



POSTCARD FROM THE DARK PEAK · #8

# WHAT THE RIPPERWING CIRCLES

A SOLO RPG SCENARIO · BURBAGE EDGE · THE DARK PEAK

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## A NOTE FROM PIP

I will be direct: this is not a job for someone who prefers to resolve problems with their hands.

I know a crosslander who tried that. At Burbage Edge, against a morivarid sweep, with a ripperwing already on its second pass overhead. He had a shard and confidence and a plan that he had described to me, in detail, the previous evening. He was proud of the plan.

The ripperwing detected him on the knife-draw. The morivarid detected him on the follow-through. The emissary was gone before the blood dried. He got nothing.

The job is simple. Bevel Crook needs to know who met with Hordrön's emissary at the Burbage millstone last Besd'y. He has a name in mind but he needs confirmation — a face, at distance, in the murk. Nothing more.

The meeting happens again this Besd'y. Same place. Same time. Murkfall.

You will go there. You will see who it is. You will come back.

You will not be seen.

— Pip Rippon, *field notes, The Rawson Spring, Hillsborough*

## YOUR CHARACTER

You are a crosslander with enough sense to lie still in cold heather for forty minutes. This is, in Hellsborough, a marketable skill.

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

STAT	WHAT IT COVERS
<b>GRIT</b>	Strength, endurance, not dying. Fighting, if it comes to that — and it shouldn't.
<b>WIT</b>	Perception, quickness, staying still when everything in you says move. The primary stat for this job.
<b>MURK</b>	Sensitivity to dark matter. Resistance to mind-feeding creatures. Luck, for the parts that aren't skill.

**HP: 6.** At 0 HP you have been found — and cleaned.

## TESTS

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

ROLL	RESULT
<b>10+</b>	Success. You do the thing.
<b>7-9</b>	Success with cost. You do the thing, but something goes wrong or the situation worsens.
<b>6-</b>	Failure. You don't do the thing. The situation worsens.

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

# BURBAGE EDGE

This is a **WITNESS** job. **Do not fight**. Every violent action makes it worse. Combat costs 2 detection points automatically, regardless of outcome.

**Detection points** track how visible you have become. Begin at 0. At 3, the scenario ends – the emissary has been notified and whatever you've seen, you haven't seen enough.

Each time you enter a new zone, roll **2d6 + Wit** (stealth):

ROLL	DETECTION GAINED
10+	0 – you pass unseen.
7–9	1 detection point.
6–	2 detection points.

Roll the **Encounter Table** each time you enter a new zone to learn what the stealth roll is against.

## THE TRACK HEAD

Below the ridgeline. Gritstone outcrops, high heather. The ripperwing's circuit passes here. You start here.



## THE HOLLOW

Open ground between ridgeline and millstone. Flat, exposed. The morivarid spiral inward from here. The organic network stops at the Wisewood tree line. What watches you here does not need a network.



## THE MILLSTONE OUTCROP

Ancient cut stones, half-sunk in heather. The meeting point. The stones were cut before Hellsborough existed. That should be reassuring. It isn't.

**To complete the job:** reach The Millstone Outcrop, make the Wit observation test, and return to The Track Head – all before accumulating **3 detection points**.

**On the return journey:** the ripperwing has tightened its circuit. Add +1 to all encounter table rolls on the way back.

# ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 2d6 when entering a zone. The result tells you what you must move through. Then make the stealth roll (2d6 + Wit) for that encounter's conditions.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
2	<b>The ripperwing locks on.</b> Third pass — a commitment. If you run, it attacks (combat = 2 detection). If you hold: roll Wit 10+ to register as heather. On 7–9, 1 detection and 1 damage (clipped). On 6 or less, 3 damage and 2 detection.
3–4	<b>Morivarid sweep extends into your position.</b> The loop has tightened. One passes within reach. Hold completely still: roll Wit 10+. On 7–9, 1 detection. On 6 or less, 2 detection and the nearest morivarid orients on you (attacks next round, 2 damage to the face).
5–6	<b>The emissary pauses and turns, scanning the zone.</b> Do not move. Roll Wit 7+. On 7–9, 1 detection. On 6 or less, 2 detection — the morivarid sweep tightens to 3 metres for the rest of the scenario (+1 to all future morivarid sweep rolls).
7–8	<b>Loose gritstone underfoot.</b> The heather conceals a shifting slab. Roll Wit 7+ to catch your weight before it grinds. On 7–9, 1 detection (a sound, distant). On 6 or less, 2 detection — a sharp crack, audible across the hollow.
9–10	<b>Clear passage.</b> The murk shifts across the hollow. 0 detection. Note it.
11	<b>A scrufftail breaks from cover near you,</b> drawing the nearest morivarid's attention away. 0 detection this move. Roll Wit 7+ to use the window — on a success, move to the next zone with 0 detection (no zone roll required). On a failure, the window closes before you've moved.
12	<b>Murk rolls in.</b> A bank of murk crosses the hollow, providing cover. Your next two zone entries cost 0 detection regardless of rolls. Mark this.

# THE CREATURES

## RIPPERWING



*Hunter. Two metres of wingspan. Patient. Already watching.*

By the time you notice a ripperwing, it has already been watching the area for longer than you've been anywhere near it. It circles. It records. Running triggers an immediate third-pass attack.

### STAT BLOCK

**HP 6**   **Damage 3** (talons, physical)   **Type Hunter**

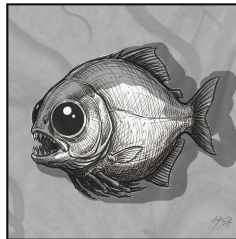
**Three-pass protocol:** First pass — reconnaissance, roll stealth as normal. Second pass — test, roll stealth at -1. Third pass — commitment, treat as a direct attack. Any combat advances to third pass immediately.

**Talon grip:** On a committed attack, roll Grit 10+ to break free. On 7-9, 2 damage and free. On 6 or less, carried and dropped — 2 damage, in the open, and the emissary hears the commotion (1 detection).

## MORIVARID

*Hungry. Big-eyed. Coming in threes — one visible, one feeding, one already behind you.*

They travel with Hordrön's emissaries as cleaners. They loop around the emissary in long slow spirals, eating whatever they find. What they find includes eyes. The third one is already oriented before you've spotted the first two.



### STAT BLOCK

**HP 2 each**   **Damage 2** (always face and eyes, physical)   **Type Hungry**

**Come in threes:** Three attack simultaneously. Roll Grit 7+ once for the swarm. On 7-9, one connects (2 damage). On 6 or less, two connect (4 damage, plus roll Wit 7+ or lose 1 Wit for the rest of the scenario — blurred vision from a corneal graze).

**Smoke:** They dislike it. I am not suggesting you set yourself on fire.

# THE CREATURES

## HORDRÖN'S EMISSARY



Warden. Gelatinous. Wrapped in something that shimmers. Do not engage.

The emissary communicates directly with the ripperwing. It moves through the crosslands under the assumption that anything watching it is already dead. It has been right about this more often than not.

### STAT BLOCK

**HP** 8   **Damage** 3 (gelatinous strike, physical)   **Type** Warden

**Relay agent:** Any combat with the emissary = 2 detection points and the ripperwing advances to third pass immediately. Fighting it does not help. It announces you and makes your exit harder.

**Gelatinous form:** Grit attacks deal 1 less damage (minimum 1). The form absorbs blows.

**Trapdoor:** If the emissary reaches 0 HP, it drops through any surface and is gone. The ripperwing descends. 3 detection points immediately. The scenario ends.

## OBJECTIVE

At The Millstone Outcrop, lie flat and observe. Roll **Wit** 7+.

ROLL	RESULT
10+	Clean identification. Face, bearing, the mark Bevel Crook described. You know exactly who it is. 0 extra detection.
7-9	Identification made, but the move to get a clear angle has registered with the nearest morivarid. 1 detection point.
6-	Too dark, too much murk, wrong angle. You cannot confirm. 1 detection point. You may try again — roll the encounter table first.

# 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. For this example: **Grit 1 · Wit 3 · Murk 2 · HP 6**. A cautious crosslander — sharp eyes, poor instincts for a fight. Write it down.

## STEP 2 – THE GOAL

Track Head → Hollow → Millstone Outcrop. Make the Wit observation. Get back to the Track Head. Stay below **3 detection points** throughout.

## STEP 3 – MOVE TO THE HOLLOW

Roll 2d6 on the Encounter Table. You roll **4+3 = 7**. Look up 7–8.

*"Loose gritstone underfoot. The heather conceals a shifting slab. Roll Wit 7+ to catch your weight before it grinds."*

Roll stealth: 2d6 + Wit (3). You roll **2+4 = 6, +3 = 9**.

9

7–9: 1 detection point — a sound, distant. The slab shifted but you caught it in time.

DETECTION: 1 OF 3

## STEP 4 – MOVE TO THE MILLSTONE OUTCROP

Roll the Encounter Table. You roll **5+6 = 11**. Look up 11.

*"A scrufftail breaks from cover near you, drawing the nearest morivarid's attention away. Roll Wit 7+ to use the window."*

Roll: 2d6 + Wit (3). You roll **4+2 = 6, +3 = 9**.

9

7–9: Success — move to the next zone with 0 detection. The scrufftail did the work.

You are at The Millstone Outcrop. The emissary and its contact are thirty yards ahead. The morivarid loop. The ripperwing circles.



## HOW TO PLAY CONTINUED

### STEP 5 – MAKE THE OBSERVATION

Roll **Wit 7+** (2d6 + Wit 3). You roll  $3+2 = 5$ ,  $+3 = 8$ .

8

7–9: Identification made – but the move to get a clear angle has registered with the nearest morivarid. 1 detection point.

You have the face. Now get off the moor.

DETECTION: 2 OF 3

### STEP 6 – RETURN TO THE HOLLOW (+1 ON ALL ENCOUNTER ROLLS)

Roll 2d6 on the Encounter Table, add +1. You roll  $5+4 = 9$ ,  $+1 = 10$ . Look up 9–10.

*"Clear passage. The murk shifts across the hollow. 0 detection."*

The murk is with you. Move.

DETECTION: 2 OF 3

### STEP 7 – RETURN TO THE TRACK HEAD (+1 ON ENCOUNTER ROLLS)

Roll 2d6 + 1. You roll  $1+1 = 2$ ,  $+1 = 3$ . Look up 3–4.

*"Morivarid sweep extends into your position. The loop has tightened. One passes within reach. Hold completely still: roll Wit 10+."*

Roll: 2d6 + Wit (3). You roll  $5+4 = 9$ ,  $+3 = 12$ .

12

10+: You pass unseen. The morivarid loops past within eighteen inches and continues. 0 detection.

You make the Track Head. You are back.

DETECTION: 2 OF 3 · IDENTIFICATION CONFIRMED · OUT

## RESULT

*Bevel Crook pays half. He is not displeased – you got what he needed. Something followed you off the moor. Not close. But following. Check behind you on the way*

| home.

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## FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Move between zones** = roll the Encounter Table, then roll 2d6 + Wit to see how visible you were.
  - 2 Detection reaches 3** = scenario ends. You are known. The meeting moves.
  - 3 Combat costs 2 detection points automatically.** Fighting is always the wrong answer.
  - 4 The ripperwing does three passes.** First is watching. Second is testing. Third is a talon in your shoulder.
  - 5 The return journey** adds +1 to all encounter table rolls. The moor is not done with you.
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## OUTCOME

### **If you return to The Track Head with the identification and 0-1 detection points:**

Bevel Crook receives the name. He pays the full three hundred and fifty chits without commentary, which is the nascent equivalent of a standing ovation. He does not ask how you held still for so long. You do not tell him about the eighteen inches. You are not followed home. This time.

### **If you return with the identification and exactly 2 detection points:**

Bevel Crook pays half. You got what he needed, but the partial exposure means the Hellsborough contact will be warned, and whatever was in that canister has already been moved. Something followed you off the moor. Not close. But following. Check behind you on the way home.

### **If you reach 3 detection points:**

The emissary relays. The ripperwing descends. The morivarid tighten. You are not caught — too far into the heather by then — but you are known. The meeting will not happen at Burbage again. The canister goes where you will never find it. Bevel Crook pays nothing. He does not say he expected this.

### **If you reach 0 HP:**

The morivarid found you lying still in the heather, which is exactly the kind of thing they are for. Someone will find your psycmask on the moor in a day or two. Everything else will have been cleaned.

Hordrön and his household, the world of Hellsborough, the Bestiary of The Dark Peak, and more Postcard Adventures:

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Postcard from The Dark Peak: What the Ripperwing Circles. Published by Demonspawn Books and Games, Sheffield S6, South Yorkshire.

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