

POSTCARD FROM THE DARK PEAK · #7

LONIK WEATHER

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

DEMONSPAWN BOOKS AND GAMES

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A NOTE FROM PIP

The commission was straightforward. Page forty-three of the second notebook, in my own handwriting: *sealed brass cylinder, survey weight, eight inches long, weir apron above Malin Bridge, retrieve before murkrise*. Van dictated it. I wrote it down. He said nothing when I read it back, which is Van for yes, that's right, file that.

What Van did not dictate was what the Lonik sounds like in the margin after murkfall. Or what happens to a path you know when the chewing starts from two directions at once. Or how it is possible to follow a route you have walked thirty times and arrive somewhere you did not intend.

You wake up on Hellsborough Corner Bridge. You do not know how long you have been there. Your sleeve is wet to the elbow. There is a warmth behind your eyes that started before you opened them, and the parapet is very close, and looking over it seems, for a moment, like a reasonable thing to do.

Do not look over the parapet.

Get off the bridge. Move upriver. The Wisewood Margin is three zones away. You have four encounter rolls before the Kraken has had long enough to finish what it started. The cylinder may or may not still be in your hand. At this point, that is the least of your problems.

— Pip Rippon, *field notes, recovered from the Mason's Arms bench, sometime after murkrise*

YOUR CHARACTER

You are a crosslander. Something went wrong before this scenario began. This is reflected in your starting HP.

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. Pushing through. Not dying.
WIT	Perception, intelligence, quickness. Spotting things. Not being led somewhere you didn't intend to go.
MURK	Sensitivity to dark matter. Luck. Resistance to things that feed on minds.

HP: 4. Something already happened. If you reach 0, the weir has the rest of you. The cylinder surfaces three days later at the Hellsborough Hole. Nobody claims it.

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-	Failure. The GM — your own bad luck — decides what happens instead.

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

THE VALLEY

The upper Loxley runs through three zones. You are moving upriver — away from the bridge, toward the road. Move between adjacent zones freely, but each time you enter a new zone, roll on the **Encounter Table**. Also roll when you make noise or fail a test.

HELLSBOROUGH CORNER BRIDGE — START

Old stone bridge. The Loxley runs beneath. The warmth is already in your skull when you open your eyes. The Draw is running. Move.



THE WEIR

Four metres of green-black stone above an apron pool. The fallclimbers are on the face. The path upriver is narrow and close to the water.



THE WISEWOOD MARGIN — EXIT

The beech-root strip above Malin Bridge. The chewing comes from somewhere left. The path to Walkley Lane is through here — if the Wisewood lets you find it.

To complete the scenario: Reach The Wisewood Margin before making **4 total Encounter rolls**. On roll 4, if you are not in the Margin, the Kraken has had long enough to finish the Draw. There is no retrieval test — getting out alive is enough.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

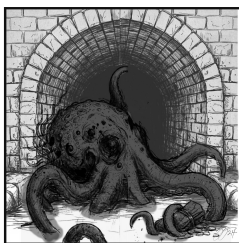
Roll 2d6 when you enter a new zone, when you make noise, or when you fail a test.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
2	The Draw deepens. Wherever you are, the warmth intensifies. Roll Murk 7+ or take 3 Murk damage. If you are still on the Bridge, the tentacle comes over the parapet immediately after.
3-4	Fallclimber on the path. One has left the weir face and is on the apron track. Roll Grit 7+ to move past. On 7-9, through but take 1 damage from a limb-grip. On 6 or less, take 2 damage and are held — roll Grit 7+ next round to break free.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
5-6	The Lonik in the margin. The chewing is close. Roll Wit 7+ to hold your bearing. On a failure, the Wisewood has rearranged — move back one zone. Roll this table again when you re-enter.
7-8	The murk shifts. The chewing and the warmth alternate. Nothing happens. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll.
9-10	Clear passage. You move without incident. Note it. It won't last.
11	You find something. On the weir apron: a survey notebook, water-damaged. One page is readable — a record in Van's handwriting, dated three seasons ago. Take it or leave it. It doesn't affect the Encounter count.
12	A fallclimber crests the weir lip directly above you. It pauses at the top, looking down. You pause below it, looking up. Nothing happens, which is somehow more alarming than something happening. Move on. No roll required.

THE CREATURES

THE LOXLEY KRAKEN



Pale. Wide as the river channel. Patient the way very old things are patient.

The warmth behind your eyes is the feeding. The Loxley Kraken does not need to surface — it has been working on you since before you woke up on its bridge. The tentacle, when it comes, arrives with no drama at all, as if this were simply the next thing that was going to happen.

STAT BLOCK

HP 19 **Damage** 2 to **Murk** (not HP) **Type** Hungry

The Draw: At the start of each round you remain on the Bridge, roll Murk 7+ or take 2 Murk damage. At **Murk 0**, you walk to the parapet of your own accord. Nothing about it feels wrong.

Cannot be fought: The Kraken is in the river. Physical attacks cannot reach it. The only counter is movement — leave the Bridge zone and the Draw stops compounding. It does not follow upriver.

The tentacle: If you spend 3 or more consecutive rounds on the Bridge, or if a Murk test fails by 3 or more, the tentacle comes over the parapet. Roll Grit 10+ to dodge. On a failure, take 3 damage and are pinned. Roll Grit 7+ to break free.

FALLCLIMBER

The colour of the weir stone. Fin-limbs like a crustacean. Ascending, always ascending.

They don't initiate contact. They respond to noise, sudden movement, and anything that falls into the water near them. They are not territorial in any way you can predict, which is worse than territorial in every practical respect. The path upriver runs close to the apron. Too close.



STAT BLOCK

Ascending: Fallclimbers won't leave the weir face or apron pool unprompted. Move quietly through their zone and they ignore you. Make noise — fail a test, splash, or trigger the 3-4 Encounter result — and one descends.

Thick plates: Grit attacks deal 1 less damage (minimum 1). Wit-based manoeuvres — keeping still, slipping past slowly — deal normal damage and don't trigger Limb-grip.

THE WISEWOOD MARGIN

LONIK



Hare-sized. Herbivorous. Not trying to kill you. This is almost the whole problem.

The pelt is ash-grey this season, and in murk it stops being a shape and becomes part of whatever it happens to be standing next to. You hear it before you see it — soft, patient chewing. The Lonik does not know it is a hazard. The hazard is entirely the Wisewood's idea.

STAT BLOCK

HP 2 **Damage 0 (harmless)** **Type Lurker**

Moves without moving: The Lonik does no damage and cannot be fought usefully. Its effect is passive: when you fail a Wit test in The Wisewood Margin zone, the Wisewood has used the Lonik as a distraction. You move back one zone and the Encounter count advances by 1.

Cannot be driven off: If you attempt to scare or harm the Lonik, it vanishes. The chewing resumes from a different direction thirty seconds later. This counts as making noise — roll on the Encounter Table.

OBJECTIVE

REACHING THE MARGIN

There is no retrieval test. The objective is simple: get out. When you move into The Wisewood Margin and no Encounter roll sends you back, you are through — the path to Walkley Lane opens, the chewing recedes, and the warmth behind your eyes finally starts to fade.

The cylinder, if you still have it, is in your hand. Whether you deliver it or not is a question for later. The person who hired you is waiting on Walkley Lane. They will see the state of your sleeve and say nothing.

THE KRAKEN DOES NOT FOLLOW

Once you leave the Bridge zone, the Draw stops compounding. The warmth does not follow upriver. If you keep moving, the Kraken loses you before you reach the

Weir. The only thing that can pull you back is the Encounter Table – and your own bad luck.

HOW TO PLAY

A complete example. You woke up on the bridge. Here is how you get off it.

STEP 1 – MAKE YOUR CHARACTER

Assign **3, 2, 1** to your stats. For this example: **Grit 1 · Wit 2 · Murk 3 · HP 4**. Something already happened – hence the 4, not 6. You are a surveyor's assistant who went in for the cylinder and lost track of time on the bridge. Write it down.

STEP 2 – THE GOAL

Bridge → Weir → Wisewood Margin. Get there in **4 Encounter rolls or fewer**. No retrieval test – reach the Margin alive and you're out. The Draw is already running on the Bridge. Move immediately.

STEP 3 – THE DRAW (BRIDGE)

You start on the Bridge. Before moving, roll **Murk 7+** (2d6 + Murk 3). The Draw is automatic – this does not cost an Encounter roll. You roll **3+3 = 6, +3 = 9**.

9

7–9: You resist – but cost. Take 1 Murk damage. The warmth recedes slightly. Move now before it returns.

Murk is now 2. You must leave the Bridge this round or roll again.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 0 OF 4 · DRAW ROLL DOES NOT COUNT

STEP 4 – MOVE TO THE WEIR

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

"The murk shifts. Nothing happens. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll."

Safe for now. Note the +1. You are at The Weir – fallclimbers on the stone face above you, path upriver close to the apron water.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 1 OF 4

HOW TO PLAY CONTINUED

STEP 5 – MOVE TOWARD THE WISEWOOD MARGIN

Roll 2d6, add the +1. You roll $2+2 = 4$, plus $1 = 5$. Look up 5–6.

"The Lonik in the margin. The chewing is close. Roll Wit 7+ to hold your bearing."

Roll 2d6 + Wit (2). You roll $1+2 = 3$, +2 = 5.

5

6 or less: The Wisewood has rearranged. Move back one zone — you are at The Weir again. Encounter count advances by 1.

Back at The Weir. The path you were following is no longer where you left it.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 3 OF 4 (2 ROLLS THIS STEP)

STEP 6 – TRY AGAIN: MOVE TO THE WISEWOOD MARGIN

One roll left. Roll 2d6. You roll $5+5 = 10$. Look up 9–10.

"Clear passage. You move without incident."

You are in The Wisewood Margin. The chewing is still there, somewhere to the left. You keep moving. The path to Walkley Lane is exactly where it should be. You are through.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 4 OF 4 · YOU'RE OUT

RESULT

You reach Walkley Lane at HP 3, Murk 2. The person who hired you is waiting. They look at your sleeve. They say nothing. The cylinder is in your hand and you honestly can't remember picking it up.

FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 You start at HP 4, not 6.** Something happened before the scenario began.
- 2 4 encounter rolls total.** Every zone entry, noise, or failed test uses one. Count carefully.

3 **The Draw is automatic on the Bridge.** Roll Murk 7+ each round you stay there — this does NOT count as an Encounter roll, but Murk damage adds up fast.

4 **The Lonik is harmless — the Wisewood is not.** Failing the Wit test sends you back a zone and costs an Encounter roll.

5 **No retrieval test.** Reach the Margin and you're done. The cylinder is incidental. Getting out is the job.

OUTCOME

If you reach The Wisewood Margin before 4 Encounter rolls:

You hand it over at murkrise — the person who hired you is waiting on Walkley Lane with the focused attention of someone who has been awake all murkneet. They do not open the cylinder in front of you. They say nothing about the mud on your coat or the state of your sleeve. You walk to the Mason's Arms. Pal is already behind the bar. He looks at you the way he looks at people who have been to the weir and come back — not surprised, and slightly disappointed that there isn't a better story. The chewing is still faintly audible, somewhere near the treeline, if you listen for it.

If you reach the Margin at HP 1-2:

You make it out, but something made it out with you. You don't know what it is yet. It isn't the Kraken — the Kraken doesn't follow upriver. Something smaller. Something that travels in pockets. You will notice it later, probably. The cylinder surfaces three days later at the Hellsborough Hole. You have no memory of losing it.

If you reach 0 HP:

The fallclimbers don't mean to. They're ascending. You were between them and the weir stone, and you were making noise, and the limb-grip is not malicious — it is simply mechanical. The cylinder bobs in the apron pool until the murk-current takes it downstream, past the bridge, past the confluence, and eventually toward the Ripperthroat mountains where everything finally ends up.

The full legend of the Loxley Kraken, the world of Hellsborough, the Bestiary of The Dark Peak, and more Postcard Adventures:

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