

# The Steading Playbook

*Stats, Moves, and Improvements for Your Home Steading*

Stonetop itself has a playbook, much like the PCs. It has stats, moves, possible improvements, and places to record NPCs. It's meant to be a living document, changing throughout play.

Other steadings have similar stats, but the GM is responsible for tracking them in whatever detail they like.

## FORTUNES AND SURPLUS

These two stats will change often during play.

*Fortunes* represents how things are going in Stonetop, both tangibly and socially. It reflects morale, and trade, the state of the harvest, and the fullness of the cistern. The players roll +Fortunes when they Outfit for an adventure or when the Seasons Change.

*Surplus* represents the food and wealth available to the steading. It measures communal resources (like the granary) and the stores of individual homes. Surplus is consumed each winter, to pay for improvements, and (possibly) when the town Pulls Together.

These stats change:

- ☉ Because a move says they do
- ☉ To pay for improvements
- ☉ When the GM says they do
- ☉ When the fiction demands

## OTHER STATS

*Size* represents the steading's infrastructure: its buildings, its fields, and how many people it can theoretically support. Its also limits Prosperity and Defenses; neither can be more than 1 higher than Size.

The possible values for Size (and the number of people they can comfortably support) are:

- 1 *Hamlet* (less than 100 souls)
- +0 *Village* (150-350 souls)
- +1 *Town* (500-1,000 souls)
- +2 *City* (1,500 souls or more)

Stonetop starts at Size +0 (*Village*), with around 250 inhabitants.

*Population* indicates the number of inhabitants relative to Size. The possible values are:

- 2 *Exodus*: buildings are falling into ruin; key jobs go undone; no labor to spare
- 1 *Shrinking*: buildings stand empty; very little labor available
- +0 *Steady*: population in line with current Size, with some slow growth
- +1 *Growing*: cramped quarters; some people in makeshift homes; labor is plentiful
- +2 *Booming*: resources stretched thin; people living in tents or worse; labor is readily available

Stonetop starts at Population +0 (*Steady*).

*Prosperity* represents how much trade flows through town and the quality of goods and services available. It doesn't represent how things are going *right now* (that's Fortunes), but rather the number and variety of tradesfolk, the frequency of visits from merchants, and the availability of goods.

The possible values for Prosperity are:

- 2 *Dirt*: folks scrape by, not really selling things but trading for necessities; most goods are crude, shabby, or old
- 1 *Poor*: enough to go around, but little luxury or finery; essential trades are present; some simple things are for sale
- +0 *Moderate*: folk are generally comfortable; quality goods are traded or sold freely; a broad range of tradesfolk are present
- +1 *Wealthy*: most mundane goods can be bought or sold, including luxuries; numerous skilled tradesfolk ply their wares.
- +2 *Rich*: fine goods are sold freely; specialized tradesfolk abound but are in high demand

Stonetop starts at Prosperity -1 (*Poor*). While the steading remains Size +0 (*Village*), its max Prosperity is +1.

*Defenses* represents the readiness, number, and training of the town's warriors.

The possible values for Defenses are:

- 2 *None*: a frightened (and/or angry) mob is the best you can hope for
- 1 *Militia*: able-bodied men and women with worn weapons are available to be called, but there's no standing force and discipline is iffy
- +0 *Watch*: a handful of dedicated protectors keep the peace and run regular drills for the militia
- +1 *Guard*: a small population of armed defenders is always at the ready; the militia is well-ordered and disciplined
- +2 *Garrison*: a standing force of professional soldiers regularly patrols the steading and its surroundings

Stonetop starts at Defenses -1 (*Militia*).

While the steading remains Size +0 (*Village*), its max Defenses is +1.

## STEADING MOVES

The steading moves resolve actions that the community takes as a whole, and/or reflect the changing fortunes of the town.

These moves will most often be triggered in Stonetop, but they can also apply if you trigger them in other steadings.

### DEPLOY

When you *send a steading's people into danger or rally them to repel an attack*, roll +Defenses: **on a 10+**, it goes as well as can be expected; **on a 7-9**, it works but someone chooses 1 from the list below. If the steading is acting from a position of strength, you choose. Otherwise, the GM chooses.

- ☉ It's less effective than you expected
- ☉ There are a number of serious injuries, take -1 ongoing to Defenses until the wounded are cared for
- ☉ The GM picks an NPC with whom a PC has a bond; they die

Deploy represents military actions taken at a PC's direction. If no PC organizes the action, then this move doesn't trigger; look to the GM to see what happens.

The follower moves (page XX) supersede this move. If a follower has tags that make them effective in danger, use Do Their Thing instead of Deploy. Gathering up a small group to go on an adventure is Recruit instead of Deploy.

The GM should resolve the move as broadly or discretely as makes sense. A single roll could determine the outcome of an entire battle or a single desperate rally.

Acting from a position of strength requires solid fictional positioning: superior numbers, fighting from cover, surprise, etc. Achieving that position of strength can be a challenge all by itself.

A 6- on could be anything from the militia's refusal to follow your orders up to a disaster. Or it could be a bloody slaughter in the making, unless you intervene, right now, what do you?

*GM: Sure enough, Caradoc, it's crinwin! Dozens of them, massing in the treetops, preparing to attack. What do you do?*



*Caradoc: Oh crap! I clang the alarm bell and yell "Crinwin! Crinwin at the east wall! Awake! Awake and arm yourselves!"*

*GM: Sounds like you're rallying the steading against an attack. Deploy?*

*Caradoc: Oh, sure. Sweet, a 10+!*

*GM: Okay! Cries go up throughout town and folks stumble out of their homes in nightshirts, spears and shields in hand. Good thing, too, because the crinwin are soon among them. And one of them is leaping towards you, in the watchtower, what do you do?*

*GM: You dispatch the crinwin and look about. The town's awake and skirmishes are all about. It's a wild free-for all. Fion is struggling with one ahead of you. Padrig chases one between buildings on your left. And you hear sounds of battle behind you.*

*Caradoc: Why's it going so poorly? Didn't I get a 10+ to Deploy?*

*GM: Sure, but that was to rally the sleeping town. On a 10+, "the plan works as well as can be expected." So the villagers are up and fighting but not really with any focus. What do you do?*

*Caradoc: What needs to be done! "Fall back to the granary, everyone! Defend the granary!" and I start gathering folk up as I go. Deploy again? I got a 7.*

*GM: You're not at a position of strength, so I'll choose. I think Padrig doesn't make it. He's falling back to join you, fending off three of them, when another jumps him from behind. They dogpile him. You see a spray of blood as they finish him off. But your plan works! The militia has formed up around the granary, and the crinwin are circling, wary. This isn't what they expected. What do you do?*

*GM: Rhianna, you and your crew make it back in from the Wood. The crinwin are circling the granary, where the militia is waving torches and making a racket to keep them at bay. What do you do?*

*Rhianna: My boys are stealthy and archers, right? We sneak into position and start picking off crinwin.*

*GM: Cool! Roll to Deploy!*

*Rhianna: Deploy? This is my crew, yo. Don't they roll +Quality to Do Their Thing?*

*GM: Oh, right! Good call. Roll +Quality then!*

## MEET WITH DISASTER

When *calamity befalls a steading*, reduce its Fortunes by at least 1, to a minimum of -3. Other stats might be immediately affected, at the GM's discretion.

This move triggers when something concretely and clearly bad happens to the steading: a fire, a sickness, a large number of casualties, a group of villagers go missing, someone important in town (like the blacksmith or the cobbler) dies, someone goes missing or dies in an eerie or spooky way.

The move should *not* be triggered by mere rumor or bad news from abroad, nor by the day-to-day hardships of life. The town doesn't lose Fortunes simply because a strange, shadowy presence is spotted in the Wood. No, they lose Fortunes when Rheinal doesn't come home for a few days and Betr's finds his body just past the Stream: withered, desiccated, skin slack and hand reaching out towards home, and every plant within five paces of him dead and brown and brittle.

Most calamities will inflict -1 Fortunes. Far-reaching disasters, like the granary burning down or someone poisoning the cistern, could have more pronounced effects: -2 or even -3 Fortunes, and possibly reductions to Surplus as well.



## MUSTER

When you *press every able body into the defense of a steading*, reduce Fortunes by 1 and roll +Population: on a 10+, the steading gets +1 ongoing to Defenses and choose 2 from the list below; on a 7-9, the steading gets +1 ongoing to Defenses and choose 1.

- ☉ Everyone's willing to pitch in; don't reduce the town's Fortunes after all
- ☉ The recruits hold together as long as the threat lasts, even without your presence
- ☉ 1 or 2 recruits show real potential; ask the GM how

Use this move to put the steading on alert and ready for trouble. It's a good idea to Muster if you expect to Deploy soon—you're trading Fortunes for lives!

To trigger the move, you must actually be able to press the population into a state of readiness. That shouldn't be a problem in the face of a clear and present danger, but it might take some convincing if the threat is unseen or theoretical.

Gathering up a posse for a mission beyond the Old Wall isn't Mustering, it's Recruiting (see the follower moves, page XXX).

Whoever takes the lead should be the one who rolls. On a 7+, the players can freely discuss their options, but the player who rolled chooses.

The +1 ongoing to Defenses lasts while the threat persists and you (the PCs) stick around to direct things. If you want to leave town and keep the muster going, pick "The recruits hold together...."

On a miss, the GM's move will often reflect the tensions established in town. GMs, look to your homefront moves and threats for inspiration.

Note that you might still get the +1 ongoing to Defenses on a miss, but if so, the GM will tell you the requirements or cost.



*Rhianna: We scared them off, but the crinwin could come back any time. I'm going to Muster.*

*GM: Cool, how do you do that?*

*Rhianna: How do I...? I'm the marshal! I bark orders, tell people what needs doing. I want watches kept all night in every household, spears and shields always at the ready. Double up the posts at the watchtowers, and have a squad of six armed and patrolling every night.*

*GM: Whoa, okay! Roll it.*

*Rhianna: 12! Let's see... they'll hold together even without our presence, and... 1 or 2 show potential. I could use a replacement on my crew.*

*GM: Hub, sure. Fion stands out as someone you can trust to keep charge of things while you're gone. And Andras, Padrig's eldest kid, he catches your eye as a recruit for your crew. So, why him? What do you see that makes him stand out?*

## OUTFIT

When you *undertake a mission on behalf of a friendly steading*, choose someone to roll +Fortunes: **on a 10+**, together with your allies you pick up to 6 things from the Gear list that corresponds to the steading's Prosperity; **on a 7-9**, you pick 3; **on a 6-**, you get nothing (not even XP). Regardless of the result, you can make up to 3 additional picks, but doing so reduces the steading's Fortunes by 1.

This move takes the place of going shopping before an adventure. The items you pick will mostly come from the good will of the steading, from your friends and neighbors and from communal stores.

GMs, use this move to show off what NPCs think of the PCs. Maybe the town blacksmith gives the Would-be Hero a new dagger as a sign of respect. Maybe the party's provisions come from the missing boy's kin—packing up a good lunch is the least they can do.

Note that this move only triggers if you go *on behalf of* the steading and at least some folk know about it. A foolish jaunt to the Ruined Tower to sate your curiosity? That doesn't count.

The "picks" are from the Gear List matching the steading's current Prosperity. You can "trade down" freely (for example, picking 3 Dirt items instead of 1 Poor item) but you can't trade up. More expensive and valuable stuff just isn't freely available.

If you reduce Fortunes for the 3 extra picks, you're asking for things that the town needs. They'll hand it over, but they'll be going without. Sometimes that's what you have to do.

If you don't Outfit (or roll a 6- and don't reduce Fortunes), then you're on your own. You can barter and trade for the supplies you need, but don't expect anyone to be very generous.

On a miss, the GM doesn't make a move. Not getting any gear is bad enough.

*Rhianna: Okay, time to hunt crinwin. Me, my crew, Caradoc, and Blodwen. Plus Andras, the new kid, to see if he works out. Outfit?*

*GM: Sure, go for it. Remember, it's winter, so you'll all need warm clothes.*

*Rhianna: Yup. And I get +1 because of Logistics. An 8. Three picks from the "Poor" list. My crew already have travelling cloaks. I've got one, too. Caradoc, Blodwen?*

*Blodwen: I'm good. My thick hides are warm.*

*Caradoc: I... yeah, I need a cloak. Guess I've been keeping watch huddled in a blanket.*

*GM: Andras needs one, too.*

*Rhianna: Can we give him Garet's old cloak?*

*GM: You want to give him the blood-soaked, torn up cloak of a dead man?*

*Rhianna: ...right. We'll take two wool cloaks from the "Poor" list. And trade down for 3 "Dirt" items: 2 sets of provisions and a set of bandages. I am giving Andras Garet's old spear and shield.*

*GM: Cool. You tell Andras that he'll be coming with you and he better get himself a cloak. He comes back wearing a familiar, worn thing. It was his father's, Padrig's. But Padrig's dead, so... Caradoc, what about you? Who would gift you a cloak before you go?*

*Caradoc: Um... I think Morwenna would.*

*GM: Oh, totally! She catches you in the square as the crew is gathering. She's got a bundle under her arm and avoids eye contact. "I... I was weaving this for you... before... and, well, the embroidery on the back isn't done, but if you insist on going out there again... well, you'll need something warm. So... here." And she blushes and shoves it in your arms and runs off. What do you do?"*



## PULL TOGETHER

When you *set a community to work on improvements, to secure new resources, or to make major repairs*, spend whatever the GM says is required (time, Surplus, coin, etc.) and roll +Population: **on a 10+**, the job gets done; **on a 7-9**, pick 1:

- ☉ It gets done but other work doesn't; reduce Fortunes by 1.
- ☉ The work is incomplete or shoddy
- ☉ There's an unforeseen cost or requirement; address it and the job gets done

Pull Together to achieve improvements (page XX) or to meet requirements after Making a Plan (page XX). You can also use it *ad hoc*, like when you build a house for those refugees or when a thunder drake tears up part of the Ringwall and one of the watchtowers.

Don't use this move for day-to-day tasks like planting crops or thatching roofs. Likewise, you aren't Pulling Together when you drag a handful of folks on some fool adventure (that's Recruiting, page XX).

To trigger the move, people must be willing to do the job. You might need to do some convincing—especially in other steadings.

GMs, use the following guidelines for costs:

- ☉ *Time*: days to build a wooden structure; weeks to erect a stone house; a season for a new public building; multiple seasons for major infrastructure or grandiose edifices. Jobs that take multiple season require separate Pull Together rolls for each season.
- ☉ *Surplus*: 1 Surplus for each full season of work; extra Surplus for out-of-town jobs or those that are resource-intensive.
- ☉ *Coin*: a handful of silvers for jobs requiring skilled artisans or tools and goods that the town must trade; a purse of silvers (or more) if both are required.
- ☉ *Etc.*: Fortunes if the project interrupts planting or harvest; favors if someone's specific skills or permission are required; protection from the PCs (or their followers) if the job takes place somewhere dangerous; more esoteric costs for most esoteric projects.

On a 7-9, the player who rolled picks but the GM describes the specifics.

If the work is incomplete or shoddy, ask the GM how. Maybe you Pull Together again (at a lesser cost) to finish the job, or maybe you live with substandard work. Your call.

If there's an unforeseen cost or requirement, ask the GM what it is. Someone might need convincing, a key resource might be running low, a flaw in your plans might be revealed, or maybe it just costs more time or Surplus or coin.

On a 6- the GM's move will likely interrupt the job: an accident, a conflict, a crisis, etc. GMs, look to your homefront moves and threats for inspiration, and make as hard of a move as makes sense given the task at hand.

*Caradoc: So we found that big patch of hornleaf in the Wood, and crinwin hate the smell of that stuff when it's burnt. We should go harvest the leaves.*

*Blodwen: Good idea. How long would that take?*

*GM: With just you all? Most of the season.*

*Blodwen: What if we got a bunch of folk from town together to do the harvesting?*

*GM: Hmm. With a big enough group? Probably just a couple weeks. But how do you convince them? Most folk are pretty scared of the Great Wood, especially with the crinwin having just raided.*

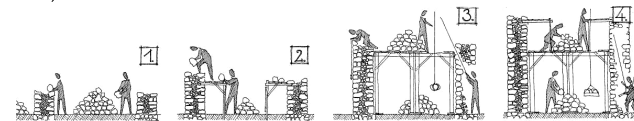
*Caradoc: I'll talk it up around town, especially with Fion. It's totally something she'd support! We could have braziers of the stuff every night, and keep those wretches away for a good long time.*

*Rhianna: And I'll have my crew patrol while the work is happening, to keep everyone safe. Deal?*

*GM: Yeah, sure, okay. Fion's easy enough to get on board and folk fall in line after that. It won't cost anything other than time. Do you go for it?*

*Caradoc: Yeah! Pull Together... that's +Population, right? +1 for Logistics?*

*GM: No Logistics, that's only if Rhianna takes the lead. And she'll be managing her crew. But, yeah, go ahead and roll.*



Rhianna (that summer, after Making a Plan with the GM): Okay, we'll send a dozen folk to the foothills with the wagon and they'll cut timber and send it back. It'll take all summer and 3 Surplus, plus my crew going with them for protection. That should get us enough timber to start on the palisade, right?

DM: Right. If you're not going, who's in charge?

Rhianna: I'll put Eira in charge, from my crew. And I want my boys rotating... two working, two on watch, and two resting. Good?

DM: Yup! Reduce Surplus and roll +Population, +1 because of your Logistics.

Rhianna: Crap. 4. So what happens?

DM: The crew heads out. Weeks pass. The first shipment of timber comes down without a hitch. But the second shipment comes early, with no timber, just Rees—y'know, Lkweelyn's kid—and like three others, all shameful and scared looking. Andras, the new kid, he's in the back, unconscious and pale with this nasty, crudely bandaged wound on his leg.

Rhianna: I curse. "What the hell happened?"

DM: Rees's voice shakes. "There's something... out there. In the hills. I ain't seen it myself, but Uriel and Terrwyn did. Like a big goat, but a man's skull for a head, and three pale, round eyes, and horns like you never, and, and..." He swallows. "The crew won't work no more. Just hunkered down on the wayside. Eira and your boys been tracking it but... well, it got Andras. Eira let us draw lots to see who'd bring him back, and, we... we got lucky." He hangs his head in shame. What do you?

Blodwen: We found that big wooden sphere out in the Woods. I need to get it back here to study. That'll take, what, like six strong backs to drag it home? Pull Together?

GM: No, I don't think so. It's three days out there, right, and even with Rhianna's crew, it'll be super dangerous. This isn't Pulling Together, it's an adventure. You can gather up some townfolk, if you like, but you'll be Recruiting followers. You do it? And if so, who are looking for and what are you offering?

## RETURN TRIUMPHANT

When you *return home in triumph*, having saved your fellows, put down the threat, seized an opportunity, etc., increase Fortunes by 1 (to a maximum of +3).

A successful adventure boosts morale and sets your home on the path towards prosperity—or at least it undoes some of the damage from when you Meet with Disaster.

To trigger this move, your return has to be *triumphant*, the sort of thing that makes folks celebrate or at least talk excitedly. If crinwin steel an infant and you go into the Wood after them, triumph means saving the kid. It doesn't mean killing a bunch crinwin and returning with the child's corpse.

You'll have to play this by feel. If a traveler limps into town raving about how his caravan was set upon by strange raiders (on the Road no less!), well, no one's expecting you to save those other travelers. They're probably goners, and triumph means putting down the threat. By contrast, if your logging camp in the Foothills comes under threat and you get *most* of them safely home, that's probably Returning Triumphant even if you lose a few folk in the process.

When in doubt, put it to the table: if anyone (GM or player) thinks that your return should *not* trigger this move, then it doesn't trigger.



## SEASONS CHANGE

When the *season ends and a steading's Fortunes are +3 or -3*, reset the steading's Fortunes to +0. Then, the GM increases or decreases Prosperity, Population, or Defenses by 1. Prosperity and Defenses can never be more than 1 higher than Size (which is +0 for a village), but can go as low as -2.



When *spring bursts forth upon the land*, whoever is the most hopeful rolls +Fortunes: **on a 10+**, chose 1 option from the Gains list; **on a 7-9**, choose 1 Gain, but a threat to the steading makes itself known or gets worse; **on a 6-**, don't mark XP and threats abound.



When *the long, hot days of summer settle across the land*, whoever is most content rolls 1d4-1; the steading generates that much Surplus. Then, roll +Fortunes: **on a 10+**, choose 2 from the Gains list; **on a 7-9**, choose 1; **on a 6-**, don't mark XP and a threat to the steading makes itself known or gets worse.



When *autumn falls and the land is ripe for harvest*, whoever is most determined rolls +Fortunes: **on a 10+**, choose 1 from the Gains list; **on a 7-9**, choose 1 Gain, but a threat to the town makes itself known or gets worse; **on a 6-**, don't mark XP and threats abound.

When the *harvest is complete*, roll 1d4; the steading generates that much Surplus.



When *winter grips the land*, whoever is weariest rolls 1d4+Population, and the steading consumes that much Surplus (minimum 0). If there isn't enough, reduce Surplus to 0 and Fortunes by 1, then choose 1 from the list below:

- ⊗ A handful of the weaker or less fortunate starve or freeze to death; more children and elderly die than ought
- ⊗ An important NPC dies, their role unfilled
- ⊗ An important resource (one of the horses, the cistern, etc.) is lost or not maintained

Then, regardless of the last roll, roll +Fortunes: **on a 10+**, the winter passes without further incident; **on a 7-9**, the winter is long, harsh, and brutal—the town must consume Surplus equal to 1d4+Population or suffer the consequences as above; **on a 6-**, don't mark XP, the 7-9 result applies, and threats abound.

## SEASONAL GAINS

- ⊗ **Danu's blessing:** Fine weather, good crops, and ample game. When you next roll to generate Surplus, roll twice and take the higher roll.
- ⊗ **Unexpected bounty:** A sudden influx of wild game, trade profits, or some other resource. Gain 1 Surplus, now.
- ⊗ **Trade opportunity:** Your goods are in high demand among your neighbors. Roll 1d4: if you choose to trade that much Surplus, reduce Surplus by that amount and increase Fortunes by 1.
- ⊗ **Interesting news:** The GM will tell you of some way to increase the steading's fortunes, knowledge, or relations.
- ⊗ **Valuable insight:** The GM will tell you some new way to address a threat that's been plaguing the steading.

This move serves a few purposes. It formalizes how the PC's home steading changes over time. It introduces twists and turns. It gives mechanical teeth to steading stats like Fortunes, Population, and Surplus. It drives the game forward.

It's ultimately up to the GM when to trigger this move, because the GM frames scenes and the passage of time. When the PCs are all doing their own thing and there are no crises or moves to resolve, the GM can say that time passes and the seasons change and this move triggers.

When Fortunes are +3 or -3, the fiction should inform which stat the GM chooses. If Fortunes have been reduced by death and famine, expect Population to decline. If Fortunes increased from trade and new resources, Prosperity should increase. Regardless, the GM should make it clear how the change in stats looks in the fiction. If they don't, ask them!

The rolls for each season tell you what *will* happen during that season. Threats or gains don't necessarily need to appear immediately after the roll.

When there are gains, the players can discuss which they want but the rolling player gets the final say. GM, remember to **begin and end with the fiction**. What does Danu's Blessing look like (this time)? What is the source of the unexpected bounty? Who comes to town looking to trade, and for what? Who brings the news or insight? Feel free to **ask the characters questions and use the answers**.

Interesting news could bring word of arcana (major or minor), a resource to exploit, a step towards an improvement (p. XX), a chance to improve your standing with (or over) your neighbors, etc. The GM decides what the news is and what opportunity it presents. Likewise, the GM decides what threat a valuable insight pertains to, and how that insight presents itself.

On a 7-9 (or a 6- in summer), the GM will either introduce a new threat or advance a grim portent. GM, remember to **let things breathe**. You should advance an existing threat if that makes the most sense, but it's good to have multiple threats out there simmering away.

To be clear, threats can be external or internal, distant or looming, personal or impersonal, mundane or supernatural. The key is that they threaten the people of the steading, their livelihood, or their future. As play goes on and the steading establishes additional resources, endeavors, or relationships, those things can be threatened, too.

On a 6- in spring, autumn, or winter: the gloves are off. The GM can and should make things bad. A new threat might leap onto the scene—immediate, dangerous, calamitous—with little or no warning. Multiple existing threats might advance, some aggressively so. Internal threats might boil over, and it might all be compounded by weather, crop failure, etc. Such rolls should reflect a time of crisis for the steading.

In case it's not obvious: this move isn't the only source of threats or opportunities in the game. Your actions, ideas, and backstory will introduce plenty of them. The move simply provides a prompt for those things, telling the GM that it's time for one (or more) to enter the fiction. But neither you nor the GM should feel constrained by the move. Follow the fiction, always.

*GM: The rest of the winter passes uneventfully, and after weeks of boredom and cold, the snows thaw and the birds return and spring breaks forth. Fortunes are at +1, so none of the stats change. Who among you would you say is most hopeful?*

*Blodwyn and Rhianna (simultaneously): Caradoc!*

*Caradoc: Yeah, I guess that means I roll. Nice! 10!*

*GM: Okay, so you get to pick 1 from the Gains list. Which will it be?*

*Caradoc: Hmm. What do you think? We've got 4 Surplus... we could go for a trade opportunity.*

*Rhianna: No, we'll need that Surplus to get building. I'd say an unexpected bounty is better.*

*Blodwyn: Not Danu's blessing? We'll get even more Surplus in summer.*

*Rhianna: Maybe. It's not a sure thing. Unexpected bounty gives us 1 Surplus now. I think that's better.*

*GM: Caradoc? It's your choice.*

*Caradoc: Umm... let's go with an unexpected bounty. So +1 Surplus.*

*GM: Okay, sure. Let's say it comes in the form of a trade windfall, though. Caradoc, what's the name of the merchant who's always first to come down from Gordin's Delve? And what does he usually bring to trade?*

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*GM: Okay, then. Work continues on the palisade all through spring and into the early weeks of Summer. Who's the most content? I'm thinking Blodwyn?*

*Blodwyn: Yeah, that sounds right. Roll +Fortunes?*

*GM: No, roll for Surplus, first. 1d4-1.*

*Blodwyn: 2, minus 1. So 1 Surplus.*

*GM: Great. So that's like, from wild berries and game and spring vegetables, yeah? A little on the lean side I guess. Now roll +Fortunes.*

*Blodwyn: Uhm... that's +2, right? 9. So we get another Gain? I think we should go for a valuable insight. I want to know what those crinwin have been up to.*

*GM: Oh, okay. Sure. Let me think about that for a bit... Meanwhile, Rhianna, are you all continuing to work on the palisade?*

*Rhianna: Of course! Should I roll Pull Together?*



*GM: Yeah, go for it. And spend the Surplus and silver, too.*

*Rhianna (after updating the Steading Playbook): An 8. Let's go with another unexpected challenge.*

*GM: Hmm. Oh, got it! A few weeks go by and work continues. It's getting hotter and hotter out there. Tensions are running high. Tomos and Fion have been arguing about tools and rope and not putting things back where they belong, and Rhianna, it's been all you can do to keep their crews working and not at each others' throats. And you're pretty sure that stuff really is going missing.*

*Then, maybe five weeks into summer, Andras comes back from hunting and has this urgent look on his face. He finds you and Blodwyn and Caradoc in the public house. "I was out hunting, a bit west of the Marw, and I spotted a... well, a wall. Made of dead wood and branches. I freaked out at first, cuz it sounded like tales my pappy told me about the hagr. But I stayed calm and watched, like you taught me, and then I saw 'em. Crinwin! Dragging wood in from the forest. And don't laugh, but I swear they were, like, pounding on the sticks with what looked like some of our tools, and lashing it together with rope. They... they don't know what they're doing, but I swear... they're building their own palisade!"*

*Everyone in the pub is silent, listening to Andras. Then you realize that they're all looking at you three, expectantly. What do you do?*



GM: Okay, Blodwyn, you're spending the rest of summer brewing Old Mother's Wine, yeah? And Caradoc, Bethys has you working with him night and day on the tanning. Rhianna, work resumes on the palisade and goes on without a hitch. The heat breaks, then it turns chilly, and soon the Flats are going brown and the leaves starting to turn.

Rhianna: Autumn, then? We're at +3 Fortunes, so a stat increases.

GM: It sure does. Let's see... you've got the palisade going up, and between that and the action the steading has seen this past year, I think everyone is just getting more and more used to being on guard. Rhianna, folks just keep shield and spear handy out of habit. Double watches have become routine, as have the patrols. Go ahead and reset Fortunes to +0 but increase Defenses by 1.

Rhianna: Sweet, we're at +0... a standing watch. I think I've got my crew running patrols more-or-less constantly, too. Not just hunting, but actually, like patrolling for danger.

GM: Sure, sure. Rhianna, you're probably the most determined, so how about you roll +Fortunes.

Rhianna: Yeah, okay. Uh-oh... a 4. No gains, only threats.

GM: Hub, well, you wiped most of the nearby crinwin, so... hub. (Looks at notes.) Tell you what, let's end here and I'll figure out what the threats are between sessions.

(And the next session starts in media res, with the PCs approaching the Ruined Tower in pursuit of a pair of villagers who were literally dragged off of the new watchtowers in the middle of the night.)

GM: The festival is rather subdued, what with the deaths of Andras and the others in the Ruined Tower and the sparse harvest. Everyone's just huddling in behind the palisade and a little shell-shocked. The snows come early and before you know it, winter is here. Who among you would say is the weariest?

Rhianna: I bet I am. I've had to bury too many friends this year, and I'm just tired of keeping everything together.

Caradoc: No arguments from me.

Blodwyn: Me either. It's all yours, Rhianna.

Rhianna: Okay, we use up 1d4 Surplus, -1 from the palisade. That's a 1! We've got 2 Surplus left.

GM: Yeah, but now you have to roll +Fortunes, and you're at -1 right now.

Rhianna: Goody. Well, a 7. Could've been worse. We use up another 1d4-1 Surplus? Oh no... 3.

GM: That's more than you have, so drop Surplus to 0 and Fortunes go down to -2. And you've got a choice to make.

Rhianna: Me? Damn. These are all awful. I guess I'll go with the first one: a handful of the weaker or less fortunate die, more than should.

GM: Okay. The winter's a harsh one. It just snows and snows. The palisade helps with the wind, but even after y'all fill the cistern with snow there's still more, and it's just a pain to clear out of the palisade. Everyone is getting sick of thin soup. The hunters can't get out to the Wood much, and they almost never come back with game. Blodwyn, by the end of winter, two of your relatives have passed on. Who were they, and how did they die?

Blodwyn: I guess my grandparents. I think their roof caved in and they froze to death in the night.

GM: Yeah, that makes sense. Rhianna, one of your crew had a wife and a newborn. Which one?

Rhianna: Harri, I guess. They didn't make it?

GM: The newborn didn't. She caught the croup and just sort of faded away. His wife is totally distraught, and Harri's been spending a lot of time out in the Wood even when it snows. Hunting, he says, but you can tell he's avoiding his wife.

Rhianna: Ugh. I'll make a point of swinging by their place when Harri's gone and checking in on his wife, making sure she's okay. I'm probably pretty bad at that, but, yeah. And when I see Harri, I'll give him an earful.

GM: Sure, sure. Things are still strained but that actually helps a bit. Now, Caradoc, your family is all fine. But you hear through the grapevine that Morwenna's mother has caught ill and probably isn't going to make it through the winter. What do you do?

### Who Marks XP on a Miss?

For most steading moves, the character who triggered it marks XP on a miss—even if the missed roll affects other PCs. It's no different than when someone rolls a miss to Defy Danger and, yeah, they dodged the hagr's mighty blow but dropped the urn containing the bound elemental and it shatters and now everyone has to deal with that.

No one marks XP on a miss to Outfit or when Seasons Change. Those moves are procedural; they don't reflect a specific character's actions and you can't really choose whether they trigger.

If you like, you can have *everyone* mark XP on those two moves—that's cool too! But PCs are meant to level a bit more slowly in Stonetop, and giving everyone XP on a miss will speed that advancement up.

## IMPROVEMENTS

The steading playbook contains a number of improvements that can be unlocked in play. Each has a list of requirements and a benefit that the steading gains upon completion.

The requirements for each improvement vary from clear and obvious ("Pull Together 3 times, each requiring 1 season and 1 Surplus") to the seemingly impossible ("Invent some method to make water flow uphill"). If you don't know how to go about working towards a requirement, tell the GM that you'd like to pursue it and Make a Plan (see p. XXX).

The benefits listed for each improvement are mostly mechanical, but don't forget about the fictional impact! If you unlock Aurochs Hunting by cooperating with the Hillfolk, you've not only gained a new move and resource, you've improved your relationship with the Hillfolk!

Once unlocked, improvements last until the GM makes a move that takes it away. Assume that any upkeep is done by the community as a whole. For example, once you build a palisade, it's assumed that the town keeps it in good repair. But if winter comes, you don't have enough Surplus, and you choose "an important resource is lost or not maintained," then the GM might describe how one of the watchtowers collapses in a blizzard and how the whole southeast wall is ready to give. You'll want to Pull Together to repair it and, if you don't, you're giving the GM a golden opportunity to make a hard move and take the palisade away.

The improvements listed in the steading playbook aren't the only ones you can pursue. The GM will find other improvements in the various almanacs and reveal them as appropriate. Also, you might come up with an idea for an improvement yourself and Make a Plan to learn its requirements. Add these new improvements to the playbook as they come up.

