

Adventure Presents: Tiny in the Tower: The Burglar of Brackwood

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This is the easy read PDF for The Burglar of Brackwood, which contains all of the materials the Game Master (GM) requires to run the prologue game for Tiny in the Tower. If you are a player, don't read this document!

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The Burglar of Brackwood

This prologue is a short, stand-alone story that acts as an introduction to the *Adventure* system, as well as serving as a prelude for *Tiny in the Tower*. Beyond what's provided in this booklet, players will need a few pencils and three standard six-sided dice (d6s), as well as the How to Play booklet and a character sheet for each player.

One player will take on the role of the Game Master (GM). **If you are not the GM, stop reading this now!** The GM needs to keep secrets from the other players, many of which are contained within this booklet.

The Burglar of Brackwood is intended to be a single session of play, although it could be longer depending on the preferences of the players. Unlike *Tiny in the Tower*, there are no separate booklets for the Allies, Antagonists, or Special Rules. Instead, these are all included in this booklet.

What the Protagonists Know

The Burglar of Brackwood takes place in a fantasy world, replete with magic, wonder, and not-too-threatening dangers. The Protagonists are a group of small-time heroes and do-gooders who are out to set right the wrongs of the world, one quest at a time.

They have been hired by the villagers of Brackwood to track down the thief who has been stealing from them. As the Adventure begins, they arrive in Brackwood to begin their investigation. The villagers are ready to show them the damage that has been wrought and eager to give their account of events.

What the Protagonists Don't Know

The thief is a bear who is possessed by the ancient spirit of an evil, long-dead witch called Romelda Rawbane. Centuries ago, Romelda imbued a tiara with a part of her soul so that, if she were ever slain, her soul would possess whoever donned the cursed headpiece.

In the present day, this cursed crown is in the possession of Zura Zathra, a local wizard who has been carefully studying it. Recently, a crow from Brackwood Forest flew into her window, stole the shiny tiara, and stashed it in its nest. A bear shook the tree that contained the crow's nest, causing the tiara to fall and land on the bear's head. The spirit of Romelda Rawbane instantly possessed the bear and began to prepare a resurrection spell to bring Romelda back to life.

Since then, the bear-witch has been searching for the components necessary to perform a resurrection spell, as well as clothes to wear to make herself feel more at home in the bear's unwieldy form. The bear-witch has been clumsily rummaging through villagers' homes in order to find these items. Currently, she resides in a small clearing, where she is preparing a ritual circle in order to cast the resurrection spell.

Prologue Breakdown

Part 1: Prudence Loom is Very Upset

The Protagonists arrive in the village of Brackwood, where they have the opportunity to question the villagers and investigate the crime scenes. Each character is found at their location, but there's nothing to stop the GM from moving them around as the story demands. For example, it's likely that Prudence will come looking for the group if they're taking too long elsewhere.

Part 2: The Burglar Isn't Having a Great Time Either

The Protagonists track the culprit into the forest, leading them to the edge of the clearing, where they confront the villain.

Running the Game

The spirit of this Adventure lies in investigation and insightful problem-solving. The initial interviewing of the villagers and following the bear's trail are likely to be fairly linear experiences, but the confrontation with the bear-witch will be in the hands of the players. Running the confrontation scene will require the GM to improvise based on the choices that the players make.

Keep in mind that there is no wrong answer for how players should deal with the bear-witch. The GM should do their best to facilitate the players' choice of action and keep their focus on maximising fun. Reward those who employ clever problem-solving or insightful, brave, or creative solutions!

GM Tip

One of the key elements of *Adventure* is that every Test should keep the story moving. However, not every Test needs to be important to the main plot.

At the start of this scenario, in Betty's Kitchen, there is a selection of easy Tests designed to get players comfortable with the dice mechanics. Usually, something as obvious as noticing unhidden claw marks would not require a roll, so, to keep in the spirit of the game, find an appropriate negative consequence for failure other than the Protagonists simply failing to find the marks.

This does not need to be a mechanical consequence; a failed Test just needs to feel like something is happening (rather than failing to happen). Perhaps Prudence begins to lose faith in the Protagonists if they fail to notice the bite marks in the candles, or a failed Test to mend Betty's door could result in it taking them hours, meaning they're entering the woods in the dark of night.

Part 1: Prudence Loom is Very Upset

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Introduction

Before arriving, the Protagonists have received the following letter from Prudence Loom. Consider reading it aloud to the group, making note of where she crossed through what she initially wrote.

To Whom it May Concern,

Brackwood Village Council humbly request the assistance of several adventurers of good character and standing in a matter of Grave Concern. The good people of Brackwood have now three times been terrorised in the night by a Heinous Thief who remains at large. We must stress that Brackwood is a Nice Village, and this sort of thing doesn't usually happen in the locale.

Of particular concern is the damage caused to the premises of renowned local seamstress Prudence Loom, though, of course, the wellbeing of all of Brackwood's villagers is of equal import.

~~The third theft happened right under the council's noses~~ (this line is crossed out).

~~A local watch has proven ineffectual~~ (this line is also crossed out).

Your prompt assistance in this manner would be greatly appreciated.

Warm Regards,

Prudence Loom

on behalf of Brackwood Village Council

Arriving in the Village

The story begins as the Protagonists arrive in Brackwood. It is a small village consisting of twelve thatched cottages scattered around a crooked crossroads. Towards the east of Brackwood lies a dark, dense forest, and there is a small farm just north of the village.

As the Protagonists stroll into town, Betty Heather is there to greet them. She will explain that she has been asked to bring the Protagonists directly to Prudence Loom so that she can instruct them. While chatting, she'll mention that she is also a victim of the burglar. In fact, the burglar broke her front door, and if someone could fix it she'd be very grateful.



Investigating

There are three crime scenes in the village, each providing clues to the burglar's nature and motives. Betty will take the Protagonists to each location so that they may investigate the scenes and ask the owners questions. Most groups will start at Betty's cottage before moving on to Prudence's house and finally heading to Wormwood Farm, but they can be encountered in any order.

The villagers will be happy to recount what they have seen and show the Protagonists the crime scenes. Make sure to downplay the shadow that Juniper Jones saw at the edge of the woods if Wormwood Farm is the first location they visit.

Key Facts

The thief has visited Brackwood every night for the last three nights, each time stealing items from a different person's house:

- On the first night they stole from Juniper Jones.
- On the second night they stole from Prudence Loom.
- On the third night they stole from Betty Heather.

After Prudence was robbed, the villagers set up a watch duty. They didn't manage to catch the thief, so they called for a party of adventurers instead.

When assessing what was stolen, the Protagonists can attempt to search with their own knowledge by making a Smarts (7) Test to determine if any of the stolen items have anything in common. A success will reveal the magical use (if any) of the stolen items, such as that wormwood can be used in magic rituals to ward off disease. A result of 10 or higher will reveal that this particular combination of stolen ingredients could be used to cast a resurrection spell.

The Missing Items:

- **Wormwood leaf** was stolen from Juniper Jones. It's typically used for brewing liquor, but can be used to magically ward off disease.
- **Bonemeal** was also stolen from Juniper Jones. It's typically a fertilizer, but can be used in summoning spells.
- **Candles** were stolen from Prudence Loom. They're typically used as a light source, but can be used to create and illuminate a summoning circle.
- **A purple dress** was also stolen from Prudence Loom. It doesn't have any magical uses, Romelda just wants to feel more like herself.
- **A lilac scarf** was stolen from Betty Heather. It doesn't have any magical uses, Romelda just wants to feel more like herself.
- **Thornapple pods** were also stolen from Betty Heather. They're typically used as a cough remedy, but can also be used in awakening or revival spells.
- **Deadly nightshade berries** were taken from a bush in the forest. They're typically poisonous, but can be used in magic of the underworld.

Betty Heather's Kitchen



Betty's cottage is on the western edge of Brackwood. The front door is made of sturdy oak wood. It has a large, splintered crack down the centre and is stuck in the frame due to this damage.

- A Toughness (7) Test will force the door open.
- An Agility (8) Test will mend the door's hinges so that it will work again.
- A Smarts (7) Test will deduce that whatever slammed into this door is much heavier or taller than the average human.

Very little is disturbed in the kitchen except for the back door, which lies in pieces on the floor.

- A Wits (6) Test will reveal that brute strength was used to smash open the back door, and that there are claw marks around the handle.

Betty Heather



Toughness 1.



Agility 1.



Smarts 1.



Wits 3.

Betty's face is wrinkled yet serene, her voice is soft and kind, and she always has a faint aroma of herbs around her.

Surprisingly calm about the situation, she isn't bothered about her items being stolen, but instead worries for the safety of the villagers. She hopes that the Protagonists might be able to fix her front door.

Items stolen: Thornapple pods and a lilac shawl.

Witness account:

- Betty heard about some trouble with thefts but didn't worry much about it, as she didn't think she owned anything a thief might want.
- On the third night, she heard a series of loud crashing noises coming from her kitchen.
- By the time she'd made it downstairs, the thief had gone, having stolen a bag of thornapple pods from the floor by the door and her lilac shawl, which was draped across a chair.
- The front door was left splintered and cracked, stuck in its frame.
- The back door was torn off its hinges.

Wormwood Farm



A perfectly normal farm to the east of the village. There's no sign of anything out of the ordinary.

Juniper Jones



Toughness 3.



Agility 1.



Smarts 1.



Wits 1.

Juniper is all tattered overalls, dark curly hair, and a big smile. Despite being absolutely enormous, he's quiet and a little embarrassed.

Items stolen: Bonemeal powder and wormwood leaf.

Witness account:

- On the first night, Juniper noticed a barrel of bonemeal in his shed was tipped over, and someone had torn large clumps of wormwood from his field.
- He suspected local vandals and tidied everything up without much of a thought. He apologises for “disturbing the crime scene”.
- After Prudence was robbed on the second night, he became worried and volunteered to take a shift on the night watch to guard the village.
- On the third night, he heard a crash come from Betty’s cottage and rushed to the scene, but the thief had already gone.
- He saw a shadow disappearing into the edge of the forest to the east of the village, but it was too big to be vandals, so he didn’t think much of it.

Prudence Loom's Sewing Room



Prudence's shop is in the centre of town. Prudence herself lives in a flat upstairs. She has not touched the scene since "The Incident".

Downstairs the floor is littered with sewing supplies, and the heavy table in the middle lies on its side. An undressed tailor's mannequin is on the floor, lying among a few broken candles. A drawer lies open, with a few candles still left inside.

- A Wits (6) Test will reveal that the remaining candles and the mannequin both have bite marks on them, matching those of a bear.

Prudence Loom



Toughness 1.



Agility 2.



Smarts 3.



Wits 1.

Prudence's taffeta gown is pristine, the bun in her hair is pulled tight, and she is **very** upset. Furious that her house has been needlessly vandalised, she insists, nay, **demands** that the Protagonists slay the offender and bring her belongings back in perfect condition!

Items stolen: Purple dress and candles.

Witness account:

- Prudence awoke on the second night to loud noises coming from her sewing room.
- She hurried downstairs to see a great, hulking shape in the darkness rummaging through the drawer she keeps her candles in.
- Horrified, she tried to shoo whoever it was out, and in the moonlight saw a snarling mouth full of candles, and claws clutching the new purple silk gown she had just finished sewing.
- She shrieked, and the thing lumbered out of the house as several other villagers came running towards the sound of her screams.

Leaving the Village

Once the party has investigated the village, they should have deduced that the creature Juniper Jones saw must be connected to the thief. He will happily show the Protagonists the spot along the eastern treeline where he saw it disappear. He wishes them luck in finding the culprit.



Part 2: The Burglar Isn't Having a Great Time Either

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The Trail

As the Protagonists enter Brackwood Forest, they will be able to see that a clear trail has been left through the thicket. The grass is trampled, bushes have been swept aside, and dark brown wisps of fur can be seen caught on thorns and brambles along the path of destruction. Occasionally, they come across a torn wormwood leaf, a scrap of purple silk, or a discarded thornapple pod along the way.

Deadly Nightshade Berries

Along the trail, the Protagonists will spot a leafy green bush that has been savaged, with many of its leaves and shiny black berries now scattered on the forest floor. A Smarts (6) Test will identify the berries as deadly nightshade, a poisonous fruit. A result of 8 or higher will reveal that these berries are also used by wizards in spells that open a portal to the underworld.

Any character who eats any amount of deadly nightshade berries must make a Toughness (8) Test. On a failure, the character suffers 10 Damage. Once a character has eaten these berries, that character is immune to the berry's effects for 24 hours.

The Crow's Nest

Along the trail, the Protagonists will discover a collection of shiny items and a bird's nest strewn across the ground. Among the items, they will find a silver ring with the initials "ZZ" carved into its black onyx stone, a few shiny coins, and a small brass key.

- A Smarts (7) Test will reveal that the nest belonged to a crow, birds who typically like to collect shiny objects.
- A Wits (6) Test will reveal that a nearby tree trunk is scuffed, with brown hairs clinging to the bark; it has been rubbed by a bear to scratch an itch, and this is probably what caused the nest to fall from the branch.

Confronting the Bear-Witch

As the Protagonists follow the bear's trail, they approach the clearing where she is preparing to cast a resurrection spell. They will hear the bear-witch grunting and moving around before they reach the glade. Give the players a chance to observe the bear-witch without being seen.

- To hide in the bushes surrounding the clearing, make an Agility (6) Test to remain undetected by the bear-witch.

The Ritual Site

When the Protagonists discover the bear-witch, they find her in a small clearing in the forest. In the centre of the clearing is a large flat stone, scattered with crushed herbs and berries. Surrounding the stone, candles have been roughly jammed into the soft earth, creating a large circle. A canopy of thick branches above the clearing casts jagged, swaying shadows across the floor of the glade.

The bear-witch stands on her hind legs by the stone. She is wearing a purple silk dress and scarf, her brown shaggy fur bulging from several ripped seams as the gown struggles to contain her bulk. On her head rests a delicate silver tiara that emits a soft, fluorescent blue glow.

The bear-witch is attempting to light a fire using a piece of flint on the large stone. Her intent is to be able to light the candles around the ritual circle. Using her paws to make fire is a difficult task, and she is getting visibly frustrated.

If uninterrupted, the bear-witch will slowly continue to prepare the ritual by clumsily lighting candles and arranging ingredients upon the stone. She will attempt to chant and the forest around her will darken as the spell begins. However, she won't be able to complete the spell because she is not able to verbally articulate the required magic words.

A Smarts (8) Test will successfully identify this ritual as a resurrection spell.



Resolving the Bear Problem

If the players are unsure of what to do next, a Smarts or Wits (7) Test will tell them that the tiara is magical, and likely affecting the beast in some way. The players may approach a resolution in a variety of ways. The following are some suggestions for how this final scene may play out.

Remember that, while the bear (or any other creature who has failed a Wits (9) Test after donning the crown) is wearing the tiara, they are possessed by Romelda, who wants to complete the resurrection spell at any cost. If in any scenario the tiara is removed from the bear's head, the bear will attempt to flee the glade, terrified by the sight of the crown and the strange experience it has endured.

Fight the Bear

If the Protagonists fight the bear-witch, she will fight back furiously. Instead of killing the bear, the GM may wish to have the tiara topple from her head before the bear reaches 0 Health.

Help the Bear

If the Protagonists choose to help the bear-witch to complete the ritual, she will attempt to lure the Protagonists closer so that she may get one of them to wear the crown. This is Romelda's primary objective, so that she may possess a more dextrous host who is able to articulate the words of the resurrection spell.

Incapacitate the Bear

If the Protagonists try to stop the bear-witch without permanently harming her, the GM should choose an appropriate Test for them to make depending on their plan. For example, the GM may choose to require an Agility Test to sneak up on the bear-witch and a Toughness Test knock her out. The difficulty level for these Tests should be between 6 and 9, depending on how ambitious the plan is.

A Bear with the Spirit of Romelda Rawbane

A towering, shaggy beast with dark brown fur and beady black eyes. When the Protagonists come across the bear-witch in the forest, she is wearing the glowing tiara, a lilac scarf around her neck, and an expensive-looking purple gown, which is torn open in several places with tufts of rough brown fur poking through the burst seams as it struggles to contain her bulk.

It doesn't work as a look, but she's doing her best.



Stats



Toughness 4.



Agility 2.



Smarts 3.



Wits 2.



Health 40.

Special: Claw

If the bear-witch wins an Attack, she pins the creature she is attacking down, and they can't move until she moves her paws.

Gear: Romelda's Tiara

When any creature puts on Romelda's Tiara, they are instantly possessed by the spirit of the ancient and evil witch, Romelda Rawbane. A creature must make a Wits (9) Test or be compelled to follow the cruel and selfish wishes of Romelda for the next 24 hours or, if sooner, until the tiara is removed. If anyone dons the tiara, secretly provide them with the following text:

- “You are now Romelda Rawbane, the great and powerful witch who has possessed the body of your character. All those around you exist only to serve your every wish, and your wish is to complete the resurrection spell so you may return to your own body. If anyone tries to stop you or gets in your way, they will suffer your terrible wrath!”

Roleplaying Tips

Romelda is narcissistic, spiteful, and quick to anger. Days spent in the body of the bear have made her impatient, and her terrible temper simmers just beneath the surface. She looks down on everyone and assumes that her intellect, cunning, and beauty are superior to all.

While wearing the tiara, the bear-witch will act in a haughty, impatient, and disdainful manner. She will appear to take pride in her appearance and will walk on her hind legs as often as possible.

Wearing clothes, gathering ingredients, and preparing to cast a spell are all immensely difficult with bear claws. When frustrated or angry, the bear-witch will roar, snarl, and act much more like an agitated bear than an ancient human spellcaster. While wearing the tiara, the bear-witch retains all of her bear-qualities, such as brute strength and a heightened sense of smell.

Without the tiara, the bear will act like a regular grizzly bear, and her Wits and Smarts are both reduced to 1.

Aftermath

The story ends as the party returns to the village. How the players chose to deal with the bear/Romelda will determine what they have to say.

- Do they declare the beast defeated and get a hero's welcome?
- Do they mention the tiara, or just explain that the thief won't be a problem any more?
- Do they have to explain a massive portal opening in the forest and an evil sorceress unleashed on the land?
- Does Prudence Loom get her stuff back?

Regardless, some of the villagers will be grateful for their aid and will offer them a hearty meal of thanks for their services. As they get ready to eat, a messenger hurries up to the party with an urgent letter addressed to them.

It is from Azra Zathra, wife of the local wizard, Zura. She urgently needs their help, as Zura has gone missing and a band of strong, brave adventurers is needed to help find out where she has disappeared to.

Are our Protagonists ready for something bigger?

What's Next?

If you have enjoyed *The Burglar of Brackwood* and the Adventure system and want to keep playing, there are plenty of options available to you!

The natural next step is to continue the Protagonists' story in *Tiny in the Tower*, where they will investigate the disappearance of the powerful Zura Zathra. Not only does she need the help, but as the owner of both Romelda's tiara and the ring found in the crow's nest, she is sure to be grateful having them returned! Make sure to give the Protagonists a chance to rest up and resupply before setting out on another daring adventure.

You can also find other issues of *Adventure Presents* on the Rebellion Unplugged website, which all use the same core ruleset. The first in the series, *Tartarus Gate*, is a game of sci-fi horror, while there are many more issues planned for the coming years, venturing into new worlds and genres.

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