

Ironsworn_Story_009

Intro Notes & Previously...

Valgrym is 3/10 steps through the Journey to the Elf-Earl's Castle.

He's just left a small part of his own spirit behind in a cave, with Atani. The Faerie Life-drinker – a sort of life-draining succubus. It appears that killing her in the possessed body of the fisherman's wife only drove her back to Faerie (but greatly weakened as a sort of life-hungry spirit). Her followers set a trap for him so that she could regain her power. He escaped at a minor cost with some cryptic information that might help him pass the guardian of a bridge.

His supplies are running very low, so putting all thought of the beautiful Atani out of his mind, Valgrym sets off at dawn to try foraging. His intention is to travel up the steep valley-side and then find a way for his pony and himself across a tributary river. Then he can make his way back down into the valley to continue following the Wye to its source.

THE STORY

When he gets to the forest at the top of the valley, he tethers the pony and starts searching in the bushes for anything useful.

He tethers “Wheezer” hundred yards back, at the edge of the wide fast-flowing river that leads to the waterfall. In the Mortal World this is only a stream but in Fae, the valley was three times as high and the river gushes past in a frothy torrent. He spots a fallen tree, jutting out near the lip of the falls, there are blackberries nearby. When he gets there, there is a wonderful view along the Wye valley but the blackberries are sour and their thorns are razor sharp – reminding him of the runes drawn by Atani’s folk... he starts to daydream about Atani and the feel of her lips on his....

The frightened scream of his pony snaps him out of it. Wheezer is somehow in the river! Being pulled along towards the falls. He has one chance to save the terrified beast. If he can crawl out along the fallen tree and keep his **balance**, he might be able to grab the bridle and **preserve** the pony’s life.

Clinging desperately to the tree, he almost slips and plunges off the dizzying drop. At the last moment, he grabs a handful of reins and mane and manages to drag the shivering beast to the side.

Once it has calmed down, the pony nuzzles him affectionately and no longer seems stubborn and difficult.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Resupply : 4 +2 wits =

6 vs 7 & 6 MISS

Nothing helpful – Pay the Price... D100=83. A surprising development complicates your quest.

Looking for inspiration Oracle 4 Location “Woods”, Oracle 1 Action “Preserve”, Oracle 2 Theme “Balance” !!! Not an easy combination to work into a story.

*In future I’m going to do more envisioning possible outcomes and not **always** roll on the Pay the Price table.*

Face Danger : 5 +1 edge (as it is agility) =

6 vs 8 & 6 MISS

I’ll burn his +9 Momentum to turn this into a **STRONG HIT**. Reset to +2 and gain +1 momentum.

In exchange for this rescue and sacrifice of momentum, I’m going to let him switch his Companion Asset for “Snowfoot” across to “Wheezer”. This will give +1 when he does *Undertake a Journey*

THE STORY

Pony and Rider now seem to move as one. Despite his lack of supplies, he decides to keep moving along the river to find a ford or a bridge. The current is too strong to attempt to swim over.

It takes most of the day and he is forced to eat the last of his food. With the sun hanging low above the trees, he approaches a stone bridge. A bright yellow tent stands at the far side, four shaggy wolves begin howling when they spot him, one of them as big as his pony!

A man emerges from the tent, dressed in ornate wooden armour and carrying a bright sword that appears to be made of glass. He gestures at the wolves, who fall silent, then strides to the middle of the bridge.



“Lady Atani bids me welcome all travellers leaving or entering her lands. I am to offer a trial to all who would use the bridge. Best me in combat **to-the-death** and pass freely or best me in a riddling game and I will step aside and offer you no harm. Choose traveller!”

THE GAME MECHANICS

Undertake a Journey : 4 +2 wits +1 pony =

7 vs 6 & 10 WEAK HIT

Reach a waypoint (4/10) “the bridge” but lose 1 supply. Back to ZERO again so must do Out of Supply. (tick the “Unprepared” debility).

The bridge is a location I already had an idea for – a Guardian with a Riddle and a Combat.

As before, as I obviously know the answers, I’ll use Gather Information to simulate Valgrym being able to work them out.

I particularly like this kind of challenge when I’m GM-ing for some players and Faerie creatures are involved. I always try to pay great care to the wording.

Mechanically-speaking... this will be either a single +Wits (with a bonus of 1 for the clue Atani gave) or a full-scale combat using +Iron against a Formidable warrior. Valgrym’s Iron spear might give him a good chance in a fight.

However, the setup for this should mean that if he chooses the riddle, there can still be a fight (with the wolves which will either be a Dangerous fight or a formidable one)

THE STORY

Not wanting to be tricked, Valgrym carefully studies his options. The knight looks formidable, but Valgrym knows his iron spear should give him an advantage, however, he doesn't really want to kill this knight and he has already had a clue about the riddle from Atani.

"I choose the riddle game. I have no wish to kill you sir Knight"

The knight beckons him to approach and takes off his helm and lays it on the wide stone wall of the bridge.



"There shall be two riddles, answer well, boy. Answer wrongly and we shall fight, and I shall drag you in chains to my Lady".

"Firstly, the simplest of riddles, a child of three or four could answer it, while the wisest of riddle-masters might fail. On what does a man sit and sleep and wear his hat?"

Valgrym scratches his head for a while, there are three obvious answers but he can't arrive at a single one that answers all three points. Then he remembers swapping riddles with a child from the village and how the infant didn't know the rules and would just give a straight question and answer.

"A chair. A bed and on his head!"

The green knight scowled. "Lucky – one more to go and it shall not be so simple".

He takes out a pack of tarot cards that seems to only contain the major arcana. He begins to shuffle them and then to deal them out face-up along the stone wall.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Secure an Advantage : 6 +2 wits =

8 vs 6 & 5 STRONG HIT

Take Advantage, choose to make another Move with +1 or to take +2 momentum (now 5).

*Atani giving him a clue to a riddle could be interpreted as her **tricking** him into choosing the Riddle Game!*

Gather Information : 6 +2 wits +1 for simplicity =

9 vs 2 & 5 STRONG HIT

+2 Momentum (now 7)

THE STORY

“Choose one from the pack and then I will choose another. Whoever chooses the highest will win.” He steps back as he places the last card on the wall and gives a slight bow.

The boy, starting to panic as he realises he knows nothing at all about tarot cards, begins to panic. “You must give me more time”.

“Take the rest of the day – I’m enjoying the game” the Knight smiles, revealing sharp teeth.

Somewhat relieved, Valgrym stops to eat and drink, only to remember he has no supplies. Then he realises that the sun is about to set, and the day is almost over.

The Green Knight picks up his helmet and puts it back on. He draws his glass sword. From the far end of the bridge the wolves begin to growl and salivate.

“CHOOSE or forfeit!”

Distracted by the wolves, especially that huge one, he is about to mumble “Star” or “Emperor” when he remembers Atani’s “clue”. What else can the word “Pack” mean?

The lad points to the end of the bridge. “I choose that one, the big one – the biggest wolf in the pack!”

THE GAME MECHANICS

I’m going to give V a chance to see what he knows about the Tarot deck.

One key piece of information is that when the cards are used in games rather than for prophecy) the Fool (like an Ace in a normal deck) can be counted as the highest or the lowest.

Another piece of information is that if looked at in another way the “Emperor” could be considered the highest socially while the “Star” could be considered highest “physically”

Gather Information : **1** +2 wits =

3 vs **10** & **3** MISS

Unearth a dire threat or unwelcome truth. Pay the Price D100=87 – wastes resources. As this was only meant to reveal that the question was unanswerable if it really relates to the cards themselves.

As he is out-of-supply, he has to pay with another resource, -1 Spirit (now +4).

Will Valgrym be able to work out what Atani’s clue meant “The deck and the pack have two different meanings”?

Gather Information : **4** +2 wits +1 for Atani’s clue =

7 vs **7** & **4** Weak Hit

Complication or reveal new danger. That sounds OK for what I had planned anyway.

THE STORY

Cursing under his breath, the Green Knight stands aside. "You may pass, and I can offer you no harm".

Mounting his pony and stroking its neck to keep him calm, Valgrym urges it forward towards the wolves...

The huge one howls mournfully and lopes off into the forest, but he realises with horror that the other three aren't moving aside.

The voice from behind him explains "You **chose** Bloodfang and now he may not harm you either, but the others should be enough."

He chuckles softly as the wolves prepare to charge.

Valgrym spurs Wheezer into a charge and thrust with his spear like a knight with a lance.

The iron of the spear and the pony's iron shoes flash and spark as they strike the wolves.

Then Wheezer recoils from the angry fangs and the howling.

With a furious final stab, Valgrym finishes the last wolf but it twists awkwardly, goes off the edge into the river and the spear, caught in its ribs, goes with it.

THE GAME MECHANICS

So the fight will only be Dangerous and not Formidable, because he chose Bloodfang.

Enter the Fray : 4 +3 iron =

3 vs 1 & 1 STRONG HIT !! MATCH !!

What a good time for a Match 😊
+2 momentum (now +9) and he has the initiative. I'll say the "match" indicates these wolves have the usual faerie weakness to iron.

Strike : 6 +3 iron =

9 vs 6 & 10 WEAK HIT

Inflict harm but lose initiative. Inflicts 3 harm which becomes 6/10 for this dangerous pack.

Clash : 1 +3 iron =

4 vs 10 & 7 MISS

~~Lose initiative and Pay the Price~~ Burn his +9 momentum to make this a WEAK HIT instead.

It does enough harm to finishes off the wolves, but he has to *Pay the Price* D100=32 "something of value is lost". He only has three things of value – Pont, Spear, iron dust. Determined randomly, it's the spear!