

The Antlered Ogre

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When best to run this

- PCs are traveling through a forest, either on their own or as part of a merchant caravan on the way to someplace else.
- One or more of the PCs are Elves and are seeking out an NPC who lives in a forest village of Elves.
- If there are communities of evil Elves in your campaign, this adventure can come after the PCs have been defeated and need a secret weapon (see trigger #5).
- PCs have had a particularly nasty run-in with Fey and need a secret weapon

against them.

- One of the PCs is a bard and was told of a terrific tavern to swap tales—the Antlered Ogre (works even better if he's an Elf or Half-elf).

- The PCs are in service to another druid who is looking for payment for a favor he granted Skarwúrz. This could also work if the PC is a high level druid who loaned Skarwúrz some money. Many of the triggers will work for this depending on whether they find Skarwúrz first or enter the village first.

Things to Note before starting

New spell and new item (see appendix). More info on Wendigo template can be found in Fiend Folio pg.187.

You can adjust the CR of the Wendigos, but to make it believable either the Druid sees them as natural creatures (Fey) and doesn't want to destroy them or they are too powerful for him (in which case their total EL should be 14+). As presented here, there is one CR 12 and two CR 10's for a total EL of 14 (if they are all released at once).

Setting

The setting can be any forest between two cities or where some daring merchants may gain a slight advantage by using a shortcut. Instead of near the edges of the forest, the village in this adventure is in the center. It is important there be at least one trail or road leading into and out of the village. It would be best placed about a day's ride in on both sides making it a perfect and natural stopping point for travelers.

Story

The druid of this cold forest, Skarwúrz, is not your typical druid—he's an Ogre. He doesn't share the vile temperament of his kind, but instead lives harmoniously with the other creatures of his territory. While he is only rarely seen, stories of his presence are common. He is described as a hulking brute of a creature covered in animal furs and wearing a helm decorated with the antlers of a great moose.

There are seven noble families of elves in the forest. They all reside in the same sleepy village between two hills named Attaemyn. There is a well-worn trail that acts as a pass through the forest and the citizens of Attaemyn play host to the many travelers who choose to stop there year after year.

Over the past 27 years, each family has had the responsibility of paying tribute (approximately 4,500 gp) to the druid of their forest exactly four times, except the Dûnwethiel family. This year it is their turn and as the eldest male in the family, Merimac is responsible for paying the tribute. Merimac has only recently inherited the post as his father passed (or left for Evermeet if you play Forgotten Realms) three years ago.

Merimac is not the generous sort, and since he is a young leader in the community and can expect to pay this tribute many times over his lifespan, he has chosen to seek out another remedy instead. Merimac doesn't trust the Ogre (whom he's never met by the way). Ogres have been a menace to the forest in recent years as they raid and plunder, making responsibilities like paying the tribute even harder to bear.

Merimac feels that the druid is extorting the community and should either leave the forest or stop demanding the tribute every year. While he can't prove the connection, he also believes that several people went missing about the time that the Ogre druid arrived.

To add insult to injury, a few years ago, a pair of wandering Elven bards found the story of the antlered Ogre so amusing that they opened up a tavern by that very name. The tavern's placard is the painted silhouette of an ogre with a pair of great moose antlers on his head. Just as the ogre asks for tribute every year, the bards ask their patrons to pay "tribute" for their drinks, meals, and stories.

Unbeknownst to Merimac, Skarwúrz has a real need of the tribute. Skarwúrz arrived in the forest soon after an Elf Wendigo (see appendix). The Wendigo had stalked and killed a few of his kind and even created another pair of Wendigos. Skarwúrz used powerful magic (see appendix) to trap the creatures within cold iron rings or circlets. While the magic is powerful, it is not permanent and thus the cold iron circles must be enchanted once again every year. If they are not re-enchanted, the Wendigos will be freed and will immediately look to satisfy their hunger for Elf flesh.

Hooks

1 – The PCs stop in Attaemyn on their way to someplace else. The best place in town for entertainment is the Antlered Ogre. As a strong looking bunch, Merimac will approach them about making the real antlered Ogre leave the forest—permanently.

2 – If one or more of the PC party are Elves, the Ogre encounters them on the trail and mistakes them for the tribute bearers. If the PCs do not offer tribute (precious metals or gems) the Ogre gets angry and becomes 'unfriendly'.

A failed Diplomacy or any offensive action may cause the Ogre to attack. The druid will not try to kill the party but will instead try to subdue them and leave them where the Elves will find them and take them in to the village. Since he needs the resources for his spells, he will take all of their valuables (see trigger #8).

If the party kills the Ogre see trigger #1. Otherwise, shift to the village as the starting point (still look at trigger #8).

3 – If the PCs are caught defiling a forest, the antlered Ogre may appear to demand their penance or to punish them. If the PCs kill him, see trigger #1. The druid will not try to kill them but will instead try to subdue them and leave them where the Elves will find them and take them in to the village. Since he needs the resources for his spells, he will take all of their valuables (see trigger #8).

Triggers

1 - The PCs kill Skarwúrz – The Wendigos are freed and begin to hunt and devour the Elves. Some may also become Wendigos themselves. The village elders who knew of the druid's importance to their survival hold the PCs responsible.

2 - The PCs deny helping Merimac – Merimac doesn't complete his duties to pay the tribute despite telling the village elders that he would. Skarwúrz pleads with him but Merimac threatens to turn the village on him by connecting him to the Elves that disappeared those 30 years ago with false evidence and Skarwúrz is forced to

retreat. See trigger # 9.

3 - The PCs ask a village elder about the tribute – The elder will be evasive, trying not to answer the question directly. He will cite tradition, responsibility, and honor. Only the elders have been told the reasons for the tribute but Merimac's father never told him before he passed away. Merimac doesn't trust the other elders, so their pleas wouldn't help anyway. The elders' main concern is keeping the peace in the village and keeping what few travelers they have coming through. They won't let word get out of the Wendigoes willingly because of the panic it could cause in the village and the number of people who would likely leave. If that happened, the town could never support the payment of the tribute and the Wendigoes would certainly be released.

4 - The PCs confront Skarwúrz – He will gladly explain why he needs the money and gems. He uses the tribute to trade with other forest creatures and outsiders for the spell components he needs to keep the Wendigoes trapped. Most of the year, he is traveling outside his territory, trying to find a place to release the Wendigoes where there aren't any Elves for them to hunt. While it would only be a temporary solution, it would be better than having to perform the ritual every year. The binding spell as well as the initial enchantment can be taught to any Druid who can cast 6th level spells.

5 - The PCs offer to take the Wendigoes to another location – There isn't enough time to do this unless the circles have been re-enchanted. If they have not, the Wendigoes are released and immediately windwalk toward the forest. If they have been re-enchanted, the circles must be broken or buried far from Attaelym. Otherwise, any enemy of Elves could find or obtain the rings and use them as a weapon against any concentration of Elves (if playing in the Forgotten Realms, this would be a very valuable item to the Fey'ri otherwise an Orc tribe would be the most interested).

6 - The PCs pay the tribute – This is unlikely, but it could happen. If this is the case, the crisis is averted for this year but any number of things could cause a repeat: economic crisis in the village, Merimac spouts off about not paying the tribute and how nothing bad happened, something happens to the druid during his travels, etc.

7 – The Wendigoes are destroyed – This will be a tough encounter, but if the PCs are successful, the PCs will earn the trust and admiration of Skarwúrz and many of the village elders. Merimac will still consider himself better off for being stubborn, but he's harmless.

8 – The PCs encounter Skarwúrz and are defeated – Merimac jumps at the chance to make friends with someone who may have a grudge against his enemy. He will depict the Ogre as a foul, money-hungry beast ripe for the slaughter. To bolster the PCs spirits, he will offer his knowledge of the Ogre's lair (where he was told to take the tribute) and enough money to resupply the group with the weapons they lost.

9 – The Wendigoes are released - The Wendigoes are freed and the PCs, if still available or if they return, are asked to help destroy the creatures. Skarwúrz will help if he is asked (and still alive). Even if Merimac is told the truth, he refuses to pay the "ransom" because he believes that the story is purely fictional and that the Wendigoes are merely children's ghost stories used to extort the village.

However, everyone in the village, once word of the Wendigoes release reaches them, will paint their windows black. This is to keep the Wendigoes from seeing them at night, when they are most likely to hunt. Since Merimac doesn't believe the stories, his house is entered the first night by the Wendigoes. If no one is there to defend him, he is killed and devoured by the hungry creatures. If the creatures are not destroyed, their numbers grow, people leave the forest, and travelers stop coming through town (especially Elves). The town literally will become a ghost town over time.

10 - The Ogre and the Wendigoes are destroyed - Merimac takes the opportunity to convince the other elders that he has the best relationship with the Druid. He tells them he can reduce their tribute by 20% if they pay him directly. If this happens, you can have the party come through the village again in a few years. Merimac will be in total economic (and therefore political) control of the area.



Appendix

Merimac

No stats are presented here but if needed use standard aristocrat stats from the DMG.

Roleplaying: Merimac is young, influential, and paranoid. He thinks that the other elders of the village do not respect him and may even sabotage him if given the chance to absorb his family's holdings for themselves. Merimac is determined to become the most wealthy and powerful elder in the village--so for starters he's going to stop paying his family's share of the tribute to the Antlered Ogre. He will dismiss any mention of the Wendigoes as mere ghost stories.

Village Elders

Roleplaying: The elders are the leaders of each of the seven houses (including Merimac). Their roles are to act as village council as well as manage their family's assets and deal with day-to-day business within the community. If you choose to give any of them class levels aristocrat is the best choice. They are generally the voice of reason, wisdom and patience in this adventure.

Village populace and the Bards

Roleplaying:

The two bards who run the Antlered Ogre know the same stories that the villagers do, they just tell them better. When you want your child to do something you tell them "the Wendigo will get you". The Wendigo in the village lore has replaced the 'boogeyman' for intensive purposes.

Regardless of the party's success or failure, the reports of what happens, should it make it back to the bards, will be added to the village lore and may travel to other nearby cities if the village remains in tact.

The villagers do not differentiate between Merimac and the other elders. They are all wise and powerful members of the community and wouldn't do anything to harm it.

Skarwůrz, Ogre Drd11, Large Giant; CR 14; HD 15d8+30; hp 101; Init +1; Spd 40 ft/x4; AC 18 (+3 armor, +1 dex, -1 size, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk/Grapple +11/+20; Full Atk +16/+11/+6 Two-handed (2d8+7;20/x2, Masterwork greatclub), +15/+10/+5 One-handed (1d4+5;20/x2, Grapple); AL NG; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 20(+5), Dex 12(+1), Con 15(+2), Int 10(+0), Wis 17(+3), Cha 10(+0).

Skills: Climb¹ +7, Concentration¹ +14, Craft (blacksmithing)¹ +5, Diplomacy¹ +4, Handle Animal +4, Heal¹ +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen¹ +8, Spellcraft +4, Spot¹ +10.

Feats: Natural Spell, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Practiced Spellcaster(Druid) [CL 15], Scent, Large and in Charge

Spells: 6/5/4/4/3/2/1 (Bonus spells): -/1/1/1

-- RACE ABILITIES --

- +10 Strength, -2 Dexterity, +3 Constitution, -4 Intelligence, -4 Charisma
- Base land speed of 40 feet.
- Space/Reach: 10'/10'

- +5 Natural Armor bonus.
- Darkvision 60 feet.
- Low-Light Vision
- Favored Class: Barbarian

-- CLASS ABILITIES --

- Proficient in light and medium armor, and all shields(except tower shields) (but cannot wear any armor made of metal)
- Proficient with all simple and martial weapons.
- Restricted Spells: cannot cast Evil spells.
- Spontaneous Casting: Can spontaneously cast summon nature's ally spells, by sacrificing a pre-prepared spell of equal or higher level.
- Animal Companion(Ex): has selected a Brown Bear as his animal companion.
- Nature Sense(Ex): gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge(nature) and Survival checks.
- Wild Empathy(Ex): can make a check(1d20+11) to improve the attitude of an animal. Must be within 30 feet of the animal, and it generally takes one minute to perform the action.
- Woodland Stride(Ex): can move through natural thorns, briars, etc. at full speed and without suffering damage or impairment. Magically overgrown areas still hamper him.
- Trackless Step(Ex): leaves no trail in natural surroundings, and cannot be tracked unless he chooses to.
- Resist Nature's Lure(Ex): +4 to saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey creatures.
- Wild Shape (Su): can turn into a Tiny to Large animal (and back) 4 times per day for 11 hours. The new form's Hit Dice cannot exceed 11.
- Venom Immunity(Ex): Immune to all poisons.

Skarwúrz called in many favors and paid most of what he owned to obtain the three Iron Circles of Fey Binding that he used to trap the Wendigoes. During most of the year, he is either paying back those druids of the order who helped him or finding ways to make money to pay them back. He feels like his sacrifice has more than entitled him to be the master of his territory and if it wasn't for him, the village of Attaemyn would probably not exist.

Roleplaying While Skarwúrz is wise and well tempermented in his dealings with the Elves, his Ogre temper can flare if things are going poorly and the stress of the Wendigo's release is mounting. His nervous pleas for cooperation may turn toward roaring demands to do what's best for the village.

Wendigoes (high-level group)

Elf Wendigo Ftr10, Medium Fey (Cold); CR 12; HD 10d10+20; hp 57; Init +10; Spd 120 ft/x4; AC 18 (+2 deflection, +6 dex), touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +10/+14; Full Atk +14/+9 Bite (1d6+6;18-20/x3, Bleeding, Disease DC 17), +14/+9 One-handed (1d3+4;20/x2, Grapple); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 18(+4), Dex 22(+6), Con 14(+2), Int 10(+0), Wis 12(+1), Cha 14(+2).

Skills: Hide¹ +10, Intimidate¹ +12, Move Silently¹ +10, Ride¹ +12, Survival¹ +5.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, (Track), Danger Sense, Death Blow

-- RACE ABILITIES --

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution
- Low-Light Vision

- Immunity to sleep effects
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against Enchantment spells or effects.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks
- Automatic Searching: Passing within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door entitles you to a free Search check, as if you were actively looking for it
- Favored Class: Wizard
- CLASS ABILITIES --
- Proficient in all armor, and all shields(including tower shields)
- Proficient with all simple and martial weapons.
- Bonus Feats: You gain a bonus combat-related feat at first level, and another one at every even fighter level.
- TEMPLATE ABILITIES --
- Gains bite attack
- Disease (Su) any creature bitten must make a Fortitude save (DC 10+1/2 Wndigo's HD+Wendigo's CON modifier). Incubation period 1d3 days deals 1d3 WIS damage and Will save (DC 10+1/2 Wndigo's HD+Wendigo's CHA modifier) or hunger for flesh of own race. If Wisdome reaches zero, infected creature becomes a Wendigo.
- Maddening Whispers (Su) 1/day can be used on any creature within 120 ft. and can be used while wind walking. Will save (DC 10+1/2 Wndigo's HD+Wendigo's CHA modifier) or suffer 1d3 Wis damage.
- Ravenous Bite (Ex) a critical bite attack results in a bleeding wound that deals 3 damage per round. Damage from multiple bleeding wounds stack. Bleeding can be stopped by a successful Heal check (DC 10) or any cure or healing spell.
- Becomes Fey with Cold Subtype
- Corner of the Eye (Su) a victim stalked by a Wendigo suffers -2 on all Wis based skill checks.
- Regeneration 5 (Ex) Fire deals normal damage to a Wendigo.
- Wind Walk (Su) Can Wind Walk as per the spell at will transforming from physical form to incorporeal and back again as a move action.
- Deflection bonus to AC equal to Cha bonus (min +1).
- Fly speed 120' (Windegoes do not travel on land).

In his life before becoming a Wendigo, this Elf was a mercenary. His last job led him into a forest where he encountered a Wendigo and contracted the disease. On his way through the forest of Attaelym, he succumbed to the disease and became a Wendigo. Before he completely succumbed, he attacked an Elf woman in the village. Two rangers who typically tracked down human bandits in the area followed him. Once his transformation was complete, the rangers were no match for him and he ultimately turned them into Wendigoes as well. The rangers' names are known to the village elders: Lorictal and Davinuel, the original Wendigo's name is unknown—which can pose problems if they must be recaptured.

Roleplaying: The Wendigoes are evil nature spirits. Although they speak sylvan, common, and elvish, they they can not be bargained with.

Lorictal and Davinuel (2) Elf Wendigo Rgr8; Medium Fey (Cold); CR 10; HD 8d6+16; hp 46; Init +10; Spd 120 ft/x4; AC 18 (+2 deflection, +6 dex), touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +8/+11; Full Atk +11/+6 Bite (1d6+4;19-20/x3, Disease DC 16, Bleeding), +11/+6 One-handed (1d3+3;20/x2, Grapple); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +3; Str 16(+3), Dex 22(+6), Con 14(+2), Int 10(+0), Wis 12(+1), Cha 14(+2)

Skills: Handle Animal +10, Heal¹ +5, Hide¹ +12, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen¹ +11, Move Silently¹ +14, Ride¹ +14, Search¹ +8, Spot¹ +11, Survival¹ +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Distracting Attack, Favored Critical(Humanoid (human))

Spells: 1/0 (Bonus Spells): -/1

-- RACE ABILITIES --

Same as above for Elf

-- CLASS ABILITIES --

- Proficient in light armor, and all shields(except tower shields)
- Proficient with all simple and martial weapons.
- Wild Empathy(Ex): can make a check(1d20+12) to improve the attitude of an animal. Must be within 30 feet of the animal, and it generally takes one minute to perform the action.
- Woodland Stride(Ex): can move through natural thorns, briars, etc. at full speed and without suffering damage or impairment. Magically overgrown areas still hamper you.
- Favored Enemy: have certain types of enemies that he has extensive knowledge about. Against these creatures, he gains the listed bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks, as well as weapon damage rolls.
 - ✕ Humanoid (human) (+2 bonus)
 - ✕ Humanoid (human) (+2 bonus)
- Track: gains the Track feat as a bonus feat.
- Combat Style-Two-Weapon Combat(Ex): has gained Two-Weapon Fighting as a bonus feat.
- Endurance: gain the Endurance feat as a bonus feat.
- Spells: can now cast spells. Your caster level is 4
- Improved Combat Style-Two-Weapon Combat(Ex): You have gained Improved Two-Weapon Fighting as a bonus feat.
- Swift Tracker(Ex): can move your normal speed while following tracks without taking the normal -5 penalty. Takes only a -10 penalty when moving at up to twice normal speed.

-- TEMPLATE ABILITIES --

Same as above for Wendigo

New Item

Iron Circle of Fey Binding: A powerfully enchanted iron circle (wrought of cold iron), usually a hoop or circlet. Any Fey touching the circle is immediately bound within it for one year. There is no save. Only one Fey may be trapped at a time. Once the item is used and the enchantment dissipates (after 1 year), the item returns to being a mundane cold iron circle. Powerful Enchantment/Medium Conjuration; CL 17th, Craft Wonderous Item, Sympathy, Trap Fey* (see below); Price 100,000 gp; weight 1lb. or as item.

New Spell

Trap Fey

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: 6 Drd

Components: V, S, M, F See text

Casting Time: 1 Standard Action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5ft / 2 levels)

Target: One Fey (or object, see text)

Duration: One year (see text)

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: See text

Trap Fey forces the life force of a Fey into an object of cold iron that is formed into a circle.

The object holds the creature for up to one year or until the ring is broken or a successful dispel magic is cast on the object.

If the spell is cast on a Fey without any other preparation, the creature is allowed a Will saving throw and spell resistance to avoid the effect. If the creature's name is spoken upon spell completion, the save DC is increased by 2.

The spell can also be cast on an object (same as the material component) with the trigger words of the spell inscribed on the circle. The target must be tricked into reading the trigger word while holding the object. This allows a saving throw however if the creature's name is also inscribed, there is no saving throw.

If the spell trigger object also has a Sympathy spell placed on it, the item traps any Fey touching it without a saving throw.

Lastly, if a Fey is already trapped by a Trap Fey spell, the spell's magic can be renewed without a saving throw by recasting the spell on the iron circle. The durations do not stack and the new duration always takes precedence (duration is one year from the time of casting).

Material Component: A circle wrought of cold iron. You must use at least 1,500 gp worth of uncut gems and/or un-smelted (natural) ores of precious metals. All of the natural ingredients are placed within the iron circle during spell preparation and the components are destroyed. The spell is triggered later with only the iron circle needed during casting.

If the spell is being cast to re-enchant a circle that already has a Fey bound to it, there is no need for a new circle, just place the components in the center of the circle and complete the spell.

Focus (Trigger Object): The cold iron ring is needed and must be prepared as above.

Special: This spell can be made permanent by a 14th level caster using 3,000 xp.

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