

Into the Forest: Single-Player Vanilla Run on "Medium"

Goal: Find 3 discoveries and return home alive.

This is a demo story to accompany the demo video. It is one of many possible adventures that can be had in the game **Into the Forest**. Find the game at secretfoxfire.itch.io/into-the-forest.

Day 1

My entire life, I've been warned against going into the forest, beyond the borders where we forage for fruit and nuts. They say it is full of danger, and few who enter are ever heard from again. But I've also heard whispered tales about the wonders that can be found in the dark depths beneath the tall canopy. This life grows boring, and I long for adventure. I've filled my pack with as much food and water as I can carry. I left a note for Uncle. I hope he will forgive me.

The first thing I saw in the dim light is a structure, or what remains of one. It was once made of metal, but it has rusted so thoroughly as to be hardly recognizable. I tried to look around inside for one of the magical artifacts they say can be found in these ruins, but the roof collapsed, nearly killing me. I managed to dodge out of the way, but some of my rations fell out of my pack as I leaped, and are now buried in the rubble. No matter. I'm sure I will find more to eat and drink somewhere.

Day 2

I've already lost my bearings. The thick vegetation and the way the ancient trees twist and bend makes it impossible to move in a straight line. I found another ruin, an ancient structure made of brick. I was far more cautious this time, having learned my lesson yesterday about the instability of these structures. Not much remained intact inside, but there was a box, astonishingly well-preserved, and inside I found several semi-transparent canisters of multicolored stones. They look like the ancient medicines I've heard stories about. I put them in my pack before getting out of there. I'll take them home and show Uncle. He'll be amazed!

Day 3

My eyes have adjusted quite well to the very dim light that makes its way down here, and it was a shock to see a green glow in the distance. I approached it cautiously, and saw shadows dancing around a strange fire. The shapes were all wrong, all straight lines and sharp angles, and instead of voices I heard metallic clangs. As I neared the edge of the clearing, the flames went out and the figures vanished, but the ash of the fire was still there, and still glowing softly green. It was not even hot! I scooped some up to take home.

Day 4

How could this be? I have found myself once again at the edge of the forest. Daylight streams between the leaves, and I can hear the sounds of children playing not far from here. I could go home, right now, share the few treasures I found, and return to my life of safety and comfort, but something compels me to go back. There is surely much more to find in the darkness, and now that I've tasted adventure, I must have more.

Day 5

I am not alone in this forest! Today I saw a tiny, pale face in the bushes – with enormous eyes, but human nonetheless. I approached them slowly, trying to show with smiles and gestures that I meant them no harm, but they vanished into the trees beyond. They had left me a bundle of food and a small jug of water, which I gratefully put into my pack. I have not found anything else to eat or drink. Has this tiny person been following me, watching my every move? I could swear I heard the sound of giggling in the distance.

Day 6

My eyes have begun to play tricks on me in the darkness. Perhaps people such as I were not meant to live away from the sun for long. I keep seeing flashes of Uncle's face, as though he is standing before me, his face a mask of anguish with tears running down his cheeks. Orbs of light seem to dance around me, but I cannot

see by them. And then, now and then, I see monstrous mouths which scream at me and then vanish. Surely these things cannot be real. Perhaps I should not have trusted the food that tiny person left me yesterday. Have I been drugged?

Day 7

It is as though the forest does not wish me to explore it. Once again I have found myself at its edge. This time I did not hear people, but the sound of the waves on the coast is unmistakable, and I would have no trouble finding my way home from here. Once again I considered leaving and bringing my adventure to an end, but I cannot give up yet. I will not. The next time I stumble out into the sunlight, I will stay. But I must give this one more try.

Day 8

Another metal structure, this one in far better condition than the first but still showing patches of rust. I chose to seek adventure, and this is the adventure that I have found. I did not regret it. The structure was clearly long abandoned, but inside I found some remarkably well-preserved bars of meat and fruit which smelled better than I would have expected, several sealed containers of fresh water, and two hard, smooth rectangles of a substance I have never seen before, inscribed with colorful lines that may be words in a long-forgotten language. My pack is heavy again, and I do not regret the extra weight.

Day 9

There are more of the people with the huge eyes and the skin so pale it's nearly translucent. I found one, an adult, half-starved, taking shelter in a crumbling ruin. They were bent over a fire, rocking back and forth, and when I tried to approach, they turned away, put their hands over their ears, and rocked even harder. They must have thought me a hallucination. I wonder why they are alone and in such a terrible state? Did they lose their people? I left them in peace and moved on.

Day 10

Light calls me from far away in the darkness. This time, a flashing orange glow that would probably seem dim in the village, but shines like the sun in the forest. It was a tiny thing, smaller than the palm of my hand, attached to the top of a pole planted in the ground. I took it, hid it in my pack so as not to attract unwanted attention. I do hope it is an abandoned relic and not important to anyone who lives in here...

Day 11

The plants in here are all strange, and I've stopped noticing the new ones. Perhaps I should pay more attention. I brushed up against a vine the color of rust and regretted it instantly. It was as though my skin had been burned by fire. It still hurts. I will be careful to avoid any similar vines in the future.

Day 12

There are stranger creatures in this forest than pale-skinned humans! A small creature with long, black fur, white eyes, and an odd number of legs climbed down a tree in beside me and landed on my shoulder. I froze, paralyzed with fear as I felt it reach into my pack. It spoke to me in my own voice – or was it me speaking? I heard me say, "It's okay. Everything is fine." The creature was gone as quickly as it had come, but when I checked my pack, I found my supplies replenished. It had also left me a small orb of the same material as the rectangles I found the other day, and when I touched it, I felt refreshed. Whatever it was, it seems it was a friend. I wish it well.

Day 13

I have grown overconfident, after my pleasant encounter with the friendly creature yesterday. I was playfully hopping stone to stone across a shallow creek when I lost my balance and fell. I twisted my ankle and soaked my clothes. I have built a small fire and am trying to dry off, but I feel miserable. All good cheer has evaporated.

Day 14

I camped by the creek, trying to restore my energy, but I have awoken feeling worse than when I fell asleep. I had a nightmare so terrifying and lifelike that I know I'll never forget it. I refuse to write it down. Nothing good could come of it.

Day 15

Some luck, at least. I stumbled upon a hollow in a gnarled tree, its trunk as wide as my house. Mostly it was full of rotted bits and pieces, but there was a scroll propped against the wall, in perfect condition if a bit dusty. I cannot read the runes on it, but perhaps Uncle can help me translate it when I get home. I do hope I find my way home soon. I have had enough of adventure.

Day 16

Another ruined building, this one mostly rotted away to nothing. There were the remains of shelves in this one, and books. Most of them had disintegrated, of course, but one of them had miraculously survived. It is full of the same ancient script as the scroll yesterday. Think of the wisdom it might contain! I simply must find my way home. I have eaten the last of my food, and I wish to see Uncle smile again.

Day 17

There was a partially fallen wall of a porous stone, rough to the touch, and embedded in it was a perfectly smooth black rectangle. I ran my finger along it, and it left a glowing blue trail which slowly faded. Transfixed by this strange magic, I traced a random pattern, then suddenly I felt as though my mind had been turned inside-out. The wall and the panel were gone, and I was in a totally new place, transported somehow across the forest. I haven't the slightest idea where I am now, nor which way is home, nor how far. My stomach growls and my mouth grows dry. Surely my luck will change soon.

Day 18

Humans were never meant to be alone in the darkness for this long. I think back to the figure I saw crouched over the fire – how long ago? – and I think I understand. I tried humming a tune Uncle used to sing to me when I was a child, and it brought me a small amount of comfort. The forest seemed to like it as well. It sang along with me, and the vines swayed back and forth to the beat. How lovely... If only the forest would give me something to drink...

Day 19

Another creature came down from the treetops today, descending on a shiny string, but this one was not a friend. It looked a bit like a spider, but far too large, too soft, and with too many legs. It sang to me in my mother's voice – do I even remember my mother's voice? – and bit me on my neck before climbing back up. The bite stings and festers. Or is that just my thirst? I don't know how much longer I can go on.

Day 20

I cannot go any further. The glowing orbs surround me, singing with angelic voices. They dance. It is beautiful. I have no strength left. Uncle, I am sorry. Please tell Uncle I am sorry. The orbs have vanished. I've never felt such deep sadness. I'm sorry, Uncle.

The character died of dehydration in stratum 5 of the forest.