

Light in the Darkness

An Everway Scenario for 3-5 Players

Plot Summary

The heroes are plucked from their worlds by a sinister swirling black fog:

Shelagh's character is diverted during a spherewalk. She gets to see the mysterious figure dressed in white with the blinding light in place of a head.

Slight disappears during a magic trick

Wrath is sucked into a box presented to him by a pedlar (NB who is the pedlar? How does he know about the darkness?)

Jason is enveloped by a billowing black cloud emerging from a fissure in the earth.

Alice's character ??

They arrive in a stone circle at the top of a hill. It is totally dark. When they light a lantern, it remains dark. Slight can still detect the black fog (he may even work out that it's associated with Air and Water), but can't determine its source. Jason can find almost no animal life - there are no birds nor bees and almost all the small mammals are hibernating - and the animals which are around are all extremely hungry ("no grass! no grass!"). There is, of course, this extremely large and scaly animal that seems to be associated with one of the other characters... Wrath will find that the Astral Plain is equally dark and featureless.

After stumbling around for a bit, and possibly encountering wolves, marshes, sheer precipices etc., the heroes find one of the following:

1. The hut of Not of the People, an old woman who was born of the one mixed marriage that has occurred between the People of the Sun and the People of the Moon in the last generation. She is not welcomed in either village, and is slightly crazed from loneliness. She is convinced that one of the (female) heroes is the Lightbringer, a godling who visited the realm ten years ago. She explains that the Lightbringer tried to bring about a reconciliation between the People of the Sun and the People of the Moon and even got as far as persuading the Sun Lady and the Moon Lord to marry. But the marriage was called off at the last moment amidst mutual recriminations, and in disgust the Lightbringer departed the realm, leaving a stone tablet broken in three pieces

which she said would allow the people to find her once they had got over their petty squabbles. Two pieces she gave to the Sun Lady and Moon Lord - the third belongs to Not of the People.

2. The village of the People of the Sun. This is barricaded and guarded, as the People of the Sun are expecting an attack by the People of the Moon at any moment. Needless to say, the heroes will be mistaken for an attack. Hellia, their leader, explains that the sun was swallowed by the moon's shadow and did not come out again. She is convinced that this is a plot by Selenus, the Moon Lord, after his attempt to gain control of the Sun People by marriage failed.

3. The village of the People of the Moon. They too are expecting an attack - they think that the People of the Sun deliberately created the darkness to give them an excuse to attack.

Putting the three pieces of Lightbringer's map together reveals a gate by the river Sparklebrook. Approaching, it becomes clear that this is the source of the waves of darkness. The gate itself is impassable except for those with Water scores of 7 or above - the only way to free the realm from the darkness is to destroy the gate. Which may trap the heroes in the realm forever...

Plot Leads and Holes

1. What is the darkness?

The darkness swirls and flows. It's clearly related to Water and to Air. The only fortune card with which it could be associated is the Unicorn (Purity). Conclusion: something pure and innocent is being used to generate the darkness - say the avatar of the unicorn itself, an innocent child whose feet do not touch the ground. The ability of the darkness to flow between spheres could also come from him. Alternatively, a powerful wizard is responsible.

Who is doing this and why? The effect of the Mist is to promote hatred, division and war. The avatars of Destruction or Corruption would seem good suspects. Is its effect to destroy life in general or humans in particular? The latter - humans are needed to make its effects apparent. Possibly the Unicorn is deliberately helping because removing humans from spheres would "purify" them...

No, prefer the idea of a powerful wizard/shaman. He/she has managed to trap the Avatars of Purity and Corruption in magic circles. From them s/he has created the Mist.

Who would have such power? Why, someone from Everway, of course. A member of Chamber Platinum, methinks, with access to the Library of All Worlds. A Crookstaff or a Scratch, possibly with the assistance of a Wailer. But get this- they are under the influence of Alurax, or are Alurax in disguise! This would explain the effect of the Mist.

2. Why did the darkness come so suddenly?

The Mist of Corrosion did not have a tangible form when it first appeared in Skylight. It exercised a pervasive, corrupting influence, preventing the Lightbringer from achieving his aim of bringing the two leaders together. Solar eclipses would always be a tense time between the tribes - the high feelings caused the influence to "crystallise out" into physical darkness [Hmm... this suggests that the darkness is sentient. Not sure I like this]. The Mist of Corrosion would work in a similar way on other spheres; it exists only in latent form, a corrupting influence, a temptation, until a "channel" opens down which it can manifest. Once it has taken a physical form, however, it can't change.

3. Who is the Lightbringer?

An amusing thought - perhaps the Lightbringer is the Walker himself! Why would he spend his time trying to bring the tribes together? Because they have scraps of knowledge that could help him find the capstone? Entertaining notion, but I don't think it works.

What we know so far: The Lightbringer is a spherewalker. She is interested in reconciliation or in unity. She came from the realm where the darkness is being created, or one that's very close to it. She is sufficiently powerful to be seen as a godling by the people of this realm - can create light or fire. She is a good negotiator, but can be temperamental. Someone from Everway? Yes, I think so - Lightfoot Moondance seems a good name. Why did she want to help the tribes unite?

1. They have fragmentary knowledge which is only valuable when put together [no, this doesn't work - why wouldn't she just steal it?].
2. she is a member of the Cult of the Walker, a secret organisation that believes in resolving instabilities, to bring about a world that is unchanging as possible.
3. She is Shelagh's character's mother! [this would mean that there is a hereditary curse on the family].

4. Who (or what) gathered the Heroes?

1. It's all a coincidence - the disruptive influence of the Mist of Corrosion on connections to neighbouring spheres simply sucked in a random selection of Spherewalkers. Not desperately satisfactory, but at least explains the varied nature of the Heroes...

2. Someone has been manipulating the effects of the Mist of Corrosion to bring the Heroes together. Who might be doing it and why?

 1. The creator of the Mist of Corrosion itself - a powerful megalomaniac wizard. He wants to push the Heroes together to make a fighting force for some purpose.
 2. Some other group, for the same reason.
 3. Kayte or Sharra.
 4. Someone who wants to hide something - a person or thing - amongst the group.

Let's not mess around here - there is indeed a group that is manipulating the heroes. This gives them a common enemy to fight against. They are linked in some way to the Fortune cards. What are they trying to do? 1. Break the hegemony of the 36 images that Silly Me created. 2. Make themselves into avatars. 3. Take over the 1000 spheres.

What do they want the heroes for? 1. To retrieve a lost item (how about the capstone of the Walker's Pyramid?!) needed for a magical ceremony. 2. As a defensive force against a group that's trying to stop them. 3. As an exploratory force or lightning rod (would explain why they want Wrath - if ever there was a lightning rod, he is one). 4. As a means of protecting something valuable (Wrath or his dragon).

OK, so it seems like this group is into making Avatars - Wrath's world was an unsuccessful attempt to create a super-race to conquer other spheres. Plan 2 is to put Wrath together with the heroes and point him at Change (Death). Why? Because Change is the archetypal enemy of all that the Brotherhood stands for. Presumably the Brotherhood thinks that it can get itself into power, kill Change and then it will rule the 1000 Spheres for evermore. They are clearly on the side of the Walker (though it's more amusing if they don't know this, particularly if both the Walker and the Brotherhood want the Capstone. Alternatively, some of the Moondance clan are part of the Brotherhood and know very well about the connection). Connection to Alurax? None, I think - Alurax's plan is entirely independent, the Brotherhood is just making use of it. Alurax most certainly does not want things to go into stasis while it is still in human form. Which may ultimately make it an ally of the heroes - a highly amusing proposition...

5. Who is the Pedlar?

An agent of the person who's responsible for creating the Mist. Why would he want to trap Wrath in particular? Either because he has a dragon, or because he's last of his race, or because the pedlar wants his world.

Another possibility - someone utterly opposed to tyrants who gets rid of them by sucking them through gates and dumping them on other worlds. Nice idea, but not this scenario, I think...

Obvious conclusion: Alurax or its agent is the mysterious pedlar that lures Wrath to his doom - Alurax might want Tempest for some purpose. Perhaps it hopes that Tempest will get hungry and eat the villagers. Alternatively, the pedlar is a member of the Priests of Destruction; perhaps they have decided that Wrath on his own is not enough and they want to put him with other dupes to form a more effective destructive force.

The Realm of Skylight

Virtue: The Creator (Nurture) - the people are good at regular ceremonies to maintain the natural

balance.

Flaw: Fearing Shadows (Unnecessary Fear) - the two tribes hate one another when they have no need to.

Fate: Nature (Life Energy vs Energy Sapped) - will light return to the realm in time to stop everything from dying?

Usurper: Dawn and Dusk Darkness to light or light to darkness.

The People: The people are mostly deep brown or black with black eyes. They have long flowing hair and strong jaws. The men have roughly trimmed beards. They wear rough baggy off-white shifts, sandals and hoods consisting of long strips of cloth that drape down over the back of the neck and wrap over the right arm. This basic dress is supplemented by colourful tabards depicting sun or moon symbols and circlets, necklaces and arm bands, which are put on for the ceremonies (dawn for the People of the Sun, dusk for the People of the Moon). They are lively and law-abiding, but suspicious of strangers.

Craft: Tools are mostly made of wood with the occasional iron component (such as ploughshares). The houses are of wooden construction smeared with plaster made from quicklime and mud. The moon people's huts are domed; the People of the Sun have flat-roofed houses. The people are mostly subsistence farmers.

Tamed Animals: Chickens (mostly eaten), dogs, goats, oxen. No horses.

Deities: The Sun and the Moon are worshipped as abstract deities. The chief tenet of the belief system is that regular ceremonies are required to keep them moving. Special ceremonies at solstices and eclipses. The priests have ancient writings (TM) that help them to calculate when these will happen. There is no concept of sacrifice - the ceremonies consist of mystical dances that follow complex patterns. The people believe in reincarnation, though as what is a matter of some debate.

Rule: Theocracy - the Sun Lady and the Moon Lord are both spiritual and political leaders, their moral authority deriving from the vital functions they perform in keeping the rhythms of nature going. Although they have ultimate authority, in practise they work with a council of senior villagers.

The Land: Skylight is dry and hot - it would be semi-arid desert were it not for the river Glitter flowing down from the mountains. On the upper slopes, the trees are twisted and gnarled and the shrubbery tends towards the thorny. The Sucking Marsh is full of reeds and mosquitoes. The mountains are high and sheer and generally impassable.

History: The oldest legends tell of the founding of the villages by the godling Heaven's Light. He led his chosen people to the valley from a land to the west, where he taught them their sacred

duties - the ritual dances that would keep the sun and the moon in their proper places and so make an ordered existence possible. He set up the old worship place for use by both sun and moon people. When his work was done he was taken away from them, vanishing in a blaze of light from the centre of the old worship place.

For many years, the people of the two villages continued the rituals without incident. Then one day, there was an eclipse of the sun. The leaders knew that it was coming, for Heaven's Light had shown them how to predict it, but it so happened that the eclipse occurred at dusk. The People of the Sun were performing the ceremony to ensure that the sun reappeared when the People of the Moon wanted to perform the Dusk Ritual to ensure that night fell. One group would not make way for the other, knives were drawn and a battle occurred that left many of both villages dead. When the time came to perform the Dawn ritual, the charnel house stench and the flies drove the worshippers away. In desperation, they performed the ritual in the village square, and much to their relief it worked. After that the old worship place was abandoned and the two villages performed their rituals in their own squares. The loss of regular communication further exacerbated the tensions between the villages, leading to the occasional skirmish which left dead on both sides.

This situation continued for some years until one day the Lightbringer appeared. She convinced the villagers by shows of magic that she was an emissary of Heaven's Light and persuaded them that the villages should work together once more. To this end she organised the engagement of the village leaders. The Mist of Corrosion was already doing its work, however, and the night before the ceremony the whole thing was called off. The proximate cause was the discovery by the People of the Sun that the Lightbringer's true name was Lightfoot Moondance. The People of the Moon also discovered that by the laws of the People of the Sun, all the male spouse's property was given over to the female party in the marriage. This meant that the Sun Lady would effectively own the village of the People of the Moon, who held that all property was owned by the Moon Lord. A mob arose to hurl the Lightbringer out, but she stopped them by generating a bright light that temporarily blinded anyone who looked at it. She then broke a stone tablet in three and hurled two pieces at the Sun Lady and the Moon Lord, before leaving in disgust. The final piece she handed to Not of the People on her way out of the realm.

Connections: The people are not aware of the gate that stands in the mountains where the Sparklebrook enters the valley, though if pushed some may remember a garbled legend that Heaven's Light's transcendence happened on the south side of the valley not the north. Occasional strangers have come from the west but have not been made welcome.

Names:

People of the Sun - Male: Flame, Brightness, Helios, Daystar, Apollon

Female: Hellia, Beam, Golden, Warm, Dawn, Sunshadow

People of the Moon - Male: Selenus, Pale, Crescent, Dark of the Moon (unlucky),
Nightstar

Female: Sparkle, Glitter, Gleam, Selena, Moonshadow, Dusk

The Plot:

Prologue: The heroes all start in different realms. A black smog engulfs them all - those with low Earth scores pass out. One player sees a figure in white with a light for a head.

Opening: The heroes appear in the Old Worship Place. They get a chance to get to know one another and to discover just how dark it is...

Progress: The heroes get a chance to stumble around in the dark for a bit. If they follow the path, they arrive at the hut of Not of the People. If they go into the forest, they get attacked by wolves - Action. Alternatively, they may end up one of the villages.

Interaction: Assuming the heroes do the obvious thing, they end up at Not of the People's hut. They hear about the disappearance of the light, the two villages and the Lightbringer. They get the first part of the map, which shows the way to the village of the People of the Sun.

Decisions: Go to the People of the Sun or the People of the Moon? Or do something else?

Action: The village of the People of the Sun proves decidedly unfriendly. Unless the heroes are careful, they get into a fight in the dark.

Interaction: The heroes get to hear Hellia's side of the story. They get the second part of the map.

Action: If it hasn't already happened, the heroes are attacked by wolves when they go through the forest.

Interaction: The People of the Moon are slightly more friendly, but not much so. They initially welcome the heroes, then treacherously try to drown them if they don't prove their bona fides. Assuming the heroes get on his good side, Selenus gives his version events and the final part of the map.

Rising Tension: The heroes trek through the darkness to find the gateway. As they approach, the corrosive effects of the Mist become stronger and stronger. Sensitive heroes begin to feel a physical force pushing them back. Eventually they encounter the gate feel the full force of the darkness flowing through it.

Decisions: How to stem the dark tide? If they close the gate, how do they escape from this sphere?

Climax and Resolution: Working against the debilitating effects of the Mist, the heroes struggle to stem the dark tide. At last the gate collapses - and nothing happens... But gradually the mist begins to clear, and at last the lights of a picturesque villlage can be seen twinkling in the

distance, and (perhaps) the faint sounds of drums and chanting. Then the sun rises, glorious and golden, and floods the world with light.

Starting the Quest

Ask players to come up with a typical starting situation. This can be anything they want - if two or more want to start together, that would be great. For internal consistency, the time should be the same for all of them.

Get the characters moving somewhere, then have the black mist swallow them. One character (preferably Wrath) can be shown the box by the pedlar (Tempest thinks there's gold in it). Characters with high Water scores will see the ghost of a small child dressed in white, suspended in mid air from no visible support, with something serpentine and slimy wrapped round him. Characters with high Air scores will realise that this is extremely powerful magic and that they are being transported between worlds like "you know" or "um".

She has had no company for twenty years and is half-crazed with loneliness. She desperately hopes that one of the heroes is the Lightbringer, because she was "kind". The simplest way to get on her good side is for one of the female heroes to pretend to be the Lightbringer.

History: Not of the People is the daughter of Owl Paleson and Sunshadow Warmshadow. She grew up in the village of the People of the Sun until her parentage was discovered, when she and Sunshadow were exiled. They built the hut and lived off berries and fish. One day Sunshadow left the hut and didn't come back. Not of the People thinks she was eaten by wolves - in fact she was drowned by the people of the Moon when she tried to re-establish contact with Owl Paleson. Owl is now an elder of the People of the Moon and is tipped to succeed Selenus as Moon Lord.

What she knows:

- The sun was covered by a shadow and never came out again. This happened "many, many days ago". The moon and stars vanished at the same time. She thinks she is blind. When she went to beg at the village of the People of the Sun, they were all blind too. They were building a stockade to keep out attacks by the People of the Moon.
- The plants are dying ("perhaps they are blind too!"), except mushrooms. So are many of the animals. She has heard owls and wolves.
- The Lightbringer came ten cycles of the sun ago. She was tall and gracious, and had curly brown hair and a pale skin (by which she means coffee-coloured). When she first appeared, she was dressed in fine robes with a brooch depicting a woman dancing under a crescent moon - Not of the People assumed that this meant she was from the village of the People of the Moon, but the Lightbringer assured her that this was not the case. At first she was like any other traveller, but later she said she was sent by Heaven's Light to reconcile the two villages, which had

departed from his teachings. To prove this, she caused a flame to spring into existence on her outstretched palm in the village of the People of the Sun. How she persuaded the People of the Moon, NotP doesn't know. The Lightbringer got her recognised in the Sun's village, so that at least she could go and beg there.

- The Lightbringer organised a meeting between the two villages at the Old Worship Place, where she told them that it was time to end the quarrel between them. To this end, she proposed that the Sun Lady and the Moon Lord should take partners from the other village. Naturally, they chose each other. The Lightbringer was pleased and said that they would be her special people. She promised them that she would show anyone who was interested new worlds and wonders. She started to carve a tablet that would allow people to follow her. All went well until the night before the wedding, when something went wrong in both villages, and both accused the other of treachery and betrayal. NotP doesn't know what happened, but it caused the people to turn against the Lightbringer. She took shelter in the hut, then, when an armed mob came, went out and blinded them all with a piercing light. Angrily, she broke the tablet that she had created in three, threw two pieces at the grovelling Moon Lady and Sun Lord, and gave the third part to NotP, telling them that they were talismans that would cure them of their blindness and that they could be used to follow her if ever they came to reason. Then she left and was never heard of again.

- The Sucking Mire has midges and crocodiles. The forest has wolves.

Plot Summary

The heroes are plucked from their worlds by a sinister swirling black fog:

Shelagh's character is diverted during a spheres. Characters with high Earth scores may resist the effects of the Mist for longer - one of them gets to see the figure in white with the blinding white light for a head.

Characters with low Earth scores (less than 4) pass out. Characters with Earth scores of 4-5 have to draw a lucky Fortune card or they are overcome too.

The Old Worship Place

The heroes come to in total darkness. They are in the open, it's warm and a hot, arid breeze is blowing against their faces. Beneath their fingers is short, dry grass; the surface they are lying on is uneven and rocky. It's very quiet.

Feeling around, the heroes will either encounter one another or a lichen-covered rock emerging

from the grass. The rock is about eight feet tall and five feet wide. There are eighteen of them spaced at intervals of around five yards around a circle thirty yards in diameter.

Lighting a torch is completely ineffective. It generates heat but no light. Those with high Water scores (6 or above) may sense a something black and swirling between them and the flame.

The only animals in the vicinity are ants (and Tempest). The ants are behaving in a very odd fashion - they are all underground and living off seeds and waste, when in this weather they should be foraging above ground.

The ethereal plane is just as dark as the material one. The standing stones are, however, glowing very very faintly. This indicates that they are magical. Something is obscuring their radiance, however, something swirling and black.

Beyond the circle, the ground slopes downwards in all directions. If the heroes think to look, they can detect a worn path leading away from the circle. As they heroes pass, one of them brushes against a bush. Its leaves are dry and shrivelled and fall to the ground leaving bare, dry spikes.

If the heroes stay where they are, it will start to get colder. Eventually Not of the People will come up to perform a ritual in the old way and discover them.

The Hut of Not of the People

The path is old and has not been used much recently, and unless one of the heroes has tracking skills or special care is taken, they will need a good Fortune card draw not to veer off towards the wood or the marsh.

Assuming they successfully follow it, the path continues to lead downhill. After a couple of miles, the breeze has a definite dampness. A wolf howl can be heard faintly from the left and the rustling of dry leaves.

A little later, frogs can be heard croaking from ahead. The road comes to a T-junction - ahead, the trickling of water and the slightly rank smell of a river. The heroes can also smell woodsmoke. Searching around, they can find cultivated ground (the plants are all dry and withered, but there are plenty of mushrooms) and, a little way to the right, a wooden hut. If the heroes make any noise at all, a quavery old woman's voice says "Who's there? Who's there?"

Not of the People's hut is smelly and cluttered. There are herbs, partly cured skins, dried fish, a net, pulses, unwashed cooking utensils, and firewood. Rushes cover the floor. There is an empty bed, which NotP says is for the Lightbringer when she returns.

Not of the People

Aged about thirty, malnourished, long wild hair. Her clothing is a patchwork of animal skins and cast-offs from the villages. She has a strong rancid smell.

Ardent, so unused to human contact that she has no idea of the social niceties. Will run her hands in a disturbing manner over the heroes' bodies, given a chance.

Repeats words and phrases eg "She was kind, yes, very kind." Uses "yes" as a thinking

The Sucking Mire

A place of rushes, midges, mosquitoes and frogs. If you keep to the path, you are okay. If you don't, a tumble into the mire is likely. Those with high Earth (4 or more) will be okay, those with low Earth will need a good Fortune card to get themselves out.

There are a couple of extremely hungry crocodiles (3 Earth, 4 Fire, 3 Water, 1 Air) lying in wait for anything remotely edible that strays along the path. Throwing meat from backpacks would be a good way to keep them off. Choose a hero at random - if crocs get very lucky, they get their jaws round his or her leg, if slightly lucky they knock him/her off her feet with a tail swipe.

If the heroes get too close to the river's edge, they may wander too close to a hungry water moccasin (5 Fire, 2 Earth, 4 Water, 1 Air). If it gets lucky, it inflicts a poisonous bite - disabling wound and level 4 poison that will kill in Earth score days. If slightly lucky, it wraps itself around the victim and gets to land the killing blow next round.

Put in a few spider's webs, just to make the heroes jumpy...

The River

Fairly shallow and quite fordable. A hungry pike lurks in the weeds, just to liven things up (3 Fire, 2 Earth, 3 Water, 1 Air). It inflicts a flesh wound if gets lucky.

The Sun Village

Flat-roofed buildings surrounded by a six foot fence. This was hastily thrown up to protect

against a Moon village raid. In the central area is a compass rose, which is the focus of the Dawn ceremony.

Guards constantly patrol the fence - there are at least four at any one time. They are armed with spears. They shout for help first and ask questions later. If the alarm is given, eight more people armed with spears appear in the next three rounds. They shout "Hai, hai..." at regular intervals so that their fellow combatants know where they are (Guard: 3 Fire, 3 Earth, 2 Water, 4 Air).

If the heroes go for or are forced into the physical violence option, the sensible thing would be to wait for the Dawn ceremony to start. This will involve most of the villagers, and they will not stop the ceremony to repel an attack. The villagers start the ceremony when it is coldest and repeat it several times. Some believe that the reason the sun has not risen is because they have not started the ceremony at precisely the right moment.

The village council consists of the following:

- Hellia Goldensdaughter, the Sun Lady. 30s, long brown hair, dressed richly. She wears the sun crown as a mark of office, a vertical head band with golden rays. Imperious and paranoid.
- Flame Apollonson. The oldest member of the village. Harmless old buffer. Reminisces about the old days - "we should never have left the Old Worship Place - that was the beginning of this all".
- Daystar Brightnesson. A sinister priest, Hellia's assistant and occasional lover. Tall and thin. Chief cause of the paranoia about the Moon village.
- Warm Sunshadowsdaughter. The youngest member of the council, daughter of the previous Sun Lady. Not really certain about anything.
- Shine Heliosson: The village smith. Bluff and no-nonsense.

Depending on how the heroes approached the village, they will have to persuade fewer or more village councillors. Hellia and Daystar are very close, but if the other three unite against them, they will give in.

If they gain her trust, Hellia will tell them the following:

- The darkness started when the moon apparently swallowed the sun. This has to be a trick - the sacred writings say that sometimes the moon will appear to swallow the sun, but the sun always re-emerges. The Moon people must have found a way to prolong the moment to give them a chance to wipe out the Sun people forever.
- The reason why the Sun villagers rejected the Lightbringer was that she had a book that one of the children stole while asleep on the night before the wedding. In it, the Lightbringer had inscribed her true name - Lightfoot Moondance... there was also a symbol of a woman dancing

under a crescent moon. Clearly she was in league with the Moon villagers in some way and the whole wedding ceremony was some sort of trick.

Hellia has the fragment of the tablet in her hut. If the heroes can figure out where it (the hut) is, they can steal it fairly easily.

The Wolf Wood

Wind rustles through limp leaves. Branches crack under foot. Experienced rangers may note that there are more of them than there should be. Very quiet for a wood - no birds except owl calls.

Roots catch under the feet. Rough bark. Pricks from dry brambles. Ants crawl over the skin when you lie down. Mushrooms and toadstools.

Smell of pine resin and dry leaves.

A pack of five hungry wolves will stalk anybody who enters the wood. Jason might be able to detect them if he is looking for them. They will select a single victim, based on smell - anyone who smells ill (wounded) or afraid will be chosen, otherwise choose by Fortune card. Their tactics will be to isolate their chosen victim from the rest of the pack, possibly by panicking them with howls or slitherings in the undergrowth. The lead male and female will then bring him or her down (if they get lucky with a Fortune card). The wolves will be sensible enough to retreat if the prey do not react as expected, but they will hang around opportunistically until the heroes leave the wood. Obviously they won't go anywhere near Tempest (Wolves Fire 4 Earth 4 Water 3 Air 1).

Could have spider's webs here as well, just to encourage the heroes to split up...

There are a couple of bears in the forest (Fire 3 Earth 5 Water 2 Air 1) - going into caves would be a bad idea... May hear them crashing through the undergrowth.

The Moon Village

Surrounded by deep pools of water - bottomless to all intents and purposes. The water is very cold - anyone who falls in (and who can't control their temperature) will die in a few minutes of hypothermia.

Guards stand silently on the paths between the pools. If they hear someone coming who does not identify themselves, they jerk on a string which is attached to another guard, who relays the message back to the village, summoning up to eight more guards. The first guard will then

attempt to stun the opposition with his or her club and push them into a pool (Guards Fire 3 Earth 3 Water 3 Air 2 Special ability: Stand silently).

Reinforcements come in webs - groups of four attached to each other by strings. Their aim is to keep the string taut at all times; this tells them that they are far enough away from their neighbour to swing safely. It also allows them to pull people out of the pools relatively quickly. This makes them slightly easier to beat than the Sun villagers since they cannot form a close group. In addition, they are only using clubs - the moon people do not have a smith.

The houses are of wooden construction and have domed roofs. There is a central marked-off area for the Dusk ceremony - the Moon Lord's hut stands along one side.

The Council:

- Selenus Crescentson: mid fifties, long silver hair and beard. Deep mellow voice. Apparently calm and wise, he is devious and unscrupulous. He invented the thread wheeze.
- Glean Moonshadowsdaughter: Wise woman, short and dumpy. She sees visions in the pools when people of the Sun are drowned in them. If she thinks that the Heroes are people of the Sun, she will suggest (in secret) that they be drowned en masse so that she may have a vision as to how they escape from their predicament.
- Owl Palesson: late forties, broad and bearded. Father of Not of the People. He watched while Sunshadow was drowned, which says a lot about his character. Head of the village guard. Heroes may be able to blackmail him, since the villagers would certainly not permit him to be Moon Lord if parenthood of Not of the People were known. On the other hand, that might give him the excuse to organise their drowning.

If the heroes manage to get into the village without getting into a fight, Selenus may tell them the following (after asking the Heroes what they think is going on - he will be listening very carefully for any sign that they are from the Sun people):

- The People of the Moon believe that the Moon is hunting the Sun - that is why it sometimes hides itself, and why it sometimes is seen when the sun is in the sky, but never the other way round. The Moon is hunting the Sun because the Sun stole some of its light.
- The Moon does not show at present because it is locked in combat with the Sun. When one or other has won, the winner will shine anew and normality will return.
- Some villagers disagree, arguing that it is something that the Sun people have done, some perversion of the rituals. They suggest that the Sun villagers should be subdued (the leader of such malcontents is a woman called Sparkle Glittersdaughter).
- The Lightbringer won the trust of the people of the Moon by calling forth moonlight from the pools even when the moon was not in the sky. She lost their trust when Crescent Nightstarsson (Selenus' father) realised that by marrying the Sun Lady, all his lands would

become hers. Since by the traditions of the Moon people, the Moon Lord owned the whole village, in effect the village would be taken over by the Sun people. This observation was made by Gleam Moonshadow's daughter, who claimed that she had seen the Moon village taken over by a shadow on the night before the wedding (the drowning that triggered this vision was of Sunshadow).

If the heroes say anything that suggests that they are from or are allied with the people of the Sun, Selenus arranges for them to be drowned in the middle of the night. Two (or more) guards will attempt to sneak into the hero's huts (they are assigned a villager each to stay with). They may make a fatal mistake in attempting to grab Wrath - Tempest will know and will send an alarm.

The third part of the map is in Selenus' hut. It is used as a paperweight for the ancient manuscripts describing the moon dance ritual.

Approaching the Gate

Luckily for the heroes, the marks on the tablet were deeply incised, and anyone with sensitive fingers can probably deduce that the sun and moon symbols represent the two villages, and hence work out that there is an arch and some writing where the Sparklebrook enters the mountains to the south. Someone might remember the garbled legend about Heaven's Light having his transcendence there.

Sparklebrook is a broad but shallow stream that joins the river Glitter in the Sucking Mire. Its bed is muddy in the marshes but stony beyond, making it possible to walk in the stream itself. The water is, however, very cold.

The stream passes through both the marshes and the Wolf Wood. Any events in either of these locations that haven't occurred already happen now.

In the last mile before the mountains, the stream slopes steeply upwards. The forest thins and becomes heath-like. Everything goes utterly quiet - no animals of any sort can be found here, not even insects.

Characters with high Water scores or magic detection abilities start to feel the influence of the Mist at about half a mile (say two hundred yards per point). It's impossible to describe, but there's a sense that the darkness up ahead is somehow thicker. It's also moving, streaming down the hill. It leaves a sort of clammy impression on the mind.

If there have been any major disagreements in the party, the affected heroes start to experience illusions of touch or sound or smell that are designed to exacerbate those tensions. Characters with high Earth scores start to feel weak and woozy. Characters with high Fire scores complain that they need a rest. Characters with high Air scores start to find random bits of nonsense

drifting through their heads, making it difficult to concentrate. Characters with high Water scores feel foggy.

The last few hundred yards up the hill are a real struggle. The effects of the Mist become stronger with every step.

The Shadow Gate

The Shadow Gate stands on top of a hillock to the right of the stream, by a twenty foot high waterfall. There is a gully in the top of the hillock and at its blocked-off end is a trilathon of three standing stones.

There is no problem in finding the Gate - the waves of darkness emanating from it are palpable even to the most insensitive. Fire and Earth scores are effectively reduced to one and paranoid characters are assailed by constant delusions. In the gully, the air feels treacly - it's hard to breathe and there is a physical pressure pushing the characters back, like trying to swim against a current.

Unless the heroes come up with something extremely clever, there is no way that they will be able to pass through the gate in opposition to the darkness - it simply pushes them out.

The only way to stop the darkness flowing is to destroy the gate. This can be done by pulling down the cross-beam of the trilathon. The Mist will smother most attempts to do this magically. The cross-beam is accessible from the top of the gully (it's only a few feet down); it is six foot wide, two feet thick and three feet across. It weighs about a ton. There is a small gap that would allow someone to loop a rope through. About 6 Earth points of people pulling on the rope gives a chance that it will shift - a lucky Fortune card does the trick. Otherwise the heroes will have to get Tempest or the people of one or both villages to come and help.

A Light in the Darkness

The cross-beam comes down with a great crash that echoes in the mountains beyond. The darkness continues swirling as before. But as the heroes get the breath back, Slight may notice that the forward momentum of the Darkness is diminishing. After a couple of hours, everyone can tell that it has thinned. Stars begin to shine in the night sky, and in the distance, lanterns in the villages can be seen. Faintly, the drums and chanting of the Dawn Ceremony drift from the Sun people's village. The sky to the East fades from black to grey to white to blue and then the great golden orb of the sun rises into the heavens. From the village of the Sun People, there is a faint cheer.

The landscape revealed is stark. A few yellow leaves hang on the bare and twisted trees. Around are dead bushes. The villages are surrounded by withered crops. The bones of a number of animals lie whitely in the sun.

Later, as the sun rises higher, a gibbous moon can be seen hanging in the heavens to the west. Eventually it sets.

If anyone thinks to examine the cross-beam, they find a sigil on it - a woman dancing under a crescent moon.

The heroes can help to re-establish order in the villages, though the people will never be as welcoming as they might wish. Or they may decide to take the west path towards other realms. The Sun villagers may be able to give them vague and garbled descriptions of one or two of the strangers who have passed that way, but they can be saved for a later session....

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