

41-50% Disconsolate knights watch the party pass from the shore, if the party hails them, the knights will steadfastly ignore them.

51-60% The current tears at half submerged boat trapped between two water worn boulders. Nearby a body dressed the manner of a fisherman bobs face down, its legs trapped in the roots of a tree. If the body is turned over, the eyes flick open and it lunges for the neck of the would be rescuer with razor sharp talons, for it is a ghoul (hp 10).

61-70% A flock of ducks passing overhead, dips down to inspect the party, and then continue to wing their way north.

71-80% Muskrats fight over the decayed body of a deer in the shallows.

81-90% The water boils with a massive shoal of small silvery fish (trout fingerlings). Enough can be caught to supply 2 decent meals.

91-95% Trappers in canoes filled high with mounds of pelts pass heading downstream. They will wave cheerily at the party, wishing them the best of luck.

96-100% Three gnome fishermen (hp 5, 2x 4) have drawn their nets across a sand bar. If approached peaceably they will tell the party that they spotted the giant pike moving upstream. They will be able to give the party an estimate of how many days they are behind.

The Fish Soup Recipe

The rural folk in this adventure are likely to eat this. Someone will probaly offer some to the adventurers too.

- 1 kilo of vendace
- 100 grams of butter
- 2 onions
- pepper
- salt
- water

Gut and clean the vendace and rinse them until the scales come off. Put a decent sized cast iron pot over a fire. Cut the onions into ring and fill the pot with layers of fish and onion. Add enough water to cover the fish and the butter. Throw in the peppers and a small handful of salt. Let the soup cook for about an hour and serve it with dark rye bread and whatever local alcohol happens to be available.

Gone Fishin'

A Beer & Barbarians Production

by Atherton

A tall tale about a talking fish sends a group of adventurers to a trek through the wilderlands bordering the realm of man. Meet interesting people and arrogant knights. Maybe even catch a fish of two. Keep your lines tight and your socks dry. Or die trying.

Fish Soup Recipe Included.

Gone Fishin'

A Beer & Barbarians Production

Starring Robert Shaw as Quintish

Written by Atherton

Edited by Olli Björkqvist

Art on page 11 by RFlowers

Cartography by R.S Barker (Bloated Blowfish)

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The production team would like to thank the Dragonsfoot Lounge crew, your input and comments were most helpful during the creation of this adventure.

party fail to the comply, the treant will bellow an earth shattering cry, the sound rolling away and echoing throughout the surrounding hills. Presently it will be joined by 3 more treants (hd 10 each, hp 50, 55, 48) who will order the party out of the forest, attacking them if they fail to leave immediately.

71-75% an ancient bear trap snaps closed on the leg of one of the characters (roll randomly). The trap does 1-8 hp damage and requires 20 strength points to open. The jaws are rusty and a save vs. tetanus must be rolled.

76-80% An enormous cloud of mosquitoes from a nearby bog descends on the party, biting them. Each character will suffer 1-2 hp per round unless they escape by submerging themselves beneath the surface of a nearby lake.

81-85% The party stumbles upon a shady hollow where a colony of shriekers grows amidst luxuriant orchids and climbing ivies. Their shrieks will summon a giant woods spider (hp 24) which will attempt to ensnare the party in its webbing. Five rounds later a roaming wolf packs also summoned by the sound of the shriekers will arrive to pick off any survivors (8 Wolves hp 15, 2x 14, 4x 12, 10).

86-90% Here the forest is dead as far as the eye can see. A faint wind stirs the pale, barkless trunks, their swaying tops clacking together in an eerie, unceasing dirge.

Should the party enter they will become aware of two creatures clad in homespun robes that dart from tree to tree, shadowing their progress. If approached, the two creatures will throw back the hoods of garments, exposing faces that are grey and devoid of life. The two creatures are former woodsmen, now Wights hp 20,21

91-95% A group of rangers out hunting goblins. 2-4 rangers of levels 1-3. AC 8(furs)-5(chain mail) armed with hatchet, knives and long bows. The rangers will, if approached in a friendly manner agree to accompany the party for a ways (until such time as the party reaches the river at which point they will turn back to the wild).

96-100% A giant wolverine trails the group. If the party sets up camp and makes the mistake of leaving it unattended, the wolverine will search the camp site for food, destroying packs, tents and clothing in hunger. Giant Wolverine hp 25.

Wilderness Encounters (River)

01-10% Giant frogs (hd 3 hp 12, 3x 11, 10) ambush the party from the river bank by leaping out onto their craft.

11-20% A family of otters dive joyously into the river. If the area in which they are diving is inspected, then through the clear rushing water, a number of giant clams will be seen. Opening the clams up will reveal huge pearls worth between 500-1000 sovereigns in total.

21-30% several canoes filled with goblins slide out from the bull rushes lining the shore. The canoes hold 12 goblin warriors hp 1x 7, 2x 6, 5x 5, 4x 4. On the river bank behind the rushes a grotesquely fat knight writhes against his bonds, mumbling incoherently into a gag. His armour is stuffed with wild garlic, and if he is freed, he will tear the garlic from his armour and fling it and his armour away, before running shrieking into the woods, never to be seen again.

31-40% Disappointed adventurers dropping out from the hunt, hail the party as they pass heading back down river. They will offer the party the remainder of their rations (3 days food).

equipment and treasure and with many blows and curses send them staggering, bound, unarmed, bruised and bleeding into the wilderness.

Should the party not heed the call to surrender, they might attempt to negotiate with Sir Lyonal. A character with a high charisma may be able to talk sense into him, but should the negotiations fail, then Sir Lyonal will brand them traitors to the realm and attack. The knights will neither ask for, or give quarter. It will be a bloody fight to the death.

Sir Lyonal 5th level fighter AC 1 hp 30 armed with a +1 long sword, wears full plate armour (AC 2). Also carries shield, dagger and wears a ring worth 100 golden sovereigns.

Knights of Quality

2x 4th fighter AC 2 hp 25, 24. Armed with long swords and daggers. Plate mail + shield. One knight has a magical (+1) dagger, and the other wears a ring of fire resistance. Both wear rings and necklaces to the value of 150 sovereigns.

Veteran Knights

2x 3rd level fighters AC 2 hp 15, 16. Armed with long swords and daggers. Plate mail + shield. Rings and other items to the value of 100 sovereigns.

With the knights defeated, and as this story draws to a close, an old man descends the path from the broch. He has a job for them (and a story about a cursed golden ring dropped into a river... and a greedy pike).

The End

Wilderness Encounters (Overland)

01-10% a group of drunk moonshiners lie collapsed (and mostly snoring) around their still, one still singing lustily at the top of his voice, as he lies slumped back to back with his dead friend (who has expired from alcohol poisoning). Several drunk crows stagger merrily around the branches of a nearby oak. Treasure: approximately 500 gallons of moonshine.

11-20% A gigantic ogre (hp 24) returning from a raid on human lands lumps an enormous sack jiggling with treasure. Inside the bag are the following items: a 3 legged upholstered chair, 2 sheep (live) and two clothes lines, complete with still pegged male and female garments.

21-30% a monstrous eagle (hp 20) circles the party. Will drop tree limbs on the party should they stop to rest, just to check whether they're still alive or not.

31-40% goblin worg riders rest in the shade of a grove of tall ash trees. They are well armed but treasureless. Goblins hp 2x 5, 3x 4. Worg hp 24, 2x 22, 2x 20

41-50% a family of wild boars snuffle around the roots of oak trees, looking for truffles. They will briefly look up as the party approaches but will not molest them, unless attacked (or unless they are carrying truffles, in which case the pigs will relentlessly pursue them). 1 Boar hp 18, 2 Sows hp 15, 14 and 5 piglets hp 3-4

51-60% Giant wasps buzz around the carcass of a dead elk. They will aggressively attack if the party attempts to come too close, hp 23, 2x 22, 17

61-70% A treant (hd 8 hp 40) strides through the forest. Should the party be carrying axes or lit torches (or should they have a camp fire going) the treant will demand that the fire be extinguished, and the hafts of the axes broken. Should the

Foreword

Having a foreword on what is supposed to be a mini module might be the height of pretension, but pretentious or not, here goes. First of all, I hope you have as much fun reading, and hopefully running this module, as I did writing it. The contents are freely reproduceable to you the reader, and if you think highly enough of the adventure, please pass it on to your friends. And if I may mangle the old Judges Guild slogan, please feel free to adapt, to mutilate, to borrow from, or in any way, to adjust or tailor this module to your requirements.

A few quick notes about running this scenario. The adventure is presented in a highly linear fashion where it is assumed that the party will follow the course of the river. This assumption purely made for the sake of simplicity. If your players choose to travel overland or by air, then the adventure should lend itself to a more open sandbox style of play. The village has been left deliberately vague. Should it be required, it is intended that you should develop your own or plug in one that suits your requirements.

Background

Recently there appeared at the royal court an old man telling an exceedingly odd tale of a great fish. According to his account, a local hero, being parched by the heat of the day had gone down to the river Runne to drink. The fish, an immense pike, appeared before the warrior and was heard to speak by a score of eyewitnesses, asking him in watery tones what was best in life. The warrior, afrighted by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the pike was heard to mumble a reply, at which point, the fish, with singular force and swiftness, struck the hapless man, towing him into the depths of the river whereupon he was drowned.

The recitation of the strange tale was met with enthusiastic acclaim and on its completion the king stood and being desirous of a trophy to mount in his hall, decreed that anyone who would present him with the carcass of the giant fish should receive its weight in silver. In the excitement following this proclamation, the nobles of the court have sallied forth, joined by fortune seekers from all walks of life in a gold rush to scour the banks of the great river for the elusive creature.

Start

The module begins with the arrival of the characters at the village of Abbotsford, a small settlement of the upper reaches of the great river (also known as the river Runne). The town is located on a wide gravelly ford of nearly half a miles width. The water is clear and swift flowing, but not overly deep.

When the party arrives at Abbotsford they will find the streets of the normally sleepy little town a hive of frantic activity. The chaotic, bustling crowds swarm aimlessly everywhere, and the party will quickly find that all accommodation has been booked, and that most of the towns fishermen and their boats have been hired or purchased.

The nobles and knights of the royal court are clearly in evidence, pushing arrogantly through the milling throngs, and demanding preferential treatment of the inn keeps and bar tenders. The river surface will be dotted with dozens of small craft ranging from dugouts and coracles to small barge, punts and other river craft. Along the shore, the unlucky and those less-well-to-do try their luck, wading through the shallows or casting out with pitifully inadequate lines.

Across the other of the river, about a mile back from the riverbank is the monastery which gives the eponymous town its name.

The monks have taken vows of silence and reclusion, but for a small fee they will tend to any wounds which the characters may have suffered (curing will generally cost in the order of 10 gold sovereigns per hp).

Random Town Encounters

01-20% accosted by garrulous fishwife. If a purchase is made from her, she will confidentially inform the party (and any bystander in a radius of 10 yards) of one of the rumours from the rumour table. Roll randomly to determine rumour.

21-30% challenged to a duel by a fop. A swaggering young knight accuses the party of insulting him, and slaps the face of the biggest character with his gauntlet. Fop 2nd level fighter hp 10 AC 2 (plate mail + shield) Alignment stupid, Weapons long sword & dagger

31-40 % The party is accosted by a phalanx of knights who block the parties way making derogatory remarks about their parentage. 6 bullies (1st level fighters) hp 3x 5, 3x 6 AC 3 (plate mail) armed with long swords and daggers. If the party wins, all the surrounding townsfolk burst into cheers and drag them into a local pub for an impromptu celebration.

41-50% An enterprising fortune hunter decides to go fishing in the characters pockets instead of the river. The would be pickpocket is a 1st thief (AC 10 hp 4 armed with a dagger). The picket pocket attempt will be at +5% due to the bustling chaos of the towns streets and public houses. Roll randomly for the item stolen.

51-60% A fisherman attempts to sell his punt to the players for quadruple its worth. The only problem is that the punt is at the bottom of the river with a hole in its hull. The hole can be repaired in half a day.

61-70% A passing wagon runs over the foot of a random character. Lose 2 hp.

71-75% A drunk 4th level magic user drapes himself over the shoulders of 2 or more characters and loudly insists they watch him shoot the king standard from atop the magistrates house with a magic missile.

76-80% A drunk dwarf insistently asks for directions to the Iron Hills, and then sits on a doorstep crying maudlinly to himself regardless of the answer.

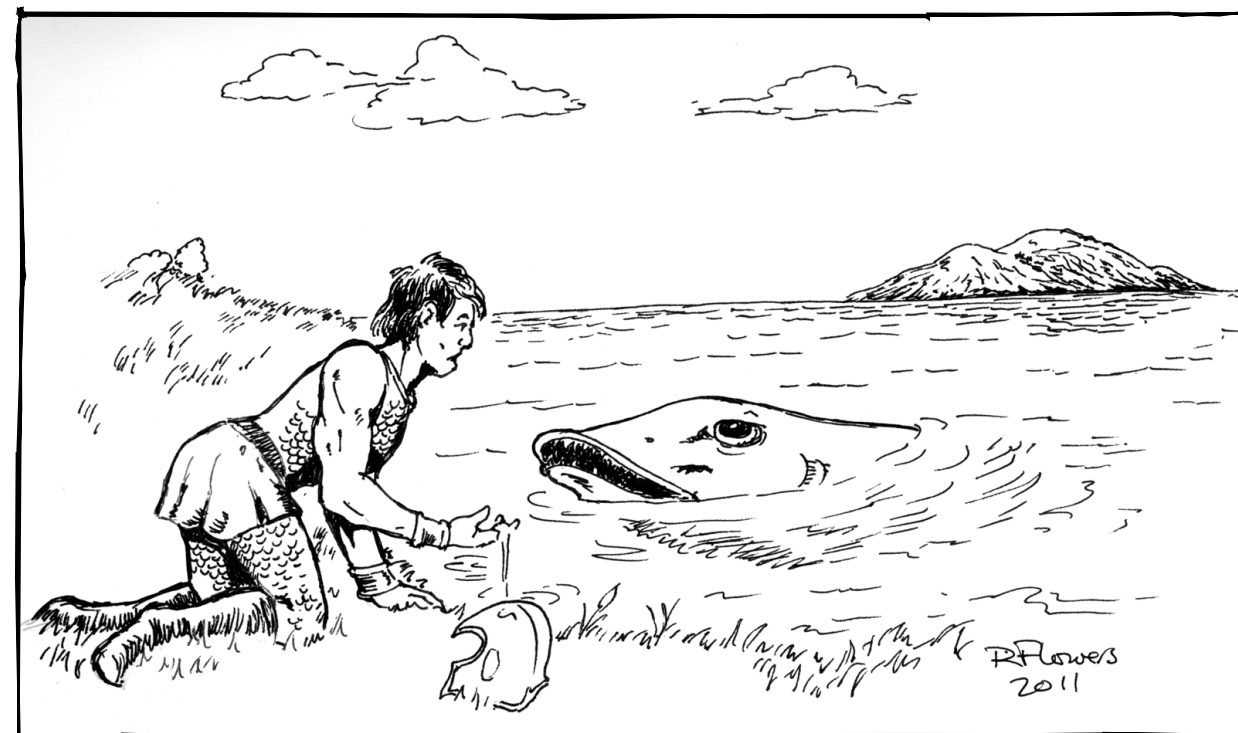
81-85 % A stinking and mangy cur (hp 3, the stench oddly reminiscent of what a character may have regurgitated some hours previously) trails the characters where ever they go, eyeing them balefully and barking at them continuously.

86-90% Local youths jeer at the party as they pass by, throwing horse droppings at them. If seriously challenged, the youths will scatter and cravenly flee to the derisive laughter of onlookers.

91-95% A passing noble invites the party into a public house and proceeds to drown them with drinks while telling incredibly boring and unlikely stories.

96-98% A fisherman approaches the party and offers to built them a coracle in the space of a day for a surprisingly reasonable price (only double the going rate).

99-100% A chamberpot is emptied from the second story onto a random characters head. The perpetrator is a cranky ex-fisherman (hp 3). The victim temporarily loses 1-6 charisma points as the townsfolk stand around pointing and laughing their heads off.



On investigation is will appear to be a solid core of masonry without any doorway (a detect magic spell will reveal the existence

of one such a portal).

However its unlikely that their attention will remain on the broch for long, for a loud splash will sound from the lake, and near to the shore they will see an enormously long stream lined shape cruising through the murky shallows. The biggest giant pike that any of them will have ever seen.

If the party approaches the pike it will raise its mouth from the water and ask: "What is best in life" before slipping back beneath the water to await their answer. Should the party answer "to eat" or "to eat before one is eaten" the pike will be satisfied and with a flick of its massive tail it will gouge a cut in the silty bottom of the a lake, within which the party will see the bright gleam of gold. The pike will then swim away and can be hunted down later, if the party so desires. The treasure consists of a number of bejeweled goblets of heavy yellow gold that spill from a rotten sack.

The goblets can be assayed as being collectively worth between 3000 and 5000 gold sovereigns.

If the party gives the wrong answer or delays too long (more than 5 minutes of actual game time) the pike (hp 28) will drive itself powerfully forward and attack the party, attacking the smallest first and attempting to swallow them whole. Bigger characters will be dragged out into the centre of the lake in an attempt to drown them.

The Final Showdown

Regardless of the outcome, as the party begin to prepare to retrace their weary steps back to where it all began, or as they go to investigate the ancient broch, they will hear the subdued clink of metal from further down the lakes shore, and as the mists part, through the streamers of grey vapour trudge five figures. Battered, dishevelled. Travel worn, their armour rusting, and with grizzled whiskers rasping against their visors, this last remnant of the knights of the court have come for a final reckoning with the outsiders who have dared to show themselves, their rightful lords and masters, up.

The leader of the knights, Sir Lyonel will call on the party to throw down their arms. Should they be foolish enough to comply, the knights will strip them of their

The answer to this mystery lies in a inlet about half a mile downstream where a salmon ladder climbs through the surrounding woodland to the long lake at the head of the falls. The salmon ladder is a stone lined culvert about 6' wide and 3' deep at the centre, semi-circular in profile. Blockages of fallen tree limbs have been recently forced aside by the passage of something of obviously great size.

The Ancient Shrine

About half way between where the lake feeds into the ladder, and where it empties back into a river is a small shrine of ancient lichen encrusted stone. From amongst the dangling willow fronds a Pan headed statue regards the characters serenely. Slightly unnervingly, its blank eyed gaze seems to track their every move.

At the statues foot, a spring bubbles into a stone lined votive pool which drains into the fish ladder. Scattered in the mud at the bottom of the pool are hundreds of silver and gold coins, which if even so much as a single coin is taken will bestow a curse on the offending characters. This curse will invoke the immediate summoning of 2-3 satyrs (AC 5 hp 22,23, 23) who will demand that the characters restore the money to the pool. If the coins are returned, the curse is immediately lifted. The Satyrs will try to persuade the party of the foolishness of their actions, and will only attack in response to an attack upon themselves or unless the party attempts to leave the pool area. If the satyrs are slain the curse will remain, and manifest itself in that the offending characters will mysteriously lose 10% of their wealth per week, regardless of any precautions they might take (treasure will even “evaporate” from securely locked vaults) until such time as the characters restore what they stole from pool.

Note: if the statue or pool are desecrated or vandalised in any way, the curse will be invoked and persist until such time as the damage has been restored. The curse can only be lifted by a cleric of 17th level or more.

A detect magic spell if available will reveal two separate magical aura's surrounding the shrine. One emanates weakly from the statue and pool area generally, a second more intensive field is located within the pond. An investigation of the second aura will reveal an ancient broadsword nestled beside the ribcage of a partially disarticulated skeleton. The sword will in the fullness of time prove itself to a +2 broadsword (if used sufficiently).

Should anyone make the mistake of lingering in the pool for more than a few minutes, the reason for the barren stretch of water in the main river will become apparent as the water swirls and forms into a sinuously twisting serpent of water which attempt to drag any character down into the murky centre of the pool and drown them.

The Guardian of the Pool - Water weird AC 4 hp 18

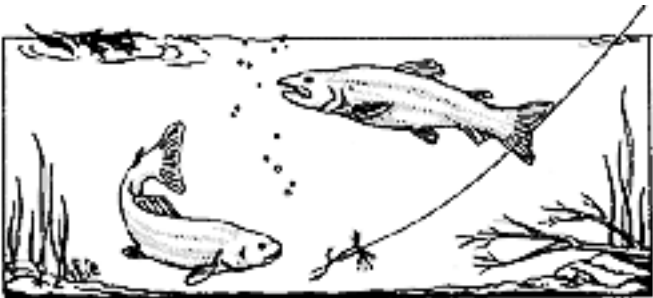
By the time the party leaves the Highforce Falls behind they will find themselves travelling alone as the last few of their dispirited competitors drop out of the race.

Journeys End - The Lake of the Clouds

After many days of travelling through country that progressively becomes more wild and hilly, the party will arrive at their ultimate destination, the fog blanketed Lake of Clouds, nestled in the arms of the mountains. Overlooking the reedy, fog bound shores of the lake is an ancient stone broch, so covered with moss and lichens that seems to grow naturally from the hillside.

Rumour Table

- 1-10% The pike was seen heading upstream (actually true, but from a false source)
- 11-20% The pike was seen heading down (false)
- 21-30% The pike has already been caught and is now being transported in secret to the King's Court (false)
- 31-35% The pike is actually a magician in disguise who is seeking to lure adventurers to their doom (false)
- 36-40% The knights are plotting to arrest and imprison their competitors (false)
- 41-50% A magician was arrested yesterday for blowing off the kings standard that flutters atop the courts of the magistrates (true/false depending on the events of the random encounter table)
- 51-60% Pickpockets are operating in the town, guard well your wallets (true)
- 61-70% The pike doesn't exist (false)
- 71-80% The pike isn't a giant pike at all, but a dolphin. The knights of the court have sown a false tale so that they can capture the dolphin themselves (false)
- 81-90% There are nixies up the river (true) who demand a tribute from all passers by (false)
- 91-95% Further up the river is a giant beaver dam (true)
- 96-100% Beware the enchanted woods they say, few that enter survive to return (partially true)



Fishing Table

- If the characters try their hand at fishing, they will have the following results (per person/averaged over half hour blocks):
- 01-50% Nothing
 - 51-60% Eel
 - 61-65% Grayling
 - 66-70% Chubb
 - 71-80% Trout
 - 81-85% Salmon
 - 85-90% Pike (small)
 - 91-95% Pike (medium)
 - 96-99% Pike (large)
 - 100% Special
- Special includes:
- 1: Bootleggers 6x 0 level humans hp 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, 5 AC10 armed with clubs & daggers are smuggling 4 barrels of beer down to Abbotsford. They will be hostile, unless the party can convince them that they aren't excise collectors. The barrels of beer are being carried on a small barge which the smugglers are towing using a dinghy. These barrels of beer can be sold for up to 25 sovereigns apiece in the public houses of Abbotsford.

2: Giant otter. This playful creature will invite itself into whatever craft the party maybe sailing and will cheerfully proceed to devour any foodstuff it can get at.

3: Giant pike, hp 16. Truly a giant pike, however on return to Abbotsford the old man who originally brought the story to court will identify it as another individual.

Country Encounters for the Civilised Lands

Should the party travel overland in the vicinity of Abbotsford, then a random encounter check should be made every 2 hours of travel time

01-05% a troupe of hobbit buskers who regale the party with a selection of reels, jigs and folk dances. The male musicians will saw away with demented enthusiasm at their zithers, while the halfling lasses coquettishly offer the party jugs of ale and invitations to dance with them. The little halfling lasses will attempt the pick the character pockets while dancing (base 25% chance of success, rising to 50% if they are inebriated).

06-10% a group of drunken dwarves unsteadily pilot a wagon partially laden with slopping barrels of half drunken beer (a particularly rich stout) in hot pursuit of a group of halfling musicians who they claim robbed them blind. The dwarves will summarily attempt to lynch any halfling on sight, and any information on the fleeing troupe will be rewarded by with a barrel of beer.

11-15% a group of yodelling farmers sway drunkenly, arm-in-arm, back and forth on the back of a large flat bed wagon, stacked high with barrels of beer. They claim that a group of dwarves hijacked one of their beer wagons. Any dwarves in the party will be the subject of a lynching attempt.

16-20% a group of horribly sober housewives sporting determined expressions on their hardened faces will pass by in pursuit of their husbands, whom they claim to have gone sloping off into the countryside on a beer drinking excursion. Any farmers in the party will be the subject of lynching attempt.

21-25% a motley assortment of ducks, geese, chickens, pigs, dogs, cats and children in pursuit of the aforementioned groups.

26-30% A farmer carting hay on his way to the market. Knows nothing, cares even less. An old vorpal sword is hidden under the hay (the farmer finds it particularly efficacious as a pruning knife).

31-40% a tinkers wagon. The tinker sells a variety of common items including agricultural equipment (scythes, axes, grindstones and the like) for vastly inflated prices (150-200% of the normal price).

41-60% Herd of cows, who refuse to give way.

61-70% a group of cheerful pilgrims en route to a local harvest festival. They clutch sheaves of corn (wheat), rye and barley. The young women will offer the party draughts of a particularly sweet and heady cider which they bear in stone glazed urns.

71-90% a flock sheep, who bleat plaintively. The shepherd boy seems full and uninterested

91-100% Knights of the Court. Looking for sport, be it fox or man or woman, these knights are only trouble. Lacking excitement they will try to provoke the party into attacking them, so they can claim self defence. They will harry the party by impeding their progress and hurling crude insults at them until the party

The Green Lake

Although this long and green lake lies outside the domain of the kingdom, it is known for the strange tribe of lizard folk who live on a narrow island in its middle. These scaly creatures are fiercely territorial and will recklessly defend the lake from any invasion, no matter how peaceful. As soon as the flotilla appears on the lake, the males will seize their stone headed weapons, launch their dugout canoes and paddle briskly towards the approaching armada of vessels.

Four to five canoes swarming with lizard men will target the characters craft. If the party is victorious then the tide of battle turns against the defenders, and the human armada will brush aside the remnants of the lizard man forces.

8-12 (adjust upwards if necessary) lizard men AC 5 hp 10-11 average, armed with stone headed maces and javelins

On the island is the lizard mens rude village, a cluster of squat huts constructed from reeds. The huts form a rough semi circle crowding around a crude stone idol of a gigantic crouching lizard man. Behind the idol is an enclosure of wooden stakes. Inside is a fanged horror, which the lizard men believe to be the chosen one of their deity. The fanged one is ritualistically fed the bodies of the slain, and hearing the sounds of combat it will be waiting with a fearsome hunger.

When the party approaches, it will dart forth out of the enclosure (the gate having been released by a retreating lizard man) and will descend upon the hapless Quintish, who if he agreed to accompany the part and surviving the battle on the lake, will be somewhat in advance of the party. Before the party can come to his aid, the luckless ranger will be torn limb from limb. Should the party not enter the village, the ranger will disappear into the village

never to return.
The Fanged Horror

AC 4 HD 8 (hp 36) Att 3 1-8 1-8 1-10
Special attacks Drowning Int semi AI
Neutral

The product of some malign sorcerers mad research, the fanged horror comprises the head of a shark atop the torso of a lizard man with the claws of a giant lobster or crab. Its tough shark skin hide, insatiable appetite and ferocious temperament all combine to make it a dangerous adversary. Fanged horrors typically lurk in the rivers, bays and along the coasts of tropical through to temperate lands, usually either as single predators or in small family clans.

The village will otherwise be found to be empty, the non combatants having left during the battle on the lake to hide in the reed beds along its shores. A number of small, poorly formed pearls can be found in the huts. These will have a total value of between 50 – 200 gold sovereigns.

The Falls

Here a powerful waterfall descends a series of drops amounting to a vertical height of about 30'. Due to their power, the falls are known as the Highforce Falls. Downstream of the boiling plunge pool, the swift waters are unusually clear, and unusually barren of fish life. Local Legend tells of a watery serpent that by reputation haunts the plunge pool. When the party arrives (unless they are first on the scene) they will find the plunge pool the occupied by mystified adventurers looking for the pike.

A basic examination of the falls will reveal that they would be impossible for any giant pike to climb, let alone one as massive as claimed.

exactly six days previously. The beavers won't oppose passage over their weir, they just want the humans to keep away from the area where they are raising their kits.

Leaving the Beavers Lodge behind, the river snakes through the countryside in slow, indolent loops, the water becoming progressively stiller and as green as the heavily forested banks until they reach the ...

Blackwater Marshes

Of traditionally evil repute, few are brave or foolhardy enough to venture into these foreboding swamps of dark, thickly wooded quicksands. A morass of decaying vegetation fills the turgid waters and swarms of buzzing midges and mosquitoes will attach themselves to any exposed flesh. Three passages of clear water wend 1 (large and 2 small) their way through the swamp.

If the character(s) have not led the charge upriver, then the main channel will have been cleared by the time they arrive. If not, vast intertwined spider webs will cover a stretch of at least 200 yards, and lurking in dappled shade of the overhanging boughs are 4 giant spider (hp 25, 2x 24, 22) which will agilely scuttle through the webbing the first moment they feel a boat (or a wading person flailing to free themselves) bump into their sticky nets.

If the characters try one of the side-channels, they will find a boat trapped mid channel and the desiccated bodies of two adventurers hanging from the webs. Two of the giant spiders from the main channel will arrive in a matter of less than a minute. The bodies have nothing of recoverable worth, having already been looted by passing adventurers.

Onward from the Marshes

Clearing the marshes, the pursuit enters wilder lands on the borders marches of the kingdom. With each passing day the party will pass an ever diminishing trickle of drop-outs from the great chase who will line the shore, despondently watching the parties passage upstream.

The Wilderlands

For wilderness encounters see the tables at the back. Typically a check should be made every 6 hours of travel time.

As the countryside suddenly takes a turn for the rougher, the party will find themselves entering a swift flowing gorge where the water flows strong and clear. About a half a mile in they will encounter two knights stranded on a tiny rocky islet in the middle of the stream. From the shore, an unshaven man in rough leathers watches them in considerable disgust as they flail their arms and beg piteously for the parties assistance. Should the party take pity on them and rescue them from the islet they will quickly prove demanding. If allowed, they will begin to command that the party attend to their every whim. However should the party suggest heaving them overboard, they will immediately shut up and behave themselves.

Sir Roscoe and Sir Belvedear, Knights of the court

Level 2 & 3, hp 9, 12 AC 3 (plate armour), weapons long sword & dagger Align neutral

The man in homespuns is Quintish a 2nd level ranger, AC 8 (leather/fur armour) hp 18 armed with a hatchet and knife Align Chaotic good

attacks or the knights lose interest or find some other quarry.

AC 2 (plate mail + shield) Levels 1-4 (hp 5-24 on average) armed with long swords and daggers. If mounted they will additionally have a heavy lance and a heavy warhorse (hp 16-17 on average). 4th level fighters will typically have plate barding for their war horses, 2nd and 3rd level fighters will typically have chain barding. Each knight will carry items and money to the approximate value of 25 gold pieces per level.

The Old Mill

On the eves of the forest, a small leet runs into the Great river, and in the embayment formed where the leet meets the river stands an old mill, its tiles, and bricks cracked with age and green with moss and lichen. However the roof is still sound and the interior is surprisingly warm and comfortable, made so by the hay bales that fill half the ground floor. The bales form a solid wall underneath a wooden loft (accessible via a ladder). If the bales are shifted, it will be found that they have been arranged to conceal a dozen barrels of beer. There is a 50% chance that the smugglers from the random encounter table above will be in the tower, if this is the case then their dinghy and barge will be tied up at the tiny dock outside the mill. If the smugglers aren't at home when the party visits, then for each hour that passes there will be a base 50% chance of the smugglers turning up, rising by 5% per hour (so that after 10 hours have passed, there is a 100% chance of the smugglers arriving).

The floor of the loft is carpeted in dry, fresh hay for it is home to a family of booka.

4 Booka hp 4, 2x 3, 2

The booka dislike the smugglers who have invaded their home intensely. If

approached in a peaceable manner, and the party leavens negotiations by a small bribe (say a barrel of beer or three) the booka might be persuaded to tell all they know of smugglers activities.

The Enchanted Woods

A few miles upstream from Abbotsford are the Enchanted woods. It is an area seldom visited by the inhabitants of the town for it is home to ...

The Wee Folk

The wee folk keep to themselves and do not welcome any intrusion into their lives. Naturally the influx of big folk pestering them, disturbing the birds and animals of the river and woods has severely tried their patience. The fisherfolk who work this stretch of river respect the privacy of the wee folk and will warn the adventurers not to intrude into their domain. Should a large enough inducement be offered then perhaps a fisherman might reluctantly take the characters to them - fearfully hanging back however.

The following groups or individuals exist:

Nixies

About 50 nixies live on the main river channel, along with 2 charmed men and 1 female, each of more than average comeliness. The nixies have no lair, preferring to spend the night in a deep green pool shaded by lofty boughs. Near to the entrance of the pool, a plated arm reaches up despairingly from the murky depths of the river. If the body is rescued from the depths, a second will be found nearby, the remains of two arrogant and thoughtless knights who learnt to respect Nixies a mite too late. Aside from their soggy plate mail, two elegantly damasked long swords (of worth 100 gp each can be

recovered) as well as a thick leather belt studded with amethysts (worth 50 gp).

If approached peaceably and if the characters are willing to part with various pieces of jewellery or raiment, the nixies might be convinced to tell the adventurers what they know. If so, they will tell the adventurers that a strange pike, bigger than any they have ever seen, was spotted swimming strongly upstream a week ago.

The Leprechauns

Widely known for their whimsical sense of humour, the leprechauns are avoided by the fishermen due to their mischievous nature. They will happily make the acquaintance of the big folk, promising all sorts of outrageous things to the naive and stupid. Naturally they rarely honour these promises, unless something hilariously funny results. However should the party encounter the leprechauns it is possible that for information that they might trade a funny limerick or a rude joke, or equally, they might demand a jewel of great price.

Should they find the parties humour to be lousy, they will use their polymorph non living objects ability to transform any and all armour worn by the party to a hideous hue of iridescent pink.

12 Leprechauns AC 8 Hp 2-5 apiece



The Faerie

Few of the fair folk walk the woods, which is just as well as far as the rest of the wee folk are concerned, for they are aloof and arrogant. They know nothing of the pike, and will not even deign to acknowledge the parties existence, save should there be a full blooded Elf in the party. 20 Gray elves led by a

3rd level fighter AC 5 hp 14 armed with long bow & long sword

19 1st level fighters AC 5 hp average 5-6 armed with long bows & long swords

All wear elven chain mail, cloaks and boots and carry wafers of elf food.

Brownies

A few of these reclusive folk linger in the woods. The brownies are kindly people and will go to the parties aid should they require it, otherwise they

keep to themselves and will avoid confrontations. 4 Brownies hp 4, 2x 3, 2

Red Deer Herd

This herd consists about 30 individuals and is under the protection of the wee folk. The herd is led by a large buck (hp 21) called the "Hart of Harts" a truly magnificent creature whose antlers brush branches 9' high and weights near on 1100 pounds. Should he be slain and the party make the mistake of lingering in the area, then they will feel the wrath of the wee folk as they are ruthlessly and relentlessly

hunted down. Pursuit will only end once the party reaches the borders of the forest. The wee folk will not object to the party harvesting a doe, provided that they offered a portion of the meat.

Pixies



The pixies form a small community around a grove of giant mushrooms not far from an old Druidic circle. They delight in frightening intruders with lurid tales of nightmarish creatures summoned in unnatural rites that still haunt the megalithic henge. The truth is however is more prosaic for now no magic lingers amidst the ancient stones, and it is no more than a slightly overgrown clearing. Given even the slightest opportunity the pixies will steal small items (coins, handkerchiefs and the like) from the party with extra-ordinary audacity. If challenged or attacked they will flee into the gloomy shade of the forests dark glades leaving only the mocking sound of their laughter ringing in the parties ears. They know nothing nor care anything about the passage of the pike.

The First Move - The Pike Heads Upstream

If the party fails to make any headway in their efforts to find the pike, then after the third day a rumour that the great fish has been sighted upriver will sweep through the town and throughout the day, an endless flotilla of small vessels will be seen heading upriver and by nightfall the town will be deserted save for a few drunks and some hopeless blackguard drifters – and of course the townsfolk, who will quickly fall back into their old routines, shaking their heads at the foolishness of outsiders.

The river wends its way across a broad flood plain, the farming lands falling behind, and the adventurers will enter a forested area of open soggy meadows and tall aspens until eventually the adventurers will enter a tranquil stretch of water, at the far end of which they will see a massive dam of logs ...

The Beaver Lodge

Here a clan of giant beavers has dammed the river with an immense weir. The beavers, long tolerated by the locals, and free of would be predators have prospered, creating a vast and intricate lodge complex. When the party arrives they will find the beavers embroiled in a brawl with a large group of angry, shouting knights, the two sides vigorously shoving each other. As the party joins the fleet of gawping retainers bobbing beneath the lodge, the beavers will push a group of 5 knights over the edge, sending them splashing and spluttering into the shallows.

The party can join the pushing match, or proceed on an alternative path such as negotiation. If the party is sensible enough to speak to the beavers they will probably be able to find out that the giant pike passed through a slip way in the dam,