

Valgrym episode 10 – the Wicked Wye Wood

For this episode, I have been play-testing the new DELVE mechanics for Ironsworn.

Choose a theme and domain (page XX). Select a theme and domain based on what you know of the nature of this place, or *Ask the Oracle*.

THEME: WILD

DOMAIN: TANGLEWOOD

THEME	DOMAIN
	
<p>WILD Nature prevails in this place.</p> <p>FEATURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-4 Denizen's lair 5-8 Viewpoint 9-12 Impressive flora or fauna 13-16 Hunting ground or watering hole 17-20 Remains or carrion <p>DANGERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-5 Weather or environmental threat 6-10 Denizens hunt 11-12 Denizens strike without warning 13-14 Denizens leverage the environment 15-16 Denizens wield unexpected abilities 17-18 Denizens guided by a greater threat 19-20 Denizens protect something 21-22 Terrain hinders you 23-24 Overzealous hunter 25-26 Benign aspect becomes a threat 27-28 Disturbing evidence of a victim's fate 29-30 Hapless victim in danger 	<p>TANGLEWOOD A perilous forest of eternal shadow.</p> <p>FEATURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21-43 Dense thicket 44-56 Overgrown path 57-64 Waterway 65-68 Clearing 69-72 Elder tree 73-76 Brambles 77-80 Overgrown structure 81-84 Rocky outcrop 85-88 Remote lodge 89-98 Something unusual or unexpected 99 You transition into a new theme 00 You transition into a new domain <p>DANGERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31-33 Stalking denizen 34-36 Nesting denizen 37-39 Trap or snare 40-42 Disorienting mist 43-45 Entangling plant life

Set up your playscape (page XX). Ready your moves reference, site worksheet, and theme and domain cards.

Name the site (page XX). Give the site a name and record it on the site worksheet. Also, make note of your objective, theme, and domain.

NAME: Wicked Wye Wood (named after the River Wye)

Give the site a rank (page XX). Give the site a rank of troublesome, dangerous, formidable, extreme or epic. Mark the rank on the site worksheet.

RANK: Formidable

Choose denizens (page XX). Envision some potential inhabitants of the site and mark them in the denizens matrix on the site worksheet.

DENIZENS:

very common 01-27 Pixies/Sprites	common 28-41 Dangerous Beasts	common 42-55 Dangerous Plants	common 56-69 Dangerous Plants
uncommon 70-75 Talking Beasts	uncommon 76-81 Talking Plants	uncommon 82-87 Elf	uncommon 88-93 Dryad
rare 94-95 Troll	rare 96-97 Sentient Hazard	rare 98-99 Wild Hunt	unforseen 00 Wandering God

Envision the scene (page XX). Set the scene as you prepare to Delve the Depths.

Valgrym's Journey through the Faerie Realm

Our hero, Valgrym is trying to find the Castle of Imric, Elf-Earl of Albion.

He has already found his way across the Moon's Road and into the Realm of Faerie. He has passed a few challenges...

- Atami the Undying, a seductive Fae "Life-Drinker" (Succubus) in a riverside cave
- a Green Knight guarding a bridge (with a riddle and a trick and a pack of wolves)

Now he needs to push on through the beautiful, yet forbidding woodland, seeking the Castle.



Valgrym knew he was in a different world – the realm of Faerie, and without his iron-tipped spear he was in even greater danger.

Still, he had sworn a vow (actually two!), to find the castle of Imric.

Firstly, to find his sweetheart – Gwenneth – who had been brought there by her witch mother – Radka. He had no plan for how he would rescue the girl, but his first step had to be to reach the castle. All he knew was that his "friend" Peatbog had told him to seek the source of the Wye.

His second vow was made to the Giant Symon who opened the way to Faerie for him in exchange for a promise to bring a message to the Elf-Earl Imric.

[Unknown to our hero, Symon's short poem is a trick, offering Valgrym as a gift to Imric!]

I envisage the realm of Faerie to be full of dangers and wonders for mortals with a background conflict going on for centuries between the Elves and the Trolls. That conflict is the underlying reason for the current story and the "kidnapping" of Gwenneth, although Valgrym is as yet unaware of it.

IRONSWORN Solo Character				Experience
Valgrym				3
1 EDGE	2 HEART	3 IRON	1 SHADOW	2 WITS
Health 5	Spirit 5	Supply 1	Momentum 2 Max: 10	Burn Reset: 2

ASSET: SKIRMISHER (when you Face Danger)

ASSET: STORYTELLER (when you Secure an Advantage, Compel or Forge a Bond)

ASSET: COMPANION HORSE – Swift (when you Face Danger or Undertake a Journey)

ASSET: RITUAL - FAERIE WARD

Valgrym has very little equipment left – a wooden spear, a dagger, his pony “Wheezer” and a small amount of iron dust (rust) for casting Faerie Ward

RITUAL 

FAERIE WARD

- When you sprinkle iron dust around you and envision a shield. Roll **Faerie Ward** +spirit or +heart (whichever is higher). For the next minute...
 - On a **strong hit**, the Ward reduces the level of any Faerie Creature crossing it by 1 and then inflicts 1 harm on it. Also, any harm-causing Faerie Spell that crosses it, is reduced by 1 level. +1 momentum.
 - On a **weak hit**, it still reduces the level of any harm-causing Faerie Spell, but only inflicts 1 harm on a Faerie that crosses it.
 - On a **miss**, the Ward fizzles out - roll on Oracle 17: **Mystic Backlash**
- As above and improve the effect of your Faerie Ward (+2 momentum, choose either 2 harm or reduce level by 2)).
- When you perform this ritual, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

THE STORY

The young man leads his pony through the twisting paths, trying to keep moving up the river.

Although the terrain forces him to leave the riverbank many times, he always manages to find his way back.

Valgrym reaches an area where the river flows directly out of a tunnel in the side of a mountain. If he had a canoe, he might be able to stay with the water, but there is no way to enter the tunnel on-foot. He'll have to go over the mountain and try to pick up the watercourse on the far side.

After a few hours of travel, Valgrym finds his way forward blocked by thick spiky brambles and when he turns his pony to retrace his steps, he sees with alarm that the path behind them is rapidly filling with more as the thorny branches wriggle across the trail, sprouting and splitting and knitting together!

His options seem to be trying to ride out of there before the way is completely blocked (risking injury to himself and his pony) or looking for a torch in his pack and trying to burn his way out.

Trusting to his new-found rapport with Wheezer, Valgrym spurs the pony into a desperate leap over the writhing brambles and just manages to clear them.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Delve the Depths : 4 +2 wits = 6

vs 3 & 6 **WEAK HIT**

On a weak hit, roll on the Results table...

Delve Results 70

Choose one – Mark Progress or *Find an Opportunity*

Mark Progress 1/10

Delve the Depths : 3 +2 wits = 5

vs 9 & 10 **MISS**

On a miss, *Reveal a Danger*

Reveal a Danger 73

A discovery undermines or complicates your quest

[For this playtest, I'll roll on the table rather than "envision the danger"]

Delve the Depths : 6 +2 wits = 8

vs 8 & 6 **WEAK HIT**

On a weak hit, roll on the Results table...

Results Table 22

Mark Progress (2/10) and *Reveal a Danger*

Reveal Danger 37 Check the Domain Card.

37 = Trap or Snare. I'll roll for a Feature

Feature 73

Brambles

"Face Danger" (any harm would affect both V and his companion) or "Check Your Gear" (to be followed by a Face Danger that only affects V) ?

Face Danger : 4 +1 edge +1 swift horse = 6

vs 3 & 3 **STRONG HIT!! MATCH !!**

On a strong hit, you are successful. Take +1 momentum (now 3).

THE STORY

They have to spend a night on the hillside. Despite the strange noises and feeling of being watched by malevolent eyes, the night passes peacefully.

That morning, they stumble into a narrow valley filled with scree. The pony is unable to resist sliding and scrambling down.

Fortunately, they emerge from the long scramble, at the riverbank once more on the far side of the range of hills.

At a point where the river crashes through rocks and rapids, Valgrym stops to admire the spray and the sight of trout leaping. Suddenly finds himself staring into the eyes of a black bear, emerging from the water with a trout in one huge claw.

The fearsome and sudden appearance of the creature is shocking but Valgrym manages to steel himself and calm his panicking steed.

He tries to hold off the beast with his spear and it runs onto the point.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Make Camp : 4 +1 supply = 5

vs 10 & 2 WEAK HIT

Choose = +1 Momentum (now 4)

Delve the Depths : 1 +2 wits = 3

vs 6 & 2 WEAK HIT

Results Table 94

Mark Progress 3/10 AND Find an Opportunity

Find an Opportunity 06

The terrain favours you, or you find a hidden path.

Delve the Depths : 3 +2 wits +1 hidden path = 6

vs 6 & 8 MISS

On a miss, Reveal a Danger

Reveal a Danger 46

Encounter a hostile Denizen.

Denizen 39

Dangerous Beast(s). I'll use the Challenge Rank Oracle but cap it at Formidable.

Oracle:Challenge Rank 49 "Dangerous"

Enter the Fray : 2 +2 heart = 4

vs 3 & 9 WEAK HIT

Choose +2 momentum or to get Initiative – Momentum +2 (now 6).

Face Danger : 3 +3 iron +1 Skirmisher = 7

vs 3 & 4 STRONG HIT

On a Strong hit, strike now with +1

Strike : 4 +3 iron +1 bonus from successful

skirmisher = 8 vs 5 & 9 WEAK HIT

2 Harm (4/10) but lose initiative

THE STORY

Batting the spear aside, the creature roars in his face and looms over him, striking terror into his heart.

Another slashing claw and poor Wheezer has had enough. The pony rears up and throws Valgrym to the ground.

With a desperate thrust upwards, Valgrym's wooden spear glances off the bears sodden fur and he sees the heavy claw rip open a gash in his pony's flank.

While the bear is occupied with the pony, Valgrym rolls beneath it, thrusting up and sinks his point deep into its belly.

With a horrific gurgling scream, the bear collapses and dies, leaving Valgrym gasping and his pony sweating and stamping in fear.

THE GAME MECHANICS

Clash : **3** +3 iron = 6 vs **9** & **9** **MISS!! MATCH !!**

On a miss, you are outmatched and must Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

Pay the Price **76** It is stressful -2 Spirit (now 3)

Endure Stress : **2** +3 spirit = 5

vs **10** & **6** **MISS**

-1 momentum (now 5)

Clash : **2** +3 iron = 5 vs **3** & **7** **WEAK HIT**

On a weak hit, inflict your harm, but then Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative

Harm 2 6/10

Pay the Price **05**

A person or community you trusted loses faith in you, or acts against you [I'll interpret this as the pony throwing him off].

Valgrym will risk all to Turn the Tide!

Strike : **1** +3 iron +1 Turn the Tide = 5

vs **9** & **5** **MISS**

On a 1, the harm affects the Companion. -2 harm (3/5)

Companion Endure Harm : **1** +3 companion

health = 4 vs **10** & **9** **MISS**

-1 momentum (now 4)

Clash : **3** +3 iron = 6 vs **1** & **5** **STRONG HIT**

On a strong hit, inflict your harm, you have the initiative and choose... Inflict +1 harm.

Harm 3 (9/10) and V can move to End the Fight

End the Fight : **9** progress vs **2** & **8** **STRONG HIT**

On a strong hit, this foe is no longer in the fight. They are killed, out of action, flee, or surrender as appropriate to the situation and your intent

THE STORY

After a few seconds Valgrym and Wheezer have calmed down and the young man notices, for the first time, that the trout the bear had been holding in one claw, is still alive, wriggling weakly on the track a few feet from the river.

Intending to put it out of its misery with his spear, Valgrym walks over and notices a strange gleam in the creature's eye. It seems to be pleading for its life, mouth opening and closing soundlessly, gills flapping.

There will be plenty of meat on the bear, he doesn't really need a fish for supper too. Carefully he picks it up and lowers it into the water. In an instant it has streaked away, a silver blur in the churning river.

Valgrym decides to camp nearby and hacks off a decent chunk of bear meat to cook and tries to skin the creature for its valuable fur but manages to cover himself in blood soaking and staining all his clothes. Exhausted he falls asleep without washing it off and is stained and stinking. The meat on his camp-fire spit burns black and is wasted and Valgrym wakes in the middle of the night, hunger gnawing at him.

Lacking the time and materials to clean and treat the bear skin, he scrapes it as best he can and then wears it as a cloak.

When he returns to the river bank, scavengers have finished off the rest of the bear (wolves judging by the tracks).

Mid-afternoon a wide tributary hits the main river, blocking Valgrym's path and he has to follow it to the west for a few miles to find a fording place.

On the way back down the northern bank, Wheezer begins to shy away nervously and he looks down to see half a dozen sticks a few inches high dotting the path, each one topped with a tiny, bloody head...

THE GAME MECHANICS

As this encounter was in Faerie, I'll give it a chance of being "special". Roll 1D10, 1-4 nothing, 5-6 the bear skin has a magical property, 7-8 the Trout is magical, 9 the bear was really a Troll, 10 the bear was really an Elf.

Roll 1d10 **8**

The Trout is magical!

I'll grant +1 momentum (now 5) and +1 spirit (now 4) for this act of kindness and hold the Trout in reserve for some future need – it is a Faerie creature and now owes Valgrym a debt.

I'm also going to count the bear carcass as +1 supply (now 2)

Make Camp : **6** +2 supply = 8 vs **9** & **8** MISS

On a miss, you take no comfort. Pay the Price

Pay the Price **37**

The current situation worsens

Delve the Depths : **6** +2 wits = 8

vs **3** & **10** WEAK HIT

Results Table **17**

Mark progress (3/10) and Reveal a Danger

Reveal a Danger **78**

Confront a harrowing situation or sensation

That's enough for a single session. A complete DELVE seems like it will take a few hours of play (maybe 6 hours at the speed I go, trying to imagine the scene and think of interesting possibilities).

I really like the Domains and Themes with their narratively-relevant dangers and features. Definitely something I'll be using again and again.