

# Introduction

## Welcome!

Welcome to “Bits of the Wilderness™: Into the Swamp,” Tabletop Adventures’ book of, believe it or not, swamp descriptions. What is there to describe about a swamp, other than that it’s wet? We hope to show you that here. Our writers, with a broad range of writing experience and gaming expertise, have provided pieces giving realistic or fantastic detail above and beyond the stereotypical idea of hot and damp.

We have taken care to provide descriptions that can be used in virtually any game that takes place in a quasi-European medieval fantasy setting without “clashing” with the feel or setting of your existing campaign. However, in those rare cases that something seems out of place, either discard the description or change it as you have need. These descriptions are for your use in your game and you are free to modify them to keep your game fun and exciting for you and your players. I hope that you can find plenty of material here to augment your players’ imaginations and to stimulate your own ideas for adventures.

## Harried Game Masters, or How We Came to Write This Book

So, I hear you ask, “Why write a book like this?” Well, I’m glad you asked. We wrote it for all those Game Masters who have ever lamented not having the time that they wanted to spend on their game because those unforgiving intrusions to gaming (life, work, family, school) interfered. We wrote it for all those game masters who have come home from a hard day of work or just finished a grueling finals week and had friends call up and say, “Hey, let’s play tonight. I had a rough

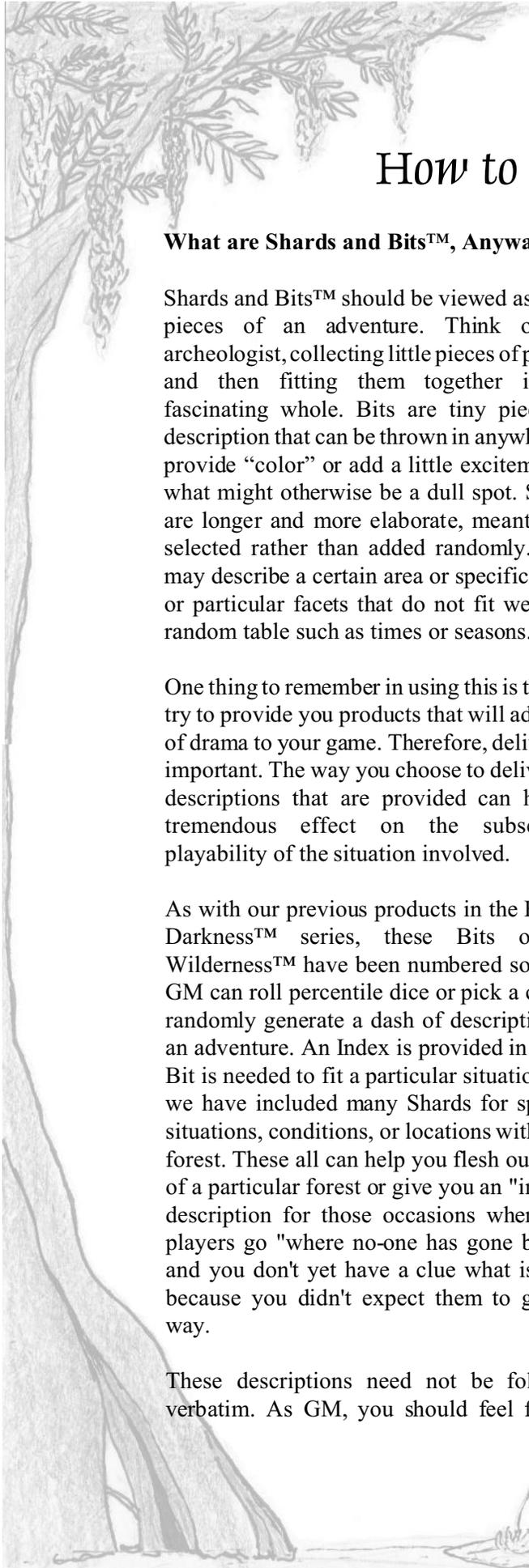
day and I want to kill something.” For all of you who need more than 24 hours in a day, welcome to Tabletop Adventures’ line of products for the Harried Game Master.

We here at TTA believe that description is a very important part of game-mastering and that vivid descriptions can make a world or an adventure come alive. However, we have noticed that the more rushed or frazzled a GM becomes, the more mechanical the game tends to be. So we have written a book that we’ve always wished to have, one that would have made our lives easier over the years. Tabletop Adventures’ “Harried Game Master” products are designed to be products that you can buy today and play tonight. We have taken care to make them flexible so they can be used in virtually any campaign without changing its feel or details. They are to help you, the Game Master, make the maximum use of the limited time you have available.

This tool provides the GM with a way to stimulate the characters’ senses and the players’ imaginations without having to use game-changing information. The descriptions can give players a “feel” for a situation, a better image of what is happening or what their characters are experiencing without all of those experiences leading directly to combat or treasure. They are intended to enhance role-playing by encouraging character building, reaction, and interaction. These Bits of the Swamp, and all the accompanying material, are made for you, to ease the life of the Harried Game Master.

Enjoy, have fun, and create fun for others!

The good people at Tabletop Adventures,  
and the Overlord.



# How to Use This Resource

## What are Shards and Bits™, Anyway?

Shards and Bits™ should be viewed as small pieces of an adventure. Think of the archeologist, collecting little pieces of pottery and then fitting them together into a fascinating whole. Bits are tiny pieces of description that can be thrown in anywhere to provide “color” or add a little excitement to what might otherwise be a dull spot. Shards are longer and more elaborate, meant to be selected rather than added randomly. They may describe a certain area or specific thing, or particular facets that do not fit well in a random table such as times or seasons.

One thing to remember in using this is that we try to provide you products that will add a bit of drama to your game. Therefore, delivery is important. The way you choose to deliver the descriptions that are provided can have a tremendous effect on the subsequent playability of the situation involved.

As with our previous products in the Bits of Darkness™ series, these Bits of the Wilderness™ have been numbered so that a GM can roll percentile dice or pick a card to randomly generate a dash of description for an adventure. An Index is provided in case a Bit is needed to fit a particular situation, and we have included many Shards for specific situations, conditions, or locations within the forest. These all can help you flesh out areas of a particular forest or give you an “instant” description for those occasions when your players go “where no-one has gone before” and you don't yet have a clue what is there because you didn't expect them to go that way.

These descriptions need not be followed verbatim. As GM, you should feel free to

adapt them however you need in order to use them to greatest effect. In some instances they may even give you ideas for additional adventures for your players. These Bits are for whatever you want! If a piece sparks your imagination (or those of your players) and you want to build on it, then go for it.

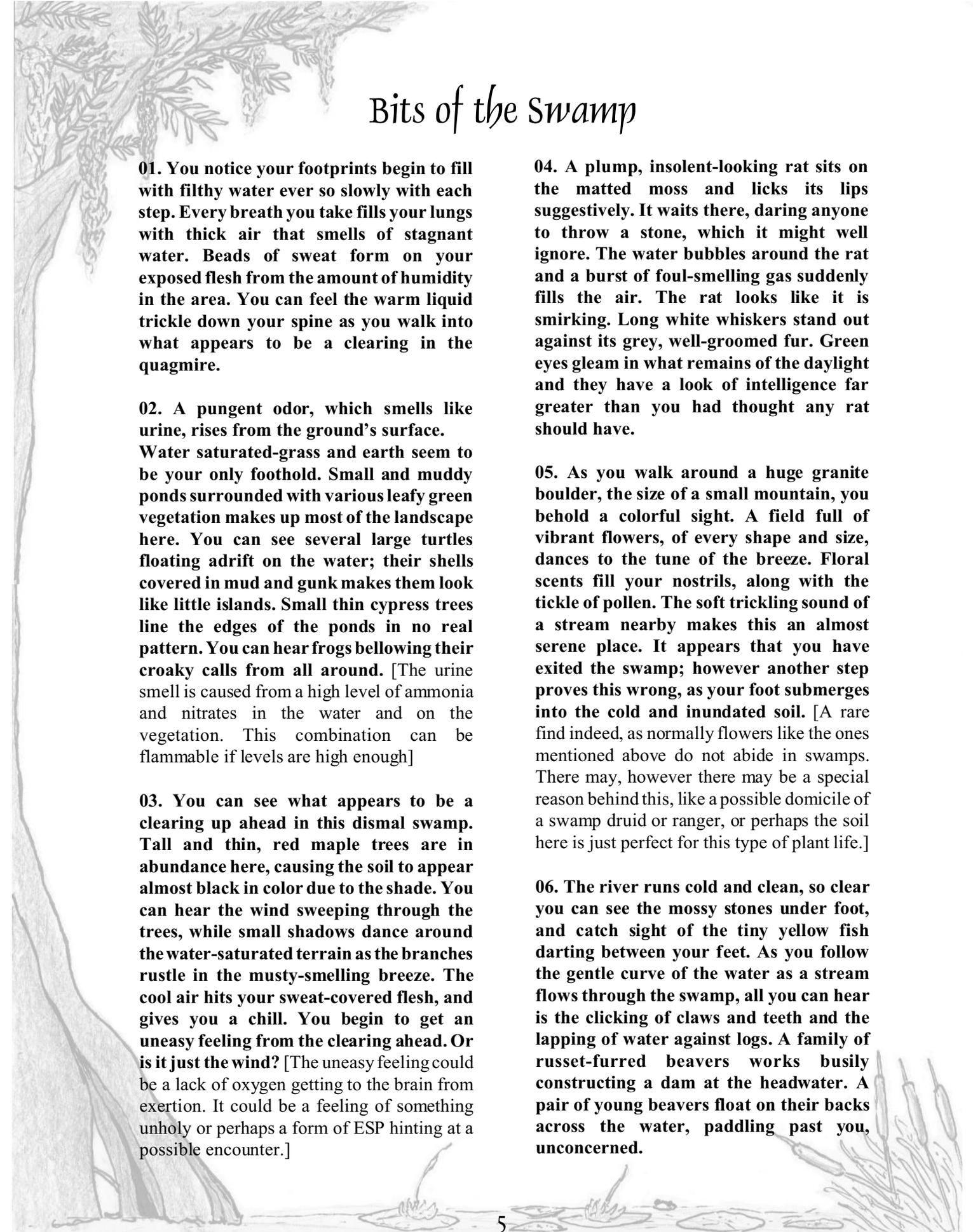
Another thing to consider is that some of the Shards or longer Bits can be used a little at a time. Read one paragraph, let the adventurers move on a little further or ask questions, and then continue with the text.

## Printing This Product

These pages can be printed out on regular paper. However, the final pages are formatted to be printed on card stock. As cards, they can be shuffled and drawn randomly during play or sorted ahead of time, with the GM selecting certain bits for use and placing them with the appropriate map or other materials. If you don't want to work with cards, you can roll randomly and read the description to the players, or write the appropriate number on the GM's map and refer to it when the characters arrive there.

## Upcoming Products from TTA

As always, be watching for the next product from Tabletop Adventures™. “Bits of Darkness: Dungeons II” will bring even more mysterious and suspenseful descriptions in October 2005. Visit our website at [www.tabletopadventures.com](http://www.tabletopadventures.com) for more information. As always, if you have any comments or suggestions please send them to [overlord@tabletopadventures.com](mailto:overlord@tabletopadventures.com). You can be sure that the Overlord is always ready to listen!



## Bits of the Swamp

**01. You notice your footprints begin to fill with filthy water ever so slowly with each step. Every breath you take fills your lungs with thick air that smells of stagnant water. Beads of sweat form on your exposed flesh from the amount of humidity in the area. You can feel the warm liquid trickle down your spine as you walk into what appears to be a clearing in the quagmire.**

**02. A pungent odor, which smells like urine, rises from the ground's surface. Water saturated-grass and earth seem to be your only foothold. Small and muddy ponds surrounded with various leafy green vegetation makes up most of the landscape here. You can see several large turtles floating adrift on the water; their shells covered in mud and gunk makes them look like little islands. Small thin cypress trees line the edges of the ponds in no real pattern. You can hear frogs bellowing their croaky calls from all around. [The urine smell is caused from a high level of ammonia and nitrates in the water and on the vegetation. This combination can be flammable if levels are high enough]**

**03. You can see what appears to be a clearing up ahead in this dismal swamp. Tall and thin, red maple trees are in abundance here, causing the soil to appear almost black in color due to the shade. You can hear the wind sweeping through the trees, while small shadows dance around the water-saturated terrain as the branches rustle in the musty-smelling breeze. The cool air hits your sweat-covered flesh, and gives you a chill. You begin to get an uneasy feeling from the clearing ahead. Or is it just the wind? [The uneasy feeling could be a lack of oxygen getting to the brain from exertion. It could be a feeling of something unholy or perhaps a form of ESP hinting at a possible encounter.]**

**04. A plump, insolent-looking rat sits on the matted moss and licks its lips suggestively. It waits there, daring anyone to throw a stone, which it might well ignore. The water bubbles around the rat and a burst of foul-smelling gas suddenly fills the air. The rat looks like it is smirking. Long white whiskers stand out against its grey, well-groomed fur. Green eyes gleam in what remains of the daylight and they have a look of intelligence far greater than you had thought any rat should have.**

**05. As you walk around a huge granite boulder, the size of a small mountain, you behold a colorful sight. A field full of vibrant flowers, of every shape and size, dances to the tune of the breeze. Floral scents fill your nostrils, along with the tickle of pollen. The soft trickling sound of a stream nearby makes this an almost serene place. It appears that you have exited the swamp; however another step proves this wrong, as your foot submerges into the cold and inundated soil. [A rare find indeed, as normally flowers like the ones mentioned above do not abide in swamps. There may, however there may be a special reason behind this, like a possible domicile of a swamp druid or ranger, or perhaps the soil here is just perfect for this type of plant life.]**

**06. The river runs cold and clean, so clear you can see the mossy stones under foot, and catch sight of the tiny yellow fish darting between your feet. As you follow the gentle curve of the water as a stream flows through the swamp, all you can hear is the clicking of claws and teeth and the lapping of water against logs. A family of russet-furred beavers works busily constructing a dam at the headwater. A pair of young beavers float on their backs across the water, paddling past you, unconcerned.**