

Embrun Grove wrapupchip

Last time, I believe the characters finished after they witnessed the bear attack in Embrun Grove. If they search the bodies, they find a little workingman's gold on them, 10 gp total.

Embrun Grove was the last landmark the party had been told about in Arnhem, the town where they met Paine and the mining company mercenaries. Now, Bruhl says his plan was to just head further west and hopefully find Shear Pass by looking; he doesn't know what other option you have. He says there is or was a flagstone path heading from the foothills up to the pass, so if they continue to the foothills and head north, hopefully they should hit that flagstone path. There is a narrow path/road going out of the grove on the west, Bruhl suggests you go that way.

Silvermotes

The party travels west on the flagstone path for two days, until midday one day. Have them roll perception. Whoever rolls the highest notices:

On the ground off the road but nearby, you see a red insect about an inch long crawling out of the ground, struggling to do so. It has a narrow forebody with six black legs, and a more bulbous rear section. It climbs a few feet up a tree's trunk, then seems to attach itself there, and then molt. Its skin breaks apart and a silver bug emerges, like the bug that attacked Beowulf before. The red shell left behind is kind of creepy, it's a skin shell that looks like a complete dead insect, with its own legs and all.

If they don't kill the silver bug immediately:

It flies in the air, then near to you and lands on [random PC].

After they eliminate the first one, roll perception again. The highest perception notices:

Now that the silver bug is killed, and you can turn your attention back to the space around you, you're alarmed to see that there are actually three more of the silver bugs flying near you. Also, you can see three more of the red insects about to molt nearby.

Afterwards, roll perception again. The highest perception notices:

Now that the silver bug is killed, and you can turn your attention back to the space around you, you're alarmed to see that, although it's midday, it's suddenly becoming quite dark. Looking through the forest canopy, you can see a huge silver, glittering cloud of bugs filling the air above the canopy, blocking the sun. And then you see, the space between the trees and the path you're on is quickly becoming filled a huge swarm -- shall we say brood, of the bugs, coming this way.

They have no option but to find cover, and as they realize that they see a wolf blast across the path between them and the swarm, presumably going for a safe place he knows. If they run after the wolf, they see him run past a large (100 ft x 100 ft) mound in the wood, maybe a burial site, and then see him blast down a low hole entrance to a tunnel that they could also get into.

When they get into the mouth of the tunnel, they're one level -- about 7 feet -- below ground, and now they see that there's a door being closed on them. Presumably Beowolf can pound the door open despite someone on the other side trying to bar it.

Haugr's home

When they get through the door, they find there's little light inside -- just a few smouldering embers in a stone box on the far wall of the room. You can stand upright, but the ceiling is just a little above your head, and it seems to be made of several huge granite slabs laid like planks across the ground above. You can see the room is rounded, with the walls made of stacked, irregular, flat stones all around. It's maybe 20 x 20 feet.

Now you see that it was a troll who was blocking the door against you. He was thrown back when you forced the door, and is sprawled on his back in the middle of the room, looking angry and alarmed. There are two other alarmed trolls coming into this room from a far door. The wolf that you followed in here is also, growling at you and a line of fur is standing up on his back from his head down to his tail.

Troll powers

- Trumpeting Roar (same as Aeris' "Beguiling Stands"): Daily, Close Blast 5, Intelligence vs. Will. On a hit, do +5 damage, and push the targets up to 3 squares. The characters ears ring and objects in the house rattle.
- Animal Rage (same as Beowolf's Rage Drake Frenzy): Daily, Strength vs. AC, Hit 3W + 4, Miss half damage. Enter a rage where once per round when you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points, you can make a melee basic attack as a free action.
- Troll hide: Daily: Turn a melee attack against you, by reducing the roll by 4 after it's been rolled.
- Fluid Trolly Grace ("athletic grace"?): Immediate interrupt: Negate an attack, then shift and attack as a free action.

Also, for Haugr:

- Asmund House Shield (same as Bracers of Defense): Daily, immediate interrupt. Reduce the damage from a melee attack by 10.

Also, for Gudmund:

- Mound Dagger: Ancestor Memory, daily power. On a hit, a *human* target is stunned for 1 round by the dim memory of an ancestor lost to time, running naked like an animal, confused, and hunted in a jungle universe you don't understand and that does not care for you.

Wolf powers

- Raised Hackles: You're shocked to see that as the wolf snarls at you, his entire body is racked by rage and the hair over his hackles -- the areas over the shoulders and just before the tail - becomes raised. He gets an action point and combat advantage against one target this round.

Haugr

Weapons:

- Asmund House Shield
- Metal poker from fire

Gudmund

Weapons:

- +2 Mound Dagger.

Oddr

Was working on a ball -- will use it as a thrown weapon on the first round.

Wolf

I guess generic wolf...maybe something related to fur standing on end...maybe to do with loyalty to trolls, if a troll goes down, the wolf gets even crazier

More detailed description of Haugr's home after the fight

The space has stone beds with hides and furs for padding. There are a few tools here, like shovels, some rope. There are some non-utilitarian things here, like beads, a beaten-looking but functioning squeezebox accordion. One of the trolls seems to have been working on something aesthetic, a stone ball with bulbous extensions and swirls.

One of the rooms seems to have some crude plumbing and what might be a (non-flush) toilet that used it. But, you don't see any evidence right away that it was used as such by the trolls.

treasure

The main treasure here they characters have already seen -- the +2 axe and the heirloom shield:

- Asmund House Shield (Ord)
 - A troll hide heavy shield, painted white with a red circle in the center
 - Heirloom of the Mound Clan's Asmund House faction
 - Magic: Kelly's choice of any "Arms Slot" items on PH pages 244-5, up to level 8; or Kelly can suggest something of similar power
 - It doesn't have the normal heavy shield penalties: you can use your shield hand, and it doesn't have the -2 penalty to skill checks
- Mound Daggar (Kasskar)
 - +2 daggar, with a finely constructed, chipped-stone axe head
 - Any magic weapon ability from PH up to level 6.

When the characters leave the troll home, presumably to go to the Mound, they see that the brood has already passed on, leaving a few freaky-looking molted skins on the landscape here and there, maybe 100 of them that you can see from any one spot.

The Mound Clan, the Mound Clan warren

Troll names

As a whole, thees people are called the Agmund. The Richard III subtree is Asmund family, the Henry VII subtree are the Gyda.

Borrow from:

<http://www.behindthename.com/names/usage/ancient-scandinavian>

Troll "neolithic" weapons

Stone weapons from the chambered tomb: spear, axe, arrow heads; wooden shields...armor? I guess no armor?

The Mound Clan has been habitating in the neolithic settlement for about 300 years. So, there's a complicated history of rulership...let's model the length/chronology on the War of the Roses. So, assuming we're at the end of the war of the roses, the two main houses have just been united by a new ruler. So, the PCs will see multiple emblems in the warren, the ones from the two different clans, and then the united emblem combining both. I think Haugr should be the

most senior surviving member of the “Yorks”, who’s “Richard III” member was just killed (a year ago) by the “Henry VII”. Now maybe the Henry VII is leading the unified Mound Clan against another clan nearby...Cliff Dwelling Clan? Or maybe even the Shear Pass clan? That would actually be awesome. So, I guess Mound Clan warren is actually close to the pass.

I guess there are about hundred other of these neolithic style houses in the area -- enough to house most of a “clan.” In addition to the houses, there’s also the mound with the human burials, which the trolls routed long ago.

Chambered Cairn

A low door like the troll house door leads into the Mound. After going through a low passage, the characters come into an arched room with a well-preserved *human* body lying on it. It seems to have been stripped of any martial items on it, but on a Arcana check the characters (or Aeris specifically) can notice two treasure items:

- Mound Amulet (Aeris)
 - Stone amulet with a pattern similar to the ones that Keith draws
 - Preserves a body for reanimation indefinitely as the Embalm ritual, without having to do the ritual and without having to remove organs
 - It’s probably a good opportunity for Aeris to leave the amulet on the current body if he wants to resurrect it and talk to the stone-age king later.
- Mound bracelet (Aeris)
 - Several strands of leather interlaced into a rope bracelet.
 - Has the magic power of any “Neck slot” or “Hands slot” item from PH up to level 7.

There are also a series of side crypts. Unlike the central arched room, the bodies here are not well-preserved, and they have no items of value.

Shear Pass...gate to Hadia / haplessness

I’m going to use the Labyrinthian from Skyrim as a jump start in the layout of the pass.

The characters find the flagstone path and it leads into a narrow path between two cliffs. They follow it for quite a while -- it’s becomes narrow stairs in many places. After several hours of traveling on this trail, they’re able to see a tower rising above the cliffside above them, and soon after that, they turn a corner on the path and the path widens into a wide beautifully carved stair...actually a sequence of beautifully carved stars. At the top, there’s a kind of fort complex that they tower is a part of. It looks like the complex actually guards the way through the mountain.

What is the complex?

Necuratu

Reinhardt and his men - the Lotus eaters

There is a hardened man, but sedate when you see him, named Reinhardt. He's an apparent poet-warrior. He's with his men, who are lounging and maybe inebriated, eating a red fruit:

"The fruit is an edible drupe, yellow-brown, red, or black, globose or oblong, 1–5 cm (0.39–2.0 in) long, often very sweet and sugary, reminiscent of a date in texture and flavour."

There are also Necuratu around, apparently afraid of or subservient to Reinhardt; even in their oblivion, Reinhardt and his men don't seem to be afraid of the Necuratu. However, even sedated, Reinhardt is perceptive and can give advice on different topics.

He recognizes the Asmund House shield that Ord is carrying, and gives the characters a little information about Mound Clan.

He recognizes Beowulf as an Inkeri, he says by the smell of Hilde on the party, and stares hard at him. He says as an Inkeri he knows that Hilde is in an inhuman place, the hell towns, the nonsensical dream happenings, the abominations, eye of the storm, Highpyre -- the last defense against abomination -- destroyed. And, where is the Star that once lit Highpyre, a symbol of holdout against death there?

He can also answer their questions about the Pass complex and the nosferatu there -- how the pass was built where the earth touched the sky -- actually a portal to the nosferatu's plane of evil in the sky above the tower -- like an Apogee but to that one specific plane.

On the Kirsi, he says he'll stay silent on that topic.

"howe" clan...haugr clan...mound clan.

When this house was excavated, fragments of stone, bone and antler were found. It is possible that this building was used as a house to make simple tools such as bone needles or flint axes.

stone boxes

This pastoral lifestyle is in sharp contrast to some of the more exotic interpretations of the culture of the Skara Brae people. Euan MacKie suggested that Skara Brae might be the home of a privileged theocratic class of wise men who engaged in astronomical and magical ceremonies at nearby sites like the [Ring of Brodgar](#) and the [Standing Stones of Stenness](#).^[17] Graham and Anna Ritchie cast doubt on this interpretation noting that there is no archaeological evidence for this claim,^[18] although a Neolithic "low road" connects Skara Brae with the magnificent chambered tomb of [Maeshowe](#), passing near both of these sites.^[19] Low roads connect Neolithic ceremonial sites throughout Britain.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maeshowe>

Other artifacts excavated on site made of animal, fish, bird, and [whalebone](#), [whale](#) and [walrusivory](#), and [killer whale](#) teeth included [awls](#), needles, knives, [beads](#), [adzes](#), [shovels](#), small bowls and, most remarkably, ivory pins up to 10 inches (25 cm) long.^[32] These pins are very similar to examples found in [passage graves](#) in the [Boyne Valley](#), another piece of evidence suggesting a linkage between the two cultures.^[33] So-called Skailk knives were commonly used tools in Skara Brae; these consist of large flakes knocked off sandstone cobbles.^[34] Skailk knives are found throughout Orkney and [Shetland](#).

The 1972 excavations reached layers that had remained waterlogged and had preserved items that otherwise would have been destroyed. These include a twisted skein of heather, one of a very few known examples of Neolithic rope^[35] and a wooden handle.^[36]

haugr -- mound

- Old Norse for "The Maiden's Tomb"? This would be *meyjarhaugr* or *maerhaugr*.
- Old Norse for "The Great Tomb"? This would be *mestrhoaugr*. Interestingly, Maeshowe is called *Orkahaugr* in the [Orkneyinga Saga](#). The first element of that name, *orka*, signifies power or greatness.

troll barrows

trolls should be living in a N.M type cliff wall, neolithic type homes, caves. they should have the heads etc. marking off the way to the nosteratu as a warning. Or, perhaps the characters should be chased into some kind of a troll home that reflects that they're slightly more human than the ice trolls they met before.

I guess I need something to reflect that there's life going on here, rather than just 3 trolls sitting in a neolithic home. Let's say there are five trolls there, all home at the moment, in a small space that we'll exaggerate the size of for effect. There would have to be say a common room and 3-4 bedrooms, an unused drainage/toilet room that the trolls don't use. An old box that the trolls use for a seat. The main visual feature are the walls, which are those flat stones piled up against the soil to make a stable wall. The rooms are curved and rectilinear -- the ceiling is low, let's say 6 or 7 feet. The dog/wolf is there. There are many layers of cave-drawing like drawings here, drawn on top of each other. It has a smell like soil, cold moistness maybe feces or just the smell of trolls...actually the trolls here seem pretty clean. Do they have crops? Maybe a few

? Maybe some weed -- they smoke? A few silvermotes have also gotten in. A few animal hides on the ground for bedrolls..on top of the old stone beds. One of the trolls was carving a ball with swirling patterns and bulbous things coming off of it. Maybe there's an elderly / cripple blind troll in teh back room that the characters can bar in. The trolls have some valuables that can be plundered or no? I guess the trolls can't have clothes made of cloth -- it's hard to imagine them making cloth ... I guess leather or hide clothing, right? For modesty, some hide shorts, not a loin cloth but relatively minimal, about the size and style of shorts MMA fighters would wear. They actually have a few silvermotes in a jar to enjoy.

Key to the trolls -- why is fighting them interesting? Maybe they already took some weapons from the cairn.

Chambered Cairn

Maybe the chambered cairn is still visited by the shape changers thus respected / not used by the trolls. Umm, maybe not, I'd like it to be clearly abandoned so the characters can plunder it.

Back entrance goes to a chambered cairn which...the trolls ignore? The trolls have taken over?

Shear Pass, or, The Eye of the Needle

I guess the closest example to this in the lit is Cirith Ungol.

How do the characters find the pass? Maybe one of "Kurtz"'s men tells them?

Shear/Sheer Pass, Crux Pass, Hairline Pass, Nub Pass, Im Pass, Singleton pass, Chokepoint pass...other synonyms for dubious, anxious, or at the limit of what you can do? Shackleton Pass? Shackle Pass? Actually, I think it need a name more reminiscent of the realms that it's in, reflecting the trolls, vampires, or Kirs. Or maybe something more generic, e.g. Elm Pass? Barrow Pass...oh, I kind of like that, a little generic though. Or maybe something subtly related to the vampire haunting there? Lost Pass? Or maybe something *gate? Blackgate? Black Pass? Something about being close to the sky or low oxygen? ("Breathless Pass", "Panting Pass"?) Or, maybe something more psychodelic / unreal? "Shroud", curtain? Eye of the needle? Maybe just "needle pass"?

Defile? Earth touching the sky? Talontower? **Travertine Pass.**

There might be some food for thought on this page, which discusses a point where earth and sky touch:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flammarion_engraving

There should be a place in Anhalt where the earth and the sky touch.

Inkeri have a barbarian ritual that lets them go into inner Hilde without losing time.

The Nosferatus should have embryo-position skeletal baby mummies as power sources, collected maybe in their main hall.

The party won't be able to go back through the pass because now the nosferatu are alerted to them, and can bar the gate against them coming back...so they'll have to take the "moria" route...actually maybe this can be where Prosper's thing is?

kirsi

Now it seems like the Kirsi are beset by a bunch of things -- miners, nosferatu, "Kurtz", the deformed dragon, the guilty god.

After game summary

The 17-year silvermote brood drives the party underground, into the stone age home of Mound Clan trolls, who they defeat. They continue to X Castle at Shear Pass, where they find the admiralty warrior Reinhardt and his men seeking oblivion and mingling with vampire-like necaratu. They learn that Shear Pass is where earth touches Granauch, the necaratu plane and hell of hapless victims.