

# The Deep Dark Wood

(*Bonivant*)

## An adventure for 4-6 Rank 1 characters

During the full moon, the party travels near a large forest (Fenring, Jewelspider, or Wistren) to find a hamlet in turmoil. A Beast has emerged from the forest at night to slaughter some sheep. The small settlement of farmers are terrified by the creature and beg the party for help! There is more at stake than a few sheep, however. Hunting down and killing the creature responsible will endanger the party and may anger an ancient forest spirit. The party could resolve this problem simply and amicably, or could make the situation far worse. What will they do?

## Player Introduction

*It is a commonly held belief that the full moon carries evil portent, and is when the veil between this world and the fey realm is at its weakest. Spirits and monsters crossing the veil is the source of many a scary tale. You arrive at a hamlet where several mutilated and half-eaten sheep have been found. Beast tracks have been found nearby. No more sheep were killed last night, but the farmers are very worried.*

## The Mission

The villagers ask the party to find Rowan, a local Huntsman, to ask him to hunt and kill the Beast. If they cannot find Rowan, they should track and kill the beast themselves, and they will be paid a bounty for the Beast's head.

*'Please find Rowan the Huntsman, who lives in the forest. Convince him to hunt and kill the beast. We will pay 20 florins for its head.'*

If the party does not accept, the villagers will become desperate and increase the bounty to 50 florins (which is all the money they have!)

## The Pursuit

The farmers show the party the beast's tracks and the dead sheep. The tracks show a medium-sized creature with four cloven hooves. The sheep carcasses have clearly been attacked by a powerful predator. The tracks are easy to follow for any character with the Track Skill.

The party follows the tracks all day without incident. It is getting dark and they decide to camp. As the party settles, a hunting party of Beastmen attacks the camp (1 Beastman per PC). After a few rounds, or if the fight goes badly for the party, Rowan arrives to drive off the Beastmen. The Beastmen run as soon as Rowan arrives, who shoots to wound only?

## The Hunter

When the party interacts with Rowan, he agrees the Beastmen must have attacked the sheep (they like mutton, you see). Rowan agrees to hunt them down and asks the party for help. They rest at their camp peacefully overnight and track the Beastmen at dawn. Rowan takes the party straight to the Beastmen camp, who are still sleeping and can be easily surprised. The party may decide to slaughter the Beastmen, but Rowan will shoot to wound only. If the party captures a Beastman, they will be unable to communicate with it in any way.

## The End?

If the party 'accept' that the Beastmen attacked the sheep, they can decapitate a dead Beastman and return to the village by dusk. With the job done, florins in the purse, and some happy villagers, the party can move on to resume their regular campaign adventures.

If the party has inquisitive members, they may piece together the holes in Rowan's version of events. This could extend the scenario, or the party may decide to return later to resolve it.

## The Actual End?

There are several questions about the enigmatic Rowan, and the sheep-killing Beast that the party may want answers to, for example: the sheep's wounds didn't match the claws and horns of the Beastmen. Rowan appeared 'just in time' to drive off the Beastmen, without injury? Rowan knew exactly where the Beastmen were camped, not hiding? The party easily ambushed and slaughtered Beastmen in a forest? Rowan, a skilled archer, didn't kill any Beastmen during any of the fights?

**What actually happened...** Rowan's teenage son, Ash, has reached adulthood and has (unexpectedly) inherited his father's lycanthropy. Ash is a wereboar too and went on his first rampage during the full moon. This took Rowan by surprise, who was able to catch and contain his errant son but not before the sheep were slaughtered. Rowan feared that the farmers might do something stupid that could anger Garambar. He suggested a solution to his patron to smooth things over. Garambar was not impressed by the idea, but is even more angered at the thought of men disturbing his peace with fire and iron. The price of a few dead Beastmen is a cheap one in order for Rowan to keep the peace. The party, the farmers, and Garambar, are all happy. If the party insists on seeking out the actual Beast (Ash), Rowan will do his best to throw them off. If he has to, Rowan will fight to keep his family safe. If the party are still in the woods at dark, they may even get attacked by Rowan in wereboar form! If the party enlist the farmers to hunt down Rowan and/or Ash, this will trigger a response from Garambar! The Lord of Animals will send more Beastmen to drive off the party and farmers.

The outcome is left to the GM's discretion...

## Dramatis Personae

**Rowan** is a local huntsman who inhabits this forest. As a Huntsman, Rowan controls predators,

conserves flora, and ensures game is bred successfully. He lives a simple life with his wife Hyacinth, and children: Ash, Rose, and Lily. They live alone, isolated from habitation. If Rowan and his family are left in peace, he will not be aggressive but, if attacked, he will fight ferociously to defend his family and lifestyle. Rowan was recruited as a forest guardian by Garambar many years ago, and blessed with the ability of lycanthropy. Rowan is a wereboar.

**Garambar** is an ancient forest spirit of Ellesland, self-titled the 'Lord of the Animals', who values the balance of nature. He has no love for mortal man and ensures their ravages do not encroach into his domain. He likes Rowan though, and chose him as the forest guardian. Garambar is only slightly irritated by the indiscretion of Ash, and hopes Rowan will fix it.

**Rowan** - Rank 4 Hunter, Str 11 Ref 16 Int 12 PT 9 Lks10. Human Stats: ATT 17 DEF 9 MD 4 EV 7 STH 20 PER 10 AF 2 HP 12 Items - Longbow (d8 +1, 4) Shortsword (d8, 3). Skills - Track, Bowyer/Fletcher, Precise Shot, Favoured Terrain (Woods), Favoured Weapon (Longbow), Set Traps, Forage, Stillness, False Trails. Wereboar Stats: ATT 19 DEF 5 MD 3 EV 5 STH 13 PER 10 AF 1 HP 24 Gore (d6 +3, 8) Charge: SPD 14 (d4 +7-AF) damage, stunned for 3 rounds.

**Ash** is Rowan's oldest child and has unknowingly inherited his father's lycanthropy. He experienced his first transformation during the full moon, and in an uncontrollable Wereboar rage, slaughtered the sheep in the village. He will react violently to any threat.

**Beastmen** are the servants of Garambar, who cross the veil at the full moon to do their master's bidding. They are afraid of Rowan and will obey him. Rank 1 Str 16 Ref 8 HP 10, 08, 09, 07, 09, 07 ATT 14 DEF 6 MD 4 EV 3 STH 15 PER 12 AF 0 Sword (d8 +1, 5)

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