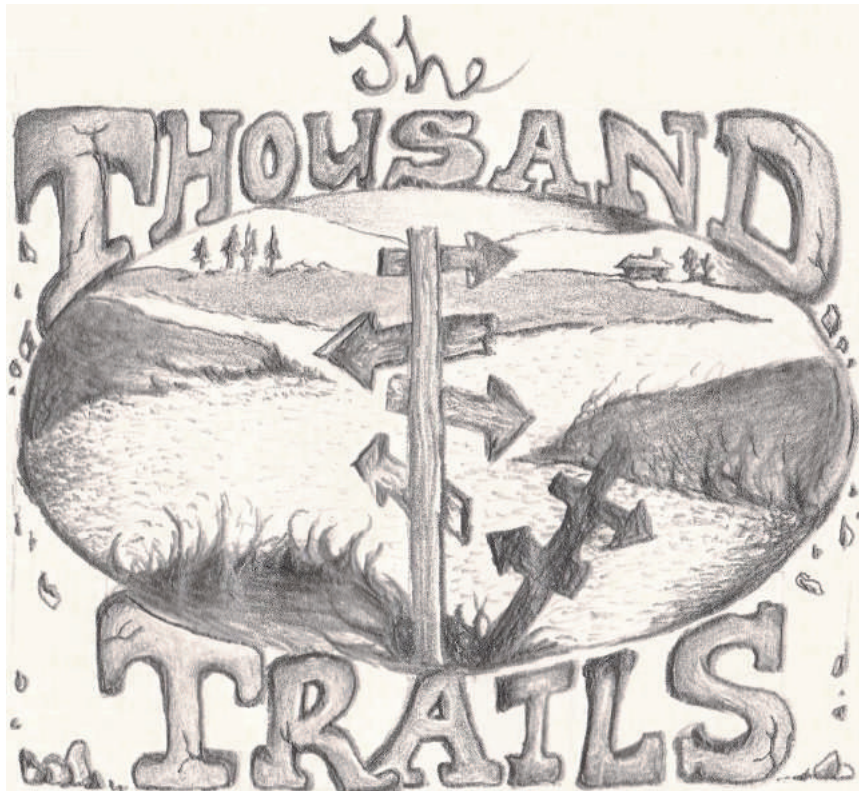


A lush, misty forest scene with large trees and wooden buildings. The scene is framed by thick, gnarled tree trunks and hanging vines. In the background, a large waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff. To the right, a multi-story wooden building with a balcony is visible. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and wild.

EDGE OF THE WILDS

THE THOUSAND TRAILS

PART 2



A "**True Mask Games**" Product

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second book of “The Thousand Trails”. Before you is a collection of over one hundred plothooks and story-seeds to be used as you desire. Most of these should fit into nearly every fantasy setting with only small adjustments. We call them “**story seeds**” because that is exactly what they are: ideas about plots, NPCs and world-building that will sprout and grow into mighty trees inside of your own mind, as you appropriate them in whatever way you think is best suited for your personal RPG group!

The plothooks in this specific book are focused around rural areas, places where civilization and the wilds clash. Your players will hunt smugglers and outlaws, investigate strange cults, negotiate between rival settlements and follow the trail of hungry creatures that prey upon innocent villagers. This is the frontier, a place bereft of strong local authority, where people tremble in the shadows of terrible beasts and the only true law is that might makes right!

The booklet before you will help you and your group make the best use of this unique environment, a blend between the civilized and the untamed, with both forces clashing in a ferocious battle for dominance.

These story seeds can be turned into full – blown adventures quite easily, adjusting small details to fit into your world and the area your group of heroes is currently visiting. Or you can simply use our adventure ideas as inspiration, turning them into your personal plots, tailored specifically to the likes and dislike of your own gaming group.

If you do end up doing this, we would love to hear how your players reacted, and how they managed to solve the plots thrown at them. Do not hesitate to let us know!

I hope you have a lot of fun with The Thousand Trails: “Edge of the Wilds” and are already looking forward to our next book, “The Realm of Leaves”, which will entail 100+ storyseeds for woodland areas, from subarctic evergreen forests to tropical jungles!

As always, please feel free to reach out with any feedback or ideas you might have! You can contact us at “earin_shaad@msn.com” or on our True Mask Games Facebook channel.

We look forward to hearing from you!

March 19, 2018

For True Mask Games

Alex



All the ploohooks and storyseeds in this document are divided into three catrgories: their challenge level, suggested length and what elements of an RPG they mostly focus on.

CHALLENGE LEVEL

This is the suggested level the heroes need to be to successfully complete the adventure. Since this book is intended for many different game systems the suggestions here are very basic. You know the game system you are playing better than we do and will be better suited to judge whether an adventuring idea might be too “tough” for your group or not. That said, with a bit of work you should be able to adjust the challenge level of an adventure quite significantly.

The numbers in brackets describe character levels in some of the best known, D20 based roleplaying games.

Low Level (1-5): The heroes are still at the start of their journey. They might already be locally admired, but they are not yet equipped to face greater threats.

Medium Level (6-10): Leaving their humble beginnings behind, the heroes are now veterans in their fields. They have faced deadly dangers and lived to tell the tale. Their skills, influence and resources are growing.

High Level (11-15): After many adventures the heroes have reached a status only few ever get to. Their names are known far and wide, and they are considered amongst the most dangerous and skilled individuals in the realm. They are ready to stop all but the greatest threats.

Epic Level (16-20): The heroes are legends, their names and deeds known in better parts of the civilized – and maybe also the uncivilized – world. Only the most powerful individuals would dare to cross them, and only the most extreme threats are worthy of their attention.

SUGGESTED LENGTH OF THE ADVENTURE

This is of course up to the individual Gamemaster, for adventures can easily be embellished or shortened according to the desires of the gaming group.

A **short adventure** can usually be played on a single evening, sometimes in as little as an hour or two. They usually include few location and only one or two adventuring styles.

Average adventures can last anywhere from two to four gaming sessions and will often involve several different locations and styles of challenges.

Long adventures are such that will take five, six, or even more sessions to finish, and are basically campaigns at this point. Some can be turned into plots that last for years. Such adventures will nearly always feature a lot of different locations and focus on all four different parts of adventuring (see below).

FOCUS ON:

Exploration: This adventure will have the heroes visit regions they have never seen before, push through untamed wilderness or find secret chambers. They will be filling out the empty spots on their maps, even those spots they never realized were there...

Diplomacy: This adventure heavily features the heroes talking to living creatures, tricking or persuading them to do their bidding. Sometimes such interactions will require a delicate touch, but other circumstances might profit from a more heavy – handed approach. Many situations, if handled badly, can quickly turn into combat.

Investigation: Adventures like these will involve a lot of sneaking, deception and interaction with living beings. Secrets need to be found, plans revealed and schemes pulled into the light of day. Mysteries and complicated intrigues are featured quite often, and only clever actions will be rewarded.

Combat: Sometimes the most simple of all adventures, combat – focused plots can be more or less straightforward, but they will always feature dangers to the very lives of the heroes. Monsters, outlaws and other villains need to be fought and defeated. This might require a more tactical approach, but sometimes it will be a very direct experience. In the end, you never know what your players will come up with!

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS FOR FOR VILLAGES, TOWNS AND THE HALF TAMED AREAS AROUND THEM

These short encounters can be thrown in whenever the heroes are within, or in the vicinity of a village or similar small settlement. They are best used sparingly, but nonetheless can serve to make the players feel they are immersed into a living world, where not every single thing is part of some greater plot. Or you can use these encounters to fill the time if your players, as so often, decide to do something you are completely unprepared for... Most of these encounters should only take a couple of minutes to at most an hour to play through, but they could spawn much longer adventures if you so desire. You will probably only need a few minutes to prepare such an encounter (maybe during a food-break?), or you could try to improvise the whole thing, especially if you are an experienced gamemaster.

D20 Roll	Random Encounter
1	Screams of pain shatter the peace of a village inn. A richly dressed man is beating the stable-boy with a riding crop! The innkeeper himself does not interfere, for the man is the son of a local knight, and his pure-bred horse has disappeared from the stable of the inn. If blame mainly falls on the stable-boy, then the proprietor will get away more cheaply. But where is the horse?
2	During the show of a small group of street performers – fire breathers, sword jugglers, musicians, contortionists – an old woman in the audience suddenly drops dead from a heart attack. Her son, an extremely aggressive warrior on leave from the army, accuses the showmen of dark magics, and tempers flare quickly. Our heroes, who are part of the audience, might be caught up in it.
3	As our heroes are approaching a village, making their way through the pastures surrounding it, they are suddenly threatened by a massive herd of cattle. The big beasts are stampeding and might trample everyone in their way! A bear has attacked the cattle and the herders are desperately battling to keep it at bay.
4	A large mob of angry villagers has gathered around a local windmill. They are bearing pitchforks and torches, shouting that there is a monster hiding within! The poor miller and his wife, not wanting to see their home go up in flames, are desperately trying to calm their neighbours. In the meantime the monster might be escaping...but does it really deserve death?
5	The food served at a local inn, usually famous for the quality of its meals, suddenly tastes far worse than usual. Soon the first guests – including our characters – complain of stomach cramps. This is the cook's revenge upon her husband the innkeeper. To punish him for cheating on her she has poisoned the food with local herbs that cause violent diarrhoea, but are ultimately harmless.
6	The panicked shouts of a girl draw our heroes' attention to a nearby wheat field. There a young local woman is being chased by three large, aggressive hounds. After she is saved she will first hesitate to reveal what is going on, but finally admit that her own father, a very violent man, has set his hounds upon her for ruining his best shirt. She is not sure if she can go home again safely...
7	Two village vintners call upon randomly passing strangers – our heroes – to once and for all judge the quality of their newest wine. They both bring forth a small barrel, gathering quite the crowd around them. Each vintner tries to secretly signal that, should they be declared superior, their impromptu judges will receive more than fair rewards...
8	While arriving at an inn our heroes are approached by several older locals. They bring warning: a sizeable group of young ruffian farmers is looking for trouble, and they are already quite drunk. They have beaten up several groups of travellers over the last few weeks and are now searching for new victims to prove their strength.
9	The village is in an uproar! Cattle thieves have struck and stolen several of their most prized cows! Now everyone is looking for the culprits, and any stranger passing through the village or found in its vicinity, especially if they are well armed, will be subject to interrogation and harassment. The situation is tense, and suspicious behaviour could lead to violence quite easily.

10	When entering the local stables, our heroes find a desperate stable-boy. All the animals in the building are extremely nervous and even aggressive, biting at everyone trying to get to them. The poor lad does not know what to do. There is a weird, exotic fruit rotting in a corner, dropped there by a traveller. The smell of it, nearly undetectable for humans, is driving the animals insane.
11	It has been raining heavily for several days and as our heroes travel past a village the local dam bursts, releasing a massive flood, that threatens the settlement. Villagers are shouting for help as their houses are damaged by the water, but the heroes might have their hands full to save their own equipment...and maybe even their lives.
12	While enjoying a quiet night at an inn everyone is abruptly awoken by a panicked scream. Two local lads – enjoying some alone time away from their parents' angry gazes – were scared to death by a big, exotic snake that slithered past them. This is the pet of a wealthy traveller, escaped from its box. The beast is cunning and quite dangerous when provoked, but also very valuable. Its owner wants the snake to be caught without harming it.
13	A large, bald man with massive muscles approaches the heroes. He is Ulfar, the local blacksmith and strongman. Boastful of his title and sure of his power he is prepared to offer a decent money pouch to whoever can beat him in a contest of strength which will draw quite a crowd.
14	The rickety bridge outside the village looks like it cannot uphold much weight...but nonetheless there is a heavily loaded merchant wagon trying to cross. It soon becomes stuck, as the owner is swearing loudly and the poor oxen is trying to pull. And with all this ruckus the old bridge might very well start collapsing! Can our heroes save merchant and wares and earn a small reward?
15	A young woman is shouting for help, as she is being carried off by four rough – looking farmers carrying large cudgels on their belts. The ruffians are grinning widely and easily handling their weakly struggling victim. The rest of the village seems to be content as spectators, unprepared to help! This is the “stealing” of a bride just before her wedding, a completely harmless local custom.
16	The sky is darkening and a hailstorm rapidly approaching. Our heroes are riding past a village as an agitated old farmer shouts for help. One might think his family is being murdered, but in truth his collection of garden figurines is threatened by the hail and he needs more people to put his little “friends” away before the storm. He will be extremely angry if refused.
17	One of our better looking heroes spots a local beauty in a window, smiling in his direction. The pleasure of such a sight is short however, as he is just a few moments later assaulted by a very large, angry man wielding a hammer. This is the woman's jealous husband, who thinks the hero is his wife's lover...mainly because she told him so to preserve the identity of her true lover.
18	A sleazy looking snake – oil salesman with a garishly painted wagon is loudly proclaiming the effectiveness of his many potions. Perfect health and beauty, supernatural strength and stamina, love potions and many many more wonders are promised. Some of them even work, for the salesman has gotten them from a wizard who fell on hard times and had to sell his collection...but even the sleazy merchant doesn't believe that they work!
19	Our heroes come upon a small local festival, celebrating the villagers' victory over a group of bandits twenty or so years ago. They, being rough – looking strangers, are asked to play the role of these outlaws, wearing ridiculous masks and being beaten with sticks by grinning youths. The scene is a bit rough, but if our heroes go with it they will be rewarded with fine food and drink.
20	Cries of fear and pain call our heroes to a small farmstead. They are running into a trap, for vicious outlaws have gathered and are holding the family hostage, forcing them to draw travellers in. They have already slaughtered several potential helpers and are ready to murder our heroes where they stand...and the farmer's unlucky family will end up in the middle of it all!

THE STRENGTH OF RURAL AREAS

A FEW THOUGHTS

The rural environment is an interesting setting with a strong central theme: the battle between man – made structures and natural habitats. The war between the rules of civilization and the law of the wilds. Control against freedom. Order versus chaos. Keeping this central conflict in mind let us discuss some of the most important things to consider when running or preparing rural adventures:

1. **Rural areas are “simple”:** Villages and towns hold far less people than an average city. The social structures of rural settlements have far fewer layers of power and most things are controlled by a handful of individuals. This also means there are generally far fewer powerful NPCs around.

For players this can mean a far easier time to understand who the “big” people are, what kind of relationship they have with one another, and to establish good connections with some – or even all – of them. In many ways this also means less work for a gamemaster: far fewer NPCs are needed to create the illusion of a living world, their relationships are usually less complex and the GM has more time and energy to focus on other parts of the game. This also makes rural environments the ideal starting point for a campaign, especially one involving several new or fairly inexperienced players.

2. **Rural areas are “free”:** The frontier of civilization is made up of villages. They are the hand of mankind stretching into the wilderness. While rural areas are actually quite important to the cities – enabling the rich folk to avoid starvation – they are overlooked by most important people.

Usually there is a distinct lack of local authority. Except for the occasional militia or town watch under the command of a mayor, constable or reeve there are little to no powers enforcing law and order. This can be extremely liberating for our player characters, especially if they are already fairly high level. They will probably be the most powerful people for miles around which means that there are few NPCs who could even try to stop them from achieving what they want.

3. **Rural areas are unsafe:** On the flip side this lack of local authority means a distinct lack of protection: if bad things happen our heroes will often be the only ones in the area with even a chance of making everything right again. They will not be able to count on much magical or even military support from the locals. And villains know about this lack of protection as well...

Criminals, monsters and madmen can act far more freely and directly in rural areas than they could do in a large city. While there is a clear lack of anonymity in small settlements, increasing the chance that a villain is discovered, they always have a relatively simple way of escaping justice: retreat into the wilderness and either set up a new lair there or move to another settlement altogether and resume their plans. Most villains will be very aware of this option and quite often the confrontation between them and our heroes will not start and end in the same settlement, but instead move over into the surrounding wilderness.

4. **Rural areas are areas of conflict:** The war between civilisation and the wilds is real. Hunters, woodsmen and farmers are just the most common of the many people who heavily depend on the land around them for their own survival. Their doings often damage these very lands however...and that is a source of great conflict, a battle where either – or even both – sides can be equally villain and victim. Wild beats hunt and are themselves hunted, spirits of the land nourish or destroy, villagers live in harmony with nature or exploit it mercilessly.

Because of its isolation and tiny size the threat of potential annihilation can descend upon a village or town far more quickly and easily than upon a city...and the people know it too: the smaller a community is, the more superstition and fear will be within the hearts of its inhabitants. New, unusual and exotic things could be dangerous and are therefore not to be trusted.

Keep these things in mind when preparing to run adventures from this booklet and you will be able to get the most out of your rural adventures, turning them into an experience difficult to forget!

PLOTHOOKS AND STORYSEEDS

(ROLL 1D100 FOR A RANDOM RESULT...WE DARE YOU!)

1. BLACK COACHES IN THE NIGHT

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

For several weeks now mysterious coaches, driven by hooded figures, have been spotted on the roads. But these dark vehicles seem to travel only by night, shrouded in secrecy. Several young villagers, braver than most of their neighbours, tried to stop such a coach, but were nearly run over by it. Two members of the militia, who followed one such coach on horseback, never returned...

Folks are getting frightened and whispers of dark magic are abound. Poril, a local mayor, hires our heroes to investigate.

Asking around the villages will give rumours about criminals trying to scare people, secret meetings of fiendish powers and even the legend of vampires travelling in their coffins. Nobody seems to have any precise information though.

Spotting the coaches themselves is not too difficult, for they travel openly, even though they travel at night. Stopping them however is an entirely different matter. The hooded coachmen do not exchange words with anyone and are prepared to use their whips if people get too close. The horses are incredibly fast and powerful, so that even a chase might prove tricky. And on the cobbled roads these coaches leave only few tracks.

In the end the secret is revealed: the coachmen are undead creatures, serving the will of their master. They deliver corpses for a necromancer's experiments to an ancient barrow south of the village. Okvir, the extremely paranoid wizard, wants to raise a long-dead king, interrogating him and learning secrets of the ancient times. He has not quite mastered the spell however and requires fresh corpses delivered to him for experiments of trial and error. The coachmen themselves were some of his earliest successes, faster, stronger and far more intelligent than the average undead minion.

2. BEST SERVED COLD

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

Durtan the merchant has left city life behind, deciding to spend his retirement in an opulent country manor. He has invested a large part of his wealth in this magnificent building but now that he has settled there his mind is troubled. He keeps hearing weird noises and catching hints of movement out of the corner of his eyes. Servants gossip about their master suffering horrible nightmares and not even his wife seems to be able to calm him.

A few weeks later Durtan reaches out to our heroes, offering them a lot of money for their protection. He is certain that assassins are coming to kill him, but is unwilling to share many details. A quick tale about old business rivals wishing him dead is all he is prepared to say. Nonetheless, Durtan expects the best protection he can get.

After spending a few days in the manor our heroes have not seen any hint of real danger, but their employer is getting more paranoid by the hour. He refuses to eat most meals due to fear of poison and spends days and nights locked away in his vault. And Durtan is right to fear...

The old merchant's past holds some very dark deeds. He has worked with smugglers, hired thugs to destroy his competitors, even paid poisoners to take care of some of his most troubling adversaries. Now these sins are catching up to him.

Ovelia and Ania, the Elker sisters, were skilled merchants that tried to take over parts of Durtan's business. He invited them to a private meeting and poisoned them with his own hands. The women choked on their own blood...but their spirits are still here and they want only one thing: vengeance.

At first the ghosts only had the power to send disturbing dreams and cause small mischief, but as their anger grows so does their power. Soon they will find hosts, dead bodies that they can possess. These revenants will be coming for Durtan...and they cannot truly be destroyed. They will keep coming nearly every night with murder in their cold, dead hearts...until their prey is destroyed or some bargain has been struck to put the spirits to rest.

3. THE PEN AND THE SWORD

HIGH LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Our heroes have overcome many terrible foes, saved hundreds of lives and their fame is spreading! It is not unusual for them to be recognized even in the more rural areas of the realm, and farmers are often offering them free room and board just to hear a few of their tales. But such mighty reputations can also draw more unusual characters...

Our heroes learn about a woman who seems to be following them, arriving at the scenes of their latest triumphs only a few days, or even a few hours, after they have left. The woman is asking a lot of questions about them, seeking to gather information about their personalities, backgrounds, fighting styles, allies and enemies. She seems to be spending a lot of money to gain such knowledge and is suspiciously interested in any close friends or family members they might have...and such information can be very dangerous to our heroes. Trying to talk to the woman will prove very difficult, for she is skilled in both magic and stealth and she clearly does not wish a direct meeting.

The woman herself, a bard by the name of Leyana, is harmless. She wishes to compose an epic poem about our heroes and is doing extensive research for it. But there might be other powers drawn by her appearance, people wishing to settle their scores with our heroes, and should their agents gain Leyana's knowledge it could prove very dangerous indeed.

4. BLADES OF GRASS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Local communities are starting to be overrun by an aggressive, fast growing weed that strangles fields and even damages livestock with its bladelike leaves. This weed, called "knifegrass", has never been seen before, but it is spreading with incredible speed. The harvests of several villages are threatened and locals fear starvation in winter. All their efforts to get rid of the weed – cutting it down, ripping it out, having it eaten by goats, even burning it – have proven to be fairly ineffective.

While these actions have destroyed some of the knifegrass it just keeps coming back...and the villagers do not have enough manpower to battle it and work their fields at the same time.

Now an alchemist by the name of Vecar has offered a solution: he has designed a very potent poison that could get rid of the knifegrass. The locals might be desperate enough to pay him...but that poison would also damage the soil for many years to come. Our heroes will hopefully be able to find the cause of this insidious attack. The knifegrass was first spotted in the vicinity of an old forest, and this very forest is the home of a spirit of nature. The elemental was once protectress of all the lands, but has become enraged by what it perceives as the ever growing threat of civilization. It created the knifegrass to remove the villages...but should that plan fail it might send out even more aggressive plantlife. The use of Vecar's poison could drive the spirit insane, and it might very well personally come for the arrogant alchemist, his hired thugs and whoever else stands at their side.

5. THE GAZE OF COLD EYES

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The local youths are getting nervous, for many of them have spotted a weird rider dressed all in black, watching them from a distance and even following them for a while. This figure only seems to show up when no adults are around...and to make matters worse two of the young people who had seen the rider are found dead, bearing no visible wounds!

Our heroes are sent to investigate. They will have to be clever to trap the rider, for he seems to always know when people are nearby and simply refuses to show or rides away quickly without leaving any tracks on the ground.

Once forced to confront our heroes the figure will introduce itself as Morin, an eccentric old wizard who is keeping an eye out for a promising new apprentice, for his last one has died in an accident. He does not have anything to do with the deaths and is unsure what is going on there.

Sadly Morin is not the only one watching the young people. The spirit of Fermaj, the old wizard's former apprentice who died in an accident involving a poisonous concoction, is following his master around. Fermaj has a lot of rage in his heart and will use his spectral claws to kill any youth who catches Morin's attention, for he refuses to be replaced by some dumb farmer!

6. THE GREATER GOOD?

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION,
COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

The “Children of Preservation” are an ancient group, going back many centuries. Their rituals of fertility and cultivation, intended to make the plants on the fields grow well and the livestock have plentiful offspring, have been kept alive in the rural areas for generations. Membership to the Children is semi secret at best. Especially many of the ordinary cultists only hide the fact that they are part of the Children when they talk to strangers.

There is however one dark secret at the heart of the cult, something that only its highest ranking members, whose identity is known to only very few, are aware of. The Children of Preservation have been founded to guard the prison of Cryzuhl, an evil power held by magical chains in a cave deep underground. To preserve these chains and reinvigorate their magic the Children have to hold a blood sacrifice once every three years, on the night of the spring equinox.

This is a difficult burden to bear, and Pedira, an old midwife and leader of the cult, is not sure how much longer she can do it. She is a bringer of life, not a taker, yet she has already had to spill the blood of eight innocents. She can still see all their faces...

Nonetheless, the duty is an important one, and Pedira forces herself to continue. Recently her helpers have taken Ena, a young local woman who fits the arcane criteria they are looking for, as the next sacrifice. They have drugged her and are hiding her beneath Pedira's house. Ena's husband, the young merchant Frodik, is devastated by the disappearance of his love, and is willing to pay whatever our heroes demand, if they can only return her to him.

Soon after starting the investigation it will become very apparent that Ena is not the only person who has disappeared in the area over the years. The tales of a “hunter” who strikes once every third spring have been circulating for many generations, although nowadays nobody but a few old folk really believes in them. And not even they assume that the loving Pedira and her helpers, good men and women all, might be behind this gruesome tradition.

The Children of Preservation will fight hard to stop our heroes...for they know how powerful Cryzhul is, and that the area will suffer greatly if the being were to escape.

GM NOTES:

The "villains" in this storyseed are very reluctant ones, and making that clear to your players is important to capture the essence of the plot. This is not just another murdering bunch of cultists. The Children believe their cause to be just and necessary, but they despise the methods that it enforces upon them. This dichotomy can lead to some interesting discussions amongst members of the Children, but also to very powerful scenes between them and a group of player characters that prefers not to solve all their problems with naked steel. Diplomacy could win the day...especially if you allow for a better way to keep Cryzhul imprisoned to be discovered. But what happens if the families of the people murdered over the years realize the truth?

7. TOWER OF TERROR

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

A terrible storm hits the village our heroes are staying in, damaging several buildings, ripping down trees and injuring dozens of people. As the night grows ever darker a horrible ripping sound pierces through the howling of even the wildest wind. Only a few hours later, with the tempest slowly starting to die down, a massive hound-creature attacks the village, barely being fought off.

Then, when the storm has passed and the sun rises...a massive stone tower stands on a hill not far from the village. Nobody has ever seen such a structure before, but it is clear that the beast must have come from there. Our heroes are tasked with leading a small number of armed men up the hill and find out if there is more danger for the village.

The tower of Turbal, a powerful wizard, can travel great distances by magical means. Sadly Turbal himself has been killed in an experiment gone wrong and the tower is out of control. Our heroes only have a few hours to find the magical mechanism at its top and deactivate it, otherwise they will be taken with the tower when it “jumps” again. To reach the mechanism however, they will have to overcome both dangerous traps and mutated beasts, creations of Turbal that have broken out of their cages and might very well threaten the area.

All the while the armed farmers will be trying not to show fear in front of these “mercenaries”, but will be clearly overwhelmed by the unprecedented amount of magic that surrounds them. And the village will not be happy if our heroes return without the men they led to the tower...

8. THE SHADOW OF ERLENG MANOR

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

About fifty years ago a rich merchant named Erleng built a large manor overlooking the village from a nearby hill. Since Erleng's death five years or so later the house has had several owners. None stayed very long, experiencing bad dreams and a general sense of danger within the manor. Local gossips tell of all kinds of spirits and curses attached to the place, whispering about murdered servants wanting revenge, ancient hags wronged by Erleng in his dealings and even the spirits of murderous hounds from the ancient times, whose bones can be found in a cave deep under the manor.

The previous owner, Lady Oliana, had only lived within the house for a few months when she fell ill and died soon after. She was an old woman however, and her spirit was simply added to the menagerie of ghosts stalking the halls...or that is what local legend claim.

Three months ago Sir Kolben, an energetic man of good breeding and significant fortune, bought the manor as a retreat. He is a painter of quite some skill and finds the rural air invigorating. Sir Kolben's arrogant demeanour did not make him many friends amongst the farmers and craftsmen of the village. Few people noticed when he stopped showing for several weeks. When he reemerged from the manor however, everyone noticed. The strong young man had lost a massive amount of weight and looked as if he was his own grandfather.

Only a few days after this reemergence scared servants summon our heroes to see Sir Kolben on his sickbed. There they hear a tale of illness and suspicion. The young noble is sure that he is being attacked by poison or foul magic, and has dismissed all but two of his most trusted servants. These, the butler Olbert and his wife, Irina the cook, assume the history of the manor has something to do with their master's weakness.

Soon during the investigation our heroes might learn that Sir Kolben is not the only one suffering. There are half a dozen other strong young men and women in the village who have started experiencing similar – but much weaker – symptoms. They all live close to the manor grounds. But no simple ghost or curse of a witch lies behind this evil. It is something darker, a creature from beyond the veil that has been drawn by the collective imagination of the people and found its home in Erleng Manor. The thing is invisible but highly dangerous, for it sucks the energy of mortals and ever so slowly leeches away their whole life force. This power is also highly cunning and will seek to use its magic to lead our heroes onto a wild goose chase, following legends of ghosts and spirits.

All the while it will slowly attach to them, living off their strength, weakening them day by day...and while Sir Kolben is spared the creatures attention and becomes healthier his saviours will soon find their own lives endangered.

9. BROTHER V.S. BROTHER

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY, INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The rich villages of Fostering and Ognylake have, so legend has it, been funded by two brothers. Foster and Ognyn were both mighty heroes of the ancient times and their descendants settle in both places. Over the course of centuries the villages have had a friendly rivalry, but in recent months that rivalry has gotten out of control. Cattle thieves have struck both places...and some of the cattle have found their way to the market of the respective other village. A small landslide that destroyed a farm in Ognylake seems to have been set off close to the hill of Fostering. Both bridges connecting the two villages to the outside world have been heavily damaged by sabotage. Now tempers are flaring badly, and several brawls have happened on the road connecting the settlements to one another. Some hotheads are already calling for open war.

Mayor Unbrin of Ognylake hires our heroes as he sees control slipping away from him. He makes sure they understand that nobody must know that it is him they are working for.

Preventing bloodshed will be a tricky thing, for there are agents in both communities actively working to provoke it. Ilfrin, the miller of Ognylake and Ottra, an attractive young woman from Fostering, have both been handsomely paid to manipulate their neighbours into striking at the other community. They do not know of each other's existence, but they do know that a small gang of mercenaries has been hired to sabotage both settlements and cause war.

The mysterious employer behind all of this is the same person leading the mercenaries: Twintongue, a shapeshifter and outlaw chief, has control over a medium sized group of bandits (or some primitive, wilderness dwelling creatures) and wishes to plunder both villages as soon as they have significantly weakened one another.

10. A VERY SCOLDING SEAT

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

Algernon, mayor of Jokrinn village, has slipped and fallen into the local river, drowning before anyone could help him. A few months before that, mayor Albinna was killed during a storm, her skull crushed by a flying shingle. And just a few weeks before that, the long-term mayor Pendar was accidentally shot and killed by his own son during a hunting trip.

People have started whispering of a curse after Albinna's death, but Algernon was a brave man and did not believe in such things. Now, with his body being buried, the whispers are back in full force. Whoever dares to rise into leadership position in Jokrinn village, so say the gossips, will meet a brutal end within a few short weeks. These whispers are believed by nearly everyone, and so nobody dares to step up to do the job. But there are certain things that only a mayor (or someone with similar authority) can do, and Baron Wilmire is starting to lose his patience with Jokrinn village. He has issued an ultimatum. They have a week to appoint a new mayor, or they will all be punished for disobedience.

A relative or friend living in the village reaches out to our heroes, begging them to help and persuade any of the potential candidates to step up. Ulfon the blacksmith, would be the best one for the job, but he is highly superstitious – even though he would never admit it – and could even react violently to a heavy handed approach. Jonna the midwife is beloved by all, but she is not ready to step in either, fearing for her own life and believing that a curse is indeed upon the village. Gosric the wool merchant, richest man of the village, would be the only other obvious choice, but he is a greedy bastard and hated by most of his neighbours. Gosric heavily suspects foul play and does not want to be the next target of the assassin, poisoner or whatever foul business is going on.

Finally there is Erevan, the village drunk, who has been depressed ever since the death of his wife five years ago. He does not fear for his life at all and would make for a surprisingly good mayor if someone could only give him back the will to care about things.

GM NOTES:

Yes, in this adventure there is actually no great intrigue or curse happening, just simple village superstition. This fact is a core element of the scenario, but might be considered disappointing by some gaming groups. Feel free to add additional plot parts to make it seem like something happening. Or even just add whatever nefarious plot you want to spice things up and introduce some chase or combat scenes into the adventure!

11. SILENT STEALING

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The Undering family are some of the richest people in the realm, making most of their money by selling extremely fine jewellery, adorned with the teardrop rubies that have become known as “Under-Stones”. While the family grew richer they used their money to bankrupt many of the other goldsmiths and jewel – sellers in the kingdom. It is rumoured that the Underings have often employed underhanded tactics, working with thieves and thugs, to get to the position of influence that they now hold. Along the way they have made many enemies.

One of these enemies, Gilbert Overoy, whose father was once amongst the most famous jewellers in the realm, has discovered the Undering secret: they own a hidden place where magical, insect-like creatures dwell. In this heavily guarded compound the Under-Stones are created, for they are a byproduct of the natural life cycle of these weird beings. One strange specific of these creatures is that they can only produce stones if they are in excellent health and suffer no stress at all...and any loud noise or violent jerk can cause them a lot of stress.

Thus the Undering compound is far away from any other civilisation, with guards roaming the area to keep everyone away. The walls are thick and the rooms holding the ruby makers well isolated. They are also filled with exotic plans needed for the reproduction cycle of these insects.

Gilbert Overoy wants our heroes to sneak into the compound, overwhelm the guards and bring him as many of these creatures as they can carry. All of this has to be done with little to no noise...and the guards know that as well. Which is why any confrontation within the compound would be highly tricky and highly unusual, with both sides hesitating to use their full force upon the opponents.

12. RED SLAUGHTER

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

While travelling along a mostly abandoned road, our heroes unexpectedly arrive at a scene of terrible slaughter. A village lies burned before them. Corpses are everywhere. Women weep over murdered husbands and infants prod fallen parents. Even the well has been soiled by throwing several bodies into it. Some of the buildings are still burning, but most are little more than smouldering heaps of blackened timber. Death has come to the village of Serrafield.

If our heroes are able to speak to the shocked inhabitants they will learn that this destruction was wrought upon them by the "men in red", dozens of riders who attacked surprisingly, murdered brutally and rode off with the any riches they could find. They even took some of the more attractive younger women as captives and escaped in a northerly direction. This is most of the information that can be learned, for the few surviving people of Serrafield all seem confused and in severe shock...but they are begging for revenge and for someone to save the women.

Following the hoof prints of these butchers' steeds our heroes will see the tracks vanish completely only about an hour north of the village. If they continue into the same direction they will come upon a large, well fortified settlement surrounded by golden fields. This is apparently a place of significant wealth. A red banner with a rearing black horse flies over a small manor in the centre of town, but otherwise everything seems peaceful. There are a few guards, but nothing that shows any ill intent or bears witness to the butchery of Serrafield. Our heroes, if they approach peacefully, will be greeted and invited into this settlement of Redbar.

Nobody here knows anything about an attack or riders...or about a nearby village called Serrafield, for that matter. To the south lies a small marsh that has never held any settlements, or so the people say. And, to make matters worse, if our heroes ride back south, a small marsh is all that they will find. Only with a lot of searching will they be able to discover the remains of ancient, blackened structures, swallowed up by the mud.

Truth is that Serrafield was an illusion, a memory of the land held over from ancient times. The slaughter that our heroes saw happened two hundred years ago. The descendants of the brutal raiders, growing rich on their spoils, founded the village of Redbar. Most of them have heard the stories of their ancestors' crimes, but these are surely just local legends. Only two people in Redbar know something of the truth. Lord Mayor Quosrik is a learned man who has heard the name of Serrafield, and also what happened there. His own great-great-great grandfather, Bulgar the Red, led the brutal raiders, and his stories have been passed down through the generations. Quosrik is a decent enough man, but he does not wish for the truth to come out and might take some measures to silence our heroes if they cause too much of a ruckus.

The other person who knows what happened is Hildia, an ancient woman. Her grandmother, Hildia the Elder, was one of the young girls taken from Serrafield and has passed her version of these events on to her descendants. Hildia's family, who live on the outskirts of the settlement, still nurse a certain disgust for the Lord Mayor and his kin.



13. MUSIC FOR THE MAD

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The Lionsgate Asylum is not a particularly good place. Despite the best intentions of the Warden, a young man by the name of Timias, his “patients” are suffering and need to be contained, lest they be a danger to themselves and others. Timias has a good relationship with a nearby village. The local farmers are not particularly happy about the dozens of maniacs living close by, but the walls of Lionsgate are high and the Warden pays well for the food he claims from the surrounding area.

This peaceful agreement is about to be shattered. Multiple animals have recently been found dead in the fields, blood staining the fur of their faces and the sides of their heads. Soon after a young shepherd is found in the same state. The locals are angry, many blaming some escaped lunatic for the deed, this despite the Warden's promise that not a single one of his patients is missing.

Several of the wealthier farmers collect money to hire our heroes, asking them to look into the matter, maybe even infiltrate the asylum if it proves necessary.

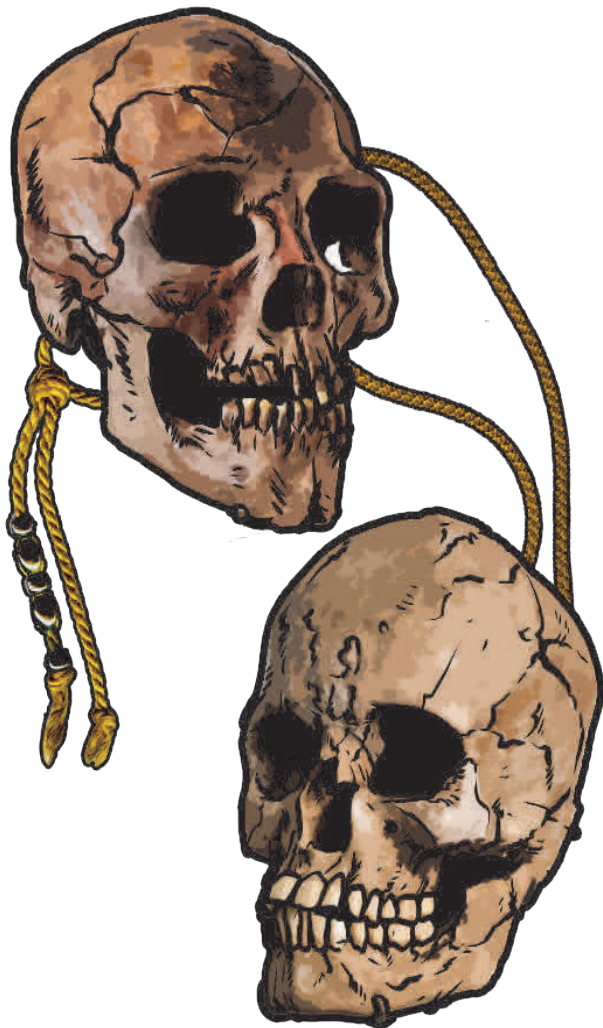
Timias and his employees will not be particularly happy to talk to strangers but remain mostly polite. They are all under a lot of stress, for many of their charges have been acting more aggressively than usual. Several guards have been injured, which leaves the rest with their hands full. Inmates are babbling about “the Piper” who speaks to them and will come to save them. But these sad men and women always have strange hallucinations, so Timias pays them no attention.

This time however there is something to the visions of the insane. The piper is a powerful demonic creature whose music and voice can only be heard by those who are insane...and by those whose lives he has come to claim.

Within a few days several more dead bodies will turn up in the area and even one of Timias' guards dies. The demonic piper is near and his music fills the inmates of Lionsgate Asylum with a great aggression and a terrible longing. With every hour both power and reach of the creature grow until he can use the bodies of the insane to manifest within them and lead the rest of the Asylum patients on a horrifying rampage.

14. DRUMS IN THE DARKNESS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT



The village of Umber is situated between a nasty swamp and a thick forest. Here runs the only road for many miles, and the people of Umber have been getting along relatively well by claiming a hefty toll from whoever passes by. Recently however the village has been gripped by terror. Every couple of nights there is a sound coming from the darkness. The sound of deep drums, like a monstrous heartbeat. Nobody knows what is going on, but the only group of guards sent to investigate came back terrified, speaking of shadow creatures trying to devour them.

Now nobody dares to leave their homes after dark anymore, no matter whether the drums can be heard or not. Siralda, mayor of the town of Pestios, hires our heroes to check upon the whole thing, for it is hurting her coffers, as the people of Umber are paying far less taxes ever since the drums started speaking to them.

The explanation for this mystery is far less dangerous than it might at first appear. A group of smugglers, led by Curwen Eightfingers, have purchased a magical drum that causes fear in the hearts of those who hear it, and are using this simple artefact – strengthened by the sound of more mundane drums – to scare away anyone that might spot their smuggling. Curwen and his people have claimed a base not far from Umber, situated in a cave within the forest, and are spending most of their days there. The smugglers are not unreasonable and will try to bribe our heroes if they are discovered. They are also earning a lot of money at the moment though, and will be prepared to react with extreme brutality if they feel truly threatened.

15. A RECKONING FOR THE WILDS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

Most people would say that animals are simple things, without mind or soul, only driven by the most simple of purposes. Certainly they are incapable of higher thought...or even magic. But sometimes that might not be the truth. Sometimes, when collective souls cry out...something answers.

The village of Toran's Hill is surrounded by many pastures and is known for the premium quality of its meat, which is exported into the whole realm and beyond. Several slaughterhouses and many butcheries can be found in the community, and most people work in the business of raising or slaughtering livestock. Thousands upon thousands of animals have met their untimely end in this peaceful community. And soon they might have their revenge.

Several slaughterhouse workers are driven insane, killing their own comrades. They then collapse themselves, falling into a nightmare – filled coma and dying soon after. This incident shakes Toran's Hill...especially as it is repeated a week later. Our heroes are hired by Pruval, known as “the Meat King”, owner of most of the village. He is prepared to pay them handsomely if they put an end to whatever is going on.

Pruval himself does not know it yet, but he and all of his employees are in terrible danger. The blood of countless animals, spilled by their hands, has marked them. The souls of these beasts cry out, and their collective desire has brought forth a terrible spirit of vengeance. This...thing can animate the bodies of dead animals, drive all those insane who have taken animal lives and manipulate the desire for slaughter that hides in many human hearts. It might spare a few innocents, but in its rage the spirit will be extremely cruel, forcing people to murder their loves ones and commit terrible atrocities. It will make sure that only very few inhabitants of Toran's Hill remain. Blood calls for blood.

GM NOTES:

This adventure can be considered pretty heavy - handed if the GM does not prepare it properly. I suggest letting the player characters visit Toran's Hill before everything goes crazy. Let them witness the thoughtless brutality of Purval and his butchers. Maybe even introduce a few sadistic ones amongst them, who take great pleasure in their work. If you play it right your heroes might not be sure whether they should step in and fight the spirit of vengeance at all...for maybe its victims deserve to suffer?

Generally some players might be put off by the amount of violence against animals in this scenario, so make sure you know your gaming group well before you run it.

16. THE BLACK MIST

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

Loch Calhod is surrounded by many small fishing communities that profit from the large catches and steady supply of meat that can be taken from within the lake. Usually this area is a peaceful one, but that has recently changed. A few weeks ago a weird dark mist descended upon Loch Calhod, shrouding the area. At first it was nothing more than a weird weather phenomenon, burning off with the morning sun. But then, a few nights later, what would quickly become known as the Black Mist returned. And this time, it brought horror with it...

Pale figures stalk the mists, slaying all those who cross their paths. Those killed disappear, only to return as a soldier in this army of death with the next misty night.

The Black Mist has been coming for several weeks now, appearing every third or fourth night, and many villagers have fled the area. Other are frantically looking for help...which is where our heroes come in.

The origin of the Black Mist is on an island in the centre of Loch Calhod. There our heroes will find a large hole in the ground, the recently excavated entrance to an ancient ruin. Within it a group of adventurers looking for treasure awoke the Mistwraith, an ancient evil. Overcome by the wraith these adventurers – some of whom our heroes might even be acquainted with – became the first soldiers in the pale army of the mists. This army now holds dozens of villagers as well, and it keeps growing. The wraith itself can only be destroyed if its resting place – a black pearl – is exposed to direct sunlight for several hours. And that can be difficult, especially because the creature can summon the mists to protect itself and obscure the light.

If any of our heroes are killed by the minions of the mist they will become one of them, returning a few nights later at the head of the wraith's army and attacking their former comrades.

17. THE FURY OF STONE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Twenty years ago a small mine was established on Olden Hill. The bit of copper found there quickly gave way...and revealed gold beneath! Hilltown, the settlement that was founded during the gold rush, never became particularly large, but it did become extremely wealthy, paying significant amounts of that wealth into the coffers of Baron Pundrag, strongest nobleman in the area. Now the gold is starting to slowly run out, and Revenna, Lady Mayor of Hilltown, is putting a lot of pressure onto her miners and engineers. They have started using large quantities of acid to melt the rocks and break the earth. Sadly this has also polluted the ground, killing animals and plants alike. Some people drinking from the streams have sickened, and now nearly all food and drink is brought in by caravans from the outside. But that is not all.

The spirits of the earth and stone are angry, and that anger manifests as distant rumbling in the ground, putting miners on edge. This anger has also poured into the dreams of Leaping Wolf, the shaman of the Rainbow Tribe, a community of nomads living close to Olden Hill. The shaman is encouraging his warriors to strike against the town, and they have already waylaid two caravans, wounding drivers and killing or stealing the horses and oxen. Now our heroes are brought in by Baron Pundrag, who is willing to spend a lot of money to preserve his steady income of gold.

The nobleman does not care how the problem is solved and has little regard to the superstitions or even lives of “murderous savages”.

If the situation does not de-escalate quickly there will not only be bloody war...the spirits might also crush Olden Hill in a terrible earthquake, killing every man woman and child within Hilltown's walls.

18. LAUGHING FLAMES

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Warden Eswalda, leader of a group of soldiers responsible for protecting the local roads, calls upon our heroes' assistance. Several groups of travellers were found dead on the road, their bodies blackened and burned. Her men seem incapable of catching whoever is responsible, and Eswalda thinks dark magic must be involved. She is not wrong.

There is a malicious spirit afoot, a being of flame and destruction, born in the blaze that consumed half of the village of Espern a few weeks ago. This same fire, and the death of a dozen villagers within it, were blamed on witchcraft, and now a hunt is on to find the culprits. Two women and a man have already been accused, and a group of witch hunters led by the murderous fanatic Giskorin have arrived to make use of the situation.

Now villagers are extremely suspicious of each other, and accusations fly left and right. The fire – spirit is watching all this from the remains of the burned buildings of Espern and laughing at the fear, confusion and anger. In its malice it will strike at several villagers to stoke the flames... and when Giskorin starts to light the cleansing pyres the creature will use them to destroy everyone in the area in a night of fire and death, leaving only ashes behind.

19. BREAKING GROUND

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Weird things are happening in the area our heroes are travelling through. Animals seem spooked, streams disappear and a low humming sound can be heard when everything else is quiet. There is tension in the air...a devastating earthquake is about to hit!

Trees are toppled, boulders crushed, the ground can swallow houses whole. After our heroes have survived this violence they will soon come upon a village in peril. People are buried alive, walls have been broken and fires gotten out of control. To make matters worse, the quake seems to have brought some strange, clawed creatures to the surface, that now in their confusion and fear lash out at whatever moves!

After the dust settles and normality seems to slowly return the people of the village will insist that our heroes spend at least a few nights here, celebrating them and being extremely thankful. But sadly that is not the end of the trouble.

A tribe of hill dwellers (human or otherwise) has been hit even harder by the quake, losing all their resources and many of their members. They will come down to the village to steal food and they are prepared to fight for it if necessary. There isn't enough food for both villagers and tribesfolk...but if no type of accord is reached the situation might become very bloody!

20. ETERNAL LOVE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

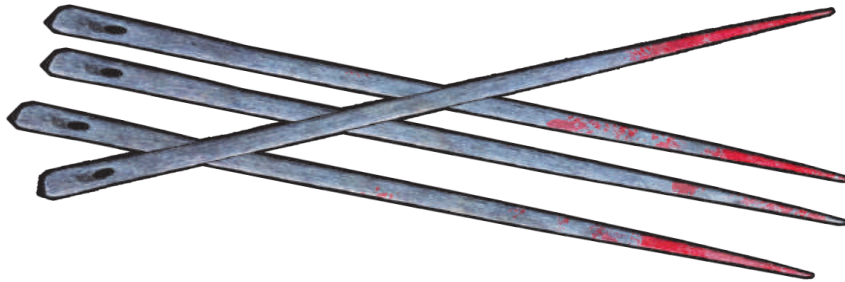
There are many things wrong in the village of Goldfields. This once idyllic community has been brought to the brink of destruction by suspicion, anger, family feuds and an old, malicious power.

A few months ago Gorin, one of the wealthiest farmers in the village, found a pretty amulet of gold while digging his fields over. He cleaned it and gave it to his young wife, Arletta, who was overjoyed to receive such an amazing gift. Sadly that amulet held the malevolent spirit of its previous owner, the witch Orga. This spirit has taken possession of Arletta's body and has used it to poison the minds of many villagers. The witch has unveiled secrets, turned friends against one another with dangerous words and cast small enchantments upon many of the villagers.

Now the Inring family and the Ekwel family have sworn to destroy each other over a dispute about field borders, mayor Hallig is despised by everyone because they think he lay with his own daughter, the blacksmith's wife has nearly strangled her sister, who she thinks seduced her husband, and most young, unmarried men have come to hate each other as they compete for "Arletta's" attention. One of them, a poor fool called Calvin, has even murdered Gorin and been strung up for it, leaving the witch free to use her dead husband's riches and influence to even further poison the villagers' minds.

There is another murder at Gorin's funeral, as Ricon, the village drunk, gets beaten to death by several men whose minds Orga has bewitched. Our heroes are called in by Egar, the desperate bailiff of Goldfields, to provide assistance with the investigation...and hopefully keep the village from devouring itself.

While all this is happening Orga hopes to resurrect her own lover, a powerful Warlock named Eguron, whose crumbling bones she has recently discovered...but for that ritual she needs far more murders, and far more blood.



21. THE WOLFHUNT

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

For several weeks now local farmers have been harassed by a pack of wolves. The beasts have struck half a dozen times, attacking at night and taking sheep, goats, even a cow. While this might seem like a minor issue to most people, more attacks like these could ruin the farmers and threaten the survival of their families. Local hunters have tried to slay the beasts, but this pack seems far more intelligent than other wolves in the area. It has evaded ambushes and traps alike, even seemingly sending out individual pack members to draw away the hunters and at least once apparently laying false trails. People are starting to whisper of dark magic and potential shape-shifters. Several well armed outsiders, our heroes, are hired to assist the hunters.

It will soon become clear that the wolves indeed are led by an alpha with far more than bestial intelligence. And not only that...the beast seems to know all the tricks the hunters use. That is because it was once one of them. Orgis was a handsome man and promising hunter, younger brother to Pellak, master – hunter and the very man who has hired our heroes. The two siblings were fierce rivals, and as the reputation of the younger man started to eclipse the older one Pellak saw his very position threatened. He decided to get rid of his brother and ambushed him in the forest. Orgis was heavily injured, but crawled away. As he lay dying his own brother covered him in dirt and spit in his face. Then Pellak walked away and never showed any remorse. Nobody else in the village knows what happened, and everyone thinks Orgis simply left without saying goodbye.

The truth is: while the young hunter lay dying a spirit of the forest came to him and, feeling pity for the man, used its magic to heal and transform his body. When Orgis awoke he was a man's mind in the flesh of a strong young wolf. Ever since that moment revenge upon his brother was his main thought.

He used his cunning and power to subjugate several packs in the region and has humiliated Pellak with these attacks. Soon, when the hated brother becomes desperate enough, Orgis will move in for the kill.

22. UNWELCOME GUESTS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes, while travelling, are surprised by a quickly gathering storm. Dark clouds threaten to unleash a massive downpour, and the rumbling of thunder grows louder and louder. The small village of Hommel is the only shelter close by, but as our heroes arrive they are greeted with suspicion. The locals seem nervous and not at all happy to see them. Even the innkeeper, a fat man called Albert, who is also mayor, tries to pretend that he has no room available. Many villagers will be openly rude to our heroes, who might not be used to such a welcome. They are clearly not wanted here...but in the end the locals will offer them the chance to stay in a barn out in the fields, outside of the village. Not comfortable and probably leaking, but better than camping in a storm that looks capable of tearing tents to shreds.

Soon after nightfall the rain will hit like a hammer, a wall of water striking the ground with full force. And not long after a caravan of quiet coaches, covered in dark cloth, will arrive in the village. Albert and the other locals will greet these new visitors far more warmly...and they will start pulling tied up men and women from their basements, handing them over to a tall, bearded brute. This is Meranio, a master – slaver, and he has brought some hefty coin in exchange for the captives. The slave caravan will only be staying to take in the twenty or so “goods” and a warm meal, then they are back on the road again and disappear in the storm. Should they be challenged Meranio will order his thugs to react with extreme brutality. No witnesses can be left alive.

23. ANOTHER TOWER, ANOTHER TERROR

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Two days ago there was a flashing light, like a second sunrise, in the forest only a mile or so from the village. Locals that went to investigate found a strange tower, covered in blue symbols, that had appeared in a small clearing. Unwilling to endanger the lives of his militia, Mayoress Pinala hires our heroes to investigate and find out if any danger comes from this apparition.

Getting into the magically protected building will be the first issue, for the door can only be overcome if several small seals, concealed in the blue symbols, are found and deactivated. Once inside our heroes will be attacked by several golems and animated objects...and they will realize that the door cannot be opened from within.

They are also followed by a shadow...for Synna the Assassin, who has struck down the mage Fellandovar, master of this tower, has been caught up in the teleportation device that transported the building, and she is eager to find out who these new visitors are. Maybe they can help her figure out the mechanism, still half covered by the fresh corpse of Fellandovar? And if they cannot, she will simply have to kill them one by one.

Synna is unlikely to show herself, and she is extremely skilled. She also knows the tower and its dangers very well. If our heroes draw her anger by being unable to understand and use the teleportation mechanism, getting out alive will not be easy.

24. MIGHT MAKES RIGHT

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

The small town of Worming is in trouble. A large gang of outlaws has descended upon it and is trying to take over. They have severely beaten the dozen or so guards and plundered the houses of the few relatively rich people Worming possesses. Mayor Ezar has fled the town and is now looking for people to help him reclaim it.

To make matters both more and less complicated the outlaws have started quarrelling with one another after only a few days, and have split into two rivalling gangs. The “Bloodfists”, consisting of the more brutal and straightforward members, and led by the giant thug Porgo “the Crusher”, have taken over the Dancing Boar in, where they are drinking heavily, harassing any locals that happen to cross their path, and generally being destructive with other peoples' property. They enjoy the sense of fear they provoke, and don't have any long term plans.

The “Twinblades”, on the other hand, a smaller but more cunning group, are led by an extremely dangerous woman only known as “Mistress”. They have taken over the largest building in town, which was once the guard barracks, and are spending their days systematically laying claim to the most valuable property of Worming's citizens. They also have crossbowmen stationed at the town gates and hold half a dozen young women as hostages.

Both groups have grown to absolutely despise one another and might be provoked into several violent clashes. There are already brawls between them on a daily basis, but so far no lives have been claimed in these confrontations.

25. SHADOWS IN THE DEEP

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Even the oldest people of Alvas Village cannot remember a time when the Sinterlake wasn't wrapped in dark legends about ghosts and demons. Most prominent of these stories is the "Tale of the Deep One", an ancient evil sleeping where the water is darkest, but rising every few decades to pull poor men and women down into the depths.

Now two washerwomen have disappeared from the edge of the lake, their baskets found overturned nearby. Weird large tracks have been found in the mud. Locals are terrified. This must be the return of the Deep One! Nobody except for a few desperate fishermen now dare approach the lake, and children are kept within the house at all times. Our heroes are hired by the elders of Alvas to save the women and slay the creature.

The situation however is not quite as expected. The only monster in the lake is an unusually large pike, but that fish is nowhere near dangerous enough to kill two grown women. The true culprits are Olvis and his brother Herok, two violent local fishermen with expensive tastes, who have fallen on hard times. They desperately need money to buy booze for themselves and trinkets for the prostitutes whose company they keep. Thus the brothers came up with a plan: they would abduct some locals and sell them into slavery for a nice sum. Herok knows a thug named Padro, who will be coming over in a few days and will probably be willing to buy the two women...and any others the brothers might be able to abduct until then.

26. GOLD AND BREAD

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION,
INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The mining villages of the eastern hills have been becoming quite wealthy over the years, pulling tin, copper and silver out of the ground and exchanging it for caravans filled with food, drink and some luxury goods. Their wealth has even become large enough that they were able to pay for the services of a mercenary company, the "Swordhounds", employed to protect both caravans and settlements.

Sadly the ordinary men and women working the mines and few fields see very little of that wealth, for Lord Mayor Mercuzio and a small group of his closest supporters are the ones keeping most of the spoils.

Recently several agitators have risen from amongst the locals, openly speaking out against the corruption of the rich. Unrest is spreading. At if that wasn't enough, the most recent supply caravans have never reached the hills. A large group of Swordhounds is sent to investigate...only to run into a well prepared ambush and be nearly completely wiped out by outlaws!

Now Lord Mayor Mercuzio is desperate and is prepared to pay our heroes a decent sum of money to protect his investments from both agitators and bandits.

This task will prove tricky. The people are hungry – for the food caravans can no longer reach the villages – and their anger keeps growing. The demagogue Ekatri and his group of assistants are very skilled in manipulating public opinion, and they are by now very well liked amongst the locals. They are also working together with the bandits, whose leader, the bowmaster Qar, receives good information from Ekatri. Tracking down the three outlaw camps, which are well hidden, will be tricky, for the forests and hills here are dense, and there are few easy ways to traverse them, especially if you are not familiar with the area.

But even that is not the end. Both Ekatri and Qar are working for a shadowy figure called "Goldhand", a masked man who provides them both with handsome rewards for their victories. This mysterious agent is the best spy Count Peregrin of Ancing, a powerful noble in his own right, has, and he is making sure that Mercuzio will fall so that the Count can take over the whole area.

While our heroes are investigating and potentially making powerful enemies, they will also have to deal with the hothead Dunvar, leader of the Swordhounds, who wants revenge for his slain soldiers and also does not appreciate the fact that strangers – as he sees it – are trying to take over his command...

GM NOTES:

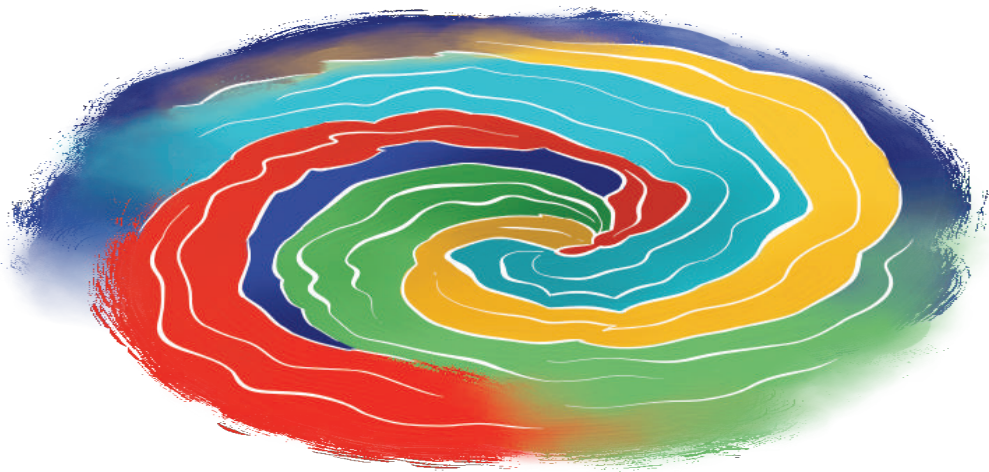
This adventure can have a very different feel, depending on what type of game your group prefers. Hunting for outlaws in the wilderness can be very exploration and combat - heavy, while finding and taking out Ekatri is strongly focused on investigation. With Dunvar of the Sowardhounds and Lord Mayor Mercuzio a group of well - versed talkers has plenty of opportunity for diplomacy and negotiation...and if your group is skilled enough they might even be able to turn both Qar and Ekatri against their employer.

27. FLAMES ON THE WATER

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

A strange smell has been permeating the air close to Swanlake village for days. Now the earth starts rumbling and the top of a nearby hill explodes! Lava is pouring down, but luckily misses the village itself by more than a mile. Some locals collapse from the fumes, but they all start recuperating soon. Sadly that is nowhere near the end of it. Yellow fog can be seen coming out of the ground, which still rumbles occasionally. The water of the Swanlake itself is moving in an unnatural way, and large outpourings of dust and steam frighten the locals. It seems like nature itself has gone crazy! Our heroes, who are luckily nearby, are asked for help.

The farmers and fishermen are right to be afraid, for the eruption and other phenomena are all part of a massive conflict between two ancient spirits: the Burning Tempest, a being of fire, and Deepheart, a spirit of water. Swanlake is their chosen battleground, and if they are not stopped or at least persuaded to take their war elsewhere the whole area will be utterly devastated.



28. LOST SPIRITS

ANY LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATION

Our heroes have been cursed! A powerful enemy has struck a significant blow against them, or they came into contact with a strange artefact. Either way, an extreme force of magic has surged through their bodies and knocked them out. As they awaken everything seems different...

The first thing they notice is a feeling of airiness, of wind. They see all the colours around them shift, and the world seems far less real than it was a moment ago. And then they will see their own bodies lying on the ground, alive but unmoving, fallen into a deep slumber!

The magic has forced our heroes' spirits out of their bodies! They are now ghosts indeed...and who knows how long a body without a spirit can survive?

Soon our heroes will realize that ordinary people can neither see nor hear them. Especially perceptive locals might be able to catch glimpses of movement out of the corner of their eyes, and the presence of such strange things will frighten them. Our heroes are only able to interact with the material world in minor ways and even that takes a lot of strength out of them. Animals and small children can sense the presence of spirits. Some might be spooked, others could be interested or even follow them around. Possessing the bodies of those weak of will could be a way to influence the world, but it is a dangerous one, for it damages both the mind of the possessor and the body of the possessed. They might forget or merge parts of their personality, and thus lose themselves.

Either way, our heroes will have to find a powerful witch living nearby. Only this "Grandmother Thistle" can perceive them properly and could help them. But surely she will demand a price for such powerful magic...and put a strong geas on our heroes to force them to uphold their end of the deal, once they are back in their bodies.

While in spirit form, our heroes might even catch a glimpse of the following storyseed...

29. THE SPIRITHUNTER

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The name of Barsoon, the Hunter of Spirits, is known far and wide. He is a famous ghostslayer, called upon whenever such undead remnants threaten the living in the local communities. Barsoon is a pale, sour – faced man of few words, bald and always wrapped in a billowing black cloak. People know very little about him, his origin, or even his methods. Our heroes would have run into the Hunter of Spirits several times on their own adventures, maybe even had the opportunity to witness Barsoon using “Soulkiller”, his ghost – slaying blade.

Despite the hunter's best efforts, sightings of spirits seem to increase with every month. Many villages are tormented by spectral beasts...but these new creatures seem to have a distinct purpose, even work together. And many of them are not new at all!

Engelin, an old scholar well versed in arcane writings and the lore of spirits, will realize something strange: many of those “new” spectres seem very similar to ones that have been seen in the region years or even decades ago. He will hire our heroes to investigate.

While on the hunt for these undead creatures, exploring ancient ruins and sites of tragedy, fighting many different beings, a few details will emerge: all these spectres are much more intelligent than they are supposed to be, and their purpose seems to be the collection of a weird dust gathering in specific locations. They will attack whoever dares to get close to any such places...for that is where they harvest the power of “wraithdust”, a resource only usable by spirits and only found gathering in places of magical – and tragic – significance.

Our heroes will also realize that many of the creatures they are facing seem to be the very same ones killed by Barsoon! The suspicion arising within them is true: the so called “Hunter of Spirits” is mastermind behind this whole plot. Barsoon is not human at all, but instead a powerful wraith that has been subjugating other spectral beings for many decades. He is now releasing them all from captivity within his blade and forcing them to do his bidding. When they have gathered enough Wraithdust Barsoon will use it all to empower his magic and unleash a wave of necromancy through the land, raising hundreds, maybe thousands of spirits and creating a new empire whose Wraithking he will be!

30. MADNESS IN THE BLOOD

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION, INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

For several months now local farmers have been disappearing. Most of the victims seem to be pretty young women, and they are always taken at night. Some were seemingly abducted from their houses, others taken from the road. There are very few signs of struggle. Bendig, the local priest, is sure that a vampire, an unholy creature, must be behind these disappearances, and he has whipped some of his closest supporters into a frenzy. They are searching ruins and graveyards, trying to find the resting place of the creature. But still the disappearances continue.

Finally the local Baron Walder agrees to hire some mercenaries, our heroes, to hunt down and slay the creature. Bendig will greet them with open arms, but will soon try to order them around and force them to join his cause...if they are men and women of pure heart and intent. He gets very angry if he is not obeyed, for he has tasted power now.

Sadly the priest is completely mistaken. The attackers are not supernatural creatures at all. Instead the disappearances have been caused by ruthless agents hired by Antonus, cousin to Baron Walder. He and his fellowship of deranged and depraved young nobles have recently found a new favourite sport: they enjoy hunting people through the forest like animals. Once the poor souls are captured they are ravaged and disposed of.

Antonus' agents are well paid and quite skilled, led by the assassin Yerena, who will not hesitate to obey her master's even most deranged order. In fact, when the nobles hear of strong mercenaries joining the fray they will be eager to hunt this more dangerous prey, especially if there are pretty women amongst them...

31. ONE FACE, TWO WILLS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

While travelling through the village of Zarin our heroes realize that they are being followed. The one after them, a scruffy looking man, flees if they try to approach him. Soon locals will tell them that he was asking a lot of questions about them, especially about a specific member of their group, and that the man was willing to pay good money for information.

Not long after our heroes are suddenly ambushed by men and women armed with crossbows, clearly intent on capturing or killing them. These are bounty hunters led by Resswa Oneye, and they prove a serious threat. After the fight survivors might reveal that they are hunting one of the heroes, for Baron Snowin has put a significant bounty onto that one's head!

Our heroes do not know much about Baron Sonwin and have never had any dealings with him, but his castle is only a day's travel or so away. They might choose to look into the matter, but even if they do not the whole thing is far from over.

Only a few hours after the bounty hunter attack the character whose head they were after will be approached by a shifty looking individual. This suspicious man is a bandit called Miro, and he seems confused, calling the hero Olek, treating him like some sort of superior.

Soon the whole story will come out. Miro is a member of the "Wildfangs", a dangerous group of outlaws led by a chief called Olek...and that chief looks very much like one of our heroes!

Olek has attempted to kill Baron Sonwin, which is why the bounty has been posted. But that isn't all: the Wildfangs are preparing for another strike at the Baron, ready to ambush him while he is on a hunt on the very next day! Miro will reveal that Sonwin's kennelmaster, Filvin, has been bribed to lead the Baron into a trap.

Will our heroes attempt to thwart this plot? There are a few problems: the Wildfangs will be more than ready to kill anyone trying to mess with their plans, the soldiers of Sonwin have express orders to slay "Olek" on sight (they know his face very well)...and there are more bounty hunters around!

32. CHAINS OF PEACE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Longfelds Village is a community fairly far from any major roads. It has had some trouble with bandits in the past, but more presently the area has become very peaceful. That makes the recent rumours even more disturbing, for it is said that several groups of people travelling to the village never returned. A small group of guardsmen were sent to look for them, but they were also never heard from again!

Now Jorden, a fairly rich farmer, whose daughter and son-in-law never returned from their journey, asks our heroes to look into whatever evil is happening around Longfelds Village.

Arrival in the area will reveal an idyllic place, with clear, small streams full of fish, golden fields of wheat, bushes heavy with berries and fruit trees bearing rich offerings. A strong sense of peace calms the nerves and heals a wounded spirit. Even the weather itself is gentle and nourishing.

Soon our heroes will find all the people who have supposedly disappeared living together in harmony. Jorden's daughter and her husband are building a house, other newcomers are camping out in the fields, and even the guardsmen decided to settle here!

All the locals will be very friendly and seem happy, enjoying an easy life full of content. They will greet our heroes with many gifts of both food and drink and invite them to stay however long they want. The offerings are delicious and very nourishing, but suspicious characters might realize that most of the inhabitants seem to have forgotten large parts of their old lives. Even close friends and relatives living outside of Longfelds are no longer very important, which is why nobody even tried to send a letter.

There is magic here...and it is a powerful one. A spirit of the land, eager to please the humans who settled here, is using all of its power to shape everything into a paradise. It wishes for much company, and provides for everything one might need. Every night spent sleeping here, every food or drink made in these lands, binds the people closer to Longfelds, until they have no desire to ever leave. It is a gentle binding by a gentle spirit, but in its own way terribly strong.

Aggression is nearly impossible within the influence of this magic...but maybe our heroes can bargain with the spirit, trick or persuade it into letting at least some of the people go. That won't be easy however, for the spirit is sure that it is helping its human friends, protecting them from the evils of the outside world.

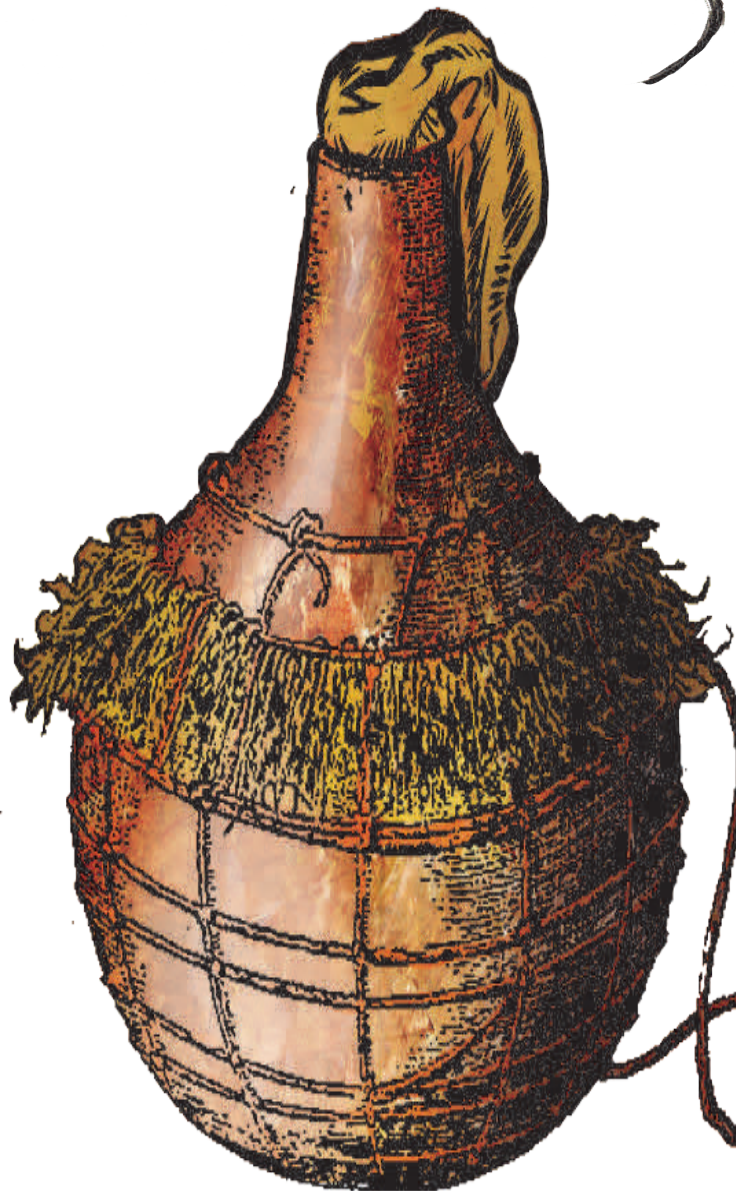
33. THE MORNING AFTER

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE,
FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

After a wild night of partying at a local village festival, our heroes awaken with a terrible headache and very few memories, finding themselves in a prison, bound hand and foot! Their jailer, a fat, unpleasant individual by the name of Kruk, will gleefully tell them that they are accused of murdering Tanner, a local lad, in a fit of drunken rage! Kruk is especially happy because when they are hanged in a day or two, he gets to keep – and sell off – all their stuff!

Soon our heroes will learn some more details about their crime from Balwer, the imposing local bailiff. It is said that they went to Tanner's house for drinks with him, his wife and a friend of the family, and screams were heard a bit later. When neighbours rushed the house they found Tanner in a pool of blood, his wife unconscious and Ugwin, the other man, heavily bruised, while our heroes were stumbling about drunkenly, smashing furniture. The case is pretty clear...and they will be hanged the day after tomorrow. The only way for our heroes to prove their innocence is to escape prison, which proves far easier than expected, for Kruk is a bad jailer and can be easily tricked. Then they need to find Ugwin and get the truth out of him. He killed Tanner, and had the victim's wife, Jolia, poison our heroes. They are planning to leave town together very soon, for they have found a small fortune that had been amassed by Tanner's father and that was hidden under the floorboards of the house.

Of course, intimidating Ugwin into telling that story to our heroes' faces is one thing, getting him to admit it in front of the Bailiff or other villagers another thing entirely...



34. SQUABBLES OF THE RICH

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The west of the realm has been troubled for many months now. There is a private feud going on between Baroness Senna of Greyrock and Baron Alan of Dyvner. The two were meant to be wed in their youth, a match none of them was happy about, and they have despised each other ever since. Now that they have both come to power their private quarrel has become quite public.

It started with slanderous rumours, then agents of both nobles were seen brawling at the roadside. Attacks by outlaws, using the chaos to their advantage, made the situation worse, and now there are rumours of all out war between Greyrock and Dyvner, as soldiers are being prepared.

Count Esmire, liege lord of both nobles, is a weak ruler, slowly becoming overwhelmed by the threatening troubles. As a last resort he hires our heroes to try and deescalate the situation. But it cannot be known that they are acting in the count's name, for that might forever destroy the relationship he has with both Dyvner and Greyrock.

Once our heroes arrive on the scene, they will not only have to deal with hot – headed soldiers from both sides, itching for a good fight, and farmers suffering under the games of their lords, but also with a very dangerous group of outlaws, led by the wizard Brenning. These criminals want to provoke chaos and violence. A war between the baronies would be a great opportunity for them to plunder and enrich themselves...maybe even while working for both sides.

35. THE HANGING TREE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION,
INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

A long, long time ago, druids lived in these lands, venerating the spirits of nature and guarding the lay lines, roads of the world's power. Many of their ceremonies were held around a holy oak, an ancient tree of great magic, for it stood upon a crossing of multiple lay lines.

Then modern man came and wiped out the druids. Villages appeared all around and the forest grew smaller. Streets were constructed through the wilderness. The lay lines and the holy oak became mostly forgotten.

Over the course of many decades bandits plagued the lands, none worse than the monstrous sadist known as "Quicksilver". Him and his gang killed hundreds but were eventually brought to justice. As a warning to all other outlaws, their bodies were hung upon a tree...and that tree was the holy oak. Later on more criminals joined this rotting company on the hanging tree.

The spirits of many evil men and women seeped into the ground, merging with the magic and corrupting the presence of the tree. The holy oak became unholy and with its influence the forest begun to change as well. Trees are twisted and crippled, animals become more aggressive and even the small fey of the forest have grown malicious. Some fey are resisting this corruption, without knowing where it comes from, but others give in to it and their "games" are getting darker.

Our heroes are hired by Mother Germa, a priest of Greenedge village, which stands close to the ancient forest. They are to investigate several apparent suicides in the vicinity. Germa is afraid that some evil influence has begun to drive the people into death...and she is right.

All the victims were associated with the forest and burned wood found close to the Hanging Tree in their homes. The fumes of that wood, filled with sinister energy, made their hearts heavy and their thoughts dark, until they couldn't take it anymore. Malicious fairies watched giggling and they will try to thwart the investigation of our heroes.

In the end, when the forest has grown dark enough, Quicksilver and his gang will return from death, their power wrapped in undead flesh and ready to devour the living.

36. TRUE DREAMS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Strange things are happening in the village of Jenspire. Magic is in the air and can be felt with every breath. Colours seem brighter, plants healthier, and all people have an air of mystery around them. Our heroes might be visiting the village for an entirely different reason, maybe even just passing by on their way to somewhere else, but it shouldn't take too long for them to notice that something is happening.

Below the surface, things are even weirder. People have started dreaming each others' dreams, or even sharing them. They are starting to perceive the colours of magic shifting and turning, even noticing the remnants of the dead. Some especially perceptive ones, like the village idiot Undar or Melina, a sickly girl, have even started to read peoples' minds.

Some villagers revel in the experience, gazing about with eyes full of wonder, but most are frightened by it. A small group of people around the miller Ekrin, Melina's father, are becoming increasingly aggressive. They are sure that some sort of witchcraft is to blame for all this, and that all their lives are in danger.

The magic's source is a being called "The Dreamer", a fey lord who came into the village a few weeks ago in the guise of a travelling bard. This "Ostrin", a man of blonde hair who seems to be beloved by men and women alike, has settled down in the local inn, playing his music and listening to tales. Slowly magic seeps out of the Dreamer, influencing the world around him. This being, mostly unfamiliar with humans and the effects fey magic can have on their minds, is fascinated by everything that is going on, and considers this a grand story unfolding.

While the Dreamer is by no means evil his mind is quite alien, and it will not be easy to persuade him into releasing the people of Jenspire...assuming our heroes even want to try.

37. THE BEAST WITHIN

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION,
EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The north of the realm has been a nearly lawless country for several decades now. Local rulers are weak and poor, unable to protect their villages from the many barbaric tribes and outlaw gangs that roam the wilderness. But now the tides seem to be turning, as several of the most feared villains are killed...and their slayers are wild beasts. Falcons scratch out their eyes, wolves snap at their throats, bears destroy their encampments. Even herbivores prove aggressive, as horses turn against their masters and herds of cattle stampede over panicking barbarians.

Our heroes are sent to investigate what is going on and, if at all possible, use the distraction to themselves strike some heavy blows against the villains of the north.

It will be tricky to find out the truth, for the villagers in the area are tight – lipped and do not trust outsiders. Some of them however do know what is going on. The woman responsible for the beast attacks is a young, idealistic wizard called Palyma. She has spent several years working on an artefact that allows her to control all kinds of animals. Now finally her work is finished, and she can use her magic to take revenge upon those who dared prey upon her friends and neighbours.

There is a problem though: Palyma has lived too many hours in the heads of beasts. She is starting to lose herself. Already her closest friends have noticed some changes in her behaviour, as the young wizard grows more chaotic and distracted every day. Palyma longs to run through the forest on powerful legs, or soar through the skies on mighty wings. Fresh blood on the tongue is her desire...and if most of that blood is human, so be it.

Sadly if the young wizard is not stopped she might become the most dangerous predator out there, forcing villagers and outlaws to join forces if they are to stand a chance against the tide of horn, claw and fang.

38. THE FINAL BLADES

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

Lord Pavel's lands have been plagued by bandits for many months. A few weeks ago he finally decided to do something about it and hired the Final Blades, an elite mercenary company, to take out these outlaws. The soldiers have destroyed several groups of criminals and Lord Pavel is overjoyed. He does not care at all that the Final Blades are causing trouble elsewhere...

Our heroes are approached by the mayor of a small town that has been housing the mercenaries for over a week now. He begs them to save his people from these well – armed thugs that seem to him to be not much better than the bandits! The mercenaries are blowing off steam and partying hard. Many of them are drunk and have started brawls with each other and even with some of the braver locals. The inn has been partially destroyed in such a fight and now damage is piling up. The Last Blades do not care. They quarrel, fight, gamble, whore and treat the locals poorly. After all, they are risking their lives for these ungrateful farmers, and the least they deserve is some pleasure during their time off!

Marus, commander of the town watch, has been ordered by Lord Pavel himself not to interfere with the mercenaries' business, and the company leader Ender Trueblade is too busy drinking and/or planning his next attack against the outlaws to care about the complaints of the townsfolk.

39. A PIECE OF THE PIE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

“Piehome” is not just the name of a village. It is a way of life. For many decades two of the most famous bakeries in the area, both found within the village, have been producing the finest pies and pastries. The friendly rivalry between the Golden Goose Bakery and the Sweetberry Bakery heats up once a year, when the best pie is decided upon in a massive pie-eating competition. Whoever sells more of their most famous pies in the village during a period of three days will be declared the winner, earning the title of this year's “Best Bakery”.

Our heroes are hired by Jukti, matriarch of the Sweetberry family, to sabotage their competition and make them lose customers. This will not be easy, for the Golden Goose has hired a gang of ruffians to do the very same thing. And the village militia, led by Edgar the Humourless, is keeping a close watch on everything, ready to lock up and fine anyone trying to break the rules of the competition. Making pies is serious business in Piehome...

40. BLOODY ROADS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION,
INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The Lording Road runs past some pretty dangerous places and is heavily patrolled by soldiers and townswatch alike. Usually the Wering Woods part of the road is one of the safer areas, but that has clearly changed. Several travellers disappear and others are found murdered on the road, all their valuables gone!

The local guard searches Wering Wood extensively but cannot find any sign of a bandit camp. Yet the attacks continue. Constable Aldrik reaches out to our heroes, hiring them to assist his men in the endeavour. Some people are whispering about the foul magics such bandits must be employing to escape the attention of the guard, but Aldrik does not believe that. He assumes the outlaws are either expert rangers themselves, or that someone within his own ranks is a traitor and passes on all his plans to the enemy.

Neither of those two things are, strictly speaking, true. While the outlaws are decent woodsmen, their main strength lies in the fact that nobody would ever suspect them. Behind the attacks are Brother Olwin and Brother Smed, two members of the local Monastery of the Shining Soul. There, in a giant complex at the edge of Wering Woods, a hundred monks live and toil. Olwin and Smed have decided that they have had enough of a peaceful, boring life without worldly possessions, and started attacking travellers. They are using the information they get during their sermons in town and their private talks with unsuspecting guardsmen to decide when and where to strike.

Abbot Lanteran trusts all his monks and he will use his significant influence to protect Olwin and Smed unless he is presented with strong evidence of their crimes.



41. THE BLADE OF RAGE

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

There was once a monstrous warlord by the name of Borchum, who put cities to the torch and butchered thousands. Recently his tomb was discovered by a group of treasure hunters. They claimed great riches, amongst them a single red blade. This is Orgul, a powerful weapon of magic, that grants every wielder incredible skill, but also fills their soul with burning rage and the thirst for blood. Even Borchum was once a good man, but fell prey to the sword's influence.

Soon word about Orgul is spreading. The original treasure hunters are butchered and the blade passes from one wielder to the next, leading to several massacres. Many powerhungry individuals seek it, willing to do whatever necessary to lay claim to its magic.

Our heroes are hired by a temple of paladins to acquire the artefact. The head of the order, Primus Mandurin, wants to lock this evil away forever. Claiming it however won't be easy, for Orgul is currently in the hands of a warlord named Caladan, who has laid claim to multiple villages and subjugated all locals. His army is growing as outlaws, barbarians and monsters are flocking to his banner. Soon Caladan might be willing to take on the rulers of the realm and our heroes could be caught in a warzone.

And there is one last problem: Primus Mandurin has lied. He has no desire to lock Orgul away. Instead he believes that its power can be used for the forces of good. Surely a man of such pure mind and body as himself can control the artefact? With this new magic at his disposal and leading an army of paladins, Mandurin will become the greatest hero the realm has ever seen...or that is what he thinks, at least. Whether his will is truly strong enough will only be determined in a moment where it might already be too late...and the blade might rule.

42. ANGEL OF DEATH

EPIC LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY,
INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

A miracle has happened in the small village of Genfar! Jonder, an old farmer whose chest was pierced by a bull's horns, didn't die! He is in significant pain, but something is keeping him alive!

A similar thing happens to Eldina, a young woman who wanted to take her own life because of the pain of a horrible disease. The wounds on her wrists are slowly closing even though she has lost far too much blood. Several more incidents happen and soon it becomes apparent that no human in Genfar can die! The news spread like wildfire, drawing priests and pilgrims from all over the realm. Peaceful Genfar falls into chaos as actual cults are forming around old Jonder and young Eldina, the two sides of the same deathless coin. They are the first "deathbanes".

Our heroes are drawn into this madness...as are several dangerous mages who secretly arrive with their retinue. They all sense the sheer power at work and want it for themselves. But how do you fight each other when none of you can truly die? And what will the fanatical multitudes of pilgrims say if someone tries to steal "their" miracle?

While all this is happening the angel of death itself is hovering above the village. There it waits, invisible and in silence, nearly impossible to detect. It has come to honour the last moments of its favourite follower, the great hero Dorus Deathwalker, who has been buried a thousand years ago in what would become the village of Genfar. The tomb is still there, deep, deep underground, holding the corpse and powerful mystical items of Dorus. Disturbing its rest, however, might enrage death itself...

Eventually the angel of death will show itself, replaying the ancient ceremony in which it accepts Dorus' spirit, and then disappear from Genfar, never to be seen again. And all the deathbanes? Well...their end has finally come.

43. A DAGGER IN THE HEART

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND DIPLOMACY

An old couple has been brutally murdered and the local militia is looking for the culprit. Mayor Ortin approaches our heroes and begs them to start their own investigation. He wants them to catch the murderer because they are a neutral party. If locals, who have known the sweet old couple for many decades, find the man or woman responsible first, Ortin is afraid that there is going to be a bloodbath...and he wants to avoid that sort of mob justice in his own village at all costs.

The Mayor is willing to pay a decent sum if the murderer is brought to him without arousing too much attention. And he has a good reason for that.

The culprit is Norrin, Ortin's son. The poor lad has not been the same ever since a fever nearly killed him a year ago. He keeps hearing voices and experiencing strange dreams, growing ever more violent towards his parents. Now they haven't seen him in days, and they feel terrible anguish over the deed of their own flesh.

Norrin is hiding in an old barn at the edge of the forest. He is confused and quite aggressive. Some might think the poor boy possessed but there is nothing supernatural about his madness. If he is returned to his parents he will reveal his identity as soon as he meets them. Ortin swears to hold his son imprisoned and try his best to heal him...but will our heroes trust his judgement? And when they hear that another couple has been killed in the same village only a few weeks later, how will they react?

On the other hand, if the murderer is brought to a violent justice, as many villagers would do, then our heroes will have earned the eternal hatred of Mayor Ortin and his kin.

GM NOTES:

This scenario only works well if our heroes are sympathetic towards Mayor Ortin and his wife. If they dislike the couple from the start the whole adventure will probably end in a very short hunt and a very brief killing. If you however play Ortin and his wife in a way that the players start to like them - you should know what kind of NPCs they are usually more likely to befriend, so feel free to use all this knowledge in this scenario - then a moral crossroads is created. Playing the murderer, Norrin, as the poor victim of a horrible sickness rather than a dangerous madman will also help in that regard.

Which way will our heroes decide? Justice? Revenge? Or will they side with the love of the parents?

44. THE GREY MONK

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes are hired to track down and seize a local legend: the Grey Monk is an old hermit who has been living nomadically in the area for several decades. He was always there to help when danger threatened, personally saving locals from floods, snowstorms, wild beasts and even bandits.

For his deeds the Grey Monk is much beloved by the people...and even the local guard is hesitant to strike against him. This is why Captain Ilvenna was forced to hire outsiders to do the job her men are unwilling to attempt.

Why arrest the Grey Monk? Because he has robbed three travellers on the road and slaughtered two more! It seems the old hermit has finally snapped and become a danger to the villagers.

Tracking down the monk will not be easy, for he does not appreciate company and knows the area extremely well. The ancient man also has mastered a surprising amount of magic and has many allies amongst the beasts of forest and field. In addition to that: he is innocent and might react harshly if accused.

The real culprit is an outlaw named Girak, who came into the area a month or so ago. He has heard the tale of the Grey Monk and decided to use a mask and a grey robe when ambushing travellers on the road, thus creating a false trail. The arrogant young cutthroat thinks himself very clever, but he will not be prepared for the tempest that is the real monk's fury if he descends upon the impostor.

45. A VOICE UNSILENCED

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

The evil deeds of Count Thormen have finally caught up with him. He was arrested by knights and is awaiting trial in front of the king and queen. Sadly many of his agents and supporters are still at large and they will do everything in their power to save their foul master.

Dozens of witnesses have disappeared, statements have been burned and many people have changed their tune, threatened into silence. The king wants Count Thormen convicted in a proper way...thus he needs someone to speak out, even if it just one truthful person.

Such a voice has been found. Voruc is a young priest, resolute and filled with an unwavering belief in the rightness of justice and truth. He is prepared to travel to the capital, stand before the assembled nobility and tell the story of Thormen's villainy, no matter the danger to his own person.

Our heroes has been hired to make sure Voruc reaches the capital alive. The road is long and many accidents can happen along the way.

Count Thormen's minions have learned of the young priest quickly and they are well prepared. All main roads towards the capital are watched by dozens of cutthroats. Our heroes will have to take the side roads, travelling through villages and across fields. Yet even here trouble is waiting. Outlaws have been paid handsomely to watch for young Voruc. Ambushes have been set both on the road and away from it. Inns have been taken over, poison prepared, pits dug to cripple the horses, many locals turned into spies. Our heroes will also receive several tempting offers to let go of Voruc...or even finish him off themselves!

The goal of most of these attacks is to simply slow the escort down, for the Count's men are gathering forces as soon as they learn of the route our heroes are taking...and they will strike with as many men as they can gather, ready to turn any village into a warzone.



46. SONS OF POISON

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Baron Collwood has been poisoned! Despite the best efforts of his physician, the nobleman died just a few hours after the crime was discovered. It is soon clear to everyone involved that Farin, the baron's only son, must be the culprit. He has quarrelled with his father terribly over his relationship with a man – of which Collwood was extremely disapproving – and was also seen visiting the shop of a black herbalist. When Towal, the young captain on the baron's guard, tries to arrest Farin, the murderer manages to wound two men and slip away. The hunt is on!

A few days later the young Farin, exhausted and frightened, stumbles into our heroes. He begs them to save him from his pursuers and wants to explain everything...which is when hired killers, who were hot on his trail, strike!

The young nobleman badly needs sleep, but he is prepared to offer a sizeable reward if our heroes are ready to assist him in his predicament. He is the true heir of his father and he wants them not only to clear his name, but also to find out who the true murderer is.

This will be a tricky endeavour, but picking up the trail of the black herbalist could be a good start. With a bit of persuasion that elusive figure, an old man only known as “Threehand” can confirm Farin's story: the young man was here because he hoped for an anti – love potion, to stop his feelings for someone. As awful as that sounds, Farin was desperate and trying to win the approval of his father. Threehand will also, after a bit of persuasion, admit that he provided a powerful poison to Towal, captain of Baron Collwood's guard.

In the meantime this captain has not remained idle. He has spent quite a bit of money to hire bounty hunters and assassins and his own handpicked men are also on the lookout for young Farin. A magistrate has been bribed and has already signed the death warrant...which is highly unusual for such a case.

In the end the truth might come out: Towal and Farin are half-brothers, for Towal is a bastard son to the old baron. He was waiting for an opportunity to lay claim to what, in his eyes, rightfully belongs to him, and has spent years putting his own supporters into positions of power. Now he is aiming for the title...but first his young half-brother needs to die.

47. THE BLOODCURSE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

As our heroes arrive in the village of Harborn, they find the whole place in shock. Two nights ago a family of farmers has been found brutally butchered in their homes. The funeral is today and Renna, the mayor's daughter, is especially distraught, for one of the murdered men was her fiancée, Korvin. Nothing like this has ever happened in Harborn and everyone is terrified that the murderer is still around. Some even have a suspicion: a few weeks ago this weird hermit arrived in the area. He mostly stays in the forest, seemingly wandering the wilderness at random. The few times he came into the village to buy supplies the fellow seemed extremely irritable and suspicious of everyone. Maybe he was the one responsible for the brutal murder?

Mayor Uledar is more than happy to accept our heroes' help in the matter, if they offer it, for he feels totally out of his depth. His daughter Renna will even angrily demand that the hermit be captured and brought to justice.

The whole matter is darker than expected, as is so often the case in a world filled with evil.

The hermit is not the murderer. Quite the opposite, he might be the solution, especially if our heroes treat him with respect and avoid provoking his anger. For the “hermit” is Andiron, a gruff witch hunter, who has tracked an evil warlock into this area. He suspects this warlock, Blackstaff, to hide somewhere close to the village. His magic would be to blame for the murder, for where his shadow falls terrible things happen.

It was Renna who drew the warlock's attention. Her youthful beauty and arrogance raised the ire of Blackstaff, and he struck her down with a curse. Now the mayor's daughter has dreams filled with blood and turns into a terrible monster every few nights. Soon she will strike again, this time maybe even against her own family.

In the meantime Blackstaff is hiding close by, walking invisible amongst the villagers, waiting for the show to resume.

48. DEATH IN THE MINES

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION,
EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The iron mine of Whiteiron Village has been fairly profitable in the last couple of years. The village is growing, as more and more mining workers settle there, bringing their families along. Foreman Gunder has become moderately wealthy, even constructing a decent sized house not far from the mine. He is known as a strict but just man and is fairly well liked by his workers.

Now several miners have gone missing and the foreman hires our heroes to help. He suspects that the disappearances might have something to do with the new tunnel that was discovered within the mine a few weeks ago. If asked directly, Gunder speaks about a legend he heard, mentioning a monster living underground. He does not like to come across as superstitious, but thinks that his men might have found the lair of that creature.

The new tunnel is quite long and has many dead ends. Some of the areas are filled with poisonous vapours, others settled by strange snails whose slime is acidic. At the very bottom there is a deep, dark lake. And there is indeed a monster within it, an old being that has been sleeping under the cold water for many centuries. It is not responsible for the disappearances however. At least not directly.

A long time ago there was a cult worshipping this creature, bringing it human sacrifices. The remnants of said cult have infiltrated the mining business and, pretending to be ordinary workers, have been busy searching for their god. Now, under the leadership of an older but very tough and muscular woman named Yorra, they have finally been successful.

The missing miners have been abducted and are being prepared as sacrifices, for the cult hopes that the taste of fresh blood might reawaken their god.

49. SWEET MADNESS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

Corben, miller of Oakhallow, has gone insane, babbling about terrible demons and secret fires that burn behind the faces of his neighbours. His daughter, nearly as fat as her father, develops a very similar madness just a few days later! And another man, Kuros the farmer, has a screaming fit in the middle of his fields, then drops dead!

Several more people seem affected by the madness and another local woman dies. What is going on in Oakhallow? Our heroes are hired by Egrin, the village herbalist, to help him with his research. Some locals talk of evil wizards and terrible curses, but Egrin is not so sure.

All the while the Goldenglow Inn is booming, despite everything. Alenna the innkeeper is a well respected woman, friendly and grandmotherly. Her business has been growing for months and she was even forced to hire several helpers. The quality of the food and drink is amazing, and leaves you wanting for more...which is not a coincidence.

Alenna has always had a lot of knowledge about herbs and she has a terrible secret: most meals in the Goldenglow Inn contain a little extra something: Sweettickle, a local herb whose properties only a few people know about. It is a drug of medium strength, and all the regulars are now addicted to it. In small doses Sweettickle sharpens your senses and helps against fatigue. In large doses however, over a longer amount of time, consumption can lead to madness and even death.

The innkeeper is starting to suspect that she might have to do something with the recent horror, but she is too afraid to mention it. One of the cooks, a ruthless older man by the name of West, is the only other person who knows the secret, but he only cares about his own salary and doesn't give a shit about what might happen to the inn's customers.

GM NOTES:

This scenario holds little potential for violence, for the villains are neither particularly aggressive people nor particularly skilled fighters. Alenna is an old woman and will probably break down if she realises how much damage her meddling has done. West might try to flee, which can lead to an interesting chase scene.

The real question that every GM has to decide for their own gaming group is: how will the locals react when the truth is revealed? Will they seek to punish the guilty? Some of the family members of those who are the afflicted the most might be extremely angry. But others, with the addiction controlling them, might even actively work against our heroes, seeking to discredit and ignore their findings.

50. VOICES IN THE NIGHT

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Many people in the village of Pendar are troubled by terrible dreams, nightmares in which they hear an angry voice accusing them of evil deeds. The young priest of the parish, Father Jeron, is trying his best to provide assistance, but he is afflicted himself and has hardly slept for several days.

Despite Jeron's insistence that the village does not need help mayor Brendina has decided to hire our heroes to see if they can do something about these nightmares.

With a little investigation it can be easily realized that the most afflicted people are those living close to the temple, or those who visit it regularly. The reason for that is because the angry ghost of Father Ullwig, Jeron's predecessor, is the power behind the nightmares. Ullwig fell sick a few months ago and died when Jeron, his acolyte at the time, used the wrong herbs for his medicine, unwillingly poisoning his teacher. Ullwig's ghost does not realize it and assumes that he was murdered by someone close to him.

The young priest has covered up his mistake, but he feels extremely guilty and thinks that the voice of his god is judging him, condemning everyone that associates with him. Jeron is trying to keep the situation under control, but he is slowly breaking apart. If our heroes are unable to help, suicide might be the young priest's only way out.

51. A WIZARD'S TOMB

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION, COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Rumours says that the library of Plaginos, one of the most powerful mages of the ancient times, has been discovered somewhere close to the town of Rhinebeck. Sadly the man who supposedly found its location, bringing back several ancient coins and an amulet with the symbol of Plaginos, has been killed in a weird accident involving two horses, a pitchfork and a bucket of booze.

Now nobody seems to know where the library and tomb can be found.

That does not stop several groups of mercenaries and adventurers, who have all come to Rhinebeck looking for treasure. They are watching each other like hawks and scouring the hills and forests.

Everyone wants to be the first to find Plaginos' resting place. So far nobody has.

Our heroes have arrived in town themselves, looking for ancient knowledge or treasure, and they will soon be caught up in everything. Two very powerful wizards, Sryla and Mendar, have also arrived with their retinue, and are prepared to do whatever it takes to gain the power of the ancient mage before their rival does.

In the end the rumours will ultimately prove false. It is not the tomb of Plaginos himself hidden in a river not far from Rhinebeck, but the resting place of Iridan, one of his disciples. Some interesting tomes can be found within, but otherwise nothing much of value.

Despite this – or maybe even because of it – the town of Rhinebeck will suffer the fallout, as mercenaries and wizards allow disappointment to fuel their anger.

52. PAIN OF A MOTHER

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Several weeks ago Renya, ten year old daughter to Esilda, the best hunter in the whole province, fell terribly ill. A dangerous fever threatened to kill the girl. Esilda tried all manners of herbs and doctors, but nothing seemed to help. Until, one night, the ancient witch Ysgra came knocking at the door. She offered both medicine and spells to keep Renya's sickness at bay. In exchange she demanded Esilda's servitude. In her pain the huntress had no choice but to accept.

At first the witch just wanted specific parts of dead animals, a task which Esilda could easily fulfil. Renya kept getting better and better. But recently she has suffered a relapse, and Ysgra demanded a higher price: the life of a young boy.

Esilda, her heart torn with grief and pain, accepted. She kidnapped Ulwin, the six year old son of the village miller, Podris. For now the huntress is only holding him captive in the woods, going through a massive inner struggle, but soon she will deliver him to Ysgra.

In the meantime our heroes are hired by Podris to look for his son. They might discover the huntress's pain, her daughter's sickness and the foul curse the witch has placed upon Renya. Only by finding Ysgra's lair, deep within the darkest part of the woods, and forcing the foul creature to release its grip upon the girl, will evil be beaten.

53. FISTS OF BLOOD AND GOLD

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Mayor Duval of the small town of Princehill is a terribly arrogant man. His new mansion just outside of the walls, on the highest part of the peak, was built upon the remnants of an ancient castle and decorated with substantial riches. Duval was very proud of his home, treating his peers with contempt for not being able to match his wealth. This arrogance is now being punished.

A group of bandits have invaded the mansion, taking it over as their new base of operations and beating up Duval's bodyguards in the process! None of his peers are willing to help the mayor, so he has to hire our heroes as mercenaries. Duval wishes them to take care of the bandits and return the control of his manor to him! Especially the outlaw leader, a tall, bald man, who treated the mayor extremely rudely, needs to be punished!

Sadly the story is not as simple as expected. The "bandits" are not mere outlaws, but in fact an order of dangerous martial artists, monks who have sworn to reach physical perfection. They are only a small group, but deadly in combat. Their leader, the Headmaster, has brought them here in the search for an old artefact, hidden deep within the bowels of the earth. And the entrance to these ancient tunnels lies underneath Duval's mansion!

The Headmaster does not want anyone to know of his true intentions, so he has his disciples act like ordinary bandits (a role they are not well suited for), while he himself delves into the depths day after day, braving traps and foul creatures to reach the resting place of the artefact, which once belonged to the founder of their order.

54. GHOSTLY AFFAIRS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

The richest farmer of Fourpeaks Village, the old sourpuss Gubin, died a few weeks ago, leaving all of his money and the large farm to Matilda, his young wife. She did not have much time to enjoy her new found wealth and the freedom that might come with it. Not only does the rest of the village whisper evil things about poor Matilda behind her back, she has recently also started witnessing terrifying things! Whispering voices, ghostly lights and strange figures stalk the farm at night. Matilda thinks it is her husband's ghost, returned to punish her for some imagined slight. And that is indeed what everyone is supposed to think...

Our heroes will arrive to help the young widow and find a village united against her (and them). Other locals have started hearing a voice whispering about poisoned meals...and they are becoming certain that Matilda has murdered Gubin.

In truth all this is the work of a cunning illusionist who was hired by Porrik, dead Gubin's envious brother and the second richest farmer in the village. The mage is hiding in his basement during the day, but ventures out at night to create his illusions...until Matilda is convicted of murder and Gubin's possessions go over to Porrik.

55. THE RACING GAME

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

Every few months three of the best horse trainers in the realm send their best steeds and riders to compete in a daring race. The upcoming competition is to be held close to the village of Lodring and many fans have already arrived. There are brawls between the supporters of the three teams, known only as the "Greens", "Blues" and "Blacks"...and our heroes are caught up in the middle!

After proving themselves in a street fight they are approached by an agent of the Blues, who offers them a job: protect Koren and Unia, the two best blue riders, and their steeds Northwind and Azure.

Our heroes are to make sure that these four beings are in good health in three days, when the race begins, and they are to be paid handsomely if they fulfil this task.

While the only official first prize is the honour of victory many know that the king's stablemaster is also amongst the visitors and will buy many expensive steeds from the winning team. There is also a lot of money made with betting, which has led several criminal organisations to send their own agents to make sure their team is the only one with a good chance of winning.

Our heroes will have their hands full. Not only will criminals try to bribe them and saboteurs try to poison both riders and steeds. Koren and Unia will also be involved in a major argument – the two were lovers once, with some resentment still lingering between them – and might refuse to participate if the other one does not apologise for whatever faux pas they have committed.

56. DAWN OF THE REAPER

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

A terrible calamity has befallen the villages of the east, for their homes have been destroyed by a powerful monster (or an invading army). Hundreds of refugees have been contained in a large camp on the edge of Baron Maximilian of Senderfield's domain. The conditions there are terrible, for Sir Narik, the knight in charge of the camp, and his men are not much better than common thugs. They abuse the refugees and take advantage of their women...and they illegally keep most of the food and equipment meant for the refugees and paid for by Baron Senderfield, selling it off to smugglers.

Our heroes are hired by the baron himself to investigate the deaths of two guards within the refugee camp. They will soon realize that the situation is close to exploding and that nobody really wants them there. Lieutenant Kendrick, brother to one of the murdered guards, is ready to do whatever it takes to find the culprit, even if it means harassing, beating up and torturing refugees. Those poor people, on the other hand, have had enough. One of their shamans, an old man named Bugaloo, has watched his granddaughter being raped and taking her own life. He has gathered some of the older refugees and persuaded them into sacrificing some of their lifeblood to summon an ancient spirit of vengeance. Thus the reaper has come, and it has broken two of the worst monsters amongst the guards. The spirit has tasted blood. Even Bugaloo can only barely control it now...and his own thirst for vengeance might blind him to the peril.

GM NOTES:

This adventure seed is especially powerful if you reveal the amount of abuse the refugees are having to endure to your players bit by bit. Have them see the camp as a disorganized mess and present them with the rage of the wardens. These thugs will try to cast the blame upon the thankless foreigners, who are not only unhappy with food and lodging that they do not deserve. No, they are even ruthless enough to murder the very men and women who are trying to help them!

The refugees will be extremely cautious when the player characters are around and will not be ready to talk - assuming there isn't a strong language barrier anyway - before their trust has been won. That is when you should reveal the full atrociousness of the wardens' behaviour...but even when that moment has come our heroes should nonetheless not be 100% certain how many of these accusations are exaggerations.



57. THE BLOOD PRICE

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT,
EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATION

The Westmorrow hills have always been a dangerous place. Landslides, wild beasts and roaming monsters have claimed the lives of many travellers. In the last ten years or so it has become even worse. About a month ago the young priest Marcius received a vision from his god. He went into the hills to combat this evil, holy symbol held high. He was not heard of again. Now the church has hired our heroes to venture into the Westmorrow hills, establish contact with the only settlement in the area, the village of Morrow, and find out what happened to Marcius.

After a long and difficult journey through the hills they will find the village under siege. Every night groups of shadowy spirits descend upon its inhabitants, eager to tear them from this life. The people of Morrow beg for our heroes to save them. But things are not as clear as they appear. While these spirits target the villagers, they seem to only fight our heroes when they absolutely have to. And one of the most powerful shadows looks as if it wore the robes of a priest...

Marcius is indeed the leader of the spirit horde. He has become a power of vengeance, for the villagers of Morrow are bandits and there is a mass grave of murdered travellers hidden nearby. The young priest is only the latest of their many crimes...and every single victim has return to take revenge.

58. PAIN AND BLISS

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

While our heroes visit the village of Markin a crazed man attacks several people, scratching and biting at them. The town watch quickly beats the ragged figure into submission...only to realize that he is Talesin, a beloved bard who had passed through the village several times already!

Our heroes are hired to investigate what the hell is going on, and they will soon realize that strange things are afoot. Over a dozen people – most of them travellers – have disappeared from the streets of Markin within the last couple of weeks. Most of them stayed at the Silver Cup Inn...

The owner of that establishment, a sleazy older man called Toris, is working with a group of criminals. He drugs customers and hands them over to the White Claw. These villains, hiding under an abandoned windmill not far from the village, are developing a new drug and need test subjects for it. Talesin the bard managed to escape but has been driven insane by the side effects of the dangerous substance.

When the White Claw is discovered they will not hesitate to unleash the addicts against our heroes, telling them that these “evil people” have come to take their bliss away. And while these poor souls are not well armed they fight with savagery and desperation.

59. DARK HEARTS BEATING

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND EXPLORATION

Horror! Half a dozen children have disappeared from the village of Farrun! Our heroes are called to help by the desperate parents! At first there seems to be no trace of the children...but other things might be noticed: all the children were of a similar age (around seven years old) and the only child of that age that did not disappear was Mara, daughter to the village blacksmith. There are also some strange plants growing in the forest close to Farrun, flowers and mushrooms that nobody remembers ever seeing before.

In the moment of greatest pain for the five families who have lost children...the sun of hope rises!

All six children are discovered, scattered through the woods. They are sick, feverish and weak, but they are alive! The children are brought back into the village and watched by their families day and night. While they seem to be recuperating well they are also confused, unable to remember anything that happened in the last couple of weeks. They also seem slightly changed...but only people knowing them closely would realize that.

The terror isn't over yet: soon more children of all ages start disappearing. While the original kidnapped children grow ever healthier, the rest of the village is suffering and sickens. And those two things are directly connected...for the six children are not children at all. They are changelings, offspring of the fey, and their mere presence draws upon the life force of their families and neighbours. But even if our heroes realize the danger, most parents will never be convinced and will protect their “children” at all costs!

Only by entering one of the hidden fae gates close to those strange plants discovered before and finding the matron of the changelings can this story be brought to a good ending. That is also where the original children, working as slaves in an exotic garden, can be discovered.



60. THE MAD KNIGHT

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Sir Ivan of Kondes is known far and wide as an honourable knight, fighting to protect villagers and their homes everywhere. But now it appears that he has gone mad! Reports say that he has attacked multiple farmers and their livestock, slaying sheep and cows and injuring their owners. A small group of guards tried to stop him, but Sir Ivan's highly polished fighting skills proved superior and left them dead in the dust. Now our heroes are hired to capture this mad knight.

While following Sir Ivan's trail it will soon become clear that evil powers are afoot. Small demonic creatures seem to show up on the scenes of the knight's rampages, attacking the surviving livestock and farmers.

Sir Ivan is heading for the village of Goldstream and the forest that lies beyond, which is where our heroes will catch up with him. The knight thinks that he is on a holy journey to liberate an angelic being...and that those who try to stop him are possessed. This tale is actually not far from the truth, but a horribly twisted version of it. It is Sir Ivan who is influenced by demonic powers. Both his blade – which can summon evil creatures whenever it is drenched in blood – and his horse – an actual lesser demon disguised as a noble white steed – have been tainted, centres of the energies of hell. If the knight can bring both sword and horse to an old ruin in the forest beyond Goldstream he will release a dangerous demon who will gladly take control of this new and powerful host body.

61. KILLING FIELDS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

A local battle has claimed the life of Sir Perreg, a noble knight. His son Dietmar, himself heavily injured, hires our heroes only a few hours after the end of the battle, to go and retrieve his father's body and the blade of their house. They need to hurry, for it is getting dark.

The aftermath of a battle might be worse than the battle itself. Wounded are crying in pain. Some call out for help, others are begging for a quick, clean end. Our heroes are not the only visitors either. Groups of looters have arrived, some little more than opportunistic scavengers, others better armed and far more vicious. There are also families from a nearby village, looking for their fathers, sons and brothers, and their wailing (or, even worse, their terrible silence) can destroy the spirit of even the hardest warrior.

Nonetheless, if our “heroes” are of a more questionable moral standing, they can gather quite a few riches while looting. But they also need to find Sir Perreg quickly...for when darkness falls worse than just mere scavengers will arrive on the battlefield. Things drawn to pain and suffering might stalk the night, seeking to still their hunger.

62. DUTY AND DEATH

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND EXPLORATION

The Gilden Road is a pathway for many merchant caravans, carrying goods and riches across the realm and passing through many small villages and towns. Our heroes are hired by the merchant Nukor to guard a caravan bringing some of his finest and most expensive cloth to one of the coastal trading cities. They are one of several groups of guards attached to the trail of wagons, all led by Caravan Master Orgus. The road is long, and there will be issues ahead, for banditry has increased on the Gilden Road over the course of the last months. But there are also troubles within the caravan. One of the other guard officers, Ilbrok, is loud, boisterous and aggressive, which leads to many quarrels. Another member of the caravan, a mule mistress named Liva, is a thief and tries to steal small trinkets every night. And then there is a young passenger named Pelten, a nobleman in disguise accompanied by two tight-lipped bodyguards, who complains endlessly about food, the weather, the odour of his travelling companions, the state of the road and pretty much everything else.

Master Orgus does nothing to stop any of these problems and allows them to fester until they are nearly out of control. But this is not simply incompetence on his part.

Orgus has a sister, an outlaw leader named Jermenna “Redscarf”, who is preparing to plunder the caravan. Initially the presence of many well armed guards makes the task too dangerous for her “crew”, but that is where the Caravan Master comes in. Orgus will lead the wagons into several dangerous areas, where they can be weakened by wild beasts, smaller natural disasters and inner turmoil. He even poisons some of the supplies, hoping to further weaken the defenders.

Then, when the guards are no longer much of a threat (or when Orgus is discovered), the Redscarf crew will strike.

63. TERROR IN STONE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATION

The people of Quandis Village are terrified by a recent discovery: in the hills close to the village locals have found the statues of scared looking people, carved to nearly lifelike perfection. One of those statues even looks like Murid, a farmer who disappeared a few weeks ago!

Our heroes are hired to help the community and they will arrive to find a village on the edge of panic. There are local legends about a terrible monster, the “Bloodbeak”, coming forth to devour innocent folk whenever they leave the village. Nobody believed these tales...but legend says whoever spots the Bloodbeak and looks into its eyes is turned into stone! Only a mixture of rare herbs, so say some of the oldest folk, can protect one from the power of this terrible creature.

These herbs are only found on the highest peaks of the hills...and that area is filled with dangerous animals and not easily reached. Nonetheless, many villagers will pay handsomely – within their own meagre means – for these herbs.

Only a day or so after our heroes' arrival Inira, one of the farmers who discovered the first statues, disappears, and her petrified hand is found inside her home. Quandis Village panics, as people are getting ready to flee the area!

There is no monster however...the real culprit is the crazy stonemason Olfar. He has prepared this plot for many months, creating statues one by one. It was him who abducted both Murid and Inira and left their likenesses behind. Now he is thrilled by the developments, enjoying the surge of power he feels as people are panicking. Olfar might very well give himself away by not being able to control this joy, stalking the village with a wide grin while everyone else is terrified.

64. ELECTION TIME!

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION,
DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

The town of Easthaven has become relatively wealthy in the last ten years or so, and two people are mostly responsible for that: Silvina Dowring is a wool merchant of great skill who has established many successful trading deals with neighbouring communities for the town's farmers and herd owners. Macros Zalar is the owner of several small new mines in the area and these have brought him and his workers a decent amount of coin.

The position of mayor in Easthaven has always been decided by popular vote, which is held every two years. In the last twelve years the title always went to either Silvina or Macros. Others who tried to challenge them simply didn't manage to get enough supporters.

This year might prove to be different, for both Macros and Silvina have gotten greedy, trying to enrich themselves further at the cost of their followers, and their endless bickering with one another also annoys many people. They have both lost many supporters and everyone is looking for a new face to step in and take control. Elvin the silversmith might just be that face...

While he only arrived in Easthaven about six months ago, Elvin has managed to gather some small wealth with his beautiful silver wares. He has also proven himself to be a shrewd negotiator and has contacts to his original home town, which might lead to good new job opportunities for the people of Easthaven. Elvin has been convinced that he should jump into the race for major. While he does not have that many supporters yet this could change rapidly.

Our heroes are hired by Elvin's wife, who is worried that her husband is getting in over his head, to help him with his campaign. They will not only provide personal protection, they will also negotiate deals with potential supporters, advertise the greatness of their employer and guard his belongings. If they are up for it they might even be used for sabotaging Macros and Silvina, digging through their past to find slanderous secrets (Silvina has a young son that she refuses to acknowledge, Macros has made some shady deals with a local smuggler named Ortak). When Elvin actually proves to be a viable threat to the two would – be mayors, our heroes will also have to ward off attacks from thugs and other agents hired to take him out of race as permanently as possible.

65. THE HOLY PATH

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

For several decades the villagers of Rentrum have been fighting against the tribes of the Umbra Hills, a range of gentle peaks only a few hours north of their settlement. These tribes – they can be monstrous humanoids like goblins or orcs, or they can be “barbarian” humans, if that better fits into your campaign – are warlike and proud, dwelling in the wilderness and slaying all those who venture into their territory.

A few months ago however a peace agreement was finally reached! After a year of small skirmishes, with everyone fearing that even more violence would follow, Erona, mayor of Rentrum, went into the hills with a small group of followers. She met with Urok, chief of the tribes, and became a personal friend of his wife, the shaman Naka. Together they forged peace and it has proven very profitable for both sides! The tribes know many secrets of the hills, able to find rare herbs and hunt valuable animals, which the people of Rentrum can sell for good money.

For a while everything was well, but now Father Ordan of the Illuminated Church has heard of the situation. He is enraged! How can a human village be willing to work with such unholy creatures? Surely the village of Rentrum must have left the holy path behind and is heading into damnation!

Father Ordan sends several acolytes into the village, instructing them to preach against the peace treaty and demand action against the tribes, stirring up trouble. Soon Ordan himself will arrive, bringing soldiers of the church and trying to organise a “real” strike against the unholy hill dwellers. And they might very well be met with great force, for Urok's brother Gannor, a mighty warrior in his own right, is condemning the treaty and gathering like minded individuals around him to lead a war party against the “weak village swine”.

Our heroes could become involved in many different ways: both Father Ordan and Mayor Erona are looking for allies and hirelings. They could also be hired by a merchant who sells fur and herbs and wishes the peace treaty to continue. Maybe they just wander into the village, unaware of the situation, and are caught up in the gathering violence.

Either way, two campaigns of manipulation and calls for violence need to be stopped, but even then it is likely that a skirmishing war (or worse) will break out again. There are plenty of people on both sides who carry grudges or even blood vendettas against the other side, and would be eager to leap into a conflict that could very well destroy both villagers and hill folk.

66. DAUGHTER IN DISTRESS

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Quentin, one of the richest men of Thostel Village, hires our heroes to save his daughter Lorinda. She has disappeared two days ago, leaving Quentin both devastated and angry! He is convinced that his daughter has been taken by that rogue Evardo, a young wizard who came into the village a few weeks ago, and that she has been spending time with. The fact that Evardo hasn't been seen for a few days either makes it more than clear. Quentin wants his daughter returned and the wizard punished!

Asking around the village our heroes will soon find that Quentin is far too overprotective of his daughter and has been treating her like a child. Most people, even though they hesitate to speak too loudly, are convinced that it was only a matter of time before she ran away.

Picking up the trail of the young couple in a meadow east of the village is an easy enough task, but soon it becomes clear that this is not simply the tale of a girl running from an overprotective father. There are other footprints here, and signs of a struggle...

A group of bandits has taken Lorinda captive and carried her to their cave hideout in the hills a few hours east of the village. There they planned to hold the young woman for ransom...but imagine their surprise when night fell and their captive broke her bindings, summoning green fire and tearing into the outlaws with her bare hands! Only one bandit survived, but he is in too bad a shape to be of much help and will just mumble incoherently about “green flame”.

Lorinda is possessed. Together with the wizard Evardo she has explored the hills and found the tomb of an old sorcerer, a monster named Zargon. The spirit of Zargon is now within her body, taking control as soon as it gets dark. He has forced Lorinda to find her path back to his tomb, where he wants her to open his sarcophagus. Sadly for the sorcerer, even with his added power, Lorinda is too weak to lift the lid by herself, for it is protected by old magic.

Our heroes will come upon Lorinda only a short while after the wizard Evardo arrives at the tomb. He wishes to save his beloved, but isn't quite sure how. Zargon himself will use his guise as a fair maiden to turn our heroes against the “evil wizard who was working with the bandits and wants to sacrifice her to dark spirits”...and then she wants their help to open the sarcophagus, for only thus can “the evil spirits be fully destroyed”.

67. HEAL AND DESTROY

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Melwinder valley is a place of great natural beauty. Bright flowers grow next to many trickling streams and the calm shadows of majestic oaks give travellers ample place to rest. Yet there is only one settlement within the valley. Newgill is an idyllic town under the control of the Bertyn family, and it is quickly growing richer on their trade of rare herbs and fine timber taken from semi-secret places all around Melwinder valley.

There are many old legends surrounding this place, most of them speaking of angry spirits, dangerous beasts and strange storms appearing out of nowhere. Phenomena like these were the reason why many old settlements failed to survive within the valley, and why many ruins can be found scattered throughout the area. Until Dermyn of Bertyn came. This high mage, unbeknownst to any but his closest family, discovered the source of the valley's magic: a powerful spirit of nature calling itself Silverheart, that used its abilities to destroy all bastions of civilization trying to encroach upon its territory. Dermyn tricked the spirit, imprisoning it in the thousands of roots of an ancient tree. In the one and a half centuries or so that passed his family has been using the influence of the spirit to enrich themselves, creating many powerful healing draughts and potions from the magic that they can syphon and channel into herbs.

But there are things the Bertyns do not know: Silverheart has a deep connection to all life within Melwinder valley, and abusing its power comes at a price: slowly but surely the rage of the spirit has trickled out, and started poisoning the land. Now ordinary animals are becoming dangerous, plants are taking on a life on their own, nourishing herbs are becoming dangerous.

Our heroes are hired by Xavier the merchant, who has close connections to the Bertyn family, to go to Melwinder valley and find out what is going on there. He thinks that his business partners are trying to cheat him, selling him spoiled wares, and has no idea about the real truth.

68. STRANGE THINGS, WEIRD TALES

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

The circus has come to town! Fire breathers, sword eaters, talespinners, musicians...and a freakshow! The locals are amused, nervous, disgusted and entertained. Strangers from the surrounding villages visit to see weird things and have a good time. A lot of booze is flowing...and soon tempers are flaring. Some old resentments come to the surface as old rivals from different villages meet. The men of Isenhill and Oldvale have always hated each other, and brawls between them erupt in the streets.

The situation turns even more dangerous when Disha, a young local baker, beloved by many for her sweet pastries, is found brutally murdered, her throat cut open. Suspicion immediately falls upon the circus folk. Surely one of these freaks must be to blame! Two of them, Sullin the heavily tattooed fire breather and Inara the Snake Lady, have no alibis for the hour of the murder, and they have both been seen in the vicinity! But there is also Rondo, a local tough guy who has been trying to court Disha for many years, and who has some blood – drenched clothes hidden away in his basement.

These are details our heroes can discover when hired to spearhead the investigation...and they need to be quick. Tempers are flaring, and mobs are gathering to attack the circus folk. The whole show would badly like to leave, but Mayor Axellin has ordered them to stay and is definitely looking for someone to blame and punish. That's why Director Liano and his showfolk are getting ready to defend themselves, should that necessary. They will not fall prey to the anger of a mindless mob!

In truth Rondo is innocent and being framed. Sullin was actually returning from a tryst with Disha, as they used to know each other quite well a few years ago, before all the tattoos. Inara is the one to blame...but she didn't do the deed herself. She was merely a lookout for the real monster.

Tagori is a vampire, a bloodsucking creature of the night harboured by the circus, hiding amongst the many exotic figures there. Only Inara knows of his presence, for she is his fateful servant, picking out easy victims for her master. They have always managed to make the death seem some sort of accident, but Disha proved more difficult to overcome than expected and thus Tagori got...too excited. Now he is unsure of whether to leave the circus or not, but will try to escape if things get too hot, leaving his “family” to take the blame.

69. NO REST FOR THE GUILTY

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

As our heroes arrive in the village of Kondmire – ideally while following a whole different quest line – they are welcomed warmly by the locals. The Softsong inn seems like a cheap, comfortable place, with good food and clean rooms. Then, later this evening, while enjoying the singing of a young bard, our heroes witness an unexpected event: the innkeeper brutally slaps a young serving girl, who seems to take it with little reaction!

All the locals seem perfectly fine with this treatment and will be annoyed if the heroes try to step in. This serving girl is Ana Orwin, part of the Orwin family. They are all descendants – the sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters – of an evil necromancer named Lesron who tried to destroy the village about ten years ago. Ever since then, as punishment for the crimes of their family (even though only few of them actually helped the necromancer) they have been forced to work for the village. All the Orwins are held in terrible conditions, basically slaves, forced to endure punishment and do the worst of all labours. Will our heroes help them? But if they do, they will bring down the wrath of all of Kondmire down upon their heads, and while the people would not try to harm them physically, they might find other ways (rumours, theft, sabotage...) to take revenge upon those who “side with a necromancer against the common folk”.

70. DARK POISON OF THE HEART

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Harvesting season has come to an end and now all the villages are preparing for the last festival of autumn. This is a time of sweet pie and hollowed – out pumpkins, a time of scary stories and flickering candlelight. It is also a time for a secret ritual in the village of Foursparrow. There the Gilmere family, a large clan of nearly fifty people, has always had their own little tradition: in the last day of autumn they gather to a secret fertility rite on the fields, in the middle of night. There they wear old robes and masks, dancing and singing old songs in the tongues of their forefathers.

The ritual is perfectly harmless, and there is only very little magic involved, but most members of the Gilmere family are convinced that only this ritual keeps their fields and livestock healthy and helps them survive the winter.

Many people in Foursparrow are envious of the Gilmeres and their success, for they have become the richest farmers in the region. One such person, an old miller by the name of Randon, has convinced his own family that the Gilmeres are evil, and that patriarch Jorrun is some sort of dangerous warlock.

Randon's heart has become so filled with bitterness and hatred over the years that he has convinced himself to believe in his own lies. For several years now he has been spying on the Gilmeres as often as he could and last year he caught sight of their “evil ritual”.

Now Randon finally has a reason to attack the hated family and persuade others to help him. He will contact our heroes, begging them to come and save the village from evil magic. Whispering his lies into their ears, he will show them signs of forbidden practices by different members of the Gilmeres, finally asking them to stop the ritual.

Once our heroes step in there might be violence, for many of old Jorrun's descendants are prepared to fight for what they perceive as magic that will ensure the future prosperity of their family.



71. SWEETEST DREAMS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION,
INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

The wilds around the village of Cenaris have always been a dangerous place, with many ferocious animals and some even deadlier creatures roaming around. This has led to a tough population, skilled in arms and more than capable of defending themselves. That makes it even more surprising when our heroes are called in to help the villagers, for there seems to be an evil afoot that spear and bows cannot battle.

For several months now something seems wrong with the creatures of the area. Some are more aggressive than usual, others seem strangely placid. A few have even been found dead without the trace of a wound. Now this disease or whatever it is has also started affecting the population. A few hunters were the first ones to go insane, experiencing strange visions and weird dreams. Then it started spreading to their families. Some people became extremely aggressive and several murders occurred. Two of the killers are still at large, having fled into the wilderness. Our heroes need to find the source of this madness and capture its victims without killing them.

Many villagers suspect foul magic, but the answer is a surprisingly natural one: last year a new swarm of bees moved into the area, and they are spreading fast. While they appear to be normal bees at a quick glance, their honey is very different, for it has powerful hallucinogenic properties which can even take effect when diluted by something, say the water from a stream. Many of the hunters have been collecting wild honey for generations and sharing it with their families, which is why they never thought twice about bringing some of it home.

72. SPOILS OF WAR

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

The recent war has left the country weak and depleted, with many young men slain and many communities damaged. In the end even unwilling people were forced to fight the enemy. And despite the war coming to an end the evils that it has caused are going to haunt the realm for a very long time.

One such evil is the legion known as the "Warhounds". One of the last armies to be recruited, this legion consisted nearly entirely of press – ganged criminals, prison inmates and people neither quick nor influential enough to save themselves when the recruiters came knocking. Despite all this the Warhounds have served well against the enemy, winning several battles. At the end of the war however they disbanded without ever being formally released...and many of them still have their weapons and armour. Now the countryside is overrun with well equipped men and women of low morals. Many take up banditry, others force individual villages to pay them for protection. Some of the more desperate or vicious ones ravage settlements, enjoying their power and the knowledge that the king's armies are too weakened to stop them.

Our heroes are only some of the many adventurers hired to help and they will soon realize that the Warhounds are reforming in two places. Silvana is a good soul, a teacher turned soldier who was an officer in the legion and is trying to leave her brief criminal past behind. She gathers all those willing to uphold the discipline and honour of a professional army and wants to hunt down the deserters causing too much harm.

Then, on the other side, there is Clodius, a vicious man of violence. Strangely enough he was only a boy when the war began, but now even the most hardened criminal obeys him out of fear. Clodius has realized that large parts of the realm are ripe for the taking if he can only get enough of his former comrades together...and there is nothing he wouldn't do to those who try to stop him.

If our heroes aren't careful the war between those two groups could lead to massive damage and many civilian casualties.

73. SHROUD OF DEATH

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

While digging in their fields close to the village of Untra, a group of farmers found the entrance to a strange underground tomb. Therein seemed to lie the remains of an ancient hero. The farmers were overjoyed with the riches they discovered therein, only to have their greed brutally punished as a group of outlaws descended upon the village a few days later, butchering many inhabitants and taking the gold. Only one farmer managed to kill some of the bandits, discovering strange and deadly powers within himself. This Korren, an older man, had taken a simple grey cloak from the tomb, unaware that this was a powerful artefact known as the "Shroud of the Reaper".

The cloak can do many incredible things: it protects its wearer from most harm, can turn him invisible, give him the ability to fly and unleash powerful spiritual attacks that can rip the souls of his enemies to shreds. Korren has watched many of his friends be killed...and he soon realizes that he has the power to take revenge.

Our heroes will soon learn the tale of Untra and hear that bandit leader Krogan Ironhead has come to new-found riches, which he spends to gather more evil men and women under his banner. But at the same time there is a power hunting the bandits...and the Shroud of the Reaper is a price that not only our heroes will covet. Several powerful wizards, at least one highly influential guild of criminals and some of the most skilled assassins in the realm are after the artefact. Ironhead's gang will soon find themselves in the centre of far too much attention.

While Korren is hunting the bandits and in turn being hunted by many there is another player that nobody has noticed yet. The Reaper himself, wraith – remnant of the original owner, has left his tomb and is coming for his property...and his power makes the one of his shroud pale by comparison.

74. BRIDGE TROUBLE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Our heroes are hired by Baron Orwell, one of the poorest nobles of the realm. The Baron can't pay them much, but is willing to owe them a favour if they can help him out. One of his main sources of income, the toll-bridge at Wonster Village, has been taken over by bandits/monsters, and that is depleting his already meagre sources of wealth!

The bandits/monsters in question are only a small group, but they are pretty tough...although not particularly vicious. They gave the baron's soldiers a good beating, then sent them on their way. Now they have raised the toll (but not that far above what Orwell demanded, no matter what he or his men say) and are taking it for themselves, seeing it as a nice and steady source of income. But the issue is more complicated than that. The "villains" are actually using part of the toll to repair the nearly decrepit bridge...something that Baron Orwell never did!

Due to this fact there is a not insignificant size of the population of Wonster Village who actually supports the bandits/monsters, and will be quite angry at our heroes if they try to take them down and restore the unfriendly baron's toll collectors to their "rightful" place.

GM NOTES:

This storyseed and several others in this book are centered around the idea that someone or something hires our heroes to get rid of a problem. Once our heroes arrive in the area however, they will realize that the locals do not consider this "problem" a problem at all!

This might lead to some moral issues for a group of heroes, but it most definitely will lead to some logistical ones. Locals can make our heroes' lives difficult in a lot of different ways: misinformation, sabotage or the simple refusal to do business with them. At the same time the locals can help the "villains" by providing them with information, guides and equipment. In such a situation even an adversary who would generally not prove much of a challenge to the player characters can be difficult to overcome.

When playing this type of scenario it is always important for the GM to consider how our heroes could break that bond between their enemies and the locals. Maybe they can even offer the village a better deal?

Also make sure not to present "the locals" as a unified front. There are always people willing to betray a cause for the right prize, or nursing private greivances that can be exploited by cunning player characters.

75. REUNION OF THIEVES

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Twenty years ago the name “Red Hoods” struck fear into the heart of every merchant and noble of the realm. They were an infamous gang of outlaws, specialized in burglary, high – stakes con games and even the occasional highway robbery. After being active for over a decade the gang vanished. Some think that they were taken out by rivals or law enforcement, but most assume (and rightly so) that the Red Hoods had simply amassed enough wealth to retire.

One of their members, Clem “the Clever”, became Collin the Mayor, setting up a successful inn and buying a significant amount of land close to Picker Village. Now, exactly twenty years after their last coup, the surviving dozen or so members of the Red Hoods want to celebrate a reunion. “Collin” has invited them all to visit his village.

Unbeknownst to him however, Clem's son Wingo, who knows about his father's infamous past, has approached our heroes and is asking them to protect the village. He thinks that having a group of potentially vicious outlaws stay for a few days might lead to bad things for his neighbours and friends. He doesn't know how right he is, for there is not one but two major issues:

One former member of the gang, Santiago the Shadow, has completely changed in the last twenty years. He has become a faithful, law abiding citizen and is very concerned with the dark deeds of the past weighing his soul down. To ease his conscience he has decided to help the law take out all his former comrades. Santiago has contacted a highly skilled bounty hunter by the name of Lamora and has shared all the information about the upcoming meeting with her. Lamora has hired over a dozen tough men and women and she is bringing them to Picker Village to capture as many of the Red Hoods as possible.

And then there is the Hoodchest, a treasure that has been assembled at the high time of the gang and hidden away for a rainy day. Only Clem, Santiago and Orthan Silvereye, the three most prominent members of the group, know the location of that treasure and each possesses one of the three keys necessary to access it. Orthan, a bitter and evil man, has decided to finally claim the Hoodchest and he will be more than happy to kill his old comrades if they do not hand over their keys...



76. THE WEBSPINNER

HIGH LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

A very large bounty has been posted on the head of a wizard named Ellio, for he is accused of trying to manipulate several powerful nobles into overthrowing the king. Hunted by royal agents the evildoer has fled from the capital and disappeared without a trace...until now.

Our heroes are contacted by a minor bounty hunter named Rico, who has managed to pick up the wizard's trail. Rico knows that he cannot take on such a powerful mage by himself, but he is willing to split the bounty fairly if our heroes can do the capturing. The bounty hunter is very certain that Ellio is hiding in or close to Denderin, a village in the hills.

At first glance Denderin seems like a peaceful, idyllic village, but it hides a terrible secret. Ellio, using his powers of illusion and mind control, has turned the entire population of the village into his slaves, wrapping layer upon layer of magic around their brains. They report every stranger in the area to him immediately, and are ready to die at his command.

Should the evil wizard realise that our heroes have come looking for him, he will not hesitate to unleash every single villager against them. Men, women, even children, barely armed but whipped into a frenzy, will descend upon our heroes in waves. There are nearly three hundred people under Ellio's control, so if a massive slaughter is to be avoided the wizard's magic must be broken, and quickly at that. Sadly Ellio is quite clever and his magic extremely powerful, so getting to him or unravelling the spell will both be equally difficult.

77. BLOOD ON THE FANGS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT



Our heroes are hired by Reeve Sendara, who is responsible for the security of the roads in the area. Recently three groups of travellers have disappeared. Sendara assumes that some kind of monster has moved down from the mountains to threaten the valley folk. Her soldiers were so far unable to find any tracks of the beast and the locals also don't seem to know anything. Sendara is hoping that our heroes might prove more successful.

The village closest to the disappearances is Sunfield, where people are friendly but don't know anything. They seem nervous, but will reveal nothing unless severely pressed, because they are terrified...and they have good reason for it. It wasn't a monster who killed the travellers, but a group of vicious cannibals! A small tribe moved down from the mountains, infiltrated the villages and took several hostages. They killed a handful of locals in terrible displays of brutality and forced all the others to fall into line. If the cannibals don't receive information about travellers, soldiers and other people of interest to them – like our heroes – they have sworn not only to kill and eat the hostages, but also to creep into the villages at night and tear out the locals' throats!

The tribe is extremely dangerous and has several small camps in the wilderness close to Sunfield. They have spent a couple of weeks getting to know the area very well and are skilled rangers.

Many traps could harm or even kill those who dare go search for them and the cannibals themselves use both bows and blades to great effect. And, if someone actually goes searching for them, they will not hesitate to follow through on their threat, putting many villagers in great danger.

78. MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION

Three months ago a weird old stranger moved into the village of Shutenberg. He bought a large piece of land on the outskirts of the village, surrounding it with a sizeable wooden wall. Within it the old man built a medium sized hut and the foundation of a fine garden. This stranger hardly speaks with anyone and nobody knows where he gets his money from. Only one thing is sufficiently clear from his demeanour and the dozen or so ferocious guard hounds that he keeps: this man does not like visitors. Nobody seems to know anything about the stranger's past, but the name he gives is a weird one: Bogarin, the Maker.

At first the whole issue was not much more than an interesting tale and great food for the rumour – mongers. Then, about two months ago, people started hearing strange sounds emanating from Bogarin's home. Some described it as the wailing of angry spirits, others as the cries of tortured animals. Only a few days later a wagon arrived in the middle of the night, driven by a cloaked individual. This mysterious visitor did not stay for long...but a few nights later another one arrived and left even more suddenly. And the weird noises continue.

Several villagers are extremely concerned and demand that Mayor Alvin do something. Thus he hires our heroes and asks them to investigate.

Sadly this weird Bogarin fellow does not accept visitors and will threaten to unleash his hounds upon anyone too eager to speak to him. He has good reason to value his privacy, although the reason is not nearly as sinister as our heroes might expect:

“Bogarin's” real name is Samulos, and he is the most famous maker of musical instruments in the whole realm. In his retirement he has decided to create several new instruments and give them only to his closest friends amongst the musicians. There are quite a few famous bards and minstrels who would pay very handsomely to have one of Samulos' newest creations, and the Maker is afraid that spies might learn of his location and try to reveal the instruments before they are perfected.

79. THE BLOODHAIR TWINS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Kane and Zorvan were once the twin sons of Sir Ovar, counted amongst the proudest and brightest young nobles of the realm. Then they murdered their father, slaughtered a dozen retainers and burned down the estate. They have been on the run ever since. Soon it became apparent that somehow the two red-haired young men, known from that moment on as the Bloodhair Twins, had learned to master dangerous magic and that they intended to use it for chaos and destruction...or at least that is what the upper class of the realm says.

Our heroes are hired to find the twins and take them out, ideally bringing them back to the capital alive so that they can be put to trial for their horrible crimes. They know that both Kane and Zorvan can be found somewhere in the Sevonian Hills, an area of three villages and large swaths of untamed wilderness. From a hideout somewhere in those hills the Bloodhair Twins strike at merchant caravans, the carriages of noblemen and other endeavours of the upper class.

Very soon our heroes will learn that they are not particularly welcome in any of the three villages. The simple folk seem to regard the twins with a type of respect, for they are only striking out against the rich...and that's just what those greedy bastards deserve. But it is more than that: the Bloodhair Twins actually give away most of their spoils and have made the lives of many farmers in the hills significantly easier. The people are trying to keep this a secret, but that will prove impossible in the long run.

Many farmers are actively aiding the twins, providing them with food, drink and information. Thus Kane – who visits the villages every few days under the illusionary guise of a hairy blonde woodsman named Nero – will soon learn of our heroes' intent and might try to set a trap for them.

Searching for the twins' hideout in the wilderness is nearly impossible, for they are assisted by Ugwin, an extremely skilled woodsman, and have also covered the entrance of their cave in a magical illusion.

The best way to reach the Bloodhair Twins is to find someone holding a grudge against them...a person like the farmer Miana, whose daughter and son they have seduced. Miana detests both Zorvan and Kane, and she is ready to aid all those who wish them harm. She even knows where their hideout is from spying on her own children. But Miana is afraid of both her neighbours and the magic of the twins and will not step forward easily.

80. A MONSTER ROARS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The people of Gordin Village are terrified, for every night they can hear some sort of large beast sniffing and roaring in the darkness. Most have barricaded themselves in their own homes and refuse to even look out of the window as soon as night falls. Our heroes are called to help.

While looking for this monster no tracks will be discovered. No livestock is taken, no people have actually ever seen it. The only thing that might be noticeable is that someone or something has been eating the grain stacked up close to the mill on the edge of the village.

There you can find the culprit: a medium sized bird with green feathers, its beak twisted into the resemblance of a perpetual grin. This is a rare liar – bird, capable of perfectly mimicking every sound that it has heard within the last couple of days. It seems clever enough to use its ability to scare the villagers away so it can get to their grain.

Most people in Gordin will be laughing really hard at the discovery, relieved that they have only fallen prey to the prank of a silly bird. But there is one old hunter who isn't laughing. He knows

where such a bird would be coming from: the depths of the Western Forest, a wilderness mostly untouched by the hand of man, whose border is only a few hours away. Ullick, the hunter, is still afraid...for the liar – bird does not invent sounds, it only repeats them.

Ullick is right to be scared: in the depths of the forest an ancient beast has awoken: part lion, part bear, but larger and more vicious than any natural predator should be. Soon the creature will have devoured most of its food supply in the forest...and then it will come for the people and animals of Gordin Village. Our heroes should track the beast down before it strikes, but that would mean having to enter its domain, where battling it would be most dangerous.

§1. THE MIND OF A SAGE

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

There are many legends about Croval Lake, stories about dangerous creatures and beautiful maidens under water. None of these stories is more prominent than the legend of the Silver Sage. This man supposedly lived as a hermit on the small island in the centre of the lake. Legends say he stared into the water and the heavens until his mind could comprehend both, a mirror to the universe. Many pilgrims came to the sage to partake in his wisdom and that tradition continues even over two hundred years after his death. A village has grown at the edge of the lake and a shrine of significant size has been built on the island. Within it are many keepsakes of the sage, most precious amongst them the skull that held his wise mind. People say that standing in front of the shrine, gazing upon the skull, brings answers to difficult problems.

Now our heroes are contacted by Hurio, head priest of the Sage's shrine. The clerics are devastated, for the holy skull has been stolen! They have, for now, placed a very similar skull within the shrine, and are begging our heroes to treat their investigation with the highest discretion possible.

Two things will soon become obvious: Firstly, not all locals are thrilled with the multitude of strangers that come to the shrine as pilgrims, trudging through their fields and past their homes.

Secondly, whoever took the skull must have either known exactly in what brief moments it would be unguarded (when the monks go to close the gates of the shrine an hour before midnight, ushering out the last pilgrims) or must have had some magic at their disposal.

Interrogating the locals might raise suspicion, but will not bring many clues. Several of them are unhappy with the priest of the shrine, whom they perceive as arrogant and aloof, but none of them probably has the skills to pull off such a heist.

In truth it was a young priest who took the skull. His name is Arbello and a few months ago he discovered the writings of a previous head priest, indicating that the skull on display was not the sage's at all! Arbello went to his superiors, who ignored his findings, for they did not fit into their own understanding of the world. For a while the young monk was unsure what to do...but recently he has been approached by a strange fellow, a wizard or some such, who wanted to obtain the skull and was willing to pay a sizeable sum of money for it. Arbello, thinking that such gold might finance his search for the real skull, accepted.

Now this wizard, a necromancer named Wurrok, has retreated into a nearby cave and is preparing a ritual to bring the skull back to life. He wishes to obtain arcane secrets from the spirit of the ancient sage and will be less than pleased to learn that he is speaking to a long – dead cattle thief.

Wurrok will descend upon the temple in fury...will our heroes try to stop him?

§2. VILENESS WITHIN

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

All the animals in the village of Mareen seem unusually nervous. Pigs squeal, goats refuse to leave their barns, sheep huddle together, barely touching the grass on their pastures. The farmers are unsure of what is going on. Some suspect the presence of some dangerous beast, but our heroes are unable to find any traces of such a creature. Soon the first animals sicken and people start feeling weak as well. An old farmer collapses and cannot be woken up again. Even our heroes are getting a little bit queasy!

Many talk of some dark magic, a curse cast by witches or evil sorcerers. The truth is much simpler, and much more natural. The local quarry, led and owned by the wealthy Fordin, has recently unearthed silver. While keeping quiet about it, the foreman and his most trusted workers are using a dangerous chemical to melt away the rocks around the vein. They could do this by hand, but that would make the work much slower and far less profitable. And in the meantime the chemical is seeping into the ground, spreading a subtle scent and poisoning all the water supply in the area.

Fordin is an arrogant man and it will not be easy to convince him to stop his doings, for he does not believe that he is to blame for the sickness.

§3. BROKEN IN THE WOMB

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY AND INVESTIGATION

Generally the village of Finstering is a safe, nearly idyllic place, despite the fact that it lies far from any other settlement, nestled between forests and hills. But as our heroes are hired by its mayor Hendriksen things have taken a much darker turn.

Arriving in the village one will immediately sense the atmosphere: while people are moving freely and doing their work as usual there are few conversations, no laughter can be heard, and it is rare to even find a single smiling face. People seem angry, confused and afraid.

A few weeks ago Milla, wife to Jonik the hunter, gave birth to a horribly deformed daughter. The poor thing was crippled and broken, of near demonic visage. The father, disgusted and horrified, killed the child in a nearby pond and this deed deeply divided the people of the village. Their terror was magnified as two more children were born with similar deformations! Both babies and their mothers have been locked away by the mayor, and protecting them will be one of our heroes' main tasks. Mayor Hendriksen is not sure what could happen to the children. Especially Ogluf, a burly farmer and father of a misshapen baby, has demanded that the "demon" be destroyed.

The people do not talk in the open, especially with strangers amongst them, but in the secret of their homes many whisper dark and angry thoughts. Some say the presence of these deformed children is divine punishment. Others blame the old hermit living high on a hill south of the village. A few even put the blame on the parents, for they must be corrupted by association with some dark power!

There are two more heavily pregnant women within the community, and they are both terrified...

While the village is starting to tear itself apart and some locals are even beginning to form violent mobs with different goals in mind, the true culprit sits in their midst, gossiping and casting blame on the hermit: Yana is the only midwife in Finstering, an old, bitter woman who has damaged her own brain with many years of Shrilroot consumption. This fiendish plant gives people blissful dreams and helps with anxiety, but it can lead to significant behaviour changes, illusions and extreme paranoia if taken too regularly. That is what happened to Yana, and she thinks that many families in the village, led by the old hermit, are plotting against her. No matter how illogical this assumption is, the herbalist fully believes in it, and has poisoned the pregnant women with a rare, potent herb called "Moonbane", thus causing the poor children to be crippled. This, so thinks the sick mind of the old midwife, is just punishment for their plotting.

GM NOTES:

WARNING! If you have not figured it out yourself by now, "Broken in the Womb" is an extremely dark adventure with very mature tones. Many players will be highly uncomfortable with violence against children, especially because there is no real "happy ending" for the poor creatures already crippled. You better make 100% sure that your players are prepared for such a dark story before you consider running this plotook.

That said: there are many techniques you can use to get the most out of this horrible scenario. Probably the most important one is to make sure your player characters understand how much of an impact the whole thing had upon the community of Finstering. People are desperate, terrified and angry. Let your heroes feel that situation. When NPCs speak they do so either very loudly or very quietly. Emotions rule the community, not logical thinking. These emotions can flare up at any time and only few locals have enough strength left to control themselves. Violence is in the air...and some of that violence is the horrible truth that parents wish to murder their own, completely helpless babies!

In such a situation accusations fly left and right and nobody is safe. Some people will of course also suspect Yana the midwife, but she has been in the village for many, many years, and the troubles have only recently started. Newcomers in the area, like the hermit or some of the more recently arrived settlers, are much easier targets.

The atmosphere is boiling...and even a very weak "proof" of guilt can lead to an outpouring of violence. Yana can sense this as well as anyone else and might try to frame our heroes if they get too close to the turth. As mentioned before, strangers and newcomers are easy targets.

84. FEAR IN THE AIR

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

Our heroes arrive in the village of Silben on a late afternoon. Everything seems quiet...too quiet.

There are few people around, although most houses seem inhabited. The inn itself is open, but there are no customers within. Soon our heroes will realize that an aura of nervousness, even fear, permeates the whole village. If our heroes are perceptive, they will spot half – concealed signs of recent violence. A few wiped up – but still visible – bloodstains can be found. The door of one house seems to have been damaged recently. And there is a group of tired looking horses, apparently new arrivals, in the stables.

Kosten the innkeeper will not admit to having any free rooms. He serves the visitors a quick meal and urges them to travel on. All the while he is glancing to the windows, as if expecting to see someone there. If he is asked any direct questions he will mumble something about a sickness that forces many people to keep to their beds. He will not accept any help though, the village healer has everything under control. No, they cannot talk to the healer, he is very busy...

A gang of vicious outlaws is hiding in the village. Their leader, a brute named Murrin, has ordered his men to snatch up all the children and hold them hostage in a barn close by. The arrival of our heroes has interrupted their plundering. Murrin threatened to kill every single child if the villagers give away anything...but some might still be desperate enough to try and drop hints.

85. FAIREST OF THEM ALL

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND DIPLOMACY

Baron Gindos is a lecherous old man, enjoying the sight of pretty young girls a little too much. Luckily “looking” – and a bit of drooling – is as far as his perversion goes, therefore he is actually one of the better liked noblemen in the area.

Every year the village of Holming, encouraged and sponsored by the baron, holds a beauty contest, calling forth the most attractive women for many miles around. The price for the fairest lady of the land is a heavy gold purse and therefore many families send their daughters to try their luck and also try to catch the eye of a wealthy husband.

Our heroes are visiting Holming during harvesting season while recuperating from one of their recent adventures and will be pulled into the chaos. Some of them might choose to compete, others are simply watching and some might even be appointed assistants to Baron Gindos, there to help him choose the most beautiful flower of “this year's crop”, as he calls the women.

The two favourites for the crown of roses (and the fat purse) are the Melan sisters, Junia and Elvina.

They are both beautiful women but also absolutely ruthless, ready to ruin reputations and even lives as long as they gain victory. While they have promised not to sabotage one another – a promise that might or might not last – they have started a campaign of terror, seduction, bribery, slandering and outright violence against any other girl they deem dangerous. These things are of course partially expected every year – the baron usually has a good laugh – but the sisters could be going too far. One young pretty girl was attacked by a vicious dog and barely survived, another was nearly murdered by a jealous lover, and a third has been disowned by her family after especially foul rumours!

So far only few people know who is behind this string of “accidents”...and the sisters are intending to keep it that way. In only two days the winner will be crowned, but a lot can happen in two days!



§6. RISE OF THE OPPRESSED

MEDIUM LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT AND DIPLOMACY

Count Alvion of Correnhill has long been known as one of the most brutal nobles in the realm. He took perverse pleasure in abusing, demeaning and heavily taxing the people in every town and village under his control, and the population has had enough! It started in the town of Perag: two arrogant tax collectors were beaten to a pulp by an angry crowd.

When soldiers tried to apprehend the culprits more people were drawn into the brawl. Many locals were severely injured or even killed, including several women and children! That most definitely broke the camel's back once and for all, and many settlements rose in open rebellion! Government buildings were attacked, magistrates beaten, imprisoned or even lynched. Militias were ordered to take up arms against their own friends and neighbours, but most chose to side with the rebels.

Sir Bantrell, once loyal retainer of Count Correnhill, is the military brain behind the uprising, making sure that they take important settlements and arm themselves as well as they can. The true leader however is a young woman of great bravery: Indira, known as "the Fox of Perag", both for her cunning and her fiery hair. She has become banner, face and soul of the rebellion...and the Count knows it too!

Our heroes will be caught up in this violent tale. They might be asked to join the uprising, maybe even by their old friend Sir Bantrell. They could simply be travelling through the area and be forced to choose sides. Or they could be hired by Count Alvion to commit atrocities for coin.

The Count has called in a large group of brutal mercenaries and his gold has also brought all kinds of criminal scum to his banner. This menacing army is led by Raban, the count's own son, who is nearly as vicious a monster as his father. He will be sending assassins against all leaders of the rebellion and is prepared to rape and burn whole villages if necessary. And if Raban dies...his father might unleash a horror of vengeance unlike anything the realm has seen in many years.

GM NOTES:

This storyseed can become a very long campaign, one that is particularly interesting if your players know NPCs from both sides well. Have them establish connections with some of the less brutal men of the count, but let them also befriend people who will later join the rebellion. There is good and evil to be found on both sides of every battle ever fought. Your player characters should understand that.

Some rebels are so vicious or desperate that they would do anything for victory. Some loyalists serve the nobles because they believe in the stability of the system. Friends and family members might find themselves at odds. If your players know people from both sides the conflict will get a far more personal note. That is the terror of a civil war, a very memorable evil that you can show to your players with just a little bit of work.

§7. OF MEN AND BEASTS

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

A group of savage beasts attacks a small caravan close to the village of Greyfern. Survivors describe twisted creatures like a mixture of man and animal, bellowing in rage and pain. Our heroes are called in to hunt down this menace.

It will soon become clear that nobody in the area has ever seen monsters like these and also that the caravan might not have been their first target. Ormen, a pretty young woman and wife to a woodcutter named Boron, begs our heroes to find out what happened to her husband and his work crew. They never returned from their logging site deep within the forest and are several days overdue! Ormen hopes they can return Boron...or at least bring her a silver amulet he received at their wedding and was wearing day and night.

The logging site shows weird trails and signs, a simple but heavily damaged hut and the remnants of some sort of large feast. This is when the first twisted creatures start streaming out of the forest...

When the things are slain they will turn back into the woodcutters that they once were, for these beasts are cursed by the spell of an evil hag. They were invited to a strange feast by a mysterious maiden of the forest and simply could not resist her allure.

Now all the woodcutters are monsters, commanded by the hag. Boron, tallest and strongest of the men, is her bodyguard, a hulking monstrosity with equal parts of bull, bear and human. But he will not be within sight when the hag approaches our heroes in disguise, telling them of the magic of an evil spirit of the forest, offering them a potion whose cool liquid will protect them from that magic...and take away all their sorrows.

88. THIEVES MUST DIE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY, COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

Several generations ago the ancestors of Lerin Village fought with the strange tribes living in the forest. Many died on both sides but in the end a long lasting peace was forged: the villagers would stay on their fields and the tribes would not venture forth from their forests and swamps. For a long time this peace was upheld, while both sides remained on their side of the border, living only a few miles away from one another but hardly ever coming into contact.

Our heroes are called to Lerin Village as trouble is brewing. Some of the tribes have been seen sneaking around the fields and when farmers tried to apprehend them they fought their way out and injured several people. Locals are angry and some are forming a small militia to take revenge. These, led by the massive local champion Garon, say the “savages” need to be taught a bloody lesson. Others call for a more peaceful solution.

Our heroes are sent to try and negotiate with the tribes but they have to be quick about it. For soon not only Garon's group will be out for blood. A small warband of tribesmen is in the area and they are ready for violence. Their ire has been raised by a brazen theft: one of their holy objects, the “Eye of the Emerald Spirit”, a petrified green egg, has been stolen and they have tracked the thief all the way to the village of Lerin. He must be hiding within! The tribes want their treasure, but they also want the thief handed over to them.

While this clash is threatening the culprit is hiding in his mother's house, the egg stashed away in a small hole. Irvon is only fourteen years old and although his body is that of a man his mind is still very much that of a child. He stole the treasure because he wanted to give it as a gift to Nerina, a girl he likes, but now he is terrified that the owners will come and kill him...

89. A HEART DESTROYED

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes are called upon to help the small village of Sorvale, a place inhabited by farmers, hunters and woodcutters, at the edge of a large forest. In the last few days several strange things have happened. A farm collapsed and buried three people under it, many animals are refusing to go close to the edge of the forest and four woodcutters who ventured into it have disappeared without a trace! Soon it will be discovered that strange roots broke the foundations of the house, weird flowers have started growing and spreading a smell that makes animals and people sick...and thorny vines are spreading rapidly from somewhere deep within the forest.

This all started about a month ago, when a team of woodcutters led by a greedy man called Porrick discovered an ancient tree with strange silver bark. They cut it down mercilessly, thus killing Silvara, the dryad spirit dwelling within. A week after this deed Estriga, the dryad's companion, awoke and discovered what had happened. It does not know exactly who is responsible for the murder of Silvara, but the culprit is obviously amongst the people of Sorvale.

Estriga will use its magic to control plants and confuse the minds of humans, leading them into danger or killing them outright. Only the deaths of the dryad or Porrick and his two surviving companions will end the attacks. Estriga cannot be easily slain, for even when its humanoid form is destroyed it will reshape itself within its tree, an ancient willow found beside a small pond deep within the forest.

90. RAT PLAGUE

LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes are called to the village of Sinderling for what sounds to be a fairly boring task: killing rats! The farmers seem more desperate than they should be and it will soon become quite obvious why. The rats attacking the village are quite numerous and extremely hungry, even going so far as to attack people and try to eat them! The grain silos are in great danger, and most dogs and cats within the village have already been killed or wounded.

Quite soon our heroes will notice that some of the rats are a fair bit larger than others and seem unusually cunning, capable of coming up with plans like flaking manoeuvres or distractions. More and more of the beasts seem to be showing up...until their lair is found. In an old cave on the edge of the forest a crazy old hermit is using his magic to call all rats in the area towards him. Some he strengthens with spells, others he sends on the attack immediately. The hermit himself has been chased out of Sinderling several weeks ago – the villagers are not particularly friendly when it comes to vagabonds and vagrants – and is still bruised by the experience. Thus he decided to use his little furry minions for some old fashioned revenge.

91. THE LORD OF STAGS

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION, EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

For nearly ten years now the cult of the Stag Lord has been spreading its influence amongst the farmers, herders and hunters of the local villages. This new faith came from the wilderness, brought forth by the druidess Carrina and her brother, known only as Leafspear. Its adherents seem to be protected by the spirits of nature, which are apparently subservient to the Stag Lord. Hunters find easier game, herders have less trouble with predators attacking their animals and farmers see their crops grow strong and healthy. The benevolent power of this new god wins converts on all sides.

Sadly there is a heavy price to pay for such mystical help.

The Stag Lord and its closest followers are dark and inhumane beings, manifestations of the primal ferocity of the wilds. While they can be bargained with and often try to present themselves as benevolent, their true nature always comes out in the end: the Stag Lord demands blood sacrifices, civilized beings for him and his monstrous hounds to hunt at every full moon.

Carrina organises these “holy rites”, abducting travellers in the area with the help of her closest followers, while Leafspear acts as conduit and vessel for the might of the Stag Lord, taking on a terrifying appearance.

Our heroes are asked to find a young merchant named Gerilo, the intended sacrifice for the approaching hunt, and will soon learn about the cult of the Stag Lord. More civilised local temples have been speaking out against the cult for a while now, and many priests will not hesitate to blame them for the recent disappearances. It will be difficult to find proof however. Even if our heroes succeed in it, a lot of the local population, growing wealthy in the service of this new god, might turn against them and try to cover up the crime. What is the life of a few city folk after all, compared to the well being of several whole rural communities?

92. WET GRAVES

MEDIUM LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT

It has been raining heavily for many days now, a steady stream of water pouring from the sky like the wrath of an angry god. Our heroes are travelling over muddy roads while the landscape around them is turning into bogs. They come upon a village in peril, for several local dams have burst and large tracks of land have been flooded. Many of the villagers and their livestock managed to escape in time, but dozens of houses are heavily damaged. The settlement itself is under six feet of muddy water, with only a small hill in the centre sticking out. A few families are trapped there, watching the flood slowly encroach. Can our heroes save them?

There are no boats anywhere in the vicinity, but tree trunks or doors might be used instead. The flood is treacherous, capable of devouring them whole. It is also not the only danger: strange amphibious beasts, scaled and hungry, have come with the water. They navigate the muddy depths, striking quickly and savagely before trying to draw their prey to a watery grave.

93. TRUTH OR NIGHTMARE

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION AND COMBAT

Horrible things are happening in the village of Everguard! Three farmers seem to have gone insane. A man called Gilbert awoke screaming one night, shouting that his whole family had turned into demons. He fled into the darkness, fell into a ravine and died before he could be saved. An older woman by the name of Petunia tried to murder her own husband, apparently suffering from the same delusions, and is now locked away for her own good. She seems to believe that her husband is possessed by an evil spirit...and she speaks so coherently about it that even some of her neighbours have started suspecting poor old Padrick.

Finally there is the worst case of them all: Olvander, a young farmhand, has murdered his employer and her husband, burned their farm to the ground, and is now on the run! When two of his former friends tried to apprehend him he wounded one of them with a knife. Now Olvander is hiding close by, plotting his next move. He firmly believes that the villagers are all demons and that he has to kill as many of them as possible before their evil can spread.

Our heroes are called in by the local reeve, an old man named Hensel, to capture Olvander and find out what the hell is going on. Many villagers speculate about some kind of curse, while others secretly suspect that demons might, in fact, be amongst them.

The explanation is far simpler: the vegetables on several of the western fields have been befallen by a strange disease. Eating them can cause nightmares, paranoia and even illusions. This means that our heroes will not have to deal with supernatural powers, but it also means that more villagers will be affected. Even some of our heroes might become a little weird...

94. DEATH OF A FOREST

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY,
EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The Tholwer Woodlands are an ancient place that went untouched by the hand of civilization for a long time. Only within the last twenty or so years have settlements started to appear at the edge of the forest. Moring Village is one of those settlements, built only twelve years ago by the hunter Tomas Moring, now risen to the role of mayor.

Our heroes are approached by a strange figure with a surprising request for help: an old woman appears from the wilderness, introducing herself as Southwind. She is one of the elders of a small tribe of druids that have been living within the woods for many generations. The tribe has had nearly no dealings with the outside world so far, but now there is trouble and the spirits have showed Southwind the way to our heroes. Several villages have started cutting down more and more trees and the forest is getting angry. The druidess asks for help, to approach the villagers and persuade them to reduce the quantity of their logging.

Fulfilling Southwind's plea will not be easy. On one hand, the villages are earning some decent money for their timber. Especially a merchant named Bulwer, newly arrived to the area with the plan to build several sawmills, will be very unhappy. What does he care about some filthy forest savages and their primitive beliefs? Bulwer has the full support of mayor Moring, who is being paid quite handsomely for it.

On the other hand the area is still fairly dangerous and a significant amount of the wood is being used to construct sturdy walls around the villages. This comes at the cost of many hundreds of trees, but it is necessary to protect the people. There is one particularly vicious group of outlaws roaming the area, and they are actually led by a former druid, an outcast named Riverlight. She wants to push the civilized people out of the area, but her predatory nature has actually made the situation worse. Can a clash between bandits, settlers, druids and spirits of the forest be avoided?

95. FIERY TEMPERS

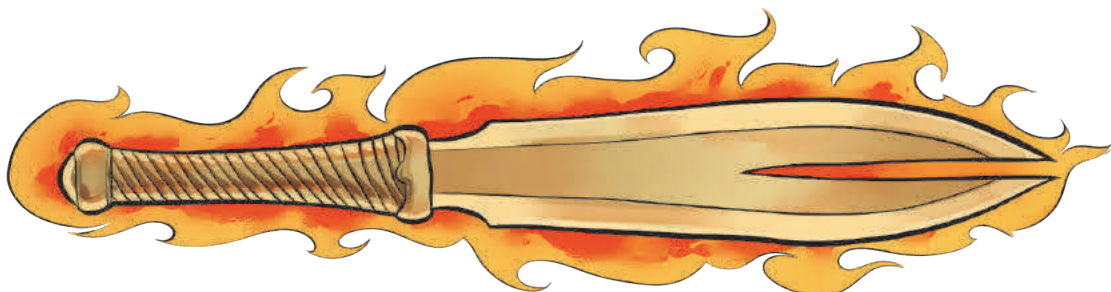
LOW LEVEL SHORT ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON DIPLOMACY

A massive heatwave is tormenting the land. Streams dry out, fields crack and plants die. It is a tough time for many villages and the stress is getting to people. Tempers are flaring, old grievances are being pushed to the forefront. Our heroes are asked to help in a dispute between the villages of Erkhill and Onderhill.

The two settlements have been quarrelling over the fields that lie on the border between their lands for decades. Mostly the dispute has been fairly civil, for the cooler heads of village elders prevailed. There was an agreement in place that allowed one village to use the fields for three years, then giving them over to the other one for an equal amount of time. Sadly the elders who created that agreement have died, the last of them taken by a wave of sickness during the previous winter.

Now younger, more aggressive villagers have come into power in both settlements. Rolda, a petite woman with the temper of a brutal gladiator, leads Erkhill. They have had the fields for three years, but they are not ready to hand them over. These fields, slightly protected from the merciless sun by the shadow of both hills, are currently amongst the most fertile, and Rolda will not see her people starve in the winter just because of some stupid words written on parchment.

Orivan, the respected and ambitious new leader of Onderhill, is furious with this breach of contract and demands the right to the fields. This issue has been raised months ago, but the heat makes everything worse. Insults fly in both directions, cattle have been stolen, even fistfights have broken out. The situation is threatening to get out of control...especially as a large barn holding a significant amount of grain burns down in Erkhill. The heatwave is to blame for the fire, but Rolda is sure that people from Onderhill have committed arson! Can our heroes cool the tempers and prevent a vicious confrontation that might lead to dead farmers on both sides?



96. FURY OF THE WILDS

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

The Wildlands are an untamed region of wilderness at the edge of the realm, consisting of misty marshes, dense forests and steep hills. There have always been a few hunters and hermits here, but the first real settlements in the Wildlands have only been built a decade ago. It did not take the new settlers very long to realize that they had found a land of great resources: exotic animals to be hunted, rare trees to be made into timber, medicinal herbs to be gathered and even a little bit of gold in the streams! Now the population of all three local villages is swelling and people are pushing deeper and deeper into the wilderness.

Two siblings, ruthless individuals and skilled rangers, are leading many expeditions in the search for valuable goods. Kormin the Archer has become the most renowned hunter in the realm. His sister, Orwenna Goldhand, has led many prospectors to the gold they all so desire. And in their greed they have gone too far, threatening to bring death upon all local settlements.

Kormin and Orwenna have entered the territory of Lash, a dangerous avatar of nature. The creature is extremely powerful and these strangers have angered it. Several individuals have already been killed by the agents of Lash, but now it is moving in on the villages. Our heroes are called upon to protect the locals from whatever evil is attacking.

Soon they will realize how desperate the situation truly is: Lash uses its magic to unleash plague within the settlements while his servants, aggressive beasts and animated plants alike, hunt all those who dare venture into the wilderness. Flocks of ravens murder livestock and even attack people while wolves, bears, boars and the large oxen of the Wildlands are even more aggressive. Thorny vines and poisonous herbs are spreading with great speed, and some of the plants move just like a beast would!

Lash will not show itself unless forced to, unleashing its true form – made from dead plants and animal bones – when its ferocity is unmatched. Either all the locals leave the Wildlands, or Lash will make sure that they stay here forever...as rotting meat to feed its servants.

97. THE HIGH AND THE LOW

MEDIUM LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON INVESTIGATION,
DIPLOMACY AND COMBAT

Baron Orwell has never been particularly well liked amongst the simple folk. While he isn't as crazed a psychopath as some other nobles, his high taxes and the harsh ways of his retainers are not suited to make him popular. Recently things got worse.

A great fire consumed several buildings within Torrenttown, a settlement owned by the baron. The citizens are struggling to rebuild, but Orwell is not prepared to lower their taxes and even ridiculed their representatives. Gosmer, a timber merchant and one of these representatives, has even been beaten for his “impudence” by some of the baron's soldiers. Now Gosmer's son, a hot headed youngster by the name of Aldin, has sworn revenge. Together with some of his friends they are besmirching the baron's name and spreading vile rumours about his retainers. One of them, Captain Korrick, did not react well to people sniggering behind his back and ordered several locals detained and beaten. Now the families of those people are joining the unrest movement, none more so than Irwine, a dangerous ex – mercenary whose older brother has suffered several broken bones. The rumours of this unrest have reached the ears of Signella, mistress of Baron Orwell's servants and spies, and she hires our heroes to stop what she thinks is a potential rebellion in Torrenttown.

Aldin and Korrick are the main instigators of the unrest, but they are both clever enough to take good care of themselves, especially after soldiers tried to arrest them. But there is an even more dangerous mastermind: Quenna is Signella's estranged sister, leader of a gang of smugglers, burglars and thieves. She hates Orwell and his people with a great passion, for she has been horribly wronged by them about ten years ago. Now, with the flames of anger rising within the population, Quenna will do whatever it takes to provoke an outburst...and she has a dagger with the baron's name on it ready to strike.

If our heroes are not exceptionally careful their actions might cause significant harm, as Captain Korrick is only waiting for an excuse to unleash his thugs against the people of Torrenttown... although he will find them a much harder target than expected.

98. THE DEVIL OF KORRENWALD

HIGH LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION,
COMBAT AND INVESTIGATION

Every few years a horrible creature brings terror and death to the villages and towns surrounding the old Korrenwald forest. This thing, described as a large wolf that runs on its hind legs by some, as a monstrous man-bat by others, leads a legion of lesser horrors: packs of predators with glowing red eyes, pale figures with a freezing touch and stealthy winged things thirsting for the blood of the villagers. Many brave heroes and local warriors have tried to end this threat, but they all failed and died. Now young Count Helidan has promised to finally kill this Devil of Korrenwald, ending its threat once and for all. He is prepared to pay a significant sum to all veterans who wish to join him in the hunt, and our heroes will find themselves alongside a small army of sellswords.

From the very start the hunt seems cursed: the weather is bad, the locals terrified and many of the mercenaries themselves start losing their vigour. Several grow sick, others disappear in the night.

A few are even found dead. The power of the devil is great and soon the first hunters will desert. Count Helidan grows ever more desperate, pushing his remaining men harder and harder to find and kill the beast.

The devil is extremely smart and it knows the forest well. Its creatures strike from all directions, its magic clouding the senses of the hunters, picking them off one by one. And it has allies within the villages...

There is a secret cult, the "Sons of Peace", led by a merchant named Shelver. They have decided to side with the devil, for they are sure that it cannot be beaten and hope that their families will be spared. Thus they are sending information to the creature with a mystical talisman that allows communication, and they are actively sabotaging the hunt with rumours, thefts, even poison.

Caught between this horrible creature on one side and the treacherous villagers on the other both Count Helidan and our heroes might not get out of Korrenwald alive.

99. SPOILS FROM THE BEYOND

LOW LEVEL AVERAGE ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

Our heroes are drawn to the village of Erlenferry by rumours of a strange man cheaply selling excellent weapons and armour. They might even see a piece someone else bought and notice the strange flamelike symbols engraved upon it.

After arriving in Erlenferry our heroes will soon find out that the merchant, a weasel – like, nervous little man calling himself Kane, has gone into hiding. And he apparently had good reason to do so, for there is a holy knight in town, an angry giant named Sir Naru, who has taken a close look at the weapons and armour sold here and decided that they must have been taken from the graves of an ancient local tribe. Grave robbing is not an occupation that the church looks kindly upon...

Sir Naru will offer to pay our heroes quite handsomely if they can track down this "Kane" and find proof of his crimes.

Finding the weasly creature is not too much of a problem. Several farmers have spotted him heading east into the hills and he does not have the skill to hide his tracks. Soon our heroes will navigate the rocky terrain and find the hidden entrance to an old burrow. There are still a few primitive traps protecting the tunnels leading down into the burial chambers, for Kane has left them untouched. He has moved ahead, looking for more fine equipment to sell. What he has found however, is major trouble.

Kane is in significant danger, for the dead bodies he has robbed are returning to life...and they are eager to not only take revenge upon the criminal, but to also find and reclaim their weapons and armour.

Our heroes will be chased back to the village by hundreds of angry corpses, most of which still have a significant number of weapons. Kane might die along the way, but even if he does the undead will not hesitate to attack Erlenferry. Our heroes will only have a few short hours to prepare the people and Sir Naru for what is coming.

100. THE APEX OF EVIL

EPIC LEVEL LONG ADVENTURE, FOCUS ON COMBAT, INVESTIGATION,
EXPLORATION AND DIPLOMACY

The whole realm shakes in terror as a series of horrible calamities hits many villages. Buildings are burned, local militia slain by the dozens, civilians harmed in all kinds of painful ways. Some of the assailants are strangers, but others seem to be well – known criminals who have managed to obtain dangerous magical powers! The realm is on high alert and the army protects all major cities. Sadly these attacks seem to be focused on smaller settlements, and locals are suffering!

Our heroes will soon get involved in one of these attacks, as a nefarious highwayman by the name of Dermes strikes against the population of a medium – sized village. The bounty on Dermes' head is significant, but far from sufficient to express the danger he poses: this criminal moves faster than the eye can see, and his hands twist shadows into weapons capable of piercing even the sturdiest armour! Even if taken alive Dermes refuses to talk...until he suddenly starts bleeding from his ears and sinks to the ground, dead. Taking a close look at the body reveals a fairly fresh scar at the nape of the neck, and potentially a strange piece of extremely hard wood buried under the skin there. This wood is clearly the focus point of powerful magic, although it is already dissipating.

It will soon become apparent that all the criminals who have developed these powers – and there are dozens of them within the realm, from simple yet aggressive tavern brawlers to deranged serial killers – are carrying such a piece of wood within their bodies. This wood is part of a massive petrified tree, hidden in a cave deep under the King's Forest. This is the resting place of a demigod of nature, a creature calling itself Apex. For many centuries it has watched the rise of civilisation. It has seen the evil in men, how they wound and kill one another...but it has also seen the destruction they can unleash upon animals, plants and the land itself. After much deliberation Apex has decided to destroy humanity to save the world, and do so by using its most evil members against it. Thus its agents – young spirits of the wilds and unusually intelligent animals – have sought out criminals and other dangerous people, keeping an eye on them. Recently Apex was ready to put its plan into motion and it has offered a piece of the tree that contains its own magic to dozens of the most ruthless and destructive men and women it could find. Now this calamity threatens to destroy the realm, for once all the small villages and towns are obliterated or all farmers forced to run for the safety of the cities there will be nobody there to tend the fields. Starvation will follow soon...and Apex has also prepared to unleash some potent magical diseases into the weakened crowds.

In but a few short years most of mankind will be dead and the few that are left will no longer pose a significant threat to nature. Thus the land will be safe.

