



Path of the Rootwalker

The leafers of the Deep Forest are renowned for their enigmatic nature. Most of these Namegivers we encountered during our exploration of Vasgothia were reluctant to discuss themselves in detail and much less inclined to talk about their views on adept magic. However, we discovered from our companion Steenhauz, that the leafers do indeed have unique magical practices, among them the Path known as the Rootwalker. Tracking down a practitioner of this Path was difficult, as was convincing them to open up about their ways. Eventually, we found a leafer calling themselves Sosl the Searching who claimed to be a follower of this Path. I cannot say for certain that the information presented here is entirely accurate, leafers are well known for speaking in riddles and half-truths. As always, we owe a debt of gratitude to the tireless efforts of our Empirist & Barrite companions.



- Jerriv Forrim

The Songs of the Ancient Ones

The Deep Forest is eternal. It was present at the birth of the world in the form of the Erminsosl. It swayed in silence as the ulks gnawed their way to the surface to sate their appetites. It watched as the Passions foolishly took up arms with their Barrite followers to make war upon the Horrors. It wept in knowing silence when they vanished from our world. The Always and Ever Present One, knowing that its demise was at hand, blossomed and spread its essence into the Deep Forest. Rather than be torn to pieces and discarded, as the other Passions had been, it dispersed itself, infusing the Forest with its magic. In doing so, it ensured that the Forest and itself would always be renewed. From tree to seed, to sapling to tree, the cycle is endless. Just as the Place of ReNaming gives birth to the reborn Barrites, the Always and Ever Present One lives on in the bodies and souls of all Sosl.

Rooting Oneself to the Always and Ever Present One

The roots of the Deep Forest spread out far and wide beneath all of Vasgothia





and beyond. From the most ancient of oaks, to the youngest flower, all life within the Forest is connected. The Forest is also connected to the elements. Its roots sink deep into the soil where they are nourished by earth and water. When they fall and rot, their bodies return this nourishment back to the earth, allowing new life to flourish. Their leaves produce air, upon which their seeds are also carried. When the Barrites wish to warm themselves during the winters, they cut down the trees and use them to feed their fires. Air, earth, fire, and water. Animals. Trees. Namegivers. Each and every being alive dances in one way or another to the ancient song of the Forest.

The Always and Ever Present One is the Deep Forest, and the Forest is the Always and Every Present One. There is no place its influence cannot be felt. Nowhere its roots cannot take hold. Though it cannot always be seen, it can always be felt by those who are in tune with its endless song. All beings are connected to the root, and it is through this root that all beings can be reached. Understanding this truth is key to understanding the Path this one follows.

The implications made by Sosl the Searching are so large in scope that I find it difficult to decide if they are telling a grand cosmic truth or simply playing a trick on us. I suspect the reality is somewhere in between. The Always and Ever Present One is a force that few, if any scholars truly understand. The way that Sosl talks about this Path reminds me of how questors talk about their patron Passion. And yet, their magic is like that of an adept. Just like the Avowed, I feel that these Rootwalkers are ingrained in the mysterious Pattern of the Deep Forest. Maddingly, each question we ask, leads only to more questions.

- Steenhauz

Defending the Root

The Always and Ever Present One has given much to Sosl, and in return, Sosl is expected to act as its roots in the world. Though it survived the Untold Winter, the Always and Ever Present One must look to the Sosl to perform those duties that it has deemed important. Chiefly among all Sosl is the duty of protecting the Root. Just as a seed falls to the ground and draws upon the soil to grow strong, so too must all Sosl. When the trees die, they enrich the soil, passing on their magic to the next seed that falls. So too are Sosl born and if the soil is corrupted, then so too is the Sosl. The Root must be kept pure, it must be enriched, and above all must be protected. A Sosl's most important task is to earn a powerful Name. When a Sosl returns to the Root, it takes its Name with it, and so enriches the Pattern of the Great Stem. Each Sosl bears this responsibility. Those who cannot or refuse to earn their Names wither and die. They offer nothing to the Root, and so the Root offers nothing in return. More troubling than this, however, are the Sosl born to corruption. Though they were nourished by the magic of the ulks, they are still part of the Root. Should one of these Sosl earn a Name, it will take that Name, and its corruption, back to the Root. From there, it will spread like a rot to all Sosl. So, we must hunt these Sosl and ensure that they die Nameless. Though they are but saplings, we do not mourn them. Once they have been returned to the Root, they will be reborn once more, hopefully in better soil.





I find it fascinating that throughout this entire discourse, our leafer friend has not once referred to their Path as a "Rootwalker," instead opting to it only describe itself as "Sosl". Was the name of this Path coined by other Namegivers in an attempt to describe its purpose? That Sosl the Searching refers to both itself and followers of this Path as "Sosl" should provide us a hint as to how it truly views itself and the nature of this Path's magic.

- Waskha

Protecting the Root is vital to the survival of all Vasgothia, but there are other duties a Sosl must obey. The flesh of the dead Passions still lays scattered across the floor of the Deep Forest, as does that of the Horrors. Even the wisest Sosl cannot tell the difference between them. To ensure that the Root remains pure, the Fruits of the Horrors must be removed from the Forest. They cannot be permitted to take root in the Patterns of those Namegivers foolish enough to eat them. The Fruits of the Passions, however, must be found and devoured. It is the destiny of the Vasgothian Passions to one day return to our world. As winter gives way to spring, so to must death give way to rebirth.

Walking the Forests Beyond Vasgothia

The Erminsosl is the oldest of all roots. It is the All Tree. The Great Stem. As such, it cannot be confined to one forest, nor to one world. Its roots spread far beyond Vasgothia, carrying the will of the Always and Ever Present One. As these roots spread, so too must the Sosl. This One cannot and should not limit its duties to the Deep Forest alone. All the forests of this world are born of the Erminsosl and are connected to the Deep Forest. This One's duty cannot be confined to one land. There are a great many forests that require rebirth. The Roheline Wood has been reduced to ash by the ulks. But from ashes, new life can spring. To the east this one hears the painful songs of the so-called Blood Wood, a lesson that one must sometimes give way to the forest fire, if one wishes to see life return.

I find this blatant theft of my people's legend to be both tiresome and insulting. All true elves know that Oak Heart was the first and greatest of all trees and it is from Oak Heart that the first forest, the Wyrn Wood, sprung. I hear these leafers have only existed for a handful of decades. Little surprise then, that they turn to older legends to make sense of their senseless place in this world.

- Grimmas, Merchant of Iopos

One cannot help but see parallels between these strange adepts and the Path of the elven Woodsman. Not only do Rootwalkers share some of the Woodsman's magical abilities, but they also display a similar commitment to defending the wilderness. Though in the Rootwalker's case, this is focused mostly upon the Deep Forest, rather than a single Namegiver community. We know Vasgothia once had ties to the elves of the Gwydenro, is it possible that the teachings of the Woodsman somehow made their way from the Roheline Woods and to the Deep Forest? If this theory is correct, it only raises more questions. The leafers only appeared after the Scourge ended, centuries after the elves had ceased their





cultural exchange with Vasgothia. How then did the leafers learn or discover the magical teachings of the Woodsman Path?

- Jerriv Forrim

This one knows the answer but is not telling.

- Sosl the Kind

Game Information

Rootwalkers are leafers who have tapped into the primal magic of the Deep Forest in a way that even they do not truly understand. In many ways, a Rootwalker resembles a questor, at least in their outlook and the relationship they have with a higher power. A Rootwalker feels a natural connection to the magic of this Path, as if it is an extension of leafer nature, rather than a separate entity. In other ways, they could be said to have similarities with the Avowed, though they do not swear an oath to a specific aspect of the Deep Forest, instead opting for a holistic view of the Forest and its strange magic. Rootwalkers believe that their magic comes directly from the Always and Ever Present One, which they see as a manifestation of the Erminosl. They feel a deep and intrinsic connection between nature and Namegivers. Their magic is focused upon building upon, and sometimes exploiting, this mystical connection that they believe spans across all living things. Due to their innate connection to nature, Rootwalkers often feel a kinship with communal creatures such as insects, as well as some types of fungal colonies.

Disciplines: Those adepts drawn to the Rootwalker Path tend to be those that already have a strong connection to nature and the wilderness such as Beastmasters, Elementalists and Scouts. Disciplines that have strong community connections such as Troubadours and Weaponsmiths are also drawn to this Path.

Passions and Questors: As leafers rarely become questors of foreign Passions, followers of this Path tend to observe and respect the Always and Ever Present One of Vasgothian legend. Those Rootwalkers who do decide to honor another Passion tend to be drawn towards Jaspree or other Passions of nature.

Other Paths: It is difficult to generalise which other Paths a Rootwalker may be drawn towards. Those who wish to see the corruption of the Deep Forest cleansed may also follow the Purifier or Horror Stalker Paths. Those followers more prone to exploration outside the forest may find that the Messenger or Scholar Paths suit them.

Initiation: Initiation into the Path requires seeking out another practitioner for instruction. This may seem like a simple matter, but the rarity of leafers, coupled with their belligerent nature can make this endeavour quite difficult. Once a prospective recruit has found a mentor, they must prove their commitment to the forest, usually by slaying some form of threat, a Half-Horror, or a nest of feral leafers are common targets. More rarely the recruit may be asked to combat nearby Barrites that the mentor holds a grudge against or Therans who have cleared away the forest to make room for farmlands. Once the threat has been dealt with, the recruit enters a period of dormancy where they root themselves to the Deep Forest's floor and contemplate how their actions have benefitted the Always and Ever Present One. More importantly, they





meditate on the connection between themselves, the Forest, and the flora and fauna that dwell within. They extend their senses beyond themselves, allowing their consciousness to travel along the roots of the Deep Forest. During this time of reflection, it is common for the recruit to take a second Name that will reflect the Rootwalker's commitment to the Deep Forest. These titles appear to outsiders to be little more than nicknames such as "Sosl the Stalker" or "Sosl the Strider", but to other Rootwalkers they are important statements of a recruit's intent and journey along the Path.

Ordeals and Advancement: Advancement along the Path typically involves forming a strong bond with the mentor who inducted the recruit into the Path. This close bond is rare between leafers and is said to reflect the bond between a Path follower, the Deep Forest, and the Always and Ever Present One. To advance along the Path, a mentor will typically present more ordeals to their students. Much like the initiation, these ordeals will be combative in nature and focused upon those whom the mentor feels have somehow wronged the Forest. As the follower gains more ranks in the Path, these challenges become more deadly, but also more esoteric in nature. A recruit may be asked to travel to the Place of ReNaming and spy upon a Barrite Naming ritual, bringing the details back to their mentor. They may be asked to uproot a special flower from one region of the forest and plant it in another or to defend a grove of trees for an extended period. The tasks are unique to the mentor and no two mentors seem to agree on the kinds of ordeals that a follower should fulfil.

Karma Ritual: Rootwalkers conduct their karma rituals while rooted to the floor of a forest. This is usually the Deep Forest, but in practice any grouping of trees is sufficient. The first few minutes of the ritual is spent in quiet contemplation as the adept connects their own roots to those of the world around them. The rest of the ritual is performed as is typical for whatever Discipline the adept follows.

Half-Magic: The adept can also use their Half-Magic to find other Rootwalkers and know the history and customs of Rootwalkers. Additionally, the adept can make Perception-based Half-Magic test to detect the presence of a Fruit of the Passions or Horrors within 30 yards as well as the presence of other leafers. The Difficulty Number for sensing a Fruit is typically 12, whereas the Difficulty Number for sensing a leafer is that leafer's Mystic Defense. The adept cannot determine if a Fruit is one of the Passions or the Horrors or what abilities are granted by eating it. The game master may choose to make this Half-Magic test on behalf of a Rootwalker at any time, as this innate sense is always active.

Rootwalker Talent Cost

Journeyman tier, Maximum Rank 10

Rootwalker Rank Bonuses

Rank 2: +1 Physical Defense

Rank 4: +1 Mystic Defense

Rank 6: +2 Physical Defense





Rank 8: +1 Initiative

Rank 10: +1 Recovery Test

Rootwalker Talent Options

Rank 1+ (Purchased as Journeyman tier talents)

Anticipate Blow, Awareness, Borrow Sense, Climbing, Empathic Sense, Guardian's Service, Stealthy Stride, Tracking, Wilderness Survival, Wood Skin

Rank 5+ (Purchased as Warden tier talents)

Lifesight, Insect Communication*, Safe Path, True Sight, Wood Speak, Wood Walk

Rank 9+ (Purchased as Master tier talents)

Forest Sense, Plant Talk, Resist Pain, Vine Armor

New Talents

Insect Communication

Step: Rank + PER

Action: Standard

Strain: 0

Skill Use: No

This talent allows the adept to understand and communicate with insects and other arthropods such as spiders and centipedes. The adept makes an Insect Communication test against the targets Mythic Defense. If successful, the adept can talk to and understand the target for a number of minutes equal to their Insect Communication rank. Each additional success improves the insects' Attitude by one degree, making them more helpful. Most insects have a Neutral Attitude towards Namegivers, but larger ones who prey upon Namegivers possess an Unfriendly Attitude.

This talent does not compel the target to communicate; it merely makes communication possible. The gamemaster is advised to treat insects and similar creatures as if they were gamemaster characters, using the rules for Social Interactions (*Gamemaster's Guide*, pp. 142-151), but they should keep in mind that these creatures tend to have alien mindsets and are not as intelligent as Namegivers.

Rootwalker

Step: Rank

Action: N/A

Strain: 0

Skill Use: No

This talent measures the adept's advancement on the Rootwalker Path. The adept can learn one Rootwalker talent option for each rank and gains their Rootwalker rank as a bonus to Interaction tests for making an impression or asking for favors of other Rootwalkers. See the above text for details and additional benefits. This talent's maximum rank is 10 and costs Master tier to advance.





New Knacks

Astral Sight Knacks

Forecast Corruption

Talent: Astral Sight

Requirements: Rank 5

Restrictions: Rootwalker 3

Step: Rank + PER

Action: Simple

Strain: 2

The adept may use their Astral Sight talent to tune into the ebb and flow of the Deep Forest's astral corruption. The adept makes an Astral Sight Test (10) test. Unlike other astral sensing test, this test is not modified by the astral corruption of the region. If successful, the adept learns the current level of astral corruption in the region they currently inhabit (*Safe, Open, Tainted, Corrupt*), as well as if it will change, and what that change will be, within a number of weeks equal to their rank in Astral Sight. This knack does not provide the benefits of a standard Astral Sight test (observing Patterns, etc.) and only works in Vasgothia's Deep Forest.

Climbing Knacks

Creeping Ivy

Talent: Climbing

Requirements: Rank 6

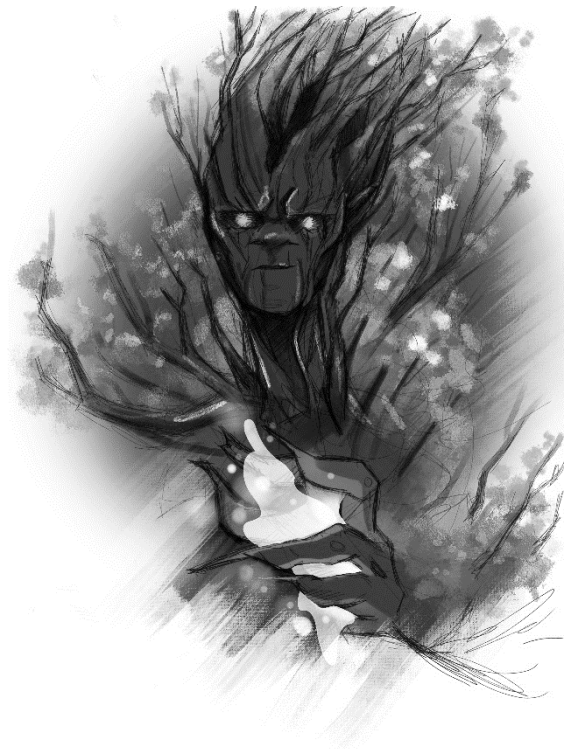
Restrictions: Rootwalker 2

Step: N/A

Action: Free

Strain: 2

The adept summons a sprawling growth of ivy from their own body as they climb that attaches itself to a surface and aids others when making their own Climbing tests. The ivy adds a +2 bonus to Climbing tests to a number of targets equal to the adept's Climbing rank (including the adept). The ivy lasts for a number of hours equal to the adept's Climbing rank.



Light as a Leaf

See *Mystic Paths*, p.225





Empathic Sense Knacks

Attune to the Colony

Talent: Empathic Sense

Requirements: Rank 7

Restrictions: Rootwalker 4

Step: Rank + CHA

Action: Standard

Strain: 2

This knack allows the adept to tune into the emotions of a community, rather than the individual. The adept makes an Empathic Sense test against the highest Social Defense among the target group, +1 for every 10 additional targets. Success means that the adept can tune into the general mood of the group, sensing if they collectively feel a strong emotion such as fear, joy, apprehension, or anger. Success also means that the adept can tune into the focus of the community's current emotional state.

For example: if there is a yearl in a Barrite village who has been terrorizing his subjects with high tributes and executions, the adept will feel a strong pull of fear and injustice emanating from this target. If there is no emotional focus from the community itself, say an ember wolf has been killing the town's cattle, the adept will instead feel a pull of fear emanating from outside the community.

For the purposes of this talent, a "community" consists of any group of creatures ranging up to their Empathic Sense rank x 100. Use of this knack does not provide the usual +2 bonus to Interaction tests, as it does not target a specific individual. Otherwise, this knack follows the same rules as regular uses of the Empathic Sense talent, including attunement.

Hive Mind

Talent: Empathic Sense

Requirements: Rank 9

Restrictions: Rootwalker 7

Step: Rank + CHA

Action: Standard

Strain: 3

The adept is capable of attuning into multiple targets, creating an empathic link between them that allows them to share their knowledge. The adept selects a number of willing targets equal to their rank in Empathic Sense, making a test against the highest Social Defense among them, +1 for each additional target. If successful, each target may select a type of test from the list below, gaining a +2 bonus to it for each success scored on this test. Each target must remain within 10 yards of each other, otherwise the effects of this knack end for all targets. The characteristic must be selected before the Hive Mind test is made and lasts for a number of minutes equal to the adept's Empathic Sense rank.

Available Tests: Initiative, Interaction, Knockdown, Knowledge Skills, Resist Fear





Insect Communication Knacks

A Thousand Eyes

Talent: Insect Communication **Requirements:** Rank 5
Restrictions: Rootwalker 5 **Step:** Rank + PER
Action: Simple **Strain:** 1

The adept is able to attune to the local insect life to increase their perception abilities. The adept makes an Insect Communication test against a difficulty determined by the current terrain they inhabit. Each success grants the adept a +2 bonus to Perception tests for a number of hours equal to their rank in Insect Communication. This knack cannot be used in environments where insect life cannot live or is too sparse, such as snow-covered mountains.

<i>Terrain</i>	<i>Difficulty</i>
Hinterlands	7
Jungles	5
Mountains	7
The Wastes	12
Woodlands	6

Infestation

Talent: Insect Communication **Requirements:** Rank 7
Restrictions: Rootwalker 5 **Step:** Rank + PER
Action: Simple **Strain:** 2

The adept is capable of summoning huge swarms of insects to distract an opponent. The adept makes an Insect Communication test and applies the result to an opponent's Physical Defense. Success causes a swarm of insects to harass the target, causing them to be *harried* for a number of rounds equal to the successes scored.

Lifesight Knacks

Root Sense

Talent: Lifesight **Requirements:** Rank 3
Restrictions: Rootwalker 3 **Step:** Rank + PER
Action: Standard **Strain:** 0

The adept is able to extend their roots out into the ground to sense the presence of nearby beings and gather general information about them. The adept makes a Root Sense test and compares the result to Mystic Defense of every being (living or dead) within Rootwalker rank x10 yards. Success allows the adept to sense the general direction of where the beings. Each success allows the adept's player to ask the gamemaster one general question about the region they are currently sensing such as how large is the biggest creature? Are any of the beings Horrors? Are any of the beings





Namegivers? Are there any wounded creatures within range? This knack cannot be used to reveal game information such as Defense Ratings or Wound Threshold. The adept must be touching the ground to use this knack.

Patterncraft Knacks

Rootwalker Spells

Talent: Patterncraft **Requirements:** Rank 7
Restrictions: Rootwalker rank 4 **Action:** NA
Step: NA **Skill Use:** No
Strain: 0

The following spells are available for the adept to learn as part of their Discipline. Divine Aura (*Player's Guide*, p.343), Grove Renewal (*Player's Guide*, p.282), Mantle of the Woodland Hunter (*Player's Guide*, p.277), Shelter (*Player's Guide*, p.274). Threads are woven using the Discipline's thread weaving talent and additional threads determined by the Discipline's Circle. The adept must still have all the talents required to cast and learn the spells; this only provides the opportunity to learn them for Disciplines normally unable to do so.

Rootwalker Knacks

Cleansing Erminsosl [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker **Requirements:** Rank 5
Restrictions: None
Strain: 1

The adept can spend a Karma Point on Damage tests made against Horrorspawn and feral leafers.

Foxglove Friend [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker **Requirements:** Rank 3
Restrictions: None
Strain: 1

The adept can spend a Karma Point on attest to resist poison.

Gloam Skin [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker **Requirements:** Rank 3
Restrictions: None
Strain: 1

The adept can spend a Karma Point on a Wood Skin or Temper Flesh test.





Marauding Roots [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker

Restrictions: None

Strain: 1

Requirements: Rank 2

Stabilizing Roots

The adept can spend a Karma Point on a Damage or Effect test against a target within 10 yards who has been *harried* from the result of an ally's action or ability. This knack can be used once per round.

Mulch Walker [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker

Restrictions: None

Strain: 1

Requirements: Rank 3

The adept can spend a Karma Point on Stealthy Stride tests or other tests to conceal their presence when in a forest environment.

Song of the Ancient Ones [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker

Restrictions: None

Strain: 1

Requirements: Rank 7

The adept can spend a Karma Point on Insect Communication, Plant Talk, and Wood Talk tests while in the Deep Forest.



Stabilizing Roots [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker

Requirements: Rank 1

Restrictions: None

Strain: 1

The adept can spend a Karma Point on an ally's Knockdown test made within 10 yards. This knack can be used once per round.

This One Knows the Answer [Karma]

Talent: Rootwalker

Requirements: Rank 5

Restrictions: None

Stabilizing
Roots

Strain: 1

The adept can spend a Karma Point on Knowledge tests relating to Vasgothian "Forest Magic" (Deep Forest, Dread Yearning, Half-Horrors, Physical Warping





etc.).

Tracking Knacks

Understanding the Forest

See Vasgothia, p. 206

Wilderness Survival Knacks

The Forest Provides

See Vasgothia, p.223

Understanding the Forest

See Vasgothia, p.224

Wood Skin Knacks

Bramble Skin

Talent: Wood Skin

Restrictions: Rootwalker 2

Action: Standard

Requirements: Rank 4

Step: Rank + TOU

Strain: 2

The adept causes their skin to erupt with thousands of tiny bramble thorns when employing the Wood Skin talent. While the adept's Wood Skin talent is active, any Unarmed attacks that successfully hit the adept cause the attacker to take step damage equal to the adept's Bramble Skin rank

Oak's Growth

Talent: Wood Skin

Restrictions: Rootwalker 6

Action: Standard

Requirements: Rank 8

Step: Rank + TOU

Strain: 1

The adept is able to use the Wood Skin talent to rapidly expand their size and the thickness of the bark that covers their body. After making a Wood Skin test, the adept automatically increases their height by 50% and gains +2 Physical Armor for the duration of the talent.

Wood Blend

See Mystic Paths, p.295





Wood Walk Knacks

The Forest Knows My Feet

See Mystic Paths, p.296

The Forest Knows My Friends

See Mystic Paths, p.296

Rooted to the Spot

Talent: Wood Walk

Requirements: Rank 5

Restrictions: Rootwalker 5

Step: Rank + STR

Action: Simple

Strain: 1

The adept can send their roots out into the ground, making it more difficult for their opponents to knock them down. The adept's makes a Wood Walk test against their Strength step. Each success adds a +2 bonus to any Knockdown tests the adept makes for a number of rounds equal to their Rooted to the Spot rank. An adept loses the benefits of this knack if they move. The adept must be touching the ground to use this knack.

Traverse Forest

See Mystic Paths, p.296

Wood Excursion

See Mystic Paths, p.296

Path Knacks

Rootwalker [Path]

Talent: Thread Weaving **Cost:** 500 legend points

Requirements: Rank 5, leafer, must complete a Rootwalker ordeal

Restrictions: Any Discipline Circle 5

The adept performs the initiation ritual and weaves a thread to the Rootwalker pattern, taking 2 Blood Magic Damage, and gains Rootwalker at rank 1.

