

BEORN, THANE OF TISSBURI 004 SWORD FEAST

Beorn's current game stats are Edge +1, Heart +2, Iron +2, Shadow +1, Wits +3
Momentum +8, Health +5, Spirit +0, Supply +1, Experience 2.

Assets: Companion:Horse (Swift) harm 3/5 - Thunderbolt
Companion:Hound (Ferocious) harm 0/4 - Dexter
Domain:Tissburi (Security:2, Prosperity:4) harm 3/5

Bonds: Folk of Tissburi, Dexter the Hound

Starting Vow: **Avenge his Father's Death by killing the Saxon King of Sussex, Aelle (Extreme)**

Current Vow: **Raid against the Ravenclaws (Dangerous)**

I envisioned the steps to be...

- 1) Get Home (done) 2) Scouting (he's halfway through this step)
- 3) Make Plans 4) The Raid (Progress 2/10)

Future Benefits

- +1 on a future attempt to Forge a Bond with Merlin

Future Issues (caused by "Pay the Price")...

- An un-named Giantess hates Beorn for killing her mate.
- Harald Carpenter (one of the troops of Tissburi) hates Beorn because of the death of his brother John.

It is the Yuletide of 486. King Uther and his court have come to Sarum for the Yule Festival. This is the castle of Beorn's Lord, Ealdorman Roderick, so Beorn and his folk are invited. Beorn was also ordered to be there by Merlin.

This coming year, Beorn wants to increase the security of his lands by forging alliances with his Lord and his fellow Thanes.

He can use the Prosperity of his Domain (currently +4) to do so, and the current Security is only +2 so it will only be a "Dangerous" level of difficulty. This won't get resolved until Autumn of 487.

Before heading for Sarum Castle, Beorn will spend some time recovering after his ordeal in the Misty Forest fighting Giants and the "un-killable" Green Knight...

Sojourn : **2** +2 heart +1 bond = 5 vs **9** & **3** WEAK HIT

Choose **one** from the list of benefits. I would like to have cleared his Shaken debility and increased his spirit from zero, but the Domain Troops and his Horse are currently injured, so he'll choose the "Recover" option and restore them both to 4 out of 5 health. He also gets the benefit from his Domain Asset, that he can restore his Supply to 4.

As a start towards strengthening his alliances, Beorn will try to judge the motives and disposition of his fellow Thanes.

Gather Information : **4** +3 wits = 7 vs **3** & **8** WEAK HIT

The info complicates his quest or introduces new danger. Take +1 Momentum, now +2.

The Pendragon rulebook has a table of 20 Salisbury Manors, so I'll roll on that to find out which of my fellow Thanes is causing the complication/danger 1 = Baverstock (a manor halfway between Tissburi and Sarum).

Oracle 9 - Settlement Trouble **65**

Family Trouble.

Beorn's father's sister (his Aunt Katherine) married the Thane of Baverstock, so Boris of Baverstock is his uncle. The man is always getting into trouble and asking for assistance. As his uncle and an older

Thane, Boris commands more respect than his title and his personality warrant. Beorn would gladly ignore him but finds it much harder to ignore his Aunt.

This year, Boris is asking for help with building fortifications at Baverstock. He wants to borrow a few of Beorn's skilled craftsmen, just for a month or so.

*If Beorn agrees he **may** gain +1 on attempts to influence the other Thanes at Sarum (**Unlikely**) but may suffer a penalty to Prosperity rolls for his Domain for this year (**Likely**) – he won't find out about the penalty until Autumn.*

Unlikely (76+) chance of Boris supporting him at Court **41**

Beorn grudgingly agrees, hoping for some support from Boris in his negotiations. However, when he turns to his Uncle, the old man is drunk and no help at all.

Adventure of the Sword Feast...

At the Great Feast, Merlin comes before the Court and makes a gift to King Uther of the glittering sword that Beorn witnessed him get from the Lady of the Lake. As the only witness to the miracle, Merlin asks Beorn to tell the Court what happened.

The poor lad is a bit overwhelmed by the presence of the King, and feels the eyes of all the other nobles upon him.

He has very little momentum and doesn't have the Storyweaver asset so it is a difficult task. Resolving it as a compel with +heart to convince them of the truth (it is a supernatural and unbelievable story!)...

Compel : **5** +2 heart = 7 vs **10** & **2** WEAK HIT

They accept what he says but ask for something in return. If he had "proof" – such as having kept the giant's head or the Helm or Shield of the Green Knight? Alternatively, write a short poem or song describing the events.

The assembled Nobles seem close to believing him, but either want some proof or need the story to be delivered in a more convincing way – Beorn decides to try using poetry...

Through **Merlin's Mist** to the **Giant's Gorge**
Stout soldiers scattered by bellowing blow
A score of swords and shining spears strike to slay
Press on, the Troops of Tisburi, to the waters way below.

Merlin moves across the lake. **Beorn's brave bondsmen**
Face a fearless foe, garbed in greaves of green
Heedless of harm, though his heart is holed.
But with no blade of magic made, no blood is seen.

Brave John falls to the **Green Knight's glaive**
Blood of bondsmen stains the sandy sward
Dark-haired daughter of the wild-wood's water
Grants Merlin, the High King's silver sword

'Til the mage **brings back** this **brightest blade**
The **bondsmen hold** the knight at **bay**
With **Excalibur**, the **unslayable is slain**
The **Green Knight's life is done** that **day.**

I have to judge the quality of my own rhyme! Not bad for 20 minutes work, and even in something like the style of Anglo-Saxon or Viking poetry. It seems good enough to count as the "something in return" required by the Weak Compel (and to be worth +2 on future Compels on this topic).

My "GM" notes about the Compel, state that on any Hit, I get to choose to either ...

- *Accompany the Royal Court on an Embassy mission while your domain troops undertake the "Naval engagements" event without you. The Embassy mission will give you opportunities to mix with King Uther, Merlin and other VIPs.*
- *Join your troops in the "Naval Engagements" battle*

I'll choose to accompany King Uther on the embassy mission and leave my domain troops to fend for themselves in the "Naval Engagements".

King Uther is pleased with my efforts and sees that my telling of the tale has impressed the Court. He invites me to join his entourage on a trip to see the Duke of Lindsey. He needs to win the man over as the Duke is a member of the so-called "Supreme Collegium" and is able to vote on whether the various "Kings" of Britain can elect a High King.

I'll allow another Sojourn attempt at the Feast itself...

Sojourn : **4** +2 heart +1 Yuletide high spirits = 7 vs **4** & **8** WEAK HIT

I'll take the Clear a Condition option and clear my "Shaken" condition and gain +1 Spirit.

Adventure of the Lindsey Embassy

After a couple of weeks travel north, when the royal party led by the King, Merlin & Duke Ulfius, arrives at Lincoln, the Duke is not yet home. King Uther insists on everyone going on a Hunt.

The "GM" notes for this suggest using a single Battle roll for it or making it a Scene Challenge. I'll opt for the Battle roll but will try to get some sort of advantage by cleverly choosing where to hunt.

Secure an Advantage : **6** +3 wits = 9 vs **8** & **6** STRONG HIT

Either +1 on the next move or +2 Momentum. I'll take the +1 to the hunting roll.

Beorn spends some time talking to the locals about the terrain and known haunts of deer and boar.

I'm going to consider a Deer hunt as non-dangerous, but a Boar hunt as dangerous. For this outing it will be 50/50 which the King goes for.

1-50 = Deer, 51-100=Boar **06**

The Hunt will have to be either archery (edge) or sneaking (shadow) – neither of which are high attributes for Beorn. However, I will grant myself +1 for my swift Horse Asset.

Battle : **6** +1 edge +1 Swift Horse = 8 vs **3** & **8** WEAK HIT

Successful Hunt but a person you care about is exposed to danger (I'll expose poor thunderbolt to danger – I'd already mentioned that a Boar hunt was Dangerous so I'll call a Deer hunt as only troublesome in terms of harm)

Thunderbolt takes 1 harm (now harm 2/5)

Companion Endure Harm : **3** +3 Thunderbolt's health = 6 vs **7** & **4** WEAK HIT

He is "battered" but just a graze.

The Hunt is successful, giving me a chance to mingle with the King's entourage.

The "GM" notes offer me a chance to attempt to Forge a Bond, with a Noble, with Merlin or with the King. This attempt is at a penalty on the Action Dice (-1 for Duke Ulfius, -2 for Merlin or -3 for the

King). I have a +1 bonus at the moment from a previous encounter with Merlin, or I could wait to accumulate more bonuses.

Forge a Bond with Merlin : **1** +2 heart -1 bonus of 1, penalty of 2 = 2 vs **9** & **7** MISS

Pay the Price Pay the Price **40**

The current situation worsens. Beorn will get a penalty of 1 on a future attempt to Forge a Bond with Merlin.

After the Hunt, Beorn tries to engage in friendly banter with Merlin. It seems the crotchety old man is not so fond of Hunts and grumbles that he would rather be chatting to the noble stag, than stuck in here with staggeringly stupid nobles!

When the Duke returns, there is another Feast. King Uther shows off Excalibur and gets Merlin and Beorn to tell the tale of it once more.

It will be another Compel (with a +2 bonus for my self-judged quality of my earlier Poem)

Compel : **3** +2 heart +2 poem = 7 vs **1** & **3** STRONG HIT

Success and take +1 momentum (now +3)

Beorn does well and has impressed the King and his entourage. They have private drinks afterwards and it seems that Duke Lindsey may well vote for Uther to become High King.

My "GM" notes offer another chance to Forge a bond, this time the penalties are 1 less (Ulfius -0, Merlin -1, King Uther -2)

Forge a Bond with King Uther : **5** +2 heart -2 KING = 5 vs **8** & **4** WEAK HIT

The King seems impressed but before he will consider you a friend, he'll send you on a solo mission. This mission was going to be the next adventure anyway, but the success of the Forge a Bond will depend on the outcome.

The King is happy with the outcome but asks Beorn to tell his tale once more and try to convince King Malahaut (also a member of the Supreme Collegium) to vote for him too. Malahaut is even further north, in Eboracum but Uther has received messages asking him to go south immediately. Beorn is sent to talk to Malahaut (who is not a keen supporter of Uther).

The Adventure of the Malahaut Embassy

On the Map of Logres, Malahaut is shown as off the top of the map, across the Humber. (It's nowadays known as York).

I've decided this adventure should class as an Iron Vow (and then grant experience for the Sword Feast and the Lindsey Embassy all from that – ticking off the first two boxes because of the adventure so far). The Vow is likely to be Dangerous.

The 10 likely sections of the Malahaut Embassy "Vow" are...

Sword Feast, Lindsey Embassy, Journey (just two milestones), Eboracum, Additional Journey to King/time in Eboracum (just two milestones), Combat Encounter, Getting an Audience & Impressing Malahaut

Swear an Iron Vow : **1** +2 heart = 3 vs **10** & **2** WEAK HIT

Determined, but start with more questions than answers. Take +1 momentum (now +4).

Beorn is politically naïve (he is only 20) and doesn't understand why he (a mere Thane) is being sent to negotiate with a King. However, King Uther has asked him to undertake the mission, so there is no doubt that he will attempt it.

As Duke Lindsey was won over, Beorn will get chance for his stay in Lincoln to get prepared for the arduous journey.

As he is staying at a friendly castle it can be a Sojourn rather than just a Make Camp.

Sojourn : 2 +2 heart = 4 vs 1 & 6 **WEAK HIT**

Beorn will put together a plan - +2 Momentum (now 6)

The lad spends some time talking to the courtiers about Eboracum and the road north before setting off.

Beorn will put together a plan - +2 Momentum (now 6)

Undertake a Journey : 6 +3 wits +1 Swift Horse = 10 vs 5 & 5 **STRONG HIT!! MATCH !!**

+1 momentum (now 7) but -1 supply (now +3). There should be an extra benefit for the match – I'll take an opportunity to Make Camp with +1 and to Gather Information about the situation in Eboracum. (cross off one Progress Box – 3/10)

Make Camp : 4 +3 supply +1 benefit = 8 vs 6 & 6 **STRONG HIT!! MATCH !!**

Choose two – Relax +1 Spirit (now 2), Focus +1 Momentum (now 8). I'll take a third choice for the Match – Prepare: +1 to the next Undertake a Journey

With Thunderfoot's easy canter, the first 40 miles passes easily. After crossing the Humber at a ford, he finds a small friendly village to stay for the night. He questions the villagers about their King, Malahaut.

Gather Information : 5 +3 wits = 8 vs 3 & 3 **STRONG HIT!! MATCH !!**

+2 momentum (max 10). Discover something helpful & specific. That's three Strong Hits with Matches in a row!!!

They are able to tell him that Malahaut is not in Eboracum, but is away to the north east, fighting Saxons. Beorn also gets the impression that Malahaut likes to be King and would not like the idea of a "High" King being over him. He will have to do something pretty spectacular to impress Malahaut.

Undertake a Journey : 2 +3 wits +2 Swift Horse + benefit = 7 vs 6 & 3 **STRONG HIT**

as I'd decided there were only 2 waypoints, Beorn reaches Eboracum. He's already at max Momentum, so no other benefit. (cross off one Progress Box – 4/10)

Beorn reaches Eboracum as night is falling. He manages to make his way to the Castle to announce himself as Uther's messenger (showing letters of introduction) and asks to speak to somebody in charge.

Malahaut's Castellan, sneers at him and tries to get rid of him.

Compel Malahaut's Castellan to take him seriously : 1 +2 heart = 3 vs 5 & 4 **MISS**

Pay the Price 34 *The situation worsens. The "GM" notes suggest being able to Stay in Eboracum for a while to do a Sojourn, Resupply or Gather Information – however, because of the miss, I'll say Beorn's only hope of continuing the quest is to head off to find Malahaut and his army. (cross off one Progress Box for Eboracum – 5/10)*

The Castellan tells him to go back to Uther and tell him that Malahaut is not at home. He is not welcome to stay in the Castle while the King is not here.

Fortunately because of his earlier information gathering, Beorn already knows roughly where Malahaut will be.

Undertake a Journey : 1 +3 wits +1 Swift Horse = 5 vs 4 & 9 **WEAK HIT**

Reach a Waypoint but lose 1 supply (now 2). (cross off one Progress Box – 6/10)

I just realised I could have burned my momentum when talking to the castellan – never mind, I forgot!

As he was ejected from the town with no chance to pick up supplies, he is running dangerously short by the time he reaches the half-way point in this journey.

Undertake a Journey : **5** +3 wits +1 Swift Horse = 9 vs **2** & **5** STRONG HIT

*Reach a Waypoint – already at max Momentum so, no benefit. (cross off one Progress Box – 7/10)
The “GM” Notes state that you now have to fight a pack of Saxons (Dangerous) before you get the opportunity to “Reach your Destination”*

Perhaps because he has been travelling at speed, Beorn rounds a corner and is suddenly faced with three mounted Saxons blocking his path. There is nothing for it but to attack!

Enter the Fray : **6** +2 heart = 8 vs **2** & **7** STRONG HIT

+2 momentum (already at max Momentum so, no benefit). Gain initiative.

Strike : **3** +2 iron = 5 vs **6** & **5** MISS

*Saxons gain Initiative. Take 2 Harm, Pay the Price **57** It causes a delay or puts you at a disadvantage. (I'll take the disadvantage as -1 on next roll).*

Despite getting the drop on them, Beorn fails to make use of the initial advantage and is soon whirling Thunderbolt about, desperately trying to fend them off. Dexter, his faithful hound is snapping at their legs – so far with no great effect.

Clash : **5** +2 iron = 7 vs **4** & **4** STRONG HIT!! MATCH !! (I actually had -1 on that roll but still got a STRONG HIT)

Gain initiative, do 2 harm (sword) and choose either +1 momentum or +1 harm – will do +1 harm, also +1 harm for Dexter = 4 harm which converts into 8 out of 10! I'll assume that I've taken out two of the three and will take the MATCH to mean the third one might try to flee so I can immediately try to End the Fight with +1.

End the Fight **8 Progress in the fight** +1 benefit = 9 vs **6** & **1** STRONG HIT

Beorn manages to cut down two of the Saxons, killing one while the second falls and has his throat ripped out by the ferocious hound. The third one turns his horse to flee, but Thunderbolt is a far faster horse. Beorn has no mercy in him today and cuts him down.

Reach Your Destination : **10 Progress in the journey** = 10 vs **2** & **1** STRONG HIT

*The situation at the destination favours you. Choose one... * Make another move now (not a progress move), and add +1. * ~~Take +1 momentum~~*

Beorn cuts down the escaping Saxon in view of a group of Malahaut's scouts. They escort the young man into their camp, talking excitedly about how he and his dog took on three of the enemy on his own. Taking advantage of his momentary notoriety, Beorn asks them to take him for an Audience with Malahaut.

Compel : **1** +2 heart +1 benefit = 4 vs **8** & **4** MISS

*Rather than fail the quest, by not reaching Malahaut, I'll **BURN MOMENTUM** to turn this into a **STRONG HIT**. They will do what Beorn asks. He resets Momentum to 2, then adds another 1 for the String Hit (now +3).*

At first, they seem reluctant but the lad's persistence (and his letters bearing a royal seal), eventually seem to convince them. He is brought in to the tent of King Malahaut and introduced as a messenger from his brother King, Uther.

Unable to turn him away, but clearly annoyed with his scouts, Malahaut agrees to listen to Beorn's tale (with poem) of the King's Sword being delivered by magic from the Lady of the Lake.

Compel : **6** +2 heart +2 poem = 10 vs **5** & **6** STRONG HIT

Take +1 Momentum (now 4). The "GM" Notes explain that Malahaut cannot be persuaded, but Beorn makes a good showing, and seems to have impressed many of the King's Thanes. Word of this will get back to King Uther via his spies.

Although Malahaut seems to be resolved against the idea of granting the High Kingship to Uther. Beorn can tell he was impressed and noticed many of Malahaut's Thanes whispering and nodding among themselves. A few wink at him and grin.

Malahaut treats him with respect, particularly when he learns about the three Saxons and the boy's journey into the warzone alone to find him.

Sojourn : **1** +2 heart = 3 vs **2** & **3** WEAK HIT

Choose 1 benefit – Provision +2 supply (now 4).

When he is rested and with a few gifts of provisions, Beorn heads home to give the king the news. He's not sure how Uther will take his "failure".

Notes...

I was very happy with the way that played out, based on the GM Notes I'd written for these opening years in the Great Pendragon Campaign.

I'll definitely write-up notes for more of the years and continue Beorn's story.

Next...

I've still got the rest of year 487 to do. The Naval Engagements for Tissburi's Domain troops and resolving the annual Domain Project and annual Domain Threat. As Beorn isn't involved in The Naval Engagements, I will probably create a character for Beorn's second-in-command, Osric, and play through the Naval Engagements with him in charge.

488 has the characters either staying in Britain where there is a plague of Frogs (man-sized and aggressive!) or travelling with Prince Madoc to France on a "holy" crusade.