

Bugbears; No. Encountered: 1d2+2; Alignment: Chaotic; Armor Class: 5; Hit Dice: 3d8+1, Hit Points: 18, 15, 13, 10; Attacks: longsword (1d8+1), longbow (1d8+1); Save: F3; Morale: 9; 50% chance to surprise enemies.

The Bugbears are lead by an old 'bear named Crash. He's a smart fellow (for a 'bear) and very wily. So far, he's managed to keep the elves away. The others (his younger brother Smash, a cousin Trash and an un-related 'bear named Ted) follow him until things go wrong, then they'll strike out on their

own. Ted, particularly, wants to lead the band and may be convinced to parley with the party if they knock-off Crash. Due to their recent bad experiences, all the Bugbears are deathly afraid of undead. A clever party may be able to exploit this fear to their advantage. But they'd have to have a really good plan and I'm sure that the elves would help them out. At the very least, a well-done zombie disguise could cause a fright in these Bugbears (save vs. Paralysis).

