

Red Ruin Publishing

# Meryon Woods



by  
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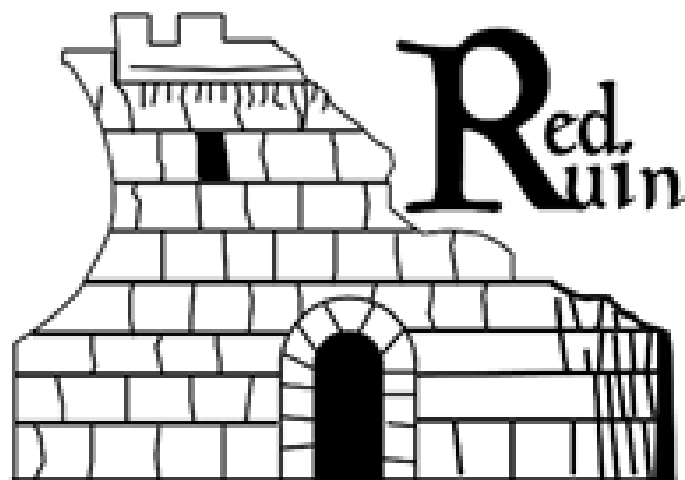
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# Introduction

**W**elcome to the world of Legend! Meryon Woods is a short adventure gamebook designed for a single 2<sup>nd</sup> rank player character. To play through this adventure you will need a copy of the *Dragon Warriors* rulebook available from [DrivethruRPG](http://DrivethruRPG) and a character sheet to record your character's attributes, health, and equipment. A blank sheet can be downloaded from:

<https://www.cobwebbedforest.co.uk/Downloads/DWCharSheet.pdf>.

Alternatively, you could use the wonderful character generator at <https://www.cobwebbedforest.co.uk/Apps/CharGen.php>. You will also need polyhedral dice or one of the many dice rolling apps now readily available for smartphones and tablets.

If you are reading an electronic copy of this book you can navigate to your next chosen section by clicking on the numbered hyperlink for that section. Any profession can succeed at this adventure. Although it should challenge a 2<sup>nd</sup> rank character, a strong 1<sup>st</sup> rank character might succeed, and higher ranked characters will find it correspondingly less challenging, but still might fail – remember life and death are only a dice roll away!

When reading through, follow the rules just as you would when playing a multi-player game of *Dragon Warriors* except that you will also have to take on the role of the Games Master in encounters by rolling the dice for your opponents as well as your character.

When you are ready to enter mysterious Meryon Woods, turn to [1](#) to begin your adventure.

# 1

You are one of the Baron's Irregulars. When the Baron needs something done, something that needs skills beyond the ordinary, he calls upon his Irregulars. Desperate and daring deeds, often in the dead of night, are what he has come to rely upon his Irregulars to do. So it was that the Baron's Seneschal sent for you just before midnight. A sealed message to be delivered to the Abbey. To be delivered only into the hands of the Abbot himself. To be delivered in secret. You cannot take the road; unfriendly eyes are watching. Through the Meryon Woods is the only way to travel unseen. It's only 12 miles. Even by moonlight through the woods you should arrive by dawn. If you leave now.

A saddled horse is waiting by the postern gate. You secure the sealed scroll case, check your weapons and equipment, and spur your mount onwards towards the Meryon Woods. Dark and mysterious creatures are said to stalk beneath the tangled and ancient boughs of Meryon, hidden by its foreboding shadows from the sight of men and God. They say a young shepherd once pursued a stray from his flock deep into Woods, only to return an old and stooped greybeard, as though a lifetime had passed for him in a single day! But surely these are just fireside winter tales to scare young children?

After a short ride you reach the edge of the woods near a small woodcutters' trail. A solitary crow watches you from a dead white tree. Do you urge your horse forward along the forester's trail, turn to [16](#) or dismount and head what you figure to be due west into the forest, turn to [67](#).





## 2

The path continues and you find it is marked by signs of civilized life. A discarded pot here, a broken axe handle there, and signs of foot traffic. Soon you see a modest wooden cabin ahead, smoke trailing skywards against the night sky from a rough stone chimney. Light glimmers around the edges of a split plank door. The smell of cooking wafting towards you is rich and inviting.

If you:

- approach the cabin and knock politely, turn to [24](#);
- stride boldly forward and open the door with a mighty kick, turn to [9](#); or
- decide to bypass the cabin and press forward on your mission, turn to [23](#).

## 3

As soon as you wound the tall one, Dunc, he howls like a child and backs away from you, clutching the wound and muttering *"I ain't gonna get killed by this one – bites like a wolf!"*

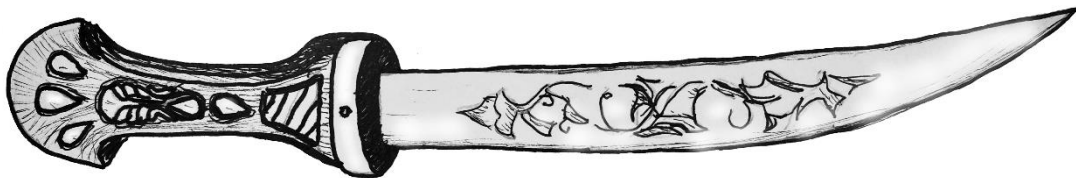
Dunc backs further away from you slowly and then turns and runs towards the cover of the trees.

You offer a small prayer for his cowardice. Still marveling at how the Bowman Gord was put to rout, you glance down and see the tiny imp you met in the Elderberry grove grinning up at you.

The Imp executes an elaborate bow and then bounds away into the dark forest.

You may take Gord's discarded bow and the single arrow he dropped.

Turn to [64](#).



## 4

After following the trail over a series of low rises and shallow depressions you are surprised to come upon a small carved wooden shrine, to an unnamed saint, resting beneath a giant oak tree. On closer inspection you see that beneath the rough-hewn statue of the saint, hand raised in benediction, there is a small wooden offering bowl. It looks like a couple of florins rest at the bottom of the bowl.

If you:

- decide to engage in petty thievery and filch the florins, turn to [83](#);
- kneel and pray, turn to [41](#); or
- leave a coin in the offering bowl and pray, turn to [18](#).

## 5

The forest trail has become more well defined, and you make good time as it seems to straighten out and head almost due west by your reckoning. You guess that it must be no more than an hour, two at the most, to dawn. The sounds of the waking forest life surround you and your spirits begin to rise. You feel sure you will reach the western edge of the woods soon as the trees are beginning to thin out already.

Soon though, the hairs on the back of your neck rise and you get the distinct feeling you are being watched. You hurry onwards, weapons at the ready, alert for danger.

If you have the keyword "OWL" turn to [91](#), otherwise turn to [46](#).

## 6

As you examine the Elderberry trees you notice a flickering on a branch at eye level. Raising your lantern, you notice an impossibly small figure, dressed in bright red hose and cap sitting on the branch peering straight back at you.

You must be eye to eye with a sprite or imp of the forest.

Test your INTELLIGENCE, if you succeed turn to [26](#).

If you fail, decide what to do. If you:

- try to attack the Imp, turn to [20](#);
- offer the tiny man some food, turn to [47](#); or
- give the Imp a gift, turn to [52](#).

The two rogues adopt what must be a well-practiced battle strategy. Whilst Dunc tries to keep you at bay with vicious jabs from his spear, Gord will endeavor to stay out of arm's reach and will fire his two remaining arrows. Once he is out of arrows, he will draw a Seax from his belt (d8, 3) and join the melee.

If you injure Dunc, who wields the spear, turn to [57](#).

If you injure Gord, who carries the bow, turn to [40](#).

If you kill either Dunc or Gord in one round, (for example with a spell) turn to [48](#).

If you are defeated by the bandits turn to [22](#).

### **GORD THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Bow (d6, 4) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 10

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 3 pennies

### **DUNC THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Spear (2d4, 4) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 11

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 2 pennies



## 8

You squeeze yourself and your horse between the tightly packed trees. Several times you must coax the reluctant beast through tight spaces and dank undergrowth. Your progress has slowed to a snail's pace. You are beginning to wonder whether you will ever see the far side of the Meryon Woods.

Test your PERCEPTION on 2d10 vs STEALTH 19. If you succeed turn to [35](#). If you fail, turn to [74](#).

## 9

The door flies open under your swift kick. Illuminated by a low fire in the rough hearth you see a wild-looking, bearded man seated at a table, a spoonful of stew half-way to his lips.

He mutters some incomprehensible curse at your untimely interruption to his victuals and snatches up an axe, kicks over the table, spilling stew everywhere and launches himself at you in wild fury, intent on splitting your skull with no care for subtlety or defense.

You must fight the Woodcutter for your life. As you have surprised your opponent, he may only defend in the first round. The Woodcutter's DEFENCE is 6 in the first round and thereafter he attacks with berserk fury using the stats below.

### **Berserk Woodcutter** (1st rank Barbarian)

Attack 16 (14) Defence 0 (6) (Wood Axe 1d6, 5)

Magical Defence 3 Health Points 11

Evasion 5 Stealth 13 Perception 5

Treasure: 3 florins and 8 pennies

If you win, turn to [60](#). If the Woodcutter defeats you, he hacks at your body over and over, turn to [22](#).





## 10

The wolf tears horrifically at the child, snapping and snarling as the tiny victim flails at the ferocious beast. The poor child's screams are soon silenced when the wolf's jaws clamp around its tiny neck. Transfixed by the gruesome scene you are surprised to suddenly see first one, then two and finally a third arrow thud into the wolf, killing it almost instantly.

A hunting party of strange figures, armed with oddly curved bows and clad in hooded green and grey cloaks, emerge from the trees. Their leader, a tall, gaunt but ethereally handsome creature steps forward, glaring at you with strange almond-shaped, purple eyes, and speaks.

*"Does your god not tell you to protect the weak? What manner of stone-hearted fiend are you to let an innocent child perish before his time?"*

He points an impossibly long, elegant finger at you and continues *"I curse you! May your cold stone heart be your undoing!"*

The Elf Lord then gently scoops up the bloodied remains of his child and the three elves disappear into the trees, back from whence they came. You lose sight of them almost immediately as they seem to simply merge back into the woods.

You feel a strange cold prickling sensation on your skin and find your movements are slow and sluggish almost like you are half-frozen or made of stone. Deduct 4 points from your REFLEXES (to a minimum of 3) and adjust your ATTACK, DEFENCE and EVASION accordingly. Note the keyword "CURSED" on your character sheet.

Chastened by the Elf Lord's words and his curse, you turn to gather the reins of your horse but find no trace of it. It is as if it too has simply disappeared into the forest. Cursing your ill fortune, you have no choice but to trudge onwards along the path.

After a short walk you come to a fork in the path. From what you can tell the left-hand path looks more well-worn and you think you can even make out some footprints and wagon ruts in the darkness.

If you take the left-hand path, turn to [2](#) or if you take the less-travelled, right hand path, turn to [89](#).

## 11

You manage to defeat the forest witch Mags. Cleaning your weapon on her fine woolen dress you notice it has now turned to filthy rags. Looking around you, you realise her quaint little cottage is a ramshackle shack, with a drunken lean. What you thought were pretty flowers are twisted thorn bushes and Mags herself is no pretty, raven-haired young woman, but a hideous and withered old crone.

You kick over her cauldron and taking a burning brand from the fire, you set her shack alight so no other servant of the dark one might find refuge there.

You head onwards with the dancing shadows from the blazing hut at your back. Turn to [5](#).

## 12

The trail leaves the clearing heading roughly due west and after about a hundred paces it branches off to the left and the right. Peering down each fork you can gain no indication as to which might be the better path, time and the elements having worn them both about the same.

If you head down the left path, turn to [23](#) or if you take the right-hand path, turn to [88](#).

## 13

As you draw your weapon and advance towards the creature you suddenly find yourself wading through a boggy mire, barely able to make progress towards it. Through some vile sorcery it has turned the forest floor into almost impenetrable, sucking mud.

It gives a gurgling sound, which you think might be laughter, and picks up several rocks the size of your fist and begins hurling them at you with inhuman strength.

Your movement rate has been reduced to one-tenth normal (i.e. to 1m per Combat Round) so it will take 3 rounds for you to close the distance to be able to fight the creature hand to hand. You are stuck fast in the mud and can barely struggle your way forward so you will be an effectively stationary target for the gnome's rocks (d6, 2) for 3 rounds.

If you have a missile weapon or wish to cast a spell you may do that instead but will not make any progress that round moving towards the creature.



### **FOREST GNOME**

Attack 15, Claws (d8, 5) Armour Factor 3  
Defence 9 Movement: 10m (15m) Reflexes 7  
Magical Defence 8 Evasion 4  
Health Points 10 Stealth 23  
Rank-equivalent: 3rd perception 15 (elfsight)

If you survive, turn to [23](#). If the gnome defeats you, turn to [22](#).

As you finally fell the vicious wolf you are surprised by three tall, green-cloaked figures who seem to emerge, like soundless shadows, from the edge of the clearing.

The child, for you can now see that is what the diminutive creature is, leaps up and rushes to embrace the central figure of the three. You now get a closer look at the strange trio. They appear to be a hunting party of some sort, armed with oddly curved bows and clad in hooded green-grey cloaks. Their leader, a tall, gaunt but ethereally handsome creature steps forward. With one arm still around the child the otherworldly being gazes at you over an uncomfortably long silence. Its eyes are strangely almond-shaped and the colour of the evening sky in winter. You shuffle nervously and the Faerie Lord, for surely that is what so majestic a being must be, bows low and then speaks to you, its voice at once strong but liltingly musical.

*"I am in your debt, son of man. You have risked your life to preserve that which is most precious to me. Let me give you two gifts."*

He reaches inside his robes and hands you, hilt first, a magnificently decorated and bejeweled dagger. The finely curved blade glints a pale silver in the moonlight.

*"But more important than faerie steel!"* he says with a faint smile playing across his thin otherworldly visage *"I give you the gift of knowledge. I ken you seek to cross our ancient home. If you take the sinister way at first and then at third and fifth you will take the safest path to the western edge of the Woods. Not safe mind you, but safer than the others."*



The Faerie Lord bows once more and the four of them turn and disappear into the trees, back from whence they came, but not before the youngster turns and gives you a friendly



wave. You lose sight of them almost immediately as they seem to simply merge back into the woods.

Note the Faerie Dagger on your character sheet; it is a (d4+2, 5) magical weapon. Quite apart from its enchantment you figure it would be worth a small fortune (at least 200 crowns) should you be minded to part with it. Not even the Baron has so fine a weapon!

You turn to gather the reins of your horse but find no trace of it. It is as if it too has simply disappeared into the forest. Cursing your mixed fortunes, you have no choice but to stride onwards along the path. Reflecting on your surreal encounter with the lords of the forest you realise that, but for the magnificent dagger at your belt, it's doubtful a single soul would believe your tale!

After a short walk you come to a fork in the path. From what you can tell the left-hand path looks more well-worn and you think you can even make out some footprints and a wagon ruts in the darkness.

If you take the left-hand path, turn to [2](#), or if you take the less-travelled right hand path, turn to [89](#).

## 15

The water has a strangely dry, bitter taste. You struggle to rise above the water, a languid feeling washing over you. After what seems a lifetime, but must have only been moments, you manage to coax your limbs into motion and splash and splutter your way out of the stream and up the rocky banks.

You stand there soaking wet, your limbs feeling dull and heavy. Reduce your REFLEXES by 1d6 (to a minimum of 3) and adjust your scores accordingly. Add the keyword "STYX" to your character sheet and turn to [5](#).

## 16

The foresters' trail is narrow and heavily overshadowed by ancient and twisted oak trees. You make slow progress in the dark, guided only by the moonlight making its way through breaks in the canopy. Your horse picks its way uncertainly over ruts and tree roots, its caution mirroring your own.

If you press onwards in the dark, turn to [69](#) or if you stop to light your lantern, turn to [28](#).

## 17

You step gingerly onto the great trunk of the fallen oak. It seems solid enough. As you edge your way across you notice that it has grown mossy and is quite slippery and wet as you move out over the stream towards the middle of the fallen trunk.

Treat the walk across the log like a climb with a Difficulty Factor of 12. If your REFLEXES is 12 or higher you make it safely across. If your REFLEXES is lower, roll 1d20. If the result is less than or equal to your REFLEXES you manage to shakily make your way across, leaping the last metre rather than risk the slippery, mossy wood.

If you make it across, turn to [5](#). If you fall in, turn to [34](#).

## 18

If you have the keyword "CURSED", turn to [54](#). Otherwise, as you rise from prayer and make the sign of the cross you feel invigorated and hopeful for the success of your mission. If you have been injured, restore 1 HP. Whilst within the forest you may also add +1 to your ATTACK as the holy fervor lends strength to your arm and stokes the fire in your heart.

Turn to [5](#).

## 19

You find yourself in a shallow depression, perhaps a dry streambed which slopes slowly downwards as you traverse its length, ducking under moss covered fallen trees.

Soon you hear the burbling sound of a stream up ahead. You emerge from the trees and find yourself on the bank of a slow-moving stream, perhaps 20-30 yards at its widest. You cannot see the bottom of the stream and the water appears black despite the light from your lantern. The moon reflects in the water, shimmering with the ripples and eddies of the current.

Glancing skyward you figure that the stream runs roughly North-South and that you need to cross it to keep heading west towards the Abbey. Whilst the stream looks relatively benign, you don't particularly fancy wading blind across the water. Glancing upstream and downstream you notice that the stream is narrower upstream and whilst it seems to be flowing faster there a giant fallen tree will provide a makeshift bridge for you to cross and stay dry.

If you wade across the stream, turn to [21](#). If you try your chances at walking across the log turn to [17](#).

## 20

You strike at the tiny figure but are too slow as he leaps nimbly from branch to branch before stopping to angrily chitter at you from a high branch, safely out of reach.

You turn to leave dismissively only to find yourself being pelted ineffectively with acorns. You ponder stooping to pick up a rock to hoist at the pesky sprite but stop as you hear a distant buzzing sound growing louder and louder.

Your worst fears are realized as a ferocious swarm of bees flies towards you from out of the trees and begins stinging you viciously. Roll 1d8 and deduct the result (reduced by your AF, if any) from your HP due to the brutal stinging inflicted by the swarm as you flee the clearing.

Turn to [12](#).

## 21

You gingerly wade out into the stream, feeling your way on the smooth river stones underfoot. You hold your weapons and lantern high above the water as you find the water rising to chest height when you are about halfway across. The water is cold and strangely inky black, save for the reflection of the moon high above.

Without warning the stones beneath your feet give way and you find yourself slipping into deeper water as you begin to take your next step. Test your REFLEXES on 1d20 against a Difficulty Factor 13. If you succeed you manage to flail your way across the depression without a dunking and scramble your way up the bank to the other side, thoroughly soaked and cold, but otherwise none-the-worse for wear. You buckle on your weapons and climb upwards towards a break in the trees. Turn to [5](#).

If you fail your REFLEXES test, turn to [34](#).

## 22

You die alone in the Meryon Woods. Your last sight is of the pale indifferent moon looming large through the trees. Whether your immortal soul will pass through the Pearly Gates to feast with the Saints and Angels or be dragged kicking and screaming down to be eternally tormented in the fires of Hell is another story.

## 23

The path continues through the woods, switching back and forth upon itself but generally heading in a westerly direction so far as you can establish from your limited glimpses of the night-sky. You come to another fork in the road.

If you follow the right-hand way, turn to [4](#). If you take the left-hand way, turn to [50](#).

## 24

After you knock loudly on the door you hear some indistinct noises from inside and after about a dozen heart beats the door opens a crack and you see a grizzled, bearded face glancing out at you.

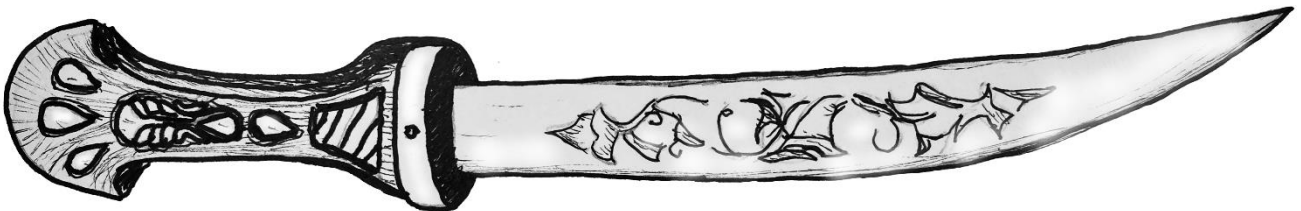
"Are you man or monster? Faerie or real?" a gruff voice interrogates you.

You assure the fellow that you are a god-fearing soul and as real as the door between you both. He seems somewhat reassured and opens the door to let you into the small, crowded cabin. Glancing around you see sparse furnishings, but your eyes are drawn to a large woodsman's axe sitting on a rough table and a small black pot simmering over the fire which must be the source of the delicious meaty smell which has filled the cabin.

You ask the wood cutter whether the path you are on will lead you to the western edge of the Meryon Woods and how far it is.

But your host is a man of few words and waves off your questions, and instead fills a bowl and motions for you to sit on an upturned log and eat with him as he tucks in with gusto.

If you eat, turn to [29](#). If you refuse, turn to [55](#).



Looking around you see the closest door has light shining from around its edges. From the smells coming out of the shuttered window you guess it must be the kitchen.

You are about to head in the opposite direction, towards a small side door, when a timid voice from near the gate calls out to you. *"Hold there! Who are you, where did you come from?"*

You find yourself confronted by a young, scrawny, sleepy-looking monk approaching you from the alcove near the main gate in the wall surrounding the Abbey. He clutches a small cudgel, but you doubt he knows how to use it.

You debate your options but decide that now you have been discovered only the truth will get you to meet the Abbot without causing a great commotion or laying hands on an innocent monk.

You are tired, sore, and hungry and sternly inform the young initiate, perhaps a little more harshly than you intended, that you are there on the Baron's business with an urgent missive for the Abbot.

The monk's eyes narrow suspiciously, but when you produce the sealed scroll case bearing the Baron's wax seal he nods and ushers you into the Abbey kitchens. He tells you to wait there whilst he informs the Abbot of your arrival. A thin looking monk is kneading dough at the table whilst another, with a wispy grey beard is feeding loaves into a kiln with a long-handled wooden paddle. A pot of soup is bubbling over the fireplace.

The smell is almost irresistible and your stomach rumbles loudly, betraying your hunger. The grey beard appears to take pity on you and draws you a clay mug of small beer and offers you a round loaf, still hot from the oven.

You offer your thanks, resolving to put aside all the old tales about never trusting a skinny cook, and tear into the delicious bread, washing it down with the malty beer. Restore 1 HP from this hearty fare.

As you wipe away the last of the crumbs you look up and are surprised to see a familiar face appear at the end of the table. Turn to [66](#).



You have heard tales that one of the best ways to avoid misfortune at the hands of the wee folk is to treat them with dignity and give them gifts.

Hoping to avoid any mischief at the hands of the tiny man, you bow politely and gently offer it a gift. Choose one item from your character sheet to give to the imp.

The tiny man dances a jig along a branch before accepting your gift and disappearing with an excited sounding high pitched chittering. You wonder that if your ears were sharper and your wit quicker you might ken what the faerie creature was saying.

Note the keyword "WEEFOLK" on your character sheet and turn to [12](#).



Seeing an opportunity to regain the initiative you snatch up the pot of boiling soup and try to dash it in Rinan's face.

Resolve the attempt like a normal missile attack. If you succeed, deduct 2 HP from Rinan. He is also blinded for 2 rounds and can only defend at -8 DEFENCE.

If you miss your throw, he curses you muttering "*Waste of good soup*" as he surges forward, intent on cleaving you in two with his heavy axe.

If you flee out of the kitchen door into the courtyard of the Abbey, turn to [72](#), otherwise you prepare yourself to fight your former companion to the death, turn to [45](#).

## 28

With your lantern to light the way you make good progress along the uneven forest trail.

As you round a bend in the path you enter a small clearing and are startled by a small child-sized figure bursting forth from the clearing's edge and dashing across the clearing in front of you. Just as it reaches the other side of the clearing it stumbles and falls heavily against a tree.

You dismount for a better look at this strange sight.

You soon see the reason for its headlong flight – a great grey wolf bounds into the clearing intent on catching and devouring the small green clad creature.

Your horse shies and bucks at sight of the wolf, turning tail and galloping back down the path.

The slaving beast is distracted from the hunt by the light from your lantern and your horse's terrified whinnying. The wolf turns from its diminutive prey and stalks towards you, teeth bared, and ears flattened against its cruel grey skull. You cannot flee from this battle as the wolf will just run you down.

### **WOLF**

Attack 15, Fangs (d4, 5) Armour Factor 0

Defence 3 Movement: 12m (25m) Reflexes 14

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 8 Stealth 16

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 11 (elfsight)

If you win the fight, turn to [14](#). If you lose, turn to [22](#).

## 29

The stew is surprisingly good and the woodcutter, who says his name is Garr, asks no questions as to why you have stumbled upon his hut in the middle of the night.

If you have been injured, you restore 1 HP from this hearty fare.

You ask Garr whether the path you are on will lead you to the western edge of the Meryon Woods and how far it is. He says you are only a few miles from the edge of the Wood.

Cheered by this news you thank him for his hospitality, so unexpected in the middle of this forsaken place. You reach for your purse to pay him for his food, but he gruffly waves you away and he makes a parting statement as his door closes behind you.

*"Don't yer take the right fork in the path – she's wot's down that way walks a dark path."*

You go to enquire further about this cryptic warning, but the door closes firmly in your face. Note the keyword "STEW" on your character sheet.

You head onwards, fortified by warm food in your belly and the news that you will soon leave the menacing woods behind you. Turn to [12](#).

## 30

You warmly shake your fellow warrior's hand. He grins at you behind his giant bristling mustache and then you feel a shooting pain in your side. Rinan has stabbed you with a small blade hidden up his sleeve! Lose 3 HP.

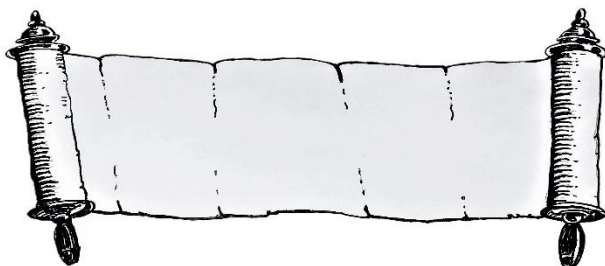
You stagger back as he kicks over a chair and pulls his battle axe from a loop on his belt. *"I rode hard to beat you here! But no hard feelings, eh? Business is business. Now why are you here? Just give me the message and I won't split your skull like a melon!"*

As you ponder your response, the younger monk stands transfixed, his mouth agape in terror at this unexpected kitchen event. But the greybeard appears behind Rinan and with a mighty swing breaks the long handled wooden oven paddle across Rinan's broad, armoured back.

Rinan grunts in annoyance and with a swift backhanded blow sends the elderly monk sprawling to the ground.

Giving thanks for the small respite the brave monk's actions have bought you, do you:

- draw your weapon and prepare to fight your former companion, turn to [45](#);
- flee out the kitchen door into the courtyard of the Abbey, turn to [72](#);
- try to fling the boiling contents of the cauldron into Rinan's face, turn to [27](#).



## 31

As you creep through the undergrowth some sixth sense causes you to pause and examine a deep pile of leaf litter. Pushing aside the debris you see the cruel iron jaws of a wolf trap, ready to fasten upon your leg had you stepped upon it.

Offering a silent prayer of thanks for your good fortune you press onwards; the lightly wooded fields appear tantalizingly close through the trees. If you decide to rejoin the path and quicken your pace, turn to [56](#). If instead you decide to stay hidden and continue creeping through the trees alongside the path, turn to [81](#).

## 32

As you ponder whether to fight or acquiesce to the robbers' demands you hear a distant buzzing sound, which grows louder and louder.

You are relieved that you are not hallucinating as the robbers glance around nervously, also confused by the sound. As the noise reaches a crescendo you see both Dunc and Gord's eyes open wide in terror. A giant and ferocious swarm of bees flies towards them from out of the trees behind you and begins stinging them viciously. Both your would-be thieves drop their weapons and flee from the onslaught. They run screaming and swatting into the woods. You cannot but help to chuckle quietly at this almost miraculous reversal of fortune.

Glancing down you see the tiny imp you met in at the Elderberry grove grinning up at you. The little figure pulls a thorn sword from his belt and touches it to the trap. Before your very eyes it rusts away into fine dust, the work of a lifetime in the elements unfolding in a few heartbeats.

The Imp sheathes its thorn sword, executes an elaborate bow, and then bounds away into the dark forest.

Pondering the power of kindness and the fickle nature of the fey, you grit your teeth and hobble onwards towards the edge of the forest and the Abbey beyond.

You may take the spear, the bow and one arrow, which the fleeing bandits threw to the ground as they fled the swarm of bees.

Turn to [64](#).

## 33

You recall the Garr the wood cutter's warning and hurry past the idyllic scene. The moon is low in the sky, but despite your weariness you push onwards, eager to complete your mission. Turn to [4](#).

## 34

You find yourself unexpectedly submerged in the cold black stream. Test your REFLEXES against a Difficulty Factor of 11. If you fail you have inadvertently swallowed some of the water, turn to [15](#).

If you succeed, you manage to avoid a mouthful of water and splash and splutter your way up the unstable streambank, thoroughly soaked. Turn to [5](#).

## 35

You hear a faint scuttling from above and whirl around just in time to see a giant spider, as big as a dog, scuttling down a tree trunk towards you. Another spider, even bigger than the first descends slowly towards your head on an almost invisible thread.

You must fight both Giant Spiders at once. Remember to halve your DEFENCE until you kill one of them.

### **GIANT SPIDERS**

Attack 15, Bite (d6, 3) Armour Factor 1

Defence 2 Movement: 15m (20m) Reflexes 12

Magical Defence 4 Evasion 4

Health Points 7 & 8 Stealth 19

Rank-equivalent: 2nd perception 11 (panoptical)

If you are wounded by a spider's bite you must test your STRENGTH on 3d6. If you roll higher than your STRENGTH, then you will be paralyzed by the Spider's powerful venom for 2d6 combat rounds. Whilst paralyzed the Giant Spiders can attack you with your DEFENCE set to zero.

If you defeat the Spiders, turn to [76](#). If the Giant Spiders defeat you, they sink their poisonous fangs deep into your body and you watch helplessly paralyzed as they trap and kill your trusty horse. Turn to [22](#).



## 36

You fight the witch. Your opponent is a sorceress and will use magic to try to defeat you initially and attack with an ancient bronze dagger (d4, 2) only if her magic has failed to defeat you. The witch will repeatedly cast *Weaken* to reduce your ability to attack her and then try to stab you, hopefully in a much-weakened state, after her magic points have been expended.

### **MAGS THE FOREST WITCH – 1<sup>ST</sup> RANK SORCERER**

Attack 11 Magical Attack 15

Defence 5 Magical Defence 5

Evasion 3 Stealth 13 Perception 5 Reflexes 10

Health Points 7 Magic Points 4

Treasure: 12 florins and 4 pennies

If you defeat the forest witch, turn to [11](#). If the witch defeats you, turn to [39](#).

## 37

The soup smells of onions and something else you cannot quite place. As you taste it, Margaret – Mags, joins you in tasting it and watches you intently.

*"Do you like my soup? How are you feeling?"*

The second question strikes you as a strange one, and you begin to feel unwell. You realise you have been poisoned! You stagger to your feet and draw your weapon and lunge to attack the witch, for surely that is what she must be!

The soup acts as a weak poison. Roll under your STRENGTH on 2d6. If you fail, turn to [39](#). If you succeed, you manage to fight off its deadly effects and suffer only 1d3 HP. Turn to [36](#).

## 38

The door is opened by a comely raven-haired young woman dressed in a fine, red-dyed woolen dress. The woman nods and opens the door wide, beckoning you to enter.

*"Greetings, stranger. Please put aside your weapons and share a bowl of soup with me. Let us talk so that we may be strangers no more. I am called Margaret, but friends call me Mags. Perhaps soon you will too?"*



If you decide to attack Margaret, turn to [36](#). If instead you join Margaret for a bowl of soup and friendly conversation, turn to [37](#).

## 39

You have succumbed to the forest witch Mags. Through blurred vision as your life ebbs away you see she has dragged you out of her cabin and looms over you with her bronze dagger in one hand and a small wooden bowl in the other. Mags kneels beside you with a sinister smile on her face. The last thing you hear is "*My, my, what pretty eyes you have...*".

Turn to [22](#).

## 40

As soon as you injure the short, round one called Gord he wails like a baby and backs away from you and shouts to his companion *"C'mon you great bean pole I ain't gonna get killed by this one!"*

His companion Dunc needs no further encouragement, lacking the courage to face you alone. He backs away from you and when out of reach he turns and scrambles away after his fellow thief.

You offer a small prayer for their incompetence and lack of conviction and another as you finally manage to free your trapped leg and hobble onwards towards the edge of the forest and the Abbey beyond.

Turn to [64](#).

## 41

As you rise from prayer and make the sign of the cross you feel a renewed hope for the success of your mission. Turn to [5](#).

## 42

As you scan the clearing you find yourself glancing past a gnarled tree stump only to gasp in shock as two eyes, which glimmer like dewdrops, blink open and glare at you balefully. As you recoil in surprise, knotted root-like fingers tipped in thorns reach for you and a black hole opens where you guess its mouth would be.

To your even greater surprise the creature speaks as it shuffles towards you.

*"You trespass and take the bounty of my forest. What will you give in return?"*

If you refuse and attack the creature, turn to [13](#).

If you agree to the demand from the strange woodland creature, which you suspect may be a gnome, a kind of guardian spirit, then choose one item to give to the gnome. Remember to cross it off your character sheet.

The creature seems to be satisfied with the gift you have bestowed and shuffles back to the edge of the clearing and closes its eyes. You would struggle to pick it out as anything other than an old tree stump had you not just seen it move and speak. Turn to [12](#).

## 43

The woman regains her composure when you do not press forward to attack. Carefully keeping the simmering cauldron between you she carefully raises a hand in greeting and says:

*"Greetings stranger. Please put aside your weapons and share a bowl of soup with me. Let us talk so that we may be strangers no longer. I am called Margaret, but friends call me Mags. Perhaps soon you will too?"*

If you decide to attack Margaret, turn to [36](#). If instead you put away your weapon and join Margaret for a bowl of soup, turn to [37](#).

## 44

As your lifeblood leaks out onto the cold stone floor you hope he will spare the Abbot but fear the worst. Your last sight is of Rinan looming over the Abbot, his giant mustache bristling as he says *"Burned the message? You'll pay for that old man!"*

Whether your immortal soul will pass through the Pearly Gates to feast with the Saints and Angels or be dragged kicking and screaming down to be eternally tormented in the fires of Hell is another story.

## 45

### **RINAN "THE WALRUS" 3RD RANK BARBARIAN**

Attack 17, Battle Axe (d8, 6) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

Defence 9 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 9

Magical Defence 5 Evasion 6

Health Points (15) 12 Stealth 14

Rank: 3rd Perception 6 (normal)

Treasure: 34 florins and 6 pennies. He also wears a heavy gold ring worth 120 florins.

If you overcome Rinan, turn to [75](#). If Rinan defeats you, turn to [49](#).

## 46

Feeling that you are being followed you decide to slip off the path and make your way through the undergrowth.

Test your PERCEPTION against a STEALTH of 17. If you succeed, turn to [31](#). If you fail, turn to [84](#).

## 47

You offer the creature some bread from your belt pouch. It sniffs the offering before snatching it and scampering away along a branch and into the shadows.

You hope that you have done enough to assuage this forest spirit. You fear that you may never find your way out of the woods if, true to the campfire tales, the creature obscures the path ahead of you.

Turn to [12](#).

## 48

As you fell one of the bandits his partner in crime wails piteously in terror and turns tail and runs into the trees. It seems there is neither courage nor honor amongst thieves.

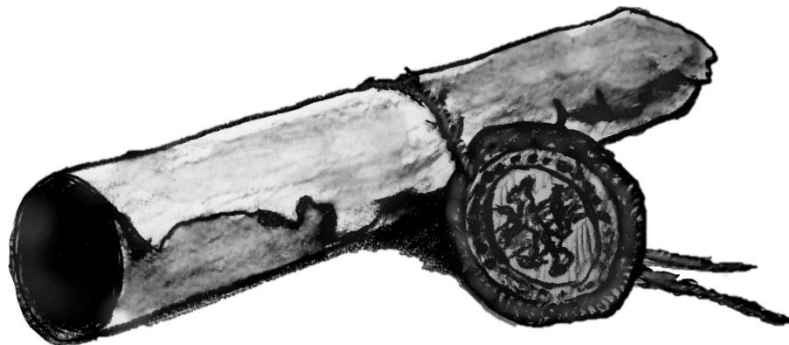
You finally manage to free your trapped leg and hobble onwards towards the edge of the forest and the Abbey beyond.

Turn to [64](#).

## 49

As your lifeblood leaks out onto the cold stone floor of the Abbey kitchen, your last sight is of Rinan looming over you, his giant mustache bristling as he retrieves the sealed scroll case from your satchel. Slapping you playfully on the cheek he says, "*never did like you*". Rising to his feet he winks at you, flourishes the scroll case and then brutally stomps on your head.

Whether your immortal soul will pass through the Pearly Gates to feast with the Saints and Angels or be dragged kicking and screaming down to be eternally tormented in the fires of Hell is another story.



As you proceed in the darkness, you catch sight of something glinting beneath the undergrowth by the light of your lantern. You draw your weapon and approach, expecting an attack.

Instead, you almost trip over the skeletal corpse of a long dead knight. The unfortunate soul's bones have been bleached white by the elements and as you shine your lantern down a rictus skull with empty black eye-sockets stares unblinkingly back at you from underneath a tarnished helm with nasal. The knight's tabard has largely rotted away, but you see hints of red and gold cloth over rusty chainmail.

You are unable to discern how the knight died but a broken hafted mace lies just out of reach of the knight's outstretched boney hand. You have no time to give him a decent burial but offer a quick prayer for the long dead warrior and resume your journey.

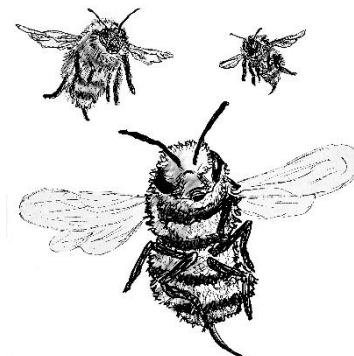
Before you have gone more than a dozen paces you are surprised by a wispy ethereal figure which floats out of the trees towards you. You notice it is caparisoned like a knight, its ghostly tabard bearing a stag, rampant, but you cannot tell its hue as the figure appears a translucent, glowing milky-white. The knight's helm resembles the one you found on the dead knight by the roadside. You feel certain the dead warrior's shade has come to treat with you. As it drifts closer to you, you notice what appears to be two ghostly cloth-yard shafts jutting from its back.

As you prepare to defend yourself the apparition speaks, its voice rasping and strained, as though coming from far away.

*"I trusted those closest to me to my mortal peril. Do not share my mistake lest you join me in a lonely grave."*

As suddenly as the shade appeared it winks out of sight, leaving you shaken but unharmed. You resolve to heed this uncanny warning from beyond the grave and hurry onwards.

Record the keyword "SHADE" and turn to [5](#).





## 51

With a brutal boot, you kick open the quaint little cabin's door and storm in, weapon drawn. You surprise a pale, raven haired woman standing over a bubbling cauldron. She is dressed in a fine, red-dyed, woolen dress and lets out a shrill shriek, which sounds like a mix between terror and anger, when you burst in.

If you attack, turn to [36](#), remembering that as you have surprised your opponent, she may only defend in the first round.

If you wait for the woman to say something, turn to [43](#).

## 52

You have heard tales that one of the best ways to avoid misfortune at the hands of the wee folk is to treat them with dignity and give them gifts. Hoping to avoid any mischief at the hands of the tiny imp, you bow politely and gently offer it a gift.

The tiny man dances a jig along a branch before accepting your gift and disappearing with an excited sounding high pitched chittering. You wonder if your ears were sharper and your wit quicker you might ken what the faerie creature was saying.

Note the keyword "WEEFOLK" on your character sheet and turn to [12](#).

## 53

As the morning sun is still yet to peek above the forest to the east, you guess it must be just before Lauds. Given the lateness, or perhaps more accurately the earliness, of the hour you grip the iron knocker firmly and rap loudly five times.

After about twenty heart beats you hear a scuffling noise from behind the doors and a bleary-eyed young monk opens the small, shuttered window in the door and says "*What do you want? Mass isn't until Sext and we've no bread to spare for beggars!*"

You are tired, sore, and hungry and sternly inform the young initiate, perhaps a little more harshly than you intended, that you are there on the Baron's business with an urgent missive for the Abbot.

The monk's eyes narrow suspiciously but when you produce the sealed scroll case bearing the Baron's wax seal he nods and shuts the small window before unbaring the doors and ushering you inside.

He leads you into the Abbey kitchens and tells you to wait there whilst he informs the Abbot of your arrival. A thin looking monk is kneading dough at the table whilst another, with a wispy grey beard, is feeding loaves into a kiln with a long-handled wooden paddle. A pot of soup is bubbling over the fireplace.

The smell is almost irresistible and your stomach rumbles loudly, betraying your hunger. The grey beard appears to take pity on you, draws you a clay mug of small beer and offers you a round loaf, still hot from the oven.

You offer your thanks, resolving to put aside all the old tales about never trusting a skinny cook, and tear into the delicious bread, washing it down with the malty beer. Restore 1 HP from this hearty fare.

As you wipe away the last of the crumbs, you look up and are surprised to see a familiar face appear at the end of the table. Turn to [66](#).

## 54

As you rise from prayer and make the sign of the cross, you feel the effects of the Elf Lord's curse lifted from you, leaving your limbs supple and nimble again. Humbled by the healing power of the Lord, you resolve to press on without further delay and complete your mission for the Baron.

Turn to [5](#).

## 55

You politely decline the offered fare, although it smells quite delicious. The woodcutter is extremely offended by your refusal; however, and mutters some quite vile and blasphemous insults. You offer your apologies and back towards the door, but he has begun to gnash his teeth and has turned red as a beet, great veins bulging on his neck as spittle beings to fly from his mouth.

You throw open the door and retreat from the cabin, but he snatches up his axe, kicks over the table, spilling stew everywhere and launches himself at you in wild fury, intent on splitting your skull with no care for subtlety or defense.

You must fight the raging Woodcutter for your life. He is in a berserk rage and his stats below reflect that. His usual stats are in parentheses.

**Berserk Woodcutter** (1st rank Barbarian)

Attack 16 (14) Defence 0 (6) (Wood Axe 1d6, 5)

Magical Defence 3 Health Points 11

Evasion 5 Stealth 13 Perception 5  
Treasure: 3 florins and 8 pennies

If you win, turn to [60](#). If the Woodcutter defeats you, he hacks at your body over and over, turn to [22](#).

## 56

The forest here begins to thin out and the path runs straight and true. You hear though, behind you, the sound of footsteps. Turning around you see two figures come into view out of the gloom. They are walking cautiously along the path, peering this way and that, obviously looking for something or someone. One holds a bow, the other a hunting spear. In the fading moonlight you think they are dressed in rough leathers and have the look of desperate men, used to living rough.

They spot you and hasten after you at a brisk walk. In the light breeze, your nose wrinkles in disgust as their fetid odor reaches you. The short bearded one carrying the bow whispers to his companion – a tall gangling fellow, as bald as an egg.

If you have either of the keywords STYX or TRAP, you realise that with your slowed pace you will be unable to outrun them and must turn and fight. Turn to [7](#).

Otherwise, you may either choose to stand and fight, in which case, turn to [7](#), or try to outrun them, turn to [71](#).

## 57

As soon as you injure the tall one called Dunc, he howls like a child and backs away from you, clutching the wound and muttering *"I aint' gonna get killed by this one – bites like a wolf!"*

Dunc backs further away from you slowly and then turns and runs towards the cover of the trees. His companion Gord curses Dunc for a coward, a useless layabout and many other crude and unsavory things but shows no inclination to attack you without the support of his fellow thief.

Gesticulating at you most rudely, the incompetent pair slink away into the forest, no doubt in search of easier prey.

You offer a small prayer for their lack of conviction and head onwards towards the edge of the forest and the Abbey beyond.

Turn to [64](#).

## 58

You weave your way along through the trees, realizing for the first time that the usual sounds of the night are largely absent from the forest. You feel panic rising as you realise that you have become disoriented and have no real sense of which way you should be heading, unable to see the stars to gauge your direction.

After what seems like an eternity you notice a patch of moonlight up ahead which must indicate a clearing of some sort. Emboldened by the chance to see the stars and escape the oppressive darkness of the looming trees you hurry ahead. Turn to [89](#).

## 59

You glance urgently around the courtyard and spot a large iron bucket balanced on the edge of the well in the center of the courtyard. You race across to it as you hear the crash of Rinan throwing his considerable bulk against the kitchen door again and again.

You bang your weapon against the bucket repeatedly shouting *"Fire! Fire in the kitchen! Awake! Awake!"*

Rinan bursts through the door, staggering into the courtyard, just as a half dozen monks appear from various doorways around the courtyard, some carrying buckets, heading for the well.

They pause their head long rush when they spy you and Rinan, facing off across the courtyard, weapons drawn. Glancing uncertainly back and forth the monks part as a grey-haired monk, with a heavy silver crucifix hung around his neck, appears from one of the doors. This must be the Abbot.

Glancing at you both the Abbot strides forward confidently to stand between you and asks *"What is the meaning of this commotion? This is a holy place of prayer and reflection, not a seedy tavern for brawling ruffians!"*

Rinan seizes the initiative and stabs a fat finger towards you accusingly, shouting *"this one is an assassin sent to murder you, Lord Abbot. Do not trust a word that comes from that filthy mouth!"*

Appalled at Rinan's sly deception do you:

- denounce his lies and move to attack him, turn to [62](#); or
- reveal the Baron's message and your mission to the Abbot and assembled monks, turn to [73](#).

## 60

You wipe the blood from your weapons and survey your surroundings. A quick search of the man and his cottage reveals 3 florins and a battered pewter mug, which might be worth 5 florins, as the only items worth taking. The wood cutter's axe (d6, 4) is of average quality but well-honed and well kept. It is not an ideal weapon for combat and can only be wielded with two hands. Note any items you take with you on your character sheet and turn to [12](#).

## 61

Rinan bursts through the door, staggering into the courtyard looking around trying to spot you. You leap forward from your hiding place behind a couple of barrels and attempt to strike him down.

Roll to see if you surprise Rinan (an Assassin may make a shock attack for automatic surprise). You have fought alongside Rinan before and can only wonder who might have bought his allegiance against the Baron.

### **RINAN "THE WALRUS" 3RD RANK BARBARIAN**

Attack 17, Battle Axe (d8, 6) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

Defence 9 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 9

Magical Defence 5 Evasion 6

Health Points (15) 12 Stealth 14

Rank: 3rd Perception 6 (normal)

Treasure: 34 florins and 6 pennies. He also wears a heavy gold ring worth 120 florins.

After 2 combat rounds, a half dozen monks appear from various doorways around the courtyard, drawn by the sounds and commotion of your battle.

They pause their head long rush when they spy you and Rinan, facing off across the courtyard, weapons drawn, circling. Glancing uncertainly back and forth the monks part as a grey haired monk, with a heavy silver crucifix hung around his neck, appears from one of the doors. This must be the Abbot.

Glancing at you both, the Abbot strides forward confidently to stand between you and asks *"What is the meaning of this commotion? This is a holy place of prayer and reflection, not a seedy tavern for brawling ruffians!"*

Before you can say a word, Rinan seizes the initiative and shoulders the Abbot aside and sweeps his axe towards you. Continue the combat, if you defeat Rinan, turn to [78](#), if Rinan defeats you turn to [86](#).







## 62

You grit your teeth and face off against your former companion. You have fought alongside Rinan before and can only wonder who might have bought his allegiance against the Baron.

### **RINAN "THE WALRUS" 3RD RANK BARBARIAN**

Attack 17, Battle Axe (d8, 6) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

Defence 9 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 9

Magical Defence 5 Evasion 6

Health Points (15) 12 Stealth 14

Rank: 3rd Perception 6 (normal)

Treasure: 34 florins and 6 pennies. He also wears a heavy gold ring worth 120 florins.

If you defeat Rinan, turn to [78](#), if Rinan defeats you turn to [86](#).

## 63

Before you can free yourself, you are interrupted by two figures approaching along the forest path. They have spotted you and are walking cautiously towards you. One holds a bow, the other a hunting spear. In the fading moonlight you see they are dressed in rough leathers and have the look of desperate men, used to living rough.

As they approach you, your nose wrinkles in disgust as their fetid odor reaches you. The short bearded one carrying the bow nods to his companion – a tall gangling fellow, as bald as an egg.

The tall one approaches you whilst the one with the bow stands out of reach with an arrow nocked on the string. You see he has only one additional arrow thrust through his belt.

The tall one comes closer; his spear tip pointed towards your face and says over his shoulder *"caught us a live one, Gord"*.

*"I can see that you great fool!"* the one referred to as Gord replies derisively. Addressing you he says *"Now we don't want no trouble, just give us yer silver an we'll be on our ways. The monks will be along the path come the mornin' and one of them well-fed lot will set yer free."*

If you have the keyword WEEFOLK, turn to [32](#), otherwise if you hand over your purse, turn to [65](#).

If you decide to draw your weapon and attack, turn to [85](#).

## 64

The forest here begins to thin out and the path runs straight and true until you find yourself clear of the thick woods and making good progress through lightly wooded pastures. As you crest a small rise you look down and see the path winding its way through fields separated by low dry-stone walls to what must be the Abbey.

Welcome lights gleam through windows, and you stride forward boldly, intent on covering the last mile or so quickly with your destination, and hopefully a warm meal and warm bed awaiting.

Turn to [79](#).

## 65

You untie your belt purse and throw it to the one called Dunc. In a ham-fisted fashion he comically fails to catch it and almost drops his spear in the process. Snatching up the purse he retreats to stand beside the one called Gord and they greedily peer inside your purse.

Gord snatches the purse and the two head back along the path into the forest bickering between them about which one of them will carry your purse.

Remember to cross all your coins off your character sheet.

You finally manage to free your trapped leg. Grateful that the bandits inexplicably kept their word, you vow to hunt them down and dispense your own justice to them. You grit your teeth and hobble onwards towards the edge of the forest and the Abbey beyond.

Turn to [64](#).

## 66

*"Well well, fancy meeting you here. Have you found God my friend? No chance of that for me eh? I'm just here for the food. These monks know how to set a table!"*

You grin at the sight of your erstwhile companion Rinan, a fellow Irregular serving the Baron. Rinan, sometimes called "The Walrus", as much because of his bristling horseshoe shaped mustache as his bellicose belching and legendary skills as a trencherman, departed the castle last winter and you have not seen him since.

Rinan is a brash but amiable fellow. A staunch companion in a fight with a prodigious appetite and a tremendous capacity to drink. He approaches you hand outstretched, evidently intent on greeting you with one of his bone-crushing, back-slapping handshakes.

*"Come my friend, we have much catching up to do. What brings you to the Abbey at this hour? Is it too early to ask these shriveled up prunes to crack open the Abbot's best? Telling tales gives a man a thirst!"*

You are surprised to see Rinan already dressed in his maille hauberk and padded gambeson at this early hour. He is a wily warrior and must be expecting trouble. If you have the keyword "SHADE", turn to [80](#).

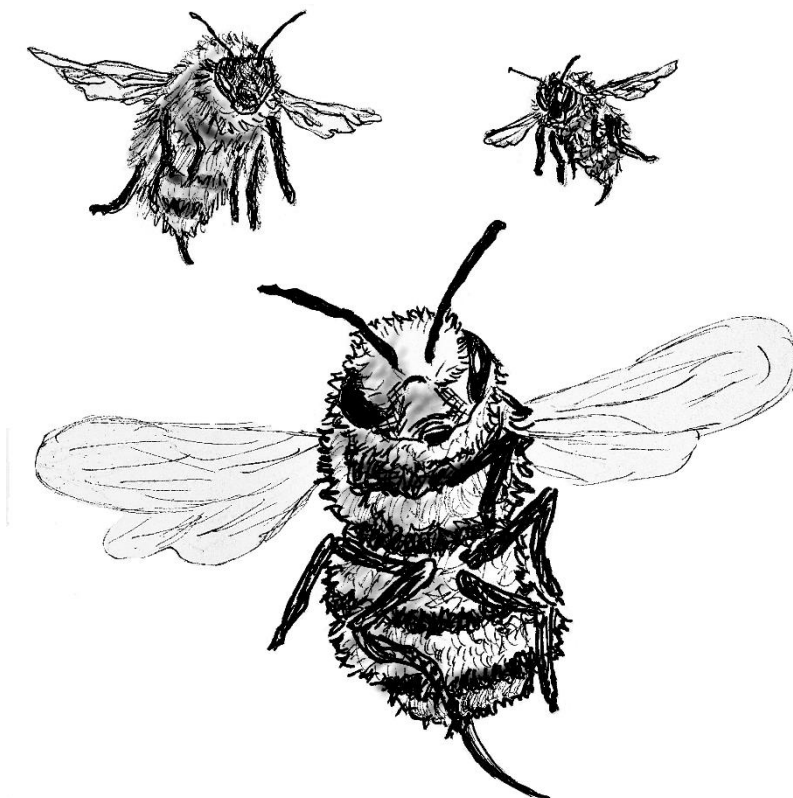
If you return Rinan's warm greeting, turn to [30](#).

## 67

You dismount and give your steed a reassuring pat before taking up the reins and leading the nervous beast in between the trees. The canopy overhead is thick, and you are soon plunged into gloomy shadows, only the faintest hint of moonlight finding its way through the leaves above.

You pause and look back over your shoulder at the outside world beyond the edge of the woods. The faint glow of the open meadows is like a bright doorway in the gloom.

If you decide to turn back and find the path, turn to [16](#), or if you gather your courage and push on through the trees, turn to [92](#).





68

As you face off against Dunc, the spearman, you hear a distant buzzing sound, which grows louder and louder.

You are relieved that you are not hallucinating as the robber, Gord, glances around nervously, also confused by the sound.

His companion Dunc seems too intent on skewering you with his spear to have noticed. As the noise reaches a crescendo you see Gord's eyes open wide in terror as a giant and ferocious swarm of bees flies towards him from out of the trees behind you and begins stinging him viciously.

He drops his bow and attempts to flee from the onslaught. He soon runs screaming and swatting into the woods. You cannot but help to chuckle quietly at this almost miraculous reversal of fortune. Dunc seems not to have noticed and you must continue to fight him.

### **DUNC THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Spear (2d4, 4) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 11

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 2 pennies

If you injure Dunc, who wields the spear, turn to [3](#). If Dunc defeats you, turn to [22](#).

## 69

You decide that discretion is the better part of valour, preferring to take your chances in the dark rather than draw attention to yourself by lighting your lantern like a beacon in the dark.

As you round a bend in the path you enter a small clearing and are startled by a small child sized figure bursting forth from the clearing's edge and dashing across the clearing in front of you. Just as it reaches the other side of the clearing it stumbles and falls heavily against a tree.

You soon see the reason for its headlong flight as a great grey wolf bounds into the clearing intent on catching and devouring the small green clad creature.

Your horse shies and bucks at sight of the wolf.

If you draw your weapon and attack the wolf you may add +1 ATTACK in the first round as you catch the wolf partially by surprise.

## **WOLF**

Attack 15, Fangs (d4, 5) Armour Factor 0

Defence 3 Movement: 12m (25m) Reflexes 14

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 8 Stealth 16

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 11 (elfsight)

If you win the fight turn to [14](#). If you lose, turn to [22](#).

If instead you stand by and watch safely from a distance, turn to [10](#).

## **70**

You crouch quietly, hidden in the undergrowth and watch from behind a large oak tree as the two bandits wander past your position along the forest path and bicker back and forth in a most unprofessional fashion.

Their hearts are clearly not in the search as they turn around about forty paces past your position and amble back in the forest muttering about goose chases and a lack of hot meals and comfortable beds.

If you let them pass by, turn to [64](#).

If you leap forward to attack these miscreants, who clearly prey upon helpless travelers, roll 1d6 to see if you surprise the villains. They are not paying particularly close attention, clearly believing their quarry has eluded them. You will surprise them on a 1 or 2. Turn to [7](#).

## **71**

You decide not to chance an encounter with these unsavory looking characters and turn and break into a run along the path towards the edge of the woods. You glance back, half expecting an arrow in the back but find your pursuers have soon given up the chase and are gesticulating rudely at you. Perhaps as outlaws they fear the open fields and the censure of civilized folk and the law?

The forest here begins to thin out and the path runs straight and true until you find yourself clear of the thick woods and making good progress through lightly wooded pastures. As you crest a small rise you look down and see the path winding its way through fields separated by low dry-stone walls to what must be the Abbey complex.

Welcome light gleams through windows and you stride forward boldly, intent on covering the last mile or so quickly with your destination, and hopefully a warm meal and warm bed, awaiting. Turn to [79](#).



## 72

Caught off guard you flee from Rinan out the kitchen door into the Abbey's courtyard, slamming it closed behind you. Intent on regrouping before confronting him you spot a wooden farmer's fork standing against the kitchen wall and manage to wedge it against the door.

It won't hold for long against Rinan's bulk and his axe, but it may buy you some time.

Do you:

- try to get the jump on Rinan when he breaks through the door, turn to [61](#);
- circle around the Abbey and try to find another way in to meet with the Abbot, turn to [87](#);
- raise a hue and cry to alert the monks to their murderous guest, turn to [59](#).

## 73

You reach into your satchel and retrieve the sealed scroll case. Rinan's mustache twitches as he eyes the scroll case greedily.

You turn and toss it to the Abbot who catches it with surprising dexterity.

Rinan begins stalking towards the Abbot saying *"I'd better take that, Lord Abbot. Might be poisoned or trapped with some dark hex."*

To their great credit, the unarmed monks move protectively to stand in front of the Abbot, ready to protect him with their very bodies, despite the looks of terror on their faces.

You have no doubt that Rinan will ruthlessly slaughter the unarmed monks if you do not intervene.

You move forward to confront him in what will be a brutal fight to the death. Turn to [62](#).

## 74

Stumbling through the almost pitch-black woods you almost walk straight into some particularly thick and sticky spider webs. A feeling of dread fills you as you hear a scuttling sound and whirl around to see sticky strands of cobweb flying towards you through the air!

You throw yourself to the side, trying to avoid being entangled by what you now see is the biggest spider you have ever seen.

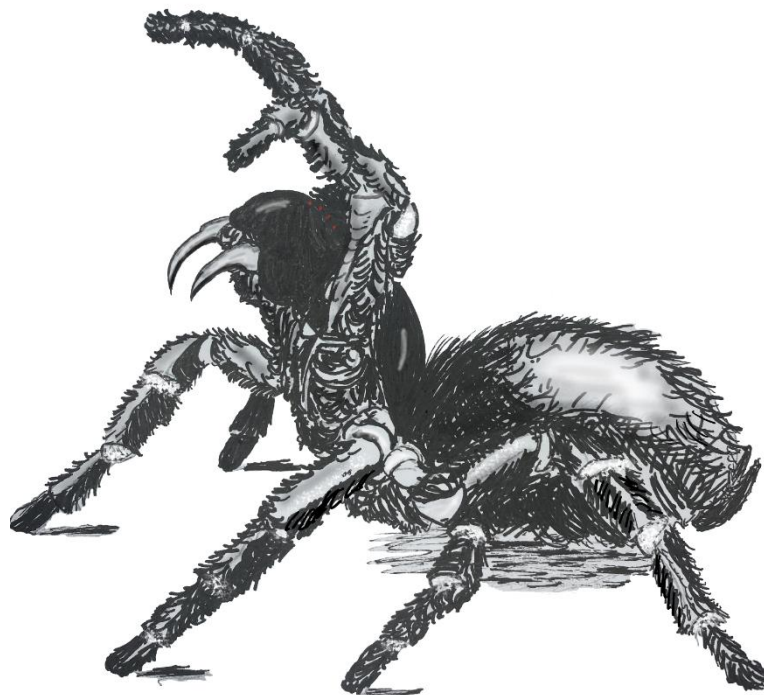
Make an Evasion roll against the sticky strands' SPEED of 13. If you fail, you are entangled in the web and must lower your ATTACK by 2 points and DEFENCE by 1 point each combat round as you become more and more hopelessly caught, i.e., -4 ATTACK in the 2nd round, -6 ATTACK in the 3rd round etc.

Instead of trying to attack the Spider you can try to free yourself. The chances of success are 30% in the 1st round, 20% in the 2nd round and 10% in the 3rd round. You may add +15% to each chance if you have an edged weapon. Your scores return to normal once you free yourself.

### **GIANT SPIDER**

Attack 15, Bite (d6, 3) Armour Factor 1  
Defence 2 Movement: 15m (20m) Reflexes 12  
Magical Defence 4 Evasion 4  
Health Points 7 Stealth 19  
Rank-equivalent: 2nd perception 11 (panoptical)

If you defeat the Spiders, turn to [76](#). If the Giant Spider defeats you, it sinks its poisonous fangs deep into your body and you listen helplessly paralyzed. Your faithful horse is presumably also caught and killed somewhere in the distance. Turn to [22](#).



## 75

As Rinan's dead body slumps to the floor of the kitchen, the young monk who met you outside returns with a grey-haired monk who wears a heavy silver crucifix around his neck. This must be the Abbot.

The Abbot offers a prayer of thanks for your salvation of their mortal bodies and tells you to follow him to his study so that he can read the message in private.

You wipe the blood from your weapons and follow the Abbot into the Abbey, turn to [90](#).

## 76

You clean the sticky spider ichor from your weapon and offer a quick prayer that you somehow managed to survive the deadly arachnid ambush.

Unfortunately, your horse was not so fortunate. You find it lying on the forest floor, foaming at the mouth and whinnying pitifully, its eyes wide and rolling in terror. Not wanting the poor beast to suffer any more you quickly and humanely end its suffering.

Cursing the Seneschal for sending you off on this mission and cursing yourself for staggering blindly through the dangerous woods at night, you move away from the scene of the battle lest your horse's corpse draw more of the eight-legged monstrosities.

You think you can hear the rushing sound of water off to your left.

If you head towards the sound, turn to [19](#). If you turn back and try to find your way to the path turn to [58](#).

## 77

A sound behind you makes you spin around, weapon drawn.

Rinan stands grinning at you from the far end of the hallway, his axe dripping blood on the cold stone floor of the Abbey.

*"Led me a merry chase, you did. Well, I've cornered you rats now. Time for me to collect what I came for."*

Seeing Rinan approaching, the Abbot picks up the message and holds a corner to the candle. Realising what the Abbot is doing, Rinan roars in anger and charges down the hallway like a raging bull, intent on cleaving you in two.

You grit your teeth and prepare to face your former companion. You have fought alongside Rinan before and can only wonder who might have bought his allegiance against the Baron.

Rinan is wild eyed and frothing at the mouth. His stats below reflect his berserk state.

**RINAN "THE WALRUS" 3RD RANK BARBARIAN**

Attack 19 (17), Battle Axe (d8, 6) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 4

Defence 3 (9) Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 9

Magical Defence 5 Evasion 6

Health Points (15) 12 Stealth 14

Rank: 3rd Perception 6 (normal)

Treasure: 34 florins and 6 pennies. He also wears a heavy gold ring worth 120 florins.

If you defeat Rinan, turn to [93](#). If Rinan defeats you, turn to [44](#).

## 78

The Abbot offers a prayer of thanks for your salvation of their mortal bodies and tells you to follow him to his study so that he can read the message in private.

You wipe the blood from your weapons and follow the Abbot into the Abbey, turn to [90](#).

## 79

You soon reach a scattering of outbuildings and given the lateness of the hour the small hamlet's streets are deserted.

You hurry through the buildings, past what must be a forge and a humble inn, before arriving at the Abbey. The Abbey complex is enclosed by a wall, about 10' high, with heavy looking wooden double doors, studded with iron, closing a stone arch. The left door is pierced by a small, shuttered window for speaking with visitors without opening the whole gate.

There is a large iron knocker in the centre of the right door.

If you grasp the knocker and knock on the door, turn to [53](#).

If you decide to climb the wall instead, turn to [82](#).

## 80

You recall the chilling warning from the shade of the murdered knight in the woods. Could this be the very meeting the otherworldly spirit was prophesying would take place?

If you shrug off your doubts and return Rinan's warm greeting, turn to [30](#).

If you heed the warning, you take a step back, placing the table between you both once again.

*"What? No warm embrace for your old friend Rinan?"* he says with a sneer. He kicks over a chair and makes his way around the table towards you. He pulls his battle axe out from a loop on his belt and asks in a deadpan tone *"Now why are you here? Must be a message. Just give it to me and I won't split your skull like a melon!"*

As you ponder your response, the younger monk stands transfixed, his mouth agape in terror at this unexpected kitchen event. But the greybeard appears, and with a mighty swing breaks the long handled wooden paddle across Rinan's broad, armoured back.

Rinan grunts in annoyance and with a swift backhanded blow sends the elderly monk sprawling to the ground.

Giving thanks for the small respite the brave monk's actions have bought you, do you:

- draw your weapon and prepare to fight your former companion, turn to [45](#);
- flee out of the kitchen door into the courtyard of the Abbey, turn to [72](#);
- try to fling the boiling contents of the cauldron into Rinan's face, turn to [27](#).

## 81

You pause your cautious progress as you hear the distinct sound of footsteps and movement along the path back the way you came. You crouch low and wait to observe who might be following you.

Soon two figures come into view in the gloom. They are walking cautiously along the path, peering this way and that, obviously looking for something or someone. One holds a bow, the other a hunting spear. In the fading moonlight you think they are dressed in rough leathers and have the look of desperate men used to living rough.

As they walk past, you wrinkle your nose in disgust as their fetid odor reaches you. The short bearded one, with the bow, whispers to his companion – a tall gangly fellow, bald as an egg.

*"Must'a come this way Dunc!"*

The one called Dunc looks around nervously *"I ain't seein' nobody Gord...I don't like it. I don't like it at all."*

*"You don't like nuthin', Dunc"* the one called Gord replies.

*"I won't like havin' me neck stretched by the Baron's soldiers if'n they catch us outside the woods"* Dunc responds.

*"You're so tall they'll not find a tree high enough to hang you from"* Gord scoffs. The tall, bald one guffaws at this and then is abruptly silenced by loud shooshing from the short, bearded Gord.

If you hide, hoping to let them pass by, turn to [70](#).

If you wish to spring your own ambush on the villains, who must have been following you, roll 1d6 to see if you surprise the villains, then turn to [7](#).

## 82

You decide not to announce yourself but rather to try to steal into the Abbey quietly and find the Abbot. You approach the wall and begin to climb. The stones are cool to the touch but luckily not too slick and wet from the dew. The climb would be easier by daylight, the darkness before the dawn makes it harder than it would otherwise be.

Make a REFLEXES test with a Difficulty Factor of 12. If you succeed, you slowly and carefully ascend the wall with little difficulty, and drop the short distance inside, turn to [25](#).

If you fail your REFLEXES test you lose your grip suffering 1d2 HP damage (i.e., 1d4 halved but rounded up) from the fall. You may attempt the climb as many times as you need to succeed or if you give up the attempt you can turn to [53](#) and knock on the door.

## 83

The moment you take the meagre 4 florins from the shrine's wooden cup you feel overwhelmed with feelings of trepidation and guilt. Memories of old sermons that told you the good Lord is always watching haunt your thoughts and you find yourself full of imagined horrors and fear.

You must deduct 1 from your ATTACK as you find yourself overcome with feelings of doubt and hesitation.

Turn to [5](#).



## 84

You step into a pile of leaf litter. You hear a metallic snap and pain shoots through your right ankle. Lose 1d3 HP.

Record the keyword "TRAP" on your character sheet.

You look down and see your leg caught in the cruel iron jaws of a wolf trap. You try to move, and see it is attached to a nearby tree by a thick iron chain. Your only hope of escape is to try to prise the trap open.

Test your STR on 1d20 against a Difficulty Factor of 14. If you succeed you manage to lever open the iron jaws and free your leg. You must reduce your REF by 1 point and adjust your ATTACK, DEFENCE and EVASION as necessary due to the injury to your ankle.

If you fail to open the jaws of the trap you remain caught and suffer 1 HP additional injury from further lacerating your leg in your attempts to free yourself.

You may make one attempt to free yourself each round but must add 1 point to your d20 roll for each round after the first.

If you free yourself in 3 rounds or less, turn to [81](#).

If it takes you more than 3 rounds, turn to [63](#).

If your HP falls to zero through your struggles turn to [22](#).

## 85

Caught by the trap, you can only strike in melee at the one called Dunc, who wields the spear. If you have a throwing weapon you may hurl it at the one called Gord. He is standing approximately 4m away. You cannot draw a bow as the spearman will likely skewer you.

If you fight, you must deduct 1 from your ATTACK and 2 from your DEFENCE as you are severely hampered by the trap closed around your leg. Each round in melee combat you will lose 1 HP from lacerations caused by the trap around your ankle.

Once Gord has fired two arrows, he will draw a Seax from his belt (d8, 3) and join the melee.

If you injure Dunc, who wields the spear, turn to [57](#).

If you injure Gord, who carries the bow, turn to [40](#).

If you kill either Dunc or Gord in one round, (for example with a spell), turn to [48](#).

If you are defeated by the bandits, turn to [22](#).

### **GORD THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Bow (d6, 4) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 10

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 3 pennies

### **DUNC THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Spear (2d4, 4) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 11

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 2 pennies

## 86

As your lifeblood leaks out onto the cold earth of the Abbey's courtyard you hope he will spare the lives of the monks but fear the worst. Your last sight is of Rinan looming over you, his giant mustache bristling as he says, *"I'll have that message now."*

Slapping you playfully on the cheek he says *"You made me run. I don't like running, bad for the digestion!"*. Rising to his feet with a grunt he winks at you and then brutally stomps on your head.

Whether your immortal soul will pass through the Pearly Gates to feast with the Saints and Angels or be dragged kicking and screaming down to be eternally tormented in the fires of Hell is another story.

## 87

You race around the side of the kitchen and follow alongside the building until you find another doorway. Fortunately, it is unlocked, and you make your way inside, finding yourself in a chapel.

Luck is on your side as a grey-haired man with a heavy silver crucifix around his neck has just entered through a doorway on the opposite wall, followed by a gaggle of younger monks in rough brown cassocks.

If the Abbot is surprised at your sudden appearance, he conceals it well, smiling at you and asking with a hint of humor *"Welcome traveler. Have you come to join us for the Lauds devotions?"*

You turn to shut the door behind you and slam home the internal bolt, hopefully locking Rinan out for the time being.

Breathlessly you explain your mission to the Abbot, and the dire peril now posed by the rampaging Rinan.

One of the monks comes towards you nervously and accepts the sealed scroll case from you, handing it to the Abbot. He inspects it closely by the flickering light of the altar candles before nodding and breaking the wax seal and opening it. He removes a scroll, itself also sealed with wax marked by the Baron's seal. Curiously, he holds the scroll to his nose and sniffs it before nodding again.

Turning to the assembled monks he commands them *"Make haste all of you. Bar the doors against this heathen invader and either arm yourselves with whatever you can find or down to the cellar to hide."*

Turning to you he says *"You, come with me. I must examine this message in my study."* With that he sweeps from the room, expecting you to follow, obviously used to immediate obedience from his monks.

Note the keyword "CHAPEL" on your character sheet.

You wonder whether to go with the Abbot, but then you hear a splintering sound from the chapel's side door. Rinan has clearly begun to hack through it with his axe. The door will not hold for long under his thunderous chopping. You hurry after the Abbot, turn to [90](#).

## 88

The trail runs straight and true and you notice that the forest is thinning out a little here. Even by moonlight you notice flowers and wild raspberry bushes growing along the way. After about half a mile you notice a picturesque little cabin nestled beside a pretty little pond.

Light spills from the windows of the cabin, but there must be curtains across them because you cannot see inside when you try to peer through.

If you have the keyword "STEW" turn to [33](#), otherwise if you wish to knock on the door and wait to be invited in, turn to [38](#). If you decide to kick the door in and burst in on the occupant, turn to [51](#). If you decide to ignore the cabin and continue onwards down the path, turn to [4](#).

## 89

You come to a small, almost circular, clearing which is open to the night sky. Under the moonlight you spot a dense copse of Elderberries. The trees are heavily laden with small black-blue bunches of berries and scattered with delicate white elderflowers. You recall that different parts of the plant have different medicinal and alchemic uses.

It will delay you, but you may:

- pick some berries; and/or
- pick some elderflowers; and/or
- scrape some bark.

Whether or not you choose to collect some elderberry plant components, roll 1d4 and add between zero and three to the result, depending upon how many plant parts you decided to harvest.

### **Result:**

1.....Turn to [12](#).

2-3.....You hear rustling in the bushes and just as you prepare yourself for battle a frightened doe breaks from cover and springs across the clearing before disappearing in the forest on the other side of the clearing. Turn to [2](#).

4-5.....You hear a solitary owl hooting three times. There is silence for ten heartbeats and then you hear two more hoots. Note on your character sheet that you have the keyword "OWL" and then turn to [12](#).

6.....Turn to [6](#).

7.....Turn to [42](#).

## 90

The Abbot invites you to sit on one side of his desk whilst he breaks open the wax seal on the scroll, unrolls it and places it on the table.

He reads it out to you, although you have your letters. The content seems banal enough – an enquiry after the Abbot's health, the state of the Abbey's herds of sheep and cows and an invitation to visit with the Baron for the midwinter festival. In short nothing of particular importance and certainly nothing which warranted you risking your life through the Meryon Woods in the dead of night.

You silently curse the Seneschal for sending you on a fool's errand.

Whilst you stew in your thoughts the Abbot lights a candle and holds the scroll above the flame. His eyes narrow as hidden words appear on the scroll and he throws it down with a deep sigh.

You glance at the spidery script that has appeared between the lines of inked text. *"The bear is on the march. The snake prepares to strike the lady's hand. The gull returns to shore."*

If you have the keyword "CHAPEL", turn to [77](#). If not, turn to [93](#).

## 91

You scan the surrounding forest for signs of danger. Soon a tall, gangly figure detaches from the gloom and appears around the edge of an oak tree.

As he approaches you, you turn to face him, weapon at the ready. Your nose wrinkles in disgust as his fetid odor reaches you. The lanky fellow carries a spear, its tip pointed towards your face.

In the fading moonlight you see he is dressed in rough leathers, is as bald as an egg, and has the gaunt hungry look of a desperate man, used to living rough. When the tall vagabond is just out of reach, he stops, and you hear the distinctive thrum of a bowstring. Instinctively you duck but the shot is true and pierces your left buttock. Deduct 4 HP.

The one facing you moves cautiously forward to attack, shouting out to his hidden partner in crime *"Wot you doin', Gord? You gone blind? You done hit their arse. A shot in the arse ain't gunna kill nobody. Now I've got to go do it meself."*

You circle to try to place the spearman between you and the hidden archer. As you move around you see a short, round, bearded fellow emerge from the gloom with another arrow nocked. He seems intent on approaching closer before loosing another arrow. He shouts at his companion as he approaches *"Shut yer ugly mouth Dunc, yer couldn't hit the broad side of a barn if yer were in pissin' range. That's why I've got the bow!"*

If you have the keyword WEEFOLK, turn immediately to [68](#).

Otherwise, you must fight the two brigands. The bowman, Gord, will spend two rounds approaching and then fire his last remaining arrow, from around 5m away, in the third round. You cannot reach him without using a missile weapon or spell.

Once he is out of arrows, he will draw a Seax from his belt (d8, 3) and join the melee.

If you injure Dunc, who wields the spear, turn to [57](#).

If you injure Gord, who carries the bow, turn to [40](#).

If you kill either Dunc or Gord in one round, (for example with a spell), turn to [48](#).

If you are defeated by the bandits, turn to [22](#).

### **GORD THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Bow (d6, 4) or Seax (d8, 3) Armour Factor 1

Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 10

Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3

Health Points 7 Stealth 12

Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)

Treasure: 3 pennies



## **DUNC THE OUTLAW**

Attack 11, Spear (2d4, 4) Armour Factor 1  
Defence 5 Movement: 10m (20m) Reflexes 11  
Magical Defence 1 Evasion 3  
Health Points 7 Stealth 12  
Rank-equivalent: 1st Perception 4 (normal)  
Treasure: 2 pennies

## 92

Even though your eyes become more accustomed to the darkness you find the going slow and difficult. The ground is uneasy and leading your reluctant horse forward is a tedious process.

Test your REFLEXES on 1d20 versus a Difficulty Factor 12; if you fail you miss your footing and fall awkwardly spraining your left ankle, lose 1HP. If you succeed your natural agility, and no small measure of luck, sees you land on a soft bed of moss and leaf litter.

You realise it is too dangerous to continue without some illumination and light your lantern. You blink and look away as it flares into life, casting a pitifully small circle of light around you. Your horse snorts in appreciation and stamps its hoof impatient and unsettled by the enclosed environment.

The trees ahead grow closer together and it may prove difficult to navigate between them with your horse. The light from your lantern reveals that a small depression, perhaps a dry streambed, leads off to the southwest and may provide you with a clear path forward.

It occurs to you perhaps you should retrace your steps to the path, lest you become hopelessly lost in the dark woods, unable to even see the stars to navigate by.

If you:

- press on boldly, turn to [8](#);
- follow the streambed, turn to [19](#)
- turn back to find the path, first you must test your PERCEPTION on 2d10. If you succeed, turn to [16](#), if you fail turn to [58](#).



The Abbot offers a prayer of thanks for your salvation of their mortal bodies, but he is clearly concerned.

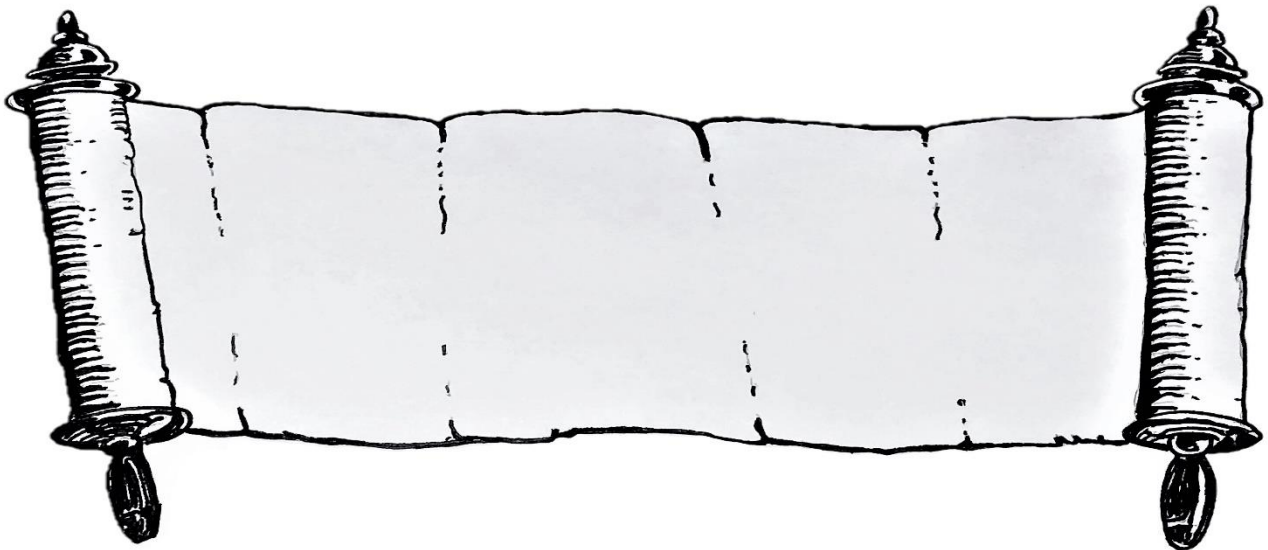
*"Bears, snakes, birds? What nonsense is this?"* you ask. Pondering further you ask *"a code? What does it mean?"*

The Abbot pauses, apparently deciding what he can share with you, an unknown retainer of the Baron.

Appearing to reach the conclusion you can be trusted, he grasps you by the shoulders and whispers *"May the good Lord preserve us all my child, for soon we shall be at war!"*

You may award yourself 5 experience points for completing your mission in addition to any experience gained for defeating opponents. Give yourself one additional experience point if you have the keyword "STEW" and one more if you have the keyword "WEEFOLK".

# THE END



## A word from the author

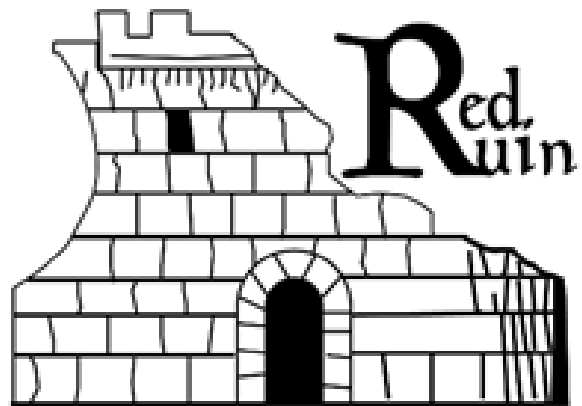
I hope you enjoyed this short solo adventure gamebook using the Dragon Warriors RPG rules from Serpent King Games.

I intended to just write a very brief solo adventure module, but somehow ended up writing a short gamebook instead. Go figure. If you like what I did here, go ahead and check out the other cool stuff available from Red Ruin Publishing on DriveThruRPG – it's all crackingly good! You might enjoy the adventures of Cedric & Fulk, two wandering monks, who have been described as “like Brother Cadfael but with more ass-kicking”, written by yours truly. If there is something you really liked in *Meryon Woods*, or even if you thought this adventure was lame, why not drop me a line at [nigelwardauthor@gmail.com](mailto:nigelwardauthor@gmail.com)? I read every email and will take your feedback on board or maybe just curse you out and hit delete!

Nigel Ward

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