

SHIMMERTOWN

by Pat Perkins

A DUNGEON WORLD STARTING ADVENTURE

You have arrived in Shimmertown, a once proud and prosperous mining town thanks to the flow of velurtium, or "Shimmer" from a mine south of town. However, since the closing of the mine, the town has fallen into despair and is now home to around 200 locals still clinging onto their humble lives and homes.

A new problem has arisen in Shimmertown. The crops that provide meager trade income as well as sustain life through the harsh winter have been infested with blight and it is feared that there will not be enough for everyone to survive the winter in this remote place. Will the heroes save Shimmertown from certain doom or will they encourage the locals to leave their homes while there is still time?

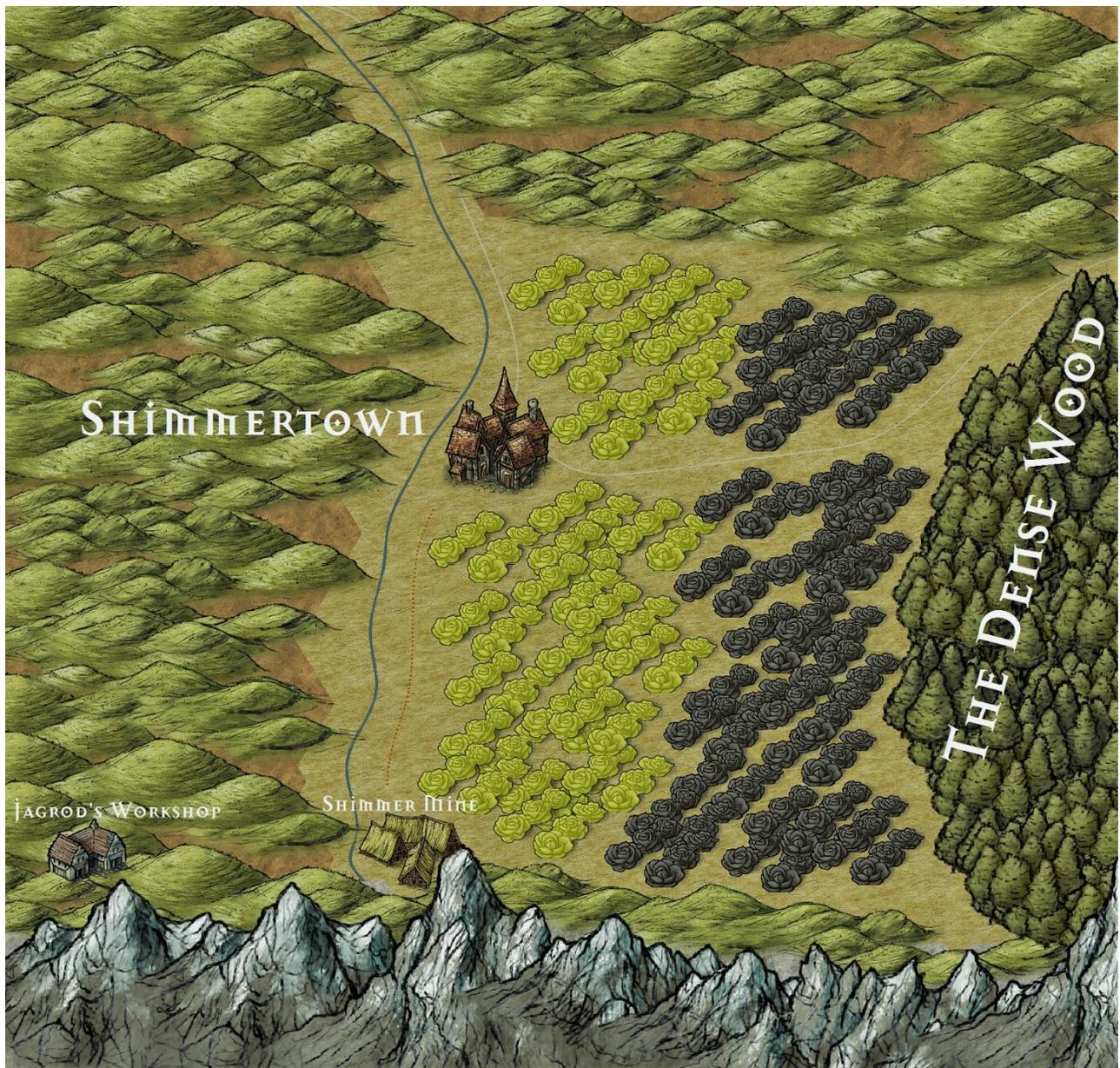
OVERVIEW OF THIS MODULE (SPOILERS! FOR GM EYES ONLY)

The blight seemed to originate from the forest to the East and has spread west through the massive grain fields toward the town. The mayor, Jurian Vesik, ordered half of the fields burned to stop the spread. Half of the crops may be enough for the town to survive the long winter, barely.

The blight began because someone stole the Heart of the Dense Wood, the magical lifeforce of the forest. The keepers of the forest, Dryads and Treants, believe the mayor and the townsfolk to be the culprits and intend to destroy the village unless the Heart is returned.

To the south, something stirs at the Velurtium mine. It seems the mayor has secretly reached out to a venture mining company to reopen the mine as he believes it is the best chance for Shimmertown to survive. The mine was closed years ago as deadly gas spread through the mine killing 17 workers. The mine was sealed with explosives to prevent the gasses from escaping. Only that wasn't the truth. Deep delving allowed the hordes of underground goblins to infest the mine and it was that which killed the workers. The mayor doesn't know the true story.

While the mayor encourages the townsfolk to be resilient and hopeful, the town's handyman, a dwarf named Jagrod Caskfall, believes the town to be cursed and urges everyone to leave while there is still time. He is the one that stole the Heart of the Grove. Not out of malicious intent, but to save the life of his deathly ill 5-year old daughter, Bouline.



Questions for the start of session:

1. You are here because of the request of Jurian Vesik, the town mayor. Jurian helped you in the past and now you owe him a favor. What did he do to help you? Are you friends?
2. There are many legends of the Dense Wood. Which legend do you fear the most? Where did you hear about the legend?
3. In another place, you overheard an agent of a mining company discussing the closed mine near Shimmertown. What is the name of the mining company? What else is the company involved in that gives it a bad reputation?
4. Velurtium is highly sought-after metal. Other than its shimmering appearance, what properties does it carry that make it so valuable? What is a drawback of using velurtium?

DANGER: THE BLIGHT OF SHIMMERTOWN

Nestled along the banks of the river and desolate hills of the south, Shimmertown has struggled since the velurtium mine shut down a decade ago. It has survived thanks to an abundance of grain and crops that it uses for trade and sustenance. Now the crops are infected with blight, forcing Shimmertown to burn half of its crops to save the rest. The winter here is long and arduous and Shimmertown's dry food stores are the citizens' key to survival.

Impending Doom: The blight destroys all Shimmertown's crops

Grim Portents

- Some townsfolk sacrifice a hog to appease the harvest goddess
- Crops begin to show sign of the blight again
- The blight spreads further
- The mayor orders the militia to seize the livestock
- Food rationing begins

Stakes

What will happen if Shimmertown runs out of food?

Will the party urge people to stay or flee?

Cast

Jurian Vesik the Mayor

Jurian Vesik is the mayor of Shimmertown, not from choice but from necessity after the previous mayor fled the outstanding debts of the mine closing. Jurian is pragmatic and loyal to his hometown and only wishes to see it flourish again. He urges resilience and promises the locals that if they stay the course, Shimmertown will never falter.

Jurian dreams of reopening the Shimmer Mine. This blight upon Shimmertown's crops has forced his hand and Jurian has secretly reached out to a venture mining company to reopen the mine.

Jurian believes dark magic from the dense wood is the reason for the blight and will ask the party to investigate the Grove.

Jurian Vesik

Solitary, Intelligent, Organized, Cautious

D10 dmg, 12HP, +1 armor

Close

Instinct: To Save Shimmertown

Call upon town militia

Negotiate for the benefit of Shimmertown

Skilled swordsman

Jagrod Caskfall

Jagrod Caskfall, a dwarf from the far east, was once the chief maintenance engineer at Shimmer Mine. He remained in Shimmertown after the mine closed because of the town's isolation and its friendly people. He works as a handyman around town and is a trusted advisor to Jurian.

Jagrod lost his wife, Ingrid, to childbirth 5 years ago and now his daughter, Bouline, has caught an unknown and seemingly deadly malady. Jagrod believes that someone or something has put a curse on Shimmertown and he urges the townsfolk to flee to safety before the winter cuts off all travel. Jagrod is preparing to leave and thinks Jurian is a fool for wanting to stay.

OTHER NPC'S

Olive Vesik: Jurian's wife who doesn't share her husband's hope for Shimmertown. Wants to move to a big city. She's a bit pretentious.

Kaldar: The only elf that resides near the human town. He is an oxherd and keeps a small farm next to the river. Kind but is secretly hoarding food at his home.

Eden: Kaldar's half-elven teenage daughter. Broody and melancholic, she wants to learn the ways of the arcane.

Krinn: A farmer whose crops were burned on the orders of Jurian. He understands the reasoning but holds a grudge against the mayor for his loss of crops.

Taiawa: A former thief and wanted criminal up north. Dignified and caring, she runs the only Inn in town. Avoids her past and wants a quiet life.

Ruthir: An obnoxious yet whiny human who constantly complains about the lack of fine women in town. He wants to seek glory yet has not yet built up the nerve to adventure.

LOCATION: SHIMMERTOWN

The Senses

Sight: Shimmertown was once home to nearly 1000 people during boom times but now only 200 or so people still linger. Most of the buildings are abandoned and boarded up.

Sound: Shimmertown doesn't have the usual sounds of a bustling town. It is oddly quiet, and the people are quite downtrodden.

Smell: The smell of the river and earth permeate the town

Taste: The local fare is bland and the offerings at the Inn are meager.

Random Events

Roll a D8 or choose one if you need some excitement

1. A fire breaks out in one of the abandoned buildings
2. One of Kaldar's oxen gets loose and is rampaging through the streets
3. Krinn, drunk and angry, confronts Jurian angrily about his lost crops
4. Bounty hunters arrive looking for Taiawa
5. Someone finds out that Kaldar is hiding food
6. Ruthir says the wrong thing to Eden and she attempts to use magic to teach him a lesson. The spell goes badly.
7. In the streets, a group of people that want to stay in town argue with a group of people that want to leave. The tension is high.
8. A debt collector and his group of unsavory mercenaries arrive to collect on debts incurred by the previous mayor.

DANGER: THE DENSE WOOD

The Dense Wood is an ancient forest that lies to the east of Shimmertown beyond the agricultural lands. It is a few hours travel east from Shimmertown and the players will pass the charred fields of crops on the way to the Wood. The forest is so dense that no road passes through it and the eastern road from Shimmertown turns northward to skirt around the forest.

Within the forest, Dryads and Treants protect nature. At the center of the forest is a clearing which stands the oldest and largest tree of the forest. Within a magical alcove in this tree usually lies the Heart of the Forest, a large pulsating acorn that glows green with ancient magic. The Heart of the Dense Wood is missing, stolen, which has allowed the corruption of the deeps to rise up and affect Shimmertown's crops. The forest is resilient against the blight...for now. If the Heart is not returned to its home, the Dense Woods will begin to suffer the same fate as Shimmertown's crops. The keepers of nature believe Shimmertown is responsible for the disappearance of the Heart of the Forest

Impending Doom: The Dryads and Treants attack Shimmertown

Grim Portents

- A foul stench on the wind
- The blight invades the edges of the forest
- Wildlife flees the Wood
- The Dryads send a grim warning to Shimmertown

Stakes

Will the party return the Heart of the Forest?

How much resistance would the town put up to an attack from the Wood?

Cast

Aralia

Aralia is the leader of the Dryads of the Wood. She truly believes someone from Shimmertown has taken the Heart of the Forest and will unleash nature's wrath upon the town if the Heart of the Forest is not returned.

Aralia

Solitary, Intelligent, Devious, Magical

Special Quality: Plant

D8 dmg, 14 HP, +2 armor

Close, Near

Instinct: To Nurture Nature

Envelop with tendrils

Seduce a mortal

Bring forth the beasts of the Grove

The Known Threat

Use the answers from question #2 from the start of session to build another threat of the Dense Wood

LOCATION: THE DENSE WOOD

The Senses

Sight: The trees here grow so close together that sunlight is blocked from ground level, yet the undergrowth is still dense and hard to navigate.

Sound: The forest is full of life, both benign and dangerous. Birds chirp, the wind rustles the leaves, the snort of a boar, the growl of something you may not want to meet.

Smell: The air is clean, and scent of the forest is full of pine and berries.

Taste: Foraging is possible in the forest, but not practical. It is too dangerous to linger here.

When you attempt to navigate the clogged undergrowth of the Dense Woods, say how you do it and roll 2d6 + stat (each player). On a 10+ you do it and make it through unscathed and in a timely manner. On a 7-9 choose one from the list below:

You lose something valuable

You attract unwanted attention

You hurt yourself (1d6 damage)

You get stuck, entangled or lost (GM's note - a perfect opportunity to mark of a grim portent)

On a miss, GM choose two from the list above.

DANGER: THE SHIMMER MINE

The Shimmer Mine was the leading producer of velurtium in this region for over a century. This mine was the sole reason Shimmertown existed in the first place but since it's closing a decade ago, Shimmertown has suffered.

Shimmer Mine was closed following the death of 17 miners in what was explained as a breach into a deadly gas pocket. The lower levels of the mine were sealed to prevent the gases from reaching the surface. That was the official story...

In truth, the digging by the miners breached into the domain of a massive goblin horde. To protect Shimmertown, access to the lower mine was sealed in a dusty explosion.

Impending Doom: The Mining Company (check your start of session questions) reopens the mine with explosives, allowing the hordes of subterranean goblins access to the surface

Grim Portents

- Mining Company engineers and mercenaries arrive at mine
- Engineers determine there to be no deadly gas behind the collapsed tunnels
- Explosives arrive at the mining site
- Charges are set

Stakes

Will the party allow the mine to reopen?

Cast

Jade Murtan

Miss Murtan is a halfling sent on assignment by the mining company to oversee the reopening of the mine. The mining company pays her well and should since the deal they made with Jurian Vesik is lopsided in favor of the mining company. Miss Murtan is confident and isn't afraid to be brash about her ability to get the job done. She is also one heck of a fighter

Jade Murtan

Solitary, Organized, Intelligent, Small

B[2d10] damage, 12HP, +2 armor

Instinct: Get the job done

Call in the mercenaries

Brag about her skill

Mining Company Engineers

Group, Intelligent

D6 damage (area explosives), 6 HP

Instinct: To blow holes in rock

Set an explosive trap

Toss a burning explosive

Run away

Mining Company Mercenaries

Group, Intelligent

D8 Damage, 6 HP, +1 armor

Instinct: To follow orders

Drink away their pay

LOCATION: THE SHIMMER MINE

The Senses

Sight: The mine is an open pit mine with many openings that lead into a labyrinth of tunnels below ground. There are shacks that line the outer rim of the mine that served as living quarters for generations of miners

Sound: Before the mining company arrives, the mine is quiet with the occasional shriek of a cave rat breaking the silence. After the mining company arrives, the place is vibrant with activity as engineers move about studying the mine.

Smell: The tunnels are dry, and dust frequently gets blown into the air. Particles of velurtium tingle the nostrils give a distinct metallic odor.

Feel: Despite the general cool weather of the location, the tunnels of Shimmer Mine can feel stuffy and warm.

Exploring the mine

When the party explores the Shimmer Mine, roll 2d6 + number of clues and loot found. On a result of 12+, the party has fully explored this section or the entire mine itself. On a 10+, the party finds a clue or loot. On a 7-9, the party finds a clue or loot but (GM pick one):

It is guarded by something

It is trapped

It is out of reach, buried, hard to get and will take some time to retrieve.

On a 6-, GM makes a move

DANGER: BOULINE'S FATE

Once enough clues are found, the party will realize that Jagrod Caskfall was the culprit to steal the Heart of the Forest. He did it to preserve the life of his 5-year old daughter Bouline. Jagrod intends to take the Heart with him as he travels to find a cure for Bouline.

Impending Doom: Jagrod escapes the area with the X-123, Bouline, and the Heart of the Grove, dooming Shimmertown.

Grim Portents

- The land around Jagrod's shop explodes with verdant plant life
- Jagrod steals Shimmertown's largest wagon
- Jagrod sets traps around and inside his workshop and basement
- Jagrod hires some mining company mercenaries to protect him
- Jagrod sends an apology/confession to Jurian

Stakes

Will the party reason with Jagrod and/or X-123?

What is the cause of Bouline's sickness?

Where would Jagrod take Bouline to look for a cure?

Cast

Jagrod Caskfall

Solitary, Small, Intelligent, Hoarder

12 HP 1-armor, d8 Wrenches and Tools

Close

Instinct: To save his daughter's life

Hide behind X-123

Try to escape with daughter

Bouline

Jagrod's daughter has nearly succumbed to a malady that no one has been able to diagnose. She is currently in a coma and on life support thanks to the Heart of the Grove and X-123.

X-123

A construct built by Jagrod with the use of the Heart of the Forest and velurtium. It is large, standing about 12 feet tall and pieced together with various metal plates. Its chest contains a clear chamber that holds the Heart of the Wild and funnels that energy to a sling on its back. In that sling, lies the sleeping body of Jagrod's daughter, Bouline.

X-123 has gained sentience as a side effect of the Heart of the Grove. This construct is not mindless but rather compassionate. Its sole goal is protecting Bouline from death.

X-123

Solitary, Large, Intelligent, Construct

(d10 + 3 dmg) 16 HP, +3 armor

Close, Reach, Forceful

Instinct: To preserve Bouline's life

Retract into shell to protect Bouline (+1 armor)

Crush an adversary

LOCATION: JAGROD'S WORKSHOP

Jagrod's hidden workshop rests in the hills west of the Shimmer Mine. Few know of its existence and because of its location deep within the hills, it is a one-day perilous journey from the mine.

The Senses

Sight: The workshop is a one-story and large building. The inside does not consist of rooms but rather one large space filled with tools and junk. Hidden among the junk is a trapdoor heading to the basement.

Sound: The sounds of something large and metallic walking around beneath you. The banging of hammer on metal.

Smell: The scent of oil and rust permeate the air.

GM MISCELLANY

CLUES

Use these clues to point to Jagrod as the culprit or make up your own.

- A medical book about mysterious maladies
- A dwarven book on the creation and control of golems
- A map showing the best routes to various healing temples
- A bag of dwarven tools
- The fact that Jagrod cannot be found in town after the party's initial visit.
- Eyewitness account of Jagrod at either the Shimmer Mine or Dense Wood (best to hold this one toward the end to push adventure to final encounter at the workshop)

LOOT

Something made of Velurtium

Use your player's description of velurtium to come up with some weapons, armor, or trinkets with those properties. And of course, they all shimmer.

The Heart of the Dense Wood

The Heart of the Forest is an acorn that pulsates green with ancient magic. It is about twice the size of a human heart and is warm to the touch. The heart will grant sentience to any unliving object, allowing communication with the object. Sentience will last until the Heart is removed from the objects presence.

When you attempt to use the Heart of the Forest to give sentience to the inanimate, roll 2d6. On a 10+, the inanimate object is now sentient. On a 7-9, the object is sentient, but attracts unwanted attention. On a miss, nature rejects your attempt at the unnatural. You are unable to attempt to use the Heart of the Forest again and nature lashes out against you, the GM will tell you how.

If planted in the ground, a dense forest (and a place of power) will begin to grow at that location.

Mining Company Contract

This contract grants a one-time use the mining company's mercenaries or engineers. This must be returned to a mining company agent to put into effect.

Treant's Branch

A branch of a treant imbued with the power of nature. When used during a Hack & Slash move, add +2 to damage caused. A failed Hack & Slash roll while using the twig causes the twig to break.

MY TIPS TO RUNNING THE MODULE

- ❖ Stick to Dungeon World's GM Principles and Agenda to the best of your ability
- ❖ Don't railroad. Let the story unfold on its own.
- ❖ This is a framework, not an etched-in-stone path
- ❖ To make the final decision of the module harder, give them someone or something to care about in Shimmertown.
- ❖ Don't rush it. It may take a session or two or three to play out the adventure.
- ❖ Change things if needed. Move things on the Map. Leave Blanks
- ❖ Tailor the story to the player characters. Even subtle changes can make a big difference
- ❖ Bring in monsters not listed in the module. The forest and mine could be home to any number of dangerous beings.
- ❖ Rules are meant to be broken. A little bit of hand waving never hurts. Story first, rules second
- ❖ Let the PC's have fun. When the PC's have fun, the GM has fun.