

Ironsworn_Story_006

Intro Notes & Previously...

I'm going to assume Valgrym set out in search of Gwenneth on the 1st of May in the Year of Our Lord 999 and that he spent 4 cruel months shackled and cutting peat for the slavers. Add on a month for his travels and time in Gloucester and for his return, it is now the end of August.

The lad has fulfilled the first of two Quests for The Peatbog Faerie. He has recovered Peatbog's "Sword of Kings" by stealing it from St Oswald's Priory in Gloucester. The little man is very pleased as he got it back in time for an up-coming Fae Festival.

He's forged a bond of friendship with Peatbog, and with Yan's family in Gloucester. I have decided to start a list of "People Encountered" that I could roll randomly on, if an oracle or other event suggests a person from his past – perhaps ...

1. the **Brigands** who beat him and sold him into slavery, likely to still have Snowfoot, his Horse (companion asset)
2. **Prior Godmund** (as an Enemy if he realises that Valgrym stole the dagger and smashed the reliquary lid – but more likely not)
3. **Brother Beornfred** (as an Enemy if he realises he was duped, but more likely he's happy in his new role as a travelling evangelist)
4. Valgrym's mother **Mona**
5. **Radka the Witch** (most likely unrecognisable due to having been granted the secret of the Potion of Youth – but she will know Valgrym and wish him harm)
6. Someone from his home village or from Evesham Abbey
7. **Elstan or Mathilda Yans-son** of Gloucester
8. The Faerie **Peatbog**
9. One of the other **freed slaves**
10. One of the **Slavers** who got away

Here is my proposed Asset for the Faerie Ward ritual.

I've made it quite dangerous to cast unless you have high spirit.

RITUAL	
FAERIE WARD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● When you sprinkle iron dust around you and envision a shield. Roll Faerie Ward +spirit or +heart	
On a strong hit , the Ward reduces the threat level of any Faerie Creature or Spell effect that crosses it and does 1 harm. +1 momentum.	
On a weak hit , reduce the threat level of a spell, but not a creature. Does 1 harm.	
On a miss , the Ward fizzles out - roll on Oracle 17: Mystic Backlash	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As above and improve the effect of your Faerie Ward (+2 momentum, 2 harm and the creature cannot leave).○ When you perform this ritual, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.	

RITUAL	
HOLY WARD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● When you sprinkle holy water around you and envision a shield. Roll Holy Ward +spirit or +heart (cost 1 supply)	
On a strong hit , the Ward reduces the threat level of any Faerie Creature, Devil or Spell effect that crosses it and does 1 harm. +1 momentum.	
On a weak hit , reduce the threat level of a spell, but not a creature. Does 1 harm.	
On a miss , the Ward fizzles out - roll on Oracle 17: Mystic Backlash but rolls of 1-50 are only -1 Spirit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As above and improve the effect of your Holy Ward (+2 momentum, 2 harm and the creature cannot leave).○ When you perform this ritual, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.	

I've also created a Holy version of the Ward too, as Christianity is supposed to be even worse for Faerie Creatures and spells than Iron. I've made the Holy version cost 1 Supply, as it uses Holy Water, while I figure the Iron dust can be swept up and re-used.

There is place nearby called Symond's Yat, a huge block of grey stone still standing on a steep-sided wooded valley overlooking the River Wye.

"Yat" may have originally meant "Gate" so I thought it could be the Gate to Faerie-land. I've decided that the Elf Earl's castle is in Wales, but you must pass through a gate into Faerieland in order to be in the Fae version of Wales, out-of-phase with the world of men.

Although "Symond" was meant to be a much more recent person, I'll let it be called Symon's Gate

As there was a rumour that giant's bones had been discovered in the nearby King Arthur's Cave, I decided the Gate Guardian would be a Giant! Rather than a combat encounter (although it may turn out that way), I'll let Valgrym get in with his wits, if he can give the right answer to the giant's question "what do you seek?".

Peatbog will give him a clue in the form of a riddle/rhyme...

THE STORY

Peatbog is delighted and Valgrym's second quest will be one with no time limit, so he is free to search for Gwenneth, and fulfil the vow when the opportunity presents itself.

"For your second Quest, I'll ask you something that should be no trouble at all" with a sly grin. "You are intending to rescue your true love from the Elf-Earl, so this quest can follow-on from that adventure. Bring her here to meet me, stay a week or more, that I may speak with her and find out why the Earl took her."

Valgrym thanked him for allowing the search for Gwenneth to continue immediately, but had no idea where to go next.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Peatbog's second quest is **likely** to be a very quick one, or one with no time-limit, to allow him to get on with his search for Gwenneth

Ask the Oracle: D100 = 12, so the less likely option – No time limit

To get an idea for the 2nd Quest, I rolled on the Settlement Trouble D100=81 "Trade route Blocked" but didn't get inspired, so tried reversing the digits for 18 "Revolt against a leader"

I took this to mean that Peatbog doesn't like the Elf-Earl Imric (although Peatbog is King of his own small realm, he is a vassal of the Elf-Earl, who is in turn a vassal of the King of the Elves) and wants to get rid of him somehow. The Earl clearly wanted the girl, Gwenneth for some reason, so Peatbog wants to help get her away from there.

MOVE:Swear an iron Vow
Action Dice 6 +2 Heart +1 bond = 9
Challenge Dice 5 & 9, so WEAK HIT

More questions... +1 Momentum but no clear path.

THE STORY

Peatbog gives him a clue as to how to find the castle of the Earl of Britain's Elves. "It is in faerie-land, not in the world of men, I dare not help you more than this, but a song I once heard may point your way" ...

**On Simon's Hill where gate stands gaunt
On steep vale side where falcons fly
When gate guard looms, a bellow booms
Not Who or Where, but Whence comes Why**

It means nothing to Valgrym, though he wracks his brains and considers giving-up. How can he, a mere mortal, and a proven coward (in his own eyes), hope to steal his girlfriend back from a powerful Elf-Earl from another world!

He pleads with Peatbog to help, but to no avail. After a day moping, despite the attack of despair, he decides to press on. The Drake had told him to travel West, so West it would be.

He sets out from the Malvern Hills on the 1st of September. [*today's date as I write this and sunny, warm, clear skies*].

Valgrym has left his cart behind in Gloucester and has been riding the cart-pony, Bedric. After two days trudging mainly south-west over the hills, mostly walking and leading the reluctant Bedric, he climbs to a hill with a good view back east to the River Severn. He spies chimney smoke rising from a tiny hamlet called Ruardean, just a few poor huts, and decides to ask if anyone has heard of a Gate or Yat nearby.

THE GAME MECHANICS

I guess Gather information is the right sort of Move to work out riddles.

MOVE:Gather Information

Action Dice 1 +2 Wits = 3

Challenge Dice 4 & 8, so MISS

Un-earth's a dire threat or reveals an unwelcome truth. Pay the Price D100=69, it is stressful.

MOVE:Endure Stress

Lose 1 Spirit before rolling

Action Dice 1 +3 Spirit = 4

Challenge Dice 3 & 10, so WEAK HIT

Press on.

I'm going to give V a chance for a week's Sojourn before starting out, to attempt to resupply. I'll use the result to indicate whether the 2nd Quest is Troublesome or Dangerous

MOVE:Sojourn

Action Dice 6 +2 Heart +1 for bond = 9

Challenge Dice 6 & 5, so STRONG HIT

Choose 3 benefits +2 Supply (now +3), +2 spirit (now +5) +2 Momentum (now +8)

The journey to the Faerie Gate is through Mortal Lands and should only be Troublesome.

MOVE:Undertake a Journey

Action Dice 4 +2 Wits +1 for bond = 7

Challenge Dice 7 & 5, so WEAK HIT

Reach a Waypoint, -1 supply (now +2). Mark 3 progress in the troublesome journey.

THE STORY

The first man he speaks to is a shepherd with a dog and maybe a dozen sheep. He turns out to be a Welshman *[this was suggested to me by the Ruardean entry in the Domesday book at*

<http://opendomesday.org/place/SO6117/ruardean/>]

Rhys doesn't speak much English and no Danish, but becomes upset at the mention of Yat and Faerie land, makes the sign against evil, and sets his dog on the stranger.

The dog is so aggressive, Valgrym is forced to skewer it with his spear. Seeing the boy's skill in combat, Rhys backs away but calls for help and three more men, with pitchforks chase Valgrym away.

He is forced to make camp in the hills.

He must not have gone far enough, and the villagers find him during the night.

He manages to ride away from them on Bedric but loses his direction in the night.

It's too cloudy to clearly see the sunrise. He is lost, realises he left some of his supplies in the camp when he fled. But about midday, he reaches a wide river. Either the Severn (if he got turned around) or some river he's not heard of. *[It will actually be the River Wye, near Yatton (another village in the Domesday Book, but this one is a single hovel!)]*

THE GAME MECHANICS

MOVE:Gather Information

Action Dice 4 +2 Wits = 6

Challenge Dice 6 & 9, so MISS

Unearth a dire threat or unwelcome truth!

The dog is only a Troublesome foe. I'll choose to resolve this with Battle rather than Strikes and Clashes. If I get a strong hit, I'll say he can chase the dog off without killing it and try again for info.

MOVE:Battle

Action Dice 3 +3 Iron = 6

Challenge Dice 5 & 9, so WEAK HIT

Victory with a cost.

With a "9", I couldn't even burn my +8 momentum to turn this into a STRONG HIT

MOVE:Make Camp

Action Dice 5 +2 Supply = 7

Challenge Dice 9 & 9, so MISS 😞MATCH!!!

Pay the Price. D100=71 – It is stressful

An obvious reason could be the angry villagers.

MOVE:Endure Stress

Lose 1 Spirit before rolling

Action Dice 6 +4 Spirit = 10

Challenge Dice 2 & 7, so STRONG HIT

Either lose 1 momentum to regain the 1 spirit, or +1 momentum. I choose to keep my Spirits up (now +5), so -1 Momentum (now +7).

MOVE:Undertake a Journey

Action Dice 4 +2 Wits = 6

Challenge Dice 10 & 2, so WEAK HIT

Reach a Waypoint, -1 supply (now +1). Mark 3 progress in the troublesome journey (now 6 of 10).

THE STORY

Spying a single fisherman's hut near the river, he decides to risk asking for directions. The old fisherman introduces himself as Hwaetmann Hwaetmann-son and he has a young son of his own, surprisingly a babe-in-arms, whose name *[you guessed it!]* is Little Hwaetmann. His wife is Aelfgifu, a pretty, young simpleton.

They are friendly enough and tell him this is the River Wye. They even tell him he can get himself and his pony across on a ferry a few miles upstream. However, at the mention of the Gate or Yat, they become wary and warn him not to go there. They clearly know of it and that it is somewhere along the river, but refuse to tell him which side or which direction, claiming it is in "your own best interests, young master".

Valgrym tries to bribe the information out of them with the last of his supplies.

It is really confused superstition, but the fisher-folk swear this is gospel truth. The "Yat" is a crag down-stream 5 miles or so. It is guarded by an evil giant and to survive, you would need to be carrying King Arthur's Shield. Fortunately, that is hidden in "King Arthur's Cave" a few miles further.

Valgrym can stay the night and set out in the morning.

THE GAME MECHANICS

MOVE:Gather Information

Action Dice 2 +2 Wits = 4

Challenge Dice 1 & 9, so WEAK HIT

The information complicates the quest or introduces a new danger.

I'm going to decide that for a bribe, I can get +1 per supply (based on the threat level of the target)

MOVE:Compel

Action Dice 5 +2 Heart +1 Supply = 8

Challenge Dice 3 & 7, so STRONG HIT

They give the info. +1 Momentum. Can make Gather Info with +1.

I'll use that immediate +1 to try and spot some connection to Peatbog's Riddle (Weak hit to spot the word "why" at the end could mean the river's name. Strong hit to also get a bonus +1 towards solving the riddle, when the time comes.)

MOVE:Gather Information

Action Dice 1 +2 Wits +1 circumstance = 4

Challenge Dice 9 & 9, so MISS 😞MATCH!!!

Unearth a dire threat or unwelcome truth! But the Match makes it much worse.

I make up a complication based on wanting an excuse to involve King Arthur's Cave (another local landmark – see *the notes at the end of this session*).

THE STORY

They eat well, fishing has been good.

The fisherman is out early next morning with his net, leaving his pretty young wife with Valgrym.

The lad is handsome and closer to her own age than her gnarled, old husband.

There is something irresistible about the girl, her smiles and coy glances made him uncomfortable and he was about to make his excuses and leave when she kissed him. Heat rose in him and suddenly he was burning with desire.

As she dragged him to the bed and clambered astride him, he spotted their reflection in the polished copper bottom of a hanging saucepan.

With each thrust and moan, he saw the veins in his face and chest pulsing darkly down and the same pulse flowing up into her wild, writhing, abandoned body. She was clearly some sort of Faerie succubus!

The vision of Gwenneth, sweet and innocent, swam before his eyes, and he pushed the writhing woman off and ran her through the heart with his iron spear, pinning her to a wooden beam.

THE GAME MECHANICS

MOVE: Make Camp

Action Dice 6 +2 Heart = 8

Challenge Dice 3 & 3, so STRONG HIT

☺ MATCH!!!

Lots of Choices – I'll take +1 momentum twice (now maxed-out at +10).

The match indicates either a **twist, something interesting** or a **new opportunity**.

I'll use Test Your Bond, to see if his love for Gwenneth is enough to let him resist her charms.

MOVE: Test Your Bond (Gwenneth)

Action Dice 2 +2 Heart = 4

Challenge Dice 9 & 10, so MISS

Pay the Price!

I envision either being discovered by the old man (1-35) or the guilt afterwards being stressful (36-70) or the girl secretly being faerie folk and having enchanted him into it (71-100). D100=78! I'm glad to discover he was enchanted and not just unfaithful!

Let's up the ante! The evil faerie is a succubus and has killed the real Aelfgifu and seduced the young fisherman, each time draining years off his life, aging him. Now she has set her sights on young Valgrym.

I'll go for Face Danger with loyalty to break free.

MOVE: Face Danger

Action Dice 3 +2 Heart = 5

Challenge Dice 3 & 9, so WEAK HIT

Succeed but face a troublesome cost. I'm going to burn my 10 Momentum to turn this into a STRONG HIT and narrate the most satisfying conclusion.

THE STORY

Instantly her body began to change, still the face was recognisable as she screamed, and the baby began to wail in his cot. All the while her chest burned.

The old fisherman rushed through the door, horrified at the sight, but before he could attack the naked Valgrym with his long fish-gutting knife, streamers of blood-red energy began to flow out of the woman's body.

A small part flowed weakly into Valgrym, but it gushed into Hwaetmann and with every pulse, he grew younger until he was little more than Valgrym's age.

Then she died with a terrible groan and the body of poor Aelfgifu slumped as the blood red eyes faded to the glazed white of a long-dead corpse.

Realisation dawned on young Hwaetmann as he fell to his knees cradling his wife's body.

[From Wikipedia - King Arthur's Cave is a limestone cave at the foot of a low cliff at the north-western end of Lord's Wood in The Doward, near Symonds Yat, Herefordshire, about four miles northeast of Monmouth, in the Wye Valley. The cave entrance lies about 285 feet above the River Wye on a hill with a double interconnected entrance and two main chambers.

There is evidence that the cave was occupied by man during the Upper Palaeolithic era, and flint tools and woolly mammoth bones have been unearthed within and around the caves.

A skeleton of a "giant human" was supposedly discovered in the cave around 1700, but was lost when a local surgeon named Mr. Pye took the skeleton to sea on a voyage to Jamaica and his ship sank]

I'm going to take this to mean that the Giant I was thinking of as the guardian of the Gate, lives in the cave, but there is no "King Arthur's Shield" – the Giant has a key for the Gate, but won't open it for anyone who fails to answer that they are "seeking the source of the river"