

# Spears of the Northmen

A module using the *Worlds Without Number* system for 3-5 characters of 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> level

## Background

In vengeance for the death of his sons lost in battle against the southerners, Conal Red Hand, leader of the Crow Brother tribe has awoken a sleeping demon god, offering it fresh souls in exchange for vengeance. Crow Brother Warriors, bolstered by the dark magics of the demon below have been stalking the land carrying off supplies and people to sacrifice in obscene rituals to free the demon, Cernunnos, from its prison. Without the intervention of heroes, it is only a matter of time before the demon is freed and leads the Crow Brother tribe in even greater slaughter.

This adventure should be able to be placed in a campaign world with little issue. Ideally somewhere in a cold and northern climate with tribal warriors and swathes of wild forest interspersed by small points of civilization.

## Hooks

- The tax from the village of Crom in northern Volsung has been absent, and messengers sent to ascertain what happened have not returned. The party has been sent to find out what happened and if possible, recover the missing tribute of 1000 silver pieces in goods in return for 250 silver pieces and the favor of the local Lord Hrolf Grimmir, whose forces are currently engaged in a territory dispute to the south.
- Traveling north through the Patchwork Lands, the party stops off in the village of Crom and finds it suspiciously empty, the locals huddled together in fear of what lurks outside
- PC's receive a missive in their dreams of some great evil stirring in the north. Somewhere near the backwater village of Crom.
- As a reward for a quest, the party receives a map to ancient elven catacombs, which may contain great wealth and knowledge, but is said to contain "a Shard of the Great Darkness." The map is old and imprecise, only giving the general location of the tomb. Modern maps reveal the nearest settlement to be the village of Crom in the northern Patchwork Lands

## The Village

Village of Crom: a small village in the northern Patchwork Lands, Crom has managed to keep away from the near constant strife plaguing the rest of the country. With verdant fields, good fishing from the nearby river, and a rich forest, the village had managed to not only survive, but prosper, paying tribute to Lord Grimmir in exchange for protection. With the winter, most of the villagers had taken shelter within their homes to wait out the cold, but as their neighbors began to disappear they grew worried. After the first mutilated corpse was placed, the villagers fled towards the fortified longhouses near the town's center, dozens of families packed tightly into each one as torches burn and the chants of frenzied wild men echo through the night. Once nearly 120 villagers, their number has dwindled to 43, with some fled but many more dead, their bodies strung up in grotesque effigy along the tree line. The remaining villagers now huddle in the long houses, fearful of the dark

Layout: 3 large longhouses, originally used as communal larders and meeting spaces, the smithy and a handful of shops lie in the center of the village, all surrounded by a wooden barbican. Dozens of small cottages lie in the surrounding area, though by now all are abandoned, many burned or looted. Those that do stand have been painted

with blasphemous symbols. A handful of nervous men and boys man the barbican at all times and draw bows on the party until they see they are not wild men

NPC's

- **The Reeve, Snorri Sturlson**- grim, dour, walks with a limp from an old wound. Former warrior. Asks for assistance from the party. Offers 50 silver pieces per wild man scalp and 500 for the head of the wild men leader with a secret treasure if they can bring him proof the matter is put to an end. If the party is there to find the tax collector, Snorri tells them in no uncertain terms that he has the tribute, which is where the reward is coming from, but he did not kill the tax collector or any messengers. The money and treasure is hidden away where only he knows where it is. (Buried under the rear of the central longhouse in case the party wants to rob him and go. There is a total of 2572 silver, 5 gold bars worth 100 silver, 12 pieces of assorted jewelry set with precious stones worth 45 silver pieces each, and a tablet covered in ancient rune stones that acts as a Calyx (Scroll) of *Scorn the Fetters of Earth (Fly)*) Snorri will give the party the tablet once the matter is put to rest
- **Blacksmith, Cormac Murchadha**- loud, red faced, hates non-humans. Has decent amount of weapons and armor, and sells at list price and has nothing more expensive than 50 silver pieces. Does command some respect and if the party can befriend him, either by making social checks or bringing back a dozen enemy scalps, he will convince one of the few remaining guards to possibly join the party as a henchman.
  - Militia- **AC:** 13 armored **Hit Dice:** 1 (4 HP) **Attack:** +1 **Damage:** 1d6 shock 2/AC 13 30/60 light spear **Move** 30' **Save:** 15+ **Morale:** 8 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 4.
- **Local priest, Brother Albrecht Erickson**- Nervous, constantly praying, mind is almost broken from the horrors he has witnessed. If party can convince him they are here to help, he tells them of the hermit (the wizard Fjolnir), that may help them if they ask. He warns them that he has been having prophetic dreams of a great beast of darkness stalking him through the forest. He says that every night it seems to get closer
- **Traveling merchant, Leila Tilaku**- dark skinned, enigmatic, mercantilist. Has a stock of items, nothing worth more than 50 silver pieces but selling at book price unless they insult her, in which case she charges double. If they can befriend her through a successful charisma/ connect or convince 9 check, or selling her treasure they find on the cheap, she has secret items for sale. 3 small breakable tokens of wood that hum slightly that act as *Elixirs of Sanctified Healing (healing potions)* that she will sell for 250 silver pieces each. If the party has made their intentions to help the village known, Leila gives them a bottle of vodka and tells them to visit Geirrod the troll to learn about the land. If asked how she knows a troll, she just smiles and says a merchant knows their customers.
- **Children**- a number of children are out playing in the bit of open space in the long houses. If the party can befriend them by playing with them or buying sweets from Leila, they will tell the party where to find "Mother Spider" out in the woods, and say that she has treasures. Any adults asked about it frown and say it's an old wives tale

### Events and issues

When the party first arrives at Crom, a timer should start. Conal Red Hand and his followers are not idle, working steadily to break the binding that holds the demon in place. By torturing prisoners and terrorizing the populace, the demon grows stronger, eventually enough to break the binding. The party can combat this by defeating the minions of the demon. Each day they kill or drive off a band of Crow Brothers, do not advance the timer.

For each night the party remains in the village, roll 1d6. On a 1, the village is attacked by 1d6+5 Crow Brothers who will attempt to carry off 1d4 villagers. If they are successful, the timer advances an additional day

If **8 days** have passed, the binding has weakened enough for the demon to lend its power to the warriors, granting a +1 to attack, damage, and morale for all members of the Crow Brother tribe

At **12 days**, all remaining Crow Brother Warriors have been transformed in Ghouls and now make for the village in a full on assault lead by Conal and Cernunnos. The demon's power will allow it raise more dead warriors such that by the time they arrive they will have an army of nearly 60 ghouls to ravage and raise the village. If not stopped here, the demon's forces will begin to grow with more Ghouls added to the horde as Cernunnos regains its full power (see epilogue for more details)

## Forest

Much of the land surrounding the village is a **lightly forested** (2 miles per hour travel) area of woods to the north, with a small area of **Hills** (1.5 miles per hour travel) and a **Bog** (1 mile per hour travel) to the west. All manner of strange things lurk within the darkened boughs.

## Weather and Travel

Set in the winter months, the lands around Crom are chilly but bearable during the day, but can become frigid at night, with sudden storms blowing through but only lasting for a few hours. The nights are considered **harsh** and will cause 1 system strain without shelter or fire, or 2 if a party member does not have warm clothing or other magical protections. It is recommended that GM's use the maiming rules on page 161 of *Atlas of the Latter Earth*, rolling for a maiming wound if a player reaches maximum system strain from the cold to represent frostbite. As each hex is only 2 miles, fully exploring a hex requires 4 hours of dedicated searching. Warm clothing costs 50 silver pieces and is 1 encumbrance but does help protect from the worst of the cold.

## Random Encounters

Roll 1d8 for every 4 hours. On 1, for encounter roll 1d12. If the party has a fire lit, roll 1d4 rather than 1d8 to check for encounters

1. Raiding party of 1d6+3 Crow Brother Warriors, 1 in 10 chance either of the Named Men will accompany them (see area **L: Crow Brother Camp**)- **AC:** 15 pieced armor **Hit Dice:** 2 (10 HP) **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d6+1 shock 3/AC 13 30/60 short spear or 1d6+1 shock 2/AC 15 10/30 hand axe **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 (+3 sneak while at night) **Instinct:** 4. Due to being painted with the black Wood, the wild men can see in darkness up to 60 feet. Crow Brothers will always attempt an ambush, picking off members of the party one at a time, especially under cover of darkness.
2. 2d4 hungry wolves- **AC:** 13 **Hit Dice:** 3 **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d4+1 bite **Move** 60' **Save:** 15+ **Morale:** 7 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6
3. 1d4 Large angry boars- **AC:** 13 **Hit Dice:** 3+3 **Attack:** +4 **Damage:** 1d10+2 gore **Move** 40' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 9 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6
4. Rapidly developing storm, lasts 1d4 hours. Unless the party has a nearby place they can shelter, they take 1d4 system strain with a physical save for half. Those with full system strain die of exposure. Speed is slowed by **Deep Snow (.1 speed)**, and Notice checks automatically fail
5. Heavy snowfall, lasts 1d6 hours treating current and next surrounding hexes as **Foul Weather (.5 speed)**, and Notice checks have a -2
6. Light snowfall, limiting visibility with a -1 on Notice checks for 1d8 hours
7. The party sees a mutilated corpse nailed to a tree, painted with profane symbols
8. Figures appear to be moving in the trees off to the side. Investigation reveals nothing but foot prints
9. An old trail of blood leads away, as if a body were dragged. It stops suddenly
10. The party hears the sounds of a crying child. After a few seconds the wailing is abruptly cut short with a loud "THUNK" sound
11. One PC hears a horrid, cacophonous roar which fills his ears and reverberates off the trees. No one else hears this
12. Roll 1d10 and 1d3, combining the 2 results

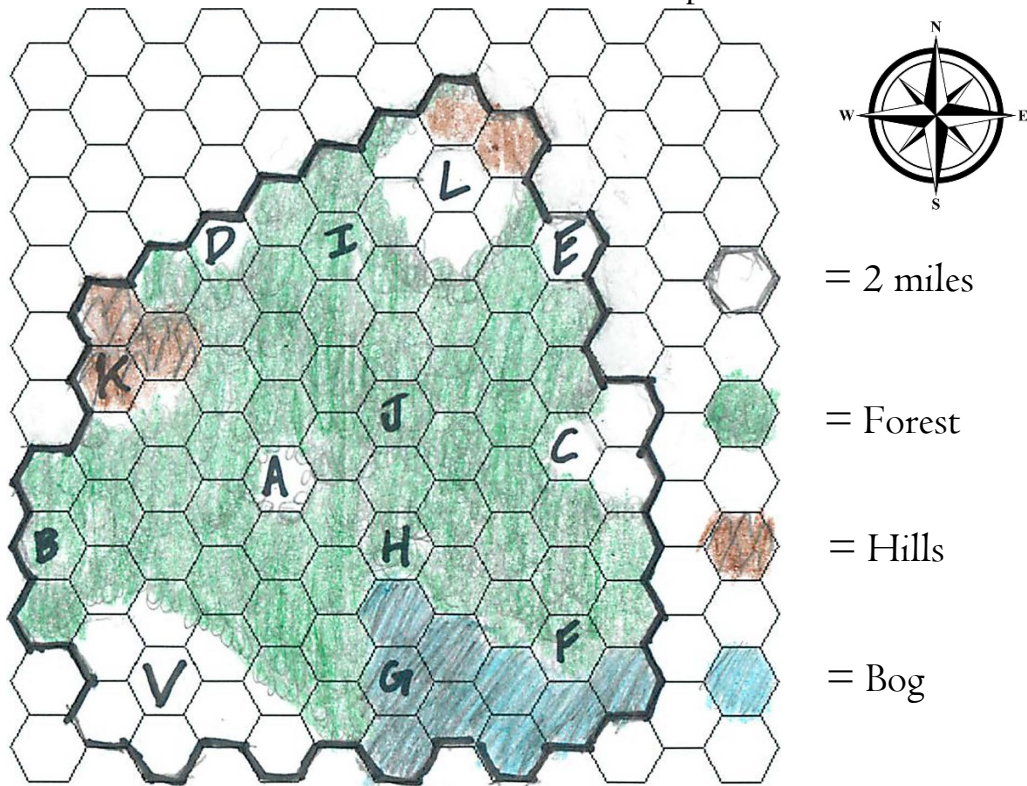
**Crow Brothers:** Crow Brother Warriors wear mismatched armor of boiled leather and rough stitched hide, bearing spears and throwing axes. Adorning themselves with bone fetishes and runic medallions, the Crow Brothers cover themselves in Woad that is so dark it is almost black, adding to their feral, brutish appearance

If one of the Crow Brothers is captured, they initially present a stoic front, but if tortured will eventually break, requiring a few hours and a relevant skill check against their morale. Interrogated warriors scream about a dark demon god below that their war chief has awoken, and how he has anointed them with dark blood. In mere days (however many are left) the beast will be free to lead them to greater conquest. Party's that have yet to discover where the Crow brother camp can find out from one of the warriors, who will tell the party where the Crow Brother camp is, but do not know about Geri and Freki's weakness to silver

As one of the major antagonists in the adventure, it stands to reason that party will want to take the fight to them rather than wander around and wait to be ambushed. A skilled tracker can attempt to pick up trail sign, rolling a Wisdom/ Survive IO check and spending 1d8 hours looking. Success means the party has located a roving band of Crow Brother Warriors, rolling opposed Wisdom/ Notice checks as normal to determine surprise. Once 20 or more warriors have been killed, this check will automatically fail to find any enemies, but will pick up sign leading towards the Crow Brother encampment. If more than **10 days** have passed since the beginning of the adventure, replace any roll of Crow Brothers with **Ghouls**.

- **Ghoul- AC:** 14 **Hit Dice:** 2 (13 HP) **Attack:** +2x2 **Damage:** 1d4 claw, 1d6 shock I/AC 13 bite **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6 **Special Ability:** on hit with claw, physical save or paralyze target for 1d4+1 rounds. Undead Immunities

### Area Map



A	Menhir Standing Stones
B	Spider Grove
C	Troll Den
D	Wizard's Hut
E	Barrow Mounds
F	Deserter's Camp
G	Frozen Bog
H	Mimir's Spring
I	The Dead Grove
J	Fae Clearing
K	Bear Den
L	Crow Brother Camp
V	Village of Crom

## Locations

### A. Menhir Standing Stones

Dozens of large worked stones in a circle, each covered with intricate runes, now faded with time. Enemies will not attack the party here, retreating before facing them. Anyone who intentionally spills the blood of another here must make a spirit save or have their right hand rot away. This save must be repeated every hour while the offender lingers here until either they fail or leave. Any undead, spirit, or wild man painted with the black Woad cannot physically enter here, as though some unseen force prevents them.

### B. Spider grove

This stretch of forest is home to Mor Edderkopp, a massive intelligent spider and her smaller offspring that makes this part of the woods her domain, now covered in massive webs. These webs will entangle a PC if they move faster than 10' per round while within 100 feet of Mor Edderkopp's shrinewi. For each point of Strength less than 19, it takes one round to break free of the webs (for example, a PC with Strength 15 can break free in four rounds). As many spiders as possible will attack the defenseless victim during its struggle to free itself. Entangled characters can be attacked with a +4 bonus to hit, and lose all Armor Class adjustments due to Dexterity. Mor Edderkopp is smart enough to trade treasure, or "shinies," to travelers in exchange for fresh meat, but she does not quite understand the inherent value of the treasure. She will allow the party to pick 1 item from her trove for every 2 hit dice of living creatures they bring her, up to 16 HD worth of creatures. Those killed in the last 12 hours are treated as 1 HD lower, while any longer than that is refused. In addition to the *Gem of Brightness*, Mor Edderkopp has 86 silver coins, 10 pieces of bone scrimshaw worth 5 silver pieces each, 10 gold coins, 5 emeralds worth 40 silver pieces each, 4 bracelets of gold inlaid with runes worth 50 silver pieces, 3 gold necklace with sapphire pendants worth 100 silver pieces, a silver flask with platinum filigree worth 150 silver pieces, a set of three daggers bearing the mark of a far off noble house. The daggers are each made of silver and worth 100 silver pieces each, but the set is worth 900 silver pieces to a collector. If need be, an intelligence/ trade 8 check could be used to help players figure which items are most valuable. A *Gem of Brightness (37 charges)* can be found hidden in Mor Edderkopp's nest in a makeshift shrine, but she refuses to part with it unless driven off or killed. Mor Edderkopp is a large gray spider with razor sharp legs that wears a tiara made of pure crystal that slightly glows worth 240 silver pieces as well as 3 bracelets on her limbs in various states of disrepair. If the party repairs the bracelets with an intelligence/ craft roll, each bracelet is worth the result of the roll times 5 silver pieces.

- Mor Edderkopp (intelligent sword spider)- **AC:** 17 **Hit Dice:** 5+5 (27 HP) **Attack:** +6x2 bite/ leg **Damage:** 2d4 bite or 2d6 shock 2/- leg **Move** 40' climb and web **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4. Mor Edderkopp can leap up to 30 feet attacking a creature at the end of the jump with 4 of her legs, dealing 8d6 damage with a successful attack
- 6 large spiders- **AC:** 12 **Hit Dice:** 1+1 (7 HP) **Attack:** +2 **Damage:** 1+ physical save or 2d6 poison damage bite **Move** 30' climb **Save:** 15+ **Morale:** 7 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6
- 3 spider swarms- **AC:** 10 **Hit Dice:** 4 (21 HP) **Attack:** +6x3 **Damage:** 1d6+ poison shock 1/- bite **Move** 30' **Save:** 13+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 5. **Poison:** Physical save or have dexterity reduced by 3 points for 1d4+1 rounds. Creatures reduced to 0 dexterity are paralyzed until they recover **Swarm:** half damage from melee damage, 1 maximum damage from ranged weapons, and double damage from area effects

### C. Troll den

An aged Troll (as 2 headed troll), Geirröd, has taken up residence in this cave in a crude lean-to near the entrance. Ancient for a troll, he has eaten well on wildlife and wild men that have been moving through the area, and does not attack on sight like some of his other kin, but will defend himself to the death if attacked to the point of pursuing enemies who flee. Suspicious and proud, he can easily be riled by perceived slights. Kept within his hovel is a small trove of treasure he has gathered. If the party steals it without killing him he will relentlessly pursue them once he wakes up and realizes it's gone. For each new hex the party enters, roll a 1d8. On a 1, Geirröd has found them

- Geirröd- **AC:** 16 **Hit Dice:** 10 (47 HP) **Attack:** +10x4 (2 axe attacks, 2 bites) **Damage:** 1d10+4 shock 6/ AC 15 War Axe, 1d8+4 bite **Move** 30' **Save:** 11+ **Morale:** 11 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4. Regenerates 1 hit point at the end of each round, even after being reduced to 0 hit points, Fire and acid appear to delay this regenerative process indefinitely, and a troll who takes such damage within a round of being reduced to zero hit points will be slain. Due to his years of fighting, Geirröd cannot be surprised by mundane means
- Treasure: 172 silver pieces, 13 gold pieces, 2 armbands of tarnished silver inlaid with blood stones worth 400 silver pieces for the set, or 150 for 1, 6 loose gemstones worth 25 silver each, dozens of once fine clothes and art objects now rotted and ruined, and a sword of giant make (as *+2 great sword*)
- He knows something of the area and can provide directions in exchange for alcohol, which he loves. For each barrel of wine, beer, or bottle of spirits he is supplied with, Geirröd will tell them where a different location is, negating the need to fully explore the hex. If he drinks 3 or more barrels in a sitting, he will eventually pass out, but there is a 1 in 6 chance he will fly into a drunken rage, attacking anyone nearby.
  - **Area L.** Crow Brother Camp: "In the north is where the Wild men make their camp, and where the warchief anoints them with the dark blood. There are still many of the dark warriors there, but their warchief has retreated into the earth. Be warned though, there is one with the stink of the wolf on him."
  - **Area F.** Deserter's camp: "You are outnumbered. If you were half the warrior Geirröd is, you wouldn't need allies, but since you are not, seek out the camp of those Wild men that chose not to follow their warchief into darkness. Perhaps they have not the stomach for it, perhaps they are cowards."
  - **Area E.** The Barrow Mounds: "(Spits) an evil place, full of the rotting dead and unclean spirits. Others of your ilk stored their treasures there, but I'll not waste my time when the dead rise from their graves."
  - **Area G.** The frozen bog: "be wary of the witch lights that dance upon that bog. I've seen them lure men and other creatures to their doom. Bit tricky to get the meal after and takes forever to dry out, but the bog gives the meat a nice brine."

## D. Wizard's hut

The home of the wizard Fjornir is at first glance a humble affair, ramshackle cottage that seems worn but sturdy, with steady smoke billowing from the chimney, all beneath a massive yew tree. Old, unkempt, and constantly muttering to himself, the Wizard Fjornir has one eye covered by an eye patch and dentures made of iron. Suspicious at first, if the party comes in peace, Fjornir will offer to trade magic and information in exchange for favors and treasure. Fjornir has 1d4 *Calyxes (Scrolls)* for sale, all of 1<sup>st</sup> level, costing 300 silver pieces for each. If the party asks him about stopping the wild men, he invites them in to tell them his plan. Fjornir will tell the party he's been divining the cause of the Crow Brother's strength for a while, and that they are driven by a demon. If they help him gather the materials for a ritual, he can banish the demon. He is lying, and plans to bind the demon to his own purposes. For the ritual he needs the life blood of a fae, a branch from one of the Green Man's Favored, and the bones of an ancestor. For the blood, he tells the party where the daughter of Mother Raven is waiting (**Area J**) as well as a ritual to call her up if they have already encountered her peacefully, though any lost companions still remain lost. If they have already driven her off, then the witchlights (will-o-wisps in **Area G**) could work in a pinch but both must be slain and their fluids drained. The branch can be taken from the Green Man's Favored (Treant in **Area I**)

but will likely be met with resistance, as its roots are watered in blood. As to the bones of an ancestor, they can be found in the barrow mounds (**Area E**), the deeper the better, but he warns that the dead are loath to give up what is theirs. The ones he wants are special rune inscribed bones of an ancient king that once ruled these forests. If these can be acquired, Fjornir assures that it will make a powerful weapon that will banish the demon to the void. However, Fjornir's ritual is flawed. While the ritual will bind the demon, it will let the beast of the outer dark possess him. As a token of good faith, the wizard will tell the party of a treasure that will banish the darkness and allow the party to penetrate the temple where the demon is held. He does warn that the spider mother (**Area B**) holds it and may refuse to part with it. Should he be attacked, Fjornir has several defenses and remains a powerful wizard, summoning skeleton warriors from the earth to defend his home.

- Fjornir- **AC:** 13 **Hit Dice:** 8 (20 HP) **Attack:** +1 **Damage:** 1d6 shock 1/AC 13 staff **Move** 30' **Save:** 13+ **Morale:** 9 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4 **Effort:** 3 **Arts:** Empowered Sorcery, Inexorable Effort, Iron Resolution, Sense Magic, Swift Casting, Wizard's Grandeur **Spells:** 4/ day: Calculation of the Phantasmal Eidolon (Monster Summoning II), Disjunctive Temporal Reversion, Festering Curse (Bestow Curse), Raise Corpse (Animate Dead), Command the Dead (Command Undead as 8<sup>th</sup> level cleric), The Torment of Tumefaction (Contagion), The Howl of Light (Fireball), Damnation of the Sense (Blindness), The Wind of the Final Repose (Sleep)
- 10 Skeleton warriors- **AC:** 13 **Hit Dice:** 1 (5 HP) **Attack:** +1 **Damage:** 1d6 shock 1/AC 13 spear **Move** 30' **Save:** 15+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +0 **Instinct:** 0
- Treasure: collections of rare herbs worth 1,000 silver pieces to an apothecary or 200 on the open market but is 2 encumbrance. Requires an intelligence/ know or heal check 10 to realize the worth, or automatic if they have at least know or heal-0. A small bookshelf crammed with tomes worth 1000 silver pieces but 3 encumbrance. Anyone with at least magic or know-0 can identify which are worth the most, with 3 volumes worth 300 silver pieces each. A small chest beneath the bed is locked, requiring an intelligence or dexterity/ sneak 8 check to open but contains 312 silver pieces, fine robes worth 100 silver pieces, and an exquisitely carved bone pipe worth 75 silver pieces, and 5 pouches of fine pipe weed and other substances worth 25 silver each. Fjornir's grimoire lies in a satchel at his side containing all his spells, along with any Calyxes still unsold.

## E. Barrow Mounds

Collection of 4 smaller barrow mounds around a larger one, the area has an ominous atmosphere. The smaller mounds are arranged in the cardinal directions around the larger mound and have entrances that have sunken into the earth and are only about 3 feet in height. The central mound still stands 15 feet tall at the highest point and 60 feet in diameter. The stone doorway to in the south of the mound leads in while rubble lies strewn about the entrance indicating entrance at some point within weeks. A narrow hallway leads down to a 30 foot round room of an ancient chieftain. 6 corpses lie interred on stone slabs cut into that walls while an iron throne sits on a dais near the far wall. 4 pillars of granite inscribed with rune stones from floor to ceiling are the only other ornamentation in the crypt. A corpse in rusted mail and rotting finery lolls on the throne, runes carved into its very bones. When living creatures enter into the barrow mound, the corpses begin to stir and the figure on the throne rights itself, glaring at any interlopers. If they don't immediately attack, the long dead chieftain will demand tribute in the ancient language of the first men (or any suitable ancient or dead language). Any magical weapons or treasure equal to 1000 silver pieces will be enough to calm the corpses but if not, the other corpses on the wall will animate and attack. If the party bargains with the dead, the chieftain will tell them the ritual words that will grant passage into the catacombs of the north where "the dread God from the Void lies slumbering," after which they may leave unmolested. If another offering of equal value is offered up, the ancient king will grant the part use of the bones in its left arm. Any attempt to take back the offerings sends the dead things into a rage. The dead things, Wights, will not pursue any who flee the tomb, and despite appearances, all the corpses have the same stats.



- (7) Wights- **AC:** 15 **Hit Dice:** 4+3 (17 HP) **Attack:** +5 **Damage:** 1d4+ energy drain strike **Move** 30' climb **Save:** 13+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 4. Undead Immunities. **Energy Drain:** Foes hit by it are enfeebled, taking a cumulative -2 penalty to hit rolls and -1 to damage rolls, Shock, and skill checks for the rest of the scene, as well as 1d4 system strain. Foes with system strain equal to their maximum are slain, rising as a Wight under control of the one who slew them on their next turn. Wights are immune to weapons not considered magical or forged from silver
- Treasure: a number of grave goods including 6 small silver statues of warriors worth 25 silver pieces, a ceremonial sword dipped in gold worth 300 silver pieces, 6 pewter bracelets inscribed with swirling silver designs worth 30 silver pieces, a gold arm ring set with rubies worth 350 silver pieces, a torc of brass set with small gems worth 120 silver pieces, a *+1 Mail Hauberk*, and a massive drinking horn made from the bone of an unknown creature, set with filigreed gold design. The horn is heavy, worth 3 encumbrance and is worth 2000 silver pieces to a collector or 800 on the open market. The horn is Mimir's horn, and will reveal secret knowledge if water from the spring (**Area H**) is drank from it.

## F. Deserter's Camp

A small camp hidden away in the trees, where 6 warriors sit around a small sheltered fire, looking warily into the darkness. Deserters from the Crow Brother tribe, these warriors are fleeing their brethren and preparing to head back north, away from this cursed place. Looking similar to their fellows, these warriors wear rough boiled leather armor and hides, carrying hand axes and crude swords, their bodies covered in swirling tattoos and bone ornaments. However, they lack the characteristic dark black Woad of the marauders. Instantly wary, they will leap to their feet, weapons drawn if they see the party, but will not attack right away if the party comes in peace. If the party can call them down through a charisma/ convince, lead, or connect-9 check, the warriors will slightly relax, willing to talk. The warriors explain that they left the tribe when their war chief, Conal Red Hand, went mad with grief from the deaths of his sons. According to them, Conal lead his tribe to this place, venturing into some deep catacombs and returning with dark knowledge. Conal anointed his warriors with a dark Woad, letting them become one with the darkness and drove them to inhuman cruelty, while the Named Men received a greater gift. Black Geri and Freki Spear-Brother, the most loyal warriors of Conal have become as beasts, able to shift between man and wolf, with no weapon able to touch them. Conal and the rest of the warriors began taking hostages, bringing them north to their camp near catacombs to torture and sacrifice. Conal himself spends all his time in the catacombs, only coming out to torment the captured prisoners in horrible ways. He says he will free a demon and take his vengeance. Unwilling to descend into true barbarism, the warriors fled and now live in fear of reprisal. If the party can convince them to throw their lot in with them, either by slaying one of the Named Men, or with a successful charisma/ lead or convince 14 check, the renegade wild men may be able to help in the assault on the camp. For every 100 silver pieces the party offers in treasure, reduce the difficulty by 1. Should the party not convince them, the warriors will offer them a place to rest, then slit their throats in the night, take their treasure and flee. The villagers don't know the difference between the deserters and the invaders, and will pay full price for their scalps.

- Wild men- **AC:** 15 armored **Hit Dice:** 2 (8 HP) **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d6+1 shock 3/AC 13 30/60 short spear or 1d6+1 shock 2/AC 15 10/30 hand axe **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 9 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 3.  
These wild men each have a weeks' worth of supplies and warm clothing

## G. Frozen Bog

Frozen over bog with 2 Will-O-Wisps that dance in the moonlight and hide during the day. The ice in many spots is thin, cracking under a PC's weight. Only coming out at night, the Will-O-Wisps linger over the thin spots to lure men towards them. Anyone walking through this area must make a dexterity/ exert 7 check or fall through the ice

into the freezing water. Anyone falling in takes 1 system strain and must make a physical save or begin drowning to the freezing water. Those in the water can make a strength/ exert 8 check to pull themselves out as an action. Those moving slowly during the day can see the thin areas and do not need this check. If the party inspects the area, have one PC make a wisdom/ notice 8 check, with a +1 for each party member assisting. For every point of the result over 8, the party finds 50 silver pieces worth of treasure from drowned travelers, in gems, ornaments, precious metals or loose coins but requires 1d4 hours of time to retrieve. This person diving in takes 1 system strain per hour from the freezing water. Found treasure weighs 1 encumbrance per 50 silver pieces. Additionally, a Wisdom/ Notice 10 check on arrival will reveal a partially electrocuted corpse half in the bog. In his bag is an oil skin case that reveals a map for the nearby area, with a spot marked "Well of Knowledge," which reveals the location of **area H**.

- Will-O-Wisps- **AC:** 22 **Hit Dice:** 9 (48 HP) **Attack:** +10 **Damage:** 2d8 electricity **Move** 60' fly **Save:** 10+ **Morale:** 11 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 6. **Special Abilities:** **Invisibility:** if it does not attack, the Will-O-Wisp remains invisible for 2d4 rounds. It can resume invisibility as a main action. **Hard to Hit:** all weapon attacks against the Will-O-Wisp must roll twice and take the worse result. **Spell Immunity:** Will-O-Wisps are immune to all spells except *The Coruscating Coffin (Magic Missile)*, *Banishment to the Black Glass Labyrinth (Maze)*, and *Wardpact Invocation (Protection From Evil)*

## H. Mimir's spring

A placid spring in the middle of a clearing sitting before a large rock resembling a giant face. Those looking during the day can make a stone symbol of an eye at the bottom of the spring. Runes in a dead language scrawl near the mouth of the giant face say, "a sacrifice for knowledge," for those with the ability to read it. If a character who can cast spells plucks an eye out and throws it in the water, they will instantly gain knowledge of any spell of their choice up to their maximum level they are able to cast. Those who lose an eye have a permanent -4 to ranged hit rolls. Any player who drinks from the waters using the drinking horn found in the Barrow Mounds can ask the GM one piece of information about the campaign world or the current adventure which they must answer truthfully. A player can only benefit from this once. Additionally, if the party has spoken to the wizard Fjolnir and has agreed to help him with this ritual will realize that the ritual is flawed in some way, but not to what extent. A PC who spends their question on the proper way to fix the ritual will know that the ingredients must be prepared and purified in a sacred place (the Menhir stones) with a piece of pure light (the *Gem of Brightness*). If the party can combine those items in a ritual, it will create a totem that if broken on the altar within the catacombs where the demon lies imprisoned, it will send it back to the void in a brilliant flash of light, ending the effects of the black Woad and turning the Named Men back into humans, if they still live.

## I. The Dead Grove

A grove of dead trees that stands eerily silent. Warped and black, these trees stand in stark contrast to the green and white of the surrounding forest. In the middle of this grove is a gnarled tree with black bark. When the party enters the area, a face twisted into a mask of rage will contort into view as the Old Man of the Woods draws himself up to his full 18' height, screaming in a bellow of rage. The Old Man attacks without mercy, animating trees to cut off ranged enemies. He will pursue for about a mile if players run, but will then return to his grove. If the players come seeking a branch, there are a number of fallen ones around where he stands that would be suitable, but the Old Man of the Woods will not bargain for it, unless he is approached by an elf or fae who is unaccompanied by humans, and even then it will require a charisma/ connect or convince 11 check and the promise of the heads of 10 humans. If they can deliver that, he will grant them a suitable branch taken from his own body. A player can identify a suitable branch by a cursory glance with an intelligence/ notice or magic 10 check, but will find a suitable one if they spend a minute carefully looking. If slain, within the body of the Old Man of the Woods is his Heartwood, equivalent to 1d4 units of *Ancient Salvage (magical reagents)*

- The Old Man of the Woods (Treat)- **AC:** 20 **Hit Dice:** 12 (57 HP) **Attack:** +12x2 **Damage:** 2d8+4 shock 6/- fist **Move** 40' **Save:** 10+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 6. **Special Abilities: Animate Trees:** A treant can animate 2 trees within 180 feet as a main action. It takes one round for a normal tree to uproot itself. Thereafter the animated tree can move at a rate of 10' per turn and fights as a full-grown treant. A treant must be within 180' of the tree it is attempting to animate. Animated trees lose their ability to move if the treant who animated them is incapacitated or moves more than 180' away. **Fire Weakness:** Any fire based attack gains a +4 to hit against a treant and gain +1 per damage die of the attack. Treants have a save of 14+ against all fire based effects
- Animated Tree- **AC:** 20 **Hit Dice:** 12 (57 HP) **Attack:** +12x2 **Damage:** 2d8+4 shock 6/- fist **Move** 40' **Save:** 10+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 6

## J. Fae Clearing

A beautiful woman with pale blond hair cavorts in a clearing, singly sweetly at the base of a tree. She welcomes the party upon arrival and introduces herself as Moonlight on New Snow, a daughter of Mother Raven, then asks if they would like to play the riddle game. If they can answer 3 riddles of hers, she will give them a boon. If they can't, then she desires one for her company. The woman is a dryad, and any who agrees to the game and cannot answer 3 riddles automatically fails their saving throw against her charm effect. If more than 1 person has agreed to the contest, she chooses the one with the highest charisma. Once she has the PC charmed, she steps behind a tree with them, disappearing to the fey wilds for the next 3 years. If the party does not play the game, but speaks respectfully, she warns them to be wary of the dead grove for their hatred of men runs deep (**area I**), but the witch lights in the bog are boon companions, always willing to cavort about (**area G**). Should they win by answering all three riddles, she laughs and hands the party a *Key of the Former House*, telling them to come visit her summer home anytime. If attacked or the players are rude to her, she flees immediately through a nearby tree, luring 8 Crow Brothers to attack the party next time they rest in the woods.

- Dryad- **AC:** 11 **Hit Dice:** 2 (10 HP) **Attack:** +2 **Damage:** 1d4 shock 1/AC 15 dagger **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ (9+ vs spells) **Morale:** 9 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 4. **Special Abilities: Charm:** 3/ day, the Dryad can cast Ineluctable Shackles of Volition (Charm Person) with a -3 penalty on the Mental save. **Speak With Plants:** as a main action, the Dryad can question plants in a 30 foot radius as to whether or not creatures have passed through them, cause thickets to part to enable easy passage, require vines to entangle pursuers, and command similar services. The spell does not enable plants to uproot themselves and move about, but any movements within the plants' normal capabilities are possible. Entangled creatures cannot move faster than 10' per round, but can free themselves with a Strength/ Exert 6 check as a main action. This effect lasts for 2 rounds. **Dimension Door:** As a main action, the dryad can touch a nearby tree and teleport herself 180 feet in any direction
- Riddles
  - I view the world in little space, Am always changing place; No food I eat, but, by my power, Procure what millions do devour. Answer: the Sun
  - There's not a kingdom on the earth, But I have travelled over and over, And though I know not whence my birth, Yet when I come, you know my roar. I through the town do take my flight, And through the fields and meadows green, And whether it be day or night, I neither am nor can be seen. Answer: the Wind
  - In Spring I look gay, Deckerd in comely array, In Summer more clothing I wear; When colder it grows, I fling off my clothes, And in winter quite naked appear. Answer: a tree
  - Great deeds with little strength I do, I close the open, open the closed for you. I keep the master's house, the master keeps me, too. Answer: a key

- Though it be cold, I wear no clothes, The frost and snow I never fear; I value neither shoes nor hose,  
And yet I wander far and near; My diet is forever good, I drink no cider, port, nor sack, What  
Providence doth send for food, I neither buy, nor sell, nor lack. Answer: a fish

## K. Bear den

In the rocky foothills is a large cave that the locals of Crom warn the party away from. 2 brown bears have taken up residence in this cave for hibernation. Unless disturbed from their slumber, they won't engage the party. The half-eaten remains of 3 Crow Brother Warriors lie near the entrance to the cave.

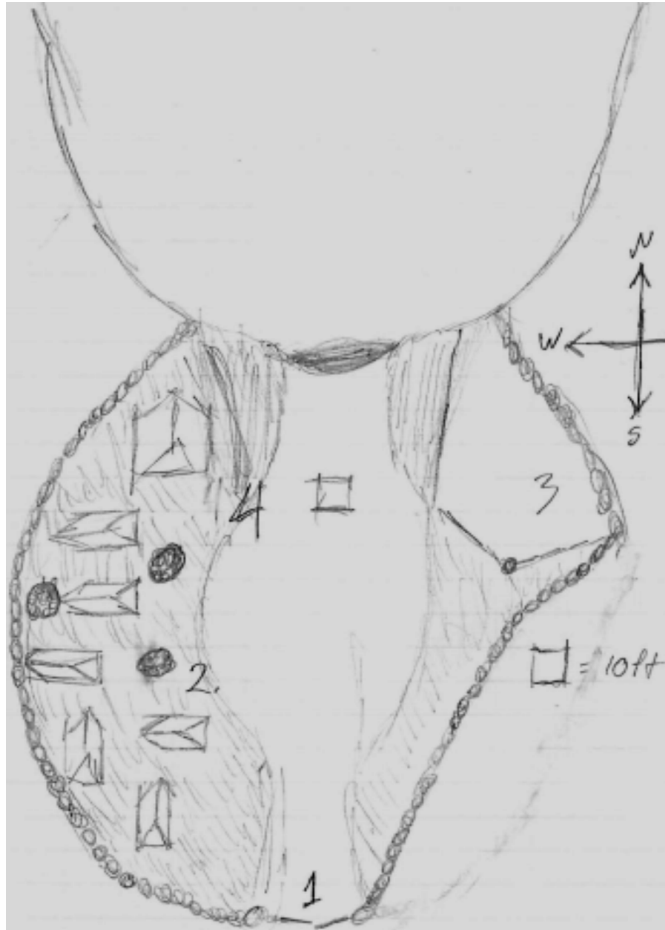
- (2) Brown bears- **AC:** 14 **Hit Dice:** 5+5 (33 HP) **Attack:** +6x3 (2 claws, 1 bite) **Damage:** 1d6 claw, 1d8 bite, all shock 1/AC 13 **Move** 40' **Save:** 13+ **Morale:** 9 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6. **Hug:** If a brown bear scores a paw hit with a roll of 18 or better it will also hug for 2d6 points of damage. A bear continues fighting for 1d4 rounds after reaching 0 hit points or fewer. If it reaches 9 hit points over maximum it is killed outright

## L. Crow Brother Camp

This space of forest has been moderately fortified with a crude wooden wall encircling the immediate area in front of a barrow mound. Several fire pits dot the inside next to a few tents, but only 2 are lit. cursory viewing reveals space for roughly 50-60 warriors, but the amount of warriors' changes though out the day. Every 4 hours, roll 2d6+6 and subtract it from 32 to determine the number of warriors in the camp, as war bands leave for patrol, to hunt, or harass villages throughout the day, with any already killed by the party permanently subtracted from the total. If 10 warriors have been killed, reduce the roll to 1d6+3, and if 20 have been slain, then do not roll, as all the remaining warriors wait on guard. If both if the Named Men remain alive, one will be here while the other will assist Conal in the catacombs, while if slain, one will remain here as leader of the camp.

**Order of Battle:** The Crow Brothers fight with fearless abandon but are not organized, coming at the party piecemeal rather than all together. If fighting breaks out in one area, new warriors will arrive from the surrounding area each round. For the sake of play, treat each area as a separate zone, with the warriors entering a new zone each round until they have joined combat. If the party flees, the Crow Brother Warriors will pursue them with single minded fury unless they can somehow lose them. Should their morale break, individual warriors flee towards the catacombs to join their fellows, where more warriors wait in reserve.

**Infiltration:** The walls are sturdy but not particularly well hewn, and PC's may try and scale the walls or even the barrow mound with a Strength or Dexterity/ exert 9 check but run the risk of being seen, requiring a dexterity/ sneak roll opposed by one of the Crow Brothers. Finding a wider spot in the walls and squeezing through requires a dexterity/ sneak 12 check, but forgoes the need for an opposed roll, but the only spot wide enough is near the tents, while climbing allows the players to start where ever. While players can potentially lure out a raiding party of 1d6+3 Crow Brothers of those within, one that party has been slain the rest will band together to wait, not exposing themselves unnecessarily. If the party does not press, the wild men will start dragging out what prisoners they have and make a show of torturing and sacrificing them until the party shows themselves or they run out of prisoners.



Crow Brother warriors- **AC:** 15 armored **Hit Dice:** 2 (10 HP) **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d6+1 shock  
 3/AC 13 30/60 short spear or 1d6+1 shock  
 2/AC 15 10/30 hand axe **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+  
**Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 (+3 sneak while at night)  
**Instinct:** 4. Due to being painted with the black Woad, the wild men can see in darkness up to 60 feet.

I. Entrance: more an opening in the makeshift barbican than an actual entrance, at least **4 Crow Brother warriors'** guard this area at all times, sitting in lean-to's behind the barricade. Once every 1d4 hours at patrol of 4 more will walk the perimeter of the barbican to check for trouble. Each of the warriors on guard carries a horn that at least one of them will sound upon spotting an enemy. The warriors know all of their fellows within the camp, having fought beside each other for years, but are not quite paying attention if they recognize the person, willing to let them pass without more than a cursory greeting. During the morning hours (0600-1200) there is a 1 in 4 chance that 2 of them are sleeping off a hang over, and lose their action on the first round of combat.

2. Tents: any remaining warriors not assigned to other areas are in this area doing menial tasks, eating, or sleeping. The Wild men always keep their weapons and armor close at hand, though at least a quarter of them are asleep or drunk at any one time, losing their action on the first round of combat. Several barrels of mead and hanging cuts of meat lay near the center of the tents, set up for those off duty warriors to partake in. If poisoned, it will affect 1d8 Crow Brothers in the whole camp before they notice, setting them all on high alert. If the tents are scoured of goods later, there is 100 silver worth of rations and equipment along with 300 silver pieces in loose coin and bone ornaments, but taking 4 hours to search.
3. Makeshift prison camp: 1 man, 3 women, and a child sit huddled around a meager fire beneath a ragged shelter. All are beaten and starved (1 Hit Point), staring with fearful gazes towards the **2 warriors** that stand guard outside of the makeshift corral they sit in. Future sacrifices to unleash the demon below, they have seen their fellows slain before their eyes. During the evening hours (1800-2400), one of the warriors will stumble over and wave the guards off, determined to have his fun with one of the prisoners. When the guards leave, the warrior will take a -2 to notice rolls to detect someone sneaking up on him. If the prisoners can be successfully rescued, Snorri Sturrlson is so grateful he will give the party one of his hidden gold bars for each prisoner rescued. If the party tries to sneak them out, the prisoners have a skill bonus of -1 due to their weakened state and 2 remaining system strain.
4. Altar: a large roughhewn stone altar stained with blood that sits 20 feet in front of the entrance to the barrow mound. Functioning as a makeshift parade ground and command post, a larger tent squats nearby where one of the **Named Men**, either Black Geri or Freki Spear-Brother, waits, accompanied by **2 more warriors**. Restless, the **Named Men** pace the parade grounds, shouting instructions to nearby warriors or periodically stopping to tear into a haunch of raw venison. When the party enters the area, the werewolves'

sense of smell will alert them to intruders even if they cannot see them. Inside the tent is the war chest of Conal Red Hand, containing 247 silver pieces, 9 gold, 3 bottles of fine spirits worth 50 silver pieces each, 2 broken knives with handles of fine ivory, one carved with the name “Angus” and the other with “Rowan,” each worth 15 silver, a small woven tapestry depicting a warrior and 2 younger men worth 150 silver but weighing 2 encumbrance, a bone comb carved with a flower design worth 10 silver, and a set of stone tablets carved with runes. A mage studying the tablets can make an intelligence/ magic check II check to learn the spell *Raise Corpse* and *Query the Skull (Speak with Dead)*, and the tablets are valuable, worth 500 silver pieces to a collector of ancient lore but weighing 3 encumbrance.

- Named Men, Black Geri or Freki Spear-Brother- **AC:** 17 Mail Hauberk or 15 (wolf form) **Hit Dice:** 4+3 (21 HP) **Attack:** +5 (weapon in human form; bite in wolf form) **Damage:** 1d10+3 shock 5/AC 18 Great Hammer (Black Geri) or 1d10+3 shock 5/ AC15 Great Spear (Freki Spear Brother); and 2d6 shock 3/- bite **Move** 30' or 60' in wolf form **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4. Can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons. Can change between human and wolf form as a main action

### Catacombs

The massive barrow mound near the Crow Brother camp, this opening connects to ancient elven catacombs where the demon Cernunnos was imprisoned. Using the secrets of the dead, Conal is in the process of freeing the demon while more of his men stand guard or explore more of the hidden secrets

- I. Entrance- main burial chamber of the barrow mound. Rough dirt floor dotted with the ruins of 5 stone cairns. The tops of the stone cairns have been cast aside exposing the ancient corpses within. Walls of rough bricked stone tapering to a dome make up the rest of the mound, decorated in prayers to the Gods of Blood and Iron in faded paint. Passages to the left and right stand open, while the north exit lies shrouded in absolute darkness. This darkness is impenetrable, as no light or dark vision is able to penetrate it. Those who try and walk into the darkness find themselves walking for hours, unable to progress. Retracing their steps will lead them out of the darkness in just a few paces. To penetrate the darkness, the party must use one of the following methods
  - Expend 5 charges from the *Gem of Brightness*, which will banish the darkness for up to 24 hours
  - Use the ritual words learned from the ancient king in the eastern barrow mounds to banish the darkness for 1 hour
  - If a party member has a question to ask from Mimir’s Spring, they may ask it to immediately learn the ritual words
  - Using the tablets from Conal’s private stash and the spell *Query the Dead* to interrogate the dead in this room, though using the spell in this manner causes 4 permanent system strain and deals 4d6 damage with a mental save for half, as the profane ritual drains out part of the mage’s soul
2. Side burial chamber- a smaller side burial chamber of similar rough construction, the walls here are covered in shelves wherein sits hundreds of skulls, each carved with a name rune. Rotted bones litter the floor, with nothing else of value here
3. Deep shaft- a rough earthen passage that seems more natural than anything man made, this room is a small shelf that sits above a deep shaft that drops steeply into the earth. 100 hundred feet below the shaft levels out into a passage that leads to area 6. However, the walls are slick with moisture with few hand holds, requiring a strength/ exert II check. Failure by 4 or more means the climber falls 100 feet, while a normal failure is a fall of 50 feet. However, that is not the worst as the corridor below has filled with a poisonous gas. Anyone in the in the bottom of the shaft takes 1d6 damage and 1 system strain each round they remain in the area. The gas extends throughout passage to area 6 and 20 feet up into the shaft. At the end of the passage is a bricked up wall that can be smashed through with a strength/ exert 8 check. The gas does not follow into area 6

4. Guard Post- the passage way from area 1 gradually turns from a downward slope into worked stone stairs leading into a room of worked stone and concrete. Ornate statues of elvish warriors sit in alcoves on the walls but for one that lies partially destroyed on the floor near the remains of a wrought iron gate on the eastern exit that appears to lead down into another area. Scorch marks line a 10 foot area in front of the right door and the destroyed statue. The north gate lies untouched and locked. Tearing the gate off the hinges requires a strength/ exert 13 or an intelligence or dexterity/ sneak 10 check to pick the ancient lock. Doing so sets off a magical trap as runes around the doorway flare and send a gout of flame that scours a 10 foot by 10 foot area, dealing 5d6 damage with an evasion save for half. This effect is treated as cast by a 5<sup>th</sup> level caster with a +2 on the skill check
5. Monument to a deity- stairs in leading into this room give way to a tile floor in an ornate mandala pattern. A large statue sits in the front of the with 4 figures sitting in the cross legged sitting back to back facing in the 4 directions, while the walls are likewise scrawled with intricate designs depicting the 4 season. The statue is a depiction of the kings and queens of Faerie, which are Mother Raven, Queen Titania, the Horned King, and the Green Man. There appears to be no exit in this room at first, but seams can be found on the north wall if the party takes a full exploration turn to look. The passage is stuck fast but can be opened by rotating the statue to face the correct way. Mother Raven, who is currently facing south towards the wall depicting summer, must be rotated to face north to the wall depicting winter. Hiding here are **10 Crow Brother Warriors** waiting to ambush the party if they come through the south door. If they come through the western door, roll opposed wisdom/ notice checks, and if coming through the secret door from area 6, they are automatically surprised.
  - 10 Crow Brother Warriors-**AC:** 15 armored **Hit Dice:** 2 (10 HP) **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d6+1 shock 3/AC 13 30/60 short spear or 1d6+1 shock 2/AC 15 10/30 hand axe **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 (+3 sneak while at night) **Instinct:** 4. Due to being painted with the black Woad, the wildmen can see in darkness up to 60 feet.
  - Kings and Queens of Faerie
    - Titania, the Lady of Summer and Shaper of Flesh
    - Mother Raven, Queen of Air and Darkness, The Winter Lady
    - The Horned King, the Stag Prince, Lord of Beasts and Revels
    - Oberon, the Lord of the Harvest, the Green Man
6. Hidden sanctum- a stone room with a small granite statue of a hooded crone overlooking a pool of frozen water at the center that radiates unnatural cold, the walls have stylized depictions of ravens and wolves. Several pine boughs are hung on the walls with shanks of smoked meat and jars hanging from them. All of the jars are ancient, perhaps thousands of years old but perfectly preserved, and eating from them or the smoked meat will heal a PC for 1d6 hit pints and 1 system strain. If the party slides the statue out of the way there is a small cache of 4 bottles of strong herbal liqueur worth 500 silver pieces each to a collector due to their great age, or 100 silver pieces on the open market, along with a cloak of deep blue silk inlaid with silver filigree set with small diamonds worth 800 silver pieces. However, anyone who takes these items earns the enmity of Mother Raven. Until the next winter solstice, any system strain gained from cold or harsh weather is doubled, and their supplies spoil after 1 day. A PC can end this effect early by making an offering of knowledge or other secrets worth character's level x 500 silver pieces by leaving it exposed to the winter in the dead of night, where it then disappears. Another narrow corridor leads to a secret exit towards area 5.
7. Ossuary- unlike the rough affairs on the upper floors, this ossuary is far more ornate. Rows and rows of clay urns decorated in the flowing script of the fae tongue sit on shelves. A few lie smashed on the ground, ashes spilling out from the wreckage. There 147 urns remaining, each 1 encumbrance and worth 5 silver pieces each if carted out
8. Ornate corridor- beautiful brick and tiled hallway made to look like a forest scene. Decorations on the southern entrance show images of great elven warriors bearing fabulous arms and armor, while the ceiling shows an image

of those elves doing battle with demons and other monsters towards the north entrance, where it shows elves slaying and imprisoning those same beasts.

9. Fortified vault door- worked stone room where a large steel door sits across the south entrance. A 10 foot tall stone statue of an elf warrior stands guard in front of the door and the pulverized remains of two wild men lie in front of it. The statue is a stone golem that animates and bars the way for any seeking to open the door. Speaking an archaic form of elvish that requires someone who speaks elvish to make an intelligence/ know 9 check to understand, the golem says the treasures within are only for those who do battle with the void. The golem only allows passage to elves, but can be tricked if the party douses themselves in the ashes of dead elves form area 7 and passes a charisma/ sneak or perform 11 check to pass off as elven warriors. If the golem is tricked and a player is able to communicate with the golem, it will turn use the stone sword in its hand to unlock the vault. If slain in combat, there is a 1 in 4 chance the sword is broken and will need to be re-assembled to get into the vault. The golem does not pursue any who flee the vault area
  - Stone Golem- **AC:** 15 **Hit Dice:** 14 (60 HP) **Attack:** +14 **Damage:** 2d8+4 shock 6/ **AC** 18 stone fist **Move** 30' **Save:** 10+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4. Can only be harmed by weapons with a +2 or better. **Spell Immunity:** The stone Golem is immune to all spells except *Calcifying Scourge (Flesh to Stone)* which heals all damage done to it, *Decree of Lithic Dissolution (Destroy Earth and Stone)* which deals damage as normal to a rock based monster, and *The Earth as Clay (Move Earth)* which reduces its movement to 10' per round **Slow:** Every other round as a main action, force one creature within 30 feet to make a mental save or have movement reduced to 10' feet and take a -4 penalty to armor class for 3 rounds
10. Vault- inside the vault is another stone room, albeit unadorned but for the weapons and armor contained within. While many of the items have been rusted due to the great age, a number of treasures remain. A +1 *small bow* designed to resemble sparrow wings occupies a place of honor below a +2 *major energetic (flaming) long sword* emblazoned with a bright red ruby in the pommel. 2 suits of plate armor, a cuirass and greaves, and a mail shirt are still serviceable, along 5 large shields, 4 small shields, and any other weapon the PC's might want besides hurlants or crossbows
11. Prison Entrance- several cells set with iron bars line the room while a pale light dimly illuminates this room. Inside each cell is a stone totem inscribed with an elven word for different negative emotions. The western wooden door has been hacked apart and lies in a heap on the floor. The eastern door is locked, requiring a dexterity or intelligence/ sneak 11 check to unlock or an hour spent hacking it down
12. Prison cells- more cells line the walls of this 2 story room, separated into upper and lower tiers. The cells are bare but for a water trough, a small hole in the floor, and long disintegrated remains of a pallet of sorts in each cell. Faded graffiti in an ancient elven tongue lines the walls of the cells with a variety of messages, most of them vulgar. In the center of the room is a raised dais surrounded with low worked stone counters on 3 sides. On top of the counters is a row of levers, each below a different letter of the elven alphabet that corresponds to a letter above each of the cells. Pulling a lever causes the cell door to swing open. A search of this room reveals little but for a green glass pipe underneath the counter on the dais. Decorated with beautiful designs, the inside of the pipe lights whatever is placed inside of it, and is worth 600 silver pieces. Further exploration reveals one of the cells on the upper tier is covered in writing. Anyone with at least magic-0 recognizes this as spellwork, making the entire cell a *Grimoire (spellbook)*, containing spells of *The Wind of the Final Repose (Sleep)*, *Phantasmal Mimesis (Phantasmal Force)*, *Casting Forth the Inner Eye (Clairaudience/ Clairvoyance)*, *The Inexorable Imputation (Suggestion)*, *Vallation of Specified Exclusion (Magic Circle vs Evil/ Good)*, *The Howl of Light (Fireball)*, *Obnubilation of the Will (Dominate Monster)*. However, due to the age and madness of the writer, each spell requires a roll on the spell flaws table on page 89 of *Worlds Without Number*. In addition, opening the cell to study the grimoire releases **2 Invisible Stalkers** who have been trapped there. The Invisible Stalkers fight until reduced to ¼ hit points before they attempt to flee.



- 2 Invisible Stalkers- **AC:** 17 **Hit Dice:** 8 (36 HP) **Attack:** +8 **Damage:** 2d6 shock 3/ **AC** 15 air buffet **Move** 40' fly **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 11 **Skill:** +1 (+5 sneak) **Instinct:** 5. Permanently Invisible
- I3. Prison cells- very similar to room 12, cells line the upper and lower tiers of this room and are operated by a raised dais in the center of the room. Unlike the previous room, there is a circle near the dais with ancient manacles chained to the floor. Old bloodstains line spatter this circle, but is otherwise unremarkable. There is nothing of value in this room
- I4. Trophy Hall- less a room and more a long hallway, this area is lit by pale radiance emanating from the ceilings. Decorating the walls are 10 fabulous paintings of horrible monsters and demonic figures doing battle with elven warriors. The paintings appear so lifelike that one could almost step in. If a painting is touched, the creature in the painting begins animating and scrambling at the painting like a creature against glass. In front of each of the paintings are large (2 encumbrance) ceremonial urns. If an urn is broken, opened, or the painting damaged, there is a terrible scream as the creature in the painting disappears, only for a terrible monster to be unleashed somewhere in the campaign world. Where and what is up to the GM. If the urn is removed, it is still quite fragile with a 1 in 6 chance of breaking every time the carrier is jostled or physically attacked. As the urns contain the essence of terrible monsters, these could potentially be sold for an exorbitant amount (GM's discretion, but should be extremely expensive), but would only be purchased by the most discerning of buyers.
- I5. Central Prison Sanctum- a large domed room covered in sorcerous bindings and wards. In the center is a raised dais upon which lies a man sized glass egg, where *something* writhes within. Before the dais is an altar, now covered in fresh blood stains and dimly lit by 2 candles. Standing before the altar is the architect of this scenario, Conal Red Hand, War chief of the Crow Brother tribe himself. A tall, lean man, Conal is clad in the ceremonial attire of the Crow Brothers. Ribbons of dark cloth and a cloak of raven feathers make up his regalia, while the skull of a massive raven sits on his brow like a helmet. While he is there to confront them, whatever else is there depends on the party's choices.
- If the party has taken over 10 days to confront Conal Red Hand, the accumulated death and stolen souls will free the demon Cernunnos, allowing it to join Conal in battle, with the powers of the demon animating the 4 Crow Brother warriors as ghouls
  - Should the party have not slain both of the Named Men, Geri or Freki, one will be here to fight at the side of their war chief
  - Should the party use the prepared ritual branch from Fjolnir, it will banish the demon from the fight, but will not dispel the effects of the Black Woad or the Named Men's wolf form, leaving Conal Red Hand and **4 Crow Brother Warriors**. The demon will possess the body of Fjolnir who will be looking for the party upon their exit from the catacombs in hopes of slaying any survivors. This uses Fjolnir's stats and he will attempt to ambush the party 1d6 hours after they leave the dungeon
  - If the purified ritual branch is used or the wizard Fjolnir already dead, the demon is banished in a burst of pure light, and any warriors lose all abilities granted by the Black Woad, the Named Men lose their shapeshifting abilities and damage resistance, while Conal loses any magical abilities
  - If the party has managed to make it through in under 10 days, they confront Conal and 4 warriors in the sanctum. Should Conal die during the fight, the egg will remain unbroken but whatever waits within thrashes madly

#### Enemies

- Conal Red Hand- **AC:** 18 (*Raiment of the Crow*) **Hit Dice:** 6 (25 HP) **Attack:** +7 **Damage:** 1d6+5, shock 5/ **AC** 15 dual wielded masterwork short swords **Move** 30' **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 (+4 sneak) **Instinct:** 1. Practiced in the art of sudden murder, Conal Red Hand can make a move action on the same turn he makes an execution attack. Due to the gifts granted to him by his pact with the demon Cernunnos, Conal Red Hand can see perfectly even in magical darkness and heals 6 hit points per round if he ends his turn in darkness. Conal can

only be killed if his body is burned, otherwise he will begin regenerating the next time he is placed in darkness. Besides his masterwork swords, the *Raiment of the Crow* is a *+2 Silent Mail Shirt* that is cursed, causing 1 system strain per combat when it is worn. During battle, Conal uses hit and run tactics, targeting any sources of light first to rely on his dark sight and regenerative abilities before taking out enemies one by one. A true fanatic, he fights to the death

- Cernunnos (Nabassu demon)- **AC:** 16 **Hit Dice:** 7+2 (32 HP) **Attack:** +8x3 (2 claws, 1 bite) **Damage:** 1d8 claw, 1d10+2 shock 3/AC 15 bite **Move** 30' or 45' flight **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +2 (+4 Sneak) **Instinct:** 2 **Special Abilities:** **Death Gaze:** any enemy that makes eye contact with Cernunnos with 30 feet must make mental save or take 1 system strain, and cannot regain system strain until Cernunnos has been slain or the curse has been removed by magic. Any creature that reaches maximum system strain dies and rises as a ghoul 1d4 rounds later. This affects 2 enemies per day. **Darkness:** as a main action, Cernunnos can manifest a sphere of magical darkness in a 15' radius that impenetrable even to dark vision. This is automatically dispelled by a source of magical light, and dispels a source of magical light when it first comes into contact with it. Cernunnos can only be harmed by magic or weapons forged of cold iron
- Named Men, Black Geri or Freki Spear-Brother- **AC:** 17 Mail Hauberk or 15 (wolf form) **Hit Dice:** 4+3 (21 HP) **Attack:** +5 (weapon in human form; bite in wolf form) **Damage:** 1d10+3 shock 5/AC 18 Great Hammer (Black Geri), 1d10+3 shock 5/AC 15 Great Spear (Freki Spear Brother) and 2d6 shock 4/- bite **Move** 30' or 60' in wolf form **Save:** 12+ **Morale:** 12 **Skill:** +2 **Instinct:** 4. Can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons. Can change between human and wolf form as a main action
- Crow Brother Warriors-**AC:** 15 (pieced armor) **Hit Dice:** 2 (10 HP) **Attack:** +3 **Damage:** 1d8+1 shock 3/AC 13 long sword or 1d6+1 shock 2/AC 15 10/30 hand axe **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 (+3 sneak while at night) **Instinct:** 4. Due to being painted with the black Wood, the Crow Brothers can see in darkness up to 60 feet.
- Ghoul- **AC:** 14 **Hit Dice:** 2 (13 HP) **Attack:** +2x2 **Damage:** 1d4 claw, 1d6 shock 1/AC 13 bite **Move** 30' **Save:** 14+ **Morale:** 10 **Skill:** +1 **Instinct:** 6 **Special Ability:** on hit with claw, physical save or paralyze target for 1d4+1 rounds. Undead Immunities

## Epilogue

Depending on how the party prepares for the final showdown with Cernunnos and Conal Red Hand, they may either banish the demon or set it free. If Conal is killed before the demon is banished, then the party will need to figure what to do about the demon's binding. Without the help of the Crow Brothers, the monster is stymied but not defeated. Reaching out, it is only a matter of time before more warriors, eager to do the monster's bidding arrive. It is also entirely possible that Cernunnos will flee if he can see the chance, potentially becoming a recurring villain as the beast of the void looks for a new army to wage war on creation if Conal and his tribe fail the demon. In addition to whatever rewards in silver that they have found, the party's deeds will certainly echo through the land. For helping the village of Crom, they will gain 1 point of renown, as well as another point for slaying Conal Red Hand. Should they face and merely survive fighting the demon, they will gain 1 point of renown, but if they permanently return the monster to the void, they gain 2 points of renown instead.

Regardless of if the party has taken this mission on for Lord Hrolf Grimmir, he will likely be so impressed with their deeds that if the party wishes to put down roots, they may be placed in charge of the village as vassals of Lord Grimmir and given free rein to grow their new domain. A fortunate thing for this land to have new protectors, as other things lie in the vast forests of the north, and Cernunnos was not the only thing to lie buried in hidden deeps.

Of course, should the worst come to pass and the demon survives, this will assuredly not be the last they see of the void-born monster. Cernunnos gains power from bloodshed and misery, growing stronger with each mortal life consumed. If free to rampage as it pleases, the demon gains an additional hit dice for every 3 mortals it consumes and

its AC increases after every 2. An increase in Hit Dice gives it a +1 for each additional hit dice, while saves are 16 minus half of current hit dice, rounded down. This increases until Cuernunnos has reached a maximum of 13 Hit Dice and 25 AC. Once the demon has regained his power, it has the following abilities:

- **Death Gaze**- Cernunnos can use this ability 3 more times per day per additional hit dice
- **Energy Drain**- as a main action once per day, one target in melee range takes a permanent -2 to attack rolls, saving throws, a -1 to all skill checks, 1d4 system strain, and their maximum hit points are reduced by 2d6. If this affect where to maximize their system strain or take maximum hit point below 0, the target dies and is reanimated as a Ghoul on their next turn. This effect is permanent until dispelled
- **Regenerate**- as an on turn action, regenerate up to 20 hit points per day
- **Silence**- as a main action once per day, Cernunnos designates a 15 foot radius area within 100 feet. Within the affected area, all sound is completely stopped and spellcasting that uses verbal components is impossible
- **Vampiric Touch**- once per day as a main action, Cernunnos makes a melee attack that if successful, deals 3d6 damage. Any damage inflicted by this attack heals Cernunnos for a similar amount, with any excess added as temporary hit points that last for the scene. This cannot heal for more hit points than the target has
- **Paralyzing Aura**- any creature starting their turn within 10 feet of Cernunnos must make a physical save or be paralyzed for 1d10 rounds

Of course, it is entirely possible that the demon is bound to the body of the hermit Fjolnir, and rather than immediately take vengeance, will wait and plan. Now stuck in the body of a mortal, albeit a powerful wizard, the demon will try and summon more of its kind, eventually attacking the village to use the bloodshed in a terrible ritual to open a gate way to the unending void to establish a foot hold in creation, requiring the call for more heroes to again put down this terrible menace

**A note on entries:** as this piece is for a contest, there has been a note on spells, items, and monsters for their equivalents in previous versions of *Dungeons and Dragons* and other OSR equivalents

**Gem of Brightness:** this crystal appears to be nothing more than a gem in a rather long, prised shape that can be used to emit light in a variety of ways. As an on turn action, the holder can cause the gem to emit a 10 foot light from the gem with a radius of 2.5 feet at the end. As a main action, the holder can expend one charge from the gem and cause a creature within 50 feet to make an evasion save or be blinded for one round. Thirdly, as a main action the holder can expend 5 charges to cause all creatures in a 30 foot cone to be blinded for 1d4 rounds and take a further penalty to attack rolls for the amount of rounds rolled for the rest of the scene if they fail an evasion saving throw. Charges cannot be regained, and when all are drained it becomes a normal gem. If in an area of magical darkness, the holder can expend 5 charges to negate the darkness for the scene.

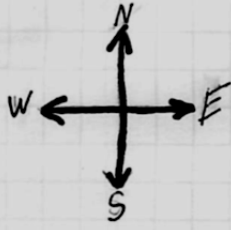
**Suggested Media:** here is a list of suggested media that can be used to evoke the atmosphere this adventure is intended for.

Music: Heilung, Wardruna

Video Games: Tainted Grail: Conquest, Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice, the newest God of War

Movies/ Television: The Northman, Vinland Saga, Prose and Poetic Edda, the Völsung Cycle

# Dungeon Map



□ = 10 feet

D = Locked Door  
S = Secret Door

