

LONE WOLF

ADVENTURE GAME

ADVENTURES OF THE KAI



JOE DEVER AND CUBICLE 7

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CONTENTS

How to use this Book	4	The Shining Wood	39
INTRODUCTION	4	The Leprous Grove	39
What's this Adventure About?	6	Muckmarsh Flats	39
Adventure Synopsis	6	Independent Longhouses	40
FOR RICHER, FOR POORER	6	Random Events	40
Scene One The Wedding	7	River Events	40
A Mission to the South	7	Wildlands Events	42
Along the Way	7	Scene Three The Long Fang Tribe	46
The Village of Maura	7	Meeting with the Long Fangs	46
Bandit Attack!	8	Meeting with the Queen	47
Making their Escape	9	Scene Four The Ruins of Fort Harding	47
Scene Two Searching for a Husband	11	Lair of the River King	48
Asking about the Bandits	12	The Storehouse	49
Into the Wilds	12	The Barracks	49
Encounters along the Way	12	The Encampment	49
Forest Encounters	12	The King's Hall	50
Mountain Encounters	13	The King's Private Room	51
Scene Three The Complexities of Love	14	Concluding the Adventure	51
Entering the Mine	15	What's this Adventure About?	53
The Bandit Hideout	16	Adventure Synopsis	53
Talking to Tareth	16	ON THE WINGS OF DARKNESS	53
Revelation	17	Scene One Feast for the Crows	54
Scene Four Blood and Gold	18	Barias Thorn, Investigator	54
A New Regime	20	Finding Nyssa	55
The Pale Mask's Hidden Lair	20	Betrayal and Blood	58
Into the Caves	21	Scene Two Dread in Hitchford	58
Scene Five To Stand or Fall	22	Den of Iniquity	59
A Deadly Warning	24	The Barkeeper's Rumours	61
Battle for the Village	25	Corvid Confrontation	62
Ending the Adventure	25	Parting of Ways	64
Gold and Games	26	Scene Three The Awoken Dead	64
What's this Adventure About?	26	House Ternan	64
RIVER PIRATES OF THE DORN	28	Scene Four A Murder of Crows	69
Scene One Welcome to Ragadorn	29	The Bleak House of Oldan Krall	70
The Situation at Fort Harding	29	CREATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES	75
Scene Two To the Fort!	31	Getting Started	76
The Wildlands	31	Choose a Goal	77
Scene 2a The River Route	31	Choose a Path	80
The Rapids	33	Putting it All Together	83
Blue Fens	33	Never Assume	85
The Great Cataract	34	WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS	85
Look-out Rock	34	Listen to your Players	86
Scene 2b The Overland Route	35	Adjusting the Adventure	87
Bubbling Fields	35	Always Have a Plan B	87
Cracked Badlands	36	Random Adventure Elements Charts	88
Grey Flats	37	Random NPC Charts	92
Haunted Pillars	37	Adventure Location Chart	93
Lost Creek	38	INDEX	94
Mud Geysers	38		
Salt Creek	38		



INTRODUCTION

“The river rapids roar up ahead, threatening to dash your raft against the sharp rocks. Through the spray you can see that the river forks in two. To the left, you hear the cry of some terrible beast. To the right, you can make out the silhouette of River Pirates, waiting in ambush.

What do you do next?”

Welcome to **Adventures of the Kai**, three epic new adventures for you and your Players to embark upon! These adventures take the intrepid Kai Lords deep into the aptly named Wildlands, south to Ruanon in pursuit of fearsome bandits, and to Toran where they'll need all their wits about them to solve a mysterious murder.

This book contains three new adventures:

For Richer, For Poorer – Guests of honour at a wedding, the Kai Lords must save the day when the groom is kidnapped by bandits! But as they give pursuit, they find out it might not be quite so straightforward at it seems...

River Pirates of the Dorn – A Sommlending expedition into the Wildlands has gone missing. The Kai Lords must trek deep into the wilderness to find out what has befallen it, in the process stumbling into the machinations of the ambitious River King!

On Wings of Darkness – A tragic chain of events is unleashed when the Kai Lords investigate a gruesome murder. They must hurry to halt a strange new supernatural foe before all of Sommerlund is imperilled.

But that's not all, for the book also includes plenty of helpful advice for how to write an adventure of your own, as well as techniques and tips for what to do when things go awry!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you've played through the adventures in the *Book of Kai Legends* (in your **Lone Wolf Adventure Game** box set), you use these adventures in exactly the same way. Just get your Players to grab the same Kai Lords they used before, and start playing your next adventure! If you've not played the adventures in the *Book of Kai Legends*, you might be better off starting with those first before playing the adventures here – but it's entirely up to you!

Throughout this book, you'll see a number of different symbols beside the text:



When you see this symbol it means you should read aloud the accompanying text.



When you see this symbol it means you should ask the Players a question or prompt them to make a choice.



When you see this symbol it describes a suggested course of action or activity that the Players might attempt.



When you see this symbol it means you should use the game mechanics to resolve the outcome, and it explains how to do so.



FOR RICHER, FOR POORER



IN THIS CHAPTER

WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT
SCENE ONE: THE WEDDING
SCENE TWO: SEARCHING FOR A HUSBAND
SCENE THREE: THE COMPLEXITIES OF LOVE
SCENE FOUR: BLOOD AND GOLD
SCENE FIVE: TO STAND OR FALL
GOLD AND GAMES





CHAPTER ONE FOR RICHER, FOR POORER

For Richer, for Poorer takes the Kai into Southern Sommerlund, to the remote province of Ruanon. The Kai Lords are hunting for bandits plaguing the miners and traders of this remote region. They should have a little experience of working away from the security of the Kai Monastery, but need not be especially advanced – this is an ideal next adventure to run for Players after they have completed **Onwards 'til Morning** from the *Book of Kai Legends*.

WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT?

The roads of the Ruanon Province are frequently travelled by merchants laden with ore and other trade goods, heading towards the larger cities. Such travellers make for tempting targets for bandits and lately banditry has been on the rise. One such bandit group operates near the village of Maura, which has recently (MS 4975) become wealthy after obtaining a Royal Exemption authorising its miners to retain some of the ore (gold, copper, iron) they extract in the southern sector of the Maaken Mines. The bandits have been rather too successful with their raids; they appear to know the comings and goings of merchant traffic with unerring accuracy. They have a spy in the village, a bandit leader named Tareth. Operating undercover, Tareth sends regular reports back to his bandit allies about which merchant is headed where, and who is conveying the most valuable goods. In his undercover guise, Tareth is getting married to a girl named Hara – and this is where things get complicated.

Tareth's fellow bandits are worried at this unexpected turn of events and, assuming that Tareth is in need of rescuing from his forthcoming nuptials, stage a kidnapping, thus saving him (as they see it) from a life of mundanity. Unfortunately, Tareth is very much looking forward to married life; he has genuinely fallen in love with Hara and has vowed to give up his life of banditry. But escaping from the clutches of his fellow bandits is going to prove harder than he thought...

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure is made up of five scenes:

- **Scene One** sees the Kai in the village of Maura during a wedding. During a surprise attack by bandits the groom is kidnapped.
- **Scene Two** has the Kai set off to find the groom, tracking him across the Ruanon Forest to the bandit's lair in the Southern Durncrag Mountains.
- **Scene Three** reveals that the groom is actually the leader of the bandits and his men thought he was looking to escape the marriage. But the groom has fallen in love with his bride to be, although he cannot tell his men this. He needs the Kai help him to convince his men to give up their life of crime.
- **Scene Four** forces the Kai to make amends with the villagers and prove the bandits have changed by returning some of the stolen ore. The bandit leader knows where it is kept, a secret site owned by the person they really work for, an underworld figure known only as 'The Pale Mask'.
- **Scene Five** sees the agents of the Pale Mask come for revenge. Destroying the bandits, and the village, will further his plans to control the area. There is no time to call for aid! Can the Kai Lords bring the villagers and bandits together to save the village?



SCENE ONE THE WEDDING

A MISSION TO THE SOUTH

Read the following text to the Players when you are ready to start the adventure:



You have returned to the Kai Monastery for a well earned rest. But, for the Kai, adventure is never far away. A summons from Kai Femskurd River Blade brings you to the office of the venerable Kai Mistress, who sits behind a desk surrounded by maps and reports. She looks at each of you with her clear blue eyes, fixing you with a piercing stare.

"I need you to travel to the south, as far as Ruanon Province. The ore from the Maaken Range brings great wealth to Sommerlund, but it has always been a magnet for bandits and thieves. Lately this activity seems to have increased, and I sense a darker hand is involved. Your mission is to patrol the area and learn what you can. If you can put paid to these cowardly attacks as well, then all the better."

WHAT CAN RIVER BLADE SHARE?



The Players are to leave immediately, but they are free to ask questions of River Blade. This is a great opportunity for you to improvise some answers while encouraging the Players to roleplay! River Blade can tell them anything they need to know about the Province of Ruanon and the region of Southern Sommerlund. If the Players ask about equipment, they will all be provided with horses and a few provisions, as it will be a long journey. Mistress River Blade will remind them that they will be a

long way from the Monastery and the rest of the order. While she doesn't expect too much trouble (it is not a trip into the Darklands after all!) she reminds them they will be very much on their own.



River Blade also knows it will take several days to reach Southern Sommerlund. You might like to show the Players on their map (from the boxed set) where the Kai Monastery is and where the Province of Ruanon is. Then ask them which route they will take, and get them to plan where they might rest each night and possibly take on supplies.

ALONG THE WAY

The journey south should be an uneventful one. The heroes will be travelling on main roads and Sommerlund is a peaceful place. But you might like to pepper the journey with small encounters if they like. Here are a few ideas:

- In a bar, a local drunkard is being rude and abusive to one of the waitresses. He may need a reminder of his manners.
- A small group of bandits attacks, but they will run once they realise they have bitten off a little more than they can chew. Use the stats for Bandits on page 7 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*.
- An urchin steals something from a Kai Lord. When caught he says it is to feed his starving family. Is he telling the truth or simply playing on their sympathy?
- One of the heroes' horses hurts its leg on a hole in the road. Can the Kai find someone who can tend to the horse, or try to hire a new one?
- A local insists the Kai Lords arrest a neighbour for his behaviour. The neighbour is annoying (noisy, messy or rude) but he's no criminal. Can the Kai's diplomacy defuse a neighbourly squabble?





PLAYING RIVER BLADE

If you have played through the first adventure in the *Book of Kai Legends*, **The Lost Caravan**, then your Players will have already met Kai Femskurd River Blade. Bringing back such recurring 'background' characters throughout the Players' adventures is a great way to make them feel a part of a vibrant, living world.

River Blade is a fairly young Kai Mistress, no older than 30 years, and she retains a sense of wonderment and empathy that strike a chord with younger Kai Lords. Older Kai Skuridin may have lost this empathy after going through some particularly hard times in their lives. River Blade is tall and graceful with clear blue eyes and golden hair. Her smile brightens the cloudiest of days, as does her easy demeanour and her ready sense of humour.

ARRIVING AT MAURA

When you feel the Kai have journeyed enough, read the following text:



After a few days travelling south, you reach the welcome sight of a village on the highway to Casiorn, south of Ruanon town. The village is Maura, a small community who work in the nearby mines.

While you were hoping for a simple bed and a meal in the local inn, the Splayed Spade, you are met with a huge celebration. It seems your arrival has coincided with a wedding, one the whole village has turned out to celebrate. Before you can wonder if you are interrupting, the villagers drag you into the very centre of their festivities. The presence of Kai Lords at the wedding is taken as a great blessing and a promise for the couple's future happiness.

Like it or not, you have just become the guests of honour!

As it is a bright sunny day, the wedding is taking place in the village square. In a place where nearly everyone knows each other, the whole village has turned out to join the celebrations. In the centre of the square, several tables have been set up and heaped with all manner of harvest foods. Bread, meat, fruit and cheeses have been laid out to feed the celebrants. The Kai will be taken to meet the bride, Hara, and groom, Tareth, who sit with their families at the largest table. They will all welcome the Kai with great enthusiasm, highly excited at the blessing their presence bestows.

THE VILLAGE OF MAURA

The little town in the making that is Maura nestles in a beautiful fertile valley in the Ruanon Homelands, south of the Ruanon Forest. Decades ago the inhabitants were mainly farmers who worked on the surrounding farmsteads. Since MS 4950, the Maaken Mines have extended into the Maaken Range foothills overlooking Maura and now the inhabitants are mostly miners and prospectors. While none of them are rich, there is enough ore and work in the Maaken Mines to keep each family comfortable. The extracted ore is mostly sent to the Royal Ore-grinding & Gold Works near Ruanon Town, to be audited by the Comptroller General prior to its shipment to Holmgard. Under the terms of the Ruanon Decree of MS 4570, the Maaken Mines are Crown property and placed under Crown administration, but having started as prospectors in isolated claims before being absorbed by the Maaken Mines by Baronial Decree, the miners of Maura have been permitted to keep a substantial part of the ore they extract for themselves. That ore is traded to local merchants for a fair price.

Recently, bandit attacks have made things hard for the village. Merchants who have lost their cargoes are less keen to trade. Those who do are trading ore for fewer Gold Crowns to offset their losses. If the ore price for the villagers drops any lower, some are going to go from being comfortably off to uncomfortably hungry.

CELEBRATIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

The Players were probably not expecting to become honoured guests, but there is no law to say that the Kai cannot enjoy themselves! In fact, this may be a very good place to begin their investigations. However, there are a few more 'fun and games' that you may want to throw their way before the evening comes to a close.

The encounters during the festivities are mostly all social. They should be easily resolved with conversation and playing in character. They are designed to be fun, putting the Kai in embarrassing or difficult positions rather than threatening ones. However, don't be afraid to ask the Players to make a test or use a discipline if you need to.

A STRANGE FEELING

When they first meet the bride and groom, any Kai Lord with the Sixth Sense discipline may make a Target Value 8 test. If they succeed, they notice that while the wedding party are genuinely glad to see the Kai, the groom seems to harbour some reservations and his smiles are not entirely genuine. Even so, he remains polite and charming, so while the Kai might challenge him on the matter they would appear very rude for doing so.



TOO MUCH MEAD

As with every celebration, there will be some people who enjoy the freely flowing mead too much. Hopefully, this will not be the Kai! While they are allowed to drink, they should not allow themselves to get inebriated.

Plenty of folk will be somewhat worse for wear by the end of the afternoon. While it is a nice summer's day, it isn't very charitable to leave them lying where they fall. Being helpful souls, the Kai Lords should do their best to help get these people to bed. Their relatives and spouses will help, but may be worse the wear themselves. Some will be more hindrance than help, forgetting where they live or insisting on a clearly doomed plan to get the unconscious friend safely to their bed.

In some cases, the drunk may regain consciousness, probably at the most inopportune time. They may then wander off in search for more mead or to continue the festivities. They will not want the party to end and might prove very difficult to catch.

STORIES AND STEEL



The presence of the Kai gets the village boys excited. They will cluster around, eager for stories of their exciting adventures. You should ask one or two of the Players to share a tale of one of their past deeds – and encourage them to be somewhat tall in their telling! Unfortunately, some of the older lads decide to challenge the Kai Lord who told the best story in a test of swordsmanship, foolishly believing themselves the equal of a Kai warrior. The Kai will have to be careful how they refuse such a challenge, as they can potentially wound the pride of these nascent swordsmen very deeply. However, if they take on the challenge they will also have to be careful not to physically injure them too.

VILLAGE BOYS

Combat Skill: 6 / Endurance: 10

The boys are quite quick, but not skilled. However, their wild attacks can be hard to defend against without hurting them.

DRUNKEN UNCLES

A more concerning problem that will need the Kai's attention are two older men who have also had too much to drink. Unfortunately, alcohol has fuelled an old argument and they are about to start fighting. They will undoubtedly regret their argument in the morning, but at the moment they are ready to hurt each other. If a Kai Lord doesn't intervene they will be asked to help before they batter each other senseless. If they can resolve and calm the situation without violence they will gain great respect. However, they may have to resort to force to pull the two men apart. If they do it will be hard to do so without injuring one or both of them.

ARGUING UNCLES

Combat Skill: 8 / Endurance: 18

Both these men are old and drunk, with little real combat ability. But what they lack in experience they make up for in enthusiasm.

A CHANCE TO ENTERTAIN

As honoured guests, the Kai Lords will be invited to dance, sing or play. If they have such skills they will be offered the stage to entertain the other guests for a turn. Even if they decline, they may still enjoy dancing with the other villagers. None of them will remain without a partner for long if they do.

BANDIT ATTACK!

When you feel the Players have had enough hijinks, read the following to them:



The celebrations last all day, a day full of laughter, dancing, food and good company. But as the evening wears on, the celebrants begin to run out of energy. The music becomes calmer and those who have overindulged settle into a happy stupor. The bride and groom, having danced and talked all day, prepare to finally take their vows with the setting sun. In this village it is a quiet ceremony held with their close family and those who remain to witness it. You are called forward to be a part of this profound moment and offer blessings on the happy couple.

But before a word can be spoken there is a sound of pounding hooves and a shout as several riders crash into the village square. The crowd scatters and the riders begin to swing blades down upon the defenceless villagers. Panic explodes across the whole square and chaos ensues.

The riders are bandits, armed and very dangerous but they are not here to murder the villagers. In fact they have come for the groom. Tareth is actually one of the leaders of the gang; they think they are rescuing him from matrimony! While Tareth does not actually want to leave Hara, he also has no desire to explain his change of heart to the bandits. So when one of them sweeps past and grabs his arm he allows them to take him.

It is unlikely that the Kai are going to stand there and just let the gang raze the village. Whether they see the groom get swept away on horseback or not, they will want to engage the villainous bandits before they can do any more damage. There is plenty for them to do as well. Many of the villagers are being menaced by the riders who are causing mayhem throughout the village square.



WHAT CAN THE PLAYERS DO?



The Kai should all make a test with a Target Number of 8. If they succeed they notice the groom being pulled onto a horse and ridden out of the village. They may well want to give chase or try to stop them.



Unfortunately, in the chaos of the attack, there is little they can do. Many people need their help and to go after the groom will mean ignoring people in need.

It is possible that the Kai Lords will do their best to stick to the bride and groom when the trouble starts. In this case, Tareth asks them to protect Hara before running into the chaos to try to help. The crowd will surge at that moment, cutting off the Kai from Tareth, even if they quickly try to follow him.



In all the encounters, if necessary, use the following statistics for the Bandits. They attack as two grouped enemies (comprising 3 bandits each, included in the stats below):

BANDITS

Combat Skill: 17 / **Endurance:** 20

Traits: Grouping (Mob), Soldier.

You can use some or all of the following encounters to occupy the Players while Tareth is taken by the bandits – each Player (or group of Players) should have to deal with at least one of these situations. All the while you should emphasise the chaos and disorder as people run and scream all around them, while Tareth is ‘abducted’. Make sure this scene is a solid challenge if the Kai fight. Provide additional bandits as needed.

WHAT IF THEY SAVE TARETH?

Have no fear if the enterprising Players manage to overcome all obstacles you throw in their path and actually save Tareth – the adventure is not won before it has begun! Instead it will just require a little bit of ingenuity to allow the story to proceed.

LOST CHILD



Through the stampeding horses and dust you catch a glimpse of a small child, standing in the middle of the chaos. He is frozen in fear, and crying uncontrollably. With horses powering past him he can't see where to run, and at any moment he could be crushed under the hooves of the raiders.



To get to the child, the Kai will have to make a test at a Target Value of 8. But just getting to the child is not enough. They will have to try and calm him down and get him to trust them before they can save him. Once he's calmed down, they'll need to pick up the boy and get him to safety. This requires another TV 8 test.

If more than one Kai join in this encounter, the Narrator may allow a bandit or two to attack them while they try to look after the boy.

If the Kai interacted with any of the village children during the day, this boy should be one they have already met, thereby increasing the tension and fear as they make a bid to rescue him.

ABDUCTION



Another horse almost tramples you, sending gritty dust into your eyes. You blink away the dust, and as your vision clears



you see two bandits trying to carry off a young woman. One has dismounted and they are both wrestling with her to steal her away. The woman is struggling with all her might but she is losing the battle.

Speed is of the essence if the Kai are to save the young woman. If there is only one Player in this encounter, as long as they run as fast as they can, they will get to the abductors in time.



If more than one Player is present, they must all make a test with a Target Value of 7 to get past the other horses and crowds. Those who fail find it harder to get through and will arrive 1 round after those who succeed.

There are two bandits, and the woman is doing her best to make it hard for them. When the Kai engage them, one will keep hold of the woman, whilst the other fights the Players. However, if that bandit is wounded or outnumbered, the other bandit will knock the woman out with a blow from the pommel of his sword and then both will engage the Players.

This encounter will work better if the woman is one the Kai have interacted with already.

WANTON DESTRUCTION



The acrid smell of burning hits your nostrils and you notice a small gang of bandits setting light to one of the houses. There are three of them, each carrying flaming torches and laughing as they touch them to the wooden walls.



The Player faced with this encounter has to make a choice here: do they stop the bandits or do they try to put out the fire? The bandits will probably set alight to another house if no one stops them, yet someone needs to put out the fire before it spreads, and make sure no one is inside!



If the Player chooses to fight the bandits, they will have three of them to engage, fighting them as a grouped enemy as described earlier. If they manage to reduce their ENDURANCE by 12, they will retreat. All of them will have to drop their torches to engage the Players, which will at least stop them spreading more fires.



If the Player tries to get into the house, they will have to make a test with a Target Value of 7 to get past the small fires that have already taken hold. Then they need to make a further test with a Target Value of 8 to see if there is anyone still inside. If they succeed at this roll they find two children taking shelter inside who need to be rescued. If the Kai Lord rescues the children, they will be able to find their parents outside the house.

With the children safe, the fire still needs to be put out. The Kai Lord will need to gather some of the frightened villagers to form a water chain to put out the fire. To get this organised they will need to make a test with a Target Value of 7 to get enough people together.

It is possible the Player will try to do both tasks, by rushing into the fire after defeating the bandits. They can do this, but the fire will have taken greater hold by the time they do, adding +1 to the Target Values of the tests needed. If the Player decides to engage the bandits after entering the house they will have fled.

TERRIFIED FAMILY



Among the shouts and screams, one sight in particular catches your attention. Across the square, a family has been cornered by three bandit raiders. They ride around the mother, father and their two children, waving their swords and laughing. The father is armed with a pitchfork and is trying to defend them as the mother holds the children close to protect them with her body. But every time the father tries to drive the bandits off they wound him for his temerity. He is already bleeding from several flesh wounds.

Dealing with this encounter is quite straightforward. The Players need to get to the family, so they can drive off the bandits. Upon seeing the Players, believing their horses are an advantage, the bandits will decide to go for the greater sport. Each of them is foolishly thinking to claim a Kai cloak for a trophy!



There are three bandits, but each has a bonus of +3 to their COMBAT SCORE for being mounted on horseback.



However, after the fight the father will need their skills in first aid to tend to his wounds. A Player with the Healing discipline can automatically tend to the injuries; otherwise the Players will have to seek help elsewhere.

MAKING THEIR ESCAPE

After each of the Players has been confronted with an encounter, a horn will sound and the bandits will ride off. They will take their wounded with them if they can, although it is possible the Players may take a prisoner or two if they get lucky.

While many of the villagers are hurt, and a lot of property has been damaged, none have been killed. But there is a lot of anger, with many of the men and women looking to hunt down the brigands themselves.

What will dampen their thirst for revenge is the personal trauma Hara is suffering. If the Players did not see what transpired, they will quickly hear that Tareth has been kidnapped by the bandits. No one knows why, but Hara will beg the Kai to rescue him.



SCENE TWO SEARCHING FOR A HUSBAND

After assisting the villagers as much they can, the Kai Lords set off to find Tareth. The trail is fresh and leads into the Southern Durncrag Mountains, located to the north west of the village. The area lies a little too close to the Darklands for comfort, and it is entirely possible that they will encounter some fell creature along the way. Eventually they will come across the bandit's lair. Here they will have to find the best way to get inside and rescue Tareth. There are bandits on guard and Tareth is being held deep inside this old mine.

ASKING ABOUT THE BANDITS



Before they go charging off after the bandits, who are on horseback, the Players may decide to take the time to find out more from the villagers. By now they should have made friends with a few of the villagers, and if not, their defence of the village will have certainly earned them the respect of the locals. Any of the villagers can tell them the following information. It may be more interesting to have each piece of information come from a different source, so encourage the Players ask ask more than one villager.



"There have always been bandits on the roads around here. People come for the ore we do not ship to the Royal Ore-grinding & Gold Works, and while some are prepared to work for it, a fair few aren't. We work the nearby mine which is Crown property and we receive from the Crown a part of the proceeds from the exploitation of all gold extracted, this is no great fortune. Thankfully, our Elders obtained special dispensation from the Crown and the Baron of Ruanon that permits each man to keep a share of what he excavates. Every so often a merchant comes and buys the ore from us, then sells it in Ruanon or Holmgard where they get a better price."



"Usually, the merchants are heavily guarded. However, a few disguise themselves as some other sort of traveller to avoid the unwanted attention of bandits. It's worked this way for years, but recently the bandits have been growing in numbers. And they have become bolder. But more importantly they seem to be working to a well-directed plan. They seem to know the best places to attack, and the best times to launch their ambushes, and the most lucrative caravans to target."



"Why they attacked today, I really can't say. It's never happened before, and apart from causing some damage they didn't actually steal very much at all."



The Players might also want to ask Hara if she knows why Tareth was taken. She is in tears, but through her sobs will tell the Kai what she knows.



"I don't know why they took him! He was just a travelling musician when we met. He used to serenade me with his flute. He was so romantic, not a warrior or a thief. He used to talk about setting himself up as a gold merchant, so he always had questions for the ones who came by. He was so clever and charming I knew he'd make a go of it once we were settled. Maybe he asked the wrong questions to the wrong people. But recently he hadn't been asking so many questions, we just talked about what we'd do for the wedding and how we were going to spend our lives together."

"I can't imagine what they want with him; it was as if they came just for him today. He didn't talk much about his past, but how could he have any connection to thieves and robbers? He must be alive. They'd have tried to hurt him already if they wanted him dead. I have to hold on to that hope. Please, you must find him."

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

Having found out what they can from the villagers, the Players should consider setting off to find Tareth. Luckily the bandits are easy to follow: thirty riders on horseback leave an easy to follow trail!



Ask the Players if they wish to set off now or wait until morning. The ceremony took place at twilight, and night is fast approaching.



On the one hand, they should set off now; daybreak is several hours away and the longer they leave the trail the more difficult it will be to follow. There is also the matter of what the bandits intend to do with Tareth. Can they risk leaving him in the hands of bandits all night?



On the other hand, the forest and mountains are especially dangerous at night. There are all manner of creatures that might take the Players by surprise, and the trail will be harder to see. Surely the bandits will only do whatever they intend to do with Tareth in the morning after they have slept.

If they leave as soon as possible and travel at night, the Target Values for all tests made to follow trails or avoid ambushes are increased by +3. If they wait until morning, their rolls will be unmodified, but the bandits will have already arrived at their hideout.

INTO THE WILDS



When the Kai Lords set off after the Bandits, they should be prepared to follow them for quite some time cross country. Travelling at night is something best done together, and each of them should pick a different activity from the following list to perform during the journey. It doesn't matter who chooses the activity, although all the activities should ideally be performed. It is up to the Players to decide who performs which activity; describe each of them and let them discuss amongst themselves who is best suited to perform each task.



The journey will take 10 hours, and it will have to be undertaken on foot to properly follow the trail (although they can lead their horses if they wish). The journey begins in the Ruanon Homelands, the fertile plain that surrounds Maura, but after 2 hours it moves into the Ruanon Forest, and 6 hours later, into the Southern Durncrag Mountains.

Most of the activities require a test of some kind, although some Kai disciplines will allow the Player to automatically succeed. The bonus for success and penalty for failure is listed for each activity. In each case the Target Value is 6. If more than one Player attempts the same activity, there will be a greater chance that one will pass the test.

The different activities are as follows:



Follow the Tracks

One of the Kai Lords must follow the tracks left by the bandits. It takes great concentration and awareness. If none of the Players performing in the group succeed in the test then the party loses the trail. They will have to backtrack to pick it up again, losing time and adding another hour to the journey. A Kai Lord with the Tracking discipline will automatically succeed at this task.



Keep a Lookout

One of the Kai Lords must keep an eye out for threats as they travel. They are watching for signs of dangerous animals, bandits and other troublemakers. If they succeed at their test it will be impossible for an enemy to take the group by surprise. A Kai Lord with the Sixth Sense discipline will automatically succeed at this task.



Hunt for Food

The wilds are full of food if you know where to look. One of the Kai Lords will need to hunt game or forage for fruit to keep the group fed. If the Kai have plenty of Meals they will not need anyone to perform this task, but it is always good to conserve rations when they have the option of living off the land. If a Player succeeds in their test, they find enough food for 2 Meals. Failure grants nothing. Several Kai Lords might be required to feed a group low on rations. A Kai Lord with the Hunting discipline will automatically succeed at this task.



Plan Ahead

With everyone watching for trail signs and danger, someone needs to look at the big picture. One of the Kai Lords needs to plan ahead for where the path seems to be leading. They must watch for changes in the weather and terrain. If they succeed in their test, the Target Value for all the other tasks are reduced by 3, so the Players may wish to attempt this one first!



Motivate the Others

It will be a long journey over difficult ground and keeping morale up is important. So, someone should spend their time keeping spirits raised. If their test is a success they grant everyone in the group a bonus of +1 for the next test they make during the journey.

USING SKILLS ON THE JOURNEY

If you are using the Master-level rules, the Players will likely wish to use their skills to assist them with these tasks:
Perception: The Perception skill can be used to try to find the trail or to keep a look out for potential dangers along the route.

Survival: A Kai Lord with the Survival skill might use it to hunt for game or track the bandits.

Investigate: The Investigate skill could allow the Kai Lords to piece together the clues that the bandits have left, coming to a conclusion about where they are headed,

Influence: A Player with the Influence skill can bring it to bear to help motivate their fellow Kai Lords.

ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE WAY

It's up to you how difficult you want to make the journey. You may decide to skip this whole scene and pick up the with the Kai Lords arriving at the bandit's hideout. However, there is plenty of adventure to be had tracking through the wilderness.

Unless the Players fail their tracking attempts, the journey should take 10 hours. In general, you should plan for an encounter no more than once every two hours. In the case of creature encounters, there is no reason you can't use the same encounter twice, especially if the group enjoys a good combat. You could also allow three or four hours to pass with nothing happening to speed up the journey and lull the Players into a false sense of security.

If you are feeling confident, this is a great opportunity for you to come up with a few small encounters of your own. You may have read about a monster you'd love to set on your Players, or introduce an NPC you want to develop. Otherwise, there are enough encounters in the following section for you to pick and choose from. You can use them in any order you like, depending on how the Players are faring on the journey. While the wilds can be a place of excitement and adventure, the Players shouldn't spend too long tramping through the countryside.



FOREST ENCOUNTERS

The trail initially takes the Players towards the north-west, seemingly towards the village of Torseth, before veering to the north a little. It takes them deeper into the Ruanon Forest, away from Torseth. After they cross the old highway between Ruanon and Torseth, the trail veers to the west and the forest becomes thicker and wilder. Dangers lurk between the trees, as the Kai Lords enter a place where the Spirits of Nature rule.

WOLVES



From all around you, a deep growl emanates from the forest. It is answered by another, and then another. You are surrounded by a group of hungry wolves, readying themselves to pounce!



The pack is made up of 2 wolves, plus one more for every Player in the group.



The wolves are hungry and desperate for their next meal. If one of the Kai Lords has the Animal Kinship discipline they will automatically realise this. If the Kai Lords can spare a Meal for each wolf they will not attack, otherwise they will run if half their numbers are killed.

HUNGRY WOLVES

Combat Skill: 18 / Endurance: 22

STRANGE FRUIT



Tired and somewhat hungry, you come across a small stream with lush fruit trees growing along its banks. The fruit is a luscious golden colour, and inviting.



This fruit is not fit to eat! A Kai Lord with the Hunting discipline will know this automatically, but other Players must attempt a test with a Target Value of 7.



If any of the heroes eat one of the fruits, they must immediately make a resistance test. If they fail they suffer from stomach cramps, giving them a penalty of -3 to all their tests for the next five hours.

OLD HERMIT



You see a small hut a little off the beaten path. Smoke curls out of its chimney. Whoever lives here is a long way from civilisation. They may be glad of some company, or know something about the bandits.

The hut belongs to a very old man called Granvis. He has lived here as a hermit for many years, preferring to avoid people and all the problems they bring with them. However, he does yearn for a little company, even if his social skills have atrophied.

At first Granvis will insist the Kai Lords go away and leave him alone. But if one of them can succeed at a test with a Target Value of 8, he will be friendly and invite them in for a meal. It won't be much, but it will relieve their hunger. If they ask about the bandits, Granvis knows very little, but he will say their path seems to lead towards the Durncrag Mountains. He suggests the bandits might be hiding in one of the old mines that can be found up there. He will also warn the Kai Lords to be careful as the Darklands are close by.



LOST MUSICIAN



You hear the haunting music of a flute from up ahead on the path. As you round a corner you find a brightly dressed young man playing, apparently, for his own amusement. As soon as he sees you he stops playing and greets you warmly. "I'm so glad to see you. I must humbly admit I am most hopelessly lost!"

Villin is a travelling minstrel and got lost after taking the wrong path in the forest. He has no supplies, no equipment and he is not relishing a night on his own. If the Players wish to help him they have two options. They may take him with them until they find habitation or return to the village, or they could lead him back to the main road, but that will lose them time.

Unfortunately, Villin is not just a minstrel; his is also a thief. At some point he will attempt to steal from one of the Kai Lords; they look like wealthy folk who'd not miss a few coins after all. Should Villin be caught, the Players will have to decide what to do with him. Will they devise some punishment, or decide not to risk their mission, abandon him to his fate and press on?

BANDIT AMBUSH!



With a cry of rage, several tough-looking men leap out of the forest, their weapons drawn. They appear to be bandits, and there is clearly no chance of negotiating with them!

These bandits are from the group the Players are tracking. They waited behind to pick off anyone who followed. There is one bandit for each Player, but they fight as a Grouped Enemy (see the *Book of Kai Wisdom*, page 71) so you will need to work out the total COMBAT SKILL and ENDURANCE. If the Players manage to capture a bandit, he will tell them the location of their hideout if they can persuade him to do so with a TV8 test. If they know the location, all Tracking tests gain a +2 bonus.

BANDITS

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 15
Traits: Grouping (Mob), Soldier.

MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTERS

After a few miles of trekking through wooded hillsides, the forest gives way to barren mountainside. Luckily, the trail moves along the side of the mountain rather than ascending any higher. On the other side of these mountains lie the Darklands, and its fell denizens.

SHORTCUT



Ahead of you, the trail curves around the mountainside. You notice another, much steeper path rising up the mountain nearby. The bandits clearly couldn't take their horses up this steep path, but it appears to be a quicker route.



Present the Players with a choice. They can follow the bandits' trail, or attempt to catch up with them by taking the shortcut. Unfortunately the short cut is steep and dangerous, for it is covered in scree (small loose stones).



If the Players choose to take the short cut, they must all make a Luck test. Any who fail will slide down the slope, taking 5 points of Endurance damage from the fall. If they all manage to pass the test they will reduce their journey time by an hour. Unfortunately, as they have to move at the pace of the slowest, all of the Players must pass the test to get this bonus.

AKATAZ ATTACK!



You can hear a low growling among the rocks. As you turn and ready a weapon, you realise the growl is only a distraction! A pack of taut and thin dog-like creatures with black leathery hides rush at you on your flank.

FERAL AKATAZ

Combat Skill: 20 / **Endurance:** 23

These creatures look like very thin, leathery black dogs with sharp teeth and vicious claws. There will be one for each Kai in the group but they will retreat if half their number are killed. These particular Akataz have been fighting each other for leadership of the pack for some time now. Because of this, they will not group.

The Kai have come across a hunting pack of feral Akataz. They were lost in the mountains when their Drakkarim handler was killed some time ago. They are very hungry and very dangerous.

TAINTED STREAM



Among the grey boulders you come across the welcome sound of a trickling mountain stream. The water looks clean and inviting; it could be an excellent opportunity to refill waterskins and take a short rest.



While the area is safe, the stream has come from out of the Darklands. It has been tainted by a subterranean tributary of the Nengud-Kor-Adez. The water itself is refreshing and tastes fine. In fact, anyone who drinks it will not suffer any immediate effects.



However, its corruption is subtle and those who sip even a little must make a resistance test.

If any of the Kai Lords fails the test, they become prey to their worst urges, and must pick a random number and compare it to the chart below. They should gradually bring this behaviour into their portrayal of their character as it governs their actions for a number of hours equal to a random number (a 0 = half an hour). The water does not lose its potency if removed from the stream, so anyone filling a waterskin will also suffer the effects if they drink it later in the adventure.

Kai Lords with the Mindshield discipline are immune.

Mannerisms Chart

Random Number	Behaviour Exhibited
0	Arrogant
1	Aggressive
2	Argumentative
3	Cowardly
4	Envious
5	Stubborn
6	Paranoid
7	Fearful
8	Jealous
9	Vain

SCENE THREE THE COMPLEXITIES OF LOVE

When you are ready to bring the journey to an end, read the following aloud:



You round a rocky spur of the mountainside and discover what must be the bandit's lair. It is an old mine, hidden just off the path, with a commanding view of the track below.

Two bandits stand outside.

While they appear to be guards, they are not paying much attention to their surroundings and are obviously not expecting any trouble. Nearby, the bandits' horses, too big to take into the mine itself, stand in a makeshift corral.

Having found the bandits' hideout, the Kai will need to get inside to rescue Tareth. Unfortunately, Tareth is not being held prisoner at all; he is one of the bandit leaders. He has been spying on the village to learn the movement of the merchants. His men rode into the village to rescue him from his marriage.

However, there is another problem. Tareth is in love with his fiancé Hara. He didn't tell his men so as not to appear weak or be seen as a traitor. He dearly wants to leave this life and settle down with Hara, but if he does so the more violent element will take over. He needs help to purge the worst element from the bandit gang, that way he may be able to persuade the others turn away from their lives of crime.

ENTERING THE MINE

There are actually two ways into the mine. The Players may decide to get past the guards at the main entrance, but with a little searching they could discover another entrance the bandits have long forgotten.

GETTING PAST THE GUARDS



The simplest way to get past the guards is to attack them. But you should caution the Players that combat is noisy and this may raise the alarm (see below).

The guards may not be paying a lot of attention to their duty, but they are also standing too close to the entrance to make it easy to slip past them.

Instead, the Kai Lords will need a distraction, and the horses can provide just that. If the Players think to spook the horses a little, the guards will have to go to the corral and see what the matter is. Then the Kai Lords can slip past them. They had best be careful not to open the corral and let the horses out. That would cause the guards get more men to help round them up.

THE SECRET ENTRANCE



If the Players decide to look for another way in, they may come across another entrance to the hideout. Everyone should make a test at a Target Value of 6. Any Player who succeeds discovers a chimney vent in the ground above the mine. The vent leads to the Forgotten Storeroom (see pg. 18), and is easy to climb down. However, it is quite narrow so if there are any bandits at the bottom of it, the Kai Lords will be captured before they can draw their weapons. Whoever goes first will be taking a big risk!

RAISING THE ALARM

There are a lot of bandits in the hideout – more than enough to capture the Kai Lords if they find them. However, they mostly remain in the large communal area and rarely wander about the mine. It is also quite noisy in there so they aren't going to hear very much unless the heroes make a loud noise.

But that doesn't mean the Kai can do as they please. Combat is noisy – any combat lasting 3 or more rounds will alert the bandits that something is wrong. They will first send 5 men to the entrance to see what is going on. Those same guards will also stop anyone escaping from the vicinity.



Following a combat at the entrance to the mine, the bandits will make a thorough search of their hideout. If they find the Kai Lords, they will try to capture them, sending for (many) more men if necessary.

THE BANDIT HIDEOUT

The bandits' hideout in the mine is a simple place, mostly built out of a large communal room and several storage areas. It is also important to remember that the bandits' hideout is not a static place. People move around; they don't simply wait in rooms for the Players to encounter them!

Every time a Player enters an area, you should pick a random number. On a 1-5, nothing happens. On a 6-7, a bandit wanders into the area, and on an 8-9 two bandits enter. If the number is a 0, three bandits arrive!

As before, if any combat lasts more than 3 rounds, the alarm will be raised. You should allow the Players a test at Target Value 6 to see the bandits first. If they succeed, the Players have the option to ambush the bandits or hide until they leave.

ARMOURY



This room houses several racks of weapons and armour. While most of it is in rather shoddy condition, it is serviceable.

None of the bandits actually trust one another, so they remain armed at all times with weapons they have acquired from caravan guards and other victims. While the Kai Lords won't find any magical weapons or special items here, they will be able to stock up on arrows or pick up some armour.

HORSE SUPPLIES



The smell of hay and oats hangs heavily in this area. Several boxes and sacks are piled up and contain what appears to be fodder for the horses. On the wall are racks with several pieces of tack and harness.

The bandits keep the supplies for their horses here. The tack is well looked after as each bandit knows his life may depend on a quick getaway.

PRIVY



This area is the only one with a proper door to it. The door is the side of a wagon, roughly nailed into place on some hinges to close over the tunnel entrance. When the door is opened, a deeply unpleasant smell emerges.

The door leads to a mine shaft that drops to a lower level. The lower level is flooded and so the bandits use it as their latrine. The door is more to keep the smell inside rather than for privacy. The smell should be bad enough to discourage the Players from checking out the lower level. But if they insist, they will not find anything of interest and leave the area in desperate need of fresh air.

SMOKE-FILLED CORRIDOR



The corridor ahead is filled with black smoke. It rolls along the tunnel in thick clouds, smelling strongly of ash and flame.

The air in this corridor has a peculiar draft that the bandits have taken advantage of. They have a fire at one end of this corridor that opens into the main chamber and the air current pulls the smoke out along the corridor. The corridor ends in a shaft that draws the smoke into the lower levels where it dissipates.



The Bandit Hideout

Key

- 1: Armoury
- 2: Horse Supplies
- 3: Smoke-filled Corridor
- 4: Forgotten Storeroom
- 5: Private Room
- 6: Main Chamber



The bandits never come down this corridor. But, as the Players don't know this, they might think it a trap.



From the central T-junction the Players come to, it takes 10 minutes to walk to the shaft at the end of the left hand branch of the corridor, and 10 minutes to walk to the fire at the end of the right hand corridor. For every 10 minutes they spend in the corridor, the Players must each make a resistance test. If they fail they are overcome with smoke and begin to pass out. If they fail the test for a second time, they fall unconscious. If there is no one to drag them out they will suffocate and die within 30 minutes.

If they get to either end of the corridor they will realise they have to turn back. Jumping through the fire is possible, but they will suffer 4 points of ENDURANCE damage and end up in the middle of the bandits' main lair. If they go to the shaft end of the corridor they will only see the opening below them with a successful test at Target Value 7. Should they fail they will fall 15 feet and have to climb back out (see the *Book of Kai Wisdom*, page 13, for more about falling).

Should all the Kai Lords have the misfortune to be overcome by smoke, you shouldn't actually let them die. Instead, by chance, one of the bandits finds them and drags them out to find out what they are doing there. When they awaken they will be tied up and surrounded by bandits in the main area.

FORGOTTEN STOREROOM



This place is dark and full of dust. A few broken crates lie in one corner and rubbish is piled up against one of the walls.

The bandits used to store their equipment and supplies here in this more secure area, but the mine is quite remote and they have grown lax about security. So they started using the areas near the entrance for storage to avoid the hard work of hauling it here. The area has become a storage place for things no one really wants, but no one really wants to throw away either. Consequently, no one tends to come down here, and the vent in the ceiling (leading outside) has been forgotten.

PRIVATE ROOMS



This tiny area contains a cot bed and a few personal effects. It is dark and dingy, but at least it is dry.

There are several of these small rooms, each claimed by a different bandit. They are reserved for the most respected members of the gang, so the others don't dare use them. If the Kai rummage around, they will find a random number of gold coins in each cell. However, all the bandits keep their most valuable items on them at all times.

MAIN CHAMBER



The corridor opens into a large, domed cavern, full of bandits. In one corner is a large fire, used both to heat the room and cook meals. The bandits are clustered in small groups around the room, with the most important seemingly nearer the fire. Some are talking; others arm wrestling and a few gambling with dice. All of them are drinking. The atmosphere is uneasy and competitive. You look around for Tareth and see him sitting near the fire. Strangely he seems to be talking quite amicably with one of the bandit leaders.

Almost all of the bandits live in this part of the mine. Those who do not have their own rooms sleep here, competing for space near the fire. All the bandits are armed, so while an attack will have the element of surprise, it will be a short-lived advantage.

TALKING TO TARETH

Most likely, what the Players will want to do is to try talk to Tareth and find out what is going on. Has he charmed the bandit leaders or is the situation more complicated? The Players could take one of two approaches.





If they choose to be more direct they may try to challenge the bandits, which will lead to capture. There is no need for you to stage a full combat here. Unless the Kai Lords can run very fast there are more than enough bandits to overwhelm and subdue them. However, they may instead be more subtle, causing a distraction to get close to Tareth. Using the other tunnels they could get near enough to talk secretly to him if a few of the bandits can be convinced to leave.



More subtle Players may choose to be patient and wait for an opportunity. Tareth will either go to bed or the privy at some point. At this time it will become clear he is not being kept under guard. When he leaves the company of the bandits for somewhere quieter, the heroes can catch up with him and find out what is going on.

If they manage to get close to Tareth, you should read out the following.

Note that text sections this long do not have to be read aloud all at once. You should try to work this information into conversation or paraphrase as required.



"You're here? How did you find me? I heard Kai were skilled and you have proved those rumours true. But I am sorry you have had a wasted journey. As you may have gathered I am no captive; I am one of the leaders of this group. But please, I tell you this because I need your help, even though I have no right to ask. For years I have worked as a spy, learning the routes of the most valuable ore caravans so my men can attack them. I used to think I was reclaiming wealth from the rich, but as time went on my men became greedier and we attracted harder and more dangerous men to the group. I spent more time away, and it was in doing so I met Hara.

"I didn't mean to hurt her. In a way she made me forget myself. I decided to never return to my men. But they found me, and decided to 'rescue' me from my fate as a husband. I can't go back; they would destroy the village. Even if they chose not to follow me, without my influence they would become more violent in their attacks. I need your help to be free of them.

"I'm not the only one in the gang who wants to leave this wretched life. Some of us have saved a few crowns, enough to start over. But there are many who love not only the money but the violence of a bandit's life. Left alone they would bring terror to this area and not be content with robbery. They will leave a trail of corpses in their wake.

"My plan is simple, but dangerous. The more violent faction in the gang is led by my partners, a despicable pair of thugs. They have reached their position by being the most ruthless and vicious of my men. I do not have the ability to stand against them. But perhaps you do."

Tareth will direct the Kai Lords to his private room, where they will

find a change of clothing (if they are still wearing their Kai uniforms and cloaks). He will suggest that they return in disguise and pose as members of another group whom Tareth made contact with and have come to join forces. If they can convince the bandits they are telling the truth, they will all sit down for a meal together. At this time it will be up to the Kai Lords to take offence from the two thugs in some way and challenge them to mortal combat.

This is just his plan, of course. The Players may have any number of other ideas and should be encouraged to try them. As Narrator, make adjustments to the scenario to factor in their plans and run the adventure accordingly.

BARANSH AND SAVASH (BANDIT THUGS)

Combat Skill: 16 / **Endurance:** 26

Traits: Brutal (3), Soldier.

These two bandits both stand just over 6 feet tall. They are made of muscle and have an air of threat with every movement they make. They will be the first bandits the Kai Lords notice, and their size and demeanour makes it clear they are among the leaders of the gang.

Both men joined the gang because they love to fight and enjoy seeing their enemies crushed before them. To them, violence solves every problem. They believe they have a right to take anything their black hearts desire. Without Tareth to talk some sense into them, they would terrorise the countryside. They have come to respect Tareth's cleverness, although they are beginning to wonder if they really need him now the gang has become so successful.

A SUITABLE DISGUISE

If the Players are in need of a disguise, they will find spare clothes where Tareth has told them. They can stash their Kai cloaks in the same place. All they need to do then is to walk back into the main cavern and announce themselves.



As the bandits leap up, ready to defend their lair against these intruders, Tareth will call for peace and tell his men to calm themselves and welcome them. But it will be up to the Kai Lords to play the part of dangerous bandits from another gang convincingly. They will need to engage in some persuasive roleplaying by establishing their bandit credentials, such as by upending a bandit's pint, perhaps, or spitting into a fire, or picking their teeth with a knife, then make a test against a Target Value of 6



to pull this off. Those who pass will be invited to eat with the gang leaders by the fire. Those who fail will not be thrown out, as Tareth has vouched for them. However, they will not be trusted enough to be let anywhere near to the leaders and will have to join one of the other bandit groups.

A TENSE DINNER

The heroes will be 'treated' to a meal of roast boar with Baransh, Savash and Tareth. During the meal they need to find an excuse to challenge Baransh and Savash to a fight. Luckily, this should not be too difficult, as the bandit leaders are aggressive, outspoken and vainglorious. They are also looking to put the toughness of these new potential gang members to the test.



The following are topics of conversation the bandit leaders will get into, and reasons the Players may feign offence. Luckily (depending how you look at it) the bandits will never allow themselves to appear weak and will accept any challenge the Players make, no matter how spurious.

- A story about how they fought in a certain area ("*That was our territory, how dare you raid there!*").
- How they fought several men at once in a battle ("*Are you saying we couldn't, let us prove it!*").
- That women are never good fighters ("*The women of our band are better fighters than you!*" – doubly so if any of the heroes are female).
- This boar is badly cooked. ("*The boar is a beloved animal to our family! How dare you spurn the offering!*").
- The hideout is a lucky find, before this we used to live in a forest ("*We live in a forest, are you saying you're better than us?!*").

THE CHALLENGE

When the challenge happens, it happens quickly. Baransh and Savash will get up and answer the insult the only way they know how. They will expect to fight the hero who took offence, but will raise no issue if all the Kai Lords get up to fight them. The bandit leaders think they can take on at least four men between them (and from the look of them, they'd be right). However, if there are more than four Kai, another bandit will join the brothers for each additional Kai. Basically, this is a brawl not a duel.

The fight will be a fight to the death. It *should* just be a fight to see who yields first, but the bandit leaders will refuse to yield. They have never been beaten. If one of them falls it will only enrage the other. The Kai Lords might decide to yield if the fight turns against them, but Baransh and Savash will make it clear they "despise weakness" and will look to kill them in cold blood if they surrender.

REVELATION

If the Players defeat Baransh and Savash, read the following aloud:



As the last of the brothers falls, Tareth steps forward in the silence that follows. He carries a small bundle in his arms.

"My brothers," he says, "I've made a decision about our future. From this day hence we are retiring to build new lives. If you disagree with my decision to disband our company, you can take it up with my new partners – the Kai Lords of Sommerlund!"

He throws the bundle on the floor, where it spills open to reveal the Kai's renowned green cloaks!

SCENE FOUR BLOOD AND GOLD

A NEW REGIME



At the mention of the word 'Kai' the bandits quickly sober up. The reputation of the Order of the Kai, coupled with the fact a group of them has just killed their two most fearsome bandit leaders, gives the bandits a chilling shock. Again, Tareth steps forward to address his men.

"I am now your one and only leader. My true wish is to declare our company dissolved and give up this dishonourable bandit life. I know that many of you feel as I do. I also know what you're thinking: it will take a lot of money to begin a new life in a distant realm, far more than you have amassed to date. Well, take heart you rogues. I have a plan that will make us all wealthy men. Wealthy, and worthy of respect."

Tareth is a shrewd and intelligent man. And he is nobody's fool. Revealing the Players' real identities serves two purposes. It prevents the Players from taking control of the bandit group themselves, and it gives the appearance that they are his friends and allies, thus reinforcing his claim to leadership. By having the Players on his side, it will help him greatly to convince the bandits to take part in his plan. The fearsome reputation of the Kai Order will boost the bandits' confidence like never before. He now has the bandits' undivided attention.

"We have been getting less and less for the gold ore we sell to our paymaster – The Pale Mask. He is exploiting us into extinction. We do all the work and he reaps every greater rewards from our labours. I say it's about time we took back what he's taken from us. He has a secret smelting workshop where he extracts the gold and casts it into pure ingots. I know where this place is. My plan is to raid his base and steal his hoard of gold bars. Mark my words; it will be dangerous. But the rewards will be far

greater than we could ever hope to gain in two lifetimes as lowly bandits. I offer you wealth and respect, my friends. Wealth and respect!"

Tareth's stirring speech is met with cheers and applause from the bandits. He has appealed directly to their most fervent desires in life and has won their unanimous approval.

WHAT DO THE PLAYERS DO NEXT?



The Players now have a tough decision to make. Clearly, Tareth and the Bandits are guilty of serious crimes, but it would be suicidal if the Players were to attempt to arrest them here and now. They are duty bound as Kai to uphold the laws of Sommerlund, but there are times when practicality must take precedence, and this is one of those times. There is also a bigger fish that needs to be caught – The Pale Mask. You should remind them of these salient points if they do not figure them out for themselves. The best option they have is to go along with Tareth's plan in the hope of finding and bringing The Pale Mask to justice.

Tareth calls for all of his Bandit gang to gather in the hall and then he outlines his plan of action. They are to gather their weapons and backpacks and prepare their horses for the journey to the Pale Mask's Secret Lair. The lair is guarded by tough mercenaries and it will not be feasible to storm it directly. He calls for seven volunteers to accompany him and the Players in an attempt to infiltrate the lair unseen. This will be a very dangerous mission with a significant risk that the volunteers may not survive, but as an inducement he promises that they will each receive a double share of the loot. Once the seven brave volunteers have stepped forward, he orders his men to proceed to the corral and saddle up their horses. Spare mounts are provided for the Players. When the preparations are complete, Tareth leads his Bandits in single file down the mountain track and turns northwards with the Players riding close by. Daylight is fading as you come to within a mile of the Pale Mask's lair.

THE PALE MASK'S HIDDEN LAIR



Tareth orders the Bandits to take cover in the trees and stay here until they are called upon to ride to the lair. He tells them that either one of the Players or one of the volunteers will perform this task. If nobody comes back to them by daybreak then they should assume that the mission has failed. They can then return to base, gather their personal possessions and valuables, and decide their own future; whether or not to elect a new leader and continue as a Bandit gang, or disband and make their own luck elsewhere. Tareth's directive certainly brings it home to the Bandits that this will be an all-or-nothing mission.

Tareth leads the infiltration party forward until you come to the edge of a treeline. Here he commands everyone to dismount and tether the horses securely. Through the sparse trees you can see the cave entrance to The Pale Mask's lair. Large mounds of ore

are located around the cave mouth. They have been carefully camouflaged with tree branches and foliage. Tareth informs you that the cave is not very deep and a shaft-like excavation lies just a few dozen yards inside the cave mouth. There is a wooden elevator platform at the top of this shaft. It is the only way to gain access to the caverns and tunnels that lie below. This is the heart of The Pale Mask's lair, and it is here that he smelts and stores his hoard of gold ingots.

The entrance to the cave mouth is guarded by three mercenaries. They are playing dice and are not at all alert to the imminent danger you pose. Approaching them unseen is not a difficult task, and you are able to take them completely by surprise.



Due to the surprise of your attack, you may ignore any END losses sustained in the first round of combat.

PALE MASK MERCENARIES

Combat Skill: 16 / **Endurance:** 20

Traits: Grouping (Mob), Soldier.

THE ORE ELEVATOR



A wooden elevator has been constructed at the top of the shaft. It consists of a large square platform with a wooden cage in the middle. It is lowered and raised by means of thick ropes which run through a large wheel. The ropes are supplemented by stone weights which counterbalance the load so that it can be hauled up without too much effort. It requires two men to operate the winch, and so Tareth delegates this task to two of his seven volunteers. There is a bell fixed to a post near the wheel. This is used to signal to elevator operatives below to let them know when the elevator is about to descend. Tareth tells you that there is another bell at the bottom of the shaft. He tells the two men designated to remain here that he will ring the lower bell four times when you are ready to leave the cave complex below. This is the signal to them to raise the elevator.





INTO THE CAVES

The Kai Lords, Tareth and his five remaining Bandit volunteers climb aboard the elevator platform and take a firm hold of the cage. Then Tareth signals to the two Bandits who will remain at the top of the shaft to begin lowering the platform down the shaft. It takes one minute to reach the shaft floor where, to your relief, you find that the cavern-like area is unoccupied. A torch-lit tunnel leads away from the elevator cavern. Iron mine cart tracks have been laid on the ground to enable mine carts to be wheeled to the base of the elevator.

The following encounters occur in a linear manner i.e. one after the other. The infiltrating party has the element of surprise and may be able to sneak past the following encounters if they are able to maintain their stealth and silence. Their base test value is TV6 which can be modified to their advantage if they possess at least one of the Kai Disciplines of Camouflage, Sixth Sense, Hunting or Tracking. You should test them at the start of each encounter, and also make a test for Taneth (TV6) and the five Bandits (TV7).



GUARD ROOM



A number of guards are relaxing here, talking or playing at dice or cards.

There are plenty of areas for the guards to take a rest break, and this is one of them. Pick a random number to determine the number of guards in the room. The guards here are armed and reasonably alert, but they are not on duty and therefore they are not paying much attention.



CHASM

The tunnel opens into a deep chasm, but continues on the other side.



While there is no bridge here, a ledge along one side looks just about wide enough to allow you to cross.

The ledge is both wide enough and stable enough to cross. However, it is still a scary climb as the chasm below appears bottomless. You can use this encounter to scare the Players a little.

Each Kai Lord who crosses must make a test at a Target Value of 4, but don't tell the players the TV. Success means they have managed to get across, and that their test result was good enough.



If one of them fails, they do not quite fall to their death (although a bandit may well do so!) Instead, they slip and will need someone else to help them get across. Taneth will automatically succeed and does not need to test.

THE GHOULS AND THE WORM



You hear a scampering sound from up ahead and point your torches to see what you can. In the flickering light, a group of thin, hunched, grey-skinned figures come scurrying towards you. Their fingers are long and they look at you with wide inhuman eyes. Their ragged mouths have razor-sharp teeth. It looks certain that they intend to attack!

The tunnels are not as empty as even the guards expect, stretching out much further than the hideout. The odd wild creature occasionally finds its way inside, a few even making their home deep within the cave complex. These creatures are Ghouls, but they are not attacking the Kai; they are instead running from an even larger predator called a Stone Worm.

If the Kai Lords do not attack, the Ghouls will run past them. But if they are engaged in combat they will fight. There is one Ghoul for each Kai Lord and should the chance arise they will all try to evade combat and flee into the tunnels.

3 rounds after the Ghouls' arrival, the Stone Worm attacks. It is both non-sentient and very hungry and will try to consume whatever it runs into first. If reduced to half its Endurance it will attempt to escape and find easier pickings elsewhere.

GHOULS

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 16

Traits: Brutal (1), Grouping (Mob), Immune to Mindblast.

Ghouls are thin and spindly looking undead humanoids with long limbs, sharp fingers and ghastly, inhuman eyes. They fight well as a pack and are especially vicious when cornered.

STONE WORM

Combat Skill: 18 / **Endurance:** 30

Traits: Burrow, Defence (2).

This huge underground dweller lives simply to feed. It slithers along the deep sensing vibrations to track prey.



FLOOD



A layer of water has bubbled up along the tunnel floor here. It only goes up to your shins but is dark and murky.



The water isn't dangerous, but it does hide a danger. It is bubbling up from a hole hidden in the corridor. Anyone walking through the water without first probing the ground ahead will slip into the hole and vanish. They will have to make a test at a Target Value of 9, but they can reduce this to 6 if they cast aside at least two of their possessions. If the test is a success they manage to break the surface. If they fail, they begin to drown (see the *Book of Kai Wisdom*, page 16). They can attempt the roll again next turn, until they succeed or lose consciousness.

SMELTING AREA



The tunnel opens out into a large chamber full of heat and fire. There are four forges here, being used to melt down and process iron ore, copper and gold. A few workers mill around, but they are so intent on their task that they fail to notice you. Various tunnels lead out of here, and ramps have been built to help move carts full of metal in and out of the chamber.



If the Kai Lords observe this chamber for a while they will notice two interesting facts. The first is that the ore being brought in for processing is all coming from one tunnel. This must be where it is being stored. The ore is being processed into ingots and sent out into a different tunnel, presumably to another storage area.

INGOT STORAGE

This is where the ingots of pure gold are stored. It is The Pale Mask's treasure trove. There are 204 gold ingots here, enough for the following division among Tareth and his men:

4 ingots per Bandit (there are 35 Bandits waiting at the treeline) = 140

8 ingots per volunteer (there are 7 volunteers) = 56

8 ingots for Tareth = 8

Total = 204

The Players will not receive any ingots. This is, after all, contraband gold. Due to their ethical Kai code, they will not seek to benefit in any way from this contraband loot.

There is an empty mine wagon on the tracks, and a pair of sturdy pit ponies standing in an enclosure in one corner of the chamber. The infiltration party can load the gold ingots into the mine wagon and harness the pit ponies to the front of it. This will enable them to haul the wagon through an adjoining tunnel all the way to the elevator. This tunnel bypasses the areas the party passed through on the way to the Ingot Storage chamber.



ESCAPING WITH THE GOLD

Upon arriving at the base of the elevator, the infiltration party will need to load the ingots into the cage on the platform. It can only take 102 gold ingots, so hauling the gold to the cave mouth above will necessitate two lifts.

Tareth will ring the bell four times to alert the two volunteers above. The winching can then proceed. It will take the two volunteers 3 minutes to unload the cage each time it arrives laden with ingots. Unfortunately, the unorthodox bell ringing will alert some of the Pale Mask's mercenaries. They will enter the elevator chamber just after the second gold lift is underway and combat will ensue.

PALE MASK MERCENARIES X5

Combat Skill: 18 / **Endurance:** 28

Traits: Grouping (Mob), Soldier.

WEALTH AND REPARATION

The Bandits are understandably overjoyed with their haul of gold. Each ingot is worth 6,400 Gold Crowns. Tareth has delivered on his promise and they praise him profusely. He uses this outpouring of appreciation to his advantage. He wishes to return to the village of Maura and make up with his beloved Hara. He also wants to make amends to the villagers for the damage done by the Bandits during their raid and apparent abduction of him. He appeals to the Bandits that their desires are only partially fulfilled. Yes, they are now wealthy men but they are still far from being respectable. He attempts to persuade them to return with him to Maura and calls for each man to give the villagers one of his gold ingots as reparation for the damage and distress they caused. This is far more than the villagers could ever hope to have received from the proceeds of their stolen ore. Most of the Bandits are in agreement, although there are five dissenters who choose to mount up and ride off of their own accord. Tareth orders his loyal Bandit followers to let them go.



SCENE FIVE TO STAND OR FALL

Tareth leads his happy band of Bandits to Maura and you all arrive at the village shortly before noon. The Players should feel pleased that Taneth and his men have chosen to do the right thing, however events soon take an unexpected turn for the worse. The elevator shaft was not the sole means in and out of the Pale Mask's lair. He had the foresight to have a secret tunnel excavated from the cavern complex to the surface, and by this way he and his surviving mercenaries are able to escape within an hour of the Kai Lords, Tareth and the Bandits leaving the cave mouth. The deep tracks left by the Bandits' gold-laden horses are easy for the Pale Mask and his mercenaries to follow.

RETURN TO MAURA



The villagers are understandably nervous upon seeing the Bandits riding into their village for a second time.

But they are riding much slower than before and their smiling expressions convey no malicious intent. Having Tareth and the Players riding at their head also helps to calm the villagers' fractious nerves. Word spreads like wildfire and soon all of the folk of Maura have emerged from their homes and come to the square to find out what is going on. Mayor Hagon Kantar steps out of the crowd with a look of suspicion etched on his distinguished face. He is perplexed to see Tareth and the Players in the company of the Bandits and he demands an explanation. Tareth answers with a calm and soothing tone. "My lord, I have convinced these rogues to give up their wicked ways and seek the forgiveness of you and your kinsfolk. They are truly sorry for what they have done and they wish to repent and make reparation."

Tareth signals to the Bandits and, as one, they dismount, remove one gold ingot from their saddlebags and walk forward to place the bars in a heap in the middle of the village square. Tareth brings forward the horse(s) of the volunteer(s) who did not survive the raid on the Pale Mask's Secret Lair, and he takes out their ingots, one by one, and places them alongside the others. A collective gasp arises from the villagers when they stare upon more than 40 gold ingots, stacked and gleaming in the glare of the midday sun.

Mayor Kantar scratches his head and looks down at the gold incredulously. There is enough here to rebuild the village twice over and still have a considerable fortune left over. Slowly, his eyes widen and his expression changes from doubt to delight. Upon seeing this, the villagers burst out cheering and dancing with joy. They have become overwhelmed by a sudden rush of gold fever. Through this happy throng comes Hara. When she sees Tareth she is overjoyed and runs into his arms. The couple warmly embrace and become oblivious to everything that is going on around them.

A DEADLY WARNING



Suddenly an arrow arches across the sky and lands with a thud in the ground near the feet of Tareth. Attached to it is a message:

"You have offended the Pale Mask.

Your choice is simple. Return all of my gold and I will permit you all to live. Resist and I will kill everyone; men, women and children.

"Leave the market square at once. Do not attempt to prevent my men from collecting what is mine. Show any sign of resistance and it will cost you all your lives."

Mayor Kantar takes the message from Tareth's grasp and reads the contents. His face drops and he begins to tremble.

"We... we must do as the Pale Mask demands. He... he'll slaughter us all if we dare defy him."

Tareth retorts, "No my Lord. He will slaughter us all if we allow him and his men into the village to take the gold. He is an evil man. He will want to make an example of us as a warning to all the other villages he exploits. We have no choice. We must stand and fight if we are to survive."

STAND AND FIGHT



Tareth is absolutely correct. The Pale Mask has no intention of allowing anyone to live. His honour has been compromised by the theft of his hoard and only the death of all concerned will assuage his anger. Convey this truth to the Players. They must prepare themselves for an imminent battle against the Pale Mask and his mercenaries.

BATTLE FOR THE VILLAGE

You may be anxious about running a combat involving over 100 combatants, but fear not! You don't need to run the battle as lots of small fights; instead, just focus on what the Players are doing and roll to see which way the tide of battle is going.

PALE MASK MERCENARIES

Combat Skill: 16 / **Endurance:** 20

Traits: Grouping (Mob), Soldier.

The battle will last 10 combat rounds. At the end of that time, one side will have lost enough men to be forced to give up. If this is the mercenaries, they will be routed. If the villagers' lose, they will have to flee the village with as many as they can as the mercenaries overwhelm them.

At the start of each combat turn, you should pick a random number for the Pale Mask's mercenaries. One of the Players should do the same too. The one with the highest number has the upper hand in the fight that round. At the end of 10 rounds, the side who had the upper hand the most times is the winner.

However, the numbers are modified depending on what goes on during the combat rounds, according to the following table:

- +3 to the mercenaries side due to their superior force.
- +1 to the villagers' side if they are ready for the attack.
- +1 to the villagers for each opponent the Kai Lords defeat in the previous round.
- +3 to the villager's side if the Black Bandana is defeated (and -2 to the mercenaries).

THE BLACK BANDANA

Combat Skill: 24 / **Endurance:** 35

Traits: Brutal (3), Soldier.

Leading the mercenaries is one of the Pale Mask's fiercest lieutenants, the Black Bandana. He is a tall and impressive warrior who wields a vicious-looking heavy axe and wears a plain black bandana to hide his features. The Black Bandana will join the fight on round 3 of the combat, angry that his men are not having an easy victory. He will also seek out the Kai Lords, looking to slaughter them to destroy the villagers' morale. It will take more than one of the Kai Lords to take him down, but if he falls the mercenaries will suffer a serious blow to morale.





ENDING THE ADVENTURE

After a ferocious combat, one of two outcomes are possible. Either the villagers rout the mercenaries with the help of the Bandits, or they are overcome and forced to flee. If the mercenaries are routed they will run for the hills to south of Maura. The Players may try to pursue them, but the villagers will need help with their wounded. After such a desperate fight, with many homes in ruins and innocent people hurt, the Players should be glad it is finally at an end and not wish to pursue it any further. The villagers and the Bandits will retain the gold ingots and secure their futures.

If the villagers cannot fight off the mercenaries, they will have to flee into the foothills of the Maaken Range to the north. The Kai Lords will need to protect the villagers as they make good escape. However, Tareth and the remaining Bandits will stand shoulder to shoulder with them to form a protective wall. If they can hold them off for a further 5 combat rounds (with a mercenary for each Player to fight), the villagers will escape. While the mercenaries will not chase the villagers into the foothills, they will set fire to Maura and raze it to the ground.

Whatever the outcome, Tareth and Hara will be reunited. The villagers will have witnessed the bravery of the Bandits who fought by their side, and although they will not forgive them for what they did in the past, they will choose to forget it as best they can and allow them to settle down and make new lives among them (or join them as fellow refugees). Tareth and Hara will honour their vows and their marriage will come to symbolise the beginning of a new period of hope and stability for the village and its hard-working inhabitants.

GOLD AND GAMES

The Pale Mask is a Vassagonian noble with grand plans for the province beyond simply stealing its riches. He seeks to take control of both Ruanon Province and the ore trade, and will even consider making an alliance with the Darklands if that is what it will take to bring his plans to fruition. His control over the local bandit groups has given him some wealth, but it is power that he craves most. Should the Players return to the Pale Mask's Secret Lair, they will find it empty and its smelting forges destroyed. The Pale Mask never leaves loose ends.

The attack on the village will demonstrate that the important area between Ruanon and Casiorn is not safe for traders nor travellers as the Bandits have become too confident, despite the presence of Cassels of the Sommlending Army of the South. In his other identity as a concerned community leader, the Pale Mask will push for more troops to be sent out on regular patrols of the area. This is deliberately disingenuous for he knows it would be far too costly for the King to sanction. It is his goal to have his men fulfil this role, with Crown consent, as an auxiliary force under his direct command. Should he be able to achieve his ambition, eventually he will muster a small army that is active throughout the whole of Ruanon Province. When the time is right, he will then carry out a coup d'état and seize military control of Sommerlund's richest region.

A character like the Pale Mask, working against the Players in the background, makes for an interesting villain to use in your own adventures. It will provide an ongoing plot that will weave them together into a grand campaign. As for the Pale Mask himself, no doubt he will make a re-appearance and resume his devious schemes at sometime in the not too distant future...





RIVER PIRATES OF THE DORN



IN THIS CHAPTER



WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT?
SCENE ONE: WELCOME TO RAGADORN
SCENE TWO: TO THE FORT!
SCENE THREE: THE LONG FANG TRIBE
SCENE FOUR: THE RUINS OF FORT HARDING





CHAPTER TWO

RIVER PIRATES OF THE DORN

River Pirates of the Dorn takes our heroes out of Sommerlund and into the shattered wastes of the Wildlands. The Kai Lords must travel a hundred miles down the River Dorn from the city-state of Ragadorn into the Wildlands to investigate the outpost Fort Harding. Along the way they must navigate several hazards, face creatures both natural and bizarre, and battle the vicious bandits and river pirates of the region.

WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT?

The Kingdom of Sommerlund has long wanted to form an expedition into the Wildlands in order to pacify and perhaps settle that broken land. The first stages of the grand plan involve setting up forward outposts in the Wildlands for the expedition to resupply at. One such outpost, Fort Harding, has been constructed at Salt Creek on the Dorn River. This outpost is to be the keystone of the expedition, for the Kingdom of Durenor has pledged to assist by sending its own expedition from the east to meet the Sommlending army at Fort Harding.

Last summer a unit of Border Rangers accompanied a company of army pioneers to construct the base. During the summer and autumn, and into winter, regular messengers arrived in Ragadorn bringing reports of the outpost's progress. They brought news of battles with mutants and bandits, as well as worries about a large force of bandits calling themselves the River Pirates who were planning to mass a large flotilla to attack the city-state of Ragadorn. Messengers did not arrive in the spring, and after the ice on the river had broken three Border Rangers were dispatched to investigate. They never returned, nor has any further word from Fort Harding reached the Sommlending agents in Ragadorn.

The army has sent word to the Kai Monastery, hoping that a team of Kai Lords will be able to get through to the outpost, ascertain what the situation is and, if possible, resolve it. The Players have been chosen for this mission, and have been sent by ship to Ragadorn to meet with the Sommlending consul there. Consul Lord-lieutenant Kelting can provide them with helpful information, supplies and a flat-bottomed riverboat to carry them down the Dorn River to Fort Harding.

WHAT HAPPENED TO FORT HARDING?

The River Pirates are a large force of Wildlands bandits who have gathered around a notorious brigand who calls himself the River King. While they do not think they can actually conquer the city-state of Ragadorn, they are powerful enough to do some serious damage, and grab a great deal of loot along the way. Fort Harding and the planned expedition are a threat to this scheme, and a direct challenge to the River King's power (not that the Kingdom of Sommerlund knows or cares about the River King).

In the middle of winter when the river was covered in ice and snow blanketed the ground, the River Pirates struck, attacking the fort and capturing it in one brutal night. The brave soldiers of Sommerlund were slaughtered, many still in their bunks, and the fort was burned. The three Border Rangers who came to investigate in the spring were ambushed, two were killed and the third held captive by the River King. With this threat to his scheme to sack Ragadorn taken care of, the River King is now planning to row north in the summer.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure is made up of three scenes:

- **Scene One** takes the Kai Lords to the city-state of Ragadorn, where they are introduced to their mission and make preparations for a dangerous journey into the Wildlands.
- **Scene Two** sees the Kai Lords crossing the inhospitable landscape of the Wildlands, whether by boat or overland, confronting them with all manner of strange and deadly hazards.
- **Scene Three** can be positioned at any point in the adventure, and brings an encounter with potential allies against the River King – the Long Fang Tribe.
- **Scene Four** reveals the dark and bloody fate of Fort Harding, and sets the Kai Lords into a showdown with the River King in his lair.

SCENE ONE WELCOME TO RAGADORN

Read the following text to the Players when you are ready to start the adventure:



The long sea voyage has come to an end as first the spires and then the docks of the city-state of Ragadorn come into view. Before your vessel can find its slip in the harbour, a small lighter shoots out from the shore and comes alongside. The consul, Lord-lieutenant Kelting, has sent the boat to pick you up and take you to his personal docks. The captain of your ship is obviously annoyed by this development – anything that disrupts the normal operations of his ship or delays landing his cargo annoy him – but he has no choice in the face of not just a royal consul, but a group of Kai Lords too. Acceding to your wishes, he has his ship brought around and your baggage lowered into the lighter.

The six oarsmen and their coxswain rapidly ferry you past the merchant shipping and around to the far side of the bay. There you put up alongside a private dock on the Eastbank Wharf. An older man in thick brocaded robes, the gold chain of his office around his neck, awaits you. Behind him are a trio of courtiers; obviously a scribe, a bodyguard and an advisor.

The richly dressed man steps forward and offer you a hand up out of the lighter, “Welcome to Ragadorn, Kai Lords. I fear your services are in great need.”

The consul and his escort then convey the characters in a carriage along a rubbish-strewn thoroughfare known as East Trade Lane. The carriage turns left in Unicorn Street, then enters Ladder Street,

a surprisingly clean lane bordered by old terraced houses including the consul’s palace, the Joint Embassy of Sommerlund and Durenor. Although a magnificent edifice, the Joint Embassy is rather sparsely decorated, and what few decorations there are of a martial manner. Due to his infirmities, the Consul moves more slowly than he would like, and struggles with his cane and the stairs. Despite this hindrance, he maintains a steady pace and continues talking.

THE SITUATION AT FORT HARDING

The following is a considerable amount of spoken text. Feel free to divide it up and work it into conversation during roleplaying. You are not constrained to the format of this or any other section of text in the adventure. Provide these details to your Players any way you desire.



“How much do you know about your mission? It might seem simple enough, but the mission itself is crucial to our kingdom’s plans in the Wildlands, not to mention those of our allies. Fort Harding is to serve as the keystone for the joint Wildlands expedition planned by ourselves and our allies in Durenor, they will come from the east and we will come from the west. The two columns are to meet at Fort Harding, a resupply point and the means for both nations to communicate with their soldiers.

“Construction on the fort began last spring, and I received regular updates throughout the summer and into the winter. There were not any messengers after midwinter, and I feared it might have been more than the cold and the ice on the river. Now spring has come and gone, but I have still had no word from the fort. I sent three Border Rangers south to check on the situation, but they have not returned and it has been two months now, what with getting my request for aid out and you arriving.





v“It is imperative that you make it through the Wildlands to the fort and determine why we have not heard from it. If there has been some sort of attack, and this being the Wildlands it could be bandits, Szalls or some monstrous mutant, you will need to resolve the problem before returning. I can help you in any way possible; I have supplies and boats in abundance, after not hearing from the fort I stopped sending the weekly shipments of supplies for them to stockpile.”

QUESTIONING THE CONSUL



The characters can ask further questions of the Consul. He is very willing to help, but he does want them to get started on their mission without delay. Below are some answers to likely questions.

What do you think happened to the fort?

“The last reports I received mentioned a gathering force of bandits calling themselves the River Pirates. Captain Hendorn felt that this was a threat that needed attention, but he did not have the manpower to perform even the barest of reconnaissance. These bandits may have attacked the fort. Also, the Wildlands are home to all manner of strange beasts and deadly creatures.”

What dangers lie along the river?

“There are many dangers on the River Dorn: giant Alligator Kreels, Szall packs, daring Giak raiding parties from the Durncrag, not to mention the Shadow Cats and other predators of the Wildlands. Bandits and mutants are common near the water; the river is one of the few sources of fresh water in the area.”

How do we get to the fort?

“You can travel upriver; I have both flat-bottomed supply boats and small swift canoes for you to use. If you would prefer, you can try striking out overland, though this will likely take longer. I apologise; I have no guides to offer you. The local tribes are violent and untrustworthy, as one would expect from such savages.”

How far is it to the fort?

“80 miles as the crow flies, but along the river it will be closer to 100. You should be able to make at least 10 miles a day on the river, faster in a canoe than a flat-bottomed supply boat. Overland will be risky; what reports I have tell of some truly horrid terrain.”

Can we get supplies for the journey?

“Of course, the warehouses for the expedition are well stocked as I have been unwilling to risk resupply missions until we find out more about the situation.”

GETTING READY



Consul Kelting was not lying; the warehouses are well stocked. Ask the Players what mundane supplies they think they will need, including weapons and armour. However, before they go overboard on the supplies, remind them that there is a limit to what they can carry. They should not tarry too long in Ragadorn; Kelting will be trying to hurry them along as fast as he can.



The largest decision the Players must make is: on foot or on the river? Both have advantages and disadvantages. The River Dorn is a wide and strong river, and paddling against the current will be tiring. However, it is nearly impossible to get lost, having boats allows for more supplies to be carried (and thus decreases the amount of time needed to find food), and the river provides fresh, albeit somewhat slightly tainted water (the source of this river is located in the Maakenmire Swamp to the south), something otherwise hard to find in the area. However, the overland route will be quicker, providing the characters do not fall foul of the terrain and beasts of the Wildlands. Let the players study the map from the fort to the city (see opposite), this is the area that the Consul has reports on.

PLAYING CONSUL LORD-LIEUTENANT KELTING

Once a ranking general in the Sommlending Army, Consul Lord-lieutenant Kelting is an older man afflicted with both gout and the lingering pain from his many wounds earned in the service of the King. He moves awkwardly but brusquely with the aid of a cane and often one of his courtiers, but still has the commanding presence and stout courage of a life-long military man. His speech is short and clipped, and always to the point.

Lord-lieutenant Kelting holds himself personally responsible for any ill fate that has fallen on Fort Harding, even though he was over a hundred miles away at the time. As the leading Sommlending Consul to the city-state of Ragadorn, he has been tasked with overseeing the construction of the fort and making sure supplies are regularly sent down the Dorn River. While he has been instrumental in arranging for the acquisition, warehousing and disbursement of supplies, a tall order considering he is not only supplying an outpost but also making sure supplies for the expedition are stocked both in the city and at the fort, he has yet to make the journey to the fort himself.

Because of this sense of guilt, he will be both overjoyed that a band of Kai Lords have arrived, but also in a hurry to get them informed and outfitted, and on their way. The sooner they get to the fort, the sooner they can find out what has happened.



SCENE TWO TO THE FORT!

There are two ways for this scene to begin, depending on how the Players decided to travel in the previous scene.

LEAVING RAGADORN BY RIVER



If the Players decided to travel to the fort by river, read the following aloud:



You launch your boat out into the river and begin paddling hard against the current. Soon, the river gate of Ragadorn disappears behind you and the grey wastes of the Wildlands, cut only by the green edged blue ribbon of the river, stretch on to the horizon.

Proceed to **Scene 2a: The River Route**, on page 33.

LEAVING RAGADORN OVERLAND



If the Players decided to travel to the fort by foot, read the following aloud:



Hoisting your packs onto your shoulders, you exit out the Dorn Gate – the southern gate bordering the west bank of the River Dorn – and begin your trek across the Wildlands to Fort Harding. The sand beneath your feet soon takes on an ashy consistency broken here and there by sharp edged volcanic rocks. To the south lies the fort and, hopefully, a solution to this mystery.

Proceed to **Scene 2b: The Overland Route**, on page 35.

The characters must now begin their journey to the fort. Unless one of them can sprout wings, there are only two ways to get there: paddling up the river or hiking across the desolate wastes. Both routes are detailed below, and the characters can choose either of them. They might even mix the two; for example, if they lose their boats or decide the river is taking too long.

THE WILDLANDS

The Wildlands are a wasteland of cracked ground, rare sluggish streams and blasted plains stunted with scraggly stunted bushes and dead trees. Everything that lives here must fight for the scarce resources that the land gives up, and even the native tribes – some descendants of the inhabitants of Northern Cloesia, before this region turned into the Wildlands – prefer violence to any other form of conflict resolution.

Exploring these blasted and tainted wastes will prove a challenge. The characters will need to struggle to find enough food and water, shelter themselves from the more deadly aspects of the environment and fight off savage attacks by not just hungry predators, but the fouler





creatures that haunt the Wildlands. The greatest dangers are those of the human variety, for the Wildlands are home to bandits, renegades and savage tribes. The latter might be a source of information, supplies and assistance, however, for the two tribes in the area are not friends of the River King and they have suffered much at his hands

You will need to track the party's progress on their journey, but you do not need to be terribly precise about it. Assume that the travel times listed below are average and include time for an encounter or two. Let the Players cover the listed distance unless they truly act in a manner that will delay them. However, you will need to track Meals consumed by the Kai Lords; the Wildlands are not a hospitable place, and the story requires the heroes to consider balancing their need for food with their need to reach the fort.

HUNTING FOR MEALS IN THE WASTELAND

Note that the Kai Discipline of Hunting cannot be used to find Meals within the Wildlands – it is simply too inhospitable a wasteland. The exception, of course, is for Kai Lords who possess the Advanced discipline – they may hunt freely in the Wildlands.

RATES OF TRAVEL

Barring some form of magic, flight or other unlikely invention, there are only two means of reaching the fort. Canoes and flat-bottomed riverboats are the only choices for following the river. The other option is good old boot leather.



One or two Kai Lords can paddle a canoe, and these boats are the fastest river option. Canoes also provide some limited capacity to carry extra meals and other equipment. A day's worth of paddling will put 15 miles of river behind the character. Each canoe has 10 slots for cargo that can be filled with any supplies a character might want. Furthermore, canoes are rather light and can even be carried short distances over land. The lightness of their frames is also their weakness, for any amount of damage will puncture the skin covering of the hull and render a canoe unusable.



Flat-bottomed riverboats are large vessels that draw only a few feet of water. They are propelled with long sweeps and poles that allow one to push against the current of the river. While capable of navigating all but the shallowest portions of the river, flat-bottomed boats do suffer from a need for deeper water than canoes. Travelling by one of these boats is a slower process than the faster canoes, and the Kai Lords can expect to only make 10 miles per day. However, the boats have a nearly limitless capacity to store whatever supplies the Kai Lords wish to take, and provide a safe place to sleep at night. They are also constructed of sturdy logs that provide ample protection from damage and danger.



Finally, the Kai Lords might decide to walk overland to the fort. At best they can expect to cover 10 miles of terrain a day; even the best parts of the Wildlands are far more rugged than the wilds of Sommerlund. Naturally, Kai Lords travelling by foot must carry whatever supplies they need with them. However, they are not confined to the river and can choose their own course. There is the risk of getting lost while travelling overland, unless one of the Kai Lords has the Tracking discipline; otherwise staying on course will require a TV 6 test.

USING THE SURVIVAL SKILL

Master-level Rule: The Survival skill, possibly modified by the Kai Disciplines of Hunting and Tracking, will help the Kai Lords find their way overland across the Wildlands.

WAIT, IS THERE A TIME LIMIT?

The answer to that question is yes and no. There is no set time for the adventure to be completed in. The characters can take all the time they want to get to the fort, explore the area and defeat the River King. However, two factors need to be kept in mind. First, Consul Lord-lieutenant Kelting feels that time is of the essence and will impress this upon the characters. This has more to do with the Consul's personality than the needs of the mission (see the box out on page 30). Second, the River King is preparing to launch an attack on Ragadorn. The number of River Pirates and their position varies depending on a set timeline.

10 days after the characters leave Ragadorn, increase the number of River Pirates at the River King's Lair by 4 per day. 20 days after the characters leave Ragadorn, the River King has assembled his flotilla and is heading north at a rate of 15 miles per day.

The Players should find out about the River King and his scheme, as well as that it will soon be implemented. They can do this in several ways. First, if they make peaceful contact with either the Long Fang or Shadow Cat tribes then the leaders of those tribes will speak of the River King and how his forces are gathering. Second, encounters with other bandits or some of the River Pirates might yield this information. Finally, spying on the River King's encampment will show that boats are being made ready, warriors are arriving and that a major operation is about to happen.

DESCRIBING THE WILDLANDS

The Wildlands are a wasteland, a place wracked by an ancient cataclysm and savaged by storms. Little grows here save for isolated stunted bushes and dead-looking trees. Bizarre weather, earthquakes, flash fires and worse continuously hit the land. The very soil is corrupted in most places, and sometimes takes on bizarre colours such as blood reds, electric blues and sickly greens.

Many of the remaining animals that live here have been mutated by the pollution, some are simply a different colour than expected, such as the yellow-green deer that make up most of the game, but others are hideously warped by the Wildlands' strange conditions.

When describing the Wildlands to the Players, make sure to point out three things: the twisted and wracked state of the land, the foreign and unnatural colours normal things take and the harshness of life there. The Wildlands were subjected to terrible earthquakes, and after the opening of the Maakengorge in MS 3055, to episodic but violent eruptions of lava and roiling clouds of gas, ash and smoke. Some areas are still seismically active, and small quakes, sudden eruptions, geysers and such should be a common experience.

SCENE 2A THE RIVER ROUTE

The river route is the most likely route the Kai Lords will take. You should use your map (see page 30) to track the Kai Lords' progress. When they reach one of the following locations, describe the appropriate scene to them and play out the encounter. Some of these locations can be combined with random encounters from below to create varied and interesting challenges.

HANDLING RIVER JOURNEYS

It is very easy for a river journey to become a railroad trip; that is, it is easy to fall into the mistake of letting a series of events take over the story and not the actions of the characters. This is called railroading, where the plot takes over and the characters are only along for the ride. Good roleplaying is about the Players making choices for their characters; forcing them into a series of events that they have no control over robs them of this.

How do you avoid this when running through the river journey portion of this adventure? The Narrator has to be reactive, rather than active. Let the Players make decisions and follow through with them. If they want to leave the river and travel by foot, adjust the adventure to take that into account. They might want to sneak past some threats, or otherwise avoid them. The river rapids scene is very exciting, but it does not have to be played out if the characters decide to ditch their boats and carry on afoot, or if they figure out a way to carry the boats around the rapids. Both are just as good of a choice as running the rapids, and can be just as fun.

There are other ways to avoid forcing the characters to fit the plot. Use the random events table on page 40 to break up the pacing of the planned events. If the planned events need to occur in a different order, or possibly one or more needs to be skipped, then do so. In all published adventures, this one is meant to be a tool to allow you to make your own fun, not a script to be followed.



BURNT-OUT HAMLET



The river narrows as a low bluff rises up on the western bank, diverting the flow towards the lower and flatter eastern side. The remains of a hamlet can be seen in the distance, as well as a row of severed heads placed on stakes along the river's edge. The opposite bank, dominated by a large chalk cliff, has been painted with an image of a fanged canoe.

The ruins of a hamlet lie along the edge of the river, the huts nothing but charred stumps, the people run off or slaughtered, and the livestock long since taken as tribute to the River King. The people of this independent hamlet refused to bow to their would-be ruler and suffered for it. To drive his point home, the River King had the hamlet's warriors decapitated and their heads placed on stakes lining the river's edge, as well as his personal symbol, a fanged canoe, painted on a cliff face across the river.

THE RAPIDS

A THUNDERING APPROACH



A dull rumbling reaches your ears from the river ahead, and the tell-tale haze in the air hints at rapids ahead. A well-travelled trail leads along the eastern bank and up



a small ridge, no doubt a portage path used by local tribes and bandits to skirt the rapids. As you paddle closer, you see that the rapids are strong, but possibly navigable.



These rapids are the worst on the northern part of the River Dorn. Flat-bottomed riverboats have no hope of getting through and must be put on rollers and carried around. This will take at least a day of work, and possibly more if no one is familiar with basic carpentry or has any tools.



Canoes can simply be carried, something that will reduce the amount of travel today by 3 miles, or an attempt can be made to shoot the rapids.



Paddling up the rapids is a great challenge, requiring a TV 7 test (adding your Endurance bonus to it if applicable); this test is reduced to TV 6 if going downstream.

Failure means a canoe has been overturned, all supplies in it are lost and its occupant must swim the rapids to safety, requiring the same test as above. Success sees the Kai Lord and their canoe shoot out the top of the rapids and further up the river.

USING THE SURVIVAL, MIGHT OR ACROBATICS SKILLS

Master-level Rule: The Survival skill may be used for this test, as can Might or Acrobatics.

BLUE FENS THE SLOWEST OF ROADS

A few miles after navigating the rapids, the river opens out into a broad plain, cutting several channels through the grey-blue soil. Water birds, some mutated into grotesque mockeries of normal fowl, gather here in large numbers to feast on the insects swarming around you and the fish that leap out of the murky water. The way ahead is unclear, one or more of these channels leads through to the main river somewhere to the south.

The Blue Fens are a 8 mile long, 3 mile wide expanse of boggy land dotted with twisted and gnarled trees and inhabited by strangely long-legged birds, swarms of biting flies, and weird two-headed fish. The river splits into dozens of channels, many of them blind streams or interconnected waterways. In places the water spreads out and slows to a sluggish crawl, which would make travel easier and faster were it not for the choking mats of lilies and other water plants.



The heroes will have to find their way through this mess. A TV 6 test will allow them to find the right channel. Failure means that they will need to backtrack, losing a mile off their travel for the day and having to reattempt the check again. A Kai Lord with the Tracking discipline will automatically succeed at this test.

USING THE SURVIVAL SKILL

Master-level Rule: The Survival skill, aided by the Hunting Kai Discipline, can help the characters find their way upriver.

THE GREAT CATARACT PORTAGE AND PASSAGE



The river passes from swampland through a series of low bluffs and on to cut through steep, cracked and fractured low badlands. Huge boulders have tumbled down to block and divert the water's flow, and the river narrows down, making paddling against it even more difficult. Adding to this, the river also twists and turns, its centuries-old flow having traced the thread of the softest rock through these broken badlands.

The sound of falling water echoes through the canyons, and you come around a bend to see a 20-foot waterfall cascading down from the southern stretch of the river to the northern. There is no way to ascend by boat and you will have to carry your boats up and over. Luckily, there is a clear and well-blazed path from just below the waterfall and up to the river above. The cliff face above has been marked with a stylised image of a fanged canoe.

The Great Cataract, the largest on the river and the only one in the northern half of its reach, features a well-known and well-used portage. Generations of feet and boats have carved a set of steps, and the locals maintain a simple rope system for lifting up larger boats. While moving canoes, or worse yet, a riverboat up the portage will be time consuming – it will take at least three hours of labour (six for a flat-bottomed boat) and end the day's travel – it is possible.

For the bandit groups and savage tribes of the Wildlands, this portage is neutral ground, but not to the River King and his pirates. He has stationed a group of five River Pirates here to waylay any who attempt to use the portage. Mostly, they charge a toll for any who wish to pass, but in the case of outsiders (such as Sommlending soldiers, Kai Lords or other threats), a more direct approach is preferred.

The River Pirates will wait in hiding until the Kai Lords are halfway up the portage. At that point they will strike, raining arrows down before charging in a mad rush to drive the intruders off the portage.



The 5 River Pirate ambushers fight as a grouped enemy – their stats below already reflect this.

RIVER PIRATE AMBUSHERS

Combat Skill: 24 / **Endurance:** 23

Traits: Grouping (Mob – already included in stats).

Special Rules: Ranged Combat, Trappers.



If the heroes are trying to hoist a flat-bottomed boat up, the River Pirates will cut the rope, hopefully sending several thousand pounds of free-falling lumber into the Kai Lords. Evading this trap requires a physical test, so bonuses from high COMBAT SKILL scores will apply. The TN is 6. Failure forces the hero to lose 10 points of ENDURANCE. Defence will not reduce this damage, but Players may take a Luck test to reduce the damage by half (to 5 points).

LOOK-OUT ROCK FANGS OF WARNING



Ahead of you the river splits to go around a large rocky outcropping that stands in the middle of the water and rises up at least 50 feet. The sides of this rock have been painted and carved with a stylised image of a fanged canoe. If this doesn't serve as enough warning to intruders, the top of the rock is inhabited by a small band of armed men. As you approach you can see the sunlight glinting off their swords and arrow tips.

The River King has sent five men to stand guard at Look-out Rock. At any time three are on top of the rock ready to shoot at intruders, while two more wait at the base on the upriver side to take fast canoes south. This encounter is less of an ambush and more of a race through the killing zone, possibly to catch up to the sentries paddling south. The river is five hundred feet wide at this point, divided into a channel to the east and west of the rock.



The sentries on top of the rock have a height advantage and the benefit of cover, causing any Kai Lords who wish to attack them at range to incur a -2 penalty to their COMBAT SKILL.



The combat begins at Far range, which means that ENDURANCE damage inflicted in ranged combat is halved until the distance is closed. A Move action each round (free, as described on page 26 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*) reduces the range by one step until the combatants are Close range from one another.

After this point, instead of entering Melee range, the range between them increases to Long and then Far again as they paddle past.



There is a trail from the upriver side of the rock that leads to the top – if the distance between the Kai Lords and the sentries is reduced to Close, the heroes can try to ascend the rock in order to reach the sentries. If they do so, they will have cover from the sentries above until they reach the top. The top is barren save for a crude camp and small pile of firewood.



The three River Pirate sentries atop the rock fight as a grouped enemy – their stats below already reflect this. Each sentry has ten arrows and will fire off five of them if they get the chance. The sentries paddling south have a five-round head start and will paddle instead of trying to return fire.

RIVER PIRATE SENTRIES

Combat Skill: 21 / **Endurance:** 22

Traits: Grouping (Mob).

Special Rules: Ranged Combat.

SCENE 2B THE OVERLAND ROUTE

While less desirable than taking the river, some Kai Lords may prefer the overland route. The river runs a 100 miles to the fort, while cutting straight across the land looks like 80 miles as the crow flies. The following locations are ones the Kai Lords might encounter on their journey – the Narrator can use some or all of these as the pace of the adventure requires.

BUBBLING FIELDS TOIL AND TROUBLE



A haze fills the sky as hundreds of steam vents, small geysers, and hot springs bubble and boil through the cracked ground. The field of broken land dominated by strangely coloured soil and brightly patterned condensation stretches on for several miles. The land looks torn and uninviting, but going around might be far more time consuming.

Stretching across nearly 15 square miles of the Wildlands, this large field of hot springs might provide fresh water in a parched land, but does not. Steam and strange-coloured vapours roil off the surface and drift in noxious clouds across the area. Centuries of the hot springs' bubbling and the clouds cooling and coalescing has created a riotous pattern of blues, greens, browns and rust-reds upon the ground, giving the Bubbling Fields a stark and otherworldly beauty.



The Bubbling Fields are largely devoid of life, with only a few scabby plants and the occasional lizard skittering across the scorched surface. Occasionally a dead bird or the carcass of a larger animal can be found, either felled by the poisonous clouds of vapour or having made the mistake of drinking the alkali water. It should be plain to anyone who views the Bubbling Fields that the land is poisoned and blighted.



Any creature that enters the Bubbling Fields loses 2 points of Endurance per hour; those that drink from the waters are poisoned (TV 6 to resist).

CRACKED BADLANDS A BROKEN LANDSCAPE



The ground climbs from ashy plains to twisted and tortured low rocky badlands. It looks as if a great hand came down and tore the very strata from the earth only to dash it down in haphazard piles. The wind and rain have worked on these formations, sculpting them and further twisting them into something that can only barely be called terrain and not a coked mess of rock and dirt. Scant vegetation grows here, sending bent and thorny arms up from what few pockets of soil can be found.

These steep-sided badlands stretching across nearly 20 square miles of the Wildlands are riven with narrow canyons, some only a few metres wide. The ground is composed of a mix of warped and deformed metamorphic rocks - the leftovers from a long past supernatural volcanic upwelling -, and jagged obsidian fields emitting evil radiations. Here and there a formation of jagged edged volcanic glass twists and juts up into the sky, some relatively whole, others broken and shattered into thousands of sharp edged pieces.

These formations take on fantastic forms, and the mind can easily see a twisted tree, a small shrub, or even the face of an animal or person contorted in pain and fear. Ghostly images can be seen floating in some of these bizarre formations, images that hint at something moving around inside.

The badlands are a rugged terrain of rock and obsidian-covered slopes that drop precariously into knife-edge canyons. The canyon bottoms are sandy and often pierced with fissures or smoking sinkholes that emit foul odours and heat. The uplands are a little better, and here and there enough sediment and water have accumulated to allow for a few hardscrabble grasses or stunted trees to take root. Few animals can be spotted, and those that are seen are scampering rodents, Carrion Crows, and other unpleasant or unclean creatures.

The truth of the matter is that the residents of this area had been spared by the great earthquake which formed the Maakengorge in MS 3055. However, they were cursed a few centuries later when their green, rolling plains were rent and cracked, lava and ash spewing

up as the Cracked Badlands formed overnight. Unbeknownst to the scholars of the Lastlands, the geological upheaval which created the Maakengorge opened many secondary faults below the surface of Northern Cloeasia, which were later filled by tributaries of the Nengud-Kor-Adez, the lake of evil fire which surrounds Helgedad and which has run below and corrupted the soils of the Darklands since MS 3072. In a few regions of the Wildlands, like the Cracked Badlands and the Bubbling Fields, resurgences of distant tributaries of the Nengud-Kor-Adez caused supernatural volcanic eruptions during the Age of the Black Moon, and greatly corrupted the land, in the manner of the Darklands Blight.

Many died during the eruption, sucked into the broken crust of the earth or felled by clouds of sulphurous ash. Others managed to flee and became the ancestors of the Wildlander tribes that still roam this part of the Wildlands. The truly unlucky were transformed into living statues, for this was no ordinary lava and fire. They were trapped in prisons of evil black volcanic glass, and driven mad by the centuries of suffering in the manner of the souls agonizing in the Nengud-Kor-Adez around Helgedad.

Immobile, the obsidian prisoners can do little to vent their wrath on the free and living. Theirs is a horrid existence, somewhere between death and life, forced to watch as others walk by. There is but one chance of respite, one brief glimmer of freedom for them. If their prisons are destroyed, the obsidian prisoners will be free to pass on to the next life. To accomplish this, they are able to temporarily take over the bodies of another, driving their victims to go on a rampage of statue-prison smashing before the possession runs its course and the prisoner is forced back into their obsidian jail. During this rampage, the prisoner cannot break his own statue, only those of others.



To effect this possession, two things must happen. First, a person must stare into the face of one of the statues and make eye contact with the soul trapped inside. If this occurs, the prisoner sends out a telepathic request to be allowed into the viewer's mind, and if this is refused, the viewer must succeed at a COMBAT SKILL (or WILLPOWER, if you are using that stat) test. If the viewer fails, the prisoner takes over their body until the next sunset or sunrise, at which point the trapped soul returns to its statue.

KAI DISCIPLINES ON THE OBSIDIAN PLAIN

The Mindshield discipline makes a Kai Lord immune to this form of control, though it can be willingly lowered. The Sixth Sense discipline in this area might bring thoughts of claustrophobia, the echoes of madness brought on by countless centuries of imprisonment, and hundreds of voice, desperately crying out for release.

GREY FLATS

A GREY FOREVER



South from the city-state of Ragadorn stretches a sandy, ashy, grey plain of stunted trees, deep creek beds, and few people. Each step sends up a cloud of grey dust that pushes the boundary between ash and soil. To your surprise, even this uninviting and barren land has some life, for here and there tiny oases support spots of green growth and the occasional fortified longhouse.

The soil here can support life, but just barely, and most of the Grey Flats is a broad pan of ashy dirt spotted with spiny bushes and inhabited by fleet-footed hares and thick-bodied lizards. Life here is harsh, but survivable, and larger animals can be found around isolated springs of fresh water or in the bottoms of seasonal creek beds. In these places where water is more abundant, darker and richer soil has formed, allowing for short trees and green shrubs to grow, as well as tough grasses. Here can be found Larnuma trees like those on the coast of the Wildlands. Their fruit is very nutritious as well as being sweet and juicy. The Kai Lords can pick enough fruits for 4 Meals here.

It is in these seasonal creek beds that the majority of the inhabitants of this part of the Wildlands dwell. The Long Fang tribe ekes out a precarious existence, planting their crops where the water table is higher and hunting the deeply incised creek beds for Wildlands deer and other game. Most of the tribes live in a few tiny hamlets, but individual families or bands often stake out their own fortified longhouses near springs or particularly verdant creek beds.

HAUNTED PILLARS

UNFORGIVEN, UNFORGOTTEN



An isolated hill of broken basalt lies ahead, its top and one side studded with the broken columns and tumbled walls of an ancient Cloesian ruins. A faint howling can be

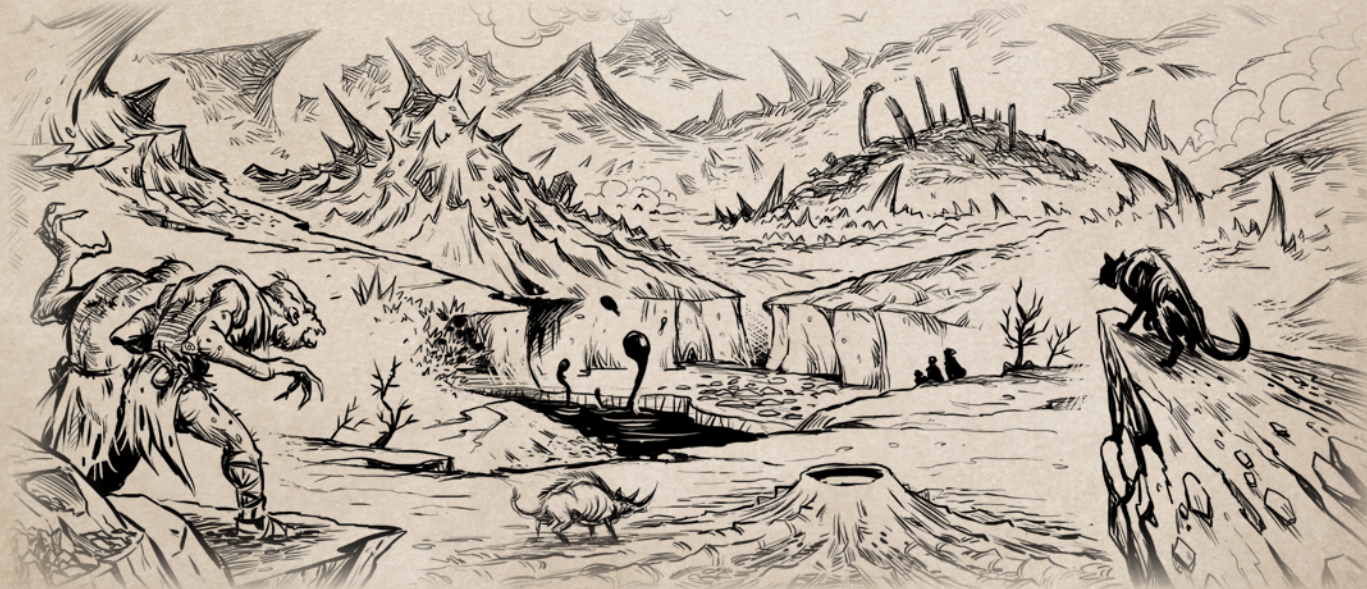
heard coming from the ruins, and furtive forms can be seen darting between the jumbled blocks of stone. Do you press on or investigate?

Long ago this was a temple complex dedicated to the gods of lost Northern Cloeasia, a large sprawling building of decorated stone. The cataclysm that devastated the land shattered the temple, bringing down the walls and toppling the mighty columns and soaring buttresses. Today the temple complex sits half on a hill of broken basalt and half slid down into the valley below.

This maze of broken buildings, tumbled columns and half-buried ruins is a constantly shadowed and eerie site, a place where one could easily imagine the unhallowed dead still gather in.

The threat in the Haunted Pillars is not the dead, but the living. The ruins provide some protection from the terrible storms that wrack the region as well as shade in the summer and something resembling shelter in the winter. Being so far out into the Wildlands, the haunted pillars are not a suitable place for bandits to gather; there is nothing of value for the bandits to steal. Instead, it has become a haven of sorts for the bands of s that roam the wastes, descendants of those Cloesians who managed to survive the destruction of their homes and the predation by the foul creatures from the Maakenmire, but fell victim to the creeping corruption which befell the Wildlands during the Age of the Black Moon.

These are a ragged people that eke out what little life they have in any manner possible. Were it not for their tainted and horrid practises, they would be creatures of pity, but in their desperation they have turned to foul deeds such as brigandage (rare though the opportunity presents itself), murder, theft and cannibalism to survive. No act is too dark or too foul for them if it means they get to draw another breath, and even the traditional bonds of family are meaningless to them.





The Haunted Pillars are home to dozens of these wretches, far more than the Kai Lords can hope to defeat. Luckily for them, their mission is not to clean out swarms of feral man-beasts, but to get to the fort. Should they decide to enter the ruins, a dozen or so will come screaming out of the darkness in a maddened lust for blood. Once these are dealt with, other packs can be heard howling in the darkened and tumbled halls, and elsewhere deep in the ruins.



Twelve Mutants of the Wildlands fight as a grouped enemy – this has been included in their stats below.

MUTANT PACK

The Mutants of the Wildlands are a stunted, deformed, and wicked lot, horrid beings whose ancestors managed to survive the destruction of all they knew only to see themselves and their offspring warped by foul magic. Their forms are mostly human, but just barely. They have scabby skin dotted with wiry and greasy patches of hair, eyes that weep pale yellow pus, hands that are more like claws than fingers, and faces closer to that of dogs than humans.

Combat Skill: 20 / **Endurance:** 20

Special Rules: Wildland Mutants can see in the dark.

Traits: Grouping (Pack), Immune to Disease and Poison

LOST CREEK A WINDING BLUE ROAD



A rare sight in the Wildlands, a clear and fresh-looking stream runs across the land. Wild animals can be seen slipping down to grab a drink, and the signs of Shadow Cats, humans and other predators can be spotted in the muddy banks. The creek runs north to south; it might lead to the River Dorn, or might lead to somewhere else.

A clean, clear stream cuts its way from the Cracked Badlands towards the interior of the Wildlands, eventually disappearing into the Mud Geysers, giving it its name. This stream looks inviting and it provides a source of much-needed freshwater in the wastes of the Wildlands. Looks are not as deceptive as they might be, although as the only source of fresh water for several miles the Lost Creek does attract a large number of visitors. Amongst the natural creatures of the region there is somewhat of a truce here, and although prey do not lie down with predators to drink, it is not unusual to see several Wasteland Deer drinking from the creek with a thirsty Shadow Cat lapping away on the opposite bank.

This is not to say that all who come here do so in safety. The truce only extends as far as the river's edge; the approaches are fair game for predator and prey. Furthermore, the mutated beasts that wander

the wastes, as well as humans, Giaks, Szall and other things, are not part of the truce.

A Giak raiding party, Shadow Cat, blue boar, Szall, Wildlander band or Sandsnake from the Random Encounters table might all be met here. Hunting bands from the Long Fang and Shadow Cat tribes also come here to drink and take game, and this might be a fine place to make the Players' first introductions to them.

Finally, this is the perfect opportunity to let the Players jump tracks over to the River Approach if they wish to try their hand at trying the water ways. A few abandoned rafts can be found along the Lost Creek, more than suitable enough for the Players' needs.

MUD GEYSERS VICIOUS VENTS BELOW



Bubbling plumes of mud shoot high into the sky from dozens, possibly hundreds, of small vents in the land's surface. The smell is acrid and horrid, and the heat from the boiling mud can be felt from yards away. Unless you want to risk the steaming mud, a route needs to be found around the mud geysers.

Several small streams, including the Lost Creek, drain into this basin of mud and muck stretching across nearly 15 square miles of the Wildlands. The ground below sends forth boiling water from underground hot springs. These springs get clogged and periodically erupt, sending hot mud cascading around. The mud is not just hot, it is also caustic from the chemicals in the springs.



Anyone crossing the mud geysers runs the risk of being struck by a shower of steamy hot caustic mud – they must each take a Luck test. If they fail, they are struck by the hot mud and suffer 4 points of Endurance damage. They incur an additional 2 points of damage per turn until the mud is removed (requiring at least one free hand and some water).

SALT CREEK THE STING OF SALT AND SORROWS



A small stream, its banks populated by scrubby grasses and stunted bushes, runs nearly perpendicularly into the River Dorn. At the confluence of the waters the two streams mix, the chalky white waters of the smaller creek eventually dispersing into the darker waters of the river. Fort Harding stands on a low rise at this confluence, and to the south-west stretches a brackish swamp.

Running roughly parallel to the Lost Creek, Salt Creek runs from the Shining Wood to the south, north past the edge of the Grey Flats, and empties into the Dorn River. While still drinkable in an emergency, Salt Creek is not fresh, but highly saline due to the sediment it picks up in the Shining Wood. Despite the marginal nature of life along Salt Creek, the creek is home to tiny hamlets of the Long Fang tribe. For the most part, the banks of Salt Creek are



an acceptable location to live. The water might be saline, but there are still fish in it and plants that grow along its length.

Once properly treated through boiling and condensation, the waters of Salt Creek are palatable. However, it does make irrigation difficult, and a field can easily be ruined if water from the creek is allowed to inundate it. Because of this, hamlets here are forced to rely on rainfall, a scant promise this far from the coast of the Wildlands, to sustain their fields of hardy millet and barley.

Close examination of the land will quickly reveal the tragedies that have played out here. Because of its access to food and shelter, the Grey Flats have been a battleground hundreds of times in the past. Bones litter the area, sometimes so close to the surface that a careless footstep can crush an ancient skull.

THE SHINING WOOD BRIGHT AND BARREN BOUGHS



The sun glimmers off the twisted arms of a wood of dead white trees. No life moves beneath these denuded boughs, nor do birds sing from the branches. As you draw closer, you see that the forest is not one of white trees, but of salt somehow formed into the shapes of trees.

The successive cataclysms that devastated the Wildlands did more than tear up the soil, poison the rivers and corrupt the bedrock; some also sent waves of toxic gases cascading across the landscape. Entire regions were blighted and whole towns slain, but stranger things happened as well. The Shining Wood is the result of a one of these strange toxic clouds.

The poison in the cloud had no effect on man or beast, but settled out of the air and condensed onto plant matter. The trees, crops and other foliage affected by the cloud gained a sheen of pure white salt. The flora rapidly died, but the salt remained, creating the Shining Wood, a small forest covering 10 square miles of the Wildlands where nothing lives, nothing grows and the very trees are composed of massive blocks of tainted salt.

THE LEPROUS GROVE DEATH AND DECAY



The very air in this grove feels greasy and cold, sickly in some unnameable way. The trees here are covered in blights, pustules and disgusting growths of mould, fungi and bracken. The ground beneath squishes in some perverse manner and oozes a thick liquid that smells faintly of decay. Here and there a rock leers a wind-carved face like that of a man in intense pain.

Where once a series of prosperous orchards grew now stands a wood of twisted grey branches, black bracken and sickly looking ferns. Dead vines hang from the trees and seem to reach out to grasp passers-by. Sometimes they do. The ground is a mixture of dead grey, dirty white

and greasy green-black soil. Rocks protrude here and there, some of them significant in size, and take on forms of snarling faces or appear to be rotting from some form of leprous mouldy growth.

Underneath the boughs of the Leprous Grove the sun seems to shine less, the air is cooler, and a constant breeze brings the smell of rot and decay. No natural animals can be found, nor are the plants and fungi safe to consume. A single stream winds through the forest from a scabrous spring near the centre until it disappears into a canyon in the Cracked Badlands. Needless to say, this stream is not safe to drink from.

MUCKMARSH FLATS DANGER IN THE FENS



Running from the confluence of the River Dorn and Salt Creek, the Muckmarsh Flats stretch along the western banks of the river for several miles, and follows Salt Creek an equal distance. While not a true swamp, the Muckmarsh is somewhere between a swamp and a marsh. You can see glimpses of birds and other wildlife through the branches, but the only clue as to the interior are the occasional sounds of something large crashing through or the roar of some kind of hunting beast.

Stretching from the confluence of the River Dorn and Salt Creek, the Muckmarsh Flats run south for a few miles. Several sluggish streams as well as run-off from the Bubbling Fields and the Mud Geysers feed this wetland. The Muckmarsh is uninhabited by humans, and even the Szall avoid the place. It is not just the briny or sulphurous waters, nor the threat of quicksand that keeps intelligent creatures away. The Muckmarsh is home to several dangerous reptilian creatures, such as Gourgaz and the dreaded Muck Devil.

Be careful introducing your Players to the Muck Devil. It can easily overwhelm small groups and may be best used as a 'boogeyman'; something glimpsed but never seen directly that helps move the Players along through the story.

MUCK DEVIL

The Muck Devil is a mutated and fearsome Gourgaz, twisted and gnarled like the swamp trees it hunts beneath. It is a terrible brute much given to fell tempers and violent out lashes, indeed, even the similarly fell Gourgaz of the Muckmarsh avoid it at all costs.

Combat Skill: 25 / **Endurance:** 40

Special Rules: The Muck Devil is immune to Mindblast. Unlike its smaller cousins, the Muck Devil is entirely amphibious and can breathe water as easily as air.

Traits: Brutal 4, Soldier.



INDEPENDENT LONGHOUSES

SHELTER FOR THE WIND AND WAVES



Atop a small rise sits long, wooden building and several small outbuildings enclosed by a low palisade wall. Scraggly crops lie in uneven rows around the house, and a few ill-fed goats wander about. The people who live here have all fled inside, their heads seen poking over the palisade or around crudely carved doorways.

Not everyone in the Wildlands lives in a large tribe as the Long Fangs do. For some, their independence is too valuable to ally themselves with others. Many do not fit in with large gatherings and either live alone or as part of small family groups, often two to three generations in a single fortified longhouse. These independent Wildlanders are not a trusting bunch, and strangers are almost always a sign of trouble. However, if approached with respect and under a sign of peace, they can be talked to, and even bargained with. Most are willing to trade for food, tools or labour, offering information or protection inside a fortified longhouse in return.

Then there are those who live apart because no other can tolerate them. Many of these are merely unsociable, foul spirited or simply mean. A rare few have fallen into fell practices and wicked actions. They can be found as loners or in small groups of like-minded people, functioning more like a coven or cult than a small tribe. These evil Wildlanders are feared by their neighbours as cannibals, worshippers of dead evil cults, murderers, robbers and worse, some are in league with the Darklords and spies of those terrible entities.



It's left up to you and the demeanour of your Players as to which type of inhabitants this longhouse is home to. If combat arises with such folk, you can use the stats for Bandits found on page 72 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*.

These longhouses also mark the end of the overland route, as they rest within a short distance from Fort Harding and the rest of the adventure!

RANDOM EVENTS



There are two tables of random events listed below: one for journeying on the river, and the other for overland travel in the Wildlands. Every day of travel pick a random number to determine if there is an event and what time of day it occurs. If there is an event, pick a random number from the appropriate table below. You might note that the river events can only truly occur along the river, while the Wildlands events might occur along the river or during overland travel.

HOW BEST TO USE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The use of random encounters, especially for wilderness exploration based adventures, has long been a staple of fantasy adventure games. They allow an adventure to be played out in different ways, give the Narrator some guidance for improvisation, and provide a fun alternative to strictly following the script.

The thing is, you don't have to use them. You don't even have to use random encounters randomly. As the Narrator you are free to modify anything in the adventure to fit what is going to be the most fun for everyone at the table. Pick a random number and consult the table or not, play each encounter through one after the other if you want. If the result of a random number pick from the table does not fit into how the adventure is playing out, or you simply do not like it, pick a different number or skip it altogether.

Random Events

Random Number	Event?	When?
0-1	Yes	Between midnight and dawn
2-3	Yes	Between dawn and noon
4-5	Yes	Between noon and sunset
6-7	Yes	Between sunset and midnight
8-9	No	-

RIVER EVENTS

Random Number	Encounter
0	Snag
1	Low Water
2	Mist
3	Alligator Kree!
4	River Pirates!
5	Burned-out Boat
6	Hunters
7	Szall Pack
8	Ruined Longhouse
9	Wildlands Event

SNAG

One of the boats hits a snag in the river and suffers damage. This can be avoided with a TV 6 test. If not avoided, it tears the bottom out of one of the skin canoes or traps a flat-bottomed boat. A trapped boat requires several hours of work to clear it, hardy, wet, muddy work as someone needs to swim under the boat and cut away the snag. Repairing a canoe or freeing a flat-bottomed boat will take several hours, meaning a halt to travel or a long night with little rest.

LOW WATER

Sand bars and gravel spurs cause this section of river to be impassable by boat during certain seasons. Sadly, this is one such season, and the boats need to be dragged or carried over the low water zone. Carrying canoes is a simple task of unloading them and hoisting them up on a pair of broad shoulders. Flat-bottomed boats need to be unloaded and dragged across to deeper water. In the case of canoes, there is not a major loss in time. Unloading and dragging the boats will consume the rest of the day's travel, or cause a long and sleepless night of hard labour.

FOG

A thick fog rolls off the river and soon blankets the area in a grey haze. The banks of the river cannot be seen from the deeper water in the middle, and the way ahead is only barely perceptible. This will mean that the characters might paddle right past something of fail to spot a danger before it arrives, and will need to go slower in order to navigate any water hazards. Cut travel time in half.

ALLIGATOR KREEL

One of the many dangers of the River Dorn are the Alligator Kreel, terribly ugly fish with long snouts like a predatory reptile filled with sharp, hooked teeth. Alligator Kreel also possess thick, stubby pectoral fins that allow them to crawl up on logs or mud banks to pursue prey. All this makes them a dangerous fish if you are swimming in the river, but they have been known to come up underneath a canoe or leap onto the decks of flat-bottomed boats.

RIVER PIRATES!

Three small canoes shoot out from underneath an overhanging tree on the bank's edge and paddle rapidly towards the characters. This is a band of River Pirates on their way to join the River King for the big attack on Ragadorn, but seeing prey right before them has tempted them into rash action. Their tactics are to open up with a volley of arrows and then paddle fast into melee combat.

Each canoe holds three River Pirates and they fight until half their number has been vanquished, at which point those remaining paddle away as fast as they can, heading down river in order to take advantage of the current.

Use the stats for Bandits on page 72 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*.

ALLIGATOR KREEL

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 17

Special Rule: Alligator Kreel can take a foe in one big gulp and drag them beneath the water. If the massive fish strikes a foe, it can attempt to drag them into the water with a successful contest of Endurance.





BURNED-OUT BOAT

The charred remains of one of the Consul's supply boats lies half submerged along the water's edge. The boat appears to have been run aground in a fight; arrows dot the timbers and signs of violence can be seen scattered about. Five bodies, the corpses of the men hired to guide the boat to Fort Harding, lie on the bank and amid the wreckage. A green symbol of a fanged canoe has been painted on a nearby rock.

HUNTERS

A band of hunters from one of the local tribes has spotted the characters and decided to stop and talk. This is not to say they are friendly, but strangers are a rare sight on the river. The hunters are not interested in violence, but will fight back if attacked and try to make a rapid retreat to safety or a more defensible location. What they can provide, if not provoked, is a fair trade of information or the skunk-deer they are carrying, in exchange for manufactured goods, meals or a canoe.

SZALL PACK

See page 44.

RUINED LONGHOUSE

See page 45.

WILDLANDS EVENTS

Random Number	Encounter
0	Dust Storm
1	Shadow Cat
2	Wild Dogs
3	Szall Pack
4	Giak Raiding Party*
5	Ball Lightning Storm
6	Sandsnake
7	Blue Boar
8	Wildlander Band
9	Ruined Longhouse*

DUST STORM

The wind begins to whip up and catch the ever-present dust of the Wildlands, gathering it into long-flowing streams of red and ochre-coloured tendrils. These are more than just natural flows of windborne sediment; in the Wildlands the dust tendrils can have unusual properties. You should flip the Luck token; if it lands Naar-side up, the dust behaves in a sentient manner.

A test with a Target Value of 6 detects the coming of the dust and allows time for shelter to be found or erected. Normal dust storms limit visibility, choke those not in shelters and bring travel to a stop. Anyone caught out in a dust storm suffers a loss of 2 points of Endurance as the storm buffets them and sends clouds of dust into their eyes and down their throat.

A sentient dust storm has an evil intelligence that only lasts during the phenomenon's manifestation. These short lived Dark Spirits of loss and devastation, born from the creeping corruption of the Wildlands, know little else but a sense of wrath and a desire to choke the breath from the living. Treat these tendrils of living dust and wind as creatures with the following statistics. One tendril per hero attacks, even if they have managed to find shelter from the storm.

SENTIENT DUST TENDRILS

Combat Skill: 12 / **Endurance:** 10

Special Rule: Sentient dust storm tendrils cannot be fought with normal weapons; they must be dispersed with such things as cloaks, shields, tent sides, blankets and so on. All other attacks do not inflict any damage.



DUST ZOMBIES

Combat Skill: 10 / **Endurance:** 15

Special Rule: When slashed open, Dust Zombies spill their animating dust. Any slashing attack inflicts double damage.



As an alternative to an encounter with a dust storm, the characters might encounter a roving band of Dust Zombies instead. This would be especially appropriate if they recently had an encounter with a sentient dust storm. Two Dust Zombies per Kai Lord come stumbling out of the night, or possibly out of the cloaking veil of a mundane dust storm.

SHADOW CAT

One of the great hunters of the Wildlands, a deadly Shadow Cat has begun stalking the party. A wild creature, its intent is not evil, merely curious and hungry. Normally a Shadow Cat would be loathe to approach or even attack a fully grown human, much less ones that move with confidence through across the badlands and cracked plains, but the Kai Lords smell differently; of wood smoke and green boughs, something the creature is unused to.

The Shadow Cat will follow the Kai Lords for a number of days equal to random number. It will stay out of sight when it can, and keep its distance as much as possible. While the cat is more curious

than anything else, it is still a predator, and any character who is left behind, goes off on its own, or lies wounded will see the Shadow Cat slink up. If it looks like the curiosity has become potential prey, the cat will pounce.

Those with the Animal Kinship discipline can try to communicate with the Shadow Cat. The beast is curious and knows much about the surrounding area, but its knowledge is tainted by its nature. All life is either a rival or prey to the Shadow Cat.

SHADOW CAT

Shadow Cats are one of the few natural predators that have managed to survive since before the cataclysm that ravaged the Wildlands. They are solitary hunters that only meet others of their kind to fight over territory or during the mating season. Powerfully muscled with long fangs and sharp claws, the Shadow Cat gets its name from its dark grey to almost midnight blue pelt that allows it to blend into shadows and darkness.

Largely nocturnal, it is rare to see a Shadow Cat out and about during the day, save for when their insatiable curiosity overtakes them and they are driven to investigate something new in their territory.

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 12

Special Rule: Shadow Cats gain a +2 bonus on any attempts to be stealthy. If performing an ambush, the Shadow Cat can make a special pounce attack, moving into engagement and attacking in the same action, and doing so with a +2 to its CS.

Shadow Cats can see in the dark





WILD DOGS

The peoples of Cloeasia were largely killed or scattered by the upheavals that created the Wildlands, though a few lonely tribes remain. While the people were scattered and slain, their dogs managed to weather the cataclysm well. Now, bereft of masters and unused to human contact, the wild dogs of the Wildlands roam in large, feral packs.

Most are medium-sized animals of indistinct dun-yellow colour. Occasionally some exhibit the blood of the long-lost Cloeasian war dogs or another larger, more fearsome breed.

WILD DOGS

Combat Skill: 12 / **Endurance:** 10

Special Rule: Wild dogs can see in the dark.

Traits: Grouping (Pack).



PACK LEADERS

Those wild dogs that show signs of having the blood of the Cloeasian war dog are larger and more ferocious than their brethren, with dark brown hides that often show a faint black brinelling.

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 18

Special Rule: Wild dogs can see in the dark.

SZALL PACK

The area ahead is inhabited by a small pack of a dozen Szall, the pathetic rejects of the Darklands. These creatures try their best to make what life they can, though it is a wicked and selfish life. They waylay travellers if they think they can prevail, pilfer small items when they can, raid the burrows of smaller creatures, and in general make a nuisance of themselves. While a pack of Szall pose no major threat, they can become dangerous in larger numbers.

The first time this encounter is picked, the Szall watch from cover, behind brush or the tops of hills. The first pack then follows the characters, raising a ruckus, throwing stones from a safe distance before scampering away and in general harassing the characters.

The second time this encounter is picked, a second band joins the first, and so on until there are four bands of Szall following the characters. At that point, the amassed group attacks in a fearsome tide of screaming Szall.

Stats for Szall can be found on page 78 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*.

GIK RAIDING PARTY

A small band of Giaks has drifted east out of the Darklands to raid and pillage the Wildlanders. Due to the size of the raiding party, they have been forced to skirt widely around the larger tribes, striking at outlying longhouses and smaller groups. While this has not allowed them any great victories, it has let them slip deep into the Wildlands, and the raiders are planning to extend their depredations into Sommerlund in the coming weeks.

There are eight Giaks in the raid, all mounted on Doomwolves. See the stats for Mountain Giaks and Doomwolves on pages 74-75 of the *Book of Kai Wisdom*.



BALL LIGHTNING STORM

The air grows dry and soon arcs of lightning dance between rock outcrops. The air is so filled with static electricity that hair and fur stand on end, and even the slightest touch between friends brings a small arcing blue jolt.



Kai Lords carrying a bared metal weapon or wearing a large amount of metal armour (such as a chain shirt) must make a Luck test. If they fail, they are struck by lightning, losing an amount of ENDURANCE equal to a random number pick.

SANDSNAKE

These small, vicious and venomous snakes lurk in the wastes of the Wildlands and hunt small prey such as rodents and lizards. However, they are easily startled and the lightning-quick reflexes and venomous bite that serves them well as hunters works just as well as in defence.



Randomly pick a Kai Lord: they have inadvertently encountered a hidden Sandsnake. The serpent leaps from its hiding place, normally under a rock, in a burrow or from underneath a bush, and bites at the Kai Lord once before slithering to safety (COMBAT SKILL 16, Poison: TV 7 to resist).

BLUE BOAR

Of the many mutant animals that roam the wastes of the Wildlands, the blue boar is one of the oddest. Named for the colour of its hoary hide, the blue boar is not just a beast of a different colour; it is much larger and more ferocious than the common boar found in the wilds of Sommerlund. Nearly the size of a small pony, blue boars are very territorial, and with their massive heads and sharp tusks, very dangerous

Combat Skill: 13 / **Endurance:** 18

Special Rule: A blue boar fights on for one more turn after it has been killed.

Traits: Brutal 2.



BLUE BOAR

The first hint that person might be violating a Blue Boar's territory is the smell; these fiendish swine exude a musky scent that can be detected from a great distance. The males rub their bodies against rocks and trees, marking their territories with the pungent odour.

WILDLANDER BAND

A hunting band of Wildlanders has spotted the characters. These adept tribesmen might be from the Long Fang or Shadow Cat tribes (see pages 46-47), or they might be from one of the many independent family groups that dot the land. If from one of the two large tribes, the Wildlanders will be cautious of strangers but willing to meet under a sign of truce and talk, providing our heroes with their first meeting with the feuding tribes they have been sent out to find. If an independent band, the Wildlanders will stay out of sight or flee if approached.



RUINED LONGHOUSE

The smoking remains of a fortified longhouse send thin columns of smoke up into the sky. This was once the home of a small band of Wildlanders. The wall has been breached in several places, the front gates torn down and set alight. Arrows pepper the charred walls of the longhouse and the signs of violence lay strewn about. Inside the smouldering remains are the bodies of the band that lived here. A stylised image of a fanged canoe has been painted on one of the remaining walls.



SCENE THREE THE LONG FANG TRIBE

This next scene can actually be used at any point in the adventure, but is best positioned before the Kai Lords reach Fort Harding. In it the Players meet a tribe of Wildlanders – the Long Fang Tribe – and potentially gain some powerful allies to join their fight against the River King.

This tribe of Wildlanders are famed throughout the region as warriors both without peer and possessing of a fierce honour and integrity. Their territory is peaceful and well maintained; there is no chance that evil might creep in under their watchful gaze. Long Fang tribe members can be easily identified by their shocking hairstyles, shaved bald on one side and left long on the other. Rendered fat is used to shape the long side into fantastic shapes, the more extreme the style the more accomplished the warrior.

Like most Wildlander tribes, the Long Fangs are hunters, fishermen and practice a limited form of farming. Their territory is poor in game and edible plants, and they are also lacking in metals and clay. Most of the tribe lives in three scattered hamlets named after salient geographical features: Catfish Lake, Hogs Wallow, Salt Creek. The tribal leaders, a ‘queen’ and a council of elders, reside in a wooden palisade at Salt Creek. Although the Queen styles herself a true monarch, the elders elect the Queen and she serves at their desire.

MEETING WITH THE LONG FANGS

The territory of the Long Fangs is marked by blazes carved into tree trunks, crude renderings of the tribal symbol, a single curved fang. Warriors of the tribe regularly patrol their borders looking for Shadow Cat incursions and other threats. Unless the Kai Lords are trying to be particularly stealthy they will be spotted.

The Long Fangs provide an interesting opportunity for the Players, potential respite from the harsh landscape and fierce foes they will have fought so far. Encounters with the tribe do not occur at any set point, and you should feel free to insert them into any suitable point of the adventure no matter which route the heroes take.

HAIL AND WELL MET



You see several rocks and trees ahead that have been carved with crude depictions of a curved fang. These carvings have been selected with care; only trees that show a marked contrast between the outer bark and the inner bark have been cut into. Shortly after passing into their territory, five leather and fur clad warriors come out of the underbrush. Their hair is shaved on one side and the left long on the other, the long parts swept up in

standing columns, worked into horn like shapes, and otherwise greased into savage and feral forms. The lead warrior, a tall woman of middle years, raises one hand and calls out to you in a halting and heavily accented form of Sommlending.

“Hail and halt, you be friend or foe, you not be Shadow Cats, who you be?”

The Wildlanders are making no obvious threats, but in their stance and they way their eyes fall across you, there is a definite threat. You had best answer the leader’s questions, and do so well, or you will have to fight.

The leader’s name is Tanasha, warrior, mother of three, and cousin of the Queen. In her youth she served as a guard and scout for trade caravans making the dangerous trek from Sommerlund to Durenor along the coastal highway known as the Grey Road, and has both some knowledge of the Sommlending and Durenese languages, but also knows about the Kai Order. She will not immediately recognise the characters as Kai Lords; she has only heard tales about the Kai, but what she has heard makes her respect and admire them.



If the Players are polite and diplomatic (and able to pass a TV 7 test), she will take them under escort to Salt Creek to meet with the Queen and the council of elders.



Should a fight erupt, the Long Fang warriors will fight bravely to expel the intruders. One of the warriors is Tanasha’s eldest son, and Tanasha is herself a cousin of the Queen. Thus, their deaths will result in a blood feud between the killer and their families.

SALT CREEK

The largest of the three Long Fangs hamlets, Salt Creek is also the centre of the tribe’s government. The hamlet itself consists of 20 longhouses, each the home to an extended family group of 20 to 30 individuals. These buildings circle a small rise in the forest crowned with the Queen’s wooden stockade and longhouse. The nearby Salt Creek provides water, and in its upper reaches, a large salt lick that supplies the entire tribe with enough salt for preserving meat as well as a small surplus for trade.

The approach of the Kai Lords, accompanied by Tanasha and her warriors, causes quite the stir in Salt Creek. Although a runner had been sent ahead to bring word to the Queen, a band of Kai in their green cloaks, fabled strangers from a far-off land, brings a halt to the day’s work. People stop and stare, their tools and baskets hanging from numbed hands. Children come close but then back away, warriors eye the weapons and armour of Sommerlund with awe and envy, and the villagers can do nothing but stand and gape.

MEETING WITH THE QUEEN



With Tanasha at the head of your procession, you move through the starring villagers and up the hill to the Queen's palisade. As you approach, the gate swings open on thick leather hinges and the Queen, followed by the council of elders, march out. Her highness has dressed in her most regal attire for this audience. On her head is a crown of beaten brass set with a single polished chunk of quartz. Upon her shoulders is a magnificent bearskin that drapes over her muscled arms and hangs almost to her ankles. The front of her head is completely shaved, but the back has been worked into a wide fan of salt and pepper hair. At her belt hangs a gleaming steel broad axe, and her arms are stretched out a welcoming pose.

Unless one of the characters speaks Vassagonian, Tanasha will have to translate. "Welcome strangers from Sommerlund; you claim to be Kai Lords, and this I will not dispute. You are welcome here for a night, but longer I will require proof that you are who you say you are. This is not an insult, but a wise choice made by the council and myself. Now come, for tonight there will be a feast, my hunters have brought down a stout boar, its fat already drips upon the spit."

With this welcome you are led into the palisade and the gate closes behind you. The night will be filled with the hospitality of a queen, a somewhat rustic and primitive queen, but a queen nonetheless.

You are seated in her longhouse at a place of honour, on a wooden bench shared with the Queen and her cousin, Tanasha. In the centre of the room a large fire pit smokes and sputters as a fat boar turns on a spit. There is baked squash, fresh fish from the lakes and rivers, wild harvested greens, and cattail flour porridge spiced with honey, raisins and nuts. Mead is the drink of choice here, and a large horn cup is passed back and forth along the Queen's bench.

The Kai Lords can freely talk with the Queen and her council. They are concerned about the recent upsurge in River Pirate activity and have lost a few warriors to the River King. They do not know about the fate of Fort Harding, but would welcome strangers to come and build a fort here so long as it was outside of their territory. What the Long Fangs want the most is to establish trade; they have tried to bring furs and other goods to Ragadorn, but the people of that city suffer so much at the hands of bandits that they tend to drive away anyone coming out of the Wildlands. Meeting with the Queen and the Long Fangs can result in the characters gaining valuable allies in the region, especially if they plan to take on the River King (see the next scene).



SCENE FOUR THE RUINS OF FORT HARDING



As you come around a bend in the river, you see a ring of charred timbers standing next to a broad creek; no doubt this is Fort Harding, or the remains thereof. Lines of stakes have been placed along the water's edge, each topped with the rotting skull of a human. The fort has been thoroughly devastated, the outer palisade wall has been burned down to stumps, the inner buildings are a tumbled ruin of charred timbers, and even the dock has been burnt to the waterline.

One short span of timbers still stands, and these have been painted with a large sigil, a stylised rendering of a fanged riverboat. Of the soldiers stationed here, not to mention the hundreds of pounds of goods stockpiled for next year's expedition, there is no sign.

Fort Harding is nothing but a shell of burned timbers and the remains of the unburied dead. The signs of a large attack are still evident, even after months of weathering of the Wildlands. Arrows mark those timbers that still stand, broken weapons, rent mail and



other detritus of battle litter the ground, and the scavenger-picked skulls of soldiers of Sommerlund rest on crude wooden stakes lining the river front.

The bodies of these brave men and women have been piled in the centre of the fort, thoroughly vandalised by whatever wild creature came by. There is no doubt as to who might have done this, for the River King has had his own personal sigil painted onto the largest piece of remaining wall.



Ask the Players what they wish to do next? Do they bury the Sommlending dead, or strike out immediately towards the lair of the River King?

LAIR OF THE RIVER KING

THE RIVER FRONT

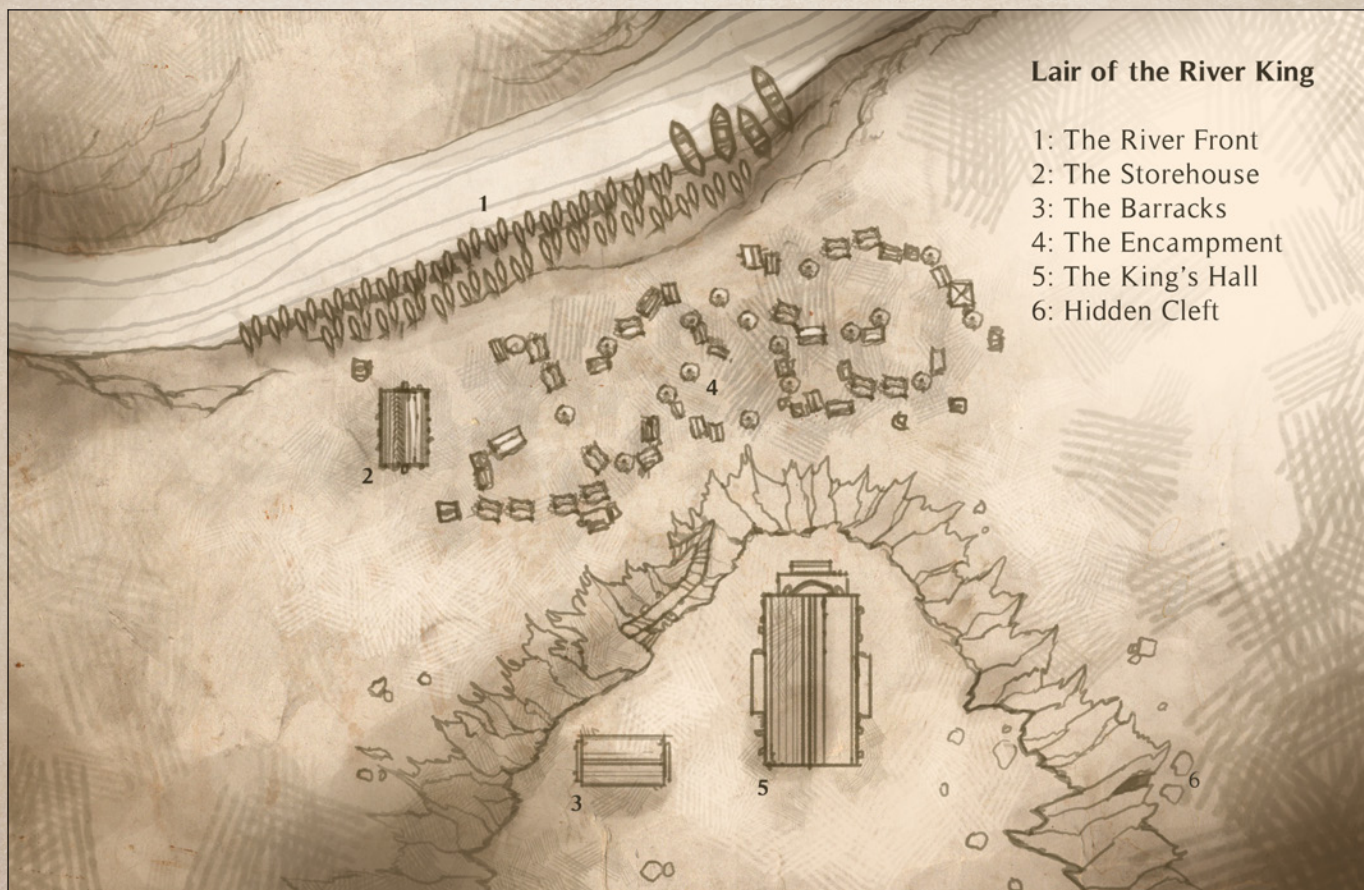


Dozens of canoes and several flat-bottomed riverboats lie drawn up on the banks. Small fires smoulder away and guards can be seen walking along the banks. The guards do not look terribly watchful, and more than one can be seen deep in conversation or passing a wineskin back and forth.

68 canoes and 4 riverboats have been dragged up out of the water, waiting for the orders from the River King to be sent north against

Lair of the River King

- 1: The River Front
- 2: The Storehouse
- 3: The Barracks
- 4: The Encampment
- 5: The King's Hall
- 6: Hidden Cleft



the walls of Ragadorn. The boats have not been loaded and are all held in place by thick leather ropes and deeply driven wooden stakes. Six river pirates walk the bank keeping an eye out for trouble, but they have little to fear in the heart of their lair.

THE STOREHOUSE

THE PIRATE'S SOURCE OF PROVISIONS



Sitting off to the south of the boats is a small longhouse with only one door and without a smoke hole in its thatch roof. Two river pirates lean against the doorframe, and the door can be seen to have iron banding, a rare thing in the Wildlands. A closer inspection shows it to have a lock as well.

In order for the River King to keep his force together for the time needed to assemble the dispersed bandit bands and launch them against Ragadorn, he needs to keep them well fed. The Wildlands are not a very hospitable place, and a force even half the River Pirates' size would soon deplete local resources. This storehouse contains all that the pirates need for their short campaign, and not much more. Inside there are barrels of ale and wine, pallets of hides and skins, stacks of arrows, hanging smoked meats, casks of dried or slated fish, and a small supply of arms and armour.

The armour and weapons can be determined by the Narrator as desired, but there is something vastly more important stored here: Sergeant Trulier, the sole surviving Border Ranger from the ill-fated first expedition to recover Fort Harding.

SERGEANT TRULIER

Captured when the river pirates ambushed him and his comrades, Sergeant Trulier is worse for wear after languishing for over a month as a prisoner of the River King. He has been starved, beaten and left tied up in the storehouse. Occasionally, the River King has him brought out to suffer indignities and cruel mockery in the King's Hall. Trulier is unable to fight in his current condition, but he can still walk. If rescued he can reveal the River King's plans and what happened to his comrades.



Ask the Players what they want to do with Sergeant Trulier. Do they question him to find out what he knows? Maybe they hurry to tend his wounds or fetch him something to eat and drink. Do they take him with them, wasting no time to rescue him, or do they leave him here in relative safety until they have dealt with the River King?

THE BARRACKS

BEDS AND SUPPLIES FOR FIFTY MEN



To one side of the River King's longhouse is a smaller, less decorated longhouse. This building is roughly fifty feet long and maybe ten feet wide, constructed from stout logs with a smoke hole in the thatch roof and a door at each end. River pirates can be seen entering and leaving the building, or lounging outside on crudely carved benches or simple logs.

ROLEPLAYING SERGEANT TRULIER

The good sergeant has been through a lot in the past eight weeks or so, and has managed to maintain his courage and good sense throughout all of it. While he did give up information to the River King, this fact is balanced out by two things: Trulier did not know a great deal and the River King had the information beaten out of him. In all, Sergeant Trulier is a stalwart soldier of Sommerlund and remains loyal to his king and country.

However, one other emotion boils inside him that might well eclipse any thoughts of loyalty. Tompsin wants revenge; revenge for his comrades, revenge for the men and women at Fort Harding, and revenge for the treatment he has received at the hands of the River King. If given the opportunity, he will carry out this vengeance with terrible fury, even if it puts his life or duties at risk.

The River King has had a barracks constructed to house his gathering horde of warriors. This longhouse is simple, yet sound, and provides a home to 50 pirates. The interior is fairly open, with a long table filling the middle, sleeping platforms lining the walls, and various weapons, cloaks, and shields hanging on pegs. There is a single large fire pit in the centre of the longhouse and a fire is kept at least smouldering here at all time. Various cooking utensils line the fire pit.

At any given time, there are a dozen pirates here unless an alarm has been called. If the fort has been alerted of enemy presence, this building will be closed and locked (TN 7 Test to pick the lock).

THE ENCAMPMENT

A GATHERING FOR WAR



Dozens of tents, lean-tos, and crude brushwood shelters fill a field to the north of the King's Hall. A large number of river pirates can be seen lounging about, sharpening weapons, stirring cook pots, and otherwise rolling away the day. There are no guards around the encampment, but there are enough eyes to hint that there is always someone watching in some direction.

Most of the River King's warriors are camped in a broad meadow just to the north of his hall. None of their shelters have a sense of permanency about them, and the pirates themselves do not appear to have made any attempt to organise themselves for long-term habitation. For example, there are no guards posted, nor have any latrines been dug. The tents, lean-tos and makeshift huts are laid out in a haphazard plan. In total, 60 to 70 river pirates can be found here at any one time.



THAT'S A LOT OF RIVER PIRATES!

Why yes, it is a lot of River Pirates. The Kai Lords do not need to defeat them all to end the threat of the Pirate King, nor do they have to win the day in one epic battle. The characters have a lot of options here, and a frontal assault on a fortified location held by a numerically superior foe should not be the first choice for anyone sane.

First, simply removing the River King can defeat the River Pirates. Without his leadership, the various bands of pirates and bandits will quickly fall to bickering and disperse. Another option is to delay or prevent this year's attack, possibly by destroying the storehouse and the vessels on the riverbank. Without food, weapons and other supplies, the River King cannot maintain such a large gathering of warriors in the barren wastes of the Wildlands.

Likewise, without the canoes and riverboats, he has no hope of transporting his warriors and supplies to Ragadorn, much less bring the loot back home. Finally, the Kai Lords might embark on a protracted guerrilla campaign, attacking the River Pirates in small, easily managed chunks, whittling them down to a more sensible size.

Then again, there are the two Wildlander tribes that can be brought into an alliance (see page 46). With their own numbers bolstered by screaming tribesmen, the characters might be able to pull off a large attack on the River King's lair. Running such a large battle might seem like a daunting task, but keep in mind who the heroes of the story are. The camera, that is the attention of the Narrator and the Players, should be drawn to the heroes' actions.

Let the rest of the battle go on in the background. If the Players succeed at their challenges, the day is won. If they fail, the battle ends in defeat. The rest of the fight is just scenery, something to keep the hordes of River Pirates occupied with while the real heroics are being done.

THE KING'S HALL WHERE THE LEADER OF THE PIRATES CAN BE FOUND



Standing on a stone outcropping and looming over the River Pirates' lair like a crouching beast, the River King's Hall is a large longhouse decorated with carvings depicting the River King's personal heraldry, a green, fanged canoe.

A half dozen guards stand outside of its double doors or lounge on the portico that graces the front of the edifice. Other River Pirates come and go as their tasks of whims dictate, and smoke mounts into the sky from a large smoke hole in the thatched roof.

Larger than most longhouses found elsewhere in the Wildlands, the River King's hall is a mixture of crude grandiosity and defensible fortification. The stone outcropping it sits upon only permits one easy avenue of approach, the side facing the river, while the other three sides are steep rocky cliffs twenty to thirty feet in height.

A small portico stands at the front of the hall and provides some shelter for the guards who lounge there, as well as framing the large, stout, iron-banded doors that provide the only public access to the hall.

THE MAIN HALL

A pair of long tables stretches the length of the room, filling the middle of the main hall. A massive fire pit dominates the centre of the hall. The walls are decorated with crude carvings, hung animal hides and the occasional painting or gilded item taken from the River King's victims. All these decorations are hung high and without care to any sense of decorum or style. Below the decorations are pegs for guests to hang cloaks, weapons and other items.

At the far end of the hall sits the throne of the River King. A carved wooden chair of worn velvet and scratched gilding stands upon a small dais of lumber. Behind this petty throne are hung two banners, the flag of Sommerlund and the banner of the Royal Pioneers that once flew over Fort Harding.

It is here – lounging upon his throne – that the River King can be found. He does not engage the Kai Lords immediately – he would much rather talk his way out of trouble, or at the very least delay them until more of his pirates arrive.



THE KING'S PRIVATE ROOM

Behind the throne is a small door with a simple latch. Beyond is the River King's private room, a single chamber where he sleeps and plots his next move. A single smoky pallet of furs lies on a low bed along one wall. When not in use, a chain shirt, helm, sword, and bow hang on pegs along the walls. Owing to his status as 'monarch', the River King has a few valuable possessions; a gold framed standing mirror, a crown made from crudely hammered gold and silver, and a chest containing nearly 200 Gold Crowns. Beneath the furs is a trap door that leads to a narrow and rather grubby tunnel cut through the rock. The tunnel leads down to a natural cleft in the outcropping and eventually to a hidden cleft at the eastern base of the mount. Only the River King knows of this, and he has long planned to make use of it should his lair be overrun or his followers turn on him.

THE RIVER KING

Once just one of hundreds of bandit leaders, the River King hit upon the idea of uniting the various bandit groups under one leader, namely him. He rules his people with a mixture of intimidation and open-handed generosity. The bandits of the Wildlands are a fairly independent minded bunch and a would-be tyrant could see his followers turn on him at the drop of a pin.

Combat Skill: 22 / **Endurance:** 34

Special Rule: The River King wields Blood Moon, a mighty double-headed axe crafted of Kagonite that grants the bearer the Brutal 2 quality.

Traits: Veteran (18 / +3)

PLAYING THE RIVER KING

While little more than a common thief or pirate, the River King has one thing that sets himself head and shoulders above his peers – ambition! He has the charisma and drive to carve out his own kingdom in the middle of the Wildlands, not to mention the guts to set sail to conquer Ragadorn too! When confronted by the Kai Lords let this swagger show through – he might even invite them to join his motley crew, if they've impressed him enough!

The Players should not mistake him for some noble anti-hero, however – the River King is a savage, brutal murderer and a bully. While he might seem to be all smiles at first, he easily lets slip his evil side when frustrated – especially by meddling Kai!



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of the River King, the Dorn will once again be free – at least for now. Though the loss of Fort Harding is a heavy blow upon attempts to reclaim the Wildlands, it can be rebuilt. Indeed, that task may even fall upon the Kai Lords themselves, whose worthy efforts have been so instrumental in wresting the ruins from its would-be conquerors.



ON THE WINGS OF DARKNESS



IN THIS CHAPTER

WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT?
SCENE ONE: FEAST FOR THE CROWS
SCENE TWO: DREAD IN HITCHFORD
SCENE THREE: THE AWOKEN DEAD
SCENE FOUR: A MURDER OF CROWS



CHAPTER THREE

ON THE WINGS OF DARKNESS

On the Wings of Darkness sees our heroes teaming up with a private investigator to find out what has happened to Nyssa Crovan. In doing so, the Kai Lords find themselves on the trail of a supernatural horror and a series of grisly murders.

WHAT'S THIS ADVENTURE ABOUT?

Nyssa Crovan is the estranged daughter of House Crovan, a wealthy noble family from the County of Tyso. Over the past few months she has made contact with her family and something of a rapprochement has taken place. In her last letter, she accepted her parent's invitation to return home and a carriage and guards were dispatched to bring her back safely to the family seat. She never returned, and her anxious family have commissioned an investigator, Barias Thorn, to find her.

Unbeknownst to her family, Nyssa had written to a Tysoan property trader to arrange the purchase of a modest dwelling in the city. An independent woman, Nyssa had no intention of making up with her family only to lose her freedom. Unfortunately, the property owner in question was a ruthless and greedy man by the name of Oldan Krall. Krall took her deposit gladly, but upon discovering her desperate desire for a home of her own, he upped the price again and again. Nyssa, poised to return home, threatened to expose him to her father and bring an end to his unscrupulous practises.

The despicable Krall arranged for 'an accident' to befall Nyssa. He bribed one of her family's guards, Roanel Calej, to lead Nyssa and her protectors into a trap he had arranged with an infamous pair of bandits called the Brethan Brothers. The trap was sprung, Nyssa was murdered and her bodyguards slaughtered. In order to make sure there were no loose ends, the bandits killed Calej before taking Nyssa's signet ring to send to Krall as proof that they had fulfilled their mission. The unscrupulous Krall intends to use it to extort money from her grieving family.

In Sommerlund, such murder and treachery often exacts an unexpected price. Some of the bandits who carried out the murder of Nyssa and her bodyguard have since met with a strange and sinister fate.

And it is into this mystery that the Players enter the story...

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

Wraithcrows are supernatural undead creatures summoned to the material world of Magnamund by cruel and deceitful acts of evil. Drawn to Sommerlund by the betrayal and murder of Nyssa Crovan, and unwittingly bound to her signet ring, the Wraithcrows are now stalking and killing those who have come into contact with the ring since her murder. Their eventual goal is to destroy the ring and thereby break their bond to it, at which point they will be free to manifest at will in Sommerlund. No good will surely come of this!

See page 73 for more about Wraithcrows.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure is divided into four scenes:

- **Scene One** brings the Players into contact with Investigator Barias Thorn, and together they make a gruesome discovery.
- **Scene Two** takes them to the village of Hitchford on the trail of a pair of notorious murderers, but they find a flock of strange supernatural birds – Wraithcrows – have already killed one of them.
- **Scene Three** further reveals the power of the Wraithcrows when the Players encounter devastation at House Ternan and are confronted by undead ancient warriors, newly arisen from their graves, whilst on their way to Meadowood.
- **Scene Four** is the climax of the adventure, and takes the Players to the city of Tyso for the final showdown with the evil Wraithcrows.





SCENE ONE FEAST FOR THE CROWS

Read the following text aloud to the Players when you are ready to start the adventure:



You have been on the road for quite some time, carrying tidings from the Kai Monastery to border forts along the Durncrag. You have delivered them all, and now you've decided to ride on from Shadow Pass to Thornfalcon to rest and recover before heading home tomorrow.

You are near to the first village marker along the road when you see something odd in the distance. A man in a long, dark cloak is leading his horse with one hand whilst sweeping back and forth with a lantern gripped in his free hand. It emits a strangely pale light.

Consumed by his search, the figure does not notice you approaching. But if he keeps wandering further east of the road, he will soon enter territory you all know to be unsafe.



Ask the Players how they wish to approach Barias.

Barias is so focused on searching the ground in his immediate vicinity that the Kai Lords will be nearly upon him before he looks up and sees them.



If they are approaching with weapons drawn, Barias rests his hand on the hilt of his sword and looks wary but non-threatening.

In Sommerlund it is considered both rude and ill-advised to draw a weapon in the presence of Kai Lords.



The Players may choose to ride on and leave the man to continue his search. If they do not approach him, Barias will fail to notice the Players and they can go on their way.

If the Players follow him at a safe distance but do not approach him closely, then you can skip the conversation which follows and wait for an opportune time to stage it later.

BARIAS THORN, INVESTIGATOR

The rest of the scene assumes the Players either follow or approach Barias Thorn as he investigates the whereabouts of the carriage and its escorts who were bound for Tyso. Depending on the roleplaying style of your group, you may wish to simply read out the following passage or incorporate the information Barias gives into a conversation with the Players.



"Hail and well met. Whether it be fate or Ishir's grace that brings you to me tonight, I'll not be complaining."

The thin, pale-skinned man before you has a formidable moustache, an aquiline nose and sharp intelligent eyes. He is dressed in clothes well suited to travelling through difficult terrain. He has a Bronin-hilted sword sheathed on one hip and a strange silver lantern with crystal lenses clutched in his left hand.

"I am Barias Thorn, an investigating agent. I am headquartered in Toran but currently I'm working on behalf of acquaintances in the County of Tyso. I am looking for signs of a carriage and its escort of riders that left Thornfalcon a couple of days ago."





He gestures ahead towards the hills and valleys that dominate the landscape. "As my last name might suggest, my family were among the first Sommlending who settled in these parts. I know these hills very well. I know how easy it can be for a carriage to enter these parts and never be seen again."

He looks at you and his lantern illuminates his gaunt face. It is a mask of worry and warning.

Ask the Players if they wish to offer their assistance to Barias Thorn. If they offer to help, Barias will accept their aid gladly. He will tell them that he expects to find bandits in the vicinity. Having Kai Lords with him will greatly ease his worries for his personal safety.

ROLEPLAYING BARIAS THORN

Barias is a member of a small but well-respected company of private investigators called 'The Lanterneers'. He comports himself in a dignified manner and he is a studious, even-tempered investigator who takes great pride in his work. He strives to remain impartial and utterly professional no matter who or what he is investigating, particularly if it is a crime. This can make him seem cold and aloof to those who don't know him.

QUESTIONING BARIAS



Barias has a deep respect for the Order of the Kai and he will be happy to converse with the Players as they travel with him. Below are some answers to likely questions they may ask. If the Players ask questions that are not on the list, answer as best you can while keeping in mind who Barias is, what he knows and how the Players have treated him so far.

Why are you here, so far from Tyso or Toran?

"I am a friend of the noble House Crovan of the County of Tyso. In recent months, their estranged eldest daughter, Nyssa, has been corresponding frequently with her mother. Hoping for reconciliation, Nyssa had agreed to return home and a carriage and guards were sent by her father to collect her. They never returned and now her parents are beside themselves with worry. Lady Arva Crovan, wife of Fryearl Oswin Crovan, has commissioned me to find her missing daughter."

Might she have just been delayed, or maybe she had a change of heart?

"I do not think she has been delayed. I came by way of the only road she could have travelled to reach Tyso. I do not know what has happened, but I have a gnawing feeling in my gut that something unpleasant has befallen her."

Did she have an escort?

"She did, which is what I find so vexing. The bodyguards employed by House Crovan, the Calegs, are considered to be the best that money can buy. Even one Caley bodyguard is enough to make most bandits think twice about attempting highway robbery on those in their charge. The Calegs are family. They train together, eat together and famously can drop a man from the saddle with a crossbow at a hundred paces. With a Caley escort, Nyssa should have been safe."

Do you think Lady Nyssa is dead?

"For the love of Ishir, I pray that is not so. If she is gone, what happens next will depend on the circumstances of her demise. I would see to it that her signet ring is returned to her family so that they have something personal to remember her by. I am sanctioned by the Baron of Tyso to mete out summary justice where I must. If Lady Nyssa has been harmed in any way, I will not rest until justice is well and truly 'meted'."

What's that lamp?

"It is a valuable tool of my trade and it is also the mark of my company. It has served me well in past investigations."

FINDING NYSSA



In order to find out what happened to Nyssa, the Players must accrue between them a total of three successes on a TV 8 test. A Kai Lord with the Tracking discipline scores an automatic success. Remind them that they can use points of Kai's Favour to assist them if need be.



As each of them makes a test, ask them what they are doing, how they are helping and what they are looking for. Describe the Kai Lords hunting through the hills and down among the many small valleys folded among them. These valleys are peppered with gorse and thorny shrubs.

Once they have accumulated three successes between them, they will find the carriage.

ONE FOR SORROW

In one of these valleys, a particularly deep and shadowy vale known as Hopeless Hollow, the Players find what they have been searching for. They will also realise that it is the perfect place for a carriage and its guards to disappear.



As you crest another hill, the sight below you is one of horror and loss. A carriage stands wrecked with its team of horses unhitched from their traces and lying dead nearby. A number of men also lie dead. The smell of death is carried by the wind towards you. This was clearly not a desperate last stand. It was a massacre.



Barias will hesitate in investigating the scene. As he rides, he pulls his grey scarf up to cover his mouth and nose. He will indicate to any of the Players who follow him to do likewise.

As they approach the site of the massacre, read or paraphrase the following. It is important that the Players are made aware of what they are heading towards so they can avoid the potential fight. They will see the first appearance of their adversaries: the Wraithcrows.



As you make your way down into the valley, a single black-feathered bird gazes up at you from where it is perched on the roof of the wrecked carriage. It stares at you unblinkingly before spreading its wings and launching itself into the air with an angry caw. It seems to leave a trail of darkness in its wake, although it could be just a trick of the failing light.

Just beyond the carriage, a sudden motion catches your attention. Four dark-furred canines are feasting upon the carcass of a horse, their jaws stained red with blood. You can see that the saddle and bridle are intact, and its saddlebags are full. Utterly feral in appearance, these wild dogs sniff the air and twist their heads to stare in your direction. Yet they do not leap up to attack you. Instead, they form a protective circle around their feast.



They bare their gore-stained fangs and growl menacingly as you come closer.



Though the wild dogs snarl with menace, they will not attack the Players. You should inform them of this fact. Ask them whether or not they wish to approach the dogs.



If the Players continue their approach, hurriedly the wild dogs will fill their jaws with horsemeat and retreat into the surrounding hills. Instinctively, they know when best to fight and when to flee.

THE DEAD OAK

Any Player with the Sixth Sense discipline should be provided with the following information. You may like to provide this information to the Player in private, or read it out in to the group.



A chill creeps over your flesh, as if all the heat in your blood has suddenly cooled several degrees. A shadow sweeps over you. It is black and it is hungry. It has been drawn here by murder. And murder shall be punished by murder!

Do not explain or elaborate on this information, it is just a feeling that washes over any Kai Lord with Sixth Sense.



Ask the other Players what they are doing and where they are searching. Before they find anything of significance, read the following aloud:



A sudden flicker catches your attention as the light in Barias' sealed lantern wavers and nearly goes out. You feel no wind at all but the pale flame is clearly struggling to remain alight.

"What in the name of...?"

The air grows suddenly cold as the cawing of a hundred crows shatters the silence. They are perched on the boughs of a dead oak tree at the top of the valley. Scores of malevolent coal-black eyes are gazing skywards and they shuffle nervously on their shared perch.

The dark clouds part and moonlight streams down upon the crows. They emit a cacophonous shriek as the ashen light of Ishir washes over them. As one, they cease their cawing, spread their wings and take flight in complete silence. Now the trails of darkness they leave behind are quite distinct. It was not a trick of the light after all. They circle above the dead oak before flying east to disappear into the midnight sky.

The chill leaves with them, yet your blood runs cold at the sight of what they leave behind. Lying beneath the dead oak tree is a human corpse. It is frozen solid with its rictus face twisted into an expression of abject fear.



Barias stands immobile and silent. He is in a state of shock. When he recovers, it takes him several minutes to regain his composure. If the Players decide to investigate the frozen corpse they can discover the following clues with a successful test. Encourage them to use different skills and disciplines during their examination.



INVESTIGATING THE CORPSE

- The body is that of an adult male in his mid-twenties. His frozen body is completely and unnaturally rigid. It is coated with a thick crust of frost.
- The clothes that are frozen to the corpse look similar to those of other corpses in the vicinity of the wrecked carriage. The blue and scarlet crest of the Caleg family is sewn on the chest of the tunic and will be revealed if the frost is scraped away. It identifies him as one of the carriage guards.
- Despite the fact that his body is now frozen solid, it is not the intense cold that killed him. If the corpse is turned over, a tell-tale patch of red frost in the middle of his back indicates that he died from a single stab wound from a sharp blade.

This is the corpse of Roanel Caleg. He was stabbed in the back after having betrayed Nyssa to the Brethans. He was left dead where he fell before the Wraithcrows found him. Their supernatural powers froze his corpse. This freezing has only just occurred, a matter of minutes before the Kai Lords arrived in Hopeless Hollow and disturbed them.



INVESTIGATING THE TREE

- This Sommlending Oak has not been dead for long. All of its leaves are shed and they lie frost-withered around its base. This is the only dead tree in the area; the others are perfectly healthy.
- There are no feathers to be found, either beneath the boughs or around the base of the trunk. There are hundreds of small perforations and scratches on the trunk itself that have been made by the crows.
- Something unnatural killed this tree. It shows no signs of disease. Players with any psychic abilities will sense that there is a residue of dark energy lurking beneath its scarred bark.
- The upper branches of the tree offer an unobstructed view of the valley below. If one wished to observe the attack on the carriage and its guards, this tree would have been the best place to do so.



INVESTIGATING NEARBY

- There is a copper-threaded leather mask hidden among the frosted grasses near the base of the tree. Barias will recognise the mask if it is shown to him after he recovers his wits.
- There are three sets of tracks to be found. One, likely belonging to the dead man, comes up from the valley and then halts at the base of this tree. The other two sets of tracks also come from the direction of the valley below but on a different bearing. The footprints indicate that they spent some time at the tree before heading off into a nearby forest.

The mask is an important clue, as Barias knows the significance of the swirling pattern of copper wire that embellishes it. This cloth is particular only to a sibling pair of bandits called the Brethan Brothers. The discovery of the mask will convince him that their next stop should be Hitchford.

There is more to be learned using the Tracking discipline, as detailed in the following section.

USING SKILLS

If you are using the Master-level rules, there are different skills that can be applied to investigate the mystery:

Investigate: Investigate can be used to reveal clues, from the crest on the corpse's tunic, to noticing that there are no feathers to be found anywhere in the area when, realistically, there should be.

Medicine: A TV 9 Medicine test will reveal the cause of death as a single stab wound. He was frozen stiff after this fatal wound was inflicted.

Occult: A Player who succeeds at a TV 7 Occult skill test can confirm that something very strange has happened here; the cause of the tree's death was wholly unnatural. The crows, too, were not natural birds. The deep chill which accompanied them is testament to this.

Perception: The Perception skill will most likely be used by Players who do not possess the Investigate skill. It can reveal information about the footprints whereabouts.



BETRAYAL AND BLOOD

Through judicious use of their skills, disciplines and traits – and perhaps with some help from Barias – the Players should be able to piece together most of what has happened here.

ROANEL CALEG BETRAYED HIS FAMILY

At some point, the carriage left the main route, travelled here across the grassland and stopped to make camp. The carriage was forced to divert to avoid a washout across the road (engineered by the Brethans) and continued through the woods because Roanel insisted that he knew a short cut.

Unfortunately, his intentions were entirely deceitful. He knew the Brethans would be waiting at Hopeless Hollow. Once the carriage reached this place, he suggested they make camp for the night and the bodyguards agreed. The carriage was unhitched, the horses tethered nearby and food was prepared.

Roanel slipped some Gallowbrush into the food to ensure that the Calegs were fast asleep when the ambush was sprung. While Roanel watched from his vantage point by a Sommlending Oak tree at the top of the valley, the bandit brothers entered the encampment, killed the woman they'd been paid to slay, and then murdered her bodyguards. Roanel watched from this location as his brothers were murdered, feeling shock and horror that soon transformed into a dark delight. Long years of feeling downtrodden, abused and unappreciated erupted into an explosion of bitter hatred and a euphoric feeling of vengeance achieved.

Unfortunately for him, this spiteful and terrible fratricide is what drew the Wraithcrows to him and doomed him to be their first victim.

NYSSA CROVAN WAS THE FIRST TO DIE

Even a cursory investigation will uncover Nyssa's body lying inside the ransacked carriage. If the Players neglect to look there, Barias will be the one who discovers her. He is deeply saddened at the discovery. Lifting her carefully from the despoiled carriage, he will carry out his duty and examine her body with care and proper respect.

Nyssa was killed by the thrust of a sharp stiletto blade that penetrated her heart. Death was instant. The other bodies have all had their throats cut. A band of pale flesh on the middle finger of her right hand reveals where she wore her signet ring. It was stolen by the Brethans after they murdered her. In a concealed pocket of her dress is a small iron key.

A search of the carriage interior will reveal that it has been thoroughly ransacked. There is a length of sturdy chain fixed to a ring bolted securely to the floor. Lying among the fragments of splintered wood and torn leather is a padlock that has been crudely

battered open. Players who succeed at a TV 7 test will be able to determine that chains such as this are normally used to secure precious goods, like travel chests containing valuables.

The box that was padlocked to the chain is missing. It was stolen by the Brethan Brothers and broken open after they left the encampment. The box contained 80 gold crowns and some jewellery. After smashing it open and looting its contents, they threw the strong box away a mile away from the scene of the crime.

THE BODYGUARDS

By searching the bodies of the murdered bodyguards the Players will find red and blue crests adorning their bloodstained tunics. This identifies them as members of the Caley family.

The tracks left by the Brethan Brothers are clearly visible. While Barias may well have made the connection with Hitchford from the mask found with Roanel's body, these tracks will lead the Players to that village.

When the Players are ready to leave the encampment, proceed to **Scene Two: Dread in Hitchford.**

SCENE TWO DREAD IN HITCHFORD

This scene takes the Players to Hitchford, the next settlement east from Thornfalcon and the current location of one of the Brethan Brothers. The Wraithcrows are on their way there as well, as the Players will see when they catch up with their quarry.



Discovery of clues at the site of the massacre may have led them to Hitchford, or by following the bandits' trail using the Tracking discipline, or by trying to keep up with the Wraithcrows as they flew away. So long as they decide to keep on the move, the byway will take them to the nearest village, Hitchford, where they may have an opportunity to stop and rest for the night.

When they reach Hitchford, read or paraphrase the following:



In the distance, you see the lights of Hitchford. This large village is ringed by a wooden palisade with watchtowers. The River Tor flows past to the south side of the settlement. This is the most westerly point in the province of Toran where the great waterway is navigable by barge. The majority of the folk of Hitchford are farmers. It is a relatively affluent village and the townsfolk are known to be very friendly and hospitable.

"The Brethan Brothers would not expect a warm welcome from the honest citizens of Hitchford," says Barias, thoughtfully. "This is a close-knit community and those two outlaws would stand out like

sore thumbs. But there is one place that they may seek sanctuary and I'd wager that's where we'll find them."

Trusting the investigator's judgement, you enter Hitchford via its open west gate and proceed across its lantern-lit market square towards a maze of narrow passageways. At the end of one shadowy alley you arrive at a decrepit-looking tavern. Its creaky sign is so grimy that the lettering is barely legible. Barias tells you that this place is called the 'Dread Falcon'.

Barias' previous experience of Hitchford is such that he's had reason to visit this insalubrious little backstreet ale house before. The Dread Falcon has a reputation for being a den of iniquity that no self-respecting villager would ever think of visiting.



Ask the Players if they wish to go into the Dread Falcon incognito, or if they choose to simply enter without disguising the fact that they are Kai. If they choose the latter, Barias will strongly advise against it.



"The patrons will likely scurry away like frightened rats if you go in wearing your Kai cloaks and rank badges. You'd better stow them in your saddlebags and muddy your faces before we open the front door. We'll need some cooperation from the ne'er-do-wells within if we're going to find the Brethans."

It is wise advice. Most of the types who frequent the Dread Falcon are not the kind of people who cooperate willingly with Kai Lords. Conversely, attacking a Kai Lord is an offence punishable by imprisonment, and the Players may choose to retain their cloaks and badges so as to benefit from the protection afforded them by law. Inform the Players of the pros and cons and let them decide freely. Their choice will have an effect on how the scene plays out.

DEN OF INIQUITY

Regardless of how they choose to enter the seedy tavern, you should proceed by first reading the following text aloud:



The narrow frontage of the Dread Falcon belies its true size. In past years, neighbouring hovels have been bought up and knocked through to create more taproom and lodging space for the tavern's disreputable owner. It comprises two storeys, serviced by three staircases. The fixtures and fittings are of uniformly poor quality. The air is heavy with cheap tobacco smoke and the unwholesome smell of sour sweat and greasy food.

A boisterous man with a bushy red beard is singing a bawdy ballad at the far end of the taproom bar. Half a dozen drunken patrons are gathered around him with flagons of ale in hand. They join in with the chorus. A few moments after you enter, the red-bearded man stops singing mid-verse and all eyes turn to stare at you.

What happens next depends upon whether the Players took steps to

conceal the fact that they are Kai Lords.

Irrespective of the choice they made, the outcome will lead to the same conclusion. The difference will be the degree of difficulty the Players experience in reaching it.



THE EASY WAY

If the Players have decided to conceal their Kai identities, the initial part of the scene will go much easier than if they haven't. It is not uncommon for complete strangers to enter the tavern, and they tend to be accepted without question unless there is an obvious reason to be wary of them.

As long as the Players do nothing untoward to upset or antagonise the patrons of the Dread Falcon (such as drawing their weapons and attacking them), the awkward silence will only last for a few seconds.



Having satisfied his curiosity, the red-bearded balladeer resumes his song and the other patrons continue smoking and conversing. With a rousing final chorus, the singing comes to an end. The owner, a heavy-set middle aged man with an unfortunate squint, gathers the empty flagons and sets about refilling them from a large cask of ale set atop his counter.





Barias motions you to follow as he approaches the bar. When the owner has finished refilling and returning the flagons, he beckons him over and orders tankards of “best ale” for you all. The owner, whose name is Dread (hence the name of the tavern), obliges and draws the ale from the counter cask.

“Is that your finest libation?” queries Barias. “Aye, ’tis” replies the man, gruffly. “My best and only.”

Barias pays for the beer with a single gold crown, and you are surprised when the owner gives him a tarnished silver Veno as change. For such a cheap price you are all somewhat wary of the quality of the beer you’ve been served, and rightly so. It tastes more like ditch water than ale. Barias raises his tankard and toasts your good fortune before taking his first and only sip of the insipid brew.

Quietly, he says, “Pay the man for a couple of rooms for the night. That’ll give you an excuse to search upstairs. Unless, that is, you’d rather stay here in the taproom and try your luck at getting some information out of the owner and his customers?”



Ask the Players whether they wish to investigate the upper floor of the tavern, engage the taproom patrons in conversation or split up and do both.



If all the Players decide to go upstairs, skip ahead to **Corvid Confrontation** (page 62).



If the Players choose to split up, first deal with the investigations by those who stay downstairs, before handling those who choose to go upstairs (see **Corvid Confrontation**).



If any or all of the Players choose to remain downstairs and try to gather some information as to the whereabouts of the Brethan brothers, they can learn the following with a mixture of good roleplaying, bribery (costing them 2 gold crowns) and the occasional test.



ASKING ABOUT THE AMBUSH

- The customers have heard nothing about the massacre in the hills west of Hitchford. It will come as no surprise to them that such a crime has happened for the area is notoriously unsafe after dark.
- A couple of poachers, a brother and sister named Gost and Darla, have heard tell of wagons going missing hereabouts over the last few months. While they doubt the disappearances are related to this incident, the growing trend suggests that bodyguards, army patrols and the vigilance of the Border Rangers are not providing the same degree of security they used to.



ASKING ABOUT THOSE RESPONSIBLE

- None of the patrons has ever heard of a carriage and its bodyguards being ambushed and murdered in cold blood in this part of the province. Highway robberies do occur, but they rarely result in anyone losing their lives in the way the Players describe. Opportunistic robbers and outlaws are known to frequent the Dread Falcon but none would ever think of bragging about it, let alone admitting to having committed highway murder.
- A butcher named Big Dugan knows of a couple of brothers who live “wherever they can find a roof”. He does not know them by name, but he has seen them come into village several times over the past two years with goods to trade or sell at Hitchford market.
- As Big Dugan puts it, “These two aren’t exactly honest merchants, y’know?”
- TV 9: A woman named Asna motions one of the Players over (determine at random which Player is summoned) to join her at her table. She has noted that they are seeking out information and she is willing to impart what she knows, for a price. The Player will need to pay her 2 gold crowns before she will share what she knows. If payment is made, you can read the following aloud:



Last Fehangor, a fight broke out here in the taproom that ended with a forester getting stabbed to death by a regular. That man – Werlan is his name – hasn’t been back since. It can get rough in here from time to time, but it don’t often end in murder. Well, I’ve not seen hide nor hair of Werlan since, but his brother Erik is upstairs as I speak. I saw him come in here last night. And I’ll tell you this: tho’ he was trying his best to hide it, his shirt was bloody under his coat.”

Having told the Player what she knows, she will suggest that they go and ask Dread, the tavern owner, about Erik.

- If any Player decides to question Dread the tavern owner, he will tell them the following information in return for 3 gold crowns:

“That lousy piece of pondlife is upstairs in Room 4. Here’s the spare key to his door. It’s about time he got his comeuppance, him and his murdering brother. If you’re looking to rough ’im up some, then that’s fine and dandy by me.”

USING THE INFLUENCE OR VOCATION SKILLS

Master-level Rule: Players who possess the Influence skill can use it to persuade Asna to talk with a successful skill test with a Target Value of 7. A Player with the Vocation skill can try to use it instead (TV 8).

THE BARKEEPER'S RUMOURS

The son of the owner of the Dread Falcon is a thin-faced young man called Ormund. He assists his father as a barkeeper when it's busy in the taproom. He is often surly towards strangers, but he can be quite jocular once he takes a liking to someone. He does not like Kai Lords, disguised or otherwise, but he is willing to help the Players if they pay him 2 gold crowns.



If the Players ask him about Erik, the two brothers that Big Dugan spoke of, or if he has seen any suspicious-looking men enter the tavern in the past few days, the Player who has paid him 2 gold crowns may take a Luck test (this test can be retried if failed). If they test successfully, he will tell them to go and speak with Asna (see Asking about those Responsible above). No Luck test need be taken with Asna and she will not ask for money in this instance.



THE HARD WAY

If any or all of the Players choose not to disguise the fact that they are Kai Lords, play through this opening of the scene instead.

While no one will attack them outright there is no respect for authority to be had here, especially the authority of the Kai. Most of the patrons will hastily avert their eyes after recognising the cloaks and Kai rank badges, and some will leave as quietly and as inconspicuously as they can within minutes of the Players entering the taproom. The rumbustious atmosphere of the tavern will become sullen and subdued.



The noise of the taproom ceases when the patrons recognise your cloaks and Kai rank badges. All eyes are averted and an uneasy silence prevails. The owner, a heavy-set middle aged man with an unfortunate squint, moves to the far end of his bar counter and turns his back towards you.

"Don't say I didn't warn you," Barias murmurs, his voice tinged with frustration. "I do hope you know what you're doing..."



Ask the Players what they are going to do now. If the Players decide to question the patrons, refer back to the people and answers given in the previous section (**The Easy Way**). However, all tests must now be taken with +1 added to difficulty and all payments are double the stated cost.



The suspicion, distrust and simmering hostility provoked by the unexpected presence of Kai Lords in the taproom will boil over if, at any time, a 0 is picked at random whilst making a test. In this instance, a fight will break out.



BARROOM BRAWL

If a fight does break out, use these statistics and tactics.

Bar Patron (Butcher's assistant):

Combat Skill: 14 / **Endurance:** 16

Bar Patron (Poacher):

Combat Skill: 15 / **Endurance:** 17

Bar Patron (Market stallholder):

Combat Skill: 13 / **Endurance:** 15

Bar Patron (2 Pickpockets):

Combat Skill: 13 / **Endurance:** 16

Big Dugan (Butcher):

Combat Skill: 16 / **Endurance:** 20

These six patrons will all move across the taproom towards the Players in a threatening manner. None of them benefit from Grouping and none of them will fight with a weapon unless the Players draw theirs first. This means that they will fight with a -4 Combat Skill penalty, and so too will the Players.

You should make it clear that none of the angry patrons are looking for or expecting a fight to the death. Their aim is to beat them up and throw them out. Although the Kai Lords have the legal right to use lethal force if they are attacked, they can expect a severe reprimand from their Kai Masters if this becomes known to them. Young Kai Lords killing drunken and unruly Sommlending citizens, no matter how lowly and disrespectful they may be, will tarnish the reputation of their Order.

If the attackers are reduced to 0 Endurance or less, they are rendered unconscious and not killed. Likewise, if any Player is reduced to 0 Endurance or less, they are rendered unconscious. In this instance, they must pick a random number. The result indicates the number of minutes they are knocked out (0 = 10 minutes). A Player reduced to 0 END will recover 5 END on regaining consciousness.

The moment a fight starts, the owner will pull a concealed lever under the bar counter that causes the tavern door to lock shut. No escape can be attempted by the Players by this way. Barias will distance himself from the fight and climb halfway up the nearest of the three tavern staircases. When the fight ends, he will signal to the Players to follow him up the stairs to the first floor.



WHAT IF NO ONE GOES UPSTAIRS?

Use Barias to prompt the Players to investigate the upper floor before leaving the tavern. If they ignore his prompting, when they step out into the alleyway they find it strewn with broken roof tiles and hear the sudden noise of crows above. Upon looking up, they will see the flock of black birds pouring from a gaping hole in the roof and soar away into the night sky. If they do not decide for themselves to go back inside the Dread Falcon and investigate its upper floor, Barias will insist that they do and lead the way.

CORVID CONFRONTATION

When the Players investigate the first floor of the Dread Falcon tavern, read the following aloud:



At the top of the stairs, a dimly-lit corridor extends directly ahead. It is flanked on both sides by closed doors with numbers crudely daubed on the cheap timbers. When you test their iron handles you discover that they are locked, save one: Room 4.

It is slightly ajar and a thin film of frost is slowly spreading into the corridor from the gap beneath the door. Candlelight is flickering inside the room. It becomes dimmer as you approach.

While the Players are free to examine any room they wish, curiosity or prior knowledge is likely to guide them directly to Room 4. Unfortunately for the Players, they have arrived too late to ask questions of the man inside.

Raise the tension and suspense a little by describing the creaks and groans of the timber floor and the whistling sound of the unnaturally cold air that is escaping from the narrow gap between the door and the jamb. When they decide to push open the door and enter, read the following aloud:



Stiffly, the door creaks open to reveal a macabre scene. Near to a solitary open window there stands an old copper bathtub, caked with frost. On a wooden table close by are the dying remnants of a lit candle. A naked man is sitting in the tub with his head tilted back. He appears to be staring unblinkingly at a large hole in the cracked and cobwebbed ceiling. His clothes lie strewn about the floor, all ripped and shredded.

As cautiously you approach, you pass beside a bed and an overturned chair. Upon reaching the tub you see that the water is frozen solid. The man is encased in a block of ice from his chest downwards. His eyes are wide open but he is clearly dead. A look of horror is literally frozen on his face. Through the gaping hole in

the ceiling, you see roof rafters and scores of small black shapes moving about up there in the darkness.

Suddenly, the silence is shattered by a cacophony of cawing birds. From out of the hole flows a seemingly never-ending stream of crows. They fall eerily silent as quickly they fill the chilled room. They swoop around your heads, battering you with their wings and attempting to stab your eyes out with their cruel beaks. The room's solitary window shatters and its frame is wrenched off its rusty hinges when the crows stream through it and soar upwards into the night sky, screeching and cawing loudly.

The shrieks of the escaping Wraithcrows will draw the tavern owner and his patrons out into the alley to find out what is making such a terrible noise. This will give the Players all the time they need to investigate the room without being disturbed.



Ask the Players what they wish to examine first: the body and bathtub, or the room and its contents. Also, ask what skills, disciplines and traits they want to use to aid them.

Use the following lists as your guide to what they can discover by way of making successful tests. The information is listed in order of increasing difficulty, so the latter discoveries on the list will require higher test results in order to be accomplished successfully.



EXAMINING THE BODY AND BATHTUB

- The body is that of an adult male in his mid-twenties. Both of his arms are hanging over the side of the frozen copper tub. Their bear several old scars.
- There are no rings on his frozen fingers.
- Judging by the colouration of his skin, he has been frozen solid for somewhere between 3-10 hours.
- The remnants of the candle standing on the table beside the tub is two inches wide, and there is a copious amount of wax that has melted and run down from the table's surface and onto the floor. When new, a candle of this type and width could be expected to last 12 hours.

The Wraithcrows entered the tavern by way of a hole they made in its tiled roof. They used their supernatural powers to freeze the water in which the man (Erik) was bathing. He literally froze to death while they feasted on his intense pain and anguish.



EXAMINING THE ROOM AND CONTENTS

- There are no obvious reasons for why the room is so cold.
- The room temperature is beginning to rise.
- Whichever Player decides to search the bed will find a folded piece of parchment tucked under the pillow. If no Player declares their intention to search the bed, choose one of them at random to spot it. This letter is from Werlan and is described below.
- In a leather satchel stowed under the bed are several valuable items, mostly gemstones and pieces of fine silver jewellery. Some of the jewellery has dried blood on it.
- Despite the frantic flapping of their wings, and the haphazard escape they made through the broken window, there are no feathers to be found anywhere in the room. If the Players previously noticed a lack of feathers around the dead oak tree, they will automatically realise that the black birds are those they encountered previously.
- Hanging from a hook on the back of the door is a backpack and a leather bandoleer. The bandoleer holds three bone-handled throwing daggers. The backpack contains an empty glass vial.

The satchel contains Erik's share of the valuables that were looted from the carriage. It was his intention tomorrow to visit and sell his ill-gotten gains to a fence that he knows in the village. The glass vial in the backpack contained the Potion of Gallowbrush that the Brethan Brothers gave to Roanel Caleg to slip into the stew that was prepared for Nyssa and her bodyguards, prior to their murder.



Ask the Players what they wish to do with the leather satchel of stolen valuables.

This letter reveals several interesting things. Some are relevant to the adventure and some are not, as follows:

- **'Eustri':** The Brethan Brothers call each other Eustri and Verstri. In Old Sommlending these words mean 'East' and 'West'. 'Eustri' is Erik who is now frozen dead in the bathtub. 'Verstri' is Werlan, his older brother.
- **O's Courier:** This is a reference to poor Toman Rye, a messenger in the employ of Oldan Krall, who has the misfortune to be the one in possession of the Crovan Signet Ring that was stolen off the finger of Nyssa by Werlan Brethan. The act of carrying this ring back to Oldan will seal his doom. Toman will later be found dead in Tyso where the Players finally combat the Wraithcrows.
- **Meadowood and Jiena:** This part of the letter tells the Players where Werlan is going and the reason why. What they will not

USING SKILLS

If you are using the Master-level rules, there are several different skills that may be used:

Investigate: Investigate can be used to reveal different clues, from how long the body has been in the tub to the fact the window was latched shut before the crows smashed it open to make their escape.

Occult: A Kai Lord who succeeds at a TV 7 Occult skill test gets a strong sense that the crows are supernatural. The unnatural cold, their sudden silence and the lack of any feathers are a residual effect of their otherworldly powers.

Perception: A Perception skill test at TV 7 will allow a Player to find the backpack and bandoleer hanging behind the door. Succeeding at a TV 8 test will permit a Player to find the leather satchel stowed under the bed, and detect that one of the valuable items (a silver locket on a chain) contains the silhouette of a young woman's head and shoulders shown in profile. It strongly resembles Nyssa.

Sage: A Kai Lord with the Sage skill, and who has found the glass vial in the backpack behind the door, can ascertain that it recently contained Gallowbrush Potion. They should be told of the properties of this potion: it is a powerful sleeping draught.

Werlan's Letter to Erik

Eustri -

I am handing the ring to O's courier who will take it to Tyso. I will then go to Meadowood to see Jiena. You have your trophies and should be able to sell some of them to Garne and raise all the Crowns you need.

Rest up and stay low in Hitchford for a while. I will be back in a few days with your half of the money I get for the ring. Just give me some time with J and her kin. I am so close to sealing the deal and getting my feet under the table of the Ternan family. Stay clear of Meadowood for now. Please don't ruin this for me. If you do, it will ruin it for both of us. Remember, we will always be blood brothers come what may.

- Verstri



know is precisely why Erik was against this. Erik does not believe that his older brother Werlan can successfully convince Jiena's parents that he is a successful merchant and thus eminently eligible for their daughter's hand in marriage.

- **Garne:** Garne is a fence for stolen goods and a handy contact for thieves and bandits in this province. He is not an evil man, but he is excessively selfish and avaricious. By way of his secret trade, he knows a lot of bad people who are willing and capable of perpetrating some very bad deeds.

Barias will be paying Garne a visit in the following scene. The information he gets from him will set him on a direct path to Tyso to confront Oldan Krall himself.

- **Staying Out of Meadowood:** Werlan intends to convince Jiena's parents once and for all that he is an ideal son-in-law, thereby securing his engagement to their beloved daughter. Interestingly, this plea is made to Erik by Werlan because he genuinely loves Jiena and does not want his brother to ruin his chances of marrying her. Werlan is prepared to do anything it takes to marry Jiena, including confronting Erik if he has to. This part of the letter is his way of making sure that it will not come to this.



Ask the Players what they think the letter means, and what they wish to do next. If you feel it is appropriate, and the Players are on the right track so far as their answers go, you may use the above information to hint at or confirm the real meaning behind what Werlan has written about to his (now dead) brother Erik.

PARTING OF WAYS

Barias is as resolute as ever. After carefully considering what has been found in this room, he speaks to the Players directly about what he believes should be done.



"My friends, I now have a lead that I must follow up here in Hitchford. This 'Verstri' is undoubtedly Werlan Brethan. The man we see here, imprisoned in ice before us, is Erik: his brother in blood and crime."

"I must recover Nyssa's signet ring from the courier, or at least find out to whom it is being delivered. Yet justice must always be served. To this end, I'd be eternally grateful if you'd go to Meadowood and apprehend Werlan Brethan on my behalf. Upon his capture, do not hesitate in dealing with him in whichever way you deem fit and proper. He is, after all, a prime instigator in a murder most foul..."

He takes a map from one of his belt pouches and carefully unfolds it on the bed.

"When I have completed my investigations in Hitchford, I will meet you in Meadowood the day after tomorrow, which is Midvoka. If I am able to do so, and I do not arrive in the market square at Meadowood at midnight on Midvoka, you should journey to Tyso and wait for me at the Burning Beacon tavern."

"Are we agreed?"

As one, you acknowledge and agree to his proposal and bid him a safe and successful tomorrow in Hitchford.

"I hope you meet with you again very soon. Midnight on Midvoka in Meadowood."

SCENE THREE THE AWOKEN DEAD

The Players are able to retrieve their horses from the stables of the Dread Falcon. They are now on their own; Barias has remained behind in Hitchford to follow up his lead. It is 42 miles from Hitchford to Meadowood. They cross the mighty River Tor by way of Hitchford ferry and ride to Meadowood along the King's Highway in the dead of night, guided by the benevolent light of a full moon. Their objective is to find and apprehend Werlan Brethan. Begin the scene by reading aloud the following paragraph:

HOUSE TERNAN



It is shortly after dawn and you are six miles north of Meadowood when you happen upon a signpost that points to the Ternan estate. The grand manor house, with its apple orchards and its acres of cultivated gardens, could not be more different to the modest farmsteads hereabouts.

"House Ternan" is the deliberately pretentious name that the villagers of Meadowood have attached to the manor house and its grounds. It implies that the Ternan family is a noble house with an aristocratic pedigree, but this is not so. The Ternans are very wealthy but they are neither aristocratic nor noble. They have made their fortune from money-lending. Ironically, their best clients are nobles who reside in and around the cities of Toran and Tyso.

The five-bar gate to the Ternan estate is closed when the Players arrive. A blond-haired youth is sitting astride it, whittling at a piece of oak with his pocket knife. His name is Jac Ternan, he is 15 years old, and he is the youngest of three Ternan boys. Jac is wide-eyed with respect when he sees that the Players are all Kai Lords. He has always dreamed of being a Kai.

THE FALL OF HOUSE TERNAN

Give any Player with Sixth Sense a moment's warning:



You feel a sudden sensation of intense cold followed by an unsettling sensation of rising anger.

Having done so, read the following to the Players as a group:



In the middle distance, the manor house is engulfed by a sinister dark shadow. The temperature plummets and all of you shudder as the unexpected chill washes over you. There is a deathly silence followed by a cacophonous noise. Every window in the grand house bows outwards and shatters with tremendous force.

"No... No... NO!!!" cries young Jac in abject horror.

He leaps from the gate and lifts the latch to allow you entry to the gravelled pathway that leads to the grand double doors of his family home. You urge your reluctant horses to the gallop and steer them along the pathway towards the stricken house. Jac, now sobbing, runs after you.

You are within a dozen yards of the front doors when suddenly they burst open. Out pour the flock of Wraithcrows that you encountered last night in Hitchford, Cawing fiercely, they soar upwards and circle around the house, streaming smoky black trails of darkness that dissipate quickly in the frigid air. Your horses skid to a halt amidst a cloud of loose gravel and you struggle to remain upright in your saddles. With one last malevolent shrieking chorus of cries, the flock of Wraithcrows turn towards the south and fly away at breath-taking speed.

"Mother! Father! Jiena! Cries Jac, as he races along the pathway. Before you can dismount and attempt to stop him, he runs past you and sprints headlong towards the open front doors. The house is groaning now. Tiles fall from the roof and cracks appear in the walls, spreading out and widening alarmingly with every passing second.

Jac runs through the ruined doors and disappears from view. You hear his panicked screams echoing from the dark interior.



If the Players decide to go after Jac Ternan, they will enter the entrance hall of the manor house amidst a deluge of falling plaster and splinters of timber that are falling from the ceiling.



Each Player must now take a Luck test. If successful, they suffer no damage from the falling debris and will be able to follow Jac's footsteps, which are plain to see in the plaster dust that now carpets the floor of the entrance hall. They lead to a large parlour located next to a grand oak staircase that ascends to the first floor. If unsuccessful, they reach the parlour but they will sustain injury from the falling debris as they cross the entrance hall. They must pick a random number and will suffer an ENDURANCE loss equal to the number they choose (0 = 10).

Upon reaching the open door to the parlour, they will witness the following scene. Read this text aloud:



This grand reception room is lavishly decorated with expensive tapestries and exotic furniture imported from Cloeasia and Lyris. This décor is now caked with frost and plaster dust. Most of the elaborate carvings and cornices which embellished the ceiling have fallen away and chunks of broken masonry and plasterwork litter the parlour's polished oak floor.





Cowering beneath a sturdy table in the centre of the room are three terrified individuals. A late middle-aged man and woman, and a young lady clad in a blue velvet gown. Jac is kneeling beside the table and is pleading with them, his parents and his sister Jiena, to come out. They are insensate with fear and frozen to the bone by the penetrating coldness that pervades this room. They are incapable of speech or movement.

<question>Ask the Players – urgently – what they are going to do. Don't give them much time to discuss it among themselves; this is a good opportunity for them to act like heroes. There is very little time left in which to save the Ternans. The ceiling creaks alarmingly and sections of the supporting beams are starting to crash down, revealing the rooms on the first floor above.

The three Ternans can be retrieved from their hiding place by any Player who is willing and able to crawl underneath the table and pull them out. Jac will act on his own initiative and save his sister as his first priority. He will plead for help from the Players to save his parents as he carries his sister, who is literally frozen with fear, out of the parlour and into the entrance hall. If none of the Players respond, he will place his sister under the grand staircase and return to save his mother. His father, Ulnar, is too heavy for him to lift and carry.



In the unlikely event that the Players do nothing but stand idly by and watch young Jac save his mother, the moment he leaves the parlour with her, the entire ceiling will collapse and crash down upon their heads. Any Player who is in the parlour when this happens will be killed. Jac's father will also be killed by the falling beams and timbers that crush and bury the table.



In all likelihood, the Players will have acted to save Jac's parents. Assuming that this is the case, Jac will say that it is too dangerous to remain in the house. To avoid being caught in the ensuing deluge of falling masonry, beams, timbers and roof tiles, they must carry Jac's parents out of the house by way of the open front doors. Once outside, they will need to get at least thirty feet away from the house to avoid the risk of being injured. This risk extends to their horses as well, so they must act quickly and decisively if they are to save Jac's parents, their horses and themselves.



If they fail to get clear of the collapsing house, they must make a Luck Test, similar to the one that they took when first they crossed the entrance hall. If successful, they suffer no damage. If unsuccessful, they will sustain injury from the falling roof tiles. They must pick a Random Number and will suffer an ENDURANCE loss equal to the number they choose (0 = 10).

The safest place for them to stop and recover from their ordeal is the gravelled pathway that leads to the main gate. Jac's parents

and sister can be revived by the use of the Healing discipline or administering Laumspur. If none of the Players have any Laumspur, or if they choose not to use it, then Jac will inform them that Laumspur is grown in the ornate garden at the rear of the house. There is enough Laumspur here to revive the Ternans and counter the effects of shock and cold. There will be no surplus Laumspur left over for the Players to use or keep for themselves.

The house will collapse to its ground floor level while the Players (or Jac) tend to the injured Ternans. Upon recovering, Jac's mother has an interesting tale to tell.



"Werlan visited us for supper last night. He's a well-to-do merchant's son and suitor to our daughter, Jiena. He said he had a matter of importance to discuss with us after the meal.

We assumed he was going to ask Ulnar for Jiena's hand in marriage and wanted our blessing. I thought it best that we discuss this in private, so I instructed Jac to retire to his room as soon as supper was over."

"No sooner had Jac left and I'd locked the parlour door behind him, it happened. All of a sudden the fire in the hearth blew out and our wine froze in our glasses. An incredible cold filled the room that chilled us to the bone. The doors leading out to the rear garden were flung open and a huge flock of screeching crows burst into the parlour. They circled above our heads and then swooped down upon poor Werlan, engulfing him completely. We were petrified! One moment he was alive and well; the next he'd been transformed into a block of ice."

Jiena begins to sob uncontrollably. She is deeply traumatised by what happened to her beloved suitor, Werlan. If Jac is present, he will hold her and try to comfort her as best he can. If Jac is not present, Jiena will seek comfort in her mother's embrace.

The Wraithcrows remained in the parlour to await the arrival of Barias. Instinctively, they knew it would only be a matter of time before they came here. What they hadn't anticipated was that Barias would send you in his stead.



"After having killed poor Werlan, these evil crows settled in the parlour and watched us in silence. Alerted by the noise they had made when they burst through the garden doors, Jac came running downstairs and tried to open the parlour door. But it was locked and the key was still in the keyhole on our side. Ishir be blessed! If I'd left the door unlocked then I'm sure they would have attacked him as they did Werlan."

"Then another strange thing happened. I felt compelled to call out to Jac that everything was fine and that he should go back to bed. I heard the words leaving my mouth but I had no control over them. It was as if a spell had been placed upon me. I was helpless to resist it. We heard Jac climb the stairs and go back to his room."



"All night we remained in the parlour, held captive by the crows. It was so cold that we could hardly move. Shortly before dawn, we tried to muster our strength and attempt to escape into the rear garden through the open doors, but we had only taken a few steps when they swooped down and barred our way. Why would they do such a thing? And why would they come to murder Werlan? He was such a nice young man, always polite and thoughtful."

The mention of Werlan's name sets Jiena sobbing once more. Her mother tries to comfort her as best she can. She is filled with remorse for having caused her daughter renewed upset.

Ulnar Ternan assures the Kai Lords that he will see to it personally that the Monastery hears of their heroism. He and his wife both thank them profusely. Jiena is too traumatised to say anything.

The Players now have only one lead to follow: the direction in which the Wraithcrows turned and flew away: south. You should ask them if they remember in which direction the Wraithcrows left House Ternan. If none of them remember correctly, they might have to turn to other means. If any of the Players have the Tracking discipline, or the Sage skill, then you should tell them the correct direction. Otherwise they can take a Luck test. Success means that they remember the direction. Once they have this information, show them the map of Sommerlund that came with the **Lone Wolf Adventure Game**. They will be able to deduce that Meadowood lies six miles due south.

Barias is expected to arrive in Meadowood on Midvoka (tomorrow) at midnight. Remind them that he told them to meet him at the Burning Beacon in Tyso if he doesn't rendezvous with them in Meadowood as planned.

When the Players are ready to leave House Turnan, read the following text aloud:



You set off along the King's Highway towards Meadowood. You set off along the King's Highway towards Meadowood. You have covered five miles before you come to a junction where a trail heads off to the west. It simply says 'Old Mine Road'. This junction is cast in the shadow of a large solitary grey cloud that hangs directly overhead. Hereabouts, the air is supernaturally cold and a dusting of frost carpets the highway and surrounding land. The dramatic fall in temperature is a forewarning of the presence of Wraithcrows close by.

Suddenly, the eerie silence is broken by myriad cracking sounds. You see the frost-covered ground rising up as a dozen mounds appear. Things previously buried are pushing their way through to the surface and splitting open the frozen soil in several places. Your horses, unnerved by the cold and the shifting soil, become so difficult to control that you are forced to dismount and move away from them as they rear up on their hind legs and kick out frantically.

Panicked, they take off along the frozen highway and do not stop until they are clear of the junction. You see them slow to a halt about a mile away. They are waiting for you to hurry after them.

To your horror, you see a dozen pairs of bony hands claw their way out from their resting places. These are ancient skeletons, the remains of Sommlending and Drakkarim warriors who fought and perished here during a battle that took place over 1500 years ago. They have been awoken from an eternity of sleep by powerful magic. As these animated entities free themselves from the frozen soil, you hear a gleeful cacophony of shrieks emanating from the dark cloud above. It is the unmistakable sound of the Wraithcrows!

The skeletal undead warriors, clutching their rusty weapons, encircle you with unnerving speed before they close in and attack.

This sudden and unexpected confrontation provides a dramatic change of pace following what has so far been a largely investigative adventure. It also serves to illustrate another aspect of the power of the Wraithcrows: the power to raise the dead. The unexpected speed with which the ancient skeletal warriors move and attack the Players makes evading combat impossible.

The Players must fight with a penalty of -2 to their basic COMBAT SKILL due to a lack of sleep, and the mental and physical fatigue of what they've endured so far.



There are 12 Ancient Skeletal Warriors in all and they fight individually rather than as a grouped enemy.

ANCIENT SKELETAL WARRIORS

Combat Skill: 16 / **Endurance:** 20

Special Rules: Mindless (incapable of grouping, immune to all psychic attacks).

The skeletons are resistant to conventional missile fire and will take only half END damage (with fractions rounded down) inflicted by arrows, bolts and Bor musket balls. However, they are especially susceptible to blows from non-bladed weapons, such as maces, war hammers and quarterstaves. All strikes they receive from these types of non-bladed weapons do double END damage.

When an Ancient Skeletal Warrior is reduced to 0 END it will disintegrate to dust.



KONA-RAKR KAEI ETRYRHAR

Combat Skill: 24 / **Endurance:** 30

This is the skeletal remains of an exceptional female Sommlending warrior. The literal translation of her Old Sommlending name means: 'Woman-warrior Kaeli Silverhair'. She has lain buried for more than 1500 years, yet much of her long silver hair remains attached to her skull and can be seen trailing from beneath her rusty iron helmet. Kaeli is not entirely mindless and is therefore vulnerable to psychic attack. Despite the powerful evil that animates her remains, she is less committed than the other skeletons when she engages the Players in combat. This is due to the blessing of God Kai that surrounds them, which, to her, is like an invisible shield.



For every combat round against Kaeli, make a Luck test. Kaeli will only attack if the test fails. On rounds when the Luck test result is in Kai's favour, she will turn and attack the nearest Skeletal Warrior instead. Players with the Kai Discipline of Sixth Sense will detect that her soul is in torment.

She will welcome release from her undead state. When her END is reduced to 0, and moments before she crumbles to dust, she will utter the words: 'Ek Fryals!' which means "I am free!" Her remains disintegrate but her weapon does not. It is a silver-bladed spear with a shaft of pitted steel. It is called 'Stûrnalas', which means 'Starlight'. The Player who destroys Kaeli in combat may retrieve and keep this spear.

Once the Players have destroyed the Ancient Skeletal Warriors, the cloud above (which contains the hidden flock of Wraithcrows) will move rapidly in a south-easterly direction and disappear over the distant horizon. The temperature will return to normal and the frost covering the highway and surrounding land will rapidly melt away. The return of birdsong in the vicinity will indicate that the threat posed by the Wraithcrows has gone. At least for the time being!

The Players will be able to retrieve their horses and continue on to Meadowood, arriving shortly before noon.

Read the following text aloud:



Meadowood is a large village that bestrides the King's Highway on the northern edge of the Fryelund Forest.

You find board, lodging and stabling for your horses at the village's main inn, the Sun & Flag, for a cost of 2 gold crowns each. Alternatively, you can stay overnight (at no charge) at the Border

STURNALAS – THE STARLIGHT SPEAR

This extraordinary weapon is a lasting testament to the skill of the ancient Sommlending weaponsmiths who forged it long ago. It has a pitted steel shaft inlaid with dozens of small silver studs that gleam with an inner light during the hours of sunset to sunrise. It has a small indentation at the base of the shaft where a jewel was once embedded but is now missing.

Stûrnalas grants its wielder a +1 bonus to COMBAT SKILL. This bonus increases to +3 at night when used under an open sky.

If ever the missing jewel is found and pushed back into the indentation, the bonus to COMBAT SKILL will rise to +4, and +8 at night (with the same caveats as stated above), and it will be transformed from a Weapon into a Special Item.



Ranger's garrison house which stands directly opposite the Sun & Flag in the middle of the village.

The next day is Midvoka. While waiting for Barias, you spend time grooming your horses, sharpening your weapons and resting in the warm sunshine. At midnight, you gather in the village square in anticipation of Barias' arrival. An impatient hour is spent waiting for him to appear. Resigned to the fact that he is not going to come, you decide to retire to the Border Ranger's garrison house and catch a few hours' sleep before dawn.

After enjoying a hearty breakfast at the garrison house, courtesy of the Rangers, you say farewell to your hosts and take your leave of Meadowood by way of the south-easterly byway that heads to Durnfallow. The ride is easy and uneventful and you arrive in the village shortly before sunset. Durnfallow is ringed by a palisade with wooden watchtowers which provide it with adequate protection from bandit gangs that have their hidden lairs in the forest hereabouts. Comfortable board, lodging and stabling can be found at the village's main inn: The King Braern I.



The cost of an overnight stay here, including feed for the Players' horses, is 3 gold crowns each. If they do not have sufficient funds, they will be allowed to stay in the inn's stable for free. Unless they have a Meal in their Backpack (or the Kai Discipline of Hunting) they will lose -3 END.

SCENE FOUR A MURDER OF CROWS

This is the final scene of the adventure and it comprises two parts: **The Burning Beacon** and **The Bleak House of Oldan Krall**. Begin the scene by reading aloud the follow text.



You leave Durnfallow at dawn. You have 35 miles to travel before you reach Tyso, so your whole day is spent in the saddle. Fortunately, your horses are well fed and rested, the weather is fine and the journey is uneventful.

You enter Tyso by way of the Sun Gate, one of four fortified gates in the great curtain wall that rings this city. Clad in your Kai cloaks and with your rank badges clearly showing, respectfully the small garrison of the City Watch salute you and allow you to enter unchecked.

Darkness is fast approaching and the city is lit by burning beacons set at regular intervals along the quayside, and all along its main streets and thoroughfares. Beyond the Sun Gate is Sun Gate Square. The Burning Beacon Tavern is very easy to find on the north side of the square and its sign is brightly illuminated.



THE BURNING BEACON

The Burning Beacon is an impeccably neat and tidy tavern. It is often the first port of call for traders and travellers arriving overland from Toran. It is owned and run by Braern Yarley and his exuberant wife, Valdi. They pride themselves on serving good food and fine ales at very reasonable prices.

The purpose of the Players' visit to Tyso is to rendezvous with Barias Thorn at the Burning Beacon, although they cannot be certain when precisely he will arrive or if he has already done so. The Players will most likely decide to stable their horses and enter the tavern. If they decide otherwise, you should consult **The Realm of Sommerlund** supplement which further details the layout and key features of this coastal city.

When the Players decide to enter the Burning Beacon, read aloud the following text:



The small tavern is bustling with activity this evening. A jovial middle-aged woman, assisted by several young serving staff, is busy delivering plates of food and ale to the cheerful customers. Her husband is at the counter, serving ale as fast as he can. The woman sees you enter and strides across the taproom to give you a warm greeting.

"Welcome to the Burning Beacon," she says, with an engaging smile. "My name be Valdi and 'im, behind the counter, he be my

husband Braern. You're very welcome to our humble tavern. Not often we get Kai Lords payin' us a visit. T'is an honour, f'sure. Now, what can I be getting you?"



Ask the Players what they are going to do now.



If they ask her if Barias Thorn is here, Valdi will tell them that she's too busy to have a conversation about Barias just now. But she does tell them that he arrived in Tyso this afternoon. She promises to come and chat with them later, once the suppertime rush has eased.



If they ask her for a table, she will escort them to the rear of the crowded tavern and seat them at the only one still vacant. Food with ale costs 2 gold crowns per person. Valdi will expect the Players to place an order. She will not be amused if they forego ordering supper and choose instead to consume a Meal from their backpacks.



If they ask about the availability of rooms for the night, she will tell them that she has three rooms that are vacant. The cost of food and lodging is 3 gold crowns per person, per night, payable in advance. Unless they are already seated, Valdi will escort them to a vacant table at the rear of the tavern before taking their food order and sending it through to the kitchen.

If they decline Valdi's offer, they can go to the counter and order ale from her husband Braern (1 gold crown per tankard), or engage the patrons in conversation. None of the patrons will know who Barias Thorn is.



If they ask Braern if he knows the whereabouts of Barias Thorn, he will tell them to go and ask his wife.

VIVACIOUS VALDI

The Players will have to wait two hours before Valdi keeps her promise and talks with them about Barias Thorn. While they are waiting they must consume a Meal, either one they have paid for or one from their backpack. When she is free, she ushers them out of the taproom dining area and takes them to a small private reception room at the rear of the tavern. It is illuminated by candlelight and the glow of a log fire crackling warmly in a brick fireplace. Once inside, she listens at the door for a few moments and then draws the door bolt across to prevent any unwanted company from entering.



"Well, my lords, now we can converse without risk of being eavesdropped by my lovely customers. First, I must confess that I've been expecting you. Barias is a good man and always comes and visits me when he's in Tyso as I pride myself on knowing all there is worth knowing about the goings-on in this fair city. He's relied on me for information these past few years. He's a fine upstanding gentleman and I'm happy to help when I can. Besides, he's generous too. He always pays a good price for what I know."



From the pocket of her apron, she takes a small furred parchment that is tied and secured with a wax seal. The seal bears the emblem of a lantern.

"Barias asked me to give you this."

Destroy this parchment once you have read the contents.

My Lords,

Forgive the brief nature of this missive. I'm sorely pressed for time. I've identified our true foe and, if I am right, the horrific murders at Hopeless Hollow and the Dread Falcon are only the beginning of an unimaginable waking nightmare. I must leave now and act at once to stop another tragedy from occurring.

Come at once to the home of Oldan Krall. Valdi will give you directions. I pray to Kai and Ishir that your help will not be needed but, should I fail, you must succeed where I did not.

Farewell, my friends. Hopefully, not for the last time.

BT

The parchment can be destroyed by throwing it into the fire that warms this humble parlour. The Players should not be prompted to do this; they should remember the instruction that Barius gave in the first sentence of his message.

Valdi will give the Players clear and precise directions to the home of Oldan Krall:



"The house of Oldan Krall is in the Nobles' Circle. It's in the northern part of Yorl Halo, overlooking Keel Park. It's easy to find, even at night. Its front door is varnished blood red and it has a large oval plaque made of polished brass. There's an ornate lantern hanging above the door that shines a pale amber-coloured light."

Before you leave Valdi's parlour, she opens a tall cupboard and takes out a plain pine box. She lifts the hinged lid to reveal a dozen corked glass vials, potions of Laumspur and Alether. She gives each of you two vials, one of Laumspur and one of Alether. Unless your Backpack is already full, you must accept these potions and record them on your Action Chart.

Potion of Laumspur (Backpack item): restores 4 points of lost ENDURANCE when consumed immediately after combat.

Potion of Alether (Backpack item): increases your COMBAT SKILL by +2 and lasts for the duration of one combat, or 10 minutes, whichever is the shorter duration.



"Godspeed, brave Kai Lords. May Ishir and Kai keep you safe this dark night."

You bid Valdi thanks and farewell. If you have any brass room keys, you return them to her before leaving the tavern. In view of the generosity she has displayed by giving you potions of Laumspur and Alether, it would be churlish to ask her for a refund of any payment you may have previously made for a night's lodging.

Following her directions, you make your way towards the Nobles' Circle district. Upon reaching the thoroughfare called Yorl Halo, you walk in a north-easterly direction until you come to the entrance to Keel Park. This is the only public park in Tyso. At its centre, illuminated by a circle of tall lantern-posts, you can see a large statue of King Tor III mounted on a marble plinth and surrounded by a shallow pool of water. A hundred yards beyond the park entrance you find the house you are searching for.

If the Players choose to enter Keel Park and go to the statue of King Tor III, they will discover that the shallow pool of water surrounding marble plinth is partially frozen over. This is evidence that the Wraithcrows were recently in the vicinity.



THE BLEAK HOUSE OF OLDAN KRALL

Read this aloud to the Players:



Oldan Krall's two-storey home is not overly extravagant for a prestige abode in the wealthy Nobles' Quarter. The white wooden shutters on all of its visible windows are closed, and its blood-red front door is illuminated by the amber light of an ornate Vassagonian lantern hanging by a chain above it. The oval brass plaque that Valdi spoke of is clearly visible from the street.

The property is surrounded by wrought iron railings. There is a gate that opens onto a flagstoned path leading to the front door. A twist of its well-oiled handle reveals that the gate is unlocked but the red front door is not. An engraving on the plaque simply states 'Krall' in ornate Sommlending script.

Rather than remain standing by the locked front door, in clear view of any passers-by, you circle around to the rear of the house and discover a sturdy back door painted black. This door is also locked, but you notice that two initials have been etched recently into the paintwork beside its ornate enamelled handle: 'B.T'. Next to the

initials is a simple symbol of a flower, a Salt Poppy, standing in a flower pot. On the terrace that extends from the rear of the house into a well-tended garden, you see a real flower pot containing a clump of white Salt Poppies. You discover a black iron key hidden among the flowers. Clearly, Barías has left this here for you to unlock the back door. Strewn about the terrace are the shattered fragments of several roof tiles.

TOMAN'S DEMISE

Read the following text aloud to the Players when they find the key:



You unlock the back door and enter as quietly as you can. You step into a plain white-tiled room. Several gardening tools are neatly arranged in wooden racks fixed to the walls. Hanging on a hook next to the back door is a black iron key which is an identical copy of the one you found in the flower pot. An archway leads to a short corridor illuminated by a gilded lantern hanging from the ceiling. There are two doors along the corridor, one immediately to your right and another straight ahead.



Ask the Players which of these doors they wish to investigate first.



The First Door

This is locked. It is secured by a strong deadlock and can be opened by a key. The back door key they found outside in the flower pot is too large to fit into the keyhole of this door's lockplate. The lock can be picked but it will not be an easy task. The basic TV for picking the lock is 8. It is for you to decide the appropriateness of Kai disciplines or skills that the Players proposes to use to assist them. A maximum of -2 points can be applied to the test (reducing the TV to 7 or 6).

If a Player succeeds in the test then they can enter the room beyond. If they enter, read the following text aloud:



You enter a chamber that is lined with bookshelves containing rare leather bound first editions from all over Northern Magnamund. A beautiful teak desk dominates the centre of the room. It has six drawers (three on either side of a captain's chair), an oil table lamp (lit) and several ledgers strewn about its green leather-tooled surface.



Ask the Players what they wish to do now. Their most likely choices are:



Search the desk: The ledgers contain meticulously detailed records of Ordan Krall's business transactions. Everything seems perfectly in order here, leading you to suspect that the true records of his unscrupulous deals, if they exist, are likely hidden somewhere else. In the top drawer to the left of the chair they will find a small Silver Key (Special Item).



Search the bookshelves: Many of these books are rare and valuable. Have the Player who have decided to investigate the bookshelves make a test (TV7). If they have the Kai disciplines of Sixth Sense or Hunting, this test should be reduced to TV6. They may only test once. A successful test will reveal a small safe hidden behind a row of six books. These 'books' consist of just leather spines that have been fixed to the safe's door to conceal it.



It can be opened using the Silver Key in the desk drawer, or by picking the lock on TV9. As was the case with the door to this chamber, the lock can be picked but it will not be an easy task. The difficulty of 9 may be modified by any Player who possesses Kai disciplines or skills that are appropriate in this instance. A maximum of -2 points can be applied to the test (reducing the TV to 8 or 7).

If the Players succeed in opening the safe door, either by picking the lock or using the Silver Key, then read the following text aloud:



Inside the safe you discover three velvet draw-string pouches, each containing 50 gold crowns. There is a Black Book that is a secret record of Krall's unscrupulous and oft-illegal business transactions. And there is a small Mahogany Box with a hinged lid, filled with precious gems.

These gems have a total value in the region of 500 gold crowns. If the Players choose to take and keep any of these, they should be recorded on their Action Chart as backpack items. Any Player with Sixth Sense will detect that one of the gems is different to all the others. It is the Starspear Jewel (see page 68 for further details about the significance of this ancient gemstone; it is a Special Item). If the Starspear Jewel is inserted into the shaft of the Starfire Spear, it will transform the weapon into a Magical Weapon. This will be significant in the final scene.

The Far Door

This is unlocked. Read aloud the following text:



You enter a large room that is beautifully appointed, with expensive furniture and velvet wall hangings. Portraits adorn the walls and they all depict Oldan Krall in various heroic poses, wearing glaringly ostentatious clothing of various styles and colours. Clearly, this man has an exaggerated admiration for himself and his appearance.

On the far side of the chamber is a narrow oak staircase that ascends to the floor above. At the top of the stairs you discover another short corridor with two doors, a green one to your left and a blue one straight ahead.



Ask the Players which of these doors they wish to investigate first.



The Green Door



The brass door knob is very cold to the touch. The door itself is unlocked and it opens stiffly when you apply some pressure to it. Beyond lies a bedroom. It is unlit, but the light from the corridor provides enough illumination for you to discern what it contains. The room is icy-cold and your breath clouds every time you exhale. Every surface is sheened with frost. Lying face up on a four poster bed is the frozen corpse of a man in his early thirties. The corpse bears the now familiar signs of having been slain by the Wraithcrows.

This is the corpse of Toman Rye, a professional courier who came here to rest and recover after his ride from Hitchford. He is the man who procured Nyssa's signet ring for his paymaster, Oldan Krall. He had the intention of leaving and heading back to his home in Searsby, 30 miles due west of Tyso, at dawn tomorrow. Unfortunately for him, the Wraithcrows had other plans.

Ask the Players what they intend to do now. Their most likely choices are:



Examine the body: A close look at his face reveals that this is not Olden Krall. He bears no resemblance to the portraits of Krall in the chamber below. Hanging by a cord around his neck is a leather pouch containing 40 gold crowns.



Search the bedroom: towed away in a cupboard the Players discover a backpack containing a mud-stained old rain cape and a Potion of Alether (increases COMBAT SKILL by +2 for the duration of one combat, or 10 minutes – whichever is the shorter period). There is also a sword sheathed in a plain leather scabbard. If the Players decide to keep the Potion of Alether or the sword, then whoever takes them should update their Action Charts accordingly.



The Blue Door



The brass door knob is very cold to the touch. The door is locked but it can be barged open easily enough. Beyond you discover a large bedroom, luxuriously furnished and hung with fine tapestries. It is unlit, but there is sufficient light from the corridor for you to see what it contains. There is no one present in this icy-cold room and your breath clouds when you exhale. A trail of frost covers the expensive rugs that cover its mahogany floor. It leads from the doorway, crosses the room and seemingly vanishes behind the far wall.

A Player with the Tracking discipline will automatically detect a concealed lever in the wainscoting of this section of the wall and activate it. If no Player possesses this Kai Discipline then the lever can be detected on a test of TV5. This test may be retried if failed, but every attempt after the first carries a hidden penalty for Barias (and could result in his death if the Players take too long finding the lever; see **The Reckoning** on page 73).

Once the lever is activated, read aloud the following:

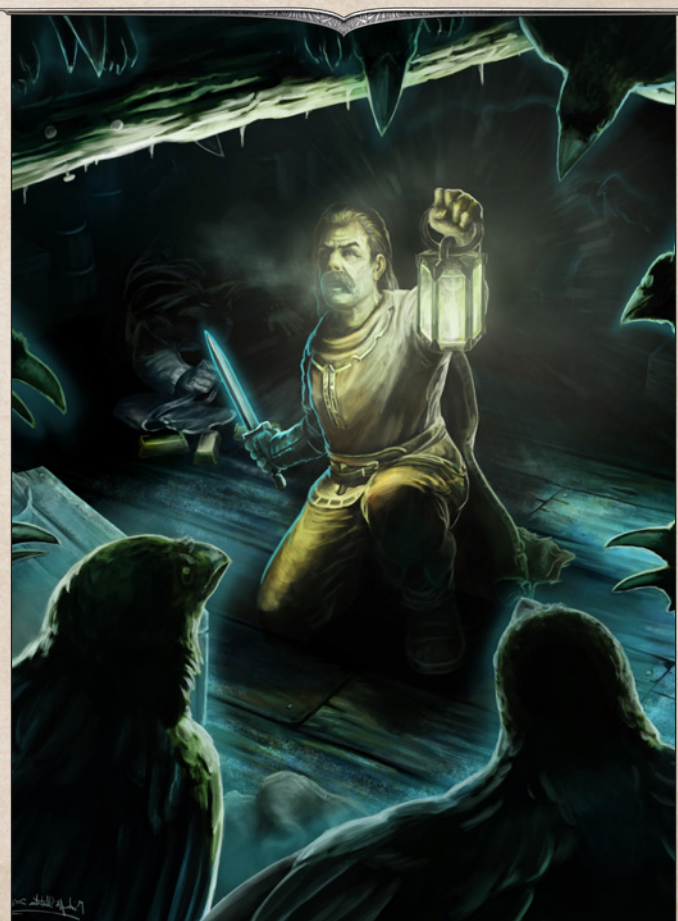


The thick wooden wall swings open, balanced by a pair of stone counterweights and a long steel hinge. Behind it, you discover a narrow wooden staircase that ascends into the attic of the house. The wooden steps are coated with a thin layer of ice in places. Tiny claw marks can be seen on the walls and sloped ceiling. The air is very cold here and the top of the staircase is obscured by a cloud of freezing fog.

Before proceeding to the next and final section, allow the Players time in which to make whatever preparations they wish. Any Player with the discipline of Sixth Sense will experience strong feelings of the presence of evil close by. Players who do not possess Sixth Sense will be filled with trepidation of what awaits them in the fog at the top of the stairs.

THE RECKONING

When the Players are ready to ascend the staircase, ask them in which order they wish to proceed. The staircase is only wide enough for them to climb in single file. After making a note of their order in the line, read the following text aloud:





You pass through the freezing fog and emerge into a large attic. Through a ragged hole in the rear-facing apex of the roof you can see the stars twinkling in the night sky. Huddled on the floor in the middle of the attic is Barias Thorn. He is clutching his lantern in his left hand and he has the hilt of a glowing dagger gripped firmly in his right. The floor itself is frozen over, except for a circular area around Barias that is lit by the light of his lantern and the radiance of his blade.

Olden Krall lies sprawled on the icy floor beyond. You cannot clearly see his head, legs or torso, but you are able to make out one arm that is extended towards Barias. Gripped tightly in his frozen fist is the strap of a leather satchel. The satchel flap is open and three ingots of gold have spilled out and frozen solid to the floorboards.

Surrounding Barias are scores of Wraithcrows. They are perched in the rafters, patiently awaiting their change to strike. Barias' protective lantern and blade light is growing dimmer with every passing second. His skin is deathly pale, his lips are blue and his grip on his lantern and blade is fast failing. Barias will not survive much longer without your intervention!

"Flee, my friends! Flee this godforsaken place! These fell creatures will steal the life and soul of any man who touches Nyssa's ring." You can see that Barias is wearing Nyssa's signet ring on a gold chain around his neck. "Flee before it is too late. Go warn the City Guard of what is happening here."



The amount of time the Players have taken to arrive in the attic should now be reckoned. Barias normally has 24 ENDURANCE, but he has been weakened by the cold and the supernatural malevolence of Wraithcrows and he now has only 18 END remaining. From this reduced total, subtract the following penalty:

- -2 END for each attempt, after the first, that was made to find and activate the secret lever in the wainscoting of the room below.

Barias' END can fall no lower than 6.

The Wraithcrows will descend from their perches and attack Barias when the light of his lantern and blade diminish to a low enough level. Their initial attack inflicts a loss of 5 ENDURANCE and flattens him to the floor. Badly wounded and grievously weakened, he soon loses consciousness. Now it is up to the Players to stop the Wraithcrows before they can retrieve the signet ring that hangs by the chain around his neck and curse it forever.

Before combat begins, the Player who was first in the line upon entering the attic may retrieve the Enchanted Dagger that has fallen from Barias' hand.

ENCHANTED BRONIN DAGGER

The Enchanted Dagger is a Special item. It is made of Bronin and is of superior +2 quality. Its enchantment will be recharged when a Player picks it up for the first time. This recharging comes at the cost of -2 END and cannot be avoided. When used in combat against supernatural creatures from the Plane of Darkness (e.g. the Wraithcrows) it adds an additional +2 to COMBAT SKILL.

WRAITHCROWS

Combat Skill: 25 / **Endurance:** 45

Traits: Aegis.

Special Rules: The Wraithcrows are invulnerable to non-magical weapons, but they are not immune to psychic attacks.

Normally, when confronted by a powerful enemy, the Wraithcrows will flee rather than fight (as they have done until now). However, they cannot flee from this final confrontation as they are bound to Lady Nyssa's signet ring and must retrieve it at all costs. If the Wraithcrows are reduced to 0 END, they will be permanently destroyed.

Once the Wraithcrows are destroyed, the signet ring will disintegrate, Barias Thorn will be saved and the Players will have completed their adventure successfully with utmost heroism and courage.





CREATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES



IN THIS CHAPTER

GETTING STARTED
CHOOSE A GOAL
CHOOSE A PATH
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES

Adventures of the Kai provides three thrilling adventures for Narrators to run, but once you have played through these as well as the two adventures in the *Book of Kai Legends*, what are you to do? Make your own scenarios, that's what! This chapter shows you how.

Adventure creation can look like a daunting challenge. You have to come up with a plot that will entertain and challenge your Players, write it down, and then hopefully run it without any major problems. It can be a lot of work, but it is also a large part of the fun of being a Narrator. Writing your own adventures lets you take a more active part in helping to create the world of Magnamund at your table, the individual, unique version of the world that you and your Players are building as you play the game.

DO I HAVE TO WRITE IT ALL OUT?

Not at all. The adventures in this book and in *The Lone Wolf Adventure Game* are written out in their entirety, but that is because they are written for publication. When you write an adventure for publication you are writing it for someone else to read and run it; you have to put every piece into the puzzle so that a Narrator can see the whole picture. When you write your own adventures you are writing them for yourself. You can, and should, use an outline, a list of notes or some other way to organise your thoughts. Every speech by an NPC, every description of an area, every detail does not need to be fully written out. One way to do this – and this is not the only way – can be seen in this chapter.

WHAT IF IT'S BAD?

A bad adventure is one that is not fun. It really is as simple as that. If your Players tend to be a bit silly, and your adventure is silly, that works fine. If your Players love combat and your adventure has more combat than published adventures, that is also good. As long as everyone at the table is having a good time, the adventure is good, it is working, and you have done a good job in writing it.

WHAT IF MY PLAYERS DON'T LIKE IT?

Try again another time. Ask them what they did not like about it and listen to them. A good writer knows their audience; your Players are your audience. Write what you enjoy to run, and what they enjoy to play, and you will be fine. Not every adventure is going to be great; some will be simply good; the next might fall flat. Learn from the mistakes and do better next time. Also, do not compare your adventure to published ones; we here at Cubicle 7 are professionals, we have been doing this for a long time. Trust us, everyone here has written a bad adventure, some even for our published games. We test these out before we publish them, fix the bad ones and make them better.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ADVENTURE?

There are a lot of factors that make an adventure fun, but there is one primary thing that all good adventure writers keep in mind: good adventures prompt good gaming, and good gaming is about making choices. Sitting there while the Narrator tells a story is not very engaging for the Players, and honestly, not much fun for the Narrator either. Having to make a decision about your character's actions, which is fun for everyone. The Players are actively engaged in playing the adventure and the Narrator is actively engaged in deciding how the NPCs and world at large react to the Players' choices.

HOW DO I EVEN START?

Your adventure writing begins now! Follow the steps below to brainstorm what you want to include in your adventure. You do not need to fill in all the details at once, just write down a few notes about what you want and move on to the next step. A fully fleshed out adventure is fairly easy to craft once you have your ideas in front of you. If you get stuck, you can use the tables in the next chapter to help you out.





GETTING STARTED

The first thing you need to do is find an idea. Ideas are all around us, we just have to look for them. The easiest place to start is with *The Lone Wolf Adventure Game* itself. Look at the *Book of Kai Wisdom*, especially **Chapters Six: Friends and Foes** and **Chapter Seven: Magnamund Gazetteer**. From Chapter Six you can pick out a villain and start from there. This might be as simple as deciding that you want the adventure to involve a Helghast at some point. Chapter Seven provides the history and geography of the Lastlands, and thus hooks to latch onto in order to start thinking about your adventure. Is there a particular foe you want the party to fight? An NPC they should meet or perhaps a location for them to go to? All these are great starts; a towering castle is built first with a single stone.

Don't feel limited to Lone Wolf for inspiration either; your idea can come from anywhere. Fiction, history, movies, television shows, games; any of these can give you an idea. Your source does not even have to be fantasy, you can adapt the adventure from a different genre entirely, just make some changes to make it fit Magamund and heroic fantasy.

*For example, Ken is writing an adventure for his gaming group. He would like to tell a story about a journey, but is uncertain exactly what he wants to do. Starting from there, he looks through the Book of Kai Wisdom for ideas. Durenor and Sommerlund are allies, but they are a good distance from each other. As the party recently played through **Pirates of the River Dorn**, they have returned to Ragadorn. Rather than bringing them all the way back to Sommerlund to guard a caravan there, he decides that a journey by ship to Durenor might be in order.*

KNOW YOUR PLAYERS

Throughout the adventure design process, and especially at the start, you need to know your Players. Everyone wants to have a good time and no one wants to feel left out, or worse, uncomfortable. This is a game, not an experimental drama class. Avoid topics that might make others feel negatively. If you want to write a horror scenario, go right ahead, but keep in mind that the line between fear and fun can be crossed too easily. While roleplaying might be a fine way to work out issues in your life, a game is not a therapy session. Focus on having fun – fun for everyone.

Likewise, keep in mind your Player's interests. What part of an adventure do they engage in the most? What do they like the least? If someone is quiet during combat and does not build combat focused characters, that Player is showing little interest in combat. If one of the Kai Lords in the party has disciplines and skills of a social nature, make sure to include challenges that can be resolved through social interaction.

While deciding on his ship journey idea, Ken recalls that while playing another roleplaying game, Glena tended to tune out investigative scenes but got really excited about combat. Sam and Kyle both really enjoy interacting with NPCs, but Kirkland preferred to solve puzzles and not talk much in character. Finally, Will is having trouble at work with his boss; adding in an overbearing Kai Master to the adventure might hit too close to home.

It looks like this journey will need to a puzzle to solve, people to talk to and at least one fight, and possibly a chase or two, for action.



CHOOSE A GOAL

Every adventure needs to have at least one goal the Players can achieve. Sometimes this goal is obvious based on your starting idea, sometimes not. The goal should be one the Kai Lords can achieve; no one wants to play a game only to find out that they were doomed to failure from the start.

When choosing the goal of the adventure, picture the characters achieving it. How do they get there? What steps need to be taken along the way? What information do they need? Who do they need to talk to? Answering these questions will give you ideas about the nature of the adventure, what needs to be in it, and what the Players will need to know at the start, and what they will discover along the way.

Do not feel limited to one goal; the adventure might have two or three goals the Kai Lords need to achieve. All the goals need to be ones that they can conquer, and if using multiple goals, make sure they are linked in some fashion. Having multiple unlinked goals does not make for a good adventure; the attention and decisions of the Players will be split, their characters' actions will be divided and the adventure will lack coherency. If you can come up with three goals that are not linked together, you have three separate adventure ideas instead!

Intermediate goals, even conflicting goals, are good. These allow you to develop a pace for the adventure, as each intermediate goal leads in to the next and they all come together for the big goal at the end. Conflicting goals are a little more difficult, as they might create conflict amongst the Players. A little bit of conflict is actually good, as long as it remains under control and does not spiral out to the point where it impacts anyone having a good time.



MAJOR GOALS

The major goal is what the party needs to accomplish to finish the adventure. This needs to be something of importance; simply delivering a package from one town to the next is not a major goal; delivering a coded message that contains information about a secret Darklord plot to the Kai Monastery while being pursued by the fell minions of those monstrous overlords is! Keep in mind when crafting your major goals that Kai Lords are heroes of their own stories; the tasks placed in front of them need to reflect this.

Crafting a major goal can be as easy as choosing a foe that the party must defeat. However, that foe needs to have a motivation other than being fodder for aspiring Kai Lords. Do not fall into the habit of modelling video games and 'boss fights'; a tabletop adventure game is a far more open platform that allows you to imagine things no amount of code can replicate. Your villains need to have a reason for the things they do and a plan to achieve them.

A major goal does not have to be the defeat of a villain; it can be some other heroic act. Saving a village or rescuing innocents are always good choices. Likewise, stopping a raiding party that has snuck into Sommerlund is another excellent choice for a major goal. Other ideas could be: retrieve an item, guard a caravan passing through dangerous terrain, solve a mystery, or relay an important message.

Whatever you choose for the major goal, it needs to be something that takes effort, thought and planning to achieve. Simply walking into a ruin and slaying a monster is not much of a challenge, and you would soon find that your Players are not engaging in the adventure. Always keep in mind that good gaming involves having to make choices, and planning how to achieve a goal is a fine example of those choices Players should be making.

Ken cannot simply say that the party is going to Durenor; they need to have a reason to go. As they have returned to Ragadorn, they will have to report to the consul concerning the success of their mission against the River King. He tells them he has an important task for



them, Prince Keth, the youngest son of King Alin II of Durenor, has been slain in battle against the forces of the Darklords. His body has been preserved and needs to be escorted back to Durenor, and having a group of Kai Lords as an honour guard will help reinforce the good relations between the two kingdoms. The major goal of the adventure is to safely return Prince Keth's body to Hammerdal. A ship is waiting in the harbour as soon as the characters are ready.



INTERMEDIATE GOALS

Sometimes you have to find somebody to find somebody. Intermediate goals are those that build towards a larger goal. They are not the minor goals of the adventure, nor are they a major goal, but by completing these intermediate goals, the plot of the adventure is advanced. You should not plan out every intermediate goal the party will need to complete; a great deal of the intermediate goals in the adventure will be based upon the plans they come up with as to how to achieve the major goal. However, having two or three in mind can be useful. It allows you to have something ready for when the Players need it, allows you to provide some guidance if they get stuck, and gives you something ready in case the adventure starts to drag a bit.

Intermediate goals should be relatively easy to achieve. Consider them stepping-stones along the path of the adventure; if the party can achieve an intermediate goal, they should be moving closer to, but not actually reaching, their major goal. Keep in mind that each intermediate goal still needs to move the party closer to ultimate victory, just not get them there at all at once.

Another thing to keep in mind about intermediate goals is that if you have too many, the adventure becomes work, not play. If you place a dozen intermediate goals, the Players may become fatigued on their way to the climax of the story. Also, if you map out every possible intermediate goal, you are getting close to railroading the Players – that is, forcing them into a chosen course of action. This eliminates their freedom of choice, and thus cuts down on the amount of fun they can have.

Ken's adventure seems fairly straightforward: escort the body from Ragadorn to Hammerdal. However, a few intermediate goals are needed to flesh out the story. Perhaps there could be a problem with the ship, a storm or some other issue that needs to first be addressed. Thinking about the design of the adventure, and looking at what an intermediate goal is, Ken discards his idea of a storm as that is more of an obstacle that needs to be overcome than a goal that can be achieved.

He decides instead on two intermediate goals. The sailors, always a superstitious lot, are unhappy about hauling a corpse. After several accidents on board, they decide that the ship has been cursed and the only thing to save it is to toss the body overboard. Getting the sailors to calm down and do their duty will be the first intermediate goal; it aids in the advancement of the story and the completion of the task at hand.

As far as the second intermediate goal, Ken wants the party to have to stop on an island at some point, an island with mysterious ruins, too small to appear on most maps. Perhaps the ship is damaged and needs repair. Jotting down a third idea, Ken decides that an agent of the Darklords wants the prince's body for some foul purpose.

This gives him three goals, but it never hurts to have extra ideas at this stage of the process. Working with the idea of a superstitious crew, maybe instead of threatening mutiny on the high seas, the crew might quit! The party then needs to find a new crew for the journey.





INDIVIDUAL GOALS

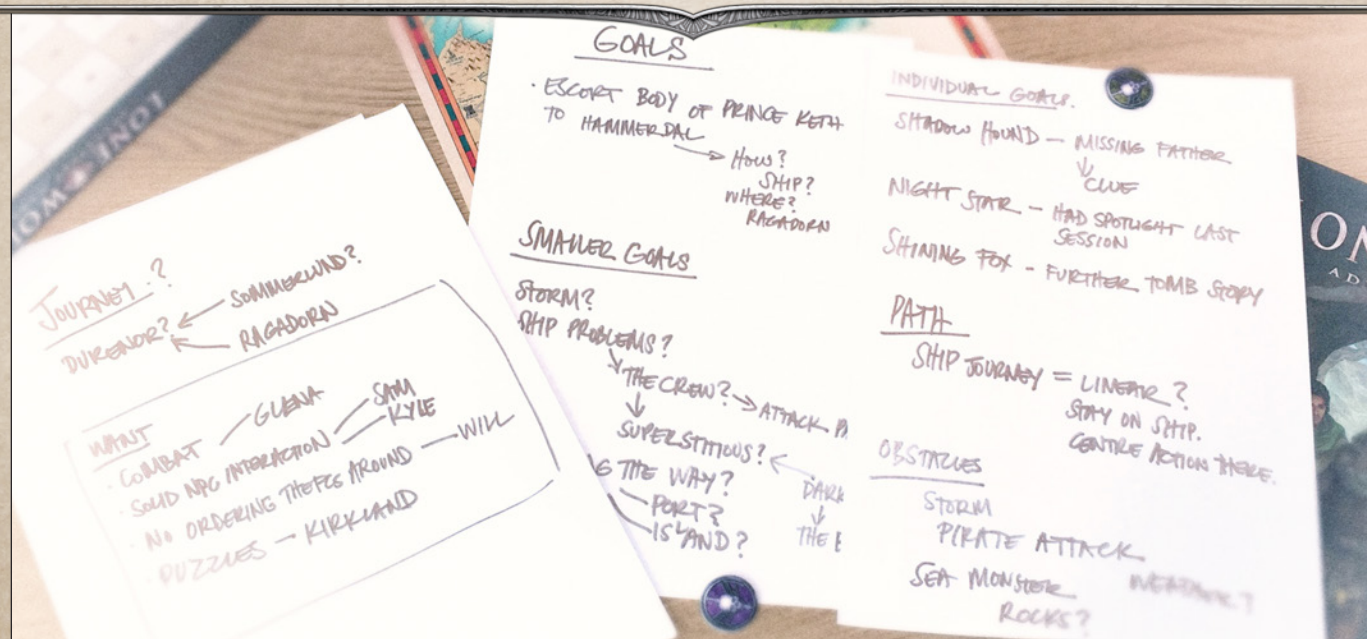
Not every goal is going to be one that the whole party must contend with. Individual goals are designed to provide motivation for one character or, at most, two characters. These are goals of a personal nature that a character will want to fulfil, at times risking the party's common goals.

Individual goals can be both the easiest and hardest to work into a adventure. You will not often find them in published adventures, as an individual goal is unique to the character (and Player) involved. They are also not necessary to a good adventure, especially if the characters being played are only going to be used for one or two sessions. However, for campaign play, adding individual goals allows Players to have some control over the plot, tie their characters into the greater story, adds more choices for Players to make and provides an additional level of challenge.

The easiest way to add individual goals to an adventure is to ask your Players what their characters want, and what they want to see as far as their character's development. By involving the Players and their characters in the adventure design process, you are better able to craft an adventure that meets their expectations of fun.

The difficulty with individual goals lies in their pacing. Too many individual goals can overshadow the main plot and lead to the party splitting itself up in order to chase their own particular interests. The other side of the coin is the risk that you will leave someone out, or shine the spotlight on one Player too much or too often. If opportunities to advance their own plans and agendas do not arise often enough, Players will likely grow disinterested or frustrated. A good rule of thumb is to include no more than two individual goals per adventure, and to have adventures in a campaign where there are no clear opportunities to pursue individual goals. As the Narrator, it is your job to make sure the use of individual goals is fair and even; do not allow one Player to take the spotlight and hold on to it.

Glena's Kai Lord, Shadow Hound, is searching for her missing father. As it has been a couple of adventures since this plot line has had a chance to advance, Ken is going to add in a sub-plot that reveals a clue about Shadow Hound's father. Kyle's Kai Lord, Night Star, has had an on-again off-again romance with an NPC, but that individual goal figured prominently in the last adventure when he rescued him from a Giak raiding party, so it would not be fair to include that relationship in this adventure. Looking through his notes from past adventures, Ken sees that it has been some time since Sam's Kai Lord, Shining Fox, has had a chance to investigate the strange writing she found in a Cloesian tomb. Perhaps someone they meet in this adventure will have some answers?



CHOOSE A PATH

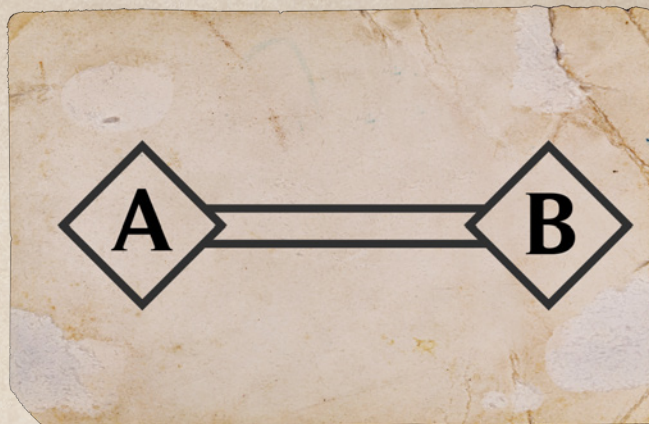
You can visualise an adventure as a path. It begins at one point, travels through others, and ends at a destination. Like a path through a forest, it is not always easy to see the destination from the start, or to see where the path is leading while you are on it. In fact, your Players are likely to forge their own paths through the woods, choosing to take interesting shortcuts, and even ignore the path altogether, and maybe also the woods, in their progress towards achieving their goals.

There are hundreds of variations on the path a adventure might take, but in general they follow one of three broad styles. There is the linear path, where the adventure follows one distinct route from start to finish. In contrast, there is the branching path, a path that leads off in a myriad of directions and ends at several possible points. Finally, there is the double-bow path, one that starts at one point, can go in several possible directions that all come together at the end.

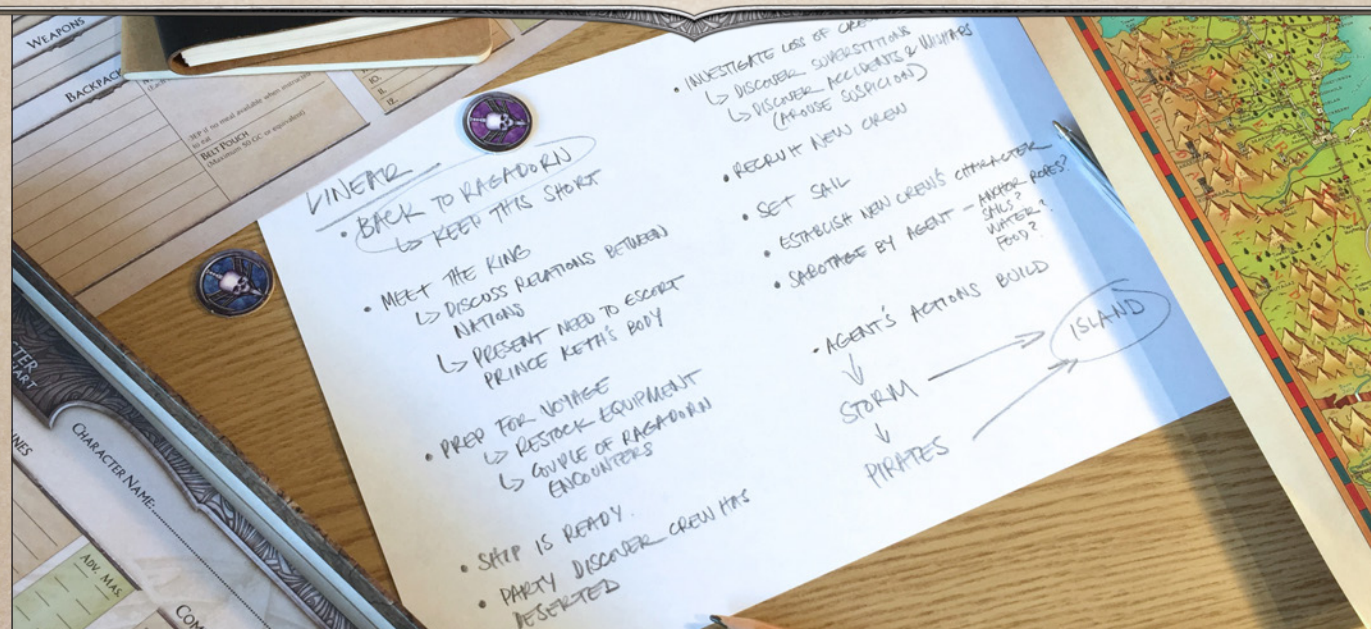
THE LINEAR PATH

The linear path is the easiest to craft, but also the one that tends to lead towards railroading. Railroading is when the Players are denied their agency to choose how the plot progresses, no matter what they do A will be followed by B which will be followed by C. Not all linear paths are railroads, and there are many ways to use a linear path without taking away the Players' agency.

A classic linear path is a journey. The party is going to try to get from point A to point B; the why is not nearly as important as the how. Following this type of linear path allows the Narrator to be better prepared for how the adventure is going to be laid out, as the



characters are going to travel over a set piece of terrain in order to achieve their goals. However, knowing where the party is going to be does not mean the Narrator has already determined what they are going to do. This does not detract from their agency; they are free to make decisions as to how, when and where they are going to journey. A variation of the journey is the extended chase. The characters are running from their foes, or vice versa. There are still a lot of choices for the Players to make, but the ground (or sea) they are going to cover is partially dictated by the setting of the adventure and the nature of the chase. The Kai Lords might be in a race to get a message through to a noble; meanwhile their foes are trying to stop them. This sets up a linear path, but one where the Players can choose their actions while the Narrator chooses the terrain (and the villains' actions as well).





THE DOUBLE-BOW PATH

An alternative to the linear path, the double-bow path is one of the most popular adventure structures. A double-bow consists of a starting point and an end point with two to three paths that the party can take. These paths are laid out at the beginning of the adventure as two or three likely options, or the Narrator can present a situation where the party is forced to choose between two or three courses of action. This provides them with agency while at the same time directing their efforts along paths that you have already crafted.

When crafting a double-bow path, you must be careful to give the Players true choices to make. Do not offer them three choices, where only one of them is something they can accomplish or that they would want to do. Also, make sure all the choices lead to the same end point, the resolution of their major goal. Finally, always keep in mind that the Players are free to make choices that do not follow the options you have placed in front of them. In fact, expect them to be offered two viable options, and for them to pick a third of their own creation. Your job as a Narrator crafting an adventure is to give them options, not force them down the path of your choosing.

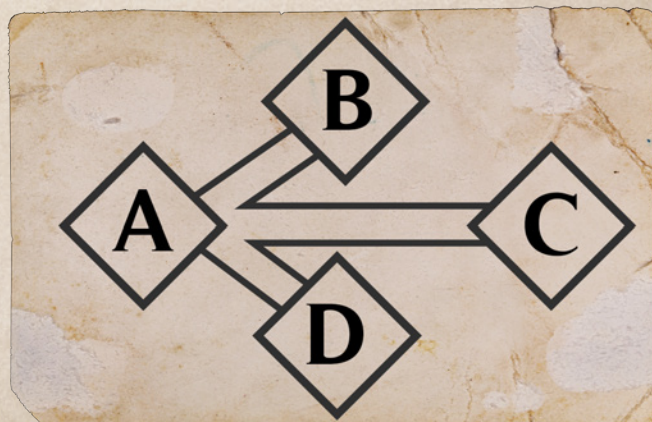
THE BRANCHING PATH

By far the most difficult of all adventure design models, the branching path begins at the start of the adventure and can go in any direction from there. The Narrator needs to have a firm idea as to what possible choices the Players might make, where various obstacles might be and what is going to happen when. This requires a great deal of planning and flair of improvisation. The advantage to this model is that the Players drive much of the plot while the Narrator reacts to their decisions. It involves a lot of pre-game work on the Narrator's part, but the actual running of the adventure is relatively easy. Sounds challenging, does it not? Well, here is how you make this happen.

Two classic examples of a branching path are investigation and sandbox-style scenarios. In investigation scenarios the Players are presented with a mystery of some sort and must resolve it (their major goal). The Narrator knows the answer to the mystery and what clues there are to unravel it. For example, if the mystery is a crime, the Narrator should have in their notes who committed the crime, how they did it and what evidence might have been left behind. The Players can then go in any direction they want in order to chase leads, follow clues, speak to witnesses and interview suspects.

In a sandbox-style adventure, the Players have to explore an area. Perhaps they are mapping it, looking for an item or person, or are lost and trying to find a way out. The Narrator needs to have a map of the area and place obstacles, NPCs and other interesting things on that map. A separate map should be given to the Players that has only the information they might know at the start of the adventure. During play, the Players choose which direction they are going in and the Narrator, while referencing their notes, plays out the appropriate scenes.

Looking at the three paths, Ken decides that a linear path would be the right one. A double-bow is generally a good idea, but the party is on a ship going from point A to point B. If this were instead a journey of discovery, then a branching path would be the perfect choice.





PLACE OBSTACLES IN THAT PATH

The path from the start of the adventure to the final climatic confrontation should be strewn with obstacles. These are not intermediate goals for the party to achieve, though such goals might prove to be an obstacle in their own right. Obstacles are things that trap, hinder or threaten the party. These are things that they must overcome along the way, and may or may not be directly related to the major goal of the adventure. Obstacles need to have three components: a reason for being there, a means to overcome them and a setback if they are not overcome.

Placing an obstacle just because you want one there is poor adventure design. An obstacle needs to have a good reason within the story for being there. Having the party be ambushed by a group of bandits on the road might make for an interesting battle, but it is not a good obstacle. Instead, such an event is just a random happening unrelated to the rest of the adventure, and furthermore, is something the party could not expect to happen, and thus not plan or prepare for. This reduces the Players' decision making, and thus reduces their fun. The same group of bandits, if seen in the village watching the party, and if in the pay of someone the party is actively opposing, would now fit the story. This is not to say that seemingly random obstacles can't occur: an adventure involving a trip through the mountains might risk avalanches, rockslides and all manner of accidents. Such an event, while random in nature, are the sorts of things that happen in mountains, and are therefore something that the party could expect and plan for.

Every obstacle must have a means to be overcome; otherwise you are not telling a story with your Players, you are torturing their characters. For some obstacles, the means to overcome it will be readily apparent; for example, the bandit attack or the rockslide mentioned above. Others might not be so obvious, but much like with goals, you as the Narrator need to have at least one or two ideas on how they can be overcome. If you can only think of one means of overcoming an obstacle, it is likely that your obstacle is too much of a challenge or too specific of an obstacle for the adventure. Try to keep obstacles open-ended in how they can be defeated; your Players need to be able to make choices and plans, and having only one true way to accomplish something limits those.

An obstacle that does not offer some form of penalty for failure is not much of an obstacle. The Players will wonder why they even tried to overcome it if they do not suffer for failing to do so. Decisions, the key to good adventure design, must have consequences, but these consequences need not be terrible. If the result of failing to overcome an obstacle ends the adventure, that consequence might be too much. These penalties need to be setbacks, something that hinders the progress ahead, but does not end the adventure before the party reaches their major goal. From the examples given above, if the bandits defeat the party, they might capture them instead of killing them. Deprived of their weapons and held in a cage at the bandit's hideout, the party must escape in order to complete the adventure. Such an event is exciting and fun, not frustrating.

By now you should have a set of notes about what you want to be in your adventure. You might not use all these notes; in fact, if you have followed the process outlined above, you likely have more notes than you need.

There are a lot of obstacles that might be good to place in Ken's adventure. A storm, a pirate attack, sea monsters, all manner of oceanic fun might happen. Ken puts these ideas in his notes and plans to finalise things later.





PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

At this point you should have a list of notes describing what you want to be in the adventure. Not every idea is going to be a good one, and now you should go over your list and pick out the ones you want to use. Not every idea is going to be a good one. After you have picked out the ideas you want to use, put them in a logical order. An outline is useful, but you can also draw a line or series of lines that illustrate the path of the adventure and use that as the framework to place your notes on.

Now, get out there and run that adventure!

After jotting down his ideas, Ken takes a break for a few hours and comes back to his notes. Refreshed and ready, he looks over them and places them on a linear model. The major goal is unchanged, but the intermediate goals need to be narrowed down. He settles on the idea that the crew is unwilling to serve on the ship and have all left. The characters must recruit a new crew before they leave. A mysterious island forms the other intermediate goal.

As far as obstacles, a pirate attack is definitely in the plans, provided of course the party is made aware of pirates in these waters. A storm is also planned, and Ken hopes to shipwreck the party on a mysterious island. Failing that, the pirates might win and strand them with the corpse on the same island. If all else fails, an island that does not show up on any maps might be spotted in the distance. That is three ways to get the party to the mysterious island, though if none work then Ken should not force it. Finally, a third obstacle will be present in the form of an agent of the Darklords who wants the body. Maybe that agent is the one who summons a storm.

As he moves towards finalising his adventure, the plot changes. The major goal stays the same, but the intermediate goals and obstacles differ. Playing on the idea of the agent, the Players can discover that the crew were frightened by a series of misfortunes that occurred right after the body was brought on board. These were the result of the work of the agent of the Darklords. When the Kai Lords go out to recruit a new crew, they run up against the agent's plots to intimidate and bribe sailors on shore.

A crew is found and the ship sets sail. The agent first sends a storm, and then attacks them with the help of pirates. If the party fails the first, they are cast ashore on the mysterious island. If the pirates capture them, the pirate base is on the island. Now, all Ken needs to do is make a map of the island and place some obstacles there.



WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS



IN THIS CHAPTER

NEVER ASSUME
LISTEN TO YOUR PLAYERS
ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE
ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN B
RANDOM ADVENTURE ELEMENT CHARTS
RANDOM NPC CHARTS
ADVENTURE LOCATION CHART

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

Much of your task as Narrator is to be reactive. True, you have your adventure in front of you, your detailed plans, lists of NPCs, and maybe even a map or two. However, you are only part of a larger story being told by the people at the table. The Players will contribute their portions, and that contribution might – usually will, in fact – alter your carefully crafted plans. This is good. This is right. This is how the game is supposed to be played out.

No adventure survives contact with the Players.

So, what do you do when the Players go right when the adventure assumes they will go left? How about when they need to contact a certain person for information, but instead accidentally burn down that person's house? What if they fight poorly and lose a battle, what happens then?

This is where the Narrator steps in and keeps the fun rolling. This is when everything goes wrong and someone, somewhere, must stand up and take the situation by the horns.

You are the Narrator. You are that someone, the table is that somewhere, and it is time to roll up your sleeves, take a deep breath, and play that game!

NEVER ASSUME

You have your adventure front of you; either a published one or one you wrote yourself. The Players are moving along through it, everything is going according to plan. Suddenly, one of the Players makes a choice that is not covered in the adventure, and worse yet, that choice cuts out an entire section, leads to the death of an important NPC, or even brings the major goal to a premature resolution. This is bad, right? You have failed as a Narrator!

No, no you have not, and the situation is not bad, just changed. Here is the big secret of adventure design, the one that should be the guiding rule for all Narrators: the adventure is just a guideline. It is a plan, not a complete plot, not a script that needs to be followed and, most importantly, not set in stone. It is a framework for fun, a path to follow or not, a strong recommendation as to how the game should proceed. Yes, even published adventures.

This means that the Narrator and the Players can go 'off-script' any time they want. As Narrators, our job is to manage that game, play along with it, let it happen and enjoy the ride. You can do this by encouraging Player input, adjusting the adventure on the fly and planning for contingencies.





LISTEN TO YOUR PLAYERS

When you sit down to play *The Lone Wolf Adventure Game*, everybody at the table should already know that this is a cooperative game. You are telling a story together, a story of high adventure in a fantastical world. The important part is that you are doing this **together**; the Players are as free as the Narrator to contribute to the story.

The Players should know this, and they should already have the basics in mind. The actions of their characters help to drive the story; in fact, it is the actions of those characters that should be central to any adventure. This communal activity, while not unique to adventure games, is not the norm when it comes to playing games in general. In many other types of games there is a winner and a bunch of losers. Look at sports, video games, most board games, and you see that this is the case. Some Players might come to the table with this mindset, and either see the need to have their characters 'win' or view the Narrator as the opponent that needs to be defeated. Some Narrators do the same thing, and set themselves up as the opponent to the Players.

Here is another big secret to designing a good adventure and being a good Narrator: the Players need to have their input in the game.

How does this apply to advice on what to do when things go wrong? First of all, you need to be willing and able to adapt the adventure to fit the choices the Players are making. For example, if the adventure requires the Players to make a certain choice, such as rushing into a trap or ambush, and they do not, the Narrator needs to adapt the adventure to fit this decision. Use the information available, and do not be afraid to add information not in the adventure.

In addition to adapting and reacting to the Players' choices, the Narrator must also be willing to accept their input in adventure design. Look at the types of Kai Lords the Players have created. If they are a group of scholarly sorts, then make adventures that feature thoughtful mysteries. A combat-heavy group is looking for a fight, so give it to them. Parties that rely on guile need to be able to resolve their major goals that way, and the same holds true for those who like to kick in doors first and ask questions later.

Adapting and planning for the party's wants and needs are fine, but the best way to encourage Player input is to simply ask them. Sitting down and asking if there is somewhere in the Lastlands they want to go, a foe they want to challenge, or a type of adventure they want to play through is a fine way to gain inspiration for the game.

Finally, the best way to encourage Player input is to be open to it. Never tell them they cannot do something; at the most warn them that an idea will have bad repercussions. Let the Players make their own choices and adapt to them. If a Player offers a suggestion for an adventure or a polite critique, listen to them. You do not have to do what they say, but you should be respectful of their views and give them serious consideration.

If an adventure is a guideline, and the Players work with the Narrator to create a story at the table, what do you do when the adventure turns out to be wrong or, worst of all, when a challenge in the adventure turns out to be too much for the party? You adjust the adventure to fit what is going on at the table.





ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

By far the most common problem with an adventure is that it does not fit entirely with the game you are playing at the table. As your Players go through a campaign, they alter the world of Lone Wolf. This is normal and this is what should be happening. The Narrator and Players are adding to the story of Magnamund every time they sit down to play, and that story evolves and changes to fit your unique story.

For example, if a published adventure involves King Alin II of Durenor, and an adventure you played through had the Players fail to stop an assassination attempt against the King, you will need to change the adventure to fit your group's version of the world.

While this is a fairly easy fix, there are other ways in which the adventure might not match with what is happening at the table. A mismatch is more than a simple case of the Players making a choice that the adventure does not support, which can be solved through simple adaptation. A true mismatch is where the adventure makes assumptions about the characters that simply are not true. A good adventure does not make assumptions about what a character thinks, feel, or does; that decision is left to the Player.

For example, an adventure might say that the characters are stunned and shocked when Talbor betrays them. What if the Players have already come to suspect Talbor of treachery? Now you have a bit of text to read that does not apply to the situation or, even worse, what if the Players have already made their plans on how to deal with Talbor's betrayal? If the following scene involves Talbor capturing the Players and handing them over to their foes, and the Players are prepared, just let it play out; do not feel obliged to stick to the adventure. This might mean that the rest of the adventure might need to be altered; and if it does, do so. When these things happen, do not be afraid to admit to the Players that they have gone outside of the parameters of the adventure and you need to take a break, or even end the game early, in order to figure out what to do.

ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN B

Something has gone wrong. The Players have made a choice that invalidates part of the adventure, they have gone off in a direction you did not foresee, or they have either defeated a foe that they were not expected to, or were defeated by a foe they were supposed to overcome. The time has come to adapt and redirect the adventure, but how do you do that?

You could just fly by the seat of your pants and see what happens. You might want to stop the session and figure it out. Both of these options are viable, but by far the best thing to do is to have a plan in place. Now, you cannot plan for every possible eventuality, but you can prepare for most, and prepare for the worst, with a few simple steps.

It does not matter if you are using a published adventure or one of your own devising; the best course is to prepare for what might happen before the game even starts. Read through the adventure, go over your notes and imagine how different scenes might play out. Picture yourself as a character in the story and try to come up with ways to resolve challenges, overcome obstacles and find clues. Look for places where the adventure can go off the rails, so to speak, and make a few quick notes on what you will do should that happen. A few notes is all you need, the rest can be improvised.

Another great option is to have a few interruption or fill-in scenes on hand. These do not need to be tied to any particular adventure, but should be of the sort that can be dropped in anywhere and any when. Having these ready makes it much easier to provide a brief interlude to the main adventure storyline, keeps the game going and gives you time to think out how to proceed. A broken wagon on the road and merchants in need of help, a bandit attack, a reoccurring friend or foe that pops up, all are good starts. Your small side scene should not take away from the main plot of the adventure, but should be something of enough importance to keep the Players' interest. At the very least, an interruption will keep the game going until the session is ended, and thus give you until next time to figure out how you are going to adapt and salvage the adventure for next time!





RANDOM ADVENTURE ELEMENTS CHARTS

This next section includes several charts to help get you started on adventure design, throw in random obstacles and scenes, and adapt when things go wrong. Much like an adventure, these are just guidelines and you should be able to adapt them to your game as needed. For each table, pick a random number or read down the list and choose the one that fits the best.

Major Goal Seeds Tables

Random Number	Major Goals Table
0-1	Table 1
2-3	Table 2
4-5	Table 3
6-7	Table 4
8-9	Table 5

Major Goal Seeds Table One

Random Number	Goal
0	Save a village from raiding Giaks,
1	Rescue the kidnapped child of a nobleman,
2	Carry a critical message back to the Kai, Monastery.
3	Uncover a Darklord plot to destroy a city.
4	Solve a murder.
5	Explore the Wildlands.
6	Recover an artefact taken from the Kai.
7	Root out corruption in the Mercer's Guild.
8	Stop a band of Giaks from crossing the border.
9	Receive a mysterious message to meet with someone in a secluded place.



Major Goal Seeds Table Two

Random Number	Goal
0	A local magistrate is found dead in their locked, windowless study.
1	A strange beast is rampaging across the countryside.
2	Bandits on the King's Highway are extorting a heavy toll from travellers.
3	A dying man stumbles up to the characters and gasps out the words, "avenge me".
4	Local authorities have uncovered a slaving ring with ties to the Darklords.
5	A Cloesian ruin is discovered in the middle of the Mudgraves swamp
6	Doomwolves are attacking local shepherds and their flocks.
7	A ship carrying an important diplomat never arrives in port.
8	A noble rebels against the King.
9	A cult of Cener Druids threatens to unleash a plague.



Major Goal Seeds Table Three

Random Number	Goal
0	A nest of Burrowcrawlers has been found, and the tunnels lead deep into the earth.
1	The heroes are given a week's leave to visit their families, and each is attacked while away.
2	A diplomatic mission is in need of bodyguards.
3	A badly decomposed body is found bearing the signet ring of a magistrate. Yet that magistrate is apparently alive and well (albeit is secretly a Helghast!).
4	Someone has stolen a book from the library at the Kai Monastery.
5	The heroes must go undercover to infiltrate a band of smugglers.
6	Rains of frogs, dead fish in the rivers, and other signs of ill omen abound.
7	A large force of Drakkarim are amassing on the border.
8	A family member of one of the heroes has died, foul play is suspected.
9	A scholar has been researching ways to defeat the Darklords, and has unlocked a mystery that leads to the creation of a horrid beast.



Major Goal Seeds Table Four

Random Number	Goal
0	A travelling sideshow features a 'tamed' Gourgaz, and the creature escapes one night.
1	Pirates are ravaging the seas between Sommerlund and Durenor.
2	A band of young Kai Initiates have disappeared during a training mission in the forest.
3	The River Xane has suddenly dried up in the Province of Ruanon.
4	Something has been driving miners out of the Maaken Mines.
5	A Kraan has been spotted flying high over the western Sommlending border.
6	One of the watchtowers along the western Sommlending border has not sent any reports for two months now.
7	A deathly ill nobleman has discovered the cure for his illness lies in the flowers of a rare plant.
8	A famine has struck distant villages and supplies need to be brought in.
9	A band of Szalls have settled in a remote forest, and the woodcutters fear they are only the first part of a larger Darklands incursion.



Major Goal Seeds Table Five

Random Number	Goal
0	A Kai Master has disappeared.
1	A bizarre squid-like creature is attacking ships along the coast of the Holmgulf.
2	The King of Durenor suspects a plot against the royal family and has requested a team of Kai Lords to investigate.
3	It was a calm day until a great boulder fell out of the sky.
4	A Kai Master is being honoured by the King and has requested an honour guard.
5	A hero is accused of murder.
6	Merchants have been selling strange glass mirrors of unknown origin.
7	A group of settlers want to pioneer a farm in the Wildlands.
8	A noted explorer has become lost in the Maakenmire.
9	Someone has broken into the palace and left a threat carved into the door of the King's bedchamber.



Intermediate Goals

Random Number	Goal
0	You have to get something in order to persuade someone to provide important help or information.
1	You have to travel to a distant place.
2	You have to stop the villain's henchmen from causing damage.
3	You have to rescue an ally.
4	You have to find an item that will stop the villain.
5	You need to infiltrate the villain's lair to gain information.
6	You have to rescue a person who has the information you need.
7	You have to find a rare book in an abandoned ruin.
8	You have to convince a superior to allow you to proceed.
9	You must find the money to buy an item you need.



Random Interruptions

Random Number	Result
0	Armed Giaks burst into the scene!
1	Someone yells, "help".
2	An earthquake knocks everyone to the ground.
3	Rain starts to fall and quickly limits vision to only a few feet.
4	An unexpected eclipse.
5	A civilian wanders into the scene.
6	A herd of animals thunders through.
7	A band of religious pilgrims comes down the road.
8	Someone runs by being pursued by Doomwolves.
9	A familiar voice is heard whimpering in the forest.



RANDOM NPC CHARTS

The following charts allow you to create the basics of a NPC (Non Player Character) very quickly. Don't feel restricted by the tables – use them as an inspiration. You can also make your own tables themed to match the feel of your own adventures. You never know when they might come in useful!



NPC Motivations

Random Number	Motivation
0	Duty to a Greater Cause
1	Greed for Wealth and Power
2	To Bask in the Adulation of the Masses
3	The Safety and Well Being of a Loved One
4	Defend Her Community
5	Hatred for a Rival
6	Pride in Personal Appearance and Skill
7	Acknowledgement by a Superior
8	Maintain the Status Quo
9	The Quest for Knowledge

NPC Personality

Random Number	Personality
0	Energetic, Fidgety, and Flighty
1	Eager and Incompetent
2	Lazy and Dolorous
3	Courageous Beyond Reason
4	Melancholic and Despondent
5	Cautious, yet Optimistic
6	Highly Superstitious
7	Loyal to a Fault
8	Gullible and Trusting
9	Cowardly and Vocally Fearful





NPC Personality Quirks

Random Number	Quirk
0	Hums constantly to herself, "dum da da dum."
1	Carries a favoured weapon and talks to it, "Foe Reaper, you are a good sword and will see me through the next battle."
2	Starts nearly every sentence with the same phrase, "well, I was thinking..."
3	Whittles tiny animals out of sticks and likes to show them off, "look, a swan!"
4	Constantly asks mundane questions, "and we find the wagons where?"
5	Never can find the right word, and mispronounces the wrong one, "these tracks are from a, what are they called, a gankik."
6	Takes long pauses in conversation to stare off into the distance, often mid sentence, "the bandits went... north."
7	Talks about self in the third person, "Thom can do this thing, but Thom needs some coin first."
8	Always has a story or reference to a past event that may or may not apply to the present situation, "this is just like that time I chased a goose into Salt Creek."
9	Constantly misuses idioms, "you can lead a horse to water to get it straight from his mouth."

ADVENTURE LOCATION CHART

Need some inspiration for where to set an adventure? This chart can help get you started.

Random Interruptions

Random Number	Location
0	Deep in the Wilderness
1	Ancient Ruins
2	A Major City
3	On the High Seas
4	A Frontier Settlement
5	Abandoned Mine
6	The Kai Monastery
7	A Player Hero's Hometown
8	A Noble's Estate
9	A Lonely Roadside Tavern





INDEX

A		D		I	
Abduction	10	A Deadly Warning	25	Independent Longhouses	40
Adjusting the Adventure	87	The Dead Oak	56	Individual Goals	79
Akataz Attack	15	Den of Iniquity	59	Ingot Storage	23
Alligator Kreeel	41	Double-Bow Path	81	Intermediate Goals	78
Always Have a Plan B	87	Dread in Hitchford	58	Into the Wilds	12
Ancient Skeletal Warriors	67	Drunken Uncles	9	Introduction	4
Armoury	17	Dust Storm	42		
The Awoken Dead	64	Dust Zombies	43	K	
				The King's Hall	50
B		E		The King's Private Room	51
Ball Lightning Storm	45	The Encampment	49	Know Your Players	76
Bandit Ambush	15	Enchanted Bronin Dagger	73	Konâ-rakr Kaeli Etryrhar	68
Bandit Attack	9	Encounters	13		
The Bandit Hideout	17	Entering the Mine	16	L	
Bandits	10, 15			Lady Nyssa	55
Bandit Thugs	19	F		Lair of the River King	48
Baransh	19	Feast for the Crows	54	The Leprous Grove	39
Barias Thorn, Investigator	54	Feral Akataz	15	Linear Path	80
The Barkeeper's Rumours	61	Finding Nyssa	55	Listen to your Players	86
The Barracks	49	Flood	23	The Long Fang Tribe	46
Barroom Brawl	61	Fog	41	Look-out Rock	35
Battle for the Village	25	Forest Encounters	14	Lost Child	10
The Black Bandana	25	Forgotten Storeroom	18	Lost Creek	38
The Bleak House of Oldan Krall	70	For Richer, for Poorer	6	Lost Musician	15
Blood and Gold	20	Fort Harding	28	Low Water	41
Blue Boar	45				
Blue Fens	34	G		M	
Branching Path	81	Ghouls	23	Main Chamber	18
Bubbling Fields	35	Giak Raiding Party	44	Major Goals	77
Burned-out Boat	42	Gold and Games	26	Maura	8
The Burning Beacon	69	The Great Cataract	34	Mountain Encounters	15
Burnt-out Hamlet	33	Grey Flats	37	Muck Devil	39
		Guard Room	22	Muckmarsh Flats	39
C				Mud Geysers	38
Chasm	22	H		A Murder of Crows	69
The Complexities of Love	16	Hara	8	Mutant Pack	38
Consul Lord-lieutenant Kelting	30	Haunted Pillars	37		
Corvid Confrontation	62	Horse Supplies	17	N	
Cracked Badlands	36	House Ternan	64	Never Assume	85
Creating Your Own Adventures	75	Hunters	42		



O

Old Hermit
On the Wings of Darkness
The Ore Elevator
The Overland Route

P

Pack Leaders
Pale Mask Mercenaries
The Pale Mask's Hidden Lair
Picking up the Trail
Place Obstacles in that Path
Private Rooms
Privy

Q

The Queen

R

Random Adventure Elements Charts
Random Events
Random NPC Charts
The Rapids
Rates of Travel
The Reckoning
River Blade
River Journeys
The River King
River Pirate Ambushers
River Pirates
River Pirate Sentries
River Pirates of the Dorn
The River Route
Roanel Caleg
Ruanon
Ruined Longhouse
The Ruins of Fort Harding

S

Salt Creek
Sandsnake
Savash
Searching for a Husband
The Secret Entrance
Sentient Dust Tendrils
Sergeant Trulier
Shadow Cat
The Shining Wood
Shortcut
Smoke-filled Corridor
Snag
Stand and Fight
Stone Worm
Strange Fruit
Stûrnalas - The Starlight Spear
Szall Pack

T

Tainted Stream
Tanasha
Tareth
Terrified Family
The Storehouse
To Stand or Fall
To the Fort

V

Village Boys
Vivacious Valdi

W

Wanton Destruction
The Wedding
Welcome to Ragadorn
When All Else Fails
Wild Dogs
Wildlander Band
The Wildlands
Wildlands Events
Wolves
Wraithcrows

