The Wanderers



A scenario about life on the run, about the people you meet along the way, about the things you leave behind, about friendship among strangers, and about the journey towards a better place.

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Colophon

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Brief description of the scenario

Genre: Drama, adventure – pen-and-paper
Keywords: Refugees, Tale of travel, Heartfelt
Duration: Approx. 5 hours
Participants: 3-4 players + 1 game master
Content notes: Violence, discrimination, loss of close family members.

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Introduction to the scenario

The Wanderers follows a group of refugees who band together to cross their war-torn kingdom, Drada, on their journey towards a better place. Along the way, each of them must figure out whether they can hold on to the life they left behind, and the person they once were. The story follows their journey, both in the many quiet and contemplative moments on the road and around the campfire, and in the dramatic moments when everything is at stake.

The scenario is **a story about being a refugee**, set in a low-fantasy world inspired by Nordic folk tales. The story mixes the darkness, tragedy and realism of refugee life with warmth, adventure and an underlying hopefulness.

The scenario is an **adventure scenario**, **not a survival scenario**. It is about the characters' inner and outer journeys, not about survival strategies, combat, or keeping track of resources.

Form, narrative and structure

The scenario follows a fixed structure with predetermined scenes that follows the characters' journey through Drada. Within this framework, the players will have room to take full ownership of the characters' development and emotional journey through the narrative.

- The scenario begins with a **briefing** that will prepare you all for taking part in the story. It lasts about 40 minutes.

- The story begins with a short **prologue**. The prologue takes place over the summer, one year after the war began, and establishes how the characters first meet and decide to travel together. The prologue lasts about 20 minutes.

- The characters' journey then unfolds in **three acts**:

- **Act I** take place from summer into late summer. The act follows the characters as they travel along the roads of Drada until it becomes too dangerous and is an introduction to life on the run and the war as an unavoidable circumstance surrounding the characters. The act lasts about 70 minutes.

- **Act II** takes place from late summer into autumn. The act follows the characters' quieter journey through the fields and forests of Drada, which allows time for reflection, and ends with the dangerous crossing of the Great River, where the group is split two. The act lasts about 70 minutes.

- **Act III** takes place from autumn into winter. The act first follows the characters' journey through the deep forests of Drada, still divided into two groups and at their lowest point. In the middle of the act, the characters are reunited. The act then follows the last and hardest stretch of the characters' journey as they cross the mountains. Here they are caught in a terrible storm, and their fates are left uncertain. The act lasts about 60 minutes.

- The scenario concludes with a short **debriefing**. It lasts about 5 minutes.

Your role as game master

Before the scenario, it will be your job to make sure that everyone feels welcome around the table and to familiarise the players with the setting, the roles and the mechanics. During the scenario, your main task will be to run the predetermined scenes based on the script you find in the **scene catalogue**. The scenes are fixed and provide you with a solid framework to lean on but also give you room to put your own touch on the mood, descriptions and supporting characters.

Setting and tone

"A year ago, the King was to stand groom in his castle, surrounded by the distinguished crowds of the nobility. But fate took a turn when he gave his heart, not to his noble betrothed, but to a simple nomad girl, and married her in the castle's quiet garden, with flowers and old trees as their only witnesses. The nomads are rich in songs, stories and freedom, but not in the titles and wealth that confer nobility. Angry and embittered, the nobility rose up in defiance, and that was the beginning of a bloody civil war. Now, the King and most of his family are dead, yet the nobility continues the fight against the King's loyalists, and the war still ravages the land with despair, death and famine. All the while, the cities where Drada's families have lived for generations burn. Many have fled across the sea, but not everyone can find passage on boat or ship. Those who cannot, must either remain in their war-torn country, and burn with it, or take a chance and head north to **the land on the other side of the mountains** and, hopefully, a better place. Stories spread among refugees what awaits them there: A land of new opportunities and new beginnings."

Drada is a low-fantasy world inspired by Nordic folk tales. On one hand, the story will present a realm in decline, marked by hopelessness and the tragedy of war, and on the other hand, small heart-warming moments and a sense of adventure that will give the story a hopeful touch. You and your players may choose to lean more in one direction (tragedy) or the other (hopefulness), but both will be a part of the story. As a cultural and technological reference point, Drada may be reminiscent of Scandinavia or Northern Europe around the 1600s–1700s but is not modelled after a specific place or time in our world.

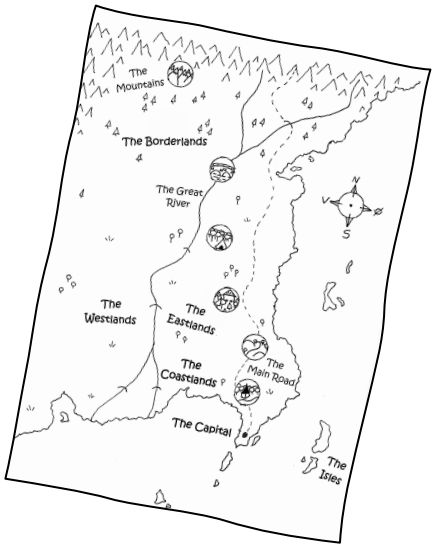
Along the way, the story will present phenomena that may be difficult for the characters to explain. Whether these are supernatural occurrences or simply coincidences and misunderstandings is up to you and your players to interpret.

The scenario's final scene—The Storm—blurs the boundary between the natural and the supernatural more than the rest of the scenario. Throughout the story, the players will encounter a small goldcrest several times—more and more as it progresses—to lend the narrative a supernatural touch and soften the transition into the final scene. The symbolic meaning the goldcrest takes on for the characters is up to them and you.

Apart from the backstory described above, the finer details of Drada are deliberately kept vague. The sea is simply called *the sea*, the mountains are called *the mountains*, and the King is called *the King*. If there has been war before, it is *the old war*, and the conflict that is raging now is simply called *the war*. Prayers are addressed to *the gods* or *the ancestors*. This makes it easy for both you and the players to talk about Drada and contribute to the world without knowing much about it in advance.

The map

In the appendix to the scenario, you will find a simple **map** of Drada (pp. 55-56. One copy for the players and one for you). It is only there to give you and the players a sense of the layout of Drada, and to give the players a general idea of how far along they are in their journey. The six circles on the map represent the six **event scenes** (you will read more about them on the following pages) that make up the dramatic highlights of the story.



The characters

In the scenario, each player takes control of one of six roles, all from different walks of life and parts of society. Roles not chosen by the players do not appear in the scenario. Each role contains more narrative threads than players will likely be able to explore, and is shaped by the threads they choose to pursue. If a player encounters something in the reading of a character that they do not feel comfortable playing, they can choose another.
Each character includes questions intended to help players reflect on and develop their understanding of the character. Players can answer these for themselves if they feel it helps them, but they are not required to do so.

Cornelius – The Gardener, 64

Cornelius is an absent-minded and slightly philosophical gardener who has lived an isolated life in his garden, cut off from both the outside world and his own emotions, and who now comes face to face with both as he must confront the world outside the four walls of his garden.

Themes: Living a life of isolation and loneliness, being trapped in dreams of what life could have been like, and holding on to hope in a hopeless time.

Mirabel – The Maid, 58 years old

Mirabel is a proud and respectable maid who desperately clings to the manners and formalities of her long life in service, and who struggles with her faith after the loss of the family she has served for her entire life.

Themes: Struggling with faith, living with grief and loneliness, and holding fast to one's principles in a chaotic world.

Petra – The Smuggler, 42

Petra is a seasoned and cunning smuggler who has profited greatly on both sides of the war. Now burned by her past, she lives a life on the run dependent on the generosity she herself has never shown.

Themes: Living with shame and guilt, struggling with one's own moral compass, and exploring the price of freedom and independence.

Nico – The Blacksmith, 30 years old

Nico is a blacksmith with a calm exterior that hides deep anger, frustration, and fear. He struggles trust himself and others in a world that constantly puts that trust to the test.

Themes: Living with anger and hatred, learning to show trust and forgiveness, and fighting against one's own self-destructive impulses.

Hector – The Deserter, 21 years old

Hector is a young soldier who did not have the heart for killing. He has turned his back on his country and can never return home to the people he loves.

Themes: Discovering what it means to be brave, to do one's duty, and to hold on to one's innocence and goodness in a world ravaged by war.

Aviaja – The Nomad Child, 15 years old

Aviaja is a young nomad child who loves colours, dancing and singing. Now, she must now try to rediscover the colours and joy in life after losing both her parents to war.

Themes: Fighting prejudice, overcoming an insurmountable loss, and finding one's identity and the courage to stand by oneself.

Prejudice and assumptions

During the scenario, the characters will grow closer, but at first they will be strangers to each other, just like many of the people they meet along the way. It is often in the encounter with strangers that we fall back on prejudices and assumptions based on where people come from and what they look like. Assumptions that are sometimes correct, sometimes completely wrong. On the name plates players receive at the beginning of the scenario, they will find common prejudices and preconceptions about people from the parts of Drada where the characters come from. Players will be able to draw on these in their interactions with each other and others they meet on their journey. You will find all the prejudices on **the prejudice sheet** (pp. 53) and the **overview-sheet** (p. 54).

Belongings

Fighting to hold on to one's past is one of the scenario's major themes. To highlight this theme, the scenario uses a mechanic linked to personal **belongings**.

We humans are nostalgic creatures who tend to attach great value to even the most insignificant things around us. As a refugee, you don't own much and can't take much with you. The few things you do own therefore take on a very special meaning. In the scenario, all the characters start with three cherished belongings that they bring with them from their old lives. All belongings are represented by small cards, which you will find in the appendix to the scenario (p. 23). Each belonging is linked to a part of the characters' history and personality:

> An old pocket watch may be a gift for years of loyal service, reminding one to always be punctual and orderly. A stolen dagger may be associated with great shame and represent one's sense of independence and survival. A colourful ribbon may remind one of brighter times and be a symbol of a character's indomitable optimism.

During their journey, the characters will lose belongings in **event scenes** (explained on p. 8), either due to unfortunate circumstances or because they choose to leave them behind.

Belongings may just be things, but they each represent something much greater: They are each one of the last physical ties to the characters' old lives. The loss of a belonging can cause many reactions: Perhaps the character will be filled with anger, grief, guilt, or hopelessness as they lose a belonging. Loss has many faces, and exactly how a player chooses to portray the feeling of loss that comes from losing a belonging is up to them. There is no framework for how long it takes to get over the loss of a belonging, or what that process looks like. This is also up to the player.

When a player loses their belonging, ask them to read the text on the card aloud so that everyone around the table can feel the significance of the belonging to the character and appreciate the weight of the moment.

Afterwards, the characters will have the opportunity to articulate and explore what the belonging meant to them and the history it represented in **campfire scenes** (explained on p. 8).

In addition to their belongings, each character has a few other things with them: Items such as clothes, a water skin, some matches, etc. The characters may also find new things on their journey: A rusty tool they pick up, a flower they pick, or a gift from a kind soul. These may be things that help them on their journey, or simply things of nostalgic value, but they are just things, and not the same as their cherished personal belongings.

How to run the scenario

Briefing

Before you start playing the scenario, introduce the players to the elements of the scenario, align expectations, and assign characters. You can do this using **the start-up sheet** (p. 26).

Structure

- The story begins with a short **prologue** consisting of two small scenes that establish how the characters first meet, and give the players a chance to get a feel for their characters.
- The main part of the story then unfolds in **three acts** that follow the characters' journey through their war-torn country. Each act consists of a series of predetermined scenes of three types: **Travel scenes**, **Campfire scenes**, and **Event scenes**. You will find all the scenes, both for the prologue and the three acts, in **the scene catalogue** (p. 29).
- It is recommended to take a 5-10 minute break after Act I and Act II so that you and the players can take a breather and stretch your legs.

Cutting scenes

The characters' journey spans several months, but the scenario's narrative will only follow highlights of their longer journey. Some players will love to stretch a campfire scene over an hour, but the important thing here is the characters' development over a longer journey, not to linger too much on individual moments along the way. Therefore, it is crucial that you cut the scenes tightly and keep the narrative moving forward. In the scene catalogue, you will find help to quickly get the scenes started and cut them, so they do not drag on. Scenes have an approximate duration you can use as a guideline, but you will have the best feeling with the players in the room, so as long as the scenario keeps to the time, you can easily lengthen or shorten scenes. Sometimes days pass between scenes, other times weeks. The exact length of time isn't important. If it becomes relevant, you decide how much time has passed.

Wrap-up

The scenario ends with a short debriefing, which is intended to round off the scenario properly. You run this based on the **wrap-up sheet** (p. 52).

Travel scenes

Travel scenes are short scenes that follow the characters as they move through the landscapes of Drada in silence; small snapshots of the characters' journey that give the impression of a longer journey. The scenes focus on giving the players the opportunity to provide insight into their characters' inner thoughts and feelings. Sometimes there will be a single travel scene, other times several in a row.

Travel scenes always start with you saying: "*And the road carries you onwards...*", followed by a short description of something the characters pass on their journey. In the scene catalogue, you will find ready-made descriptions that you can either use directly or draw inspiration from. The most important details are highlighted to make them easier to remember and/or improvise on.

> You come across a large oak that has fallen onto the road. It must have stood here for decades. Now its old roots hang vulnerably in the cold air, exposed to wind and weather. The storm must have knocked it down.

Then you will take turns asking the players questions – in no particular order – to get them to describe their characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions in the situation you have presented. It is important that the players do not use direct or indirect speech here.

> **Game master:** How do you react when you see the tree?
> **Cornelius:** I stand there for a moment looking at the tree, wondering how long it has been standing there by the roadside. I think of my garden and wonder how it is doing. Suddenly, I realise that the others are already crossing the trunk, and I hurry after them.

In the scene catalogue, you will find suggestions for questions you can ask the players. You can use these pre-written questions or come up with your own if you have a good idea.
If a player wants to contribute and describe how their character reacts, feels and thinks without the help of the questions, they are also welcome to do so.
If the players interact with their surroundings, it is up to you to decide what happens.
These scenes are meant to be kept relatively short – about 3-5 minutes each.

Campfire scenes

The campfire scenes follow the characters as the take a break during their journey to reflect on the past, present and future in conversation around the campfire. These are dialogue-focused scenes, where the players, mainly using direct/indirect speech, have the opportunity to bring their characters' backstories into play and learn more about each other's characters.

The scenes always start out with you saying, "*Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire...*", followed by a brief description of the scene's surroundings. In the scene catalogue, you will find ready-made descriptions that you can either use directly or draw inspiration from. As in the travel scenes, the important details are highlighted. You will also find a prompt for the scene, which is intended to quickly get the conversation between the characters going. Typically, the prompt will be for one of the characters to talk about a lost belonging. From there, it is up to the players to create an interesting conversation and involve everyone. They can do this, for example, by letting the characters share their own memories and thoughts and ask each other questions.

Event scenes

Event scenes follow the characters during some of the more dramatic and memorable moments of their journey. These scenes are more traditional role-playing scenes, where the players describe what their characters say and do.

Event scenes focus on putting the characters in situations where they must make choices that may have consequences for them, their group, and whether they lose some of their belongings.

The scenes always start with you saying: "*On your journey, you come to...*", followed by a brief description of the scene's surroundings. In the scenario catalogue, you will find ready-made descriptions that you can either use directly or draw inspiration from. As in the travel and campfire scenes, the important details are highlighted.

From there, it is up to you to guide the players through the scene. The scene catalogue will tell you how the scene starts, when it ends, and what should happen in between – in broad terms. It will be your job to fill in the scene by describing what happens in the scene and controlling the supporting characters. The scene catalogue will contain suggestions for things you can use to fill out the scene. You can use these as they are written, take inspiration from them, or come up with your own.

Not all roles need to be equally in focus in every event scene, but make sure everyone gets their time in the spotlight. In these scenes, pay special attention to the cutting to keep the scenes from dragging.

One of your most important tasks in the event scenes is to ensure that all the characters have the opportunity to lose one or more belongings during the scenario. If a player really wants to hold on to their belongings, let it have consequences: Maybe a belonging is taken from another character instead, or maybe it leads to the scene taking a dangerous turn?

Life as a refugee is dangerous. The story will put characters in situations where they may lose belongings, suffer injuries, or even die. Make this clear in the briefing: If the characters don't help each other out, it can have serious consequences. The goal is not to kill characters (avoid it if you can), but there must be consequences to keep the story true to the risks refugees face. If a character dies early in the game, the player could perhaps choose and read a new one during a break and join the next act.

Preparations before the scenario

Before you sit down with the players and are ready to run the scenario, it is important that you have a few things in order first:

- As an opening to the scenario before Act I, and as an ending to the scenario after Act III, it is suggested that you play a piece of music to get the players into the mood of the scenario and to round off the story, respectively. The music comes from the albums "*Wood Works*" (2014) and *"Last* Leaf" (2017) by The Danish String Quartet, where the classical quartet interprets a series of folk tunes, which have been a great inspiration for the mood of the scenario. Ideally, you can use a small Bluetooth speaker or something similar to play the music, but otherwise you can also just play it from a phone or computer. Whatever you use, you can easily fade the music out by slowly turning down the volume – this way, the ending won't be so abrupt. You can find the music on a YouTube playlist by scanning the QR code below (note that there may be ads). Alternatively, the music is also available on platforms such as Spotify.



- Read through this entire guide (including appendices) so that you are familiar with the scenario, its progression, and its individual elements. The more comfortable you feel with the scenario, the better a guide you will be for your players.

The following is only for those who are not running the scenario at Fastaval 2026

- Print out the 6 **main characters** (pp. 11-22).
- Print the 6 **name plates**. Fold them along the lines (pp. 57-62).
- Print and cut out all **the belongings** by cutting along the lines (pp. 23-25).
- Print the **prejudice-sheet** (p. 53).
- Print the **overview-sheet** (p. 54) and place it in front of you.
- Print **the map**, one copy for you and one for the players (pp. 55-56).

Appendix

Cornelius – The Gardener, 64 years old

Cornelius is an absent-minded and slightly philosophical gardener who has lived an isolated life in his garden, cut off from both the outside world and his own emotions, and who now comes face to face with both as he must confront the world outside the four walls of his garden.

Themes: Living a life of isolation and loneliness, being trapped in dreams of what life could have been like, and holding on to hope in a hopeless time.

Keywords: Absent-minded, philosophical, nature-loving, soft-hearted, fearful, lonely.

Cornelius carries: An old coat with the King's symbol embroidered on the breast pocket, a water skin, a walking stick, and his few personal belongings (an oak cutting, a pocket sundial and a clay flute).

For as long as he can remember, Cornelius has worked as a gardener in the King's garden. As a young man, he was very taken with the beautiful flower beds and flowers in the palace garden: Lilies and lavenders from faraway lands, fine roses and delicate orchids, and greatest of all, the old oak in the centre of the garden. It was hard to comprehend how anyone could oversee such an enormous garden. It took him years to learn every task and how the tasks changed with the seasons and the weather. Decades passed with dirt under his fingernails and satisfied smiles, with sweat on his brow and the wind in his hair. Over time, as his fingers curled and his hair no longer grew as it once had, he came to know every plant and learned how to give each of them what they needed.

Cornelius grew up in **the Capital**, in a nice flat above his father's painting business. Like many other city dwellers, Cornelius was born with a spring in his step, a singing city dialect he never lost, and his head in the clouds. In his youth, he spent his time reading poetry and philosophy, practising the violin, and painting. Often, he had barely started one activity before inspiration struck him, and he immediately turned to another. Cornelius remembers his mother as a humorous and kind soul, but she was also fragile. She suffered sporadic outbursts of anxiety, anger, and depression. At first they were minor and infrequent, but over the years they became more frequent and more violent. Cornelius never knew how to behave around her when she was like that. He will never forget the long nights in the family home when he could hear his mother shouting and screaming through the thin walls, and when there was no escape from her illness. His mother came from a wealthy family, but also from a family where many things were left unsaid. As a young boy, Cornelius often played with his cousins when they visited from the country on the other side of the mountains, where their father ran a business. But as his mother's illness worsened, their visits became fewer until one day they stopped altogether—perhaps because, like him, they did not know how to react. As a boy, Cornelius was apprenticed to his father, and he hated the long days the two of them spent shut away in fine but dim apartments, surrounded by the thick smell of paint and wallpaper paste, and by the impenetrable silence between them—days when much remained unsaid.

One spring morning he met the baker's daughter, Maren, and the two quickly struck up a conversation. She soon fell in love with his then-handsome hair and his self-written poetry, and he fell in love with her gentle and curious nature. They spent many evenings together at the edge of the forest, exchanging forget-me-nots, poetry, philosophy, and cautious song. Yet although Cornelius found it easy to talk about the great questions of life, he found it difficult to speak about the small things: The emotions and anxieties he had taught himself to hide away and ignore. He feared he would never be able to give himself fully to Maren, and that he would stifle her love. In the end, his repressed emotions grew too great for him to handle, and he left Maren a letter that suffocated their love before it could blossom. Soon after, the despairing Cornelius struck up a conversation with a gardener who showed him the castle gardens. They were short-staffed, and the gardener

offered him work within the garden's high walls. There Cornelius found the setting for a quiet, meaningful, and deeply lonely life.

Decades passed behind those walls. Time and loneliness softened Cornelius' heart like overripe fruit—the curse of old age—and he came to regret deeply that he had never found the courage to express his feelings to Maren, or to his parents, who were now both buried in the earth, surrounded by the finest flowers and the same impenetrable silence that had marked his entire upbringing. Cornelius was not present on the evening when the King was married beneath the great oak in his garden, yet he was proud that the garden had provided the setting for the event of the century—a romance straight out of the fairy tales and poems Cornelius had once loved to write.

It was a terrible day when the soldiers of the nobility entered the capital, killed the King, and slaughtered everyone in the castle. Blood watered his garden that day. In a decision that required far less deliberation than Cornelius was used to, he had to choose between dying in his garden or living without it—an impossible choice. Yet Cornelius chose life. He fled over the garden wall and was forced to face the consequences of that choice outside the walls and green surroundings that had formed the backdrop to his entire life.

The days after his escape were hard for an old man like Cornelius. The world beyond the walls had changed greatly over the years, and there was much he no longer recognised. For Cornelius it was also full of reminders of all he regretted: Every face, every tree, every bird in the sky reminded him of his parents, of the King, and of Maren. Perhaps he should have died in his garden, he sometimes thought in his darker moments. But his thoughts turned to the great oak tree in the King's garden, grown from an acorn brought all the way from the land beyond the mountains—the land where his cousins lived. If they were still there, that is. Much had changed since they played together as children. It was not much to cling to. A hope as fragile and delicate as a flower. But a hope nonetheless.

Questions for Reflection

- What interest did Cornelius share with his mother before her illness took hold of her?
- Which memory of Maren always makes Cornelius smile when he thinks of it?
- What deeper purpose does Cornelius find in surrounding himself with nature?
- What strange habit did Cornelius develop during his lonely moments in the garden?
- What does Cornelius still hope to experience before he dies?

Listen to the recorded role:

Mirabel – The Maid, 58 years old

Mirabel is a proud and respectable maid who desperately clings to the manners and formalities of her long life in service, and who struggles with her faith after the loss of the family she has served for her entire life.

Themes: Struggling with faith, living with grief and loneliness, and holding on to one's principles in a chaotic world.

Keywords: Respectable, proud, diligent, reserved, sorrowful, lonely.

Mirabel carries: Some simple clothes, a woollen cloak, some matches to keep warm, and her few personal belongings (a necklace, a prayer stone and a shawl).

It was a particularly cold winter when Mirabel was born on a small farm in **the Westlands**: a place of simple life stories that ended where they began, and of conservative people who were conservative with their words. "*From the earth you came, from the earth you shall live, to the earth you shall return*," Mirabel's mother liked to say.
Four generations of Mirabel's family lived under the same roof on the busy farm, and she quickly learned that independence and hard work were of the utmost importance in keeping the family and everyday life together. Everyone had to chip in, young and old alike, out in the fields or indoors. Mirabel's love fell early on thread and needle, and she spent long evenings mending the family's clothes and embroidering. Food on the table was certainly not a given, so every evening it was accompanied by good table manners and prayers to the gods, thanking them for the gifts they had so graciously bestowed upon the family. Mirabel had a talent for always being the extra hands or eyes that were needed, and as she grew older, she and her sister **Kaja** were often put in charge of looking after their younger siblings. Kaja was a year older than Mirabel, but very distracted, and she often did more harm than good in her work and childcare. At times, her sister's frivolity would be a great irritation to Mirabel, but in the end, they were sisters and shared a close friendship that only sisters can have.

Mirabel remembers it as a big day when, as a young girl, she arrived at the villa where she would serve as a maid for her entire life. Her head was filled with naive dreams of a life among fine furniture and even finer people. She was excited to meet **the mistress** and wondered what she would think of having Mirabel, a girl of such humble origins, with her prominent Westlandish dialect, serve in her home. Mirabel was convinced that it must have been the will of the gods that she had been spotted by the mistress' head servant at the market, and that he had been in desperate need of extra hands in the villa.
The mistress was a tough employer who always had work for Mirabel. Before sunrise, Mirabel scrubbed the stairs clean, and late into the evening she sat by candlelight, mending the mistress's many dresses. Meanwhile, Kaja went to farmers' balls, danced the nights away, married a stable boy and started a family on the family farm, which she inherited when their parents died. Mirabel read all about it in the many letters the two sisters exchanged over the years. But Mirabel never complained. She went to work with dedication and attention to detail, determined never to apologise for herself or her efforts. Over the years, a quiet respect developed between her and the mistress. A respect that grew into appreciation. Perhaps even into what some would call friendship. A friendship that rarely needed words.

As Mirabel grew older and her knees became too weak for the hardest work, the mistress put her in charge of looking after her nephews and nieces, who had come to the house to receive some education. Mirabel looked after them, raised them, and learned to love them as her own. The young **Signe**, in particular, won her heart with her round rosy cheeks, big eyes, and infectious laugh. Mirabel did not allow the children to slurp their soup. Nor did she allow them to run outside without proper clothes on, or to skip their evening prayers. But she allowed herself to let her bedtime stories – the same ones she herself had been told on cold evenings as a child – go well beyond the children's bedtime. She always told them with great empathy and even greater gestures, and with the Westlandish accent she had never quite lost. They were the only children she would ever have, she knew. That was something she and the mistress had in common.

The war was a dark time for the country, and Mirabel often prayed for its future. However, she omitted the King from her prayers; in her eyes, his marital indiscretions were the root of all the misery. But prayers did not keep the war away forever. One day, she received a letter from Kaja. In it, her sister described how the family farm had been burned down by the King's soldiers after the family had been unable to pay the ever-increasing taxes. The early summer drought had made it impossible to save much, but fortunately, the family had escaped unharmed. Mirabel was devastated to read this, and she wrote back immediately, advising Kaja to take the rest of the family to their cousins, who were sheltering from the war on the other side of the mountains. Then she could only wait for a reply and pray that her letter had arrived. At the time, Mirabel thought it was the worst tragedy she would ever experience. She was wrong.

One evening, robbers broke into the villa, men hardened by a life without love and emboldened by alcohol. Mirabel fought hard to save her beloved mistress and the children, but in vain. The only lives that mattered to the robbers were their own. Only a young robber's sympathy for an old servant saved Mirabel's life. And with that, no longer young or naive, she had to flee the villa that had been her home for her entire life and set out into a world where her faith had failed her and her purpose was gone.

Life on the road was no life for decent people, and certainly not for a lady of Mirabel's age. But Mirabel had lived through several harsh winters in the Westlands, and she did not let hunger and cold break her spirit.
She had never received a reply from her sister, and now, with no home to send it to, she knew she never would. But she hoped that Kaja had received her letter. She hoped that Kaja had listened for once and gone to their cousins. If Kaja had any sense, that was where she and the rest of the family would be found. They were all Mirabel had left. And as she moved north towards the mountains, she knew that Kaja would need her in the months to come.

Questions for reflection

- What fond memory does Mirabel have of Kaja from their time on the farm?
- How did the mistress mark the day that Mirabel had officially served her for ten years?
- What habit from her time in the mistress' villa does Mirabel still hold on to?
- What kind of bedtime story was Signe's favourite?
- What does Mirabel hope she will have the opportunity to tell her sister?

Listen to the recorded role:

Petra – The Smuggler, 42 years old

Petra is a seasoned and cunning smuggler who has profited greatly on both sides of the war. Now burned by her past, she lives a life on the run dependent on the generosity she herself has never shown.

Themes: Living with shame and guilt, struggling with one's own moral compass, and exploring the price of freedom and independence.

Keywords: Outspoken, tough, loner, lonely, ashamed.

Petra carries: a few inconspicuous items of clothing, a stolen water skin, a charcoal pencil and some falsified papers, and her few personal belongings (a coin, a pocket knife and a letter).

There is a beautiful little island south of the coast of Drada, home to about a hundred souls. It is the kind of place where everyone knows everyone and has done so for generations. A place without strangers, without danger and without surprises. A place where the waves bow before the people do, and where things are as they always have been. It was on this island that Petra began her days as **an islander**. Petra lived alone with her mother in a small house near the coast. Her mother was a loving but anxious woman who always worried that Petra was wearing too little clothing, eating too little, or wandering too close to the tide. Petra learned to recognise these concerns as a form of love and knew that they were born of a deep sorrow. Petra's father – a sailor whose name she had never known – had left them shortly after her birth. He left Petra and her mother with the few belongings he had not had time to take with him and with a hollow in their lives that nothing could fill.

The change in Petra came slowly, like the sea eroding the coastline year by year. The island began to feel small, the close-knit community to feel suffocating. And a nameless longing—what she would later recognise as wanderlust—took hold of her heart. There was nothing sudden about her decision to leave her home and her mother, whose heart she knew she would break, just as her father had before her. But one evening, just 14 years of age, she boarded a ship and did not look back.

At sea, Petra found a diffuse community that changed members from port to port. A community where everyone was in the same boat when the waves rose high, and where survival depended on the efforts of each individual rather than the mercy of the gods. At first, she found comfort in anonymity, in the fact that no one knew her or pretended to want to. Then she discovered the freedom to be exactly who she wanted to be. It was not always easy being a young girl aboard a ship. Sharp remarks and extra chores came quickly to anyone seen standing idle on deck, so Petra learned early on to always appear busy. Her quick wit became her weapon when seasoned sailors tried to belittle her, and she took great pleasure in watching them lose their verbal duels. Over the years, the sea washed the islander dialect from her tongue until she sounded like someone who came from nowhere at all.

Petra had never given much thought to the King or his laws. So, when she was one day offered a small purse of coins to smuggle goods from one port to another, she did not hesitate to say yes. She would never forget her first journey with contraband in the hold—how her heart pounded and her eyes darted from face to face, convinced that someone had to have figured her out. But in the end the cargo arrived without incident. The first of many. The years carried her from ship to ship, always with some new secret cargo hidden below deck. The young and underestimated girl slowly grew into a sturdy woman few people dared challenge. Several lovers each sweetened her life for a time, but they were always temporary, and work always came first. As her reputation as a smuggler grew, so did the danger of the trade. But danger and excitement were exactly where her inner compass pointed. She dreamed of becoming as rich as the King himself and buying the freedom that people like her would otherwise never know—the freedom to see the wonders of the world, taste the finest wines and the most exotic tobacco, hear the most beautiful songs and the saddest verses, and never again be bound by

obligation. Yet every year, on her birthday, she was reminded of everything money could never buy: Someone to share her life with, a child to love, a mother's forgiveness, and a father's love.

When war broke out, it was a terrible time for most people—but a prosperous time for smugglers. Petra smuggled food to the hungry, weapons to the fighting, and almost anything to anyone who could afford it. She made a fortune supplying both sides of the war. Sometimes she felt almost heroic, helping those that believed they were fighting for the right cause. At other times she felt dirty in a way that could not be washed off. Eventually—whether through failing courage or simple bad luck—the King's soldiers caught up with her, and she was forced to jump overboard to escape them. When she finally washed ashore, wanted and half-dead, she had only a single coin left in her pocket. Everything she had worked for was gone. Her salty tears mixed with the sea as she realised, she had been left with nothing.

The Coastlands was no longer safe for her. Soldiers filled the busy ports, searching every ship as desperate refugees crowded the docks. Petra tried to secure passage away from the mainland, but she had burned too many bridges and had nothing left to pay the few smugglers who had not already been caught. She began to hear rumours that many people were travelling to the lands beyond the mountains, hoping to find safety and work. Work did not interest her. But the thought of no longer needing to look over her shoulder did. Perhaps in a place where no one knew her she could begin her life anew. Find a ship. Sail toward the horizon. And maybe—somewhere out there—find something that could fill the empty space in her heart.

Questions for reflection:

- What small kindness did Petra's mother always show her that she sometimes misses?
- What stories did a young Petra imagine about her father?
- How did Petra celebrate her first successful smuggling job?
- What small ritual does Petra perform each year on her birthday?
- Where does Petra dream of sailing, and what does she hope to find there?

Listen to the recorded role:

Nico – The Blacksmith, 30 years old

Nico is a blacksmith with a calm exterior that hides deep anger, frustration, and fear. He struggles trust himself and others in a world that constantly puts that trust to the test.

Themes: Living with anger and hatred, learning to show trust and forgiveness, and fighting against one's own self-destructive impulses.

Keywords: Empathetic, calm, down-to-earth, temperamental, self-destructive.

Nico carries: Some worn clothes, a fire steel he made himself, a pair of leaky boots he has stolen, and his few personal belongings (a hammer, a bottle, and a wooden figure).

There are cities where one life story is easily lost among a hundred others, where lives flicker and fade like fireflies in the night. Places where you are not supposed to think yourself special or believe you can make a difference. Places where long hours are sacrificed upon the altar of routines. It was in such a city in **the Coastlands** where Nico grew up—a place where everyone knew their place and kept to it. His mother was a laundress with a lively Coastlander dialect, which Nico still slips into without noticing whenever he is in a good mood. She spent long hours washing clothes for the town's bourgeoisie, and the rest of her time caring for Nico's younger sisters. As Nico grew old enough to look after himself, their time together became rare, and they turned into strangers living under the same roof. But sometimes, late at night, Nico would find her in the kitchen. There, they would share a cup of tea with a splash of sweet liqueur. Those moments meant more to him than he would ever admit, and he loved listening to her gossip about the intrigues of the bourgeois households.

Nico's father was a blacksmith with a dangerous temper and a weakness for drink. As the only boy in the family—and one who quickly grew both tall and broad—Nico was often forced to help in the smithy. Nico hated every moment of it: The harsh words, the mocking remarks, and the distant look in his father's eyes as one drink turned into many. The only peace and relaxation Nico found was when his father passed out in his drunkenness. Then Nico would quietly take up the tools and work on the small wooden figures he loved to carve. Nico's father was a small man, and Nico tried to be the bigger man. He avoided confronting him, fearing what it might do to the family. But over the years anger and hatred settled deep within him. One evening, he finally lost control. A quarrel over a poorly made horseshoe turned into shouting and screaming. Tools and scraps of metal flew through the air. One of Nico's wooden figures struck his father in the temple—and the fight truly began. His father lunged at him, but Nico was stronger and quickly forced him to the ground. For a moment, seeing fear in his father's eyes brought a terrible sense of satisfaction. Something inside Nico wanted to continue—to destroy the man who had taught him how to hate. But when he saw his sisters crying in the doorway, he stopped. With his father's threats echoing behind him, Nico fled into the night.

Over the next few years, life tossed Nico around like sparks flying from hammered steel. Most people looked with suspicion at a young man of Nico's size wandering the roads alone, and their mistrust slowly shaped how he saw himself. Several times he tried to settle down and earn an honest living. Each time, his temper or misfortune ruined his chance, leaving him with wounded pride and many lost opportunities. He cursed the gods—first for the misfortunes they sent him, and then for creating him at all. The bottle tempted him more than once. He hated how seductive its promise of oblivion sounded. But he never reached for it. He knew there would be no turning back from that choice.

One morning, after a fight in a narrow alley, an old blacksmith named **Elias** found him bruised and bloodied. Instead of chasing him away, Elias offered him work in his smithy. "*Better to use your hands to make something*," the old man said, "*than for beating on the world.*" At first Nico refused. But that same evening

he returned to the smithy and accepted the offer. Days turned into weeks. Nico found comfort in the quiet rhythm of work and in the companionable silence between himself and Elias. He rediscovered the simple satisfaction of making something with his hands, just as he had when carving wooden figures as a child. Weeks became years. Slowly he grew familiar with the faces in the village and the work that needed doing. Gradually he became part of the small community and found a place for himself. He grew fond of the routines of village life. People valued him for his skill, and for the calm nature he had learned to show the world.

At first, the war did not change much. But one day soldiers of the nobility arrived in the village. They demanded that Elias forge weapons for their war. The old blacksmith refused. Nico admired him for standing by his convictions—but he feared it would not end there. That same evening Nico was awakened by noises from the smithy. Quietly he grabbed his hammer and slipped into the workshop. There, he found Elias lying dead on the floor. The soldiers stood over him, laughing at how easily the old man had fallen. Something inside Nico took hold of him. He hurled himself at them. One soldier fell instantly when Nico's hammer struck his forehead. But there were too many of them. Once again, Nico fled into the night. When he awoke in the forest outside the village, he felt nothing but shame, anger, and fear. All his life he had banged his hands against the world. Now it had struck back.

The days that followed were spent tending his wounds and constantly looking over his shoulder. Life on the road—alone and without direction—was nothing new to him. But losing Elias and the life he had finally built left a deep scar on his spirit. His thoughts often turned to his family and how they might be surviving the war. More than once he considered travelling south to find them. But he could not bear the thought of bringing his troubles home with him. He did not deserve to return. More than once he thought about simply giving up. But then he thought of Elias standing firm before the soldiers, and something inside him refused to surrender. So, Nico turned north, toward the mountains and the lands beyond them. A place where he would not be hunted. A place where he might be given another chance. One last chance. Perhaps the chance he needed to finally find his place in the world.

Questions for reflection:

- What promise did Nico make to his mother that he hopes to keep one day?
- What happened the first time Nico saw his father drunk?
- What kind gesture did Elias make that evening when Nico first came to his smithy?
- What small luxury did Nico learn to appreciate during his years with Elias?
- What kind of life does Nico hope to find on the other side of the mountains?

Listen to the recorded role:

Hector – The Deserter, 21 years old

Hector is a young soldier who did not have the heart for killing. He has turned his back on his country and can now never return home to the people he loves.

Themes: Discovering what it means to be brave, to do one's duty, and to hold on to one's innocence and goodness in a world ravaged by war.

Keywords: Caring, honest, trusting, cowardly, naive.

Hector carries: Some simple clothes he has stolen to get out of his uniform, a fire steel, a waterskin, a pair of good boots, and his few personal belongings (a ring, a dagger and a porcelain figurine).

Few places are as full of life and affection as the farmstead in **the Eastlands** where Hector grew up, like a needle in a haystack among countless siblings, farmhands, milkmaids, and animals. Easterners are known for a pride often mistaken for arrogance, and a bluntness that can seem intrusive. Hector was a poor example of both. Only his butter-blonde hair marked him as an Easterner. As a child, Hector loved feeding the chickens. He gave them all names and imagined rich personalities for them, much to the amusement of the farmhands. The fun ended one rainy day when he found his mother at the chopping block in the yard, surrounded by blood and feathers. Death was a natural part of life on the farm, she gently explained to the crying Hector. But it was never a part he fully accepted.

Harvest time was the best time of the year. As children, Hector and the other boys ran through the fields laughing, chasing birds away with small drums, clapping and shouting. After long days, the tired youngsters would drift toward the kitchen, where their irresistible faces sometimes earned them a sugary treat. As they grew older, begging for sweets gave way to harder work in the fields. Playing and drumming were replaced by mischief and pranks: swapping the salt and sugar, pouring water into the farmhands' boots, and hiding the milkmaids' buckets. Hector wanted to prove himself as part of the gang, but he never dared to be the one to carry out the deed. The others called him a coward and a wimp, but the truth was simpler—Hector just didn't have the heart for cruelty, even in its smallest forms.

Hector's father was a strong man. A rock for those around him to lean on, with a body like a tree trunk you could cling to. He filled every room not with loud words, but with his quiet presence, and he never complained about pain, weather, or wear. For Hector, he was an unwavering support. That is why it was so unbearable to see him lying sick in bed, pale and exhausted, too weak to rise unaided. The man who once carried sacks of flour alone could now barely lift his own head. The silence in the room—broken only by his father's laboured breathing—was horrible. When Hector's mother took his hands one morning and told him his father had died during the night, the words felt strange and hollow. She said he was with the gods, but to Hector it felt as though something much earthlier had vanished: The pillar he had always clung to. At the funeral, Hector stood in silence until his grief finally broke through. No one cried more than he did.

Time heals all wounds, even though some never fully close. As the weeks passed, laughter slowly returned to the farm. When the other boys discovered Hector had taken a liking to the milkmaid **Lina**, they teased him relentlessly. Under their pressure, he wandered into the cowshed one early morning during milking and came face to face with the round-cheeked girl who had filled his waking dreams. Flustered and panicking, he proposed to her on the spot, leaving both her and his friends speechless. Even more so when she said yes. What began as immature young love slowly deepened. Lina fell for Hector's big heart and spontaneity, and he for her straightforwardness and humour. As the youngest sibling, Hector was set to inherit nothing, and he began dreaming of owning a small farm and starting a family with Lina. He had no idea where the money would come from, but the daydreams were sweet.

When war broke out, life on the farm grew difficult. The King's taxes increased, trade slowed, and everyone had to work harder just to get by. One day, the King's men arrived looking for strong, brave lads for the army. Hector had no desire to fight or leave Lina, and he watched his childhood

friends march away. But in the hours after their departure, doubt took hold of him. Could he stay behind while the others—his friends and Lina's brothers—went to war? Should he not fight to protect the people he loved? And perhaps a soldier's pay could give Lina the life he dreamed of? In the end, after a tearful farewell, Hector rode after the soldiers. To do his duty. To do what he believed was right.

The journey to the capital was long and filled with anxious anticipation. An old soldier placed a sword in Hector's hands, but there was no time to teach him how to use it. Young men fought each other out of nervous excitement, while the veterans watched in grim silence. When they finally reached the capital, the stories of heroism gave way to a brutal reality of rotting corpses, desperate screams, and death. When Hector's unit first faced the enemy, his courage failed him. He dropped his sword and ran. Once the capital was far behind him and his breathing slowed, the truth settled in: He could never return home. As a deserter and a wanted man, soldiers would search for him at the farm. He could not bring that shame and danger to Lina. But the thought of never seeing her again tore his heart apart.

The weeks that followed were filled with hunger and paranoia as he hid from soldiers, haunted by the horrors he had witnessed in the capital. His shame was almost the only thing that sustained him and sleep rarely came easily. It was during this time that he heard rumours of the land beyond the mountains—a place of new beginnings, where there was work for anyone willing to take it. Perhaps he could earn enough money to send home. There was much he needed forgiveness for, much that needed explaining. The dream of a life with Lina on their own farm felt more distant than ever. Yet it was that same dream that carried him toward the mountains.

Questions for reflection

- What habit from his childhood has Hector never completely let go of?
- What image of his father is most vivid in Hector's mind?
- What does Hector think his mother would say about him being a deserter?
- Which of Lina's habits makes Hector smile when he thinks about it?
- What kind of life does Hector hope to build for himself and Lina on the other side of the mountains?

Listen to the recorded role:

Aviaja – The Nomad Child, 15 years old

Aviaja is a young nomad child who loves colours, dancing and singing. Now, she must now try to rediscover the colours and joy in life after losing both her parents to war.

Themes: Fighting prejudice, overcoming an insurmountable loss, and finding one's identity and the courage to stand by oneself.

Keywords: Creative, imaginative, curious, angry, afraid, heartbroken.

Aviaja carries: A pair of simple sandals made according to nomadic custom, a colourless dress, some flint and dry twigs she has collected along the way, and her few personal belongings (a ribbon, an earring and a pair of binoculars).

There is a people who, like dandelion seeds, ride the wind and only put down roots for a time, before sowing new seeds again. A people whose clothes are as colourful as their stories, and whose songs are as infectious as their laughter. Aviaja's father was once one of those people – one of **the nomads**. But one day he saw a young woman as beautiful as all the colours of spring combined: Aviaja's mother. Then he knew that his heart was hers, and that it always had been. That was how Aviaja's father himself preferred to tell the story. But behind the words and the broad smile, Aviaja always sensed a sadness. Perhaps because he knew that by marrying someone outside the nomad tribes, he had broken with their most sacred custom and had been cast out by his own kin.

Aviaja's love of singing came early, from her mother's gentle humming as she hung laundry in the yard. Before that came her love of dancing, born from the spontaneous dances with her father—first riding on his shoulders, then standing on his feet, then spinning through the air in his arms. Perhaps first of all came her love of colours, from the meadow of flowers behind the family's home. Each year the family gathered the flowers and placed them on a small altar for their ancestors, following the nomadic traditions her father still honoured, praying for their blessings in the year to come. Aviaja was their only child, deeply wanted, and deeply loved. She carried the warm glow of the nomads in her skin, though not their language on her tongue.

When Aviaja was young, games, colours, songs, and dancing were the only things on her mind. The other children in the small village in **the Coastlands** met her with curiosity and the boundless acceptance that only children seem to possess. **Liam**, more than any other. The two of them were inseparable. Together they turned the forests around the village into worlds of adventure. Sometimes other children joined them, but most often it was just the two of them exploring their imaginary worlds. As they grew older however, things began to change. The games of imagination she shared with the other children were replaced by new games with rules known only to the selected few. The songs were exchanged for gossiping. Her colourful clothes, once admired, now drew quiet giggles. The others still danced, but only "proper" dances like those performed at the King's court—not her nomadic jigs. At first Aviaja felt confused and hurt. Liam tried to comfort her, telling her to ignore the others. But he had changed too. Soon shame took root in her. She avoided people's eyes, afraid of what she might see in them. She tried to change her clothes and her behaviour to fit in, but nothing seemed good enough. Then the shame turned to anger. First, she was angry with the other children. Then with their parents, who must have put these new ideas into their heads. Then with Liam, who distanced himself from her growing bitterness. Then with her father, for always standing out. And finally, with herself, who deserved it the most.

The forest remained her refuge. Aviaja often went there alone or with her mother, who knew much about plants and their healing properties. Liam had sometimes joined them there, but not anymore. One day, while gathering herbs, Aviaja asked her mother a question she had long wanted to ask. Had she ever regretted marrying a nomad man? Did she feel guilty that Aviaja's father had been cast out by his kin? That their family was slowly being ousted by the village? "*The others don't matter,*" her mother replied gently. "*We have each other. No matter what happens, your father and I will look out for you.*" Aviaja asked quietly, "*But who looks out for you?*" To that, her mother had no answer.

When the King married a nomad woman, many were outraged. Yet in a strange way it made Aviaja feel closer to the King—a man she had never met. Soon after, the war began, and everything became much, much worse. Hatred and fear stuck to the family like flies around a corpse. Soldiers were sent to guard the village, among them Liam's father. They mocked Aviaja's father, shoved him in the street, and called him vile names. And beneath their laughter, Aviaja sensed something far more dangerous lurking. During those days, Aviaja often saw her father kneeling at the family's small altar, praying to the ancestors for guidance. Now, she is not sure they ever heard him.
One evening soldiers burst into the family home. They pushed her father around, accusing "his kind" of corrupting the King's mind. They beat him, and when her mother tried to intervene, they threw her to the floor. "*Run, Aviaja*," her mother shouted. "*To our secret place*." Aviaja ran into the dark forest and hid among the bushes. When morning came, she crept back home. What she saw when she opened the door changed something inside her—something she still cannot put into words. From that day on, she was alone. An orphan. A refugee.

Life on the road was lonely. Aviaja avoided people whenever she could. She stole food when necessary, ate alone, and slept beneath pine branches like a wild animal. When she could, she warmed herself beside a fire. Otherwise, she warmed herself with memories—especially her father's stories about the land beyond the mountains, the ancient homeland of the nomads. The land from which his tribe originated. Perhaps they were still there. Slowly, almost without noticing, Aviaja began moving north toward the mountains. It was not exactly a conscious decision. She simply followed her feet.

Questions for reflection

- What song does Aviaja hum to herself when she is alone?
- Who was Aviaja's first kiss, and how did it change the dynamic between her and Liam?
- What image of her mother is most vivid in Aviaja's mind?
- What are the last words Aviaja wished she had had time to say to her father?
- What ideas does Aviaja have about the land on the other side of the mountains? About meeting the nomads?

Listen to the recorded role:

CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT

Oak cutting
(Cornelius)

This little cutting, hidden in an old tobacco box, is the last remnant of your beloved garden, which has been your only companion for decades. The cutting represents not only your **HOPE** for a new garden someday but hope itself. It is a reminder that everything, if you take the time to get to know it and water it with your love and care, can grow into something big and beautiful.

Pocket sundial
(Cornelius)

This fine sundial made of ivory and gold is a reminder of the woman who gave it to you, who birth to you, and who now lies in the earth. A woman who deserved much better than what she got from life. It is a reminder that even though time can feel short, counting the minutes only makes it shorter, and reminds you that **PATIENCE** and **CALM** are a gardener's most important virtues.

Clay flute
(Cornelius)

This delicate clay flute, shaped like a dove, is a reminder of the baker's daughter who shaped the clay with her own soft hands. There comes a time when memories are all you have left. The song of the flute is a painful reminder of a **LOVE** that once was, and a life that never was. But also that you were **WORTHY** of being loved. Everyone deserves to be loved. Even an old coward like you.

Necklace
(Mirabel)

This fine necklace once belonged to a fine mistress who filled you with pride when she gave it to you. It reminds you that you can be elegant like her. But it is not silver and finery that makes a lady. It is manners and grace. A head held high and a straight back do. It is **DECENCY** and **CLEANLINESS**, both in how you present yourself and treat others.

Prayer stone
(Mirabel)

This beautiful smooth stone, a gift from a sister who both loves and worries you, listens like no other. It reminds you that the Gods are always with you and listen to your prayers. Even though the world doesn't make sense right now, the stone reassures you that one day it will make sense again. The ways of the Gods are inscrutable. But in your **FAITH,** you find **HOPE**.

Shawl
(Mirabel)

This woolly shawl, knitted from a remnant of red yarn, may not look like much with its general unevenness and holes where the thread has fallen off the needles. But for you, it is a reminder of the small hands that made it. Of the children who were not yours, but who trusted you and gave you their unconditional **LOVE**.

Coin
(Petra)

This old gold coin is the last of the treasure you have spent a lifetime collecting. It is a small piece of your **DREAM** of a life where anything is possible. Most people don't see enough of the world, and you know what they are missing out on. The coin may not be worth more than a penny, but to you it means the world. It is the **HOPE** for a better future and the freedom that few know.

Letter
(Petra)

This old letter is the unfinished farewell you never gave your mother. You still read it from time to time and intend to send it one day. You carry it with you as a reminder that you are not a bad person. Regardless of everything you have done, and whether you will ever find forgiveness, you can **FORGIVE** yourself and believe that there is something good in everyone. Including you.

CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT

CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT CUT THE CARDS OUT

Pocket knife

(Petra)

This abandoned pocket knife, your only memory of your father, may not look like much. But appearances can be deceiving, and even an old thing like this can be an invaluable tool. Perhaps even an invaluable defence. It reminds you of your ability to fend for yourself, without help from anyone else, and of the **INDEPENDENCE** and **SURVIVAL INSTINCT** that has sustained you your entire life.

Wooden figure

(Nico)

You made this small, battered wooden figure with your own hands in your father's workshop. It reminds you that even the worst people have something good in them – even your father, even you – and that no one is entirely bad. Everyone deserves forgiveness for their mistakes, and if you can face your past with **ACCEPTANCE** and **FORGIVENESS**, you can face the future as a free man.

Bottle

(Nico)

This unopened bottle of liqueur, a gift from your mother, has been your companion since you left your family home. It is a reminder of the cherished moments you spent together. Its eternal temptation to forget the world for a while is a daily reminder of the **SELF-CONTROL** you have spent years building up. That you are not like your father, and never will be. You will not allow it.

Hammer

(Nico)

This old hammer is a tool, a relic from a smithy that is now long gone. You received it from a man who meant more to you than words can express, and with it in your hand, you built a life that mattered. It taught you that everyone can be something to others, and that everyone has the capacity to show **KINDNESS** and **HELPFULNESS** and make a difference in the world.

Ring

(Hector)

This golden engagement ring reminds you of an old prank, of your betrothed, and of your love. It reminds you to be a man who stands by his word, who does not shy away from it, but who fights for it, and always meets people with **HONESTY**. You may be a deserter, but you are not a liar. You may have betrayed your country, but you will never betray your word.

Dagger

(Hector)

This old blade is a reminder from your father that being brave does not necessarily mean being the one who strikes first. Sometimes **COURAGE** means owning a dagger you know you will never use and resisting the temptation to draw it for your own gain. Other times it means being willing to do things you don't want to do to protect those and what cannot protect themselves.

Porcelain figurine

(Hector)

This delicate porcelain figurine of a hen has clearly been glued back together after being broken. It reminds you of a joke that went too far, of your guilty conscience, and of your mother's mercy when she saw that you had glued it back together. It is a reminder that everything that is broken can be made whole again, to have faith in all people, and to never betray the **TRUST** that others place in you.

Silk ribbon

(Aviaja)

This coloured silk ribbon is traditionally worn by nomads and is a gift from your father. It is a reminder that the rhythm hidden in your feet and the song hidden in your heart are part of who you are: A nomad. You can be **PROUD** of that. Being a nomad means facing the world with **FEARLESSNESS**, not hiding who you are, but standing by it and proudly showing it off to the world.

CUT THE CARDS CUT THE CARDS CUT THE CARDS CUT THE CARDS

Earring

(Aviaja)

This handmade earring, adorned with a blue feather, reminds you of a mother who loved you very much. It reminds you that you resemble her, and that you are beautiful, inside and out. Many people walk around in a world of black and white, but those who choose to see the colours in the world will always see **the BEAUTY** in people and things. There is something beautiful in all people. In all times.

Binoculars

(Aviaja)

These old, worn binoculars are just like the ones the captains from your and Liam's stories use to spot danger. They are a gift from your friend, reminding you to always be on the lookout for the adventure that lurks around every corner, and to never lose your amazing **CURIOSITY**, eternal **WONDER**, and tireless **INQUISITIVE** nature.

Start-up sheet (approx. 40 minutes)

Welcome the players

- Ensure that everyone has gotten acquainted (go around the table and ask everyone to state their name).

Align expectations

- The scenario follows a group of refugees who join forces and cross their war-torn kingdom, Drada, on their journey towards a better place. Along the way, they must figure out if they can hold on to the lives they left behind and the people they once were.
- A **story about being a refugee**, set in a low-fantasy world inspired by **Nordic folk tales**. The story mixes the darkness, tragedy and realism of refugee life with warmth, adventure and underlying hopefulness.
- It is an **adventure scenario**, **not a survival scenario**.
- The scenario begins with a short **prologue** that establishes how the characters first met. The characters' journey then unfolds in **three acts**. After acts I and II, there will be a 5-10 minute **break** to go to the toilet, stretch your legs, get some fresh air, etc.

Introduce Drada

- Read the following text aloud to the players as an introduction to Drada:

"A year ago, the King was to stand groom in his castle, surrounded by the distinguished crowds of the nobility. But fate took a turn when he gave his heart, not to his noble betrothed, but to a simple nomad girl, and married her in the castle's quiet garden, with flowers and old trees as their only witnesses. The nomads are rich in songs, stories and freedom, but not in the titles and wealth that confer nobility. Angry and embittered, the nobility rose up in defiance, and that was the beginning of a bloody civil war. Now, the King and most of his family are dead, yet the nobility continues the fight against the King's loyalists, and the war still ravages the land with despair, death and famine. All the while, the cities where Drada's families have lived for generations burn. Many have fled across the sea, but not everyone can find passage on boat or ship. Those who cannot, must either remain in their war-torn country, and burn with it, or take a chance and head north to **the land on the other side of the mountains** and, hopefully, a better place. Stories spread among refugees what awaits them there: A land of new opportunities and new beginnings."

- A low-fantasy setting, inspired by Nordic folk tales, with a technological/cultural reference point that could be Northern Europe/Scandinavia around 1600-1700. The specific details about the country are not that important.
- It will be up to interpretation whether there is anything supernatural in Drada, and up to the players what their characters believe.
- Give the players a copy of **the map** (p. 55). The circles represent all the important points in their journey (event scenes).

Pitch and assign roles

- Read the introductions below aloud, talk to the players about what they would prefer to play (they may read the themes of the roles), and assign the roles together:

Cornelius – The Gardener, 64 years old
Cornelius is a distracted and slightly philosophical gardener who has lived an isolated life in his garden, cut off from both the outside world and his emotions, and who now comes face to face with both as he must face the world outside the four walls of his garden.

Mirabel – The Maid, 58 years old
Mirabel is a proud and proper maid who desperately clings to the manners and formalities of her long life in service and who struggles with her faith after the loss of the family she has served for a lifetime.

Petra – The Smuggler, 42
Petra is a seasoned and cunning smuggler who has profited greatly on both sides of the war, but who has been burned and now must live a life on the run, dependent on the generosity she herself has never shown.

Nico – The Blacksmith, 30 years old
Nico is a blacksmith with a calm exterior that hides a great deal of anger, frustration and fear. He struggles to find trust in himself and other people in a world that puts that trust under considerable pressure.

Hector – The Deserter, 21 years old
Hector is a young soldier who did not have the heart to kill, who has turned his back on his country and can now never return home to his loved ones.

Aviaja – The Nomad Child, 15 years old
Aviaja is a young nomad child who loves colours, dancing and singing, and who must now try to rediscover the colours and joy in life after losing both her parents to the war.

- Give the players time to read the roles. In the meantime, you can fold the name plates (p. 57).
- Give the players their name plates and explain that prejudices and assumptions can be used both in their interactions with each other and with NPCs in Drada. Give the players a copy of **the prejudice sheet** (p. 53).

Explain and distribute belongings

- As a refugee, you cannot take much with you. The few belongings you have therefore take on special significance. The characters each start with 3 belongings (represented by 3 cards), each of which is linked to a part of their history.
- During the game, you may lose belongings. This gives the character an opportunity to explore their relationship to that part of their history and personality. When you lose a belonging, read the text on the card aloud.
- The loss of a belonging can provoke many reactions: Anger, grief, guilt, hopelessness. How the character reacts is up to the player.
- Ultimately, belongings are just things. The characters can work through the loss of belongings through reflection and dialogue. It is up to the player to decide how their character's process will be and how long it will take.
- Give each player the 3 belongings listed on their role sheet.
- The characters also start with other things they have with them and can pick up new things along the way, but these are <u>not</u> belongings.

Explain the travel scenes

- Always start with: "*and the road carries you onwards…*"
- Follow the characters as they silently wander through the landscapes.
- The game master describes something the roles encounter on their journey and asks questions to get the players to describe their characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions. If you have an idea yourself, just go ahead and contribute.
- <u>No</u> direct or indirect speech may be used in these scenes.

Explain campfire scenes

- Always start with: "*Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire...*"
- Follow the characters as they gather around the fire at one of the rest stops on their journey.
- In these scenes, the focus is on the use of direct and indirect speech, and on turning the characters' past, present and future into conversation.
- Campfire scenes always start with a description of the scene's surroundings and a topic suggestion from the game master so that the players know where the conversation is starting. This will typically be those who have lost belongings talking about their belongings and the stories associated with them.
- Then it is up to the players to open up the conversation and involve everyone. This can be done, for example, by asking each other questions.

Explain event scenes

- Always start with: " *On your journey, you come to...*"
- Follow the roles at one of the highlights of the journey.
- Classic role-playing scenes where you describe what your character does and says.
- This is where you risk losing your belongings.
- Life on the run is dangerous and costs many their lives. The goal of the scenario is not to kill the characters, but to make the danger feel real, so the characters risk dying if they do not take care of themselves and each other.

Aligning expectations

- The scenario will contain both the tragedy of the refugee narrative and the hopefulness of the folk tale genre. Discuss with the players whether they would like to lean more towards one or the other or maintain a balance between them.
- The scenario will deal with some harsh topics. If anyone needs to tone things down or withdraw, they can just say so. You can use the "timeout" sign to show that you are withdrawing from a scene.

Explain the prologue

- Takes place over the summer. The backstory to the actual narrative, which in two short scenes shows how the characters first meet.
- During the prologue, the players have two tasks: The first is to play into the fact that these characters inevitably will end up travelling together. The second is to introduce who the characters are, i.e. by asking each other things like what their names are, where they come from, and where they are going.

Prologue scenes – 2 scenes (approx. 20 minutes)

Please note that the beginning of the scenario unfolds differently depending on whether there are 3 or 4 players.

If there are 3 players: In prologue scene 1, the first and second characters meet each other. In prologue scene 2, the two characters meet the third character. From there, all the characters travel together.

If there are 4 players: In prologue scene 1, the first and second characters meet. In prologue scene 2, the third and fourth characters meet.
It is not until the first event scene in Act I that the two pairs meet. From there, all the characters travel together.

The order in which the characters are introduced is not important – you just decide on an order.

This happens in the scene: The first character walks along a country road, surrounded by overgrown fields. Ask them to describe what they look like.

- The character's eye catches a bird in the distance – they don't see where they are stepping – and they step into a hole in the road, twisting their ancle painfully. It can no longer support their weight. Give the character a moment to figure out how to handle the situation.
- The character hears someone approaching from further down the road.
- The other role approaches along the road and sees the first one. Ask them to describe what they look like and give the roles time to interact.

How to end the scene: Describe how they both see a bird – the same one as before? – taking flight in the distance.

Scene 1 – scene description: (address the first character)

- **The sun beats** down relentlessly from a **clear blue sky**. **The country road** winds through **fields** of yellow-green corn dotted with **blood-red poppies**, disappearing behind a distant hilltop. Not even a breeze stirs.
- The only things breaking **the silence** are the crunch of your footsteps on the dry road and the buzzing of insects in the overgrown ditch and in the thick tufts of grass that have begun to grow on the road.
- There are **no people in the fields**, and in many places the weeds grow taller than the wheat. Here and there in the landscape, you see small farms, but there is no smoke from the chimneys and **no life** around them. **The coastlands** was the first place to be hit by the war and the first to be abandoned. For good reason.

Questions you can ask the players to get them started:

For both roles:

- What in your appearance reveals that you have been on the road for some time?

For the first character:

- What is your first impulse when you twist your ancle: To bite down on the pain, curse loudly, or sit down?
- What are you most afraid of right now: The pain, being alone, or being seen?
- **For the second character:**
- What is the first thing you notice about the stranger?
- What about their appearance makes you either more wary or more comfortable?

This happens in the scene: The third character is walking through a forest. Ask them to describe what they look like.

- The character discovers that they have lost a belonging. Ask them to describe what it is and how they react.
- **If there are 3 players:** The first and second characters comes by. After a while, one of them spots the lost belonging.
- **If there are 4 players:** The fourth character comes by. Ask them to describe what they look like. After a while, they spot the lost belonging.

How to end the scene: A cold breeze blows through the forest, reminding the characters that they should be on their way.

Scene 2 – scene description: (address the third character)

- The small **country road** leads you north, into a **forest** of tall moss-covered **beech trees** and ancient gnarled **oaks**, deeper and deeper, until **the road is completely swallowed up by the forest floor**. For a moment, you stand there, on the edge of the forest's kingdom, considering your next move. Then you continue forward.
- The sun is high, but its light only reaches down sporadically through the dense crowns of the beech trees. **A lazy breeze** blows through the forest. **Some birds sing** in the distance, somewhere up among the treetops.
- **The soft forest floor** gives way under your footsteps, and here and there you see remnants of early summer anemones and wood sorrel, slowly retreating until next spring.

Questions you can ask the players to get them started:

For the third role:

- How do you feel walking alone in the forest?
- How do you react when you realise you have lost your belonging?

For the other roles:

- What are your initial thoughts about the stranger?
- What do you do when you spot the belonging?

Conclusion of the prologue

As you get through the prologue scenes, explain the following to the players:

- You wander for days before **the quiet country roads of the Coastlands merge into the main road.**
- **The main road is never empty of people** – on carts, on horses, on foot, many in groups, a few alone – all travelling from one place to another; no sooner has one group of travellers disappeared over the horizon than another appears, and there is always a buzz of **creaking wheels**, **hoofbeats**, and **low conversations** around you.
- Many people pass you, but few give you so much as a glance, and no one meets your eyes.
- The next few weeks offer many long days of walking, but they also give you the chance to discuss where you are headed, and slowly you begin to piece together a plan for your journey:
- You will follow **the main road** up through **Eastlands** as far as it will take you.
- Most of the crossings over **the Great River** are guarded by soldiers, and they do not let people cross. But on the way, you hear rumours of a **bridge** further north, forgotten and unguarded, where you might be able to cross.
- From there, you must travel through **the Borderlands** and over **the mountains** to **the land on the other side**, and whatever you each hope to find there.

Act I (approx. 70 minutes) – overview for the GM

Act I focuses on introducing the players to life as refugees on the road and to war as an inescapable circumstance.

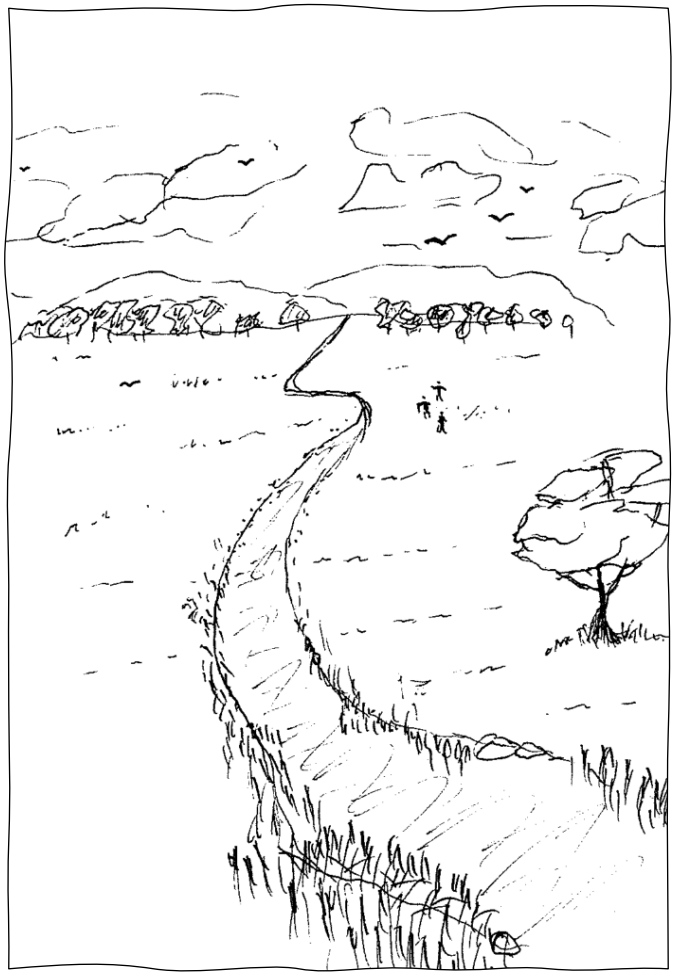
The act follows the characters as they travel along the roads of Drada, experiencing how the war has changed the country. Throughout the act, an underlying tension builds, culminating in the climactic final scene, where the group is awakened by a militia in the night and finds itself in a dangerous situation that threatens both their dignity and their lives.

Overview of the act:

- Travel scene: Life on the road (approx. 5 min.)
- Event scene: Answered prayers (approx. 10 min.)
- Travel scene: Those left behind (approx. 5 min.)
- Event scene: The King's road (approx. 15 min.)
- Campfire scene: Hearth and home (approx. 10 min.)
- Event scene: The party (approx. 25 min.)

Introductory track

"*Waltz After Lasse in Lyby*" from the album "*Wood Works*"
Listen for approx. one minute, then fade out.



Travel scene: Life on the road (approx. 5 min.)

If there are four players: Address the first pair of characters (who were introduced in prologue scene 1). This scene is only for them.

Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..."
- **The morning rain** has filled the many potholes **in the road**. Your clothes have only just dried. **The afternoon is grey and gloomy**, small drops herald another shower, and the wind bends the golden corn in the fields.
- The road winds past **a small roadside inn**, hidden behind a windbreak. From inside the inn, there is a lot of shouting, talking, clinking, warm light, and the smell of food that makes your hungry stomachs rumble. You approach cautiously.
- You can almost feel the warmth inside as you try to peer through the window. Suddenly, **the barking of a large dog** startles you. Its chain, attached to a post, tightens as it runs towards you, baring its white teeth.
- The door opens and **a broad-shouldered man steps out**. "Go away! We don't need any more of your kind here," he shouts as **he chases you away**.
- You circle around the back of the old inn, hoping to find shelter from the downpour you sense is coming. Instead, you find **a boy** of about twelve **throwing some burnt bread crusts into the pigsty**. The pigs crowd around the fence. His cheeks are red from the cold, his clothes are stained with mud.
- **He stops when he sees you**, with a crust in his hand. For a moment, he just looks at you, rain dripping from his hair. **Then he throws a couple of crusts onto the muddy ground in front of you**, without a word.

Questions you can ask the players:

- Do you take the bread?
- How does the bread smell? How does it taste?
- What do you read into the boy's gesture? Fear? Contempt? Mockery? Kindness?
- How does it make you feel to be out here with burnt bread crusts while others are eating hot food inside the dry tavern?

Event scene: Answered prayers (approx. 10 min.)

If there are 4 players: Start the scene with the second pair of characters finding the chapel. After they have had a moment to themselves, the first pair of characters also arrive at the chapel.

This happens in the scene: As the rain begins to fall heavily, the group seeks shelter in a small chapel.

- On the small altar in the chapel, the group finds bread offered to the gods and must decide whether they have the conscience to take it.
- The scene is a fairly undramatic warm-up scene. Leave open the possibility that a character may leave a belonging behind, but you don't need to push for it.

How to end the scene: Describe how time passes and the characters slowly settle down for the night, falling asleep to the sound of rain drumming on the roof.

Scene description:

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- As **evening approaches**, **grey clouds** begin to gather in the darkening sky, and **the main road slowly empties of people**. When **the rain** finally decides to fall, it falls heavily and densely, and you quickly become soaked. The **fields around the road** offer no cover, so you head for a beech forest a little further ahead, hoping to find shelter.
- As you approach **the boundary between the fields and the forest**, your eyes catch sight of a small, neglected wooden shed. You recognise it as **a chapel**, often used by passing travellers for prayer. Its walls are crooked, and the wooden shingles on the roof have definitely seen better days.
- **The chapel** has no door, just an opening, and a cold wind blows in. The room is small and cramped. It smells musty, of old oil and incense.
- **Water is dripping from a spot in the roof**, and a small puddle has formed on the clay floor. It will be a wet night if nothing is done.
- On **a small, modest altar** stands a dish of sand. Once it must have been filled with **wax candles**, but now there is only one, illuminating the small room. Someone must have lit it recently. On the wall behind the altar is written, in neatly painted letters: "**No sacrifice too great, no sacrifice too small**."
- Next to the dish is **a whole loaf of bread, sacrificed on the altar**. Perched on the bread is **a goldcrest**, the smallest of all Drada's birds, with a fine yellow crest on its tiny yellow head. It eats the bread in small, quick bites.

Inspiration for questions you can ask the players:

- How does it feel to have a roof over your head?
- What do you do about the puddle on the floor? About the hole in the roof?
- Why do you think no one has done anything about the hole before? After all, it is a house dedicated to the gods.
- Who do you think left the candle and bread? Why do you think they did it?
- Do you believe in the gods? Is anyone in your family very religious?
- A wax candle is a valuable thing: It can provide light, be used to light a fire, and be rubbed into clothing to waterproof it. Will you leave it here?

Travel scene: Those left behind (approx. 5 min.)

Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..."
- The days on the main road are exciting at first, filled with new people to break the solitude that once surrounded you. But slowly, they become a monotonous journey among people who ignore you, without much variety.
- It is **quiet** and **dark** in **the early evening hours** as the road takes you through **a small village**: More or less just a few houses along the main road. It is the kind of place whose name is known only to those who live here.
- A woman hangs laundry in silence. Two old men are giving up on repairing a cart with the few tools they have. A group of children sit on a staircase, but there are no play and no laughter. **The fields behind the town seem strangely empty**, here just a few weeks before the harvest.
- **A house stands empty**, as if still waiting for someone who will never return. **Others have shutters on the windows** and no sign of life, as if they gave up waiting long ago.
- In the middle of the town stands **a mighty oak tree**. **Three men hang from its thick branches**. One of them is just a boy, no more than sixteen. Their boots are gone, probably stolen by passers-by.
- On the tree hangs a sign with four heavy words: "**Thus die the unfaithful."**

Questions you can ask the players:

- What emotion strikes you when you see the three?
- What do you think they have done? Deserters? Outlaws? Unlucky?
- What do you think it is they don't believe in?
- Who do you think could have done this?

Event scene: The King's road (approx. 15 min.)

This happens in the scene: The group passes some of the King's soldiers resting in the shade of a tree.

- Shortly afterwards, they come to a barricade where several of the King's soldiers are searching people and inspecting their papers.
- There is nowhere to hide in the open landscape, and if they turn back, they will be stopped by the soldiers they passed earlier.
- The soldiers do not let anyone pass without asking who they are, what their relationship is, and where they are heading. They demand to see papers or other proof of who they are.
- However, they are mostly interested in lining their own pockets, and ultimately, they will let the characters pass for a belonging of some value.
- The players should feel that something is at stake. The soldiers may introduce the idea of bribes of the players don't.

How to end the scene: The soldiers take their payment and send the characters past the barricade.

Scene description:

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- **The afternoon sun** breaks through **the white clouds** as you travel along the main road. **The air is warm and heavy,** even this late in the day. **The open fields and meadows of the Easterlands stretch** out around you, and it brings you hope to see that you have come this far
- You pass **a group of soldiers**, **dressed in the King's red and white colours, who have found shelter in the shade of a willow tree** by the roadside. They sit with their weapons in their laps, dice in their hands, and half-closed eyes. You continue past them.
- Suddenly, you see people stopping and forming a queue. There is nervous buzzing among the travellers. As you round **the hilltop**, you see **a barricade** of carts and felled trees on the other side of the hill.
- **A dozen or so of the King's soldiers** are moving around the barricade. Some **are stopping people**, questioning them, and asking them to show their papers: Travel documents, citizenship certificates, or whatever else can confirm their identity. Others **are rummaging through carts** and opening barrels and sacks in search of contraband.

Inspiration for things they might see as they approach the barricade:

- A young man is pushed up against the barricade and searched.
- An elderly man watches as his sacks of grain is torn open by a soldier, the grain spilling out onto the ground.
- A woman is separated from her two sons, aged twelve and sixteen. The necklace she bribed the soldiers with is apparently not enough to pay for their passage as well. "*They have to pay too. Otherwise, we can always use more people at the front.*"

Inspiration for the soldiers:

The soldiers are unkempt and smell of stale sweat and pipe tobacco. They are bored and looking for any opportunity for a little excitement.

- One of them comes from the same region as one of the characters.
- One of them is very prejudiced and a bit pushy.
- One of them takes his responsibilities very seriously and treats them and their answers with the utmost scepticism. He is very difficult to read.

Inspiration for questions you can ask the players:

- Are you hiding your belongings? Where? How?
- What goes through your mind as you approach the barricade?
- Are you doing anything to help the other travellers?

Campfire scene: Hearth and home (approx. 10 min.)

Scene description:

- "Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire..."
- **The evening wind has turned cool**. You have **left the road** to find shelter for the night. But also to leave the road behind you for a while, and the experiences at the barricade, which still haunt you several days later.
- Between the large, **dense pine trees**, you see **an old, abandoned-looking watermill**. Its large wheel is crooked and creaks as it turns slowly, driven by the sluggish stream.
- Inside, it smells of **damp, mould and rotten flour**. Mice have eaten what is left of the empty sacks scattered across the floor. Your feet leave tracks in the dust and flour residue. **No one has been here for a long time**.
- A large millstone fills the room. Its cogwheel stands still, covered in cobwebs.
- A hook hangs above **the fireplace**, and next to it hangs an old pot hook. In one corner are some abandoned, moth-eaten boots.
- As **you get the fire going**, the room seems to change. The old flour begins to smell faintly of roasted grain, and shadows dance on the walls. **For a moment**, **the place feels almost like a home** with four walls, with a fire in the hearth and the sound of the wind in the treetops outside.

Prompts for conversation around the fire:

- Address a player who has lost a belonging: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to the belonging you lost...*"
- If no one has lost a belonging, address a character instead: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to what you miss most from your old life...*"

Setting: The party (approx. 25 min.)

This happens in the scene: The characters wake up in the watermill (where the last scene took place) and find armed men around them.

- The men serve in a militia loyal to the King, and are supposed to be patrolling the woods, but they are drinking on their patrol.
- The men ask the characters a few questions about who they are, what they are doing here, and where they are going, but ultimately they just want to have a party and entertain themselves at the characters' expense.
- If the characters fight back or try to escape, it will arouse the men's suspicion and escalate the scene: *"Why are you in such a hurry? Are you thieves? Spies? Tell me, are you trying to hide something? Come on, we're just having fun!"*
- The scene is the dramatic climax of the act and should feel dangerous and unpredictable.

How to end the scene: The men's lieutenant interrupts the festivities. He searches the characters, takes a belonging for himself, orders the characters to leave his woods, and orders his men back to their patrol.

Scene description:

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- The evening air is like a cold bucket of water in your face, and for a moment you are **disoriented in the darkness of night** before you realise that you are awake.
- You see **dark figures in the moonlit watermill**. **Men**. First, you notice their weapons: Swords, axes, daggers. Then you notice that **they are not wearing uniforms**, but simple leather armour. Then you notice a sway in their gait and a distant look in their eyes. "*Look! We have guests*," one of them shouts. Several voices laugh outside. "*We do? Bring them out here!*"

Inspiration for the soldiers:

- The men are young lads and old men. They are called things like Eik, Wilhelm, Tue, Ivar, Arvid or Karl.
- One of the men comes from the same region as one of the characters and immediately sympathises with the character. The others are not from the same region as the characters.
- Two men stay in the background at first. Their sly smiles reveal that they have darker desires than the others.

Inspiration for games and humiliations:

- The men want the group to drink their nasty booze with them and make a toast to someone/something. If they refuse, the men's suspicions grow.
- The men want the group to entertain them, e.g. by singing for them or dancing for them/with them.
- The men force one of the characters to hand over some of their clothes so they can try them on.
- The men clearly have something against one of the characters when they discover where they come from. Feel free to use negative prejudices.
- The men force a character to play dog (and put them on a leash), play horse (and give the men a ride), or play pig (and be forced to eat food scraps from the mud).
- The men search the roles and treat their belongings disrespectfully: Throwing them in the mud or using them to remove dirt from their boots. Perhaps they keep a belonging or throw it on the fire.

Inspiration for the lieutenant:

- The lieutenant interrogates the characters and is happy to beat the answers out of them. You might let him gather several of the characters' belongings and go through them before choosing one or more to keep or destroy.
- The lieutenant demands that the characters kiss his boots in gratitude for the militia keeping them and Drada safe.
- The lieutenant wants to brand a character so they will never forget this encounter.

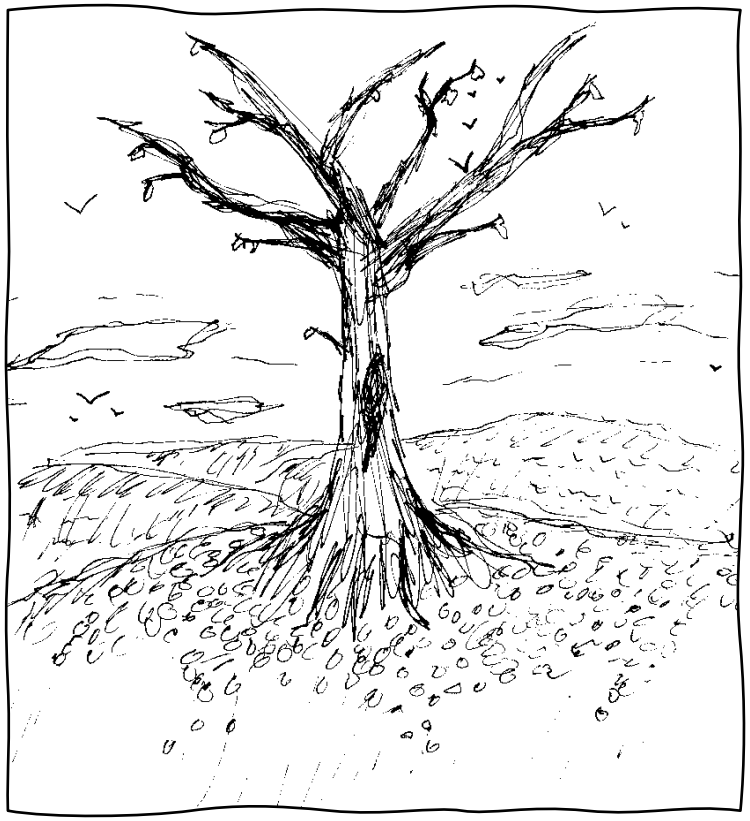
Act II (approx. 70 min.) – overview for the GM

Act II focuses on the past that the characters must either fight to hold on to or slowly leave behind.

The act follows the characters as they first travel through Drada's fields, meadows and forests. Here they get a break from danger and have time and opportunity to think about the lives they have left behind.
The second part of the act builds tension towards the characters' dangerous crossing of the Great River, which ends up splitting the group in two in the act's climactic final scene.

Overview of the act:

- Travel scene: A life in ashes (approx. 5 min.)
- Event scene: The nomads (approx. 25 min.)
- Campfire scene: Under the oak (approx. 10 min.)
- Travel scenes: Along the river – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)
- Event scene: The Great River (approx. 20 min.)



Travel scene: A life in ashes (approx. 5 min.)

Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..."
- **The sun is high** in the sky as you make your way through **the wild meadows** of Drada. Velvet grass brushes against your legs, and red clover and dandelions brighten up the landscape. **Bees buzz around you**, and colourful **butterflies** dance from flower to flower. **The wind** is a peaceful breath through the meadow.
- **It has been weeks since you left the main roads and busy harvest fields** behind to seek out the sparsely populated rural areas where the land and the people are left to themselves. You have kept your distance from the few farms you have passed on your journey.
- **The grass grows taller** and leads you into **a forest edge** of birch and rowan trees. The light filters through the treetops, where a few leaves already bear the first yellowing tones of the year.
- Suddenly, you see something above the treetops and stop: **a column of smoke curls upwards**. After a moment's hesitation, you slowly approach, covered by bushes and trees, to assess the danger ahead.
- In the distance, you see the blackened ruins of **a lone burned-down farmhouse**. **The smell of smoke** still lingers in the wind. The roof is gone, and beams stick up crookedly from the remains of the building like twisted ribs.
- **A man and a woman wander among the ruins of their home**, their hands and faces blackened by ash. The man stops, hopeless, and falls to his knees. The woman embraces him. They do not notice you.
- You see something lying not far from you. It looks **like a doll.** Its single button eye looks up at you.

Questions you can ask the players:

- Do you leave the doll lying there, or do you pick it up? Why?
- What fear grips you when you see the ruins?
- What do you think happened here?
- Do you think there is anything this war cannot destroy?

Event scene: The nomads (approx. 25 min.)

This happens in the scene: At evenfall, the group approaches the sound of music and spots a group of nomads celebrating. The nomads quickly notice them.

- A young woman fetches the eldest, who assess group. After a moment's thought, she declares that "the guests have arrived," to great excitement.
- It is traditional for the first guests at the celebration to be messengers from the beyond. The nomads believe that the roles have been sent by their deceased with gifts and messages from the afterlife.
- Before they know it, the group are served food and wine, children swarm around them and decorate them with coloured ribbons, they are pulled up to dance and receive kisses and hugs. Rejection of the nomads' hospitality is not accepted, and everyone is dragged into the festivities.
- **During the evening, the eldest tells the group about the land on the other side of the mountains**: A land of plains, rivers, and ancient oak trees. The party is visited by a small goldcrest – the one from the chapel?

How to end the scene: Explain how the festivities continue until the characters go to sleep a short distance away from the nomads. The next morning, the nomads are gone. If it weren't for the traces of fire pits and tents, one might be tempted to believe that they had never been there.

Scene description:

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- Evening descends as the wind carries **the sound of music and laughter** to your ears from the distance. Your curiosity draws you closer.
- In **a clearing,** you find **a dozen tents** in bright colours. Around them, you see people in equally colourful clothes and spirits: **Nomads**. Some donkeys graze near the tents. There **is a smell of spicy meat and sweet wine**, and the air is full of drums, flutes, and clapping. Children and dogs run around between the tents, and joyous young and old dance around the fire, singing in a language you do not understand.
- When the dogs notice the group and start barking, **the nomads spot them**. Some of the men grab spears and approach, but a young woman runs in front of them and stops them. **The nomads' elder is summoned**.

Inspiration for the nomads:

- The nomads are an open people with a special respect for their elders and their traditions. Adult nomads tie coloured ribbons in their beards and hair.
- The nomads have names like Iria, Dahlia, Moris, Aran, Nassin and Ferrik.
- The young nomads understand the roles and speak their language brokenly, but the elders do neither, so the young translate for them. The characters do not understand the nomads' native language.
- The war has cost the nomads dearly, and many clans have fled to the land on the other side of the mountains, where the nomads once came from. But this is their land, and the clan here will not leave it.

Inspiration for the celebrations:

- Hector/Aviaja/Nico receive a lot of attention from the young women/men, who invite them to join in a group dance, later a couple's dance. During the evening, the dancing becomes closer and the eye contact longer.
- Nico/Petra/Hector are drawn into the wine and the company around the fire. During the evening, more is drunk, people move closer, and inhibitions loosen: There is laughter, singing, dancing, and an exchange of clothes.
- Cornelius/Mirabel/Petra are surrounded by children who want them to entertain and tell stories.
- Mirabel/Aviaja/Cornelius are drawn into a ritual, with pipe smoking, face painting, and meditative singing. A worship not of the gods, but the ancestors of the nomads. They are asked to make a sacrifice as part of the ritual.
- An elderly woman approaches one of the characters. She wants to know what gift and what words they have brought from her recently deceased son. Will they give her something?

Campfire scene: Under the oak (approx. 10 min.)

Scene description:

- "Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire..."
- A **breeze** rustles through **the tall grass** around you. The sun is high in the sky, but there is **a chill in the wind** that is new. The warmth of the fire is therefore not only pleasant, but much needed.
- From **the hilltop,** you can see out over the beautiful rolling landscape. Lighting a fire on a hilltop is not without risk, but you feel safe in the knowledge that you have not encountered a soul for days, and you make sure to keep an eye on the horizon.
- In the distance**,** you see **a large flock of starlings flying south**.
- **Above you, an oak tree stretches its long arms**. **Its foliage is brown, yellow and golden**, but leaf by leaf it is shedding its clothes. Soon it will be bare. **Someone has carved two initials into its wrinkled bark** (T + M), surrounded by a heart. It must have been a long time ago.

Prompts for conversation around the fire:

- Address a player who has lost a belonging: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to the belonging you lost...*"
- If no one has lost a belonging, address a character instead: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to where you grew up...*"

Travel scenes: Along the river – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)

Scene 1 – Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..."
- **The midday sun** warms your faces every time **the cool wind** finds a moment's respite. **The tall grass and reeds** brush against your legs as you move through **the wet meadow** with squelching steps. The wildflowers have now withered, and the summerly buzzing of insects has fallen silent. **It feels strangely quiet**.
- The water is high in the meadow. **The autumn rains must have caused the Great River to overflow its banks**. In some places, the plant life is completely covered by a shiny mirror of water, and you have to move from tuft to tuft in small jumps or well-placed steps. It becomes almost like a game.
- **You stop in front of a wider flooded area**. It is not deep, but the water is cold, and the tufts are further apart here. It can easily be crossed, but something in the air gives you the feeling that this game will not last.

Questions you can ask the players:

- How do you move forward?
- What memories does the water and the game bring back for you?
- How do you feel about water?
- What memory would you like to leave behind when you cross the Great River?

Scene 2 – Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..."
- **It is getting dark faster** than it did a few weeks ago. Grey clouds hang threateningly above you, and you hope you can get just one night without water. **The ground is saturated with rain**, and **the mud squelches** under your feet. **You continue north along the river**, hoping to find a way across.
- Suddenly, you notice some **broken reeds**. Then **flattened grass**. Then **traces of heavy boots in the mud**, several sets.
- You see **the remains of a raft**: The ropes have been cut, and the planks chopped up and scattered along the riverbank. Around the remains, you see four pale figures: **A man** still clinging tightly to the ropes, as if refusing to let go, even in death. Arrows stick out of his back. **A woman** lies a short distance from him, half hidden in the grass. The rain has washed most of the blood from her yellowish skin. **Two children** lie not far from her. They are holding hands, as if trying to stay together until the end.
- **Those who did this have left the bodies here**. Perhaps as a warning to others. Perhaps because they did not think them worthy of burial.

Questions you can ask the players:

- How do you feel when you see the four figures?
- Who do you think they were? What do you think they were doing here? What happened?
- Who does one of the four remind you of?
- Do you think they would have made it to the other side on that raft?

Event scene: The Great River (approx. 20 min.)

This happens in the scene: The characters arrive at the bridge they intended to cross and discover it has been destroyed. The only remains are four stone pillars in the water and a beam that has washed ashore.

- The scene is the climax of the act, building tension until the scene reaches its peak when someone falls into the river and the group splits up.
- Give the characters time to react to the destroyed bridge. As they look more closely at the pillars, they think they might be able to wade out to the second pillar and from the third to the opposite bank. Between pillars two and three, they will have to swim. It is risky, but perhaps they can succeed with mutual help. They know of no other crossing, and it would be too risky to wait to cross.
- As the characters wade through the water, the tension rises.
- The characters make it to the third pillar, and now the crossing seems manageable. Suddenly – too late – one of the characters sees a tree floating downstream. It hits the rear character, who falls into the water.
- The rear character in the water and those who try to help them, at the expense of putting themselves in danger, all end up falling into the water and being swept away by the current. The others, who do not risk their own safety to help, are able to reach the other side safely.

How to end the scene: The scene ends with the characters in the river losing consciousness as they are either pulled under the water or knocked against the rocks, and the others (if any) reaching the other side and watching their friends wash away.

Scene description

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- **You have been walking north along the Great River for days. Every day it gets colder.** If you want to reach the land on the other side of the mountains before the snow starts to fall, you must cross the river soon.
- When your thoughts turn to the family with the raft, and what might have awaited you there if you had arrived before them, your pace quickens slightly.
- **The roar of the Great River** accompanies your steps, like the mighty roar of an ancient creature – an unstoppable force of nature.
- The rain further north has raised the water level and speed, and you can see the grey clouds on the horizon.
- As you move along the rocky shore, **you see large stone blocks that have been washed ashore**. Then a single blackened beam. Soon you see where they come from: Only a section of the stone ramps remains on each bank. Between them, in the rushing water, stand the remains of the **four blackened stone pillars** that once supported a bridge, almost like memorial columns. This was the bridge you had planned to cross.

Inspiration for questions you can ask the players:

- What feeling comes over you when you see that your passage is gone?
- Who do you think burned the bridge, and why?
- What do you think when you first see the place you have to cross?
- Who goes first? Who goes last?
- How do you prepare to cross?
- Do you think your plan will work?
- Who/what are you holding on to?

Inspiration for things that can increase the tension:

- The wind and the river tug at their clothes. The waves splash in their eyes.
- The water is freezing cold and makes them shiver, their hands are slippery and their grip is weak without much food in recent days.
- The stones are slippery beneath their feet.
- Their clothes become heavy with water.
- The current is stronger than expected.

Act III (approx. 60 minutes) – overview for the GM

The third act focuses on the future that awaits the characters and the home they dream of finding on the other side of the mountains.

The act takes place from autumn into winter. The act first follows the characters' journey through Drada's deep pine forests, still divided in two and at their lowest point. In the middle of the act, the characters are reunited. The act then follows the last and hardest stretch of the characters' journey as they cross the mountains. Here they are caught in a terrible storm, and their fates are left uncertain.

Overview of the chapter

- Travel scenes: Alone – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)
- Campfire scenes: Within reach – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)
- Travel scenes: Through the mountains – 3 scenes (approx. 10 min.)
- Campfire scene: The last rest (approx. 10 min.)
- Event scene: The storm (approx. 20 min.)

Conclusion

Before you begin the act, tell the players that the scenario will end when you play a piece of music at the end of the act.



Divided

At the beginning of the act, the characters are divided into two groups as a result of their choices in the last scene:

- **Group A** is the group that did not jump into the river to help their travelling companion, or, if everyone jumped in, those who were the last to do so.
- **Group B** is the group that jumped/fell into the water first.

With three players, the group can be divided 1/2 or 2/1. With four players, the group can be divided 1/3, 3/1 or 2/2. Feel free to divide the group so that the characters that have not interacted the most end up in the same group.
As long as the characters are split, it is important that at the beginning of each scene you address the characters that are in the scene so that everyone is aware of who is in the scene and who is not.
For example: "*And the road carries you onwards... Cornelius and Nico, you slowly wake up...*"

Travel scenes: Alone – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)

Scene 1 – Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..." (**address group A**)
- **Again and again, you see your friends being swept away by the river before your inner eye**. You see their struggle against the current, hear their cries for help. It is like a nightmare you cannot escape.
- **The mud** sticks to your feet with every step, as if the earth itself wants to hold you back. **The rain** falls from the **grey sky,** without rhythm. You have stopped noticing both it and the cold. **You have been walking for hours**.
- **The sun is setting somewhere behind the cloud cover,** and with its light, your chances of finding your friends disappear. Your feet are tired, but you refuse to stop, refuse to give up. They must be out here somewhere.
- **Suddenly, your gaze falls on something on the shore**, half-hidden among the rocks. You freeze as **you recognise your travelling companion's beloved belonging**.

Someone from group B has lost the belonging. Choose a person from group B. That person has lost the belonging and must now describe it. Give the belonging to the person from group A who picks it up (if anyone does).

Questions you can ask the players:

- How do you feel when you realise what you are looking at?
- What do you do when you see your friend's beloved possession? Do you approach it? Do you pick it up? What do you do with it?
- If you could rewind time to before the crossing, what would you do differently?

Scene 2 – Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..." (**address group B**)
- You slowly awaken from unconsciousness to the feeling of raindrops on your faces. **Suddenly, consciousness takes hold of you,** and you turn over onto your stomach, coughing and gasping, **and vomit**: River water and stomach acid spray over the stones on the riverbank.
- You just manage to see a grey figure – **a wolf cub** – disappear in fright into the bushes between the pine trees. It must have approached your unconscious bodies out of curiosity. That, or hunger.
- As you try to sit up, **the pain in your body** almost knocks you back down again: Bruises, probably a sprain, hopefully nothing broken. Your pale hands shake with cold as you support yourself with your arms.
- **The tall trees** look down on you like dark figures. **The calls of some ravens** sound almost like laughter in the distance.
- **Suddenly**, **memories hit you**, and you remember how you ended up here.

Questions you can ask the players:

- What are your first thoughts when you wake up? Do you curse the river, or thank it?
- Why do you think the wolf cub approached you? Do you think the wolf has strayed from its pack?
- What emotion strikes you when you realise your friends are gone?
- How do you react when you realise that one of your belongings is missing?

Campfire scenes: Within reach – 2 scenes (approx. 10 min.)

Start with a short campfire scene with group A, followed by a short campfire scene with group B. If a character is alone, they can talk to the goldcrest from earlier, who returns.

Scene 1 – scene description:

- "Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire..."
(**address group A**)
- **You have been walking north for several days**, towards the mountains, hoping that your friends – if they are out there somewhere – have done the same.
- The fire causes the shadows to dance restlessly on the ground around you and on the dark trunks of the pine trees. You quickly got the fire going tonight. You wonder if your friends are just as lucky.
- **It feels empty around the fire**, almost as if even the pine trees are keeping their distance from you. **A cold wind** makes you pull your clothes close to your body.
- In the distance, you hear **a lone wolf howl**. **Then another** one answers. **A third**. **A pack** calling to each other. Fortunately, **far away from you**.
- The sky is **starry**, and in the distance, you can just make out **the tops of the mountains**. The mountains you have all travelled so far to cross.

Prompts for conversation around the fire:

- Address a player who has lost a belonging: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to the belonging you lost...*"
- If no one has lost a belonging, address a character instead: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to what you think awaits you on the other side of the mountains...*"

Scene 2 – scene description:

- "Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire..."
(**address group B**)
- **The fire is low**. The wet pine branches smoke a lot, but it's all you have. It took hours to start the fire, and you huddle around its warmth, your eyes fixed on the flames.
- The days are getting shorter and shorter, but they only feel longer and longer as **hunger** gnaws at your stomachs and **fatigue** settles into your bones. Every time you sit down, it becomes harder to get up again, and you find it harder to answer why you continue. But you continue north, nonetheless. Perhaps the others are doing the same, if they are out there somewhere. Unless they have left you behind.
- Around you, you hear **wolves howling**, **close by**. A whole pack – you don't know how many – but you count yourselves lucky for the little fire you have and pray that it will last through the night. You don't dare think about what the consequences will be if it goes out.
- **The stars** hang in the night sky like sparkling ice crystals, and between the dark silhouettes of the pine trees, you can just make out **the tops of the mountains**. The mountains you have given so much to reach.

Prompts for conversation around the fire:

- Address a player who has lost a belonging: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to the belonging you lost...*"
- If no one has lost a belonging, address a character instead: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to what you think awaits you on the other side of the mountains...*"

Travel scenes: Through the mountains – 3 scenes (approx. 10 min.)

Scene 1 – Scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..." (**address group A**)
- The road up **the mountain** becomes **steeper and steeper**. The pine forest is now behind you, and the mountainside is dotted with bare blueberry bushes, and flowerless bell heather.
- You have tried to find a place where the mountain climb seemed most manageable, but even here it is a struggle: What started as a gentle slope now sometimes requires you to pull yourselves up with your arms and legs.
- **The sunset** brings with it an **icy wind** that bites your tired fingers as exhaustion settles into your bodies. Never before has your hike been harder or slower.
- As you take a moment to catch your breath and **glance back**, you can still just make out the forests of Drada and the Great River on the horizon, **catching a last glimpse of the land behind you** before your entire horizon is swallowed by rock and stone.

Questions you can ask the players:

- How are you coping with the steep passages? Do you need help?
- Do you look back? What do you think about when you look back?
- How do you feel about turning your back on your home?
- What are your thoughts about the challenges that still lie ahead?

Scene 2 – scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..." (**address group B**)
- The days seem to get longer as **the air gets thinner at higher altitudes**. It is difficult to judge distances between the mountains, and you often have to turn back to find a better route. The sun's heat casts a blanket of haze over the landscape. A lone falcon in the grey sky is the only sign of life.
- **You crossed the tree line days ago**, and the nights are cold without a fire to warm yourselves by. **The night frost has made the rain-soaked stones slippery**, and the terrain is treacherous.
- **You follow a narrow passage along a mountainside**. Below you, the cliffs slope steeply, and a fall here could be the end of you. You cling to the cold rocks as best you can.

Questions you can ask the players:

- How do you feel about heights? Do you look down?
- How do you cross the passage? Do you need help?
- Do you believe you will make it through the mountains?

Scene 3 – scene description:

- "And the road carries you onwards..." (**address group A**)
- **You crest the mountain** as **the first snow begins to fall.**
- The flakes drift softly through the air, settling over sunlit stones in a delicate veil. The grey landscape shifts, becoming something almost otherworldly. **Winter has arrived**.

Questions you can ask the players:

- What memory comes to mind when you look at the snow?
- Do you leave the snow untouched? Or do you have to touch it?
- What do you do to protect yourself from the cold?

(address group B)

- The climb takes your breath away. **Small flakes** begin to fall around you, and **you push on towards the top**, where you can enjoy the view with a short rest. As you round the top, you see two familiar figures.

Group B rounds the corner and sees group A.

Questions you can ask the players:

- How do you react when you see your friend?
- Had you given up hope of seeing them again?
- Do they have a place in the life you dream of having on the other side of the mountains?

Campfire scene: The last rest (approx. 10 min.)

Scene description:

- "Once again, you find yourselves around the campfire..."
- Or perhaps you simply wish you were. There are **no flames** to cast light, no scent of smoke, no crackling wood, but you still dream of its warmth.
- **Darkness** has conquered the land that daylight no longer touches. **You have sought shelter for the night behind some cliffs**.
- Around you, **the cold** clings to the rocks, and the wind is thick with **snow**. **Something is coming**. Or, if the Gods are merciful, nothing.
- If the snow falls heavy tonight, it could be your death. You cannot stay here forever. And there is no way back. No way around. Only forward. And for now, a little rest before the final stretch.

Prompts for conversation around the fire:

- Address a player: "*You have been talking for a while when the conversation turns to a memory from your journey together...*"

Event scene: The storm (approx. 20 min.)

This happens in the scene: The characters are caught in a terrible snowstorm, and every step forward is a struggle.

- During the scene, the characters begin to see and hear things moving in the storm: Voices of people they have known or met on their journey, both living and dead.
- Each character has a conversation with one of these figures. Feel free to involve the players in describing the figures. The figures want them to turn back, return to them, or to lie down to sleep. It is up to the players whether their characters listen to the figures or continue forward.
- This is the final scene of the scenario and the big emotional climax. Feel free to play on the characters slowly losing their bearings and doubting whether the figures are actually there. Leave the fate of the characters uncertain so that the players can interpret the ending themselves.

How to end the scene: One of the characters comes to a small "pocket" in the storm. In the distance, they see rivers cutting through frozen plains, and in the middle of it all, a mighty oak tree, as described by the nomads. And perhaps, just barely, they can make out small lights in the distance.

Closing track: "*Fastän*" from the album "*Last Leaf*". Play it in its entirety.

Scene description:

- "On your journey, you come to..."
- **The worst storm the Gods have ever sent upon mortals**. The wild snow swirls around you, thick as fog, and you cannot see more than an arm's length in front of you as the wind whips the flakes into your eyes.
- The snow has formed a crust, and you tread carefully. Sometimes you break through the crust, sink in up to your hips, and must struggle to pull yourself back up.
- It has been a long time since you could feel your toes, and both your fingers and your faces are slowly losing all feeling. Your bodies are pale and cold as corpses. The howling wind feels like the call of the afterlife.
- **But you walk. And you walk. And you walk**.

Inspiration for the effect of the cold on the characters:

- Your limbs become stiff. At first they tremble – but then it subsides.
- You lose coordination, your speech becomes slurred, you become confused, forget things and lose your bearings.

Inspiration for questions for the players:

- What keeps you going?
- What do you do to take your mind off the cold?
- What memory warms you here in the storm?
- Who do you think of in what may be your last moments?
- Do you believe you will make it?

Inspiration for the figures:

- The figues are unaffected by the cold and wind, and almost glow in the darkness. Their skin is cold as a corpse's. They always keep their distance.
- Cornelius meets his father/his mother/Maren.
- Mirabel meets her parents/Kaja/the Mistress/Lisa.
- Petra meets her mother/father.
- Nico meets his father/his mother/his sisters/Elias.
- Hector meets his mother/his father/Lina.
- Aviaja meets her mother/her father/Liam.
- The characters meet figures from their journey: The goldcrest, the hanged "traitors," the soldiers, the nomads, the wolves.

Wrap-up sheet

When the music stops, the story is over.

At this point, the players may have questions about the ending: What happened in the end? Did they find the land on the other side? Did they die? The scenario ends openly, leaving it up to each player to decide what they think happened to their character. No player (or you) has a monopoly on deciding what actually happened.

Role-playing can be an emotionally intense experience. Take 5 minutes to discuss the story.

Finally, thank the players for playing – and give yourself a pat on the back for helping to give them that experience!



Nomads (nomad)

- A nomad never gets lost and never settles down.
- If you invite them to dinner, they will empty your pantry and then some. But you will find no greater hospitality than around their fire.
- They are godless sorcerers who enchant, curse and seduce.

The Westlands (westerners)

- Their heads are full of dirt, and they smell of stables and manure, but they work like oxen.
- They can stretch one meal into ten and let nothing go to waste.
- They are knowledgeable about nature and plants, but are deeply superstitious and see omens everywhere.

The Coastlands (coastlanders)

- Every coastlander can drink like ten men and fight like eleven.
- They only shed dry tears.
- They reproduce like rats, sneak like cats, and steal anything that isn't nailed down.

The Eastlands (easterners)

- They are arrogant and haughty, and there are no truth to their tall tales.
- They are fearless, but rush forward without thinking about where they are putting their feet.
- They cheat wherever they can, but if you have their word, they will not break it.

The Capital (city dwellers)

- They have their heads in the clouds, but have never had their feet on the ground, and will not lift a finger to help anyone.
- They think the world ends at the city walls.
- There is nothing they cannot talk their way out of.

The Isles (islanders)

- The mainland could sink into the sea without them batting an eyelid.
- They marry their brothers and have children with their sisters.
- Once they set their minds to something, nothing can stop them.

Overview over characters, belongings and prejudices – for the game master

Cornelius, the Gardener, 64, City-dweller

An **oak-cutting**, hidden in an old tobacco tin, from the garden he has tended his entire life. A reminder of his hope for the future.
A handmade **clay flute** from the love of his youth, Maren. A reminder of a love he never gave a chance.
A fine **pocket sundial** from his frail, now deceased mother. A reminder to keep track of time, which he so often forgot.

- They have their heads in the clouds, but have never had their feet on the ground, and will not lift a finger to help anyone.
- They think the world ends at the city walls.
- There is nothing they cannot talk their way out of.

Mirabel, the Maid, 58, Westerner

A fine **necklace** from the Lady she has served her entire life. A reminder of the propriety, tact, and manners that make a true lady.
A **prayer stone** from her sister, Kaja. A reminder that the Gods are always listening.
A **shawl** knitted by Signe, the Lady's niece. A reminder of a child she loved as her own, and who loved her unconditionally.

- Their heads are full of dirt, and they smell of stables and manure, but they work like oxen.
- They can stretch one meal into ten and let nothing go to waste.
- They are knowledgeable about nature and plants, but are deeply superstitious and see omens everywhere.

Petra, the Smuggler, 42, Islander

The last **coin** of the fortune she spent years gathering. A reminder of her dream of the freedom only money can buy.
A farewell **letter** to her mother that she never sent. A reminder that she must forgive herself for leaving her.
A **pocketknife** left behind by the father who abandoned her as an infant. A reminder of him, his betrayal, and her own independence.

- The mainland could sink into the sea without them batting an eyelid.
- They marry their brothers and have children with their sisters.
- Once they set their minds to something, nothing can stop them.

Nico, the Blacksmith, 30, Coastlander

A **wooden figurine** he made in his father's forge. A reminder that there is good in everyone—even his father, and even himself.
A **bottle** of liqueur from his mother. A reminder of her, and of his own strength to resist its constant temptation.
A **hammer** from his master, Elias. A tool to repair the world.

- Every coastlander can drink like ten men and fight like eleven.
- They only shed dry tears.
- They reproduce like rats, sneak like cats, and steal anything that isn't nailed down.

Hector, the Deserter, 21, Easterner

An old **ring**. A reminder of his betrothal to Lina, and his promise that they would always be together.
A **dagger** from his late father and role model. A reminder to be brave.
A **porcelain figurine** from his mother, which he broke by accident and glued back together out of guilt. A reminder to believe the best in people.

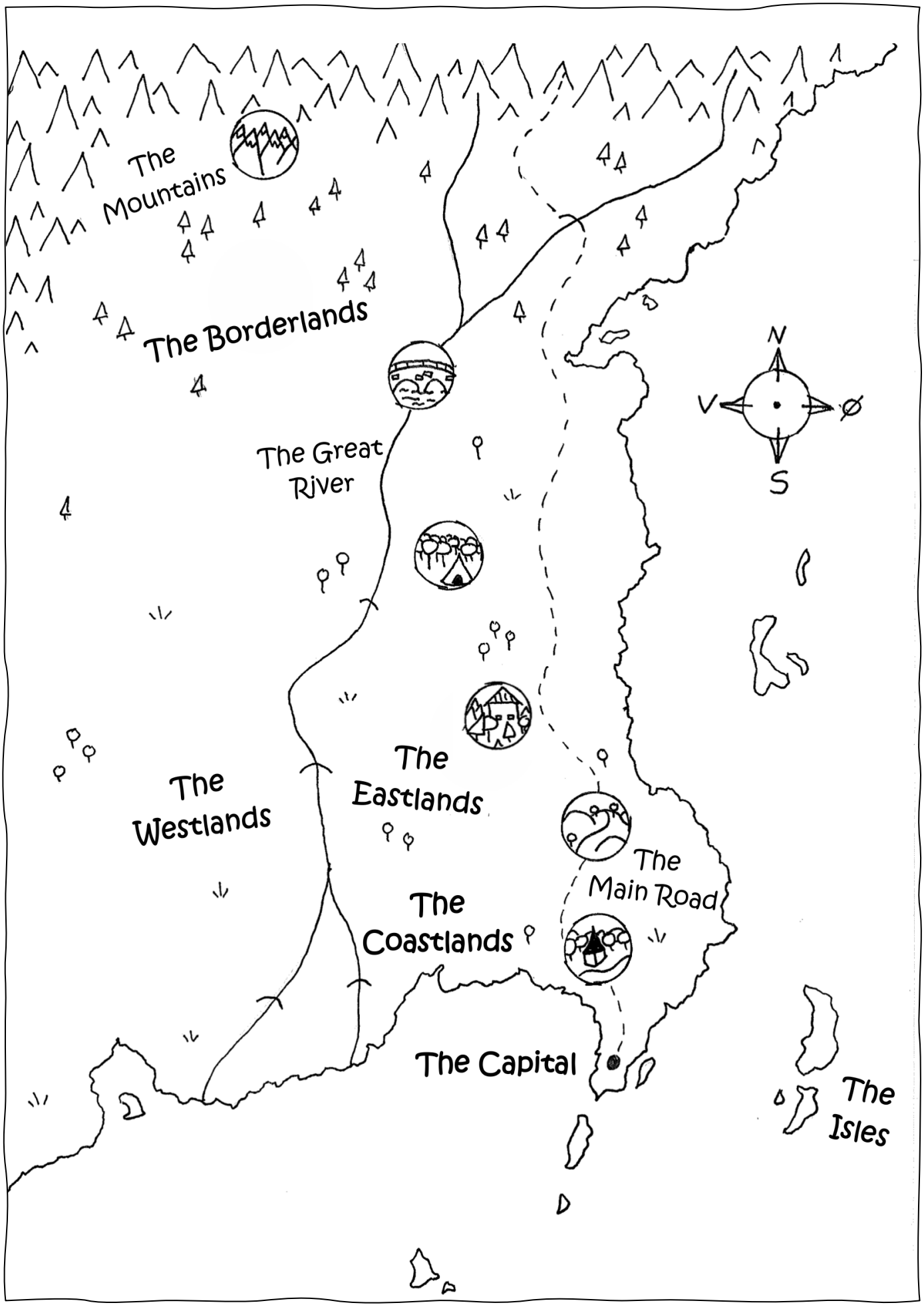
- They are arrogant and haughty, and there are no truth to their tall tales.
- They are fearless, but rush forward without thinking about where they are putting their feet.
- They cheat wherever they can, but if you have their word, they will not break it.

Aviaja, the Nomad Child, 15, Nomad

A **silk ribbon** worn by nomads. A reminder to stand by oneself.
A handmade **earring** from her mother. A reminder to see her own beauty.
A **spyglass** from her best friend Liam. A reminder of the adventure hiding around every corner—and of their friendship.

- A nomad never gets lost and never settles down.
- If you invite them to dinner, they will empty your pantry and then some. But you will find no greater hospitality than around their fire.
- They are godless sorcerers who enchant, curse and seduce.

MAP OF DRADA – FOR THE PLAYERS



MAP OF DRADA – FOR THE GAME MASTER

