

5E

# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

THE HERMIT'S SANCTUARY





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## hwaet! (LISTEN!)

A far flung isle  
Mist mantled, Rune deep.

Surrounded by the whales way  
A speck of footfall - firmly set

Upon a blue bright shield  
A stone boss boldly sits

Battle-battered by billow maidens  
Ancient bearer of grave and grove.

Home of bristle backed boar  
Racked by wild winds keening.

Culls wheeling screech, its scops;  
Baleful beaked eagles unlock their wordhoard.

Bitter brine - not balmng beer  
Is lapped by that wyrd - wrought isle!

Once a holy held place  
A blessing not bane to honest kin.

In hearth of deep dwelled slaughter,  
Its leavings glut the grey cloaked wolf;

Corges the black ravens bent beak  
Feast giver for Woden's greedy birds.

Moon bleached, snow skinned  
Shield breaker, blood drinker

A pale scabbard for a sword host  
Of battle - bold warriors!

Hardened hearth-troop wreak their craft  
Battle lights sing but do not sever

Blood embers swing - harmless their hewing  
No war sweat stricken from war needles striking.

Forge fired, handiwork of smiths  
Have no power present there.

Wyrd unravelled, blades bite dulled  
Fates weave woe in warp and weft.

# INTRODUCTION TO BEOWULF

BEOWULF is a setting for 5e, specifically designed to work with one player and one GM. It's structured to create adventures with the feel of the epic Anglo-Saxon poem Beowulf, which is the root of so many of our fantasy stories and folk tales.

In BEOWULF your lone Hero sets their will against the world of Monsters, and travels the Whale Road seeking out deathmongers, hellbeasts and the misbegotten kin of Cain, and slaughtering them for the good of humanity. While each Hero is a member of a singular class in the rules system, you'll find that the sample characters possess great variety in their capabilities, background and outlook.

Whether your character is a doomed hero who believes in the Old Ways, and the long defeat against the forces of darkness that will ultimately swallow all light, or whether they are a follower of the Church with its promise of redemption, forgiveness and eternal life, fighting monsters is what it's all about.

You'll ride the Whale Road with your trusted retainers, seek out the truth of what sickness ails each kingdom you encounter, and slay the monster that inevitably lies behind it. You'll meet new friends, take what treasure your sword arm provides, and become

a gracious ring-giver, sharing your wealth and glory with your loyal band of Followers, buy a bigger ship and a sharper sword and await the next call to arms!

BEOWULF is set in a mythical, "story-world" of the Anglo Saxons. It draws on hundreds of years of stories, culture, and decorative arts. Everything that happens in the game is occurring *within* the story of your hero, so you don't need to worry too much about historical accuracy.

The game provides a rich palette of historical influences to draw from, and we've curated our favourite parts of the real history into the full rules. But we're not bound by it. You don't need to know much about Anglo-Saxons to enjoy BEOWULF. Alternatively if you're something of a scholar of the era, then we've provided a framework into which you can deploy your knowledge to great effect.

Perhaps your Hero lived in a half-forgotten Europe hundreds of years before the Anglo-Saxons crossed the Sea to what was to become England. Or perhaps their adventures are taking place just a few weeks before the tale was told. Who knows? And who can say it's not all true?



## INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVENTURE

In this adventure, our Hero travels to the island sanctuary of a Hermit to investigate the tale that a monster is eating people. The sanctuary has been built using stones from an ancient tower of a forgotten people, stones that kept the monster sleeping through old magic.

Damage caused by a recent storm meant even more stone has been taken from the ruined tower, and the beast has awoken. It now roams the island at night, and eats people. It devours one victim each night, and will continue to do so until all are devoured.

The story of the monster, and some of the history of the island can be discovered from the various people and locations around the island, and if the Hero can stay the course they should be able to discover the secret of how to kill it.

Meanwhile two other wefts are being woven across fate's loom: Just as word of the dire emergency on the island has reached our Hero, so has news of the weakened defences on the island reached the ears of raiders. Seawolves and reavers are on their way to attack the hermit's sanctuary, anticipating treasures.

And once there were indeed treasures kept on the island sanctuary. But recently they have gone missing...







## THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

And so it is that our Hero hears the call for aid from this Hermit's Sanctuary. Perhaps they are in their homeland, attending to their king when news of the island's trouble reaches their ears. Or they might be abroad, at another ruler's hall when they hear tell of the monster and the Hermit. The Hero will immediately gather their trusted Followers, prepare their ship for sail and head out in search of adventure!

Each of the pre-generated characters have plenty of information to inspire the beginning of the quest, and includes suggestions about the Hero's homeland and ruler.

In common with all BEOWULF adventures it is assumed the Hero wishes to fight monsters, and in some way help others. A Hero may seek glory, revenge, treasure, or simply to help others. But they will always take action. The full rules, of course, can provide a great deal more detail, but for the sake of this adventure, we're jumping right in.

## FOLLOWERS AND SHIPS

In BEOWULF all Heroes have two things: A Ship and Followers. Along the way they may lose both temporarily, but such inconveniences are part of an epic tale, and a Hero will always be able to secure the return of both.

A starting **Ship** is large enough to hold the Hero, their Followers, and the rest of the benches are filled by the **Crew**. The Crew don't take much part in the adventure, beyond making the ship "go". By and large, the crew of sailors do the unglamorous work of getting the ship from A to B. We don't spend too much time thinking about them.

**Followers** are the trusted friends, retainers, shield bearers and confidantes of the Hero. They will feature in a lot more detail than simple sailors who are not remembered in any tale. **Followers** have a variety of Gifts and Burdens, which can be called into action by the Hero. But this is the Hero's tale, and not the story of the Followers. They enter the action only briefly, play their part and then fade into the background until next time.

Different kinds of Hero will have different numbers of Followers - some Heroes rely on just one companion, some charismatic Heroes may have a larger crew, some may focus on being a loner.

## THE PORTENT

Every adventure in BEOWULF begins with a portent. As the Hero's ship is prepared and stocked for the sea, omens are consulted. This piece of wisdom might come from a prophetic crew member, one of the Hero's Followers, a wise woman of the Hero's native hall, or perhaps come to the Hero in a dream.

For this adventure we will use an abbreviated version of the Portent rules from BEOWULF.

The portent creates something a bit like a line of Anglo-Saxon poetry, as well as stocking three pools with tokens. The portent sets the tone for the events to come, and the tokens in the pools provide inspiration for those times when events seem to fall in line with the portent.

You will need four tokens - regular coins or buttons work well if you can't get your hands on some of our amazing BEOWULF metal coins. You can also print the tokens included with this adventure, and stick them onto card or counters.

## CREATING THE PORTENT

Set aside an area for the GM Pool, the Follower Pool and the Hero Pool. You can use BEOWULF art cards for these, or simply a piece of paper with the name of each pool written on it.

The portent for The Hermit's Island will run "Adjective-Noun, Adjective-Noun". In the full rules this would be randomly generated, with the possibility of much more variety.

For each of the 4 parts of the Portent the player rolls 2d3, noting down the resulting word, and adding a token to the appropriate pool as indicated by the tables below:

- Red (X):** GM Pool
- Blue (P):** Follower Pool
- Green (K):** Player Pool

Meanwhile, the GM should also note down the numbers that are generated for use elsewhere.

In this abbreviated version, re-roll any duplicate results. In the full version the tables are *much* larger, making duplicates very unlikely.

Roll 2d3 for the first Adjective. Cross reference the results on the adjective table. The first number is the horizontal result, the second the vertical result.

### ADJECTIVE TABLE

2d3	1	2	3
1	Ruinous	Harried X	Ancient P
2	Baleful X	Broken P	Honest K
3	Serpent's P	Red-gold K	Worthy K

Then roll 2d3 for the first Noun, and apply the results in the same way.

### NOUN TABLE

2d3	1	2	3
1	Grief X	Storm X	Bearer P
2	Graves X	Wisdom P	Hall K
3	Island P	Shields K	Winds K

Repeat the process for the second Adjective and second Noun.



## VOYAGE CHALLENGES

While the Player is rolling up the Portent, The GM should use the numerical results rolled by the player to determine which voyage challenges will occur on the Hero's Voyage to the Hermit's Sanctuary. The Voyage in this instance is just a short one, so only one Challenge will occur. The GM need only note down the result of the first two die rolls - just the first Adjective in the form X, Y to use later.

### THE INSPIRATION POOLS

Heroes in BEOWULF will find they need inspiration a lot more than regular 5e characters. The Hero Pool provides a source of inspiration. Whenever the player feels that they can make a connection between the words or meaning of the portent and current events in the game, they can claim a token from the Hero Pool. This works exactly the same way as all other inspiration in 5e. You can only be inspired or not. You can't have more than one point of it.

A token from the **Hero Pool** can be spent as the Player sees fit, on all the things you'd normally spend inspiration on.

Inspiration from the **Follower Pool** works a little differently. If you want to give a Follower inspiration, and can find a link between events in the game and the Portent, then claim a token and spend it to give a Follower inspiration. Tokens from this pool cannot be spent on anything else.

The **GM Pool** is a terrifying addition to the 5e rules. Tokens in this pool are used by the GM to give NPCs and monsters inspiration! Any time the GM feels they can claim a link between events in the game and the Portent, they can claim a token.

When spent, tokens from the Pools are put to one side. They don't return until the beginning of the next adventure so use them wisely!

## GATHERING THE FOLLOWERS

Next, the Hero must gather their band for the adventure. For this adventure there is a small selection of Followers for the player to choose from, and each pre-generated character can lead a set number of Followers. In the full game more is made of gathering one's Followers, and choosing who will accompany the Hero on their next great adventure. For this introductory adventure we're keeping things simple.

If the Hero is at their homeland, they have full choice of any Followers because they have many friends that they can recruit. Each hero has a maximum number of Followers, given on the character sheet. The Player selects Followers by collecting their cards, setting aside any left at home.

If the Hero is not at home then the choices are more limited, as most Followers would have left home with the Hero. Sort the

Follower cards into alphabetical order and select those Followers until you are one away from your maximum. These are the Followers from your previous adventure. Then the Hero can select one Follower of their choice as a new recruit. Of course, if you've got the full BEOWULF rules you can make your own Followers.

## THE VOYAGE

In the original Beowulf poem, which is our core inspiration, the titular hero makes several sea voyages. These are quite quickly dealt with, and likewise we don't aim to dwell on time spent at sea: BEOWULF isn't designed to simulate actual sea travel in the Migration Era. We want *something* to happen during a voyage, but not for it to overshadow the main events of the adventure. A run of bad luck at sea might frame the adventure a certain way, likewise some good luck might give the Hero and their Followers a boost.

In the full BEOWULF rules there are many more options for types of challenge, and longer voyages may result in many more challenges being encountered. The longer the voyage, the more Followers a Hero needs just to make it through in good shape. And that means a bigger ship.

## DESCRIBING THE VOYAGE

The Voyage is a transition between the known and the unknown, the world of Men and the world of Monsters. The GM should spend some time narrating this change so that the Player feels like the Hero has left their home (or other known lands) behind. Almost all travel in BEOWULF is accomplished by sea, using ships that are not too dissimilar to the popular image of a 'Viking' longship. These are usually driven by oars but the scop (the Anglo-Saxon name for bard or minstrel) telling the story might add an anachronistic sail to enliven the proceedings and help the Hero reach new lands.

The ships are open, with the crew, the Followers and the Hero all exposed to the element for the most part. Some ships might be gifted with an enclosed tent area but most don't have the room. Travel is cold and wet, full of adventure and bold action.

## READYING THE SHIP

The craft is loaded with ballast, stones that are each about a child's head in size. This gives weight to the ship, causing it to ride lower in the water (without a proper keel, the draft of the ship and the rudder are the only ways to allow the ship to sail at an angle to the prevailing winds). In the event of the ship capsizing, the stones will easily fall out, allowing the body itself to remain afloat. Above the ballast but below the floorboards the supplies are laid in. Everything will get wet over the course of the voyage, so food and other perishables are carefully wrapped to minimise

damage. If the ship has a sail then the mast is stood up in the keelson and supported by the mastfish (both of these are made of wood and are removable blocks that lock in place) and ropes called stays (fore and aft) and shrouds (sides) are tied to keep the mast in place. The yard (the crossbeam that the sail attaches to) and the sail are kept unattached and furled until needed. There are benches and oar-holes for the crew.

Additional supplies can be lashed onto the deck, under the benches or along the inside edge of the ship. Shield-locks allow for the Followers and Hero to display their shields on the side of the ship. Keeping the shields in place during rough weather is not practical and thus the shields are only set out when wanting to make an impression whilst arriving somewhere. The ship might have a figurehead or other symbol that represents the hero and their family.

## THE WHALE ROAD

The voyages in BEOWULF primarily concern themselves with the Baltic and North Seas. The ocean itself is a character in the sagas, called by a series of poetic names that emphasise both its

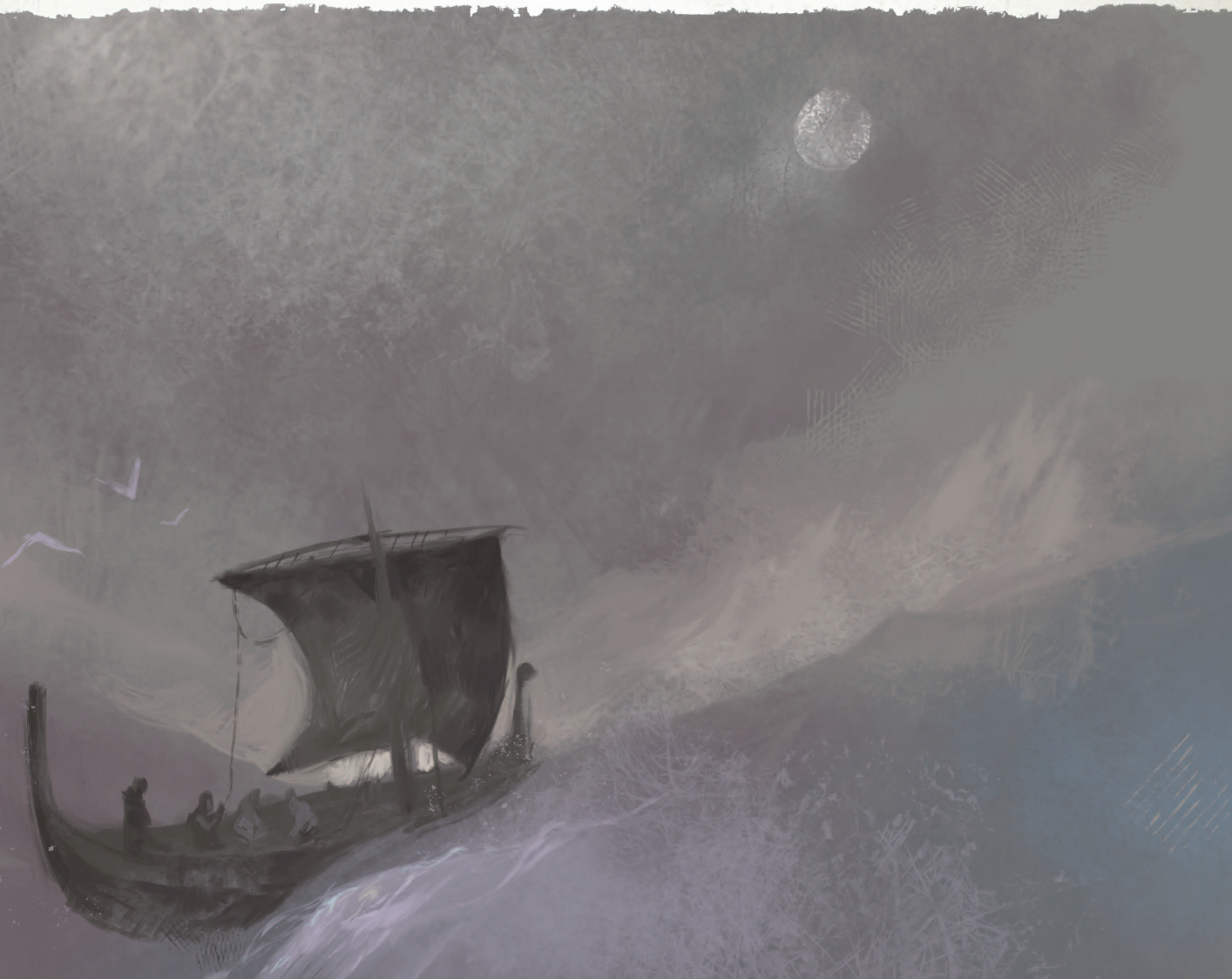
beauty and danger. Once underway, the ship and its passengers are subject to bitter cold, massive swells and water getting everywhere.

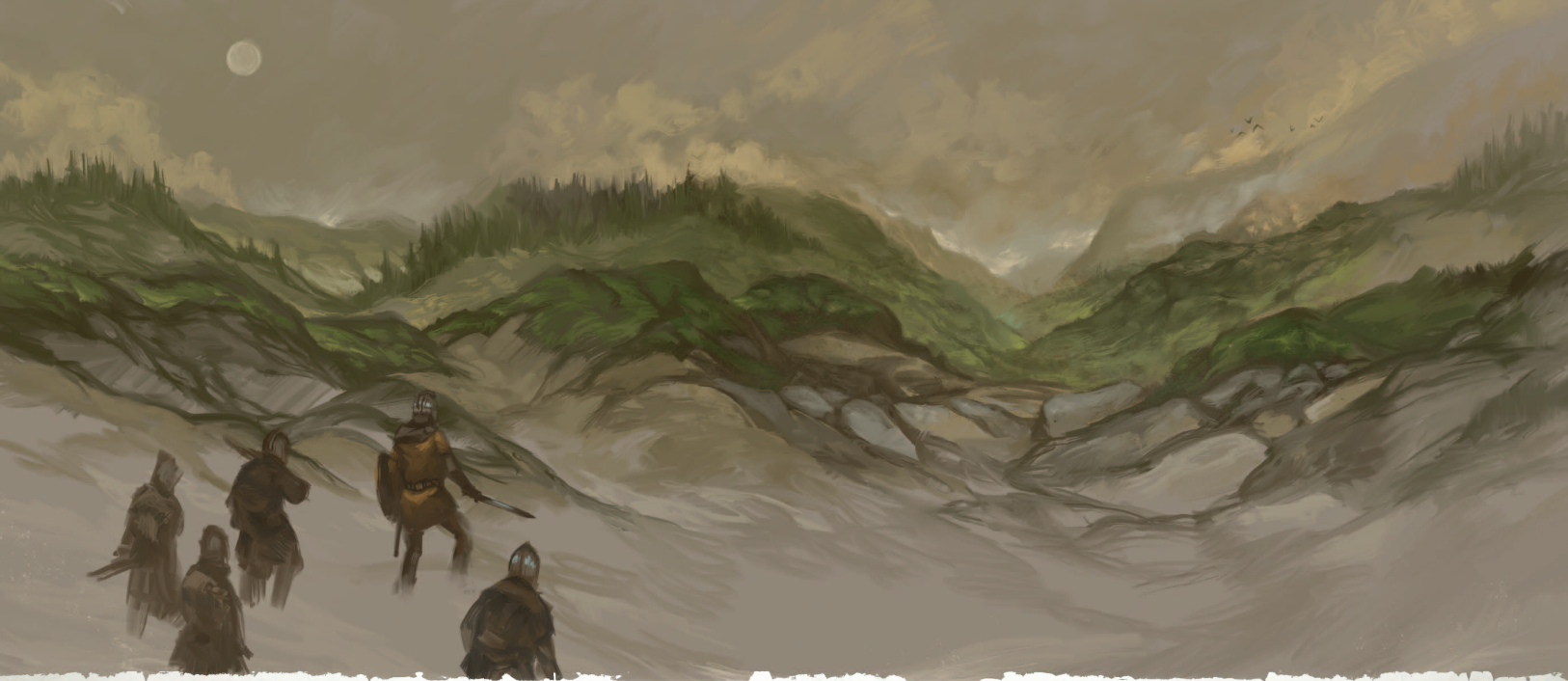
For most trips, the ship tries to keep within sight of land, allowing easier navigation and the ability to come ashore most evenings to have a hot meal and sleep on dry land. Greater voyages require more ambitious reckoning methods. Experienced navigators look for signs of unseen lands by watching the clouds, the seabirds overhead, the pattern of ocean swells and the colour of the water. Even the faintest hint of a mountain peak on the horizon can ensure that the ship is heading the right way.

## THE CHALLENGES

During the course of the voyage, the ship and its crew will be tested by the environment and fate. A wise Hero and prepared Followers might ensure victory but otherwise the voyage may be tinged with grief or frustration.

In the full BEOWULF rules, Voyage challenges come in a variety of types, and tap into different resources available to the player. Followers are almost always involved.





For this adventure there is just one challenge. The GM should take the first two numbers rolled by the Player as they generated the portent, and apply it to the following tables to determine what occurs at sea.

### FOLLOWER CHECKS, SAVING THROWS AND ATTACK ROLLS

For record-keeping simplicity, it is assumed that all Followers have +0 to all of their ability checks, saving throws and attack rolls. Certain Burdens and Gifts might give them advantage or disadvantage on a roll but they never add or subtract anything from the d20 result. The Player can **activate** one or more Followers to use gifts by using either a bonus action or their reaction. The GM may activate a Follower's burden at any time. Many times a Follower will become **spent**, meaning they cannot be **activated** again for the remainder of the adventure. A Follower might be killed or **slain**. The difference is that 'slain' represents a heroic death rather than just bad fortune.

### TYPE OF CHALLENGE

The first number determines what category of challenge is to be met.

1. Man
2. Sea
3. Sky

Then apply the second number to the entries of that category, determining what transpires at sea.

### OF MAN, MANNISH AND WOMEN

The Anglo-Saxons were very keen on their laws, and the writing of laws was a kingly business. It seems they felt that written laws, justly overseen, set them apart from other peoples in their world. In Anglo-Saxon law, the word "Man" was used to refer to both what we call men *and* women. Free women had equal rights in Anglo-Saxon law. So it is that we occasionally use the term "Man" to refer to human, as a thematic point, and as the Anglo-Saxons did. It is not intended to exclude women players or characters in any way, and it categorically refers to both women and men. You may also notice throughout this publication we use the pronouns 'they' and 'their' for Heroes.



## challenges at sea

### Man 1

**Disease.** Some illness is spreading amidst your crew. Choose three Followers, each must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain the Sickness burden.

**Sickness.** This Follower makes all checks with disadvantage. If the Follower succeeds at a check anyways they may remove this burden. Otherwise this burden is temporary and is removed at the end of the adventure.

### Man 2

**Disagreements.** A series of arguments divides your crew, and puts everyone in a foul mood. Starting with a Follower of your choice, have each Follower make a DC 5 Wisdom (Insight) check, stopping when a Follower fails the check, or you have rolled for all of your Followers. If a Follower fails, that Follower receives the Sullen burden.

**Sullen.** This Follower cannot be activated without also becoming spent at the end of the activation. This burden is temporary.

### Man 3

**Overboard.** By accident, a Follower has gone overboard. You must either spend another Follower to rescue the first Follower (who also becomes spent because of the fatigue incurred) or consign the first Follower to death. The GM can choose to have the Follower survive, and receive the Vengeance burden.

**Vengeance.** Abandoned by the Hero, this Follower will make a future appearance in an adventure (this one or a future one). Spend the Follower to impose disadvantage on all of the Hero's attack rolls until the end of their next turn and make an attack roll, doing 1d8 slashing damage if successful.

### Sky 1

**Witch's Aurora.** The dark skies crackle with eldritch energy and eerie lights dance on the horizon. If the witches are bold, then even the ship itself is lit and sailors' hair stands on end and they can feel the cold eyes of the sorcerers on the back of their head. Choose a Follower to make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw, gaining the Witch-touched burden on a failure.

**Witch-touched.** This Follower is convinced that they have certain obligations to fulfill before acting on behalf of the Hero. When this Follower is activated, they do not act or become spent until the next round.

### Sky 2

**Doldrums.** There is no wind at all, not for or against the ship. Choose three Followers, each must make a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check, becoming spent on a failure.

### Sky 3

**Clearest Skies.** There is not a cloud to be seen in the pale blue sky for the entire voyage. Instead the blazing sun always seems to be shining, reflecting brightly off the waves and even every metal fitting of the ship and the Hero's wargear. Choose a single Follower. They must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain the Sunstroke burden.

**Sunstroke.** This Follower has been deeply affected by their exposure to the elements. When activated they must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure they cannot be activated and become spent instead. This burden is temporary and is removed at the end of the adventure.

### Sea 1

**Visitors from the Deep.** Creatures from the deepest parts of the ocean sometimes find themselves near the surface, carried there by a storm or other turbulence. At night, a strange luminescence might surround the ship, or the crew might catch sight of ocean giants much larger than their ship. Choose a Follower to serve as lookout, if they succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check then they gain the Nature's Wonders gift.

**Nature's Wonders.** This Follower has recently been inspired by the beauty and majesty of the world. The first time they would become spent helping you with a natural problem (i.e. one not dealing with men or monsters) they do not become spent. This gift is temporary and is removed at the end of the adventure.

### Sea 2

**Freezing Cold.** Even though the crew is used to sailing in extraordinary conditions, the cold of the sea can be deadly. Choose three Followers to make DC 10 Constitution saving throws. They receive the Shivering burden on a failure.

**Shivering.** No matter what efforts this Follower takes, they cannot seem to become warm. They have disadvantage on all checks until the end of the adventure, when this burden is removed.

### Sea 3

**Fog.** A thick fog rises up from the sea, surrounds the ship, making it hard to know how much progress has been made. The cold fog saps the energy of the crew. Select three Followers, each must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they gain the Enervated burden.

**Enervated.** This Follower has disadvantage on attack rolls. This burden is temporary and is removed at the end of the adventure.

## ARRIVAL AT THE HERMIT'S SANCTUARY

The voyage has taken the best part of 2 days, and how well the Hero and crew fared at sea will determine when they arrive. If they have done well they will arrive before sunset, and get a chance to glimpse a little bit of the island.

If they have been waylaid or delayed at sea then they arrive just after sunset, and will not get a chance to view the island from the sea, and will see little of it as they head to the Hermit's Hall.

## THE ISLAND FROM THE SEA (SUNSET)

The island looks like a giant single stone dropped into the sea. From a distance it looks quite modest in size, but as the ship draws closer the Hero can see just how tall the cliffs are. They range in height from 50 to 100 feet, and the sea booms against them wearing nooks and crannies across their face. The land is covered in heath moor, and slopes unevenly across the mass of the island from the highest cliffs on the west of the island to the lower cliffs on the eastern side. It appears these high cliffs surround the island all the way around, aside from a natural bay on the southern side.



THE ISLAND



There's a pebble beach where a ship can make land, and there seems to be the remains of a ruined tower overlooking this beach. A narrow path winds its way up through the steep rocks above the beach onto the island proper. There is a light at the base of the tower. No other buildings can be seen from the sea.

The sun is setting as the Hero's ship draws close to the only visible place to dock the ship.

## THE ISLAND FROM THE SEA (NIGHT)

The island looms out of the dark, a great slab of rock. Waves can be heard booming against high cliffs, while a small light guides the ship to a safe harbour.

## LANDFALL

Pulling the ship up onto the beach is an easy task for the crew, and they set about securing the ship with props, and setting up their camp, both on board and around the landing site.

It's now up to the Hero how they manage their ship, crew and their appearance on the island. If they chose, the Hero may leave a Follower with the ship, to organise the crew if any defence of the ship is needed.

They may prefer to take all their Followers with them. If they do this, the sailors remain with the ship for now, but without leadership the crew are not a fighting force, and if there is any threat to the ship they will scatter.

It is likely that the Hero and their Followers will be keen to make their presence known immediately. If they do not, then the servant described below will approach the Hero's ship and demand an introduction.

## THE WATCHER

Above the beach is a ruined tower. Huddled in its shadow is a modest hut. The islanders call it "The Landing Hut". Goods coming in and off the island are dropped off here at the Landing Hut, ready to be moved onward. It also forms an impromptu guard post, and one of the Hermits servants has been stationed here to await the coming of any help.

## THE RUIN

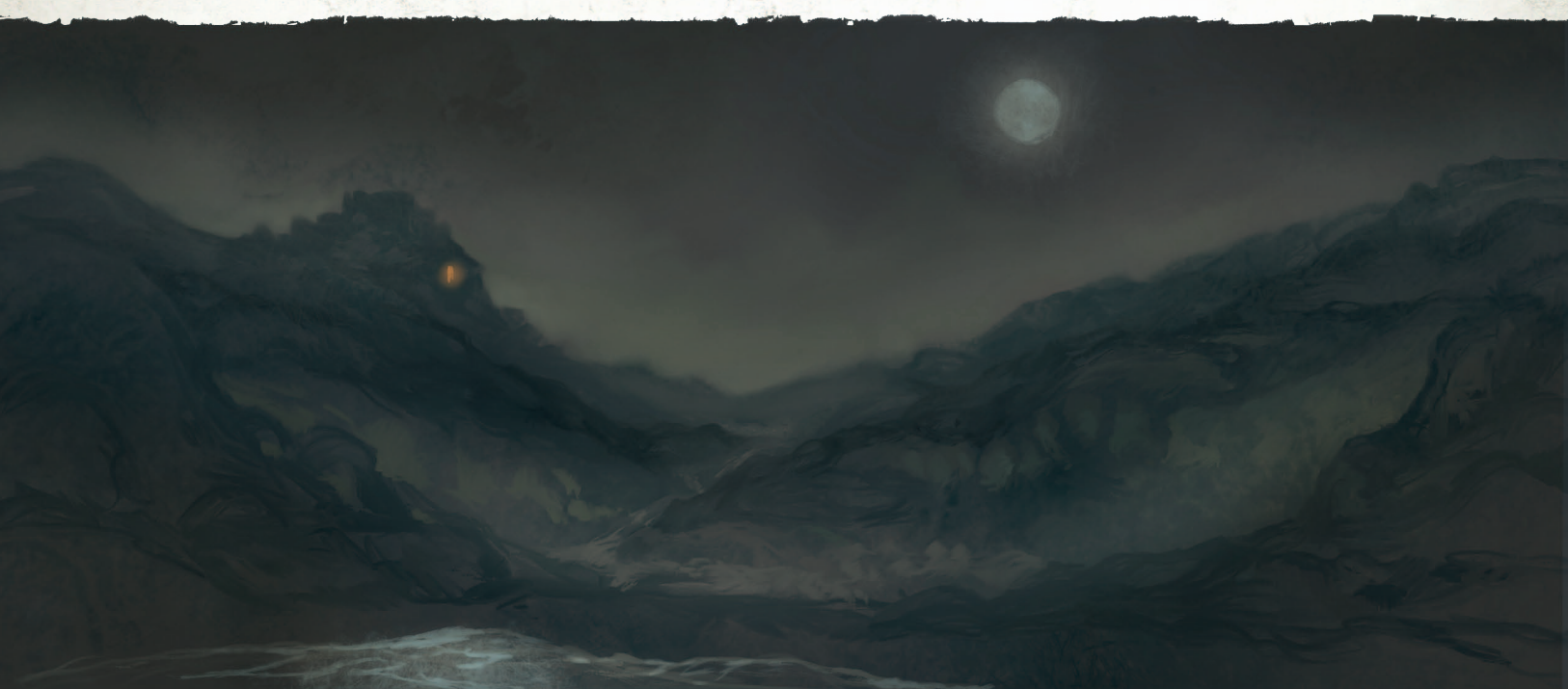
The ruin itself is of unfathomable age. Primarily a ring of huge stone blocks, set in place with many smaller chunks, it appears to have once had incredibly thick walls, with a staircase set into them.

There is only one entrance into what remains of the ruin, which faces north. The lintel remains intact, and the doorway leads into a 12 feet long passage through the very thick walls. Inside is a circular space, overgrown with bracken and brambles. The footing is unsure, with lots of loose stones, and hidden pits.

The ruin is an inhospitable place at night, and even by torchlight it's hard to see the layout of the tumble-down remains. Followers with the Hero will suggest coming back in the daylight should the Hero want to explore. Should they persist, allow them to do so, but there is very little to see here at this time. Old, lichen-covered stone, numerous beam holes in the walls lead to black spaces.

Another doorway inside the ruin leads to the stair case that winds its way some went feet upwards inside the walls. At the top it simply ends in a ruin of masonry.

Close inspection of the walls inside the ruin show some evidence of old carvings, but they are impossible to read in the dark.



If one of the Followers has the Learned Gift, then the Hero can consult with them to learn that this place was built by the Ancients. The Ancients were a mysterious folk, deeply religious and canny in the old ways of magic. They worked many rituals and knew the rhymes of the moon and sun. The Hero should not linger here, since we do not know the old laws placed upon it.

### THE LANDING HUT

The hut is some 20 feet across, and is a simple but sturdy construction of timber posts, wattle and a few wooden planks to stave off the worst of the wind. The rearward walls are made by the walls of the ruined tower behind it, and the hut appears nestled into the side of the ruin. There is a small fire in the centre of the hut, with the smoke slowly escaping through the reed thatch. There is a wooden stool for the watcher, a small wooden box to keep a few things in, and to use as a table. Clearly this isn't somewhere anyone lives.

### CLOSE INSPECTION

BEOWULF adventures are designed to allow a variety of approaches. Some players, and indeed some Heroes, will favour a direct, no-nonsense approach, and simply drive forward to the action. And that's great. We design to allow that.

We also create scenarios so that more cautious Heroes, who favour a less aggressive approach, have things to do. The level of detail provided here is a good example.

Your Hero may simply stride past all this information, and it will not hamper their efforts to do so: It's an entirely valid style. The presence of investigative details shouldn't be read as necessitating their use.

Close inspection shows a great deal of fallen stone around the hut, some of which appears to have been recently moved to attempt to create a windbreak to further shelter the hut. Further inspection also shows the roof, which is made of reed thatch, is in some state of recent disarray and needs repair.

Reeds for roofing are imported onto the island - there are very few natural resources here.

If Frithgar the Builder or a Follower with the Carpenter or Mason gifts are present, they might comment upon this, saying things like 'wild wind and ravaging storms have taken their toll'

and 'while worn stone has been put to good use, merchant ships bearing reeds and lime must return ere these places be made whole again.'

The doorway faces the steep climb up from the beach, and whatever the time the Hero and their Followers climb off the beach, there is someone waiting here to greet them. It will be one of the following three NPCs:

#### 1d6:

1-2 Eadgar, the Boy

3-4 Frithgar, the Builder

5-6 Aelfnoth, the Provisioner

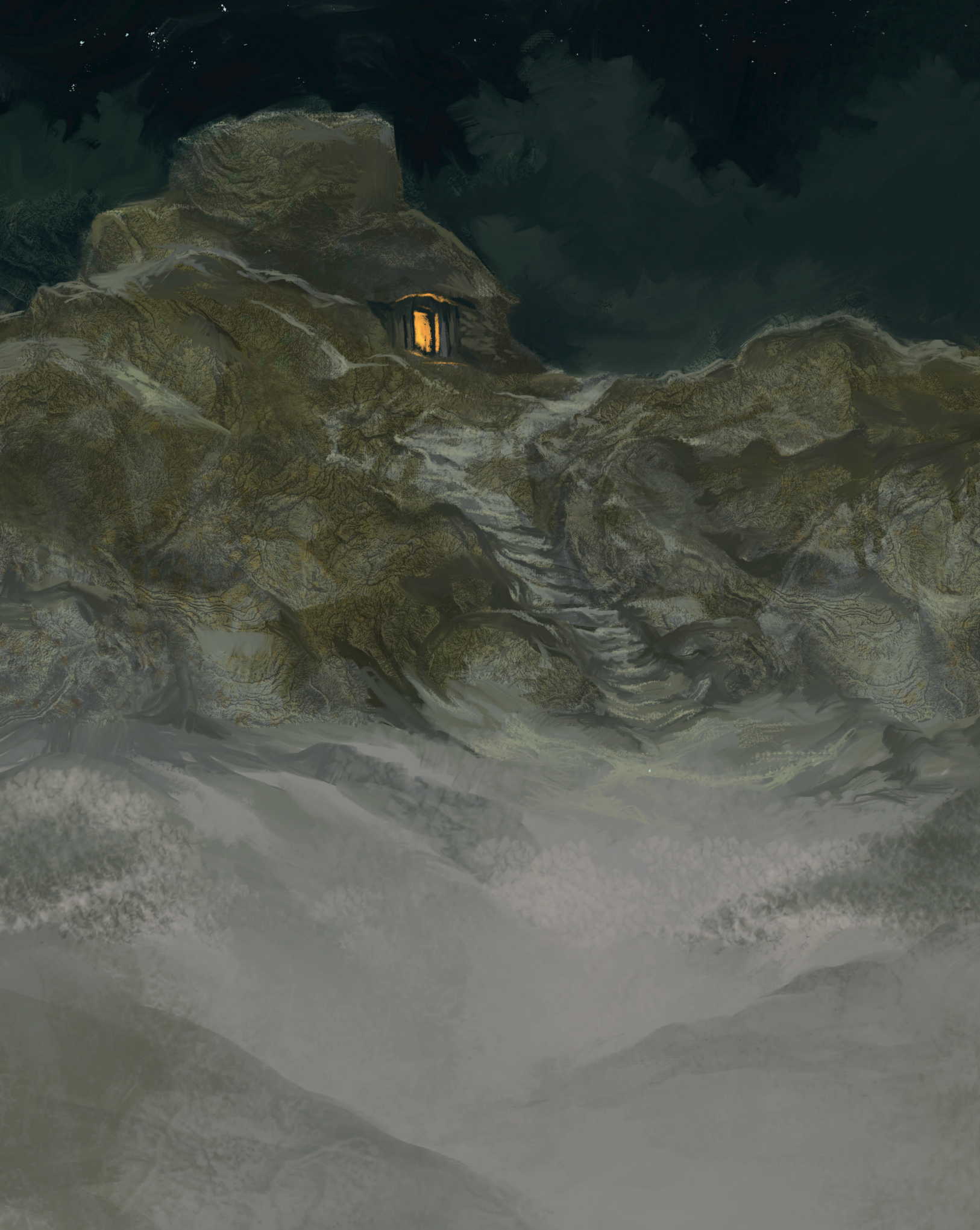
*(or the GM should feel free to choose an NPC they feel most comfortable presenting here, if they prefer)*

The servant present will ask the Hero's name, and their business, while being visibly glad to see them here. They are motivated to return to the warmth and company of the Hermit's Hall, and are very glad to see any help arrive.

There will be an element of ritual to this encounter, as the Hero presents themselves and their Followers to the representative of Ecgberht the Hermit.

- The Boy will take this very seriously, and attempt to appear very grown up and formal. On the way to the Hermit's Hall the Boy will ask questions about the Hero's exploits. He knows three people have been killed, (see page 31) and gobbled up by a monster in the dead of night. He will claim that he isn't scared. He is obviously scared. You can find out more about the Boy in his description in the Meadhall Phase below.
- Frithgar the Builder will appear gruff and not very communicative. He is a very practical man, who will simply welcome the Hero, and bid them follow him to the Hermit's Hall, where his master waits. He will not answer questions about the events on the island, saying that this is for the Master to tell. You can find out more about the Builder in his description in the Meadhall Phase below.
- The Provisioner will be very grateful they've arrived, as he is freezing cold, and is longing to return. He will ask a question or two about the Hero's ship on the way to the Hermit's Hall. He will be happy to talk about the three people who have been killed, and that it's a terrifying turn of events, to have a monster loose on the island. You can find out more about Aelfnoth, the provisioner in his description in the Meadhall Phase below.





## THE ISLAND

From the Landing Hut, the Servant leads the Hero and their Followers up onto the island proper. It's a windswept place with terrain that undulates softly across its small area. Once over the rise that leads to the beach, the Hermit's Sanctuary is immediately visible, lit by what is obviously a large fire lit in a good sized hall, accompanied by some smaller buildings, all ringed by a stone wall.

In the distance there is another smaller walled enclosure. Various standing stones are scattered across the heather and rock-strewn sward of the island. A strong wind is blowing across the island, and the NPC who greeted the Hero is keen to get inside.

## THE STANDING STONE

The group will arrive at a junction, one path leading off towards the smaller enclosure in the distance, the other leading to the Hermit's Hall. At this junction sits a large standing stone, complete with carvings.

The carvings show what appears to be a horned figure, gripping itself. Many smaller figures surround it. They appear to be doing battle. The smaller figures' swords appear to be broken. There is some kind of ancient writing on the stone, made of lines scored by other lines. This is ogham, a language of the Ancients.



A suitable Follower may be activated to read it. The ogham is unclear, but it says something about a gathering of great heroes fighting the giant and all being defeated because its hide cannot be pierced by iron.

This is the first clue as to the nature of the Monster, and that it cannot be beaten by swords.

### WAIT ISN'T THIS ALL A BIT EASY?

Immediately, our Hero learns that the Monster can't be defeated with swords simply by walking past a standing stone? Isn't this a bit easy?

BEOWULF certainly has an investigative element to it. But it's not all about that. Unless you'd like it to be. One Hero might be a wily Anglo-Saxon Odysseus, keen to use their quick wits to unravel a complex puzzle, another might simply be very strong indeed, and want to proceed as quickly as possible to the monster-whacking. Since the game is played with just one GM and one player, it's possible to tailor the style of your BEOWULF adventures closely to the Hero in play.

This scenario is intended to be a straight-forward introduction to the themes, so the Hero gets this one for free, just to get them into it and build their confidence.

But don't worry. Things get more complicated.

## THE WALL

A short walk from the standing stone is the Sanctuary itself; a smallholding comprised of three buildings and various animal pens, all surrounded by a stone wall.

As the Hero and Followers approach, they can see the wall varies in height from 5 to 6 feet tall. It's certainly not an impenetrable defence, but one that keeps out the worst of the wind, and which would make life difficult for any attacker.

Close to the single gateway, a section of the wall seems to be under repair. Wooden posts and some piles of stone mark where repairs are in progress. The NPC present will explain a huge storm recently caused a lot of damage, including to the wall, which partially collapsed near the gate. Frithgar the Builder has been working on repairing it.



THE SANCTUARY

## THE SANCTUARY

The Sanctuary itself comprises three buildings:

- The Store House
- The Servants House
- The Hermit's Hall

It's very likely that the Hero will head straight for the Hermit's Hall, and all kinds of things happen from that point. The other locations within the Sanctuary are detailed first. You may need to come back to these later, although they don't have any vital information for the plot.

### THE STORE HOUSE

A round house rather than a long house, on the left of the path into the Sanctuary, the Store House is approximately 30 feet across, with a thick conical roof made of reeds. It looks fairly recently built - within the last five or ten years. Inside there are some stores of dried and smoked foods, empty barrels, firewood, tools, and some useful things like bolts of woven cloth, trimmed pieces of timber, rope, and some iron pans waiting to be mended. It's likely that should the Hero come up with a plan that requires some raw materials, they can be found in the store house.

### THE SERVANTS HOUSE

This is another round house, simply built, and of some age. It beds into the landscape, the path to the door worn into the earth, and a low crouch needed to enter the door under the thatch. This does make it very cosy.

Inside the Servant's house is divided into a modestly-sized central common area, with a small hearth. The servants often eat here. Around the central chamber sit three sleeping chambers: one for Caero the Housekeeper and her son, another for The Provisioner and a final one for the Builder. Each chamber once had a simple wood framed bed (the beds are in the hall, see below), and a wooden box in which to keep few simple belongings and pieces of practical clothing.

These are private chambers, personal to the servants, and while they won't forcibly object to having their lodgings searched if it is necessary, they will wonder why, and not be overjoyed. After all, there is little here of interest to a Hero.

### THE HERMIT'S HALL

The Hermit's Hall is a wide, low, oval-shaped building. It has a thick thatched roof. There are 2 entrances, one directly across



from the entrance gate to the Sanctuary, and one on the opposite wall, forming a kind of back door. This back door is not used, given the weather on the island, and is covered by wall hangings. A couple of casks sit in front of this door, keeping it shut. They seem very heavy, and if the lids are lifted, the Hero will see they are filled with stones.

The Hall is a place of worship, where Ecgberht the Hermit sleeps, and is also used as a social space, where the inhabitants of the Island gather to greet visitors. Since the recent deaths occurred, the islanders are spending as much time as possible together in this hall, for their safety. They have moved their beds into this main hall.

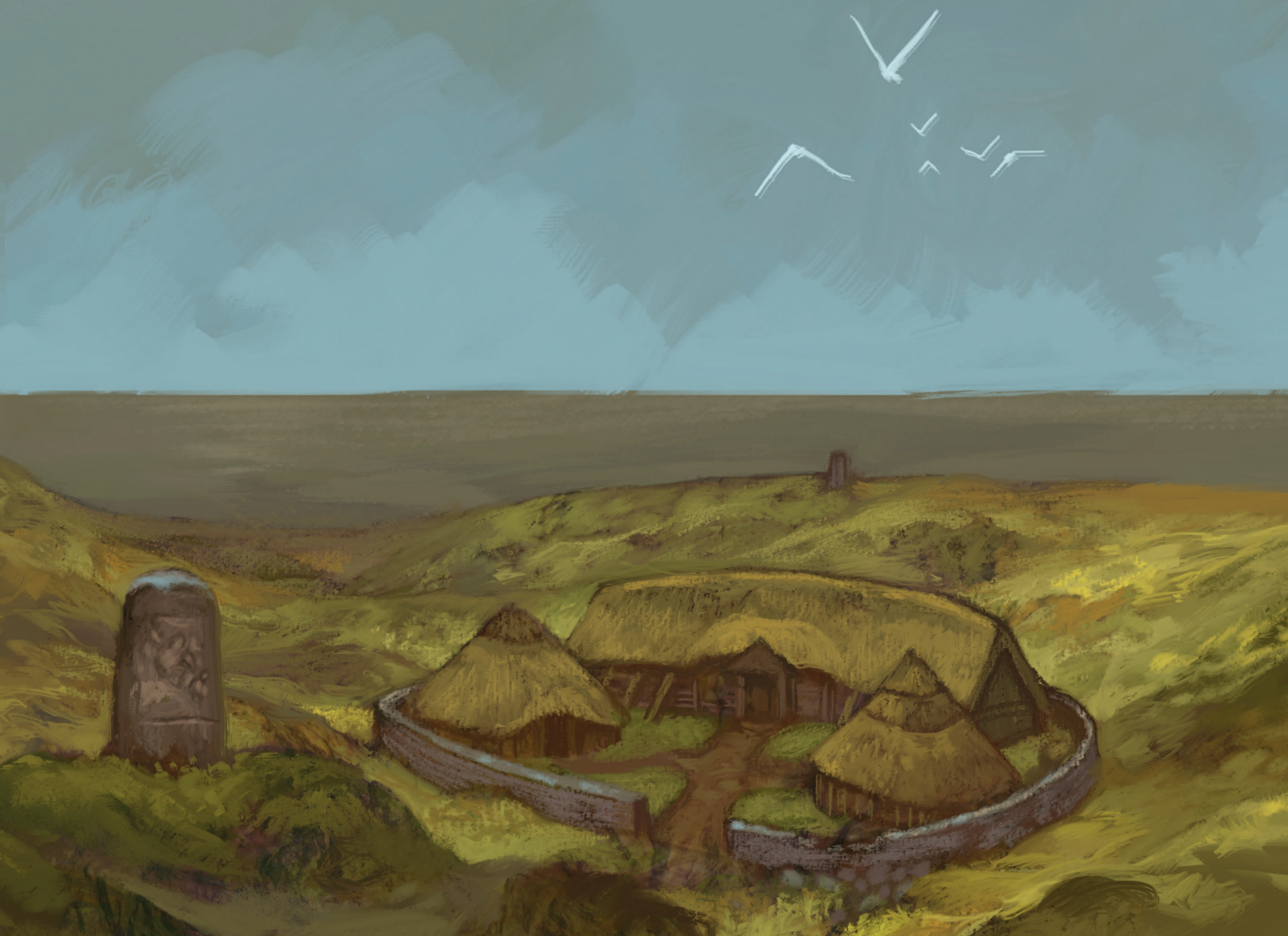
Entering through double doors, a thick felted blanket has been hung over the door to keep out the drafts. The air inside is thick with incense, and a warm glow is cast by a number of candles sat on a wooden altar to the right. There are a couple of tables currently pushed against the wall, and a number of wooden benches and stools are scattered around. In the middle of the hall sits a hearth, in which is burning a good sized fire. After the

rigours of the sea, and the gale blowing across the island, the hall is very welcoming in its warmth and golden glow.

A careful hero might notice that benches have been moved closer to the main doors, appearing placed in readiness to be used as barricades. This might prove a useful defensible location later.

To the left of the door a wall made of thick wattle divides off the Hermit's living quarters. This is a simple chamber divided by a curtain. His sleeping palette sits on one side, and a small table covered in books sits on the other. A wooden stool sits in front of the table. Various chests of different sizes line the walls. It's unlikely that the Hero will investigate these, but they contain a wide variety of Church paraphernalia, letters, clothing, blankets, some silver that Ecgberht the Hermit keeps on hand to purchase supplies and pay his servants.

There should also be a handful of relics and treasures of the church present in these chests, but most of them have been spirited away by Aelfnoth, the Provisioner over the last few weeks, and hidden elsewhere on the island.



## THE HERMIT'S HALL

The Hermit's Hall is where the Hero gets to meet the main players on the island. In a typical BEOWULF adventure this forms the middle act of three. This most often occurs at and around a Meadhall - the communal dwellings that sit around the edges of the Whale Road. BEOWULF uses the catchall term "meadhall" for any significant dwelling, and the heart of an adventure.

At the start of this second act, The Hero presents himself at the social centre of the place where the adventure takes place, and sets about uncovering what the problem is. Each major NPC presents a challenge. By using their skills, abilities and Followers, the Hero can find out a little bit about the situation, and how to resolve it. This might include side-quests that unlock extra information or clues.

Most often the situation at hand is that a monster is causing strife, and must be slain, defeated or driven off. The riddle to be unravelled is in finding out what the beast is, where it can be found, and just how to slay it.

Some NPCs at a Meadhall are interconnected, and the order in which they are approached is important. Some NPCs will have information to uncover by impressing or befriending them with social skills, or perhaps a test of wits. Others might offer the chance to find out more by undertaking a task somewhere else before returning to the Meadhall. Sometimes that might even end the second act and progress the plot, opening one door while closing others. It depends on the particular adventure.

The following NPCs are present in the Hermit's Hall, along with a summary of what information they hold.

- **Ecgberht the Hermit** — an old, apparently confused holy man  
The Hermit will potentially send them to the Walled Graveyard to investigate the bones of the pilgrim, and find out some of the history of the island.
- **Aelfnoth, the Provisioner** — a tall, thin man with something to hide  
The Provisioner will appear very friendly, but will also attempt to introduce doubt about the other characters.
- **Caero the Housekeeper** — a generously proportioned woman who worries for everyone

Knows about the condition of the Hermit, knows a little of the history of the island. Crucially, success in winning the trust of the Housekeeper provides advantage in other interactions.

- **The Boy Eadgar** — a young man with something to prove  
The Boy will potentially send the Hero to the cliffs to investigate the caves - and there they may see the Provisioner's smashed boat.
- **Frithgar the Builder** — a burly and gruff fellow  
The Builder will potentially send them to investigate the ruins and find out more about their ancient power.

## MEETING ECGBERHT THE HERMIT

The servant who met the Hero will lead them into the Hermit's Hall, and present them to Ecgberht the Hermit.

The Hermit will thank the Hero for coming to their aid, and will encourage them to take their rest here, eat some food, and meet the inhabitants of his sanctuary. His mind, at first appearing sharp, will wander, and his introductions will tail off. Aelfnoth, the Provisioner will step in, providing introductions, showing the Hero to the food and drink, and then encouraging them to circulate.

And so the investigation begins!

This is not an especially formal encounter, with no set etiquette to follow. At a hall of heroes, an encounter might centre around feasting and storytelling. There might be contests of arms, or games of skill. At a more mercantile Meadhall there may be trading of information and cargo, with trade goods being bartered and information passed around. A king's hall might be a place of high etiquette, where the Hero's knowledge of hospitality might be tested, or they may be able to impress those around them with tales of their exploits.

And the term "Meadhall" in this context is a broad one. It might well take the form of a longhouse. It might just as easily be a shipwrecked hulk on a lonely beach where a mad king holds court.

Here in the Hermit's Hall, things are quite informal, and the Hero can simply choose who to speak to in order to find out what is going on.

If the Player doesn't warm to this idea of their own accord, a Follower may suggest it as a plan of action. Or an NPC might open a conversation, asking what the Hero intends to do to solve the problem of the mysterious and frightening deaths.

## “FAILWARDS”

At the heart of most meadhalls in BEOWULF are characters for the Hero to meet and social stat blocks for those NPCs. These offer criteria for having advantage and disadvantage in the exchange. They set the stakes for the conversation. An important feature of BEOWULF is the idea of “failwards” - rewards for failing. These checks almost never result in rolling the dice to make nothing happen, and that is contrary to our adventure design principles.

A failed challenge in the Meadhall will change the way the NPCs relate to the Hero and indeed each other. It will create a different story, and probably one that is less generous to the Hero. But a failed check should never create dead ends. It should open a different door. And sometimes there's more to see by going the long way round. The Player should not be afraid of failing.

## THE DEAD

There are 3 NPCs not present, because they have been eaten by the monster.

- The Pilgrims - these 2 travellers, a man and a woman, came to the island together to visit Ecgberht the Hermit, and take

prayers with him. The islanders do not know much of these two, beyond they seemed honest and good followers of the church. They discussed spiritual matters with the Hermit, but little else. They kept themselves to themselves. They were taken on two separate nights - the first was taken when he was walking later in the evening. Only bloody bones were found when Frithgar the Builder searched for him the next day.

- The second pilgrim, a woman named Agnes, was distraught at the death of her companion. She joined him in the belly of the beast the next night, when she went out in search of the creature. Again, just blood and bones were found.

The next morning a boat bearing provisions was sent immediately back to get help.

- The third victim was a newly arrived novice monk, sent to assist Ecgberht the Hermit. He was presumed to have barely arrived late in the day, as the sun was setting. The islanders heard the monster's roars and human screaming. By the time they reached the path to the beach once again there were only grisly remains of the monster's feast.

The islanders know all of this information and will freely share it.



## EADGAR THE BOY

The Boy Eadgar is the son of The Housekeeper. He is 12 years old, slender of frame, with dirty blonde hair. From a distance he seems cautious, perhaps shy. He is a careful child who does not trust strangers easily.

He wears an un-dyed linen tunic, onion-dyed russet trousers and has a small seax and pouch hanging from his belt. He wears a floppy, grey woollen cap. He speaks quietly, but with some assurance on topics of which he is confident.

**Challenge:** To win sufficient trust to get Eadgar talking. This requires a DC 14 Charisma check.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero gives the Boy a gift, or if the Hero has succeeded in a challenge with his mother, the Housekeeper.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If Eadgar has witnessed the Hero shouting at any other NPC.

**Follower hook:** Activate any Follower with a Gift related to caring or charisma to raise any success by one level.

### RESULTS

- **Success by 5 or more:** The Boy is keen to impart that he knows everywhere on the island, and regularly explores it alone. Eadgar will talk about the cliffs all around the island, how they are riddled with caves, and how he thinks the monster is in one of them. He's also seen a boat near one particular cave in the Western Cliffs. He isn't scared of the monster, because he knows he can hide from it. (not true)
- **Success:** Eadgar will talk about the cliffs all around the island, and how he likes to explore them and collect gull's eggs. He's very good at climbing the cliffs. He knows everywhere on the island. He isn't scared of the monster, because he knows he can hide from it. (not true)
- **Failure:** The boy is too shy to speak to the Hero, and Aelfnoth, the Provisioner will take the opportunity to intervene. He will say Eadgar should really not be allowed to run around the place alone, and that one day he will fall off one of those cliffs he's always climbing. He sends the boy off to do his chores.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** No additional effect, except that the Provisioner is even more gruff.

**Further challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Eadgar can be temporarily recruited as a Follower. His Follower Card can be found on page 49.





## CAERO, THE HOUSEKEEPER

Caero the Housekeeper is a short, burly woman in middle-age. She often appears dour, but very much enjoys her work on the island. She has little time for Heroes, concerning herself with more mundane matters like if the rugs have been beaten, or if there are moths in the linen chest. She wears an unbleached apron and headscarf over a nettle-dyed green dress in a rough fabric. Like many women she wears two brooches joined by beads, from which also hang the keys to the linen chests and pantry. The Housekeeper's greatest wish is for things to stay the same, and she is hugely unsettled by the drama unfolding.

Caero is the boy Eadgar's mother. His father is "long gone", and she will be very reluctant to talk about him. They were married, and he was killed in war with "the pagans". She lives in fear of her son following his father to his death in battle. She hoped that moving to an island retreat would keep him safe. She knows however that he is growing into a young man and needs broader horizons than the island offers him. She is not happy about this, and will be very prickly about discussing it with strangers. She would be very resistant to any attempt to recruit her son into a Hero's band of Followers. But will eventually consent, revealing her awareness of his need to leave and find his fortune elsewhere.

The Housekeeper knows that the Hermit, while slowly fading away, "isn't as green as he is cabbage-like". Talk of pagans might get Caero the Housekeeper to reveal something she knows of the history of the island - that before the Sanctuary was built this was a very ancient pagan place, haunted by monsters and death dealers from hell. The Sanctuary keeps the monsters at bay. This is a good clue as to what has happened on the island, if it is a little inaccurate.



**Challenge:** To convince the Housekeeper that the Hero is genuinely here to help. A DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check is required.

**Advantage criteria:** Church-aligned Heroes get advantage. If the Hero has succeeded with Eadgar or the Builder.

**Disadvantage criteria:** Old Ways Heroes get disadvantage. If the Hero failed with the Boy.

**Follower hook:** Activate any follower with a Gift related to the Church to raise any success by one level.

### RESULTS

- **Success by 5 or more:** Caero the Housekeeper will explain her fears for the boy, and might reveal that her husband was killed in war by pagans. She will express her worries about the Hermit fading away, and what will become of the Sanctuary. Crucially she will also reveal that the Sanctuary keeps the ancient forces of evil that once dwelt here at bay.
- **Success:** Caero the Housekeeper will explain her fears for Eadgar, and might reveal that her husband was killed in war by pagans. She will express her worries about the Hermit fading away, and what will become of the Sanctuary.
- **Failure:** Caero the Housekeeper will complain she has too much to do after the damage from leaking roofs caused by the recent storm, and will bustle away. Frithgar the Builder will take the opportunity to explain she is under a lot of pressure, and that these are troubled times.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** Any later challenge taken with Eadgar will be done so with disadvantage.

**Further challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** If all the Followers the Hero brought to the Sanctuary are lost, then the Builder becomes available as a Follower. The Hero might also then try to recruit either the Housekeeper or the Boy. If either is successful, then both are temporarily recruited. (See page 49 for more information.)

## ÆLFNOTH THE PROVISIONER

A tall, thin man, whose appearance brings to mind storks and herons. He has piercing, beady grey eyes, and wears the oiled leather garments of a sailor. He wears a long-eared Frigian cap, under which he has a bald head with long, wispy hair clinging on at the sides and back. He attempts to appear the most worldly and welcoming person on the island, and thereby hides his true intentions. He will be very welcoming to the Hero, and will seek to win their friendship via flattery and being solicitous of, and helpful to, the Hero's thoughts and actions. He will spend as much time as reasonable somewhere else, about his important business of stock-taking and securing food supplies. Most of the time he's waiting for a chance to get aboard the Hero's ship.

Aelfnoth was once a sea-going trader. He found that life too hazardous, but now feels he deserves more from life than he has been offered. He has spent the last couple of seasons stealing relics and treasures from the Hermit, and secreting them away. He had planned to leave soon, but the storm delayed his departure and caused the Monster to be awoken. The Monster has destroyed the boat Aelfnoth planned to use to make his escape. The appearance of the Hero's ship offers a new hope of escape: if he can sneak aboard and hide, he may be able to leave the island before he is eaten by the monster, or discovered to be a thief. It is important to remember he isn't actually the villain here, beyond being an opportunistic thief. He doesn't want to be found out, but he does want the Hero to kill the Monster, since it will solve a lot of his problems. The Provisioner is a complication to proceedings, not a direct enemy.



**Challenge:** To learn the true nature of Aelfnoth, the Provisioner. This requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero has the Adrift or Exile background they might be able to catch the Provisioner in small mistakes as he reveals his previous life.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero considers matters of trade beneath them.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has the Merchant Gift, they can also provide advantage.

### RESULTS

- **Success by 5 or more:** The Hero will be aware that the Provisioner is not as calm nor as friendly as he appears. The Provisioner will let slip that he used to have a boat until recently, when it was holed in an accident.
- **Success:** The Hero gains the sense that the Provisioner is nervous and feels stuck on the island.
- **Failure:** Aelfnoth, the Provisioner gains the upper hand and will use it to cast doubt on other characters. While appearing wholly honest and keen to help, the Provisioner will attempt to cast doubt on the good character of his fellow islanders:
  - Eadgar** - too young to know anything, the boy is too full of fanciful stories for his own good. (partially true)
  - Frithgar the Builder** - he seems very hungry all the time. Stupid is an unkind word, but he is definitely quick to anger, and becomes very violent if crossed (entirely untrue)
  - Caero the Housekeeper** - a bitter woman, who only lives here because she couldn't be put up with anywhere else. (mostly untrue)
  - Ecgeberht the Hermit** - a very holy man, but his mind is failing. (true)
- **Failure by 5 or more:** The Provisioner is emboldened by the obvious lack of critical attention the Hero is paying. While using the smears from the entry above, he also attempts to divert attention from his own thievery by perjuring the two dead people on the island, privately and solicitously sharing that he saw things that made him think they were stealing from the Hermit. He knows however this is a risky strategy, and won't deploy it lightly, and he will make a convincing job of it.

**Further challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** The Provisioner is too cowardly to be recruited, even if this would help get him off the island. He does however, gain the idea of steal onto the boat.

## FRITHGAR THE BUILDER

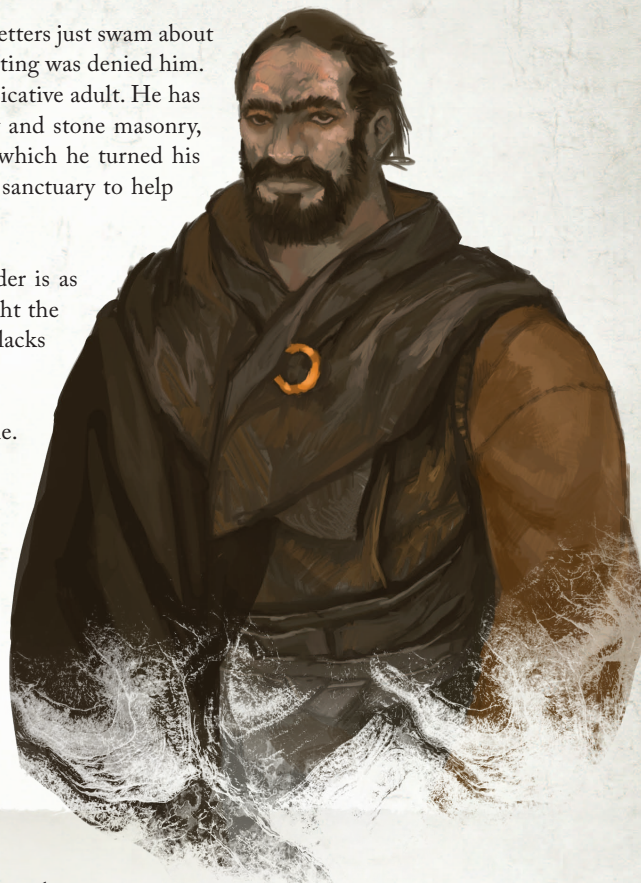
As a boy, Frithgar was an initiate monk, but found he was unable to read: the letters just swam about in front of his eyes, and the apparent truth contained in the holy efforts of writing was denied him. As a result he turned somewhat in on himself, becoming a largely uncommunicative adult. He has spent his life in menial tasks for the Church, settling on a life of carpentry and stone masonry, excelling in neither, but being largely competent at everything practical to which he turned his hand. The Hermit brought Frithgar with him as a young man to the island sanctuary to help maintain it.

In charge of most practical, physical needs on the island, Frithgar the Builder is as close as the Sanctuary gets to a guard. He feels strongly protective of Ecgberht the Hermit, and everyone who lives on the island. Honest to a fault, Frithgar lacks guile, but is completely trustworthy.

He is a large, powerfully-built man, capable of defending himself one on one. But he's no warrior, and is untrained in the use of weapons and armour.

Physically, Frithgar the Builder has a thatch of thick black hair and a full bushy beard. He wears a leather apron, and tatty ochre brown treads. His belt is hung with all kinds of tools and pouches full of nails. He usually has a piece of wood tucked through his belt, should it be needed to serve as a wedge, a ruler or a straight edge.

When he goes out in the elements he wears a huge woollen cape which he pulls over his head.



**Challenge:** To win the Builder's trust and get him to request the Hero's help in gathering more stone from the fallen tower, and get him talking while the work is done. This is a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero has Strength 14 or above, or if the Hero has succeeded in a challenge with Caero the Housekeeper.

**Disadvantage criteria:** None.

**Follower hook:** If a Follower has a Gift relating to physical strength, they can be activated to raise a success by one level.

### RESULTS

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition to requesting help with moving stone from the tower to the wall, Frithgar the Builder will mention he has seen many strange carvings on the stones from ancient times inside the tower.
- **Success:** The Builder will ask if the Hero can assist in repairs.
- **Failure:** The builder has very little to say to the Hero, who he regards as an outsider. He suggests that people of the island need practical help, not heroic swaggering. If the Hero wants to be of assistance there's a lot of stone to bring down from the tower for repairs after the storm. The Hero could start tomorrow.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** As above, but Frithgar is even more direct about his estimation of the Hero.

**Further challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** If all the Followers the Hero brought to the Sanctuary are lost, then Frithgar the Builder becomes available as a Follower.

## ECGBERHT THE HERMIT

Ecgerht the Hermit has lived on the island for many, many years. Longer than he can now remember. Slowly he is leaving this earthly realm of suffering, and his mind is frequently absent. Sometimes he will appear to not know if he is being spoken to. His voice is now a reedy whisper. He wears a threadbare monk's habit, which Caero the Housekeeper is always trying to repair. Often while he is wearing it. The hermit has a balding head and a thin but voluminous silver beard — when it catches the light it appears luminous. His skin is now so translucent and his bones so thin that his flesh appears to glow should a shaft of light pierce the smokey gloom of his sanctuary.

Ecgerht the Hermit is entirely resigned to everything that happens as being God's will, and that everything will be fine in the end. His faith is unshakeable, and he believes that any setback or unpleasantness is a step on the road to understanding of heaven's will. Thus he appears not overly concerned about the appearance of a man-eating monster on his island.

The Hermit has noticed that the relics and treasures of the island are diminishing, and he strongly suspects that Aelfnoth, the Provisioner is stealing them. But he has forgiven the man, and continues to show him every kindness, in the hope he will repent and return the things he has taken. He will not reveal this to the Hero until the Second Day. There are a variety of ways this may come to pass, depending on events. Overall the Hermit is a good man, but now so unworldly that he should frequently appear useless in any discussion of practical matters.

**Challenge:** To keep the Hermit interested and awake long enough to get the most information out of him. The Hero can use Intelligence (Religion) or Wisdom (Insight) to know the right words to keep the Hermit talking. The DC is 15 in either case.

**Advantage criteria:** If the Hero is aligned with the Church.

**Disadvantage criteria:** If the Hero is rude or dismissive to Ecgerht's servants.

**Follower hook:** A Church-aligned Follower can also provide advantage.



### RESULTS

- **Success by 5 or more:** In addition to the success result below, the Hermit shares that he believes God has sent the Hero to help, and that he will help the Hero. He quietly presses a bead on a thread into the Hero's hand. It is an amulet against evil. See "The Amber Talisman".
- **Success:** The Hermit will reveal that this is a very ancient place, where the ancients who followed the Old Ways and pagan gods did their magic. This has always been a place where their magic was strong, but now it is waning in the light of the word of the Church, and that the more people learn and read, the less there is to fear from the dark. He mentions that even the stones of the Graveyard attest to the island's past.
- **Failure:** The Hermit is not impressed by the Hero, and suggests that they spend some time in contemplation. The small graveyard on the island is a peaceful place where a noisy group of idiots might find wisdom. Away from him. And they might take their clattering spears and shields with them.
- **Failure by 5 or more:** All other challenges in this scene are taken with disadvantage, as the other inhabitants distrust the Hero.

**Further challenge:** None

**Recruitment:** Not Possible

## OUTCOMES

### THE AMBER TALISMAN

An oval of bright amber, it is carved with the symbol of a man with his arms outstretched. Ecgberht the Hermit explains this is the symbol of Heaven even before the Church came to these lands, and it has always had power over the dark places of the world. A follower of the Old Ways may recognise the symbol as an ancient one of their own faith, while a Hero who follows the ways of the Church will see it as a holy talisman. When worn, The Amber Talisman allows the wearer advantage on one saving throw per day.

### MEADHALL OUTCOMES

The Hero should now have some idea of what to do next. Since it is now firmly night time, both Followers and NPCs will advise against leaving the hall now — indeed there is little wisdom in trying to find more standing stones, climb cliffs, or visit the old graveyard in the pitch darkness. And the Hall needs a protector present, not running around in the darkness.

Hopefully the Hero will have seen the wisdom in speaking to everyone present, and have collected some ideas of what to do and where to go next. Even if they just speak to the Hermit they will be aware of the cemetery and the standing stone they encountered earlier.

### THE FIRST NIGHT

The Hero and their Followers may choose to bed down in the Hall with everyone else, or head back to their ship. The Hero may wish to plan some kind of defence of the Hall. And that's fine - let them have their fun. There isn't much to work with, in terms of people or materials. Barricading the door is really the best anyone can do.

If they head back to the ship they are in for a fateful encounter with the monster.

If they stay in the Hall, then the ship and its crew are in for a fateful encounter!

### HEADING BACK TO THE SHIP

No one from the Hermit's Hall will be willing to accompany the Hero back to the beach, and they plan to sensibly barricade the

doors against the Monster after anyone leaves. The way back isn't difficult, and while the ship can't be seen from the path to the beach, the way is easy to find.

Shortly after passing the standing stone they encountered earlier, the air is rent by the roar of the Monster! All the Hero knows at this point is what they learned from the stone: that swords apparently break on it. If indeed this is the monster depicted. The monster's pale bulk looms from the gloom.

This is an important encounter for a Hero. The Monster *cannot be defeated at this point*. If the Hero stands and fights, they may well have to make use of their Followers to get them out of the battle. And that might mean the permanent loss of Followers. If the Hero wishes to run, they will have to run back to the Hermit's Hall.

### THE DEFEATED CONDITION

One of the keystones of BEOWULF is the new **defeated** condition. This allows creatures to be mechanically defeated without being reduced to zero hit points, or even anywhere near zero. It also allows creatures to be *immune to being defeated*. Most Monsters in BEOWULF need some kind of action, or series of actions, to be taken to make them susceptible to the Defeated condition, while having way too many HP to overcome with a sword alone. For example, in the simplest instance, a monster might be immune to gaining the defeated condition unless it is in the same location as a powerful talisman, or legendary weapon. Or it may be much more complex, with the Hero needing to trick the monster into a certain location, at a certain time, and defeat it at a game of riddles.

"Defeated" is also very useful for other opponents. Not everyone fights until they're dead, and this works well for solo Heroes. They need only do enough to drive off an opponent, or group of opponents, rather than slay them all. The full setting book contains a lot more information on the defeated condition.

### THE MONSTER

The Monster of the Island was once known as Múthbona the Eater. It is a hulking brute, with corded muscles bulging under a pale, leathery hide. Its face is flat, with beady red eyes, and great broken tusks protruding from its blood-stained mouth. It has adorned itself with grisly trophies from centuries of terror: a crude belt is slung with Sundered shields and hacked helmets. It wears numerous hero-torcs as arm bands. Across its back and shoulders can be seen dozens of broken spears, javelins and arrows. Various axes are lodged in its flesh.

During the long ages spent slumbering in its cave, the troll's skin has lost all colour, and its flesh is now bleached bone white. This presents a terrifying apparition by torchlight. Despite its size it moves almost silently, looming out of the dark like a hulking blood-mouthed ghost.

The Monster primarily wants to feed, after centuries of hungry sleep. The best strategy the Hero could employ here is to run back to the Hermit's Hall or their ship. The Hall is much closer. The Monster's aim in this encounter is to grab a Follower and make off with them to feed. It cannot be defeated, but will not kill everyone in order to get food.

It is likely if the Hero does not run, that they will be beaten down within a few rounds. They will have to use their Followers' ability to get them out of the encounter. This will be expressed either as a fighting retreat during which a Follower might be slain, or the Hero may be knocked unconscious and awake in the Hermit's Hall, to discover which of their Followers survived the retreat.

## MONSTERS

In the setting of BEOWULF a Hero will encounter a variety of Monsters. Note the capital M. There are any amount of strange and dangerous creatures in the wide world, in the dark forests and forgotten corners across the sea. But Monsters are rare and incredibly dangerous.

Battling a Monster with a chance to actually win usually forms the climax of a BEOWULF adventure. And in order to defeat a Monster there are usually certain criteria that must be met. It's rare that a true Monster can be defeated by a simple sword alone.

This is expressed in the rules by most Monsters being immune to the defeated condition until those particular criteria are met. Meanwhile, they might have enormous numbers of hit points, and so can defeat any opposition, and run riot in a kingdom, but can be defeated in special ways, often only discoverable by a Hero.

Múthbona's stats can be found on page 45. When combat begins, you roll initiative for only the Hero and the Monster. The Hero can use their reaction to activate Follower abilities such as Battle-bred, Spearbearer, and Take a Blow. However, even with the aid of the Followers, this battle is unwinnable. The Player may realise this soon, and order a retreat or might fight to the bitter end. In this case, the Followers with Rescue the Hero are automatically activated. The Hero will not die, but it is likely that one or more of the Followers will, carried off by Múthbona.

The Followers will take the Hero to the Sanctuary or the Ship (whichever is more practical) and the Hero will gain the benefit of a long rest.

## RUNNING TO THE SHIP

The Hero may choose to evade the monster, and flee to their ship. This seems a little ignoble of them, and they will pay the cost: in their absence the Monster will attack the Sanctuary, breaking through the roof, and grabbing one of the NPCs. They are dragged away screaming to be devoured.

### Roll 1d4:

1. The Builder
2. Caero the Housekeeper
3. Aelfnoth, the Provisioner
4. Eadgar the Boy

## STAYING IN THE HALL

Everyone beds down in the hall, and fall asleep as the logs crackle and shift in the embers. What happens next depends on whether the Hero left a Follower with the ship:

### If no Follower was left with the ship:

There is a sudden clamour outside the hall, and a loud banging on the doors. It is the crew, or at least most of them. The ship has been attacked in the night, and they have fled up off the beach. They don't know how the ship fared, or where everyone is - they scattered into the dark. The Monster has in fact eaten one of them. And it has also holed the ship, giving the ship the Weakened burden. The Hero won't discover this until they go to investigate their ship. At which point they should record Weakened on the ship portion of their character sheet. This means that their ship will be no longer as fast, and they will suffer disadvantage when dealing with challenges at sea.

### If a Follower was left to lead the crew:

There is a sudden clamour, but in this case it is led by the Follower, who announces themselves at the door. The ship has been attacked, the crew fought valiantly to defend the ship and it is unharmed, but a crew member was carried off by a huge beast! Their spears and javelins apparently did nothing to hurt the creature.

While it would be most unwise to head out into the dark in search of the Monster, it cannot at this point be found, having retreated to its hidden cave to feast on the body of the unfortunate crew member.

The ship is now one oar short. This doesn't have any immediate mechanical effect, but the Player need not know this. The clock is ticking, night is always coming, and they need to find a way to defeat this creature.

## THE SECOND DAY ON THE ISLAND

- Exploring clues
- Raiders attack
- Retreat to the Hermit's Hall again

The coming and going of the servants wakes the Hero and their companions in the now-chilly hall. The Housekeeper prepares a breakfast of oat dumplings and the leftover meat from last night's meal, while Frithgar the Builder stokes the fire. The Hermit is sleeping, and Aelfnoth, the Provisioner is nowhere to be found. No one will express any concern about the Provisioner's absence. He's often away, seeing to this and that around the island.

It is very likely that the Hero will have a destination in mind for today's investigation. If not, a Follower or NPC will drop some hints of what might be a good idea. Throughout the day the Hero may wish to return to the Hermit's Sanctuary to find NPCs to question further.

The only character not freely available is Aelfnoth. He's making his secret plans to stow away on the Hero's ship, and hopes thereby to survive the ravages of the Monster.

There are 7 key locations on the island to explore for clues as to how the monster may be defeated:

- The Walled Graveyard
- The Standing Stones
- The Northern Cliffs
- The Western Cliffs
- The Eastern Cliffs
- The Ruin
- The Wall Repair

## THE WALLED GRAVEYARD

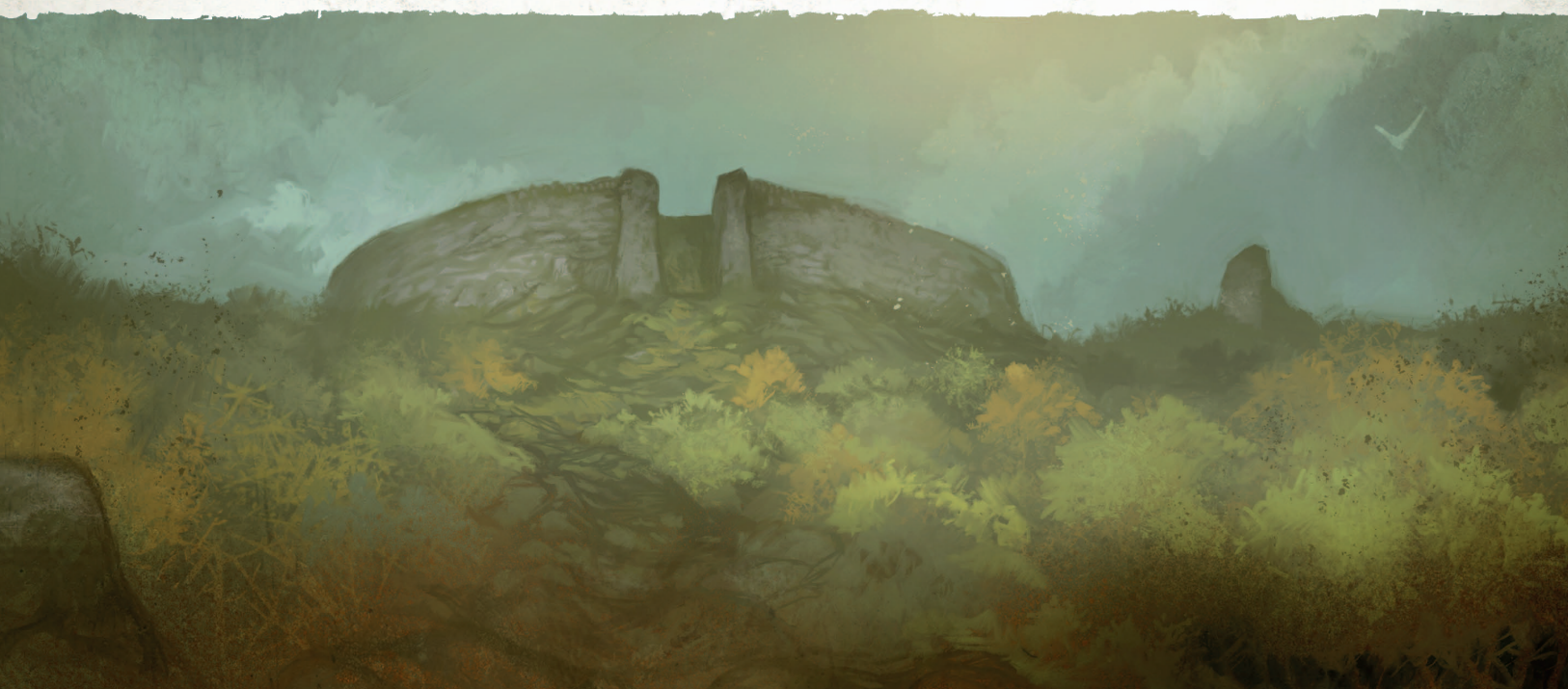
The Walled Graveyard is where generations of Hermits and their especially loyal servants are buried. To be buried here is a mark of some honour. The graveyard itself sits in the North-Western part of the Island, reached by an undulating track. The track is filled with stones, and ever-encroaching gorse and heather.

The graveyard itself is a circular enclosure of tightly placed stones. The wall is some 5 feet high, which provides the enclosed space good shelter from the winds that blow across the island. The gateway is a low linteled opening.

Inside the enclosure there are three fresh graves, dug to bury what remained of the three previous victims of the Monster. There is no benefit to disturbing the graves, and Followers and NPCs will react strongly against the idea. Graves are sacred, whether the Hero be a follower of the Church or the Old Ways, and there is a strong taboo against digging them up, especially for no reason.

There are half a dozen older graves, each one being a six foot long grass hummock, facing east-west. Each one has a small stone marker as a headstone. Each stone is less than 2 feet high and each has a carved, interlacing design on it.

Directly opposite the entrance is a much larger grave marker and its accompanying grave. When the Hermit's graveyard was first used to bury the very first hermit, an especially suitable stone was found to use as a grave marker. The servants of the Hermit of the day stumbled across a nearby standing stone which showed which they believed to show a Saint of the Church, using an amulet they dubbed "the serpent's cross". And so the main headstone in the graveyard is a broken-off standing stone, with a distinctive angular shape at its root. This could be matched to its broken base elsewhere on the island (see "The Standing Stones"). If necessary, Frithgar the Builder can talk about how stones are reused around the island.



The stone shows a robed figure holding up an amulet, and the monster from the first stone appears to be quailing in its presence. The amulet has a very particular design, showing a cross shape with an interlacing pattern of serpents.



## THE STANDING STONES

Across the heather moor of the island are scattered a variety of ancient standing stones. These predate the Hermit's Sanctuary by hundreds of years. In the daylight, these stones are easy to spot, and to walk between. The Hero will already have seen the one standing stone earlier, which shows warriors' swords breaking on the hide of a monster. The desire to investigate these is self-motivated, inspired by seeing the stone on the way to the Hermit's Hall, and it requires no special skill check to uncover more information about the Monster and the Island. It simply takes time. And, as an NPC or Follower will remind the Hero, the Monster will kill again tonight.

There are an unusual number of these stones, most of which don't do more than indicate this is a special place, to have so many markers placed here by the ancients.

## STANDING STONE GENERATOR

3d8

### Size:

- 1: Tall (10 - 12 feet high)
- 2: Short (3 - 4 feet high)
- 3: Medium sized (around 6 feet high)
- 4: Slab (a broad, table-like stone)
- 5: Broken (sheared off at 2 feet, with no evidence of the lost piece)
- 6: Fallen (10 feet high, but lying down)
- 7: Plot Stone
- 8: Plot Stone

### Texture:

- 1: Covered in deep green moss
- 2: Covered in delicate grey-green lichen
- 3: Wind-scoured, making any carvings indistinct
- 4: Grass-topped
- 5: Cracked
- 6: Pock-marked, with rainwater-filled holes
- 7: Plot Stone
- 8: Plot Stone

### Carving:

- 1: Covered in spirals
- 2: Covered in beast designs
- 3: Ancient ogham script in a forgotten language
- 4: Runes made indecipherable by weather
- 5: Geometric pictograms featuring lozenges and arrows
- 6: Mysterious concentric rings and dots
- 7: Plot Stone
- 8: Plot Stone

Aside from the numerous random stones, there are several "Plot Stones" which tell the story of the Monster and the tower.

The pacing of the discovery of these stones can be governed by the dice, or be up to the GM. Perhaps they are encountered on



the way to other locations, punctuating events, and drip-feeding information about the Monster. Alternatively, especially if the player wants to investigate the stones, they might form their own chunk of investigation. The random tables presented here are entirely optional and are a tool to be used, or not used.

**Plot Stone 1** - The Hero has already encountered this stone, and seen a beast which cannot be killed. There are further examples of this story around the island.

**Plot Stone 2** - On this stone was once the story of an ancient Hero subduing the Monster with the light from an amulet. It's been broken off and moved to the Graveyard. What is left is a distinctive angular shape, and a piece of interlaced border, which could be easily matched to the headstone in the Walled Graveyard.

**Plot Stone 3** - This stone features the same monster apparently asleep (or dead?) in a cave under the island. The ancients are building a tower above the cave.

**Plot Stone 4** - There are various stones around the island which feature the "Serpent's Cross" symbol.

## THE CLIFFS

The island is roughly circular, and the cliffs are divided by compass point, each being an equal portion of the island for the sake of the scenario.

## THE SOUTHERN END OF THE ISLAND

The southern coast of the island is more or less filled by the beach. There's nothing new to find here, though the Hero may wish to check in on their ship.

### What the crew are up to:

#### 1d6

- 1: Roasting sea birds
- 2: Singing a merry sea-chant about returning to the hall with barrel loads of rings. Arm rings, neck rings, finger rings and so on.
- 3: Singing a dismal song of straying from the safe swan road, and drowning alone in a frigid sea
- 4: Building fences around the ship out of driftwood
- 5: Drinking heavily
- 6: Remaining steadfastly on the ship, eating dried fish and looking terrified.



## THE WESTERN CLIFFS

This is the section of the island that hides the Monster's cave. The Hero may be keen to investigate this area without knowledge of the Monster's lair, or later they may come here with the intention of slaying the Monster.

This section of the island's cliffs are pocked by dozens of holes and niches. It takes some time to explore all of them, and it may appear a hopeless task.

The cliffs at this point are some 100 feet high, and offer a bracing view of the iron grey sea and sky. There are a few sea birds here, but more can be seen flying above the Eastern cliffs across the other side of the island. They seem not to favour these cliffs. Which means Eadgar the boy does not collect eggs here.

A careful search of the cliff top may uncover a hidden path that winds down through the rocks to the small beach detailed below. It is very well hidden, and requires a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Finding this hidden path allows the hero to follow the footsteps of the Provisioner to his hidden boat on the beach below.

Climbing down the cliffs to investigate the caves requires some kind of plan - the Hero may be able to fetch rope from the ship, or enlist the help of Frithgar the Builder with some materials to secure a way down using ropes. Eadgar is well used to climbing on the cliffs, and he could be enlisted to help. If accompanied by the Boy, the Hero gains advantage on any climbing checks.

To reach the base of the cliffs using a rope requires one successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Alternatively, an especially athletic Hero may be moved to simply climb down the cliffs without a rope. This is a dangerous gambit, and requires a successful DC 12 Strength (athletics) check for each section of the climb. There is a suitable ledge or nook in which to pause every 30 feet or so. The Hero will require 3 successful checks to reach the base of the cliffs in one piece without a rope.

For each leg of the climb, the GM should roll 1d6 to check the wind. On a roll of a 1, the wind has gathered sufficient speed to impede the climb. The DC is raised to 13. On a roll of a 6, the sun appears, the breeze drops to nothing, and the DC lowers to 11.

On a failure, either climbing or using a rope the following things may happen:

- Failure by 1 to 4 - slip and scrape: The Hero slips but recovers, merely skinning their knees or elbow, at a cost of 1d4 bludgeoning damage.
- Failure by 5 or more - a serious error of judgement - The Hero tumbles from one outcrop to another, taking (11) 3d6 +1 bludgeoning damage.

Falling does however complete that leg of the climb.

It's possible that the Hero may fall and be reduced to zero hit points. In which case their Followers will rescue them - clambering down with ropes from the ship, to return the unconscious Hero to the Hermit's Hall. While doing so they will observe the broken boat and large cave detailed below. The Hermit overhears this talk and will provide additional information about an old curse on the island. See "The Hermit's Curse", page 38.

## CLIMBING BACK UP

Should the Hero decide to climb back up and take no further risks they may do so without rolling - having climbed down, and with the help of their Followers the upward climb is much easier than the downward.

After two successful climbing checks, or during the rope descent, the Hero reaches a point where they can see down into a bay below. A small rocky, weed-covered beach sits before what appears to be a large cave mouth. On the beach is a ruined rowing boat. But it appears to be very freshly broken. To any sea-going hero, it's obvious this boat has been smashed on the beach. It has not been wrecked at sea.

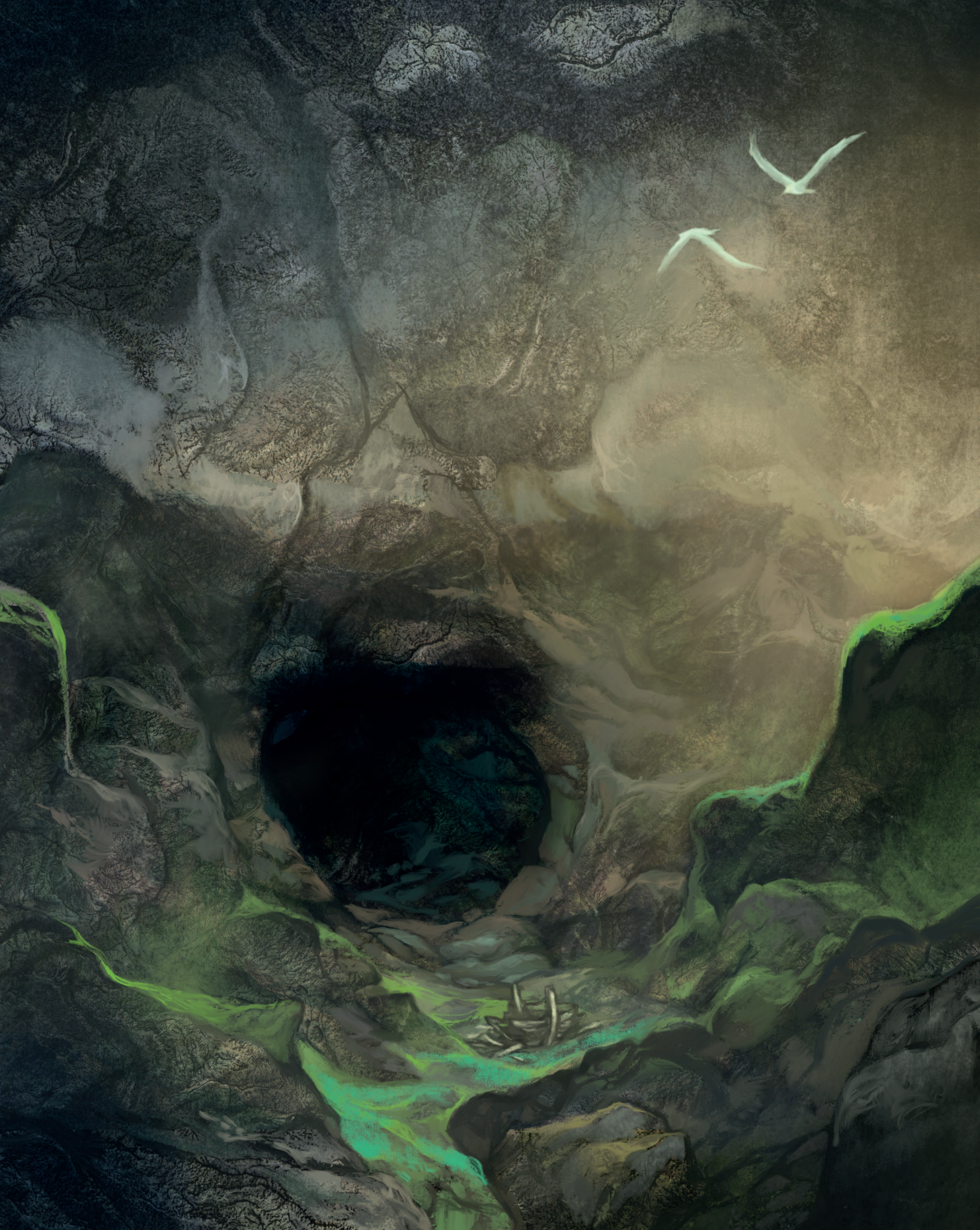
One final leg of climbing, or simply finishing the rope descent, and the Hero is able to reach the small beach.

## WHERE ARE MY FOLLOWERS? WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

In BEOWULF, the story is centred upon the Hero. Followers that are with the Hero (rather than left at home, or with the ship, or some other location) are always considered to be helping the Hero, and doing broadly the same thing as the Hero is doing. But we do not concern ourselves too greatly with their actions. This after all is the Hero's tale.

In this instance, Followers will be climbing down the same rope, helping secure it, spotting holds for the Hero, or breaking their fall should they slip. If the player wants to, then there's plenty of enjoyment in describing what the Followers are doing at any given time, but this is optional, and has no mechanical impact, beyond an opportunity to be awarded inspiration for good roleplaying.

In combat situations, Followers will aid the Hero, clashing swords with enemies, throwing their spears, and generally taking part, but to no mechanical effect. Unless they are activated to use specific relevant gifts, they're background colour.



It's clear that this is not a well-used beach. The rocks are slick with weed and slime.

The boat looks like it has been smashed with great force on the beach where it has been pulled up. It is initially unclear what could have done such a thing - there are no large boulders in evidence, and it is clearly not the work of tools. The boat was not wrecked at sea. No-one of man-size could have delivered this damage. It seems pretty clear to the Hero's Followers, if not the Hero themselves, that this is the work of the Monster.

At the head of the beach the cave looms ominously. It's a huge cave mouth, some twenty feet high. Inside seems incredibly dark. Anyone heading into the cave mouth will be struck by an incredibly strong sense of dread.

### WHAT NOW?

The Hero may have already encountered the Monster, and be aware it cannot be defeated by sword blows. Or the crew may have learned the same. A shrewd Hero will want to find out more before entering the lair, and Followers present will advise caution. What do they know of this beast's nature, or its desires? It seems foolhardy in the extreme to rush in. However, the Hero may enter undaunted. The description of the cave appears later in this scenario. The Monster remains undefeatable and it is extraordinarily unlikely that the Hero can do enough damage to kill it. If the Hero insists on entering and exploring, they will encounter the Monster again, and will not be able to slay it. The Monster will not pursue them beyond the cave mouth as it cannot bear daylight. But it is entirely possible the Hero may have to be rescued by their Followers.

### THE NORTHERN CLIFFS

The Northern cliffs are the highest. They climb up from the tumultuous sea below to some 120 feet. The wind here is always severe, and it is a foreboding place to stand. The edge of the cliffs is wind-worn and treacherous. Looking along the cliff edge, the Hero can see the turf and underlying tangle of old gorse and heather roots are undercut. In places there are holes through which the sea can be seen, far below.

Climbing these undercut cliffs without a rope is incredibly dangerous. Followers will simply refuse to climb down, as it is so obviously a suicidal endeavour.

Securing a rope to climb down is very dangerous indeed. The ground underfoot is crumbling and treacherous, and unsuited to placing pegs or posts. There are various boulders within 50 feet of the cliff, but each is undercut by time and weather, sitting in a pool of water, and of uncertain footing.

During the course of a general search of the area, or more specifically while looking for an anchor for a rope, the Hero will encounter an especially large boulder. It sits in a pool of water,

where time and weather have worn away the turf around it. The pool stretches some 10 feet outwards from the stone in all directions. It appears to have some markings on one side, which can't be examined without stepping into the pool. They prove only to be the idle scrawlings of some ancient visitor, however.



### THE EASTERN CLIFFS

This stretch of cliffs is lower than the others, being some 60 feet high. The cliffs here are less sheer than in the north or west, and tumble in broken ledges and towers down to the sea. This is where the island's seabirds nest, and their presence is obvious from both the stench of guano, and their raucous racket as the Hero approaches.

There are no clues about the Monster to be discovered here, but if the Hero lingers too long they will invoke the wrath of the seabirds. At this time of year they fiercely guard their newly-hatched chicks, and skewers and gulls will grow increasingly uncomfortable with the intruders, and begin to dive bomb them, vomiting up rancid fish, and eventually attacking for 1d2 slashing damage (+0 to hit) damage with each swoop. The gulls will not manage to kill anyone, and a Hero being reduced to zero hit points this way will be helped away from the cliff by their Followers. The birds here are a nuisance and the Hero should think better of staying here too long.

If asked, Eadgar will be able to explain the birds' behaviour, and that he only climbs the cliffs to collect eggs a month or two earlier in the season.

## THE RUIN

The Hero has already seen the ruined tower as they arrived. They may wish to return to it either having seen the standing stone which shows it, to help Frithgar the Builder gather more stone for repairs, or simply to investigate it to see if there is any trace of the Monster.

The ruin is of unfathomable age. Primarily a ring of huge stone blocks, set in place with many smaller chunks, it appears to have once had incredibly thick walls, with a staircase set into them. There is only one entrance into what remains of the ruin, which faces north. The lintel remains intact, and the doorway leads into a 12 feet long passage through the very thick walls. Inside is a circular space, overgrown with bracken and brambles. The footing is unsure, with lots of loose stones, and hidden pits.

In the daylight there is no sign of any activity within the Ruin. The bracken and brambles show no sign of the Monster, nor anyone else, passing through. There is a good view of the island to be had from the top of the staircase, in particular the standing stones, if they haven't already been investigated, especially stand out. The walled graveyard can also be seen as a walled enclosure to the north of the island worthy of investigation. What is visible in the daylight are the carvings on the inner walls of the ruin. The stones lining the central chamber are covered in decorative carvings. They show similar robed figures to that which can be found on the headstone in the walled graveyard. They walk in procession, carrying a variety of objects - neck rings, unusual sceptres, cauldrons, and serpents. These carvings are clearly very old indeed, and depict an ancient

people. There is a strong sense of sorcery and ritual in the proceeding figures. Various chunks of stone have fallen away so it's hard to follow any narrative. There is a repeating design in the carvings, which appears to be a cross interlaced with serpents.

In one particular spot a lot of stones are missing, and from the colour of the surrounding surfaces it can be seen the stones were recently removed. Nearby are some wooden props, bracing the walls apparently to aid the removal of these stones. Frithgar the Builder has taken these to repair the wall surrounding the Hermit's Hall, which was damaged in the recent storm. The result of this theft of stone was that the ancient spell in the tower has been broken, and the monster held in check by that spell has awoken. If accompanying the Builder, the Hero will be asked to help remove more stones, and help carry them to the Sanctuary wall, to further repair it after the storm.

### INVESTIGATING THE WALL REPAIR

In the daylight, the repair to the wall around the Hermit's Sanctuary can be seen to be stone from the tower. If the Hero has been to the Ruin in the daylight they will recognise the emblem of the serpent's cross in the stones forming the repair.

The Builder knows the tower is very old, but he doesn't much care for it beyond a source of raw materials. He does get a funny feeling when in the tower alone, but he dismisses this as true of any old place. Frithgar may let the Hero know he's seen the same symbol on a headstone in the Walled Graveyard.

## THE RUIN



## THE END OF THE SECOND DAY

Eventually, the Hero will need to return to the Hermit's Hall - whether due to the setting of the sun, or because they wish to speak to Ecgberht the Hermit or one of the other NPCs. The Hero has a chance to speak to the Hermit about the graveyard, and the Serpent's Cross symbol.

## THE HERMIT'S CURSE

The Player may have their own idea on what is occurring on the island, but it's likely they'll want to speak to the Hermit about an artefact they've seen depicted around the island.

The Hermit will ask to speak privately to the Hero in his Chamber. He is very concerned that this may be the end of times for the Sanctuary. If asked about the symbol, he seems even more troubled, and chews his bottom lip for a while. The tragedy is that the amulet that the Hero has seen on the stones does indeed seem very significant, and was once in the Hermit's possession. It came from the ancient times, and has always been on the island. But that it is now lost.

With a sigh he begins to relate the story of Aelfnoth, the Provisioner. The Provisioner is a thief. He has been taking relics and treasures from the Hermit's safekeeping for some weeks. The Hermit always knew - *"how could I be the protector of such treasures and not notice their absence?"* - but he hoped that with kindness Aelfnoth could be convinced to give up the path he had chosen. The Provisioner is nowhere to be found, and any search is interrupted by:

## THE RAIDERS ATTACK

It is towards the end of the day that the Raiders will attack. This flexible schedule allows the GM to bring on the end of the day. It is entirely optional how many clues the Hero is allowed to find, but the appearance of the Raiders will bring exploration to an end, and the battle will bring the day to a close, filling the remaining time until sundown. One raider appears for the Hero, and one for each of their unspent Followers.

There are a variety of ways the encounter may announce itself:

A single crew member or Follower arrives at the Hermit's Hall, saying that they have sighted Raiders. The battle may take place at the beach, or at the Sanctuary, or on the road between them.

The raiders will have the choice of attacking the ship — it's quite a prize to steal, and the Hero will need to race down to the beach to secure their ship. Or the Raiders may simply pass it by, believing that the Sanctuary holds the greater prize. They can always get the ship on their return from plundering the Sanctuary.

Either way, a battle ensues, as the Raiders find neither the ship nor the Sanctuary are undefended.

## COMBAT IN BEOWULF

The core of the combat rules themselves are unchanged in BEOWULF. Due to having a single player there is room for some more specific weapon qualities, and Followers add an extra dimension.

Followers perform several functions. They can be used to tie up opponents, so that they don't attack the Hero. They won't defeat enemies on their own, but they can keep them busy, allowing the Hero to battle the main foe, or range the battle field. Each Follower can occupy up to two opponents for two rounds without trouble. Each round afterwards, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the round. A Follower that fails a death saving throw has been slain, see page 48. They can also be activated or spent to perform their special abilities. A Hero needs to use their Followers carefully. Once spent, a Follower may not make a reappearance in the story! All of the rules you'll need to use Followers are found in their descriptions.

Since there is only one player, there is plenty of time for them to make their choices in each round. There's no need to rush to allow others a turn. In the same spirit, be generous with free object interactions and switching weaponry, as a Hero may discover that a foe undaunted by an axe's edge might still be vulnerable to the point of a spear in its tender underbelly. The Hero might plant a spear in the ground before throwing an angon, then draw an axe from their belt, only to drop the axe and hoist the spear in the next round.

While we provide maps for likely combat areas, we're neutral on whether it's best to use miniatures or to keep everything in your imagination. If you do use miniatures, don't feel obligated to place each Follower on the map, especially if there's only a single foe. They can always be around, no matter what.

This encounter is another instance where the defeated condition comes into play. Most combat opponents in BEOWULF will break at a certain point, by acquiring the Defeated condition. Not every enemy will fight to their last hit point, and some only need witness one of their comrades in arms defeated by a Hero to lose the will to fight. This is intended to both speed along the game, compensate for a lack of other players, as well as reflecting the things we see in the stories of the era. Single combat to settle a dispute, honourable victory where one side is not slaughtered, or a Hero being able to so impress enemies with feats of arms or of wits that they no longer wish to fight are all commonplace. In this instance "defeated" will manifest as a rout. For other creatures there are other expressions of defeat. They're detailed in the full version of BEOWULF.

## SEABORN RAIDER

*Medium human, old ways*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Armor Class** 13 (iron-ribbed helm, shield)**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 +2)**Speed** 30 ft.**Saving Throws** Wis +2**Senses** passive Perception 10**Languages** English**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Defeatable.** At the end of their turn, the current leader of the raiders must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw if one or more raiders were killed during that turn, becoming defeated on a failure. If the raiders outnumber their enemies, the leader has advantage on the saving throw. If they become defeated, all of the raiders flee, attempting to return to their ship.

## ACTIONS

**Javelin (1/day).** *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used in two hands.



Should the Raiders receive the defeated condition they will immediately attempt to flee to their own ship. A wise Hero will let them go, and this will be suggested by Followers and NPCs. A Hero may wish to pursue and slay them all - this is entirely possible. While defeated, the Raiders will not fight back, and can be easily slain as they run for their ship. Whether this kind of victory will come back to haunt the Hero, or affect the disposition of their Followers, remains to be seen...

If the Raiders are slaughtered, the Hero may search the Raider's ship for treasure. In a stout wooden chest under a bench in the stern of the ship there are three golden arm rings worth 1£ each. (see 'Money and Treasure' on page 48.)

## THE SECOND NIGHT

Once the Raiders are dealt with, night begins to fall. It is most likely that the Hero will return to the Hermit's Hall with their Followers. They may chose to spend the night with their ship, which will cause some minor alterations to events, as detailed below.

Whether at the ship, or the Hermit's Hall, it will become known that Aelfnoth the Provisioner has been found hiding in the hold of the ship.

This may be revealed by:

- A Follower or group of crew members arriving at the Hall with the Provisioner as their prisoner, having discovered him hiding under the boards of the ship.
- Or it may become apparent at the ship itself, depending where the Hero battled the Raiders. The Hero may uncover the Provisioner in person should they decide to spend the night at the Ship.

Whichever way Aelfnoth is discovered, the Monster will inevitably attack again tonight, taking one person to devour, and so the pressure is on.

As for the Provisioner, he is a broken man, desperate to escape the island. He hasn't attempted to take anything with him, he just wishes to flee. He had planned to leave in his small boat, which he'd pulled up under the cliffs. He discovered it had been smashed somehow, and he panicked. He is certain the Hero will put him to death, and is very frightened.

It's very likely that all the characters, the Hero, their Followers and all the NPCs will gather at the Hermit's Sanctuary. There's a good motivation to bring all the crew to the Hall too, rather than leave them as an easy target for the Monster.

## THE COUNCIL OF THE SANCTUARY

With everyone gathered in the Hermit's Hall it is time for a reckoning. The Hero is aware of the Provisioner's thefts, and the Provisioner is now in their custody. The Hermit will plead clemency and mercy should be shown to Aelfnoth the Provisioner, and that he has a chance to put things right by returning what he stole.

By this point, the GM may well have developed the character of the NPCs in play, guided by the social challenges and stance of the Hero. There are now some options for the GM to choose from on what happens next, depending on what they think the player would enjoy the most.

*For each of the possible end-games there is the chance to optionally replace the stones taken from the Ruin, in the hope that will in some way reduce the Monster's abilities. And indeed this is true. See "Replacing the Stones" for more information on this option.*

- The Provisioner, realising that time is up, and only the amulet can save them, might reveal a hidden cache of stolen relics and treasures within the Sanctuary. It's easy to get to, hidden under the floor of the servants house, or tucked into the thatch of the roof. The Serpents Cross Amulet is recovered, along with some other relics, and it is then a case of awaiting the Monster at the Sanctuary, or hunting it to its lair.
- The Provisioner might have hidden the cache of goods at the entrance to the Monster's lair - where his boat was tied up before the Monster wrecked it. This will mean a trek across the island in the dark, to find the amulet in the very lair itself! This means the final battle will almost certainly happen at the lair.

## REPLACING THE STONES

Assuming the Hero wishes to strike while the iron is hot, now is the time to recruit a working party to take the stones back to the Ruin as fast as possible. By the time discussion is over with the Hermit and Aelfnoth the Provisioner, night has truly come upon the island. Working in the dark, or by torchlight the Hero and whoever they can recruit to help will need to remove stones from the Sanctuary wall, cart them across the island to the Tower and replace them. This is a very risky task, and no one knows if the Monster will attack. It is certainly roaming the island preparing to take its next meal.

Replacing as many stones as possible will slow down the monster, and it is certainly advantageous to do this. Unfortunately, replacing the stones will not entirely mend the magic, and the Monster cannot now be put back to sleep.



If needed, the Hermit may reveal this to be the case, in his estimation. Other NPCs would concur that ancient magic can't be recreated, mended, or renewed in these times. The Housekeeper and the Builder will be appalled at the idea of trying to do sorcery, although they support putting things back as they were, as a kind of cautious option — replacing sorcerous stones certainly seems an acceptable plan to them, and not the same as trying to do sorcery or make magic.

A Bear Blooded Follower might help lug stones back to the tower, while a Learned Follower might make the suggestion at first, or be able to help recreate the pattern. In either case, this is mostly for flavour, if the Hero at least makes the effort of repairing the tower, they get the benefit (see page 46).

## THE SERPENT'S CROSS

The amulet of the Serpent's Cross is an ancient, witch-made device. A disc of aged bronze, it has the symbol of crossed lines, interwoven with serpents. In the centre sits a red garnet. It has no hole for a chain, but is lashed about with a thong. It was used by the ancients to force the Monster into the cave underneath the island, and then the magic of the tower put it to sleep.



The cross might be an ancient symbol, perhaps a human being with outstretched arms, surrounded by serpents. Or perhaps it is a cross of the Church? The wielder of the amulet will likely make up their own mind, and there is certainly no one who remembers where it came from or how it works.

The Monster will always retreat away from the sight of the amulet, unless it has nowhere to go away from it, at which point it will attack. The monster will also attack if it believes it has no other choice but to slay the wielder of the amulet.

**Important:** While the Monster is within 30 feet of the amulet the Monster is no longer immune to the defeated condition.

## MÚTHBONA ARRIVES

### THE END COMES

There are now two possible climactic encounters with the Monster. If the Hero delays for any reason, then the Siege of the Hermit's Hall will unfold. It is not possible to wait out the creature - it is aware they have the amulet and will come to slay them rather than fall victim to it again. It senses its end could be near, and will not go quietly into the long night. Nor will it skip a meal. It will kill again tonight.

If the Hero is of a more investigative bent, relying on their wits to solve the puzzle of the Monster, then they will want to head to the lair of the Monster. See "**The Lair of the Beast**" below.

### THE SIEGE OF THE HERMIT'S HALL

If the Hero is a bruiser, ready to defeat the Monster by force of arms alone, then the Siege of the Hermit's Hall is the way to go, and NPCs will push the Hero towards this climax.

### PREPARATIONS

The Player should be encouraged to make some preparations, in order to increase the anticipation of the coming battle with the Monster. However, if they don't want to do that, it is equally valid to simply await the arrival of the Monster. The opportunity to bolster the defences of the Sanctuary might merely be the wittering of lesser folk, while the Hero remains calm and ready.

Each reasonable action taken to reinforce the Hermit's Hall will cause the Monster an additional round to get toe-to-toe with the Hero. For example, barricading the door will cause it to batter at the door unsuccessfully for an additional round. Building a barricade across the gate to the Sanctuary will give an additional round while the Monster breaks through.

During this time the Hero and Followers may attempt to damage the Monster before it closes into melee combat.

### Suggested actions

- Barricade the doors with barrels and benches
- Place Followers in strategic locations to distract and harass it as it approaches
- Utilise the crew to distract or attack it in some way
- Enlist the help of the NPCs at the sanctuary to help fight
- Have Frithgar the Builder bar the doors
- Dig ditches
- Build a big fire

## MÚTHBONA ATTACKS

The Monster will make a lot of noise as it approaches, beginning by roaring in the night, before its pounding footsteps will be heard. The titanic wrenching, tearing and smashing sounds of it breaking through any defences should rack up the tension. As it approaches the hall the very beams that hold up the roof will shake.

If everyone is gathered in the Hermit's Hall, Múthbona will initially attempt to break through the door. It doesn't actually fit, so it will clamber up onto the roof instead. Before it breaks through, its grisly white arm will crash through 1d3 times, attacking a random NPC or Follower. An NPC will be injured and out of the battle (Not that they will do very much, but it's background colour and build up!), a Follower raked by the Monster's claws will have a good chance of becoming spent. The Hero must pass a DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check to rally the Follower, should they be savaged by the attack from above.

Eventually the roof is sufficiently weakened, and the Monster tires of this sport. It forces its way through the roof and into the hall. The battle begins!

It is entirely possible the Hero will meet the Monster outside the hall. Or even sally forth to meet it as soon as it makes its presence felt. Battle maps are provided for the Hall, the Sanctuary and a patch of moorland.

As battle begins, it is important that the Player knows the Monster can now be injured, and thus defeated. The first time it takes damage, the Monster will shriek in pain and look momentarily perturbed before redoubling its attack.

## THE LAIR OF THE BEAST

If the Hero is not predisposed to go toe to toe with the beast, preferring to rely on their wits rather than the strength of their sword arm, then heading to its lair will provide the best chance

to defeat it. A suitable Follower or the Hermit may suggest that finding its lair might provide a way to defeat it.

If the Hero decides to head to the Monster's lair, then a moonlit crossing of the island is afoot. Aelfnoth the Provisioner will explain there is a secret way down to the cave, if the Hero has not already found it.

The Monster is prowling the island, but in this instance will be wary - it can sense the amulet, and will keep its distance, following the Hero to its cave for a final battle.

The wind is rising as the Hero and Followers head to the cave. Followers will be on edge, as the wind fills their ears, and racing clouds trick the eye into seeing movement where there is none. The journey is a short one, but should build the tension.

Climbing down the secret stair is perilous at night, and sea spray and rain conspire to make the steps slippery. The Hero must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone and take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage.

## THE LAIR ITSELF

This may be the first time the Hero has been to the cave. It's even more threatening at night. By the time the Hero reaches the cave entrance, dawn is not far away. This may be relevant in destroying the creature later.

The entrance is some twenty feet tall, enclosing an even darker patch of night inside its gaping mouth. A tangible force of fear emanates from it, and no NPC from the Sanctuary, unless already recruited as a Follower, will step inside. This is not a cave worn by time and tides. This is an ancient place, full of dread.

On stepping inside the cave mouth the sound of the sea recedes suddenly, and all is silent and still. A slow dripping can be heard





## THE LAIR

in the distance. Any noise made by the Hero and their Followers echoes ominously far longer than expected.

A tunnel leads deep under the island from the entrance. It maintains its height and width at twenty feet, and any source of illumination — most likely torches from the ship or the Sanctuary — fails to do more than dimly illuminate the ominous cave.

As the Hero progresses deeper into the cave passage the constant low groaning of the bones of the earth can be heard. The passage runs for some 200 yards, long enough to be disorienting, and make anyone wonder how long they've been walking. The air feels thicker as the tunnel slopes downwards, and the scent of the sea is replaced by an older, dustier smell. Eventually the passage widens to a huge chamber, some 100 feet across. Its roof is held up by tall pillars of stones, appearing to be stalactites and stalagmites that have met over the aeons. They are carved with whorled knots and interlacing serpents. Some kind of rot has eaten away these stone pillars, and some of them seem perilously unstable, with time-eaten holes worn right through their bulk.

In the centre of the chamber there is what appears to be a circle of standing stones. Each stone is attached to a hefty iron chain, each link being the length of the Hero's forearm. The end of each chain is attached to a broken iron arm ring two handspans across. These once held the limbs of the Monster. Once the stones were removed from the tower, the Monster awoke from its slumber of ages, and tore off its manacles.

Inside the stone circle, the floor is carved with the same pattern as appears on the Serpent's Cross Amulet - a cross surrounded by serpents. In the centre is a hollow. It is littered with fresh and bloody bones, and the stench of slaughter grows as the Hero approaches.

If the Hero arrives during the day then Múthbona is asleep in the hollow. Without the magic of the Serpent's Cross, any attempt at combat with the beast will likely end in tragedy - the Monster will awaken and attack without mercy. The Hero's Followers may have to stage a rescue, allowing the Hero to come round at the Sanctuary at the cost of their own lives (see Page 30).

## THE FINAL BATTLE

If the Hero arrives at night, the Monster is out hunting and is silently sneaking up on them right now. Before it arrives they have some time to investigate the lair of the beast. Within the cave are four significant areas: the cave walls, the four pillars, and the circle of stones around a depression in the cave floor that once held Múthbona slumbering in chained torment.

It is up to the GM how many of these areas the Hero can investigate before the Monster appears. A full investigation of the cave should be tense, but useful. The Hero does not know where the monster is, and it could be hiding anywhere.

### THE WALLS

The walls of the cave are traced with faint carvings in the style of those found on the standing stones around the island and those found in the Ruin, showing a progression of figures carrying the serpent's cross emblem. Large parts are worn away due to great age, and many others are obscured with slimy sea mould. There appear to be no other entrances to the cave.

### THE PILLARS

There are four pillars holding up the roof of the cave. They appear to have been worn away by the action of the salt sea air, and are now riddled with pits and crevices. Large, rotten flakes of rock fall from them as the Hero examines them. At the top of the pillars where they join the roof several large cracks can be seen. It's very likely that a Follower will remark that this cave is unstable, and the pillars appear very weak. This is a very dangerous place to linger!

### THE CIRCLE OF STONES

Within the pillars there sits a circle of standing stones, also slick with seaweed slime. They show similar designs to the other stones on the island, and carvings inside the tower. They show a huge monster chained under the ground. Each stone is attached to a lengthy and heavy iron chain. The other ends of the chains end in large iron hoops, which appear to have been twisted and snapped.

### THE DEPRESSION IN THE CENTRE

This depression, some five yards across, holds a collection of bones and bloody clothing forming a kind of grisly nest. This is where the creature sleeps.

## THE MONSTER

At some point during the investigation of the lair, the Monster makes its appearance at the mouth of the cave, framed by the dim glow of the dawn light. There is no escape! This is the final battle! The Monster will attempt to rush to engage the Hero, wherever they are in the cave (see below).

The Hero now has several options:

- Make use of the amulet. While it is in the same location as the amulet, the Monster loses its immunity to the defeated condition, and so can be defeated by strength of arms.
- If the amulet is brandished at the Monster as an action, it will retreat. This can be reasonably deduced from clues in the adventure. The Hero may decide to chance forcing the monster out of the cave into daylight using the amulet. This is an uncertain strategy - the Hero knows the monster only comes out at night, but has no idea what happens to it in daylight.
- Make use of the Stone Circle - this will only be discovered by trial and error, providing a surprise extra edge in the middle of battle.
- Imprison the monster in the cave by pulling down the fragile pillars.
- Hurt the monster by bringing down pillars onto it with the help of their Followers.
- Or a combination of these things.

Note that there is no fixed, singular solution to defeating the Monster, and each of these options is a viable one. The plan the Hero formulates is, in this instance, the "right" one. This will not always be the case in every BEOWULF adventure. Sometimes the Hero will make a mistake, and encounter the creature unprepared, or under false assumptions, and will thereby suffer defeat. For this adventure the solution is an open one.

If the player is stumped for ideas, then a Follower may make a suggestion of how to defeat the Monster. Perhaps immediately, perhaps after a few rounds of punishing combat.

## PULLING DOWN THE PILLARS

The Hero or Followers may attempt to pull down a pillar while others engage the Monster. If the Hero doesn't think of this, the Followers may suggest it! This is a special Follower activation, available due to the environment.

For each of the four pillars, roll 2d6 + 15. This is the DC required to knock down that pillar. Each round, a Follower sent to pull down a pillar can choose into which adjacent area they intend it to fall, and make a Strength check to smash the stone column. If there is more than one Follower there or they have special equipment (such as the heavy chains in the centre circle), they have advantage on the Strength check. If the Hero is present, they can add their Strength modifier to the roll.

On a success, the pillar is felled. On a failure, the pillar has been weakened and the DC is reduced by 1.

## MÚTHBONA THE EATER

*Large eotena (troll)*

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	6 (-2)	24 (+7)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	1 (-4)

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armour)

**Hit Points** 75 (6d10 + 42)

**Speed** 25 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Saving Throws** Str +8, Con +10

**Skills** Athletics +8, Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Bluberous Flesh.** Múthbona's flesh is soft with great sheets of blubber between it and his hulking muscles. Any creature that successfully hits the troll with a melee weapon attack must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or lose the weapon as it is caught in his flesh.

**Creature of Darkness.** If Múthbona is exposed to the magic of the Serpent's Cross and begins his turn in bright sunlight, he must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become defeated.

**Swordback (Recharge 5-6).** Múthbona can use his bonus action to remove a weapon caught by his bluberous flesh and throw it at a foe. The attack is +8 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target and does 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing or bludgeoning damage.

**Undefeatable.** Múthbona only takes 1 point of damage from any attack unless he is subjected to the magic of the Serpent's Cross. As long as it is within 30 feet of him, he takes damage as normal. If he takes 38 or more points of damage he gains the defeated condition and flees to his lair or if he is in his lair tries to escape into the ocean.

### ACTIONS

**Claws. Melee Weapon Attack:** +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage and if the creature is Medium size it becomes grappled (Escape DC 15). If Múthbona already has a creature grappled it cannot use this attack.

**Gore.** The grappled creature takes 10 (2d4 + 5) slashing damage from Múthbona's giant tusks.

### REACTIONS

**Terrifying Roar.** When attacked Múthbona can spend inspiration to negate all damage and force the attacking character to make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or become frightened of the troll. An affected creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of its turn to end the effect.



If a pillar is felled, part of the roof collapses causing a large quantity of rock to fall from the ceiling of the cave, along with the pillar itself crashing down into the chosen adjacent area.

If either Múthbona or the Hero are in the target area when a pillar falls, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 33 (10d6) bludgeoning damage. Due to its sheer bulk, Múthbona makes this check with disadvantage. You can use Follower abilities to save the Hero as normal.

Any Followers in a targeted area when a pillar falls are considered spent.

### GUARD THE ENTRANCE

If a Follower or the Hero guards the Entrance, they may make a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) check to detect Múthbona's approach (see below). If they remain here they can engage it to prevent it from fleeing the cave.

### THE STONE CIRCLE

A place of both loathing and comfort for Múthbona, the creature can be found here during the day. If tempted or forced inside the stone circle during a battle, then Múthbona must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw at the start of its turn or remain in the hollow. If the stones have been returned to the tower, it has disadvantage on the saving throw. In such an instance, there is a visible struggle that crosses the monster's face as it tries to leave the circle. It may shake its head as if being attacked by wasps, and beat at its own head with its claws as it attempts to leave the circle.

If two opposite pillars are destroyed, the cave collapses onto the centre circle.

### MOVING BETWEEN THE AREAS

During the Hero's turn, they can order the Followers to move from one area to another or to attack a pillar. Followers can move or attack, but not both. Once the Hero activates Followers to pull down one or more of the pillars, they'll automatically continue at the task until successful. See the diagram for movement patterns at the bottom of the page.

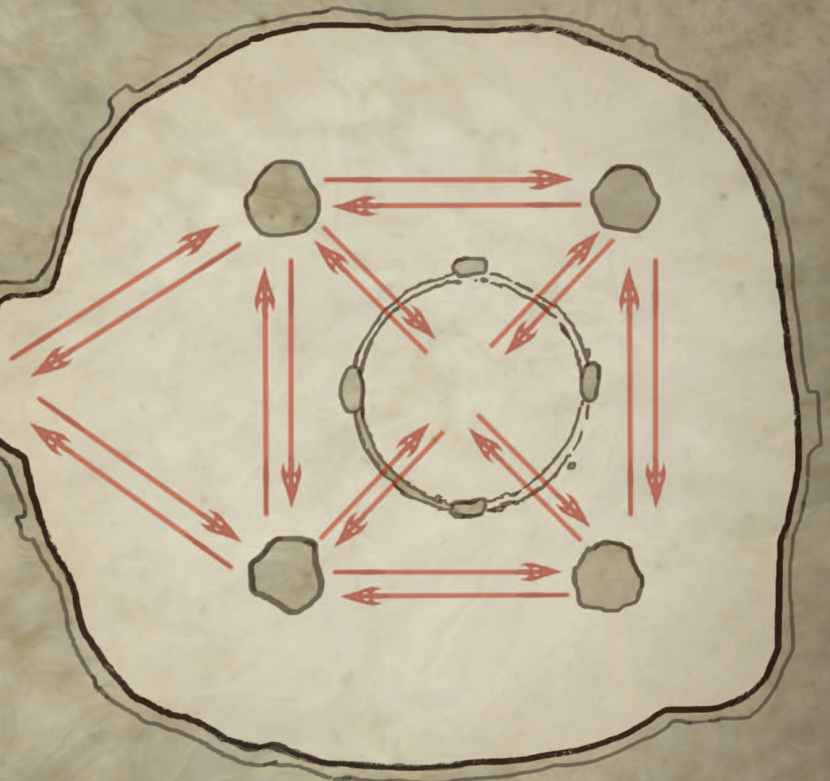
The Hero and Múthbona can use their movement to move one step and then use their action to attack or to move to a second area.

### GOADING MÚTHBONA

The Hero can use their action to make a DC 15 Charisma or Intelligence check to trick the Monster into attacking them. On a success, Múthbona will use its movement to get closer to the Hero, attacking them if possible. A Follower may use an appropriate Gift to perform the same goading action.

### PUSHING MÚTHBONA

The Hero or a nominated Follower wielding the amulet can use their action to brandish the Serpent's Cross at the Monster. This will cause it to move backwards away from the Hero to another area of the cave. Múthbona will not leave the cave now that the sun is rising, since it knows that to leave the cave is certain death, unless it is defeated and flees (see opposite).



THE LAIR MOVEMENT MAP

## THE BATTLE

### MÚTHBONA'S ATTACKS

If the Monster is at the same area as one or more Followers, it rolls one Claws attack against AC 10. On a success, a Follower of the Hero's choice in that area must make a death saving throw with the Follower being slain on a failure.

If the Hero is present, the Monster will attack them in preference to the Followers.

### THE MONSTER DEFEATED

If Múthbona gains the defeated condition then it will attempt to flee. If a Follower or the Hero is stationed at the entrance then the monster is temporarily foiled, long enough for the Hero to get one more chance to attack the creature or a warlike Follower to use a combat Gift. It then flees back into the entrance tunnel and plunges out of the cave, into the dawn light wailing pitifully. As the thin rays of morning hit the creature, its flesh begins to boil, and within moments it is reduced to a pile of bones and broken old weapons.

If the Hero manages to pull down two pillars, then the cave begins to rumble ominously. The next round a great groaning sound splits the air, and the entire roof begins to collapse. There is one round to escape the cave, while brandishing the amulet to prevent the Monster from following. If the cave collapses in this way, the Hero and their Followers witness Múthbona being crushed by thousands of pounds of rock. It is dead.

If Múthbona is reduced to 0 hit points in combat, it collapses, dying after a long lifetime of eternal hunger and hatred.

### THE HERO DEFEATED

If the Hero is reduced to 0 hit points then the Followers retreat, dragging the injured Hero with them (see notes on Rescue the Hero, page 30). The Hero will need to spend a day resting up and

try once again to conquer Múthbona. Through the care of the Hermit and the Housekeeper the Hero will be ready to return to the cave, or defend the Sanctuary as the sun is setting the next day, and the encounter can be rerun. It is up to the GM whether Múthbona is discovered in its cave on the next evening: it is very likely, provided the Hero sets out before sundown. Alternatively the GM may choose to force a siege at the Sanctuary, with the Hero not fully recovered. This will be a matter of which will provide the most tension and entertainment to the player.

### THE MONSTER IS DEAD

The Hero has defeated the creature! The Hermit's Sanctuary is saved! Everyone gathers in the Hermit's Hall to celebrate. The Hermit deems it is time for a feast, and extra supplies are broken out of storage. All the inhabitants of the island are overjoyed. There is singing and ale flows. The fallen are toasted, tales are told, and a good time is had by all. If Aelfnoth the Provisioner still lives, he is officially forgiven by the Hermit, and he is suitably contrite and emotional.

During the celebrations, the Hermit invites the Hero into his chambers.

The Hermit can reward the Hero with several treasures that belong to the Sanctuary. He is happy to do this, and it would be considered ill-favoured to refuse these gifts. Once accepted, it would be entirely honourable should the Hero wish to return some of the treasure, or keep it. But the player should bear in mind that the Hero's Followers will expect their "ring-giver" to share some of the wealth for their loyal service. And won't be shy about reminding the Hero of this reality of life on the Whale Road.

These treasures are each valued as equivalent to one pound of silver (1£ = 1 pound of silver). A successful Hero that slew Múthbona (or caused it to be slain) receives 3£. If it simply flees, they receive 2£. If all the NPCs survived then the Hermit adds 1£. Heroes who had their Followers protect or assist the Sanctuary in repair gain an additional 1£.

## MONEY AND TREASURE

In the story-world of BEOWULF treasure and coins, gifts and service are largely fuzzy and interchangeable. A rich person might maintain a hoard of treasure and be gifted goods because they're visibly good for credit. Likewise, Followers might not need to be given actual coins, if they trust that the Hero is wealthy and generous.

In practical terms it is useful and entertaining to track something consistent, and so treasures are measured in pounds of silver (£). There are 40 shillings for each pound of silver (£). Each shilling is worth a handful of pennies. A Hero will have access to a certain amount of silver, measured in £. We don't concern ourselves with the precise composition of this hoard.

To describe each of the gifted Treasures in more detail, roll 5d6

**1d6**

- 1: Beaten
- 2: Barrow-precious
- 3: Hard-woven
- 4: Glittering
- 5: Burnished
- 6: Patterned

**1d6**

- 1: gold
- 2: copper
- 3: silver
- 4: iron
- 5: bronze
- 6: red-gold

**1d6**

- 1: flagon
- 2: torc
- 3: armring
- 4: finger ring
- 5: talisman
- 6: cross

**1d6**

- 1: set with garnets
- 2: enamelled in bright colours
- 3: etched with runes
- 4: set with glass
- 5: carved with knots
- 6: embellished with animal shapes

**1d6**

- 1: of great age, handed down through generations
- 2: newly-wrought by canny craftsmen
- 3: from a far-flung land
- 4: of curious-make
- 5: from the days of the giants
- 6: of holy virtue

## RECRUITING FOLLOWERS

In many adventures, the Hero will meet potential Followers, who might join them temporarily. After the conclusion of the adventure, there's a chance that the Hero can have these temporary Followers join them in further adventures. Firstly, there is a maximum number of Followers given on each Hero's character sheet. This is how many Followers a Hero of their station and reputation can attract at a time. If you lost one or more Followers during the adventure, you can try and recruit the Boy and/or the Builder. You pay them 1 shilling for each of their Gifts and make a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check (note that the Boy has the Eager burden and you will have advantage on his check). On a success, they join you.

## MAINTAINING THE WARBAND

You'll also want to reward your existing Followers, paying them a shilling for each Gift they possess. However, you don't need to make any checks for them to remain in the band of Followers. You will also need to maintain your ship, which costs 1£.

In the full rules, having some Followers, possessed of many Gifts and so receiving greater payments than others may cause problems, so a Hero will need to be more generous to everyone to ensure a happy band. If a Hero cannot afford to pay his loyal retainers, then they may extend credit, but gain unfortunate Burdens. Similarly, Slain Followers are remembered for their bravery in songs and tales, but a Hero whose Followers always find themselves in Death's company will soon balk at further adventures.

## THE RETURN HOME

The story of the Hero's adventure on the Hermit's island is over, and the Hero can return to their homeland or another safe harbour without incident. After the adventure, the Player can choose to develop one or two of their Followers by journalling — spending a bit of time writing out the adventure and the aftermath from the point of view of the Follower. If you select a single Follower you can either add a new Gift or remove a Burden. If you choose two Followers then you can turn temporary Gifts that they received during the adventure into permanent ones. More guidance on journalling is given in the full BEOWULF rules.





# RECRUITABLE FOLLOWERS

At the outset of the adventure, the Hero may choose followers from the selection of follower cards on pages 60 and 61.

The three followers on this page are potentially available for recruitment as new followers during the course of the adventure. These three are not initially available at the outset.

NAME	Eadógar, the Boy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BURDENS	<b>Eager.</b> This Follower provides advantage on recruitment checks.					
GIFTS	<b>Young.</b> This Follower has disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks.					
	<b>Church-goer.</b> This follower is aligned with The Church.					
	<b>Engage.</b> When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.					
	<b>Meek.</b> This Follower cannot be attacked by a creature unless they are the only target within range.					
	<b>Pure.</b> This follower has advantage on wisdom and charisma saving throws.					
	<b>Rescue the Hero.</b> When this Gift is activated, each available Follower with this Gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.					

NAME	Caero, the Housekeeper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BURDENS	None.					
GIFTS	<b>Church-goer.</b> This follower is aligned with The Church.					
	<b>Engage.</b> When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.					
	<b>Wound-binder.</b> This Follower is skilled in treating hurts. Activate them during a short rest to make your first Hit Die spent; heal its maximum value.					
	<b>Rescue the Hero.</b> When this Gift is activated, each available Follower with this Gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.					

NAME	Friðþegar, the Builder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BURDENS	None.					
GIFTS	<b>Bear Blooded.</b> This Follower has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws.					
	<b>Engage.</b> When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.					
	<b>Ready.</b> The Follower automatically succeeds at any checks necessary in order to activate them.					
	<b>Rescue the Hero.</b> When this Gift is activated, each available Follower with this Gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.					

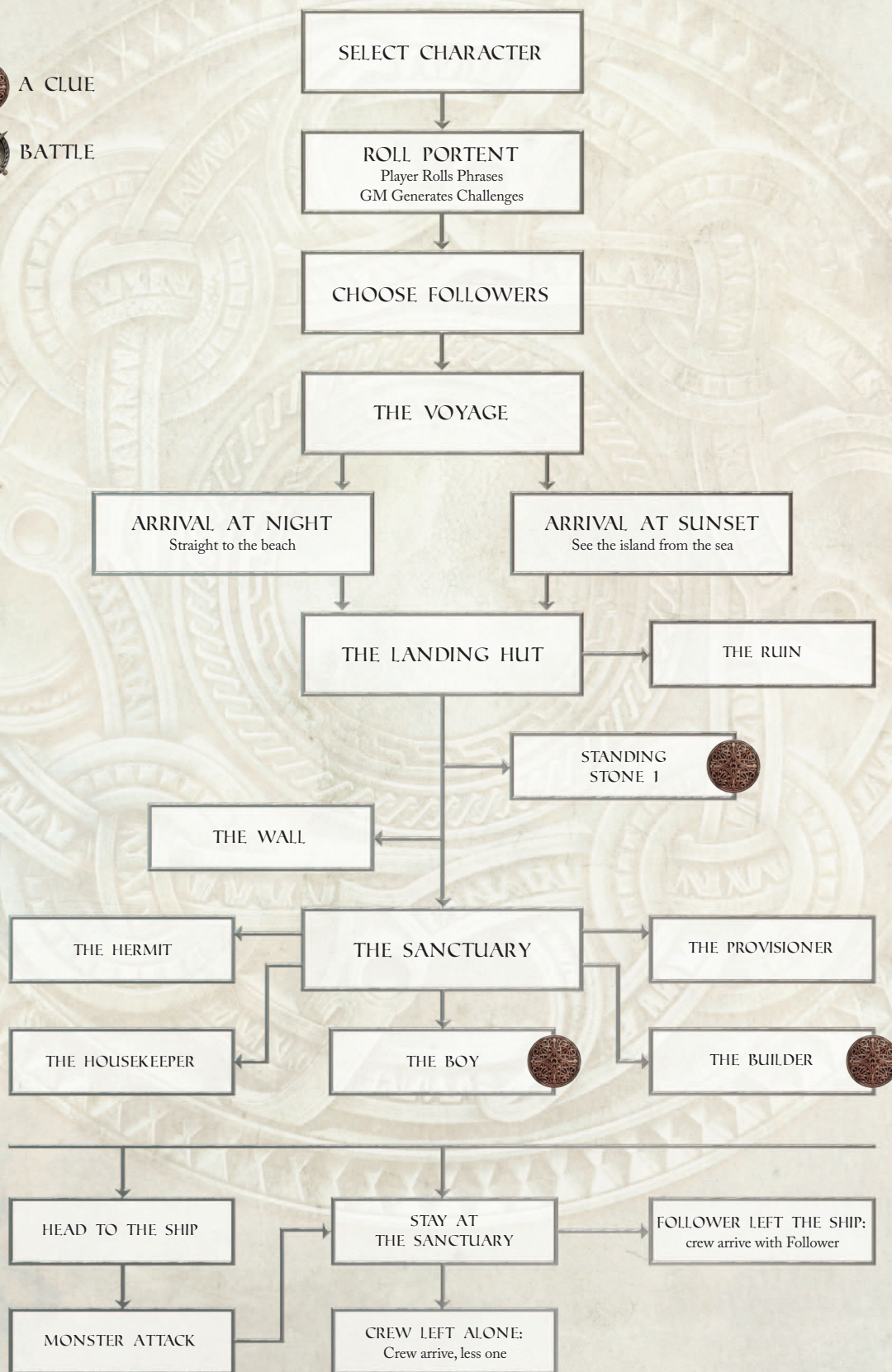
# SERIES OF EVENTS FLOWCHART



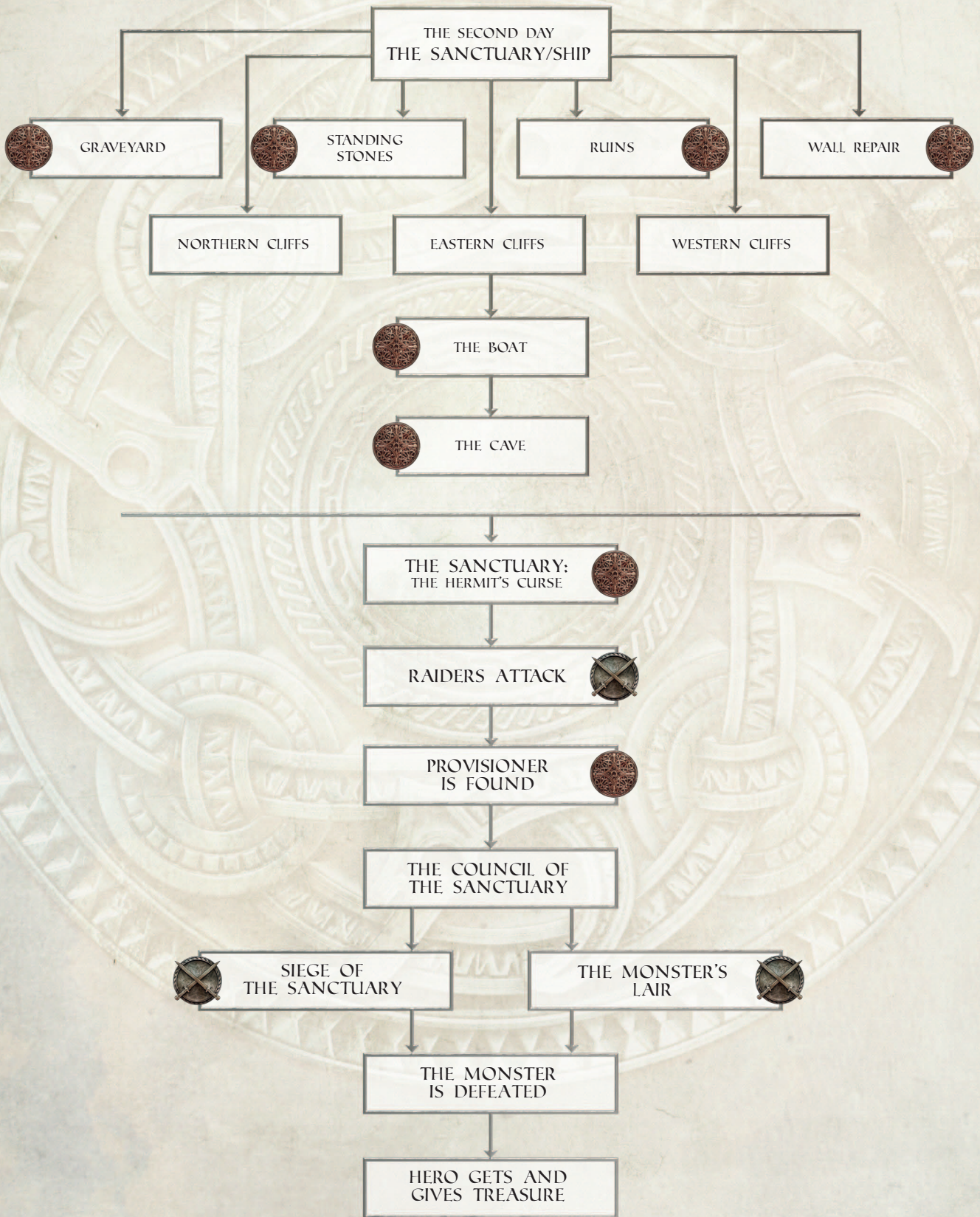
A CLUE



BATTLE



THE HERMIT'S SANCTUARY



# ALYS a PRINCESS

Born of royal blood, but fostered to a far away land across the sea, Alys found she did not fit in with the other princesses. More interested in learning to read and write, and the wonders these skills revealed, she spurned the traditional crafts of hospitality and needlepoint and the wifely duties expected of her.

Teaching herself to fight with a sword, she escaped the Nunnery where she had felt so trapped. Now she wanders the world, seeking to help others and uncover the mysteries of this 'middle earth'.

Alys is a neither follower of the Book, nor a follower of the Old Ways.

Alys' player may choose to begin the adventure from a home hall where she currently lives, or from the state of wandering between halls. The player may use the suggestion, or invent their own. They might like to use the provided random generator.

## SUGGESTED STARTING HALL

Alys finds herself at the hall of Queen Eadgifu of the Frisians, at the Eastern end of the Whale Road. The Queen has befriended the young princess, won over by her clear-eyed ways and determination to forge her own way in the world.

Alys has also won friends among the benches of the mead hall, and a group of companions are pledged to her. With the coming of spring, Alys has convinced Eadgifu to lend her a ship, so that she might explore further, and see what wonders can be found.

So it seems timely when an exhausted messenger throws himself before the treasure seat and begs help for the Sanctuary. A perfect mystery for Alys to explore. Scanning her books in preparation, a line of poetry catches in Alys' mind, forming the portent for this quest.

## ALYS THE WANDERING HERO

Alternatively, Alys already has her small band with her in the Queen's ship, and they are sailing the whale road in search of mysteries.

They put into shore for the evening when she encounters a messenger on his way to the nearby lord's hall, bearing news of the Sanctuary's predicament. On hearing of the urgent plight of the island, Alys decides to set sail immediately with the Followers she has at hand.

As the crew push off, they sing a song she has never heard before, the words of the first line become the portent for this adventure.



# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

Alys

HERO NAME

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

**14** +2 Athletics  
STRENGTH

**12** +1 Acrobatics +1 Sleight of Hand  
DEXTERITY

+2 Saving Throw

**13** +1 Acrobatics +1 Sleight of Hand  
CONSTITUTION

+3 Investigation +5 Legends +3 Nature +5 Religion  
INTELLIGENCE

+3 Saving Throw

Riddle-reaver

TALE

1st

LEVEL

XP TOTAL

INSPIRATION

**13** +1 CONSTITUTION

**16** +3 INTELLIGENCE

+1 Saving Throw

+5 Saving Throw

Chosen One

BACKGROUND

Neutral

ALIGNMENT

13 PASSIVE PERCEPTION 13 PASSIVE INSIGHT

**12** +1 Animal Hand. +3 Insight +1 Medicine +3 Perception +1 Survival  
WISDOM

**8** -1 Deception -1 Intimidation -1 Performance -1 Persuasion  
CHARISMA

+1 Saving Throw

3 MAX. FOLLOWERS

15 TOTAL ARMOUR CLASS

+1 INITIATIVE

30 SPEED

23 MAXIMUM HIT POINTS

1 (1d8) MAXIMUM HIT DICE

Successes

Failures

DEATH SAVING THROWS

HIT POINTS

HIT DICE

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE (TYPE)
Sword	+4	1d8+2 slashing
Spear(20/60)†	+4	1d6+2 piercing
Sling*	+3	1d4+1 bludgeoning

† Versatile 1d8+4 piercing with two hands.  
\* Ammunition. Range 30/120

TREASURES

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FEATURES AND TRAITS

**Friend to All.** When you enter a meeting place, make your first ability check with advantage and continue doing so until you fail a check.

**Nimble.** You can move through the space of a creature that is of a larger size than you.

**Touched by Prophecy.** Once per long rest, when a d20 shows either a 1 or a 20 as the result, you can choose to reroll that die.

**Alignment Die.** Before you roll with advantage, choose one of the d20s to be your alignment die. If you select that die as the result, you gain inspiration.

**Perceive Weakness.** If you spend an action studying a creature, you identify all resistances, immunities, and vulnerabilities of the creature.

EQUIPMENT

Book of Philosophy, Leatherworker's Kit  
Hero's Kit (A leather sleep sack, which you use aboard the ship when sleeping to keep dry and to stow your gear when not in us, a thick woollen blanket, a tinderbox, 10 torches, 10 days of rations, a waterskin, 50 feet of rope.)

PERSONALITY TRAITS

I was sent away from my home because of the prophecy and I hate it.

IDEALS

**Freedom.** I struggle against my given destiny but worry that my choices mean nothing.

BONDS

I have never known a time where my destiny was undecided.

FLAWS

I want to believe anyone who promises to release me from my destiny.

OTHER PROFICIENCIES

Trader's Tongue, Welsh  
Leatherworker's Kit

SHIP NAME

*Ceffyl Dŵr*  
(Raider)

26 Speed  
Range 3

BURDENS

GIFTS

# Bald Eadig

## Wrestling Hero

There are a great many dark places in the world, and the Book teaches that the faithful should bring the light, and with it burn out evil wherever it may be found. Blessed with the barrel-chested strength that comes with middle-age, a distinct lack of hair, and a devotion to the word of the Book, Bald Eadig means to carry the news of the saviour far and wide, and in doing so battle the forces of darkness as an example to all. Where he can't bring the benefits of writing and contemplation, he will bring his big stick.

Possessed of a simple knowledge and an earthy goodness, Bald Eadig is a fearsome enemy of the darkness. He has helped build priory walls, defended pilgrims, and guarded monks. Now he is setting out on the swan road to find the greatest enemies of the Church - the very devils of hell and the sons of Cain.

Bald Eadig's player may choose to begin the adventure from a home hall where he currently lives, or from the state of wandering between halls. The player may use the suggestion, or invent their own. They might like to use the provided random generator.

### SUGGESTED STARTING HALL

Eadig finds himself lodging with a goodly lord in Northumbria in the North of Anglaland. He has become renowned amid the benches for his good humour and indefatigable strength. When a messenger bursts into the hall to bring ill tidings from the Sanctuary of the Hermit, the local king despatches Eadig to investigate.

The king himself unlocks his word hoard and delivers the portent from the steps of the hall as Eadig gathers his helpers.

### Bald Eadig the Wandering Hero

Alternatively, Eadig already has his small band with him in his ship, and they are sailing the whale road in search of monsters.

They put into shore for the evening when she encounters a messenger on his way to the nearby lord's hall, bearing news of the Sanctuary's predicament. Beset by bandits and oathbreakers, Eadig is quick to offer assistance. On hearing of the urgent plight of the island, Eadig decides to set sail immediately with the Followers he has at hand.

A broken-headed bandit scoffs and portends his doom in rhyme.



# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

## Bald Eadig

HERO NAME

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

18 **STRENGTH** +4 +6 Athletics Saving Throw

13 **DEXTERITY** +1 +1 Acrobatics +1 Sleight of Hand +1 Stealth Saving Throw

13 TOTAL ARMOUR CLASS

Body: Weaponshirt 12

Helm: Swine-crested +1

Shield: \_\_\_\_\_

+1 INITIATIVE

30 SPEED

25 MAXIMUM HIT POINTS

1 (1d8) MAXIMUM HIT DICE

Successes: ○ ○ ○ ○

Failures: ○ ○ ○ ○

DEATH SAVING THROWS

HIT POINTS

HIT DICE

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE (TYPE)
Greatclub*	+6	2d6+4 bludgeoning
Spear(20/60)†	+6	1d6+4 piercing
Angon (20/30)**	+6	1d8+4 piercing

\* Heavy. Two-handed.  
 † Versatile 1d8+4 piercing with two hands.  
 \*\* Splintering. Use critical hit to break the opponent's standard shield.

TREASURES

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_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)
_____	(_____)

## Bench-breaker 1st

TALE LEVEL XP TOTAL

INSPIRATION

15 **CONSTITUTION** +2 +4 Saving Throw

10 **INTELLIGENCE** +0 +0 Investigation +0 Legends +0 Nature +2 Religion Saving Throw

FEATURES AND TRAITS

**Grappler.** Advantage on attack rolls against a creature you have grappled. Use your bonus action to make a single unarmed attack against a creature you have grappled. (+1 to Str applied already)

**Forge Born.** You are resistant to fire damage.

**The Power of Faith.** When rolling your alignment die, (see below) you can choose to gain inspiration even if you don't pick that die. You must take a long rest before using this feature again.

**Alignment Die.** When you roll with advantage, choose one of the d20s to be your alignment die. If you select that die as the result, you gain inspiration.

**Imposing Presence.** You may use Strength instead of Charisma when making an ability check with the Intimidation skill.

EQUIPMENT

Prayer Book, Fisher's gear

Hero's Kit (A leather sleep sack, which you use aboard the ship when sleeping to keep dry and to stow your gear when not in use, a thick woollen blanket, a tinderbox, 10 torches, 10 days of rations, a waterskin, 50 feet of rope.)

## Believer

BACKGROUND

11 PASSIVE PERCEPTION 9 PASSIVE INSIGHT

8 **WISDOM** -1 +1 Saving Throw

-1 Animal Hand. -1 Insight -1 Medicine +1 Perception -1 Survival

12 **CHARISMA** +1 +1 Deception +1 Intimidation +1 Performance +5 Persuasion Saving Throw

5 MAX. FOLLOWERS

PERSONALITY TRAITS

I have a stark worldview and those who disagree with my beliefs are wrong-headed fools.

IDEALS

**Honesty.** Lies and deceits are the worst offences against others.

BONDS

My obligation is to the common folk, they need to know the truth.

FLAWS

I am too trusting of others who share my alignment.

OTHER PROFICIENCIES

Trader's Tongue, English

Fisher's gear

SHIP NAME

**The Messenger** (Merchant)

18 Speed

Range 6

BURDENS

GIFTS

# CWENHILD

## THE WIDOW MATRON OF THE HOUSE

When her husband was slain, Cwenhild mourned for a year and then set about putting the affairs of her hall to rights. Ruling wisely and cautiously, she waited for her three sons to come of age and rule her lost husband's kingdom. Yet, one by one they were taken: as they flowered into men so they were cut down by war or taken away by creatures left over from ancient times. Now she is alone, with no one else to fight the growing abundance of monsters that herald the end of days and the snuffing out of all good things.

But no straw-death for Cwenhil. No longer the spinning wheel nor the pots of the hearth for her. She has bade broken open the barrow and taken up her husband's mail and his spear. Too long has she spent weeping and awaiting tidings at the edge of the battlefield. Now she will be the bringer of bad tidings to those who take sons and husbands.

Cwenhild is a traditionalist of the old ways. The evidence of the inevitable end of the world is all around her. Note that in the full *BEOWULF* rules, alignment plays a larger part than in this introductory scenario. Here it serves as a guide for Cwenhild's attitude and interaction with NPCs.

Cwenhild's player may choose to begin the adventure from a home hall where she currently lives, or from the state of wandering between halls. The player may use the suggestion, or invent their own. They might like to use the provided random generator.

### SUGGESTED STARTING HALL

Cwenhild finds herself currently lodging at her cousin's Hall in the South of Geatland. It's a smaller hall than she was used to, but it has proved a useful place to begin her travels. She has wintered there, gathering a small group of retainers to accompany her. When a breathless messenger arrives in the early spring, her brother has too many other pressing concerns to go himself and Cwenhild volunteers to go in his stead.

A visiting nun, renowned for sage advice that comes in visions, provides the portent.

### CWENHILD THE WANDERING HERO

Alternatively, Cwenhild already has her small band with her in her ship and they are sailing the whale road in search of monsters.

They put into shore for the evening when she encounters the messenger bearing news of the Sanctuary's predicament. The messenger is riding fast to the nearby lord's Hall. Cwenhild decides to set sail immediately with the Followers she has at hand.

One of Cwenhild's followers delivers the portent in a song as they prepare to depart.





# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

## Cwenhild

HERO NAME

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

16 STRENGTH (+3 Athletics, +3 Saving Throw)

10 DEXTERITY (+0 Acrobatics, +0 Sleight of Hand, +0 Stealth, +0 Saving Throw)

16 TOTAL ARMOUR CLASS

13 BODY (Mail corset)

1 HELM (Iron-ribbed)

2 SHIELD (Metal-rimmed)

26 MAXIMUM HIT POINTS

1 (1d8) MAXIMUM HIT DICE

30 SPEED

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

HIT POINTS

HIT DICE

Successes ○○○○

Failures ○○○○

DEATH SAVING THROWS

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE (TYPE)
Bearded Axe*	+5	1d8+3 slashing
Spear(20/60)†	+5	1d6+3 piercing
Angon (20/30)**	+5	1d8+3 piercing

\* Versatile (1d10+3), Hooking - Use critical hit to negate enemy's shield until their next turn.

† Versatile 1d8+4 piercing with two hands.

\*\* Splintering. Use critical hit to break the opponent's standard shield.

TREASURES

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## Ox-spirited

TALE

## 1st

LEVEL

XP TOTAL

INSPIRATION

16 CONSTITUTION (+3 Saving Throw, +5 Saving Throw)

8 INTELLIGENCE (-1 Investigation, +1 Legends, -1 Nature, -1 Religion, +1 Saving Throw)

FEATURES AND TRAITS

**Natural Communion.** Short rest: recovers 3 HP automatically. Spend 10 minutes communing with nature to ask three yes/no questions, then you must take a long rest before using this feature again.

**Determined.** You have advantage on saving throws against being stunned.

**Command Presence.** Once per long rest, you can revive a spent Follower.

**Alignment Die.** When you roll with advantage, choose one of the d20s to be your alignment die. If you select that die as the result, you gain inspiration.

**Stonebelly.** You have advantage on any saving throw or ability check to resist the effects of any poison (including alcohol).

EQUIPMENT

Signet Ring, Weaver's Kit

Hero's Kit (A leather sleep sack, which you use aboard the ship when sleeping to keep dry and to stow your gear when not in use. a thick woollen blanket, a tinderbox, 10 torches, 10 days of rations, a waterskin, 50 feet of rope.)

## Noble's Blood

BACKGROUND

## Old Ways

ALIGNMENT

14 PASSIVE PERCEPTION

14 PASSIVE INSIGHT

14 WISDOM (+2 Animal Hand., +4 Insight, +2 Medicine, +4 Perception, +2 Survival)

10 CHARISMA (+1 Deception, +1 Intimidation, +1 Performance, +5 Persuasion, +1 Saving Throw)

5 MAX. FOLLOWERS

PERSONALITY TRAITS

A king is nothing without their lords; a lord is nothing without their warriors; a warrior is nothing without their common folk.

IDEALS

**Responsibility.** I have obligations to my lord and to my lessers, each in turn.

BONDS

I have a signet ring or other device upon my person that proves my identity.

FLAWS

I am easy to anger and have a tendency to take offense at the smallest slight.

OTHER PROFICIENCIES

Trader's Tongue, English

Weaver's Tools

SHIP NAME

Stormspear (Raider)

BURDENS

26 Speed

Range 3

GIFTS

# IBN UTHMAN

## THE WANDERING WARRIOR POET OF BAGHDAD

Once a trader and writer, Ibn Uthman was exiled from the lands of his birth for using his prodigious ability with words most unwisely: a tangled financial dispute with a Northern King means that returning to Baghdad and his old life is no longer an option for Ibn Uthman. Resolved to explore the North, Ibn Uthman has found himself far from home. Telling a tale or two seemed to please the people of these freezing Northlands, and they enjoy his melodious, strange-sounding voice, and his songs from afar. His ability to spin a story has grown with the miles he's travelled. Uthman is faithful to the One God, though his version seems somewhat different to those of the Northerners.

Ibn Uthman's player may choose to begin the adventure from a home hall where he currently resides, or from the state of wandering between halls. The player may use the suggestion, or invent their own. They might like to use the provided random generator to add more details.

### SUGGESTED STARTING HALL

Ibn Uthman has spent the coldest of the winter months at the meadhall of a minor king of Jutland. He's found he can earn his keep telling tales of his distant homeland, and has made many friends here, who are willing to follow him and help him on his mission to explore the North. The King of the Hall is a generous ring-giver, and has gifted Ibn Uthman a ship in return for his entertaining tales.

Now that the ice is thawing, Uthman grows restless and wants to see more of the land hereabouts. When a messenger comes to the lord's hall to explain the desperate situation, the local king has no hesitation in sending Ibn Uthman to uncover the tale.

As he prepares his ship, the portent comes unbidden to Uthman as a line of poetry.

### UTHMAN THE WANDERING HERO

Out on the Whale Road, exploring and cataloguing as much of the territory as he can uncover, Ibn Uthman and his crew are putting into shore for the evening when he encounters a wounded messenger on his way to the nearby lord's hall, bearing news of the Sanctuary's predicament. Hearing the tale in the last breaths of the messenger, Ibn Uthman decides to set sail immediately for the Hermit's Sanctuary, accompanied by the Followers he has at hand.

A less enthusiastic crew member dourly portends his doom in the unfavourable augury of seabirds, and thus provides the portent.



# BEOWULF

AGE OF HEROES

## Uthman

HERO NAME

+2 PROFICIENCY BONUS

**STRENGTH** 15 (+2 Athletics)

**DEXTERITY** 11 (+0 Acrobatics, +0 Sleight of Hand, +0 Stealth)

**SAVING THROW** +2

## Honey-tongued 1st

TALE

LEVEL

XP TOTAL

INSPIRATION

**CONSTITUTION** 14 (+2)

**INTELLIGENCE** 12 (+1 Investigation, +3 Legends, +1 Nature, +1 Religion)

**SAVING THROW** +4

## Exile

BACKGROUND

12 PASSIVE PERCEPTION 10 PASSIVE INSIGHT

**WISDOM** 10 (+0 Animal Hand., +0 Insight, +0 Medicine, +2 Perception, +2 Survival)

**CHARISMA** 14 (+2 Deception, +2 Intimidation, +2 Performance, +4 Saving Throw, +6 Persuasion)

## Of the Book

ALIGNMENT

6 MAX. FOLLOWERS

**TOTAL ARMOUR CLASS** 17

**BODY** Scale 14

**HELM** Iron-ribbed +1

**SHIELD** Shield +2

**INITIATIVE** +0

**SPEED** 30

**TEMPORARY HIT POINTS**

**HIT POINTS** 24

**HIT DICE** 1 (1d8)

**DEATH SAVING THROWS**

Successes: ○ ○ ○ ○

Failures: ○ ○ ○ ○

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE (TYPE)
Sword	+4	1d8+2 slashing
Spear(20/60)*	+4	1d6+2 piercing
Hunting Bow †	+2	1d6 piercing

\* Versatile 1d8+4 piercing with two hands.  
 † Ammunition. Range 80/320. Two-handed.

**TREASURES**

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### FEATURES AND TRAITS

**Miraculous Avoidance.** When struck by an attack you can use your reaction to negate all damage. You must take a long rest before using this again. (+1 to Dex already applied.)

**Enduring.** If you take damage you can make a Constitution saving throw with the damage as the DC to take only half damage. Use this feature once per long rest.

**Seasoned Diplomat.** If you fail a social check you always use the first failure entry, no matter what the result was.

**Alignment Die.** Before you roll with advantage, choose one of the d20s to be your alignment die. If you select that die as the result, you gain inspiration.

**Glamour.** If you spend inspiration on your first Charisma check with a stranger, success will produce a dramatic result.

### EQUIPMENT

Memento of his homeland, Gaming kit  
 Hero's Kit (A leather sleep sack, which you use aboard the ship when sleeping to keep dry and to stow your gear when not in use. a thick woollen blanket, a tinderbox, 10 torches, 10 days of rations, a waterskin, 50 feet of rope.)

### PERSONALITY TRAITS

I was cast out of my homeland for using my gift with words most unwisely. Nowadays, I am much more cautious in what I say and do.

### IDEALS

**Stories.** All of life is an attempt to do something worthy of being remembered.

### BONDS

I am a stranger in this land and it is my responsibility to both learn and teach others.

### FLAWS

I am never happy staying anywhere for long. Eventually, I must continue on.

### OTHER PROFICIENCIES

Trader's Tongue, Arabic  
 Gaming Kit

### EQUIPMENT

**SHIP NAME** Siraj (Merchant)

**BURDENS**

**GIFTS**

NAME Knut the Deaf  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

BURDENS **Deaf:** This Follower has disadvantage on ability checks that require hearing.

GIFTS **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Learned (Old Ways).** This Follower can tell the hero about the Ancients and the Old Ways and even a bit about the Giants. Activate this Follower to translate Ogham or interpret some other clue. The Follower must make a DC 10 Intelligence check, becoming spent on a failure.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

NAME Leofgyd  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

BURDENS None.

GIFTS **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Hardened.** This Follower has advantage on death saving throws in combat.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

NAME Saewine  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

BURDENS None.

GIFTS **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Merchant.** This Follower knows the ways of trade. You can spend the Follower in order to get advantage on an ability check regarding a purchase.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

NAME Eastmund  SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

BURDENS **Awkward.** This Follower has disadvantage on Charisma checks.

GIFTS **Battle-bred.** When the Hero takes damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower reduces the damage by half and becomes spent.

**Bear Blooded.** This Follower has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws.

**Church-goer.** This follower is aligned with The Church.

**Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

NAME Gruni

SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** **Death-mark.** There's a price on this Follower's head, somebody wants them dead.

**GIFTS** **Carpenter.** This Follower has advantage on ability checks that involve carpenter's tools.

**Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this Gift is activated, each available Follower with this Gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Spearbearer.** Activate this Follower to make an attack roll, doing 3 (1d6) piercing damage on a hit.

NAME Corliss

SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** None.

**GIFTS** **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Spearbearer.** Activate this Follower to make an attack roll, doing 3 (1d6) piercing damage on a hit.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

NAME Maicla

SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** None.

**GIFTS** **Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Prophetic.** Spend this Follower to allow the Hero to reroll a failed saving throw.

**Rescue the Hero.** When this gift is activated, each available Follower with this gift rushes into the fight, trying to save the Hero from certain death. Each activated Follower must make a death saving throw. The Hero is rescued and has a chance to take a long rest before the adventure continues.

**Scribe.** This Follower has advantage on intelligence checks and saving throws. They can read and write one language of your choice.

NAME Thormund

SPENT  SLAIN  KILLED  RELEASED

**BURDENS** **Malcontent.** This Follower is rarely happy with their lot in life. When activated, roll a d20. On a 1, they refuse to act.

**GIFTS** **Bearded Axe.** In combat, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Hero gains advantage on all of their attack rolls this turn and the hero's target does not benefit from their shield (if they have one).

**Engage.** When you roll initiative, each Follower with this gift can be assigned up to two opponents in a battle. Engaged opponents spend their turn fighting the Follower unless the Hero is within reach, in which case the opponent can attack the Hero as normal. On the third and subsequent rounds, the Follower must make a death saving throw at the end of the opponent's turn if they were the target of the opponent. At the end of a round, a Follower can disengage from the opponent, becoming spent. Another available Follower can then use this ability to engage an opponent.

**Take a Blow.** When the Hero receives damage from a successful attack, spend this Follower as a reaction. The Follower absorbs the damage and must make a death saving throw.

**Unfazed.** The Follower automatically succeeds at any checks forced on it by a Monster.



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