

CHILDREN OF THE GRAIN

The background of the cover is a dark, textured illustration. It depicts a vast field of grain, possibly wheat or barley, under a night sky. A large, bright crescent moon hangs in the upper center. In the distance, on the left side, there is a small, dark building with a pointed roof and a few glowing windows. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, blacks, and browns, with the moon providing a primary light source.

Preview

V1.0

A 5e-compatible folk-horror one-shot adventure for Level 3 by
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CHILDREN OF THE GRAIN

EDEN'S REST IS A QUIET FARMING VILLAGE hidden in a fertile valley untouched by famine. The soil yields endlessly, the canals never dry, and the people live simple, content lives. But prosperity here is not a blessing — it is a balance. For generations, the villagers have upheld an ancient rite: one life given, many lives fed. When the party arrives, they are outsiders unaware of this pact. Their good intentions — to help, to protect, to uncover — may tip the scales that hold the world together. By the end of the adventure, the party should level up once. The story rewards curiosity, compassion, and moral choice more than combat.

TONE AND THEMES

- Isolation: A single community bound by ancient customs.
- Moral ambiguity: The line between good and evil is blurred.
- Consequences: Every choice feeds or starves something greater.

Play it slow and sincere. Let the comfort feel real before it turns hollow.

IF USED AS A CAMPAIGN PRELUDE

The final choice determines the world's condition:

- Starving World: The land dries; divine and natural magic weaken.
- Overfed World: Growth spirals out of control; jungles choke cities.
- Balanced World: The cycle endures until forgotten once more.

PLAYER KNOWLEDGE (SESSION 0 GUIDANCE)

Without spoiling the twist, tell your players upfront that this adventure explores:

- Moral choices with no clean answers.
- Themes of sacrifice, superstition, and nature's cost.
- Minimal focus on treasure or long-term progression. Encourage them to use **temporary or secondary characters**, not their main campaign PCs.

BACKGROUND

Millennia ago, druids discovered the **Rootheart**, a sleeping organism whose dreams sustain all plant life.

ROOTHEART'S HUNGER

To keep the world fertile, it must consume potential life. Children contain the most vitality—their unlined years burn brightest. Adults, having spent much of their potential, sustain the Rootheart for only weeks. If adults are used, the ritual must repeat constantly, until every soul is spent.

Over time, this truth faded into myth. The valley of **Eden's Rest** remains one of the last places still tied to that pact, performing its ritual without understanding its origin.

RECURRING VILLAGE SAYING

Throughout the adventure, villagers often repeat a simple phrase: **"Feed the land, and the land feeds you."**

It's a simple blessing, spoken casually over meals or harvests. Only later will its meaning become clear. The GM can use it to foreshadow the village's secret or to replace casual dialogue in any scene.

TWIN CRESCENT MOONS

Before the heroes reach Eden's Rest, draw their eyes to the sky. An unfamiliar sight above, the moon appears doubled: two pale crescents about to cross each other.

HOOK AND ENTRY POINTS

Each hook offers a reason for the heroes to reach Eden's Rest. All roads lead to the same beginning. All hooks will give the party 30 gp total at the end when they turn it in.

See Appendix A for maps.

BANDIT CONTRACT

Merchants hire the party to guard a grain caravan bound for Eden's Rest. After fending off a desperate bandit ambush, the villagers greet them with gratitude and insist they stay for the upcoming Harvest Feast.

MONSTER HUNT

A nearby merchant asks the heroes to clear vine-creatures clogging the canal that irrigates Eden's Rest. When they reach the site, a **small group of villagers** are already there, struggling to break through the roots. They watch as the heroes fight and destroy the creatures, then hurry back to the valley to spread word of what they saw. By the time the party returns, the villagers are waiting with Elder Maera, who thanks them for restoring the flow and insists they stay for the evening's celebration.

WORD OF PLENTY

The heroes follow rumors of a valley whose fields never fail. On the road, they meet **Tomas Reed**, a weary widower returning to Eden's Rest with supplies. Grateful for their company, he brings them along and introduces them to Elder Maera, who welcomes them politely and invites them to join the feast.

Whatever their reason, the heroes arrive as the sun begins to fall.

APPENDIX A: MEASURE & MERCY



APPENDIX B: STAT BLOCKS

ELDER MAERA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 12 (ritual vestments)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4

Skills Religion +3, Persuasion +4, Insight +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Faith of the Land. Maera has advantage on saving throws against being frightened while within Eden's Rest.

Devoted Speaker. When Maera makes a Persuasion check to calm or rally villagers, she can treat a roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Pactbound Ritualist. Once per long rest, Maera can command the earth to shudder (as earth tremor, DC 13)

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Word of Devotion (Recharge 5–6) Maera utters a prayer to the land. All villagers within 30 ft. gain advantage on their next attack or ability check before the end of their next turn.

MORALE

Maera fights only to protect the ritual. If shown the corrupted soil, she is stunned for 1 round, then either drops to her knees in grief or attempts to finish the rite in despair.

TOMAS REED

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 18 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +2, Athletics +3

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Protective Father. When Elias is in danger, Tomas has advantage on attack rolls and saving throws.

Rough Laborer. Tomas can push, drag, or lift double his carrying capacity when using both hands.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Desperate Swing (1/Day) If Tomas is reduced below half his hit points, he makes a reckless strike, dealing an extra 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage on a hit.

MORALE

Tomas fights only if Elias's life is in danger. If the boy dies, Tomas flies into a blind rage, attacking Maera or anyone near her until restrained.

CHILDREN OF THE GRAIN

In a remote valley untouched by famine, the soil never fails and the harvests never end. Travelers speak of Eden's Rest, a peaceful farming village blessed by the land itself. Yet beneath its golden fields and smiling faces lies an ancient hunger — one that must be fed.

When the heroes arrive, they find a community preparing for its Harvest Festival — a celebration of abundance and life. But as night falls, the line between gratitude and sacrifice begins to blur, and the truth buried beneath the roots starts to stir.

Uncover the secret behind Eden's bounty, where every kindness has a cost and every harvest leaves a scar. Will the heroes save the village — or the world itself?

Children of the Grain is a folk-horror one-shot adventure compatible with 5e fantasy roleplaying rules. Designed for 3–5 players beginning at level 3, this tale blends rural superstition, moral choice, and creeping cosmic dread.

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