



& miles
to go
before
I sleep



a
playable
zine



by Paul
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Make your choice, Adventurous Stranger —

You play the role of a medieval fugitive convicted of a supernatural crime. Your only hope of survival is to claim right of sanctuary at a holy site before those who hunt you succeed in carrying out their dreadful sentence.

As you flee over hill and dale, you will face encounters both terrible and wondrous, and make choices which will reveal your inmost character. Whatever fate or doom awaits you, will come by your own choosing.

This magazine comprises a complete single-player roleplaying game. Besides the materials included within, all you need to play is a pen, a regular six-sided die, and a courageous heart.

No. ____ / 100



Stone Town
DESIGN

**Anno Domini 383,
The year Macsen Wlelig marched
south to take the purple,**

**In the hill country of
Western Prydain
In the uttermost reaches of
the Empire—**

**There lay a thin place
Through which the denizens of
Unland may walk into our world
Bringing with them a Law older
by far than Imperial Edict.**

**In that place a judgment of
Unland Law
Was laid upon a man belonging
to the tribe of the Ordovices,**

And the man was found guilty.

**But the man ran from his
judgment,
For he was sore afraid.**



Begin Here

Every door is barred to you. Your former friends and neighbors watch from sullen windows your progress through the village you once called home. Though they cannot hear—as you can—the baying of the Hounds, they see the sign marked upon your brow, and know you for what you are: condemned.

Death is the punishment for poaching a sacred deer of the Unland. The Hunt has been called, and that fair son of Nudd does not call the Hounds to heel before they take their rightful prey.

Your own door is blocked by your mother, aiming a winnowing fork at your heart. Her eyes sweep from your boots to the evening sky behind you, but will not meet your gaze. Your younger brothers are nowhere to be seen, though you hear the rustle of small feet on floor rushes somewhere in that darkened room.

Your sister waits at the village's edge, leaning on her crook. The sheepdog Huw, her ever-faithful shadow, crouches nearby against a dry stone boundary wall. Your sister has with her the travel sack she carries in summer while grazing the flock across the northern moor. It hits the dirt in front of you with a full-sounding thud.

Somehow she reads the intention in your first step forward—
“If you try to touch me,” she says, “I’ll strike you down.”

You pick up the sack and step back.

She stands straight and grips her crook two-handed, ready to swing. Her shoulder blades almost meet in the hunch of her back.

“Fly east,” she says. “The City of Legions has built a cathedral to the Queen of Heaven, who gives succor even to those hunted by princes of the Unland. Do not tarry on the way, lest you bring doom upon some guiltless fool who takes pity.”

Choose your excuse:

[] “It was an accident!”

[] “I’m sorry...”

[] “How will I know the way?”

“Heel, Huw!” she calls. The piteous dog, too well-trained to howl, obeys and crouches at your sister’s feet. “Our mother has lost a son, and we’ve best to comfort her.” She is walking away from you without a glance back. “They say Huw,” the words carry to you on the night breeze rising out of the west, “that Hounds of Unland are loudest when they are farthest away. But when you can no longer hear the baying, they are almost upon you.”

It is a wonder *she* cannot hear the baying, like a chorus of bright bells. All-pervasive, the Unsound, surrounding and en-folding other sounds without dampening them, a promise of approaching bloodshed meant for your ears alone.

Alone, with nothing but a full haversack and the hunting knife slightly crusted in its sheath at your belt. Alone and already the baying grows fainter. You don’t know how far to the City of Legions, or what you’ll do when the supplies run out, or the road does, or when or if you’ll sleep tonight, nevertheless—

*Go! You have all you need: the moon is out [...]
The world will keep a good man safe from harm,
And give him sanctuary from ill-will.
Yes, by your life! The world has room for one
Who seeks or flees by night, and uses skill.¹*

The Rules

1. Hunted and Weary

Throughout the game you will see text that reads: “+1 *Hunted*” or “+2 *Weary*” etc. When you see this, go to your map and add the indicated number of points to the appropriate track.

2. Rolling and Choices

Throughout the game you will be presented with scenarios and then offered choices of how to respond. Each choice begins with “If.” You can ignore what happens under the heading of any choice you do not make. Many choices will ask you to roll a die. These will be followed by a table showing what happens depending on what you roll.

Sometimes you will be asked to roll with “advantage” or “disadvantage.” Rolling with advantage means rolling twice and taking the higher result. Rolling with disadvantage means rolling twice and taking the lower result. Even always counts as higher than odd for the purposes of even/odd based rolls.

3. Cards

At the start of each new location page—the pages with red titles—draw and play a card (unless otherwise directed). Roll your die and draw the card whose number corresponds to your roll. If you have already played that card, roll again. Follow the instructions on the card to play it (remember to read both sides!).



Camp of the Charcoal Burners

Climbing down from the hills of your youth, you find yourself in a wooded valley. Waist high bracken makes progress torturous, wooden sky above blocking the moon's wan light.

The baying of the Hounds grows slowly quieter. In vain you try to increase your pace. Thorned branches dig furrows in your forearms and rip at your tunic.

When you come upon a cart track, you could cry with relief.

On the breeze, you smell smoke. For a moment, terror fills you at the thought of forest fire. But then you see it—pale orange light shining betwixt the elms, and figures moving in that light.

Creeping closer, you see a series of earthen piles to which ladders have been affixed and that belch clouds of bluish smoke. Across a clearing from the piles stand a few makeshift huts. In the clearing's center is a small bonfire. Two figures sit near the fire, while a third climbs one of the piles to poke at the smoldering mass with the tip of his shovel.

Unlike some of your village, you have never held undue prejudice against charcoal burners. But given the reaction of your neighbors, is there any doubt that these rough men will be at least as hostile? On the other hand, they surely know the way to the nearest road. And every moment you spend lost in these woods, your hunters are gaining on you.

*And he sits and thinks of the things they know,
he and the forest, alone together —
the springs that come and the summers that go,
autumn dew on bracken and heather,
the drip of the forest beneath the snow...
All the things they have seen,
all the things they have heard:
an April sky swept clean and the song of a bird...
Oh, the Charcoal Burner has tales to tell!
and he lives in the forest and knows us well.¹*

If you approach the Charcoal Burners
to ask for directions, roll a die...



Roll Outcome

Odd You step into the clearing, brand blazing on your forehead, eyes red and streaming in the smoke. Before you have a chance to explain yourself, one shouts alarm, another leaps to his feet. Panic grips your heart and you run into deep forest. **+2 Hunted**

Even “Ho there traveler, what brings you to our hearth?” comes the call before you even step into the clearing. One of them points at your brand, crosses himself. “Just directions,” you say hastily, “south...a road?” The oldest nods, offers cryptic directions. The one with the shovel looks scared enough to use it. You call thanks over your shoulder, already leaving. **+1 Weary**

If you sneak past them instead...

You feel as if you have left the race of man behind as you creep like a beast past the edges of the light and into night shadows. One of them laughs at something the other says, and the noise makes you flinch. **+1 Hunted**



Roll for a Random Encounter!

The wilderness is full of mysteries, but you have no time to contemplate them. You trudge onward, taking strange routes *over many joyless hills*¹ in your search for a route south.

Roll Encounter

- 1 The damp night air clings to your body; you are soaked and cannot get dry. Something has begun to grow in the crevices of your body where the flesh rubs itself raw. You shiver even in direct sunlight. **+2 Hunted**
- 2 A giant—terrible and thickly-furred—comes charging through the woods on all fours, its face a cross betwixt dog, man, and horse. You hurl yourself down in terrified abasement. One talon opens your knapsack as easily as it would a belly. A snuffling maw picks at your provisions. Then the giant is gone, as quickly as it came. **+1 Hunted**
- 3–4 You come upon a stream whose surface is writhing. Eels throng so dense they are make whitewater with their thrashing. If you had a net, a smoking fire, and time, they'd be worth a small fortune. As it is, you pass through the stream and watch their wriggling bodies flee before your footfalls. **No Change**
- 5 The baying loses its dreadfulness to monotony. Your head aches, your feet ache, and each mile is more painful than the last. At first you ate rations on your feet, but now you cannot forestall any occasion to sit, even for a moment. Still you refuse to slow your pace. **+1 Weary**
- 6 You stumble into a patch of black-stemmed mugwort about whose base spring white flowers of wild garlic. Offering up thanksgiving, you mix a paste from hairy bitter leaves and pale bitter bulbs. You feel it working: your eyes brighten, your footsteps lighten.² **+2 Weary**

Burial Mound

Making your way southeast between ranges of rugged hills, you see in the distance a grassy mound rising from the valley floor, ringed by standing stones. As you approach, you notice a dark opening in the hill's base, framed by a rough stone lintel.



Something is coming out of that doorway: sweet music, curling adder-like through the air, silver in color, visible because it does not deign to mingle with the air through which it flows, throwing a lazy coil about you and constricting. When the music strikes your skin it is as cold as the brand upon your forehead, rich and sour as buttermilk when you taste it on the breeze.

The insistent music is pulling you towards the doorway into the mound. The darkness of that doorway is unnaturally complete; whatever lies beyond it is not of this world.

If you wish to resist, roll a die... otherwise turn the page.

Roll Outcome

- 1 In vain you remonstrate with your stubborn feet as they approach the doorway. A brief scream of frustration dies in your throat as you are thrust into darkness.
- 2–6 Messing with the Unland got you into this mess in the first place. You've had quite enough of *that* nonsense!



Unland Feast

Do not draw a card on this page.

If you have chosen to pass by, the wonders herein are not for you, turn to the next location. Otherwise...

You find yourself in a vaulted feasting hall crowded with merrymaking gentlefolk. Trestle tables line the walls, laden with platters of roast meat and crystal decanters of blue-black wine. Each person with whom you lock eyes is more beautiful than the last, faces unlined by care or sorrow. Each gives you a slow and gracious nod as if to a respected acquaintance.

Two pages approach, dressed in tunics the color of ferns in spring. The first offers you a platter of roasted meat smelling of mace, ginger, and cinnamon; the second offers a goblet full to the brim with a thick, dark vintage.

If you accept food, roll a die...

Roll	Outcome
Odd	Rich and well-spiced, the food sits uneasily in your belly. You have gorged yourself on rich man's fare and will come to regret it. +1 Hunted
Even	You pick at the food, appreciating its remarkable flavors, but cautious of such strange fare. No change

If you accept drink, roll a die...

Roll	Outcome
1 – 4	The sweet wine burns in your chest. Your smile becomes easy, your eyes heavy-lidded with contentment. All is right with the world. +1 Hunted
5 – 6	A few dainty sips, no more. The miles you've yet to travel weigh heavy on your mind. No change

After the pages depart, a Lady approaches, noble of posture. Her hair is woven with blossoms of oak and broom and meadowsweet. With a curtsy, she asks you to dance.



If you accept the Lady's offer, roll a die...

Roll	Outcome
1 – 2	You trip over your boots and trod upon the Lady's feet. The music stops. Gentlefolk break into peals of bright laughter. You awake lying atop the mound. +1 Hunted
3 – 5	Travel-worn as you are, you manage to stumble through a song. The last note fades; the Lady smiles. You find yourself back at the entrance to the mound. +1 Weary
6	Your weariness falls away as you rise to meet her. Your feet match steps you can't remember learning, the music enfolds you like a tailored garment. But as the song ends, you hear baying in the distance. You beg the Lady's pardon and turn to go. She catches your hand between hers and kisses it. A new brand blossoms silver across your palm. You receive the Blessing of the Lady.

The Lord approaches

Read this section only if you refused all offers of food, drink, and dance.

A man almost too big to fit in the hall towers over you. A silver circlet graces a brow as square and wide as a standing stone. "You have refused my hospitality three times," speaks the Lord of the Mound, "and so I pronounce upon you three curses: *Hir yw'r dydd a hir yw'r nos, a hir yw aros Arawn!*"¹

You awake in a cold sweat upon a stone burial slab in a cramped chamber of earth and stone. You emerge into daylight to find hours have passed while you slept. Your limbs feel stiff and heavy. **+2 Hunted**

River Crossing

Wasn't there supposed to be a bridge here?

You have come to the river which is called Wandering, a wide and turgid border between northern hill country and coastal southlands. You are following a road and there should be a bridge here. But it has fallen, recently by the look of it.

The piers of the bridge throw up pale foam as they break jagged through the ripples, and some pieces of the bridge's fallen span make dark shadows just beneath the surface. Along the banks, thick tufts of marsh grass form almost stepping stones. Perhaps, with great care, you could cross from tuft to pier to sunken span and thus make your way safely across.

Lying besides the stream, what you first take for an a strange round animal is in fact an abandoned fisherman's coracle: a tiny boat perhaps two feet across made from a willow rod frame over which has been stretched a piebald horsehide. No oar, but it looks watertight. Paddling with your hands, you are certain you could cross the river, eventually.



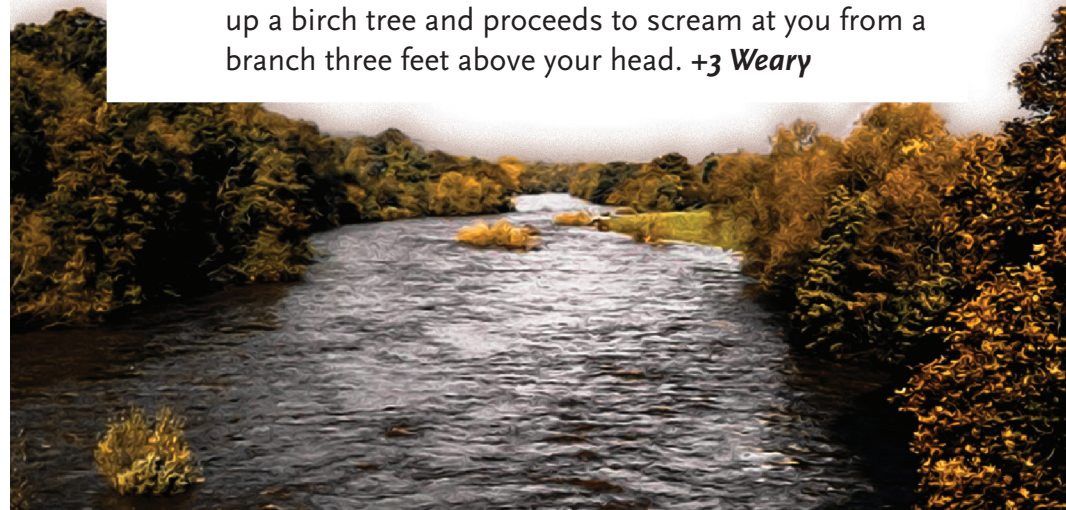
If you wish to cross by coracle, roll a die...

Roll	Outcome
1 – 2	The coracle spins along the surface of the water, almost immediately out of your control. By the time it reaches the other bank you have been swept a mile or more downstream. +1 Hunted
3 – 6	You break a sturdy branch from a riverside oak and pole your way across quite easily. +1 Weary

If you wish to cross by playing high stakes leap frog, roll a die...



Roll	Outcome
1 – 3	All it takes is one slip, a tuft crumbles beneath your weight, and you are in the river: remarkably swift beneath the surface. You careen downstream, bounce off a submerged rock, swallow water, and emerge—bloody and choking—a mile east of where you began. It takes everything in you just to breathe. +2 Hunted
4 – 5	Before each leap you poke the next foothold with a broken branch. Step by painstaking step you reach the far bank safe but shivering with boots full of water. +1 Weary
6	Just before you make your first jump, your footsteps startle a sleek, brown pine marten who crosses the river in a series of impossibly perfectly arcs. On a whim you give chase, matching it jump for jump. And just like that, you are on the other side. The marten shoots up a birch tree and proceeds to scream at you from a branch three feet above your head. +3 Weary



*I have sung with skill, and still I shall sing
Until the greatest day of all shall dawn,
Many matters in my mind,
Over which I worry.
I challenge the wide world's poets—
Why will you not tell me
What holds up the world*

Lest it fall into emptiness?

*Or if the world fell,
Onto what would it drop?
Who holds it in place?
What a vain thing, a world
Falling into the void!
And yet, truth to tell,
What a wonder's a world*

That never thus falls!

*What a singular thing,
And how great its radiance! ¹*



Siege

An ancient hill fort of the Silures, which for generations has been an Imperial stronghold, dominates the road south.



As that road takes you past the hill's foot, you see a cluster of tents ring the base of the hill bearing Imperial standards, but above the fortress flies a different banner that you cannot quite make out.

About the tents stand armored men in loud conversation. One of the men is approaching you. You become acutely aware of the sword he bears.

“State your business and allegiance.”

The man does not seem to notice your brand. Indeed he is the first you've met since your branding whose eyes are not involuntarily drawn to it. He is, however, impatient: “Speak up—in the name of the Emperor I abjure you, answer me!”

Weariness makes mulish your thoughts as you struggle to decide what he wants to hear.

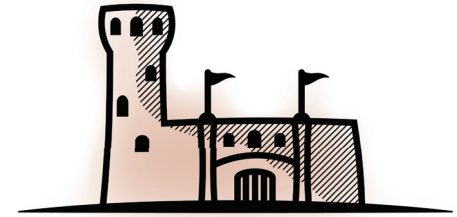


If you tell him the truth, roll a die...

Roll Outcome

- 1 For the first time his eyes find the brand. He crosses himself and draws his sword. A glancing slash as you begin to run cuts your forearm to the bone. The other soldiers watch as he chases you down the road. The heaviness of his armor is all that saves your life. **+2 Hunted**
- 2 – 5 “So I suppose its true, Ordivicians really are as dumb as their sheep.” He takes the haversack from your shoulder. “Requisition of supplies. On your way now.” **No Change**
- 6 He shudders, turns his head, and spits three times. Without another word he turns and not quite jogs back up the hill. No one else bothers you. **+1 Weary**

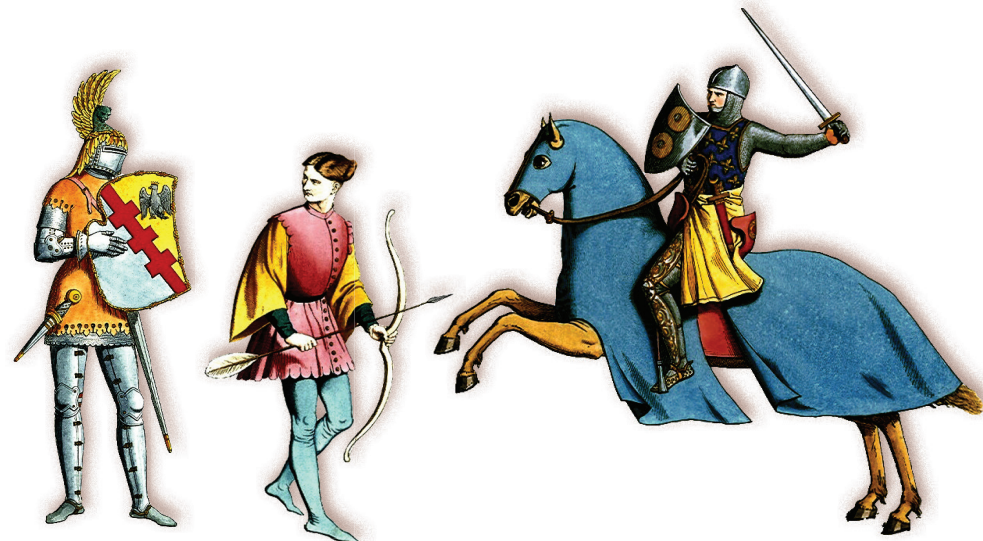
If you lie that you're on pilgrimage, roll a die...



Roll Outcome

- Odd “A likely story; I don't know what these traitors promised, but know this, Ordivician, these lands belong to Emperor Macsen Wlelig. Let's find you something useful for you to do.” A gauntleted hand clamps your shoulder. You find yourself press-ganged into dragging bodies from a pile behind the tents into a cart at the road's edge. The bodies are wrapped in shrouds, white save for where red stains mar them. Suddenly a cry goes up beyond the tents. The fort's defenders are making a sortie, and the Imperial knights rise to meet them. In the confusion, you slip away. **+1 Hunted**

- Even “God be with you then. Say a prayer in my name will you? Good man. The man claps you on the shoulder and walks away. **+1 Weary**



Farmland



The plains have been divided into squares—a giant's game of draughts. The great riches of the southlands are here displayed in crops and lowland pastures so different from the moors and hill country of your former home.

Roads demarcate a meandering route, circumventing various holdings on their way south. You, in contrast, keep to a straight path, cutting through gaps in hedgerows and across fields of sharp, dry stalks: harvested and ready to be plowed under to fertilize next year's crop.

Curious sheep keep pace with you until you lose them at the next hedgerow. But sheep are not the only curious eyes in this tame land.

A farmer approaches, holding a hoe in a manner suggesting he is armed with rather than merely carrying it. It takes you a moment to decipher his shouting, though its gist is immediately clear. Either go back the way you came, or get past him, somehow.

If you try to make a run for it...

Roll	Outcome
Odd	Road-weary legs cannot match well-rested ones. The hoe's blade cuts through the skin of your back where it strikes, bloodying your tunic. You are forced back the way you came beneath a torrent of blows and curses. +2 Hunted
Even	Desperation breeds quickness. You dive through a thin spot in the next hedge, tearing fresh cuts in face and arms. You don't stop running for another two fields, by which time his threats have faded to indecipherability beneath the distant and constant Unsound. +2 Weary

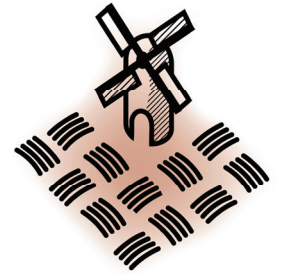
If you obey him and go around...

The land is full of farmers.

Hedged in all sides, you find yourself limited to main roads. You expect to see the Hounds around every bend, flinch when farmdogs run howling to front gates as you pass by. **+1 Hunted**

If you draw your knife...

Roll	Outcome
1 – 2	The blade catches in its sheath. The farmer swings his hoe and you feel something in your shoulder crack. You run, another swing cuts into your back, nearly bringing you to your knees. You hide in a hedge until he leaves, then take a circuitous route through the farmlands, wounds throbbing. +2 Hunted
3 – 6	He dies easier than you expected. A stumble, a shout, a gasp of surprise when the blade goes in, a little gurgle when it comes back out. You wipe it clean, return it to its sheathe and go on your way. You had thought it would weigh on you more, killing, but as tired and scared as you are, there isn't any room in your soul for sympathy. +2 Weary



The City of Legions

Peaking over the last hill of your journey, your eyes light upon the City of Legions for the first time arrayed before you like an army ready to battle, flags snapping in the coastal wind. The city stands near the mouth of the river called Fruitful, which lets out into the narrow sea separating the territory of the Silures from that of the Dumnonii. It is the only true civitas of the Empire west of the Wandering River. You have never seen its like before, a pulsating mass of human edifice and Imperial glory, the smoke of whose cookfires rises in a haze so dense it changes the color of the sky itself.

The baying of the Hounds is more like humming now, lulling-ly quiet. You remember your sister's last words to you: "Hounds of Unland are loudest when they are farthest away. But when you can no longer hear the baying, they are almost upon you."

You do not have long now, but hopefully you have long enough. No more obstacles remain. In these civilized lands the cities have no walls. And from this high vantage point you observe, deep within the city, a building taller than any you have seen in your life, with two towers like horns and windows of many colored glass that glow as if lit from within. This must be the cathedral of the Queen of Heaven. Your refuge is within sight!



How do you approach the City of Legions?



Note: this is the last chance to get points before the end. If your scores are currently tied, please break that tie now.

Action	Outcome
Ritually cleanse yourself first	It would not do to approach a holy place so begrimed. Though time is short, you go to a nearby stream, strip, and plunge. Dirt and blood rise to the surface as you sink beneath it. You wash yourself and your travel-ruined clothes as best you can, but the sodden rags still feel dirty when you drape them over yourself. You hope the Queen of Heaven appreciates the effort. +1 Hunted
Run the rest of the way!	Your breath is ragged fire in your lungs, your body screams out hatred as you mercilessly drive it onward. Your bowels constrict, your gorge rises, and still, still you run. +1 Weary
Carefully	You prize vigilance above all else. These civilized folk have not exactly been hospitable. With quick but measured stride you make your journey's final steps. No Change

Your fate has come upon you

The next four pages are endings. Which ending you receive is determined by two factors: First, which of your scores, Hunted or Weary is higher? Second, what is the suit of the card you drew for this location, Flowers or Owls? If you received the Blessing of the Lady, your suit is Flowers, regardless of what card you drew last.

Endings for the Hunted



Baptism of Flowers

The clap of your boots on cobbled street the only sound in the dark. You know what the silence means as you enter the cathedral square where the ambush waits.

White shadows surround you, red ears perked and red tongues lolling, but the Hounds do not pounce. They wait, bowing down on their forelegs as dogs do before play, eager yet obedient to the command of He who stands on the cathedral steps and blocks that dark portal through which you had hoped safety lay.

His head is heavy beneath antlers, but it is not bowed. His brow is white and shining as sun on the river and in His breast a wound shaped like a hunting knife weeps a crimson robe that trails behind Him as Gwyn—fair son of Nudd—steps forward to meet you.

Someone's hand rises to enter that space above His heart where the flesh gapes. Someone's hand is red with a king's blood.

Gwyn asks you the question:

*Where is the hunting knife with which I slew the milk-white deer?
For I see it not: neither beside my arm, nor under it.*

And someone answers:

*The hunting knife is within my heart,
the hunting knife is the ornament of my heart.¹*

You look down at the dead man whose hands are clutched about the hilt of a blade he has sheathed for the last time.

"Release!" you call to your hounds, who have been waiting so patiently for their long-sought prey. Soon, when they are sated, they will lie upon the cool stones of the square and pant their victory into the still and heavy air. Soon you will go among them, praising each dog by name. Very soon, you will call them once more to heel.

You will step up onto the white road the moon has paved upon the night itself. Your movements will be swift, your stride sure,

White-footed, long-horned, climbing, dwelling high.²

Uction of Owls



After long solitude, the city torments you. The clamor of the crowd drowns out the baying—or absence thereof. Lost, retching with anxiety at the press of humanity on every side, you take refuge in an alley and look up to find yourself surrounded.

The Hound's eyes show white all round the pupil, red ears lie flat against their skulls, tails point down at the cobbles, heads dart over shoulders to nervously check the crowded main street before returning to their prey. In this city of stone and cold iron, they look almost as pitiful as you feel.

The wall behind you is scaleable, if you're lucky, and what choice do you have but to be lucky? Your jump, reach, fingertips scrape as they scabble for purchase, fingernails chip as they dig into crevices, with a herculean effort you pull your body upward,

*but a hound leaped upon him, just at that point,
and at the horses hooves they all fell upon him,
savaging the trickster with fearsome clamour.
The lord dismounted and grabbed him at once,
pulled him smartly from the mouths of the dogs,
held him high above his head, halloing loudly,
as the fierce hounds bayed all around him.³*

"To you, fine ruddy-nosed Dormach, foremost and best of my hounds, I give the first share. The heart! And to you, brave Cavall, the offal, as if your right! Worry not, there's plenty and to spare. We are at an end to our travails; it is time for your reward!"

Later, in the alehouses on the square, someone starts a fresh topic of conversation. A remarkably savage sight was witnessed this afternoon by almost a dozen citizens: some matte-haired hunter from the barbarous hills, who—without concern for municipal regulation—conducted a fox hunt within city limits!

"And what a mangy Reynard it was too. He butchered the poor thing right there in the alley, that his dogs (his dogs!) might eat up the body. I swear the coat was not fit to make rags of."

Endings for the Weary



Communion of Flowers

The interior of the cathedral is dark, but the gold inlay on the Queen of Heaven's icon glitters in the darkness. The mantle of the Queen is blue and covered in stars. Her crown is the Sun, her face white as the moon. You kneel and confess.

A hand touches your shoulder and you turn to see a priest in black robes that blend with the darkness. He has risen from the pew in which he had been sitting, unnoticed, a pew on which rests a blanket-wrapped object the size of a child.

"This was left in the night on our threshold," he says.

The priest pulls back the blanket to reveal the corpse of a white deer with a wound the shape of a hunting knife in its breast. The priest leans in close, "She has given me a penance for you—"

*Some say the loving and the devouring are all the same thing.*⁴

He leaves you alone in the sanctuary, with the icon of the Queen and the corpse of the deer. The flesh has not rotted. There is no blood when you cut into it; it does not resist the blade. The taste is not what you expected:

*It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.*⁵

When you have finished, you wrap the hide and offal in the blanket and go to bury them in the graveyard behind the cathedral. Across the fence, the Hounds watch. You have no shovel. The earth digs beneath your fingernails till the beds are black as the loam. Every movement is agony, your belly heavy and bitter.

Then one of the Hounds speaks:

*Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.*⁶

You pick up the blanket and shake it out, hurling hide and offal across the fence. At once, the weary Hounds begin to feed.

You wrap yourself in the blanket, lie down upon the loam, and find yourself at rest.

Ordainment of Owls



Above the square the cathedral looms tall as the burial mound at Arberth. The door is open and dark, a strange howling coming from within. You run inside, grab the horns of the altar, cry out "Sanctuary! In the name of Heaven's Queen!"

Above the altar is an idol carved in ivory of a dead man hung on a piece of wood in like manner to how one hangs a deer for field dressing. The idol has a wound in its breast shaped like a hunting knife which has been dyed crimson.

You have been surrounded by black robed figures. They have stopped their howling, but you cannot understand what they are saying to you. "Sanctuary," you say it again, "Sanctuary..."

They take you and they feed you and they give you a bed and a black robe and they howl for hours several times a day. They show you which courtyards are safe for you to walk in and the boundary fence you must not cross.

At night, when the blackrobes have ceased to howl, the Hounds outside the fence take over. But unlike your benefactors, the Hounds howl in a language you have come to understand:

*They don't know how darkness is severed from light,
They don't know the course of the wind in its rushing,
Where the wind will lay waste, what land it strikes,
How many saints in the sky's vault, and how many shrines.*⁷

Through the window you can see them moving in the darkened city, white shadows with red ears and red laughing mouths.

In the morning, when the blackrobes howl, their lips draw back from their white teeth and dawn sunlight shining through the colored glass windows turns all the golden icons crimson. The pieces of glass are bound, one to another, by lead joinings that cast branching shadows across the room. Beneath these dark branches you make yourself as small as a deer hiding in a covert and wait for the hunter to pass by.

References

Cover

Featured Image. Illustration reproducing a detail from *The Book of Kells* (9th century).

Rules

Featured Image. Stanton, A. (2022). *Aberystwyth Castle*.

Map of Western Prydain

The verses in the legend come from the Welsh national anthem—*Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*. They translate: “Old land of the mountains, the Eden of bards, Each gorge and each valley a loveliness guards.”

Begin Here

Featured Image. Gnosis (4th century B.C.). Detail from *Pella Mosaics VIII: The hunters and the deer*.

1. Shanfarā (6th century). *Lāmīyah* (W. T. Treadgold, Trans.)

Charcoal Burners

Left Image. Björn S... (2017). *Bracken – Pteridium aquilinum*.

Right Image. De Francesco, F. (2011). *Italian Charcoal Burner*.

1. Milne, A. A. (1927). *The Charcoal-Burner*.

Random Encounter

1. Pearl Poet, the (14th century). *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Bernard O’Donoghue, Trans.)

2. Mugwort and garlic is said to prevent injury and exhaustion on journeys according to *The Physicians of Myddval* (14th century).

Burial Mound

Featured Image. Justfluff (2012). *Bryn Celli Ddu*.

Unland Feast

1. Traditional Welsh saying which translates: “Long is the day and long is the night, and long is the waiting of Arawn.”

River Crossing

Left Image. Wynne, F. E. (1854 – 1864). Detail from *Scraps ancient and modern: Man with coracle*.

Right Image. Ward, C. (2004). *The River Wye at Hay-on-Wye*.

Center Spread

Featured Image. Stanton, A. (2022). *Ruins of Nantllwyngwedd*.

1. Taliesin (6th century). *The small song of the world* (G. Lewis & R. Williams., Trans.)

Siege

Featured Image. Mercuri, P. (1850 – 1860s). Details from *Costumes Historiques*.

Farmland

Left Image. *Swiss hunting knife with sheath* (18th Century).

Right Image. Lally, D. (2015). *Hedge near Lockwell Hill Farm*.

City of Legions

Featured Image. Stanton, A. (2022). *York Minster*.

Endings

1. Samatar, S. (2013). *A stranger in Olondria*.

2. Shanfarā (6th century). *Lāmīyah* (W. T. Treadgold, Trans.)

3. Pearl Poet, the (14th century). *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Bernard O’Donoghue, Trans.)

4. Lewis, C. S. (1956). *Till we have faces*.

5. Revelation 10:10 (ESV).

6. Matthew 7:28 (ESV).

7. Taliesin (6th century). *The spoils of Annwfn* (G. Lewis & R. Williams., Trans.)

1 of Owls: A close call

1. Gwyn is given this title in the poem *The Dialogue of Gwyddno Garanhir and Gwyn ap Nudd* (W. F. Skene, Trans.)

3 of Flowers: A night's rest

1. Proverbs 24:33-34 (ESV).

2. Darnielle, J. *Ground level*.

4 of Flowers: The Errant

Featured Image. Composite image of *La Tène sword* (1st century B.C.) and *Alexander the Great silver drachm* (4th century B.C.)

1. Cavafy, C. P. (1911). *The God abandons Antony* (E. Keeley & Sherrard P., Trans.)

5 of Flowers: The Bard

Featured Image. West, B. (1778). *The bard*.

1. Ap Gwilym, D. (14th century). *The wind* (G. Lewis, Trans.)

2. This conversation (though not the sacred words themselves) is recorded in *Branwen ferch Llŷr*, the second branch of the Mabinogi.

6 of Owls: The Cobbler

Featured Image. De Vito, M. (1820). *Peasant Costume*.