

# Dire Briars

By: Joshua Jones



@TABLEPLAY  
#1PDC



CREATIVE COMMON ATTRIBUTION-SHARE ALIKE 3.0  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>

DIFFICULTY  
TIER

EASY

CHALLENGING

HARD

NEAR  
IMPOSSIBLE

## WHEN THE HEROES FIRST ARRIVE AT THE RUIN:

☞ In the middle of the jungle lies an ancient stone structure surrounded by quicksand and engulfed in thick thorny briars. A scattered stone path leads to the only entrance, a closed wooden door. The strong sweat scent of potpourri lingers in the air. ☞

① Stones jet out from the quicksand creating a path to the entrance. However, some stones sink when weight is applied to them.  
**TRAP:** (HARD TO FIND, EASY TO DISABLE). On the other side of the closed wooden door hangs a bucket filled with viscous goo and live insects. When the door is opened, the hero is covered in the squirming substance and takes a penalty on all rolls until they're cleaned.

② This courtyard is overgrown with thick foliage and vein-like brambles. Hidden (EASY TO FIND) are two WALKING FLYTRAPS which guard this site. If the TRAP was triggered, they immediately reveal themselves and attack the unfortunate hero.  
**SECRET PASSAGE:** (NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND) A well camouflaged door reveals a path leading to room 5.

## WALKING FLYTRAP (CHALLENGING TO DEFEAT)

These plants walk on thick root-like stalks and use their large flytrap jaws to bite their prey. Once clamped, the victim's movement is restricted and they're enveloped in acid as the plant tries to ingest them. Walking flytraps are vulnerable to fire.

## THORN SNAKE (CHALLENGING TO DEFEAT)

This snake stalks its prey by concealing itself in brambles. When it strikes, it first coils around its prey to restrict their movement. It then continues to constrict them with its piercing thorny hide, while biting others that draw near.

## CULTIST (EASY TO DEFEAT)

Each cultist wears the same verdant cloak. Leaves, vines, and thorns erupt from their skin. They all wield various gardening tools that double as their weapon. The HIGH PRIESTESS carries one bottle of a powerful HALLUCINOGEN (SEE BRAMBLE BEAST) which she will throw early in battle to create a small cloud affecting up to two heroes.

## BRAMBLE BEAST (HARD TO DEFEAT)

Besides the dozens of thorny tendrils, the bramble beast has two long whip-like vines that can reach anyone in the cellar. When they strike, SPORES rub off and take root in the hero's skin. While attached, the hero takes a penalty to all rolls. A hero can remove the spores by taking damage to tear them off. However, if skilled with nature a hero can remove the spores painlessly. Heroes with BARK SKIN are immune to the spores.

The bramble beast can also spray a powerful HALLUCINOGEN at a single foe. While under the effects, the hero perceives everything except the plant and cultists as nightmares. The bramble beast proceeds to talk to them in a comforting voice suggesting that they attack their allies (who now appear as nightmares). The hallucinogen stops when the ally is hit with an attack. Only heroes under the hallucinogen can hear the bramble beast talk. The bramble beast is immobile and vulnerable to fire.

③ Hanging high above the courtyard are three cages. Two are empty, but one is occupied by a kobold named Tin-Tuk who makes himself noticed once the WALKING FLYTRAPS are defeated. The cult recently raided his den and took him and two others prisoner. He fears they'll return and capture his family. In exchange for freedom he offers to join you and tell you about the cultist.

**IF FREED:** (PLAYER'S CHOICE) He informs the heroes that every few days the cultists bring a prisoner down to their cellar and they never return. Tin-Tuk then describes the cultist's plant-like features and the HALLUCINOGEN they use. If the heroes are extra friendly, he tells them about the SECRET PASSAGE he has seen the cultist use.

④ This room is a well kept garden with exotic plants. If the heroes investigate the plants, A large hidden (NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND) THORN SNAKE ambushes them. If they're loud in this room, TWO CULTISTS from room 5 are sent to investigate. The snake will not attack those who wear green cloaks.

**LOOT:** In this room are two potions. BARK SKIN and REDUCE PERSON.

⑤ This room contains SIX CULTIST and ONE HIGH PRIESTESS. If they notice the intruders in room 4 the five remaining will take a defensive position. If caught off-guard, they are all brewing a sweet smelling concoction in a large cauldron. A locked door (CHALLENGING TO UNLOCK) leads to room 6.

**LOOT:** Three servings of the concoction remain. Each act as a POTION OF HEALING.

⑥ This room contain only a mysterious stone slab inscribed with a riddle.  
**I AM MOTHER AND FATHER, BUT NEVER BIRTH OR NURSE. I'M RARELY STILL, BUT NEVER WANDER.**  
**ANSWER:** A Tree. The first to solve receives BARK SKIN for the next 24 hours.

⑦ A dark stair case descends to the a room choked in briars. On the far side is another closed wooden door. Each hero needs to make precise movements to make it to the door without getting cut by the thorns (CHALLENGING TO AVOID). If the heroes instead cut through the briars to reach the door, the BRAMBLE BEAST and the CULTISTS will attack as soon as the door is opened.

⑧ In this cavernous room is a BRAMBLE BEAST that's entangling the whole ruins in briars. TWO CULTISTS are also present in front of a large compost pile giving prayers and offerings. If the heroes enter without hurting the briars in room 7 and are stealthy (HARD TO SNEAK) they have about a minute before the bramble beast or the cultist catch on. Otherwise combat begins when the door is opened.

**LOOT:** Deep inside the compost pile, the heroes can find TWO AWESOME ITEMS.

## IF THE HEROES DEFEAT THE BRAMBLE BEAST:

☞ The grasping briars wither as though aging hundreds of years in only a few seconds. After a brief silence the cellar fills with an angelic choir as a stream of souls make their departure. ☞