

# The Briars' Rest Inn

## Overview

The Briars' Rest Inn is one of the last stops before the road fades into the forest, about a day's ride out of town. It serves as an easy stop for those passing into or out of the woods. The Inn is rarely full of patrons but is frequented nightly by hunters and foresters.

The building is a simple wooden building, built from the local trees nearby. It isn't particularly well maintained or well-built but serves its purpose and is sturdy enough to be a warm place for the night for those passing by. It stands off the long dirt road leading to and from the city. It is in a small clearing just shy of the forest itself, with a small creek about half an hour's walk behind the Inn itself.

The tavern is of typical quality. There won't be any outlandishly expensive or high-quality goods to be found there, but that isn't its purpose. This place is merely a way stop; a safe place to rest for the night, a decent place to get some food or a few supplies, or just a stop to catch wind of the local rumors.

## The People of Briars' Rest

### The Inn Staff

A woman by the name of **Ladria** owns the Inn. She inherited it when her husband died. She is notably slender and sickly looking but has a kind voice. Her general appearance can be a bit off-putting. Those that know her do enjoy her company after speaking to her. She seems to enjoy little more than talking to those that pass by her Inn.

Her daughter, **Varya**, works as a waitress in the tavern. She is a bit less friendly than her mother. She wishes to visit the city but rarely gets the chance to do so. She can be a bit fiery compared to the rest of her family. She

After her husband died, Ladria's sister **Saria** came to help take care of the Inn. She generally tends to the business aspects of the Inn, and she cooks most of the meals. She rarely speaks to the clientele for much more than a moment or two, and when she does, people agree that she is sad and quiet.

All three women have very similar appearances, being that they are related. They all have long black hair and slender features. They tend to dress in simple clothes, and for protective purposes, each does carry a dagger or sap with them while working. Varya is a young adult, and Ladria and Saria are both middle-aged, with Ladria being the eldest sister. Both Saria and Ladria have deep green eyes, but Varya has brown eyes.

In addition to the family, two other employees live and work at the Inn. Perhaps the most common is **Lesan**, a young half-elf who serves as both a waiter and as the apprentice tavern keep. He does much of the work around the Inn that would generally fall to a hired hand – cleaning, preparation work, and the like. He also serves as the tavern's inhouse minstrel, playing the pan flute some nights.

Finally, there is **Rain**, a Kenku of indeterminate age. He is quiet and doesn't work on the front end of the establishment due to his trouble communicating. Primarily, he gathers firewood and watches over the Inn during the night. In the early mornings, he brews fresh teas for guests. He also serves as the first line of defense against the dangers of the forest when need be. Thanks to the local foresters, that part of his job has become less needed.

### The Regulars

**Ceci** is a halfling Forester from the city. She is an ill-tempered ranger with a dire rat companion and a penchant for violence. She is rarely cleaned up, generally sporting matted and dirty hair and grungy leather armor. Her crossbow and spiked mace never leave her side. She rarely has anything of use to give those passing through other than warnings that they aren't ready for the dangers of the forest.

**Gerta** is Valdred's long-suffering half-elfin daughter. She is young, not quite a teenager. The daughter spends her time stuck at the tavern helping the sisters cook. She is shy usually but has quite a lot of anger directed at her father when pushed. It has even set Ceci's hair on end in the past.

**Pallas** is a human hedge wizard that lives nearby. He doesn't often come to the tavern except to meet traders for needed goods. The wizard doesn't much like the sisters but tolerates them. They're kind to him though, inviting him in to wait for who-ever it is he meets nearby, especially during Rain or snow.

**Togrish** is a haughty dwarven adventurer who stops at the tavern on his adventures. He is a skilled warrior, more than able to hold his own against the dangers of the wilds beyond. He always has a good rumor to pass along and a drink in his hand. He seems kind enough, but the party with which he travels is never the same.

**Valdred** is a local human farmer who spends more than his fair share of time drunk at the tavern. He is not very aware of the surroundings but comes to trade goods with the sisters and then stays and drinks himself stupid. The older man shouldn't act like that and is likely a danger to himself, but his fresh food keeps the Inn stocked, so they give him a pass.

## The Inn's Offerings

### Drinks

Like any good tavern, the Briars' Rest offers a few staple drinks.

**Creekside Mead** – The local Creekside Meadery in the city makes a rather strong drink with a significant bit of sweetness to cut the strength of the alcohol. It is a serviceable mead and goes well with a salty meal. It costs three copper per mug or two silver per bottle.

**Goat's Milk** – This goat's milk is fresh about once a week when a local farmer brings in a batch. Getting luck and getting it around then, it'll be decent. But if you missed the delivery, it might be a few days old. A mug will set you back one copper.

**Local Ale** – For two copper pieces, one can order a mug of warm ale will. Its made locally and is of poor quality. One can taste the old barrels it was made in, but it isn't the worst offering.

**Rain's Tea** – Rain, the Kenku, makes tea in the mornings. It is a dandelion tea brewed fresh in the morning. It has an earthy taste and often has flakes of flower still floating in it – but it is warm and served with enough sugar to wake one up for sure. The price is two copper per pot.

**Well Water** – Fresh well water in a clean glass. The Inn serves it free for those that want it.

**Worker's Beer** – Supplies fresh from the city. It sells the same beer it pays out to workers to the Inn. This stuff might as well be dirty water in taste, but one copper will get you two mugs.

### Food

The staff of the Inn makes food every day for themselves, and food to order for those visiting the tavern. It is subject to availability.

**Cabbage, Carrots, and Wild Onions** – All grown by the sisters outside the tavern, these are generally fresh and ready when one wants it. They frequently served it baked but will grill them from time to time. A single serving will cost one copper.

**Creek Trout, Salted** – Stored in a salt rub and tossed in the fire when ordered, this Creek Trout is served with the skin. Usually, they only serve the smaller trout caught this way. As such, a single Salted Trout will cost one copper.

**Creek Trout, Filet** – A bit more time is put into the more delicate trout. They will be served grilled and with a side of Cabbage and Carrots. This meal will cost four copper per serving.

**Creek Trout, Breaded** – A rarity, but something the sisters are more than willing to cook when able. This meal is backed with breadcrumbs and goats milk to make a breaded fish filet. It is quite good, and foresters in the region swear by it. A single serving will cost five copper and is served with Cabbage and Carrots.

**Goat Cheese and Curds** – Made from the milk they have that isn't quite going to make it, a serving of this cheese and curds will give a boost of much-needed protein to passersby. Generally, they suggest having it alongside the venison or bread but don't charge much for it. A single serving costs three copper pieces.

**Salted Venison** – Brought in by local hunters, salted venison is a bit of a treat for the tavern. A single serving will cost three copper and does not come with anything. It isn't always available, unfortunately.

**Unleavened Bread** – The sisters bake unleavened bread and serve it almost as rolls with food when requested. Each piece of unleavened bread costs one copper. The dough is incredibly bland.

**Wild berries** – The foresters and Rain often bring in wild berries that grow in the region. A handful of these will cost three copper pieces. They are tart but provide a good bit of flavor to an otherwise bland menu. Their tartness does not work well with the alcohol on offer, though.

## Services

The Inn has a few services one would expect. A few standard rooms, private rooms, and baths for the weary traveler. Each with its own cost.

**Craft, Bowyer** – Rain is a skilled bowyer, and is generally happy to make arrows or repair bows as needed. The cost varies per task and the availability of supplies.

**Common Room** – Only two copper per night, and you'll be set up in the larger common room upstairs, with a bed and a chest. The room has seven beds total, so it's not unlikely that you'll be sleeping alongside other visitors if there are any.

**Drawn Bath, Simple** – The Inn boasts a few simple baths. For one silver piece, the staff will draw a bath for you. The bathing chambers aren't exactly private or luxurious, but the Inn does include pure soap with the tub. After a long trek through a dangerous forest, it can be quite relaxing.

**Drawn Bath, Warm** – The Inn staff will draw up a warm bath for those willing to pay a bit extra. For two silver pieces, you can enjoy a warm bath. Again, like the simple bath, it isn't luxurious compared to other establishments.

**Private Room, Large** – For one silver piece per night, one can rent a large private room upstairs. This room has a larger bed able to accommodate at least a couple of sleepers, a full wardrobe, and a couple of windows overlooking the outside. The place is private with a door that does lock, but the Inn only has one such room available.

**Private Room, Single** – For five copper per night, one can rent a private room upstairs. This room just has a single bed, chest, and a window looking out of the tavern, but it is private. There are two available rooms.

**Repairs, Tailoring** – The sisters are skilled tailors and will repair items if needed. This service generally costs about a single silver per hour of work.

## Rumors

There are always rumors in any given inn. Here are a few tales one might hear about the surrounding area.

A **pack of Dire Wolves** has been spotted around nearby farms and has been poaching livestock.

**Gnoll raids** have been uncomfortably frequent lately, and the city guards have put out a bounty for any gnolls brought down.

Rumors from the south edge of the forest are that hobgoblins have been training up local **goblin tribes**. Local authorities would pay for information on the situation.

Some foresters have told stories about stone statues being found deep within the darkest parts of the forest and **otherworldly growls** emanating from the area. Foresters are suggesting people leave the place be – but the rumor of a basilisk's hide has brought a few monster hunters to the city.

Some merchants have been talking about a **strange fellow** who has been buying up arcane implements for a ritual. The rumors have reached a local wizard who is paying for someone to investigate it.

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## Game Master's Notes

### On the Characters

The Owners of the Tavern are a Coven of Hags, and their staff are thralls. The sisters will generally let people stay and will not actively do anything to harm those passing through until they've developed a report. Once they have, though, they act slowly unless otherwise provoked. Generally, once a person is comfortable with them, they will start adding more and more to their plan. They will add sedatives to foods, cast spells and curses while they sleep, and slowly chip away at their prey. Once they are weak, they will strike – sacrificing those that without comrades or family for their dark rituals, and slowly turning others into thralls or cultists if possible.

Lesan is a cultist of the Hags, serving as part of their plans. While he isn't typically part of their ordeals, if they were attacked he would move quickly to their aid. He is their most loyal of cultists but is not the only one. The other 'regulars' tend to fall under that banner as well.

Rain is a thief and loyal ally to the Hags. He is more than willing to steal for them and will take any opportunity to steal from those that stay at the Inn – but he isn't careless about it. He'll only steal more significant things once the Hags have begun their plan, and their prey are a bit more susceptible to their charms.

Ceci and Valdred are both enthralled by the hags, though both to a lesser extent than the others. They will defend them, though, if something were to happen.

Togrish is thoroughly enthralled and will bring adventurers into their clutches if possible. He tends to bring along new and young participants as prey, as they tend to be the easiest to claim were lost or decided that adventuring was not for them.

Pallas is not enthralled yet, but they are trying to work on him. His status as a hedge wizard makes it a bit more challenging for them as he is aware of the dangers in the woods. They are slowly but surely chipping away at him, though.

Perhaps the saddest of them is Gerta, Valdred's daughter. While it may be evident to some, she is a daughter of the coven – though she has not yet met her transformation. She is not quite old enough, but slowly but surely they are working on it. They are protective of her, and Valdred is somehow unaware, even though her apparent race matches neither his race of that of his late wife.

### On Secrets and Treasures

There are a few secrets within the Inn. First and foremost is the escape tunnel in the basement. This tunnel is used by the Hags to move more freely into the woodlands. It is the easiest way to get to their true lair.

In addition, Rain has buried some of his personal favorite finds behind the tavern.