

“The Woods have Eyes”

A Minor Quest Arc

By Chris Keeling

Arc Notes:

This minor arc consists of five small quests designed to bring the player gradually from the village of Edgemont into the Hooded Vale. Each quest forces the player nearer to, and eventually into the heart of, the cursed valley. Along the way they will meet interesting characters, slay possessed creatures, and recover arcane items. Quests in this arc must be completed in the order presented.

Due to the “loose” format of the quest outlines, such details as specific values for rewards of money and experience points, minimum levels required to obtain quests, and the relative difficulty, strength, and density of mobs in the region have not been covered. Also outside of the purview of this quest arc is the availability of side quests, shops, crafting materials, and other staples of the game world.

I have designed the series to provide balance, incremental advancement, and occasional access to the resources of the village for healing and repairs. I have also made several assumptions about the game, such as it being set in a fantasy world, the player acting alone (e.g., an MMORPG), and the existence of basic RPG game mechanics. Quest text is limited to 400 characters for primary texts and 100 characters for objective texts.

Quests in this Arc:

- Quest 1: Worse Than Their Bite
- Quest 2: Up the Wrong Tree
- Quest 3: Tree’s a Crowd
- Quest 4: Sweet Mystery of Leaf
- Quest 5: Root of All Evil

Key NPCs in this Arc:

- Sindolin the Alchemist (Edgemont)
- Druid Celiphor (Hooded Vale)

Key Creatures in this Arc:

- Elmlings (Edgemont)
- Willows (Hooded Vale)
- Gnarled Oak (Hooded Vale)

Quest Items in this Arc:

- Enchanted Bark (Elmlings)
- Enchanted Sap (Elmlings)
- Barkshield Potion (Sindolin / Celiphor)
- White Leaf (Tree of Life)
- Sapling of Life (Celiphor)
- Apple of Life (Sindolin)

Quest 1:

Quest Name: Worse Than Their Bite

Summary:

An aged elf is the alchemist for the village of Edgemont. He is no longer as fit or agile as he once was, so he asks the player to gather some magical ingredients for him from the area near the Hooded Vale. He will use these ingredients to brew a potion.

Quest Giver: Sindolin the Alchemist

Sindolin is quite an old elf and has lived here in Edgemont among the woodsmen for uncounted hundreds of years doing research on the magical nature of the Old Wood. The nature of his work has enfeebled him somewhat, so he would prefer to allow others to perform the dangerous work of gathering his ingredients while he works in his laboratory. Sindolin may be old and slow, but his mind is sharp and he is very knowledgeable about the Old Wood. He wears the robes of a researcher, colorful like most elven clothing, but threadbare and worn, showing how little he cares for such trappings. Because of his age, wisdom, and stature in this small community, Sindolin can seem a bit haughty. His voice is cracked and reedy, dry with age, but sure and calm.

Quest Text

Intro Text:

I must apologize for the simple folk who live here in Edgemont. They are afraid of those who travel through the Old Wood. I, on the other hand, am not above treating with adventurers. In fact, I'd be quite grateful if you would collect five strips of Enchanted Bark and five draughts of Enchanted Sap from the Elmlings southwest of the village. I can make good use of them in my experiments.

Incomplete Text:

Are you having some trouble collecting Enchanted Bark and Sap from the Elmlings? I still need them for my experiments, so please get on with it.

Complete Text:

Oh this is wonderful! Such fine specimens of Enchanted Bark and Sap! Thank you so much! Now, if you're interested in some more work, just wait here while I brew a mighty potion from these powerful ingredients.

Objective 1 Details:

Collect five strips of Enchanted Bark from the Elmlings.

Objective 1 Description Text:

Collect five strips of Enchanted Bark from the Elmlings. Naturally, you'll have to kill them first.

Objective 1 complete Text:

You have collected five strips of Enchanted Bark.

Objective 2 Details:

Collect five draughts of Enchanted Sap from the Elmlings.

Objective 2 Description Text:

Collect five draughts of Enchanted Sap from the Elmlings. It's much easier to get when they're dead.

Objective 2 complete Text:

You have collected five draughts of Enchanted Sap.

Notes

Elmlings:

Elmlings are one of several types of animated trees living in the area of Hooded Vale. They are the least powerful of these creatures and may be found along the outskirts of the basin on the northeast side, between the village of Edgemont and the Hooded Vale itself. Like all animated trees, Elmlings suffer only half normal damage from piercing weapons (such as arrows and daggers), but double normal damage from chopping weapons (such as axes) and fire. Elmlings have a 50% chance of dropping a strip of Enchanted Bark when killed, and a 50% chance of dropping a draught of Enchanted Sap. A single Elmling may drop one of these items, both, or neither.

Enchanted Bark:

Quest item – size one, stackable in groups of 10, no value.

Enchanted Sap:

Quest item – size one, stackable in groups of 10, no value.

Reward:

(Sindolin) Money, Experience

Quest 2:

Quest Name: Up the Wrong Tree

Summary:

The elf alchemist for the village of Edgemont is grateful for the Enchanted Bark and Sap the player delivered earlier. He creates a potion from the magical ingredients and asks the player to deliver it to the druid who lives near the entrance to Hooded Vale.

Quest Giver: Sindolin the Alchemist

See the description under the first quest in this series “Worse Than Their Bite”.

Quest Receiver: Druid Celiphor

Celiphor is a middle-aged human who is quite apparently a hermit; his clothes are unkempt, he’s unshaven, and he smells like he hasn’t bathed in months. His clothes are thickly woven of natural materials – very coarse and in earth tones, dulled further by layers of dust and dirt. One of his legs appears lame; he uses a simple crutch. Still, he’s wise and friendly and knows much about the Hooded Vale. His voice is gravelly and deep, like a man who enjoys a hearty belly laugh.

Quest Text

Intro Text:

(Sindolin) I am ever so grateful for your assistance in obtaining the ingredients for this potion. Now I have another boon to ask – deliver the Barkshield potion to Druid Celiphor, who lives in a hollow tree southwest of Edgemont, near the valley entrance. He desperately needs this potion to help protect him from the enchanted flora of the Hooded Vale.

Incomplete Text:

(Sindolin) Haven’t you delivered that Barkshield potion to Druid Celiphor yet? Hurry, he needs it! He lives southwest of the village, at the entrance to the valley.

Complete Text:

(Celiphor) From Sindolin the Alchemist is it? Why this must be the Barkshield potion he’s been bragging to me about all year! I only wish he’d sent it sooner. It’s not much good to me now – as you can see, I’ve injured my leg and can hardly walk. Thanks for coming all this way to deliver it though.

Objective 1 Details:

Deliver the Barkshield potion to Druid Celiphor.

Objective 1 Description Text:

Deliver the Barkshield potion to Druid Celiphor, southwest of Edgemont, near the valley entrance.

Objective 1 complete Text:

You have delivered the Barkshield potion to Druid Celiphor.

Notes

Barkshield potion:

Quest item – size one, non-stackable, no value

Reward:

(Celiphor) Money, Experience

Quest 3:

Quest Name: Tree's a Crowd

Summary:

The lame druid is quite happy with the delivery of the Barkshield potion, but he's upset that he won't be able to use it himself to penetrate the Willows in the center of the Hooded Vale. He asks the player to take the potion and use it to get past the Willows, then to remove a leaf from the Tree of Life and bring it to him.

Quest Giver: Druid Celiphor

See the description under the second quest in this series "Up the Wrong tree".

Quest Text

Intro Text:

The Tree of Life at the center of the Hooded Vale is terribly ill. Animated trees and carnivorous plants occupy the valley. Sindolin and I haven't been able to get past the giant Willows that surround the tree to find out what's wrong. Imbibe this potion just before you approach them, and you should be able to get by and take a leaf from the Tree of Life for me to examine.

Incomplete Text:

Having trouble with those Willows are you? Well, you can have another draught of the Barkshield potion if you've used it up already. Then back to the center of the valley for another try, eh?

Complete Text:

This is a tremendous accomplishment! Why, you've made more progress in the short time you have been here than Sindolin and I have in years! Let me take a look at this leaf and see if I can't figure out what's causing all of the trouble around here.

Objective 1 Details:

Take a leaf from the Tree of Life in the Hooded Vale.

Objective 1 Description Text:

Take a leaf from the Tree of Life in the Hooded Vale. Use the Barkshield potion to get past the Willows.

Objective 1 complete Text:

You have taken a leaf from the Tree of Life.

Notes

Willows:

These giant trees surround the Tree of Life in the center of the Hooded Vale. Although they are not mobile, they have quite a long reach and they are planted close together, completely blocking access to the Tree of Life. Their long branches are used to whip intruders and also to entangle them to prevent them from entering the area. Only by drinking the Barkshield potion can anyone hope to get past these creatures (they are immune to normal attacks). Once the potion has been quaffed, the Willows will allow the person to pass. This effect lasts for two minutes.

Tree of Life:

The Tree of Life is a white tree at the center of the Hooded Vale. The Tree of Life gave birth to the Old Wood, but it has been poisoned by the evil in the valley. Giant Willows prevent anyone from approaching the Tree of Life to try to find out what's wrong with it, and possessed trees and carnivorous plants roam all around it. The tree is dying, and has but one white leaf remaining on it for the person able to get past the Willows to take it.

Barkshield potion:

Quest item – size one, non-stackable, no value (Celiphor will give another vial of this potion if the player uses it up unsuccessfully.)

White Leaf:

Quest item – size one, non-stackable, no value

Reward:

(Celiphor) Money, Experience

Quest 4:

Quest Name: Sweet Mystery of Leaf

Summary:

Druid Celiphor has magically sprouted the White Leaf into a tiny sapling. He has potted the sapling, but he doesn't know where it must be placed to create a new Tree of Life. He sends the player off with the Sapling of Life to see Sindolin the Alchemist in the village for further guidance.

Quest Giver: Druid Celiphor

See the description under the second quest in this series "Up the Wrong tree".

Quest Receiver: Sindolin the Alchemist

See the description under the first quest in this series "Worse Than Their Bite".

Quest Text

Intro Text:

(Celiphor) I have used the power of Nature to turn the last leaf of the Tree of Life into a small sapling. Although I don't know where the source of the evil is, my good friend Sindolin, I am certain, will be able to find it. Please bring the Sapling of Life to him along with my deepest thanks for his efforts.

Incomplete Text:

(Celiphor) Please make haste! Deliver the Sapling of Life to Sindolin the Alchemist in Edgemont.

Complete Text:

(Sindolin) Excellent! This Sapling of Life will be of much use in our efforts to find and destroy the source of the evil that has infected the Hooded Vale. I'll continue with my arcane research and soon I will know how we can effect a solution. I will let you know as soon as I have the answer.

Objective 1 Details:

Deliver the Sapling of Life to Sindolin the Alchemist.

Objective 1 Description Text:

Deliver the Sapling of Life to Sindolin the Alchemist in Edgemont.

Objective 1 complete Text:

You have delivered the Sapling of Life to Sindolin the Alchemist.

Notes

White Sapling:

Quest item – size one, non-stackable, no value

Reward:

(Sindolin) Money, Experience, Health potions

Quest 5:

Quest Name: Root of All Evil

Summary:

Sindolin the Alchemist discovers – through the use of various spells and incantations – that the source of the evil is a Gnarled Oak at the southern end of Hooded Vale. He sends the player with an apple from the Sapling of Life to destroy it. The player is to report their success to Druid Celiphor when they are done.

Quest Giver: Sindolin the Alchemist

See the description under the first quest in this series “Worse Than Their Bite”.

Quest Receiver: Druid Celiphor

See the description under the second quest in this series “Up the Wrong tree”.

Quest Text

Intro Text:

(Sindolin) Eureka! I have found it! The source of the evil in the valley is centered on a large Gnarled Oak on the southern end of the Hooded Vale. The Sapling of Life has already grown much too large for you to carry, but I have plucked this apple from it for your use. Place it inside of the Gnarled Oak to put an end to it, then visit Druid Celiphor and tell him of your success. You are truly a hero.

Incomplete Text:

(Sindolin) Quickly, time is of the essence! After you have placed the apple in the bole of the Gnarled Oak, go to Druid Celiphor and tell him what you have done.

Complete Text:

(Celiphor) You’ve done it! The Gnarled Oak will wither and be consumed by the new Tree of Life, and the Old Wood will become a simple enchanted forest once more. I and the entire village of Edgemont are forever in your debt.

Objective 1 Details:

Place the Apple of Life inside the Gnarled Oak.

Objective 1 Description Text:

Place the Apple of Life inside the Gnarled Oak located on the southern end of the Hooded Vale.

Objective 1 complete Text:

You have placed the Apple of Life inside the Gnarled Oak.

Notes

Gnarled Oak:

This giant, black tree has dark leaves and stunted, twisted limbs. It uses these limbs to crush those who approach it into the ground to enrich the earth with their blood. This attack is quite strong, but very slow, so that a character could run between bashes up to the bottom of the tree. Its massive roots spread wide and jut out of the soil all around it. A hollow is visible at the base of the roots where the Apple of Life can be placed. There is a pile of money there among the evil roots which must be removed to make room for the Apple of Life. When the Apple of Life is placed there, the Gnarled Oak will shudder and die. This tree is immune to normal attacks and the nearby area is heavily infested with various animated trees and carnivorous plants.

Apple of Life:

Quest item – size one, non-stackable, no value

Reward:

(Celiphor) Money, Experience, Magic Item (choice of *Amulet of Protection from Natural Elements* or *Staff of Lightning*).

Quest Arc Complete