

HOUNDS OF HENDENBURGH

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Map (page 8) made with *Hexographer*

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Page 9: *Tree Landscape Drawing* by Karen Arnold

Page 11: Robert Barnett in John Cranko's 'The Witch'

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HOUNDS OF HENDENBURGH

Introduction

Terror roams the dark and brambled paths of the **Kryptwood**. A pack of giant spectral **hounds** rule the night, savaging those foolish enough to brave the forest. The villagers of **Hendenburgh** cower in the shadows of the ancient boughs as each morning heralds a newly savaged corpse.

Background

- **1000 years ago:** The area around Hendenburgh was ruled by the **Kryptwood Tyrant**. This vile and bloodthirsty ruler hunted his own peasants for sport with the help of a pack of bloodthirsty giant hounds raised on human flesh.
- **950 years ago:** The Kryptwood tyrant died after decades of despotic rule. He and his fearsome hounds were buried in a **sealed barrow** at the centre of the Kryptwood (see **Tyrant's Tomb**, p.12). As the centuries passed all memory of the tyrant faded.
- **One month ago:** **Sly George** and his **highwaymen** (see **factions**, p.2) uncovered the tyrant's tomb. Greedy for treasure, they hacked apart the **giant stone** that blocked the entrance. The spirit of the tyrant remained **bound** to his **sarcophagus** but his ghostly **hounds** are now free to hunt the **unfortunate citizens** of Hendenburgh.
- **Two weeks ago:** Two villagers (see p.6) were found ripped apart.
- **One week ago:** The villagers of Hendenburgh, led by Oliver the poacher (see p.4) mount an expedition to put an end to the threat of the hounds. Three died in the attempt.

Hooks

- The **Duke of Manorhampton** is planning a hunt in the Kryptwood three weeks from now. The party has been dispatched to survey the forest and ensure that preparations are made for his arrival. The Duke has hinted at **knighthoods** for the party should they be **successful** in their task.
- The **bandit** offered information to the party in exchange for his life. Through gritted teeth, and between laboured breaths, he claimed that an **ancient barrow** deep within the Kryptwood holds the treasures of an **ancient tyrant**.
- As a child, one of the party would receive the occasional letter from their distant uncle **Aelfwin**, an eccentric bachelor and keen hunter from Hendenburgh. A few days ago, that same party member received word that Mad Uncle Aelfwin had slipped this mortal coil (killed by the hounds) and that his adventurer niece/nephew had been named the sole beneficiary of his will. Aelfwin's estate consists of a well-appointed but dilapidated **hunting lodge** (see p.10). Under normal circumstances it could be sold for a pretty penny. Unfortunately, the deed is worthless while Hendenburgh remains under the threat of the hounds.

Factions

- **The Crones:** An ancient witch coven, consisting of **Mother Blackcap**, **Wailing Winnifred**, and the **Matriarch**, make their home within the Kryptwood. The hags are treated with fear and veneration by the villagers of Hendenburgh. The coven provide simple spells, cures and potions for those who risk their bargains. The crones are ancient and powerful. Even the hounds know better than to enter their domain. Recently, the hags have begun feuding with the **highwaymen** after **Sly George** reneged on an agreement to marry Wailing Winnifred.
- **The Highwaymen:** A gang of notorious highway robbers led by **Sly George** (a vainglorious coward whose reputation has been grossly exaggerated through folk songs of his own composition). The highwaymen use the Kryptwood as a hideout between robberies. Recently, Sly George agreed to marry **Weeping Winifred** in exchange for a **cloak of many faces** (see p.10). He has since reneged on his agreement and taken a villager (Valerie Brockel, see p.5) as his lover. There are sixteen highwaymen in total (use the **bandit** stat-block) though only a minority are usually present at the hideout.
- **Hendenburgh:** Hendenburgh is itself a faction. If the party gets on the wrong side of the villagers then a **posse** consisting of **Oliver the Poacher**, the three **Winstaple sons**, **Gregory the Blacksmith** (see pp.5-6) and five **village toughs** can be summoned to deal with ne'er do wells and trouble-makers.

Village Tough

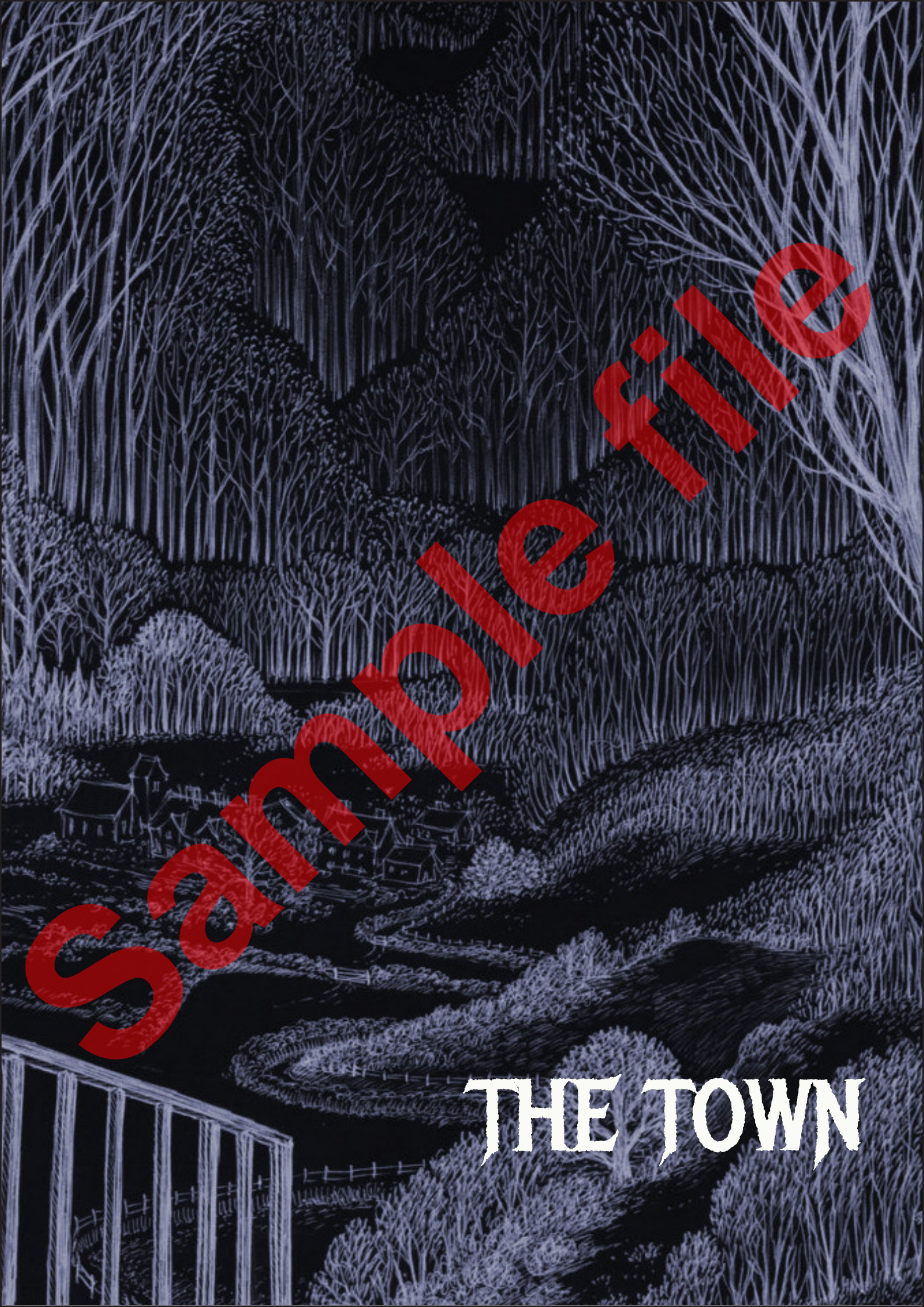
4 HP, 8 STR, 8 Dex, 4 WIL, cudgel (d6)

- **Undisciplined:** Always flee if outnumbered.

Defeating the Hounds

Though no objective is assumed for the adventure, it is likely that most parties will wish to rid the Kryptwood of the hounds. There are three ways of accomplishing this task.

- **The Pastor:** **Pastor Noonan** (see p.5) can conduct a ritual that binds the hounds to the Tyrant's Tomb. Conducting the ritual requires the pastor to spend ten minutes (one dungeon turn) in each room of the tomb (apart from rooms 5 and 6, see p.14) muttering incantations and painting chalk glyphs.
- **The Hags:** The **Matriarch** can give the party a **scroll of banishment**. If read aloud in the sarcophagus room of the crypt then the spirits of the Tyrant and the hounds will both be banished forever. She will only willingly part with this scroll if the party can bring her the head of **Sly George** and recover the **Cloak of Many Faces**.
- **Devil's Bargain:** The spirit of the Kryptwood Tyrant will offer to lead his hounds off to a distant land if the party break the wards on his sarcophagus. The Tyrant will remain true to his word. He and his canine servants will leave Hendenburgh to inflict pain and misery elsewhere.



Sample file

THE TOWN

HENDENBURGH

Life in Hendenburgh is a constant struggle against the encroachment of the Krpytwood. Ivy slowly creeps up the walls of the whitewashed cottages while brambles choke even the stately Hendenburgh manor. Since the arrival of the hounds, a silence has descended upon the village. It's citizens stay behind locked doors as chickens and geese meander untended through the empty, muddy streets.

RUMOURS

Information regarding the general situation in the village can be gleaned from the villagers in their homes or the handful who still risk gathering in the **Galloping Goat Inn**. Parties may also encounter the following rumours:

D8	RUMOUR
1	'If anyone knows how to stop those hounds it's the crones . I'll pay any price they ask!'
2	'I came across an old barrow in the Krpytwood once. Could hear barking and wailing from inside. I know better than to disturb such things.'
3	'Poor Martin hasn't been himself since his wife Valerie went missing. Mill's been shut for five days. Damn it, I need bread!'
4	'This is the God's punishment for turning a blind eye to Sly George and his gang. If we turn them in then those blasted dogs will go for good.'
5	'You should talk to Oliver . He's fought those dogs and lived to tell the tale.'
6	'It's sacrilege what that coroner is doing. It's been days and we still can't bury our dead!'
7	'I wish the Widow Winstaple would stop torturing poor Gregory . The man's never been anything but decent to her.'
8	'The hounds? If anyone knows how to get rid of them it's Pastor Noonan , but he's as likely to banish us as he is the devildogs.'

PEOPLE OF HENDENBURGH

Lord and Lady Hendenburgh

The current lord of Hendenburgh is over eighty years of age and aggressively senile. He spends most of his conscious hours demanding to be taken sledding (regardless of weather or his own physical frailty). Real power in Hendenburgh Manor is exercised by his inappropriately young wife; a student of the new learning who regards reports of the ghostly hounds as mere peasant superstition. She attributes the savaged bodies found in the woods to the work of a particularly vindictive badger.

- **Might ask the party:** To take him sledding (Lord Hendenburgh), to talk some sense into these damn rustics (Lady Hendenburgh)

Oliver, the Poacher

A war-veteran and unrivalled woodsman. Oliver recently led a large group of townsmen into the forest to put an end to the scourge of the hounds. Despite heavy losses, they managed to kill three of the dogs (see p.11). However, the bodies disappeared after only a few hours. Oliver is convinced that the pack cannot be eliminated by ordinary means.

- **Might offer the party:** His services as a guide

Oliver the Poacher

4 HP, 1 Armor (padded leather), 9 STR, 13 Dex, 8 WIL, longbow (d8)

- **Woodsman:** Can track animals across great distances.
- Never gets lost in the woods.

Pastor Noonan

Bitter ex-priest who has turned to alcohol since being defrocked for his heterodox beliefs. Harbours a grudge against the rest of the village for reporting his heretical ideas to the bishop. Spends most of his time in the filthy old parochial house, drinking cheap homemade whiskey.

- **Knows how to:** Defeat the hounds (the pastor is a talented exorcist and ghost-hunter) but has little interest in helping his ungrateful former parishioners.
- **Will help the party:** In exchange for high-quality grain alcohol.

Pastor Noonan

3 HP, 6 STR, 8 DEX, 15 WIL, sling (d4)

- **Dutch courage:** Never fails a morale check if sufficiently liquored up.

Martin Brockle, the Miller

A heavy silence hangs over the mill as the morose and taciturn Martin mourns his missing wife. The skinny and bow-legged miller has not opened his curtains since his spouse vanished five nights ago.

- **Might ask the party:** To recover his wife Valerie's body for burial.
- **The full truth:** Valerie is not dead. She has grown bored of village life and ran off with Sly George, leader of the highwaymen.

Gregory, the Blacksmith

An affable and warm-hearted giant. Gregory spends much of his time staring longingly across the street at the Galloping Goat inn. Recently, Gregory has become the object of the seemingly unjustified ire of the Widow Winstaple and is banned from the inn.

- **The full truth:** The bachelor Gregory has been enamoured with the Widow Winstaple for some time and recently bought a love potion from the crones (which he slipped into her tea). Unknown to Gregory, the crones actually provided him with a **loathe potion**. Ironically, the Widow reciprocated his feelings until he drugged her.
- **Might ask the party:** To reason with the Widow Winstaple on his behalf or to find a way of reversing the potion's effects (the effects can be evened out with an actual love potion or ameliorated with a potion of indifference (see the **crones**, p.11).

Elizabeth, the Coroner

A recent arrival to the village, summoned to investigate the bodies mauled by the hounds. Shifty and beady-eyed, Elizabeth is avoided by the villagers, who avoid the barn she has requisitioned as a makeshift morgue.

- **The bodies:** Bloody, missing entire chunks of flesh. Covered in claw and bite marks. Belong to **Aelfwin the hunter**, **Magda the village midwife**, **Hiram the brewer**, **John the farrier**, and **Margot the wheelwright**. The latter three were killed during Oliver's ill-fated hunting expedition. Close inspection of the bodies reveals some of the **organs** (a heart, a liver, a kidney, a brain, and a spleen) have been carefully removed
- **The full truth:** Elizabeth wishes to conduct a ritual to transform herself into a crone (the ritual requires human organs). Frustratingly, the rite is failing. Only the crones themselves know the correct incantations and blood-sigils to complete the transformation successfully.

Widow Winstaple, the Innkeeper

The widowed mother of three strapping sons and proprietress of the humble and welcoming Galloping Goat inn. The jovial Mrs. Winstaple is the heart of the village, though her sons and customers alike are perplexed by her unprovoked feud with the Blacksmith.

- **May ask the party:** To intimidate Gregory into leaving town forever.
- **Can offer:** Rich warming mead, frothing ale and comfortable rooms.
- **Hirelings:** The three Winstaple boys can be taken on as hirelings.

Nye Winstaple

4 HP, 6 STR, 12 DEX, 11 WIL, dagger (d6)

Lawrence 'Longshanks' Winstaple

7 HP, 1 Armour (brigandine), 13 STR, 8 DEX, 9 WIL, flail (d8)

Anthony Winstaple

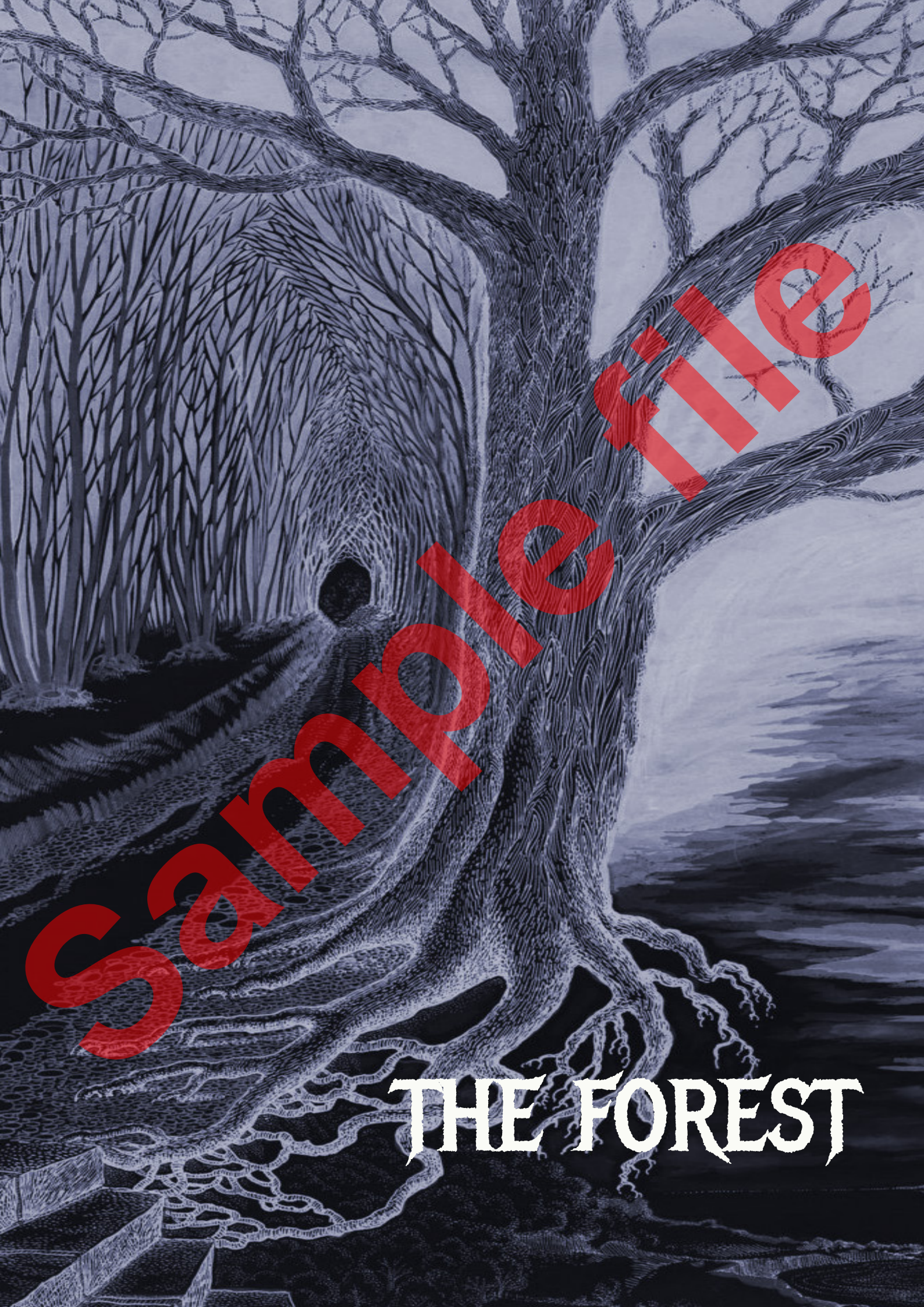
9 HP, 9 STR, 6 DEX, 12 WIL, sickle (d6)

Elizabeth the Coroner

9 HP, 8 STR, 11 DEX, 13 WIL, scalpel (d6)

Gregory the Blacksmith

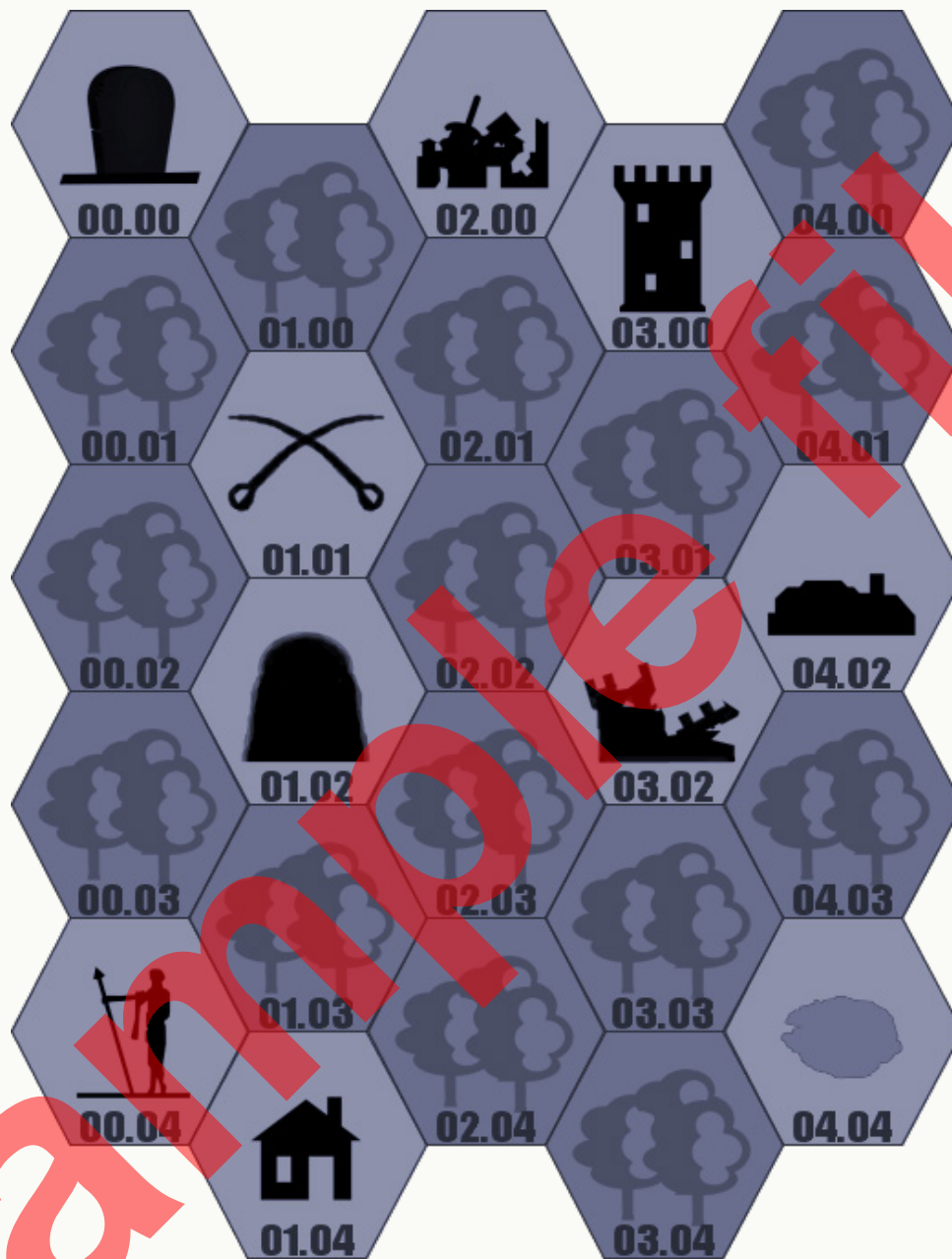
4 HP, 12 STR, 4 DEX, 5 WIL, hammer (d6)



Sample file

THE FOREST

THE KRYPTWOOD



The **Krpyptwood** is ancient and hungry, seeking always to devour the works of man and return to its primeval state. Brambles and sprawling roots trip the incautious. Light struggles to breach the dense canopy. Here and there are white bricks of unknown antiquity, choked with ivy and brittle with age.

Each **hex** is three miles squared. Roll for a **random encounter** in every unoccupied hex. **Cairn** has dedicated rules for wilderness exploration. See: <https://cairnrbg.com/wip/2e/wilderness-exploration/>

D8	ENCOUNTER
1	A herd of 2d4 owlboars (fear-some forest predators; 80 kg of tusk, feather, and fury)
2	1d4 highwaymen from the old tower (03.00) foraging for food.
3	The cave bear from 01.02 clambers up a tree trying to reach a beehive in the canopy. Remove once encountered.
4	A black cat (the familiar of the crones in 01.04) observes he party from a tree branch
5	A pit full of snakes (1d6) lies hidden under fallen leaves.
6	A wood troll gathers moss from the side of a tree.
7	A dense fog rolls across the Kryptwood. 3-in-6 chance the party becomes lost.
8	1d6 kryptwood hounds hungry for manflesh.

Owlboar

4 HP, 9 STR, 9 DEX, gore (d8)

- **Critical damage:** PC is pinned by the owlboar's tusks and cannot move.

Kryptwood Hound

7 HP, 13 STR, 15 DEX, bite (d8)

- Enormous black dogs the size of horses with enormous fangs draped in froth.
- Ethereal and shadowy.
- If killed, the hound vanishes after a few hours and is restored to life after 1d4 days.

04.02: Hendenburgh

A village of four hundred inhabitants nestled in the shadows of the Kryptwood.

04.04: The Pond

A **murky pond**, its surface thick with algae and fallen leaves, lies in the middle of a clearing. Gold **coins** (67 gp) are scattered near the dark pool.

- A **Grindylow** lurks within the pond, grabbing and drowning any unfortunates who get too close.
- At the bottom of the pool (8 ft deep) are an **emerald necklace** (300 gp), two **silver bracelets** (100gp each), 150 gp and dozens of bleached bones.

Grindylow

6 HP, 15 STR, 13 DEX, bite and claw (d8 + d6)

- Stunted and diminutive predators with scaly skin, hair like dead seaweed and lengthy multi-jointed claws.
- Lurk in bogs and meers to ambush prey.



03.00: Highwaymen's Tower

A partially ruined **tower** atop a grassy hillock offers commanding views of the surrounding forest. **Figures** are visible atop the battlements. The tower serves as a redoubt for **Sly George** and his highwayman accomplices. In addition to George and his lover **Valerie Brockle** (see p.5), an additional 3d4 highwaymen are always present, either on guard or patrolling nearby.

- **Figures.** Sly George and Valerie survey the forest from the safety of the battlements.
- **Sly George.** Long golden locks and an immaculately sculpted moustache. Wears a colourful patchwork cloak (**cloak of many faces**). Carries a lute on his back and a blade at his side. Cowardly braggadacio who has started to believe in his own myth. Paranoid and terrified of the crones' inevitable vengeance.
- **Valerie Brockle.** Attractive young woman with long auburn hair dressed in riding trousers and leather jerkin. Starting to realise that life as an outlaw is not as romantic as she thought it would be.
- **The tower.** Four stories tall (the second and third floors have rotten away). The battlements can be accessed from the ground floor by means of a ladder (Sly George will pull the ladder up if he senses danger). Under a loose flagstone on the bottom floor is a **lockbox** containing the gang's stash: **3800 gp**, a **golden wedding ring** (500 gp) and an ornate gem-encrusted **jewellery box** (900 gp)

Cloak of Many Faces, 10 charges

- A motley patchwork cloak. When the wearer pulls the cloak over their head they randomly acquire a distinctive new face.
- **Recharge:** When all charges are used the cloak becomes grey and colourless. Redying the cloak restores its power.



03.02: Aelfwin's Hunting Lodge

A large and once-impressive hunting lodge, now falling into disrepair. Major rodent problem in the **basement**.

- **Basement:** Contains a cobweb-draped **taxidermied owlboar** (600 gp, bulky) and twelve dusty bottles of **Dragonfire whiskey** (100 gp per bottle)

02.00: Villa Ruins

The bramble-infested marble ruins of an ancient villa, once the home of the Krpytwood tyrant. Only the foundations remain.

- At night the **spirits** of the Tyrant's victims (torn and bloodied, chunks of flesh missing from their pale bodies) haunt the ruins, lamenting their fate and crying out for vengeance.

01.01: Site of Battle

Bloody leaves and dozens of loose arrows litter the ground. This is where Oliver unsuccessfully fought the hounds. **Tracks** can be discerned on the ground.

- **Tracks:** Made by paws the size of dinner plates. Can be followed to **00.00 Tyrant's Tomb**.

01.02: Bear Cave

1d4 **cave bear** cubs cavort in a shallow cave. 3-in-6 chance their mother is also present.

01.04: The Crones

Smoke rises from a cosy **cottage** surrounded by herb gardens and rose bushes. This dwelling is the home of the crones. By day, the **crones** appear as beautiful young women, naked apart from crowns of grass. By night they manifest in their true and hideous forms.

- **Wailing Winnifred:** Small and stunted old hag with three withered arms and enormous eyes like those of an owl. Weeps blood constantly. Speaks in an incomprehensible and grating whine.
- **Mother Blackcap:** Eyeless crone who wears a tattered black leather cap and robes sewn from seaweed and taut human flesh. Loves nothing better than leading people to their doom with misleading omens and prophecies.
- **The Matriarch:** The most ancient of the crones. Stands 10 ft tall. Naked apart from the cloud of flies that cling to her old leathery flesh. Speaks in a sonorous and booming voice that shakes the treetops.
- **What they want:** Recently Sly George agreed to marry Weeping Winnifred (accepting the cloak of many faces as a dowry) before breaking his promise and running off with Valerie Brockle. The crones are willing to trade a **scroll of banishment** (can be used to annihilate the hounds and the ghost of the Kryptwood Tyrant, see p.2) in exchange for Sly George's head and the cloak.



- Inside the **cottage** are shelves filled with various **oddities** (a cat's eye, a jar of pickled penises, a unicorn's bladder, and an angel's liver suspended in vinegar). Among the **oddities** are three **loathe potions**, a **love potion**, and a **potion of indifference**. A **scroll of banishment** can be found in a drawer.

Crones

10 HP, 12 STR, 16 WIL, talons (d6 + d6)

- **Spellbooks (Winnifred):** Phobia, pit, hatred, deafen
- **Spellbooks (Mother Blackcap):** Liquid air, spellsaw, spectacle, befuddle
- **Spellbooks (Matriarch):** Command, web, displace, charm

Potions

- Scentless and tasteless. When the recipient drinks one of these potions they regard the next person they see with unending contempt (**loathe potion**), all-consuming desire (**love potion**) or complete neutrality (**potion of indifference**)



00.00: Tyrant's Tomb

Ancient brickwork has been partially consumed by an enormous dead oak tree. Ravens nest in its brittle grey branches. Between the sprawling roots a huge rock has been shattered into pieces. Behind it, worn stone steps descend into darkness.

- **Oak Tree:** Papery bark disintegrates easily, revealing red cambium the colour of dried blood.
- **Rock:** Covered in faded chalk warding glyphs.
- **Steps:** Slippery, coated with ancient moss.

00.04: Statue

Gargantuan. Marble coated with moss. A crowned hunter surrounded by enormous hounds..



THE DUNGEON