

The Mute Minstrel

A Faery's Tale Adventure

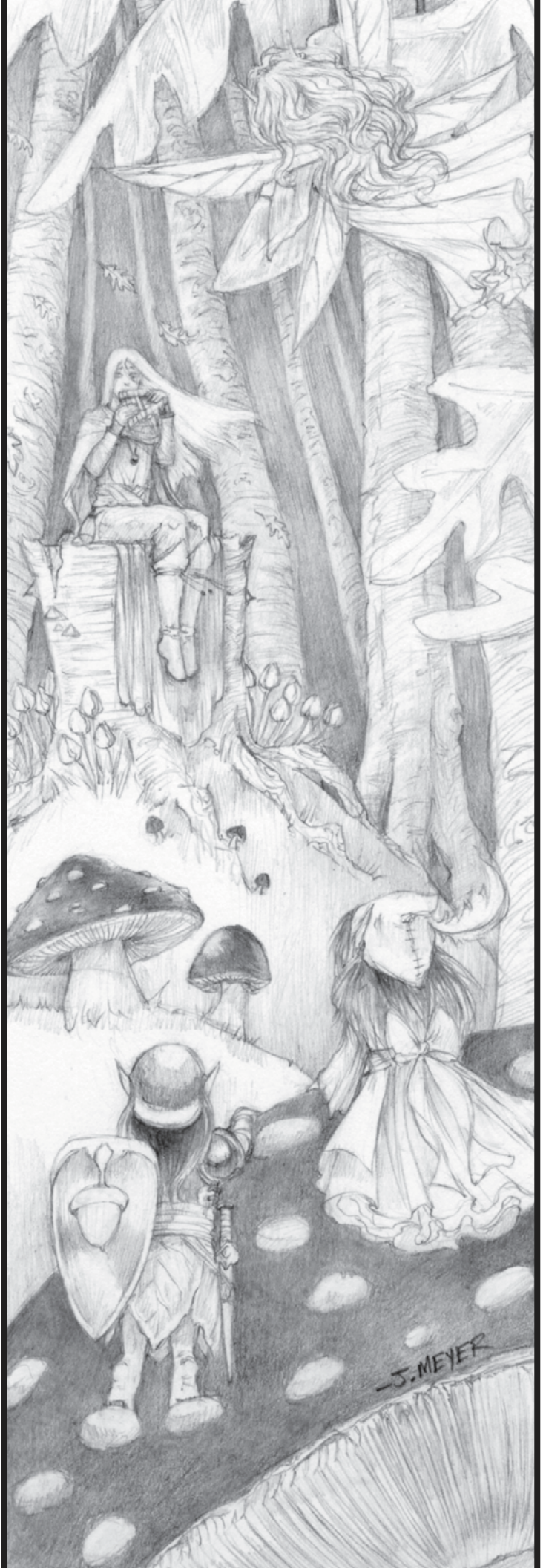
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Introduction

The Mute Minstrel is an adventure for *Faery's Tale*, the interactive storytelling game of faery folklore. Just like the game, it's suitable for ages 6 & up. You'll need a copy of *Faery's Tale*, dice, and some Essence counters to play.

The Narrator should read through the adventure before starting play, and may wish to gather a few props if possible. If you are going to play *The Mute Minstrel*, you should stop reading now or you'll spoil your fun.

A Melancholy Minstrel

This opens the adventure by introducing the faeries of the players to a cursed minstrel and setting them off on a journey to find help for him.

In Brightwood

The faeries are whiling away the day deep in Brightwood. Perhaps they've just met in the morning for another day of adventure, or they might be in the midst of a game of some kind – perhaps hide and go seek. After a little while, or when things start to drag, read the following italicized text aloud to the players:

Hm, what's that? Music wafts your way on a breeze from somewhere in the forest.

Determining the direction of the music is an Easy challenge for the Mind, requiring one success. Faeries with the Gift of Alert succeed automatically.

The Minstrel

The music comes from a nearby clearing. Read the following italicized text aloud to the players:

In a forest clearing, you see a human dressed in brightly colored clothing sitting on a huge tree stump. He plays a flute, but it's a very sad tune. The musician finishes the song and sighs deeply. Despite his cheerful clothing, the minstrel seems very melancholy.

If the Narrator has an instrument to use as a prop (see *Playing the Mute Minstrel*), then substitute the type of instrument for the flute.

If the faeries approach, the musician is too sad to be very startled. He responds to any greetings or questions by opening his mouth as if to speak, but the only sound that emerges is a croaking "Ack!" He has apparently been stricken mute.

By using signs, pantomime, and other non-verbal communication (see *Playing the Mute Minstrel*), the musician tries to convey to the faeries that he has been cursed by a wicked hag for singing a funny song about her. The hag's curse has stolen his voice, and now he's very depressed at no longer being able to sing his songs and entertain others with his stories.

If the players are having trouble understanding the minstrel's signs, a player can spend Essence to have a faery Catch a Clue. Or the Narrator might offer some extra help with translating the signs to a faery with the Gift of Clever. A sprinkling of Pixie Dust might magically bring the scenes described by the mute minstrel to life, or a faery with the Gift of Seer might use it to look into the past to view the incidents being related.

The Mute Minstrel					
Body	2	Mind	4	Spirit	3
Gifts: Musical					

The Sleepy Owl

The conversation of the faeries awakens a wise old owl.

"Hoo, hoo ... Ahem. Who's making all this noise?" asks a sleepy owl sitting on a branch over the forest glen. "Don't you know that owls are day sleepers?"

If a faery has a mouse companion, the owl eyes it briefly before admitting it would be inhospitable to eat a guest. If none of the players realizes the owl might be able to help, remind the player whose faery has the highest Mind score that owls are very wise.

If the faeries ask the owl for his advice regarding the minstrel, read the following italicized text aloud:

"Hoo, hoo, who might be able to help?" says the owl. "Quite a quandary ... a puzzle to ponder ... Oh, I know. The good witch Hester will know how to lift the curse on your musical friend. Her hut lies just a few wing flaps in that direction."

Playing the Mute Minstrel

In a pinch, the Narrator can simply tell players the information conveyed by the mute minstrel's signs, but it will be much more fun for all to act them out and let the players guess at the meanings – just like a game of charades.

The mute minstrel can do everything but talk, sing, or write (he never learned how) – so hand motions, nodding or shaking his head, pointing at players who guess correctly, standing up to act out a role or action, or drawing pictures all are possible actions.

A few props also might help. For example, musically inclined Narrators (or even those not so musically inclined) can bring out a guitar, flute, or other instrument to help convey the minstrel's moods during the adventure. A downbeat note might indicate sadness, while a trill might suggest happiness.

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The owl points off down a forest path deeper into Brightwood.

"If you reach the hills, you've gone too far," the owl says. "Run along now, little faeries, owls need their rest." With a yawn, the owl settles back to sleep on its tree limb.

Journey to the Witch's Hut

The short trip through Brightwood to the witch's hut brings the faeries face-to-face with an enraged bear.

The Angry Bear

Read the following italicized text aloud to the players:

A short time later, you are traveling down a shady forest path deeper into Brightwood when up ahead you hear an angry roar and something crashing around in the brush beneath the stately pines and oaks.

The minstrel and faeries can hide, sneak up on the animal making the noise, or try something else. Before long, a huge brown bear emerges from the brush, growling, roaring, and swiping at nearby tree trunks with his vicious claws.

If one of the faeries is a sprite, her Gift of Animal Friend allows her to understand the bear's roars. Or a pixie can use her Gift of Pixie Dust at a cost of 1 Essence to enable herself or another to understand the bear.

"Rawr! Aarr! I'm really mad! I'm an angry bear! Rawr!" says the bear. "Some bandits in the hills shot me with an arrow and I can't get it out. It really hurts! Ow! Rawr! I'm mad!"

The faeries can easily spot the arrow sticking out of the bear's rump. If the faeries wish to help the grizzly, first they must calm him down. Some possible solutions include a sprite using her Gift of Animal Friend to talk to the grizzly, a pixie using her Gift of Pixie Dust to put him to sleep for 1 Essence, having the mute minstrel play a soothing tune, or other ideas that seem reasonable for a fairy tale.

Once the bear has been calmed, pulling out the arrow is a Hard challenge for the Body, requiring three successes. Faeries can cooperate, and the mute minstrel can help, too, though he's wary of approaching the formerly angry bear and may need some convincing.

The grizzly will heal from the wound on his own, but a faery with the Gift of Empathy can heal the injury by donating 1 Essence to the bear. If the players wish to administer other first aid, let them do so. Or the faeries may invite the grizzly to accompany them to the witch's hut for more healing.

In any case, read the following italicized text aloud after the faeries remove the arrow:

"Abbbb, that's better. Thank you, little faeries. I owe each of you a Boon for taking that nasty arrow out of my rear end. My name is Barnabas the Bear."

For Kids

Use a puppet or stuffed animal prop for the bear to add to the fun for younger players.

If asked about the bandits, Barnabas replies:

"I was looking for some nice juicy berries that grow over by the hills when some bandits came walking past. One of them shot me with an arrow just for fun! I got angry and chased them up a tree, but they kept shooting arrows at me so I ran away."

Barnabas may accompany the faeries and minstrel on their quest if one of the faeries uses his freshly given Boon to request his help, if a sprite pays 1 Essence using the Gift of Animal Friend, or if the faeries persuade him the good witch, Hester, will heal his arrow wound.

Barnabas the Bear					
Body	5	Mind	2	Spirit	1
Gifts: Strong					

The Good Witch

Soon the faeries and their companions arrive at the forest glen containing the hut of the good witch, Hester. Read the following italicized text aloud:

Ahead through the trees, a neat little hut with a thatched roof nestles in a clearing in the forest. A few goats graze around a stone well. Puffs of smoke emerge from the hut's chimney.

If the faeries peek through the windows, they see an older woman with white hair and a walking stick pattering around inside. If she notices the faeries, or if they knock on the door, she invites them inside.

A cookpot of stew boils over a cheerful blaze in the fireplace, and a cupboard holds many carefully labeled jars of potion ingredients. Faeries who read some of the labels find they hold eyes of newts, toes of frogs, wings of bats, and many other icky things.

"Welcome to my humble home," says the witch. "I am called Hester. How can I help you?"

Once the faeries explain their mission, Hester examines the minstrel, telling him to stick out his tongue and so forth.

"A potion of scrying is needed to see how to remove this curse," Hester says. "Here, faeries, make yourselves useful and help me gather the ingredients."

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Hester has the faeries bring her various jars and items from the cupboards, closets, and rafters of the hut, which she uses to brew a potion into which she gazes intently. Read the following italicized text aloud to the players:

“Ahab,” cries Hester after gazing into the potion of scrying. “Well, that’s clear enough.” She sits back. “Oh, my poor back.”

“In order to reverse this curse, your friend must drink from an enchanted spring that lies on the edge of Brightwood near the hills,” says the witch. “The waters of the spring have the power to heal injuries and erase curses. But it is a dangerous quest, for a ghostly knight protects the spring.”

The witch gets up and stirs the fire in the fireplace with her walking stick.

“Legends tell of a knight, greedy for long life, who was not content at a single sip from the spring,” she says. “He built a camp and stayed at the spring, drinking each day – for the waters lose their magic powers if removed from the glade. Years passed, even centuries, and in time even the powers of the spring could not sustain his life. He became a restless spirit, doomed to guard the glade against all intruders. You will have to overcome this phantom knight if your friend is to drink of the healing waters of the spring.”

The good witch gives clear directions to the glade containing the spring, which is an hour’s walk or so away. Hester willingly answers other questions from the faeries if she can, but doesn’t have much other information on the spring or phantom knight to offer. She does not wish to accompany them, saying she has too many potions to brew to go traipsing off through the forest.

The faeries may acquire any reasonable potions they wish from her, but Hester requests a Boon as payment for each potion. If they don’t seem inclined to leave, eventually Hester will announce she needs to take a nap and invite the faeries to return someday.

Journey to the Spring

The trip through the forest to the spring goes uneventfully, passing along shady forest paths and across babbling brooks, until the expedition reaches the hills at the edge of Brightwood.

A Band of Brigands

The bandits who shot Barnabas the Bear are still lurking in the hills. Read the following italicized text aloud:

For Kids

Narrators with younger players might wish to downplay the menace of the bandits and instead play up the slapstick comedy possibilities, with bumbling bandits knocking their heads on low-hanging branches, accidentally poking each other in the eyes while trying to point out fluttering faeries, and so forth.

As you travel onward, you enter some forested hills. These must be the hills mentioned by the good witch, Hester. You hear the sound of voices somewhere nearby.

“I hope that angry bear’s not still around,” says one. “I thought you said you saw a minstrel coming this way, Lothar.”

“I saw him coming down the path while I was up in the tree,” replies Lothar.

“Well, where is he?” says the first man. “Let’s hurry up and find him so we can take all his gold.”

A challenge of the Mind with a Tricky difficulty requiring two successes enables the faeries to determine from which direction the bandits are approaching. A faery with the Gift of Alert succeeds automatically.

There are four bandits, scruffy men in dirty, ragged clothing. One carries a bow and arrows, one a club, and the other two rusty swords. They bicker and quarrel among themselves as they search for the minstrel.

The faeries can hide, set up an ambush for the bandits, trick them, or try something else. A prank using faery magic, such as Pixie Dust, to cast an illusion or otherwise fool the bandits into leaving the party alone might work best. If Barnabas the Bear accompanies the faeries, he may angrily charge the bandits, who scatter into the forest in a panic.

Bandits					
Body	3	Mind	2	Spirit	1
Gifts: None					

The Spring

The faeries arrive at the glade containing the magical spring. Read the following italicized text aloud:

The sight of a beautiful sylvan glade emerges through the trees ahead. Sparkling fresh water burbles to the surface from the spring, surrounded by beautiful flowers of all colors, in its center.

Phantom Knight

Before the minstrel can drink from the spring, the phantom knight protecting the glade must be overcome. As soon as anyone, faery, animal, or human, enters the glade, read the following italicized text aloud:

Dead, fallen leaves begin to swirl in a dark corner of the glen as if caught up in a zephyr. As the leaves flutter to the ground, a ghostly knight steps from the shadows. His ancient plate armor clanks as he walks across the glade, an enormous sword in his gauntleted hands. From the depths of his horned great helm, only darkness and two glowing red eyes are visible.

The phantom knight tries to block anyone from approaching the spring using his sword and his Gift of Ghostly Moan. The phantom does not speak.

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Clever players will come up with all sorts of ways to defeat the knight, from a straight-out fight to fooling him with tricks or distractions. The faeries might also dispel the ghost knight by appealing to his once-chivalrous nature or otherwise helping him reclaim his true self. If the faeries defeat the ghost in combat or persuade him to depart, or if the minstrel drinks from the spring, read the following italicized text aloud:

The phantom knight's long vigil at the spring is over. He raises his sword in salute to you, and for a moment an image of the young knight he once was can be seen within the armor. He smiles as the image vanishes, and the empty armor tumbles to the ground. You have freed him from his own curse as well.

The Phantom Knight					
Body	3	Mind	3	Spirit	3
Gifts: Ghostly Moan Dark Essence: 6					

New Gift: Ghostly Moan

Some phantoms try to frighten foes or intruders with a ghostly wail or moan. For 1 Essence, the ghost can scare a single person or animal. For 2 Essence, the spirit can terrify anyone within

earshot. Those targeted by the moan must succeed at a Spirit challenge with a Tricky difficulty, requiring two successes, or flee in terror until they are out of sight of the ghost. They then may return to face the phantom again – if they dare.

Finale

Drinking from the enchanted spring removes the curse of muteness on the minstrel. Read the following italicized text aloud:

After drinking his fill at the spring, the minstrel stands up and turns to you.

"Gak," he says, looking surprised. "Gak. Gurk. Goo. Gaw. Hey! My voice has returned. I can speak. I can siiiiiiinnnn nnnngggggg!"

The happy minstrel begins dancing around the glade in joy. Singing and laughing, he invites you to join him.

"Thank you all for helping release me from the bag's curse," he exclaims. "My name is Ewan. I owe each of you a Boon, and I will compose a song about our adventure together so everyone will know of your heroism."

If Barnabas the Bear is present, he grumpily declines to join the celebration at first, insisting he is not a dancing bear, but can be persuaded by the faeries. He is the best dancer of all.



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