

# Forest Friends and Foes

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Ms. Cordelia Bijou has hired the party to help save the Bijou Gemstone Company from embarrassment for ...misplacing a highly prized helio gemstone. It must be recovered quickly in order for the company to save face (and a significant investment). No one can know that the aarakocra courier service literally dropped the precious stone over a private wildlife reserve owned by some very fanatical druids. Ms. Bijou will give the party each a special potion of polymorph and instruct them to take it when on the border of the preserve, right before they cross onto the property. This will ensure that they are able to enter the preserve undetected, and will last for eight hours. Also, magic users in the party mustn't do any magic stronger than cantrips - the ward placed over the preserve will alert the druids if there is any more powerful magic performed within its bounds. Cordelia also provides the coordinates of where the gemstone was dropped - due north of where they are directed to enter the preserve. The helio stone is a large, yellow glowing crystal about the size of an apple, that emanates a magical light. They won't be able to miss it.

A large sign at the edge of the wildlife preserve screams "No Trespassing - This Means YOU!" - complete with a silhouette image of several humanoids and other races getting magically zapped by an angry druid. Ms. Bijou's instructions were vague, so when the party drinks the potions of disguise before they enter the woods, they may be surprised to find that instead of disguising them as druids, the potions transform them all into woodland creatures. *At the GM's discretion, the entire party can either all be transformed into raccoons, or each party member can roll a d6 and will become one of the following: (1) Possum; (2) Raccoon; (3) Squirrel; (4) Skunk; (5) Porcupine; (6) Hedgehog*

Once transformed, the party will have to struggle out from under their former clothing and weapons and realize they won't be able to carry any of their items into the forest as they may have anticipated. (GM's discretion for any allowances here.) Each party member will only have the normal skills and traits associated with the animal they turn into, but retain their own abilities scores. Any creatures they come in contact with will also have the regular abilities associated with that creature and should be scaled to match the level of the party. The party will be able to speak and understand the language of any other forest creatures they come in contact with while disguised.

## No Trespassing

The druid rangers will detect and arrest the party if they do any of the following:

- *If the party doesn't drink the potions before they step into the woods; or if they enter the woods as anything other than a woodland creature.*
- *If the potion wears off because they've spent more than 8 hours in the woods.*
- *If someone performs any magic more powerful than a cantrip.*

The party will be bailed out of druid jail by Ms. Bijou if they are caught. However, they will still be under contract to recover the helio stone and now have to forfeit their reward money to pay her back for bail money. Additional hindrances can be added at the GM's discretion if the party has to restart their mission.

## Facing the Fox

The Fox is a wandering random enemy that can appear at the GM's discretion in several places during the adventure. One or two encounters in which the Fox does some significant damage but escapes the party can happen throughout. A final, larger encounter should also occur right as the party recovers the helio stone and is trying to make their way back through the forest. A definitive win for the party would make them the heroes of the forest and any new woodland friends they may have made.



## Into the Forest

The preserve is a thickly forested area with a temperate climate. Low, leafy brush grows between tall conifers and deciduous trees. Birds chirp in the tree-tops and the bustling sounds of the surrounding wildlife can be heard as they move amongst the leaves and moss covering the forest floor.

## The Thicket of the Chipmunks

After a short trek into the forest, the party must struggle through a dense thicket of brambles, where they are set upon by a gang of angry chipmunks who declare they're steppin' on their turf. The party will have to defend themselves from the band of combative rodents and escape through the thicket to continue traveling north.

## Occupants of the Old Hollow Tree

A cranky old badger named Marge will barge out of her den below an old tree's gnarled, mossy roots. Marge is feeling extra ornery this morning and accuses the party (particularly the raccoons among them) of being the thief (/thieves) who has been stealing her mushrooms. At some point in her argument with the party, a fluffy great horned owl named Helena will emerge from the tree above. Helena will fuss, "Come now, Marge, you're still in a strop thanks to those awful chipmunks. And clearly these folks aren't that kleptomaniac raccoon. I've seen him at it myself, and my eyes don't lie; you let them be, now." She glares at the party with her big ole owl eyes. "How can we help you?" Marge and Helena will try to be helpful to the party but will mostly bicker back and forth about the troublesome chipmunks, the raccoon that keeps stealing everyone's stuff, and the Fox that's been on the prowl. They don't know anything about the helio stone.

## A Plunge in the Pond

The party travels on for a significant amount of time, keeping an eye out for the Fox, eventually following alongside a small creek as they approach the coordinates where the helio stone was dropped. The creek flows into a small pond that happens to be right where the coordinates indicated. The pond is very deep and the party cannot swim deep enough in their new forms to search the bottom for the stone. A turtle named Bartholomew is sunning himself nearby on a log. He will agree to help if asked by searching the bottom of the pond for the stone if the party will agree to gather flowers from the top of a nearby tree for him to give to his turtle girlfriend, Agatha. Unfortunately, the stone is not at the bottom of the pond.

## The Treetops and the Falling Sun

As the party deliberates what to do next, a young crow will swoop down from high in the trees above and introduce himself as Matthias. He will ask for their help to gather materials for a new nest for his elderly mother, whose old nest was knocked out of their tree when a piece of the sun fell out of the sky. If they agree to help him, Matthias will tell them what he knows: The piece of sun (the helio stone) landed in the shallows of the pond and was picked up by Oscar the raccoon. Oscar is sort of a nomad but can frequently be found stashing his goodies in the abandoned beaver dam just a little further down at the far end of the pond.

## The Abandoned Beaver Dam

By peering into the cracks between the old logs that make up the old beaver dam that Oscar calls home, the party can see quite that Oscar has amassed quite an impressive hoard of items. Several shiny rocks, the jeweled handle of a rusted sickle, a few coins, some broken pottery pieces, a few sticks and brightly colored feathers, and of course, some rather deflated-looking spotted mushrooms (presumably Marge's) can be found piled haphazardly in a corner if the party is able to sneak inside. There are markings all over the dirt floor nearby, likely made with a pointed stick. Once the party leaves, Oscar can be found up a nearby tree outside his den, hissing and muttering to himself. It seems the helio stone was stolen from his hoard by his nemesis/best friend, Winston the mole, during their latest game of capture the flag.

## Mole Hole Heist

Oscar has drawn crazy schematics of how to get to Winston's mole hole, and will "help" the party plan a heist to get around the ever vigilant (but nearly blind) Winston. He is convinced that the party will let him have the helio stone back once it is recovered. Regardless of how stealthy the party may be when entering Winston's den, they will find Winston sitting on top of a very obvious little mound of dirt, under which the helio stone can be seen glowing faintly. After a dramatic confrontation between the frenemies, the party will learn that Winston stole the stone from Oscar's den because it was too bright, and he isn't able to comfortably visit his friend's home when it houses such an irritating light. Once Oscar discovers that Winston just wants to get back to their game, they are both eager to be rid of the stone.

*When the party successfully emerges from Winston's den with the stone and the two reconciled friends, they are faced once more with the Fox for a final showdown.*