

Tome of Adventures

# Garden of Dread

Vol 1

Issue 2

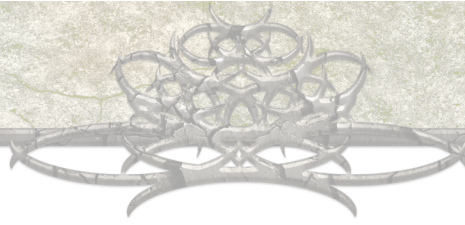
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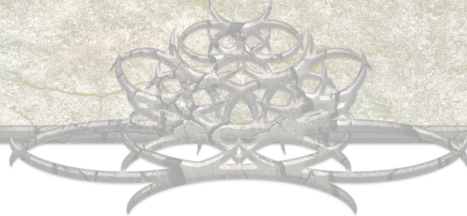
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# Avalon Games







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## Introduction

The secret of eternal youth is hidden in the center of a vast garden that surrounds the ruins of a wizard's tower. Within the sprawling confines of this forgotten arboretum is the most fantastic collection of magical plants ever gathered together in one place. Adventure waits among the crumbling stone barriers and living walls of the Garden of Dread.

*Garden of Dread* is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for characters of 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> level. You need the *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* to play.







## Background

Centuries ago, the beautiful wizard Trienta ruled over the Vale as a just and compassionate protector. She reigned from a stone tower surrounded by immaculate gardens. Her greatest joy was finding exotic and wondrous plants to add to her collection. During one of her botanical expeditions, Trienta discovered a tree whose fruit could endow a person with eternal youth. She planted this tree in the middle of her garden so she could live forever with her consort Duncan, who was also her most talented apprentice.

Immortality has its price, as Trienta eventually discovered. Over the ages the wizard's body remained young while her mind slowly began to unravel. As she descended into incoherence and delusion, Duncan secretly took over the reigns of power. At first the apprentice only wished to fill the void left by his absent mistress but eventually his rule became corrupt and tyrannical. Obsessed with power and arcane secrets, Duncan began to neglect his lover and left her to tend her gardens in a listless depression. Trienta's fragile mind could not handle Duncan's rejection and her sadness turned to paranoia and suspicion. In a jealous rage she accused her lover of committing infidelity with a servant girl and struck him dead on the spot.

Overcome by grief and madness, Trienta went on a rampage and slaughtered her entire household. Unable to handle the guilt caused by Duncan's death, she blamed those around her for turning him against her. When some of her retainers try to escape back to the nearby village, the insane wizard followed them. So overwhelming was her mistrust that she accused the villagers of treason. She razed the entire community to the ground as punishment for harboring the fleeing retainers. No one knows what happened to her after that. Some say that she has forsaken her immortality and allowed death to take her. Others say that she haunts the Vale to this day. What is known for certain is that the garden is still there, guarding its terrible secrets.

## The Garden of Dread

The Garden of Dread is a large patch of land that surrounds the ruins of Trienta's tower. It is filled with rare and magical plants, some of which are deadly. The wizard designed this place to be a sanctuary for her botanical discoveries but she also turned it into a living defense against monsters and invading armies.

The inner regions of the garden are well kept and beautiful, lovingly cared for by the ageless Trienta. However, in her unstable and confused state she rarely strays far from her crumbling tower. The outer areas of the garden have been almost completely neglected, causing them to become wild and overgrown.

### FEATURES OF THE GARDEN

The following features describe the general layout and make up of the Garden of Dread.

**Sustenance:** The garden is filled with many types of edible plants. The DC of Nature checks made to forage for food within the garden is 10 for one person and 20 for five people. A roll of a natural 1 on a forage checks results in the foraging character finding poisonous plants that look like nutritious fare. See the D&D 4E *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on poisons.

**Illumination:** The garden is open and brightly lit by the sun during daytime hours. At night the region is lit by dim light that is provided by a myriad of magically glowing flowers.

**Outer Walls:** The perimeter of the garden is surrounded by a living wall of Daggerthorn Briar (level 7 Obstacle). See the D&D 4E *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on this hazard.

**Doors:** Unless otherwise noted, the doors in the garden are heavy iron gates. A DC 20 Strength check is required to break one down. These gates have AC and Reflex defenses of 5, Fortitude defense of 10, and 30 hit points. The bars of the gates are spaced widely enough to allow someone



to pass a small object through the gap. None of the gates have any visible locking mechanism and they open and close by means of magic. An Arcana check (DC 24) allows a person to force the gate to open or close.

**Flying:** Trienta made sure to protect her tower and her precious gardens from all sorts of magical and mundane threats. Any creature of medium size or larger that tries to fly over the outer walls is attacked by a defensive ward that protects the air above the Garden of Dread. Any creature of medium size or larger that tries to take flight while inside the garden will meet a similar fate. The defensive ward makes an attack every round that the creature is in flight (+13 vs. Reflex, on a successful hit the target is knocked out of the air and takes falling damage as appropriate.) See the D&D 4E *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on falling distance.

**The Four Obelisks:** Within the four quadrants of the Garden of Dread are stone pillars that form a magical seal around the hedge maze that protects the inner gardens. Touching an obelisk causes it to deactivate. The adventurers must deactivate all four obelisks in order to gain access to the hedge maze.

### Adventure Synopsis

The wizard Trienta still lives in the ruins of her once magnificent tower, jealously guarding the tree that keeps her forever young and beautiful. The mad wizard knows fully well that the Tree of Youth is draining the life from the nearby region but she doesn't care as long as it allows her to continue to defy time and death.

In her rare moments of coherence, Trienta performs arcane experiments designed to restore her slain lover, Duncan. After falling to the wizard's wrath, Duncan's blood gave rise to an animated plant creature with a burning hatred for all life. Trienta has tried in vain to bring him back to his human form, hoping that he will somehow forgive her for his murder.

The adventure begins when the player characters hear about the garden and decide to investigate. They must make their way to the center of the garden in order to unlock its secrets. Of course, the wizard Trienta is fanatical about protecting her beloved garden and the magical tree that allows her to remain ageless. She will viciously attack anyone who dares trespass within her domain. Even in her crazed and delusional state, Trienta wields powerful spells and is quite capable of causing harm to the adventurers. As the adventure progresses the characters must explore the various sections of the garden in order to deactivate four stone obelisks. Touching all four obelisks brings down the wall of magical force that protects the hedge maze in the center of the garden. Bringing down the barrier opens up a door into the hedge maze and grants the characters access to the inner sanctum and the ruined tower.

### Adventure Hooks

The Dungeon Master can use one or more of the hooks below to lure that adventurers into the Garden of Dread and give them a reason to explore the premises. Some of these adventure hooks are also quests that provide the characters with experience once they complete them.

#### HOOK: THE TREE OF YOUTH

The adventurers are contacted by a wealthy merchant or noble who wishes to hire them for an expedition. This mysterious patron has spent many years researching forgotten lore and digging through ancient histories. During the course of this study the patron has uncovered rumors about the wizard Trienta and the Tree of Youth. He or she wishes to hire the adventurers to enter the Garden of Dread and bring back a piece of the legendary magical fruit.





### Quest: Forbidden Fruit

*The characters must search out the Garden of Dread and return with the fruit that grants eternal youth.* **Start:** A wealthy patron has contacted the adventurers with an offer of employment.

**Goal:** The adventurers must obtain a fruit from the Tree of Youth and return it to their patron.

**Outcome:** Upon completing this quest the adventurers gain 1,500 Quest XP and are paid a reward of 2,500 gp for the precious fruit. If the adventurers return from the garden alive but without the fruit then the patron will assume that they have kept it for themselves. The patron will waste no time plotting revenge for this betrayal.

### HOOK: THE WIZARD'S TOWER

The adventurers hear a rumor that fabulous riches are located in the ruins of the wizard's tower. While this rumor is absolutely false it may be enough to prod the player characters to investigate further. Further research should reveal that the wizard Trienta was once a wealthy and powerful ruler and this knowledge reinforces the notion that a vast treasure is hidden in the ruined tower.

### HOOK: THE LOST CHILD

As the adventurers travel through the area, they hear the news that a lost child has wandered into the garden. A search of the surrounding area confirms that the missing child's trail leads right up to the garden gate. The child's family and the local authorities plead with the adventurers to help.

### Quest: Rescue

*A young girl has decided to explore the Garden of Dread and has not been seen since.*

**Start:** The adventurers are contacted by a clan elder or local leader and tasked with rescuing the child from the terrors of the garden.

**Goal:** The adventurers must retrieve the lost child from the garden and return her safely to her parents.

**Outcome:** Upon completing this quest the adventurers gain 1,500 Quest XP. There is no reward offered for finding the girl but the local people can offer their hospitality to adventurers, providing them with room and board. If the adventurers return from the garden alive but without the girl then the grieving parents will thank the characters for at least trying.

### HOOK: THE DYING LAND

A powerful noble lord sends word to the adventurers that his realm is in danger and informs them that he is willing to reward them handsomely if they can help. Mysterious things have been happening in the Vale over the last few years. Crops have been wilting, once lush forests are rotting away, and animals have been dying for no apparent reason. The people of this area are well versed in the stories surrounding the Garden of Dread and naturally the lord suspects that the mysterious blight is related.

### Quest: Saving the Vale

*The Tree of Youth draws its power from the life energy of everything around it. Trienta's garden is protected against this effect but the surrounding area is not. Destroying the tree is the only way to keep it from draining the life from the entire region. Left unchecked, this blight could someday threaten the entire continent.*

**Start:** The characters are approached by the local ruler who is concerned about the mysterious crop failures and other unexplained events.

**Goal:** The adventurers must destroy the Tree of Youth before it wipes out the entire Vale.

**Outcome:** Upon completing this quest the adventurers gain 1,500 Quest XP and are paid a reward of 2,500 gp for their services. If the tree is not destroyed then the Tree of Youth will continue to drain the life from the Vale until nothing remains but a barren waste.



## Area Overview

The region surrounding the Garden of Dread was largely abandoned after Trienta went on her killing spree and destroyed the village that bordered on her keep. Over time a number of timber and mining camps have been set up on the edges of the Vale. Local herders bring their animals down into the Vale to pasture and hunters have been known to stalk some of the local forests. In recent years the plants in the Vale have been steadily dying off, forcing the herdsmen to find other pastures and causing the timber camps to shut down.

### A. VILLAGE RUINS

Where there was once a peaceful and prosperous village, there is now just a pile of crumbling bricks. After being destroyed by the insane wizard the village was abandoned and never rebuilt. The structures that made up this settlement were constructed of wood and mud brick. Time has worn away at these ruins until there is hardly any trace of them left.

### B. THE BONE YARD

This area is a burial ground where the mad wizard's victims were laid to rest. It is located along the road between the ruined village and the Garden of Dread. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 1.

### C. THE SOUTHERN QUADRANT

The only entrance to the Garden of Dread is an ornately decorated stone arch that is fortified with a gate of iron lattice. This part of the garden was once the most beautiful, designed to impress visitors with the splendid variety of blooming flowers and bushes. Now the region is overgrown with weeds and wild plants. The dividing walls of this area are made from cut stone but they are covered so thickly with moss and clinging vines that the walls themselves are barely visible. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 2, Encounter 3, and Encounter 5.

### D. THE WESTERN QUADRANT

This area is largely open and dominated by an orchard of fruit trees. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 4.

### E. THE EASTERN QUADRANT

This part of the garden is divided into a series of small meadows by walls of uncut stone that are covered in thorny vines. A central path cuts through the meadows. This path is interrupted by a series of gates. The western most portion of this quadrant is occupied by a spring-fed lake that supplies water to the rest of the garden. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 7 and Encounter 8.

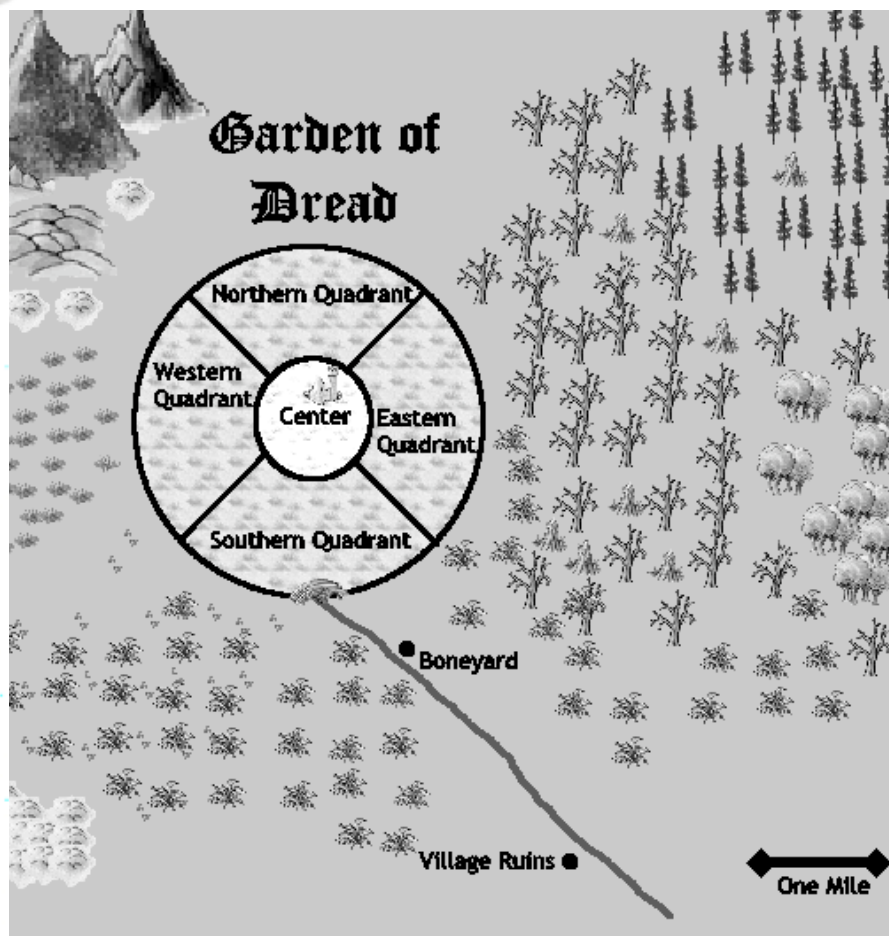
### F. THE NORTHERN QUADRANT

This area is comprised of a winding path that is bordered by a living wall. The wall is made of trees that have been trained to grown together into a lattice that is covered by vines and thorny bushes. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 6.

### G. THE GARDEN CENTER

The central area of the garden is home to the ruins of the wizard's tower as well as an open pasture that is covered by well tended fields of flowers, herbs, and edible plants. Surrounding the central area is an impenetrable hedge maze that continuously shifts and changes shape. The maze itself is protected by a wall of magical force that keeps intruders at bay. The protective barrier can be removed by deactivating the stone obelisks that are found in each of the four quadrants of the garden. Information on this location can be found in Encounter 9 and Encounter 10.





### Random Events

The Garden of Dread is not a safe place to set up camp. The region immediately surrounding the garden is also fraught with danger. Each time the adventurers take an extended rest here, roll 1d20 and consult the table.

1-10	No event
11-14	Severe weather
15-18	Mystic ward
19-20	Wandering monster

Any event that occurs will interrupt the adventurer's rest, so they do not gain the benefits that are normally associated with an extended rest.

#### SEVERE WEATHER

This region is known for unpredictable weather patterns and violent storms and the adventurers get a taste of it. The type of storm depends on the time of year but is most likely a thunderstorm with accompanying lightning and high winds. See the D&D 4E *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on weather.

#### MYSTIC WARD

The Garden of Dread was once protected by all sorts of powerful rituals and magical artifacts. The power of these wards has faded over the centuries but the adventurers may accidentally trigger an active ward if they stay in one place for too long. Roll 1d6 and consult the paragraphs below.





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### **Arcana**

Arcana is generic world, designed for use with any Fantasy RPG System, and so the information presented here and in other Arcana expansions will of course be a bit vague as to stats, levels and powers. The intention is to give the GM and players a world rich in personality, history and depth, one where they can seek adventure, but use any RPG system they feel most conferrable with.

The basics of the game world are presented here in the core book, but as expansions are released, the complexity of the world will grow as more and more of its history, dangers and wonders are explored. When it is all said and done, Arcana will become a vast world of detailed and expansive depth, one where that you and your friends can full explore.

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2

## Warlord Grom



2

4

**Strength** 3

**Speed** 8 / 1

**Movement** 4

**Adrenal** 4

**Will** 4

**Health**



### Weapons and Armor

Weapons	As mod	Damage mod	Notes
Scimitar	-1	+1	-
Dagger	+0	-1	-

### Special Abilities


**1. Savage Blow (Attack, 3)**  
 Grom can make a single savage attack, often killing a foe outright with a single blow of his deadly scimitar. You must declare this ability is being used before Attack Dice are rolled. On a single attack, Grom may add +2 Attack Dice to his total for that attack. (With no limit to the number of dice that can be rolled)

**2. Command (Move, 2)**  
 Grom may use his loud demanding bellows to command other orcs near by. When this ability is used, Grom may activate any one orc character, who is within five squares. This activated character may perform one action. (Note that the character may still take their normal actions when their turn comes up.) Gram may perform this ability but once a turn.


**3. Shatter Shield (Attack, 1)**  
 Grom often shatters shields and weapons with his mighty blows. Declare this ability before the Attack Dice are rolled. If Grom scores a hit, instead of doing any damage, he may shatter, and thus destroy, a foe's readied weapon or shield (Your choice.) If the foe does not have a readied weapon or shield, then this ability has no effect.

Magical items gain a save. Roll 1D6, and on a roll of 6+, the item resists the effect. Per five points of the item's cost, over the first five points, adds an extra +1 to the die roll is gained.







Wolf




Kir




Sie




Night Stalker



Major Glory



Lamia



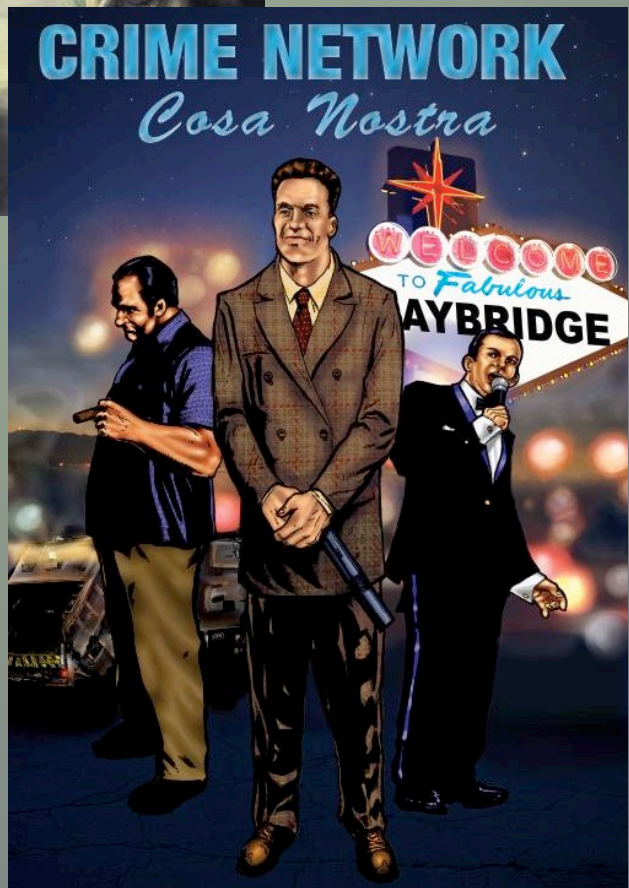
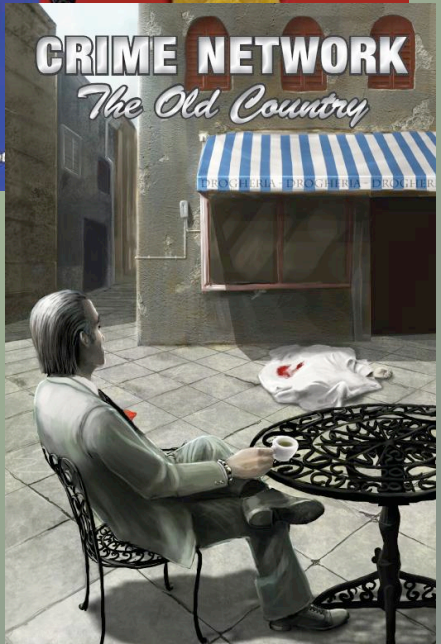
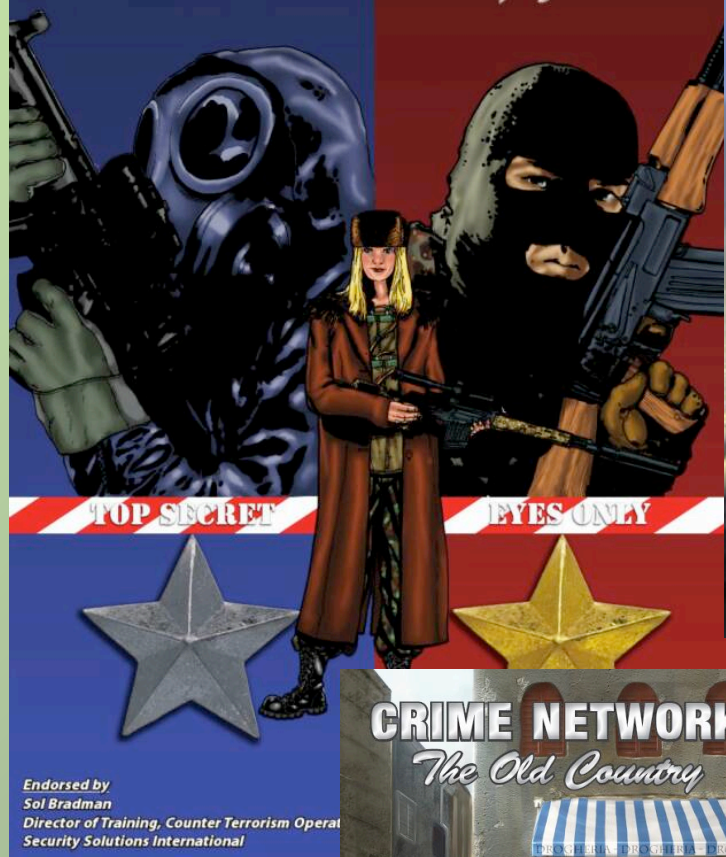
Gyea



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The blue color of your cape leaves an azure streak across the city skyline as you fly above the buildings on patrol. It has been a peaceful night over all, only one bank robbery, and that you stopped with the help of Kid Zip. The explosion rolling out of the building below you then breaks the silence. You watch with your super eyesight as the green colored smoke rolls out of the window of one of Sonic Lab's windows. Then Doctor Death leaps into the air from that very window, a beaker of the hyper explosive, chemical Y, tightly held in his armed fist. You thought he was still in jail, serving a 300-year sentence for his last attempt at destroying the city. With a sigh, you dive into the coming fight, sure it will be another long night ahead. Who said being a super hero was all capes and fun?

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