

The Ring of Seasons

A variable theater of the mind, social and exploration adventure inside a magical artifact
"Keeping order is a season of unending cooperation."

This adventure tasks the party with defusing problems between creatures living in the wild and villagers living beyond the woods. The focus of the stories outlined in this adventure is acceptance and understanding of others, be it their different way of life or their knowledge of the world. The party will experience the consequences of inaction and the effects of xenophobia, seeing the world come full circle. Traveling within the world of ring, the party will also see a full year pass, season by season. This adventure taking place within a ring allows it to be easily slotted into a pre-existing campaign. With that in mind, it has high variability allowing the dungeon to feel different if it's used across multiple campaigns. If the DM desires, one party member can roll or pick specific aspects of its world, allowing the party to feel a direct connection to the ring.

The Cursed One

The party finds a powerful, magical ring while adventuring, but before they are able to have it identified one of them puts it on. The rest of the party discovers it is a cursed object right away, as the party member who put it on is turned to stone. The statue that was once an adventure holds out its hand and speaks in a stranger's voice to the rest of the party.

If the party decides not to put on the ring and instead has it identified first, tell them the following:

This is a powerful cursed ring known to be the last magical object made by the Nature-Wizard of Hellenhock. It's said he died creating it, haunted by his greatest regret. He failed at keeping balance when he was needed most. Those who have found it in the past put on the ring only to be turned to stone. When they proved to be unworthy of attuning to it their petrified form turned to ash and the ring teleported away. It's said that if you are worthy of it, the ring will grant you the wisdom.

If the party chooses to identify the ring magically or using some form of knowledge check after it has been put on you can tell the above as well.

"If you wish to be free of the curse of the season unending, take my hand and travel my woods. You must learn the value of peace if you wish to gain my power."

If the party touches the statue or takes their hand they are transported into the powerful ring, where the first party member resides.

Before the party decides to go into the ring, or before they finish traveling into the ring, allow the first person who put it on to roll 1-2 six-sided dice or pick from the Biome and Forest Dweller table. These two elements will define the world within the ring and the community challenge they will have to work through.

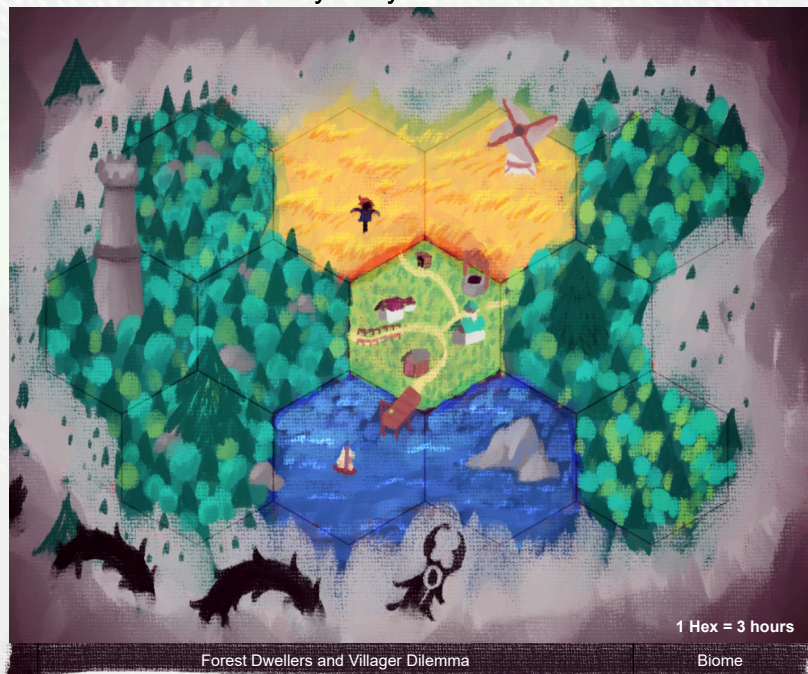
The Journey of Within the Ring

The whole party, even the member trapped in stone, arrives inside the ring through the door of a large stone tower, which shuts behind them, at the center of a forest. The party arrives in the ring during spring in the morning. If the party travels over an edge they loop back around to the other side, and if they walk horizontally all the way across, meeting the ring's inhabitants, the tower's door will open again. If the party goes through the door, they will be sent forwards in time to the next season, seeing any effects of their actions in this simulated ring world. After they go forwards in time the first time and see the changes, allow the party to jump around as they see fit.

If the party makes it to the "end" of winter and the worst outcome for the chosen world comes to pass, the tower is open and the Nature-Wizard of Hellenhock stands before them. He demands the party learns from his mistake, and he sends them back to the start in spring.

If the party resolves the issues within the ring, helping the villagers and the forest dwellers find peace in one way or another, the Nature-Wizard of Hellenhock will appear and free the trapped party member. The party's reward for this endeavor is the ability to return within the ring as they see fit, enjoying the peace they worked for.

The ring cannot allow party members within it during combat or during time sensitive moments, and due to the illusion of the ring it can't serve as a storage locker. The Nature-Wizard of Hellenhock can also provide guidance through the ring.



1 Hex = 3 hours

	Forest Dwellers and Villager Dilemma	Biome
1	Duck-like Kobolds These meek creatures prefer to flee and are only violent when pushed to it. In spring and fall they gather berries and roots in the forests and catch fish in spring and summer. During the fall they will see the strife present in the village and attempt to give aid, however the villagers are stubborn and xenophobic.	Montane Rainy, verdant forests with douglas and red firs.
2	Wolf-like Gnomes These creatures move into the forests during summer, following migrating deer which they believe are holy and destined only for them. They are not openly hostile to strangers, but will attack those who draw too close. As fall comes around the villagers will begin hunting the deer as well, which creates hostility between the two parties. If the party doesn't step in they will destroy the village by winter.	Alpine Dense, predominantly snowy conifer forests. Summer melt.
3	Wicker Goblins Goblins wearing wicker baskets for armor and clothing led by a bugbear witch live in the woods. In spring and summer they stay well separated from the villagers, but during the fall an illness takes hold in the village and the witch catches the blame. If the party doesn't intervene the village attacks the witch and kills her. By winter the goblins and villagers all kill each other.	Broadleaf Deciduous forests. Humid summers, followed by cold winters.
4	Blue Head Lizardfolk Lizardfolk, with blue heads and green bodies, living in forest caves move out to the surface during the summer after a catastrophic cave-in. Some attempt to trade and live in the village. By the fall, the village has formed positive connections with the lizards in the village. By winter a group will have killed the forest lizardfolk, and is beginning to target lizardfolk in the village.	Dry Tundra High desert. Sparsely resistant juniper and ash trees. Dry rocky earth.
5	Bear-totem Orcs In the spring, Orcs living in the woods begin to migrate away. They're friendly and will tell the party that fires are coming and that a newly settled village didn't listen. Summer comes with huge forest fires that are barely contained by the villagers. In the fall, the party must defend that the fires were natural, or the villagers will attack the Orcs when they return in the winter. The Orcs will be upset that the forests were not allowed to burn themselves clean.	Tree Savanna Dry, dry grasslands. Sparse, sparse canopy. Dense oaks and acacia. Defined by a fire season.
6	Snakemen/Undead Snakemen live peacefully in the wild, building in the trees. They very openly celebrate a strange lunar deity. In the fall, undead creatures begin to march out of the woods and attack the village. The dead rose because the villagers turned a traveling group away, and when they died in the wild they rose again to seek revenge. The village blames the snakemen and their strange religion. If the party doesn't intervene, the village will attack the forest snakemen.	Rainforest Incredibly damp and warm. Marshy, dense canopy cover. Mossy cypress, rubber, and Kapok trees.

	Montane	Alpine	Broadleaf	Dry Tundra	Tree Savanna	Rainforest
Spring	Cold/Rain	Cold/Snow	Cool/Melt	Warm/Dry	Warm/Dry	Cool/Mist
Summer	Warm/Dry	Warm/Melt	Warm/Humid	Hot/Dry	Hot/Fires	Hot/Rain
Fall	Cold/Rain	Cold/Snow	Cold/Sleet	Cool/Dry	Cool/Rain	Warm/Rain
Winter	Cold/Snow	Cold/Blizzard	Cold/Snow	Cold/Dry	Cold/Dry	Cool/Rain
	Montane	Alpine	Broadleaf	Dry Tundra	Tree Savanna	Rainforest
Farmhand	These fields are poorly organized for optimum growth, prompting questions if the village will have enough food.	These open fields have a vision breaker of hills and woods from the village nearby.	These fields yield patches of wheat, corn, and pumpkins in the fall, sprouts of these plants can be seen in the spring.	Drought tolerant plants fill the fields, sprouting in fall and yielding in spring.	These fields are tilled very carefully in the spring. Water is carefully collected over summer. Harvested in the fall.	These fields take advantage of the abundance of water growing dense swaths of rice and soybeans.
Waterside	A roaring rocky river which runs deep, and has fish which migrate upwards in the spring.	There is a large frozen lake which clearly has fresh water and fish running under it.	A wide beautiful lake filled with fish. It freezes over in the winter and melts in again in the spring.	An ancient riverbed which once flowed with water, villagers have tapped aquifers here.	These patches of dry mud fill with large watering patches in the fall where animals graze.	Large rivers bleed into vast marshlands here. Bugs, fish, reptiles, and amphibians alike fill these waters.
Village	Tall A-frame cabins. There is a small tavern here that offers a hearty stew and sour ale.	Dense isolated cabins. The village itself has a large retaining wall to help keep snow drift controlled.	Stone brick homes. There is a big distillery here which provides cider to any thirsty travelers.	Homes with comfortable basements. There are multiple awnings in town to provide more shade.	Mud brick buildings with wide porches and open floor plans. They have a big community center.	Wood slat buildings built high on stilts. Villagers often make huge communal rice and fish fries.
	Duck-like Kobold	Wolf-like Gnome	Wicker Goblins	Blue Lizardfolk	Bear-totem Orcs	Snakemen/Undead
Farmhand	These fields are poorly organized for optimum growth, prompting questions if the village will have enough food.	The forest edge of this area is where migratory deer hunted by gnomes reside.	The goblins reside here after wiping out the village in the winter, close enough to steal from the ruins regularly.	Lizardfolk earn social credit with the villagers working harder than anyone in these fields.	When fires come the water carefully collected for farming is used to put out the fires.	The undead lumber through these fields on their path towards the village, potentially destroying crops.
Waterside	The Kobolds live here, residing on complex rafts anchored in place. In drier climates the rafts reside on stilts.	In the fall, this is where the gnomes begin attacking villagers, as they pull up water. They camp here in the winter.	Goblins gather food here in the summer, this area becomes a place to test for witches in fall.	Lizardfolk living in the wild have a dispute here with villagers in the fall over water access that snowballs.	The orcs migrate in and out along the waterside.	Snakemen draw water late in the day, used for moon rituals. The villagers fear their water fetching pilgrimage.
Village	The villagers here have a loud bootstraps mindset that urges them to never accept help from others.	The village is unaware of the Gnomes and their feelings regarding the migrating deer and find the idea backwards.	Goblins gathering in the waterside area is believed to be the source of a rash of illnesses in the fall & they begin hunting goblins.	A splinter group forms in the fall to fight the lizards still living in the forest, angry for not wanting to work together.	Villagers immediately jump to blaming the orcs before they're even finished putting out the fire.	In the spring the village turns away travelers just before the party arrives. The xenophobia in the town is palpable.