This is an encounter to be used in a forest area. You can use it as part of an exploration or as an Hazard (see page 215 of the rules).

To begin the encounter, read or paraphrase this passage: *As you travel among the trees, one in particular stands out: a huge oak sticks out as if every other plant kept their distance. Taking a better look at the trunk reveals what looks like a face etched in the bark. When you make eye contact with the visage, you hear a voice coming from the tree: "To further move ahead, solve this riddle before instead!"*

The tree is a magical living oak that doesn't actually have any power to keep the characters there.

If they decide to ignore him he gets offended and curses them. When cursed the GM can use a 1 on the Kismet die during an exploration roll in a forest to make them encounter the tree again. The only way to end this curse is to either kill the oak or to indulge him until he's satisfied.

If they play along, the tree tries to tell them his riddle, but he speaks very slowly and is easily distracted. The riddle itself is the following:

"What wakes up in the morning with four legs, has six at noon and eight in the evening?"

The riddle has no actual answer as the tree has just made it up, but any well thought answer will be accepted by him as the right one. If a player answers with "Man" or "People" as in the famous riddle of the sphinx, the oak becomes enraged by the answer and uproots himself to attack the characters. This also happens if they attack the tree. If it comes to that, the tree uses these statistics:

Treant
Neutral
Threat: 13
Strength: 5 Craft: 2

Armour: 6 (bark) Life: 12

Attacks: 1 Damage: 1d6+5 (flailing branches)

Speed: 5

Special Abilities

● **Long Roots**: When a character rolls a failure and is within 10 meters of the Treant, instead of attacking them, the treant attempts to ensnare them in its roots. The character has to make a **Athletics (Agility)** test with **Difficulty 13** to evade.

Failure: The character is immobilised and can't move (but can take other actions) until they or someone else hits the root with an attack or harmful effect (count the root as a creature with **a threat of 13** that takes no damage) after which they are free. The treant can attack characters entangled in this way, dealing the same damage as an attack with its branches.

Standard Success: The character leg is caught in the root temporarily and they can't move further this turn nor in their next one.

Great Success or better: The character avoids the root.

Benefits & Banes

Incessant Babbling: Throughout the fight, the tree rapidly complains in a low voice about how "the young'uns don't listen to old folk". This sounds almost like a chant that can't help but distract characters fighting the treant and gives everyone that can hear it a -2 on any test.

Rewards

If the characters give an answer the tree finds satisfying, he removes his curse to characters that are affected and gifts the party a Woodgrowing Axe.

Woodgrowing Axe

What looks like a weirdly shaped but sturdy branch with a blade made of bark that makes it work as a battle-axe.

Special Qualities

○ **Treemaker**: If you strike a stump with this axe, the tree grows back from the stumps in a few seconds. A creature standing or sitting on the stump gets an **Athletics (Agility)** test with **Difficulty 13** to avoid getting thrown into the air by the growing tree.

Can't Kill Kin: When this weapon is used to cut plants or to attack a plant creature, it gives a -2 on the test and to damage. If this weapon successfully deals a fatal blow to a plant creature or cuts down a tree, it burns up and is completely destroyed.

Benefits: This weapon has +2 damage against beavers and creatures wielding axes and is considered magical.

Load: 3

If the characters kill the treant instead, they can use its wood to make a cursed magical wand from a wandmaker. The characters know this if they get a standard success

on a **Lore (Wits)** test with **Difficulty 13**. On a Great Success they also know the name of a wandmaker specialised in Treant Wands: Pinekeeper the ghoul. On an Extraordinary Success they also know where he resides in Sepulcher. If they just get a Standard Success, information about where to find an adequate wandmaker can be found in the City or with more difficulty in a smaller settlement.

Treant Wand

A wand made from the wood of a treant. It gives great power to nature spells, but its price is a deadly curse.

Special Qualities

▫ **Treant Curse**: A nearby tree animates. It's not enough for it to be a creature proper, but it moves to protect your enemies from ranged attacks and spells. It acts in response to you and your allies attacks, having a pool of 15 natural armour to protect them. When the pool is extinguished, the tree is destroyed. If all enemies are defeated or the fight otherwise stops, the tree reroots in the place where it was standing and stops being animated.

○ **Treant Lifesap**: When casting a nature spell using the wand you may increase a Great Success to an Extraordinary Success. You cannot do this if you already spent fate to modify the die roll or to increase a Standard Success to Great Success.

Load: 1

Credits:

Scenario, Artwork and Magic Items: David Colombelli