

Prologue

Overview

The Greydogs have long chafed at the predominance of the Orlmarth clan over the rich Starfire Ridges. Recently, a small party of well-armed men crossed over the Ridges in the early morning, using powerful magic to evade Orlmarth defenses. Led by Hengall Hodirson, brother to Branduan "Killer" Hodirson, they stole a Goldeneye Stallion from the stead of the prosperous but disliked Carl Glendara, mother to the heroes. The horse was originally stolen nearly a decade ago by her husband in a raid on the Grazelands; Glendara's husband died during the storming of Boldhome and the horse is all she has left of him. The Greydog plan is to incite Orlmarth retaliation and use this either as a pretext for taking control of the Ridges, or, if the Orlmarth fail to respond, as proof of the Orlmarth's weakness. In this endeavor, they have the support of Carinus, the Lunar Garrison commander at Clearwine, who believes the Orlmarth are harboring rebels. This plan is masterminded by Branduan Hodirson, who believes that its success will help him to become chieftain of the Greydogs.

Scene 1: The Call to Arms (Premise)

- The heroes are relaxing in the hall of their lord, Berwyn son of Cadogan. They are drinking mead and eating roasted lamb stew with dark bread when their younger brother Aski is escorted inside.
 - Prompt some initial roleplaying by having the players describe what they are talking about; are other huscarls with them?
 - Their mother's prize stallion has been stolen by a rival family, and no one in the clan will stand up for their mother's honor by trying to recover it.
 - Aski tried to recover it himself, but was caught, beaten and sent home.
 - Aski is young, with brown hair and eyes, and a strong build. He is mildly resentful of his siblings for having left, and angry at the clan for their abandonment of his mother.

Scene 2: Return Journey

- The heroes must petition Berwyn for his leave to go, but he will grant it without rancor; he will even give them gifts, though they must return their arm rings.
 - **Hero 1:** ring – bronze ring with wolves' heads / gift – a silver cloak pin
 - **Hero 2:** ring – twisted silver with plain knobs / gift – a two-tined copper hair pin worked with Vingan runes
 - **Hero 3:** ring – plain bronze with garnet settings / gift – a cloak, simple embroidery
 - **Hero 4:** ring – coiled bronze with silver threading / gift – a leather necklace with an image of Orlanth
- The journey back is relatively uneventful.
 - **Road Encounter:** Tax farmers from a local clan with Lunar authority
 - **Clearwine Encounter:** Lunar garrison harasses them
 - **Apple Lane Encounter:** Dragonewt ritual on the road into town

Scene 3: Home Again (Point of No Return)

- When the heroes arrive in Old Man Village, things are much as they were when they left years ago. A thane takes them to see the chieftain, and they are asked to explain their business – the chieftain offers them no support for their errand. Glendara is liked by no one, and he does not want to risk a feud with the Greydogs.
- **Familiar faces:** 1d3 per player. As the heroes are led through the village, each encounters 1d3 people they knew from before they left; allow the players to detail the personality and relationship, and then roleplay the encounter.

Scene 4: Mother's Arms

- Glendara's stead is comprised of a sturdy longhouse, a corral for her horses, a barn for cattle, and another longhouse where her cottars sleep and work. Five families live with her (around 40 men, women, and children; seven men of fighting age).
- How does Glendara welcome them? Is she happy to see her children, or is she resentful of them? She might even blame them for the theft of her horse. Let the players give input on this.
- She feeds them some dinner and tells them the story of how her stallion was stolen.

Scene 5: Gathering Allies

- **Information:** Who took the stallion, and why? Where are they keeping it? Who guards it?
- **Allies:** They will have to search hard for allies. Aski will insist on going with them, but others will be scarce. Possible options include an old Orimarth huscarl who has a grudge against the Greydogs, old friends from before they left the clan – possibly including Berwyn, or even men living at their mother's stead.
- **Plan:** How will they go about recovering the stallion? Attack the stead itself or simply steal the horse? Challenge the thief to a duel for possession of it? How will they return with the stallion and evade pursuit?

Scene 6: The Raid (Escalation)

- Starfire Ridges
 - **Weather:** Rain and/or Wind? What is the phase of the moon? Allow the players to roll for this, so that they determine their own doom.
 - **Ghosts on the Ridge (Lost Girl):** See adventure in Sartar Companion. Scared Little Girl and Angry Ghosts
 - **Greydog Wyter:** The ghost dogs which defend the Greydog tula. The GM assesses the distance of the heroes' approach route to Snorrstead and judges how many checks are needed. A check for every half hour spent in the Greydog lands would align with the GURPS Tracking rules.
- Snorrstead
 - **Patrols:** A chance clan patrol with three to six mounted men. Only one check for every hour is warranted.
 - **Guards:** One or two men standing watch at the stead.

Scene 7: Aftermath (Resolution)

- Successful or not, the characters must retreat back across the ridge – with or without their prize – and face the same obstacles they encountered before.
 - **Weather**
 - **Greydog Wyter**
 - **Ghosts on the Ridge**
- They must face not only their mother but also the clan ring and defend their actions
 - **Success:** Glendara will be ecstatic, despite the disapproval of the clan ring. The heroes are tolerated on Orimarth lands.
 - **Failure:** The heroes return in disgrace. Glendara will demand that they try again while the ring threatens them with expulsion should they obey her.
 - **Greydog Casualties:** The clan ring is furious and refuses to pay wergild to the Greydogs. The heroes are disavowed and threatened with exile if they cannot pay it themselves.

- What are the larger consequences?
 - **Greydogs:** Any steady-burning on the part of the heroes will result in a retaliatory raid by the Greydogs and other Lismelder clans – perhaps even a Colymar clan with ties to the family.
 - **Lunar Garrison:** Carinus will ignore a Greydog attack on the Orlmarth, but will intervene if the Orlmarth muster for a raid on the Greydogs.
- Decide the heroes' course of action going forward
 - Stay with the Orlmarth clan
 - Return to their lord
 - Strike off on their own