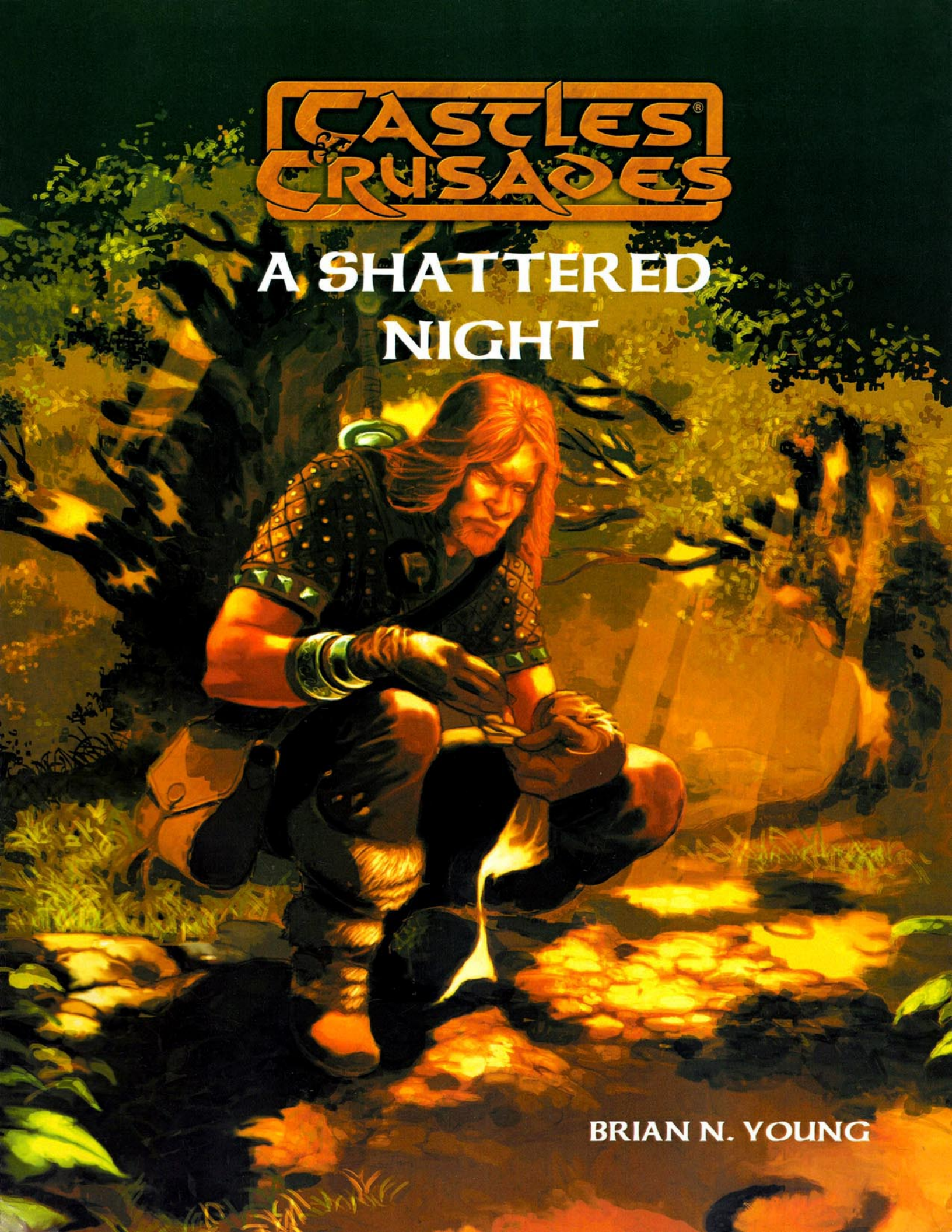


# CASTLES & CRUSADES

## A SHATTERED NIGHT



BRIAN N. YOUNG

# A SHATTERED NIGHT

By Brian N. Young

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# A SHATTERED NIGHT

**T**he princess tried to leave traces of her trail behind as the kidnappers stole her away into the Saxon land of Mercia. Ceidwyn ap Llanion, the scout, found the ripped and discarded remnants of her crimson and emerald silk cloak, still showing the smallest evidence of the golden filigree that once decorated it.

The tattered pieces had caught on brambles and rocks as they blew in the winds. Princess Gwerfyl is clever, but defenseless against the brutes of the Saxon Prince Ælfwic Icilson, who dared to sneak into Dinas Emrys and take her under the cover of night. Their plans for her circle more around her royal lineage than her sensational beauty.

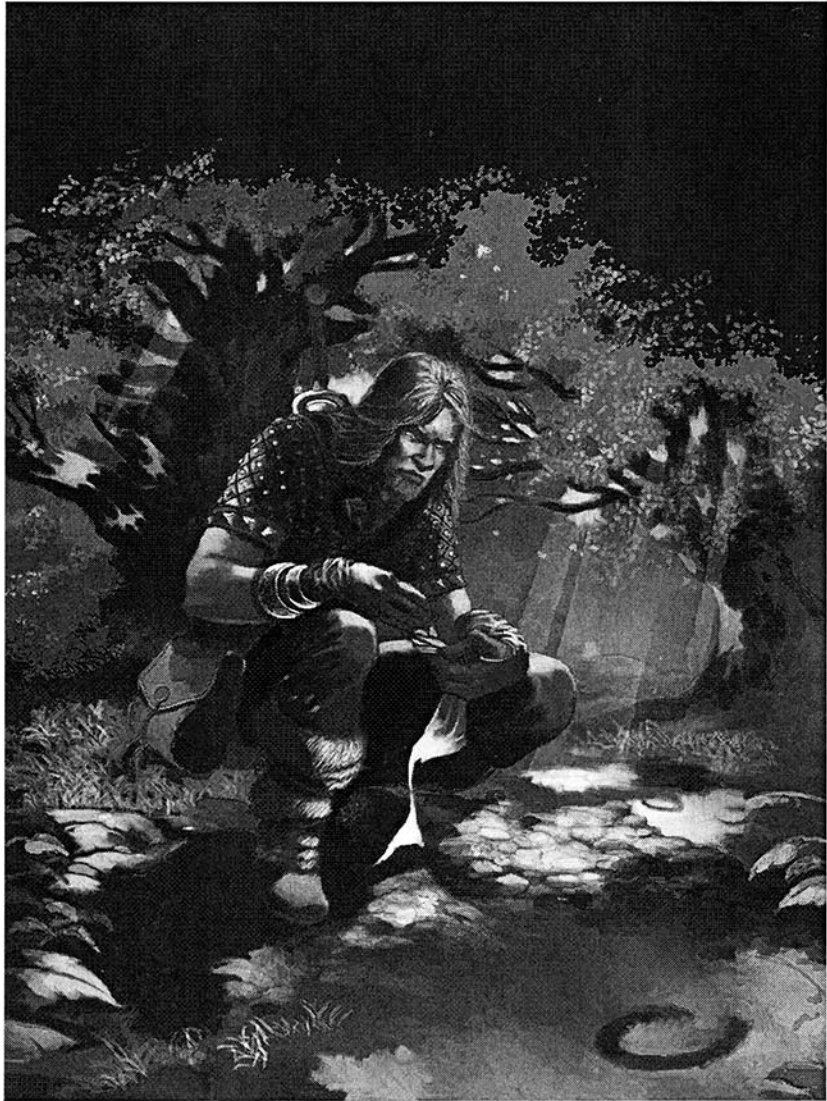
Chosen by her lord, the small band of warriors and wizards sworn to rescue her traveled quickly by night. They crept from out of Penllyn to the east and avoided the many dangers along the way to reach the edges of Mercia.

Sending an elite group was easier than sending out a large army to engage in an open war against a kingdom whose boundaries and size is not hitherto understood by the kingdoms of the West. This small band of brave and loyal adventurers wanted to not only see the princess freed, but also to gain some wealth and recognition for this dire and dangerous deed.

King Maelgwn ap Modron in Gwynedd swore that he would send some warriors from his eastern fortress of Din Gurygon when the time comes, if needed. His men need just a message and they will send a warband into Mercia to harry the Saxons.

The leader of the small group sent to rescue Princess Gwerfyl, Menwaed, is focused on the beautiful damsel and winning her heart in this extremely dangerous venture. The rest of the band, however, only want the wealth and fame in the end.

They would be famous indeed if they managed to sneak into such a mighty kingdom and its fortress to reclaim the princess of their people and return to Penllyn! A mission of this sort, undertaken by such a small team, is unheard of for its overwhelmingly impossible task.



It is said by many that the lands taken by the Saxons have changed greatly. They not only brought their own peoples and way of life to the island, but also their monsters, gods, and weird magic.

Menwaed and his band dreaded passing into the borders of Mercia. They knew this land of green misty hills and large forests would now be foreign to them, and all old landmarks and sacred places have passed from the memory of the elders of the West.

## INTRODUCTION

This adventure module continues on many of the story elements that remained from the previous *To Kill a King* and goes into a new direction. Continuing from the same intense complexity as its predecessor, this module will involve another level of sneaking, plotting, and skullduggery. As such, it will require the adventuring party to be at least 2-5 characters of 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> level to accomplish this mission.

This module takes the adventurers into the conquered and dangerous lands of the East, called "Lloegyr", where the Germanic threat is ever-present for the native Britons. They will encounter a Germanic assortment of monstrous dangers and aspects found in the *Codex Germania*. In effect, this module is a fusion of two codices in the series.

Just as *To Kill a King* was inspired by a song, this adventure is inspired by the song "Sixteenth Century Greensleeves" by Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow, a paraphrasing of the Tudor ballad "Green Sleeves". It would make an appropriate soundtrack to parts of this adventure, considering the Post-Roman, Dark Ages setting.

The adventuring party will have to outsmart the Saxons, who have the princess held captive, before it is too late. Stealth, clever thinking, and subtlety are important in this module. Although battles will assuredly occur along the way, this adventure is more about the end objective than the fighting necessary to achieve it.

The direction the players choose to save her can vary, and the CK can adjust as is necessary. Princess Gwerfyl's rescue should not be easy, but a knock-down battle to the very end. The Saxon chief and his men will provide plenty of difficulty as it is, not including the many magical and monstrous threats along the way.

## FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

Although this module, like the others in the series, centers on the Celtic fantasy setting in Post-Roman Britain (Prydain), the CK can adapt this to fit his own world and campaign easily. Replacing the Saxons with another race or people, preferably one that is widely disliked, is one possibility.

If the CK wishes to insert the party into the adventure coldly, without integrating it into a previously-played campaign, there are several adventure hooks given below that might work,

**HOOK 1:** On their way traveling across country, the adventurers stumble onto the stragglers of the Saxon group and find out that they are heading swiftly to Mercia. Perhaps the distant screams for help from the princess carried on the breeze, or they found the fresh tracks that lead onto the trail.

**HOOK 2:** A rival ruler or noble, Briton or Saxon or even another nationality, has intelligence from spies about the princess being held captive. Her ransom, spoiled or not at her captors' hands, would be worth a sizable fortune. This third party has hired the adventurers because of their skills

and talents to take her from the Saxons successfully, and they will share a cut of the ransom.

**HOOK 3:** Hired on as mercenaries by the Saxon Ælfwic to help watch the fort from retaliating Britons, the adventurers discover that they harbor a secret in the top of the tower. Possibly one or more of the adventurers served the princess' kingdom or even distantly share her bloodline, and they realize that she must be saved before it becomes too late. Somehow they will have to turn on their employers and gain access to the tower and to her. This hook would skip many of the story-building encounters along the way, however, and be a detriment to the overall tale.

**HOOK 4:** The most direct hook, if King Gwgon or one of his sons remains alive after the *To Kill a King* module, the adventurers have been hired to rescue her for the kingdom of Penllyn. With limited assistance, the king can muster a small army to eventually come to their aid if they can free her. If the module was never played, then the adventurers are hired outright without a previous history.

## ACT 1 - FINDING THE WAY

### WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT GWERFYL FERCH GWGON

Depending on which story hook the CK chooses to take in this adventure, the knowledge that the adventurers have about Princess Gwerfyl is limited, but worthwhile to helping them understand the importance of this obscure, beautiful princess.

Common knowledge about her is thus:

- She is descended from the great northern ruler Cunedda Wledig, a conqueror that seized power after the Empire withdrew from Prydain. In her blood is that mighty lineage, and as such, claims to many of the lands which Cunedda's heirs still hold across the island. On her mother Adyna's side, she has noble faery blood as well, laying some claim to territories in the Otherworld. How much her faery blood has benefited her, or if she has any abilities, is unknown.
- Her value to the other native kingdoms is of special importance because of her ancestry. Many hopeful princes want her hand for many reasons, but her father Gwgon has denied them all, hoping an ideal suitor will come along.
- To the Saxons, her worth is mixed. Many find no value in the royalty from the native kingdoms, while others recognize it and how it can be used to their advantage if need be (thus the involvement of Mercia).

### TRAVELING INTO MERCIA

The green lowlands, lush and forested in the eastern lands, fall in the kingdom of one of the mightiest realms the foreigners created on this soil, Mercia. Large and aggressive, this kingdom is merciless and expansionistic. If Britons, the adventurers are traveling into an enemy land for sure; their presence will not be tolerated or trusted.

## A SHATTERED NIGHT 3

If they left the kingdom of Penllyn, they would have traveled through two other British kingdoms, Powys and Pengwern, before reaching the ill-defined border of Mercia to the east. The CK can devise extra encounters if he chooses, perhaps using previous modules in this series or the *Codex Celtarum* for ideas.

A vast forest covers the western half of Mercia; it stretches to the far south of the island. The Britons call it Coed Mawr ("Great Forest"), and it is a place touched greatly by the Otherworld throughout. Large traveling groups and Saxon armies use the old Roman era roadways that cut through it, criss-crossing in all directions.

Upon leaving the kingdoms of the West and reaching this thick, wooded region, the adventuring characters must be clever to hide their presence (if they stand out in any way from the residents) at all times through disguise. The actual destination where the princess is being held, is generally unknown to the adventurers (unless Hook 3 is played).

The Great Forest will take a small portion of their initial journey because its leafy presence falls on the western edge of Mercia and goes south for hundreds of miles. Simply journeying in this ancient and venerable place is not as easy as it appears. The Otherworld is strong here still, and it merges into the Saxon world of magic as well, making this swath of sylvan land completely random and potentially threatening.

Encounters while traveling through the thick of the Great Forest are sure to happen. From the tame and exotic to the most dangerous lifeforms, this forest is anchored in the Otherworld, and its power resonates from every branch, leaf, and blade of grass within.

The CK can choose to make this first part of the pursuit of Prince Ælfwic calm and peaceful to counter-balance the intense action and drama that will happen later in the story, or he can thrust the adventuring party headlong into the mess from the beginning and keep them on their toes. This table can give the CK some starting place of ideas and inspiration in dealing with the Great Forest if needed:

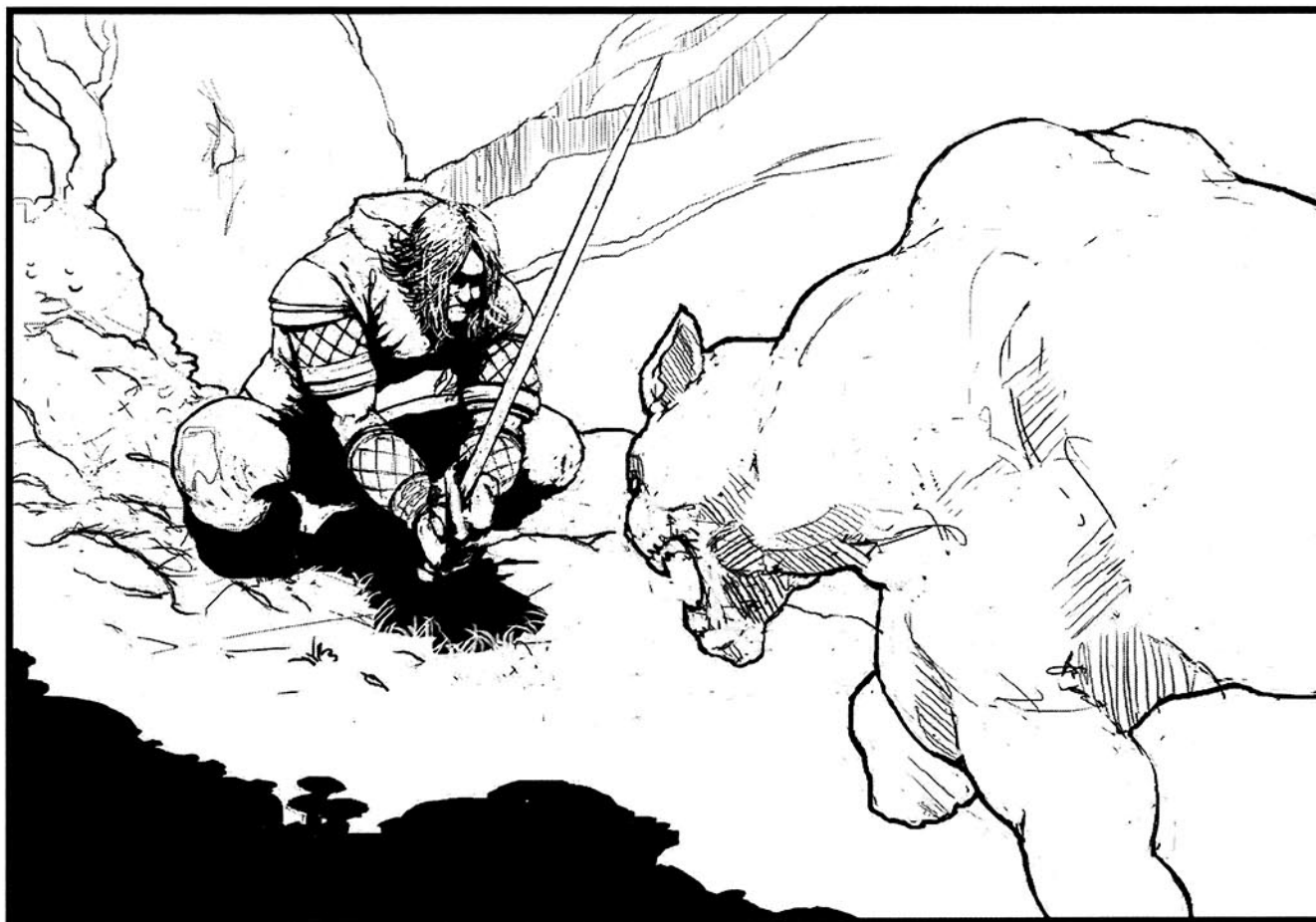
## D8 ENCOUNTERS

- 1 The adventurers come upon the crumbled Roman ruins of a small post. The forest has reclaimed the stone building, but a lingering presence still dwells here in the shady leaves and boughs. **DARK FAERIES** (2d4) have made this remote spot their home, and have taken up residence here, complete with shelters and fire-pits for warmth and food. They will be defensive about their territory if needed. *These chaotic neutral faeries' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 17, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental. They will attack using short sword 1d6, spear 1d8, and bow 1d4 damage. They have twilight vision and any faery abilities the CK desires from the Codex Celtarum.*
- 2 A drifting mist hovers in the forest that actually exists in the Otherworld. This thick, silvery grey fog oozes between the trees and foliage where odd and unusual animal calls

are heard. This Otherworldly fog will cause the adventurers to temporarily lose their way and lose d10 hours out of their time.

- 3 In a dark, smelly bog, many goblin-like creatures called pyrs live (d20). These vile and insidious beings will use the bog to trap strangers within. To do this they will summon magical lights that will dance and lure them into the muck. It requires a strength save (often) to avoid becoming stuck in the mire for d20 minutes at a time.
- 4 The adventurers unknowingly wander into a part of the forest where the trees are animated. These elm, alder, oak, and rowan trees are cruel and hateful and will attack strangers to satisfy their hunger for more compost and fertilizer. At any one time, 1d4 will be awake and threatening. *These chaotic neutral trees' vital statistics are HD 5d10, AC 12, and HP 50. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by club 4d8, and stomp at 6d8 damage.*
- 5 The adventuring party wanders onto a puzzling site of slaughter. Eight individuals, various adventurers too, were attacked by some unknown threat in the forest and slain gruesomely. Their blood, entrails, and limbs litter the woods disgustingly. The CK can decide what items, treasure, or goods these victims left behind. If the adventuring party attempt to investigate the cause of this, they will find no evidence.
- 6 A profuse number of glowing, colorful, enchanted mushrooms fill this section of the woods. At first it is a wondrous spectacle but once animals and beings enter into the confines, they must resist the spores emitted (constitution save). If they fail, they will succumb to the gas and collapse onto the richly fertilized soil and sleep for d6 hours. When they awaken they will find dozens of mushrooms all over their body, fusing into their nerves and flesh, sapping them of life by taking 1d12 hp/hour. Even after a victim is revived and his health regained, the occasional glowing faery mushroom will sprout up randomly on his body at times.
- 7 Camping minstrels are in one spot of the Great Forest, consisting of Britons and faery both. They would be happy to provide music and good company for the adventurers if given the chance. Their fire is warm and the food is very good. These entertainers are friendly and are merely trying to find their way west, out of the forest and Mercia both. In return for any help given to them, they will compose songs in honor of the adventurers and their deeds.
- 8 In the Great Forest, an old forgotten druidic grove is found. This circle of aged oaks is almost hard to notice in the ferns, vines, and leaves, but its magical presence can be lightly detected. Because this place is still holy, the gods have blessed it, the same for any who find it and honor them. Shaped out of the venerable wood are heads and faces of gods and spirits to peer at the worshippers. If any of the devoted and pious show respect, all spell casters can regain their spells and enchantments used that day as though they had just woken and were starting over for the day.

## 4 CASTLES & CRUSADES



### THE DECEPTIVE COMPANION

In planning out the kidnapping of the princess, Prince Ælfwic devised a means to slow or stop any would-be pursuers by employing a shapeshifting horerczy to await them in the Great Forest. This being, cat-like when not in another form, is demonic and vile-minded, thinking only of creating trouble and discord if given a chance. Appearing as a fellow Briton/faery/etc. to get the attention and aid of the adventuring party, it will tag along with them on their journey to Ælfwicbyrig and sabotage them when the time is right.

The shapeshifter demon will act however the adventuring party requires and needs, so as to not give suspicion of its true character. It will be as meek and amiable as possible to appear weak and non-threatening. It will also lie to see that the prince's plans occur without fail.

Some of the things the horerczy will do along the way to Ælfwicbyrig are:

- Make just the right noise to attract attention to the party.
- Create animosity between the party members and strangers by lying, stealing, etc.
- Ruin food/soil the water, and put out fires/start them.
- Say/do awkward things in the company of the enemy to draw attention and possible trouble.

- Alert the prince's guard at the fort once they have arrived and are trying to sneak in.

The horerczy is an unusual magical being that can be found in Germanic regions throughout Europe where they have settled. It will call itself by some handy temporary name, but insist that she/he has witnessed the prince's group passing by with the princess held captive.

Settlements are sparse and do not radiate out far from the main fortress of the King of Mercia at Repton, but there are many forts where warriors dwell and protect the borders from outsiders. Ælfwic and his band of kidnappers took the princess along a Roman road deep into the rolling green countryside of Mercia, a direct and dangerous route for the adventurers to follow – if they dare.

**NOTE:** Princess Gwerfyl has left ripped cloth remnants of her green silken dress along the way for her saviors to find. These can be strung on branches blowing in the wind, underfoot in the mud or soil, or however the CK desires to let them be found by the adventurers. To spot each of them, the adventurer must make an intelligence save. She only tore about 1d6 pieces total, scattered over many miles into Mercia before being stopped.

Traveling in Mercia proper, the adventurers will likely have many encounters with Saxon strangers or other beings, due to the proximity of the Great Forest. The CK can use this table for

ideas or if he wants to add extra touches of fun and tension for the first part of this journey.

#### D12 ENCOUNTER

- 1 A large warband (1d20 x 10) of Saxons roams the vastness of the kingdom looking for trouble. These men normally raid beyond the borders and may be coming from or going to such a raid now. As with all Saxon warbands, they are on foot and do not use horses, generally.
- 2 A village of peasants, nestled in the woods, lies in the way. Though small in number, these few families (10) are loyal to the king and will sound an alarm if they are bothered in any way or threatened by the adventurers.
- 3 A mysterious bearded stranger in a dark grey robe and large brimmed hat and with two pet ravens meets them going the other way. They notice he has one eye in his withered old face, and he talks grimly, babbling about many great bloody wars to come and that the adventurers are to blame. He admires their skill in battle and warmongering and will extol them for it. This is Woden Allfather in disguise; he can bless or even curse the adventurers based on how they interact with him.

*If he blesses them, the possibilities can be picked or rolled from this table:*

#### D4 BLESSING

- 1 **GREATER SKILLS:** One, or all, of the party gain a +2 on their skill/combat rolls until the moment the princess is saved.
- 2 **EXTRA INSIGHT:** One character is chosen by Woden and given the ability and insight to sense and find Ælfwicbyrig at all times.
- 3 **RESIST POISON:** The blessed character(s) are able to resist all poisons without rolling, but this blessing only lasts (unknown to them) until Princess Gwerfyl is saved.
- 4 **MIGHTY COMBAT:** Woden grants the warriors a +2 to their combat rolls for the duration of the adventure.

*If, on the other hand, Woden is displeased with his treatment by these adventurers he will curse them. Use this table for some ideas:*

#### D4 CURSE

- 1 **LOSS OF STEALTH:** Whenever the stealthy (rogues, etc.) try their craft and skill, they are given a -2 to their rolls for every attempt until the adventure is over.
- 2 **SLIPPERY TONGUES:** Whenever the adventurers try to use another language (Saxon, for example) to deceive or to lie, they will unknowingly speak the blatant truth. This curse will last for the length of the adventure.
- 3 **ROTTING FLESH:** Woden will curse one

character with being the carrier of a disease. This plague will have a chance (2 in 6) of affecting everyone around him, fellow adventurers and the princess included. If affected, a constitution save is required once a day around the carrier or leprosy will begin to take over. This is negated when the adventure ends or the carrier dies.

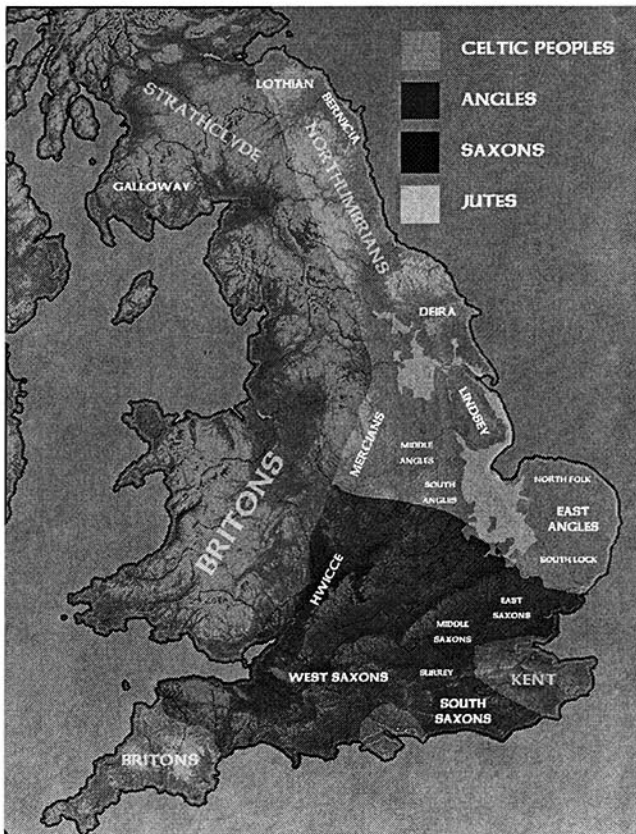
- 4 **ILL LUCK:** one or more of the adventuring party is afflicted with bad luck granted by Woden. This means that in every roll, skill, combat, etc., they will have an increased chance of rolling a fumble. Instead of a 1, now their odds have significantly been altered to a 3 or less. This bad luck will bother them until the adventure is over.
- 4 The party finds a dreadful swamp covered in mist. It reeks and is filled with strange noises and presences around them in shadows. This boggy area covers a large swath of territory and will slow the adventurers in their progress. A dexterity save or two may be needed or they will sink up to their chins in the dark stagnant yuck. Possibly another encounter is found here as well. Foraging for food perpetually, d4 **GULONS** are found. These are dog-sized, terribly clawed beasts that look like some form of wild cat, but are far worse. They eat any living thing that they find, down to the bones and even clothing and items (on people). Each gulon can devour three times its "normal" amount once in the lust for food. *These chaotic neutral beasts' vital statistics are HD 2d8, AC 14, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack using 2 claws at 3d6 damage, and bite at 2d10 damage. They possess Bloodlust.*
- 5 Unknown to the adventurers, the Saxon king's son Ælfwic set up guarded chokepoints along the many roadways going into Mercia. This is to stop or stall any who are foolish enough to pursue them. At any time, 3d20 warriors will be present to check every wagon, horse, and walking traveler coming from the west. These men will be brutal and rude, trying to provoke any disguised individuals.
- 6 The adventurers encounter an old ring of standing stones wrapped in ivy and forgotten by time. The clearing in the forest in which it stands is eerie in its stillness, with no noise made by animal nor breeze. Old magic still can be felt here, but it is ominous. The CK can decide on how or what makes this place so ominous.
- 7 The adventurers are met by a ragged group of British bandits seeking allies in their fight against the Mercians. They are the remnants of the peoples in the kingdoms that once populated the area, and now they wish revenge on their Saxon overlords. The CK can decide how many, and the way they are organized. If befriended, these bandits can become valuable allies against Ælfwic.
- 8 A troll nest is found by mistake. This lair is strewn with bones and rotting carcasses as the residents are caught resting by the adventurers. It will take stealth (CL: 2) to avoid waking them all (d8), but if they are, it would quickly become a dangerous matter. The trolls' presence

## 6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

has blighted and poisoned the land for a hundred feet in each direction.

- 9 Deep into Mercia a roaming band of Saxon berserkers (1d6) are causing havoc. They will cross the adventurers' path one way or another and not stop until everyone is raped, slain, or driven off. It is an ancient sacred custom that the berserker is a lawless but divinely blessed warrior, and he rarely answers to anyone, even a king. This will be a gruesome situation.
- 10 Stumbling across an old graveyard from the Roman era, the adventurers find a scucca. This is a large two-headed black dog-like beast that frequents graves and devours the dead. It is a ravenous and fierce monster which will not be easy to escape or slay once it catches scent.
- 11-12 A stone bridge fords a river way that is guarded by many of the king's men (d12). They will stop and inspect all travelers who need to cross. Any Britons or beings from another/Otherworld that they find will undergo intense scrutiny and questioning. Crossing the river is difficult because of the currents, CL: 3 x 3 skill rolls to do so, or the individual will be carried aloft and likely drown.

The journey deep into Mercia will require a continual effort on the part of the adventurers to hide, be in disguise, or to blend in with the peoples of the realm. The CK should really make this trek harrowing and tense, without much of a break, letting the adventurers know full well that they are (likely) deep into enemy territory.



## THE SLEEPING GIANT OF GWRANGON

For as long as the adventuring party desire to journey before resting, this encounter should be made unavoidable. Whether they set camp in the woods, in the hills, or amidst a rocky region in Mercia, they will unknowingly be near a sleeping giant. Loud noises, fires, and any great disturbances will have a chance of stirring the giant Gwendol from his old slumber (CL: 1). If they do manage to wake him, the adventuring party will experience:

*"From the earth a massive quake erupts, and then a mighty groaning jars you to the very bones. Birds panic and fly away, and the horses are unable to stay tethered for too long in the growing chaos erupting from nearby.*

*Vines, weeds, and old weather-eroded mounds of earth crumble and fly in all directions from something truly gigantic beneath; the size must be at least 20 feet or so.*

*In less than a few minutes' time, a figure rises from the ground, dirty and covered in what must be centuries of soil. The gigantic form is a man with a dark beard tangled in roots and vinery from the ages, and his clothing is a patchwork of large hides from oxen and cattle. Half-faded, complex tattoos cover his flesh in random places, each familiar and yet a touch exotic.*

*The giant rubs his hairy head and groans, and then looks down at you all in annoyance. From among the earth and stones beside him he lifts up an axe, equally as enormous as he in size, and shakes off the dust. He waves it around threateningly and snorts the dust from his lungs.*

*He thunders aloud, "Who dare awakens Gwendol, Protector of Gwranon? I have slept, waiting until the time came to guard this kingdom, and you seem to be the foes for which my axe thirsts! Speak your words before I cleave you into mince with my hungry steel."*

**NOTE:** Gwendol is actually an ally, and will defend what he perceives is his former kingdom of Gwranon, which is now gone and absorbed into the Saxon realm of Mercia. If he is informed about this change of events, and that he overslept and failed to protect it, he will not become a threat. Instead, he will become enraged and thunder off into the misty night with axe swinging, ready to slaughter the new inhabitants mercilessly. If, however, the situation with Gwendol is strained and tense and not so diplomatic, he will attack the adventurers.

**GWENDOL OF GWRANGON** is a chaotic neutral hill giant warrior, whose vital statistics are HD 9d8, AC 17, and HP 72. His primary attributes are strength, dexterity, and constitution. He uses his battle-axe primarily, doing 3d8 damage, but can also crush at 3d6 damage anyone underfoot, he also can throw rocks (2d8 damage) and possesses night vision.

The encounter with Gwendol can go a few possible ways, each of which can influence the adventurers' mission:

- 1 If befriended, the giant will thunder off into Mercia to wreak havoc on the invading outsiders all night. This

## A SHATTERED NIGHT 7

may benefit their efforts as it will send all attentions on Gwendol instead for a time, until the giant is stopped (if the CK decides he is). A second benefit of this option gives the players an unexpected ally later the story at the Ælfwic's Tower (see The Giant Returns).

- 2 If the giant is angered and engages in battle with the adventurers (and survives), he will search Mercia for any who escaped, creating more death and destruction in the process. This may not be so beneficial if the giant is hot on their heels in the escape. The thundering presence of the angry giant will take away from the adventuring party's chances of sneaking up to Ælfwic's fort.
- 3 Somehow the adventurers avoid being discovered by Gwendol and survive without conflict or exchanging dialogue. If so, Gwendol will likely either go back to sleep (1 in 6 chance), or if not, wander Mercia to find that the country he once guarded is no longer the way he left it. If this is the case, he will remain completely a separate matter, without a clue about the captive princess or the adventurers' existence.
- 4 The dreadful, but possible, outcome to waking Gwendol is bloody battle. Were this to happen, the noise and thunderous chaos it would create in the woods brings a chance of alerting the king's men (3 in 6 chance) to investigate. In d12 minutes there will be 2d20 Saxon warriors filling the woods and battle site to locate the cause.

However the encounter ends with the giant, the night (and rest) must go on before the adventurers dare to find more bits of cloth from Princess Gwerfyl along the way, deeper into Mercia.

### THE BARROWS OF OLD

Traveling the next day, after their encounter with Gwendol of Gwranon, the adventuring party will remain in the Great Forest, but find a hillier region with large clearings. A thin, wagon-trail road cuts through the woods near this part of the vast forest, but seemingly skirts past it on purpose, as though the travelers in the region have avoided going too deep into the hills.

Overcast skies and a slight drizzle make the day depressing already as the adventurers leave their encounter with the giant behind them.

These many hills are large and seem to cluster around a few larger-sized hillocks above all. From the road or nearby, the adventurers can see that these central hills each have a single standing stone placed on the top; the shape of the stone is humanoid in form.

Mists creep over many of the earthen tombs in the open daylight, seeping in and out of the many holes in the dirt and stones. If the adventurers are traveling during the day, the gleam of coins from a hillside will catch the greediest party member's eye in the sunlight (this is meant to tempt them to dig into the barrow to find the rest of the wealth, and therefore encounter the monstrous being within). If, though, the adventurers are traveling by night in the region, they will encounter an entirely different situation:

*"Slow mists creep around the many hills in the forest clearing, low to the surface and thick. From one hill a large entryway has fallen open in the recent few days, perhaps by grave robbers or foraging animals, revealing the hollow interior of the hill.*

*Shimmering in the starlight and by the dim moon are scattered piles of coins in the rubble and soil in the entrance. It is obvious there are many more from where these came inside the hill. Only night birds can be heard in the nearby woods, and distantly the howl of wolves, but there is complete silence around the hills."*

At the entrance of this barrow, 3d20 gold coins lie in the rubble as bait for the greedy traveler. These coins are from the Roman Empire and are hundreds of years old.

Once the bait is taken, the adventurer will discover that it will take some effort with a shovel to dig out the rest of the barrow to see its true contents. This digging will take a few hours before the timber-lined walls of a hollow tomb is brought to light. The curious will find in the musty tomb:

- A timber-lined and constructed chamber, well-made at one time, is inside the hill.
- Within it sits the laid and dismantled parts of a once large chariot to one side of the chamber.
- Still hanging on ornate pegs on the walls is a large shield, a gold drinking horn, and the tattered remains of a richly made cloak.
- Lying on the floor of the tomb is the desiccated body of a man on his back holding a sword tightly. He clearly was a warrior at one time, and he still dons his jewelry and garb.
- To one side of the chamber sits three small cauldrons filled with coins (200 gold and 350 silver).

The dead warrior will animate and attack anyone that dares to take its wealth; it will do this to feed off of the life-force of the trespasser. Once this barrow is disturbed, others will awaken (9) as well, causing a serious problem in a short time as the ancient, honored dead come alive together. *These undead warriors cannot stray too far beyond their tombs (about 250 feet) but will surround and trap the adventuring party to slay them all.*

**UNDEAD WARRIORS X 10** (These neutral 5th level evil undead warriors' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 15, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack using broadswords (2d4), battle-axes (d8) and slams (1d8). They possess the abilities of zombies.)

Somehow, if the adventuring party manages to defeat all of these undead warriors and wants to plunder their tombs, they will find roughly the same in each one.

During this battle there is a chance that Saxon scouting parties might catch on not far away (3 in 6 chance) and arrive

## 8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

to find the open tombs and undead warriors. Saxon warriors (3d20) will show up to complicate this matter by joining in the fight and robbing the tombs. Any surviving warriors from the scouting party will quickly find their way to Ælfwic and inform him unless they are stopped.

**SAXON WARRIORS** (*These chaotic evil 4th level barbarians' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with spear (1d6), battle-axe (1d8), throwing axe (1d6), broadsword (2d4) and dagger (1d4).*)

## FINDING ÆLFWICBYRIG

After the unexpected encounter with Gwendol, the adventuring party should be a hundred miles or so into Mercia. By this time they should have found several strips of the princess' dress along the route the prince Ælfwic and his band of men chose.

Many earthen roads and long abandoned Roman stone-paved roads are passed on the way through the kingdom, but Ælfwic follows only one to his personal fort. The road started off as a Roman highway but dropped off many miles into it and merged into an earthen one.

If the local peasants are asked, the adventurers will be informed that the eldest prince Ælfwic resides in a large fort that rests near the center of the kingdom, at Ælfwicbyrig. In this unfamiliar land of rolling hills and forests, it will take a good tracker or scout to find the way to the prince's fort (CL: 4 x 4).

Three small villages sit within viewing distance of the promontory fort of Ælfwicbyrig. These villages are active with livestock and farms, using the fertile lands for their fields. By night they are quiet with little activity except for some guards in each (6). The three villages are:

**GARRTON:** With a population of 40 or so in its confines, this village lives on the shores of a waterway that cuts through Mercia and has a wooden bridge for crossing to another village (Tywhamm). The people of Garrton, oddly, are more open to strangers than their neighbors closer to Ælfwicbyrig, and will not be too difficult to deal with. Garrton is on the forested side of the riverway and produces little aside from animal hides and aquatic game for its existence.

**TYWHAMM:** On the eastern side of the river, this village is dedicated to the war god Tiw and is populated by a very paranoid and aggressive set of families (20 in number). This village dedicates its capable as warriors for King Icil at Repton when they are of age and skill. Owning a large part of open country beyond the shade of the Coed Mawr, the people have plentiful farms and grazing pastures to thrive on. Like all Saxons, they have a good stock of Britons as slaves on hand, serving them continuously, doing the hardest labor and work.

**MANTONLEY:** This large village of 200 people sits in a vast, cleared territory where forest once rested for thousands of years. On the road that leads to the distant, and visible, hill-top fort of Ælfwicbyrig, this village lies in the path to get there. The local markets and law-giving is held here often by Prince Ælfwic and

his court. The adventurers would need clever disguises or plans to slip through this village undetected with an average CL: 10-13. Warriors are common here, to reinforce the king's laws and to keep an eye on the slaves in case they scheme to rebel again someday (not too distant is the village, Tregadwr, where the local Britons dwell under strict control). There are many streets and lanes in Mantonley that radiate out from the market in the center. There is a tavern here called Blood of Hengist where the Saxon mercenaries and off-duty warriors usually linger into the night. This is one of several large villages in Mercia, and can provide many extra adventures of fun within its limits for the CK and players, depending on the course of action that is chosen between all.

Once the adventurers make their way past the two river villages, the fort of Ælfwicbyrig can be seen in the distance to the east, over the other hills and forests in the region. At night the distant lights of the fort shine, reminding the villagers that neither Prince Ælfwic nor his elite warriors are far away, and any or all can arrive within ten minutes, once they know about troubles occurring.

If the adventurers want to gain intelligence on Prince Ælfwic and his fort from one of the villages, they will have to do some smooth talking and charm the locals to get them to talk. The most ideal place for this opportunity is in the Blood of Hengist tavern in Mantonley.

Here are some pieces of intelligence the characters may gather about Ælfwic's fort from the villagers:

- 1 The prince has a stone fort, built atop an older one, with a tower to oversee this part of the kingdom. The structures inside the earthen and timber walls are all wooden and thatch.
- 2 There are an average of 50 servants and slaves in the fort at any time. Their loyalty cannot be trusted with the prince for obvious reasons.
- 3 He has between 50 and 70 warriors at all times within the fort. Of those, nine constitute his private elite guard. These men are not berserkers, but specially trained killers from the Continent.
- 4 A witch (Ebba) serves the prince; little is known about her except that he has her council on all matters. She is said to be powerful and ill-tempered. *In reality, the shapeshifter (see Act 1, "Horerczy") sent by the prince to thwart the adventurers' plans is under her control, as are many supernatural beings surrounding the prince's region of Mercia.*
- 5 Riders travel between the capital at Repton and Ælfwicbyrig often, and it wouldn't take much time for word to be spread in Mercia about trouble. The king's army could be here within a day if needed.
- 6 There is discontent in the nearby villages surrounding the fort of Prince Ælfwic, because he is known to be fond of kidnapping beautiful girls and taking them back to his tower. Ælfwic has done this sort of thing several times a year or so, over a span of a decade. There is some secret animosity that can be fired up into action by the

## A SHATTERED NIGHT 9



adventurers if somehow the knowledge of the captured princess is given to the peasants in the right way. (see Act 3, "Siege of Ælfwicbyrig").

## ACT 2 - FINDING A WAY INSIDE

### ÆLFWIC'S FORT

Located on a large hill that overlooks the region surrounding it, Prince Ælfwic's fortress is a defendable stronghold. The natural features of the land are used to their greatest advantage in its defenses. A river splits around the fort, serving as a type of moat with one way across, using a draw-bridge.

There are two guard posts on either side of the draw-bridge to maintain security. Each post has four to six guards in it at any time. Getting into the fort will be difficult, but there is no other way. The changing of the guards at the posts happens every three hours, and at random the draw-bridge will lower and allow scouts (d8) or warrior bands (d12) to come or go from the fort, night and day.

Warrior groups patrol the land around the fort and sometimes the island-like hill of the fort at semi-regular times; they number from six to up to a dozen men. These men are the normal warriors under the service of the prince and the king.

There are several ways into Ælfwicbyrig:

- Cross the river. The current makes swimming across extremely difficult, CL: 5 x 4, with a chance of drowning and being carried downstream in the rapids.
- Wait until the draw-bridge is lowered and then climb under it and across to the muddy bank on the other side. This is not an option which provides plenty of time to waste (d6 minutes/attempt). To climb under it requires a climb skill roll at CL: 3 x 3.
- Go in disguise with a group of warriors, etc. from a nearby village. They will be stopped and checked by three guard posts (two at the draw-bridge and a third at the gates). They will be subjected to intense scrutiny each time by the guards and will likely be caught (especially if the prince's shapeshifter is present).
- Use magical means to fly or teleport over to the hill or inside the walls. This is less stealthy as it plants the caster directly where the occupants can likely see him.

### THE FORT LAYOUT

Ælfwicbyrig is a promontory fort, sitting a 150 feet high over the surrounding landscape on a rock and earthen mound. The land around it has been leveled by British slaves long ago and now is a clearing where any approaching visitors can be seen by the guards or patrols easily.

## 10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The draw-bridge post on the far side of the water's shore is constructed of thick sturdy planks of hardwood and oak. Its posts go deep in the soil and are nearly unmovable.

## OUTSIDE LOCATIONS

- 1 **DRAW-BRIDGE:** The gate near to the fort is built similarly to its opposite-shore counterpart in technique and sturdiness. Several guards maintain it and raise and lower the 15-foot draw-bridge. Constructed of many cut and smoothed planks of wood, and banded in iron strips for reinforcement, the draw-bridge works on chains and pulleys; it takes four men to make it work.
- 2 **WALLS:** The retainers of the fort are timber palisades, strengthened by packed earth and stones at the base. They stand 25 feet high and are only 5 feet wide on average. A walkway has been made for guards to stroll; there are usually 5-10 at any one time on the wall.
- 3 **GATES:** Inside the fort are strong wooden doors on simple hinges of bronze. They have a bar lock to close them but it would not resist a battering ram for too long if put to it. Between four and six guards are at the gates at all times; they will not hesitate to sound an alarm if something is suspicious.
- 4 **STABLES:** A large, long, wood and thatch structure inside holds a total of barely 10 horses. Covered in straw, this place is extremely flammable.
- 5 **SLAVES' QUARTERS:** A cluster of three square wood and thatch houses, the slaves that serve Prince Ælfwic and his court live here in cramped confines. Twenty slaves share each house uncomfortably in lice-ridden squalor.
- 6 **WARRIORS' QUARTERS:** This long, timber, thatch and stone structure houses the many warriors that serve the prince. Each man (30) is allotted a cot and a small space for their possessions. Both buildings house the guards and other men-for-hire that dwell in Ælfwicbyrig.
- 7 **STORAGE SILOS:** These three small wooden circular structures hold the grains and supplies to feed the prince and his retinue, primarily. It can hold enough sustenance for three months if needed.
- 8 **COURTYARD:** This well-trod, muddy, and stone-laid inner ward of the fort is the thoroughfare for all traffic that goes inside and out of the fort. It is watched by a brace of guards, usually six to nine, from the walls and on the ground. The prince's public executions and other judicial functions are often performed here, with the gates open and draw-bridge down for the villagers nearby to witness his power.
- 9 **WATER WELL:** This well gathers its waters from the flowing cold river which surrounds Ælfwicbyrig. Its depth is barely 20 feet and is fed by the river.
- 10 **LIVESTOCK PENS:** These wicker-fenced areas hold the sheep, goats, and other small domesticated animals that supply the meat, cheeses, and milks for the resident lord.
- 11 **ÆLFWIC'S HALL:** A typical Saxon hall, where large quantities of alcohol and food are consumed by the retinue

of the prince whilst in his company, this wooden and wicker hall can only hold about 30 cramped people, and is not very impressive as noble halls go. A central hearth pit sits in the middle of the room, while benches for the warriors rest along the walls around the throne-like seat of Prince Ælfwic. Trophies hang from the walls (captured weapons, flags, etc.).

- 12 **PRINCE'S TOWER:** See *Inside Locations for the Tower's* for details.

- 13 **THE KEEP:** See *Inside Locations* for details on *The Keep*, its rooms, etc.

## INSIDE LOCATIONS

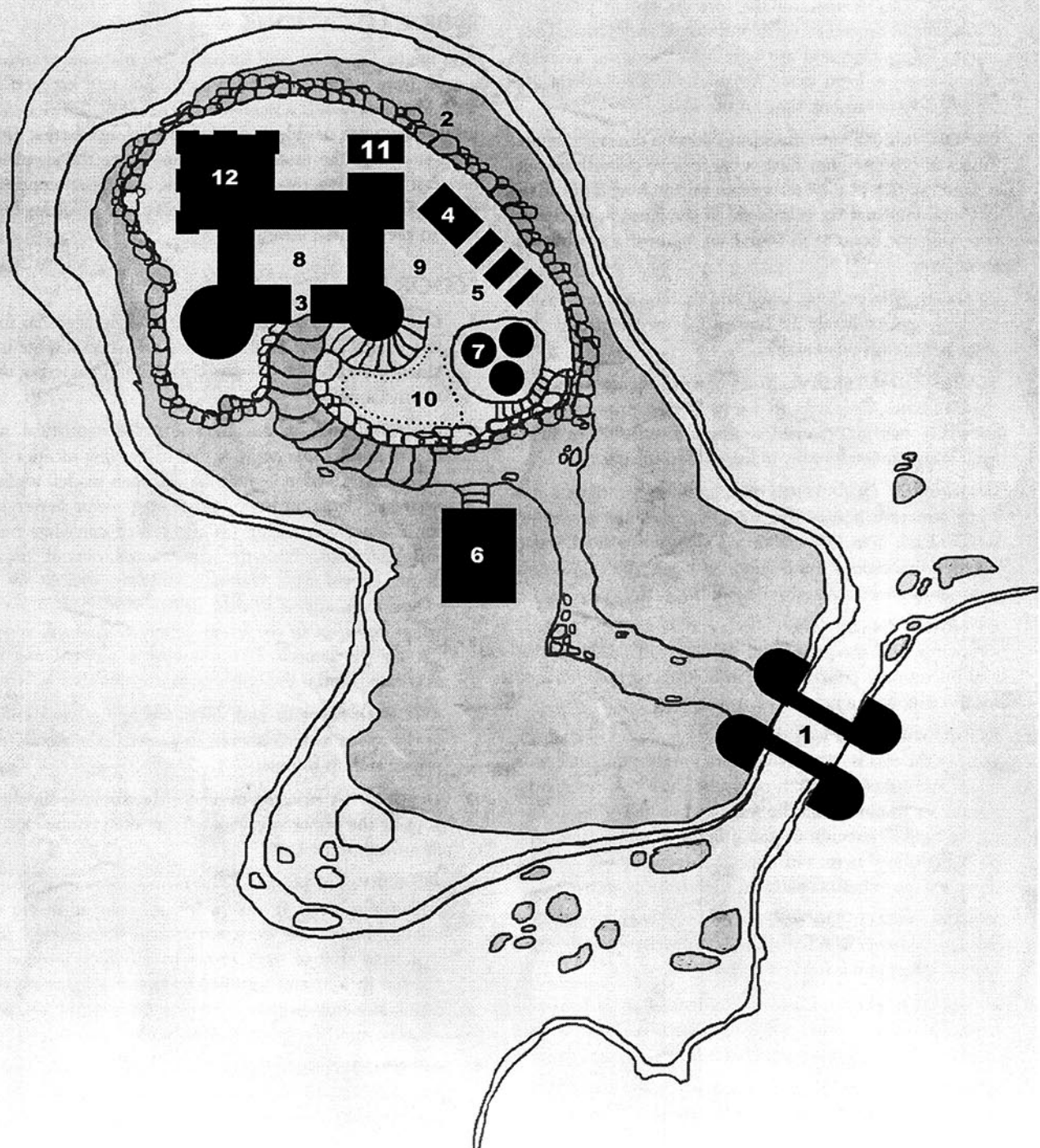
**THE KEEP:** This stone and timber building is built to withstand assault from enemies and hold the prince and his men if the walls are breached. If a siege were to occur at Ælfwicbyrig and his warriors were unable to resist it, they would retreat into the keep and close the massive oak doors. Since the supplies can only last for so long, this would only be a temporary option, but Prince Ælfwic plans to test this if need be, by sacrificing his own men to keep himself alive.

### FLOOR 1

- A **ENTRYWAY:** This main entrance to the keep has four to five guards always in attendance, and several more in side chambers with crossbows waiting in kill zones to put an end to any dangers.
- B **COURT:** Built to accommodate the egotistical whims of the prince, this court is one of the few niceties of the Ælfwicbyrig. Based heavily on a Roman model, it also has a strong Germanic style and almost seems better suited for a lesser, petty king (as the prince considers himself, unrealistically). Primarily constructed out of imported stone, carved with Germanic themes, and lit by large candelabras and a hearth, Prince Ælfwic is often here when he is not in the tower committing horrid acts with his captive damsels. His seat here is painted and richly decorated, and is the only one in the chamber.
- C **KITCHEN:** Servants and slaves toil here almost endlessly at the ovens making breads, stews, and other foods for the prince and his retinue.
- D **LARDER:** A store-room where the cooking supplies are kept by the prince's servants, it can hold enough for three months in some cases.
- E **ARMORY:** The prince and his retinue store their weaponry and armor here. It isn't a lot, in comparison to other Saxon princes and lords, but it does keep enough for his dedicated staff of men. A blackened thick wooden door, banded in iron and watched by two guards, protects this room. Hanging on pegs, 20 spears, 6 bows and 100 arrows, 10 axes, and 12 daggers line the walls.
- F **ALE-STORE:** Prince Ælfwic often keeps this room protected by three fresh guards to make sure his collection of ale, beer, and even imported Gallic wines is safe. He prizes this room

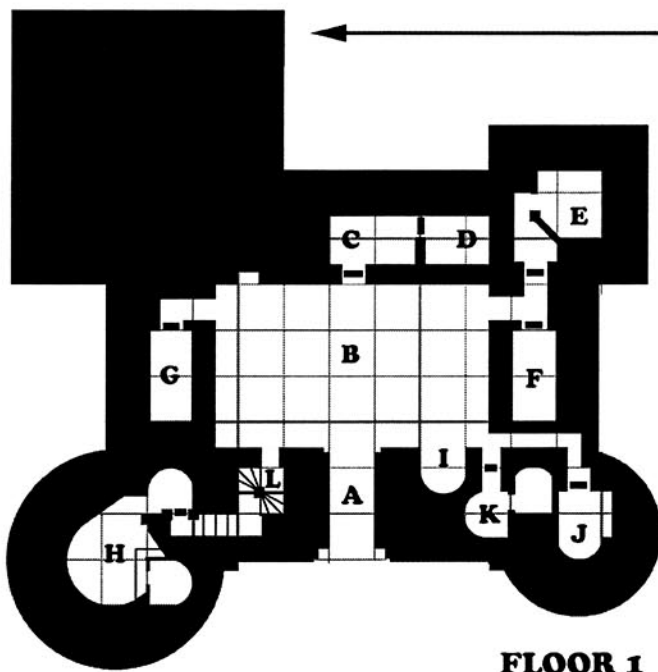
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## ÆLFWIC'S FORT

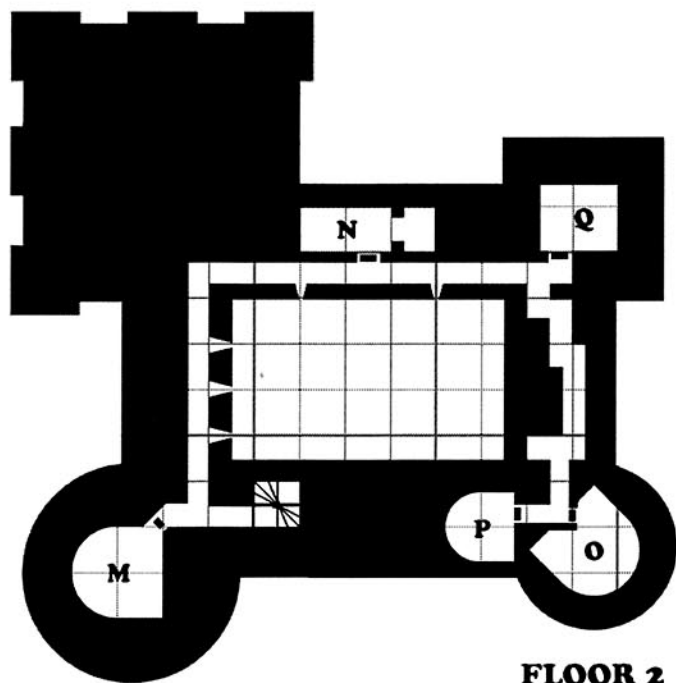
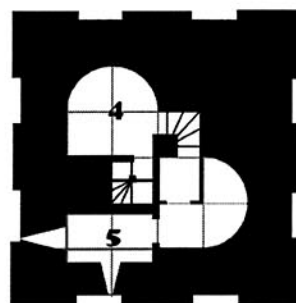
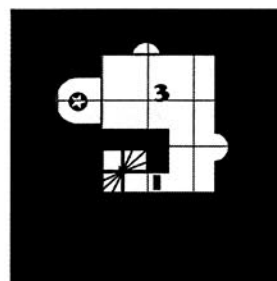
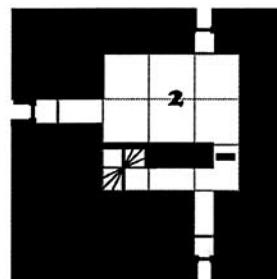
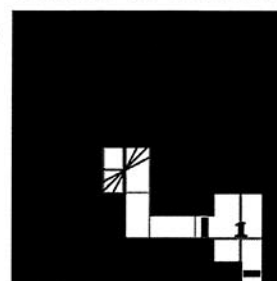


# THE KEEP

## PRINCE'S TOWER



FLOOR 1



FLOOR 2

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

second only to the holding chamber for his damsels in the tower.

- G HOLDING CELL:** This is a cold stone cell with a single door and a small window. It can hold six people fairly comfortably. One of the prince's berserkers guards this room when needed.
- H ÆLFWIC'S CHAMBER:** This room is fairly rich, with a massive fireplace, carpets, hanging lights, and other luxuries taken from the Britons and rival kingdoms, to satisfy the prince's ego. One large bed sits in the middle and a wardrobe on the side to hold his limited collection of clothing. Though his most important possessions are chained in the tower, the prince keeps a chest full of personal wealth and items in this room, hidden in a panel under his bed frame (CL: 3 to spot). This chest contains:
- 200 Gold, 125 silver, 1d20 gems
  - +2 Dagger – Woden's Luck: The wielder is given a +1 on saving rolls while using it
  - Land deeds (6) of the region, taken from the native Britons, both contractually and by force
- I SHRINE TO THE GODS:** This stone and timber alcove in the fort contains crudely-made statues dedicated to the gods. Offerings of food, coins, and animal parts can be found at their feet. If the adventurers met Woden earlier in the adventure while traveling in the Great Forest, depending on the encounter, he can appear here again for another opportunity to test the adventurers.
- J ABRECAN'S CHAMBER:** The leader of the prince's elite warriors is a Saxon mercenary chief named Abrecan. His chamber is spartan and rather bland, suited to his simple lifestyle of war and serving his well-paying lord. Abrecan is usually somewhere near the prince as both counsel and protector, but late at night he likely can be found in his chamber (2 in 6 chance). The room is small with a stone ceiling and walls, a hardwood floor, a lice-ridden cot of blankets and pillow, and his assorted weaponry and clothing on hooks on the walls. Often he has an extra Sæax sword, long-bow, and quiver of 40 poisoned arrows (level 3 poison), two daggers, and a scale mail tunic.
- K ELITE WARRIORS' CHAMBERS:** These two joined stone chambers house the nine seawolves that serve under Chief Abrecan. Wooden, Roman-style bunk beds and chests full of possessions line this room. It is smelly and unkempt, with refuse from uneaten foods, and unwashed clothing and bedding. If the adventurers spend long enough searching this room they will find 2d100 gold, 3d100 silver, mail tunic and byrnie, and an old, beaten, dented iron helm.
- L STAIRWELL TO SECOND LEVEL:** These rounded stone stairs wind their way up to the second level of the fort, and are guarded by two men at the top and bottom.

## FLOOR 2

- M TROPHY CHAMBER:** The prince keeps the many trophies from his hunting expeditions and battle conquests in

here. Animal skulls, antlers, tusks, and assorted weaponry hang from the cold stone walls around the large hearth. Roughly-made but usable furniture sits in this chamber for His Highness and a select few who get to relax in this room, dedicated to his ego. One window with locked shutters, would look out over the northern landscape towards the British village of Tregadwr.

- N WASHROOM:** This chamber is slightly smaller than the others in the fort, but it is dedicated to washing in a large stone tub. A smaller, connected room serves as a wastewater disposal and restroom, essentially a large hole in the floor in which to void. The waste dumps over into a section of the courtyard outside, near to the slaves' quarters.
- O GUEST ROOM:** This fairly large room is for the use of the fort's distinguished guests. A nice Roman-style canopy bed sits in the center, with a wardrobe and a small fireplace on either side. It is aesthetically bare and simple, since the prince lacks any sense of sophisticated style or taste. Usually his own visiting family stays here and in the adjoining guest room. Depending on events, there is a 3 in 6 chance that a guest is present and likely one of his siblings.
- P SECOND GUEST ROOM:** Run down with crumbling walls and floor, this second guest room most often sits unused. The prince's people ignore it.
- Q PANIC ROOM:** Lacking a better word to define this chamber, it is the prince's near-last resort to defend himself if he is under siege in his fort with no way out. Typically he would try to make his way to the tower under the protection of the witch Ebba. If, however, Ælfwic is unable to flee to the tower and his fort is slowly falling into enemy hands, he and his elite men will barricade themselves in this solidly-built stone room. The door is a double layered and iron-banded, able to withstand a battering ram or small flaming arrows or spears for a length of time. Several "kill" zones are located near the door for his men to use their long spears or bows in defense, while he and a few others will fiercely try to hold off any threats from outside. Unknown to all except himself, obviously, and the witch, is an escape spot in the stones that leads to a slide outside, landing near the stables.

## PRINCE'S TOWER

This slender tower is built on Roman models and does not stand too high (50 feet), but it does loom over the walls of the fort and provides a good view of the surrounding land. On a clear day one can usually see the distant high hills to the north and those to the west, but it is not often an option for the damsel held in here. Climbing the tower will be difficult, since it is unmortared stone with no hand or footholds, and it would take a long time to accomplish (d20+5 minutes), with a CL: 18 x 5.

- 1 ENTRYWAY:** With only one door to gain entrance and a small adjoining room into which to move, this entrance is not ideal for large numbers. It was designed as a chokepoint for anyone daring to take the fort. The prince's men (6-8) will be here with spears ready to impale anyone foolish enough to push his way in. A single spiral stairway cuts up through the center of the tower from here.

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- 2 EBBA'S SERVANTS' CHAMBER:** The witch has her own help, separate from the prince's, and they live on this floor together (see "Ebba's Servants" in The Cast of Characters). only the dangerous and suicidal would willingly throw themselves into this level, as it would not only be lethal but sound an alarm instantly. Several cots sit in the chamber amidst rubbish piles and filth. Few torches are ever used here since her servants are out at night. There is little of wealth in this room, since her help wear it on their persons at all times, not trusting the prince or his men.
- 3 EBBA'S VAULT:** Locked by a difficult, magical lock (CL: 5 to crack), this level holds all of the witch's supplies for her spells and magic. A *klaas vaak* (see "Klaas Vaak" in The Cast of Characters) guards this special room from intruders, made to do so by Ebba. Inside this chamber sit jars, bottles, and other containers full of herbs and the many other important ingredients for the witch's potion-making and spell-casting. A small amount of the poisons listed in Monsters & Treasures can be found in here, as she keeps them in a limited supply to use in her affairs. Crystals and magically endowed objects fill the wall shelves, mixed with assorted trinkets and items for which only she understands the purpose. The CK can go wild with possibilities in this chamber of things, giving the curious and brave thief a reward or a curse for his efforts.

Her prized but mostly unused magical possessions include:

**EAGLE'S EYE:** *When held over an eye, this crystal lens grants the user twilight vision (50 feet) and a field of vision that expands to 5-10 miles depending on height from which it is viewed.*

**MIST CLOAK:** *Made from the shrouds of the dead and enchanted, this cloak grants the user the ability to become ethereal and incorporeal as long as its clasps are used, but the user cannot hold or use anything physical object.*

**CIRCLET OF INFLUENCE:** *A silver gilt, well-crafted headband, this object gives the wearer a +3 on charisma-based saves.*

**FRIGG'S HARP:** *This richly made Saxon lyre is able to charm its listeners for 10 minutes by suggestion if they fail their charisma saves (which negate the effects if successful).*

**MIRROR OF YOUTH:** *If gazed at for longer than a minute, this gilded mirror will try to take many years of life from the viewer (d20 years) and hold them for Ebba to use later. A charisma save is required to negate the mirror's power.*

- 4 EBBA'S CHAMBER:** The witch lives in this darkly luxurious chamber that the prince granted her in payment for her many acts of diabolical ruthlessness over the years. Colored in dark blues, purples, and blacks, Ebba displays a rich Roman love of good living. Her bed is large and well-kept, with hanging sheets and cloths decorated in Saxon designs with images of ravens and strange gods. Assigned as a guardian to her chamber when she is away is a vampiric being, a *nachzehr* (see "Nachzehr" in The Cast of

Characters). Ebba has no regard for wealth, preferring her power over the prince and his actions to drain the maidens of their youth and life. Hanging from the walls are various objects such as animal skulls, stretched human skins, etc., mostly gruesome and ghastly. She has a small chest full of her prized items under the bed with a lock of CL: 15. Inside are 20 gems and the following:

**PENDANT OF THOUGHTS:** *Wearing this golden pendant enables the wearer to detect the thoughts of others within 20 feet.*

**DARK WINGS:** *This dark robed garment grants the wearer the ability to fly 60 feet/round once the command word is used ("Ravenfloden").*

**BAND OF SHIELDING:** *A silver ring that blocks the detect thoughts spell on the wearer.*

- 5 CAPTIVE'S CHAMBER:** This chamber is where the prince keeps his female captives for his various lustful carnal needs. It is simple, with a shoddy cot and no wardrobe or any other luxury. There are two windows with failing shutters falling apart, unable to keep out the cool air or dampness and exposing his captives to the elements. Climbing out of the tower would be extremely difficult (CL: 6 x 5) if it were tried, and falling will bring certain death. Princess Gwerfyl will be near the window, looking westwards, sobbing and terrified. Although not yet violated by the prince, she will be soon unless his ransom terms are met.

## THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

### PRINCE ÆLFWIC

The middle son to King Ilic of Mercia, Ælfwic is a slightly rejected and outcast member of the family because of his obsessions and perversions. His father dislikes he way he goads the peasants and British slaves by capturing, torturing, raping, and murdering whichever damsel captures his fancy. On many occasions the king has had to quell unrest near Ælfwicbyrig because of the troubles the prince caused.

Prince Ælfwic seeks some manner of benefit from his risky kidnapping of Princess Gwerfyl by a number of possible ways. Firstly, he would see the ransom paid by her father in Penllyn (20,000 gold), or from other rival lords British or Saxon (10-15,000 gold). Secondly, he would consider a trade for another beautiful woman or object of wealth from another lord or noble of any racial persuasion. If neither offer comes forth before dawn, and no ransom or attention is given to his hostage-keeping of the princess, he will ritually rape her in the tower before handing her to Ebba for her own diabolical purposes.

Ælfwic was raised to be a fairly skilled warrior by his brutal father at Repton, but his attentions are generally focused more on his women and the trappings of being a noble child than matters of statecraft. If the prince was placed on the throne of Penllyn in the earlier module *To Kill a King* and not ousted, then he claims that region through his father and Mercia until he is stopped.

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He is moderately attractive with blonde messy hair and usually unshaven. He is almost always attired in his royal garb to keep his people well aware of their status around him. He is violently impulsive and selfish to the core, with little redeemable value. Like the majority of men in this age and world, he views women as objects for his own personal pleasure and will use his royal authority to get what he wants.

**PRINCE ÆLFWIC** (He is a chaotic evil 6th level barbarian with vital statistics of HD 6d12, AC 19, and HP 78. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a +3 broadsword (2d4), and bearded axe (3d4).

#### **ABRECAN, CHIEF OF WARRIORS**

He is an Angle mercenary hired from the continent by King Illic first to serve his own needs, but later commanded to protect the king's foolish son Ælfwic. Abrecan is a true mercenary and only does his master's work if there is pay involved. He is a large, dark-haired, bearded, ruthless man who has no morals or scruples about what he has to do, making him evil and cold-hearted.

As with many other mercenary chiefs, he has his own retinue of nine select men, his seawolves to assist him and command the other lesser warriors and guards in the prince's service. The only way strangers can defeat him aside from battle (if they were so fortunate) is by offering him greater pay for service. This would amount to a fee near 5,000 gold or more in value. If he is bought, Abrecan and his seawolves would happily serve the adventuring party and do their bidding, as he clearly has no loyalties. Until then, however, he will not relent in his servitude to Prince Ælfwic until his last breath or drop of blood. He dislikes the dismal and mysterious witch Ebba and her retinue, and avoids them if possible in the fort, preferring instead to stay close to the prince at all times.

**ABRECAN** (He is a chaotic evil 7th level fighter with vital statistics of HD 7d10, AC 15, and HP 70. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks with a battle-axe (1d8) or a Sæax sword (2d4).

#### **SEAWOLVES**

These nine men are Abrecan's loyal slayers to the end. Three of them are berserkers, called upon whenever the chief cannot take care of the problem himself. They are mercenaries like their leader, but unlike him, they will only do what Abrecan decides. If their chief is slain they will not disband, but instead take their belongings and leave, even during a siege or terrible battle.

Secretly, the prince is afraid of the seawolves more than their leader because of their zealous loyalty to Abrecan instead of him. He dreads the possibility that another might pay them to have him killed; even his witch Ebba is suspect in the prince's paranoia. They rarely have an opinion or voice unless Abrecan asks it of them, ignoring the prince's own commands before their true leader's.

**SEAWOLVES X 9** (These chaotic evil 5th level barbarians' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 14, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with spear (1d6), battle-axe (1d8), throwing axe (1d6), broadsword (2d4) and dagger (1d4).)

#### **EBBA, THE WITCH OF DESPAIR**

Her origins are unknown, but rumored to be from the easternmost swamps in Germania among the bogs and fells. Ebba is here to serve under Prince Ælfwic. She is steeped in her magical ways, too distracted by her potion-making and enchantments to have a normal life.

Beautiful, with blue eyes and long black hair braided and to her knees, neither her age nor her past are certain. Ebba has sworn a vow to serve Prince Ælfwic until his time is over, and in his service she will retain her youth by way of the many captive women, hoping to work her way up the kingdom until someday she can join the king's court (be it Illic's or another's).

She is not only deadly and unpredictable with her sorcery and curses, but she also uses her feminine wiles and poisoned weapons when cornered. Strangers must be wary around her at all times or she might turn on them and overpower them. Worse yet, she may set her own servants on them. Ebba and the prince both serve equally as primary antagonists in this adventure, but she is the real threat when matters come to a head.

**EBBA** (*She is a neutral evil 5<sup>th</sup> level wizard with vital statistics of HD 5d4, AC 12, and HP 20. Her primary attributes are mental. She attacks with a poisoned dagger (d4 damage and level 3 poison), or a great spear (d8). She has five spells at "0" level, four at 1<sup>st</sup> level, two at 2<sup>nd</sup> level and one spell at 3<sup>rd</sup> level from the wizard list. Ebba possesses:*

**STONE OF WEIGHT:** *A cursed stone that once picked up cannot be released by non-magical means, it will half the holder's movement on land until remove curse is used (this does not affect Ebba since it is meant for any thief daring to take it).*

**MEDALLION OF THOUGHT PROJECTION:** *A medallion which tricks the wearer (using a wisdom save) into mistaking the medallion's own voices for those of surrounding people, it causes all manner of trouble in a short time and makes the wearer an unwitting pawn in the medallion's insidious plans to unravel the possessor's life (another item that does not affect Ebba)*

**WAND OF NEGATION:** *Ebba's wand can dispel magic from enchanted items which it is aimed at, three times a day, except for artifacts. It has an intelligence of 15.*

**ROBE OF EYES:** *This black silky robe, which is covered by patterns of eyes, enables the wearer to gain the abilities of darkvision (120 feet), and a complete surrounding sight of 360 degrees. The wearer can also see invisible and ethereal beings clearly, but spells such as continual flame, light and daylight can cause blindness for d4 minutes.*

### EBBA'S SERVANTS

Choosing not to have simple slaves taken from the native populace or her own peoples, Ebba has handpicked her own. Ghoulish and disgusting, her few helpers (three) are minor witches, half-human, that obediently do her bidding day and night. Ebba took them from various places across Germana in her travels westwards, following the migration to Prydain.

The helpers are garbed in black, almost funereal shrouds, and are pale skinned, avoiding the sunlight if they have the choice. The prince's men avoid these three helpers at all costs when they leave the tower or have to go for errands inside the keep. The villagers in the area fear and dread Ebba's Three if they are met. Their names are Geatfleada, Gytha and Nothgyth, but few know them well enough to tell them apart.

Unless matters have become dire and the fort is under attack, or Ebba is about to perform a mighty ritual and needs privacy, her three will always be by her side. They are likely to be present (3 in 6 chance); if they are not they can be anywhere in the fort or region doing her work (finding herbs and stones, etc.).

**EBBA'S THREE** (*These three 3<sup>rd</sup> level chaotic evil wizards' vital statistics are HD 3d4, AC 10, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are mental. They each have four wizardry spells at "0" level, three at 1<sup>st</sup>, and one at 2<sup>nd</sup>. If pressed they can defend themselves by dagger (d4) or spear (d6).*

### SAXON WARRIORS

Numbering a little over a hundred when not at war, these fairly loyal men make the prince's fort function by guarding what needs to be watched and protecting it from outside threats. As with most warriors in Germana and beyond, they are primarily spearmen by nature, with wooden shields and simple armor, rarely mail or iron helms.

These men are not cavalry but footmen solely, only using horses for pack and message-carrying. They will fight to the death for their prince if need be, but will flee if an all-out show of power and devastation is made, leaving little in its wake. They fear less the wrath of the prince than his father the king if they abandon the fort or fail Mercia.

If given a chance during a siege, they will send out a few men on horses to ride to the nearest garrison or fort for aid. These men do whatever the prince tells them, even if it is morally wrong, so long as they appease him. This entails murder, raiding, looting, or any other vile deed that he requires.

**SAXON WARRIORS X 100** (*These 4<sup>th</sup> level chaotic evil barbarians vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with spear (1d6), battle-axe (1d8), throwing axe (1d6), broadsword (2d4) and dagger (1d4).*)

### PRINCESS GWERFYL FERCH GWGON

With her blue eyes, long blonde hair, and elfin traits, Princess Gwerfyl has been sheltered by her parents. She has been kept from the hassles of statecraft and the daily drama of court matters, and shuffled away deep into her personal chambers in Dinas Emrys for much of her life.

Although delicate and naive, Gwerfyl has a secretive side to her character. Because of her magical blood deriving from Faery, she has communication and contact with the immortal beings from that world. Now in her late teens, her abilities are beginning to manifest themselves as time goes on.

Gwerfyl is slowly learning how to use her powers in the time of her captivity, hiding them from the Saxons and the prince's witches. By the time the adventurers arrive and the attack on the fort occurs, she will have been swapped with a homunculus from Faery. The real princess will be safely hidden away in the Otherworld by her friends, while her magical clone is left to reassure her captors that she is still detained, otherwise Ebba and her helpers will try to find her using their spells.

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For the greater part of this adventure, the adventurers, the prince, and his group will be convinced that Princess Gwerfyl is real, but when the final moments remain and she is liberated, the truth will be revealed and will come as a great shock to all (see Act 3, "Saving Gwerfyl").

## ACT 3 - SAVING THE PRINCESS

### FORCES BOILING UNDER THE SURFACE

During this whole adventure, there are many aspects which may assist the adventurers as they dare to rescue the princess in the tower before dawn. Many of these they may have been inspired on their journey into Mercia or became the result of other events on the periphery. If the CK has kept good track of what has transpired in Act 1 along the way, then what will culminate in this Act should be building in magnificent anticipation. To recount, the many factors that may or may not come to fruition by the time the adventuring party wishes to save Gwerfyl are:

- 1 **KING MAELGWN'S ARMY:** If the adventurers sought to have this mighty aid, then they would have to have been able to maintain some form of contact with the army while in Mercia. It isn't easy or plausible that a fairly large army (numbering roughly about 150 men) can sneak into an enemy region, but the king will send it all the same to help. Maelgwn's forces would have to be half a day behind the adventurers every step of the way until the moment they attempt to enter the fort, when they will attack and do so swiftly before King Illic's reinforcements arrive.
- 2 **BRITONS OF TREGADWR:** Full of angst and bitterness, the village of 200 would rebel against the prince in a heartbeat if given a chance. Once they know that the prince's men are occupied, they will swarm the two nearby villages to arm themselves and raze them to the ground before either fleeing to the west or helping in the destruction of Ælfwic's fort. If they know who instigates this uprising (the adventurers) they will aid them loyally and make sure that the evil prince pays for his cruelty.
- 3 **VILLAGERS OF MANTONLEY & GARRTON:** Displeased, rightfully, for the many innocent girls and women taken from them over the years by Prince Ælfwic, if they are dealt with in the right way they will happily join in with adventurers to see the prince toppled. The villagers of Tywhamm will be an issue due to their religious zealotry and loyalty, but it will be a momentary delay. Combined, these two villages will dedicate almost 100 men to the cause.
- 4 **BRITISH BANDITS:** Met during an encounter on the road into Mercia, these roguish people can come to the adventurers' aid and lend a blade or spear to the assault. They may not be large in number, perhaps 5-20, but they can be a distraction or some other form of assistance.
- 5 **GWENDOL OF GWRANGON:** This giant protector of the now-lost kingdom of Gwrangon could arrive, causing great havoc and damage against Ælfwicbyrig if he has become an ally with the adventurers during their encounter earlier in



this adventure. If the adventurers are wise in their initial encounter with him, Gwendol could be the greatest ally when things finally blow up at the fort. Very few things will stop or slow him once he is set on his path to destroy the invading Saxon enemy. In fact, he will become overly enthusiastic and take out his rage on all Saxons, including the villagers in the nearby towns.

Depending on what prearranged signals (if any) are made, these various factions may rebel or join in the adventurers' efforts to rescue the princess from the tower at any time. The CK can decide if any of these elements suddenly make an appearance during the rescue to add more tension and chaos during the mission. In the interest of keeping the goal of the adventure difficult and in the hands of the players, it would be wise to have these assisting forces and beings as background factors during the entire event.

**NOTE:** The fortunes of the various NPCs that might aid the adventurers could sway depending on how well the players do in the fort. It is important to not let the NPCs dominate the battle

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or win the princess for the adventurers, since this is their quest and story. Once the siege occurs in whatever form, it forms the backdrop to the rescue of Princess Gwerfyl and will definitely have an influence on their actions and options.

### SNEAKING INTO THE FORT

This is not an easy option since there are so many difficulties in the way and plenty of room for error; at best this obvious option might be the prelude to the oncoming battle that will likely happen at the fort. First, the river would have to be crossed against the cold currents at CL: 5 x 4 without the characters being spotted from the walls or by patrolling bands of warriors.

Once this is achieved, the muddy bank is small and flush with the angled wooden palisades. To scale the damp wood, it would require CL: 3 x 4 to reach the top. Guards pace the walkway near the top, numbering from 5-10, spread across the whole length. It would take a stealthy move to slip past the men inside before making the climb down to the ground within the walls.

Scaling the tower is not easy as it's within clear view on all sides by guards and the people within the fort, unless some form of hiding is used. To risk this climb, it would require five rolls at CL: 6 to reach the top and take d20+5 minutes to make way to the princess's top floor. If this is tried, make the climb as tense and potentially dangerous as it should be, with possibly Ebba or her helpers peering outside a window, etc.

If an alarm is given by the guards, it won't take long before the entire fort is sending out men and hunting dogs to find the perpetrators. The adventurers will have to hide, quickly. Three to nine men and their groups of war dogs will go from building to building within the walls, searching every room and nook until the party is discovered. If they are discovered and surrender they will be disarmed, beaten, and thrown into the holding cell in the fort until the prince and Abrecan come to interrogate them.

### SIEGING THE PRINCE'S FORT

The moment that Prince Ælfric is alerted to a danger of his plans regarding the princess he will move into his second plan of action, which will involve a series of planned events that circle around the princess and her well-being.

- First in his plan is himself of course, involving overseeing the defenses and safety of the fort. He will remain among his men for as long as it takes to make sure that no breach is made to his walls. Once this changes, he will make his way to the princess in the tower for his final plan of action.
- Abrecan and his seawolves will be on guard on the stairs in the tower and standing before Princess Gwerfyl's room to prevent anyone from entering, on pain of death.
- Ebba and her witches will be in the chamber with Gwerfyl, having tied her up to hang by ropes at knife point, ready to slay her if anyone attempts to take her. If by chance the prince is there he will begin ritually raping her as the witches look on, unless stopped. He wants to defile her, and then slay her if need be, at the very end of it all.

- Three to four warriors will be sent out on horses, to ride as fast they can to the nearest forts and spread word of the calamity occurring at his fortress. The rest of his warriors will do their best to stop any outsiders from making their way into the fort.

Once the siege begins between (with whichever enemy army), an all-out battle will commence.

The sieging force will have makeshift wooden ladder/bridges to span the waters in the moat and start to cross it under volleys of arrow fire. In this opening time of the battle they will return fire with flaming arrows, showering the guards and all inside the walls (*each adventurer must roll a d10; if it is 3 or less he is hit by friendly fire of d6 arrows doing d8 damage*).

Eventually the sieging force will make a semi-permanent way to ford the river moat to make an effective attack. Once established, the sieging force will start the process of causing as much fire and damage to the fort as possible before any reinforcements arrive.

The timeline of the siege is listed below for the CK to follow as a guideline during the rescue of the princess:

- 1 The opening assault begins, with volleys of flaming arrows catching fire to all thatching, wattle, and straw on the roofs and in the stables, etc. This initial event provides the sieging force with enough time and distractions to prepare their ladders, climbing hooks, ropes, and battering rams.
- 2 After the early offense is in motion, the sieging army will then try to take the draw-bridge post in a concentrated battle. This will not be an easy stage in the siege and will last for a length of time as men die on all sides, but once the draw-bridge is won (CK's decision), it will be lowered by having its ropes cut so that the rest of the army can make their way to second bridge-way and gates. This will enable the use of the battering ram on the gates.
- 3 During this phase the ladders will be lifted to the walls and many warriors will begin scaling them, dying in droves to the enemy's spears and arrows. These ladders surround the fort. Just a meager number of men, allies to the adventurers, will make it inside the walls at a time, but their lives are likely to be cut short.
- 4 The battering ram will bash against the gates, forced by two dozen of the army's strongest men. Again and again they will slam the sharpened and fire-treated tree log against the thick gate doors. This part of the siege is of the most importance, since it will open up the fort to the entire invading force once it is breached. If it appears that such an outcome is inevitable, the prince will flee into his tower to find the princess. This portion of the attack may take longer than any other part of the siege or the rescue of Gwerfyl; it is the CK's ultimate decision.
- 5 As a surprise during the assault, a nearby small relief army of Saxon warriors may arrive to attack the besiegers from the rear. This army is small, perhaps 30-50 men strong, but they can give an extra tension to the likelihood that the siege may fail (*the CK needs to give the impression that this*

attack on the prince's fort is doomed to fail at any time and could be undermined or thwarted). This sudden force's arrival can be shown as being larger than it really is to scare the adventurers into thinking it is the king's army, but it won't last for too long.

- 6 Sections of the wall catch fire and collapse around the fort, enough so that groups of warriors can now enter but the will not be enough to overwhelm the prince's forces. The gates are breached finally, long after dark and many hours of bloody battle. Once this event happens the sieging force will pour into the fort, laying to waste the prince's men and structures, freeing slaves, and helping the adventurers to liberate the princess. Once this occurs Prince Ælfwic's desperation reaches a critical level in his plans. If he is not given a way to slip out with the princess (to ride to his father's court in Repton), he will go through with his plans with her in the tower as mentioned earlier.

The CK can take this siege at his own pace to fit better with events occurring inside the walls with the adventuring party. By any means, however it is chosen to be played out, Prince Ælfwic will do whichever dire deed he has in mind by the dawn of the next day unless he is stopped. If the prince is able to violate or kill Princess Gwerfyl, this entire adventure's objective and point is lost, leaving only untold death and destruction in its wake and little but possible enemies for future adventures in Mercia.

Once the princess is noticeably freed from her prison, the sieging force will do some last minute damage to the fort in hopes of forever ruining the place before leaving in double speed to the west. Their next goal is to reach the edge of Mercia before the king's men can stop them. This will take all night or morning, and three or more hours of constant movement.

### THE GIANT RETURNS

If the adventurers have at least partially befriended Gwendol and/or informed him on the state of things in the former kingdom of Gwraegon (now Saxon Mercia), he will arrive at the prince's fort in vengeance.

Gwendol will wield his massive battle-axe with the aim of cutting down as many of the prince's men as possible. If he knows about the princess in the tower, he will work his way through the warriors and defenses to attempt ripping the roof free, thus enabling the adventurers to liberate her.

As with every other factor or potential variable in this adventure, the CK can choose the time at which to introduce Gwendol's arrival during the siege. If this does happen:

*"Amidst the loud clamor of the siege around the fort, many heavy thunder-like rumbles stir not far away. With each rumble, the earth shakes and stones and soil move, shift, and crack. In a pause, the noise of battle goes to near silence before a series of noisy hissing cuts through the air and the screams of men follow.*

*"One powerful deep voice can be heard over the siege, booming aloud, 'What do I find in my kingdom but invaders? They must be hewn down to the earth and cut as wheat to a scythe by my axe before the sun rises another day. Gwraegon will not be forgotten, nor its legacy and I will make sure of that! Never again will the likes of you strangers be found in this land if I have a say about it.'*

*"Outside, the giant Gwendol looms over the embattled walls of Ælfwic's fortress. Men shout to hit him with arrows and spears upon orders from their leaders, and the course of battle changes.*

*"The volleys of arrows and javelins only make Gwendol angrier and his attack on the prince's fort fiercer. With each swing of his axe he chops down droves of warriors from the walls and ground, turning them into minced remains. With vengeance and rage, the long lost protector of Gwraegon is now infuriated with these strangers in his land."*

Gwendol will live or die based on both the adventurers' actions and the CK's mood. The giant will be a large aid in this entire mess either way. If the armies of King Maelgwn or the local Britons are in the siege, they will not harm the giant, but if the villagers are driving the siege they panic and devote some man-power to slaying or driving off Gwendol, weakening their assault.

If Gwendol survives and the princess is saved, he will leave Mercia, going off to the western kingdoms to live in the mountains, away from all mankind, saddened still that he failed to protect his kingdom and all of those people who once depended on him. If he was befriended earlier in the story, he will live as a recluse but a continuing friend to the adventuring party in the future after this adventure is done.

### THE HORERCZY TRICKSTER

If the prince's shapeshifting demon still remains undiscovered and with the adventuring party by the time of the attack, it will be time for it to really earn its place during the siege. Serving the witch Ebba more than the callous prince, the demon will continue to sabotage every action that the adventurers take.

If the sneakier members of the party attempt to creep into the fort, the horerczy will make noises and other distractions to attract the attention of the guards. Unless the demon is stopped, or made to be quiet, it quickly becomes a problem.

Once the adventurers are inside the fort and making their way to the tower or keep, the demon will leave the prince's men tell-

tale signs of their presence (clear foot-prints, tufts of straw lit on fire, etc.). To keep its hidden nature convincing, the horercury will remain by the side of the adventuring party when they confront the prince and witch, and may even take a hit or spell to give the illusion validity long enough to deceive them further.

### SAVING GWERFYL

In the most crucial and well-earned moment of this adventure, liberating Princess Gwerfyl, the adventurers will encounter an unexpected event. Whichever scenario has unfolded during the siege, Gwerfyl will be not be what anyone is expecting or hoping. Likely her rescue will take place in her cell atop the tower in Ælfwic's fort, and if so, this is what the adventuring party witnesses:

*"During the bloodshed and battle, the torch-lit chamber of Princess Gwerfyl is filled with moving shadows. Roughed up and dirty from abuse, Gwerfyl is crouched against a wall, sobbing. Tears stream from her fair face and she can barely talk coherently, her blue eyes distant.*

*"Somehow in the chaos of it all in the struggle with Prince Ælfwic and Ebba, the princess was struck by a weapon. Crimson drips from her slim side under her hands. Gwerfyl staggers out from her spot, her traumatized face turning to a weird grin.*

*"She laughs and says aloud to the (possibly dying) prince, 'Do you think, vain and foul prince, that my captivity was so easy? That my worth was just in land or lineage or for your base pleasure? That there is no more to me than people know, or that my mother's blood doesn't run strong in these veins? It is more than you can ever recognize. What you have done is brought ruin to your power here by taking me. You invited your own demise and doom by taking me from my home. Not all is as it appears...'*

*Gwerfyl laughs diabolically, so unlike the petite and innocent girl for which she is known, and she explodes into a shower of dry and dead leaves all over the floor. Everyone stands astonished and in shock as the beautiful princess disappears from sight, only to become something else.*

*A warm breeze blows in the chamber, with scents of honey and flowers, and even the faded chirps of birds. Outside, the fall of Ælfwicbyrig occurs at the same moment as the walls burn and tumble, followed by the collapse of the keep. The tower begins to tremble and quake from its foundations and a roar of victory echoes from the besieging army."*

By the end of the siege and the "rescue" of the Princess Gwerfyl, the remnants of the prince's men will flee to the capital at Repton to signal danger and the need for reinforcements. The allies of the adventuring party (whoever they may be) will quickly disband and make haste away from the flaming, smoking ruins of Ælfwicbyrig before armies arrive.

By the early morning hours it will be obvious that the king's men will be in pursuit, many miles behind the adventuring party and the allies. If they slow, the army will gain on them gradually.

*The king's pursuing army will be a 200-man strong force of warriors led by a noble, and they will try to surround the adventurers to capture them. If they manage to take them once shackled, the captives will be held on the 150 mile march to Repton to be tortured and questioned by King Illic and his men to answer for their crimes against his sons and kingdom. This could be another adventure entirely involving the useful data in the Codex Germania.*

If, however, the king's forces do not catch the adventurers by dawn in their flight west out of Mercia, the party will make a startling encounter along the way:

*"Emerging from the shadowed glades of the forest is a figure wrapped in a dark cloak, feminine in form, with a hood hiding her appearance, who moves slowly into your path.*

*"Letting themselves be seen briefly are groups of sylvan-garbed bowmen with their arrows aimed at you from the foliage, high and low.*

*"The female stranger is small and petite and steps before you, saying, 'I thank you for your courageous and heroic work in rescuing me from the diseased hands of that wretched princeling. I had to hide among my own kindred once I was able, so that his witch would not discover my whereabouts, and thus bring them their well-deserved fates upon your arrival. You were all my weapons of vengeance and you did not know this until the deed was done, but I cannot thank you enough. Do not despair, as you are not returning to my kingdom empty-handed, friends. I will kindly go with you and then you will be given the reward you so earnestly deserve.'*

*"Her hood is moved aside and you can see her beautiful fair face, her large blue eyes, pouty lips, and blonde tresses revealed from under the cloth. With a motion of her right hand, the faery archers fade back into the surrounding foliage without a sound."*

- Upon their return to Penllyn with Princess Gwerfyl, the adventurers will be given a reward by the king or one of the princes. Their reward will be 10,000 gold and new horses from the king's stables (to be divided among the party).
- Their past crimes and transgressions in Penllyn will be forgiven, and they will be made members of the tribe of the king in honor. Additionally, each member of the adventuring party will be given a golden ring with a garnet signet symbol of the kingdom of Penllyn to show their loyalties.

Princess Gwerfyl quickly fades back into her former life at court, but with a more Otherworldly aspect and presence about her.

War will be brewing now in Mercia over what happened with the prince and his part of the realm during the rescue of the princess. Other forces are mobilizing in the Otherworld as well, and a tension is growing between the worlds that has been on the rise for many months. A new threat is about to spring from the depths of the earth and the abyss of Annwn which has long sat dormant.

This danger will be revealed in the next module in the series, *The Idle Wizard*.

## NEW MONSTERS

### ALP

(Medium Creature)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-2

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 15

**ATTACKS:** Claw 1d10, Bite 2d8

**SPECIAL:** Nightmares, Vampirism, Shapeshifting, Invisibility

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 4

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**XP:** 200+3

The Alp is a type of elf, vampiric in nature and the cause of terrible nightmares in its victims. Typically the Alp is a male creature and is drawn to females to feed and cause terror in, while the Mara is the female half. Their beauty is illusionary, to hide their true frightful nature. Ghastly and pale in appearance, they are not the Light Elves of Álfheimr. When garbed as human they will look like whatever function is needed in society to slip by guards and patrols.

They usually wear and possess a Tarnkappe to house their magical abilities and spells. If they lose this their potency is weakened greatly. At their most innocent, they will run horses ragged and create chaos amongst people, but at their worst they will target an individual to terrorize and draw blood from.

Witches, warlocks and other evil types employ the Alp to cause harm on their enemies. Alpen-folk live in small communities on their own and do not like outsiders and jealously hate the Light Elves and all of those that side with them and will be openly hostile towards them.

**COMBAT:** If put into a place to fight they will resort to their sharp claw-like nails and teeth, but can use weaponry too. Alpen, or Mara, are not the strongest and so do not wish to push their luck by a prolonged combat unless they have an advantage somehow.

**NIGHTMARES:** The Alp/Mara will wait until a victim is asleep and then sneak into the spot where they rest and begin to cause realistic nightmares. The victim must make a Magic Resistance roll, if they fail their dreams will be disturbing and horrific for as long as it takes before either, they are awakened, or the Alp

is stopped. These nightmares will give the victim no amount of stable sleep and deny them the benefits of a full sleep in turn. If this continues night after night (a week or more), the victim will suffer a -5 on all skill rolls while awake until proper sleep is had.

**VAMPIRISM:** The Alp can feed from the victim while they are sleeping and undisturbed. If a Magic Resistance is failed by the victim, the Alp can drain 1d6 points of damage slowly per hour of sleep. The victim will awaken weak and pale from the blood-loss and be unable to heal normally.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** The Alp can take many shapes when needed to evade capture or notice. One common form is that is a large dark horse, another is a cat, dog, pig or white butterfly. One identifying element as to the creature being an Alp/Mara is the magical hat or Tarnkappe on its head. This hat enables the elf to become invisible as well when needed.

**INVISIBILITY:** Often an Alp has a magical cloak that grants them the power of becoming invisible. This cloak will work if those in view fail their Magic Resistance if the Alp is nearby.

### HORERCZY

(Small to Medium Demon)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Small to Medium

**HD:** 4d6

**MOVE:** 40 feet

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Claws 3d8, Bite 1d20

**SPECIAL:** Vampiric Butterflies, Shapeshifting

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** Standard

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**XP:** 200+4

Horerczy are demons, dark-skinned shapeshifters that appear cat-like in appearance. They give birth to the Alp (see Alp) as well as call upon flights of demonic vampiric butterflies.



It is a bad enough experience to corner one and try to confront it, but even worse is its unusual method of exhaling dozens of butterflies to attack many foes at one time. Initially this attack might seem laughable, but the dozens of vampiric butterflies can swarm the body and feed on the exposed skin.

**COMBAT:** The horerczy will attack like a mountain cat if forced, by lashing with its steel-like talons and horrible teeth. If one horerczy is in danger others will come to its aid and gang up on the attackers.

**VAMPIRIC BUTTERFLIES:** Twice a day, the horerczy can exhale brightly colored, magical butterflies into the air (1d20+4) and send them to attack others. These insects will land on any exposed skin and begin feeding on the blood, draining 1d8 HP/round until they are driven away or stopped.

**SHAPESHIFTING:** Horerczy can alter their forms to appear as other animals if needed. They can use this a couple times a day and its duration can last in 1d10 hours at a time. The shape must be that of a small animal, ranging in size from rodent to sheep.

#### **KLAAS VAAK**

(Medium Being)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 2d8

**MOVE:** 60 feet

**AC:** 18

**ATTACKS:** None

**SPECIAL:** Cause Sleep, Stealth

**SAVES:** M

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 1

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Neutral

**XP:** 70+2

The klaas vaak is a shadowy magical figure that can choose to cause other beings to sleep when physical contact is made. Mostly they are benign by nature and only help people that seek sleep, but they can also turn evil and force sleep on those they wish to exploit.

Few have actually ever seen the klaas vaak, but those who have say they are shadowy figures that leave no sound or trace of their passing. They are not material in form and cannot be hit by normal weapons, only magical ones.

**COMBAT:** The klaas vaak cannot physically harm anyone due to their incorporeal nature, but they can influence the environment around them in such a way that harm can be done to others (such as flaring up fires, use wind to kick up rocks, etc.).

**CAUSE SLEEP:** The klaas vaak fling a misty dust-like substance into the air which acts magically to knock out anyone in a 10-foot radius and can be done every other turn. Anyone caught in the radius must make a magic resistance or fall asleep for eight

hours, but can be woken with common abrupt-waking methods such as water to the face or shaking.

**STEALTH:** Because the klaas vaak has no solid form, they leave almost no tracks behind them, with the exception of dusty prints on smooth surfaces. They make scarcely a hiss when they move or talk, and are for the most part completely hidden. Any attempt to track them will be met with a -5 on skill rolls.

#### **NACHZEHRER**

(Medium Demon)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-3

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 4d12

**MOVE:** 40 feet

**AC:** 17

**ATTACKS:** Slam (3d8), Bite (4d10), Claw (1d8)

**SPECIAL:** Blood Drain, Shadow of Sickness

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 5

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**XP:** 1500+4

The "After Devourer" is an undead corpse that has risen from the grave to eat and feed on others, ravenously. These vampiric ghouls can only become so by dying from the plague or another epidemic.

They emerge from their graves at night and prowl, looking for the living or dead on which to feast. Nachzehrer are recently dead, usually fresh from a large sickness-related event, and usually rise in 1d4 nights after being put into the grave. There is no explanation for how a dead person transforms into a nachzehrer, but many think it is the insidious influence of the underworld or curses of the Halirúna.

These rotting undead will dig into other graves and eat the corpses, or turn to any living animal or being found near, attacking like rabid animals. If a prey hard to obtain, they will stalk it and ambush when the time is right.

The nachzehrer will prey on relations and friends, and stay close to where they used to live. Hunters of the undead can find them by listening for the noises made by their bone-crunching and ravaging of their prey.

**COMBAT:** Nachzehrer flail their gore-soaked hands at the enemies, reaching for the throat, and trying to bash them and disorient them enough to be bitten. Once they bite down, they can begin savagely ripping out muscles, tendons, and blood-vessels.

**BLOOD DRAIN:** Similar to a vampire, but not identical, the nachzehrer can begin draining blood and vital juices from a target after biting. The victim must make a magic resistance with each bite or take an extra 1d4 damage from the intense blood loss.

**SHADOW OF SICKNESS:** The nachzehrer's shadow can bring illness to those who cross it. A constitution save must be made or the person or animal will get sick and lose grip on his health. Only healing or the blessing of a cleric can undo the effects, which will last 1d20 days wherein the victim will be unable to function well (all skills and combat at a -8) unless countered.

## ÞYRS

(Short Goblin)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1-20

**SIZE:** Short

**HD:** 3d6

**MOVE:** 40 feet

**AC:** 13

**ATTACKS:** Claw 1d6, Bite 1d10, Weapon

**SPECIAL:** Invisibility, Faery Lights

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Average

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**XP:** 50+3

The þyrs or þurs are wretched goblins that live in swamps and prey on travelers and the lost. They try to sneak up on outsiders and at the least, rob them of their possessions and dump them in a ditch. At the worst the strangers will be attacked.

Þyrs are disgusting beings, covered in scabs and pus, who reek of the stink of stagnant waters. They swim and live in hidden caves under murky waters, where they drag their wealth and

prey. Often they live with and work for trolls, doing chores and other jobs.

These goblins are commonly malevolent and never approachable or able to be bribed. They will attack mindlessly, attempting to drag the helpless into the waters to claim as their own. "Beowulf" described Grendel as being one of the þyrs in the poem.

**COMBAT:** The þyrs come from all sides and never attack singly unless the victim is weak enough and unable to be a threat. They are cowardly by nature and wish to overwhelm their foes and prey quickly, not by engaging in prolonged battles.

**INVISIBILITY:** The goblins can become invisible, blending in with the swamps, if they remain still. Once they do so, everyone present must make a wisdom save to notice them. The þyrs exploit the peripheral weakness in most races' vision and try to shadow them on these edges of sight.

**FAERY LIGHTS:** A þyrs can create magical, moving lights that flutter about and glide around them. These lights can make up to a 150-foot radius around the faery and can be guided and moved in a very deceptive manner in order to lure prey. This effect will last 1d20 minutes and can be used three times a day. Onlookers will have to make a magic resistance or be drawn to them for 1d6 minutes mindlessly.

## SCUCCA

(Large Hound)

**NO. ENCOUNTERED:** 1

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 8d8

**MOVE:** 40 feet

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claws (4d6), 2 Bite (3d8)

**SPECIAL:** Two Heads

**SAVES:** M & P

**INT:** Low

**TREASURE:** 2

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**XP:** 200+8

Scucca are large black two-headed dogs that smell out graveyards and the dead to feast on their remains. Ravenously hungry, the scucca will devour anything living in its way as it prowls.

This massive mastiff-type beast comes from the underworld and is one of the many hounds of Hel. The scucca cannot be surprised because of its two heads. This is because one head will sleep while the other is awake, never falling completely into slumber and becoming vulnerable.

**COMBAT:** Both heads can attack simultaneously along with its ferocious claws, on one opponent or a couple at a time. Just like a wild and rabid hound, the scucca will go for the most fragile and weak extremities of its foe.

**TWO HEADS:** Because the scucca has two heads, it can watch all sides around it and never be ambushed or surprised unless magic is used on it.



# CASTLES<sup>®</sup> CRUSADES

## To Save A Princess

Ælfwic is a cold hearted Prince with designs on the royal blood of Mercia. To this end he sent his brutes abroad to seize the Princess Gwerfyl and bring her to him. They stole into her castle and there overtook her guards and bore her off into the dark. She fought, but to no avail, for with them were strange magics and a haunt of weirdling power. Many followed the trail, taken up after a father's desperate call, but few returned, and none with the Princess.

And she vanished into the east, prisoner of a Prince most foul, to lie in the dungeons of her captor, bereft of hope.

A Shattered Night is complex adventure of intrigue, and espionage. It involves a wild hunt across ancient forests to find the Princess. But once done, its no easy task to free her. The force of arms carries an adventurer far, but at times stealth and care carry them further. The game is afoot!

Set in a semi-historical mythical Post-Roman Britain, in the Mercia and the east Saxon kingdoms, A Shattered Night has a strong element of the fairy-folk and druidic magic about it. This module can be easily placed in the Airhde world setting or any other with an easy change of names.



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