

## “Three Gates in the Wood” by Pat Bonham

### An 'Interesting Location' for Talisman Adventures RPG

This mini-adventure was created to be used as an *'Interesting Location'*. Feel free to alter any details (especially the details around quests and motivations of the 'beings' behind the gates.) Why three gates? This at least gives the *illusion* that the players have a choice in their destination. The gates represent the Past, Present and Future and can be used to help them on a current adventure....

This was set for Whispering Woods, but can be adjusted for any Forest in The Realm.

There are no stats for the 'beings' behind the gates. Suffice to say they are not meant to be Enemies – but should be considered extremely High Level \ Threat.

The 3 gates are pretty much functioning at the whim of the beings. Once they get what they want, they will kick the players back to the Realm and the gates will no longer be visible.

Questions for the 'beings' behind the gates. Feel free to alter any of these answers:

“Can I come through the gates at any time?” Ans: The gates will be available when I need you.

“Instead of questing for this, or doing this task, can I do .... Instead?” Ans: No. No bargains!

“Who are you?” Clockwork King Ans: I am all that is Good in the Realm (He believes this).

“Why do you seek the Tempus Prognosticator?” Ans: The fate of the Realm depends on the return of this object (while this is a true statement, Clockwork king has plans to change the past with it! Note: he never truly possessed this item before. He will NOT answer any other questions regarding it. Instead, he urges them to quickly continue on the quest).

- 1) Notice checks all around OR just the leader to 'hear the whispering wind'. Difficulty 11 (Routine)

Successful check reveals:

The Harmony Oak trees in the Whispering Woods are a species with a stiff trunk and curled branches, its leaves are thin, and its twigs are long. It is gnarled yet noble, unconstrained, and overspreading, entangled and intricate. You notice when wind passes through it, it is neither obstructed nor agitated. Wind flows through smoothly with a natural sound. Listening to it seems to relieve any anxiety and humiliation, wash away confusion and impurity. It is well suited to those who seek adventure in the forest, delighting in them and unable to abandon them....Gazing at the Oaks & Pines soothes your eyes; listening to the Trees soothes your ears. You spend your time wandering free and easy here and there without any worldly concerns to perplex the mind. You feel happy here and walking along the forest this way...

2)

2a) Have a character roll a notice \ wits check v Difficulty 14 (Moderate). If successful, they briefly notice a figure peaking behind a tree. (This is one of the Warlock's ragamuffins on lookout)

2b) If they fail the above check - a Solo TattleTale bird (some kinda Jay- definitely NOT a songbird) gives its call....Chirp...Chirp every couple seconds. This bird is 'announcing' the party's approach.

2c) For any Druid or woodland Characters- have them attempt a Notice \wits check v Difficulty 13. If successful, they will notice 2 of the following flowers:

- Vervain
- Mugwort
- Witch-hazel

THEN on a successful Lore check v Difficulty 15:

- Vervain: Known for sleep promotion. Could be used in a drink for divination.
- Mugwort: It has been used in flavoring drinks at least since the early Iron Age. Also- helps Repel insects, especially moths. More interesting use- helps with Psychic abilities.
- Witch-hazel: Good for circulation (healing properties?)

3)

The 3 Portal Gates in the middle of the Forest:



#### **Approaching the Portals:**

Ahead of you- you see an opening in the forest\grove. It is unnaturally lit with arcane magic and swirling blue lights - within 2 are vortices sitting some 1+ meters off the ground. A third

source of light on your right appears to be coming from what appears to be tall door. Near each light source is a mounted sphere of similar blue light. The entire area seems to be affected by

The far-left Vortex appears to be set with at least 7 visible perfect holes in the ring about it. While all 3 of these appear 'man-made' - there is a precision about this one...

The middle Vortex is set with 2 standing stones on either side. Both stones have etched Runes with the same glowing blue light.

The far-right Door appears to be freestanding frame with a faint yellow glow behind it ... and then a darkness - almost as if there is a void of some kind behind it.

In the middle of the three - the ground is set with a giant circular slab of stone. Carved into it - It contains what appears to be a crescent glowing moon. Surrounding it - is another slim glowing ring.

Near each of the mounted spheres of blue light - is a Plaque with the following inscription:

The far-left Vortex: "...As you want to be."

The Middle Vortex: "...As you were..."

The far-right Door: "Come as you are"

Beneath the crescent moon is written:

...Choose one or More than one to wander

...You need to step at time same

...Else its power is to squander.

Notes on the 3 portals (if choosing multiple portals, players MUST enter at same moment. Else, only the 1<sup>st</sup> portal chosen will activate. Otherwise, they will need to wait 24 hours to try again for a different portal. Alternate ruling- The gate(s) only reappear at the 'being's\GMs whim).

The Portal on the Left (Future) leads to The Clockwork King (4 players max at same time).

The Portal in the Middle (Past) leads to Baba Yaga (4 players max at same time).

The Portal on the Right (Present) leads to the Warlock (2 players max at same time)

### **Choosing The Warlock in His Cave:**

Sitting before you in robes of black & purple, an immense figure clad head to foot in darkness. Even sitting, it is clear the cowl'd figure is as tall as the tallest Troll. If he stood up, he might tower above three meters or more. Massive sleeves cover any hint of hands, and his arms appear to be resting comfortably on a colossal paunch that protrudes from the belly of his robes. Most eerily of all, the deep blackness of his hood is broken by seven small circles of light, each glowing a muted purple & green as they weave and move in the darkness of the heavy cowl where a face should be. 'My gentle sons, how it pleases me to see you all after the trials and tribulations you have undergone so far in getting here....'

'I have a quest for you - to discover an 'interloper' in time ... Whomever they are- despite their appearances, they are up to no good. I only know that one who goes by 'Lucky Jack' has

some information regarding said interloper. He was last seen in 'The City' near the bridge over Storm River. I will need you to return to me – with information during the next 1/2 moon. Do as I ask in this and your endeavor shall be rewarded with a pouch of emeralds so green it will appear as if the Lords of Light sneezed into a bag and the debris became crystallized. These jewels are yours, no tricks and no lies, no deceptions, and no half-truths, if your next visit marks the simultaneous arrival of the information as to the identity of the interloper I seek.'

'As For now, as a sign of good faith, I have a gift for you. As you leave, you will see a circle to walk thru. You will find that this will grant you with heightened senses and hopefully keep you from harm...'

On The Warlock's quest...

Regarding his quest to discover an 'interloper' in time ... 'Despite appearances, they are up to no good' (is actually The Clockwork King & the Tempus Prognosticator). As an alternate reward-The Warlock also says, one of the heroes can unlock more power within IF they find or somehow 'create' a 'personal Talisman'.

Immediate reward: An 'Augury spell' -for 8 hours - when they step into a magic circle. When they do (One or more) player(s) – will be following a path- and what appears to be themselves! The 'copy' of themselves says - 'this will help on the current journey'. The copy then disappears and the player(s) return to the forest...

### Choosing Clockwork King Gate

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You are in what appears to be some sort of official Court. There is a rather large dais set upon several steps. Up the steps, sits an empty throne made entirely of what seems to be brass & gold. There are wheels with spikes and wheels within wheels decorating above and behind the throne.

The **Cog Automaton** (see pic at end) will do the introductions:

"... Ahem... How would you like your group to be announced? ..."

wait for reply...

"Ladies and Gentlemen of the... May I please present his Highness...The Clockwork King."  
"Now...Please introduce yourselves from youngest to oldest in your party..."

Interrupt the players if they break etiquette or break from introducing or whispering amongst themselves...

Then, as a gesture of courtesy, The Automaton will then offer all the players a spot of tea...

### Clockwork King:

'Let us get down to business then, shall we? I am searching for a device called the Tempus Prognosticator. (He hands them a sketch of it). It was stolen from me, by a bugger that goes by the name of Lucky Jack...

To wit, as I spoke, the Tempus which I require was in the possession of a man who is infinitely deader than he was only an hour before. He fell into the Storm River by the Bridge into The City while being chased, you see. I fear that our mutual prize now sits in the stinking innards of a white-fleshed Carp fish with a black-tipped fin. It must be extricated from this intestinal burial immediately and forthwith, naturally. And that, my friends, is where you – and your sharp weapons – enter stage left into this daring performance.'

Clockwork King pauses again, waiting for a character to speak. Once someone does:

'Hush, oh violator of serene wordsmithing, hush your lips and let me finish.

Find and bring to me the Tempus Prognosticator. Do as I ask in this and your endeavor shall be rewarded with a Trinket – one of three required to create a magical object. You will be awarded the remaining 2 trinkets, if your next visit marks the simultaneous arrival of the Tempus I seek.'

Note: Lucky Jack is actually alive and the Clockwork King knows that. He prefers players not interact with him....

Item: Tempus Prognosticator. What does it do? How does it work?

Poem that influenced the Tempus:

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The glow-worms, numerous and bright,  
illumed the dewy dell last night;  
At dusk the squalid toad was seen,  
Hopping, crawling, o'er the green.  
The frog has lost his yellow vest.  
And in a dingy suit is dress'd.  
The leech, disturb' d, is newly risen  
Quite to the summit of his prison.  
The whirling winds the dust obeys,  
And in the rapid eddy plays.  
My dog, so alter' d in his taste,  
Quits mutton-bones, on grass to feast

### **Choosing the Baba Yaga gate:**

As you emerge from the strange blue sworl, you notice walking beside you something out of the corner of your eyes.

Strangely, it would appear to be a house-like structure moving with you!!!

...So you determine it must be walking along with you on its posts, or legs rather. And now that you are aware of this, you can see Two thin avian legs swinging and knee-bending.

Once you stop walking, you turn to see....

An old thatched hut stands on tall stilted Bird-like legs. The brittle straw that makes up its roof juts up like hair on a Wild man's head, and an open doorway seems to yawn like a toothless mouth....

Even on a beautiful day, the atmosphere surrounding the hut is spooky: The light around the hut dims, the air chills, and noises hush, leaving an eerie stillness....

And like a slow-moving shadow, a cowed and black-robed figure emerges to greet you ....

"I am Baba Yaga- but you can call me Little Grandmother. Did you come of your own free will, or at another's bidding?" She smiles with a half-moon of teeth made of iron....

If Hesitant #1 "...Don't be scared. The forest won't bite. It is afraid I will bite back..."

If Hesitant #2 "...Do you smell that? The raw stench of fates colliding and melding, wafting towards the future. Oh wait. Nope, that's just me...."

How a hero's answers is important. Those who profess to have come on their own, or who refuse to answer the question in a straightforward fashion, are those with whom Baba Yaga is willing to engage in conversation. She considers these people either brave or foolish, but with the potential to be more than a good meal. Perhaps she believes they can be useful for eliminating some of her enemies, or in performing some chores about her hut.

If she is happy with the answers given (either 'Come on their own accord' OR 'Answer in a convoluted fashion'), she speaks only to those individuals (she will call them out and ask for their name.)

"I have a few tasks I can assign to you... Delicate job, fun jobs or easy jobs. Upon all the assigned tasks completion, I will offer you safe passage thru this forest as well as this scroll- I have no use for...

If you refuse my offer, I can't guarantee your safety from these woods.

Delicate job: Clean the wax from my ears. This is an Athletics \ Agility test v. Difficulty 12

Fun job: For each player she can assign: Find a Newt, Frog or Toad. This is a 2 part test: 1) Notice \Wits v Difficulty 14 (newt) or 12 (Frog\Toad). Then Athletics \ Agility v Difficulty 13 (newt), 10 (Frog\toad)

Easy job: #1 Clean all my utensils & dishes and put them away in the cupboard.

#2 Sweep my porch. For both – she will inspect for thoroughness. Notice \ Wits v. Difficulty 14.

Rewards (if at least Standard success) 1) guarantee safe passage. : An 'Augury spell' -for 8 hours - when they step into a magic circle. When they do (One or more) player(s) – will be following a path- and what appears to be themselves! The 'copy' of themselves says - 'this will help on the current journey'. The copy then disappears and the player(s) return to the forest...

2) At GM's discretion will also award a scroll with 1-3 spells. Entirely up to GM the contents (whether Basic, etc and the rarity of spells).

If they fail at the tasks or refuse Baba Yaga, they are assured an encounter on the Woods Encounter table (both level and enemy numbers appropriate to characters level).

Or....

As an alternative to failure at the tasks, Baba Yaga can cast a Sleep spell upon the player who failed at the tasks given. If her Sleep succeeds, the target is taken to a small wooden cage within the hut. The only way to free the player - is for another play to succeed at the task assigned the original player.

Handouts \ Images of Encountered:

Cog Automaton (courtesy of user: Reedstilt of ffg-forum-archive.entropicdreams.com)



Clockwork King (courtesy of user: Reedstilt of ffg-forum-archive.entropicdreams.com)



Tempus Prognosticator:



Clockwork King's Rewards (1<sup>st</sup> one Trinket to start, then award last 2 Trinkets to make the Object)



Baba Yaga's Hut (pic courtesy FantasyFlightGames):



Baba Yaga (pic courtesy [mitologia-lendas-urbanas.fandom.com/pt-br/wiki/Baba\\_yaga](https://mitologia-lendas-urbanas.fandom.com/pt-br/wiki/Baba_yaga)):



The Warlock (pic courtesy Goodman Games):

