

HEROIC WORKS



Legacy of the Dike

The Dark Eye

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Easier Symbol: to make a scene less difficult for the heroes, use these suggestions.



More Difficult Symbol: to make a scene more difficult for the heroes, use these suggestions.



People marked with this symbol are already dead before the adventure begins.

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HEROIC WORKS

Legacy of the Dike



“That old farm there on the dike? You better stay away from it. There’s a curse on that farm. What sort of curse? Well, an evil curse. You know what I mean. Bad luck and all that. Maybe it’s a punishment from the good gods above. Anyway, a few weeks ago even the farmer, old peculiar Frengefolds, disappeared. Where to? Well, you know...he was just gone one day. Maybe the curse took him. Anyway, ten hippocampi couldn’t drag me to that place.”

—overheard on a dike farm in the Nostrian Lakeland

The Adventure at a Glance

Adventure Elements: Reconstructing a series of dikes, investigating a death, repelling an attack by Thorwalers

Genre: Coastal adventure with a dark flavor

Prerequisites: no major prejudices against witches

Location: The Lakeland, in the Kingdom of Nostria

Date: Modern (from 1040 FB onwards)

Complexity (Players/GM): low / low

Suggested Hero Experience Level: *Inexperienced to Competent*

Challenge Level

Social Skills	◆	◆	◆	◆
Combat	◆	◆	◆	◆
Stealth	◆	◆	◆	◆
Living History	◆	◆	◆	◆

Background

The Story Thus Far

Families often lose hearth and home from the constant fighting and ensuing changes in sovereignty in the border region between Nostria and Andergast. This is what happened to a Nostrian farmer named Elidan. When Andergastan soldiers conquered his village last spring, a spiteful neighbor seeking revenge for an old insult denounced him as a troublemaker and irredeemable supporter of the Nostrian throne. The new lord of the village didn’t hesitate to seize the old farmer’s land and banish his whole family from the village. Elidan had heard that dike farmers in the Lakeland earn a steady livelihood as yeomen, so he traveled to the Nostrian coast to find a new home for himself and his children on a vacant plot of land.

Elidan did find a piece of property to call his own, but it has a sinister history and a dangerous legacy. The land he acquired had for many years been farmed by ☠ Frengefolds, a yeoman who was plagued by bad luck his entire life. The blue wheeze epidemic of 1027 FB,

which killed a significant fraction of the population of the Royal City of Nostria, affected only his farm out of all the others in the region and claimed his wife and children. Some years later, Thorwalers attacked Frengefolds’s farm, burned his crops, and stole most of his sheep.

The Thorwalers had set ashore briefly on their way to another raid and only attacked Frengefolds’s farm out of boredom. They had no time to plunder other farms in the vicinity, but the neighbors didn’t know this, and they soon began to speak of a curse placed upon Frengefolds’s farm by the gods as punishment for some injustice he had committed in the past. People avoided Frengefolds, and the solitude changed him. He muttered to himself, and the other farmers considered him an odd loner.

A few weeks ago, Frengefolds found a carved tooth washed ashore near his dike. The tooth appeared to be covered with ancestor glyphs, so he tied it to his dike fork as a good luck charm. A few days later, he cut himself on the tooth while working and underwent a strange transformation. He found breathing increasingly difficult and felt a strange urge to submerge himself in water. Desperate to relieve his symptoms and gasping for air, he gave into the urges and dove into the sea, where his breathing quickly eased. He didn’t know exactly what was happening to him, but he recognized how it started and buried the dike fork with the cursed tooth in the sand along the shore to prevent others from falling victim to the spell. Fearing for his life, he built a large tub in the basement of his house, filled it with water, and hid there, hoping that his affliction would soon pass. Instead of recovering, though, he soon lost the ability to breathe out of the water. Trapped in his tub, he eventually died from hunger and exhaustion. His body lay in the basement of his house, undiscovered, for months....

What the Future May Hold

While traveling along the coastal road between Nostria and Salta, the heroes save the life of a child involved in an accident. The child’s father, Elidan, asks the heroes for help restoring his new farm and maintaining the bordering section of dike. They soon find the body of the previous owner in the basement, and Elidan becomes the curse’s next victim. The spell, which originated with Charyptoroth, killed Frengefolds quickly. To save Elidan’s life, the heroes must travel to Lyckmoor to obtain a cure from a witch named Karlitta of Lyckweiden.

Karlitta gives them a witch's ointment that will lift the curse, but upon their return, the heroes must fight off an attack of plundering Thorwalers before the dike yeoman can be saved.

Choice of Player Heroes

This adventure offers an appropriate challenge for heroes educated in crafting skills, characters at home in the wilderness, and fighters and spellcasters in general. Characters from the Warring Kingdoms are well suited for the adventure. Thorwalers, exotic characters, and characters who have strong prejudices against witches

may be less appropriate. Thorwalers are strongly disliked by the inhabitants of the Lakeland and may face a conflict of interests in the last phase of the adventure (*Attack of the Thorwalers*).

The heroes should generally be willing to help and at least one should be able to swim. A witch in the group might have known the witch Young Lynia (who died before the events of this adventure), and may even know Karlitta of Lyckwieden or at least know of her and be willing to recommend her as a source of wisdom.

Getting Started

A Child in Need

When the adventure begins, the heroes are traveling in the Lakeland on the coastal road between Nostria and Salta. Either they are here for their own reasons, or maybe they are returning from a knight's tournament or a friend's wedding. Perhaps they are exploring the Andergastan-Nostrian forest wilderness or simply on their way to the next large port. They could be traveling on the orders of a bombast to investigate tales of recent Thorwaler raids. They could also be traveling to the city of Nostria at the behest of a merchant from Salta, either to deliver a message or transport some goods. Maybe a

private scholar or a Blessed One of Efferd asked them to map the coastline. The important thing is that their errand takes them over the coastal road and that they are not pressed for time.

When the adventure begins, the heroes are about one-and-a-half day's journey south of Trontsand and far from any large villages when they hear desperate cries for help from the direction of the shore. If they follow the cries and cross the dike, they find an eight-year-old boy, **A** *Alsilio*, the youngest son of the farmer **E** *Elidan*. Alsilio sneaked away from home to explore the coast and look for hidden treasures. He fell into a hole on the shore about 50 yards from the high tide line, sank up to his knees in the soft, muddy sand, and could not free himself. If nobody rescues him, he drowns when the tide comes in.

The water is already up to Alsilio's chest. The heroes can reach him only by swimming (or flying), or as a final effort, by throwing him a rope. Several complications may arise, if desired, as follows.



Alsilio panics as the tide rises, and he begins to scream and flail his arms. He must be calmed down before he can concentrate enough to grab a rope (check with *Treat Soul*; failure means that the boy does not calm down).



The boy is stuck in a treacherous area of mud sand. Rescuers who try to pull him out of the hole might become stuck themselves (make checks with *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* with a penalty of -1; failure means that the rescuer is stuck and must be freed as well; freeing oneself requires a check on *Feat of Strength (Dragging & Pulling)* with a -2 penalty).

Alsilio's worried father arrives after the boy is safe on dry land. He thanks the heroes for their selfless heroism and invites them to dinner at his nearby farm.



Elidan's Request

At his homestead, Elidan tells the heroes that he lost his old farm on the border between Nostria and Andergast a few months ago and moved to the Nostrian coast with his five children to search for a new home. Two days ago, he found this farmyard, a free spot of dike land, seemingly abandoned. He hopes to settle down and build a new life here. Apparently, the farm had been abandoned for weeks, but Elidan cannot claim the land without the former yeoman's dike fork, which is missing (it is customary for a yeoman who gives up a farm on the dike to leave the dike fork protruding from the barrier, and anyone who wants to claim the land simply claims the dike fork. Given the current condition of the dike, Elidan fears that the tool might have washed out to sea during a storm.

After talking to the heroes for a while, the yeoman takes heart and asks the heroes for their help. He admits that he underestimated the extent of work necessary. He has no experience in maintaining dikes and does not know much about life on the coast. He pleads with his guests to stay for a few more days and help his family in repairing

the dike. He had initially hoped to secure help from other dike yeomen in the vicinity, as they know much more about this sort of work, but the long-established yeomen were unwilling to help. When approached, they either made vague allusions to a dark curse on the farmstead or were otherwise distrustful and dismissive of his pleas.

If asked to explain this alleged curse, Elidan hesitates at first. He found no signs of a curse on the farm, but he admits that he believes he is cursed, as everything in his life seems to be going wrong. First, he lost his family farm, then he could not find this farm's dike fork, and now Alsilio nearly drowns. He does not know how he came to be cursed, as he cannot recall when he or someone from his family has ever angered a spellcaster or magical creature.

As payment for their help, Elidan offers the heroes room and board, provisions for their journey onward, and some of his savings (5 halers per person, per day). He is also willing to share a few tips and tricks from his days as a mercenary and soldier in the Nostrian army.

On the Dike Farmstead

The Yeoman and his Family

During this adventure, the heroes mainly interact with the members of the yeoman's family. Elidan and his children are upstanding, good-hearted people who find themselves in a desperate situation through no fault of their own. Ideally, the heroes grow so fond of the family during their stay at the farmstead that they agree to help without asking for a financial reward.

♣ Elidan, Erstwhile Forest Farmer and Budding Dike Yeoman

Appearance: Late thirties; 6'; broad shouldered; dark blond hair; full beard; gray-blue eyes; serious expression

Profession: Competent farmer; experienced soldier; inexperienced dike yeoman

Motivation: Wants a fresh start and a secure future for his family

Role: Initially, a father in need; later, a victim of a mysterious transformation; unwittingly draws the heroes into the plot by asking for aid

Background: Elidan hails from a small village on the border between Nostria and Andergast. In his younger years, this farmer's son yearned for adventure, and he left his parents' farmstead to join a mercenary unit that was passing through. After two years with *Ugdalf's Unbreakables* and then two years in the Nostrian army, where he reached the rank of corporal, he felt he had seen enough of the world and of war. He returned to his village and became known as a wise and far-traveled

man. He married the love of his youth, ♀ *Girmina*, not knowing that during the years of his absence, a forest farmer named ♣ *Ingvabald* had also cast an eye on her. Ingvabald's hatred towards Elidan grew when *Girmina* died giving birth to *Alsilio*. When *Andergastan* soldiers occupied the village, Ingvabald seized his chance for revenge by denouncing Elidan with the new lords, who then had him banished. Elidan does not know the true reason for his banishment. After losing his farm, the widower determined to make a new start and provide a safe future for himself and his children.

Role Playing Tips: Look directly at your players and listen attentively to their advice and ideas. Elidan sighs morosely or rests his face in his hands when he thinks nobody is watching him. He shows optimism and determination in front of his children (and, initially, the heroes), but he is overwhelmed by the new and strange environment and the repeated setbacks.

Important Stats: Willpower 6 (14/13/12), Woodworking 7 (13/14/14), SPI 1

Elidan's Children

Elidan's five children are as follows:

♣ *Perlmin* (16; dark blond hair; looks very much like his father; Willpower 3 (12/12/12), Woodworking 8 (14/12/12), SPI 1), Elidan's oldest son, tries to follow his father's example and never questions his decisions. He is a tenacious worker and a very skilled crafter. Heroes who are willing to teach him some new skills find him quick and eager to learn.

♣ *Ovina* (15; dark blonde hair; pretty; *Willpower* 4 (11/13/13), *SPI* 1) is a quiet and shy girl who acts very restrained around the heroes. She is intelligent and unusually forward thinking for a girl from the Nostrian hinterlands, and even Elidan sometimes acts according to her counsel.

Elidan is most worried about his middle son, ♣ *Sapertyn* (13; dark blond hair; miserable luck; *Willpower* 6 (13/10/10), *SPI* 0), who among the siblings suffers the most from the loss of his old home. He is angry about the banishment and even more about the fact that his father took this injustice without fighting back. He is often moody and irritated and quarrels with his father and siblings at the slightest provocation.

♣ *Tommelothje* (11; sandy hair; cheerful; *Willpower* 0 (10/10/14), *SPI* 0), called Tomme by her father and siblings, is a rather clumsy girl who leaves chaos in her wake. She lost the little finger on her left hand in an accident a year ago, but this did not hamper the girl's lively, cheerful nature.

Little Alsilio (8; light blond hair; childlike features; cheerful; *Willpower* 1 (10/10/12), *SPI* 0) has a vivid imagination and dreams of faraway lands, great adventures, and fabulous treasures. The heroes are the tangible embodiment of his dreams. He hangs on their every word and does not leave their side as long as they remain on the farm.

Repairs to the Dike

The portion of the dike that runs along the farm's border is approximately 10 feet tall and shows no visible damage from flooding, but it and the farmhouse clearly look neglected.

If the heroes lack the necessary skills, the damage is less drastic and the repairs can wait. Either way, it is obvious that Elidan does not have the skills to repair it without help from experienced dike yeomen.

An inspection of the dike does not reveal the missing dike fork, but it does reveal three weak points that need repair soon:

- ♣ Strips of turf and rush weed, attached to the top of the dike to protect it from erosion, have dried up in many spots due to the sea winds and the merciless beating from Praios' Disc. They must be replaced (check with *Plant Lore (Crops)*; failure means the next storm sweeps away the turf strips and rush weed and compromises the dike).
- ♣ One spot facing the sea, reinforced with stones and boards, has washed away and might yield soon. The repair work proves difficult as the old boards must first be removed, which itself further threatens the stability of this section of the dike. Also, the repairs must be completed during low tide or risk collapsing the dike when the water returns (cumulative group check on *Earthencraft (Dike Building)*, 1 hour, any number of attempts; failure means the rising tide damages the dike, inflicting a -1 penalty to the next repair check).
- ♣ The ground next to an inland-facing section of the dike is very muddy, possibly indicating a leak. Someone must dig a drainage ditch to evacuate the water before it softens the berm (check with *Orienteering +1*; failure means the rising tide damages the farmhouse).



Repairs on the Farmstead

The farmhouse requires quite a bit of work as well. The thatched, wooden house consists of only two sparsely furnished rooms. The smaller room serves as a living and sleeping area, while the larger one serves as a workroom and kitchen. One corner is set aside for handicrafts. The following damage is in urgent need of repair:

- The roof is leaking in numerous places. Elidan has a fear of heights and needs the help of the heroes (cumulative group check on *Woodworking (Carpentry)* +2, 1 hour, 7 attempts; failure means rain pours into the house during the next storm).
- The wooden storm shutters facing the sea are rotten in places and nearly off their hinges. Elidan has spare lumber and the necessary tools, but not the required metal window fittings. Thus the old fittings must be refurbished and put back into service (check on *Metalworking (Blacksmith)*; failure means the window storm shutters remain unusable).
- Elidan is unable to open a wooden trapdoor that apparently leads to a storage cellar. Strangely, it seems to be locked or blocked from below (check on *Feat of Strength (Breaking & Smashing)* -1 or *Pick Locks (Bit Locks)*, 5 seconds, 7 attempts; failure means the door does not open, but the door may be smashed open (25 structure points)). Elidan would like access to the cellar as he hopes to find supplies such as spare metal items or even seeds for next season's crops. If the heroes manage to open the trapdoor, they find Frengesfold's body (see below).

Dike Builder (Special Ability)

Dikes are a common sight along the coasts of Nostria. These mighty earth walls channel or hold out the sea, creating usable farmland or protecting against tidal surges and flooding.

Rules: With this special ability, the character receives the new application *Dike Building* for the skill *Earthencraft*, and may build, maintain, and repair dikes. Some types of dikes are *complex* and require a trade secret.

Requirements: *Earthencraft* 4

AP Value: 2 adventure points

The Body in the Cellar

A sturdy trapdoor grants access to the cellar, but it is blocked from below with wedges and can be opened only with considerable force. Once open, the wooden rungs of a ladder become visible. The stagnant air that rises from the hatch carries the unmistakable smell of decay. Elidan and his children, who had eagerly leaned over the opening, now step back in fear.

If the heroes climb down to the cellar with a suitable light source, they see a large tub filled with putrid water. A successful check on *Perception (Search and Spot)* reveals something hidden beneath the oily surface. With QL 2, the heroes notice that the foul smell from the water has a salty component and is reminiscent of rotten fish.

Anyone reaching into the tub must make a check on *Willpower (Face Threats)* or receive one level of *Fear*.

If the heroes decide to smash the tub and let the water drain instead of just reaching inside, the unpleasant smell spreads through the entire cellar. Even if it does not touch the heroes, it lingers in their noses and sticks to their clothes for several days.

Eventually the heroes stand before the mortal remains of Frengesfold.

The drowned, bloated body is in an advanced stage of putrefaction. The corpse is that of a medium-sized, malnourished man of approximately 50 years old. He seems to have been here for a couple of weeks. A closer examination of the body requires a certain amount of willpower but can reveal that the body shows no signs of injury (this fact becomes clear only after a successful check with *Treat Wounds*). The dead man is fully dressed, including his shoes, and carries a work knife on his belt. A successful *Perception (Search)* check with a penalty of -1 reveals two slender gill-slits on the neck underneath the ears. These gills are otherwise barely visible due to the bloating, putrefaction, and bad lighting.

Elidan urges the heroes to remove the body from the cellar. Considering the state of the corpse, it seems best to bury him as quickly as possible. Elidan and Perlmin agree to dig a grave but otherwise these superstitious people stay away from the dead and do not even help drag him up from the cellar. The body is coated in a slippery, wax-like substance, and moving it is no easy task. Carrying the body up the narrow wooden ladder requires a great deal of creativity and resolve (as well as a check on *Feat of Strength (Lifting)* by two heroes; failure means they drop the body, which causes one level of *Fear* in all those present as body parts break off of the dead man).

The dead man is unknown to Elidan and his children, but they assume that he was the farm's previous inhabitant. If the heroes ask other farmers in the area about his identity, a female dike yeoman who lives to the north along the coast can be convinced (after some initial reluctance) to visit the farm and try to identify the body.

♠ *Meralind* (61; 5'7; bald; weather-beaten face; loves the traditions of the Lakeland; hates strangers; needs



someone she can nag about; Willpower 5 (13/12/11), SPI 1) identifies the body as that of Frengesfold and quickly leaves, preferring not to linger near the dead man or his former farmstead.

A Nightly Visit

After nightfall, flickering lights seem to float over the marshlands towards the farm. A dozen yeomen from neighboring farms, each carrying a dike fork, a punt ax, and a torch, are marching at the urging of their new leader, **Melcherbald**, to chase Elidan from the cursed farmstead and burn it to the ground. They distrust this newcomer who evidently does not know the old customs, has no idea how to maintain a dike, and cannot even produce his predecessor's dike fork, which would validate his claim on the land. The missing dike fork is Melcherbald's main concern, while the mob claims—amid dismissive whistling and yelled threats—that Elidan's incompetence in maintaining the dike will soon awaken the curse on the farm and plunge everyone here into ruin.

None of the farmers can explain the exact nature of the curse. Follow-up questions lead to a confused assortment of superstitions and rumors about the farm's previous owner, who disappeared without a trace a few weeks ago. If Melcherbald already knows that Frengesfold's body was found in the cellar, he sees this death as additional proof of the effects of the curse.

The yeomen are generally distrustful towards strangers like the heroes. Unless at least one of the heroes is a Nostrian, the yeomen suspect them of being Thorwaler scouts looking for new raiding opportunities. The heroes can defuse their anger by promising to investigate the mysterious curse, but the threat of violence works just as well. The yeomen do not want to fight and quickly leave once they realize Elidan won't surrender to threats or arguments.

Elidan's children, especially the younger ones, become very unsettled. This nighttime visit reawakens memories of their recent flight from their farm. Elidan is too caught up in his own problems to notice his children's reactions. Empathetic heroes may act to calm the children.

The Curse of the Fork

The next morning, Elidan urges the heroes to keep looking for the missing dike fork so that he has something to show if his envious neighbors return or a representative of the local Dike Count visits the farm. After much searching, at low tide they find the dike fork buried in the mud on the seaside wall of the dike. It may have been buried deliberately, and the waves seem to have washed it free again. Elidan thanks the heroes profusely and attempts a cursory inspection with the unfamiliar tool. He then cuts himself on the sea serpent tooth decoration and becomes affected by the same spell as his predecessor (he slowly loses his ability to breathe above water).

The transformation occurs slowly. Initially, a nervous restlessness comes over Elidan. Later, he complains about a shortness of breath. Over the next few hours, his breathing becomes increasingly difficult and his mood changes to fear and panic. He does not understand what is happening to him.

Elidan's children react to this change in a variety of ways. Some pretend it isn't happening, while others become terrified. With patience and determination, the heroes can find ways to calm them down and also ensure that Elidan has regular access to water—for instance, in Frengesfold's (thoroughly cleaned) tub or similarly large container. Elidan is responsive but visibly shaken by this turn of events.

Searching for Help

The heroes manage to keep Elidan alive but do not see a way to heal him. Nothing they try works, and they may begin to suspect he will face a fate similar to Frengesfold's. The dike yeomen from neighboring farms are shocked by his plight and cannot recall anything like this happening in the past. Elidan's children beg the heroes to go and seek the counsel and aid of a wise witch known as **Young Lynia**. They

Dike Yeomen

COU 12 SGC 11 INT 12 CHA 11

DEX 14 AGI 13 CON 13 STR 13

LP 31 AE - KP - INI 13+1D6

DO 7 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 8

Dike Fork: AT 10 PA 4 DP 1D6+2 RE
medium

Punt Axe: AT 11 PA 4 DP 1D6+4 RE
medium

PRO/ENC: 0/0

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages:

Negative Trait (Superstition)

Special Abilities: None

Skills: Body Control 5, Feat of Strength 5, Intimidation 2, Perception 6, Self-Control 4, Stealth 3, Swimming 8, Willpower 3

Combat Behavior: The dike yeomen prefer to fight from an advantageous position, such as from the top of a dike.

Escape: Loss of 25 % LP

Pain +1 with: 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP or less



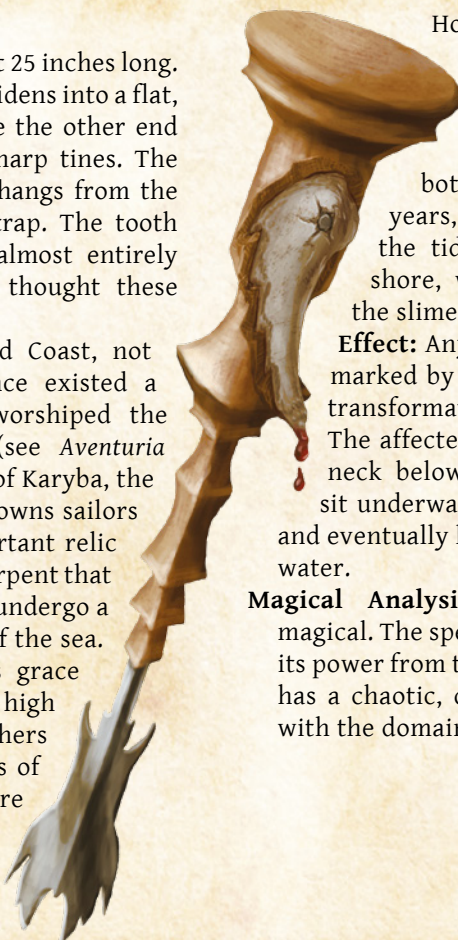
never met the witch, but they heard good things about her from various farmers while journeying to the Lakelands. They also learned that she lives near a lake in the Hookmarsher Moor, near Trontsand. If any of the player heroes are witches, they may already know Lynia, who is locally famous. Unfortunately, Young Lynia died a short time ago, but the heroes won't learn that until they arrive in Trontsand.

If the heroes do not wish to seek the aid of a witch, they might think to ask for aid at a temple of Praios, the nearest one of which is in Trontsand.

The Root of Evil

Appearance: This dike fork is about 25 inches long. One end of the wooden handle widens into a flat, potato masher-like shape, while the other end sports a flat spade with two sharp tines. The twisted tooth of a sea serpent hangs from the wooden handle by a leather strap. The tooth bears ancient runes that are almost entirely faded. The locals erroneously thought these were ancestor glyphs.

Background: On the Seven Wind Coast, not far from Trontsand, there once existed a secret cult whose disciples worshiped the Archdemoness Charyptoroth (see *Aventuria Almanac*, page 184) in the guise of Karyba, the cruel Lady of the Water who drowns sailors without mercy. Her most important relic was the magical tooth of a sea serpent that allowed members of the cult to undergo a transformation into creatures of the sea. The cult initially granted this grace only to sworn members, but the high priest later agreed to mark others he deemed worthy. The witches of Nostria eventually became aware of the cult's dark activities and decided to act. On a moonless night, they destroyed the cult and killed all its members.



However, with his dying breath, the high priest cast the sea serpent tooth into the sea, keeping it out of the witches' hands. The tooth lay at the bottom of the ocean for many years, but the constant churning of the tides eventually washed it onto shore, where Frengesfold found it in the slime, to his great regret.

Effect: Anyone stabbed, cut, or otherwise marked by the tooth undergoes a striking transformation in a short amount of time. The affected person grows gill slits on the neck below the ears, feels compelled to sit underwater (either fresh or salt water), and eventually loses the ability to breath above water.

Magical Analysis: The tooth is definitively magical. The spell is old but still active. It draws its power from the runes on the tooth. The spell has a chaotic, demonic component associated with the domain of the Merciless Drowner.

Searching for a Witch

Along the Coastal Road

The road to Salta roughly follows the coastline. It is a well-built road in good condition. On foot, the heroes cover the distance between Eldian's farm and Trontsand in a day. If they set out that afternoon, they reach the town by noon the following day.

Striped Sails Off the Coast

While traveling, the heroes come upon the farm of a dike yeoman that was recently raided by Thorwalers. They even catch a glimpse of a dragon ship disappearing in the distance. Several people on the farm are injured, but fortunately, no one died. Apparently, the marauders sought only supplies for their journey south, and they stole the farm's sheep. The farmers seem unusually resigned to their ongoing fate, explaining that Thorwalers are expert at striking quickly and unexpectedly along this stretch of the coast and always manage to withdraw on their ships before men-at-arms from the local mottes can muster and respond. The farmers ask the heroes to bring news of the attack to the sea count in Trontsand.

By asking the right questions, the heroes may gain clues about the raiders that could prove helpful later in the adventure when Thorwalers attack Elidan's farm:

- The farmers say that a heavily armed woman, probably the sea raiders' leader, challenged the strongest farmer to a duel for ownership of the sheep. None of the farmers were brave enough to accept.
- The stable boy, **♠ Joppel** (17; taciturn; extremely shy; avoids direct eye contact), who is weakly blessed with Mada's Gift, called forth a magical spark of light when a raider cornered him in the barn. The attackers retreated and did not return.
- The marauders seemed to be in a hurry. Their leader kept urging them to take only what was most valuable. She was probably keeping an eye on the water, as they had beached the vessel shortly before high tide. If they lingered too long at the farm, they would have been forced to wait for the next high tide before they could leave.

Trontsand

Trontsand at a Glance

Region: Nostria, Maritime County of Sevenwind

Population: 750 people

Governance: Seat of Maritime Count Hupert Hyttenhau of Sevenwind

Temples: Praios; shrines to many other deities

Trade and Industry: Fishing town with a seaport and weekly market; center of saltarel fishing and Nostrian wool production (Trontsand cloth); Trontsand small wooden ships (model ships in a bottle, which are also popular outside of Nostria). The city's natural harbor and advantageous location on the coastal road makes it an important trading and transfer point for goods of all kinds.

Example Names for Inns: Silver Saltarel, Coast View, Trontsand Court

Special: The city is surrounded by a mighty stone wall.

Mood in the City: Pride about the market and city rights, which were gained only a few decades ago; aspiring and industrious; ongoing anger towards Thorwal, which has a long history of attempting to raid the city.

The lord of the town and surrounding lands is Maritime Count **♠ Hupart** (mid-50s; gray hair; tradition-conscious; loves his kingdom; hates Thorwalers; wants to protect his subjects; *Willpower* 7 (14/13/13), *SPI* 2)). He expresses anger at news of the recent raid and threatens revenge on the dastardly Thorwalers. After he calms down, he admits through gritted teeth that he lacks the resources to make good on his threats. The main problem is that the northmen strike without warning and disappear before local troops can react.

If the heroes ask Hupart or anyone else in Trontsand about the location of Young Lynia's hut, they learn that the 80-year-old witch passed away a short while ago. The young knight **♠ Brealetha of Hyttenhau**, a niece of the Maritime Count, set out for Hallerû with news of her passing for her sisters. They advise the heroes to instead seek the esteemed witch **♠ Karlitta of Lyckweiden**, who lives a short distance to the north, in Lyckmoor.

In Praios' Name

A visit to the temple of Praios is not very productive. Faith in Praios is of lesser significance in the Warring Kingdoms than elsewhere, and the local Blessed One of Praios is painfully aware that Nostrians would rather consult witches on spiritual matters, especially those concerning curses. He is quite surprised that the heroes came to see him, and he is certainly willing to help, but alas, he does not know any liturgical chants that can break curses.

He happily refers the adventurers to the Praios temple in the city of Nostria, but the heroes know that time is running out for Elidan and that trip would take too long.

Karlitta of Lyckweiden

After inquiring in Trontsand, the heroes should reach the conclusion that Karlitta is their best hope. She has a reputation for power and wisdom, and her hut is only two days away.

Journey to Lyckmoor

A cart path runs from Trontsand to Lyckmoor, a settlement of peat cutters who can direct the heroes to Karlitta's hut, which lies only ten miles from Lyckmoor itself. The peat cutters share quite a few stories about Karlitta's potent potions and ointments, but they also warn the heroes to avoid angering the capricious witch. Karlitta lives in an unassuming hut on the shore of a small lake. Her small herb garden contains plants that an herbalist would not expect to find growing in the moor.

🐾 Karlitta of Lyckweiden, Beauty of the Night

Appearance: 987 FB; 5'8"; hypnotic, black eyes; rust-red hair; obvious serpent tattoo on her chest; looks much younger than she is

Profession: Brilliant witch and alchemist

Motivation: She is generally disposed to help, but always tries to benefit in return

Role: Advisor and helper who must be convinced to render assistance

Background: Karlitta is one of the mightiest witches in Nostria. She is the leader of the Inner Circle of the influential and much feared Coven of Hallerû. This Beauty of the Night is an experienced herbalist and excellent alchemist. Customers travel great distances to acquire her potions and ointments. Karlitta is ambitious and just a little vain. She loves jewelry and revealing clothes made from expensive materials. She charges dearly for her services, whether in coin or favors. Her familiar is a tomcat named *Larion*, who rarely leaves her side.

Role Playing Tips: Keep your head tilted slightly and adopt a sometimes curious, sometimes amused gaze while scrutinizing the heroes. Karlitta is friendly, but she exhibits occasional, unexpected mood swings and tends to respond to questions with flippant answers. The heroes should never be certain how long she will remain in a good mood.

Important Stats: *Alchemy* 15 (15/16/14), *Willpower* 15 (15/16/17), *SPI* 3

Conversation with a Witch

Since people often visit Karlitta seeking help and advice, the heroes' arrival does not take her by surprise, and she welcomes them into her home—as long as they behave themselves. She listens patiently to their tale and asks follow-up questions only to clarify certain details. She implies that she knows a cure for Elidan's ailment but expects something in return. Specifically, she wants the sea serpent tooth that sparked the transformation.



She wants to keep it out of the wrong hands and desires to study it more closely. If the heroes seem greedy and won't promise to give her the tooth, she threatens to send them on their way empty-handed. If Karlitta gains the impression that the heroes have good intentions, though, she agrees to help them but demands either a large sum of money (300 silverthalers, approximately the value of five sheep) or a favor to be named later (payable either by the heroes or by Elidan, depending on her mood).

If the heroes agree to hand over the tooth (or if they don't have enough coin on hand), they must give Karlitta a pledge—such as a lock of hair—and swear on their honor to return after saving Elidan and deliver her payment.

Once they reach an agreement, the witch begins preparing an ointment. The process takes four hours and may not be interrupted. When finished, she packages the ointment in a small jar and presents it to the heroes, warning them to get to Elidan as fast as possible. The heroes must apply the ointment to the wound before the end of the seventh day after Elidan was injured.

Return to the Farmstead

As long as the heroes do not take any detours or face delays, they should manage to return before the seven days are up. The journey from Karlitta's hut to Elidan's farm takes about three days. Along the way, the heroes speak with travelers and farmers and hear more rumors about Thorwaler sightings and attacks on farms and settlements near the coast. Everyone laments that the northmen seem particularly hungry for loot this summer and are growing increasingly bold in their attacks.

Attack of the Thorwalers

The Thorwalers Are Coming!

Just as Elidan's farmyard comes into view in the distance, the heroes notice an armed group approaching the dike. It is the crew of a Thorwalian dragon ship, which is sitting on the mud flats. All 25 raiders have their weapons drawn and are advancing toward the dike to plunder the farmsteads beyond.

Someone seems to have sounded the alarm, for people from the nearest farms are already reacting to the attack. The children and the elderly are withdrawing inland, driving the livestock with them, while sixteen men and women—including Melcherbald and Elidan's oldest son, Perlmin—armed with dike forks and punt axes, have gathered to repel the Thorwalers. A messenger rode to the dike count's fortified motte to summon help. The defenders hope only to hold off the marauders until their families and livestock can escape. Elidan has grown weaker since the heroes set out and cannot leave his tub of water without suffocating. His children do not want to leave the farm without their father.

The armed yeomen are determined to stand their ground. However, the approaching Thorwalers have superior numbers and combat strength. Unless help arrives, the inexperienced farmers suffer a bloody defeat. If the heroes do not volunteer to help, Perlmin asks the heroes to help to fight off the marauders on behalf of his father.

The raiders are typical Thorwaler pirates—strong, experienced, and ruthless—but they are not cold-blooded killers. They ignore all children, elderly, and other helpless people who are not carrying weapons. Furthermore, they are here only to gain loot; they are not interested in fighting to the death. Dying is not profitable, after all. These pirates are led by a battle-hardened Hetman named Thurbold.

‡ Hetman Thurbold Yasmason, Leader of the Marauders

Appearance: *1001 FB; average height but stout; shoulder-length red hair; full, tousled beard with gray streaks; burn scars on the left temple

Profession: Competent ship's master, competent warrior

Motivation: He wants to gain quick and easy victory in order to satisfy his warriors; he wants to excel in battle to prove his claim to leadership

Role: Opponent; dangerous, but not invulnerable

Background: Thurbold and his crew had little luck last summer and his position as leader is not as certain as it once was. He desperately needs a profitable raid, or at least the chance to distinguish himself in combat as leader of this rough band of warriors.

Role Playing Tips: Speak in a loud voice and use big, boastful gestures to emphasize your words. Thurbold is quick to anger. Also, he likes to interrupt others but reacts very poorly to being interrupted or ridiculed himself.

Defending against the Marauders

The heroes may use a number of strategies to defend against the raid or even prevent it entirely. They already gathered valuable insights from talking to the farmers along the road to Trontsand, and now have a basic understanding of the marauders' typical strategies. The assembled defenders gladly accept any help, but may take convincing to accept risky-sounding plans.

Side by Side

The presence of battle-tested heroes shifts the balance of power to the yeomen. As long as the defenders can hold the crest of the dike, the Thorwalers suffer a disadvantage in combat (the defenders have an *advantageous position* and receive +2 AT and +2 Defense—see *Core Rules*, page 238). The marauders do not expect much resistance and call off the attack if they feel the raid is becoming too costly. The yeomen dutifully follow orders issued by an obvious noble or even a noticeably

Krakennewt

Size: 13 to 16 feet long (body); 20 to 26 feet long (tentacles)

Weight: 1,984 to 2,645 pounds

COU 15 **SGC** 6 (a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 8

DEX 13 **AGI** 12 **CON** 35 **STR** 36

LP 350 **AE** – **KP** – **INI** 14+1D6

DE 6 **SPI** 1 **TOU** 7 **MOV** 2/9 (on land/in water)

Tentacles: **AT** 13 **DP** 1D6+8 **RE** long

Bite: **AT** 10 **DP** 3D6+6 **RE** short

PRO/ENC: 1/0

Actions: 4 (max. 1 x Bite, max. 3 x Tentacles)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Darksight II

Special Abilities

- Clutch (Tentacle; the clutch attack suffers a penalty of -4. If the creature's AT succeeds and the target's Defense fails, the target is seized and suffers the states of *immobilized* and *bound*. Roll DP as usual. Starting with the next CR, the creature's AT succeeds automatically and inflicts DP (ignoring PRO) equal to the initial DP roll (due to squeezing). Instead of squeezing, the creature can use one action to lift the victim to its maw. The creature can then bite the target (if it has a bite attack) on the following CR. Bite attacks succeed automatically against seized opponents. After biting, the creature's Defense drops to 0 for the remainder of that CR. Creatures can only seize opponents with a smaller size category. To escape from a clutch maneuver, the target must make a competitive *Feat of Strength (Dragging and Pulling)* check. The creature can release its target with a free action. If the creature releases a target it has lifted into the air, the target drops to the ground and must make a *Body Control (Combat Maneuvers)* check or suffer the state *prone*. Prerequisites: the creature must possess this SA naturally.
- Powerful Blow (Tentacle; after a successful attack, opponents of size categories medium or smaller must make a successful check on *Feat of Strength* with a penalty of -8 or suffer the state *prone*.)
- Tentacle Sweep (Tentacle; the krakennewt may try to sweep multiple targets off their feet. Targets must be at least one size category smaller than the krakennewt. This attack suffers a penalty of -2, and Dodge is the only permitted defense. If Dodge fails, the target falls down, receives the state *prone*, and suffers 1D3 DP (ignoring PRO). This attack affects targets next to or in front of the krakennewt only.)

Locked Jaws (Bite; the krakennewt makes a bite attack with a penalty of -2. If the target does not defend, the creature bites down hard. The creature's bite attack succeeds automatically in the following CR (no roll needed). The bite attack then does +1 additional DP per CR (no additional DP in the first CR, +1 DP in the 2nd CR, +2 DP in the 3rd CR, and so on). Roll damage as per usual. Also, the target suffers the state *immobilized*. The creature's defense drops to 0 as long as it holds a target in its jaws. The creature can release the target at the end of a CR by spending a free action.)

Skills: *Body Control* 5 (12/12/35), *Climbing* 2 (15/12/36), *Feat of Strength* 12 (35/36/36), *Intimidation* 13 (15/13/8), *Perception* 7 (6/13/13), *Self Control* 10 (15/15/35), *Stealth* 10 (15/13/12), *Swimming* 9 (12/35/36), *Willpower* 4 (15/13/8)

Number: 1

Size Category: Gigantic

Type: Supernatural creature, non-humanoid

Loot: 90 rations flesh per severed tentacle (tough), 200 rations flesh from the torso (inedible), flotsam (in the digestive tract; value: 1D6x3D20 silverthalers); trophy (forehead horns, 25 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Initially the krakennewt attempts to constrict victims with 1D3 tentacles and bring them to its maw. Then it bites until its victim is dead. If necessary, it fends off remaining enemies with its other tentacles.

Escape: The krakennewt retreats if it loses 6 tentacles, or 50% of its LP on the torso.

Fishing (Monsters of the Sea)

QL 1: Krakennewts can survive and move about on land.

QL 2: Krakennewts usually flee after losing six tentacles.

QL 3+: Krakennewts cannot easily grab victims coated in oil or other greasy substances (Clutch attacks suffer an additional penalty of -6; reduce the difficulty of a greased target's *Feat of Strength (Dragging and Pulling)* check to free itself by 2).

Special Rules

Severing Tentacles: To sever a krakennewt's tentacle, declare the intent before making an attack roll. The attempt requires a weapon with a sharp blade, and the tentacle must suffer at least 12 DP in one CR. Existing damage does not increase the chance to sever a tentacle. The attempt always requires at least 12 DP in one CR.

Pain +1 at: 263 LP, 175 LP, 88 LP, and 5 LP and less



combat-proven hero, but even a reasonable well-assembled battle line falls apart after the first clash with the Thorwalers and devolves into a number of single combats that the yeomen stand little chance of winning. This is where the heroes can shine by proving their bravery and convincing the marauders to retreat. Thurbold orders the retreat when more than a third of his people are severely wounded.

Combat by Proxy

One alternative, which would spare lives and blood on both sides, involves a duel between one or more heroes and an equal number of Thorwalers. Thurbold cannot refuse such a challenge without losing face in front of his crew.

If the defenders issue a challenge and put forward a number of champions to decide the battle by proxy, he accepts and selects an equal number of fighters to participate. The battle takes place on top of the dike, with both sides cheering for their fellows. Thurbold admits defeat only if he can fight no longer, but his followers yield once they lose more than half their LP. Thorwalers and Nostrians alike accept the outcome of the fight as the judgment of the gods.

Superstition

One option to avoid armed conflict altogether is to play on the Thorwalers' superstitions. The locals know that Thorwalers fear magic and ghosts. A brazen demonstration of magical power, a (staged) apparition of a ghost, or the believable warning that a curse awaits anyone who crossed the dike can cause the marauders to abandon their plans and return to their ship empty-handed. Thurbold and his crew are susceptible to staged drama and spectacle. A dramatic enactment holds more weight than an objective report.

Play for Time

The Thorwalers might withdraw if the defenders can keep them from getting over the dike. The marauders do not have much time to complete their raid and must return to their ship before the tide goes out. Otherwise, they risk getting stuck high and dry until the tide comes in again, leaving them vulnerable to the local dike count's knights and men-at-arms. If the raiders do not make it to the top of the dike, they won't be able to see beyond it, which means the heroes may be able to fool them into thinking that Nostrian reinforcements are about to arrive. A credible performance should suffice to force the northmen to withdraw to their ship and sail off in search of easier prey.

Negotiations

If the defenders show strength and determination, Thurbold regards them as a serious threat and becomes more willing to withdraw in exchange for some sort of tribute in the form of animals and supplies. Melcherbald and the others do not think negotiating with the pirates is a good solution but they agree to the heroes' plan if it means avoiding a fight with the Thorwalers. This option gives heroes with negotiation skills a chance to prove their worth.

The heroes' actions may lead to variations or even combinations of these options. For example, a bid for time could result in a negotiation wherein the heroes take advantage of the Thorwalers' fear of the supernatural to win concessions. It is also possible for both sides to agree to fight a battle by proxy *after* blood has been spilled at the dike. The point here is to give every hero a chance to contribute to the solution.

Thorwaler Pirate

COU 14 SGC 10 INT 12 CHA 11

DEX 12 AGI 13 CON 14 STR 14

LP 33 AE - KP - INI 14+1D6

DO 6 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 7

Cut-tooth axe: RC 13 RT 1 DP 1D6+4

RA 2/10/15

Orc-nose axe: AT 13 PA 4 DP 1D6+5 RE

medium

Thorwaler Shield: AT 9 PA 12 DP 1D6+1 RE short

Orc-nose and Thorwaler Shield (passive): AT 13 PA

10 DP 1D6+5 RE medium

PRO/ENC: 3/0 (Toadskin armor) (includes armor modifiers)

Actions: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Rugged Fighter / Negative Trait (Superstition)

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I, Inured to Encumbrance I

Skills: Body Control 6, Feat of Strength 8, Intimidation 7, Perception 6, Self-Control 6, Stealth 6, Swimming 10, Willpower 5

Combat Behavior: The Thorwaler pirates start by throwing their cut-tooth axes, and then move into close combat with orc-nose and shield. They prefer 1-on-1 combat and use Forceful Blows.

Escape: Loss of 50 % LP

Paint +1 at: 25 LP, 17 LP, 8 LP, 5 LP or less

Special: Thurbold has STR 15; he causes +1 DP with the Orc-nose and has AT 15, PA 7.



Conclusion

Healing Elidan

If all goes well, the heroes use Karlitta's ointment to break the spell and heal Elidan. His wound closes, the gill slits disappear, and he quickly regains the ability to breathe air. Within a few days his old strength returns and he finds the courage and determination to repair the farmyard. If the heroes agreed to Karlitta's first demand for payment, Elidan packs the sea serpent tooth safely in a wooden chest and delivers it to her (otherwise he takes it to the Praios temple in Trontsand or perhaps the Efferd temple in Nostria). If the heroes negotiated some other form of payment with Karlitta, they can try a check on *Fast-Talk* to convince Elidan to give them the tooth. If the check fails, Elidan does not hand the tooth over, as he does not want to burden the heroes with this evil. He does, however, agree to let them accompany him to Lyckmoor or Nostria.

The successful defense against the Thorwalers leaves a strong impression on Melcherbald and the neighboring farmers, and they resolve to keep an open mind regarding newcomers from now on. They also decide to share their knowledge of dike construction and maintenance with Elidan as well as any interested heroes.

The Heroes' Reward

Each hero receives **15 adventure points**. Heroes who contributed significantly to the dike repair work, the negotiation with Karlitta, or the defense against the Thorwalers receive as much as 5 bonus AP, but these may be spent only on skills corresponding to those efforts.

Elidan pays the agreed-upon sums to the heroes. Depending on the heroes' demeanor, the yeomen from neighboring farmsteads contribute to their reward to thank them for their bravery. Elidan's family is perhaps most thankful of all, and they invite the heroes to be their guests at the farm whenever they happen to be passing through.

AVENTURIA

Legacy of the Dike

by David Schmidt

Banished from his village for no apparent reason, Farmer Elidan and his family seek a fresh start on a dike farm at the Nostrian coast, but his fortunes take a turn for the worse and he suffers one setback after another. His neighbors begin avoiding him amid growing rumors of a curse upon the farm.

The heroes arrive in time to prevent a tragedy, and they soon make a gruesome discovery on the farm as the curse appears to strike again! Now the heroes may have only a few days to solve the mystery of the dike farm and save Elidan's life. Fate throws many obstacles in their path—a beautiful and capricious witch, a community of superstitious farmers, and a longship full of Thorwalian raiders—but one thing is certain: a poorly maintained dike is all that stands between Elidan's farm and the pitiless sea....



Genre: Coastal adventure with dark flair
Prerequisites: No major prejudices against witches
Location: Lakeland, Kingdom of Nostria
Date: Modern (from 1040 FB onwards)
Complexity (Players/GM): low / low
Suggested Hero Experience Level:
Inexperienced to Competent

Challenge Level

Social Skills	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
Combat	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
Stealth	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
<i>Living History</i>	◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

To play, you need only *The Dark Eye Core Rules*. The *Aventuria Almanac* and *The Warring Kingdoms* are recommended but not required. This book contains all other supporting information, such as stats, maps, and handouts.



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