

The Wurm Turns

There are four general areas which comprise the Croftbury Holding.

The Farm Compound

The world of mortals:

- Chapel – lies on the outskirts of the compound, half in the woods.
- House and yard
- Barley field
- Bramble bush- hides the discarded remnants of past ceremonies.
- The outer shed holds a number of barrels of ale and half a dozen jugs of mead.

The access to the Woods is an obscure path through the barley field.

The Woods

The Woods contains two places of interest. It is a spooky and primal place, surrounding a Fae domain.

- Ancient ghostly emanations stalk the darkness, these half glimpsed shades do not inflict fright attacks but should startle those who brave the woods after dark.
- Every Spring holly and elm are gathered from the woods and bound into a manikin which is symbolically killed on the altar.

To gain access to the Fae Mound, one must walk widdershins around it.

The Fae Mound

An atmosphere of sorrow infects this ancient hall.

The Worms Lair

A wet and shadowy limestone cavern beneath the chapel.

To gain access to the Worms Lair, one must perform a bloodrite on the altar stone within the chapel. (The family normally performs a symbolic ceremony but this year blood was accidentally spilled onto the stone.)

Use of Magic during the adventure:

Each time a spell is cast within 500m of the altar stone by a human record the Rank of the Spell.

Each spell casting loosens the alter stone from its place, it is currently slightly ajar from the blood spilt on it.

Blood spilled on the altar has the same effect.

Once 10 Ranks worth of spells are cast or 10 HPs worth of blood fall on the altar stone (or some combination of the two) the Worm will wake and crawl up the passageway from deep below through the altar and slaughter every living thing in the woods and on the farm.

Introduction:

The Crofters

No one comes to the holding anymore, not for many months, it is set some way back from the old road that stretches between Black Rock and Huthberton, further inland.

The farm has a sinister reputation among the local people. There is an old chapel dating back many centuries built when the farm was a town, it was established by a contemporary of St. Gregorius over an ancient pagan site.

Approaching the grim, stone and wooden building you soon discover that all is not as abandoned as it appears, a low fire burns in the hearth and there are figures gathered around it. There are four people inside, dressed much as the other peasants of the region are in woolen tunics and hose and draped in thick, careworn cloaks.

To the character with the highest perception: *Out of the corner of your eye as you approach the holding you keep catching glimpses of shadows. But your companions do not seem to have noted them....and indeed you cannot tell if they are anything other than windblown branches.*

1 Donner : 45 Years old but he looks much older. The weight of responsibility for what he has done to his family weighs heavily on his shoulders.

2 Gert: Donners 42 year old sister. She is a strange and unearthly woman, still comely for the lines of care and worry on her but is very dreamy and distant.

3 Ash: Donners son and right-hand man. He is 25, and more than a little unhinged by what he has seen and heard these last months. The numerous butchered and tortured animal corpses scattered about the place are his handiwork, though he will blame the Good Folk. He is also dipping into the beer and mead stores more and more frequently.

4 May: Gerts daughter, 13, she came here to live with her mother when her father died. She is scared to death, not of the fey who have not harmed or even seemed interested in her so far but of her cousin who has been acting more and more predatory over time.

Donner

APPEARANCE: 45 years old,. Looks much older than he is.

Donner was feeling the cold when he performed the ritual, the knife slipped and made a small cut on his palm. The altar stone drank in the blood before he even realized he'd been injured.

Donner is thinking of getting his family together and moving away from the ancestral holding even if it would mean impoverishing them and leaving them without a lord or master.

The weight of guilt is heavy upon him but he will take his families secrets to his grave.

GOALS:

To keep his family safe.

To wait things out til the next Midsummer ceremony when he can set things right again.

Gert

APPEARANCE: 42 years old, careworn but still beautiful.

Gert did not want to return to the family farm but her brother needed her after his wife died. At least her father was dead by then, saving her the need to smother him..

Gert is a devout woman of the true faith and does not approve of her families more rustic devotions.

Her fondest wish is to take her daughter and escape but her brother is taking some convincing to accompany them. Her nephew can stay for all she cares.

GOALS:

Gert prays in the chapel on a daily basis for the strength to leave soon she will abandon her brother and his no good son to their fates and escape.

Ash

APPEARANCE: 25 years old, white trash. Crazy eyes.

Ash was more fit for war than for farming but there has long been peace in this part of Albion. He was a strange boy as a child shirking chores to poke about the woods and catching small animals; not for the pot, but to open up and look at their insides.

Since the mishap at Midsummer those half glimpsed shapes and shadows of childhood have come calling at his window and scratching at his door.

He is becoming convinced that he has been chosen by the Good Folk for some great purpose and also that his cousin should become his wife as soon as possible.

Though he keeps these ideas to himself for now.

GOALS:

Ash wants his cousin for his own and he wants to secure his rightful place as the local fae prince.....one of these goals is delusional, the other is downright insane.

May

APPEARANCE: 13 years old,

May has been ignored by the Fey so far, unfortunately she cannot say the same about her cousin.

She wants to get as far away from the farm and her relatives as possible but she will not abandon her mother.

She will gladly kill to protect her mother.

Personal Goal

Escape.

Introduction:

The Farmyard Creepers

These low fey have crept in to torment the farmers now that the pact is broken.

Heron – insane goblin who performs ‘services’ in the chapel. His ‘congregation’ consists of ensorcelled woodland creatures.

Scarecrow – a Jack-in-the-Green haunts the barley fields and animates the scarecrow like a marionette. If the scarecrow is destroyed the Jack will flow back out into the woods.

Sallow and Dandelion – two rather plump grey gnomes who have taken over the old stone storehouse. They will cast Embog and throw insults and stones at the companions, if injured they’ll scream and retreat.

Heron

*“Our Father, which art in the earth,
cursed be thy name;
thy coils crawl;
thy will be done,
on earth as it is beneath.
Give us this day your poison breath.
And punish us our trespasses,
as we punish them that trespass against you.
And lead us to all temptation;
but deliver us from man.
Amen.*

This is my flesh, well not my flesh....”

*The black clad form capering on the alter throws back its hood
revealing a long pinched face with a sharp nose and nail-like teeth.*

“ Unbelievers! Destroy them!”

The dark forms crouched on the pews turn and leap at you....

Heron (Ref 12)

ATT 13 Sling (d6,3) AF 1

DEF 7 Movement: 12m

MAG DEF 5 EVA 5

Hp: 7 STLTH 21

Rank: 1 PER 13

Congregation (4 Badgers, 2 Wolves,) Ref 10.

ATT 15 Fangs (d4, 5) AF 0

DEF 3 Mov: 12m

MD 1 EVA 3

HP: 8, 8, 5, 5, 5, 5. STL 16

Rnk 1 PER 11

Heron's sermons are in praise of The Worm Below and his incoherent rants are disturbing to hear but have no real effect. He does not know how to open the altar stone and isn't really sure he wants to, regardless.

GOALS:

Mischief and Mayhem.

Scarecrow

A Jack-In-The-Green has taken up residence in the cornfield.
It is little interested in putting its existence on the line but is willing to have some fun with strangers by attacking them with animated strawmen.

4 Scarecrows (Ref 8)

ATT 14 Branches (d4, 4) AF 0

DEF 6 EVA 4

MD 4 STL 15

Hps: 5,5,8,5. PER 12

Ref: 8.

If its toys are destroyed the Jack will bluster and whirl its way across the barley field and disappear into the woods.

Sallow and Dandelion

These two Grey Gnomes came up out of the ground when the pact was broken and took up residence among the stones of the old storehouse. They are more of an old married couple than a fell threat to mankind but they will take umbrage if anyone tries to get into 'their' storeroom afterdark.

Dandelion will cast Embog and Sallow will begin pitching stones at the intruders until they go away. The use of real magic against them or a significant injury will cause them to call a halt to the fighting.

ATT 15 Stones (d6, 3) AF 3
DEF 9 Move: 10m
MD 8 EVA 4
Hp: 14, 16. STL 23
Rank 3rd PER 15

The two gnomes dwelt in the earth beside the Worms lair before the pact was broken and they know the secret of re-sealing the altar. Though they will not admit it as they are quite enjoying their new 'castle'.

The Faery Mound

The Court of Scales

The hall under the mound is the court of a very minor fey power.

The companions can be led to the court by any of the farmers, though Ash will be eager to lead them to it...his delusions entertain the fey and they encourage his pursuit of his cousin, finding amusement in the tensions it creates amongst their 'pets.'

It is the Court of Scales which once treated with the ancestors of the Croftbury farmers. It is they who put an end to the sacrifices being thrown down the well and bound the stone and bade the mortals feed it neither blood nor sorcery.

They did this not out of love of mortals but because they wanted the woods for themselves. The Worms first act when it emerges will be to attack the mound and destroy the court.

The Court:
The Stag.
The Prince.
The She-Bear

Taking any item from the mound or from the fey without permission will leave one forever bound to the Mound unable to venture more than one hundred metres from it.

The Stag

The Stag is an impossibly tall, lithe figure with jet black skin and branching antlers limned with starlight.

The Stag fears the Worm and knows that the ancient things revenge will be swift if things do not settle down soon. It is for this reason that it is willing to entertain the notion of allowing mortals to visit its court.

The Stag has decided that after this latest episode is decided one way or the other it will seal the Mound and retreat down secret trods away from the mortal world.

If it ever removes the Antler Crown (or is killed) it will be revealed to be an Elf dressed simply in a grey robe.

ATT 11 Sword (d8, 4) AF 0
DEF 5 Move: 12m
MD: 4 EVA 4
HP: 8 STL 18
Rnk 1st PER 13

The Antler Crown will, if put on by a mortal, transform them forever into a normal Stag. (MA 20)

The Prince

The Prince is a hulking brute dressed in red maille armour with a great axe grasped in its gauntlets and nothing to be seen beneath its hood but shadow.

If the Princes armour is removed it will at first appear empty, but will be found to contain a rather rangy looking hare.

ATT 14 Axe (d8, 6) AF 4
DEF 6 Move: 12m
MD: 4 EVA 4
HP: 8 STL 10
Rnk 1st PER 12

Anyone donning the Princes armour or picking up its weapon will find themselves transformed in appearance to a hulking brute. But with no change to their stats. They will also lose the ability to speak.

The She-Bear

A great silver furred bear that bears a linked chain of silver around its neck.

The She-Bear has betrayed the Mound to the Worm and it is she who caused the palsy that let blood spill onto the altar stone.

She has been speaking with the Worm via her spells and believes that she will be allowed to rule the mound....she is very, very wrong. The Worm has not fed for almost 200 years it will lay waste to everything it can catch.

ATT 17 Claws (d8, 5)
DEF 7 AF 1
MD 3 Move 10
EVA 4
HP: 24 Rank: 6

The She-Bear is simply a Bear Skin Cloak wrapped about the frame of a vain and petty Elven Mystic. Once the Cloak is destroyed she will defend herself with spells.

Marianne
4th-rank mystic

Attack 12, Unarmed (d3, 2)
Defence 7 Magical Attack 17
Magical Defence 6 Reflexes 10
Health Points 10 Armour Factor 0
Movement 10m (20m)
Evasion 3
Stealth 14
Perception 8

She will only go on the offensive if attacked or if it looks like The Stag will tell the mortals how to seal the altar stone.

She will use her magics to make it seem as if the mortals are attempting treachery.

Eg. Telekinisis to draw a PCs blade, then Enthral to create confusion.

If she can be defeated without destroying the Bear Skin Cloak it is a powerful artifact.

The Worm

ATT 12 Bite (d8+1, 5) or Sting (d8, 3 + Strong Poison)
DEF 6 AF 5
MD 12 Move: 10 (25)
EVA 5 Flying: 80
HPs: 40 Rank: 10th

The Worm will emerge from the altar and slither into the farmhouse devouring all within, it will then move to attack the mound.

The creature is old and angry at being cut off from its sacrifices. Where it was once happy to curl about its lair and wait for the mortals to drop it a morsel each year it is now enraged and will kill any living thing that crosses its path.

The grey-scaled wyvern is unused to flight after so many centuries so it will slither through the trees and buildings like an enormous snake.

