

Set in the village of Avonel in Rethem (q.v. HårnManor) the story is one of false accusation and fugitives in distress. An emissary from Kanday to the Earl of Tormau has foundered due to a barbarian attack in the woods of Rethem. The emissary's squire has been injured and, as a result, the pair have missed their rendezvous with a fishing boat home. They now exist by stealing from Avonel village and trying to plan a way out of the mess they find themselves in.

The season is late autumn; the Harvest Feast is over and the fief is being prepared for the winter to come.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Bailiff, Sir Howart Mymby (NPC m)

Knows only that a deer has been found wounded by an arrow or spear in the woods, which are his hunting preserve. Wants the culprit hung. If he knew of the fugitive in the woods he would want to capture him – if he knew the fugitive's mission he would sell his entire clan to capture the Laranians or tell the king of their whereabouts.

The Beadle, Murmeld of Tosala (NPC m)

Found the wounded deer and an officer of Lord Mymby. A heavy handed bully.

The Agrikan Priest, Eras of Frestor (NPC m)

A fiery champion of the Leader of the Four Horsemen.

The Farmer, Shenata of Frestel (NPC f)

A fiery tenant! Can be relied upon to oppose Lord Mymby in any way possible.

The Spies, Larma, Jondis & Avel of Holgath (NPCs m)

These three cottars are spies for the Earl of Tormau and may complicate matters by sneaking about, etc.

The Reeve, Kethor of Londa (NPC m)

A dim and unpopular Reeve. Obsequious to Lord Mymby in the extreme.

Will report a sheep straying into the fallow field and two chickens in a neighbour's garden. Reports Ferlon of Sanvis for laziness when performing his father's feudal labour duty.

The Hayward, Charthrin of Londa (PC m)

Assists the Reeve and tries to make him see sense. Realises that Lord Mymby is bleeding the fief dry by under spending on upkeep and stealing the proceeds of the "defence taxes" on grain and fish.

Knows Lyna, wife of Jerilor of Londa, is having an affair with someone – has seen her on her way to/from trysts.

The Fishermen's Leader, Laron of Estor (PC m)

Has seen an unfamiliar nivik fishing off Cape Whyd recently.

Has sold fish at Ithius and Weseda recently (naughty!).

The Woodward, Kadain/Kadina of Sanvis (PC m/f)

Has found the remains of campfires in the woods towards Arketh Moor.

Has seen Ferlon of Sanvis lurking around in the woods but not actually doing anything illegal. The boy shows good woodcraft, though – unlike whoever has been blundering about when he was not there (at night, most likely).

The Herder, Uran(a) of Galle (PC m/f)

Has seen someone, maybe the Reeve's son, milking a cow at night on more than one occasion.

Has recently treated a heifer with a sickness which could be the same as one he saw seven years or so ago. If it is the same, it could be infectious to the other beasts. For now he has the sick animal in a spare byre on its own.

The Peonian Priest, Sotrelld/Satreld of Gamis (PC m/f)

Knows that the offerings left out to the Lady of Honest Labour have been disappearing – a miracle?

Has been counselling Mertyn of Estor and Elyse of Londa, but has not heard from them in 4 or 5 days.

The Former Reeve, Yameld of Sanvis (PC m)

Realises that Lord Mymby is bleeding the fief dry by under spending on upkeep and stealing the proceeds of the "defence taxes" on grain and fish. Resents the damage, which he will probably have to live with when the young master comes of age and inherits. Has heard rumours of petty theft among the villagers – bags of rolled oats and flour, mostly, going missing from barns at night.

The Watchtower Captain, Finbene of Retiga (PC m)

Finbene's wife, Pytra, heard from Mikeld of Grentel, the hideworker, that some drying strips of beef went missing overnight recently from racks where they had been hung out by Kadene of Engbos, the salter.

Found the watchtower empty recently when Jeris of Londa's son Ebor was supposed to be on watch. Ebor turned up a little while later, claiming he had been "on patrol – to get a better view south".

The Village Midwife, Lonja of Sanvis (PC f)

Knows Laron's son, Mertyn, and Jeris' daughter Elyse are courting, against her father's wishes. Elyse came to her asking after certain herbs (rasakile, a contraceptive), but stopped asking several days ago.

Charthrin of Londa's son Emene came to her recently with a knife cut gained practicing fighting with the Agrikan, Eras of Frestor. She used the last of her berilik paste on the wound and went to pick more, only to find her favourite patch picked over. (Berilik is a plant useful

as an antiseptic and anaesthetic if prepared in the right way).

Lonja has been treating Sonja of Jenal, Jarhath's daughter-in-law, who has recently given birth to a boy with a clubfoot and Nessa of Kanesta, wife of Horkael, who works as a servant at the manor and is pregnant. Olvie of Edsar, wife of Lasir of Edsar the yeoman soldier and known in the village as "Widow Edsar" due to the lack of attention her husband pays her, has come to Lonja to ask about aphrodisiacs. Reina of Kanesta, daughter of Lasa, has come asking for advice, since she has secretly wed one of the Holgath brothers, for whom she has done household chores in return for crop share for the past year.

Lonja's son, Ferlon, prefers wandering the woods to working in the fields. His father (Lonja's husband Fertewyn) has whipped him several times for it, but there seems to be no dissuading him.

The Fugitive, Sir Gavan of Delguny (NPC m)

Emissary of the Kandayan throne and son of the holder of Echen manor in Gemala. Has visited the Earl of Tormau and has dispatches for King Andasin and his father-in-law... The fugitives hide during daylight hours and Gavan tends Eried's wound. At night Gavan has been sneaking into the village and taking any food he can find – scraps from refuse piles, a sack or two of rolled grain, milk from the cows, even the offerings to Peoni.

The Fugitive's Squire, Eried of Turtus (NPC m)

Eldest son and heir to Koffa manor in Kedisa hundred in Kanday. Currently suffering from an axe wound to the left shoulder that has lingering traces of infection.

AVONEL VILLAGE

The village of Avonel crouches in a deep coastal cleft of the Kingdom of Rethem on the island of Hårn. A medium sized manor village, it is home to two hundred and seven souls whose croft cottages cling grimly to the slopes of a steep-sided stream valley. The gorge shelters the settlement from strong winds and from casual view, as well as providing a sheltered anchorage for the few fishing boats which the villagers use to supplement their meagre agriculture. A good road runs west from Avonel to the market town of Ithiko, but most of the villagers' travel and trade is done by sea; their highway the Gulf of Andurien that lies to the east and south. To the northeast are woods that fringe the edges of Arketh Moor, a great tract of barren hills stretching in from the coast in a huge arc, secluding the religious settlement of Arketh from the rest of the kingdom.

The bulk of the village's income is from crops and livestock – especially cattle, for which the kingdom of Rethem is justly renowned. As the seasons wheel by, crops of barley, beans, oats and rye are sown and harvested and generations of cattle are raised and slaughtered for their hides, horns and meat (much of which is salted and sold to merchants from the city of Golotha). The fields occupy the high ground to the west and south of the village and are divided into strips, each of which is held by the lord or one of the villagers. A typical villager might hold 30 strips, half of which will be sown with corn and half lie fallow/be grazed by animals each year.

Five years ago the nearby sea proved the village's bane as Viking warriors from Orbaal swept ashore bringing rapine and pillage. Many villagers died in the raid, including the Lord of the manor, his wife and eldest son. A bailiff, Sir Howart of Mymby, holds the manor until the former Lord's only surviving child comes of age in six years time. My Lord Mymby seems happy to make abundant use of his borrowed rights, and has instituted heavy "defence taxes" on grain and fish. The rumour runs rife, though no proof exists, that the Earl of Tormau, Earl Barzak of Ithiko's deadliest rival, sponsored the Viking raid as part of his undeclared war against the King (to whom he still has not sworn vassalage).

A few fief officers manage the manor on a day-to-day basis. The Woodward looks after the manor woodland and collects the fees that the villagers must pay to pick berries or collect firewood. The Herder tends the cattle herd, driving it to pasture each morning and bringing it home to the barn in the evening. The Reeve arranges sowing, ploughing, weeding, reaping, hoeing and the myriad other tasks required to maintain the fields and meadows, assisted by

the Hayward¹. Each month, however, the village gathers for the Hallmoot. Our tale revolves around one such moot...

The season is now late autumn. The Harvest Feast is over, the surplus animals have been slaughtered and the manor is being prepared for winter. The warmth of summer has faded – the chill of winter is but a threatening shadow.

VILLAGE LAW

Law in Avonel is based largely upon custom and tradition. Each month, at the full moon, the Hallmoot gathers to see justice done. A jury of villagers reports any wrongdoing or infringement of traditional rights of which they know. The Lord of the Manor then dispenses justice, based upon sworn statements made by any who wish to offer evidence. The judgements made at the Hallmoot may be appealed to the Earl of Ithiko (for all the good it would do). Freemen also have the right to appeal to Royal justice, but since Earl Ithiko is a loyal vassal of the King any relief from this source seems unlikely.

The head of each household is by ancient custom held responsible for the actions of all members of their household. Household heads also have the right to dispense punishment within their own household as they see fit. This is called "family law" and applies to all, both high and low.

The next "level" of law is feudal law. This is what is dealt with at the Hallmoot. Typical infringements reported at the Hallmoot, and the punishments generally given to perpetrators (in order of seriousness/number of previous offences), are:

Arson (burning another's property) – *restitution / flogging / burning at the stake.*

Battery (assault causing injury) – *restitution / pillory / flogging.*

Fraud (cheating a villager) – *restitution / flogging / death.*

Corruption (in a manorial officer) – *loss of office / branding.*

Larceny (stealing food, an animal or a tool) – *pillory / restitution / flogging / imprisonment / hanging.*

Laxness (in the Lord's or communal work, or in keeping ones own in good order) – *pillory / flogging.*

Leirwite (sex by an unmarried woman) – *pillory.*

Murder (killing a commoner) – *restitution / hanging.*

Poaching (hunting, fishing or foraging without license) – *restitution / flogging / branding / mutilation / banishment / death by burning.*

¹ The Hayward's official responsibility is the "haies" or hedges and fences, but in practice it goes well beyond this.

Rape (sexual assault by a male upon a female) – *restitution / flogging / castration.*

Rebellion (violence against a noble) – *confiscation of property / hanging.*

Adultery/Blasphemy/Heresy/Witchcraft – are all Temple crimes, referred by the Hall moot to a Temple court. Penalties are typically *branding, mutilation or death by burning.*

The village jury – a select few villagers chosen to represent all – are responsible for reporting these crimes and naming the guilty. By custom, if the jury reports a crime but no guilty party the village as a whole is held guilty and shares the punishment. If the lord learns of a crime the jury have not reported, the jury members are held guilty and share the punishment. In this scenario, you *are* that jury...

In all cases, the condemned party may attempt to gain an *amercement* – literally an attempt to purchase the Lord's mercy. In effect, this amounts to what would in the modern world be called a "fine".

In addition to feudal law, disputes that are more general are often brought to the Lord for judgement at the Hallmoot if they cannot be settled elsewhere. Such disputes might include conflicting claims over land, rights, ownership, etc.

Finally, petitions may be placed before the Lord at the Hallmoot asking for more land (at a negotiated rent or labour service), for permission to marry, for Chevage (permission for a serf to live off of the manor for a while for an agreed price) or for Manumission (freedom from servitude for an agreed price).

After the Hallmoot, the Beadle carries out the allotted punishments and collects the agreed amercements². The Beadle is a Yeoman – a free peasant who holds land in exchange for military service rather than money rent, crop share or labour service. Resistance is thus generally futile as the Yeomen are trained and equipped in arms and most other villagers are not.

THE GODS

Only three gods concern the villagers of Avonel: Agrik, Peoni and Larani.

Agrik is the god of the Lords and Ladies. He is a warrior god, as befits the god of the nobles, and is a harsh and unforgiving master. His followers may be harsh and sometimes cruel, but their strength protects the common folk from barbarians and foreigners both.

Peoni is the goddess of the common peasants. She is unfailingly kind, loving and merciful, and she cares for everyone, especially the poorest. She is the Lady of unceasing labour, the pure maiden, patron of romantic love, bringer of bountiful harvests and healer of bodies and souls. Her priests are celibate pacifists who are beyond reproach. Their skill as healers and their bravery as protectors of the poor are renowned throughout the land.

Larani is the war goddess of the Kandians, who live to the south and are the enemies of Rethem's king. She claims to be the "Lady of Paladins", but Eras says that this is pure hypocrisy.

² Apprehension of any reported miscreants who were not present at the Hallmoot is also the responsibility of the Beadle.

THE VILLAGERS

44 households make up the village of Avonel. The household heads and their dependants are:



Sir Howart Mymby

My Lord Sir Howart of

Mymby – Bailiff and Lord of the Manor. Household consists of Gethro Tassady and his aunt Selina Tassady, a cook (Lina), a stable boy (Tamys) and two domestic servants (Olvie and Renna).

Jabis of Amula – Guilded woodcrafter. Dependants: wife, two children, three journeymen and an apprentice.

Kadene of Engbos – Guilded salter. Dependants: wife, three children, one journeyman and an apprentice.

Yarbrond of Telo – Guilded innkeeper of the Black Steer inn. Dependants: two teenage sons.

Pedkael of Wryin – Guilded metalsmith. Dependants: one journeyman and his wife. Pedkael drinks more than is good for him at the Black Steer since his wife and daughters died, victims of the Viking raid. The journeyman does most of the blacksmithing for the village.

Mikeld of Grentel – Guilded hideworker. Dependants: wife and one apprentice. An excellent, if expensive, craftsman.

Ebran of Derias – Guilded miller. Dependants: wife and two adult sons. Although it is partly due to the bailiff's grain tax, Ebran takes much of the blame for his exorbitant fees.

Rothmeld of Ifundis – Guilded timberwright (lumberjack). Dependants: wife, six children, widowed sister and her son.

Eras of Frestor – Priest of Agrik, god of war and Lord of the Four Horsemen. No dependants, but some of the villagers attend services. Agrik is a warriors' god, worshipped mostly by the nobility, but Eras seems keen to bring the word to the common folk.

Sotreld of Gamis – Cleric of Peoni, The Everliving Lady of White Virtue. Dependants: just about the entire village. Peoni is the primary peasant goddess. She favours diligent labour, meekness and romantic love. Her clerics are celibate and take vows of poverty and pacifism. Her church is perpetually verging on bank-

ruptcy, having given out all its tithes in alms to the poor.

Murmeld of Tosala – Beadle and Yeoman farmer. Dependants: wife and teenage son.

Lasis of Edsar – Yeoman farmer. Dependants: wife and four young children.

Myhath of Harkinda – Yeoman farmer; longbowman. Dependants: wife and eight children, two of whom are teenagers.

Shenata of Frestel – Free tenant farmer. Dependants: three sons and their wives with six children, two of whom are teens. Shenata is an old lady who is used to getting her way. She and Lord Mymby do not see eye-to-eye on many things – he could legally throw her off her land, but her fit young clan, her friendship with the lady Selina, and her popularity in the village might make it more trouble than it would be worth...

Laron of Estor – Fisherman and cottar (serf with less than 10 acres). Dependants: two sons and two daughters.

Febene of Estor – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife, two teenage sons and young daughter.

Pebya of Estor – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife and two children.

Krasain of Akersyn – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife and mother-in-law.

Mylirel of Jenal – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife and four sons, the eldest of whom is deaf and mute.

Laranak of Akersyn – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife, three sons and a demented father.

Kethkael of Akersyn – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife and two daughters.

Jarhath of Jenal – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife, son and a daughter-in-law who has just given birth to a son with a clubfoot.

Harerl of Rinda – Fisherman and ex-sailor from Golotha. Dependants: wife, Wista is daughter of Mythar (below). Known as "Big Fish" since Laron pulled him from the sea after he escaped pirates by jumping overboard his ship.

Mythar of Estor – Fisherman and cottar. Dependants: wife and two teenage sons. A very poor family.

Vorthrin of Retiga – Cottar. Dependants: wife, three young sons and a pretty, teenage daughter who is not yet betrothed.

Yalak of Retiga – Half-villein (a peasant who holds roughly 15 acres). Dependants: mother, sister and two children.

Finbene of Retiga – Villein (peasant holding over 20 acres). Dependants: wife and four young children.

Larma of Holgath - Cottar. Dependants: two brothers.

Fertewn of Sanvis – Half-villein. Dependants: wife (the village midwife) and teenage son.

Yameld of Sanvis – Former Reeve and villein. Dependants: wife, mother and three children.

Larib of Sanvis – Villein. Dependants: wife and three children.

Chelo of Sanvis – Villein. Dependants: wife and five sons.

Kadina of Sanvis – Woodward and villein. Dependants: adult son.

Kethor of Londa – Reeve and villein. Dependants: wife and two children. Lord Mymby chose Kethor as reeve when he took over the manor. Kethor cooperates with Lord Mymby's onerous tallages and is highly unpopular as a result.

Ryldmeld of Londa – Half-villein. Dependants: wife, two sons and two daughters.

Lyremeld of Londa - Cottar. Dependants: two sons.

Charthrin of Londa – Hayward and half-villein. Dependants: wife and two sons.

Sherak of Londa – Half-villein. Dependants: wife, two sons and a daughter.

Jeris of Londa – Villein. Dependants: wife and teenage son and daughter.

Jerilor of Londa – Villein. Dependants: young wife.

Barik of Londa – Half-villein. Dependants: wife, son and two daughters, the eldest of whom works as a manor servant.

Horkael of Kanesta - Cottar. Dependants: pregnant wife.

Lasa of Kanesta – Villein. Dependants: wife, father-in-law and three children.

Uran of Galle – Herder and villein. Dependants: wife and two young daughters.



Charthrin of Londa – The Hayward

Physique: Hardy and rugged
Traits: Poor eyesight

Holding: 17 serf acres
Skills: Competent cultivator
 Average husbandman

PERSONAL NOTES:

Wife: Kathea, a plain but sturdy woman and a good cook.

Eldest son: Emene, a burly young man who has taken to attending Eras of Frestor's Agrikan ceremonies rather than good Peonian ones. Kathea disapproves mightily, but the lad is of age, so what can be done?

Youngest son: Gostyn, a wiry youth with rather a temper on him.

As Hayward of the village, you spend much of your time assisting your brother, Kethor, the village Reeve. For all that he is your brother, you have to admit that Kethor is a dim fellow, full of his own importance as Reeve and so far ignorant of the hatred of him building up among the other villagers. You try to reason with him and mitigate the worst decisions and abuses he tries to implement, but the direction comes originally from Lord Mymby so there is a limit to what you can do. Your worst fear is that Kethor will meet with an unfortunate "accident" some day soon...

It is clear to you that Lord Mymby is bleeding the fief dry by under-spending on upkeep and stealing the proceeds of the "defence taxes" on grain and fish. He claims that the heavy taxation is to improve the fief defences, but less has been spent on the fortifications and fief infrastructure than ever was under the old lord.

You also know that Lyna, wife of Jerilor, your cousin, is up to something – possibly involving another man. You have spied her walking off into the woods looking furtive when Jerilor has gone off to the far fields, and returning later with twigs and bracken in her hair and clothing. You have no proof, but she seems suspiciously pleased with herself after these forays.

The Londa Clan

There have been Londas living in the area for generations – clan tales talk about life under the ancient "Khorane Empire" and a dark secret connected with the "Balshan Jihad". The heads of the Londa households in Avonel are either siblings (Kethor, the Reeve, is your brother) or cousins (possibly a few times removed).



Laron of Estor – The Fishermen’s Skipper

Physique:	Hardy and weathered	Holding:	5 serf acres and a fishing boat (a 24 foot nivik, “The Spry Petrel”)
Traits:	Slightly lame left leg after an accident while returning from fishing in rough weather.	Skills:	Master sailor Competent navigator Average cultivator

PERSONAL NOTES:

Wife: Yaelie, died giving birth to Yaelie, Laron’s youngest daughter, three years ago.

Eldest son: Mertyn; the youth is courting Elyse, the daughter of Jeris of Londa, but Jeris has forbidden the match. Krasain seems quite upset about the situation.

Eldest daughter: Lyse, an intelligent girl, already skilled with a whorl and loom.

Youngest son: Sharrik, a rather dull lad who seems more interested in animals than in the sea and sailing.

Youngest daughter: Yaelie, still a toddler, Yaelie is mostly in the care of Lyse, who seems to relish the responsibility.

As the de-facto leader of the fishermen of Avonel you represent their interests at the village moot. You know them all well:

Febene is a pious Peonian – he hates Eras, the Agrikan priest, and threatens to cause trouble if his temper is not kept in bounds.

Mythar and his family are very poor, but his brother Febene resents his tie with Harerl of Rinda (to whom Mythar’s daughter is married).

Krasain and Laranak Akersyn are brothers, and loyal friends to you. They own the village’s only other resident boat – a pinda of 12 feet. Their cousin Kethkael has a pretty daughter who is not yet betrothed.

Mylirel and Jarhath of Jenal are brothers. They believe that their family carries a curse, as both have disabled children – Mylirel’s son is deaf and mute, while Jarhath’s son’s baby boy has a clubfoot.

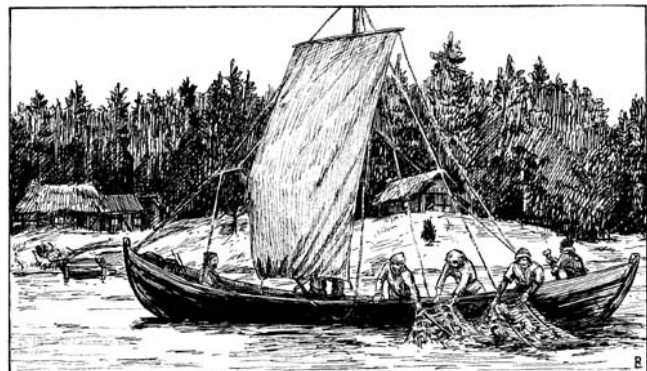
Finally, Harerl of Rinda is nicknamed “Big Fish” because you pulled him out of the sea after he jumped overboard the ship on which he was serving to escape pirates. Harerl is a Guilded sailor and knows more general sea lore than any of the other fishermen ever will, but he has married Mythar’s daughter Wista and settled in Avonel to fish. Harerl follows the ways of Agrik, but he owes you his life and it is clear that he takes this debt quite seriously.

In order to avoid the oppressive tax that Lord Mymby has put on the fish catch, you have landed a portion of your catch at other villages along the coast in recent months. You have avoided notice so far by using relatives to sell through, but should Lord Mymby discover your activities it is sure to go hard on you and possibly on the others also.

When fishing far out in the Gulf of Andurien you often catch sight of Kandayan boats from the south. They generally ignore you as you ignore them, but some wave and shout a greeting. Last month you were somewhat surprised to see one who had hailed you in the past up near Cape Whyd. One of your crew waved, but got no answer.

The Estor Clan

The Estor clan are fisher folk from Cape Whyd to Malasin Point – you have cousins in most ports along the coast for ten leagues. In Avonel there are your brother Pebya and cousins Febene and Mythar. All of you know the nearby waters well, as far north as Tormau and as far south as Peris Moor and Weseda.



Kadina of Sanvis – The Woodward

Physique:	Slight and weathered	Holding:	27 serf acres
Traits:	Sharp eyed, but slightly hard of hearing.	Skills:	Expert woods-woman Competent cultivator Average herder

PERSONAL NOTES:

Husband: Harvis, died of an infected wound after the Viking raid five years ago.

Only son: Kadain, now a young man and every inch his father's son.

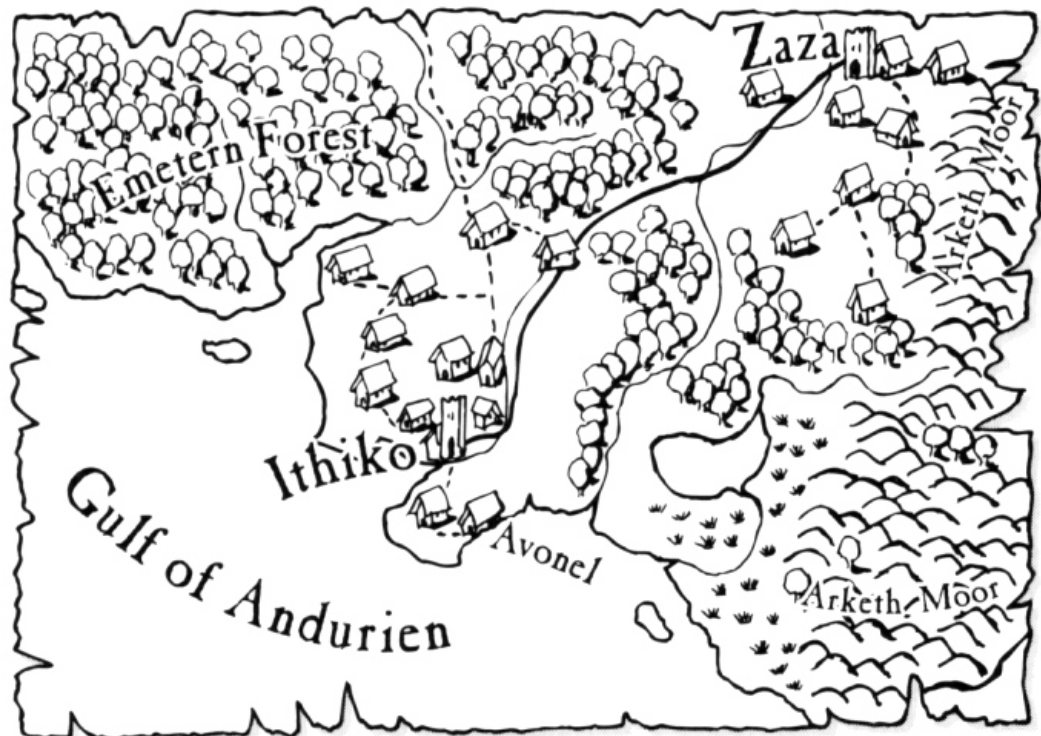
As Woodward, you are responsible for the care and upkeep of the fief's woodlands and for collecting the fees and tolls due from the villagers for the use of the woods. The first half of these duties are made difficult by Lord Mymby's reluctance to spend a penny on maintenance. In fact, he seems set on ruining the finest of the resources of the manor – just recently, he allowed the Timberwright, Rothmeld, to cut down four beautiful oaks (which were the pride of the village) for a paltry fee.

Over recent months, you have seen your young nephew young Ferlon, Fertewn and Lonja's son, lurking around in the woods when he should have been working. This might be construed as laziness, but he was not actually doing anything illegal. The boy shows good woodcraft, actually – unlike whoever was blundering about out there the other night. Probably youngsters out on a dare, but it could mean someone is taking berries, nuts or dropwood without paying the required fee.

The Sanvis Clan

The Sanvis clan first came to Avonel three generations back in the person of Krasik Sanvis, a warrior in Arlun the Conqueror's army. Krasik settled as a free farmer, but hard times during the revolts that followed Arlun's death forced his heirs to accept servitude. You were originally a Londa, but married into the Sanvis clan 18 years ago. Larib and Chelo are both your brothers-in-law, but Chelo and his family are now treated with some coolness as they have converted to Agrikanism.

This map of the Avonel area derives from your wanderings while "checking on the woods".



Uran of Galle – The Herder

Physique:	Wiry and surprisingly strong.	Holding:	36 serf acres
Traits:	Good hearing. Stiffness in the hand joints, which are slightly swollen with ague.	Skills:	Competent cattleherd Competent veterinarian Average cultivator

PERSONAL NOTES:

Wife: Wylma, a good-looking woman who makes a fine ale – what more could a man want?

Eldest daughter: Janye, a precocious but cheeky young lass.

Youngest daughter: Ilpeona, a pretty little girl.

As Herder you are responsible for the care and upkeep of the fief's cattle herd. You drive the cows to pasture each day, assisted by Feros and Gerye of Londa, sons of Lyremeld and Sherak. Each evening you drive them back to the barn in the village, after keeping them off the crops all day. You have developed a reasonable understanding of many of the ailments and injuries to which the cattle are subject, and have saved the lives of several beasts. The healing of animals seems to come naturally to you – you have even treated one of Lasa's sheepdogs successfully.

About four days back you nearly caught someone out milking the cows in the middle of the night! Scarcely a serious crime, although stealing food is always viewed poorly – probably some youngster doing it for a dare. Whoever it was was quite a burly fellow – the Reeve's son, perhaps?

You have also noticed a couple of Finbene of Retiga's sheep on one of the harvested fields recently – technically an offence under village law, but not serious since the crop had been reaped.

Finally, you have recently treated a heifer with a sickness which could be the same as one you treated seven years or so ago. If it is the same, it could be infectious to other beasts – for now you have put the sick creature in a byre on its own.

The Galle Clan

Your clan actually come from the nearby manor of Abeggy, but your father married an heiress in Avonel and passed the land on to you. Aided by the privileges you earn as village herder you have added to these lands and now the Galles are among the richest families in the fief.

Sheepdogs

Perhaps the most intelligent of breeds, sheepdogs are patient, learn quickly and have a great deal of restraint. A typical breed is the Kaldorin, 26-30 inches at the shoulder, with long, light coloured hair, and a bushy tail which is often removed (for sacrifice to Peoni).



Kaldorin



Sotrel of Gamis – The Priest of Peoni

Physique:	Average.	Holding:	10 free acres
Traits:	Handsome.	Skills:	Expert at Peonian ritual Competent cultivator Average herder

PERSONAL NOTES:

As a Cleric of Peoni, you have the respect and trust of many of the village peasants. Over the last four years, however, the Agrikan, Eras of Frestor has turned some of the common folk of Avonel away from the Lady of industrious labours. You harbour the suspicion that in truth he would do more than this, and would like to see you gone from the manor.

The Everliving Daughter of Pure Virtue enjoins those who worship her to confess their wrongdoing to a priest regularly. As a result, you hear much that you have taken oaths as an Ebasethe (full priest) of Peoni not to divulge to anyone. One example of this is that Mertyn of Estor (Laron's son) and Elyse of Londa (Jerilor's daughter) have recently come to you for guidance – they are in love and have had sex out of wedlock but are forbidden to marry by their parents. The pair seemed distraught, but they have said nothing to you for four or five days now. You doubt the matter is resolved, but don't know why they are silent.

Other troubled folk in Avonel include the brothers Mylirel and Jarhath Jenal, who believe their family cursed since both have disabled sons. Mylirel's son is deaf and mute and Jarhath's son's baby boy has a clubfoot. Mythar of Estor's family is the poorest in the village, holding only one acre. You give the two sons work as you can, but your own holdings are less than extensive...

Finally, over the last tenday a most perturbing development has come to pass. Each holy day evening you place offerings at the tiny shrine to the goddess that you maintain in the woods near your croft. Normally wild creatures simply slowly remove these over the ensuing days, but on the last two occasions they have vanished entirely overnight. Is this a miraculous acceptance of your offerings, or is some more sinister and mundane force responsible?

The Church of Peoni

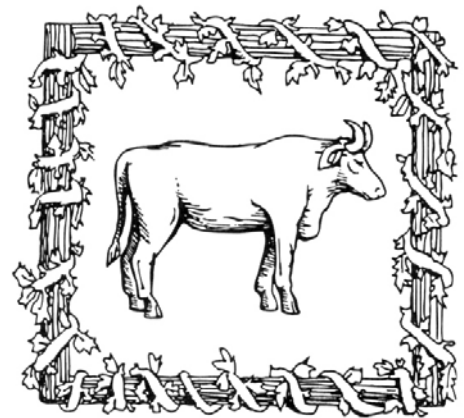
The church of Peoni is a large but very poor institution. What tithes and revenues it receives are swiftly used up maintaining the temple structures and giving alms to the poor, wherever they may be.

Priests of Peoni, be they male or female, take vows of poverty, chastity, celibacy, pacifism and obedience. The Guardian of the Meek is forgiving of any and all transgressions among her laity, but far less so for her clergy. Curiously, despite the hard life, many of her clergy respond with saintly lives and even with the death of a martyr. Perhaps it is a result of such selfless examples that the Ebasethes are so universally respected and revered. After all, there is so little to gain in material terms from becoming a priest of the Restorer that they are seldom suspected of greed or venality.

The training of a Peonian acolyte includes basic instruction in physik and in herblore, Peonian ritual, reading and writing, Emela (the language of church ritual and holy texts), agriculture and animalcraft. A priest is taught more of all of these, plus prayers to bless holy water or petals, to bless crops, to bless wounds to help them heal, to calm beasts, to calm angry people and to reveal liars.

The most common symbols of Peoni are the daisy and the wheatsheaf.

To the right is a traditional representation of Maermal, the ox – one of Peoni's companions in the fields of Valon.



Yameld of Sanvis – the Former Reeve

Physique:	Tall but gangly.	Holding:	29 serf acres
Traits:	Grizzled hair and piercing blue eyes.	Skills:	Expert agriculturalist Expert animal handler

PERSONAL NOTES:

Wife: Tysha, a good organiser and a passable cloth weaver.

Mother: Katryn, a frail but wise old bird.

Son: Rabald, who is learning to cope with the chickens.

Eldest daughter: Fabina, a rather pouty frowner, but quite bright.

Youngest daughter: Ysta, a mischievous little cutie.

Before that impostor and penny knight Sir Howart of Mymby came to Avonel, you were the village Reeve under the old Lord, young Gethro's father. You are still far better qualified for the post than that strutting imbecile Kethor of Londa, but Mymby likes him better as he is more disposed to crawl and fawn and implement Mymby's abusive policies without demur. It is quite obvious that Mymby is milking this poor manor for all it's worth. He spends insufficient on maintenance, nothing at all on defence and precious little on his own household. As far as you can see, the full income from his imposts on fish and grain go into the money-grubber's capacious purse.

Many of the village folk treat you as more of a Reeve than Kethor (which is only reasonable), and come to you with their suspicions and troubles. Most recently, they have reported petty thefts of bags and baskets of flour, rolled grain and fruit. Most likely, the venal bailiff has his lackeys go around at night and take a "little extra" tax from those already nearly starving.

The Sanvis Clan

The Sanvis clan first came to Avonel three generations back in the person of Krasik Sanvis, a warrior in Arlun the Conqueror's army. Krasik settled as a free farmer, but hard times during the revolts that followed Arlun's death forced his heirs to accept servitude. Fertewn is your brother; Lonja, his wife (and a possible PC), is thus your sister-in-law. Larib and Chelo are both your cousins, but Chelo and his family are now treated with some coolness as they have converted to Agrikanism. Kadina, the Woodward, was the wife of Harvis, Larib and Chelos' brother, but Harvis died of his wounds after the Viking raid five years ago.



Finbene of Retiga – The Watchtower “Captain”

Physique: Slight.

Traits: Poor eyesight. Thin, wispy hair.

Holding:

Skills:

27 serf acres

Average agriculturalist

Average animal handler

PERSONAL NOTES:

Wife: Pytra, a good cook but a bit of a nag.

Eldest son: Fameld, a lively and boisterous boy.

Younger son: Herye, a rather sickly but intelligent and observant boy.

Eldest daughter: Ulla, a real mummy's girl.

Youngest daughter: Karyn, a grizzly baby.

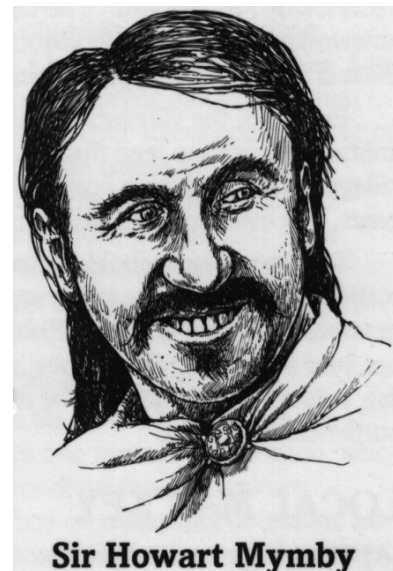
Until three months ago you held a comfortable position as a nobody in the village. Then Lord Mymby chose you to organise the serfs of the fief to take turns keeping watch in the old watchtower. The gods know why he chose you, but the rota you have instituted, while fair (as far as you can see), pleases no-one. The idea is to prevent a repetition of the Viking raid of five years back, but you would have thought the view to the southwest would be better from Whale Head than from the watchtower...

Just the other night you wandered out to the watchtower thinking that the watcher might be glad of some company. When you got there, however, the tower was empty and Ebor of Londa (Jeris' son), who was supposed to be on watch, was nowhere to be seen. You looked around for a bit and Ebor fairly soon turned up, a wide grin on his face, all dishevelled, claiming that he had been “on patrol – to get a better view south”. Now no doubt if word gets around everyone will think you go checking up on them.

Other than this, the only reportable crime you have heard of is some drying beef strips going missing from outside Kadene the Salter's workshop. You don't even have any real proof of this – your wife heard it while gossiping with Mikeld the Hideworker's wife.

The Retiga Clan

The Retiga clan is an offshoot of the Londas two generations old. After a family feud, old Gamje of Londa declared himself the head of a new clan, clan Retiga. The Londas objected, of course, but after Gamje laid the head of clan Londa out in a fistfight the matter stood. Vorthrin, Yalak and yourself are all cousins, sons of Gamje's three sons. Vorthrin has another brother who ran away (costing Vorthrin a pretty penny in amercements – a serf running away is a serious offence) and Yalak used to have a sister, but she was killed in the Viking raid five years ago.



Lonja of Sanvis – The Village Midwife

Physique: Slight but surprisingly strong.
Traits: Rheumatism in both knees. Rich, dark hair, with no grey showing.

Holding: 12 serf acres (held by husband)
Skills: Competent midwife
Marginal herbalist
Average animal handler

PERSONAL NOTES:

Husband: Fertewn, a good man and a skilled farmer, but with a bit of a temper.

Son: Ferlon, a teenager who seems far more interested in wandering the woods than working the fields. Fertewn has caned the boy several times, but nothing seems to deter him from his forays.

As village midwife, you are privy to many of the general village goings-on. The cares of the post are manifold, but if one has a mind to be interested in other folks' business, it has its compensations.

You know that Laron's son, Mertyn, and Jeris' daughter Elyse are courting, against her father's wishes. Elyse came to you asking after certain herbs (rasakile, a contraceptive), but stopped asking several days ago. Perhaps Father Satreld, the Peonian priest, knows something - or can give some advice, at least?

Charthrin of Londa's son Emene came to you recently with a knife cut gained while practicing fighting with the Agrikan, Eras of Frestor. You used the last of your berilik paste on the wound and went to pick more, only to find that your favourite patch had been picked over. (Berilik is a plant useful as an antiseptic and anaesthetic if prepared in the right way).

You have been treating Sonja of Jenal, Jarhath's daughter-in-law, who has recently given birth to a boy with a clubfoot and Nessa of Kanesta, wife of Horkael, who works as a servant at the manor and is pregnant.

Olvie of Edsar, wife of Lasis of Edsar the yeoman soldier (known in the village as "Widow Edsar" due to the lack of attention her husband pays her) has come to you to ask about aphrodisiacs.

Reina of Kanesta, daughter of Lasa, has come to you asking for advice. She has secretly wed one of the Holgath brothers, for whom she has done household chores in return for crop share for the past year. She seems besotted with the young man, but terrified of her parents' reaction when they discover what she has done.

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Before you married Fertewn you were a Londa; you are in fact the sister of Jeris and Jerilor of Londa, both of whom live in Avonel. Following common tradition you joined your husband's clan when you married him. This makes you a Sanvis now, but Fertewn has never begrudged you a close relationship with your old family.



HÂRNWORLD FREEFORM

On the misty isle of Hårn lies the little manor village of Avonel, where the villagers are preparing for the monthly Hallmoot. The jury members must decide what to report to the lord – the Bailiff, Sir Howart of Mymby. Little do they know what peril their idyllic rural peace is in...

Some folk scoff that the Hårn world and system involves grubbing in the mud as a peasant. In this freeform, you get to do just that – and hopefully find out just how much fun it can be!

Venue: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____

Sign up here to play:

Surname (block caps, please):	First name(s) or initials:

G.M. – Andy Gibson (tall bald guy with glasses).

Each session limited to eight players.

