

Over the Gloaming Moor

([Andrew Wright](#))

A sandpit adventure for low- to mid-Rank adventurers

"The Gloaming Moor? You'll not venture there after dark, laddie! Not if you want to retain possession of your body, mind and soul!" - Bertram the Pastor, Edgeham



Introduction

Over the Gloaming Moor is a short sandbox adventure or micro-setting for Dragon Warriors that can be slotted into any hilly region across Ellesland or, with some work, on the mainland as well. It can be used as a series of one-shot adventures or as part of a bigger campaign, and it is pitched at low- to mid-rank parties of characters; a GM should certainly check through Over the Gloaming Moor beforehand and modify it as they see fit for their own gaming group. While primarily a wilderness scenario, those desiring underworld adventures will not find it difficult to insert a cave system here or there, a lost crypt beneath a ring of stones, or even an abandoned Dwarven mine 'up in yonder hills!'

Overview

This scenario consists of two main sections. The first deals with the inhabitants of the two closest villages, one village being on either side of the Gloaming Moor and linked to each other by a series of road networks. The second section deals with the Gloaming Moor itself and its characteristics, as well as a list of fixed locations that may be encountered by the characters who venture into its lonely valleys.

Section I: The Villages

The two settlements are Edgeham, on the southern side of the Gloaming Moor, and Overhill, on the northern side. Both count as villages in terms of available equipment at the local market.

Edgeham

Edgeham is a prosperous village on the market road between Fettlebridge and Verraham, its dwellings clustering along the banks of the Edge River as it flows south from the moor. It is a friendly hamlet of pleasant white stone houses, each decorated with window-boxes of flowers and herbs. There is one good inn for travellers, The Moon and Three Stars, that charges one florin for space on the common room floor or four florins for a private room. The price is a florin each for hot food, a jug of wine, or a tankard of ale.

Next to the inn is an outfitter's shop, patronised by traders visiting the village, selling adventurer's gear, along with bows, quivers, arrows, slings, slingshot, staves and daggers.

In a small hovel on the edge of town lives Vael (a Rank 2 Hunter armed with a bow and shortsword and wearing padded armour), a tall, cheerful man who will serve as a guide across the Gloaming Moor if paid 10 florins a day.

Finally, in the middle of town is the Church of St Angevred the Unsteady. Bertram the pastor (a gruff black-bearded Rank 1 Priest) conducts regular daily services and is custodian of a purported holy relic, the Tooth of Angevred, embedded in a wooden crucifix on a string of beads (which, when worn, provides +1 DEFENCE versus goblins and their kin).

Overhill

Set among lush fields, the village of Overhill lies on the banks of the Hill River, with buildings made from grey slate quarried from the northern edges of the moor.

Somewhat more isolated than Edgeham, there are no inns here, but 'The Black Sheep' tavern offers a meal and space on the floor for one florin; tankards of ale cost half a florin each.

There is a blacksmith in Overhill who can manufacture most metal weapons and armour. This is handy because living in the fortified bridge in the centre of the village is Lady Nisrama, a bored and impetuous young noble (a woman-at-arms and Rank 3 Knight – see Friends or Foes p62 – wearing mail armour and armed with a morning star) and her 2-12 Henchmen (see Friends or Foes p63 – with mail armour, swords, and shields). Lady Nisrama frequently conducts raids into the Gloaming Moor, searching for brigands and other miscreants.

In a hut next to a dead tree on the road south lives Old Jenvra (a Rank 4 Sorceress). She provides services to the villagers, such as reading palms and brewing healing philtres, and may be engaged by the characters in a more esoteric capacity as a spellcaster if they are discrete enough.

Rumours and Quests

The following rumours and quests can be used as examples of things that are known by inhabitants of the villages or even the moors themselves, as well as missions that certain personages may want completed by the characters. When a rumour or quest is required, simply roll a die and consult the table below.

Roll	Rumour	Quest
1	Up on the moor is a stone circle dedicated to the old spirit god Morkaan.	Whoever currently inhabits the dark cave at area 1 has been killing livestock and villagers and needs to be stopped.
2	The Toad Fens are treacherous. Never leave the Low Road!	If you can beat the Gloomviles of the stone circle in a game of chance or strategy you can win a valuable wager from them.
3	There's a lake up there called the High Tarn. Something horrible lives in it!	Bhaldrin the Bloodthirsty and his bandits have been menacing travellers on the High Road and must be brought to justice!
4	Watch out for trolls at night!	A troll has taken up residence under one of the bridges up on the moor and must be dispatched with all haste.
5	A monster lives in the cave at the base of Fang Hill.	Goblin sorcery haunts the woods of the Grim Glade and must be exorcised!
6	An old stone cairn marks an ancient burial ground, but no one knows who is buried beneath it.	The bridge across the River Stillwater, in the middle of the Toad Fens, has broken and needs to be repaired.

Section II: The Gloaming Moor

The Gloaming Moor is a region of bleak, rolling hills covered in heather, the odd stand of pine trees,

and clumps of boulders that resemble scattered lost marbles of the elder gods. Three roads meander through the moor between the villages of Edgeham and Overhill, each with their own unique locations and peculiar inhabitants. The Low, Middle and High Roads are in reality little more than mucky tracks, but in this misty terrain, following their presence is vastly preferable than striking out into the hills without a guide.

General Notes

The Gloaming Moor is so-called because even during the day there is a chance that a fell fog will arise, obscuring everything in sight. Or dark clouds may descend, dumping buckets of rain across the landscape while thunder and lightning snarls and spits across the sky. This, in addition to the poor state of the muddy, craggy roads, means travel time is only 10-or-so miles a day on foot and half that if one strikes out cross-country. This is not recommended as travellers leaving the road to travel through the hills (or the Toad Fens or the Grim Glade) have a 4-in-6 chance of getting lost. Lost parties of characters may wander for hours in a random direction, no doubt encountering a wandering monster or two before finding their way back to the road.

This adventure can be thought of as being set during spring or autumn; summer or winter in the Gloaming Moor may bring their own perils such as clouds of insects or blinding snowstorms. In addition, every bridge has a 1-in-6 chance of a Troll living under it (though this will only be a problem at nighttime when the Troll is active). If the GM needs to determine a random encounter, use the Hills Table from the Bestiary (Bestiary p11), but if the result seems too powerful or out of place, feel free to roll a die on the Animal Encounter chart below for something a trifle more mundane.

Animal Encounters

Roll	Animal Encounter
1	A lone brown cow, trapped in a muddy patch of brambles.
2	A large flock of bell-ringing grey-wooled sheep. There is no shepherd to be seen.
3	A lame white horse with a saddle, reins and bridle, but no rider.
4	A red fox chasing a colourful pheasant across the road.
5	A stray brown dog with a string collar. It appears friendly.
6	A murder of black crows, circling something in a valley nearby.

Encounters

Below is a list of fixed encounters whose location is indicated on the accompanying map of the Gloaming Moor. Unless otherwise stated, all inhabitants can be found in the Dragon Warriors Bestiary.

1. A Dark Cave

This is a large dark cave halfway up a hill and visible from the Low Road as it rounds a bend and heads down into the Toad Fens. Roll a die to determine what dwells within the cave:

Roll	Inhabitant
1-2	Troll

Roll	Inhabitant
3-4	Bear
5-6	Ogre

This creature will use the cave as a lair until slain. The cave will then be empty the next time the characters visit, but after that, another creature will take up residence. After three creatures have dwelled in the cave, it will remain empty (at the GM's discretion).

2. Fen Bridge

This bridge crosses the River Stillwater in the depths of the Toad Fens, or rather, it would if it wasn't broken. The Fens themselves are a wilderness of mud and reeds, the monotony of which is interrupted occasionally by a weeping willow. The river can be forded easily enough, or the bridge can be repaired using bundles of reeds and willow tree branches, though this takes 1-3 days. However, anyone crossing the river or fixing the bridge will be attacked by 3-12 Swamp Folk (Bestiary p24), half of which are armed with clubs and spears, the other half will use their clammy fingers. The toad-like Swamp Folk are quite hungry and will only flee if reduced to 75% of their original number. It is possible to bargain with the Swamp Folk using food, though this has to be in the form of fresh meat. In addition, anyone foolish enough to venture off the Low Road and set out into the misty Toad Fens will, after a while, attract the unwanted attention of 1-4 Ignis Fatuus (Bestiary p39), with all that entails. Finally, anyone fording the River Stillwater or wading through the Toad Fens, or simply falling into either, has a 30% chance of contracting the Swamp Fever disease; this area is rank with pestilence.



3. High Tarn

This highland lake has deep waters stained dark brown from peat. Its shores are muddy and reed-covered where the River Stillwater drains from the Toad Fens, while the northern half has pebble-scattered beaches as the hills meet the water's edge. Anyone spending at least half a day or night at the High Tarn will draw the ire of a hungry Mud Wurm (Prince of Darkness p54) that will attack them if they are near the shore. At the very bottom of the lake is a weed-choked skeleton clutching a magic +1 sword.



4. The Low Road

The Low Road winds down from the heights towards Overhill and through pasture land occupied by several flocks of grey woolly sheep, attended to by 2-7 Shepherds (as per Villagers and armed with cudgels and slings - see Dragon Warriors p245, Bestiary p21, or Friends or Foes p64), and an identical number of Hunting Dogs (see Bestiary p27). How the Shepherds react to the characters depends on their direction of travel and the time of day: if the characters are travelling from Overhill, they will be gruffly welcomed, but if they are coming out of the moors, at dusk, or at night, the Shepherds will consider them bandits, changelings, or worse and, depending on numbers, challenged or fled from. If treated well, the Shepherds can be useful as they know some information about the surrounding moors (i.e., a GM can roll on the Rumours Table above).

5. The Middle Road

This lonely stretch of road, shielded by scattered stunted trees, is the hunting range of a pack of 2-20 Wolves (Dragon Warriors p253), who may be heard howling in the distance. During the day, they will attack any prey in the area, such as the characters, if they outnumber them, but will be driven off if they lose a quarter of the pack. At night, their presence will be bolstered by the Werewolf of area 6 (see below - assume the characters have encountered him on the first night of the full moon), who manifests as an especially large grey wolf; and the Wolves will attack regardless of numbers, fleeing only if they lose half the pack.

6. Fang Hill

This is a weird hill in the shape of a curved tooth that towers over the surrounding moor. At its base is a cave that is home to Illuric the Hermit (a rather hairy, bearded, feral-looking Rank 3 Mystic wearing a torn brown tunic and armed with a quarterstaff). Illuric is an ascetic that has rejected most worldly possessions; his only treasure is an enchanted Periapt worn around his neck, while inside his cave is simply a crude cot of animal-skin blankets, an old lantern, a fire-pit, and a pile of bones. Illuric is also the Werewolf from area 5; if the characters recently wounded him in wolf form with a magic or silver weapon, he will still bear those injuries while human. He is grumpy, reclusive and abrupt with strangers (especially if they wounded him or slew some of his Wolves!) but does know much lore about the Gloaming Moor. The presence of Bhaldrin and the bandits on the High Road (area 8) vexes Illuric strongly and he desires their immediate downfall. If attacked or confronted in his lair, Illuric will howl and summon 2-7 Wolves to aid him in battle; they arrive within 1-3 Combat Rounds.



7. A Lonely Cairn

At the summit of the tallest hill in the immediate area is a towering cairn of moss-covered stones. Anyone who disturbs or dismantles the cairn will be cursed (MAGICAL ATTACK 20). Buried beneath the cairn (which could take up to a whole day to dismantle) is a stone sarcophagus containing the skeleton of an ancient chieftain clad in a corroded bronze mail hauberk and armed with a bronze two-handed sword. If encountered at night or in conditions of fog, the corpse will animate as a Wight and attack the desecrators of its tomb. Aside from the armour and sword (which may be worth something to a collector), the sarcophagus contains a magical copper torc that functions as a Blue Scarab, along with several funeral jars containing 200 ancient silver coins in total. If the characters abscond with the treasure during the day, the Wight will manifest and attack them (even if its corpse was dismembered or destroyed), wherever they are (unless it is a church), on all subsequent nights until slain.

8. The High Road

This windswept section of the High Road is watched over by a gang of 2-12 Bandits (see Friends or Foes p62, or Humans from Dragon Warriors p25 but with +1 ATTACK) armed with bows and swords.

Their leader is Bhaldrin the Bloodthirsty (a Rank 4 Barbarian armed with a battleaxe and wearing a mail hauberk). Half the bandits will be watching the road and half will be with Bhaldrin back at camp, (a shallow woody dell to the north; assume a Poor treasure hoard). They will attack anyone they think they can rob but will flee if they lose a quarter of their men.

9. Grim Glade

This is a high plateau covered in grey-green coniferous trees; the ground is stony and carpeted with dead orange pine needles. 2-20 Goblins lurk in the Grim Glade and will attack and torment anyone who steps off the High Road; those who remain on the path are safe but will be subjected to hails of thrown pinecones, terrifying jump-scares, and torrents of vitriolic abuse. The Goblins know many of the Moor's secrets (e.g., the treasure under the cairn, the current inhabitant of the dark cave), and will reveal this information if successfully threatened or bargained with. They have some treasure of their own; a Poor treasure hoard in a large clay pot at the bottom of an old well, someway within the glade to the east of the High Road.

10. Morkaan's Stones

This ring of standing stones atop a barren hilltop was an ancient shrine to Morkaan, one of the original primeval deities of Ellesland. During the day, it is an eerie yet quiet place with an incredible view, though nothing untoward will occur. At night, however, it is visited by a pack of 2-7 [Gloomviles](#), each carrying a grey candle and a sack of loot, who manifest within the stone circle but cannot leave it. The Gloomviles will beg to play one of their games with the characters and have the riches to back up any bets or stakes. Assume an Average hoard, split evenly amongst each Gloomvile. This treasure disappears with them when they depart the ring of stones at the first rays of dawn. If a pagan priest of the old gods re-consecrates the shrine to Morkaan during the day, the Gloomviles will never reappear.

Conclusion

Every time the characters successfully complete one of the sample Quests and return to a village, they should receive 5 experience points, in addition to any gained from defeating opponents. Feel free to vary this from between 1 to 10 experience points depending on how perilous their accomplished Quest was.

This article first appeared in [Casket of Fays Issue 6](#).

From:
<https://redruin.org/wiki/> - Red Ruin Wiki

Permanent link:
https://redruin.org/wiki/doku.php?id=adventures:over_the_gloaming_moor&rev=1701612254

Last update: **2023/12/03 14:04**

