

the  
**WILDLINGS**  
Forests Dark & Caverns Deep

**.Adventure Game**  
for one Guide and 2 - 5 Players

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Playtest Version 07.01.2014

Thank you for downloading the playtest version of **The Wildlings!**

Since John Harper released the original rules for **The Wildlings** back in 2010, his knack at providing an evocative setting with simple and elegant rules, combined with eye-popping graphic design captured a lot of imaginations. That it was also designed to be an easy way to introduce children to gaming garnered a lot of interest too, both in the Story Games community and further afield. But it was incomplete, and John seemed to never have time to get around to finishing it.

At this point, I had a bit of a history hacking John's games, such as **Ghost/Echo** and **Danger Patrol**. I had also been moving increasingly towards simpler games with stronger narratives, and **The Wildlings** really hit that sweet spot. It also conveniently coincided with the theatrical release of the first *How to Train Your Dragon*, so my brain was already filled with the idea of young vikings going on grand adventures. Eventually, as it seemed like John was never going to get back to finishing the game, I started gathering notes, both from my actual play experiences, and from ideas and suggestions of others on the Story Games site, and released some rules addendums and compilations, which eventually turned into the revised game you see here.

This document is the result of about two solid years of tinkering, rethinking, rewriting, and graphic design (and some procrastination), in an effort to make *The Wildlings* a complete game. Thanks to John's support and encouragement, it's gotten to the point where I'm confident enough that the core mechanics and advancement works as intended. However, I need to make sure that, as written, it makes sense enough for others to play it without any hiccups in the process. So, I present the playtest document!

I encourage you to play and share the game, and send me your actual play reports, opinions, suggestions, and criticism. Hopefully someone will be able to run at least a short campaign, maybe even get some *Wildlings* through the Rites of Passage! Here are some questions that I would like you to think about:

- Ⓞ Do the rules, as written, make sense? Are they clear? Is there anything that doesn't quite sound right or needs clarification?
- Ⓞ Are there Feats (aka adverbs) that you think would work better than the ones listed? Do you follow the process of naming a Feat for your Goal before rolling, and does that feel natural enough to you?
- Ⓞ Do your players attempt to earn Marks, and how often? Is there anything that particularly encourages or discourages them from trying to earn them?
- Ⓞ Do you end up using the rules for Companions and Treasures? If so, what are they and how well did it work with both the rules and the story?
- Ⓞ For the Guide, are you able to use the description of your enemies to challenge the players? Do you have enough Ranks per adventure to make them threatening enough? Are there sample enemies that you think would make more sense for the setting?
- Ⓞ If you have children players, how easily do they take to the rules? Are there things they find confusing? Do any of them try to run the game themselves?
- Ⓞ If the final version of **The Wildlings** becomes a Kickstarter project, what alternate settings would you potentially like to see? What rewards do you think would be interesting to offer?

E-mail answers directly to me at [gremlinlegions@hotmail.com](mailto:gremlinlegions@hotmail.com). If you have any AP reports, consider posting them on Story-Games.com or on G+ (I can be found at +Gremlin Legions). I'll be taking feedback from the open playtest until the end of August, 2014.

Thanks!

-Mike Wight aka Gremlin Legions

# THE WAY OF THINGS

Ours is a wild and untamed land, full of as many wonders as there are dangers. For our people and allies, we draw bounty from the land and waters, and we prosper. But beyond our warm hearths and earthen walls, we must be on our guard. Surrounding us are the territories of **rival clans** and **outcast camps**, who attack and steal from us, their kin, rather than live with honor. Further out, hungry **wild beasts** stalk the unwary through the shadows of ancient forests, and long-lost ruins and caverns shelter **fell creatures** of terrible visage and the treasures they hoard...or so say the wise women.

But we bravely travel the land and venture fearlessly across the uncharted seas nevertheless, for we are blessed by the **Five Spirits**, who protect and guide us. **Wolf, Stag, Snake, Owl, and Bear** each help us grow and learn, revealing themselves differently in each person, making us unique. One may feel a close kinship with Owl, possessing keen vision or piercing insight, while another might have an affinity with Wolf, unwaveringly loyal or daring in battle. We hold dear the sacred teachings of the Five Spirits, and they have helped us thrive.

You are one of our young warriors - a **Wildling!** You have yet to be tested in the **Rites of Passage**, but you are certainly no child hiding behind the cloaks of your elders. Your heritage shows in every steady footstep, the pride in your speech, and the steel held firmly in your hand. Any of our people can be a warrior, boy or girl, weak or strong, as long as they strive to earn the favor of the Five Spirits - earning **Marks** by having the honor and bravery to do the right thing when faced with challenges. When the time is right, you too can stand by your elders as a warrior of our people. This is the way of things.

# PREPARE YOURSELF

## Assign Your Dice

You get to decide how strong, talented, and clever your Wildling is by giving different dice to the **Five Spirits**. You get a **d4**, **d6**, **d8**, **d10**, and **d12** – the bigger die you give to a Spirit, the greater bond your Wildling has with it. Your d12 Spirit is your strongest, and you should use it to help describe how you think and behave.



**Wolf** guides you through the wilderness, and makes you a good leader.



**Bear** gives you strength and health, and makes you look menacing.



**Owl** grants you wisdom and knowledge, and makes you ever watchful.



**Snake** keeps your actions hidden, and makes your mind sharp.



**Stag** blesses you with speed and agility, and makes your heart honest.

When your Wildling does things, the Guide will sometimes ask you to **make a roll** with one of your Spirits. Take that die and roll it, telling everyone **the result**.

Your **d10 Spirit** is special – it is your **Warrior Spirit**, the way you have been trained to fight. When you attack and defend yourself, this is the die you will roll, and the Spirit which will color your descriptions of battle. You may pounce upon your enemies like Wolf, strike suddenly and accurately like Owl, hit your foes with great strength like Bear, lie in wait and attack

silently like Snake, or move swiftly through your enemies like Stag, or perhaps you have some other way of describing your Warrior Spirit!

## **Make your Choices**

Here you will find a number of choices that will help to build and describe your Wildling. Everyone should read over these **together**, one section at a time, and let each other know what ideas interest you and why. When you choose something, tell the other players what your choice **means to you** – what does it mean about your Wildling, their families, or even their clan? The Guide may ask questions to further flesh out these details and get a better idea of how they make your Wildling unique.

## **Choose your Wildling's Name and say it:**

### **Boys**

Adric, Ari, Arngeirr, Atli, Bergr, Bogi, Boro, Brandr, Clade, Dov, Evard, Eymundr, Felnir, Finn, Galti, Gormr, Grimr, Hakon, Hollis, Iav, Ivarr, Karr, Kleppjarn, Maruk, Njall, Noth, Oddbjorn, Ormr, Orn, Rusk, Sigfastr, Skagi, Skorri, Snorri, Styrmir, Svartr, Tellis, Thorbergr, Ulfr, Valyr

### **Girls**

Adis, Aelfa, Alvi, Arneidr, Asny, Bera, Bolla, Brin, Brynhildr, Cyline, Dalla, Dremma, Drifa, Ea, Eydis, Finna, Fritha, Geirny, Hest, Hrefna, Ingirun, Isvel, Jodis, Katla, Kolfinna, Mun, Myrun, Nerris, Olyn, Osk, Ragnhildr, Rora, Savra, Sinn, Svana, Sym, Thordis, Tyl, Vin, Yrr

While everyone is choosing Names, start thinking about what your young warrior looks and acts like. When you've told everyone your Wildling's name, write it upon your sheet. When the others have named their Wildlings, write those Names down, too, because these will be your friends, rivals, and fellow youth who help to protect your clan!

**Say the Name of one of the other Wildlings, then choose one of these bonds and say it :**

Q got in trouble because of my actions, and I must make up for it.

Q had been my closest friend, but we have grown apart.

Q was born under a dark star, or so says my grandmother.

Q is secretly in love with me, and I know it.

Q dishonored me and I will have my revenge.

Q promised to be my right hand in battle.

Q owes much to my family.

Q knows my darkest secret, and holds it over me.

Q has been my betrothed since our birth.

Q is beloved by the elders, and I am jealous.

Q is the one I depend on most when I am in trouble.

Q has my trust, though not the trust of my family.

Q has never failed to be honest with me.

Q may serve my family, but has become my truest friend.

Q became a Wildling in secret, which I only just discovered.

Q is not of our clan, but has my family's support.

Q is my distant cousin, only recently rejoined with our clan.

Q hides their true feelings from me, I know not why.

Q does not seem to trust me, so I must prove myself.

Q knows far more of my grandfather than I do.

Write down this bond, for it is a shared history or experience that you have with this other Wildling. It helps you not only know who *they* are, but who *you* are as well. And when someone else chooses a bond with you, also write that down. As you play, you may add to or adjust these bonds, based on what you've experienced or learned about the others.

## Take hold of your belongings:

Each Wildling carries a **simple knife**, a **pack & bedroll**, **rations** of dried meat for the trail, a **skin of water**, **torch & tinder**, and a **length of rope**. You also get a weapon and armor of your very own.

Your belongings are important, but they do not have any special rules or scores that determine what they can do. They are details to add to your story, and what you have and don't have will help decide what can and cannot be done. For example, you would need an axe to chop down a tree, or rope to tie someone's hands. Without those things, you need to find a reason why your Wildling would be able to do such things. They can also be things used against you, if you aren't careful. If you are wearing metal armor, it's weight may make swimming difficult, or it could tire you quickly after a hike. Family heirlooms or rare items might be coveted by thieves or jealous siblings. Your belongings can also be lost, damaged, or even destroyed, so take care with what you have.

## Choose your Wildling's weapons:

- ☞ a massive battle axe, forged for me by my father.
- ☞ two short hand-axes, bound with chain, from a far-off land.
- ☞ a keen sword, that my grandmother used in battle when she was my age.
- ☞ a finely-crafted spear, longer than the chief is tall.
- ☞ many throwing daggers, concealed within my cloak.
- ☞ a sturdy long bow, and a quiver of arrows fletched with owl feathers.
- ☞ a mighty hammer, the head made from jet-black stone.
- ☞ an oaken staff, inlaid with the silver runes of our clan.
- ☞ a chipped and worn greatsword, scavenged from an old battlefield.
- ☞ a whaling harpoon tipped with iron, thick as my own arm.
- ☞ a warclub fashioned from the jaw of an ancient, giant bear.
- ☞ a pouch of bone dust and the hexes my mother taught me.

When you have chosen your weapon, write it down upon your sheet. Think of how you earned your weapon, and what it means about your training. How does your chosen weapon affect how you fight, and how does it look in combat with your Warrior Spirit? What role does it earn you among the other Wildlings?

### **Choose your Wildling's armor:**

- ☞ a stout wooden shield, reinforced with iron.
- ☞ thick gloves and boots, and heavy wool mantle.
- ☞ a metal breastplate and helmet adorned with carved antler.
- ☞ a mail shirt and hood, secured with leather.
- ☞ a heavy, dark cloak and tall boots.
- ☞ a mismatched outfit of metal, rag, and bone.
- ☞ a fur mantle, topped with a wolf's head.
- ☞ iron bracers forged by the chief, given to me as a reward.
- ☞ a coat of hardened leather studded with metal.
- ☞ a hunting cloak woven from grasses and bark.
- ☞ a fine breastplate of leather-like scales.
- ☞ a small charm that contains a lock of my mother's hair.

As you write down your armor, describe how it looks when you wear it, and what it represents to you. Have you decorated it with markings of your own, or do you keep it as pristine as when you received it? What does the armor mean to the rest of your clan, or to your family?

**And now you are ready for adventure!**

Name

☉ Bravely

☉ Carefully

☉ Cleverly

☉ Fiercely

☉ Gracefully

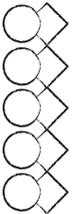
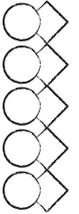
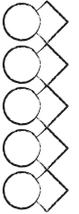
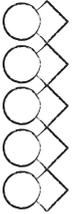
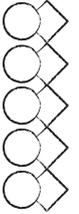
☉ Honorably

☉ Precisely

☉ Quickly

☉ Secretly

☉ Sturdily



the  
WILDLINGS

# how to play

You play the parts of your **Wildlings**, imagining how you would act were you in their places – what are your Wildlings able to do with what they have learned and the items they carry with them? How would they want to respond to difficult situations or react to challenges? Describe whatever you think would make most sense for a young warrior to do. Yes, your Wildling could do something boring, but that wouldn't be very interesting or warrior-like, would it?

The **Guide**, on the other hand, plays the rest of the World, as revealed through the Wildlings' senses – what they see, hear, touch, smell, and experience. The Guide also acts out the parts of all the other people and creatures the Wildlings may meet, whether friend or foe. Not everything that happens in the World will be known to the Wildlings, of course. If they aren't there to witness it, how would they know? But the Guide should be thinking about these things, and if they need to, making notes about what has happened that the Wildlings may want to know about later.

When your Wildling does something, usually it will happen just as you describe – after all, it doesn't require much effort to walk down some stairs or speak to a villager, does it? And there isn't much danger or tension in fishing by a pond or walking through the village at night, is there? If what you've described for your Wildling makes sense for their abilities, and there isn't anything stopping them, the Guide should just let it happen. If what you describe is far beyond your Wildling's ability, the Guide should say so and ask you to try something different. If the action faces a *challenge*, *danger*, or *opponent*, the Guide will tell you **which Spirit die to roll**. How you describe your Wildling's action and goal can influence which Spirit is involved, so choose your words wisely!



### Roll your **Wolf die when:**

You track, hunt, or navigate the wilds | You speak with authority



### Roll your **Bear die when:**

You prove your strength or toughness | You speak with aggression



### Roll your **Owl die when:**

You watch, listen, or make plans | You speak with wisdom



### Roll your **Snake die when:**

You sneak in, escape, or stay hidden | You speak with cunning



### Roll your **Stag die when:**

You act with grace, speed, or urgency | You speak with the wild



### Roll your **Warrior die when:**

You fight someone or defend yourself | You speak of past battles

Tell everyone what you plan to happen because of your action – this will be your **Goal**, the benefit or effect that you want in the story. Describe how your action does this, using one of the following **Feats**. For example, do you sneak past a guard *bravely*, to prove your courage to your friends, or *quickly*, so you reach the rendezvous before everyone else? When fighting a monster, do you strike it *fiercely*, to knock it off balance, or *precisely*, to stab it in the eye instead of its thick skin?

Before you roll, the Guide will also describe what might go wrong with your action – this is the **Risk** of the action, the consequences of what your Wildling does. They might have to face new dangers, lose something important, get separated from their friends, discover the situation is more difficult than they thought, or maybe even suffer **Harm!** What would happen if you couldn't sneak past the guard *quickly*? Will your attack still hurt the monster if it isn't done *precisely*?

If your situation or opponent is very dangerous or difficult, the Guide may include **additional Risks**, using a new Feat to describe what must be done to **avoid more trouble!** Even if you sneak past the guard *quickly*, if you don't do it *secretly*, he might later find your tracks and think the village is being invaded! Though you might attack the monster *precisely*, you may still get hurt if you don't *cleverly* avoid its poisonous breath!

## Feats

🌀 **Bravely** – fearlessly, protectively

🌀 **Carefully** – watchfully, calmly

🌀 **Cleverly** – deceptively, trickily

🌀 **Fiercely** – menacingly, powerfully

🌀 **Gracefully** – elegantly, charmingly

🌀 **Honorably** – truthfully, impressively

🌀 **Precisely** – accurately, knowingly

🌀 **Quickly** – instinctively, hurriedly

🌀 **Secretly** – stealthily, mysteriously

🌀 **Sturdily** – mightily, vigorously

### **Advanced Tip**

*Sometimes the Feats presented may not sound quite right for the action you are taking, and you want to make your own. Consider first using something **similar** – each Feat lists some variants that may be better for certain situations. If what you want is really different, ask the Guide if it is okay to come up with a **new Feat** entirely.*

A roll of **1 to 3** means **things went wrong**, and the Guide will describe what happens. This may not always mean the Goal itself is lost, but each Risk the Guide named is a chance for something bad to happen. You cannot try the action again the same way afterwards – you will need to try it differently or wait for something about the situation to change. If your Wildling cannot break down a door, it will be too sturdy for them to try again...even too sturdy for other Wildlings! However, by finding a thick log to use as a ram, getting help from an adult, or stealing a key from a guard, you can try a new way to get through. Similarly, if your sword strike results in it bouncing off a monster's hide, maybe mere weapons cannot harm it! You will need to think of a different way to combat this creature!

A roll of **4 or greater** means your action worked, and you get to say what happens! You get to pick a Feat to describe the results – do you choose the Feat for your Goal, or a Feat to avoid one of the additional Risks? Sometimes you'll have a hard choice deciding between them! Do you hit the monster *precisely*, or *cleverly*? Do you sneak past the guard *bravely*, or *secretly*? What do you do?

The higher you roll, the more Feats you get to pick. You can use these to avoid more Risks, or as additional effects you add to your action. Maybe when you *bravely* sneak past the guard, you also *cleverly* snare his boots so he can't then chase your friends! Feats can also be chosen multiple times to make its effect stronger – if you were running away from an army, you could pick *quickly* several times to move really, really fast!

🌀 If you roll a **4, 5, or 6**, choose **one Feat**.

🌀 If you roll a **7, 8, or 9**, choose **two Feats**.

🌀 If you roll a **10 or higher**, choose **three Feats!**

The Guide will use the results of your actions to decide how the situation might change, what things your Wildlings might discover, and how other people and creatures might respond. The Guide might ask you questions about your action, to figure out what happens. When you attack the monster *fiercely*, what does it look like when your weapon hits? What does it sound like? When you sneak past the guard *quickly*, you're not also doing it *carefully*, right? The answers will help to determine if your future actions will be easier or harder!

### **Action and Reaction**

*The Wildlings are the only ones in the game to have Spirit dice, and thus are the only ones that make rolls. The actions of others will happen as the Guide describes, unless the Wildlings decide to interfere. Also, when the Wildlings act against someone, that person's reaction is an opportunity for the Guide to add a new **Risk**.*

## Helping Others

The Feats you choose don't always benefit just yourself, but could help your friends and other people as well. Describe how one of your Feats helps someone else, such as "I *quickly* toss a torch down the cave so Grimnir can get a clear shot at the shadowy beast," or "I *bravely* defend my brother from the approaching bandit." Any trouble these things may cause when your friend acts are now dealt with!

## Teamwork

Sometimes it can take more than one Wildling to accomplish a task, such as bashing down a sturdy door, solving a puzzle, or building a dragon trap. Everyone working together on the same action **roll their Spirit dice** at the same time, and whoever gets the highest result will describe the outcome! However, if more people **roll badly** than successfully, there will still be some trouble or complication. If everyone rolls poorly, the consequences affect them all!

## Contests

There will be times when Wildlings will compete with each other – perhaps a race, seeking the attention of someone else, or trying to tell the most outrageous tale! Just like when they are working together, the competitors will **roll their Spirit die**, and take turns describing the contest from start to finish, **one Feat at a time**. For example, the first Wildling may start by describing racing down a hill *quickly* to get ahead of her friend, and the second Wildling could counter by *cleverly* using a shortcut through the brambles only he knows about. The Wildling with the **most Feats** would win, but if tied, they'll just have to accept they're evenly matched!

## Conflicts

Sometimes contests will get too personal, and two Wildlings may have hurt feelings or heated arguments with each other. Don't let these disagreements slow down the game, but instead **negotiate a solution** so the story can continue. If they cannot agree which way to go, have them split into different directions. If they get into a heated argument, have them add or change their bonds with each other, showing how their friendship has soured. Either way, the Guide needs to move things along as quickly as possible. The Wildlings should **never** draw their weapons against their friends, no matter how upset or angry they are!

## Harm

**Harm** is something you may suffer because of an injury, weakness, disadvantage, fear, or even spells and curses! When you take Harm, the Guide will describe it, writing it down on a card and putting it in front of you, such as *blurry vision*, *sprained ankle*, *bruised ego*, *distrustful*, or even *bewitched* or *turned into a toad*! Later on, the Guide can use your Harm to add new Risks to your actions, maybe even against your friends! If you had *blurry vision*, the Guide could say that if you don't scan the horizon *precisely*, you could mistake shrubs for bandits! Or if you had a *sprained ankle*, you might need to climb a rope *carefully* to avoid worsening your injury!

When you are in a safe place with **some time to rest**, share an activity with some of your fellow Wildlings or other friendly people you've met that can help you recover from the troubles you've faced earlier in the day. You might bandage your wounds while comparing cool battle scars, or calm a friend's nerves with inspiring tales of old heroes. Before you set back out on your adventures, everyone involved can **remove one Harm** from themselves.

Once you've taken three Harm, you should be very careful because a **fourth Harm will defeat you!** When you are defeated, you are too tired, hurt, afraid, or stressed to keep going, and your friends will need to protect you and bring you to safety. If not, you might wind up captured, lost, or worse! Afterwards, it takes **one full day of rest** to remove any Harm until you have fully recovered.

While the risk of death can be very real in your stories, and you may describe killing beasts or bandits, it can be uncomfortable if your young warriors lose their lives. No matter the danger you are in, your Wildling will not die unless both you and the Guide agree to it. Being defeated with tricks, arguments, or dishonor would not result in someone dying, though there might be vows of revenge! But in a battle with a monster or other deadly foe, your Wildling's life could be in great danger! If you are defeated in such a dire situation, the Guide might discuss this option with you, but unless you say otherwise, your defeat will not be fatal.

# SPIRITS AND MARKS

Part of being a Wildling is gaining the favor of the **Five Spirits**, preparing you for the **Rites of Passage** into adulthood. The Five Spirits value daring and noble hearts, and award **Marks** upon those who heroically help others in spite of the danger to themselves.

During an adventure, each Spirit can grant you **one Mark** for your actions. All you must do is declare a **good deed** you want to do for someone else, but at the **cost of your own safety**. While you are lost deep in the woods, perhaps you give your remaining jerky to some hungry wolf pups instead of worrying about your own survival; maybe you offer to duel a bandit lord in order to rescue an injured slave! The other Wildlings cannot help you with your deed!

Roll your **Spirit die twice**, keeping the **lower result** because of the additional peril. You may not always succeed...often you will fail, but you will **always earn your Mark**, and fill it in on your sheet next to the Spirit. The Guide may ask you what the Mark feels like, whether the other Wildlings can sense it, and what it looks like if they can.

Once you have earned Marks, you can **spend them** during an adventure to **raise the results** of your rolls. If you had three Owl Marks and rolled only a 2 to attack a monster, you could spend two of your Marks to raise the result to 4! When you do this, **describe how that Spirit helps you** – does the Owl guide your hand as you strike, do you remember some tale about Owl fighting a similar beast, or maybe Owl sends a mighty horned owl swooping in from the trees to help you! Marks may be spent in the same adventure they are earned, but not on the same roll. At the beginning of your next adventure, all the Marks you have spent **will be refreshed!**

Once you have earned **five Marks** in each Spirit and returned safely home to your clan, your Wildling is finally able to take the **Rites of Passage** and enter adulthood! Your adventures as a Wildling ends, but you can always make a new character – a new Wildling freshly trained in the ways of the warrior, ready for new adventures.

# COMPANIONS

The Wildlings will not always be alone in their quests, and may travel with **Companions** such as other young warriors or elders, trained animals, and even mythical beasts that have heeded your call! They have no Spirit dice of their own, but Companions can help you accomplish more during your travels by offering up their own knowledge, experience, or other advantages. If your Companion can help out with your action, **add +1 to your roll!** For example, a woodsman who has lived in the Olde Forest for decades could give you +1 when you try to find trails or shortcuts through the trees, or when learning about the beasts that normally creep through the foliage. Similarly, a griffon might give you +1 from its talons when you battle an enemy, or when trying to travel quickly by flying over terrain.

While you and your friends benefit from a Companion, they are still controlled by the Guide. They will have their own personalities, desires and fears, and may not take kindly to being called upon for every task the Wildlings confront.

## Sample Companions

### **Old Man Haskell, the Woodsman**

This grizzled forester left the Clan many winters ago, preferring the quiet of the trees. He knows the creatures and ways of the Olde Forest, the twists and turns of its trails, and the dangers hidden from view.

### **Sunset Talon, the Falcon**

Yuri Red Hand's own hunting falcon, Sunset Talon is said to be so perceptive, they must cover his head with a hood to prevent him from seeing into your soul.

### **Ash Loki, the Gray Wolf**

A mighty alpha wolf, the color of charcoal and twice the size of his brethren. He stalks the Olde Forest, rooting out Ice Wolves wherever they may hide.

### **Wyrdwynd, the Dragon**

A young dragon that lives in the high hills to the north of the Olde Forest, able to fly quickly and silently across the snows. She is a friend to Wise Woman Solveig.

# TREASURES

During their adventures, your Wildlings may discover wondrous **Treasures** – the wealth of ancient kingdoms, charmed talismans, legendary relics of the Spirits, and other untold and exotic artifacts! The skalds sing songs of those lucky enough to find such things, but not as many as those who have been lead astray searching for them!

While most Treasures are the same as any other valuable item, there are those with **magical boons** that benefit your Wildling in certain circumstances. When the conditions are met, these Treasures grant a **bonus Feat** to your roll, whether successful or not. For example, you may have a dagger that can shrink so you can *secretly* hide it from prying eyes, or a blanket blessed to help you *sturdily* resist the colds of winter. It can make your successes grander, while reducing the consequences of failure!

## Sample Treasures

### Comet Shield

While it looks like a battered and rusted discard from some past battle, using it to strike a blow against another shield will *fiercely* knock your opponent backwards!

### Dragon Fang

A dagger carved from gold-flecked ivory, it can *precisely* strike the weakest part of a reptile's hide.

### Emerald Feather

While this feather decorates your hair, should any take slight to the message you *honorably* speak, they will not direct their anger at you.

### Hide of the Tundra Bear

A gray fur blanket that keeps you *sturdily* safe and warm in even the coldest of winds and snows.

### Horn of Bjornson the Trailblazer

Whoever blows this horn of hammered copper can *secretly* warn their comrades, seemingly without a sound!

# GUIDE ADVICE

*The Wildlings* was originally intended to serve as an introduction to roleplaying games for children, with math-lite rules and an emphasis on encouraging creative and interesting narrative. It has undergone a few changes since it was first created, but the core of the game is largely unchanged, with new options and opportunities instead of complexity.

Some of the concepts, terminology, and structure of roleplaying games, much less player-facing and story-driven games, can be a little tricky for young players to understand the first time around. It is a good idea for an adult or experienced gamer to lead them through their first couple of adventures, teaching them the ropes of die-rolling, balancing Goals and Risks, and getting used to Feats. What follows are some other bits of advice for Guides starting to play *The Wildlings*.

## **Ask Questions**

The core of the game is about telling stories with your friends, but a good story depends on clear details and understanding what is going on. The Guide should always **ask questions** of the players, trying to get a better picture of what they are doing, who they know, what they feel, and how they act. As early as character creation, take the ideas of the base setting and the choices the players make, and help define them. Ask the players what the name of their Clan is, and which of the other neighboring clans are their allies. Have them talk about their Wildlings' families and histories.

During the adventure, any time something comes up that may lead to some interesting stories, ask a question about it. If a Wildling is speaking to the wild, summoning a crow to send a message, ask them if that is something that they have tried before, or what it looks like when they do it. When they come across a camp of outcasts, ask them if anyone recognizes the burly, red-haired warrior lurking by the fire. Take their answers, and **write them down** for future use! The players should also be asking the Guide similar questions about the World, to better visualize where they're going and what they experience.

## Discover as You Go

It can be tempting, as the Guide, to have all the answers already. Many games stress preparation and setting up encounters beforehand, but one of the strengths of *The Wildlings* is being able to adjust adventures, locations, and even monsters on the fly, without requiring any complex mechanics or point balancing. While it's natural to dream up your own answers to the mysteries that confront the players, you shouldn't set these ideas in stone. Instead, drop little hints of what you are thinking of for the players to discover, and then see what conclusions they jump to – you might like their ideas better than your own!

The **included map** shows those places the Wildlings know of from their elders, spoken of in tales and rumor. They probably have heard legends of far-off lands as well – exotic, mysterious places with amazing treasures and unending danger! Every blank space you come across is an opportunity for the Wildlings to explore, create, and imagine, and you should encourage that. Whether a spot on the map, on their character sheet, a bit of history that hasn't been defined, or even a blank piece of paper that just happens to be lying around, use it as an opportunity for discovery. Draw characters and creatures, write in new villages or features on the map, make notes about things found during their travels. Make the World your own, and make each campaign of *The Wildlings* new and different than the last!

## Stories and Scenes

When telling your stories, you should try to frame interesting events and actions as **Scenes**, much like a scene from a movie or cartoon. It's not that fun following each step and detail of the Wildlings' lives – instead, when the excitement of one Scene comes to an end, ask the players what they do next, and summarize the events that happen until the next major point in the story.

The passage of time from one Scene to the next can be as short or long as you think is necessary. When traveling, a good guideline to follow is that it takes about two days to travel to the edge of the Olde Forest by foot.

The nearest neighboring clan can be reached by longship in about a day, or perhaps two days by steed.

# ENEMIES MOST FOUL

The Wildlings have a duty to protect their Clan from **enemies** while the adult warriors are away. There are many dangers that lurk in the wilderness – barbarians and bandits, trolls and dire wolves, even mythical monsters and unknown creatures!

Enemies are easy for the Guide to make, they just need a **short description** or a few bullet-points of their strengths. The Guide uses these to introduce **new Risks** against a Wildling's action, narrating how its abilities make trouble for the young warriors! Depending on the situation, certain actions may even be impossible! For example, a savage berserker may be large and strong, making him a formidable foe in combat, while a great dragon with scales like steel could be completely unharmed by normal weapons!

Each adventure, the Guide has **Ranks** equal to **five plus the number of Wildlings** to assign to enemies they might encounter. Once the Wildlings have started to earn Marks, add **one Rank per total Spirit Marked**. For example, if two Wildlings both had Stag Marks, and one had Bear and Wolf Marks, that would give the Guide **four additional Ranks**.

Ranks determine **how much Harm** the enemy can suffer before being defeated. Without any Ranks, an enemy could be defeated in a single blow! The more Ranks given, the more formidable that enemy becomes – a single goblin may not have any Ranks, while a band of goblin thieves might have three Ranks all together...threat on par with a Wildling! A young dragon could have two or three Ranks, while a mighty dragon of legend could have five or more!

Thankfully, you don't always have to fight enemies, and you can find other ways to overcome or avoid them. You might be able to negotiate, deceive, or trick them, possibly even make friends with them! And the enemies will also have their own plans and desires – they may not want to fight, after all! Any Ranks not used during an encounter return to the Guide afterward for use later in the adventure.

## **Sample Enemies**

### **Goblin Sneaks**

- ⊗ Sneaky and cruel

### **Village Thief**

- ⊗ Dishonest and watchful

### **Rival Clansman**

- ⊗ Dishonorable and ambitious

### **Hungry Wild Dog**

- ⊗ Desperate and quick

### **Greedy Bandits**

- ⊗ Greedy thieves
- ⊗ Fight as a gang

### **Woodland Sprites**

- ⊗ Tiny and mischievous
- ⊗ Creates illusions

### **Outcast Raiders**

- ⊗ Well-armed and armored
- ⊗ Knows the woods well
- ⊗ Cruel-hearted

### **Cave Bear**

- ⊗ Huge and strong
- ⊗ Fearsome roar
- ⊗ Very hungry

### **Ice Wolves**

- ⊗ Track by scent
- ⊗ Large and fearless
- ⊗ Pack hunters

### **Cavern Drake**

- ⊗ Uncanny hearing
- ⊗ Razor-like claws
- ⊗ Hide in the shadows

## **Foreign Invaders**

- ⊗ Strange and foreign ways
- ⊗ Incomprehensible beliefs
- ⊗ Heavy iron armor
- ⊗ Sharp iron weapons

## **Hill Troll**

- ⊗ Giant and savage
- ⊗ Stinks like rotten meat
- ⊗ Foul, poisoned claws
- ⊗ Heals quickly in the dark

## **Witch of the Caves**

- ⊗ Stares into your soul
- ⊗ Spider servants
- ⊗ Strange potions and powders
- ⊗ Terrible curses

## **Outcast Commander**

- ⊗ Bloodthirsty reputation
- ⊗ Extremely strong
- ⊗ Berserker rage
- ⊗ Unforgiving

## **Gorejaw the Sea Serpent**

- ⊗ Immensely long
- ⊗ Ancient and cunning
- ⊗ Wise in the ways of weather
- ⊗ Scales made of ice
- ⊗ Spits freezing water

## **Rornar Black Hand the Outcast**

- ⊗ Elder brother of the chieftan
- ⊗ Betrayed the Five Spirits
- ⊗ Pacts with witches
- ⊗ Revenge against the Clan
- ⊗ Mighty and strong

# INTO THE RUINS

## **An Introductory Quest**

The men and women warriors of your clan are raiding lands far away across the Dark Sea. The nights are long and cold, and the elders huddle in their longhouses, warding off the chill with their hearth fires. The Wildlings are entrusted with guarding the village, keeping it safe from raiders.

Last night, during a fierce snowstorm, a foul thing crept from the ruins beyond the Olde Forest, and stole into the village while everyone was bundled and asleep within their homes. It carried away two sheep, a barrel of lard, and a small child - Rylka, daughter of Chieftain Yuri Red Hand.

The wise women have met in council and decreed that something must be done. The People are not to be preyed upon! Though Rylka might be eaten by now, a rescue must nevertheless be undertaken.

After communing with the Spirits, the wise women have chosen you and your fellow Wildlings for this task. Take up your arms and steel your courage. The time has come to do your duty, and prove your worth as a warrior to the elders!