

Black Dogs

Unofficial house-rules and materials for
Lamentations of the Flame Princess



Issue I

by Daimon Games

Black Dogs is a dark fantasy collection of house-rules, materials, adventures and monsters, a toolbox to generate new content for OSR systems, particularly focused on Lamentations of the Flame Princess.



Issue I contains: a presentation
a few house-rules, including character creation
an introductory adventure in Flussburg
a couple of magic trees
some undead and trolls

LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
WEIRD FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING
COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

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It's just here for viewing pages side by side.

BLACK DOGS #I

DECEMBER 2017

Unofficial house-rules and materials for
Lamentations of the Flame Princess



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Contents

Introduction, 3
(Guts)

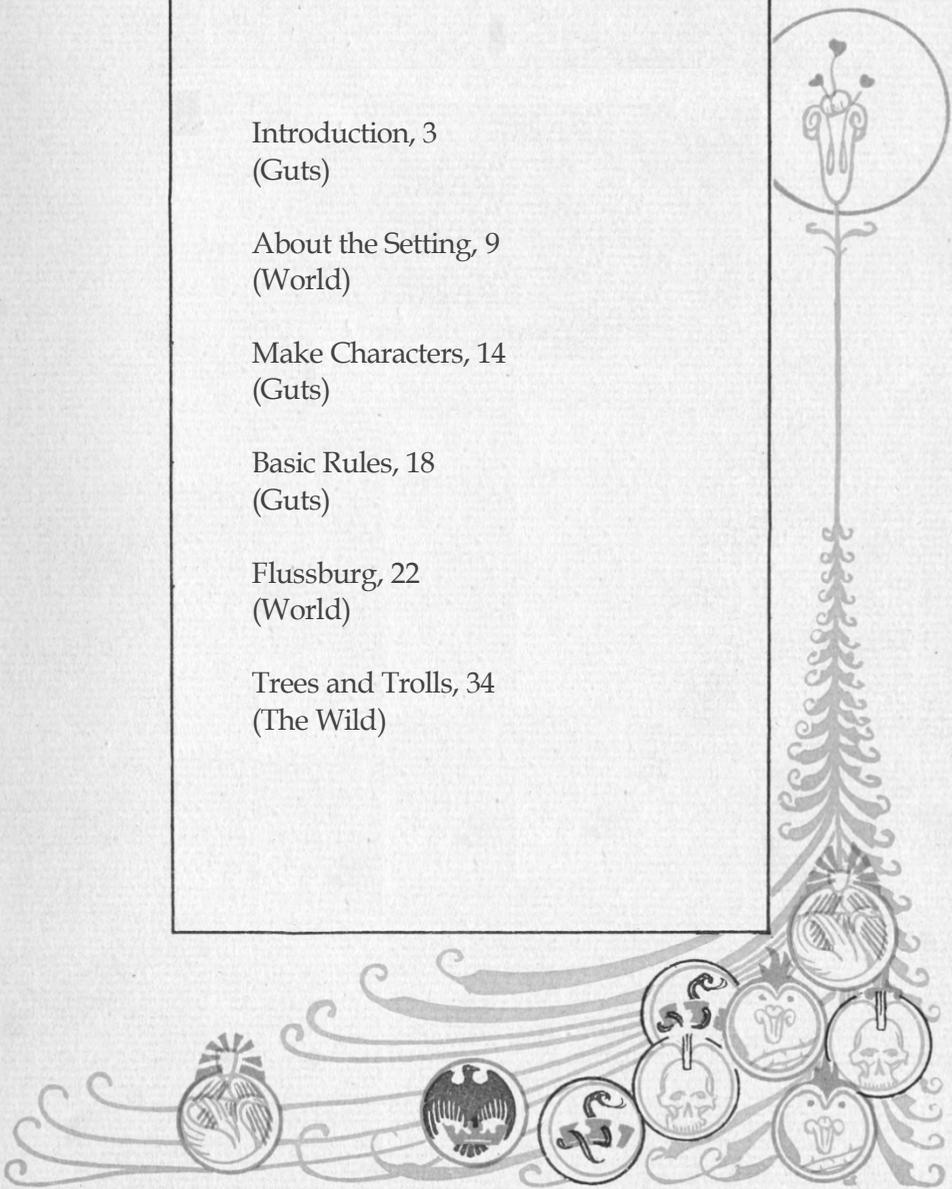
About the Setting, 9
(World)

Make Characters, 14
(Guts)

Basic Rules, 18
(Guts)

Flussburg, 22
(World)

Trees and Trolls, 34
(The Wild)



INTRODUCTION

Black Dogs is a dark fantasy collection of house-rules, materials, adventures, monsters, and together a toolbox to generate new content for OSR systems, particularly focused on **Lamentations of the Flame Princess**. Black Dogs shares a common set of rules and aesthetics with Lamentations, but it has its distinct flavor. Whenever a rule is not found (or not presented yet) in the Black Dogs 'zine, just use the default from Lamentations or whatever OSR system you're running.

Lamentations of the Flame Princess
Circle of Hands
Dogs in the Vineyard
The Black Hack
Warhammer Fantasy RPG
Ten Foot Polemic
Paolo Greco, of Lost Pages

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Beta 0.8

Version

Spirit

There's less horror in Black Dogs, although the material sticks to clearly dark fantasy tropes. In just a few words, Black Dogs is a dark, late medieval setting, for monster hunters and mercenaries - kept together into the loose frame of an informal organization that lends some purpose to your characters.

When you play Black Dogs you play for three things mostly: **monsters**, **wilderness** and its encounters, and non-playing characters' **communities**. Basically, the material from Black Dogs aims to bring together three of the most popular fantasy literature and gaming tropes: fighting monsters, traveling in a foreign and fantastic world, interacting with a fantasy community and its people.

Monsters

There is not too much fighting: fights are a few and are risky and important, with emphasis on tactics. Monsters are many but your characters encounter them with a purpose and a fight is also an encounter, with its complexity.

Wilderness

There is wilderness and travel, and those are handled with specific rules that can lead to additional encounters or different routes.

Communities

And there are NPCs to interact with: with their towns and villages, with their homes and jobs, with their troubles and their share of monstrosities.

Of course, there is some influence from a popular series of books and video games about a certain monsters' hunter, but Black Dogs shares very little with it. This is a game to play as a group and while it has a taste for darkness, it has a different spirit than the aforementioned monsters' hunter books.

There is no complete roadmap for this project, but as of now, all the material presented will belong to one of the following categories:

- ❖ House-rules, and character creation
- ❖ Combat-related rules, usable independently
- ❖ Magic rules & spells, usable independently
- ❖ Everything about setting and adventures
- ❖ Everything about wilderness and creatures

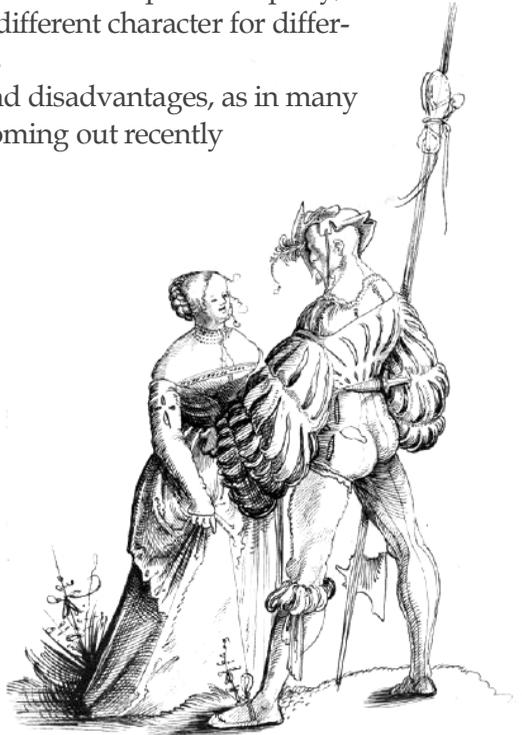
When you play Black Dogs instead of Lamentations, these are the main differences:

- ❖ Similar time frame (late medieval; a little earlier than LotFP default) but slightly different attitude
- ❖ “Good” guys hunting monsters and demons (perhaps in the end turning out to be not so good after all)
- ❖ A group of characters composes the party; players pick a different character for different adventures
- ❖ Advantages and disadvantages, as in many other games coming out recently

Content

Guts
Blood
Sorcery
World
The Wild

What’s different



What else

The upcoming issues of Black Dogs will also contain:

- ❖ Slightly different score systems, different Saves, modifiers, XP and leveling up etc.
- ❖ Substantial changes to combat (with Zones), Hit Points and wounds
- ❖ Simple Encumbrance system
- ❖ GM's advice on how to create adventures, NPCs and communities, and how to generate valid hooks that will bring players to confront meaningful monsters
- ❖ Many beasts and monsters, various creatures and other things found in The Wild
- ❖ Rules focused on travel and exploration
- ❖ New rules and magic spells for sorcerers (plus getting rid of traditional clerics). Until more details are presented, use regular spells and magic system
- ❖ A series of characters' careers, to give additional depth to the story of the various party members







ABOUT THE SETTING

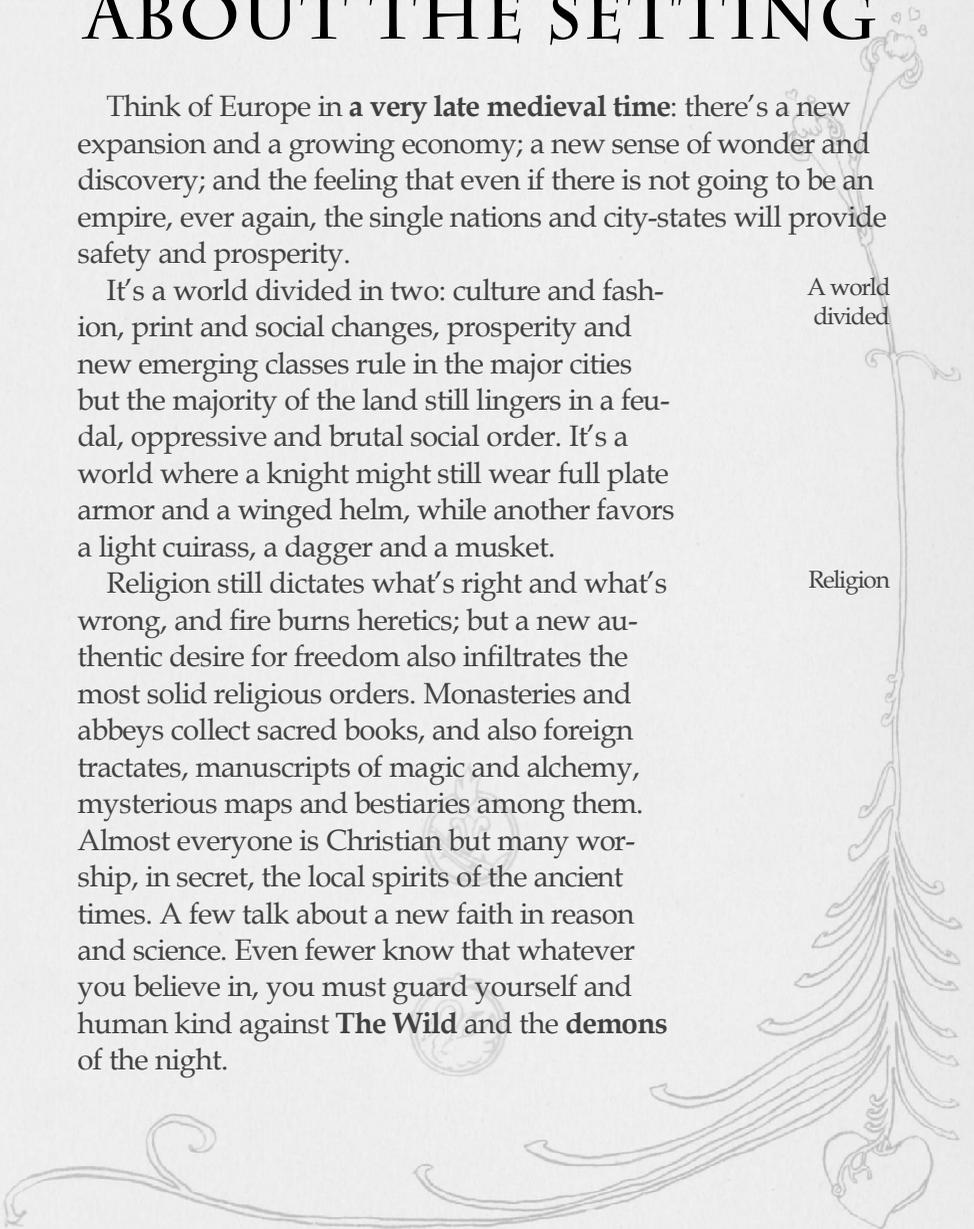
Think of Europe in a **very late medieval time**: there's a new expansion and a growing economy; a new sense of wonder and discovery; and the feeling that even if there is not going to be an empire, ever again, the single nations and city-states will provide safety and prosperity.

It's a world divided in two: culture and fashion, print and social changes, prosperity and new emerging classes rule in the major cities but the majority of the land still lingers in a feudal, oppressive and brutal social order. It's a world where a knight might still wear full plate armor and a winged helm, while another favors a light cuirass, a dagger and a musket.

Religion still dictates what's right and what's wrong, and fire burns heretics; but a new authentic desire for freedom also infiltrates the most solid religious orders. Monasteries and abbeys collect sacred books, and also foreign tractates, manuscripts of magic and alchemy, mysterious maps and bestiaries among them. Almost everyone is Christian but many worship, in secret, the local spirits of the ancient times. A few talk about a new faith in reason and science. Even fewer know that whatever you believe in, you must guard yourself and human kind against **The Wild** and the **demons** of the night.

A world
divided

Religion



The Wild

For The Wild is just **out there**: beyond the walls of our cities, a few miles into the woods; just out of our village, sneaking into our fields, preying on our cattle and on our own blood, are the monsters. And demons, demons are after our poor souls; they're born in the darkest nights, they are a shade of the devil, fragments of an evil spirit that poisons the Earth. This is how monsters are born: demons twist and corrupt nature, they consume faith, they destroy order, and bring along the chaos.

The Black Dogs

Only the wicked Black Dogs can save us. And even if we despise them, we must trust in them.

The Black Dogs are an **informal organization** of warriors and rogues, sorcerers and clerics, originally created by the Church to fight against witchcraft. The original order of the Black Dogs - comprised of fighting monks - was disbanded over a century ago, accused by the Church of corruption, use of black magic and unholy methods, and of consorting with the witches more often than fighting them.

In fact, Black Dogs have traditionally fought supernatural monsters and perilous beasts, which are far more common than the Church recognizes, and clearly a more present danger for humankind than the rare witch. The witches, by the way, are valid allies more often than enemies.

In their fight against monsters, the Black Dogs have indeed used any means necessary: steel and silver, black powder and sorcery, traps and clever tricks.

Nowadays, the Black Dogs are **not a religious order anymore**. They are not formally recognized as an authority. They are often despised by the local political powers or local nobles, and the Church often openly opposes them.

But these warriors still have an aura of authority about them, even if they carry with them blood and nightmares.

They fight monsters to protect humans, while humans often despise them and the Church occasionally hunts them as heretics. In their fight against monsters, they often discover that the real monster is the human, and that the only way to obtain peace is through balance, rather than through war.

The Black Dogs are an informal organization without a single leader. There is a **council of older members**, typically numbering ten to twelve, deliberating on the most politically relevant matters.

Besides that, every group of Black Dogs is mostly **independent** and acts according to a loose code of honor and chivalry. In this order, Black Dogs will fight against demons, monsters, and outstandingly evil humans. In order, they will protect: innocents and children, working man, humanity in general. Since they must provide for themselves, they rarely give up the opportunity to earn some coin looting ancient ruins or tombs, or working as mercenaries or similar. Each group **trains its own new recruits**. And indeed this is what your characters are: new recruits just out of training, in their first independent mission.

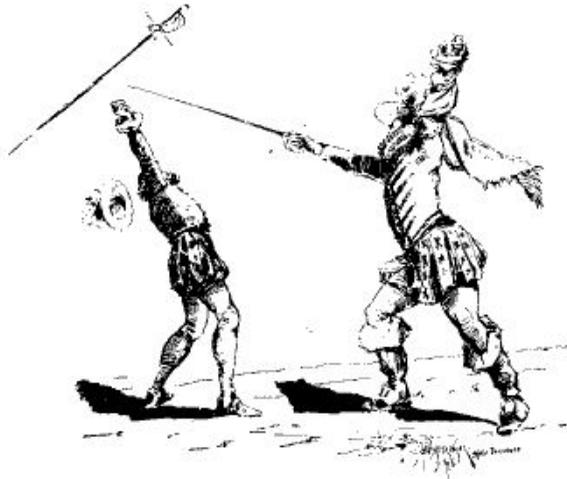
Authority

Relationship with
the commoners

The general population, while certainly not daring to show appreciation, clearly respect Black Dogs for their strength and usefulness. Also, while they do not love how Black Dogs go about their business, shunning their connection with sorcerers, witches and heretics, and fear their dark powers, many actually recognize that Black Dogs are on the side of regular folks and protect the weakest among them.

It's not uncommon for the regular population to seek - in public or in secret - the help of the Black Dogs for solving their troubles, be it personal trouble, about their family, or community.

Occasionally, nobles or royalty may hire them in secret to do business they consider dirty, but want done without too much fuss. The Black Dogs sometimes accept these offers, for profit or because they serve a more noble purpose in the greater scheme of things.



- ❖ Medieval, but late medieval: there are few large cities, luxuries, long distance travel, and reliable fire weapons
- ❖ There is a hunger for progress and nostalgia for the lost Empire that came before, but the Dark Age period is ending, right now
- ❖ There are politics and knighthood, emerging kingdoms and warlords, powerful bishops and an omnipresent church
- ❖ Just outside the major cities, it's still hardcore medieval: it's feudal, harsh and dirty, cold and violent, grit and mud
- ❖ There are small remote communities, that fall 200 or more years behind compared to cities
- ❖ There is print, there is medicine, there is knowledge; but there is still more faith in religion and superstition
- ❖ Often, there is a common and reasonable law protecting the weakest to some extent
- ❖ The strongest always has a way around such laws (via politics, corruption, violence, nobility, magic, and so on)
- ❖ The Wild is just out there: it's more dangerous and bigger than any human kingdom and it is **really** full of monsters
- ❖ The Wild also holds the remains of the ancient Empire: its treasures and knowledge, its wicked dark magic
- ❖ And **demons** are out there too; and they always find their way into a weak human heart
- ❖ The **Black Dogs** are not always respected but almost surely needed; not always obeyed but often feared

Setting Summary

In just a
few words

MAKE CHARACTERS

Your characters are new recruits of the Black Dogs that have just made it out of training. They are about to begin their first independent mission together.

Similar to how Circle of Hands generates a group of new characters

Session: meeting with your friends to play (i.e. one evening of play)

Adventure: a brief story arc, within a given location (may take more than one session to play through)

Until there's nothing left of this group of Black Dogs

As long as there is no Black Dogs character sheet, use this to track Luck, Talent and Save scores

Every player, including the GM, will generate **two characters** at the start of the first session, and **another character** before starting the second adventure. These are the characters of the group; those generated before the second adventure will become available as new members as the GM sees fit according to the story.

In the first adventure, each player must play one of the characters they've made. If that character dies, they can use their second character or one made by the GM.

After the first adventure, each player can choose any character from the group, including those made by the GM, as long as it's **not the same one** they played in the previous adventure.

This is the group of characters you have: tell their stories as long as there are enough of them still alive. Decide how they grow, change, retire, witness how they die, or despair as they plunge into madness or evil...

Print the **New Recruits sheet**: three for each player (GM included) before making characters.

Make characters using this New Recruits sheet and copy the information onto the regular character sheet, once you have completed the character creation process.

NEW RECRUITS SHEET

Print three for every player, GM included.

Character name:

Ability	Luck	Talent	Save	SCORE	Mod.
Charisma					
Constitution					
Dexterity					
Intelligence					
Strength					
Wisdom					

Class: HD and Hit Points:

Alignment: Starting money:

Abilities and scores

Charisma
Constitution
Dexterity
Intelligence
Strength
Wisdom

There are six **standard abilities**, or attributes, in the game. Those abilities have starting scores from 3 to 18, as usual.

Each ability has 3 secondary scores, in a range from 1 to 6:

❖ Luck ❖ Talent ❖ Save

Luck is used for re-rolls: burn a point of Luck to re-roll with the related ability. A re-roll is not an automatic success.

Talent is used to acquire better scores at level-up: burn a point of Talent and increase the related Ability score, or the related Save score, by one.

There is no way to regain Luck or Talent points; once burned they are gone forever.

Save is indeed for Saving Throws; it's in the 1-6 range; Saves are rolled with a d6 and not a d20 anymore.

Modifiers

Modifiers (**mod**) are similar to any other OSR system but slightly tuned; every two points above 12 give an additional plus one and every two below ten, a minus one.

Combine these modifiers with your standard OSR rules (for example +CON modifier for Hit Points, +STR for combat rolls, and so on).

SCORE/MODIFIER

3-4 / -3		13-14 / +1
5-6 / -2	9-10 / -0	15-16 / +2
7-8 / -1	11-12 / +0	17-18 / +3

- ❖ Take 6d6 and roll them: assign each number to one of the boxes (Luck, Talent, Save) of any ability you desire
- ❖ You cannot assign a 6 to a Save, but it's allowed for Luck or Talent
- ❖ For every ability, **in order**, roll the other 2d6
- ❖ This time, the lowest score must go to Save, or if already written, to the Talent value

For new characters

Save is perhaps the most critical score; try to have it as high as possible

If you don't want to use Luck and Talent, just keep **the new Save score** for your own game. To do this, roll 3d6 in order for each new character and give the Save the middle score of the 3d6. Instead of having the Save score progressing at level-up every level, give the player the option to increase one of them at level-up by one point, but only for the first 10 levels, and only up to 5 for each ability.

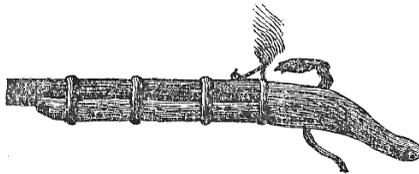
How to exclude Luck and Talent

Roll the class Hit Dice. If you roll like shit, you can always burn a Constitution Luck point and try again... as many times as you want, as long as you have points to burn.

Starting Hit Points

Every character begins the game not with the usual 3d6 x10 silver pieces, but with the equivalent of the **Charisma score x10**. Yes, the more they like you, the more they pay you.

Starting money



BASIC RULES

This is a short summary of the various house-rules applied to the standard Lamentations of the Flame Princess rules.

I've tried to write rules as single modules - so you can decide which ones are suitable for your game and which ones to discard in favor of your own house-rules, or where to stick to the original rules.

Dice notation

- ❖ **2d6** is two six-sided dice added up
- ❖ **b2dx** (advantage) is the best of two x-sided dice rolled together (drop the less convenient)
- ❖ **w2dx** (disadvantage) is the worse of two x-sided dice rolled together (drop the more convenient)

Saving Throws

Every ability has an associated **Save score**: when something bad happens unexpectedly, and you are reacting or trying to avoid harm or danger, roll a **Saving Throw** (Save). Saving Throws are not listed in the usual OSR format for the type of danger (paralyze, poison, magic, etc.) but instead they are connected to abilities.

Saving Throws
by abilities

Roll a d6 equal
or under the
Save score
for the ability

A saving throw is rolled with a d6 and must be **equal or under** the Save score to be successful. A Save roll of 6 always fails; if you have a Save score of 6 then roll at advantage (roll 2d6, keep the best one) as if you had a score of 5.

Ability checks

You resort to Saves when trying to avoid some harm or danger, as a reaction. For actions you initiate, roll an Ability Check instead.

- ❖ **Charisma:** vs. any kind of charming and possession effect, including spells of petrification or paralysis
- ❖ **Constitution:** vs. physical damage that is already absorbed (like a disease, a poison, a fall, or being hit by a trap). Includes saves against death
- ❖ **Dexterity:** vs. all danger that can be dodged or avoided (including area effects like certain spells and most traps)
- ❖ **Intelligence:** resisting spells and spell-like effects (most magic, including magic items) that are not purely elemental (for example save vs. a curse, but not vs. paralysis or vs. a fireball) and are not possession
- ❖ **Strength:** vs. any kind of physical damage that can just be resisted for a short time or endured (like burning, drowning, freezing and similar)
- ❖ **Wisdom:** vs. all kind of deception and illusions (including magical ones), and against all cleric-like abilities or spells, including most undead magic

When you fail a Saving Throw, the GM tells you the consequences of the threat coming true, when you succeed sometimes you avoid danger completely; sometimes you simply suffer milder consequences.

With Ability Checks the GM is encouraged to use also fail-forward techniques; with a failed Saving Throw the GM should inflict the appropriate damage or consequences **without holding back**.

Saves vs Magic:

Is it charming, possession, petrification or paralysis? then use CHA

Is it an area or an elemental effect to be avoided? then use DEX

Is it deception or illusion, undead or cleric magic? then use WIS

Use INT for all other magic

Save

with STR or CON?

Use STR if the condition can be removed,

use CON if it's a persistent damage or anyway when in doubt use CON

Alternative

(Raggi's) rule:

roll as many d6 as your Save score. What you

need is one 6 to

mitigate harm or danger; two or

more to avoid it completely

Ability Checks

When you attempt an action, you **roll a d20**, trying to roll **equal or under** your ability score (a 1 is always a success, a 20 always a failure). This is called **an Ability Check**. The higher your ability score, the more likely your chances for success.

Failing Ability Checks

If you fail, the GM tells you what went wrong.

You didn't necessarily screw up, perhaps it was back luck, perhaps circumstances were harder than you expected. Sometimes, you fail the roll but the GM still gives you what you want - but there's a higher price to pay, an unexpected complication, an unforeseen development. The GM is encouraged to use **fail-forward techniques** when appropriate: on a failed roll let the characters succeed, but introduce further complications, instead of presenting a dead-end.

Using a Skills' System

If you use a Skills' System, you can still use Ability Checks for unusual activities that aren't covered by the default list of skills. Remember that if skills are an independent score (like the default LotFP d6 skills), having for example 1 dot in Climbing (1/6 chances of success) is worse than having just an average Dexterity 10 (50% chances of success). Therefore, if you mix Skills and Ability Checks, you should use Skills as modifiers to improve the chance of success.

To keep things simple, I usually just make a list of skills and allow characters to gain one every other level, or every level if they're focused like Specialists.

When a character has a relevant Skill, they roll the Ability Check **at advantage** (roll 2d20, keep the most convenient), or cancel a disadvantage imposed by the situation, the lack of proper gear, the harsh environment, and so on.

As is now standard in many other games, when there is a situation with **clear advantage or disadvantage**, you roll 2 dice instead of one and keep the best (if you have the advantage) or worst (if you're at disadvantage).

With an Ability Check, this means rolling 2d20 and keeping the lowest die for an advantage, because you want to roll equal or under the ability score. If you are at disadvantage, keep the highest d20, which is more likely to make you to fail.

For an attack in combat, you would roll 2d20 and keep the highest die for advantage, to roll above the enemy's AC, or the lowest for disadvantage; the same for damage, and so on.

For a Saving Throw, you roll 2d6 and again keep the low die if you have the advantage. More likely, if you roll a Save you are in very deep shit, and being at disadvantage you will keep the high die.

Advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out. They don't need to be given a numerical value but just roughly estimated. To gain the bonus of the best of two dice - or the penalty of the worse of two dice - the situation **must be clearly unbalanced**. They are best used for extreme situations, not to emulate a scale of tasks' difficulties.

(Dis)

Advantages

With
Ability Checks

In combat

For Saves,
although rarely
at advantage

Advantages and
disadvantages
cancel each
other out

FLUSSBURG

This Black Dogs introductory adventure aims to give you a taste of the world of Flussburg; a small village with local political troubles and a greater menace looming on the horizon. There is also an element of weirdness with monsters and a tree that breathes life into the dead. Flussburg is probably wrong in German. If you speak German and it sounds weird to your ears, you could call it Villa Flumine in Latin. Or just pretend it's a weird name because it's medieval.

The Village

Places:

Small church

Imperial palace

Main square

Few shops

Overpriced tavern

Blacksmith lab

100 regular houses

Flussburg is a small village of farmers and river fishermen, reasonably poor even for the standards of this northern kingdom. It stands on the south bank of a large river (perhaps the Elbe) next to an ancient Imperial bridge.

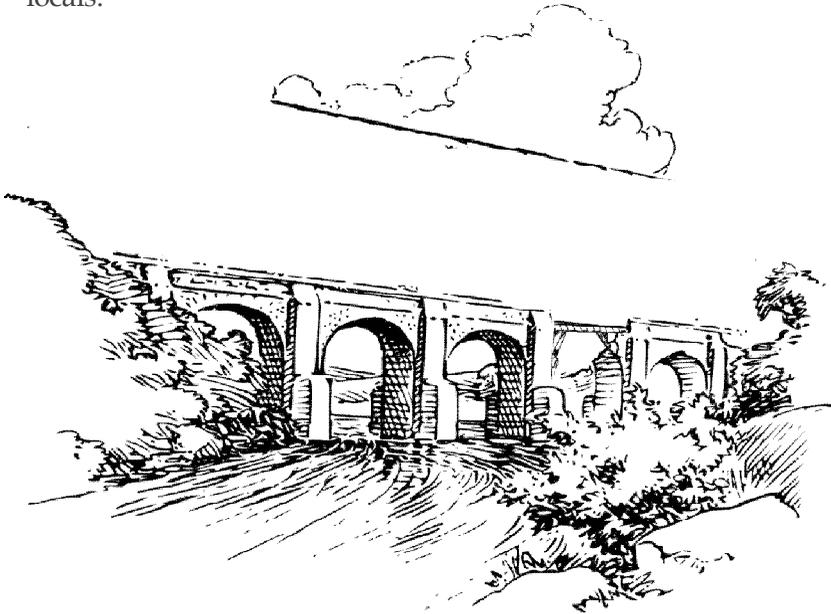
The village consists of: a **little church** and an **ancient Imperial palace**, facing each other over the **main square** (a rather sad affair of dust and mud), a **few shops** and an **overpriced tavern**, The Pig'n Bell, which also acts as the only guesthouse, a singularly big and opulent **blacksmith laboratory** and shop, a hundred **regular houses** of wood and turf and only occasionally **stone buildings**.

The village is unofficially ruled by a council of three: the priest, the master of the fishermen's guild, and the oldest of the farmers. They rule conservatively, being mostly occupied in their individual businesses, but keep a sharp lookout for troublemakers and heretics, although neither has been seen here for many seasons.

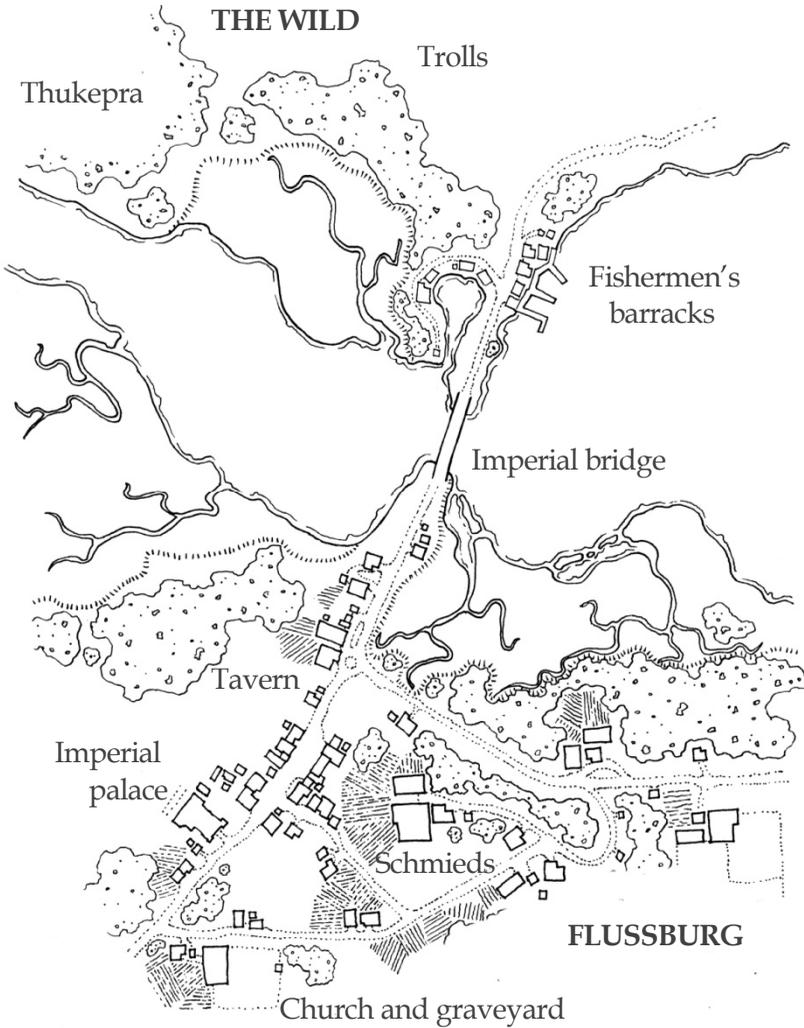
The Bridge

The ancient Imperial bridge is now in ruins and completely collapsed in two sections: it is possible to traverse it because villagers have lashed together wooden planks and used them to bridge the gaps, but these can support at most a couple of people at the same time, or a very small cart.

For this reason, traffic with the north often has to go over other bridges, either to the east or the west of Flussburg. This is ruining the potential of the village, however if the bridge was to be repaired and taxes requested in the name of the local Duke, silver would flow to the community. Some would find work as maintainers, others as guards and guides, many could easily trade with northern tribes, probably a seasonal market would be held, and even though the majority of the silver would go to the Duke, a good portion would make a difference for the locals.



FLUSSBURG MAP



They are the clan running the beautiful blacksmith's workshop; with four generations of the family working there: a grandfather, a father and his wife, two sons (with their wives and families), one younger daughter (yet to be married), countless kids and a few apprentices.

- ❖ They want to fix the bridge and bring commerce to the village
- ❖ They want to seize control from the council, maximizing their profit from a renovated bridge
- ❖ They are honest to a fault but always a little overpriced: they do the right thing but you will always feel like you paid too much
- ❖ For this reason, the majority of the villagers are against them and would not support them in their race for power, although most would also not violently oppose them

- ❖ They have **small eyes** and **big hands**; this seems to be a family trait
- ❖ With small eyes, comes shortness of sight: they **don't** see what other people think of them, they will **not** detect a plot against them, they are **blind** to everything except their own business, trade and their plans
- ❖ With big hands comes **strength** (the whole family, women included, roll 1d8 for damage even unarmed), **skilled blacksmiths** (they can fix or produce anything metallic requested by the characters as long as it's not magical), and a notable but controlled **greed** (coins seem to disappear in their big but steady hands)

The Schmieds

The Schmieds act according to these guidelines:

Make them look as you see fit but:

The others

Most of the villagers are rather unassuming and fairly standard in their appearances and trades. Everyone is basically **level zero**, with only 1d4 HP, or 1d6 if they are strong farmers or members of the watch (there is just six of them **and two are dead**, they work on shifts and also have other jobs, so they are not really professional soldiers).

Menaces

If a Troll gets soaked in water, it loses half HP, gets -3 AC and inflicts half damage

A gang of trolls prowls in the nearby woods. There are 1d4+2 of them, and they've already spotted the village. They are on the north bank and are undecided whether to risk crossing the bridge. They are afraid of water and rightfully so. There is a 4 in 6 chance for each of them that the wooden planks will move or break if they try to cross. Eventually they'll try to cross and to reach the village.

The Thukepra

A mysterious and sentient tree on the northern bank facing the village, **the Thukepra** loathes the view of the humans on the southern side of the river. It is capable of reanimating dead humanoids who are buried with enough metal on them (for example guards and knights). The Thukepra has lured the trolls in the area of the village, hoping they will destroy it and kill all the humans.

The Schmieds

The Schmieds are in part a threat to the local community, but probably **the local council** which insists that nothing bad is going on and that everybody should go about their business as usual is even more of a danger.

Upon entering the village, the characters will meet a random NPC. Roll a d6 and read the quote to the players:

1: Ubert Schmied, youngest son of Erberg, the leader of the clan (**close to the Schmieds' workshop**): "It's about time to do something. We need to fix this bridge, and we need money to hire proper soldiers."

2: Helga, the young wife of an old fisherman (**under the bridge, staring at the river**): "It's two nights that Hurst doesn't come home. This is a river, not the sea... Why is he not coming home?"

3: Hans, an old farmer (**on the south bank**, pointing to the fields and trees on the north bank): "The trees are too close to the fields, nowadays. Back when I was young, we kept the forest at a safe distance from where we worked."

4: Closs, a vagabond coming to the village too often to be liked (**begging in the main square**): "This is the last time I come here. Two guards were killed, and whatever killed a man with a spear, won't spare me."

5: Beth, the tavern keeper with an angry look (**in the tavern**): "Do you want a room? If you need a private room you can have it for 3 silver per person, otherwise just share the room with those merchants for only 1 sp per person."

6: Junta, a little girl (**playing in the graveyard**): "The priests fights with the Schmieds, the Schmieds fight at night with the merchants... My mom fights with my dad, too."

Rumors

If the characters want to discover more about the village, they do it by interacting with the locals

If the characters go to one of the listed locations, then they should have the related encounter and the information made available to them

Be honest when presenting these points of view; this adventure is not about deception

Things to discover

This is a rough list of the things happening in the village and in the nearby woods, that the characters might discover either by talking with NPCs, by investigating and by making their own deductions, by exploring the surroundings, by surveiling the village at night, and so on

Hired killers pose as merchants; with only scarce goods (some iron works and plain fabrics) to support their story. If the characters visit the tavern there is a 1 in 6 chance they will notice the killers involved in an **argument** which turns into a fight, highlighting their unlikely skills with weapons.

Ubert, the youngest of the Schmieds has hired the killers using family funds, to kill the guards and raise concern among the villagers, so that his family can rise to power. This can be discovered by **checking the graveyard at night**, where the hired killers meet their contractor **every midnight**.

The other Schmieds know nothing of this, but some of them might support this plan seeing it as a reasonable price for the villagers to pay for their own protection. This is more likely if the characters have brought proof of the presence of trolls.

The hired killers posing as merchants can be seen **the night of day 2** stalking a guard, and the night after killing the same guard **close to the bridge** (the murderers act in perfect silence but will be visible if the characters are nearby and hiding - if the characters are in sight, they will not kill). The body of this guard is easily found **on the northern** bank, close to the river, far from the trees.

Searching the room of the hired killers also reveals a bag of silver and many professional, well-kept weapons.

There is evidence of trolls infesting the nearby woods: if the characters **explore the woods** on the northern bank of the river, they will find either (roll a d6):

1-3: Troll excrements

4-5: The remains of Helga's husband that was caught and devoured

6: An unskinned roasted deer (trolls must be nearby because the animal is on the fire now)

If the characters **explore the woods after day 4**, they will find the remains of another fisherman, eaten by the trolls.

There is a mysterious pale tree **on the northern bank** of the river; its pale whiteish bark makes the tree stand out from the others. Each time the characters explore the woods their chances of finding this tree increase by 25%, so the first exploration has a 25% chance, second 50% etc. The tree is just behind the first or second line of trees of The Wild.

If characters investigate the tree, anyone with some wilderness background or with knowledge of sorcery, can try perhaps an Arcane skill test or Wisdom ability check, to determine what it is.

The tree is initially defenseless, although it has its own magic to protect itself. Every guard that dies and is buried in the northern bank by the hired killers, and anyone buried there with metal armor, will become an undead controlled by the tree within 24 to 48 hours from their death. The tree has lured the trolls here, to generate chaos and drive the humans away.

Evidence of
the Trolls

Every expedition
in a different
area should
be rolled with
cumulative +1

Evidence of
the Thukepra,
the tree

More info in
the Thukepra
section in the
next chapter

The tree has lured
the trolls here, but
cannot control
them. If the tree
is killed, the
trolls will still
try to attack the
village in the end

The Events

These rough guidelines are provided for day by day events, if events are free to run their course.

Stats for the hired killers: page 42

Remember that the hired killers/merchants will meet with the young Schmieds every midnight in the graveyard.

With only two guards left standing, the council will have a hard time enforcing the law

The players actions will ultimately determine the way the game unfolds. The following events are a guide which the GM should adapt based on their games specific events.

The hired killers

Day 1. Do nothing out of the ordinary, but meet with the young Schmieds at midnight

Day 2. Follow one of the guards home in the evening. They can be spotted by the characters if they are around

Day 3. Kill the guard they tailed the previous night, burying the body in haste in the northern bank

Day 4. The council is concerned for the third missing guard. They will question the “merchants” and the characters but are unlikely to take action

Day 5. The killers attack another guard who narrowly escapes. In the morning he brings his tale to the Council. The guard managed to harm one of the attackers. If one of the characters is hurt, they might be suspected of being the murderers even if they arrived at the village after the first two guards died. A search in the tavern’s room of the hired killers, though, will reveal a sack of silver and enough weapons to make them likely suspects too, and one of them is limping...

Day 6. The hired killers decide to leave. If the young Schmieds doesn’t pay half of the agreed price or tries to stop them, they’ll try to kill him as well

The Trolls

Stats for
the trolls:
page 41

Day 1. Another fisherman disappears; the council still sends no patrols to the woods and invites everybody to remain calm

Day 2. The trolls are spotted by a farmer; most of the villagers don't believe his tale

Day 3. The fisherman reappears, having simply lost his boat to the currents. He was probably just drunk

Day 4. Another fisherman disappears; killed by the trolls. Evidence will be found in the woods close to the farming land on the north bank

Day 5. Trolls explore the bridge at night

Day 6. Trolls try to cross the bridge, unless heavily guarded

The Thukepra

Stats for the
Thukepra:
page 36

Day 1. Does nothing

Day 2. Succeeds in reanimating the two dead guards

Day 3. Does nothing

Day 4. Reanimates the corpse of the 3rd guard

Day 5. Does nothing

Day 6. Sends the undead with the trolls, in the hope of killing defenseless villagers or exhausted fighters; the undead will go after the weakest and if they attack the villagers they will kill at least 3d6 before being chopped to pieces

In the event the Thukepra is discovered by the characters, the tree will defend itself with any undead available.

The actions of the Schmieds are all plainly public. These are not listed in the section "Things to discover" because the characters will witness the escalation of the Schmieds' attempt to seize power and there's no concealment, no hidden motive, behind their actions

The only notable exception being Ubert Schmied, the youngest of the two sons, who has hired a gang of killers to attack the guards in an attempt to discredit the council and favor his own family

The Schmieds

Day 1. They become more vocal on the topic of village security, and the failings of the council

Day 2. Even though the villagers don't believe the alarm about the trolls as reported by a farmer, the Schmieds demand that this matter is taken seriously by the council

Day 3. The Schmieds keep silent about the fisherman reappearing; they believe it might have been staged by the council and voice their concerns to those who support them

Day 4. If a guard is missing, or if another fisherman has disappeared because of the trolls, the Schmieds demand the council take action. They propose the village hires mercenaries to protect the village and patrol the area, and workers to fortify the bridge

Day 5. During the day the Schmieds keep pestering everyone to try to gather support against the council. The assassination attempt against the guard, in the middle of the night, is voiced as yet another concern against the council in an emergency meeting. If there is a chance or mandate, the Schmieds will lead a couple of mercenaries (they expect more to come within a week) to guard the bridge, and will discover the trolls exploration

Day 6. If the village is attacked, the guards or the mercenaries will raise the alarm. Once the dust has settled the Schmieds call again for the Council to resign

Both the trolls and the undead are a threat to the village, and will remain a threat as long as the council does not see reason, or the Schmieds take power. **In the short term**, defeating the trolls and undead in combat is enough - although there might be several casualties within the village if these creatures manage to cross the bridge.

In the long term, though, unless the characters dispose of the Thukepra tree, more monsters will come, more undead will be animated and sent against the village by the Soul-tree.

While the Schmieds don't know what they're against, they still have the correct plan to save Flussburg. If there is a good relationship with the characters, the Schmieds may try and hire them to protect the village. One provision of the employment is that the characters must vocally denounce the Council.

If the characters uncover and reveal the plans of the young Ubert Schmieds, the villagers will never support the blacksmiths to lead them. They will probably resent the entire family for the actions of Ubert, outcast him, and demand the Schmieds pay a costly compensation.

If the Schmieds fear for the life of Ubert, they might attempt to seize power by force or ask for the intervention of the Duke. While the priest preaches of forgiveness and fair punishment, the master of the fisherman's guild and the oldest of the farmers will insist on a public execution if Ubert is found guilty (and the hired killer will name him if they are threatened with long imprisonment or death).

The End Game

The only effective solution is to fortify the bridge and make the village important enough, thanks to the money of a new market and new trades with the north, so that the Duke will provide a stable garrison

Perhaps the characters will find another solution, but if things are left in the hands of the council, the village of Flussburg is doomed

TREES AND TROLLS

This section contains sparse notes about the unconventional monsters and creatures of The Wild that the characters may encounter in this adventure.

The woods to the north of the village of Flussburg are considered part of The Wild, so it is advisable to roll for possible encounters while the characters are there. You can use the table in the end of this section, or your own wilderness tables.

Remember that **Saves for monsters** are written as x in 6 chances (roll a d6 equal or under x), same as for characters.

Thuकेpra

Thuकेpra
AC 8
Save 3
(4 vs magic);
HD 4d8 (20 HP)

No physical
attacks

Spells:
every time
someone hits it,
roll for a spell;
Saves not allowed
unless specified

Thuकेpra is the ancient name for a **Soul-Tree**, a sentient and supernatural tree which grows only in the forests of The Wild. The legends say that the Soul-Tree's roots dig deep enough to reach the underworld, or that the tree itself sprouts from the underworld and what we see in the forest is barely its tip. It is known to be evil, even though it's unclear how the tree, which cannot move nor speak, could perform any evil.

In many stories the Thuकेpra is linked to the passage of souls to the world of the dead. In some stories the tree facilitates or guards the passage of souls. In others instead the evil tree devours those souls before they can reach the underworld, thus condemning them to eternal damnation and to linger in pain within the tree itself.

A Thukepra is visually distinct from a regular tree first of all by its color: its color is generally pale, and its bark is a light brown that tends to gray. The tree's leaves look almost transparent and of a sickish, almost unreal green. To confirm that a pale tree is indeed a Thukepra, you must dig out its roots: if they're white and glow faintly red in the dark, it's a Thukepra.

If someone eats or smokes leaves of a Thukepra, roll 1d6. When a character rolls a 3-6, any future consumption of the tree's leaves will yield the same results for that character.

- 1: The character increases their Max HP by 1
- 2: The character regains 2 HP
- 3-6: The character loses that many HP

The Thukepra tree does not fight directly. It has no "attacks". It will call for undead to protect itself, if attacked or threatened, and will use its magical powers if someone hits it.

Use the list below for its random spells.

When close to a Thukepra, any magic user must make a save vs. magic to be able to use sorcery. They must roll the save the first time they cast a spell, and if they fail then they can repeat the save each time they try to cast again, until they succeed, but waste spells in the process.

When they succeed once, they are free to cast for the rest of the encounter

Roll	Spell
1	A character's weapon is damaged. -1 to its attacks
2	A faint red spark hits the attacker for 1d4 damage
3	Wild bees are attracted by the tree. As a swarm they have AC 13; Save 1; HD 1d8 (4 HP), their sting attack deals 1d4 damage, and they lose 1 HP when they hit successfully
4	The next magical attack target is reversed against the caster (save vs magic allowed)
5	Nightmares tonight. Negate all HP recovery
6	Faint red spark (see 2) and nightmares tonight (see 5)

Tushakra

Tushakra
AC 14
or 15 (50%)
Save 2
(3 vs magic)
HD 2d8 (9 HP)

1 attack: medium
(1d6) or versatile
weapon (1d8)

Add +1 to to-hit
and damage rolls

Tushakra can be
called to protect a
Thukepra and
will appear within
1d4 rounds after
the characters
do anything
aggressive or
menacing, or
even talk about
attacking or
cutting the tree

The popular belief associates Tushakras with the death of an errand knight. Some stories tell of Tushakras being born of the corpse of an errand knight that died before completing his quest, while others present them as corrupted undead, generated when an errand knight dies in violation of their code of honor.

A Tushakra is a wild **hybrid of a Soul-Tree and metal**. Since metal is uncommon in the forests of the Wild, the most common origin for a Tushakra is the corpse of a knight or a guard in mail or plate armor.

The Soul-Tree is drawn to the corpse and the tree's roots can travel for tens of miles underground to reach the armor and weapons of the dead. The corpse is slowly filled with roots and buds, bones are strengthened with wood and bark, and the Soul-Tree drains from the metal the energy to resurrect the dead.

What emerges is a terrible warrior, brainless but telepathically controlled by the Soul-Tree. Its skin resembles bark, and often leaves and flowers spring from holes and junctures in the armor.

The head barely looks human, all the typical human features are there but the eyes are completely black, and often insects pour out of the Tushakra's wooden mouth. Resin from the Soul-Tree flows through its veins instead of blood, and the Tushakra uses this resin to polish its weapons and armor, to a perfect shiny finish.

Tushakra's have two fundamental instincts; that to protect and serve its master Soul-Tree, and slay any human wearing metal armor so that another Tushakra can be born.

Of course, if a Soul-Tree is killed or destroyed, all the Thuskaras controlled by it will revert back to inanimate corpses.

If the characters set the tree on fire, it will take quite some time for it to die. It's a safe way to get rid of it but the Tushakras will definitely be around for long enough to put up a fight.



All undead obey to the following rules:

- ❖ They can be turned
- ❖ They do not roll for morale
- ❖ They can be harmed by normal weapons
- ❖ But **normal weapons** inflict only half damage (rounded up)
- ❖ **Silver weapons** inflict double damage against undead
- ❖ **Spells** inflict normal damage against undead
- ❖ **Fire and fire spells** inflict double damage against undead

The Naked Tree

Anyone brave enough can eat this meat, but only if cooked. Make then an immediate save vs. poison.

If the save is passed, it counts as a ration, if failed the character pukes violently losing 1 HP from dehydration.

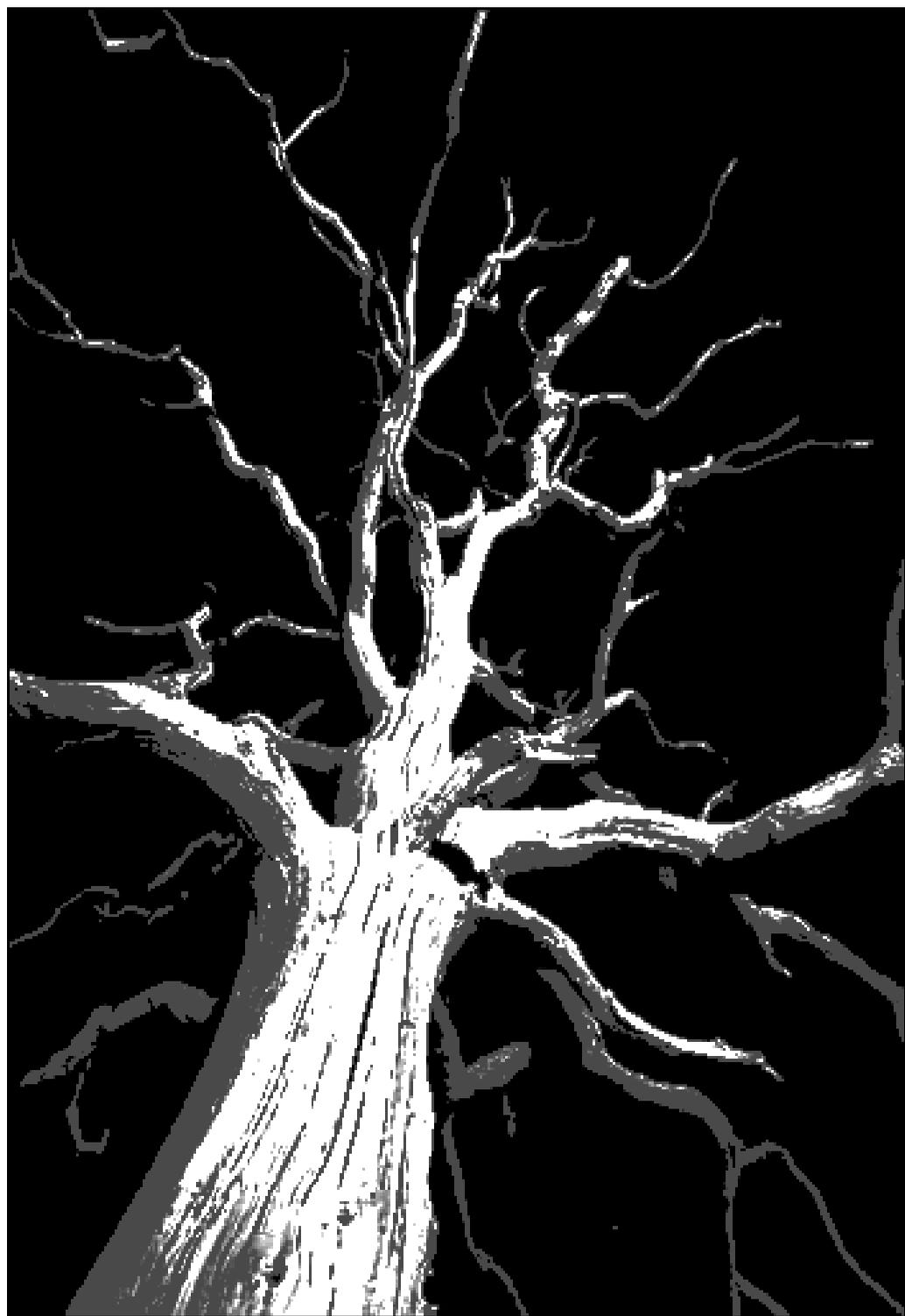
A single tree can provide over 100 rations but a save must be made for each

The Naked Tree should probably be called something like “the disgusting guts tree” or similar. From a distance it appears as a normal tree, but closer inspection reveals that its bark is thinner than usual and the leaves are floppy, their green color reflecting shades of pink. If you tear off the bark of the trunk or cut a branch, the tree shakes and recoils like an animal - although it emits no sound. It bleeds profusely, and inside it’s all guts and veins and primordial internal organs.

While traveling in the woods of The Wild on the northern shore, the characters might notice one or more of these trees. They appear in groves of 1d4, with a 1 in 6 chances of encounter for every hour of exploration in the woods. Don’t roll if the characters are engaged in some other important activity, but just if they explore or travel.

If a large and strong enough branch is cut, it can be planted into a living creature and it will root there in less than a week. Removing it afterwards inflicts 1d6 harm to the creature. The implanted branch does not, though, become a controllable limb, so why anyone would want to do that, is unclear. But it’s well known that you can do it, and sometimes this is used as a torture or as a sick, cruel joke.

Some villagers with enough experience of The Wild could inform the players that, taken to a larger town within a week from cutting it, **a branch is worth around 50 sp** when sold to an alchemist or a scholar. The town hosts not more than 1d6 alchemists or scholars interested in this sort of acquisition.





Trolls are ugly, gray, very large and have incredibly long arms. Everything about their bodies is visibly asymmetrical, from facial features to limbs. They move with unsettling grace even though their size and uneven composition would make you assume otherwise. These monsters are invulnerable to iron and steel according to rumors and legends, but are actually vulnerable to fire, acids and silver as many other monsters.

They may be encountered close to Flussburg in a group of 1d4+2. They are intimidating, but are in actuality, fairly young and inexperienced so the characters probably stand a chance...

Trolls are not invulnerable but:

- ❖ **Normal weapons** inflict only half damage (rounded up) against them
- ❖ **Silver weapons** inflict double damage
- ❖ **Spells** inflict normal damage
- ❖ **Fire and acids** (and related spells) inflict double damage
- ❖ **Every round of combat** the troll regains 1 HP from wounds inflicted by normal weapons
- ❖ A troll can give up both attacks to **reattach a severed limb** (including its head)

Each Troll has a small personal hoard hidden in their temporary nest, which can be tracked with relative ease.

Each hoard is worth around 100 sp in jewels and other minor precious items.

Trolls

Troll
(young Troll)
AC 14
or 15 (50%)
Save 3
(1 vs fire)
HD 5d8 (22 HP)

1st attack:
claws (1d8)
2nd attack:
claws (1d8+2)

If their 1st attack was successful, bite against the same target, for an automatic 1d6+1 damage

Add +4 to to-hit and damage rolls

If a Troll gets soaked in water, it loses half HP, gets -3 AC and inflicts half damage

Encounters in The Wild

The Wild keeps an eye on intruders

When exploring the wilderness, count a Turn as equal to an hour, and roll for an encounter every Turn.

Use a **d20** on the first hour, a **d12** on the second, then a **d8**, and finally a **d6** for every hour past the fourth. Step the dice further down of one size if the characters light fire, or are particularly loud to the point of disturbing nearby wildlife, and attracting the attention of monsters of The Wild.

Roll	Encounter
1	No encounter, but if the characters are exploring the woods or paying attention to the surroundings, they will spot 1d4-1 Naked Trees
2	Very heavy rain or wind for 1d6+2 hours. Travel proceeds at 1/3 speed and at the cost of 1 HP per hour. Every 1 hour rest with shelter allows to regain 3 HP lost this way
3	1d6 Acid Worms: AC 10; Save 2; HP 1d6 (3); 1 acid attack (1d4 damage & -1 to metal weapons and leather armor AC)
4	White Stag: AC 10; Save 1; HP 2d6 (7); 1 antlers or hooves attack (1d6). Pelt & antlers worth 100 sp
5	White Carnivorous Stag: AC 10; Save 2; HP 2d8 (9); 2 attacks: antlers or hooves (1d6) + bite (1d4+2); +1 to-hit
6	1d4 swarms of Green Wasps. Each swarm has: AC 9; Save 1; HP 2d4 (5); 1 attack poisonous sting (1d6+1)
7	Purple moss and mold covered tree; disturbing the mold causes 1 HP damage (no Save). If collected and treated can be used as mild poison (1d4 damage)
8	Some rare flowers used for cosmetics, worth 2d20 sp
9	Wolves footprints all around, but no animals in sight
10	A noise in the bushes, but it's just a deer
11-20	No encounter, The Wild looks darker than regular woods but is not so bad after all

HUMANS

You will find here some stats for commoners, guards and hired killers that characters may interact with in the village.

When the characters interact with humans, remember that unless really pushed, humans do not fight to the death. NPCs that are hurt more or less severely will reasonably look for an opportunity to escape or surrender, unless they expect to be killed even if they give up arms.

Use the rules for morale of your game, or simply replace them with a **d6 Save vs HP**.

Roll equal or lower than the HP left and the NPC stays in the fight, roll higher and the NPC will try to escape or surrender, depending on the situation.

Common Humans

Save vs HP is the house-rule for morale

Commoner
AC 10
Save 2
HP 1d6 (3)

1 attack:
unarmed (1d2) or
small weapon
(1d3 or max 1d4)

For priests:
Save: 3
plus maybe
add spells

Guard
AC 14
or 15 (50%)
Save 2
HP 1d8 (5)

1 attack: medium
(1d6) or versatile
weapon (1d8)

Only if AC is 14
(no shield)
weapon is a
pike (1d10+2)

Hired Killer (x3)
AC 12
Save 2
HP 2d8 (9)

2 attacks:
small (1d4)
or medium
weapon (1d6)

One has a
+2 to to-hit and
damage rolls
and AC 14

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