



POSTCARD FROM THE DARK PEAK · #11

THE BURNING OF THE UGHILL GOSAVA

A SOLO RPG SCENARIO · THE DARK PEAK · HELLSBOROUGH, S6

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A NOTE FROM PIP

Some jobs you can do quietly. This is not one of them.

There is a tree above Ughill. It is called a gosava, and it eats. Barkers went into that corner of the Wisewood and did not come out. A onetoe. A flock of wooltards. A lad. Somebody with more çhits than sense has decided the tree should stop, and somebody with more sense than çhits, which would be you, has agreed to make it stop.

Here is the trap, and I want you to understand it before you take the money, because I didn't. You cannot kill a tree in the dark. You can shard a creature. You can lure it, poison it, wait it out. A tree is rooted to the spot, which sounds like the easiest kill in The Dark Peak, right up until you realise you cannot take it somewhere quiet. You have to do the loud thing, on its ground. The loud thing is fire. And fire in the Wisewood after murkfall is a bell you ring for everything that hunts the murkneet.

What hunts above Ughill is the gabbleratchet pack. They come to noise and light the way flies come to meat. Get up the edge path, get to the tree, burn it, and be off the hill before what you've called down arrives.

You will not be subtle. The best you can hope for is to be quick.

The murk is down. You have two cans of oil and a firestarter. You have until the fire gives you away, which it will.

-- Pip Rippon, *field notes, The Wisewood Inn, Loxley*

YOUR CHARACTER

You are a crosslander, taking coin for a job nobody local would touch. You know just enough to be dangerous, mostly to yourself.

Distribute the numbers **3, 2, 1** between your three stats. Choose according to who you are.

STAT	WHAT IT COVERS
GRIT	Strength, endurance, physical force. Holding a line. Not dying.
WIT	Perception, quickness, doing a thing cleanly and quietly. Not being seen.

STAT	WHAT IT COVERS
MURK	Sensitivity to dark matter. Luck. Resistance to things that feed on minds.

HP: 6. If you reach 0, the hill keeps you. The tree is not burned, or it is, and it makes no difference to you.

TESTS

When you attempt something uncertain and the outcome matters, roll **2d6 + the relevant stat**.

ROLL	RESULT
10+	Success. You do the thing.
7-9	Success with cost. You do the thing, but something goes wrong, you take 1 damage, or the situation gets worse.
6 or less	Failure. Your own bad luck decides what happens instead.

When a creature attacks you, roll **2d6 + Grit** to resist physical damage, or **2d6 + Murk** to resist mental damage. On a failure, take the creature's listed damage.

THE HILL

The gosava sits in three zones, climbing from the edge path up into the dead wood. Each time you enter a new zone, roll on the **Encounter Table**. Also roll when you make noise or the rules tell you to.

THE EDGE PATH

A ledge as wide as a coffin. Wisewood dropping into murk on one side, crag on the other. Something walks this path, always. You start here, and you must get back here to live.



THE DEAD WOOD

The gosava's reach. Nothing grows. Bare poles, a floor of muck, the canopy blacked out overhead. The organic network stops here. You are hard to see under the cover.



THE GOSAVA

The tree. A trunk the width of a doorway, a low net of dripping branches, roots closed round something the size of a lad. This is where you do the loud thing.

To complete the scenario: Reach The Gosava, douse and burn it (Wit test, see Objective), and get back to The Edge Path and off the hill -- all inside **6 total Encounter rolls**.

Lighting the gosava forces one extra Encounter roll no matter how the burning goes.

After the tree is alight: Add +2 to all subsequent Encounter rolls. The fire is a beacon. The whelping has started.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

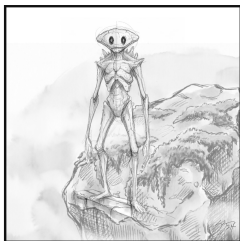
Roll 2d6. After the gosava is alight, add +2 to every roll on this table.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
2	The pack is already here. Skip directly to the Gabbleratchets. If the tree is not yet burning, they have come for something else, and you are welcome to it.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
3-4	The gritstrike is on you. It is walking where you are standing. Roll Wit 7+ to read its stride and step off the path in time. On a failure, it walks through you: roll Grit 7+ or take 3 damage and go down toward the drop.
5-6	The whelping, distant. A layered baying rolls over the hill, not close, not yet. Roll Murk 7+. On a failure it seeds in you: take 1 Murk damage, and do not, whatever you do, look up.
7-8	The murk shifts. Nothing comes. The dripping sounds nearer than it should, and for a moment the whole hillside hums like a funfair heard through a wall. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll.
9-10	Clear ground. You move without incident. Note it. It will not hold.
11	You find the second can. Dropped by whoever tried this before you, half of him still in his boots by the look of the ground. Half full. If you take it, your Wit test to burn the gosava is at +1 -- but the extra weight means the gritstrike result (3-4) costs an additional 1 damage this run.
12	The gritstrike blocks the path ahead. It stands across the ledge, facing away, mid-stride. It is not hunting. You cannot pass while it occupies the pinch. Wait a round (costs 1 Encounter roll) for it to move on, or squeeze past on the drop side (Wit 7+ or fall, 2 damage).

THE CREATURES

GRITSTRIKE



Edge-walker. Tall, stone-legged, its head set wrong. Wide eyes that take in the whole ledge at once.

It does not hunt. It occupies. It walks the same round it has walked for longer than the path has been a path -- the same pace, the same stones, grooves worn into the rock that fit its stride like a key fits a lock. If you are standing where it walks, it walks through where you are standing, and the drop is real. This is not malice. It is geometry. You are in the way.

STAT BLOCK

HP 8 **Damage** 3 (crushing, physical -- and the fall) **Type** Warden

It does not stop: The gritstrike cannot be reasoned with, lured, or turned. It can only be avoided. Any Grit attack against it triggers an immediate Encounter roll and does nothing but chip its stone.

Step off the path: On the Edge Path, avoid it with Wit 7+. Read the rhythm, step off, let it pass. Never with Grit. You cannot out-push a thing that has been pushing this ledge for a hundred years.

GOSAVA

The tree that eats. A doorway-wide trunk, a low net of dark dripping branches, roots closed like fingers round whatever it took last.

Rooted to the spot and reaching into every corner of the wood it can touch. It does not move to you. It does not have to. Get close enough to burn it and you are close enough to be reached: the branches attend, the roots shift, the dripping comes down the back of your neck and it is not water. It will not notice you are a threat until you are alight, and by then neither of you can take it back.



STAT BLOCK

Rooted: The gosava cannot follow you out of its zone. Every round you spend at The Gosava, it makes one attack -- roll Grit to resist. The longer you take dousing it, the more it takes from you.

Only fire ends it: Grit and Wit attacks scar it and achieve nothing. Cutting, hacking, fungets -- the wood closes over all of it. The tree dies one way only: soaked in oil and lit. See Objective.

GABBLERATCHET



The pack. Bodies of a large barker, wings folded until they dive. Human heads. The expression is not.

The noise arrives first -- a layered whelping, a baying with a weeping under it and, under that, something like a child, from more throats than you can count. It rolls over the hill ahead of them like weather. They are drawn to fire, to light, to noise, to a person standing out in the open like a struck match. You lit a beacon. You called them yourself.

STAT BLOCK

HP 8 each Damage special (to Murk, and the soul) Type Hunter

Do not look up: Hearing the pack seeds a quiet madness. Each round they are near, roll Murk 7+ or take 1 Murk damage. If you are caught in the open and look up -- if you fail a Murk test by 5 or more, or choose to face them -- the pack takes the soul. That character is gone: arms out, staring, making their sound. No HP is lost. There is nothing left inside to save.

Murk-covered ground, every time: Under the canopy of the Dead Wood, or off the path in the trees, you are hard to fix on. Encounter rolls involving the Gabbleratchets in a covered zone are at -2 for them. In the open -- the bare Edge Path, the burning clearing -- they find you at once.

Do not run in the open: Running across open ground while the pack is up forces an immediate second Encounter roll.

OBJECTIVE

You reach The Gosava with your oil and your firestarter. This is the job. It is also the loudest thing you will do all murkneet. Douse the roots and trunk and light it. Roll **Wit** 7+ to do it quickly and get clear before it goes up in your face.

ROLL	RESULT
10+	The oil takes, the fire catches clean, and you are already moving as it climbs. The tree is burning. Take one forced Encounter roll , then get off the hill. Every exit roll is now at +2.

7-9 It catches, but slow, or your hands shake, or the drip has soaked your sleeve. You are too close for a beat too long. The tree is burning. Take

ROLL	RESULT
	one forced Encounter roll and 1 damage from the heat, then run. Every exit roll is now at +2.
6 or less	The oil spills, the firestarter gutters, the branches thrash at you as you fumble. Take 1 Grit damage and two forced Encounter rolls . The tree is not yet burning -- try again next round, and the gosava gets another attack while you do.
	Once the tree is alight, it is done. It cannot be saved and neither can the wood. Now it is only a question of whether you get down before the pack gets in.

HOW TO PLAY

A complete example game. Follow this once and you'll have it.

STEP 1 -- MAKE YOUR CHARACTER

Assign **3, 2, 1** to your stats (see page 2). This is a job you win by being quiet, not strong, so we lead with Wit: **Grit 1 · Wit 3 · Murk 2 · HP 6**. Low Grit means the gritstrike and the gosava will hurt if they touch you. Write it down.

STEP 2 -- THE GOAL

Edge Path → Dead Wood → Gosava → burn it → back to the Edge Path. Do it in **6 Encounter rolls or fewer**. Every zone move triggers a roll. Lighting the tree forces an extra roll, and after that every roll is at +2.

STEP 3 -- MOVE TO THE DEAD WOOD

Roll 2d6 for the zone move. You roll **5+3 = 8**. Look up 7-8.

"The murk shifts. Nothing comes. The dripping sounds nearer than it should. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll."

Safe, but note the +1. You are under the canopy now, which means the pack finds you harder in here.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 1 OF 6

STEP 4 -- MOVE TO THE GOSAVA

Roll 2d6, add the +1. You roll **2+3 = 5, +1 = 6**. Look up 5-6.

"The whelping, distant. A layered baying rolls over the hill. Roll Murk 7+."

Roll 2d6 + Murk 2. You roll **3+3 = 6, +2 = 8**.

8

7+: The whelping doesn't seed. You keep your eyes down. No Murk lost.

You are at The Gosava. The dripping is coming down the back of your neck.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 2 OF 6

STEP 5 -- BURN IT (OBJECTIVE)

Empty both cans and strike the firestarter. Roll **Wit 7+** (2d6 + Wit 3). You roll **3+2 = 5**, **+3 = 8**.

8	7-9: It catches, but slow. Take 1 damage from the heat (HP 6 → 5) and one forced Encounter roll. The tree is alight. +2 on every roll from here.
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Forced Encounter roll, now at +2: roll 2d6 +2. You roll **4+3 = 7**, **+2 = 9**. Look up 9-10.

"Clear ground. You move without incident. It will not hold."

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 3 OF 6 · HP 5 · TREE BURNING (+2)

HOW TO PLAY CONTINUED

STEP 6 -- BACK INTO THE DEAD WOOD

Turn and go. Roll 2d6 +2 (tree burning). You roll **3+4 = 7, +2 = 9**. Look up 9-10.

"Clear ground. You move without incident."

You are back under the canopy. The fire lights the branches orange above you, but the cover still makes you hard to fix on. This is the last easy breath you get.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 4 OF 6 · TREE BURNING (+2)

STEP 7 -- OUT ONTO THE EDGE PATH

The last stretch, and the open one. Roll 2d6 +2. You roll **1+1 = 2, +2 = 4**. Look up 3-4.

"The gritstrike is on you. It is walking where you are standing. Roll Wit 7+ to read its stride and step off in time."

You cannot fight it, and with Grit 1 you cannot shove it. Wit only. Roll 2d6 + Wit 3. You roll **4+4 = 8, +3 = 11**.

11

10+: You read the rhythm, step off onto the crag side, and let it pass.
Tick, tick, tick. It never turns its head.

You step onto the Edge Path proper and down off the hill. The tree is a torch behind you. You made it out on roll 5.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 5 OF 6 · SCENARIO COMPLETE

RESULT

The gosava is burning to the root behind you and the whelping fades as you drop below the tree line. You got down clean, at HP 5, and nothing followed the light. You tell the man it's done. You do not tell him how close the ledge was.

FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 **Every zone move** = an Encounter roll. You have 6. Approach costs two, the exit costs two, and the fire costs one.

2 **Lighting the gosava always announces itself.** It forces an extra roll, and a failed burn forces two plus 1 Grit. You cannot be subtle about fire.

3 **Once the tree is alight, +2 to every roll.** Getting down is worse than getting up. That is the whole shape of the job.

4 **The gritstrike cannot be fought, only avoided** -- and only with Wit, never Grit. It is walking, not hunting. Step off the path.

5 **Never look up at the pack.** Murk 0 is the soul gone, arms out. Stay under cover; open ground is where they find you.

OUTCOME

If you burn the gosava and get off the hill clean, before 6 Encounter rolls:

The tree is a torch behind you the whole way down, throwing your shadow long and reaching in front of you, and then the whelping fades, and then it stops, and the murk closes back over the top of everything, funfair-soft, like nothing happened. You deliver the word: it's done, burned to the root. You are paid. Nobody asks how close it was. You do not tell them.

If you burn the gosava but leave loud:

You get off the hill, but not clean. Something followed the light down. For a week after, on bad murkneets, you hear a layered baying at the edge of hearing and you do not go to the window to check. The tree is dead. That was the job. The rest is yours to carry.

If you reach 0 HP:

The gritstrike walks its round, or the roots close, or the drop takes you. The hill keeps you, alongside the barkers and the onetoe and the lad. Whether the tree burns after is not your concern anymore.

If you reach 0 Murk:

You looked up. You put your arms out. The sound they were making, you start making it too, soft, under your breath, like you are learning it. Your body walks off the hill on its own some hours later. It is still, in every way a body can be measured, you. It simply isn't home.

The gabblerratchets, the gosava of Ughill, the world of Hellsborough, the Bestiary of The Dark Peak, and more Postcard Adventures:

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