

# IRONWOOD'S BITTER TEARS

*The air hangs thick and stagnant within the Ironwood's heart, a cavern choked with weeping moss and the sickly sweet scent of decaying bloom. Fractured light filters through the colossal tree's boughs, illuminating swirling mists that shimmer with the ghostly echoes of a forgotten tragedy, a palpable weight of sorrow pressing down upon all who enter.*

## HOOKS & RUMORS

- A Root Warden, Silas Blackwood, whispers of a hidden cache of ancient healing salves, claiming it's the only way to counteract the sorcerer's poison, but demands a proof of loyalty beyond mere words.
- Local villagers report recurring nightmares – vivid recollections of a lost child and a weeping man – coinciding with the intensifying 'Echoing Sorrow' within the woods.
- A disgraced Root Warden, Lyra Moonwhisper, seeks a party to expose the order's past failure and recover stolen knowledge, believing it holds the key to permanently silencing the tree's pain.
- Scavengers discovered a partially destroyed alchemist's workshop near the poisoned root; traces of a potent, dark elixir suggest a desperate attempt to amplify the sorcerer's grief.
- The forest spirits are restless, manifesting as fragmented visions – a young woman's desperate plea and a man's enraged accusations – that briefly reveal clues to the sorcerer's motives and weaknesses.

## RANDOM EVENTS (D6)

1	<b>Spectral Shift</b>	The chamber's lighting flickers violently, accompanied by a chorus of mournful whispers. Players must make a Wisdom saving throw or become briefly overwhelmed by the sorcerer's regret, suffering di...
2	<b>Root Awakening</b>	A section of the floor suddenly gives way, revealing a hidden tunnel filled with aggressive, thorny vines. Players must quickly overcome the vines with combat or clever maneuvering, gaining access...
3	<b>Memory Fragment</b>	A ghostly image of the sorcerer appears briefly, offering a cryptic warning about a hidden danger within the dungeon. Players must interpret the warning to avoid a future trap or encounter.
4	<b>Wardens' Dispute</b>	Lyra and Theron engage in a heated argument, their voices echoing through the chamber. Players can attempt to resolve the conflict, gaining a valuable clue or a temporary alliance with one of the W...
5	<b>Echoing Resonance</b>	The intensity of the Echoing Sorrow spikes dramatically, causing illusions to become more vivid and combat encounters to become more challenging. Players must find a way to stabilize the resonance...
6	<b>Lost Bloom</b>	A single, perfectly preserved bloom falls from the ceiling, radiating a faint, golden light. Touching the bloom grants a temporary boost to healing abilities, but attracting the attention of the sp...

## LOCATIONS

### The Weeping Threshold

A narrow, naturally formed cavern drips constantly with thick, viscous moss, casting an eerie gre...

### The Murmuring Gallery

Twisted, thorny vines cover the walls, pulsing with a sickly sweet aroma.

### Root Warden's Sanctum

The air is heavy with the scent of decaying blossoms and damp earth.

### Sorcerer's Remembrance

The chamber pulsates with a visible, shimmering distortion an Echoing Sorrow manifestation.

## ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1	<b>Guardian Golem</b>	The golem activates when the lever is pulled, blocking the exit. It's vulnerable to water damage from the dripping stalactites. Players can use the pillars for cover or try to disable it by breaking the rune on its back. If defeated peacefully, it reveals a hidden passage leading deeper into the dungeon.
2	<b>Kaelen's Vigil</b>	Kaelen, a former Warden, watches the party with suspicion, demanding they repair the altar's emblem. He believes the sorcerer's grief is weakening the Ironwood, and only restoring the Wardens' symbol can stem the flow. Failure to appease him triggers a psychic echo of his betrayal, inflicting temporary fear.
3	<b>Echoing Regret</b>	Players must navigate a series of illusions based on the sorcerer's past mistakes – a failed healing attempt, a lost love, a devastating betrayal. Success requires roleplaying and demonstrating empathy, lessening the echo's intensity and revealing a key ingredient for the cleansing ritual.
4	<b>Warden's Dispute</b>	Two Root Wardens, Lyra and Theron, argue vehemently about the party's approach. Lyra favors a direct confrontation, while Theron advocates for caution and research. Players can attempt to mediate, influencing the Wardens' willingness to share crucial information – a map of the deeper chambers.
5	<b>Bramble's Trap</b>	A section of the gallery floor is covered in deceptively soft brambles that trigger a poison dart volley. Players can disarm the mechanism by manipulating a series of pressure plates, or attempt to navigate the trap using stealth and acrobatics. Failure results in immediate, debilitating poison effects.
6	<b>Sorcerer's Reflection</b>	The mirror shifts, presenting a fragmented vision of the sorcerer's final moments – consumed by despair and regret. Players can attempt to communicate with his spectral form, offering solace or a solution to his suffering, potentially weakening the Echoing Sorrow and disrupting the altar's channeling.

## TREASURE

**The Whisperwood Shard** — A fragment of the Ironwood's heartwood, pulsing with residual magical energy. Grants temporary resistance to psychic damage but slowly drains the wielder's memories.

**Thornbinder's Gloves** — Leather gloves interwoven with thorny vines, providing enhanced dexterity and protection against piercing weapons. Found near Bramble's Trap; the thorns inflict a minor poison effect with each use.

**Echoing Amulet** — A tarnished silver amulet etched with druidic runes. When worn, it partially filters out the Echoing Sorrow, granting advantage on saving throws against its effects but attracting the attention of the spectral guardians.

**Sorcerer's Quill** — A beautifully crafted quill pen made from a raven's feather, still faintly radiating the sorcerer's sorrow. Allows the user to write messages that subtly influence the emotions of those who read them, but risks amplifying negative feelings.

**Root's Resilience Potion** — A shimmering emerald liquid derived from the Ironwood's sap. Grants temporary regeneration and resistance to poison, but its effects are tied to the tree's health – weakening the tree reduces the potion's potency.

## NPCS

**Kaelen the Warden:** A former guard who was left behind when the faction retreated. He knows the secret passages but demands the party help him escape. He's paranoid and checks over his shoulder constantly. Can be bribed with food or convinced through shared stories of betrayal. Will turn on the party if he thinks they're working with the faction.

**Lyra, the Steadfast:** A stern and pragmatic Root Warden, fiercely loyal to the Ironwood's well being. She believes in direct action and immediate solutions, dismissing the party's cautious approach. She possesses detailed knowledge of the Ironwood's defenses but is reluctant to share it without proof of the party's commitment.

**Theron, the Observer:** A contemplative Root Warden, focused on understanding the root causes of the corruption. He seeks knowledge and believes in finding a peaceful resolution. He offers cryptic clues and philosophical insights but is slow to act.

**Silas, the Collector:** A shadowy figure encountered in a hidden alcove, offering fragments of information for a price. He claims to have studied the sorcerer's work and possesses a disturbing collection of artifacts related to his experiments. He is motivated by a desire to understand the nature of sorrow and its manipulation.

## PLOT RESOLUTIONS

The adventurers could choose to fully restore the Root Wardens' emblem, permanently silencing the tree's sorrow but i...

The adventurers might attempt to communicate with the sorcerer's spectral form, offering forgiveness and releasing hi...

The adventurers could side with Silas, the Collector, seeking to understand the sorcerer's motives and harnessing his...

The adventurers might choose to destroy the channeling altar, severing the sorcerer's connection to the Ironwood and...

The adventurers could negotiate a truce between Kaelen and Lyra, pooling their knowledge to devise a purification rit...

