

Ironsworn_story_002

Following on from the start of Valgrym's quest to find Gwenneth, I decided that I shouldn't really have granted him a new Asset "Ritual" last time and that I had not provided much background about Gwenneth and her mother, Radka (the Witch).

I'm going to keep the Ritual Asset, but up the narrative consequences of failures to try and balance things out.

I've got quite a few possible story-threads in mind already for Radka's origin and potential plot twists to come. But want to try and "Play to find out" rather than just write a novel in note form.

... Flashback about a year...

Valgrym's father had died a few months back and he spent a lot of time alone, fishing on the river bank, his horse tethered on a long rope, grazing quietly. On this occasion the hot summer sun had made him drowsy and he'd fallen asleep, hidden in reeds. He woke to see a young girl enter the water from the far bank. She hadn't spotted him, and he was going to call out, when she began to peel off her ragged cloak, revealing a slender body. She ducked under the water and her tightly-bound hair came loose.

It couldn't be scrawny Gwenneth, the herbal woman's daughter? Could it? Gods! She was beautiful.

Radka, the herbal woman was feared and pitied in equal measure by most of the villagers. According to the elders, she had once been very beautiful, until raiders came and killed her new husband only a week after they were wed. They burned his farm and were about to drag her away when she ran back into the blazing house.

That morning, she crawled from the wreckage, face, and half her body, cruelly burned, what was left of her long black hair, all gone white.

No man wanted her then, but the Abbot's herbalist looked after her until she could make her own way. Nine months later she bore a daughter, Gwenneth and the villagers helped her build a shack where the farm house had once stood. For the next 17 years she raised her daughter – a scrawny, filthy creature, always scared and alone. Radka grew more cantankerous with each passing year. If she had not got some gift with herbs and healing, they might have chased her out of the village.

But Valgrym could now see that the scrawny girl had blossomed – she hid it – wearing a shapeless cloak and hood most of the time and she was never allowed to mix with the others. But seeing her now – Valgrym thought she was the most beautiful woman in the world. When she came back out, she bound up her hair again and threw on the dirty cloak, dropped into her stooped and limping posture, and ran back to her mother's house.

Over the next few months Valgrym began to bump into her from time to time, awkwardly striking up a conversation and their friendship grew. For Valgrym, lust turned quickly into love and he wooed her with song and poetry until she came to love him too. Radka was very strict and hated Valgrym's father particularly, as the raiders who caused her downfall had been Viking.

When the lad plucked up the courage to ask for Gwenneth's hand in marriage, she flew into a rage and kept the girl around the house for weeks. They would have to wait, in a few months Gwenneth would be 18 and the local laws said she could choose for herself whether to marry.

But now, Gwwenneth was gone, her mother apparently a Witch had dragged her off into the wilds and magicked-up a Drake to try and stop Valgrym from tracking them...

.... Back to the "present"

THE STORY

The defeated Drake had told him to go West, so he rode eagerly towards the setting sun.

A few days ride southwest along the main road would lead him to Gloucester and then the Forest of Dean, but he followed an older path due West, through desolate forest, silent and foreboding.

An arrow thudded into a branch as he ducked below it. Either a good shot... or lucky he had ducked!

A stocky-looking man stepped out to the side of the path a few yards in front of the horse, a long knife bouncing at his hip as nocked another arrow and growled "Hold! Nice horse! **We'll** get something good for that".

As Valgrym span the horse around, 3 more stepped to block his way, armed with clubs and daggers.

Valgrym is dragged from his horse which panics and trots a dozen yards further along the track.

Swirling his spear, Valgrym scrambles to his feet, slashing one across the leg.

Unfortunately, this seems to make them angry and what might have been just a beating and a robbery looks to be escalating.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Oracle 4 – Location 78 "Forest"

Oracle 6 – Location Descriptor 97 "Desolate"

Oracle 1 – Action 29 "Hold"

Oracle 2 – Theme 67 "War"

I took this to mean a combat encounter, maybe bandits shouting "Hold"?

Oracle 10 - Character Role 46 "Adventurer"

I said I'd make myself pay for the easy Asset, so any losses I make will be severe. I choose to make this encounter Dangerous, but make it a pack of 4 brigands (treating them like "Broken") so increase their rank to Formidable.

MOVE:Enter the Fray

Action Dice 1 +2 Wits = 3

Challenge Dice 10 & 7, so MISS

Pay the Price – foe has initiative

Rolled 12 "You are separated from something"

MOVE:Clash at close quarters

Action Dice 1 +3 Iron = 4

Challenge Dice 5 & 2, so WEAK HIT

Do 2 harm to the brigands

Pay the Price – foe has initiative

Rolled 19 – "Action has unintended effect"

Ask the Oracle, "makes them angry" (likely)

"reveals something about them" D100 = 49

THE STORY

Clubs batter aside the lad's spear and a dagger sinks into his leg causing him to scream.

They are so confident of victory, the leader doesn't even join in, just wanders off to collect the horse as the others jeer and close in for the kill. A fifth man runs out of the forest as Valgrym calls for help – but this is a desolate place and no help is coming.

“Look here!” the leader holds open the saddle bags, showing the food and ale flasks within. “He's brought us supper. Show him your gratitude boys!”

Faced with overwhelming numbers, Valgrym is forced to grovel and beg for mercy, between sobs as the blows fall.

THE GAME MECHANICS

MOVE:Clash at close quarters

Action Dice 1 +3 Iron = 4

Challenge Dice 9 & 9, so MISS ***SPECIAL***

Pay the Price – foe has initiative

For the ***SPECIAL*** I went with two rolls on the Pay the Price table. 66 – It is Harmful

MOVE:Endure Harm

Action Dice 5 +3 Iron = 8

Challenge Dice 8 & 8, so MISS ***SPECIAL***

Suffer 3 harm, lose 1 momentum (down to 3)

Pay the Price table.41 – Current situation worsens!

I decided another brigand arrives (removing the harm I've already done to this pack!).

Losing my Horse Asset would seem to pay off my gaining of the Ritual Asset!

Don't think this is “legal” when I don't have initiative, but I'll try the Face Danger move, using my spear to hold off the foes (Skirmisher Asset).

MOVE:Face Danger

Action Dice 4 +3 Iron +1 Skirmisher = 7

Challenge Dice 9 & 6, so WEAK HIT

Does 2 harm to the Pack, but with a troublesome cost – I choose loss of resources -1 supply

MOVE:Clash at close quarters

Action Dice 2 +3 Iron = 5

Challenge Dice 1 & 7, so WEAK HIT

Does 2 harm to the Pack (now 4 harm) – foe has initiative

Pay the Price 91 “It forces you to act against your best intentions”.

I'll go for an Ask the Oracle on this. Letting him die would seem too much of a let-down, this early on. So, the **likely** option is to be beaten unconscious and left with nothing, losing all momentum, all supply and losing 2 spirit. The Unlikely option of being captured and held for either ransom or to be sold as a slave.

THE STORY

As the darkness overwhelms our young hero, we'll leave it until next time to find out what happens happens.



THE GAME MECHANICS

That session certainly hasn't gone as I expected, so more "Play to find out" than "telling a story".

It was a bad run of dice, considering he has +3 Iron, he got almost no good results and then a couple of "matches" on misses.