



ABIDE



WE LIVE, WE FIGHT, WE DIE
...BUT WE SHALL NOT BE TAKEN!

You are an Elder

You have seen and accomplished much throughout your 60 years of life. You've done a little of everything, mastered a few skills, and have survived dozens of trials and dangers. You know what you're capable of.

More importantly, you know your limits; how to lift objects without hurting your back, how to fall without injuring yourself, how to shape magical forces with precision, and where and when to strike back at a foe.

You're not a young fool who bets on raw strength or blind luck. Rather, you rely on your teammates, items, and careful planning to achieve your goals.

Your Harvester is coming

During your 60th year a Harvester will descend from the skies to hunt you down and take you away.

Even if you manage to vanquish it, your Harvester will return sometime during your 61st year. It will continue to hunt you, year after year, until it either succeeds in its grim task or you perish in some other fashion.

You can't do this alone!

How is ABIDE different?

A lot of the rules and procedures of ABIDE will be familiar to you if you've played other roleplaying games. But some things may be new to you:

Conversation is gameplay. Who will do what? What's the plan? How are we accomplishing this? Discussions are the core part of the game.

Teamwork is required. Instead of taking turns, ABIDE has a heavy focus on coordinated teamwork. The players succeed or fail together.

Finding life under darkness. The threat of the Harvesters is dark and grim. Every Elder processes this fear in their own way. But everyone strives to create a joyful, fulfilling life in spite of their fears. Embrace the small joys your Elders discover, and help your Elder work through their struggles and Burdens.

You will need...

2-5 Players, one player is the Game Master

Printed character sheets & pencils

A twenty sided die (or dice app)

A few hours

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We only bother to write down important items; stuff that will help you work on Tasks. If your Elder wears a hat, for example, it doesn't take up a Slot unless you plan to use it with a Task!

Example Mementos

Mementos are items associated with past experiences and skills. They can be used for any Task related to those memories.

Gruff's Compass

Sailed the 5 oceans.
(Navigate by the stars, tie strong knots, ship repair, predict weather)

Heather's Hat

Dozens of years as a Lady of the court.
(Social cunning, build new alliances, clever wordplay)

Alexa's Deck

Ran a gambling den.
(Manage finances, organize employees, catch cheaters, plan big events)

Example Spells

Spells are stored in an item (which is stored in a Slot). They are named in the "Adjective Noun" format. A spell can be cast to do anything related to its name.

Angry Growth

A jar of seeds that shudder and shake.
(Tangle foes, infest an area with deadly ivy)

Howling Moon

A small pendant of a White wolf. (Turn into A wolf, provide light, a piercing howl)

Burnt Questions

A charred book of ancient riddles.
(Ignite materials, confuse an enemy, distract dragons)

Example Burdens

Burdens can be positive or negative; anything that weighs you down and takes up your time. All Burdens take up a Slot and cannot be used with Rolls.

All Burdens require 20 Progress to transform into a Memento or Spell.

Half-empty Vial

You're running low. Can you get more? (Memento: learned alchemy)

Twisted Ankle

Every step is agony.
(Memento: learned basic first aid skills)

A Deep Lie

A lie you believe about the world...or yourself.
(Memento: detecting lies of others)

Same Old Fear

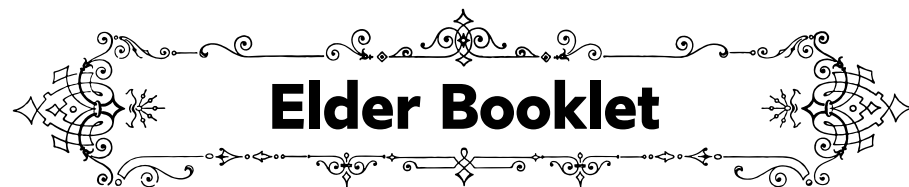
How much longer can you avoid it?
(Memento: related to your fear)

Frustrating Stutter

Why is communication so difficult sometimes?
(Spell: Mindful Message)

New Hobby

Oil Painting maybe?
(Spell: New Perspective)



Elder Booklet

Print two sided (along short edge) and fold so that this is the front of a booklet.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Debts: _____

Create an Elder

Every player creates an Elder that they will guide with their decisions and dice rolls.

1. Name your Elder. You are 60 years old. No Debts.
2. In your first Slot, write down a Memento.
3. In your second Slot, write down a Spell.
4. In your third Slot, write down a Burden.
5. In the other Slots write down anything else your Elder cares about; tools, supplies, weapons, etc.
6. For each blank Slot, gain +1 Energy in Reserves.



What's On Your Mind?

These are just the items your Elder cares about right now.
Items either **allow** you to do something or they **assist** you (roll 2x).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

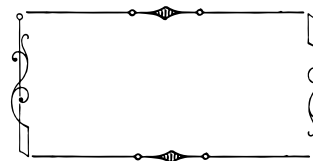


Rest to Recover

When you rest, follow these steps in order:

1. **Meditate & Train.** Unmark a Number of your choice except **1**. (can't avoid Harvesters)
2. **Work on a Burden.** Make a single roll on any Burden (even another Elder's), then spend ALL your Reserve Energy on it. *You cannot use any items with this roll.*
3. **Sleep.** Gain 1 Energy in your Reserve for each blank item Slot.

Energy Reserves



Spend Energy after you roll to make additional Progress, 1 for 1.

Spend 2 Energy to "discover" a simple item in your Pack.

Describe Action, then roll a d20

11-20 Make Progress equal to (ROLL - 10).

1-10 Your actions made no Progress. **Mark the Number** you rolled below. **If already Marked**, suffer the consequence. **If all Numbers** are Marked, your Elder is dying.



- 10** ☐ This Task is instantly failed.
- 9** ☐ Lose all Energy in your Reserves.
- 8** ☐ Gain a Burden related to an injury.
- 7** ☐ Gain a Burden related to stress.
- 6** ☐ Gain a Burden related to your past.
- 5** ☐ Immediately Mark another Number.
- 4** ☐ Destroy all simple items.
- 3** ☐ Destroy a Spell or Memento.
- 2** ☐ Incapacitated. Allies may attempt to revive you. (15 Progress, 3 Rolls)
- 1** ☐ ☐ ☐ When all three are Marked, then your Harvester arrives! Earn your Haven.

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____



Journal Pages

Print two sided (along short edge) and fold so that this is the front of a booklet.
Tuck it inside your Elder Journal or staple it to the back.

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

Event: _____

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How to Play

Start the Conversation

Tell the GM what you want your Elder to do. For simple actions, the GM will describe how the world reacts to you, no rolls required.

If you want to do something risky or difficult, create a Task and assign it a Progress Cost and a Roll Limit.

Unimportant or Low Stakes: 5 Progress, 2 Rolls

Most Tasks: 10 Progress, 3 Rolls

Important or High Stakes: 20 Progress, 5 Rolls

Working on Tasks

Any Elder can work on a Task, so long as it makes sense. Describe what your Elder is doing, roll a d20:

1-10 No progress is made. Mark a Number.

11-20 Some Progress is made.

After you Roll, you may spend Energy from your Reserves to make additional Progress, 1 for 1.

If you made enough Progress within the Roll Limit, then the Task was completed successfully! The GM will describe how the situation changes.

Otherwise, this Task was failed, things get worse. The GM will describe the consequences of your failure.

You fail or succeed as a group; you can't do this alone!

Use one item per roll

Items **allow** you to do things you couldn't do on your own or they **assist** you with what you're doing (roll twice, pick one result).

For example, a torch may allow you to set a rope on fire or it may assist you while searching in the dark. In some cases, it may be so utterly pitch black that the torch is allowing you to see anything at all.

It depends on the situation; talk with your group to determine if an item is **allowing** or **assisting**.

Marked Numbers

These represent the stresses of your body and mind. When all Numbers are Marked, your Elder is dying.

Whenever you roll a 1-10 you must Mark that Number. If the Number is already Marked, then you immediately suffer the listed consequence.

Creating Tasks

Tasks are key to enjoying a game of ABIDE. A well-crafted Task not only tells you what you're trying to accomplish, but also what the potential consequences are, and how your Elder will work on this Task. A few basic rules for Tasks:

Tasks must be open-ended. Phrase the Task so that it could be accomplished in a variety of ways.

"Pick the lock on the door" is not a Task. "Get past the door" is better. "Get past the door before the guard returns" is even better.

Tasks hint at their consequences. Set the stakes and remind everyone why you're working on this Task.

"Explore the room" is not a Task. "Explore the room before it floods with oil" is better. "Find any valuables in this room before it floods with oil" is even better.

Tasks focus on the real goal. What are you really trying to accomplish?

"Fight the bandits" is not a Task. Why are you fighting them? Is there a better/different way to accomplish your goal? "Protect the treasure from the Bandits" is better. "Protect the treasure from the Bandits until reinforcements arrive" is great.

Tasks are temporary. They either have a time limit or they can't be repeated again until circumstances change significantly.

"Get to the city" is not a Task. "Get to the city before the storm hits" is good. "Decode the map to the hidden city" is also good.

Tasks are collaborative. The GM will guide you and make suggestions, but it's up to every player at the table to ensure that Tasks are phrased clearly. Tasks help keep everyone on the same page and united in their goals.

It's tempting to jump straight to dice rolls, but a well-defined Task keeps the game moving forward and ensure everyone is involved.

ABIDE isn't played moment to moment like some other games. Rather time is flexible, and a single Task might cover weeks of travel, or seconds of peril.

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GM Reference

Play Procedures

When you're stuck, follow these steps:

1. Describe the situation

- ▶ Mention any threats nearby.
Hazards, monsters, mysteries
- ▶ List opportunities.
Paths, valuables, clues
- ▶ Add interesting details.
Unexpected, weird, fun

2. Ask the Players what they want to do. Listen to their ideas. Ask clarifying questions.

3. Create a Task from their ideas. Make sure everyone agrees with how the Task is worded.

- ▶ What is the actual goal of this Task?
- ▶ Can it be accomplished in different ways?
- ▶ What are the consequences for failure?

4. Assign Progress Cost and Roll Limit. This is more about pacing than difficulty.

Unimportant or Low Stakes: 5 Progress, 2 Rolls

Most Tasks: 10 Progress, 3 Rolls

Important or High Stakes: 20 Progress, 5 Rolls

5. Let them roll.

- ▶ **Success:** describe the obvious result.
- ▶ **Failure:** Get creative with the consequences!

Consequences

Consequences are always narrative and impact the entire group. Some suggestions:

- ▶ **Lose this opportunity.** They cannot try again and must find some other way to accomplish their goal.
- ▶ **Create a new threat or obstacle.** An enemy appears, a storm arrives, or an ally is in danger.
- ▶ **Related Tasks grow more difficult.** More Progress required, less Rolls allowed, worse consequences.
- ▶ **Remove an Advantage.** Valuable intel is rendered useless, alliances dissolve, lose something important.
- ▶ **Offer a tough choice.** The Elders can still get what they want, but they'll have to give up something or make things even worse.
- ▶ **Secret doom.** Create a growing threat that the players don't know about. Every time they fail, this threat grows closer and closer.
- ▶ **Can't think of anything?** Then you probably need to re-work this Task.

Core Tenants

The Keep is Safe. Elders disagree and squabble but ultimately come together for the good of the Keep.

Harvesters are Deadly. Elders can overcome almost any obstacle; only Harvesters present a true threat.

The World is Distrusting. Not just fear and prejudice towards Elders, but a general avoidance of Harvesters and the aged. Do not expect a warm welcome.

Everyone needs Help. Most folks within the Keep have learned to be vulnerable and ask for help. The players should feel free to do likewise. Not many loners in the Keep.

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Examples of Play

To start, the GM describes the current situation that your Elders find themselves in.

GM: "Your group descends into the cave, and is greeted by a huge stone door covered in glyphs."

GM: "A new day dawns, and someone needs your help repainting their house."

GM: "You have hidden yourselves under the pile of rugs. Your Harvester is sniffing about, searching for you."

Ask the GM any questions you have. Talk with other players and then tell the GM what you want to do. The GM may ask some clarifying questions about what you are trying to accomplish.

"Does anyone know what these symbols mean?"

"Maybe we can just break down the door instead."

"I have a bad feeling...let's leave!"

"Where can we get paint?"

"My Elder was an artist...but this seems a little different."

"What can this person offer in return?"

"If we cause a distraction, I can escape down the trash chute."

"No, we should stay here until it leaves."

"Draw your weapons; we can take it!"

If it's something simple or straightforward, then your Elders just do it and the GM describes the outcome.

Player: "I push my hands against the door to see if it's sturdy."

GM: "Oh, it's sturdy all right. Doesn't budge."

Player: "I talk to our friend, see what kind of painting they need."

GM: "They want help covering a huge, weird stain on the wall."

Player: "I wait for a while, to see what the Harvester does."

GM: "The longer you wait, the closer it gets..."

If they want to accomplish something risky or difficult, the GM creates a Task for it. Any Elder can work on a Task as long as it makes sense.

Players: "We want to translate these symbols."

GM: "That will require 12 Progress, 3 Rolls."

Players: "We want to take a closer look at this stain; it seems weird."

GM: "Deducing the cause of the stain requires 7 Progress, 2 Rolls."

Players: "Forget this! Let's run!"

GM: "Escaping the city before the Harvester catches you will require 16 Progress, 4 Rolls."

To work on a Task, describe what your Elder is doing and roll a twenty sided die. 10 or lower, your action didn't make progress on this task. 11 or higher, then your action made some Progress.

Player: "I used to teach at my old wizard school; I bet I can translate these too!"

Player rolls a 15. Progress is made.

GM: "These definitely look familiar to your course on ancient runes."

Player: "My father was an alchemist, and he taught me a few things. Maybe I can use that knowledge?"

Player rolls a 7. No progress is made.

GM: "Unfortunately this substance defies what little alchemy you know."

Player: "I throw an old bottle in the opposite direction to distract it as we run away."

Player rolls a 10. No progress is made.

GM: "The Harvester is not distracted and remains focused on you."

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Examples Continued

Tasks have a limited number of Rolls to complete them. If you run out of Rolls before you complete the Task, then the Task is failed and things get worse!

GM: "Translating the ruins requires 12 Progress in 3 Rolls or fewer."

Player 1 was a wizard professor, and rolled a 15. 5 progress is made.

7 Progress remaining, 2 Rolls left.

Player 2 knows many different languages. They rolled a 3. Linguistics didn't help.

7 Progress remaining, 1 Roll left.

Player 1 wants to try again, and rolls a 14. 4 Progress is made.

Not enough! The group is out of rolls but there is still 3 Progress remaining. This task is failed.

GM: "Determining the cause of the stain will require 7 Progress in 2 rolls or fewer."

Player 1's spouse was an Alchemist. They rolled a 13. 3 Progress is made.

4 Progress remaining, 1 roll left.

Player 2 was an artist and knows a lot about colors and textures. They roll an 11. 1 Progress is made.

Player 2: "Wait! I want to spend some Energy to finish this off. I spend 3 Energy to make the last 3 Progress."

Success! The group successfully identifies the stain.

GM: "Escaping the city before the Harvester gets you will require 16 Progress in 3 rolls or fewer."

Player 1 tries to tip over the rugs, putting a barrier between them and the Harvester. They roll a 19. 9 Progress is made.

7 Progress remaining, 2 rolls left.

Player 2 casts a spell to cover the Harvester in vines, slowing it down. They roll a 14. 4 Progress is made.

3 Progress, 1 roll left.

Player 4 grew up in a big city and knows how to find shortcuts. They roll a 13. 3 Progress is made.

The group succeeds!

The GM describes how the situation changes as a result of your actions and the game continues forward.

GM: "Unfortunately these symbols remain a mystery. You'll need to find another way past this door, or explore for another entrance."

GM: "Your examination reveals that this is in fact Harvester blood, and it's less than a year old. Something strange happened here; what do you want to do next?"

GM: "As you reach the edge of town, you hear the Harvest tearing up buildings and causing havoc. Where do you want to go from here?"

That's the basic flow of play. We like to think of dice and points as "gameplay" but in ABIDE the core of the game is asking questions and exchanging ideas.

How you do something is just as important as **what** you are doing. The rules of ABIDE are simple, but stories are complex and ever-changing. As an example, say you want to work on this Task:

Convince the quartermaster to give you some extra arrows. (10 Progress, 3 Rolls)

If enough Progress is made within the Roll Limit, the task is complete, and the quartermaster gives you some extra arrows. But you need to explain what your Elder is doing to convince the quartermaster. Are they using threats? Bribes? Friendliness? Truth serum?

Either way you roll dice. But **how** you do something matters just as much as what you roll. For example, if you threatened the quartermaster you'll still get your discount, but later they might give you trouble or withhold supplies. Likewise if you befriend the quartermaster, you might be expected to help them out in the future.

This reliance on the fiction is what makes ABIDE work. It takes priority over the rules of the game. So be sure to give the GM lots of details and make those details matter!

ABIDE



Welcome to the Keep

You may feel as though your life is over; that you've come here to wither away. I hope to show you how wrong you are, and to help you build a new life in the Poineri Este, the Silver Keep. You've heard our mantra, but it's more than just a rousing chant. The four parts guide everything we do here in the keep:

We Live

Parties, games, conversations, friendships, and fine wines are why we're all here. It's easy to get swept up in the battles and the long work shifts and the stresses of life. But most importantly we all need a reason to live and fight. Let us help you find a reason; whether that be community, hobbies, fulfillment, or simply some really delicious food.

We Fight

This is not something we do lightly, but our battle is one of life and death, and we need each of you to contribute. We place upon you a burden of **60 Wall Debts**. If you wish to remain here in the Keep, you will repay these debts before the end of the year.

There is much battle to be done; as much with a soup ladle as with a sword! The different Clans each contribute in their own ways, neither is more important than any other...despite what they may tell you. Each Clan offers different opportunities to repay your Wall Debts. We hope you find ways to contribute that are fulfilling and satisfying.

We Die

We make the most of the time we have left, and fight with every breath. But eventually we all must end our journey. When you die, those who knew you will throw a feast in remembrance, eating your favorite foods and telling your stories to one another.

Every Remembrance Feast is a blend of joy and sadness, of food and drink, of life and death. This looming threat of death is what makes life so precious; it's what makes the fight so important. And even death is preferable to the alternative.

We Shall Not Be Taken!

Your Harvester is coming for you. I wish I could say that you're safe now, that you don't need to be afraid. But fear is part of the fight. It's part of life. And if you let your fear consume you, then your Harvester has already won.

With a population of 4000 Elders, we get about 10 Harvester attacks every day. We have 100 people manning the walls at all times so the vast majority of Harvester attacks are repelled safely.

And after your Harvester is defeated we celebrate your birthday with yet another feast! You will earn your Haven and be free to roam and work beyond the walls.

Wall Debts

In the early days of the Keep, every able-bodied Elder was forced to fight atop the battlements. A 6-hour shift fighting Harvesters was known as a "Wall Day". As the population grew, Elders could work fewer Wall Days and contribute to the Keep in other ways.

While our fighters are still valued, we have just as much of a need for cooks, farmers, craftsmen, and artists. To reflect this change of priorities, we use "Wall Debts" as a de facto currency of the Keep.

To ensure all Elders contribute to the keep, we require each person to repay 60 Wall Debts every year. Wall Debts can be repaid in a variety of ways by working for the different Clans of the Keep. Reach out to a Clan and see what opportunities and jobs they have available.

The Council

The Council serves as the guiding light for the Keep, providing guidance, serving as judges for any complaints (or deputizing scribes to do so), and interacting with nobility and other concerns from outside the Keep. The Council is formed of the leaders of each Clan, although each Clan gets one vote total.

Though nominally equal, the Council does have a Chief Councillor whose vote counts as two in the case of deadlocked decisions. This role passes among the Clan Heads, passing either at the New Year or at the passing of the previous Chief Councillor, whichever comes first.

ABIDE



Clan Overview

Medics Provide medical care, healing poultices, and train first aid.

First Doctor Irche (He/Him) is a talented surgeon and a grandstanding blowhard.

Second Doctor Busrut (She/Her) is a potion master and an engaging conversationalist.

Third Doctor Sabei (He/Him) is a quiet counselor who studies mental health.

Chefs Prepare the food; from parties to traveling rations.

Head Chef Alreado (He/Him) gives his best food to the troops, and misses the battlefield.

Sous Chef Alar (She/Her) knows everyone's favorite food, and organizes the smaller parties.

Head Brewer Frost (He/Him) crafts delicious drinks. He won't bother to learn your name.

Fighters Train for combat & guard the walls.

Champion Gutless (She/Her) will train you until you pass out.

Defender Tannis (He/Him) tells self-deprecating jokes about himself in between brilliant displays of archery and wheelchair racing.

Scribes Record history, manage finances, and help the other Clans stay organized.

First Quill Brurd (They/Them) won't remember what they had for lunch, but can recite a detailed history of the Keep.

Second Quill Plidee almost enjoys people as much as she enjoys books and research.

Third Quill Farva (She/Her) is an unpopular leader who admittedly keeps everyone organized.

Locksmiths Pursue the less...legal pursuits. As Elders we must use every tool and weapon we have. Their leaders and members are secretive.

Envoy Leader Cueva (She/Her) is the public figurehead for the Locksmiths, and acts as a go-between for contracts and communication.

Cottars Do whatever else needs doing.

First Cottar Fluvere (She/Her) works almost as hard as she flirts. Cottar tasks are an excuse to meet many different kinds of people.

Second Cottar Ovrn (They/Them) does more work than anyone else, but never finishes a job.

Landsfolk Tend the pastures, farm the fields, and prowl the forests.

Head Farmer Clerte (He/Him) will interrupt your conversation with a useful tidbit and a handy map.

Head Shepherd Puan (She/Her) a champion wrestler who handles the animals with a strong but gentle hand.

Head Hunter Punjaxe (He/Him) will greet you with a hug and sign language before going on a stealthy hunt through the dark wilds.

Magi Seek to understand and harness magic.

Archmage Stovre (He/Him) can see the future, the past, and the present all at once. It's overwhelming.

Demimage Litui (She/Her) will help you craft a spell that may or may not do what you expected.

Alchimage Ana (She/Her) hates the Keep, but hates the Harvesters even more.

Crafters Include builders, artists, and smiths; all of whom create for the Keep.

Head Artisan Vima (She/Her) will find the right artist for the job.

Head Builder Judi (She/Her) will calmly organize a hectic project.

Head Smith Armstrong (He/Him) is excited about a new prosthetic he's been working on.

Caravaneers Journey across the land trading for supplies and bring new Elders home.

Caravan Leader Raffi (She/Her) was probably the first Elder you met.

Envoy Leader Cueva (She/Her) is a shrewd negotiator who sees through deception.

ABIDE



Week 1: Arrival

This short, action-packed adventure serves to introduce the Elders to the Keep and remind them of the very real threat that Harvesters pose. Expect this adventure to take an hour or two to play through.

Importantly, all the Tasks listed in this adventure are merely suggestions. They serve to demonstrate what Elders may do, or how they might overcome the obstacles presented. Allow your group to make their own plans and decisions. The adventure is a bunch of ideas; not a script.

As a word of warning, this adventure is linear and focused: Get to the Keep safely. Most ABIDE adventures work best when they're more open-ended. But for an introduction to the world, it can be helpful to point the players in a specific direction.

Intro

After weeks of travel, the Caravan finally approaches the Silver Keep. In between puffs of her cigar, Raffi, the Caravan leader, orders her Caravaneers to prepare for arrival. She calls all the Elders before her; over 400 on this particular trip. A hasty amplification spell carries her voice to every attentive ear:

"We now prepare to enter the Keep! You have all trained in basic formations with your unit. Tomorrow you'll put them to the test. Every Elder unit will be assigned to guard a segment of the Caravan as we cross the final stretch. If you recall your briefing, we get over 10 Harvester attacks every day; and this caravan will be vulnerable during the final few miles. We live, we fight, we die, but we will not be taken!"

Here's Raffi's plan:

1. In the morning, all wagons are packed and the Caravan moves out.
2. Each Elder unit protects a wagon or group of wagons. The groups separate into a long train; putting distance between each group in case of Harvester attacks.
3. The final approach will take all day, even moving the wagons as fast as they can.

The PCs are assigned to a unit and charged with protecting a rotund merchant who trades in fabrics and fashion items. Tyron is his name, and he jokes that his bulk allows him to better advertise his fabrics.

Some mistake his wrinkled visage for that of an Elder, but his jet-black hair is devoid of silver, and he smugly claims that his Elder days are still years away.

The Keep is located in a mountainous area, so the approach will be forced through a series of narrow chasms. These chasms are fantastic when defending the Keep, but they render the Caravan's approach vulnerable to Harvesters and bandits.

Prepare

The Elders have several hours to prepare for tomorrow's arrival. Ask them how they want to spend that time.

Reinforce Tyron's wagon without draining supplies from the Caravan. (5 Progress, 2 Rolls)
Success: then the wagon will not be destroyed in the following events.

Prepare and train Tyron for combat without scaring him or making him nervous. (10 Progress, 3 Rolls)
Success: Tyron is able to contribute 4 Progress to any Task he helps with.

Convince Raffi to grant extra supplies. (12 Progress, 3 Rolls)
Success: grant each Elder a new Spell or weapon.

Or simply rest and recover their energy; enjoying Tyron's jokes and stories. "Once, while I was a lad, my family visited an island where no one wore clothes! We were baffled. How can we bargain with folks who don't need our wares? However, my mother saw that they relied heavily on fish to feed themselves. But they only ever bothered with the large catches far offshore. Smaller minnows and crabs weren't worth the effort. So she demonstrated how a pair of stockings can make an effective fishing net..."

However the Elders chose to spend their evening, when the sun rises, the final approach begins. Tyron's wagon group is one of the first to head into the maze of chasms.

The Attack

After a few hours of quiet travel, a guttural noise echoes through the canyon walls. A shadow appears overhead; a misshapen figure with far too many arms. With another echoing yell, the Harvester begins to descend the walls. Ask the Elders what they want to do:

Race to the Keep, and get some help from Elders on guard duty.

(23 Progress, 5 Rolls)

It is several hours away, even at top speed it will be difficult to stay ahead of a Harvester. But it's possible; this Harvester seems to be suited for underwater movement, not land locomotion.

Success: After two hours of tense, white knuckled racing, the Elders arrive at the Keep just ahead of the Harvester. Archers are able to help with the battle, hastening its defeat (Defeating the Harvester now only requires 8 Progress, 2 Rolls).

Failure: Your furious charge takes you further from Caravan reinforcements, but the wagon breaks down before you reach the Keep. Now you must fight it alone.

Defend Tyron until reinforcements arrive from the Caravan behind you.

(17 Progress, 4 Rolls)

This will involve more running and dodging than fighting. The Elders must simply hold out until the next group of wagons catches up.

Success: Another group of Elders arrives and assists in fighting the Harvester. (Defeating the Harvester now only requires 16 Progress, 6 Rolls).

Failure: Tyron is grabbed by the Harvester, and it begins to escape. A new Task:

Catch up to the Harvester before it escapes.

(14 Progress, 3 Rolls)

Even if they catch up to it, then they'll still have to fight it alone.

Defeat the Harvester.

(30 Progress, 6 Rolls)

The Harvester has an ape-like form, but with dozens of tentacles instead of arms. It's white exterior is covered in thick fur.

Over the course of the fight, the Elders will soon realize that this Harvester is only interested in grabbing Tyron. He was lying about his youthfulness, and is in fact an Elder who kept his age a secret.

After 3 Rolls, the ground becomes liquid and the Harvester begins to sink into it, taking Tyron with it.

After 6 Rolls, the Harvester escapes with Tyron, and he is never seen again.

If the Harvester is defeated, then all of the surrounding ground liquifies. **New Task:** Rescue Tyron and yourselves from the unexpected pool. (14 Progress, 4 Rolls)

Failure: Tyron perishes, but you manage to drag yourselves from the quicksand pit.

If Tyron survives the ordeal, Raffi is furious at him for keeping his Elder age a secret. "We are not heroes. We live, fight, and die TOGETHER; a true Elder would never keep such a deadly secret. The council will decide if you're worthy of remaining with us, or if you'll be cast out to die alone."

Either way, Raffi praises the Elders for their bravery and cunning. She ushers them inside the Keep. Over the next few hours the rest of the Caravan arrives. Turns out two other Harvesters attacked; and even though these Harvesters were focused on the Keep, another wagon group was still destroyed during the approach.

The Elders are shown to their bunks inside the Keep. The next morning, the Council holds a Welcome Feast and gives them a long speech about the Keep and what they can expect from their new lives here.

Welcome Week

On the following pages are a bunch of potential events that occur during the rest of the Welcome Week. You can run each even as a simple scene, or expand them into a whole new session. These minor events are a mixture of everyday mundane activities and adventure hooks. They should introduce the players to the various NPCs and give them a sense of what daily life is like in the Keep.

ABIDE



Week 1: Minor Events

1. Head Brewer Froast starts up a little drinking competition, and outlasts 6 other Elders in a row.
Find out how he is cheating (6 Progress, 2 Rolls).
Success: Froast will bribe you with a handle of Ghost Liquor to protect his secret. It acts like a spell of the same name, and can be “cast” 5 times before running out.
2. Champion Gutless likes to show off her prowess and convince new Elders to join her daily drills.
Defeat her and her troops in a friendly sparring match (16 Progress, 3 Rolls).
Success: she grants each of you a Wall Debt.
Failure: she insists you train regularly with her, gain a new burden “Train with Gutless (20 Progress)”.
3. Sous Chef Alar wants your help learning about your companions’ favorite foods.
Learn the info while keeping it a surprise. (8 Progress, 2 Rolls).
4. Head Farmer Clerte is looking for First Quill Brurd. “The First Quill was going to recite the history of the Keep so I could draw up maps from the first century. But I have to go tend to a crop emergency. Can you record their talk and bring it to me?”
Accurately record Brurds history. (13 Progress, 3 Rolls)
Success: Clerte is delighted, and grants you a Wall Debt as thanks.
Failure: Clerte is still delighted, and grants you a Wall Debt. A few days later he tracks you down, dismayed that his map didn’t match old records. Brurd requests your help doing research in the Archives to correct the map details. (23 Progress, 5 Rolls)
5. Head Hunter Punjaxe offers an introductory sign language course. Gain the Burden “Sign Language Studies (20 Progress)”.
6. Defender Tannis is organizing a Wheelchair race along the walls of the Keep. “The winners shall receive a special commission from Head Smith Armstrong! Of course, some of us have been training for this race our entire lives, but I’m sure you have a chance.”
Win the Wheelchair Race. (21 Progress, 5 Rolls)
Success: Head Smith Armstrong will craft a new weapon, tool, or prosthetic for you.
7. Second Doctor Busrut has a difficult favor to ask. “I’m working on a new balm, but I think some alchemy might be the trick to making it work. Could you speak to Alchimage Ana and get her advice? You should know that she...she doesn’t like me very much. Says I’m too chatty. Which is a little insulting, but mostly ridiculous! I mean, have you ever...<she continues for another 20 minutes>...and that’s when I decided to study potions. So, will you ask Ana?”
Find and convince Ana to help Busrut with the balm formula. (16 Progress, 4 Rolls)
Success: Busrut shares a few jars of the new balm with you. It can be used 5 times and acts like the Spell “Calming Balm”.
8. Caravan Leader Raffi is sitting alone, nursing a drink. “My Harvester is coming soon. It always comes right after I arrive. One of the reasons I’m a good Caravan Leader. But I’m tired of running. I’m gonna face it on the Wall tomorrow.”
Convince Raffi to let the Fighters handle it. (8 Progress, 2 Rolls)
Success: Raffi reluctantly agrees. She buys you all a drink and promises to bring you back something cool during the next expedition.
Failure: Raffi refuses. She’ll get injured from the battle unless the Elders join her on the Wall and protect her. (14 Progress, 3 Rolls)
9. Third Doctor Sabei pulls you aside for a difficult conversation. “I’d like to open up a dialogue about your struggles. I know it’s difficult to be vulnerable, but talking to someone will help you adapt to your new life here!” You have the opportunity to make one Roll on a Burden by talking with Sabei.
10. First Cottar Fluvere is recruiting help to clean up after the Welcome Festival. “And let’s make it fun! Whoever helps out gets a Wall Debt, but Elders who clean the most get a wall debt and the opportunity to join my dating club.”
Clean the most. (9 Progress, 4 Rolls)
Success: Receive 1 Wall Debt, and gain the Burden “Speed Dating Events (20 Progress)”. When the Burden is complete, you learned something new, either about yourself, or something your partner(s) taught you.
Failure: You still receive 1 Wall Debt for helping.

ABIDE



Week 2: Lure

A quest based around collecting rare items and combining them to create a Harvester Lure.

There are two parts to this quest, and both can be customized to fit your group's needs and pacing. To get your Elders started on this adventure, give them the letter from the next page.

There are six items listed, but only some are required to succeed.

Not only are these rare, but they require interacting with NPCs of the Keep and working alongside them. Sample Tasks are provided, but the Elders may choose to acquire these items in many different ways.

A half session: Any two of the items are required to create the Lure. Acquiring each item is a single large Task. Treat the game like a montage, jumping straight to the important parts of acquiring each item.

2-3 sessions: Any three of the items are required. A few Tasks must be done to acquire each item.

5+ sessions: Any five of the items are required. Each item takes an entire session to acquire; and there may be unexpected hurdles that expand the adventure.



Items

1 A Memento of visiting every known land.

Caravan Master Raffi may have such a Memento, but would only part with it if you promised to join the Caravan after you receive your Haven.

Head Farmer Clerte's maps are so lifelike that he might have a Memento of those places. Of course, you'd have to do research to confirm where/when these maps are from. Research Clerte's Maps to determine what they portray (25 Progress, 6 Rolls).

Success: After confirming that the maps are true, Clerte grants you a Memento of his dream travels.

Failure: Not only is all that Progress wasted, but you owe Third Quill Farva a debt for draining Archive resources. Gain 3 Debts.

Envoy Leader Cueva is also well-traveled; and makes regular trips for diplomatic relations. Perhaps she would be willing to tell tales and craft such a Memento? Record a series of interviews and craft a Memento from her experiences (20 Progress, 4 Rolls).

Failure: You weren't able to form a Memento, and now Envoy Leader Cueva wants to spend more time recording her memoirs. Gain the Burden "Record Cueva's Memoirs".

2 A Spell contained within a living being.

Head Shepherd Puan knows of several hardy creatures who could contain the magical energies of a spell. However she won't entrust you with them until you prove yourself capable of handling them. Gain the Burden "Train with Puan" and when that Burden is complete, receive a creature from Puan.

Demimage Litui can infuse a living creature with a spell, but it will have some unforeseen consequences. Infuse a Spell into a creature (15 Progress, 4 Rolls).

Failure: The Elders must make a difficult choice: lose one of their Spells in the process, or gain a Burden related to magical feedback.

Head Hunter Punjaxe knows of a mythical creature in the woods that is already infused with a Spell. Will you join the hunt to capture it? Help Punjaxe capture this mythical creature (25 Progress, 5 Rolls).

Failure: The creature eluded you. You'll have to find another way.

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Week 2: Lure

3 A Burden you have invested 40 Progress into.

Third Doctor Sabei is happy to help you make progress on your Burdens, provided you agree to help others in the same way. "Giving someone what you yourself lack is very therapeutic." Gain a new Burden "Help others with their own struggles" (40 Progress). You don't have to wait until resting to work on this Burden.

Sous Chef Alar knows that food can heal the soul, and is always seeking help with new recipes and remembrance parties. Gain a new Burden "Learn folks favorite recipes and cook them" (40 Progress). You don't have to wait until resting to work on this Burden.

Champion Gutless is eager to help with any kind of soreness or injury; nothing like hard training to overcome any Burden. Gain a new Burden "Training and physical therapy" (40 Progress). You don't have to wait until resting to work on this Burden.

4 <text has been smudged beyond recognition>

Archmage Stovre may be able to peer into the past and see what this said. Sit with Stovre and guide them through their visions (22 Progress, 5 Rolls).

Success: The smudge was simply "anything older than you are".

Failure: Stovre is grateful for the time spent, but you didn't learn what the smudge said.

Third Quill Farva has seen every bit of handwriting in the Keep, and may be able to decode it. No Task, Farva gives 3 different interpretations; it's up to the Elders to decide which interpretation to believe.

"Anything older than you are" (correct)

"Anything more valuable than you" (incorrect)

"Anything you cared for" (incorrect)

Head Brewer Froast could identify what foul substance smeared the ink; which could provide a clue to its meaning. To do this he immediately eats the paper (physically remove it from the table). Hopefully the players were taking notes...

Froast does give the correct clue, however. "Ah, yes, it was smudged with a classic old vintage wine. You probably need to add something really old."

5 The core from a defeated Harvester.

Defender Tannis is always eager for help on the Walls. Simply look up an NPC's Harvester and fight it. This fight requires 10 more Progress than usual to preserve the delicate Core.

Alchimage Ana is working on a way to reliably preserve Harvester cores; but her methods still carry some risk. Help Ana preserve a Harvester Core (18 Progress, 4 Rolls).

Success: After she's done studying it, she lets you use it for your Haven.

Failure: The core decays before you can use it.

6 An item from beyond this world.

First Quill Brurd can confirm that rumors of an old armory have been part of the Keep since its inception. "A weapon stolen from Harvesters" is the rumor. Delve into the abandoned tunnels and retrieve the weapon (32 Progress, 7 Rolls).

Success: An old Harvester corpse was preserved and its mandible formed into a crude sword.

Failure: Difficult choice; Elders found the sword but it's discharging a toxic goo that makes it dangerous to handle. Gain the sword and a Burden related to the toxic goo OR abandon the sword and try something else.

Head Smith Armstrong has a chunk of star-iron that he might be willing to part with. Review Armstrong's notes for a transforming prosthetic arm and find areas for improvement (9 Progress, 2 Rolls).

Success: Thankful for the feedback, Armstrong gives you the star-iron.

Failure: Armstrong shakes his head, but has more designs for you to review. Repeat this Task if you like.

Head Artisan Vima has been working on a way to capture the stars within a painting; perhaps literally. Perform a magical painting ceremony with Vima (23 Progress, 5 Rolls).

Success: The painting actually contains bit of starlight within it.

Failure: A massive explosion begins to build within the painting. Create a new Task to avert this crisis.

ABIDE



Week 2: Lure

Part 2: Combination

Items are labeled 1-6, and will be referred to by their number for these instructions. Items are all combined at once, and may result in bizarre side effects or magical accidents that spiral into more quests and adventures. Use the combination table below to determine what happens when items are combined together.

When even-numbered items are combined with odd-numbered items, the listed event occurs. Multiple events can go off at once!

For example, if we combine items 3, 4, and 6 then the “3+4” and the “3+6” events occur. None of these events prevent a successful Lure from being created, assuming the players combine enough of the items.

The Lure manifests as a pillar of glowing multicolored light that lasts until the summoned Harvester is defeated.



Combination Events

	1	3	5
2	The creature absorbs the Memento, destroying it in the process. Over time the creature will achieve sentience.	The magical currents within the creature grow stale. Create a Burden related to healing its curse.	The creature leaves to return the otherworldly item to its origin. The creature will return to you in a few months.
4	The Memento and the Core begin to resonate with one another. Defeating the summoned Harvester grants a stable Core that can be used for future Lures.	All Burdens carried by all Elders lose any Progress that has been made; resetting to 20 Progress required for transformation.	A magical overload begins to build. Control the explosion (13 Progress, 2 Rolls). Failure: The item and the core are both destroyed.
6	Someone else who is seeking the <smudged text> item gains a vision of your current location, and they will begin to pursue your group. When they arrive, they want it for their own purposes.	A vision of their fallen friend creates a new Burden for every Elder.	The two items were never meant to be combined; twisted magicks infect the air and every Elder must immediately Mark 2 Numbers.

ABIDE



Week 2: Minor Events

The potential for a Harvester Lure is hard to grasp; a lot of these minor events deal with the fallout of your discovery and how the various NPCs react.

1. An emergency Council meeting is called, and your group is brought before the leaders. They are peppered with difficult questions as the Council decides how to handle this new knowledge:
"Who originally designed the Lure, and how can we trust them?"
"Which Clan Leaders helped with the Lure?"
"Who else knows about it?"
The Council's biggest concern is that a ton of Elders will all build Lures immediately and overwhelm the defenses. Maybe the players have some ideas to help?
2. You've never seen Alchimage Ana smiling and excited before. It's a good look. She wants to experiment with other Lure ingredients, to make them easier and more effective. Assist Ana with her research (18 Progress, 5 Rolls).
Success: Lures require 1 less item than before.
3. Envoy Leader Cueva pulls you aside into a dark corner of the Keep. "We have a little problem...several Elders learned about your fancy Lures and have been selling fakes. We need to put a stop to this." Perform a sting operation to stop these fakers (28 Progress, 6 Rolls).
Success: The fakers are brought before the Council and punished. Additionally you manage to recover 2 real, functioning Lures from their operation.
Failure: You scatter the fakers, making them much harder to stop. These fakes will cause many problems over the next few months.
4. Champion Gutless wants to know how the Lures summon the Harvesters. "If these Lures work as well as you claim, then we need a new strategy to take advantage of this discovery." Gain the Burden "Train with Gutless for Lure Fights".
5. Rumors of the Lures have caused a minor panic in some parts of the Keep. Third Doctor Busrut has an explanation, "We've seen the Harvesters as uncontrollable. There's nothing we can do but prepare and hope. But now we have control, and that's really scary. Do I summon my Harvester today? Tomorrow? Or just let it come when it comes?"
Busrut and Second Doctor Sabei need help calming folks down and administering stress-related medication (21 Progress, 5 Rolls).
6. Defender Tannis has been overwhelmed with requests for Fighters to help with Lured Harvesters. "I can't stand this! Literally and figuratively! Everyone thinks they can just "borrow" a dozen fighters to help them fight off their Lured Harvester. Discipline is breaking down as my men are tempted with bribes and favors to abandon their normal wall shifts."
Develop a system for Elders to use their Lures safely without disrupting the Keep's normal defenses (22 Progress, 4 Rolls).
Success: Depending on the solution, the Keep adapts and remains a safe, functioning society.
Failure: A temporary breakdown creates vulnerable gaps in its defenses (too many fighters off on Lure missions). A Harvester breaches the walls and causes havoc.
7. Head Artisan Vima is inundated with requests for portraits of Elders who plan to fight their Harvesters soon. Help her fulfill these requests (assuming you have any artistic talent whatsoever, 14 Progress, 4 Rolls).
Success: Pay off 3 Wall Debts.
8. Now that the Lures give Elders some control over their Harvesters, there is a greater need for preparation. Third Quill Farva is getting tons of requests from Elders who want to update their wills, write letters to loved ones, and record their memoirs. Help her fulfill these requests (assuming you have any artistic talent whatsoever, 14 Progress, 4 Rolls).
Success: Pay off 3 Wall Debts.
9. As expected, a group of Elders attempted to use their Lures secretly, summoning a Harvester inside the walls causing incredible collateral damage. Join Head Builder Judi's team to clean up and recover from this horrible accident (18 Progress, 4 Rolls).
Success: Pay off 3 Wall Debts.
10. While the Keep is in an excited panic about the Lures, Head Brewer Froast aims to capitalize on the fear and uncertainty people feel. Surprisingly Sous Chef Alar has partnered with him to maintain an open bar in one of the libraries. A place where people can drink, talk, and think about whether they want to summon their Harvester early or not. Visit the Bar and make a single roll on any Burden.