THE CRYING BLADES ALMANACS

THE TALL WITCH INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE

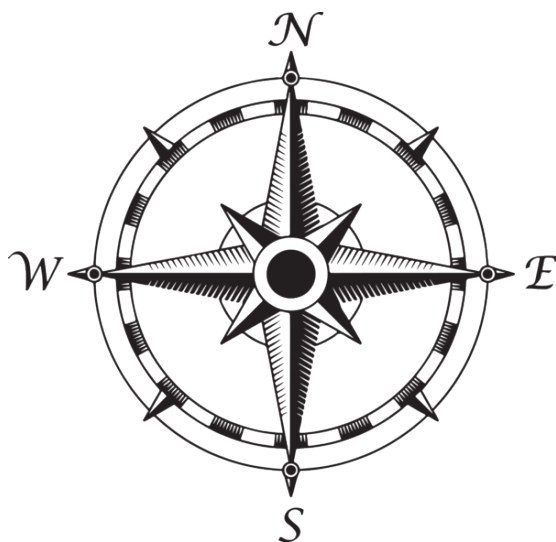## DAIMON GAMES

Summary

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD

The Tall Witch is a small adventure for OSR RPGs, built as a sort of list of encounters/combats, with a minimalistic approach in terms of background story.

All its elements could be inserted in a more complex framework, or recycled as parts of different adventures/stories.

It was written with images from W. Heath Robinson in mind (as you can see in the credits, most of the artwork is his).

ILLUSTRATIONS

The artwork used in the book is in public domain:

• Harry Clarke* 2
• Other Public Domain images from various artists* 1, 9, 11, 15
• Piranesi* 26
• W. Heath Robinson* 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23

OTHER NOTES

If you'd like to know more about The Crying Blades, you can check a free preview on RpgNow.

The Crying Blades is an OSR fantasy roleplaying game, built on the fundation of the tradition and with a few innovations and twists. It was inspired mostly by Lamentations of the Flame Princess and by Swords & Wizardry, but many other games also had a significant influence on the design, from WhiteHack to BlackHack, from Dungeon World to Fate.

So far, two manuals (out of three) have been released:
• Volume One: Characters & Basics
• Volume Two: Sorcery & Blessings

If you'd like to start with something easier and faster, there's also The Crying Hack - based on David Black's "The Black Hack".

It's less than 20 pages and offers a fast rules compendium for some quick dungeon crawling:
• The Crying Hack

Many thanks also to those who made so far comments and suggestions about the adventure.

How the adventure location looks like:

THE TALL WITCH

According to the local legends, the Tall Witch is reborn every 333 years in this place; reborn of a single large egg, daughter of a sea-serpent and a devil. She's born already adult and trained in the arts of witchcraft.

The Tall Witch is a symbol of destruction and despair for the local population.

When the Tall Witch is free to roam this county, farm animals turn savage, cultivated fields fill up with wild trees and bushes, the youngest disappear in the woods to live a dissolute life of unimaginable sins, and the oldest give in to their bestial lusts or desire for revenge... and chaos ensues. So the wicked egg **must be destroyed**, before the Tall Witch is born. The local priest has already identified **the location of the egg**: at the base of the cliff south of the village, there's a large, white rounded rock. It looks like a rock, but that's the egg. The villagers will provide pikes, axes, and any other similar tools. But the egg must be for sure guarded by other malignant entities...

Below is what they say about the Tall Witch, if you ask around in the village (roll once for each 2 characters).

d10	True/False	Rumor as told by the villagers
1	F	The Tall Witch spits poison and confuses your mind
2	T	The egg is protected by lying, evil human witches
3	T	There's another witch in the area, unrelated to the Tall Witch
4	T	She's indeed taller than 12 feet (three and a half meters), although she looks human, and she's especially vulnerable to silver blades
5	F	There's a kind spirit in the waters at the base of the cliff
6	T	The witches often find a way to infect or curse adventurers
7	T	The egg's shell is surely magical and might be used for sorcery
8	T/F	The priest is not telling the whole truth (depends on what you'll roll for the adventure finale with the Tall Witch; roll ahead of time if needed)

Table 1: Rumors' Table

If the characters approach from the main road, before they reach the cliff they will meet **Asteria**: she's dressed in a simple robe and will appear next to them after what looks like a normal encounter roll.

Asteria is dressed in a simple white robe – a bit too clean and too white for a farm girl – and has a purple flower in her hair. She speaks gently, and asks the characters to help her with her mule, with a broken leg, just out that way in the fields.

If the characters agree to help, Asteria will lead them into supernatural **quicksands**: every one failing a Save on Dex will begin to sink. Characters will sink legs, torso, then completely; every some time (a turn? every other combat round?) ask another Save on Dex and make them climb out or sink down one level (legs, torso, head) for each success (climb out) or failure (sink).

If the characters have their legs sunk, they cannot move but can fight if Asteria is close enough. If the characters have their torso submerged, they cannot fight but all their efforts must be focused in trying to escape the quicksand.

If a character fails another Save after the head has started to sink, they're dead.

Within the quicksand are several **bloodthirsty leeches**; every time a Save on Dex is rolled (success or fail doesn't matter), one sinks their teeth into the body of the character and begins to suck blood. If the character makes it out alive of the quicksand, they loose 1 HP for every 2 leeches attached to them, but will be able to remove them or burn them away easily.

Also, roll a d10 and if the result is equal or lower than the number of leeches, the character is infected. Roll on the random infection table.

If the characters do not agree to help, Asteria will simply attack them as soon as they turn their back on her.

She will also begin to chant a spell to generate quicksand where the characters stand: this takes two full combat round. In the meanwhile, Asteria can fight but not use other magic.

Asteria is always able to move freely on the quicksand as if it was regular ground, as long as she wears **the purple flower** in her head.

The flower is indeed magical and has precisely this power and only this power: it grants the wearer or carrier the capability to ignore quicksand or any other treacherous ground.

For the first 2 rounds she'll cast a quicksand spell if the characters didn't follow her. After that, or if she's free to cast, she will act as follows each round - roll 1d6:

1) Attack with nails (10% chance to cause an infection)

2) Attack with dagger and nails (2 attacks, 10% chance infection w/nails)

3) Cast blood-leeches: springing from her mouth, 1d6 of them inflicting each 1 HP damage, ignore armor

4) Cast pain-scream: makes your skin crawl, inflict 1d8 damage non-lethal, reduce HP at most to 1 and recover it 1 point per round

5) Curse: roll a random infection on the infection table, Save vs. magic to avoid the effects

6) Attack just with the dagger

All of the infections below might be caused by the bite of leeches or by spells.

If they are caused by leeches, they heal automatically the next day and can be cured by Cure Disease or similar spells.

If they are caused a curse or a spell, they can first of all be resisted by a successful Save against Magic. If the Save fails, the effects will last up to three days, but the character is allowed a daily Save against Magic to remove the effect. The cursed infection can also be cured with Remove Curse or similar blessings.

d6	Infection
1	Fevers: tremors reduce Dex by 5 points
2	Blurred vision: lose Initiative, cannot use ranged weapons
3	Fear of water: must Save vs Wisdom to enter water
4	Confusion: reduce Int and Wis by 4 points each
5	Weakness: reduce allowed encumbrance by 1/3
6	Hunger: must consume double rations

Table 2: Infections' Table

If the characters approach from the sea (by boat or similar) or from the beach, before they reach the cliff they will meet **Maetherya**: she's Asteria's half-sister and is only half-human.

She's a sea-witch and guards the egg from those approaching from the water. She's dressed with a strange robe which seems to be sewn in algae, and stays in the water very close to the cliff. When she moves, the characters can clearly see that half her body is human (the top half) but cannot really see if the bottom half is human or marine.

While Asteria's has spoken to the characters to fool them, Maetherya is less subtle. She'll try to lure the characters close to her by pretending to be a drowning woman, but won't persist in her masquerade for very long.

If the characters suspect anything or move close enough, she'll just attack them. Although she will stay in the water and fight there, she can move on the ground too.

Maetherya's stats:
AC 15
Move: fast (150') in water (slow, 90', out of water... but she's always in water)
HD 4+1 (16 HP)
Attacks (2): coral dagger (1d6) and nails (1d4)
Morale: d12 vs target number 6
Save: 13 (roll under)
Special: she will try to drag characters in the water, and she can try to do it with any successful attack; reduce the damage inflicted to zero and drag instead the character to the water. The character is allowed a Save on Dex to escape her grip, but in that case they suffer 1 HP damage.

What happens when she moves on the ground is that a magical poll of sea water sort of follows her everywhere she goes: therefore she's always in water. If she's killed, the poll remains and will never dry up (regardless of how much water is extracted); this water is salty, though, and basically useless.
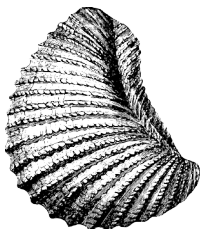
If a character is dragged into the water, or falls in the water in proximity of Maetherya, other marine creatures will attack, evoked by Maetherya.

Note that this roll applies also if Maetherya succeeds to drag a character in the magic water poll that follows her on the ground.

Roll a d6 for each character in the water, and re-roll for every round spent in the water (different creatures will respond to Maetherya's call and will crowd the waters around the characters and their boat):

1) 1d4 crabs attack the character each round, each inflicting 1 damage

2) A single large crab inflicting 3 HP damage

3) Poison algae wrap around the character's legs: 2 HP damage and roll for a random 25% chance of a random infection

4) Acid algae wrap around the character's torso: 2 HP damage and all armor looses 1 AC per round (at zero, armor is completely lost)

5) An enormous squid grabs the character's legs: Save on strength successfully for 2 rounds to get free, fail twice in a row and be dragged underwater (use your drowning rules or the houserules to the side). Also, every failed Save drains 1d4 HP in exhaustion; maximum down to 1 HP left

6) Violent waves smash the character against the rocks or the boat, for 1d6 damage

If a character wears metal armor, reduce the damage described above by 1 point each time.

On the other hand, metal armor increases the chances of drowning.

If a character is dragged into the water **but does not wear metal armor**, and as long as Maetherya or one of her creatures do not actively try to make them drown, the character can spend a round to make an action like swimming to grab the boat or reach the shore.

Getting back onto the boat requires a Save on Dex to avoid tipping the boat with all other characters on it, but from the boat the character can attack again.

If the characters are fighting from the shore, getting back on solid ground allows the character to fight Maetherya again, and requires no Save rolls.
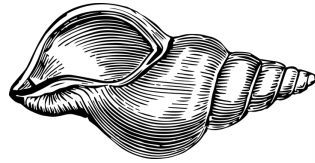
Hourserules For Drowning

If the character is wearing metal armor, though, falling into the water brings a serious chance of drowning.

This applies also if a marine creature is attacking the character to try to drag them underwater (like the squid).

So, if the character wears metal armor or fails the Save on strength twice against the squid, **start the drowning countdown**: roll a Save on Strength every round, and every failed attempt:
- Reduces the Save score of the character by 3 and
- Inflicts 1d4 HP loss from exhaustion

When HP reaches zero or less, the character drowns.

Every successful Save attempt grants to the character an action next round, but does not stop the drowning process.

The character might cast a spell, try to attack the marine creature, do something... but is still drowning.

The only way to stop the process is to use the free action to reach the boat or to reach the shore. Because of the metal armor or marine creature attack, **it will take by default two rounds** (or more, depending on the character's position) to reach safety.

After the first free action is performed, though, remember that the character **needs to Save again** to gain another action. The progress made so far is not lost if the character fails the next Save, but the drowning process continues.

Remember that by default the boat or the shore are two rounds away (two actions, two successful Saves).

Regardless of which side the characters approach the cliff, they will be able to spot the which they didn't fight against (Asteria or Maetherya) but remain unseen.

Of course, this is possible only if the fight was fought "normally"; abuse of supernatural powers or usage of fire weapons, very loud spells or methods of dispatching the guardian witch, will cause the other witch to be alert and welcome the characters with another fight as they approach the cliff.

If instead things proceeded normally enough, the characters can either climb up the cliff undetected by Asteria or Maetherya, or even be able to attack them by surprise if they wish.

Once the characters reach the cliff, they will immediately notice a large circle of pressed sand, where the large rock or egg was sitting until recently. Somehow, it has been moved.

There's a visible set of footprints going up a narrow path, which seems to lead up the cliff. The footprints are of small boots, probably belonging to a woman.

When the characters reach the top of the cliff, a third witch is there to welcome them. She's called **Vetora** and she is **not** here to defend the egg.

If the characters will manage to speak to her and somehow gain a little of her trust, and will not attack her on sight, she might reveal that she's here for the egg - but she wants to destroy it too.

In fact, Vetora does not care for the Tall Witch; she actually wants to keep the villagers quiet so she can keep working on her witchcraft, and she needs a fragment of the egg's shell for one of her rituals.

If the characters do not fight her, in the end she will reveal that she needs the fragments of the egg's shell for a teleportation spell.

Vetora appears as a pale, young lady, wearing an elegant dress completely inappropriate for the hard climbing of the cliff. Her boots are covered in sand and mud, and the bottom of the dress is ripped and dirty. She has an easy smile, sweet eyes, a precious necklace (worth at least 1d4x100 coins) and carries with her a bronze sculpture of the head of a child.

She calls the bronze head **Kiro**, and Kiro appears to be somehow sentient and able to respond to her. Kiro speaks alternating the voices of a young child and of an old woman, but his personality remains the same regardless of the voice: it's the personality of a capricious child of the age of three, but with hints of precocious intelligence. Kiro can magically sense the alignment and intentions of the characters and will immediately inform Vetora - in one of his loud voices - of what the characters plot to do.

> Vetora's stats:
> AC 13
> Move: normal (120')
> HD 3+2 (13 HP)
> Attacks (2): silver dagger +1 (1d4+1) and Kiro's head (1d4)
> Morale: d12 vs target number 6
> Save: 14 (roll under)
> Special: Kiro will keep her informed of the characters intentions and therefore Vetora always wins Initiative. She swings the bronze head as a mace and the child's head can bite viciously.

Vetora is not a fighter and has no intention of confronting the characters in any violent way.

If the characters kill her or somehow manage to obtain her possessions:

- **Kiro, the bronze head**, will refuse to speak to anyone except another female sorcerer; to a female sorcerer Kiro might be a useful ally, but it requires 1 HP of blood every day to maintain its power of being able to read alignment and intentions of people nearby

- **The dagger** is a +1 silver weapon
- **The necklace** is worth at least 1d4x100 coins
- **The dress** is magical and grants a +2 to Charisma to anyone wearing it (even a male character)

Also, Vetora is the only NPC in the area that will be able to reveal to the characters the magical power of the egg's shell, if it comes to that (see The Egg section of the adventure).

The Last Witch

When the characters reach the top of the cliff, they will find a third witch tasked with the protection of the Tall Witch. This witch looks even younger than Asteria and Maetherya; she carries a large sack and appears like a common villager, but the characters won't be easily fooled at this point. In the sack, she carries a bunch of egg shell's fragments, covered in a green slime, and warm to the touch.

The witch's name is **Xura**, and she's carrying away the Tall Witch egg's fragments. They are to be delivered to a group of older witches far from the village, so that they can begin the ritual to give birth to another Tall Witch when the time will come.

If the characters want to get their hands on the shell, they must kill Xura, because she cannot be convinced to give the egg's fragments away, not even with magic. Also, if the characters are with Vetora, she'll do everything she can to recover at least a single shell's fragment. Kiro, the bronze head, if present will immediately reveal that Xura is carrying the egg's shell.
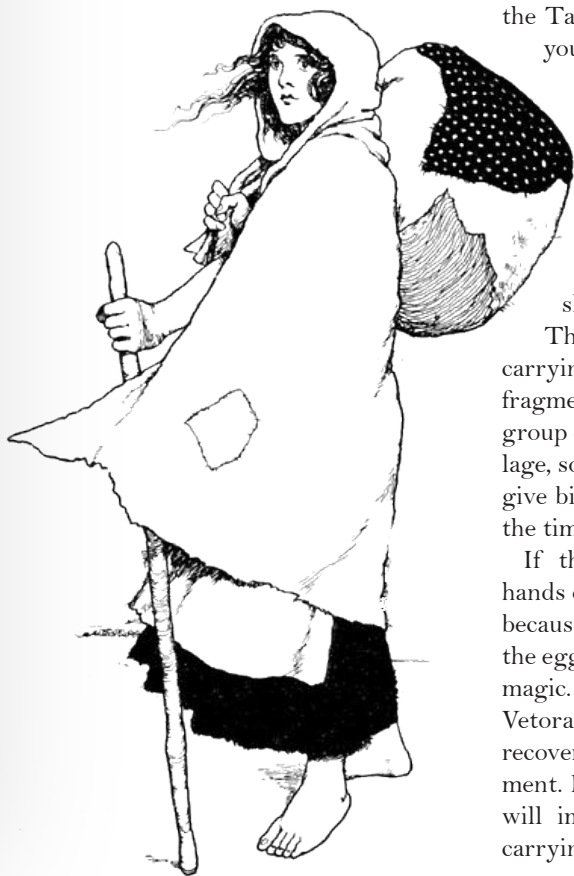
Xura appears extremely fragile, and if the characters hit the witch with their weapons, she's easily maimed.

Every blow that inflicts **3 or more HP damage**, causes a mutilation as by the table below (duplicates are allowed, i.e. cutting the second leg; when a duplicate makes no sense, go up to the next):

1) a hand (no more double attack with the staff, just one with claws, then none)

2) an arm (first the one with no hand, if possible; reduce the number of attacks if necessary)

3) a huge gash in the torso and the belly (entrails spill, fragments of broken ribs fall on the ground)

4) a foot (reduce movement speed by half)

5) half a leg (first the one with no foot, if possible; reduce movement if necessary)

6) the head (no more spells)

The witch dies when reaching 0 HP but not when the head is cut.

If possible it will continue to fight (assuming there's any attack she can perform).

But each part that is cut away **is a separate, independent entity**; it grows nails and teeth and bone-blades and flesh tentacles used to attack the characters.

As long as Xura has her head on her shoulders, she will be able to cast spells to defend herself. Every round, she will make her regular attacks (claws and staff) and then use a random spell.

The spells always work (unless you want to give it a 10% chance of failure in case also characters' spells may sometimes fail).

A **Save vs. Magic** is allowed to avoid the effects of spells 1, 2, 3.

A **Save vs Dex** is allowed to reduce damage of spell 4 by half.

1) **Charm**: the target character will not attack the witch this round

2) **Light**: a blinding light forces the character to skip the next 2 combat rounds

3) **Weakness**: the target character inflicts at most 1d4 damage for the next 2 rounds

4) **Spark**: a silver spark strikes the target for 1d6+1 damage

5) **Protection**: the witch gains +2 AC and +2 to all Saves for the next 2 rounds (does not cumulate)

6) **Cure**: the witch regains 1d4+1 hit points

THE EGG

If the characters defeat Xura or somehow get rid of her but put their hands on her sack, they'll find inside the fragments of the Tall Witch's egg.

In case Vetora is with them, she will bargain to keep the entire content of the sack, offering her necklace and dagger in exchange (the first worth 1d4x100 coins and the second worth 80 coins - being silver and +1).

She cannot be convinced, however, to part with the head of Kiro.

If the characters do not accept the deal, she will make other offers, until she obtains at least half of the sack. She came for this, and she desperately wants it. But she will not put a price on the head of Kiro, and if facing odds very much against her, she will not attack the characters (she might come back, though, in some other adventure, to try to get her hands on the shell of this precious egg).

The egg is magical and can be sold, in fragments, to sorcerers and witches. If the characters have the appropriate connections, they can sell the pieces (depending on how much of the content of the sack they obtained) for up to **4d100 coins**.

If instead they sell on a general and poorer market (for example in a small city and to general merchants, not those shady ones dealing with magical artifacts), they can obtain at most **4d20 coins**.

There is **a single very large piece** that Vetora will propose the characters will keep, while she holds to the smaller but more numerous fragments.

This large piece can be used for an instantaneous teleportation spell by any sorcerer or cleric, just by concentrating for one Turn.

The fragment allows one of these two teleport actions:
- Travel in an instant, as a group, to the Eternal City (fun dungeons ahead to plan for the GM)
- Travel to an already known location, but at most for 3 characters

If the fragment is used for the teleport spell, it then disappears (travel from the Eternal City back to civilization will be up to the characters).

THE TALL WITCH

When you reach the adventure's finale, you need roll for the Tall Witch's situation and for her motivations. This section is random so that no player could know in advance what to expect, including the GM. If for any reason the characters have the chance to discover information about the Tall Witch's situation or motivation, then roll and stick to those results when you get to the finale.

Roll a d4 for **the situation** and a d6 for **her motivation**, and for those of the priest and the villagers that sent the characters on this mission.

The motivation:

1) The priest is indeed of Good alignment and the Tall Witch is Evil (or anyway a malignant force, dangerous to humans), and so were the witches protecting her (not all witches are, but these, yes)

2) The priest is not a good man at all (Neutral and greedy of control over the local population) but saw it right about the Tall Witch (she's Evil and more dangerous than him)

3) The priest and the Tall Witch can be considered both of Neutral alignment but with conflicting objectives: the priest believes in order without being a maniac, the Tall Witch might be persuaded to bring her existential chaos somewhere else

4) The priest and the Tall Witch can be considered both of Neutral alignment but the Witch cannot be persuaded to move away; the characters must kill her or find a way to make the priest to accept her presence

5) The priest is considered to be of Neutral alignment while the Tall Witch is definitely a force of Good: she's not about to bring chaos but restore harmony in the area. The priest and the local population, though, fear her and it won't be easy for them to accept her

6) The priest is definitely a force of Evil; he represents the oppressive order of the church and actively tries to subdue the local women while the Tall Witch is a Good force of nature, born of the women's desire for freedom

The situation:

1) The egg was broken by Xura by mistake while moving it; remove half the Hit Points from the Tall Witch and use a d4 instead of d6 for spells

2) The egg hatched ahead of time: remove 1d10 (5) HP and roll d6-1 for spells (on a 1, no spell)

3) The Tall Witch is ready; use the regular stats

4) The Tall Witch is enraged by the characters climbing on her sacred ground; add a d10 (5) Hit Points and all damage inflicted by the Tall Witch is +1, if it comes to combat

> *The Tall Witch's stats:*
> *AC 14*
> *Move: fast (150')*
> *HD 5+4 (22 HP)*
> *Attacks (2): huge branch used as a club (1d10) and giant fist (1d6)*
> *Morale: will not retreat*
> *Save: 11 (roll under)*
> *Special: as alternative to one attack, she can cast a random spell. Remember that depending on her situation she will roll a regular d6 to determine the random spell, or a d4 (broken egg) or a d6-1 (hatched ahead of time)*

The Tall Witch appears to the characters emerging from a little pond of rain water on the top of the cliff, grabbing the branch of a tree to steady herself. She wears an ornate dress and is indeed as tall as she was described by the rumors, and has a clearly supernatural aura about her.

If you rolled 1 or 2 for her motivation (she's of Evil alignment) she won't hesitate to attack the characters or threaten them or try to persuade them to leave her alone (also depending on her situation: is she weak or enraged?).

If instead you rolled 3 or 4 (she's of Neutral alignment) she will first of all try to negotiate with the characters. She will not hesitate to fight back, though: she must accomplish her task (whatever that is) and the characters might be able to persuade her to go away only if her motivation roll result was a 3.

If you rolled 5 or 6 (she's of Good alignment) she will definitely not begin a possible conversation with a hostile approach, and even if there's a fight, she will give one chance to the characters to stop fighting and instead resume talks of peace. But even if she's of Good alignment, she has her own pur-pose to accomplish (restore harmony or free the local women); if the characters try to force to desist they will be met by her violent resistance.

The spells always work (unless you want to give it a 10% chance of failure in case also characters' spells may sometimes fail).

A **Save vs Dex** is allowed to avoid the effects of spells 1, 2 and 3.

A **Save vs. Magic** is allowed to avoid the effects of spell 4.

Spells 5 and 6 allow no Saves.

1) **Voice thunder**: push an adversary out of melee with a thunderous scream. The target must save vs dex or suffer 1d4 damage. Determine the target character randomly (if the fight is next to the pond, close to the edge of the cliff, there's a 10% chance the character will fall from the cliff in the sea below, for 1d8 damage and risking to drown)

2) **White Fire**: the tree branch used as club is engulfed in white flames; Save vs. Dex or receive 1d12 damage and loose 1 attack next round (if the character has 1 attack, skip the round)

3) Acid Tears: the Tall Witch shoots acid tears from the eyes; they have 50% chance to inflict 1 point of AC damage on every character that is close enough this round to be in melee (roll independently for each character). If the character suffers 1 AC damage, subtract 1 point to the AC value of any shield (first) or amor (second). If a shield or armor looses all AC, they are broken for good, otherwise they can be repaired at the end of the adventure. If the character has no shield nor armor, they suffer 1 HP damage

4) Strong Charm: the target character will not attack the witch this round, but another character or ally at random

5) Grow size: the Tall Witch grows visibly in size, and gains +2 AC and +2 to all Saves (cumulate at most twice)

6) Healing waters: as long as the Tall Witch remains inside her pond, she regains 1d4 HP per round (the spell lasts 3 consecutive rounds)
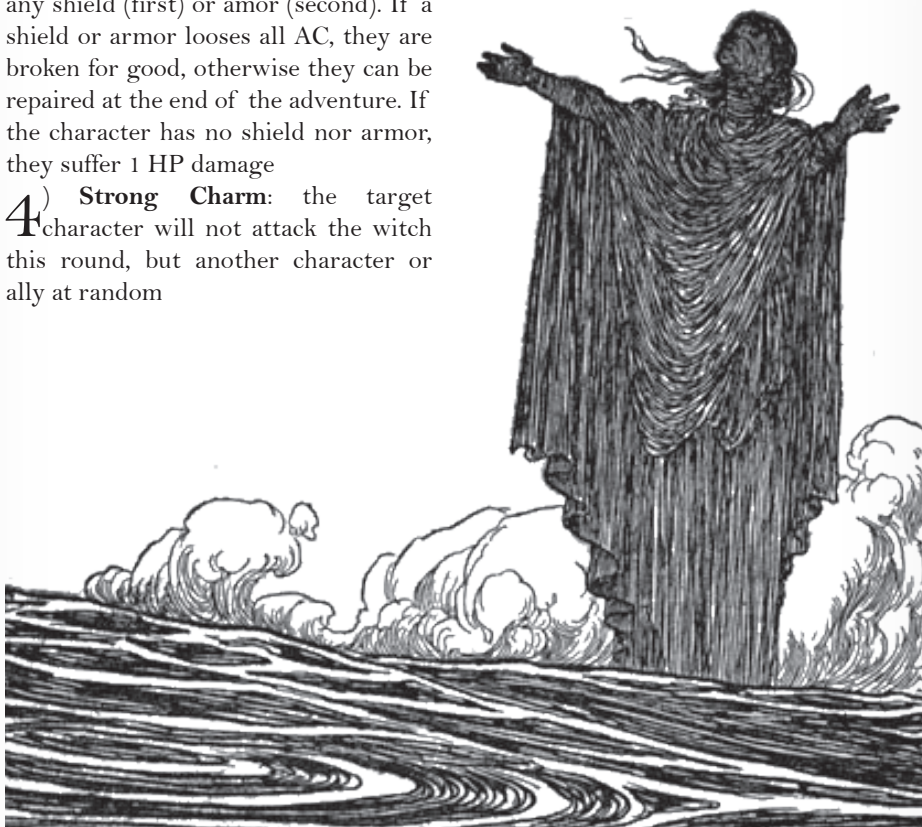
Once the characters have defeated or somehow solved the situation, the villagers might offer additional compensation, besides allowing them to keep whatever treasure they have collected from the witches.

If the characters ask for money, the villagers have just 3d20 coins to offer.

The priest might add one random blessed item, from the list to the side. Each item can cast its magic just once:

1) A blessed chalice that turns any sort of liquid into water and honey worth 3 rations

2) A blessed staff that can cast Cure Light Wounds (regain 1d6+1 HP)

3) A simple shield (worth a regular +1 AC bonus) that allows to re-roll a failed Saving Throw against Magic

4) A silver cross that works like Turn Undead by a 2nd Level Cleric (turn 1d6+2 HD of undeads)

SILENCE
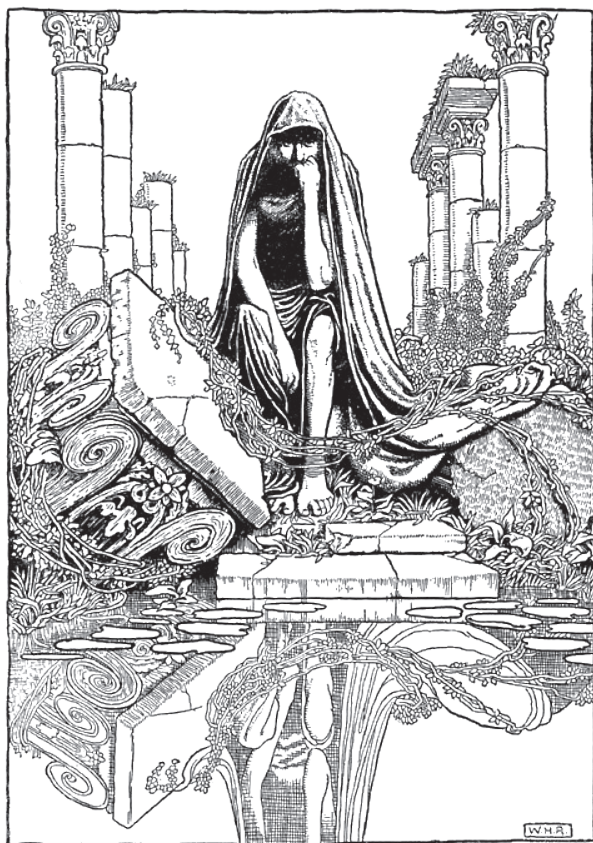
This appendix provides you with a few sample NPCs to populate the village in case you need to play a few scenes there, especially if the characters will try to convince the priest and the locals to accept the Tall Witch as a benigne force. There are basic stats for commoners and for the priest but this doesn't mean that the scenes must resolve necessarily in a violent encounter. But if the characters want to negotiate on behalf of the Tall Witch, they must be ready to answer the priest's and villager's concerns.

Villager' stats:
AC 10
Move: normal (120')
HD 1+1 (4 HP)
Attack: improvised weapons (1d4)
Morale: d10 vs target number 6
Save: 9 (roll under)
Special: one out of three villagers will be better suited to combat; use this
AC 12
HD 1+3 (6 HP)
Attack: axe or sword (1d6)
Morale: d12 vs target number 6
Save: 11 (roll under)

APPENDIX

Priest's stats:
AC 10
Move: normal (120')
HD 2+1 (8 HP)
Attack: dagger (1d4)
Morale: d20 vs target number 6
Save: 12 (roll under)
Special: the priest is a level 2 cleric with the possibility to use, instead of an attack, up to three blessings a day. Roll a d6 or decide which blessing he's using (blessings 7 and 8 are available but will not probably be used in combat, so roll just a d6)

The priest's blessings:

1) **Charm**: the target character will not attack the priest this round
2) **Cure**: the priest regains 2 HP this round and 1 HP next round
3) **Bless**: 1d4 villagers gain + 1 AC, +1 to attack (to hit and to damage)
4) **Protection**: the priest gains +1 AC and +2 to all Saves
5) **Invisibility**: the priest becomes invisible for 1d4 rounds; while unseen he can try to escape but becomes visible again if hit or if attacking someone
6) **Silence**: the area around the priest becomes silent and no spells can be used (unless the caster can use magic without speaking)
7) **Courage**: all the villagers will not retreat in front of the characters if this is used before combat
8) **Dark curse**: if used before the fight, the first two characters hit by the dagger lose 1 HP permanently, from current and maximum HP (Save vs. Magic is allowed to avoid this)

By giving to your NPCs (mostly villagers, but also the priest) some specific characteristics, you'll make them appear real rather than just a block of boring numbers.

You don't need to roll on every table for all the NPCs. Just start with something common (table 3) or maybe with an attitude (table 4) or what they see about them (table 5).

d6	Common features
1	Poor clothing
2	Bad smell
3	Long hair or beard
4	Fancy hat
5	Trusting
6	Diffident

Table 3: Start an NPC

d6	Attitude
1	Rude
2	Silent
3	Diffident
4	Trusting
5	Friendly
6	Scared

Table 4: NPC's Initial Attitudes

d6	Common tools or gear
1	A warm coat
2	Beautiful boots
3	Artisan tools
4	A dagger
5	A whip
6	1d20 coins

Table 5: NPCs' Common Tools

d6	Uncommon traits
1	Something missing
2	Too old
3	A twin
4	Too young
5	Seductive
6	Something precious

Table 6: NPCs' Uncommon Traits

d6	Uncommon attitude
1	Doesn't really listen
2	Easy to violence
3	Looking for an escape
4	Speaks too much
5	Ready to retreat or betray
6	Seems to know too much

Table 7: NPCs' Uncommon Attitudes

d6	What's in their past
1	Veteran of a war
2	A hidden treasure
3	Lost their family
4	Has seen monsters
5	Something against the priest
6	A lost love

Table 8: NPCs' Noteworthy Backgrounds

Use then table 6 (Uncommon traits) if you need to give the NPC a quirk, something special, something out of the ordinary. As an alternative to using table 6, feel free to make up your own trait but select something that is in contrast with what you would expect as a normal trait.

Make a stinky but beautiful vagabond, a butcher with delicate hands, an angry priest with an angelic face and voice, a rude but generous woman, and so on.

LICENSE

OPEN GAME CONTENT

Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of the Open Game License Version 1.0a (OGL). This entire work is designated as Open Game Content under the OGL, with the exception of Product Identity.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3.Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5.Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6.Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright

date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathon Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. System Reference Document © 2000-2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, John D. Rateliff, Thomas Reid, James Wyatt, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Modern System Reference Document © 2002–2004, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Bill Slavicsek, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Charles Ryan, Eric Cagle, David Noonan, Stan!, Christopher Perkins, Rodney Thompson, and JD Wiker, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, Peter Adkison, Bruce R. Cordell, John Tynes, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker.

Swords & Wizardry Core Rules, © 2008, Matthew J. Finch.

Lamentations of the Flame Princess: Weird Fantasy Role-Playing Player Core Book: Rules & Magic © 2013 LotFP, author James Edward Raggi IV.

BlackHack, Copyright 2016, David Black.

WhiteHack 2nd Edition, Copyright 2015, Christian Mehrstam.

Open Content: All text not specified as Product Identity.

Product Identity: design and The Crying Blades, Eternal City and Infinite City names and concepts.