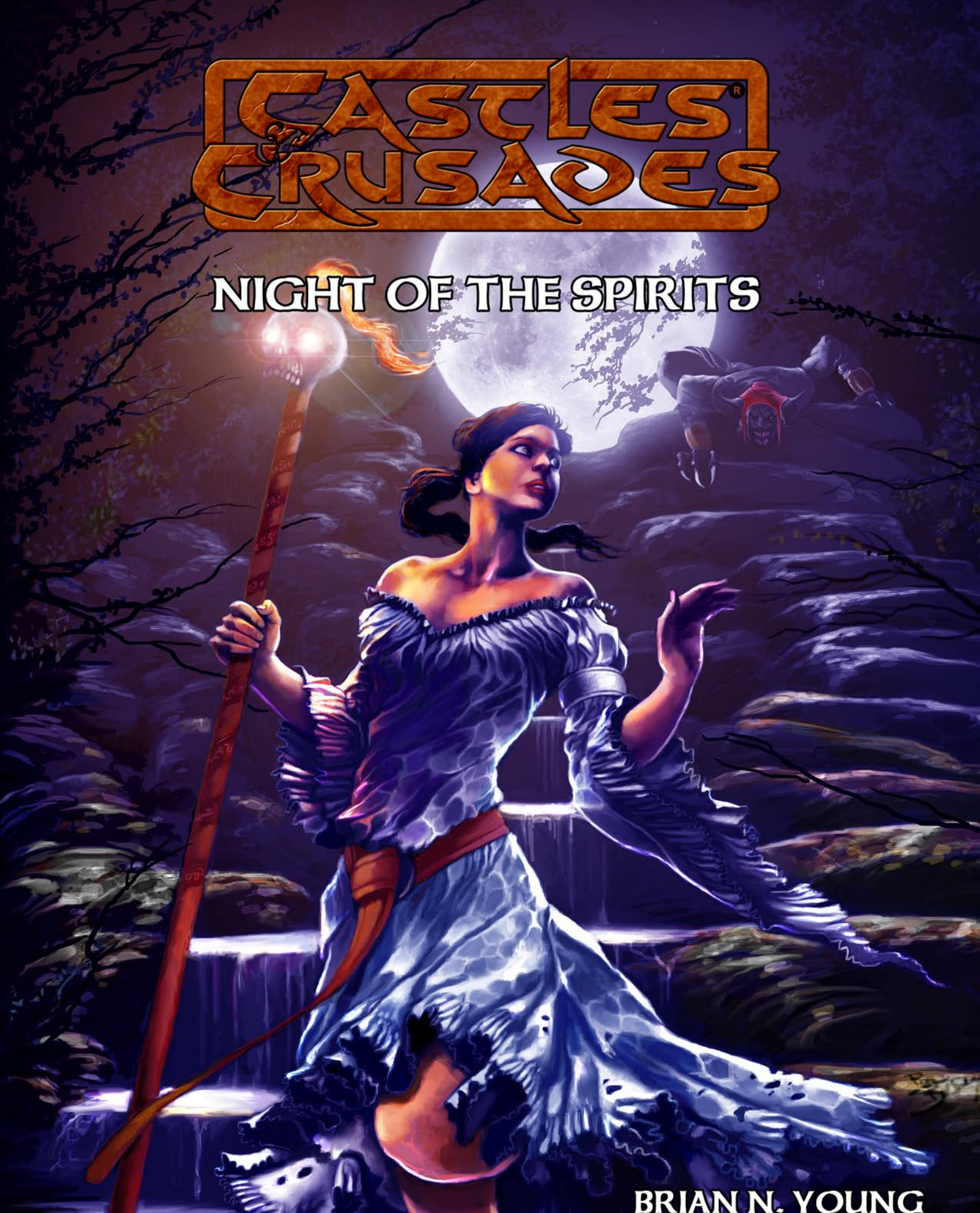


CASTLES CRUSADES[®]

NIGHT OF THE SPIRITS



BRIAN N. YOUNG

NIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

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Playtesters: THE LEAGUE OF SHADOWS (Chris and Lexi Jeffrey, Libbie Ann, Ian Huber, and Rebekah Gene. The most entertaining game group an old CK can ask for. The best of times ~ Peter

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This module is made for 3-5+ characters from 4th to 6th levels or higher. Unlike the others in the series, this adventure takes place with a heavier and darker involvement of the Otherworld and its inhabitants and involves what modern people call 'Halloween'.

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NIGHT OF THE SPIRITS



he night falls heavy over the tribe of the Gododdin people in northern Prydain. Fall leaves blow in the chilly winds, stirred by a growing storm from the dark clouds overhead. Random drops of rain patter on the ancient ivy and mistletoe covered trees in the sacred and foreboding Coed Celyddon.

Bonfires are blazing in the distant hills, set by the local folk and tended to by the druids. This is the first night of the three that places the worlds closer together more than any other time in the year, and the villagers' emotions are on edge, fearing the worst.

Events in the last year were steeped in bloody battles, the death of kings and encroaching evil from the Otherworld. The seers and madmen foretell that the omens are in place to bring a wrathful invasion from the Land of Magic. Most nobles and lords scoff at these superstitious words and ridicule them, but the common-folk know that there is truth in those portents and omens.

Families stay close, hold their festivities in honor of their ancestors and the gods, but stay wary of the dangers that might find their way into their darkened homes and lives. It is best to wear a disguise to

hide from the spirits and beings from the Otherworld, or they will grab you and take you back to their world.

It is told by those who know that life south of the Wall is less harmful during this time of the year. Even in the enormous Coed Mawr that stretches hundreds of miles from the lost lands to those bordering the Wall itself it is safer...or so the well-traveled say to anyone who wants to listen.

Little Addolgar ap Maelon Gof has wandered into the thick foliage of the Coed Celyddon, lured by the many colored playful lights that he saw dancing and laughing. Now the young dark haired child of ten winters is deep in the mist shrouded forest soaked in Otherworld energies.

A storm is brewing in the dark woods, stirring the trees and causing the limbs and boughs to crack and knock against each other. Owls hoot in their haunting voice and somewhere distant, wolves howl. Addolgar climbs over fallen trees and makes his way in bramble patches trying to get closer to the mysterious lights in the boughs of the trees.

His blue eyes cannot break focus on them. To him there is nothing else in this world but those entrancing lights. Addolgar has wandered far from his village just to reach them...

Regardless of Rome and Christianity's attempts at suppression of this ancient Celtic holiday, it persists where ever Celtic peoples live in the British Isles and on the European Continent (Brittany, Provence, and Champaign) after thousands of years. This module takes place in what the Welsh have called (since those days in the post-Roman era) the *Hen Ogledd* or 'Old North'. The bloodlines and politics of most of these northern kingdoms were tied with those in what is now Wales along the Cumbrian zone. In Welsh sources, these tribes were named *Gwyr Y Gogledd* or 'Men of the North'.

The original Celtic holiday that became Halloween was celebrated for three days and nights until the final night itself. This module will take place, in each act, with a night of the holiday becoming more intense and difficult gradually. The players must stop the menacing dark presences that will come into the Mortal world while solving the problems before they explode out of control on the final night itself.

Time is not on their side in this mystery and adventure because of the three days, the difficulties with the tribal lords and the terrible Otherworldly dangers combined. There is no way to ultimately 'win' in this scenario, but the adventurers can withstand the threats long enough until dawn on the morning after the last night and survive.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of each Celtic year comes the month and holiday of Samonios, *Samhain* to the Gaels and *Nos Galan Gaeaf* to the Britons. This is the time when the worlds are drawn together and monsters, gods and the spirits of ancestors wander between them. It is a dangerous and dark time in which the most holy and sacred of ideas mean more than they ever have before in the previous year. It is a time for the Dead and to honor them.

Bonfires are lit for the three nights of the holiday each night by the sacred fires of the druids to extinguish the old year's flame, and livestock are blessed and driven between them. It is a very important time unlike any other.

Villagers are missing from several villages near the mysterious and ghost-haunted woods of Coed Celyddon in the north of Prydain, and this is occurring *before* the Three Nights. One of these villagers is a relative to one of the players, and a call was given to help find them, to bring closure if anything to their absence.

Secretly several cultists, led by a Dark Druid Brethoc, will be taking people against their will to be offered up to the Horned One and his Wild Hunt. The fanatical dark druid wishes to entice the Horned One and his Otherworldly entourage to serve his bidding and evil goals. The terrified people taken captive are dragged to the Mouth of Annwn that sits deep in the spirit haunted woods of Coed Celyddon, and are placed in cages to be offered as the Wild Hunt emerges for the night.

The adventurers will need to quickly begin investigating the mystery before the three nights come to a close and a far worse scenario will play out on the last night of Halloween. The Dark Druid will be close to controlling the uncontrollable, the Wild Hunt, if his plans pan out the adventurers will be unable to stop him.

Amidst this investigation, they will also have to cleverly avoid the many mischievous and potentially threatening situations and presences afoot during those three nights. Gods seeking pleasure or flippant whims will be crossing their paths, monsters and evil natured faery-folk will be on the prowl and the dangerous predations by Pictish tribes to the north can be possible threats.

Although most CKs do not like linear story-lines, especially in modules, and would rather have a collection of usable statistics and resources to use as they wish, this module *must* be followed according to the layout for it to work as designed. Within the three days of the adventure there is plenty of room for random and personal direction, but ultimately time is the factor. No matter how the many encounters or investigative progress is done in the game, the final night matters the most in the end.

If the captives are not freed and the Dark Druid and his followers are not stopped before the Wild Hunt emerges from Annwn, Halloween night will be a hellish experience leaving few survivors to talk about it.

This module continues after the previous *To Kill a King* if ran solidly through to its end, but can have alternative story hooks that will enable CKs to start coldly or from their current campaign. Listed are several hooks that can throw the adventurers into *Night of the Spirits* headlong:

HOOK 1: While traveling across country the adventurers find that the local villages in the region they are in are undergoing a case of serious paranoia. Many of the people have vanished without a trace and it has caused them to waylay strangers, sometimes against their will, to find the kidnappers. This forces the adventurers to take notice of the situation and to prove their innocence.

HOOK 2: If a druid is in the group of adventurers they hear talk from the Order that one of their own has strayed and gone rogue. This Dark Druid is trying to undermine the Balance that the druids have kept in the islands for millennia and he must be found and stopped. But out of secrecy and for the security of the integrity of the Order, the other characters cannot be told as to the true cause of the reason why they are north of the Wall in the land of the Gododdin tribe.

HOOK 3: Perhaps due to a previous adventure or situation the adventurers were taken captive by the warriors from the Gododdin tribe in battle and placed into the hands of the local druids to be offered up as sacrifices. In this dire situation, a bargain was made between the adventurers and the villagers and druids that they would help to solve the problem for their freedom before the third night concludes.

HOOK 4: Stories of monsters and terrible raids by the fierce Pictish tribes to the north have come to the adventurers' ears promising wealth and fame. Seeking the riches and glory from such tales by travelers and strangers, the adventurers have decided to make the journey over many miles to pass through Hadrian's Wall and beyond the city of Caer Luel to those regions.

NIGHT OF THE SPIRITS 3

TRAVELING FROM PENLLYN TO GODODDIN

If the CK chooses to continue from the previous adventure module *To Kill a King*, the adventurers' travel across Prydain may have been eventless and dull or exciting depending on the CK's mood. For more ideas see the 'Codex Celtarum'. The travel from the kingdom of Penllyn to the Wall in the north would have taken about a week or more on horse being over two-hundred miles in distance.

On the long ride from Dinas Emrys in Penllyn to Caer Luel the chill of the Fall weather is setting in with icy winds from the north. Dark skies are overhead and rain occasionally falls making the roads muddy and travel unpleasant. The long week of travel can be quick and played through in a matter of summarizing in minutes just to get to the beginning of the adventure itself, or it can be played out with some random encounters as often as the CK desires. This table can be a starting point for those encounters:

D10 ENCOUNTER

- 1 A **GIANT** guards the long road and waylays and hassles travelers for their possessions. If they resist he will fight them to take it and devour their remains in the aftermath. *This neutral evil giant's vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 14, and HP 48. Their primary attributes are physical. He attacks by sword 4d12, axe 5d20 or slam 4d10 points of damage. He also stands 20 ft. tall and is ugly in appearance.*
- 2 2D20 **SAXON RAIDERS** cross the adventurers' path looking for trouble. They would be an experience level less than the adventurers in strength. *These chaotic neutral raiders' vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 16, and HP 36. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by spear 1d8+4, battle-axe 1d8+4, and broadsword 2d4+4 points of damage. They have combat sense, intimidate, primeval instincts, whirlwind attacks and ancestral calling.*
- 3 A **WIZARD** is out for blood and has a vendetta with one of the adventurers (or more) and will make life difficult along the way. He can be the same experience level or one higher for a tension filled encounter (this denotes the 'X' in the statistics listed below). *This chaotic evil wizard's vital statistics are HD (X)d4, AC 15, and HP 24. His primary attributes are magical. He attacks by dagger 1d4 and staff 1d6 points of damage. He will have Wizard spells at -4 at level 0, 3 at 1st, and 2 at 2nd level of experience.*
- 4 3d12 **GOBLINS** rush out of the wilderness to cause the adventurers trouble. They are more random in their motives and will easily flee back into the wilds if shown impressive force. But they will also stalk the adventurers from this encounter on and attack them when they are vulnerable (sleeping, etc). *These lawful evil creatures' vital statistics are HD 1d6, AC 13, and HP 6. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword 1d6, dagger 1d4, bite 1d3+1 and claw 1d3 points of damage. They have twilight vision and dark vision.*
- 5 5d10 **BRITONS** emerge from the woods on the trail and will rob the adventurers and kill them if they resist. These **BANDITS** are exiles from local tribes and have

no home. Wild men and lacking of all civilization, they only want to survive. They are poor and under-armed with shabby weapons. *These chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 13, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by dagger 1d4+3, spear 1d8+3, short composite bow 1d8 and hand-axe 1d6 points of damage. They have back attack, climb, hide, listen, move silently, pick pockets, traps and sneak attack.*

- 6 Laired nearby in a hill, a large black **CATH SÍTH**, is hunting for food. Any animal or person caught in the range of this fierce supernatural giant feline will have to contend with its claws and teeth once the ambush predator attacks. *This chaotic evil giant cat's vital statistics are HD 3d10, AC 16, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite 3d10 and 2 claw 2d12 points of damage. They have Move Silently, hide and back attack.*
- 7 A pack of **WEREWOLVES**, 2d6, are out at night by the light of the moon and smell the adventurers. In no time they will hunt them down and attack to eat them to satisfy their in-human urges. *These chaotic evil lycanthropes' vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 14, and HD 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite 2d8+3, and 2 claw 2d6+3 points of damage. They have Regeneration 1 and Shapechanging.*
- 8 3d6 **DUNTERS** are shadowing the adventurers in the darker and more confining parts in their route to take them when they are weak. *The neutral evil dark faeries' vital statistics are HD 2d8, AC 11, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by broadsword 2d10 and short-spear 2d8 points of damage. They have dark vision, hide and move silently.*
- 9 The adventurers will meet a **BUGGANE** on the road that will make a demand of their wealth three times, upon each giving a riddle, and if the adventurers fail they are attacked. The Buggane will grow to its giant size and force the adventurers to do what he wants by pain and agony. *This chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 3d12/6d12, AC 8/16, and HP 36/72. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by bite 2d6/5d6, and claw 1d4/2d4 points of damage. They have giant's growth and shapeshifting abilities.*
- 10 A bridge, a Roman stone arch construction, is guarded by a mighty warrior. He is garbed in black and will not allow any to pass unless they either pay him 100 gold pieces or face him in battle. His experience is equal to the highest in the party and is a spectral man. If slain he will return the next day to do so again. The **PHANTOM WARRIOR** was a paladin in his day during the time of the Empire and is effectively a ghostly paladin. *This neutral evil ghostly warrior's vital statistics are HD 5d10, AC 19, and HP 50. His primary attributes are magical. He attacks by bastard sword 1d10+5, dagger 1d4+5, two-handed axe 1d12+5 points of damage. He possesses touch of death, frightful moan, telekinesis and can be incorporeal.*

4 CASTLES & CRUSADES

REACHING CAER LUEL AND THE WALL

Nestled close to the Roman wall is the large, though decayed stone city of Caer Luel. Its many clustered houses, both native Celtic round-houses and old Roman homes fill the former garrison's grid plan flush with the wall. The adventurers will see as they reach the first hill on the road to the city:

A large stone city clusters closely to the grey stones of the Wall. It has a grid plan with many streets and looks foreign and out of place in the green hills and moors of this northern region. Black smoke columns puff away to the sky from the many homes and buildings in the streets.

An old garrison sits near the massive gates beyond the Wall to the north; it is a walled enclosure and looks to still be Roman in character but has since fallen into ruin. Caer Luel has a large population of Britons and Roman Britons within its borders; it looks to have about 20,000 or more people within, maybe more.

Somewhere a white spire from a Christian chapel stands over the many buildings prominently. Farm fields surround Caer Luel beyond its crumbled old walls in all directions with livestock and many acres of crops. A pall of darkness and gloom hangs over Caer Luel from the other side of the Wall.

Passing through Caer Luel (Carlisle) and gaining entrance into the gates of the Wall, could be tedious and cost each adventurer 50 silver pieces to do so properly. They are only opened early in the morning at 8 AM and remain so until 5 PM each day except holidays or times of war to monitor traffic and danger from the other side.

The Britons in the large old Roman colonial city do not see or understand why strangers would want to willingly go beyond the Wall; it is a wild and pagan land bereft of any 'civilized' influences. Unlike the lands beyond the Wall, Caer Luel is mostly Christian and they do not like dealing with the barbarity and strangeness of the natives in the surrounding region or abroad. Caer Luel is very Romanized in character and attitude even though a large part of its population is from the native tribes in the region.

If the adventurers wish to visit a tavern in the city, there are three, the locals will paranoid and xenophobic, almost rude towards them. But if they manage to get on their good sides through brilliant role-playing they can divulge these rumors and 'facts' about what goes on the other side to the Wall:

- A druid or wizard has enslaved people and is leading a crusade against the southerners with Pictish allies.
- Unusual occurrences, stranger than normal, have been told by travelers to be happening in the forest of Coed Celyddon.
- The Picts are becoming more restless and have been sighted near the Wall as the year draws near to Cobllynnos ('Goblin Night').
- Paganism is on the rise from the druids on in the north and they are being led by a powerful necromancer with Faery blood

There are nearly 1,000 warriors protecting Caer Luel and this part of the Wall from Pictish raids. They patrol the city as guards and the law under the chief Heranhal ap Tegid.

WARRIORS OF CAER LUEL *(These lawful good fighters' vital statistics are HD 6d10, AC 16, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by broadsword 2d4+6, long spear 1d8+6, and long composite bow 1d8+6 points of damage. They have weapon specialization (sword), combat dominance, and extra attack.*

The people of the city are very anti-social and repressed, and this is likely due to the influence of Bishop Cemlyn's influence in the Celtic Church. This is because of the strong cling to the Old Ways in this part of the isles and the presence of the Otherworld that is unconquerable.

If the adventurers want to skip dealing with the town's folk, they can try the daring trek over the Wall. Climbing the Wall would require a CL: 4 X 6 (up one side and down the other) and avoiding the guards patrolling it (CL:3). Stationed on the Wall, warriors from the Breint tribe keep an eye on the north from the dangerous raids by the Picts day and night. If they let down their guard once, the Picts will flood over Caer Luel and plunder it.

THE SITUATION

BRETHOC: He is a fairly young druid, in his forties, who seeks to topple the careful balance within the already weak druidic order in the isles, in order to reign supreme. His time spent as a druid gained him devoted and subservient followers from amongst the many tribes that still worship the old gods and ways. Using this to his advantage, he used his considerable skills as a rhetorician to convert them from worshippers of the gods to followers of him.

Within a few years Brethoc gained fifty followers, mostly cut-throats and bandits, and outcasts from the many tribes. By the time of this adventure he has also earned the support of a warband of Pictish warriors who will fight and die for him to see his goal succeed. In with his rabble of humans he also has many faery followers that have come from the Otherworld and Coed Celyddon to serve him.

His goal involves the offering up of a dozen villagers, all of them alive and innocent, to the Horned One and his rapacious Wild Hunt on the final night of Halloween. He has located the forbidden and dreaded Safn Yr Annwn or 'The Mouth of Annwn' deep inside the ancient sacred and otherworldly forest of Coed Celyddon. Brethoc knows that the Wild Hunt enters into the Mortal world by this cave from the underworld, and so he has placed the captives (as he acquires them) before the entrance.

Once the final night comes and the Wild Hunt will come forth from Annwn he will recite a special incantation that will offer up the captives to the Horned One and his frenzied minions. According to this obscure and almost forgotten ritual, the Wild Hunt is under the command of the one that hands over this manner of specialized offerings, but only for as long as the night and ends at dawn.

Brethoc plans on directing the Wild Hunt to destroy his rivals in the druidic order and political enemies throughout the land to his advantage. Those who he targets will be hunted by the Wild Hunt one by one, hundreds of miles apart, and taken by it for an awful fate.

By dawn, the Dark Druid will assume control of the remaining Druidic order in the island and begin his long road towards absolute power over all others. Unlike the short sighted *Grey King* in the first module *The Goblins of Mount Shadow*, or the *Stormgazer* in the module *The Giant's Wrath*, Brethoc will poison the druidic order in Faery and the mortal world to one day stand as the Archdruid (Arch Druid) and gain true power in the end.

Brethoc believes that the druidic order has become too soft and meek, hiding in the shadows with more mystery than ever before and needs to be strong again. To do this, they need to cleanse the order of the old druids that have made it so passive and non-aggressive. The order does not have any clue as to Brethoc's motives or why he is so secretive. No one knows in fact, not even the villagers (who trust him as they normally do all druids).

The adventuring party will meet him in this adventure and not realize that he is the source of the problems until it is too late. *The CK is advised to role-play him as intelligent and wise as any druid should be, but also clever and witty. Possibly he can even be humorous to distract from his evil-doings. Be crafty!*



ACT 1 - THE FIRST DAY

However the adventurers get beyond the Wall and reach the southernmost borders of Gododdin tribe-land, they will find a dark overcast land of hills and scattered woods with chilly skies and a bleakness that is ever present.

The village in which a relative of one of the player characters lives (or had before they were abducted) is *Henlwyn* located forty miles northeast from the gates of *Caer Luel*. This village and three others sit close to the spirit and faery haunted *Coed Celyddon*.

By the time the adventurers arrive to *Henlwyn* they can see massive wattle (wooden thatch) corrals made by the locals in the fields to contain the livestock, with farmers cutting timber and setting them in place. Further ahead a large Wicker Man is being made by several dozen people.

Many miles away (barely three) the dark woods can be seen. The day (or not) is exceptionally dark and gloomy and the mood is somber among the villagers. Several well used wagon trails and an old Roman road cross near *Henlwyn* criss-crossing in many directions.

THE VILLAGE OF HENLWYN

Like most native villages in *Prydain* and *Éire*, it is a gathering of several dozen thatched roof round houses around the center stone. Wooden silos on raised stilts sit nearby and stables for the few horses this modest village possess. The population is around ninety-six people with a chief (See *descriptions of Henlwyn's Notables*).

As villages go it survives well on hunting wild game, limited crops, and trade with others in this tribe and beyond it. It was built inside the circular outline from a former druidic grove that had sat in the field for centuries. The sacred trees have long since been cut down and profaned by newcomers in the time of Rome.

Henlwyn means 'Old Grove' and remains staunchly loyal to the old religion of the druids. The villagers are a little phobic about strangers being present and quick to react to the threat of danger, due to their constant troubles with the Picts to the north. If the adventurers win the friendship and admiration of the people of *Henlwyn* they will have allies in whatever they do.

The villagers are doing constant chores to maintain not only daily life but to prepare for the first night of Halloween. Everyone is involved in these chores. There is a village tavern that sits in the middle of the many houses and is always open, especially during these holidays. It would be the best place for the adventurers to catch up with events in *Henlwyn* and the abductions in the region.

Many decorated human skulls on poles sit around the village for the upcoming three days of celebration. By nightfall candles will be lit inside them to cast a protective glow against evil beings and spirits (see rules on 'The Protective Head' in this module).

QUESTIONS AT THE TAVERN

The tavern, ran by *Brithel* and *Eilwen*, is a small cozy round house with a warm fire-place and a dozen tables. Kegs sit in one portion with the bar where either one of the two proprietors operates it. Because the fall season in this region can become terribly cold fast the fires burn extra hot.

If asked, *Brithel* or *Eilwen* will tell the adventurers:

"Slowly people started vanishing from Henlwyn over the last month. First it was Carannog the Farmer. He was out in the fields preparing them for winter planting with his horse and plow, and after coming to town for ale and returning out to field he never returned.

But that wasn't the end of it all. Next was Tirion, she was going out to collect mushrooms for the upcoming celebrations and never returned. Only her basket remained at the edge of the woods. Tirion said she was going to find herself a man this time around during the festivities but now she won't get a chance.

The horrors were not over however as young little Tecan (a player character's nephew) was unable to even leave his house long enough to run an errand for his parents before he vanished, all three without a trace or evidence of how they went missing or who took them.

At first we thought it was the Picts or marauding Gaels or even brave Saxons able to get passed the Wall, but it just didn't make sense. The druids have been warning us about the maliciousness of the gods at this time of the year and how they are not appeased as they should be. Brethoc tells us that this year's celebrations will be tinged with darker gods for our transgressions of the previous year."

NOTE: Unbeknownst to the adventurers at this early point in the story, the three villagers kidnapped were virgins. None had been married or had any physical relationship in their life yet, and were suitable for the Dark Druid *Brethoc's* plans.

ASKING AROUND HENLWYN

The other villagers will be less than helpful towards the adventurers, being afraid of strangers considering recent times and the start of the Three Nights. Most will avoid them, close their homes' doors to them, or dodge them, never looking them in the eyes directly.

Only the relatives to one of the adventurers (CK decides on whom) will happily take in the party as guests. The family is distraught and worried terribly about the fate of little *Tecan*, they will tell the adventurers all that they know:

"We had Tecan carry word to our village druid Pendaren, letting him know that we are ready to begin to construct the wicker cages for the Wicker Man for the third night. He left the house and went across to Pendaren's but there wasn't even a scream from our boy, he was just...gone.

The other two villages in the area, Trelleu and Maemarch, have told us that several people are missing from their populace too. No one can explain what is happening. We are all too scared to think of the worst. This is the first night of the celebrations and who knows what next will occur?

The gods' blessings are not falling on us as we had hoped, instead we are cursed. Can you help us find out what is going on? Maybe you can still save them if they are alive? Your deeds are well known to us all here, and that is why effort was made to contact you."

The village druid Pendaren is out in the fields assisting the people with preparations for the celebrations to come this evening and the next two nights. He will offer to speak to them later when he is able.

Due to the constant traffic in the village by the people running about in the surrounding fields and town with their items for the celebrations, there are no tracks to find or evidence as to Tecan's disappearance, that evidence was destroyed.

If Carannog's field is checked for evidence, there is none because a mound of kindling and timber is now there for one of the bonfires.

Looking for evidence of Tirion's abduction requires a ride out to the edge of the mysterious Coed Celyddon. If the adventurers do so they will see before them:

Stretched before you over many, many miles is the ancient and shadowed Forest of Celyddon. Fall leaves dot the gloom in orange, yellow and browns. Mists creep about and not even a breeze stirs within.

Whippoorwills and other normally night birds call from within the mysterious forest, and things stir and move within but not in sight. The smell of this forest is strong on the winds. It reeks of earth, old trees and of the Otherworld.

The looming trees almost seem threatening within the venerable forest and there is almost the hint of faces or human-like bodies in the corners of your vision from within the woods. Shadows fall strangely and shift according to their own need.

Aside from the obvious disruption caused by the villages in the region taking wood and kindling from the forest there is no other sign of strange traffic. Just the dark and forbidden forest stands before you.

EXPLORING THE FOREST EARLY

If on the first day/night of Nos Galan Gaeaf the adventurers want to explore the forest, they will find it to be increasingly tense and eerie. Coed Celyddon is over 200 square miles in size and is populated by a large Pine and Evergreen tree portion, mixed in with the many other assorted varieties of Temperate Zone foliage. It is not a place that can easily be traversed and not quickly either.

It will quickly become apparent that this massive forest is not so easily and concisely able to be explored before nightfall. But in the first exploratory efforts the adventuring party can uncover these things with some work:

- Scattered animal trails cut through the woods for deer and boar in all directions.
- Random standing stones, covered in ivy, and with Celtic patterns carved on their aged surfaces. They are boundary stones from old forgotten tribes, and markers used by the druids for their secretive purposes.
- A mile or two into the forest there is evidence of people being there by old, discarded coals from fire-pits and rubbish in pits. (Brethoc's bandits).
- The faery presence is strong in this forest, and to the elves or faeries in the party, they can see this forest exists in both worlds. The sense of magic is growing stronger in Coed Celyddon.

By the time of the first day of the festivities the adventuring party won't have time to thoroughly explore parts of Coed Celyddon as they would hope. The adventurers may have to be present in the village of Henlwyn during the first night of the celebrations to watch for any suspicious activity.

THE FIRST CELEBRATION

By dusk the villagers have tables with food and alcohol gathered around one large bonfire on the outside of town for the first night's celebrations. Everyone is dressed as they normally do but made an effort to look their best.

The druids Pendaren and Brethoc are present to oversee it all. Musicians will play and people will dance around the fire merrily for the first few hours into the night.

The players will be asked to join in the fun by many of the villagers. This will go on for a while. Brethoc will notice that the new strangers (player characters) are in town and will find it annoying to his plans. So later into the evening he will plan to abduct one of them with several of his bandits when the chance is ideal.

Until then, this first night is composed of these events:

- 1 Story-telling by the elders about the gods, heroes of old and the creation of the universe.
- 2 Honoring those that have died in the last year by placing an offering in their name in the bonfire.
- 3 Singing many sacred and fun songs led by the druids.
- 4 The druids recounting the annual closing of the year itinerary.

8 CASTLES & CRUSADES

On this first night the elaborations are milder than the next two but many will continue to drink, dance and feast until dawn. This will be interrupted by Brethoc's plan to kidnap one of more of the adventurers.

THE ATTEMPTED ABDUCTION

Brethoc will have six of his loyal followers, bandits, hiding in the shadows of the village during the celebrations waiting to take another person for the ritual. Unlike the other offerings who are virgins, they will use the adventurer as a blood sacrifice if they get them in their clutches.

Once one of the party breaks off from the rest during the festivities the bandits will shadow them and prepare to seize them with nets and ropes. The bandits will attack them when they are vulnerable suddenly and unexpectedly.

BRETHOC'S BANDITS X6 (*These chaotic evil mens' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 16, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack with net, ropes and club 1d6+5. They have back attack, climb, hide, listen, move silently, traps, sneak attack.*)

If they are able to subdue one of the adventurers, they will bind them tightly, gag them and drag them off towards Coed Celyddon to the Mouth of Annwn (see 'The Mouth of Annwn') for the upcoming event in two nights.

If the bandits manage to capture a character, they will be surrounded by the many followers of Brethoc and his Pictish warriors occasionally. If they are unable to break free by the second night it will become obvious to them that the druid Brethoc is involved in this plot – whatever it is.

If however the bandits are beaten and the abduction fails, the villagers will show up armed with pitchforks and other farming implements in a panic. The druids will be present and Brethoc will not show any connection to his followers and interrogate them unless the adventurers do first (and they likely will).

If questioned any one of the bandits will say:

"We came to take people off to rob and have our way with them... we have been doing this across many tribes for a time. We are wanted men and do not know what you are talking about.

Please spare us, we...we can redeem our evil ways if you will let us? Please?"

Brethoc will instruct the villagers to take the bandits, if they remain alive, to be held for the Wicker Man in two nights. A short time will pass before the celebrations return back to a little less than it was before until dawn.

ACT 2 - THE SPIRITS GATHER

On this second day of the holiday the adventurers will be given more chance to investigate the forest and question people in the village or even the other two nearby towns of Trelleu and Maemarch about the disappearances, plus talk to the druids.

The pressure of impending events will begin to loom by this second night during the more solemn and dramatic ceremonies and games. By this day and night to follow the spirits will begin to emerge from the Otherworld, and with them monsters and even gods but not to the extent of what will culminate on the final night.

INVESTIGATING THE FOREST AGAIN

By the second day it is cooler and mistier in the eerie ancient forest with the presence of herds of stags and deer running about the fall leaves and shadows. Ravens roost in the tree-tops and caw ominously overhead.

Even though the sun is out the chance for encounters are still high and not beneficial to those daring its glades and groves. If the adventurers do this right, they can find out more about what is going on (to some degree), but will not be able to find the deeply hidden Mouth of Annwn in Coed Celyddon yet.

Per hour traveling in the mystical forest there is a 3 in 8 chance of encountering something in the woods, if so the CK can use this table below for the nature of that encounter if they wish:

D10 ENCOUNTERS (2ND DAY)

- 1** **Druidic grove:** This gathering of old giant oaks stands tall and is covered in thick ivy and mistletoe. Carvings of faces are made in the trunks of the trees and their roots. Two tall grey standing stones stand side by side with a human skull placed in them. An uneasy silence fills the grove. Not one chirp or noise from an animal is heard within it. *If a druid is in the adventuring party they see that it is just a venerable grove that is still used by the druids of the region for their ceremonies, it is not malicious in anyway.*
- 2** **Band of Dusias:** 1d8 goat-like Dusias are roaming Coed Celyddon. They will home in on the adventuring party to enchant them with their music, seduce and take advantage of, and cause them havoc unless driven away. Dusias are like a Celtic satyr in almost every manner, they are the denizens of the Horned One and children of the wilds. They live for lust and will attempt to mate with, or rape by force, anyone or creature that crosses their path. *Dusias are in the Codex Celtarum but their basic statistics are included here. These chaotic evil fauns' vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 12, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are physical and magical both. They attack by bite 1d8, and hoof 1d10 points of damage. They have Faery Lure, and Wild Hunt abilities.*
- 3** **Brethoc's Picts:** 2d10 tattooed, and wild Pictish warriors are scouting the woods for anyone that doesn't belong from the local villages and will attack them on sight savagely to stop them. Depending on the battle, the Picts might signal others to join in the

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attack to help; if they do one will sound a horn to bring an additional 1d12 more Picts in a 1d6 rounds. They will fight to the last man nearly; if just 1-2 survive (and are able) they will flee to tell Brethoc of the situation. *These chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 13, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack by long spear 1d8+5, broadsword 2d4+5, and battle-axe 1d8+5 points of damage. They have combat sense, intimidate, whirlwind attack, primeval will and ancestral calling.*

- 4 **A Bog Hag:** Traveling in the dark and haunted forest the adventuring party encounter a moss covered swamp. The swamp is large and hard to avoid and will take time to skirt around or fall in (Dexterity save) and become stuck (Strength save or individual is stuck for 1d10 minutes). While around the swamp the resident Hag, *Glaw Wolfteeth*, will try to lure them in and prey on them. She is a tall, black-skinned, hideous crone with a mouth full of steely teeth and iron sharp claws. *This chaotic evil hag's vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 15, and HP 60. Her primary attributes are magical. She attacks by bite 3d10+4, and claw 2d8+4 points of damage. She has hideousness, and dark vision.*
- 5 **Attorcorp Ambush:** The adventurers' every step has been watched by the small reptilian faery beings since they first, unknowingly, trod into their tribe's territory. In the leafy and overgrown forest floor they little beings will jump the adventurers, one at a time if needed, to take them down. Attorcorp will devote much man power to down one individual if needed. At first 1d20 Attorcorp will follow the party, and then once the attack occurs they will gang up on each member with at least 4 or more at a time on each target. *These chaotic evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 1d6, AC 19, and HP 6. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by long-spear 1d8, bite 2d4, and 2 claw 1d4 points of damage. They have poison in their fangs, level 5.*
- 6 **Haunted Standing-Stones:** The party wanders into a part of the venerable woods that has a ring of tall grey jagged standing stones. They are weathered by age, rain and use and are covered in twisted ivy. This ring has been jinxed by the Dark Faeries that haunt these woods to afflict those of Alignments Good and Lawful Neutral only. Everyone who steps inside must make a Magic save or be cursed from the ring. Those cursed will suffer a defenseless (-5 AC) malady for 1d4 days/hours. This curse will make them incapable of fending for themselves much because their mind is jumbled and blurred by the curse.
- 7 **Alder Witches:** 1d4 Alder Tree Witches will move about the surrounding forest to trap the adventurers as they travel. Slowly the Alder Witches will place the party into a place where they want them and prey on them. They appear as large, dark trees with tree-limb arms in their crooked branches, thousands of leaves that don their exterior and a ghastly feminine face with green glowing eyes and a large gaping mouth.

Alder Witches are extremely difficult to stop or slay and know it, so they will take advantage of the party's weaknesses. *These chaotic evil tree witches' vital statistics are HD 8d8, AC 16, and HP 63. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by 2 branches (slam) 1d10+6 points of damage, and grab. They have low-light vision (30 ft.) and plant-like traits.*

- 8 **Brethoc and his Druids:** If the adventuring party has not angered Brethoc or even understood that he is responsible for what is transpiring, the encounter will be deceptive and positive in nature. Brethoc and his three druids will be making a lie about traveling to a grove or forest temple for religious purposes long enough to get by. But if Brethoc and the party are on hostile terms, the Dark Druid and his three lesser ones will use their magics to trap, trick and curse the adventurers. This option is not a good one, and could radically alter the outcome of the module. *See statistics for Brethoc and his druids in Act 3.*
- 9 **Hunting Traps:** The adventurers wander into a part of the Coed Celyddon that has been set up with hunting traps. These were put in place by the Picts of Brethoc to sustain themselves while serving their master druid. Each character in the party has a chance of walking in on a trap, this is an Intelligence check. If they fail they will succumb to a trap, either a pit trap (20 ft. deep) with spikes (3d12 damage), a foothold trap made of two metal jaws (2d10 damage), deadfall trap with a large tree log (4d12), a rope snare. Unless the trapped can get free, the Picts will come (1d20 of them) in 1d4 hours to retrieve them. If this happens, they will be led to the Mouth of Annwn to be placed as sacrifices.
- 10 **Sleeping Giant:** The adventuring party unknowingly walks over a massive sleeping giant in the woods, covered in the forest floor. To not wake him from slumber and anger him each party member must roll a Dexterity check three times as they walk over and by his form in the woods. It takes a total of three failures collectively to stir him. His name is *Talfryn Gawr*, and is a quickly aggressive foe once awakened. He cannot be bartered with, bribed or convinced not to attack them. *This chaotic evil giant's vital statistics are HD 9d8, AC 17, and HP 72. His primary attributes are physical. He attacks by a tree trunk club 2d8+9, 2 fists 1d8+9 and boulder 3d6+9. He has rock throwing, twilight vision, and Wild Hunt.*

Each of these encounters can be specially and carefully prepared by the CK if they chose to give them an even greater impact and a realization that wandering in the Coed Celyddon so close to Halloween is a terrible idea.

NOTE: The adventuring party shouldn't be able to find the Mouth of Annwn once again unless they are captured by one of the various encounters or situations from the day/night before or this day. The very existence of the Mouth should be unknown to them unless they have a druid in the party, who must make an Intelligence check to know of its *alleged* existence in Coed Celyddon.

10 CASTLES & CRUSADES

THE OTHER VILLAGES

If the adventurers want to go to the other two closest villages where people have been abducted, it is a matter of just an hour's travel from Henlwyn. Brethoc has a good chance of being found in one of those villages as well (2 in 6 chance). If he is, he will be there scouting out for more worthy people to take captive for his offerings on the third night.

TRELLEU – 'Lleu's Town'. This village is the size of Henlwyn and looks almost identical except that it has a small number of warriors (25) to defend it, sent from the king of the Gododdin named Gwlyged because this village was founded by the great All-Skilled One Lleu Llaw Gyffes. Most of the people in this village has fair blond hair, and it is believed by outsiders that they share the divine blood of Lleu and of Faery.

If villagers are asked amidst their Halloween preparations, they will be initially rude and unwilling to talk. If the characters possess some skills in communication they can divulge some facts from them in time:

- Three of their own people have been taken by unknown agencies as well. It cannot be explained, not even with magic or a prayer to the gods.
- Two twin children, a boy *Garin*, and girl *Eiron*, were taken and the spinster lady *Mwyan* in the recent last few days.
- The warriors tracked strange prints away from the village towards Coed Celyddon in the time surrounding the people missing from Trelleu.

Trelleu sits amidst farm fields in a very virile and healthy patch of land and is prosperous. Outside in a field the local Halloween celebrations are being handled in the same way that Henlwyn's and literally thousands of similar places in the Isles and on the Continent.

If Brethoc is in the village too, he will send some of his followers (1d10) to stalk the adventurers where ever they go next to keep an eye on them.

MAEMARCH – 'Horse's Field'. This village is on the edge of the highlands and sits on a hillock and across a plain where herds of horses are kept and tamed by the people of the village. Horses are their livelihood and it means much to them. They breed some of the finest for the nobility of the Gododdin, even the king has one in his stables.

This village is half the size of Trelleu and Henlwyn, about 55 people, in about twenty households. They have elaborate stables and corral sections for raising their strong and swift steeds. If Brethoc was not at the other village the same chance remains that he is here (2 in 6 chance), and if so the same rules applies in Trelleu.

When they are not tending to the horses or holiday preparations, they are in the small tavern, the *Stalwart Pony*, gossiping. These people are friendly and not too paranoid even though their region falls closer to Pictish raiding zones than Henlwyn.

If a conversation is started about the missing people, the village elder *Ungust* tells them these facts:

- The beautiful young woman *Maelona* vanished two days ago while she was taking care of her foal in the stables one night. She was just about to wed on Halloween night.
- The old man *Melfyn ap Rioc* went missing a day earlier when he was working in the field. Melfyn was never married in his life and was a lonely old man.
- Just today the teenage boy *Cwrig* never left his parents' home after morning. They found no trace of him except for his blankets disturbed in his corner of the bed.
- The villagers believe that the evil spirits in Coed Celyddon are responsible, but they cannot prove it. The druids are unable to answer what happened but Brethoc has been helpful in his advice.

THE SECOND NIGHT COMES

By dusk the villages will place the human and animal skulls on poles around the village and the celebration sites and light the candles within to provide a protective glow against the evil spirits.

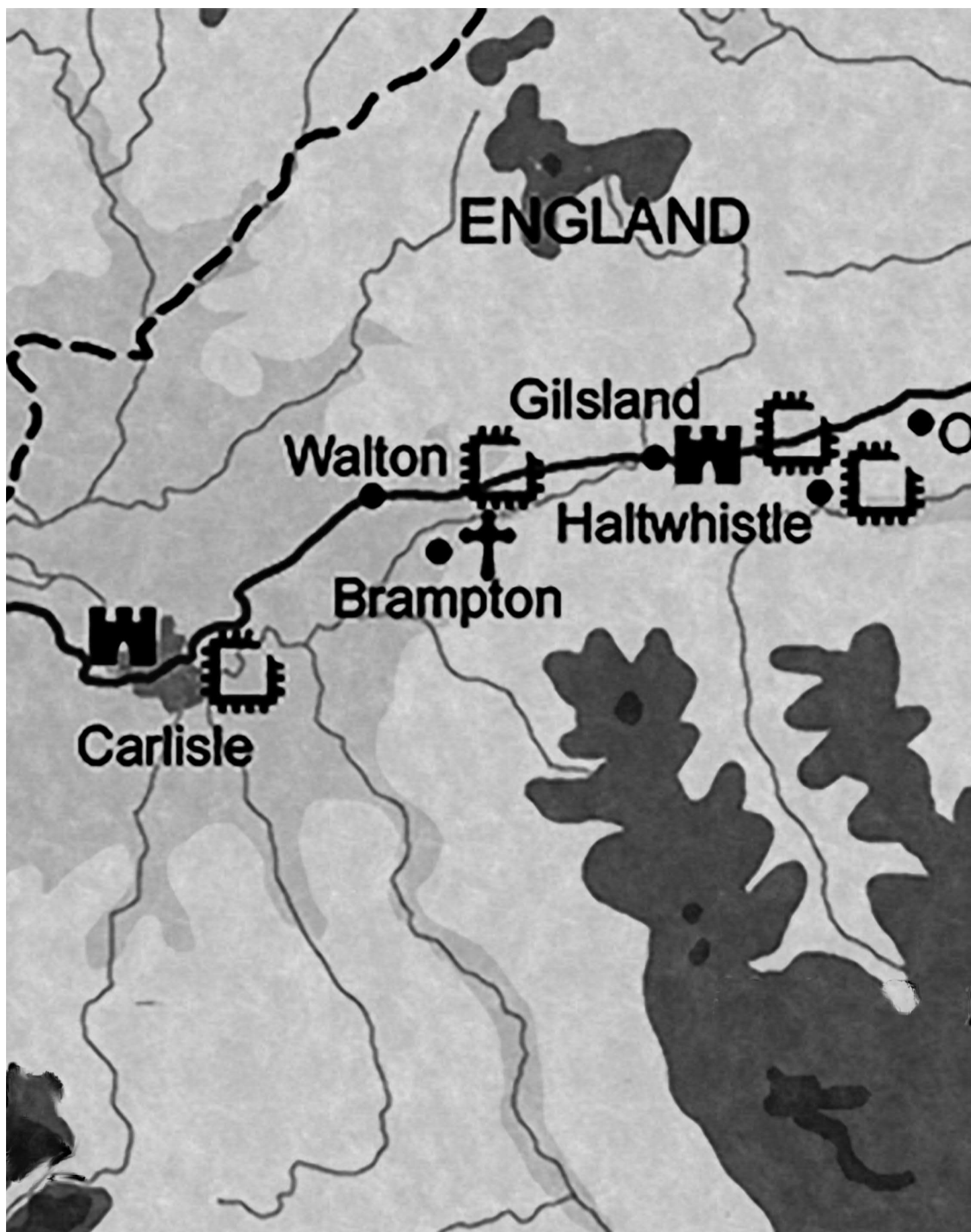
The villagers will also don costumes on this night fearing that their ancestors may come from the Otherworld (Faery) to meet them. These costumes will have masks to hide their identity from the spirits, faeries and gods that might be afoot.

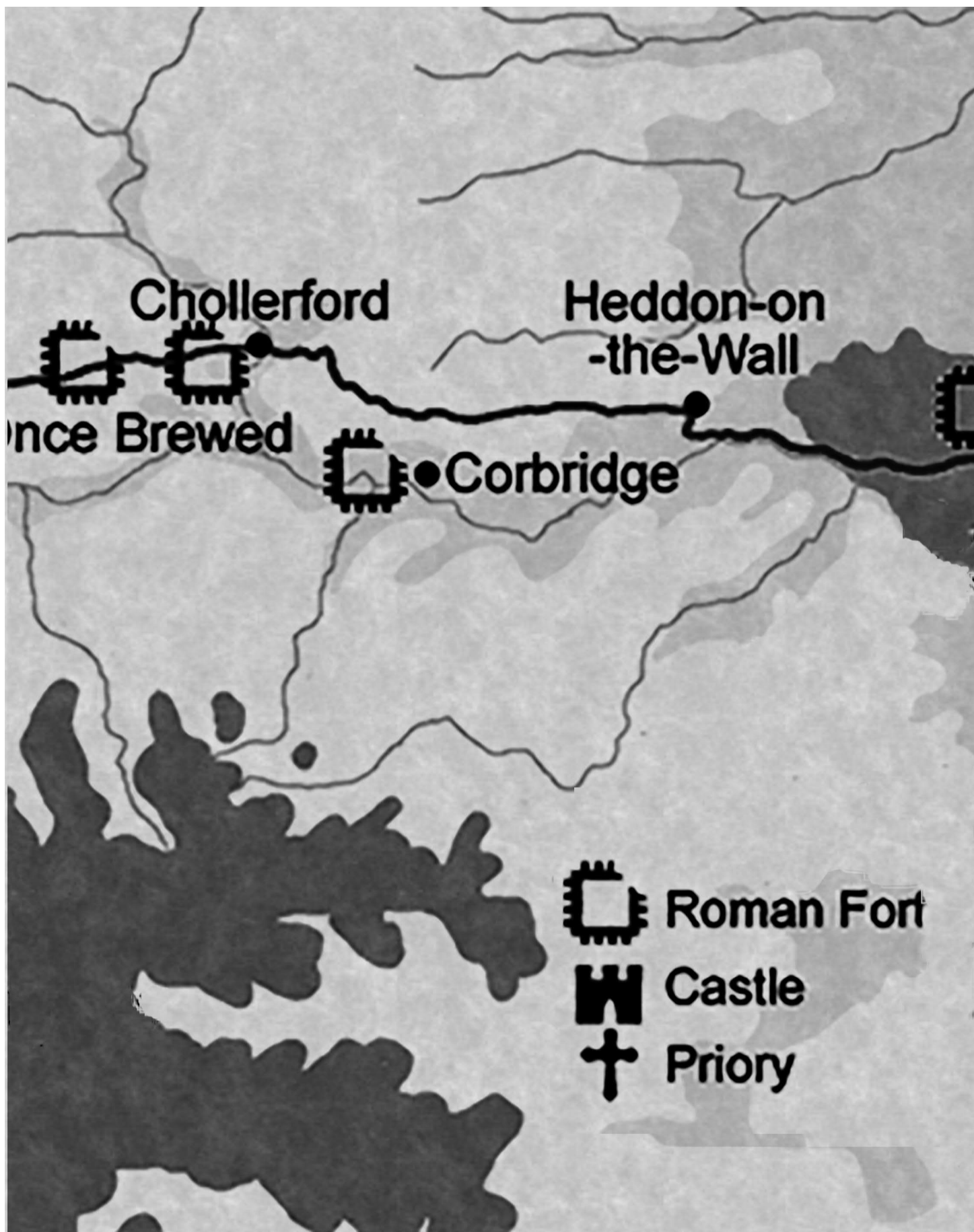
For the adventuring party, the options for their costumes are:

- **Ynfyty** – 'Fool'. Dressed in bright colored and fun clothing, like the court fools/jesters and makes mischief where he or she goes.
- **Gwrach** – 'Hag'. The costume is a usually a dark grey or black woolen hooded cloak and a hideous mask meant to represent the Great Hag that emerges from her cave around this time of the year and brings a possibility of danger and death in her wake.
- **Draig** – 'Dragon'. The garb is similar to the 'Obby Os used in recent times in Britain. The costumed wears a complicated arrangement that has an operating jaw to bite its victims. The dragon represents the destructive forces of Nature in the universe and would stalk individuals and pounce on them to eat them.
- **Duwiau/Duwiesau** – 'Gods/Goddesses'. In their best attempt, people will try to don clothing and masks to resemble a chosen deity. They do this to disguise themselves as one of the divine in case they are present in hopes it will confuse them. Obviously the richer the participant, the better their costume.
- **Arwyr** – 'Heroes'. As with the gods, participants in the event will try to resemble a chosen cultural hero from the past or recent past.

During this time children will go from house to house with an image of a deity and demand an offering of food from the inhabitants, if they do not get it they will play some manner

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of trick on them in return (to show the displeasure felt by that deity at not receiving a gift).

Because of the situation with the people vanishing, these children will be watched by adults, armed and ready to protect them.

Bonfires are blazing bright again, and this time to bless the livestock by driving them between two. Druids would handle this event. The night will be still fun but a little more solemn than before because it is so close to the final night.

If the adventurers are trying to plot out a way to catch the abductors in the act, it will take some planning because Brethoc and his followers will be ready to take another captive to meet their quota of twelve (necessary for the ritual).

Meanwhile during the evening (until dawn) the CK can roll or pick from this table of occurrences to take place all throughout, or until he or she chooses to make Brethoc's next attempt.

D8 EVENT

- 1 Gods are Afoot:** One or several Celtic deities are in the mortal world this night as they often are, to create drama and complication in the lives of mortals. They are not obvious under the clothing and costumes and could be anyone in the crowd. What exactly they are up to is the CK's decision. Some may be present to find a mate and conceive a wondrous child, others to exact revenge, etc.
- 2 Shapeshifter:** A Bogy, Buggane, or Pwca is prowling amidst the crowd and will be trying to create havoc and chaos. This shapechanging faery will take on the form of selected individuals just to get whatever it wants accomplished. No one may ever even know, or they will too late when the deed is done to them. What exactly the Shapeshifter is doing is the CK's decision.
- 3 Spirits of the Dead:** Although there will be plenty more spirits on the final night of Halloween, many do find their way into the Living's habitations. 1d8 ghostly spirits will try to mingle with the Living not sure if they are alive or not. They are not dangerous on this night but they will be scary enough if they are discovered. Clerics, druids or the Protective Skulls can send them away.
- 4 Yr Hwch Ddu Gwta:** 'The Tail-less Black Sow'. This evil faery being has taken the form of a black sow-like monster and roams the darkness beyond the lights and fires to prey on those that stray. Few things can drive him away once he is out for blood. He will linger beyond the village fire-light for 1d4 hours, and will lose interest eventually and leave. *This chaotic evil beings' vital statistics are HD 8d10, AC 19, and HP 80. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by bite 5d10, and hoof 3d12 points of damage. It has blend with darkness, dark vision (100 ft.) and hide.*
- 5 Cath Hudol:** 'Magical Cat'. This faery blooded creature will lurk about the shadows, underfoot, and close by to people during the celebration and try to spread sickness and malicious changes in others. If someone is near it they must make a Magic save or begin to get sick throughout the night, until by dawn they feel the effects

(-3 AC and -3 to attack others). The Cath Hudol will swiftly hide once it has infected people. Attacking it is pointless as it has no corporeal form.

- 6 Gwiddon(od):** A witch or several, linger among the populace with devious and dark intentions. In disguise, they sneak about the populace trying to smell out those that has magical items or spell-books. If they find what they are looking for they will use magic to disable the person to acquire what they have. *These lawful evil witches' vital statistics are HD 2d8, AC 11, and HP 16. Their primary attributes are magical. They can attack by dagger 1d4, wolf spear 1d8, and sickle 1d4. They possess this number of spells: 5 at 0 level, 4 at 1st level, 2 at 2nd level, and 1 at 3rd level.*
- 7 Invisible Faery Folk:** Unbeknownst to all present, 1d20 invisible faeries are causing trouble in the celebrations. They sabotage and foil people's plans and make life difficult. They will target individuals and then make them suffer (breaking possessions, losing them, etc). These pests will bother people until dawn, and then they will leave until the next night comes.
- 8 Wraig Wen:** 'White Woman'. A beautiful fair haired lady in a thin, shimmering white dress will appear at some point in the celebrations to seduce a man. She is a spirit and does not know that she is dead, but seeks the hand of a worthy suitor. If she is scorned and turned away she will first become sorrowful and then wrathful. The White Woman will bring nightmares to the one who rejected her (Magic save) for the night and can even harm him physically if pushed too far. *She is chaotic evil and her vital statistics are HD 10d8, AC 20, and HP 80. Her primary attributes are magical. She can attack by slam. She has touch of death, frightful moan, telekinesis and incorporeal (See 'Ghost' in Monsters & Treasures).*

PROTECTING HEADS: This odd practice involves taking a human skull and fitting it with a candle inside to banish evil spirits and beings away during times like Halloween. Any other time of the year its magic does not work, only symbolically, but during the Three Nights it holds potency. These illuminated skulls can be hung, placed on a pole, or kept by whatever means is practical, so long as the glow does its work. For each being of Evil Alignment in the ten foot presence of the illuminated skull, it must make a Magic check or it will be driven away from the radius in pain. The illuminated skull's blessing can be used to protect from the Wild Hunt but each member of the hunt will have to roll a save as they come in close to the glowing aura of the holder. If lucky enough, the Wild Hunt will swarm around and avoid the holder of the Protecting Skull as though it is a force-field.

BRETHOC'S NEXT ABDUCTIONS: Within the frivolity and chaos during the second night, Brethoc will need to take one more ideally suited person (a virgin) per village on this night. That will give him his twelve people needed for the ceremony to control the Wild Hunt.

Amidst the dancing, fun and religious events in the night Brethoc will send several more of his bandits to kidnap another

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chosen offering. This night they have the advantage because of the costumes, and can hide their appearance easily.

At any point in the night, especially a poignant one if one or more of the events just occurred (or still occurring), six more of the Dark Druid's bandits will find their target to abduct. This time around it is purely the CK's decision on how, when and where in the village(s) it will happen. There are several possibilities on how this could go:

- Have the player characters overhear or see a struggle when this is going on and give them a chance to prevent it (for now).
- Make the next abduction happen completely outside of the player characters' attentions somehow, and not reveal that it occurred again until dawn when another person is missing.

BRETHOC'S BANDITS X6 (*These chaotic evil mens' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 16, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack with net, ropes and club 1d6+5. They have back attack, climb, hide, listen, move silently, traps, sneak attack.*)

IF A CHASE OCCURS ON THIS NIGHT

If the adventuring party spot the abductions but cannot stop it, the bandits will ride on horses with the kidnapped quickly the three miles or so to Coed Celyddon. Traveling in the woods at night on one of the Three Nights is almost suicide.

If the adventuring party chooses to, they will encounter an entirely different supernatural forest then before. It will be worse and frightening and pure terror.

Riding towards Coed Celyddon the party sees:

Mist shrouded shadowed woods loom ahead. There are sporadic lights flickering within and moving oddly by the boughs of many trees. Pale shafts of moon-light cut through the dense ancient forest in the breeze.

Deep echoes from owls reverberate from inside the strange and ominous forest. Some shadows move but from what is a mystery. The click from crickets and other night animals sound from the sacred woods.

Somewhere in the foliage and mists the gallop from the horses can be heard crunching on leaves and snapping twigs. The scream from the victim eerily tears through the dark woods.

Entering Coed Celyddon, the change from previous experiences will be obvious. To find the tracks of the Dark Druid's bandits in the forest, it takes a CL: 18. Once found, the adventuring party will have to aggressively keep chase or lose them quickly, but the dangers in these woods will get in the way.

The CK can use this table to make the random encounters during the ride more enjoyable, or just pick as they choose and need in the adventure.

D10 ENCOUNTER

- 1 Fresh from the Otherworld by way of a portal in the mists between worlds is a band of **DARK FAERIES** ready to cause trouble for any who cross their path. 3d10 Goblins get in the way of the PC's and will not let the adventurers simply pass by. These goblins are not the usual lowly and miserable examples of their race, but stronger and seeking loot and taking advantage of Mortals. At least two of them are wizards and the rest are warriors. *These chaotic evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 1d6, AC 15, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with long-spear 1d8+5, battle-axe 1d8+5, and dagger 1d4+5. They have the dark vision (50 ft.) ability. The wizards possess 5th level wizardry.*
- 2 At some point in the frantic ride in the misty, shadowy forest the adventuring party bothers a group of **GALLYTROTS** (2d6) who have emerged from their graves in the forest-floor. These are decaying and baleful dead beings dressed in tattered and old clothing that seek the life essence of those they cause fear in, and they come from the underworld of Annwn at times when the presence of death is strong (See more in the *Codex Druidum*). These Gallytrots were long dead Roman soldiers from ages past that have come from the underworld seeking revenge. *These neutral evil undead beings' vital statistics are HD 3d12, AC 14, and HP 36. They attack with short sword 1d6+3, spear 1d6+3, claw 2d4, and scythe 1d4+3 points of damage. They can cause Fear (Magic save in 10 ft. radius or unable to defend with a -5 for 1d8 rounds).*
- 3 The adventuring party draw in the attentions of the terrifying **GAN CEAN** exiting from Annwn, a black cloak shrouded headless horseman, holding his own sickly head under an arm while riding. The pitch-black horse churns sparks as it rides and snorts flames and has fiery eyes. The Gan Cean wields a human skull and vertebrae as a whip in combat and will mark those chosen for death by splattering blood on them (See more in the *Codex Celtarum*). The Gan Cean will threaten and intimidate any in the party that dares to taunt or show him attention. Once splattered and marked, the Gan Cean will come for them (again if slain) and will not relent until they dead. *These chaotic evil horsemens' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 17, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by the vertebrae whip 3d8+4, and trample (by horse) 2d10+4. They have the ability to unlock any door that bares their way, create Fear (20 ft.), and Life Drain.*
- 4 On the chase the adventuring party rides upon a bog-like swamp that will likely become a vicious trap. Each adventurer must make a Riding skill check (CL: 6) or become stuck for 1d12 rounds. If trapped, they will be a lure for a **HAG** who will devour them as they sink into the dark watery doom. *This chaotic evil hag's vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 15, and HP 60. Her primary attributes are magical. She attacks by bite 3d10+4, and claw 2d8+4 points of damage. She has hideousness, and dark vision.*

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5 The ghost-haunted woods are now a true menace as several **ANGRY SPIRITS** (1d4) are drifting in the dark, foggy glades looking for a life-force to drain or a way to their former life. Glowing in a blue-white spectral light, these ghastly appearing phantoms will home in on the adventuring party from all sides of the forest. The Protective Heads, if used, can temporarily deny these spirits any close contact with them if Magic saves are made and failed. These ghostly presences are malicious and meant to cause harm unlike the night before. *These lawful evil spirits' vital statistics are HD 10d8, AC 20, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by slam. They have touch of death, frightful moan, telekinesis, and incorporeal abilities. (see Spectre: Monsters & Treasure, for these abilities)*

6 Otherworldly mists obscure the forest with its thick whiteness to the point that moving through it will be difficult for a long time. These drifting mists give glimpses of the Otherworld in flashes, portals to that world if stepped into (leaving the curious stranded in Faery). These mists cover thousands of feet of forest, and every few feet or so, as the CK decides, the chance of a portal happens at a 3 out 8. If so some of the Otherworldly flashes can be: a moonlit shadowy wood with glowing plants and fluttering colored beings, frightening swamp covered in thick oozing fog with strange red eyed monsters lurking, eerie mountains, etc. This Otherworldly mist will get in the way of the adventuring party staying on the trail of the kidnappers.

7 Just exiting from the Otherworld is a band of wild Boar Men, *Fir Collach*, confused and ready for trouble. These **FIR COLLACH** (1d12) are upright boars that walk on two legs, snort and grunt and crude. Their bodies are covered in bristled hairs, war-paint, and their tusks are decorated with the torcs from slain foes as trophies. These Boar Men are simple and basic with communicative skills just a notch above their natural boar counterparts. *These chaotic evil beings' vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 12, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by long-spear 1d8+3, battle-axe 1d8+3, and tusks 1d12+3 points of damage. They have Wild Hunt and control wild boar abilities.*

8 A barrow mound, blanketed by the forest, is open and a golden-white glow shines from within its stone and earthen architecture mystically. Because it is so close to the final night of Halloween, the spirits and beings from the Otherworld have influenced and awakened the presences inside the structure. Its glow illuminates the surrounding woods and mists eerily and muffled

voices echo from inside. The adventuring party will find a festive scene inside as several dozen faery beings are holding a gathering. Long tables covered in sumptuous foods and drinks (all meant to permanently trap any outsiders in the hill if they are taken). Sitting on tables and hanging from the walls are riches galore (all enchanted with Glamour that will reveal itself if it leaves the hill) and an affluently garbed group. *Through faery illusion the adventurers are given the false image of the twelve villagers kidnapped inside, and they are all participating in the feast.* If the adventurers are lured inside, the entrance vanishes, and the vulgar and boisterous hosts will use every charismatic trick to keep them there. The CK can have an entire extra adventure involving this encounter if they prepare it.

9 A patch of the forest is jinxed with patches of Stray Sod, faery cursed to mislead those who walk on it. Faeries have placed a powerful enchantment on this part of the woods knowing that mortals would dare to tread over it soon. The CK can secretly roll the odds for each player character that crosses this part of the woods (3 in 6 chance). If so, each character will need to roll a Magic check or be completely lost in Coed Celyddon for 1d6 hours. They will be unable to find their way out of the mystical and haunted forest until the Stray Sod's influence is over, but they will remain in the forest until it is over regardless, even if helped by others who are not so jinxed, they will lead the rest into other encounters.

10 Disguised in the fog within the dark forest is a monstrous supernatural entity called 'Boneless' because it has no form. The **BONELESS** creature appears like a mist in its form and will drift in to envelop any living beings that are around it and strip them of their flesh, blood and eventually life. Only magic and magical weapons or items can harm it since it is not corporeal. Spells will drive off the entity but only that, and it must be threatening and harmful spells. *This chaotic evil creature's vital statistics are HD 4d12, AC 18, and HP 14. The primary attributes are magical. The creature attacks by Grab/Life Drain 3d12 in points of damage. Its ability is formless and cannot be effected by anything physical directly unless it is magical.*

This second night should be quite an experience for the players and raise the tension to new heights for the final day and night to come. The anxiety of what may come should be significant.

The villagers will continue to play their various games of fortune-telling for the next year, celebrating while in costume and be devoted to the gods and spirits of their ancestors.

ACT 3 - SPIRIT NIGHT

THE THIRD DAY OF HOLINESS

By the late morning hours of the next day the villagers (all of them) will be constructing and preparing the final elements to this most holy of days outside of town. An air of added tension (compared to normal one that is present on this third day) is among the people because of their missing family members.

Brethoc will travel through the villages reciting the sacred itinerary for this final night. He reassures them about the losses of their family and friends and tells them that everything will be alright in the end (obviously a lie since he is the one masterminding this entire plot). He will be dressed in his most elaborate and flamboyant druidic garb for this day: a white robe covered in golden Celtic patterns all over, a red sash draped over his shoulders, a large golden and richly detailed head-dress and golden shoes.

If confronted by the adventurers because of their suspicions Brethoc will smile and console them by saying:

"The Order is doing what it can to find these missing people. King Gwlyged has scouts and trackers sent out across the kingdom to help find these people but all of us believe that their captors are from the Otherworld.

There is talk that Picts are afoot in the kingdom causing havoc and trying to take advantage of the peoples knowing that their attentions are devoted to the holiday preparations.

If riders took the abducted into Coed Celyddon then they are fools for it is a dangerous place to be at this time of the year. The untold dangers in those woods prey on everyone but us druids as we have the protections and spells needed to keep them at bay.

Rumors are rampant within these villages over what or who is causing these problems. I suggest you either all stay in one to watch over what may happen tonight on the last night, or split up among them all to catch the trouble causers in the act one last time. This will be a night of important changes; there may be no world as we know it by dawn tomorrow."

Brethoc will be very secure and relaxed about everything. His body language is content. His time spent in the villages will be on and off all day at random (to allay any doubt that he is involved in the kidnappings).

In the villages the completion of the Wicker Men statues are underway, with the final touches being hammered into the ground, tied and positioned on the tall (30 ft) structures out in the fields of each villages near Coed Celyddon. The kindling for the next night's bonfires are being laid in place and long feasting tables (for the Feast of the Dead), and the many other elements contributing to the most important night of the year.

If the adventurers are scattered among the three villages to observe any strange happenings on this overcast and misty cool day, they will be separated as Brethoc wants, to divide and conquer them when the time comes in the evening hours.

Infrequently, horsemen (6) ride passed the villages, sent from the king, to make sure their presence is known and nearby. They are stationed at Caer Wenddolau twenty miles away to the northeast with the young Lord Gwenddolau ap Ceidio who serves the king.

VILLAGES ON THE NIGHT OF NIGHTS

Once dusk arrives the villages will be more fervently devoted to seeing the night through to dawn and maintaining the needed balance to keep the universe from unraveling into chaos.

The Protecting Skulls will be placed around the villages and every spot that the people and their animals will be during this night. Costumes will be worn again, and bonfires lit across the countryside.

At the feast tables, food and cups of drink (ale, water, beer, etc) will be placed atop it by the villagers to give the Dead their sustenance when they arrive from the Otherworld. These tables are richly decorated with candles atop them and Protective Skulls. Each village has the same set-up to honor the Dead that might arrive throughout the night.

In the fields the Wicker Man is now hoisted in place and ready to be used when it reaches the center of the night (Midnight or 'The Witching Hour'). When the time comes the villagers will place certain animals inside the wicker cages in the limbs (each to represent a group of livestock), and save the few Human sacrifices they have for the torso and head sections. Kindling is piled high around the massive human shaped structures and a druid stands by it to watch it until the time comes (and to deny mischief makers from lighting it too early).

NOTE: *If the adventurers have been handling this module inappropriately and have become prisoners of the villagers, or by some means fell into Brethoc's hands, they will be restrained by rope cords with the other sacrifices (enemies captures from rival peoples, tribes, and criminals of the worst caliber). When it reaches the right time, the sacrifices will be led to the Wicker Man to be burned alive.*

Music and dancing is common throughout the night until the final hours of the morning before dawn comes, when most villagers have passed out from too much alcohol and work. The village druids will be giving morning prayers hoping that everything has gone correctly and all appeasement and offerings were accepted. Once the sun rises the Three Nights are officially over with and all is well in the universe again.

The Castle Keeper can use the previous night's random event table to provide more unpredictability and character for this time. All of these events and planned ceremonies for the night will not matter if Brethoc manages to control the Horned One and his Wild Hunt. They will tear through the villages ransacking, burning and abducting people as it moves through and the chaos that the druids try to keep from happening does happen after all.

Except for the Wild Hunt that may fall under Brethoc's command for the night, this last night will roughly follow this itinerary:

- 1 **At Dusk:** Tables are laid out for the Feast of the Dead.
- 2 Dancing, celebration of life is around the bonfires for most of the evening by costumed villagers.
- 3 Livestock are again led between bonfires to purify the evil that might be clinging to them from the current year.
- 4 **Midnight:** The druids extinguish ALL fires in the land, from north to south, east to west to rid of the fires of the Old Year. After a short time spent in prayer surrounded by absolute darkness, druids will come with firebrands and relight all sources of flame in the land to begin the New Year.
- 5 Immediately following the relighting ceremony, the sacrifices will be taken to the Wicker Man in a processional. The villagers and druids will be chanting and honoring the gods of the Otherworld. Once every person and animal is in place within the wicker cages, they will be set on fire. Any adventurer forced into this situation will suffer 3d10 damage per round so long as they are kept within the Wicker Man (it will take a CL: 15 to pry free from the wattle).
- 6 Children will be going from house to house with a statue of a certain god/goddess singing rhymes and asking for food offerings. If they do not get it they will be promising mischief from the deity.
- 7 Many rituals and little divination ceremonies will be done by the villagers throughout the night to foretell their next year's prosperity or ill-luck.
- 8 Spotters will be placed around the furthest edges of the village and field to look for signs of the Dead, Wild Hunt and other Otherworldly threats. They will do this until dawn comes.
- 9 **By Dawn:** Druids will be a lengthy ceremony until the first light of dawn comes from the east hoping to see the world and universe continue as before. They will be facing the east and solemn in their work.

SEARCHING THE FOREST THRICE AGAIN

If the adventuring party is brave enough to venture into the forest one more time by day-light, their odds of encountering dangerous Otherworldly threats is less in number but still a possibility. It will take all day to search their way through the woods, and Brethoc and his followers will have prepared many red herrings to waylay and confuse any so foolish.

If Brethoc suspects that the player characters believe that he is somehow involved in the goings on he will make double sure to stop them. Coed Celyddon is vast in size and is only split in two by Hadrian's Wall at one point and does fall on the southern side towards the eastern shores. *Safn yr Annwn*, or 'The Mouth of Annwn' is located almost exactly in the geographic center, a hundred miles into the middle.

Because of the day long trek it would take to reach the Mouth of Annwn, this is something that the adventuring party must dedicate themselves to once they begin. There is no going back unless the resolution to this entire situation is done.

NOTE: If Rangers or any characters want to attempt serious tracking in this massive forest to find where the kidnapped have been taken, it will first require a very difficult CL: 6 to find any traces of recent traffic. Once they do lock on to the trail that Brethoc, his bandits and Picts use, it will take them along a carefully set-up route that the Dark Druid has arranged for them to find.

ENCOUNTERS DURING THE DAY

On this third day in Coed Celyddon the atmosphere is thicker, tense and far more dangerous since the two worlds of the Living and Dead are now almost in constant contact. The Castle Keeper can decide how often they want to use these encounters while the adventuring party makes their way deep into the haunted forest.

These encounters can be used as rolled or picked (as before) as needed during the adventuring party's periodic awful experiences with the traps along the way. One possibility is combining both an encounter and a trap situation every so often at random.

D6 ENCOUNTER

- 1 Gathered around a reed filled pond in the forest are 1d10+2 giant Boobries. These are enormous (15 ft. tall) Great Northern Diver birds but demonic in nature. They will emit loud croaks and grunts from the waters and stomp their way around the shadowy pond. Boobries will smell out beings and animals to devour them, once they sense other life they will go into a frenzy to feed on them. The giant birds will swoop down and grab victims with their large talons and carry them to the waters and pin them down to quickly peck away at them. With their curved beaks they will rip a foe to pieces. *These neutral evil birds' vital statistics are HD 3d10, AC 15, and HP 30. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by bite 4d6 and claw 3d8 damage. They possess shapeshifting abilities.*
- 2 From a crevice that goes deep into the forest floor a monster emerges from the underworld to feast on the life from this world. This three headed hydra-like dragon beast is faery-blooded, with wings and scaled in form. It is called **ELLÉN TRECHEND** and stands 9 ft. tall, and breathes fire but usually serves a powerful wizard or magic user, in this case the Dark Druid Brethoc. The Ellén Trechend will rampage through the woods to destroy trespassers in its way. If any of the adventurers are slain by this fey-dragon it will grab the body and fly it to its master Brethoc's feet like an obedient animal. *This chaotic evil dragon-like being's vital statistics are HD 5d8, AC 14, and HP 48. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks by bite 3d6, 2 claw 2d8, and fire breath weapon 2d10 points of damage. It possesses breath weapon and flying abilities.*
- 3 Dangerous mists cloud the forest and make it hard to see by, in less than a foot in any direction. These mists make it so dark that it is easy to forget that it isn't day-time. These mists will make travel in Coed Celyddon even more difficult than before, taking a 1d4 hours out

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of their time speeding the day up towards the dreadful final night to come and its horrors.

- 4 The adventurers wander into a stretch of devastated forest with cracked and toppled trees, giant holes dug in the earth and steaming piles of wretched animal waste. They unknowingly strayed onto a feeding, roaming herd of **GIANT BOARS** (1d6) that have drifted from the Otherworld going with the scent of magic in the air. The swath of the woods they have destroyed is about a quarter of a mile and growing. These hellish boars are covered in a thick armor of bristled hairs and are the size of small elephants; their tusks are an average length of 10-15 ft. in size. If the Castle Keeper wishes, this could be similar to the Twrch Trwyth and his eight sons from the tale *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and have an entire family of monstrous boars ravaging the forest and those in it. *These chaotic neutral monsters' vital statistics are HD 4d10, AC 14, and HP 40. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by tusks 3d8, and hooves 3d10 points of damage. They have a venomous hide that has a Level 4 poison if any contact is made with it.*
- 5 At one point in the forest a massive quake had occurred between the worlds and shook the forest floor creating a large rift, 55 ft. wide. If the Castle Keeper decides, the adventuring party may find a fallen tree or two spanning the gap to cross by, but this will still be difficult (Dexterity checks several times as needed to cross), but otherwise they will have to find another means (magic, repelling, etc) to get to the other side safely. If they fall in the chasm they will impact on misty black stones that are on the edge of the underworld of Annwn and take 1d100 points of damage.
- 6 In the forest the adventurers encounter a wounded, frightened young woman running for her life, looking back occasionally in terror. She is clearly so terrified that she cannot speak a word and shivers in horror. Her clothes are a peasant's, drab and ripped apart from some struggle. Blood is smeared all over her and all she can do is point behind her into the thick of the mysterious woods. *In reality she is a shapeshifting faery called a **BRAG**, which works for Brethoc. This minion's goals are to mislead the adventuring party into the traps and to keep them as far as away from the Mouth of Annwn as possible. If discovered, the faery will flee into the woods cackling with a sinister voice. The chaotic evil faery's vital statistics are HD 2d6, AC 11, and HP 12. The primary attributes are magical. The Brag will attack by dagger 1d8, bite 1d10 or claw 1d4 points of damage. The faery has the ability to shapeshift but has a limited intelligence.*

BRETHOC'S TRAPS

The Dark Druid and his followers take a parallel route along the way to avoid the traps set in place. It had taken his followers the recent two days to set these in place as a backup plan just in case the curious or determined want to track them down.

The hundred mile route in Coed Celyddon is a little longer because of the thickness of the forest and because of the fact

that it is not a direct straight line from one edge of the woods inwards, it twists and curves around obstructions along the way.

- 1 Twenty miles into the forest this first of several traps will be encountered by the adventuring party. Brethoc's Picts have set-up a bristling array of fire sharpened stakes and spears hidden in the forest floor, they are poisoned (Level 3), and will spring up to impale those that spring it. If a rogue is present a Traps check is needed or it will be sprung. Ropes are hidden under the autumn leaves and fallen branches that will be tripped by the unwary. Each adventurer in the party will suffer 1d8 spikes and spears, each doing 2d8 damage.
- 2 Another twenty miles deep into the forest is set in place another trap. This is a trip line in a grove of Pines that will fire dozens of carefully placed poisoned darts (made from human finger bones) that does level 4 poison. Each adventurer will be hit by 1d4 darts and take a 1d6 damage. The darts are hidden partially in the bark and among the ivy and vines on the trunks of the trees, tendons from animals are used as springs and they are hooked on the trip-line.
- 3 Ten more miles into the path in Coed Celyddon another trap comes unexpectedly unless a rogue can detect it. Each character must make a Dexterity save or fall into the deep stone pit where poisoned spikes await them. If they fall they will take 2d20 damage and take a Level 2 poison from the wooden spikes. This pit is twenty-feet by thirty and sits in the middle of a stretch of a clearing on the trail.
- 4 If the adventuring party manages to survive all of the random encounters and these traps along the way Brethoc has one more big surprise for them just five miles from the Mouth of Annwn. Pictish warriors are posted in the trees along a pass that dips into a valley in the Coed Celyddon (Hadrian's Wall can be seen not far away south from this point). These Picts (15) will ambush the adventuring party with savagery by first hurling spears down on them from above, and failing to severely wound the party, will dive down from all sides and begin combat. Several **PICTS** will give a signal to the rest of the Brethoc's people not far away at the Mouth that danger has come. *These chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 13, and HP 60. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack by long spear 1d8+5, broadsword 2d4+5, and battle-axe 1d8+5 points of damage. They have combat sense, intimidate, whirlwind attack, primeval will and ancestral calling.*

THE MOUTH OF ANNWN

Before the Roman Empire altered the landscape by building Hadrian's Wall, this rocky and foliage covered cave sat in the geographical center perfectly, but that has now changed things dramatically. Since the most ancient of times this giant dark cave was revered and feared by all peoples because they know that it does not simply go below in the earth but is actually an active portal to the Otherworld, in this case to Annwn.

Called *Ogof Cernun* or 'Cave of the Horned One' by the local tribes, it is well known that several times of the year the Horned One himself, the great primeval god, emerges from here to go on his Wild Hunt. The cave sits in a small rocky valley surrounded

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by massive ancient oaks, thickly covered in vines, moss and greenery all times of the year. Even the freezing ice and winter has no influence here.

Brethoc has spent years studying the comings and goings of the Horned One and the Otherworld beings from the cave to know best how to arrange his plan. He has each of the twelve sacrificial offerings held in iron cages (alive) dangling by chains down from the enormous venerable oaks. They hang before the giant cave entrance down by fifty or more feet.

A stone platform has been prepared by Brethoc and his followers above the entrance of the Mouth of Annwn where he can perform his ceremony. It is covered in spiraling designs etched deeply in the rock. Several standing-stones have been fixed near the entrance of the cave by ancient peoples to harness the power that emits from the Mouth.

Hidden and on guard in the surrounding rocks and trees, Brethoc's bandits (30) and Picts (15) are ready for anything that will happen to interfere in their master's plans. They will be ruthless in their defence of Brethoc's plans, even though they do not know what it really is. Because of their superstitions they do not ask and only serve the druid as he demands.

NOTE: If the adventuring party arrives at the Mouth of Annwn during the daylight they will find the captives in their cages screaming for help, sickened and in a terrible state. Brethoc and his druids (3) will not be present, but if the kidnapped are freed before nightfall the Dark Druid has other plans to retaliate (see below).

BRETHOC'S BANDITS X30 (These chaotic evil mens' vital statistics are HD 4d6, AC 16, and HP 24. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack with net, ropes and club 1d6+5. They have back attack, climb, hide, listen, move silently, traps, sneak attack.

BRETHOC'S PICTS X15 (These chaotic neutral warriors' vital statistics are HD 5d12, AC 13, and HP 36. Their primary attributes are physical. They will attack by long spear 1d8+5, broadsword 2d4+5, and battle-axe 1d8+5 points of damage. They have combat sense, intimidate, whirlwind attack, primeval will and ancestral calling.)

If the adventuring party manages to fight off the Dark Druid's warriors and get to the captives to save them, this mystery and the horror to come is not solved, only made more complicated by Brethoc's revenge. He will be extremely wrathful and quick acting because of his necessity of succeeding in controlling the Wild Hunt by nightfall.

NIGHTFALL BY THE MOUTH OF ANNWN

If the adventurers arrive at the Mouth of Annwn by nightfall they will encounter an entirely different situation, a far worse one, than by day-light. Fierce winds rage in the forest and mists creep from the cave and the captives scream in terror from their cages about its entrance. This is the time that Brethoc has been waiting for, and it has been a long time coming. He will waste no time in seeing it to its conclusion.

The Picts and bandits will be on guard as before (unless by some other means they are taken from their posts), hidden by the darkness and foliage to aid Brethoc, they will be ruthless in their duty. From deep within the Mouth of Annwn a green glow will be emitting into the dark woods around it eerily casting even darker shadows than before.

The adventuring party will witness:

The wailing from hound-like creatures echo from inside the Mouth of Annwn, they are tortured and still they seem eager to be outside. A shimmering otherworldly glow flickers from the cave covering the surrounding woods and rocks in its green color as thick mists pour from the entrance and ooze onto the rocky earth.

The captives bemoan their impending fate from with their hanging cages before the ominous cave. Impotently they tug at the bars and shake the cage but it does not matter. The hour has come when Brethoc the Dark Druid has sought for, and the feeling in the air tingles with the shift between worlds now.

Shouting his elaborate incantations over the entrance of the Mouth of Annwn stands Brethoc. He is surrounded by three more Dark Druids with their hoods over their heads and solemn. The many complex patterns on the standing stones begin to shine with an intense greenish-white light and come alive.

From somewhere deep in the Mouth of Annwn a deep rumbling growl stirs and shakes the earth violently. This sound is followed by a dissonant chorus of terrible and spine-chilling noises. Within these chaotic sounds the familiar sound of heavy hooves thuds on stones, it is deep inside the cave but must be heading towards the entrance.

The adventurers will have a time-limit of 12 rounds to complete these tasks or Brethoc's plans will unfold as he designed. Nothing the party can do will stop the Wild Hunt from appearing from the Otherworld in this, but they can alter the course of events to be slightly in their favor. There must be done or the Dark Druid will win the night and cause havoc and terror across the land:

- Free at least half of the captives from their cages.
- Kill Brethoc and his druidic attendants.
- Flee a good distance away from the Mouth of Annwn before the Wild Hunt appears.

Battling the Dark Druid and his minions and followers while freeing the captives will be a difficult task, dividing the team up during the fifteen rounds. If the Horned One is given only half of the virgin captives for an offering when he and his hunt exit into the Mortal world the Dark Druid's control on him will not happen.

20 CASTLES & CRUSADES

BRETHOC THE DARK DRUID He is a 6th level human druid whose vital statistics are HD 6d8, AC 18, and HP 48. His primary attributes are intelligence (18), wisdom (16), and charisma (17). He carries the Horn of Evil (used once a day, when blown protects the user from Good Alignments in a five foot radius. Last for one hour and acts as the spell 'Magic Circle'), Pearly White Ioun Stone (floats within 3 ft. of Brethoc and will regenerate 1 hit point back per hour of use), and Cloak of Flying (made from the skin of birds, and with feathers on its top around the shoulders and upper back and chest, this magical cloak enables the druid to fly 60 ft per round when the command word is spoken – 'Ehedwch'). He wears a golden torc worth 5,500 gold, and two matching rings on either hand each worth 2,500 gold. Brethoc has five druidic spells at zero level, three spells at 1st, three at 2nd, and two at 3rd level.



THE WILD HUNT

As dreadful and overwhelmingly frightening as this is going to become, the Wild Hunt will issue forth from the Mouth of Annwn dramatically.

Whether the adventuring party is present or not, or have or haven't stopped Brethoc's dark plans, the Horned God and his otherworldly retinue will spew into the mortal world seeking their plunder as they do every time this night occurs.

What the adventurers will see (if they are present) is:

The world seems to shake uncontrollably while fog floods outwards from the Mouth of Annwn. The plethora of insidious, naughty, foul and bitter sounding voices and chatter grow louder from inside the cave. The heavy hooves from a great beast thunders within, and with every clop fiery sparks flash in the cave.

A gruesome deep laugh rumbles from inside the gloomy Mouth of Annwn. From somewhere amidst the noises a very strange sounding owl hoots, in its cry is a faint hint of a gasp of help. A chill fills the air as the dreaded hunting party from the Otherworld storms out of the earth and underworld into the mortal one.

The air is filled with hundreds of winged faery-folk, while others fly on long sticks and the smallest by sprigs. Ugly, misshapen and disgusting, these first faeries in the retinue emerge from the glowing mists with a presence of malice about them. Below them on the trembling earth are the ghostly packs of Cwn Annwn, the Hounds of the Underworld. These swift moving dogs bail and yelp in a way that you have never heard before.

Exploding from the mists and Mouth appears a massive hairy man with stag's antlers and a long spear in his right hand. He is bestial and feral with an immense vibe of power and virility about him. His wild tangled hairy body seems to be spawning birds, serpents and other life forms at random. The horse he rides is black and churns fiery sparks from its hooves and nostrils, its eyes flaming.

Flying around the giant Horned One's antlered head in the mists is a large white owl. The bird glides around the wild mob emerging from the Mouth of Annwn ahead of the horde.

Around the legs of the God of the Hunt's steed are dozens, if not hundreds of faery-folk crawling, climbing, slithering, running, and mobbing forward. Monstrous, dark and malicious beings form the Horned God's hunt and they now emerge from the underworld ready for a long night to hunt on the unlucky.

If the captives are freed already, the Wild Hunt will sweep through the empty cages and chains without a hindrance to their pace. But if the adventurers were unable to free the twelve or any number of them they will witness the sacrifice that Brethoc masterminded:

Dark faeries swarm around the cages grasping and thrusting their hands into the bars at the terrified sacrifices. The cages swing about from the long chains in the oak trees from the weight and attention. The screams and sobs from the captives are now as wild as the noise from the Wild Hunt.

The Horned One bellows aloud, "Gather these virgins four by three and hand them to me! I will take their pure souls to guide me this night on the hunt and transform them into more of my Cwn Annwn."

One by one the captives are being pried from their cages and dragged and carried to the Horned One. They struggle and fight the frantic swarming mob of the hunt but it is useless because they are outnumbered greatly. As they are brought before him on his dark horse he taps them with his golden guilt spear and they transform into another ghostly hound in a magical white flash.

Brethoc tosses sparkling dust down upon the Horned One and the Wild Hunt as the virgin captives are being turned into more of his hunt. The Dark Druid shouts aloud, "Lord of the Hunt, this night I command upon thee antlered crown, my rule to your hunt from the sky to the ground! I command your steed, your retinue, and your spawn, so that I can master them all before the first light of dawn!"

Emerald light shines from the Horned One and he stops in his tracks. Brethoc leaps below to land on the saddle of the black horse to sit before the wild god as master; he is bathed in the same energies. The Dark Druid's eyes shine a piercing green light and antlers form on his head.

Brethoc points towards you and shouts aloud to the Wild Hunt, "You have trespassed into a holy place that you should have never attempted. Now you will learn the punishment that comes with this crime against all things sacred."

The Wild Hunt is composed of hundreds if not thousands of faeries, beings and beasts that gather around their god eagerly to appease him and attract his attentions. The mass of the hunt is a living swarm that is an army, the Unseelie Court.

The Unseelie Court is a living mob of spitting, grabbing, urinating, defecating and attacking faeries and beasts. The CK can either just assume that the Wild Hunt has hundreds of members at one time (for attacks and actions), or can roll a D100 to give it some definition.

If the adventuring party are at the Mouth of Annwn when everything finally occurs, they will need to flee the Wild Hunt regardless of what happens to Brethoc or not. The Hunt will pursue them if the Dark Druid is in charge of it, and it will have to become a frenzied, terrifying event in the whole adventure, and it will be the defining moment. If Brethoc is not in control of the Wild Hunt, it will ride off into the wilderness at random and do its usual hunt (2 in 10 chance that it pursues the adventuring party).

THE HUNT BEGINS FOR THE NIGHT

If the adventurers are in the villages when the hunt occurs they will see the storms above the distant woods raging. Lightning flashing in the skies and the rumble of thunder makes the land tremor; the villagers know that this is the Wild Hunt out in force on this final night as it often does.

The Wild Hunt will have several different courses of actions depending on what the Dark Druid does or if he is alive still and his plan succeeds:

- If Brethoc is slain or his stopped, the Wild Hunt will run wild across the Isles until dawn as it always has, creating havoc at random. The adventurers and the nearby villages will likely not see an attack (2 in 8 chance) throughout the night but know of its distance presence in the wilds.
- But if the Dark Druid is not stopped, he will lead the Hunt through the villages to destroy them and engulf the people and animals into its mass on his way through the Isles to complete his master plan. Nothing the characters have can stop this once it starts except for hiding until it passes or they call upon another god or goddess to aid them.

The Horned One obviously is a deity and no statistics are required for his all-powerful actions since he is not quantifiable by attributes, but his hunt is more crazed in the direction of what or who they hunt. Unlike their master, who singles out certain individuals, the Unseelie Court can chase any victim they discover.

Since there are so many faeries involved in the Unseelie Court it would be tedious to list them all here. They can be found in the *Codex Celtarum* and are labeled under the ability 'Wild Hunt'. Several are provided to start with, but if the CK has the *Codex* that will give plenty of races and monsters to use in this nightmarish event. This example of a standard faery member can be used for the horde however:

UNSEELIE FAERY (These chaotic neutral/evil faeries' vital statistics are HD 3d6, AC 15, and HP 18. Their primary attributes are magical. They attack by claw 2d4, bite 1d10, and grab. Their abilities are Wild Hunt, shapeshift and vampirism.)

CWN ANNWN (These lawful evil hounds' vital statistics are HD 4d8, AC 16, and HP 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with bite 1d6+6 or fire breath 2d8. They have an immunity to fire, tracking and dark vision.)

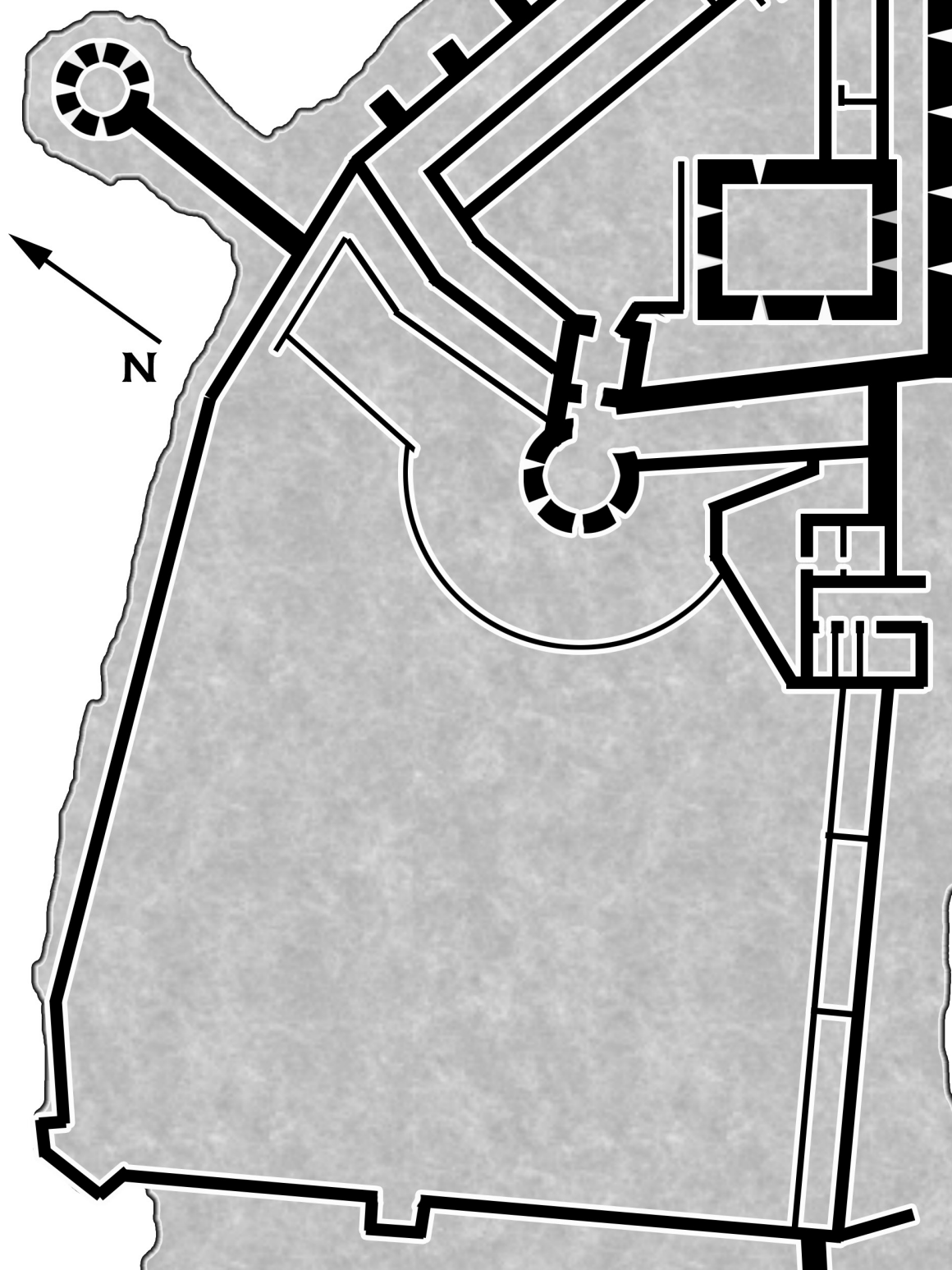
GOBLINS (These lawful evil creatures' vital statistics are HD 1d6, AC 15, and HP 12. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a short sword for 1d6, knife 1d4+2, bite 1d3+1 or claw for 1d3 points of damage. They have twilight vision and dark vision.)

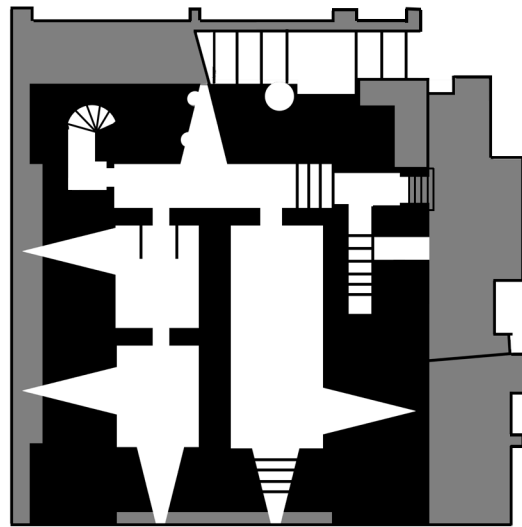
SPRIGGANS (These chaotic evil faeries vital statistics are 1d8+3/4d8+5 HD, AC 15, and 11/18 HP. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack by club 1d10/3d10, and bite 1d6/2d8 damage. They have giant's growth.)

NOTE: The CK should really make this chase the most anticipated and heart wrenching event in the entire adventure. It is what the story culminates in regardless of the fate of the Dark Druid Brethoc and his followers.

22 CASTLES & CRUSADES

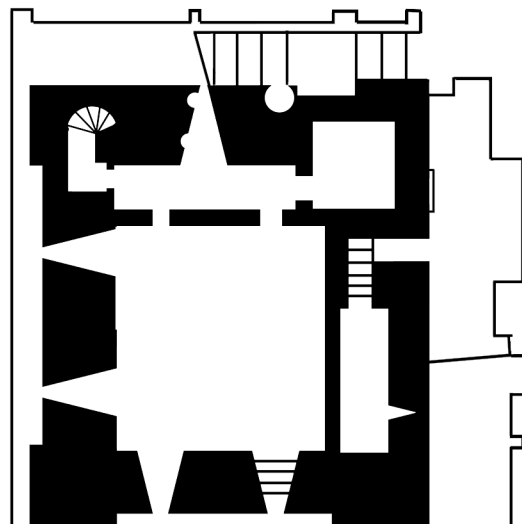
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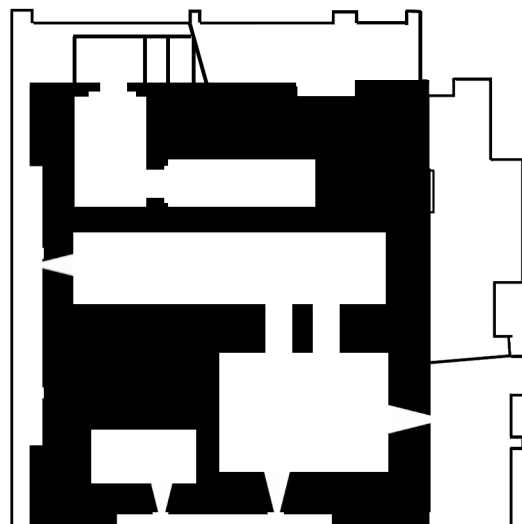


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