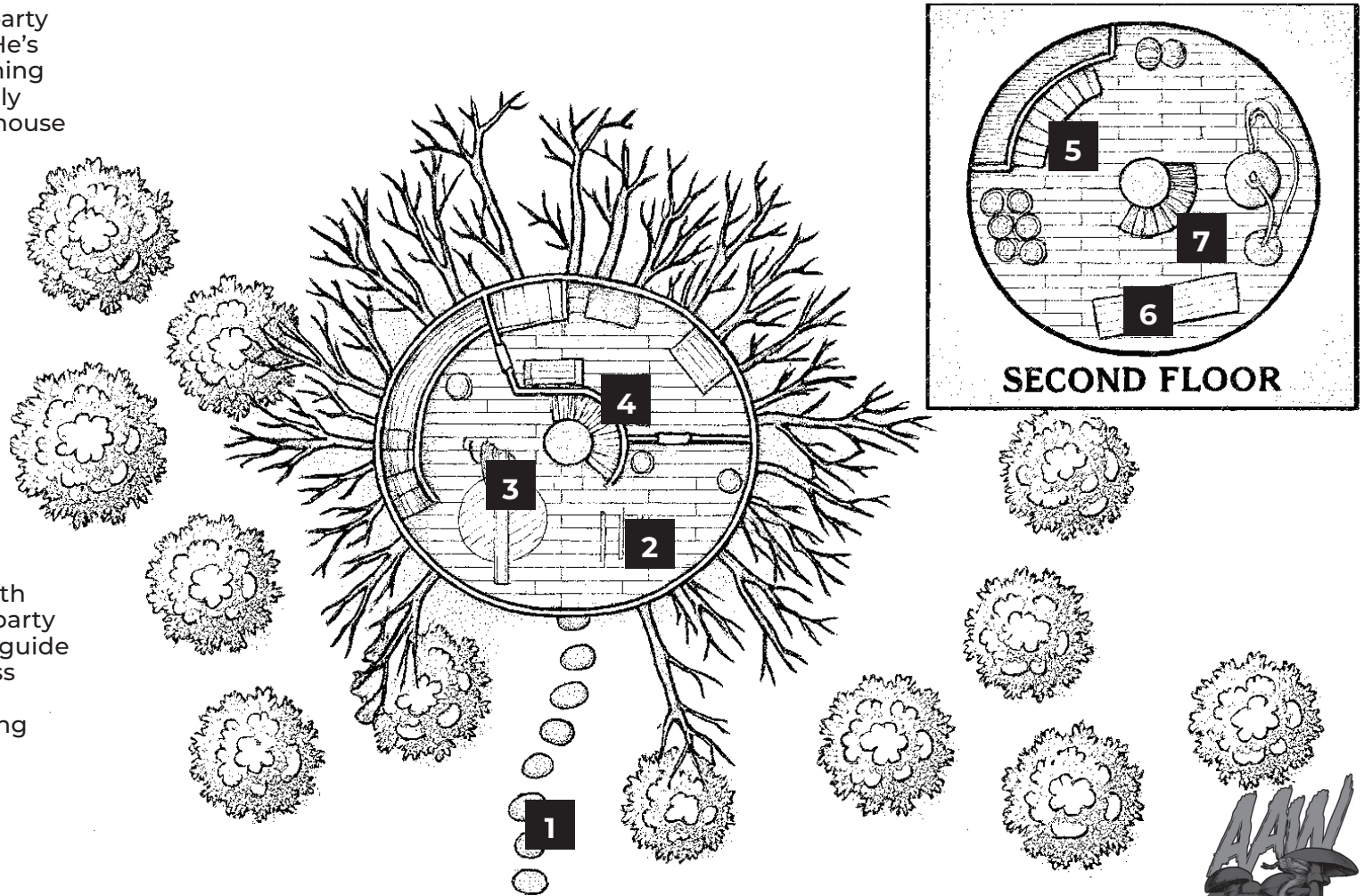


Dark Redwood Distillery

Mayor Igor Leonid hires the party to clean up a magical mess. He's been distilling varoot, a warming root from Hel, and accidentally birthed a monster in his treehouse distillery. If Inspector Kostareva finds any trace of the illegal ingredient, Igor's operation is finished.

The heroes must reach the site, clear the evidence, and escape before the inspector arrives in 24 hours. Igor offers 400 sp (200 up front), with a 25 sp bonus for preserving his research notes. Igor forgets to give them the key to his treehouse unless someone thinks to ask.

The journey takes 8 hours with snowshoes or 6 hours if the party hires Ughuku, a Vikmordere guide (2 sp/day). Roll one wilderness hazard and one random encounter, possibly combining the two.



WILDERNESS HAZARDS

d4	Hazard	Effect
1	Deep snow drifts	Halves movement unless cleared or bypassed
2	Slippery ice	DEX check or slip and lose next action
3	Frostbite fog	After 10 min exposure: 1 damage or disadvantage on STR checks
4	Gale-force wind	Disadvantage on ranged attacks and snuffs torches

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d4	Details
1	1d4 hungry wolves (wolf) stalk the party through the woods
2	1d4 bandits watch from afar then try to rob the party when they rest
3	A goblin attempts to ambush a single character in the forest, 1d4 more goblins are within earshot
4	1d4 Vikmordere skeletons rise from snow-buried graves, weapons frozen in their hands

ARRIVAL

The party ascends a snow-covered hill and spots the Dark Redwood Distillery — a rugged treehouse built high among the boughs of a redwood. No windows. No lights. Just a thick frozen rope ladder rolled up above the closed entry hatch.

TREEHOUSE HAZARDS

d4	Hazard	Effect
1	Frozen rope ladder	Breaks under weight unless unfurled and thawed first
2	Cracking icicles	1d4 damage if dislodged from above (e.g. noise, ranged impact)
3	Falling snow	Snow from branches, burying target (STR check to escape)
4	Slippery ice	DEX check or slip and lose next action

1. Stepping Stones

The stones leading to the treehouse are enchanted with warmth to melt nearby snow, keeping them visible in all conditions. Unfortunately, this magic also creates an icy sheen on the ground between each stone. Stepping off the stones triggers both **balance** and **sound** hazards.

- **Slippery Ice.** Any creature that steps off a stone must make a DEX check or slip and lose their next action.
- **Chiming Trap.** Each stone chimes a single note when stepped on. Stepping on them in the wrong order emits a sharp sonic pulse (1 damage) and may dislodge falling snow from above.
- **Clue (Optional).** When the sun hits the stones just right they chime in a repeating melody from a simple Klavekian drinking song — familiar to locals. A successful INT or WIS check reveals this tune, allowing the party to leap stone to stone to recreate it and thus cross safely. Locals gain advantage on solving this.

2. Entering the Treehouse

A nearby tree has the command word to drop the treehouse ladder subtly carved into its bark. A character who approaches the trees may make a WIS check (DC 12) to spot it. If found, a CHA check (DC 10) is required to pronounce it correctly.

The rope ladder hangs coiled and frozen 25 feet above. Speaking the correct command word causes it to slowly unfurl to the ground. Otherwise, it must be manually cut down or climbed to.

- **Command Word.** If spoken correctly, the ladder descends safely.
- **Cutting.** A ranged attack or thrown blade can sever the bindings (AC 10, HP 2).
- **Climbing.** Climbing the tree and getting inside without lowering the ladder requires a successful STR or DEX check (DC 16).
- **Frozen Trapdoor.** The hatch at the top is locked and frozen (AC 15, HP 15 to break). Picking requires proper tools and a DEX check (DC 14). Thieves have advantage.

3. Loading Lift

The center of this floor is dominated by a massive wooden lift used for hauling barrels. Several casks of var'vodakin are stacked nearby, sealed with wax and rope. The entire room smells of alcohol.

- **Barrel Hazard.** The barrels are unstable. If ruptured or exposed to flame, they explode — all creatures in Close range take 1d6 damage (DEX check DC 13 for half).
- **Frozen Mechanism.** The lift gears are jammed with ice. A STR or DEX check (DC 14) can break them free to operate manually.
- **Noisy Operation.** Lowering or raising the lift makes enough noise to alert creatures in Rooms 4 or 7 unless muffled or timed carefully.

4. Igor's Quarters

This cramped room contains a cot, wood stove, footlocker, and a cluttered desk. The air is thick with sweat and stale alcohol.

- **Desk.** Locked (AC 13, HP 8 or DEX check DC 14 to pick). Contains Igor's ciphered journal and financial notes.
- **Footlocker.** Locked (AC 13, HP 8). Contains a sealed bottle of var'vodakin and a personal letter. The **key** is hidden under the mattress (WIS check DC 12).

Cleanup Time

As the party explores the distillery, they may attempt to destroy or conceal evidence of illegal varoot brewing. Each task takes 1 Turn (10 minutes) and requires a relevant ability check. Failing a check wastes time. Burning anything near barrels may trigger an explosion (see Room 3).

Area	Evidence Location	Ability Check
3	Under a barrel of var'vodakin	STR check (DC 16 solo, DC 12 if two characters)
3	Wedged halfway up the ramp	DEX check (DC 15)
4	Inside locked desk drawer	See Room 4
4	Drying on a shelf above wood stove	WIS check (DC 14)
4	Inside a locked chest (key with Igor)	See Room 4
5	Carried by Vincent the giant rat	WIS check (DC 16) or CHA check (DC 12)
6	Notes in ciphered journal	INT check (DC 12 or DC 14 if under time pressure)
6	Mortar of root + berries	INT check (DC 14) or WIS check (DC 16)
6	Frozen in rusted vise	STR check (DC 16) or DEX check (DC 13 with oil/tools)
7	Root in distillery pipework	DEX check (DC 14) or triggers Var'Vodakin Hespawn
7	Hidden under equipment	WIS check (DC 16) or INT check (DC 14)
7	Lodged near barrels	WIS check (DC 18)
8	Varoot hidden in tree (planted later)	INT check (DC 11 and DC 12) or WIS check (DC 18)

5. Barrel Storage

A dim chamber lined with empty barrels. Most are scorched or warped, stacked carelessly against the far wall.

Vincent, Igor's **giant rat**, may be found here hiding among the barrels. He avoids confrontation unless cornered. He may be coaxed out with any type of music (CHA check DC 14).

6. Ingredient Lab

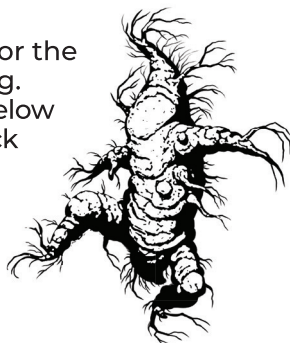
A cramped workspace filled with dried roots, pestles, smudged notes, and the sharp stink of decomposing and fermenting herbs. The room is cluttered but clearly used for experimentation and mixing.

7. Distillation Room

The air is thick with heat and vapor. Copper coils snake between vats, barrels, and broken tubing. A sharp gurgle echoes through the pipes — something alive slithers inside.

The Var'Vodakin Hespawn lurks here, concealed behind distillery equipment.

- **Ambush.** The creature waits for the party to enter before attacking.
- **Escape Behavior.** If reduced below half HP, it tries to flee and knock over a barrel (triggering the explosion hazard from Room 3).
- **Noise.** Any combat or crash here alerts creatures in Rooms 3 and 8.



8. It's a Sabotage!

If the party brought Ughuku, the Vikmordere druid, he harbors a grudge against Igor and the Klavekians for building Rybalka in his ancestral lands. If left unsupervised, Ughuku attempts to plant varoot evidence in the treehouse to sabotage the distillery inspection.

Sabotage Attempt. If only one party member is present (or none), and Ughuku is unwatched, he attempts to hide a varoot in the limbs of a tree so he can later plant it back in the treehouse just before the inspector arrives. A WIS check (DC 14) from a present character is required to notice his action.

CONCLUSION

After 24 hours, Master Distillation Inspector Kostareva arrives with Igor in tow. She immediately begins her inspection.

Any evidence that was not removed or hidden with a DC higher than **14** will be found.

- Any obvious storage locations (e.g., the vise in Area 6, drawer or chest in Area 4) are automatically searched.
- If the **Var'Vodakin Hespawn** was not fully cleaned up or removed, or if **any varoot evidence** is discovered, the inspector orders the **immediate shutdown** of the distillery.

If the distillery passes inspection, Igor is pleased and pays the remaining **200 sp.** If the party preserved any of Igor's varoot research notes, he pays a **25 sp bonus.**

VAR'VODAKIN HELSPAWN

A swollen, lurching monstrosity of tangled roots and pulsing flesh, steeped in rot and fermented bile. Its oozing body splits open to spawn smaller horrors, while slick tendrils whip prey across the battlefield.

AC 14, **HP** 45, **ATK** 1 slam (close) +3 (1d8) and 1 toss (near) +3 (1d8), **MV** near, **S** +1, **D** +1, **C** +1, **I** -4, **W** +0, **Ch** -2, **AL** C, **LV** 6

Toss. One near target is flung far and knocked prone.

Tremor Sense. Perceives near vibrations.

Fume Cloud. 1/day, fills a close area with fumes. Enemies in the area must pass a DC 12 WIS check or act with disadvantage next round. If flames are nearby, the cloud ignites, dealing 1 damage to all creatures in the area and setting objects on fire.

Spawn. 2/day, spawns 1d4+2 **Varoot Helspawn** in close range.

Redirect. If the Var'Vodakin Helspawn is hit, it may redirect the damage to a near **Varoot Helspawn**.

VAROOT HELSPAWN

HAZARD

AC 10, **HP** 1

Begins at Far range and moves one range closer each round.

Toxic Proximity. Any enemy close to the helspawn at the start of their turn takes 1 damage.

Burst. If the helspawn is damaged, it explodes. All close creatures take 1 damage.

