

# DOLMENWOOD

ADVENTURE AND PERIL IN FAIRYTALE WOODS



Welcome to Dolmenwood

**dolmenwood.com**

# DOLMENWOOD

## Welcome to Dolmenwood

Version 2.2

**T**his PDF reproduces the initial, introductory section of the full *Dolmenwood Player's Book*, providing a wanderer's first taste of the beguiling, fungus-encrusted realm of Dolmenwood.



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# The Journey Begins

A wanderer's first steps into the perilous realm of Dolmenwood.

**T**his book is a gateway to adventure in the beguiling realm of Dolmenwood—a swathe of tangled woods, fungus-encrusted glades, and foetid marsh on the wild borders of civilisation. Rife with intrigue, secrets, and magic, Dolmenwood draws travellers of adventurous spirit, daring them to venture within.

**Explore the wild places** of the Wood, travelling through bramble-choked dells, fungus-encrusted glades, and foetid marshes, bedding down among root and bracken amid the nocturnal babbling of strange beasts.

**Unearth treasure hordes** in forgotten ruins, haunted fairy manors, dripping caverns, crystal grottoes, unhallowed barrow mounds, and abandoned delvings.

**Confront fell beasts**, roving fungal monstrosities, terrible wyrms, tricksome fairies, and restless spirits of the long deceased.

**Recover saintly relics** and shrines lost in the befuddling tangle of the Wood, gaining the favour of the Church by returning them to civilisation.

**Forage for weird fungi and herbs** in the untrod depths of the woods, many with useful magical powers—and many that can be sold for profit.

**Strike against Chaos**, defending civilisation from the encroaching forces of the wicked, half-unicorn Nag-Lord who lurks in the corrupted northern woods.

**Unravel secrets of deep magic**, charting the obelisks, dolmens, and ley lines littered throughout Dolmenwood—but beware the sinister Drune cult that wards them.

**Seek the counsel of witches and hags**, masters of magic that can heal, hex, or divine the future.

**Meddle in the affairs of the nobility**, allying with a noble house in its intrigues and power plays in the courts of High-Hankle and Castle Brackenwold.

**Journey along fairy roads**, ancient magical paths bordering on the ageless realm of Fairy that allow travel throughout Dolmenwood—and perchance to realms beyond.

**Return to the homely hearth** to share tales of peril with quaint locals over a mug of ale and a well-stoked pipe.



## Inspirational Media

The following books, films, and television series inspired the creation of Dolmenwood. They are recommended as imagination fodder for all players.

### Books

- ▶ *The Charwoman's Shadow*—Lord Dunsany
- ▶ *The Fellowship of the Ring (Book 1)*—J.R.R Tolkien
- ▶ *Goblin Market*—Christina Rossetti
- ▶ *Gormenghast*—Mervyn Peake
- ▶ *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*—Susanna Clarke
- ▶ *The King of Elfland's Daughter*—Lord Dunsany
- ▶ *Krabat*—Ottfried Preußler
- ▶ *The Ladies of Grace Adieu*—Susanna Clarke
- ▶ *Lud-in-the-Mist*—Hope Mirrlees
- ▶ *Lyonesse trilogy*—Jack Vance
- ▶ *Mio My Son*—Astrid Lindgren

- ▶ *On Fairy-Stories*—J.R.R Tolkien
- ▶ *Smith of Wootton Major*—J.R.R. Tolkien
- ▶ *Stardust*—Neil Gaiman
- ▶ *The White People*—Arthur Machen

### Films

- ▶ *The Green Knight*—David Lowery
- ▶ *Labyrinth*—Jim Henson
- ▶ *Legend*—Ridley Scott
- ▶ *Princess Mononoke*—Hayao Miyazaki
- ▶ *Spirited Away*—Hayao Miyazaki
- ▶ *The Wicker Man*—Robin Hardy

### Television Series

- ▶ *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*—BBC series
- ▶ *Over the Garden Wall*—Patrick McHale
- ▶ *Twin Peaks*—Mark Frost and David Lynch

# THE DOLMENWOOD PLAYER'S BOOK

This PDF reproduces the first section of the *Dolmenwood Player's Book*. The full book contains everything players need to experience wondrous journeys and perilous adventure in the befuddling and magical Dolmenwood, elucidating the following topics.

## Part 1: Welcome to Dolmenwood

*(Reproduced in this PDF.)* Reveals common knowledge about the people, places, and factions of Dolmenwood that can be gleaned by talking with its natives.

## Part 2: Starting Play

Introduces the basics of role-playing games, along with instructions on how to create a character to begin exploring Dolmenwood.

## Part 3: Kindreds

Describes the six most common kindreds of sentient folk in Dolmenwood. Players may be a proud, goat-headed breggle, a wide-eyed elf stepped straight from Fairy, a tricksome grimalkin cat-fairy, a worldly or hapless human, a fungus-riddled mossling, or a capricious, bat-faced wood-grue.

## Part 4: Classes

Describes nine adventuring professions that define a character's talents and powers, as well as their role in an adventuring party. Players may be an ardent cleric, a wilful enchanter, a dashing fighter, a jolly friar, a stealthy hunter, a haughty knight, an enigmatic magician, a charming minstrel, or a wily thief.

## Part 5: Magic

Elucidates the many kinds of magic available to player characters—arcane spells, holy prayers, fairy glamours, elf runes, and the humble magical knacks of mosslings.

## Part 6: Equipment, Services, Animals

Presents a rich and detailed selection of gear, armour, weapons, mounts, vehicles, services, and accoutrements essential to any adventurer, including a miscellany of pipe-leaves, beverages, and useful herbs and fungi.

## Part 7: Adventuring

Explains the rules and procedures for adventures in Dolmenwood—travelling and camping in the wilds, exploring weird subterranean locales, and battling ferocious monsters.

## Part 8: Appendices

Provides additional background information on the calendar, noble houses, and saints of Dolmenwood, along with optional rules for archetypal non-human characters.

# OTHER BOOKS

Referees wishing to run games set in Dolmenwood require additional books, revealing the deep mysteries of the Wood.

**The Dolmenwood Campaign Book:** An exhaustive tome detailing the secrets and lore of Dolmenwood, including hundreds of fantastic and perilous locations.

**The Dolmenwood Monster Book:** A menagerie of weird beasts, fickle fairies, and strange spirits that inhabit the wild places of the Wood.

**Dolmenwood adventure scenarios:** A series of adventures set in Dolmenwood, presented in an easy-to-use format, perfect for the time-pressed referee.



# Folk and Factions

Introducing the folk of Dolmenwood and the factions that vie for control.

## SENTIENT FOLK

While humans dominate the settled reaches of Dolmenwood, they are not the only folk to call the place home.

### Breggles

The High Wold region of south-western Dolmenwood has been ruled since ancient times by the goat-headed breggles. Breggles divide themselves into two castes, distinguished by the length of their horns—the aristocratic longhorns and the commoner shorthorns.

### Mosslings

The dank, fungal-infested lowlands of Mulchgrove, in the eastern woods, are home to a shy and stunted folk called mosslings, part mortal flesh and part plant or fungus.

### Fairies and Demi-Fey

Among the myriad peoples of Fairy, a number venture into Dolmenwood and mingle with mortal folk: elves, otherworldly and beautiful, the little cat-folk known as grimalkins, and bat-faced woodgrues are the most commonly encountered.

### Other Sentient Beings

If one ventures off the beaten track in Dolmenwood, creatures of many other kinds may be encountered. Goblin tricksters peddle fairy fruits and other questionable wares; scrabies emerge from their network of tunnels, eager to trade; even a bird or animal may surprise travellers by greeting them from the wayside, spinning a riddle, or cursing their trespass.

## FACTIONS AND POWERS

### The Duchy of Brackenwold

Ruling from the supposedly impregnable Castle Brackenwold on the south-eastern verge of the forest, the Dukes of Brackenwold trace their line back to the earliest settlers in the region. All mortal folk within the Wood—from the humblest beggar to the highest lord—pay fealty to the duke and the whole forest is his property.

### The Pluristine Church

The monotheistic Pluristine Church is dominant throughout Dolmenwood and beyond. While it holds much political clout, the Church is of late diminished in Dolmenwood. Many shrines and chapels that once saw regular worship have fallen into ruin and been reclaimed by the forest. Some within the Church seek to rediscover and re-sanctify these lost shrines.

### The Cold Prince

Where now mortals reign, great fairy nobles once held court. The entirety of Dolmenwood was once the domain of a cruel elf lord known as the Cold Prince, lord of winter eternal, who ruled from the palace of Hoarblight Keep overlooking the great Lake Longmere. When humans began to settle the wild glades of Dolmenwood, a great war between fairy and mortal ensued. Mortals eventually prevailed and the Cold Prince was banished to his domain in Fairy. Fearful tales of his return to Dolmenwood and his icy wrath weave a common thread through the folklore of those who dwell within his erstwhile domain.

### The Nag-Lord

A wicked, trickster figure of local folklore, said to keep unholy court in the twisted northern woods, where his armies of corrupted breggles and other creatures of Chaos lair. The Nag-Lord is portrayed in folktales as being part man, part unicorn, with nine legs (nine being regarded as an especially accursed number).

### The Drune

A cabal of sorcerers who roam the Wood, cloaked in black. They claim the magical energies of Dolmenwood and are self-appointed masters of the standing stones. What gods they worship is a matter of conjecture, for they guard their secrets with their lives. In the eyes of the Church they are heathens to be eradicated, for it is said they deal in devil worship and human sacrifice. Kidnap by the Drune is among the greatest fears of the simple folk of Dolmenwood, who refer to the cult as “the Hooded Men”, fearing to speak the word “Drune”.

### The Witches

Mortal women who worship ancient deities in the forbidden depths of Dolmenwood. Their aims are obscure, but it is known that they gather beneath the moon to work magic. In folklore, witches are variously portrayed as depraved practitioners of human sacrifice, lustful seductresses (for they are said to be eternally young), and ministers of potent cures and charms.

### Ygraine the Sorceress

A reclusive figure said to be the most powerful magician in Dolmenwood, Ygraine dwells in the many-tiered Chateau Mauvesse, overlooking the black waters of the Dark Mirror. It is rumoured that her explorations of otherworldly realms have brought her into contact with the Cold Prince and that she now works her magic to release him from exile.

# Dolmenwood Gazetteer

The most commonly traversed or spoken of regions of the Wood.

## Castle Brackenwold

The seat of the Duchy of Brackenwold and ancestral home to the nobility of the line, Castle Brackenwold perches upon a high hill with a city stretched at its feet. Alongside the mighty ducal garrison is a great cathedral—this fortress-city is also the seat of the Church's power in Dolmenwood.

## Dreg and Shantywood Isle

A rough port-town and fishing village on the marshy banks of the River Hameth. Dreg has a seedy reputation as a haunt for gamblers, thieves, charlatans, and rascals of all stripes, made only worse by its proximity to the lawless Shantywood Isle, a notorious port of ill-repute. Dreg is also famed for its fine sausages, made from the flesh of the swine kept in the bogs to the north of the village.

## Fort Vulgar

A crude keep overlooking a port at the northern end of Lake Longmere. Fort Vulgar is ruled by Sir Osric the Gaunt, a vassal of the Duke of Brackenwold who is responsible for the taxation of all traffic via the port.

## Hag's Addle

A region of mazy swampland around the banks of the River Hameth. The place is shunned not only due to the natural hazards of the marsh, but also because of the hag who haunts its sodden expanse. It is said that she has the power to see into the past and future and to raise the dead, but that the price she demands in return is perilous.

## High-Hankle

The second largest town in Dolmenwood (after Castle Brackenwold), High-Hankle is the ancient capital of the High Wold region. Its reputation is one of revelry, carousing, and debauchery of all kinds. At its centre stands the imposing Castle Perigonne, home of the Baron Hogwarsh.

## The High Wold

A barony encompassing the south-western corner of Dolmenwood. The High Wold is noted for the ancient line of aristocratic breggles who rule in tandem with the human lords of the region. The barony has become wild of late under the lax rule of Baron Hogwarsh: highwaymen ply the roads and charlatans peddle questionable wares.

## Lake Longmere

The great lake Longmere, at the centre of Dolmenwood, is twelve miles broad at its widest point. No ships ply its waters, and anglers who frequent its shores speak fearfully of lake monsters.

### Dolmenwood Map

A map of Dolmenwood is found on the following pages. This map depicts the Wood as described by local folk, including the purported locations of certain sites mentioned in legend and folklore.

## Lankshorn

The market town of Lankshorn, ruled by the breggle aristocracy, lies within a bowshot of the forest's border. In Lankshorn, the traditions of the civilised south meld with the quaint, superstitious ways of Dolmenwood.

## Mulchgrove

The central region of the Wood is a dank lowland riddled with fungal forests, treacherous bogs, and twisted willow-woods. The region is little traversed save by sentient fungal monstrosities and the mosslings who are native to the place, loving fungi and moulds and all that is dank.

## The Nagwood

The northern woods, corrupted by the presence of the court of the wicked Nag-Lord and his foul armies. None of sound mind venture within this twisted region of evil.

## Prigwort

Situated in the centre of Dolmenwood, the market town of Prigwort is the largest settlement beneath the eaves of the forest. Famed for its breweries and distilleries, Prigwort is ruled by a council known as the Brewmasters. Fine spirits of Prigwort make are found on the tables of connoisseurs far and wide.

## The Ruined Abbey of St Clewyd

East of Lake Longmere, in the depths of Dolmenwood, a great monastery was founded, of old. The abbey now lies in ruins, following a nocturnal assault of unknown provenance, a century past.

## The Witching Ring

In the western reaches of Dolmenwood is found a vast ring of frost-rimed stones, erected by the ancients for purpose now unknown. The folk of Dolmenwood name them the "Summerstones" and the great ring which they demarcate the "Witching Ring".

## The Woodcutters' Encampment

Once a mere woodcutters' camp, the village is now a thriving trade community. The locals practice unusual arts of woodcraft and are said to have no fear of the Drune.



Upper hameth

Wisp Lake

Quaking Creek

Avernal Lake

Northern Scratch

Falls of Naon

Fort Vulgar

Nagwood

Court of the Nag-Lord

Valley of Wise Beasts

Groaning Loch

Lake Longmere

Old Abbey

Redwraith Manor

hag's Addle

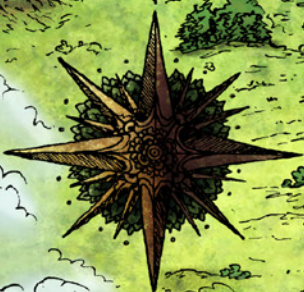
Castle Everdusk

Lankshorn

The high Wold

high-hankle

Nodding Castle



Low





Table Downs

Kewen's Creek

Brinemere

Chateau Mauvesse

Hall of Sleep

Meagre's Reach

Dark Mirror

Odd

Arrowmoor Keep

Prigwort

Blackeswell

Fog Lake

Mulchgrove

Castle Brackenwold

Woodcutters' Encampment

Dreg

Bogwitt Manor

Falls of Nyl

Hameth

# DOLMENWOOD

in the Duchy of Brackenwold