

RESTLESS HARVEST

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 2ND TO 4TH LEVEL



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RESTLESS HARVEST IS A FIFTH EDITION adventure for three to six characters of 2nd to 4th level, optimized for a party of four 3rd-level characters. Farmer Kihpi Millwinger's expansion of his sunflower fields has disturbed ancient burial goods, awakening the vengeful spirit of Pidrin Reaper, one of two legendary brothers whose bones lie beneath the twin hills overlooking Millhaven Valley. Now scarecrows stalk the farmland with unnatural purpose, while the descendants of an old betrayal seek to destroy the very relics needed to restore peace. Can the adventurers navigate family guilt and vengeful spirits to put the restless dead back to sleep? This adventure takes place in Cartosia, but the names of people and places can be changed to place this adventure in any rural farming region across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, Bellerose Valley suffered through a devastating blight that withered crops and brought the specter of famine to its farming communities. When traditional methods failed and desperation mounted, two brothers—Pidrin and Storgolm Reaper—developed innovative techniques that saved the valley's harvest. Through careful crop rotation, selective breeding, and an intuitive understanding of soil and weather patterns, they transformed barren fields into abundant farmland. The grateful community hailed them as heroes, and their methods became the foundation of the valley's prosperity.

Their success, however, bred resentment. Jorik Blackbarley, a struggling farmer whose lands remained poor despite the brothers' shared knowledge, grew consumed with jealousy. Unable to accept his own failures, he convinced himself that the Reaper brothers had made dark pacts for their success. One autumn night, Jorik murdered both brothers in their sleep and stole their prized tools—a bronze sickle and an ornate bird-skull mask used in their harvest rituals.

The community discovered the crime by morning and swiftly pursued Jorik, recovering the stolen burial goods before he could flee far. In their grief and rage, the valley's farmers buried Pidrin and Storgolm at the base of the hills overlooking their fields, interring the brothers with their tools so they could watch over the harvests they had saved. Before sealing the graves, they cursed any who would disturb the brothers' rest to "guard the fields until their bones return to earth."

The Blackbarley family bore the shame of their ancestor's crime through generations. Family stories warned of cursed burial goods that would bring doom to anyone who possessed them—a distorted version of events that grew more inaccurate with each telling.

Over the centuries, the legend of the Reaper brothers faded to half-remembered folk tales. When Kihpi Millwinger decided to expand his prosperous sunflower fields, he had no knowledge of the ancient graves. While digging an irrigation channel near the eastern hill, he unearthed the bronze sickle and bird-skull mask, thinking them valuable antiques. He sold them to Tomas Riverworth, a traveling merchant. That very night, Pidrin's restless spirit awakened, possessing the scarecrows throughout Kihpi's fields, causing them to amble about with unnatural purpose, distressing the livestock and the Millwinger family.

When Firgan Blackbarley learned of the walking scarecrows, ancestral guilt drove him to action. Believing the family stories about cursed relics, he set out to intercept the merchant and destroy the burial goods before they could bring further calamity, unaware that only their return could grant Pidrin the peace he seeks.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several reasons why the party might find themselves seeking out Kihpi Millwinger and his troubled farmstead. A few of these reasons are outlined below:

Strange Reports. The local constable in Millhaven has received disturbing reports about Kihpi Millwinger's farm—witnesses claim to have seen scarecrows walking the fields at night, moving with unnatural purpose. Unable to spare guards for what might be mere tavern tales, the constable offers the party 25 gold pieces to investigate the Millwinger farmstead and determine if there's any truth to these bizarre claims.

Caravan Delays. A caravan master explains that his regular trade route past the Millwinger farm has become impassable. His drivers refuse to travel the road after dark, claiming the scarecrows in Kihpi's fields turn to watch them pass. With deliveries backing up and profits suffering, he's willing to pay 50 gold pieces for the party to visit Kihpi directly and resolve whatever is spooking his men.

Tavern Gossip. Patrons at the local inn whisper about Kihpi Millwinger's recent good fortune turned sour. The farmer found valuable antiques while expanding his fields, but now his scarecrows allegedly move on their own. A concerned neighbor pleads with the party to check on Kihpi's welfare, fearing the isolated farmer might be in over his head with whatever he's disturbed.

THE MILLWINGER FARM

The Millwinger farmstead sprawls across fertile fields beneath the shadow of twin hills, its prosperity evident in well-maintained fences and abundant crops. Sunflowers

dominate the landscape, their heavy heads turned eastward toward the morning sun, while smaller plots of corn and barley complete the holdings. A modest farmhouse sits at the property's heart, surrounded by barns, storage sheds, and the tools of successful farming.

As the party approaches, something is clearly amiss. Several scarecrows throughout the sunflower fields stand askew, their posts tilted at odd angles as if they had been moving and recently settled back into position. The normally busy sounds of farm life—bleating goats, clucking chickens, the rhythmic thud of chopping wood—are notably absent.

Encounter: Restless Scarecrows. As the party draws within 100 feet of the farmhouse, three scarecrows (use **ghoul** statistics) emerge from the sunflower fields and attack immediately. They move with jerky, unnatural gaits, their straw-stuffed bodies crackling with each step. They fight until destroyed, showing no regard for their own preservation.

Kihpi Millwinger. Once the scarecrows are defeated, Kihpi (NG he/him human **commoner**) emerges cautiously from his farmhouse, a pitchfork clutched in his weathered hands. A man in his middle years with sun-darkened skin and calloused palms, he bears the unmistakable marks of someone who has worked the land his entire life. His clothes are practical but well-maintained, though dark circles under his eyes suggest recent sleepless nights.

"Thank the harvest gods you came," he says, his voice shaking with relief and exhaustion. "Those cursed things have been walking my fields for three nights now, but they've never come out during the day before. Never tried to chase anyone down like that." He sets down the pitchfork and wipes sweat from his brow. "I've been trapped in my own home, afraid to tend my livestock or check my crops."

Kihpi readily explains recent events:

- While expanding his sunflower fields a week ago, he unearthed two artifacts while digging an irrigation channel near the eastern hill: a bronze sickle and an ornate bird-skull mask
- Thinking them valuable antiques, he sold both items three nights ago to Tomas Riverworth, a traveling merchant, for 25 gold pieces
- The very night after the sale, his scarecrows began moving on their own, wandering his fields with apparent purpose
- The animated guardians seem drawn toward the eastern hill, often gathering at the field's edge closest to the burial mound
- His livestock have grown increasingly agitated, refusing to graze in areas where the scarecrows have walked
- He has since locked all his livestock inside the barn, fearing for their safety

"I should have known better than to disturb old things buried in the ground," Kihpi admits. "My grandfather

KIHPI'S FARMSTEAD



used to tell stories about the twin hills, but I thought they were just tales to keep children from wandering off. Now I'm certain those artifacts are connected to whatever's happening. You need to find Tomas and bring them back before things get worse."

Kihpi can provide the following information about the merchant's route:

- Tomas Riverworth left the farm traveling southeast toward Millhaven, following the coast of Lake Domain
- He mentioned plans to reach the city of Westport within the week, where he hoped to sell his acquisitions to wealthy collectors
- The merchant traveled in a covered wagon pulled by two draft horses and carried various trade goods alongside the artifacts
- If the party moves quickly, they should be able to catch Tomas within a day or so, as Tomas makes frequent stops at all the small villages along the road to Westport

If asked about payment, Kihpi offers the party the original 25 gold pieces he was paid by Thomas to retrieve the artifacts and return them to where he found them. "I don't care about the money I made from the sale," he insists. "I just want my farm back to normal and those things to rest peaceful."

Learning the Brothers' Legend. If the party asks Kihpi about his grandfather's stories, he scratches his head and offers only fragments: "Something about two brothers... helped folks during hard times, I think? There was trouble of some kind, and they ended up buried in near these hills." He shakes his head apologetically. "I'm worried I've sold their personal belongings. I wish I'd listened closer when I was young."

A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recalls the broader legend of Pidrin and Storgolm Reaper: two brothers who developed innovative farming techniques that saved Bellerose Valley from famine centuries ago, only to be murdered by a jealous rival named Jorik Blackbarley. The community buried them as heroes in the twin hills, and local folklore suggests their spirits would protect the valley's harvests.

Alternatively, the party can spend time in nearby Millhaven speaking with elderly residents. A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check while canvassing the village reveals the same information, as older farmers still remember fragments of the tale passed down through their families.

CATCHING TOMAS

The winding road follows the coastline of Lake Domain, where gentle waves lap against sandy shores dotted with smooth stones and driftwood. Ancient willows and scattered boulders provide natural cover along the water's edge, while the road itself curves around small inlets and rocky outcroppings. This stretch of coast has long served as a rest stop for travelers, offering fresh water and a scenic respite from the dusty inland routes.

Stopped near the shoreline at a small cove is a covered wagon pulled by two draft horses. A middle-aged man in merchant's garb examines one of his wagon wheels, muttering under his breath as he pokes at what appears to be a loose iron rim. His horses drink from the clear lake water while he works.

Tomas Riverworth. The merchant (LN he/him human commoner) looks up nervously as the party approaches. Tomas is a lean man with graying hair and the cautious demeanor of someone who has spent years navigating the uncertainties of trade routes. His clothes are practical but well-made, and his wagon bears the wear of frequent travel.

"Thank the gods for company," he says, wiping his hands on a cloth. "This wheel's been giving me trouble since yesterday, and I was beginning to worry about making camp alone out here." If the party mentions they've come from the Millwinger farm or asks about recently purchased artifacts, Tomas becomes visibly uncomfortable.

"Ah, you've heard about my acquisitions," he admits. "Strange business, that. The farmer seemed eager to part with them, but I've had the most unsettling dreams since... perhaps it's just nerves, but I keep seeing angry faces in my sleep." A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Tomas would gladly be rid of the artifacts if given a reasonable excuse.

Before the conversation can progress much further, the party hears the sound of approaching hoofbeats from the western road.

Encounter: The Blackbarley Gang. Firgan Blackbarley (CN he/him human **bandit captain**) rides into view with four mounted companions (use **bandit** statistics), their horses kicking up dust as they approach the bridge. Firgan is a weathered man in his forties with prematurely gray hair and eyes that burn with determination. He wears practical leather armor and carries himself with the bearing of someone accustomed to hard decisions.

COASTAL AMBUSH



"Stand aside, travelers," Firgan calls out as his men spread to flank the wagon. "Our business is with the merchant and his cursed cargo." His gaze fixes on Tomas's wagon with grim intensity. "I know what you carry, peddler, and it must be destroyed before it brings doom to innocent folk."

The bandits draw their weapons but do not immediately attack, waiting for Firgan's command. Tomas shrinks back against his wagon, clearly terrified by this turn of events.

Negotiating with Firgan. Despite his threatening approach, Firgan can be reasoned with under the right circumstances. He genuinely believes he's preventing a catastrophe and has no desire to harm innocent people unless absolutely necessary to achieve his end goal. The party can attempt to de-escalate the situation through dialogue:

- A successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Firgan to explain his family's connection to the artifacts before taking action
- If the party demonstrates knowledge of the Reaper brothers' legend, Firgan becomes more willing to listen (advantage on Charisma checks)
- Mentioning that they've seen the walking scarecrows firsthand immediately captures his attention

If engaged in conversation, Firgan explains his family's shame: "My ancestor, Jorik Blackbarley, murdered those two brothers out of jealousy and greed. My family has carried that burden for generations. Now those cursed burial goods

walk free again, and innocents will suffer for my bloodline's crimes." He firmly believes the artifacts must be destroyed to break their power, and that by carrying out justice himself, he may relieve himself of his family's guilt.

A character can attempt to change Firgan's mind about destroying the artifacts with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. The following arguments provide advantage on this check:

- The scarecrows are clearly seeking something, not randomly causing destruction
- Destroying sacred burial goods might trap the spirits forever rather than putting them to rest
- The brothers were heroes who saved the valley—they deserve proper rest, not desecration

If successful, Firgan grudgingly agrees to accompany the party to the burial mounds, though he remains suspicious that returning the artifacts might make things worse. "If you're wrong about this, the consequences will be on your heads," he warns. His companions follow his lead, though they remain ready for trouble. If the party fails to convince Firgan or if negotiations break down entirely, combat ensues. Firgan and his men fight until reduced to half their numbers, at which point the survivors attempt to flee.

Securing the Artifacts. Once Firgan is dealt with, the party must still convince Tomas to part with the artifacts. The merchant has witnessed enough strangeness to be cooperative:

- A successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces him to hand over the artifacts freely, grateful to be rid of them after his disturbing dreams
- If the check fails, Tomas demands compensation for his lost investment—either the 25 gold pieces he paid Kihpi or items of equivalent value
- If Firgan has been convinced to help and is present, his testimony about the artifacts' dangerous nature grants advantage on the persuasion check

The artifacts themselves are clearly ancient: the bronze sickle bears intricate engravings of wheat stalks and harvest moons, while the bird-skull mask is carved from dark wood and inlaid with small chips of obsidian. Both radiate a faint aura of necromantic magic if examined with detect magic.

Treasure. If the party defeats Firgan's gang in combat, they can recover 20 gold pieces from the bandits' accumulated loot, along with their weapons and armor. Tomas's wagon contains various trade goods worth approximately 150 gold pieces total, though taking them would constitute theft.

THE BURIAL MOUNDS

The twin hills rise from the valley floor like ancient sentinels, their grassy slopes topped with weathered stone outcroppings. Wild flowers dot the hillsides in scattered patches, and gnarled oak trees cling to the rocky terrain with stubborn persistence. From

this elevated vantage point, the entire Bellerose Valley spreads below—a patchwork of fertile fields and farmsteads.

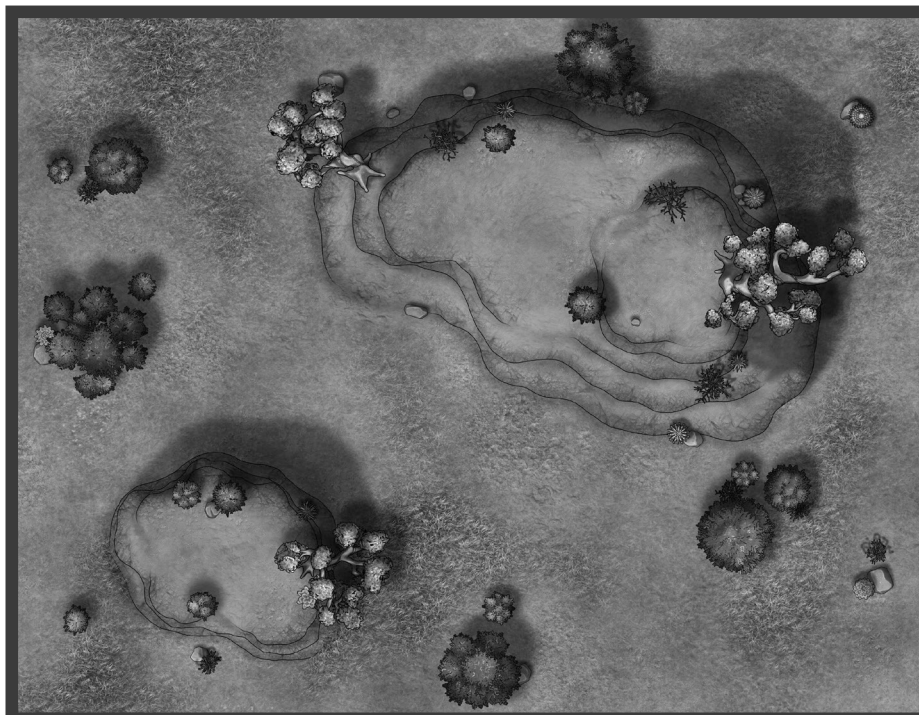
The base of the eastern hill shows clear signs of recent disturbance. Near a prominent rocky outcropping, a section of earth has been roughly excavated and hastily filled in—evidence of Kihpi's irrigation work that unearthed the ancient burial goods. Scattered stones and clumps of dark soil mark where the farmer's shovel first broke through into the centuries-old grave.

The First Sign. As the party approaches the disturbed burial site, the air grows noticeably cooler despite the afternoon sun. A faint luminescence begins to emanate from the artifacts themselves—the bronze sickle gleaming with ethereal light while the bird-skull mask's obsidian inlays pulse with a rhythm like a slow heartbeat.

If Firgan Blackbarley accompanies the party, he becomes increasingly agitated at these supernatural manifestations. "The cursed things grow stronger near their resting place," he mutters, his hand moving instinctively to his weapon. "This proves they're dangerous—we should destroy them while we still can!"

A successful DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion) check can keep Firgan calm, reminding him that the spirits are likely responding to proximity to their proper resting place. Characters can point out that the artifacts seem to be "coming alive" because they recognize their home, not because they're growing more dangerous.

BURIAL SITE



If the persuasion check fails, Firgan panics and attempts to seize the artifacts to destroy them. This triggers combat as he and his remaining companions (if any) try to take the burial goods by force, believing that doing so will prevent a supernatural catastrophe. Firgan and his men fight until reduced to half their numbers or until Firgan himself falls unconscious, at which point any survivors flee in terror.

Returning the Artifacts. The disturbed earth makes it easy to locate the precise spot where the artifacts were originally interred. Characters need only dig down three feet to reach the ancient burial chamber—a simple stone-lined cavity that once held the Reaper brothers' most precious possessions.

As the party places the bronze sickle and bird-skull mask back into their rightful positions, the supernatural phenomena intensify briefly. The artifacts pulse with brilliant light, and a cold wind stirs through the hilltop despite the calm afternoon. For a moment, the faint outlines of two tall figures can be seen standing at the edge of vision—one gesturing in gratitude, the other raising a hand in blessing.

AFTERMATH

Once the artifacts are properly buried and the earth replaced, a profound silence settles over the twin hills. The oppressive atmosphere that had hung over the valley since the burial goods were disturbed finally lifts, replaced by a sense of peace and completion.

Any surviving members of Firgan's group who witness this spiritual resolution are deeply affected by the brothers' final blessing. They recognize that the party chose correctly, and Firgan himself (if still alive) falls to his knees in relief and shame. If Firgan survives the adventure, he disbands his group and dedicates himself to maintaining the burial mounds, ensuring they are never disturbed again.

The resolution of this supernatural crisis has broader implications for Bellerose Valley. Word spreads quickly among the farming communities about the party's actions, and they gain a reputation as problem-solvers who understand both the practical and spiritual needs of rural folk. Local farmers may approach them in the future when they encounter similar mysteries involving old burial sites or agricultural curses.

Should the party have failed to retrieve the artifacts or chosen to destroy them instead of returning them, the consequences would have been severe. Pidrin's spirit, denied proper rest, would have grown increasingly violent, animating not just scarecrows but eventually possessing farm equipment and livestock throughout the valley. The supernatural disturbance would have spread beyond the Millwinger farm, forcing entire communities to abandon their homes until more drastic measures could be taken to appease the restless dead.

REFERENCES

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 (“SRD 5.1”) by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at <https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document>. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

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