

LANTERNWICK'S LONG NIGHT



THREE ADVENTURES FOR THE NIGHTS BEFORE HALLOWEEN

5e-compatible homebrew | Levels 2-4 | 3-5 players plus a DM

Three nights. One promise.

A bell rings beneath the river. Skeletons hold the bridge. On Halloween, the last lanterns begin to fail. Lanternwick needs people willing to ask what happened, face what is stirring, and choose which promises deserve to be kept.

This book contains three complete adventures for a family or mixed-age group: eerie mysteries, tactical choices, and sympathetic undead, with a hopeful conclusion. Each episode resolves its own problem. Played together, they tell a story about care freely offered and responsibility honestly accepted.

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Running the trilogy

A family adventure with real choices

Use the tone of an autumn mystery: dark water, distant bells, old uniforms, warm light at a safe doorway. Describe creatures through movement and purpose rather than decay. Let danger affect time, trust, equipment, and the festival. The modules offer a stable-at-zero convention for groups who want gentler defeat; agree on it before the first encounter.

Choose a rhythm

The Bell Beneath Blackwater takes about 2.5 hours. The Watch at Briarbridge takes about 2.5 hours. When the Last Lantern Goes Out takes about 2.75 hours. Each includes a break and a shorter route. Play on three separate autumn evenings, or split each episode across two shorter sessions. Character level advances after resolution, including peaceful solutions: 2 to 3 to 4, then optionally 5.

Give every player a useful job

Invite each player to name a detail their character notices. Offer the map, a clue card, a clock, or the party ledger to someone who enjoys handling objects. Ask quieter players directly, without requiring acting or a speech. A child and an adult can jointly plan an action, but the child chooses what their own character does.

Keep uncertainty honest

Tell players what success and a failed roll will mean before they commit. Essential clues are available through multiple routes; a low roll costs position or adds a complication, not the only way forward. Give a puzzle hint when requested. Encourage reasonable plans beyond the listed examples.

Rules and preparation

Bring ordinary 5e character sheets, dice, pencils, and a few tokens. The modules include all original adversary profiles and special challenge procedures. Use your group's normal 2014-style 5e rules for spells, rests, and character features. Labelled homebrew takes precedence only where stated. A success earned by conversation or invention is worth as much as one earned by combat.

The DM's campaign reference

Fixed truth. Seventy years ago, living townspeople and the returning dead freely agreed to care for one another. A river light, a roadside welcome, and a place at the harvest table were offered in return for winter guardianship. The agreement lasts one year at a time. It requires no sacrifice, compelled vow, or ownership of another person.

What went wrong. Festival steward Elian Voss moved the mill lamp to the arch, closed the roadside shelter, and canceled the remembrance supper as apparently harmless economies. He is responsible, but is neither a secret cultist nor a mastermind. Let him make meaningful restitution without demanding that the players humiliate or forgive him.

The voices. Mara Reed warns travelers from the riverbank. Captain Sable commands the skeleton Watch; Orrin worries that the living will rewrite its duties. The Hollow Reeve speaks for the Harvest company. Lenna Pike keeps the mill, and Nessa Vale repairs the bridge shelter. They possess different knowledge and limits; no one NPC can solve the trilogy for the party.

Continuity matters. Record the ending flags after each episode. A restored river light stays restored; an opened road stays open. Mundane alternatives such as Mechanical Safeguard and Living Patrol are achievements with distinct benefits. The finale's darkness concerns the still-empty harvest table, not a reversal of the family's earlier work.

Before the first session

- Read episode one and its four encounters; choose three, four, or five-player scaling.
- Make a level-2 party and invite one connection to Lanternwick per character.
- Agree on the amount of spookiness and whether to use gentle defeat.
- Copy the first three handouts; keep later clues and DM maps out of sight.
- Set six tokens beside the Flood clock; make clear that discussion does not spend them.
- At the end, record River Light or Mechanical Safeguard, Mara's Trust, the keeper, and any lost grain.

The Bell Beneath Blackwater



Dungeon Master's edition

Lenna Pike, the mill keeper, offers 10 gp per hero and a year's worth of flour deliveries to anyone who will investigate the bell before the next high-water surge. She has a rope, two hooded lanterns, and a small boat to lend. Characters may instead act because they live here, want to protect travelers, or recognize a relative's name on the old mill plaque. Each player chooses one connection; none requires a particular family history.

OPENING READ-ALoud

You see a row of amber lanterns reflected in the Blackwater, broken into pieces by the turning current. You hear a bell beneath the river: one slow note, then three quick ones. Across the quay, a woman in a flour-stained coat stops tying her boat. A pale figure stands beyond her in the reeds, holding an oar that casts no shadow. Cold mist settles on your sleeves. The woman pushes a spare lantern toward you as the bell begins again. Who takes the lantern, and what do you want to learn first?

Overview

An underwater bell calls Lanternwick's winter guardians to a mill whose lamp has gone dark. Discover why a ghost has returned, cross the stalled waterworks, and decide how the town will keep its promise to the river.

This is episode one of **Lanternwick's Long Night**, an original, 5e-compatible adventure for 3-5 characters at **level 2**. Four characters are the baseline. Allow **150 minutes**, including a ten-minute break; the compact route takes about 110 minutes. The adventure stands alone and ends with a real victory. Advance to level 3 afterward, regardless of the chosen solution.

DM truth: seventy years ago, living townspeople and their departed neighbors made a voluntary covenant. The living promised a light at the mill, a welcome at Briarbridge, and a place at the harvest table. The dead would guard river, road, and fields through winter. Festival steward **Eliau Voss** recently moved the mill's brass lamp into the festival arch, assuming any public light would serve. Without a tended river light, the mill's sleeping guardian echoes have awakened. Ferryman **Mara Reed**, a ghost who witnessed the agreement, rings the submerged flood-warning bell to summon help. She neither stole the lamp nor drowned anyone.

The bell hangs in a deliberately flooded warning chamber beneath the mill. The lamp, chamber, and bell are separate objects. The bell cannot ring continuously once the gate is properly closed. A replacement lamp is a valid solution: the promise is about care, not possession of an antique.

At a Glance

- **Prepare:** read the four scenes and three creature profiles; copy Handouts A and B; set out six tokens for the Flood clock. Dice and character sheets are sufficient; no battle map is required.
- **Opening and invitation:** 10 minutes. Scene 1: 25. Scene 2: 25. Break: 10. Scene 3: 35. Scene 4 and ending: 45.
- **Compact route:** Lenna gives the eyewitness facts immediately; leave only one echo in Scene 3; resolve the first two gate steps as exploration rather than initiative. Keep the final choice.
- **Tone:** cold water, moving shadows, a ghost with unfinished responsibilities. No gore, possession, infection, or child peril. The harvest workers are intact spectral impressions, not decaying bodies.
- **Family table:** anyone can ask for a pause or a less intense description. Ask each player what their character notices before asking for rolls. Hints are available through observation and conversation; speaking in character is optional.
- **Gentle defeat, optional homebrew:** a hero at 0 hit points is stable and unconscious. If everyone falls, Mara and Lenna pull them onto the quay. Resume with the gate open, one lantern damaged, and the problem still solvable. Tell

players this convention before play.

Hook

Lenna Pike, the mill keeper, offers 10 gp per hero and a year's worth of flour deliveries to anyone who will investigate the bell before the next high-water surge. She has a rope, two hooded lanterns, and a small boat to lend. Characters may instead act because they live here, want to protect travelers, or recognize a relative's name on the old mill plaque. Each player chooses one connection; none requires a particular family history.

Stakes

A surge will damage the quay stores if the warning chamber stays open. Nobody must die to make the danger matter: lost grain, an unusable mill, and a canceled portion of the festival are sufficient stakes. The ghost risks losing the townspeople's trust if they mistake her warning for an attack.

Flood clock: start at 0 of 6. Advance once when the party leaves Scene 2, once when they leave Scene 3, and for the specific failed gate attempts in Scene 4. Searching, asking questions, breaks, and player discussion never advance it. At 3, the low walkway is ankle-deep and movement there costs twice normal. At 5, floating crates obstruct the lower landing; the upper catwalk stays open. At 6, grain sacks wash onto the quay: Lenna loses her festival stock, but the gate remains repairable. Further ticks cause no additional loss. Announce every tick and visible change. No clock result removes an essential clue.

Factions

Mill households: Lenna wants a safe crossing and the mill restored. She supplies equipment, a dry workroom, and straightforward facts. She distrusts expensive festival displays. If the party blames her publicly, she still provides the gate diagram but asks for a witness at the final repair.

Festival committee: Elian wants the celebration to succeed and fears being remembered for a costly mistake. He can return the brass lamp, provide replacement materials, and fund repair. He initially calls the move harmless, but evidence changes his position. Accountability may include a public explanation or a season of lamp duty; humiliation is not necessary.

River guardians: Mara and the echoes protect water travelers. They need the living to resume care. Mara knows the covenant's three promises, but not its precise renewal wording. She remembers a signed copy at the Briarbridge watchtower.

Locations

Location: Blackwater Quay

The town is east of the river. From the quay, the mill is a twenty-minute walk north along the east bank; the festival arch is five minutes east. The quay has a 30-foot stone landing, a shallow reed shelf, and steps to a dry storehouse. A moored boat and two coils of rope are openly available with Lenna's permission. The reed shelf is knee-deep, not a drowning trap.

Location: Blackwater Mill

The book's map appendix and the native bundle include the companion location diagram. The keyed text below gives all routes and distances needed to run this standalone packet.

Text map: M1 towpath door leads into M2 wheel hall; a 20-foot dry upper catwalk connects M2 to M3 winch loft; stairs descend from M2 to M4 lower landing. A waist-high service opening connects M4 to M5 bell chamber. M3 overlooks M5 through a barred inspection grille. The river is west. The eastern towpath door and upper windows are exits throughout.

The hall is 40 by 30 feet. The catwalk is 10 feet above its floor with intact rails. The loft holds the hand winch; the lower landing holds the bypass handle. The bell chamber is 20 feet square, with water varying from knee to waist depth. The gate lever is reachable from the dry catwalk by a hooked pole. No required task demands swimming, diving, or squeezing through machinery.

Encounter Matrix

ENCOUNTER	PLACE AND TIME	PLAY	WHAT CHANGES
1: The Witness in the Reeds	Quay; 25 minutes	Investigation and parley	Learn the lamp was moved; earn Mara's trust
2: A Light Borrowed	Festival arch; 25 minutes	Negotiation or covert retrieval	Choose original or replacement lamp; establish accountability
3: The Turning Wheel	Wheel hall; 35 minutes	Exploration, hazard, optional combat	Secure access and learn the gate sequence
4: The River's Promise	Bell chamber; 35 minutes	Timed repair and meaningful choice	End the flood threat; restore the river protection

Scenes

Scene 1: The Woman Beyond the Lanterns

Runtime: 25 minutes. **Objective:** establish what happened and why the bell rings. **Stakes:** frightened witnesses may blame the only person warning them.

READ-ALoud

You see three sets of wet footprints end at the quay steps, while a fourth trail stops among the reeds. You hear the bell through the soles of your boots. The pale woman rests both hands on her oar, and the air beside her smells of rain on old wood. Lenna lifts her lantern without stepping closer. What do you examine, and how do you approach the waiting figure?

Known: Lenna saw the mill lamp lit last week. Nobody is missing. The mill has been closed since yesterday's first bell.

Procedure: ask where each character looks. Give the relevant fact without a check: the lamp bracket at the towpath is empty; Mara's oar bears the same lantern emblem as the town boats; Lenna's delivery ledger records Elian collecting the lamp. Mara answers a polite question or responds to writing if players prefer. She explains the warning chamber and says, "A promise can be kept with a new lamp. It cannot be kept with an excuse."

Three routes establish the essential conclusion that the moved lamp matters: inspect the empty bracket and its freshly unscrewed bolts; read Lenna's collection receipt; or ask Mara. An Intelligence (Investigation) DC 10 check notices Elian signed the receipt personally, giving leverage in Scene 2. Failure still reveals the receipt's basic facts.

To earn **Mara's Trust**, invite her account, promise to investigate fairly, or show care for a stranded boat. A character may also earn it by returning later with an honest explanation. Threats make her withdraw ten feet into the reeds, not withhold the route. Lenna can provide all essential facts if the party refuses the ghost.

Success: carry the receipt or Mara's account to the arch. **Fail-forward:** if conversation collapses, Lenna points to the empty bracket and names Elian. **Transition:** follow the five-minute lantern street east to Scene 2, or go directly to Scene 3 carrying a borrowed lantern; a replacement remains valid.

Scene 2: The Lamp Above the Arch

Runtime: 25 minutes. **Objective:** obtain a river light and a commitment to tend it. **Stakes:** saving the mill should not quietly transfer the burden to an unwilling person.

READ-ALoud

You see the brass lamp suspended above an unfinished festival arch, brighter than the smaller lights beside it. You smell hot wax from a workbench scattered with wick and folded paper. A man on a ladder hears your approach and turns, one hand still holding a measuring cord. Several townspeople wait with unlit lanterns of their own. What do you ask him, or what would you like to inspect?

Elian admits moving the lamp when shown the receipt or asked directly. He believed a light elsewhere still honored the town's promise. He will not attack or summon guards over criticism. The arch is 8 feet tall; a stable ladder reaches the lamp. Taking it openly requires no Dexterity check.

Offer three materially different approaches. **Return it:** show Elian the warning and ask him to help; a clear explanation succeeds, while Charisma (Persuasion) DC 11 persuades him to take personal lamp duty as well. **Make another:** the bench has a hood, oil, glass, and wick; spend ten minutes assembling them, with no roll for a workable light. An appropriate artisan's tool check DC 10 makes it rainproof, granting one automatic gate-task success later when darkness threatens. **Take it covertly:** Dexterity (Stealth) DC 11 avoids a public confrontation. On failure Elian notices and asks for an explanation; the lamp remains accessible. Taking it without discussion leaves future lamp duty unsettled, a problem Lenna can volunteer to solve at the ending.

Elian supplies Handout A regardless of approach: he found it folded beneath the mounting plate. He also acknowledges closing the Briarbridge welcome shelter and omitting the remembrance supper. These are future leads, not additional jobs required to finish this module.

Success: leave with a functioning lantern and, if negotiated, an accountable keeper. **Fail-forward:** if they reject every committee offer, Lenna's spare hooded lantern works; Mara explains the principle in Scene 4. **Transition:** advance Flood once, then return north along the towpath to the mill. A short rest is available before entry without an extra clock tick.

Scene 3: The Wheel That Turns Backward

Runtime: 35 minutes. **Objective:** reach the winch and learn how to close the warning gate. **Stakes:** careless force can damage the mill, while patient observation reveals safe routes.

READ-ALoud

You see the mill wheel turn against the current, dragging silver threads of water through its spokes. You hear wooden clogs tapping inside although the doorway stands empty. The air smells of wet grain. Above the wheel, a dry catwalk leads to a loft where a hanging chain moves an inch at a time. Which entrance or route do you investigate first?

Two **Mill Echoes** repeat the last safe shutdown they remember. They turn toward anyone entering M2, saying, "Clear the wheel; hold the line." They are spectral impressions, not the souls of people whose destruction determines an afterlife. The echoes do not pursue beyond the mill.

Procedure: place the echoes beside the wheel and stairs, 20 feet apart. Heroes enter by M1 or climb exterior steps to an unlocked loft window. Describe the safe upper route immediately. Three approaches work: repeat the workers' shutdown phrase and copy their motions, causing one echo to stand aside; secure a rope across the catwalk and use the upper route, needing no roll when moving carefully; or confront the echoes using their profile. A Charisma check DC 11 gets both echoes to demonstrate their routine, but failure only leaves the first route available with one echo still active.

At the end of each round of combat, a splash crosses a visibly marked 10-foot strip next to the wheel. Creatures there make Dexterity saves DC 10, taking 2 bludgeoning damage and sliding 5 feet on a failure. The strip does not include either exit. The wheel is screened by intact guards; nobody is pulled into it. Cutting the chain stops the splash but costs Lenna one day of repairs.

Give Handout B when anyone reaches M3 or examines the plaque beside M4. Lenna knows the same sequence, and Mara can speak it through the grille: **open the bypass; wind the chain; lower the gate.** No roll reveals a required step. Before the finale, heroes can each spend one Hit Die during a ten-minute recovery pause, a homebrew pacing allowance once in this adventure.

Success: the echoes quiet or are dispersed, and the party secures the catwalk. **Fail-forward:** forced back outside, they can enter the loft window with Lenna's ladder; an echo's repeated work chant gives the sequence. **Transition:** advance Flood once and move to Scene 4. Damage to the wheel never prevents operating the hand winch.

Scene 4: A Light Kept for Others

Runtime: 35 minutes plus ten for the ending. **Objective:** close the warning gate and renew the river light. **Stakes:** physical repair alone will stop today's surge; sustained care restores the winter protection.

READ-ALoud

You see the bell sway beneath clear, dark water. Its rope climbs to a ring beside the dry upper rail. You hear the iron gate knocking against its stops, and cold spray reaches your face. Beyond the inspection grille, Mara lifts an empty lantern hook toward the towpath. The bypass handle, winch, and gate lever are all within reach from the landing and upper walk. How do you divide the work?

Run the three-step mechanism as **Encounter 4** below. Explain each action and consequence before anyone

commits. Characters can work from dry ground using rope and a pole; one may voluntarily wade through shallow water to reach the bypass directly. No spell or specialized proficiency is required. Mara can carry a rope end but cannot turn iron machinery. If trusted, she warns of the first surge and cancels one Flood tick from a failed task.

After the gate closes, the bell stops. Ask who lights the lamp, where it will stand, and who will tend it. A lit replacement mounted above the river is as valid as the original. A willing caretaker and a credible schedule establish **River Light**; Lenna volunteers if the party asks, while Elian may take duty if negotiated. The magic confirms a fulfilled promise by settling the water; it does not judge a player's eloquence.

The party can instead keep the river protection asleep: Lenna accepts a mechanical flood plan, a rope ferry, and a public explanation that the town will maintain them itself. This protects ordinary crossings but needs winter maintenance. Record **Mechanical Safeguard** instead of River Light. Both solutions save the mill; they create different options in the finale.

Success: repair the gate and establish either protection.

Award the promised payment and advance to level 3.

Fail-forward: at Flood 6 the grain is lost, but Lenna supplies the next failed repair automatically; a soaked mill can be rebuilt. Mara offers the same covenant information afterward. **Transition:** Sable's patrol has stopped traffic at Briarbridge. Handout A names the watchtower as the place to examine the full agreement, leading to episode two.

Encounters

Encounter 1: The Witness in the Reeds

Setup: Mara is ten feet offshore on a knee-deep shelf; Lenna stays on the quay. **Procedure:** evidence or respectful curiosity opens parley; the ghost provides essential facts even if trust is not earned. **Pressure:** public blame damages trust. **Noncombat:** listen, inspect, or demonstrate care. **Escalation:** threats cause withdrawal, never an attack. **Success:** Mara's Trust. **Fail-forward:** Lenna's receipt supplies the same lead. **Transition:** arch or mill, chosen by players.

Encounter 2: A Light Borrowed

Setup: lantern bench, ladder, and an embarrassed steward. **Procedure:** restitution, replacement construction, or stealth each yields a usable lamp with different social consequences. **Pressure:** who accepts future maintenance? **Noncombat:** all listed paths. **Escalation:** failed stealth invites a public explanation. **Success:** a keeper may be secured. **Fail-forward:** Lenna lends her lamp; she will discuss duty later. **Transition:** enter the mill after one Flood tick.

Encounter 3: The Turning Wheel

Setup: two echoes, guarded wheel, upper catwalk, alternate loft entry. **Tactics:** echoes block stairs and push trespassers toward M1; they never attack unconscious targets.

Noncombat: mimic their work, cross the safe route, or use the loft. **Escalation:** marked splash strip acts at each round's end. **Scaling:** three heroes face one echo; five face three, with the third arriving after round two. For worn-out heroes, use one echo and no splash damage. **Success:** safe access. **Fail-forward:** ladder to loft. **Transition:** recover briefly, then repair the gate.

Encounter 4: Closing the Warning Gate

Homebrew timed procedure: in initiative or clockwise table order, each hero takes one action per round. No enemies attack here. Complete three tasks in order: bypass, chain, gate. Each task allows Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity with appropriate tools, DC 11. Describe how an alternative skill or spell fits before rolling. One helper may spend their action to grant advantage. Failed attempts advance Flood by one but never reset completed tasks. As an alternative to a check, two heroes can spend their actions together for automatic success on the current task. A rainproof replacement grants one automatic success; Mara's Trust cancels one failed-task tick. Tools do not break on a miss. **Success:** gate closed and bell silent.

Fail-forward: at Flood 6 Lenna completes the next task that fails; repeat until safe. **Transition:** negotiate the lamp's future, then depart for Briarbridge.

NPCs

NPC: Mara Reed

Ghost ferryman; patient voice, damp coat, steady oar. Wants travelers safe; fears being remembered as the danger. Knows the three promises and the bridge archive, not the exact renewal terms. Offers a warning against one surge if trusted. Honest disagreement preserves her trust; false promises suspend that aid until acknowledged. She cannot manipulate heavy iron or leave the riverbank. If attacked, she fades until the next conversation; she is not an XP target.

NPC: Lenna Pike

Mill keeper; speaks in practical questions, always has spare cord. Wants a working mill; fears unpayable repairs. Knows every access route and mechanism. Will lend equipment, provide shelter, or accept lamp duty. Pressure makes her ask who will pay for damage; betrayal costs trust, never access to the safety equipment.

NPC: Elian Voss

Festival steward; immaculate notebook, ink-stained thumb. Wants a celebration people remember; fears public failure. Knows he moved the lamp and cut two customs from the budget. Offers supplies and restitution when confronted with consequences. Threats make him request a neutral witness; theft makes him wary but does not erase his responsibility. He has not made a secret pact with an enemy.

Reference Appendix

All creatures and special procedures below are **original homebrew for 2014-style 5e**. Use the group's normal 5e rules for movement, attacks, rests, spells, and turning undead unless a stated adventure rule changes them. No unlisted resistances or immunities apply. A missing save uses the listed ability modifier. An attack rolls d20 plus its bonus against AC; listed damage is the average, with dice as an alternative. A check that reveals a clue adds detail rather than determining whether the clue exists.

Mill Echo: Medium undead; AC 11; HP 16; speed 25 feet; STR +1, DEX +0, CON +1, INT -2, WIS +0, CHA -1; passive Perception 10. **Workman's shove:** melee attack +3, reach 5 feet, one target; 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, and the target may choose to move 5 feet toward M1 instead of taking the damage. One attack per action. At 0 HP the echo dissolves into harmless spray. It understands Common and can be turned normally; it has no possession, drain, or flight.

Waterlogged Tool: Small animated object, construct; AC 12; HP 8; speed 20 feet; STR +0, DEX +2, CON +0, INT -4, WIS +0, CHA -3; passive Perception 10. **Tap:** melee +3, reach 5 feet; 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning. Optional substitute for an echo if a family prefers animated objects. It rests when a worker's task is completed.

Mara's manifestation: a speaking apparition, not a combatant. It cannot deal damage or solve the machinery. Turning her causes her to retreat beyond the quay for the normal duration; afterward she can be approached again. Her information also exists in Lenna's testimony and the written handouts.

Handouts

Handout: A - The Folded Promise

Visibility: player-safe

"A light for the river. A welcome for the road. A place for those who kept the fields before us. Let care be offered freely, and guardianship freely given. The full agreement rests at Briarbridge, beneath the watchtower's three shields."

Handout: B - Mill Shutdown Plaque

Visibility: player-safe

"FIRST: open the little bypass, so the river can breathe. SECOND: wind the hanging chain until its red link reaches the hook. THIRD: lower the broad gate slowly. Use the upper walk in high water. Never put a hand inside the wheel guard."

Handout: C - Lanternwick Travel Notes

Visibility: player-safe

"From the east-bank quay: Blackwater Mill is twenty minutes north by towpath. The festival square is five minutes east. Briarbridge is thirty minutes south. Beyond the bridge, the harvest road leads west to Hush Orchard. The upper mill door opens onto the towpath."

Resolution Paths

Restore the old lamp: gain River Light. Elian loses the arch's centerpiece but may earn trust by tending it. The festival substitutes paper lights.

Build a replacement: gain River Light. Keep the arch intact; name a willing caretaker. Players improve a tradition without breaking its meaning.

Choose living stewardship: gain Mechanical Safeguard. Lenna's practical flood plan works, but the town accepts winter maintenance instead of supernatural help. In episode three it supplies a safe river evacuation route.

Any ending can also retain Mara's Trust. Record it only if the party earned it honestly. Losing grain at Flood 6 changes Lenna's finances, not the validity of the chosen resolution.

Rewards and Follow-Up

Award 10 gp per hero, the continuing flour promise, and level 3. Return borrowed tools unless Lenna gives permission to keep them. The heroes may carry an ordinary repaired hooded lantern as a memento; it has no unstated magic powers. Invite each player to name one detail added to the festival lights.

DM campaign ledger: River Light / Mechanical Safeguard; Mara's Trust yes/no; lamp keeper's name; grain saved yes/no; Elian's agreed restitution. Bring these entries into the next modules. Sable's bridge blockade is a separate broken welcome, not evidence that restoring the river light failed.

The Watch at Briarbridge



Dungeon Master's edition

Carpenter Nessa Vale asks the heroes to escort her repair cart to the bridge. Innkeepers offer 15 gp per hero for resolving passage before festival wagons turn back. Nessa asks for an honest account, even if the Watch has a point; payment never requires defeating skeletons.

OPENING READ-ALoud

You see festival wagons standing nose to tail beneath the red leaves of the bridge road. No wheels turn. You hear a shield tapped three times, and the waiting drivers fall quiet. Across the river, figures in weathered mail stand perfectly still under the watchtower's broken roof. One raises a bare hand. Nessa's cart smells of freshly cut pine as she draws beside you, a folded blanket on top of the boards. Who approaches the bridge, and what do you want the guards to understand about your arrival?

Overview

Skeleton soldiers have closed Lanternwick's only road bridge. Their captain claims the living broke an agreement, but the original covenant lies inside a ruined watchtower whose old defenses cannot distinguish guests from invaders. Cross the blockade, recover the terms, and decide what a genuine welcome should look like.

Episode two of **Lanternwick's Long Night: 3-5 level-3 characters**, baseline four; **150 minutes** with a break, or 110 on the compact route. Advance to level 4 afterward. For standalone play, explain the following facts without granting unearned ally flags.

DM truth: the covenant promises a river light, a welcome for travelers, and a place for the departed at the harvest table. Elian Voss closed Briarbridge's roadside welcome shelter to save festival funds. Captain Sable's skeletal winter Watch has returned to demand its reopening. She ordered a blockade to force a hearing, not harm the town. Her inflexible lieutenant **Orrin** has invoked the tower's emergency defenses and now refuses to stand down without the covenant's exact text. Sable will allow investigators through, but cannot simply order an already-triggered stone mechanism to stop. The original agreement makes guardianship voluntary; it gives neither side ownership of the other.

Sable is accountable for blocking harmless travelers. The players need not endorse her tactics to negotiate. The shelter can move or change form if travelers truly receive welcome. Destroying the Watch or ending its service is possible, but the living then assume the work themselves.

At a Glance

- **Prepare:** three coins for the Dusk clock; four tokens for archive danger; Handouts A-C; the tower's five keys and creature profiles.
- **Schedule:** opening 10 minutes; Scene 1 25; Scene 2 30; break 10; Scene 3 35; Scene 4 and ending 40.
- **Compact route:** Sable issues passage after the first reasonable question; Nessa shows the tower's ground-floor service hatch; use two archive rounds before automatic discovery. Keep the hearing and its choices.
- **Prior results:** River Light means the water is safe and Mara can carry a message along it; Mechanical Safeguard provides Lenna's reliable rope ferry. Neither bypasses the need to settle the road dispute. Mara's Trust gets Sable's initial attention, not automatic agreement.
- **Tone:** disciplined skeletal guards, a silent tower, and the weight of a promise. No gore, torture, cruelty, or forced sacrifice. Opponents accept surrender and do not strike unconscious heroes.
- **Family play:** let players plan with tokens and drawings. They may describe a speech instead of performing it. A quiet player can hold the covenant and point out a clause while another speaks.

- **Optional gentle defeat, homebrew:** at 0 HP a hero is stable and unconscious. A total defeat leads to the Watch's dry infirmary and a supervised hearing, with weapons returned once the group agrees to talk.

Hook

Carpenter **Nessa Vale** asks the heroes to escort her repair cart to the bridge. Innkeepers offer 15 gp per hero for resolving passage before festival wagons turn back. Nessa asks for an honest account, even if the Watch has a point; payment never requires defeating skeletons.

If continuing the trilogy, the folded mill promise points directly to the tower's three shields. Let each player describe one change their previous victory made in town. Keep the earlier improvement real as the party leaves for this separate problem.

Stakes

The festival needs travelers, and travelers need safe shelter. Sable needs proof that the living recognize a reciprocal agreement. Orrin fears another winter of duty performed for people who will not even open a door.

Dusk clock, 0-3: tick once after Scene 2 and once after Scene 3. Tick once more only if the party deliberately attacks travelers, burns supplies, or repeatedly abandons the investigation; announce the consequence before such a choice. Ordinary discussion, searching, failed rolls, and the break cost no ticks. At 1, cold rain begins. At 2, a wagon elects to return home. At 3, all remaining merchants seek shelter in town and tomorrow's opening is smaller. The bridge can still reopen tonight. This clock measures lost goodwill, not an impending slaughter.

Factions

The Winter Watch: Sable wants lawful, mutual service; Orrin wants clear limits against exploitation. Their leverage is the bridge. They disagree over methods. They will accept an honest new agreement or an honorable end to their watch; they reject compelled promises.

Roadside households: Nessa and the innkeepers want travelers housed and traffic restored. They possess timber, tools, cooking pots, and spare beds. They can offer a practical replacement for the abandoned shelter, but someone must maintain the list of willing hosts.

Festival committee: Elian wants the road open and hopes a token apology will suffice. He can allocate supplies, reopen the shelter, or fund a new arrangement. If the heroes held him accountable at the mill, he arrives already prepared to listen; otherwise he admits the closure when shown the lock bearing his seal.

Locations

Location: Briarbridge

Thirty minutes south of Lanternwick, the bridge crosses east-west over the Blackwater. It is 80 feet long and 15 feet wide, with a 3-foot parapet. East-bank wagons wait in a broad roadside clearing. The welcome shelter lies beside the western end; the watchtower is 40 feet beyond it. Low banks allow a rowboat to land safely; the river here is 25 feet wide beyond the bridge abutments and slow enough for a rope ferry. No route requires swimming.

Location: The Watchtower and Shelter

The book's map appendix and the native bundle include the companion location diagram. The keyed text below gives all routes and distances needed to run this standalone packet.

Keyed text map: T1 bridge checkpoint leads west to T2 locked welcome shelter. Forty feet north of T2 is T3 tower ground floor. T3's broad stair climbs 12 feet to T4 shield gallery, which opens into T5 archive on the same level. A ground-floor service hatch in T3 leads through a dry crawlway and a ladder directly to T5. The tower's eastern door and the shelter clearing are safe exits. Windows have ledges and intact lower walls; nobody must balance over an unguarded drop.

T2 is a 20-foot-square, weather-tight room holding stacked festival bunting, a locked empty kettle cupboard, and a visitors' bench. T3 holds sandbags and spare shields. T4 is 30 by 20 feet with the three rotating shields on its north wall. T5 is 20 feet square with a stone reading table and three document drawers. The roof is open to the sky only over the disused western stairwell, which is roped off and not needed.

Encounter Matrix

ENCOUNTER	PLACE AND TIME	PLAY	MATERIAL CONSEQUENCE
1: Terms at the Bridge	T1; 25 minutes	Parley, reconnaissance, optional skirmish	Earn passage, or enter as supervised petitioners
2: The Three Shields	T2-T4; 30 minutes	Clue puzzle, exploration, optional hazard	Find the agreement through one of three routes
3: The Archive under Orders	T5; 35 minutes	Changing terrain, negotiation, optional combat	Recover evidence and decide how to treat Orrin
4: The Hearing at Dusk	T2; 30 minutes	Practical negotiation	Reopen the road by renewing or ending the Watch's service

Scenes

Scene 1: A Captain without a Welcome

Runtime: 25 minutes. **Objective:** establish safe access and understand the grievance. **Stakes:** the party can win passage without agreeing that a blockade was justified.

READ-ALoud

You see a blue ribbon knotted around the captain's dented shield, the only bright color in the line of waiting guards. You hear the river moving beneath the stones and the quiet clink of mail as she steps forward. Cold rain begins to spot the bridge. Her open hand points toward an empty bench beside the checkpoint. What do you say or do before crossing?

Sable speaks first: "The road is closed, but your voices are not. Sit, if you wish." Her skeletons stand 20 feet behind her. She explains the shelter closure and offers supervised passage to inspect the covenant. This is available without a roll if anyone asks for the evidence or offers to inspect the shelter. Persuasion DC 12 earns unsupervised passage; invoking Mara's Trust grants advantage, not automatic success.

Three distinct approaches work. **Parley:** accept a blue passage ribbon and investigate openly. **Go around:** use Nessa's boat or Lenna's ferry to reach the western bank; a careful crossing with rope requires no check, but the party enters the tower without Sable's protection from patrols. **Challenge the blockade:** fight two Watch Sentries, who aim to restrain and withdraw rather than kill. Victory secures the bridge temporarily; Sable still offers the hearing when the fighting ends. She retreats before reaching 0 HP and can be spoken to again.

Everyone can learn that the shelter was closed: the door has a fresh committee padlock, Nessa received a cancellation note, and Sable describes the empty hearth. No single clue or check gates this conclusion. The Watch has no secret command to betray the town later.

Success: obtain passage and optionally Sable's provisional respect. **Fail-forward:** defeat means a supervised investigation with Nessa as witness; sneaking past leads to the same shelter clearing. **Transition:** walk to T2, where the shelter's bench gives the first clue to the three shields.

Scene 2: Who Stands at the Door?

Runtime: 30 minutes. **Objective:** open a safe route to the archive. **Stakes:** a clever plan saves time and preserves defenses the town may want to keep.

READ-ALoud

You see a dust-free rectangle where the shelter's kettle once stood. You smell cedar boards from Nessa's cart and cold ash from the unused hearth. Beyond the open tower door, three shields turn slowly on their mounts: a cup, a lantern, and an open hand. You hear a soft click whenever one faces the room. What do you inspect, and where do you want Nessa's help?

The shelter padlock opens with Nessa's spare key, Elian's permission, thieves' tools DC 11, or ten minutes removing the hinge pins. A failed tool attempt leaves the lock intact and the other methods available. Inside, Handout A is carved beneath the bench. Nessa can read it aloud. The same verse appears beside the gallery doorway.

In T4 the shields each have a floor socket. The intended arrangement, **left to right: hand, cup, lantern**, represents greeting, refreshment, and safe rest. Handout A explicitly gives that order; the task rewards noticing and interpreting, not outside trivia. Anyone can rotate a shield as an action. When arranged correctly, the archive door unlatches. An incorrect arrangement causes a warning tap from inside the wall. On a second incorrect arrangement, a padded practice arm swings along a clearly marked stripe; Dexterity save DC 11 or 3 bludgeoning damage. It resets without trapping anyone.

Three routes: solve the shields; use Nessa's knowledge of the service hatch and crawlway; or jam the practice arm with a sandbag and lift the archive latch through a grille, Strength (Athletics) DC 12. On failure the sandbag tears, but a second bag and assistance make the next lift automatic. The crawlway takes ten minutes and admits one person at a time; it has air, handholds, and a pull rope. It is not a darkness or suffocation trap.

Hints: first point out the verse's sequence words; then ask what a tired traveler needs first; finally have Nessa name the three symbols in order. Give the next hint when requested, not after a failed roll.

Success: enter T5 with defenses intact or safely disabled. **Fail-forward:** Orrin hears the commotion and opens the archive to demand their business. **Transition:** advance Dusk once, then continue inside. The group may take a short rest in the shelter before entering without another tick.

Scene 3: The Last Order

Runtime: 35 minutes. **Objective:** recover the covenant without letting an emergency mechanism destroy it. **Stakes:** how the party treats Orrin affects the hearing and future Watch cooperation.

READ-ALoud

You see three open drawers around a stone reading table. Rain glitters on an iron shutter above a small high window. You hear a measured scraping as a skeleton in a split green cloak lowers a lever beside the door. A warm lantern on the table lights a folded sheet beneath clear glass. The skeleton looks from your faces to the paper. What do you do as the shutter begins to descend?

Orrin triggered an old archive lockdown to keep the agreement from being taken or altered. The mechanism pushes a heavy protective slab across the reading table; it will crease and damage the brittle paper unless stopped. He expects the case to be sturdier than it is. Tell players the visible danger immediately. This is not a surprise destruction of their only clue: the full covenant is also carved inside the east shutter, and Nessa possesses the visitors' clause on an old survey.

Run **Archive Danger**, 0-4. At each round's end add one; at 2 the slab covers half the table and at 4 it cracks the glass and damages the original. The carving and survey remain legible. An action wedges the slab with a shield, crowbar, or two spare boards, automatically preventing its next tick; the object bends but is not destroyed. Switching off the mechanism at the door requires an action and Intelligence (Investigation), thieves' tools, or Strength (Athletics) DC 12. Failure does not advance the clock beyond its normal round-end tick.

Three approaches: **convince Orrin** by showing the blue ribbon or pointing out that the slab threatens his evidence; he stops the mechanism without a roll if shown the crack forming in the case. **Retrieve the paper** using an action and Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) DC 12; on failure the hand withdraws safely and may try again. **Fight or restrain him** while another hero stops the machine; use two sentries with Orrin represented by one of them. He surrenders if the document is secure or his companion falls.

Give Handout B in every outcome. Ask whether the heroes preserve, copy, or entrust the original to someone. Taking it by force gains proof but leaves Orrin suspicious; returning it after a public reading can repair that relationship.

Success: original saved and covenant understood; respectful treatment earns **Orrin Heard**. **Fail-forward:** use the shutter carving and survey to make a witnessed copy. Orrin admits his error when he sees the damage. **Transition:** advance Dusk once, then take the evidence to the shelter for a hearing with Sable, Nessa, and Elian.

Scene 4: A Door Opened Freely

Runtime: 30 minutes plus ten for rewards. **Objective:** reopen passage through a workable agreement. **Stakes:** a promise extracted by force will not renew the covenant.

READ-ALoud

You see Nessa set the visitors' bench between the captain and the festival steward. You hear rain drum on the shelter roof while someone carries a kettle inside. Elian folds his notebook closed. Sable lays her shield flat on the bench, leaving her hands empty. Beyond them, travelers lift their heads from beneath their hoods. How do you present what you found, and whose concern do you address first?

Let players choose who reads, who proposes practical repairs, and who asks the hard questions. No performance or Persuasion check is required to understand the terms. Sable admits that innocent travelers paid for the committee's mistake; Elian admits closing the shelter. Neither is entitled to the party's forgiveness.

Resolve three concrete issues: **where will travelers be welcomed; who volunteers to maintain it; what service will the Watch freely offer?** Nessa can repair the shelter, Elian can fund supplies, and two named innkeepers can share hospitality if the group asks. The party need not pledge itself to a lifetime job. Sable offers night patrols and safe passage, not obedience to the town's every order.

Paths differ. **Restore:** reopen T2 with supplies and a caretaker schedule, gaining **Open Road**. **Replace:** use willing host households and a sign at the bridge, gaining **Open Road** while turning the shelter into a shared workshop; Orrin Heard makes him volunteer to keep the traveler list. **End service:** publicly release the Watch, let Sable withdraw, and establish Nessa's volunteer road patrol, gaining **Living Patrol**. **Force passage:** disperse the guards and use the road without agreement; record **Unsettled Road** and let wagons cross now, but the town must provide escorts in episode three.

If the agreement is freely accepted, Sable offers **Sable's Word**, her voluntary promise to attend the Halloween hearing. This is distinct from **Open Road**: threats may reopen the route but do not buy her support. She may agree to speak at the finale even if her winter service ends honorably.

Success: traffic resumes and the party records its chosen result. **Fail-forward:** if negotiation stalls, Nessa arranges temporary passage for tonight in return for a public meeting tomorrow. Record **Temporary Passage**, not **Open Road** or **Sable's Word**. **Transition:** the covenant's final clause calls for a place at the harvest table on Halloween, where the Hollow Reeve will speak for the returning field workers. Advance the heroes to level 4.

Encounters

Encounter 1: Terms at the Bridge

Setup: two sentries at the west end, Sable ten feet ahead.

Tactics: hold position, offer surrender, use shields to protect travelers; no pushing into the river. **Noncombat:** supervised passage or a rope boat crossing. **Escalation:** combat attracts Sable, who calls for a pause after two rounds. **Scaling:** three heroes face one sentry, five face three. **Success:** access or temporary control. **Fail-forward:** supervised petitioners. **Transition:** shelter and tower.

Encounter 2: The Three Shields

Setup: three symbols, an accessible verse, practice arm, alternate crawlway. **Procedure:** hand-cup-lantern opens the door. **Pressure:** preserve rather than smash the old defenses. **Noncombat:** puzzle, service hatch, or sandbag-and-latch solution. **Escalation:** second wrong arrangement triggers the marked practice arm. **Success:** safe entry. **Fail-forward:** Orrin opens the door to challenge the noise. **Transition:** archive.

Encounter 3: The Archive under Orders

Setup: Orrin and one sentry beside a four-round moving slab. **Tactics:** block access to the document, not kill intruders. **Noncombat:** show Orrin the paper's danger, wedge the slab, copy the visible carving, or retrieve the original. **Scaling:** three heroes face Orrin alone; five add one sentry, while leaving the same four-round clock. For injured parties, Orrin argues and does not attack. **Success:** original secure. **Fail-forward:** carved and surveyed copies preserve all information. **Transition:** hearing with proof in any outcome.

Encounter 4: The Hearing at Dusk

Procedure: resolve place, maintenance, and voluntary service. Match a practical proposal to each concern; good-faith feasible plans succeed without dice. One social check DC 12 can win an extra concession, such as a repaired shelter paid entirely by the committee. On failure the base deal remains available. **Pressure:** mutual accountability. **Noncombat:** restoration, replacement, or honorable separation. **Success:** chosen road state, perhaps **Sable's Word**. **Fail-forward:** Nessa's temporary passage. **Transition:** Halloween supper and the Hollow Reeve.

NPCs

NPC: Captain Sable

Skeleton captain, blue ribbon, shield with carefully polished rim. Wants reciprocal winter service; fears her Watch becoming a tool of force. Speaks formally but answers plain questions. Knows the old bargain generally, not the archive's exact modern interpretation. Gives passage and can release the blockade. Honest criticism earns respect; threats secure compliance at most, never her voluntary Word. She apologizes to travelers if challenged with evidence.

NPC: Orrin

Skeleton lieutenant, split green cloak, remembers every unkept duty. Wants the agreement read aloud; fears its destruction or convenient rewriting. Speaks in short remembered orders. Knows the archive mechanisms but misjudges the paper's condition. Offers archival knowledge if heard; pressure makes him demand witnesses. Betrayal leads him to ask for a public copy rather than attack after surrender.

NPC: Nessa Vale

Carpenter, cedar shavings in her pockets. Wants a useful shelter; fears arguments replacing repair. Knows the service hatch and old survey. Gives a ladder, boards, and practical solutions. She refuses orders to burn or destroy the tower but continues helping travelers. Treating her as an equal earns volunteer maintenance without a roll.

NPC: Elian Voss

Festival steward, now out in the rain with everyone else. Wants passage restored; fears admitting that three "small savings" damaged a covenant. Knows the supper was canceled too. Offers money and labor when asked for specifics. If previously accountable at the mill, he arrives with supplies; otherwise he must send for them after agreeing, without extra clock ticks.

Reference Appendix

These are original **homebrew 5e-compatible** opponents. Use ordinary group rules except stated adventure procedures. No unlisted resistances or immunities apply; saving throws use the ability modifiers below. Undead are affected by turning normally. They accept surrender and leave unconscious characters unharmed.

Watch Sentry: Medium undead; AC 13; HP 22; speed 25 feet; STR +2, DEX +1, CON +1, INT +0, WIS +1, CHA +0; passive Perception 11. **Blunted spear:** melee +4, reach 5 feet, one target; 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning. Once per round after hitting, the sentry may move itself 5 feet without provoking an opportunity attack from that target. It makes one attack per action. At 0 HP it collapses into still bones; its spirit retreats for the night. The collapse is described without gore.

Orrin: use Watch Sentry, HP 28. He spends his first action explaining the lockdown if not attacked first. At half HP he asks for surrender terms and will accept a ceasefire that protects the document. His authority does not negate another creature's turn or a player's successful action.

Captain Sable: use Watch Sentry, HP 34, Charisma +2. She prefers negotiation and is not added to a combat already containing the baseline sentries. If fighting breaks out she calls a ceasefire after two rounds, withdrawing behind her shield rather than escalating to a boss fight.

Practice arm hazard: visible stripe, 10 feet long and 5 feet wide; triggers only on the second and later wrong shield arrangements. Dexterity save DC 11, 3 bludgeoning on

failure, none on success. A sandbag disables it with an action. The arm cannot strike the stairs, exits, or service hatch.

Short rest: the shelter is a safe place once opened. Let the heroes use normal Hit Dice and rest features. No resource award requires defeating a sentry; bypassing one is equally successful play.

Handouts

Handout: A - The Shelter Verse

Visibility: player-safe

"First offer your HAND at the door. Next give the traveler a CUP. Last set a LANTERN beside a place to rest. Let these three stand from left to right, as welcome grows from greeting into shelter."

Handout: B - The Briarbridge Covenant

Visibility: player-safe

"A light shall be kept for the river, a welcome offered upon the road, and a place laid for the neighbors who tended these fields before us. River, road, and field shall in return be guarded through the winter. Neither company owns the other. Neither vow nor service shall be compelled. On the night of the last harvest procession, one willing voice of the living, one of the Watch, and one of the Harvest shall speak the year's agreement before the river bell. Let all hear, and let each promise endure for one year only."

Handout: C - A Plan for the Road

Visibility: player-safe

"Our welcome will be at: _____. The willing keepers are: _____. Supplies will come from: _____. The road's guardians offer: _____. What we ask them to stop doing: _____. When we will meet again: _____."

Resolution Paths

Open Road: restore the shelter or create the willing-household welcome described in Scene 4. The Watch resumes road protection.

Living Patrol: end supernatural service honorably. Nessa organizes volunteers; Sable may still offer her Word as a witness.

Temporary Passage or Unsettled Road: traffic moves tonight, but the finale needs a practical escort. Never reverse an already-earned Open Road.

Rewards and Follow-Up

Pay 15 gp per hero and advance to level 4. Nessa gives the party a **bridgekeeper's cord**, an ordinary 50-foot rope braided blue and gray, and repairs one mundane shield free of charge. Sable may present a blue ribbon as a symbol of passage; it grants recognition by her Watch, not magical control over undead.

DM ledger: Open Road / Living Patrol / Temporary Passage / Unsettled Road; Sable's Word yes/no; Orrin Heard yes/no; original covenant or witnessed copy; hosts and supplies; Elian's restitution. Carry all previous river flags forward unchanged. The Hollow Reeve's approaching procession concerns the final harvest promise, not a secret betrayal by Sable.

DM Table Reference

Use these prompts when the hearing slows or a player asks an unexpected question. They clarify existing motives; they do not introduce new conditions for success.

Sable's opening line: "I can open a road. I cannot make a welcome by ordering one." If accused of frightening innocent people, she answers, "That was my decision, and they paid for it. I will hear what I owe them." If the party asks her to obey forever, she declines and points to the covenant's one-year limit. A request for an apology is reasonable; a request for mindless obedience is not.

Orrin's opening line: "Read it where everyone can hear. Then tell me which words you intend to keep." If the original was damaged, he admits the lockdown was his mistake. He will dictate the carving slowly while another character writes. If treated respectfully after the argument, he offers to keep a public copy in the shelter so that no one has to enter the archive next year.

Nessa's opening line: "We have boards, blankets, and people getting cold. Which useful thing are we doing first?" If a younger or quieter player is unsure how to contribute, she offers two concrete jobs: lay out the shelter plan or inventory the cart. Either provides a real contribution to the maintenance proposal without requiring a speech or check.

Elian's opening line: "I counted the coins I would save. I did not count who would be left outside." Ask him for a specific repair, supply order, or duty shift. He can fund the shelter materials immediately; he cannot promise that every household will host travelers. A new host list therefore requires volunteers, supplied by the willing innkeepers already present.

If everyone disagrees: take one turn around the table, asking each player for one thing their character will accept and one thing they will not promise. Nessa then proposes tonight's temporary passage. This preserves the unresolved choice without trapping the family in an endless argument. Record the actual result, and let the final adventure acknowledge it honestly.

When the Last Lantern Goes Out



Dungeon Master's edition

The heroes are invited to lead a section of Lanternwick's Halloween procession. Ask each player to choose a mask or lantern design and name one person or group they hope to see. These details return in the ending. Elian asks them to help when the first lights fail; he promises 20 gp per hero from the committee's emergency fund, whether they renew the pact or establish another workable protection.

OPENING READ-ALoud

You see the festival street reflected in a hundred painted masks: foxes, owls, moons, and faces made of folded leaves. You smell toasted apples and warm bread from the supper carts. Then the nearest lantern goes out. You hear its glass knock once against the post, although no one touches it. Across the square, three more lights darken in a line toward the western road. Beyond the bridge, shapes move between the harvested rows. Who stays with the procession, and what do you follow or investigate first?

Overview

Halloween has arrived in Lanternwick. As the masked procession gathers, lights go dark in the square, restless harvest workers walk the western fields, and a tall figure waits beneath the orchard trees. Discover what the final promise asks, bring the right people together, and choose how the town will face the coming winter.

The finale of **Lanternwick's Long Night** is an original, 5e-compatible adventure for **3-5 level-4 characters**, balanced for four. Allow **165 minutes**, including a break; a compact route takes 120. It also works alone: explain the three covenant promises and begin with no ally flags, then allow the in-session alternatives below. The town can be saved through renewed guardianship, independent living stewardship, or a temporary truce. None requires sacrificing a person, pet, memory, or character ability.

DM truth: the old agreement offered a river light, a welcome at the road, and a place at the harvest table, in return for winter guardianship. Elian Voss omitted the remembrance supper from the festival plan. The missing welcome has attracted **Hush wisps**, wandering scraps of unclaimed winter magic. They are extinguishing the festival lights and animating the timber festival arch. They are not controlled by the Hollow Reeve, the masked representative of the Harvest dead. The Reeve approaches to negotiate, while intact, earth-stained harvest workers try to deliver their last sheaves to a table that no longer exists.

Preserve earlier victories: River Light still protects the mill and river. Open Road still protects the bridge. The darkening festival square is a separate, unresolved harvest problem. Mechanical Safeguard and Living Patrol likewise continue to function. This finale rewards previous choices instead of making the players repeat them.

At a Glance

- **Prepare:** six tokens for Nightfall; four for the finale's Gale; the campaign ledger; copies of Handouts A-C; the three creature profiles and the square's six location keys.
- **Schedule:** opening and recap 10 minutes; Scene 1 25; Scene 2 35; break 10; Scene 3 30; Scene 4 and ending 55.
- **Compact route:** resolve crowd safety in one round, begin the fields with two harvesters, have the Reeve already waiting near the supper cart, and limit the finale to three preparations. Keep the choice of agreement.
- **Family tone:** masks, moving lantern shadows, undead farmhands, and a storm-shaped adversary. No gore, rot, infection, possession, or punishing horror. Offer a clear pause signal and describe attacks as cold, bruises, and knocked-away equipment.
- **Optional gentle defeat, homebrew:** 0 HP means stable and unconscious. A whole-party defeat leads to shelter in the mill or inn; the square is damaged, but the Reeve accepts a hearing at dawn. Show this cost without killing named townspeople.

- **Equipment:** Elian provides three lanterns, a coil of rope, two blankets, a wheeled supper cart, and enough bread and apples to set a table. The party never needs to buy a plot solution.

Hook

The heroes are invited to lead a section of Lanternwick's Halloween procession. Ask each player to choose a mask or lantern design and name one person or group they hope to see. These details return in the ending. Elian asks them to help when the first lights fail; he promises 20 gp per hero from the committee's emergency fund, whether they renew the pact or establish another workable protection.

If playing independently, Nessa explains that the mill and bridge have recently suffered disputes with their guardians; tonight the heroes have authority to propose a practical settlement. Mara and Sable can be contacted through the river bell and blue bridge ribbon found on Elian's desk. Neither requires a previous module to understand the present problem.

Stakes

The square may become unusable, guests may lose their way, and the town may face winter without a settled protection plan. The Reeve risks returning unheard. The workers risk carrying their harvest until dawn with nobody willing to receive it. These are serious problems with humane solutions.

Nightfall clock, 0-6: advance once on leaving Scene 1, once on leaving Scene 2, and once on leaving Scene 3. Add a tick only for explicitly listed field failures or deliberately destroying a peace offering after warning. No ticks for discussion, checking rules, hints, or the break. At 2, unprotected side streets darken; at 4, the square's stalls close and guests move to inns; at 6, strong wind strips the festival banners and the main parade ends early. The party can still save the town. Additional ticks at 6 have no effect. Never extinguish a restored river light or cancel an earned road protection.

Campaign Advantages

Read the ledger aloud to make past choices visible. Each benefit applies once unless stated otherwise. Do not award both alternatives for the same prior decision.

EARLIER RESULT	BENEFIT TONIGHT
River Light	The east quay is always safely lit. In Scene 1, the river-side crowd task succeeds automatically.
Mechanical Safeguard	Lenna's ferry moves guests to the lit mill. It completes the same crowd task, with a volunteer assigned to keep the boat running.
EARLIER RESULT	BENEFIT TONIGHT
Mara's Trust	Mara carries the river bell's sound to the square; no one must transport the bell.

EARLIER RESULT	BENEFIT TONIGHT
	Without it, use the public witness alternative in Scene 4.
Open Road	Bridge guests reach shelter without an escort; complete that crowd task automatically.
Living Patrol	Nessa's patrol completes the bridge crowd task. It remains on duty rather than helping with the arch.
Sable's Word	Sable arrives willingly and cancels one Gale tick by holding the arch's line.
Orrin Heard	Orrin brings a clear covenant copy, giving the group one extra preparation before the finale.
Elian accepted restitution	His supply cart is already packed; otherwise he gathers it during Scene 1 without a roll.

Temporary Passage and Unsettled Road create no automatic success, but the party can escort guests in Scene 1. Missing allies never remove an ending; willing representation can be established during the hearing, and living stewardship requires no undead service.

Factions

The living town: Elian, Lenna, Nessa, and the guests want safety and a celebration worth keeping. Their strengths are equipment, hospitality, and the freedom to take responsibility themselves. They disagree over restoring old customs versus creating new ones.

The Winter Watch: Sable will not sign an order that makes her soldiers servants forever. She offers road guardianship or an orderly withdrawal. Orrin insists the public hear what is promised. Either may represent the Watch voluntarily; neither can sign on the other's behalf without consent.

The Harvest company: the Hollow Reeve speaks for the returning field workers, who want their work received and their names acknowledged if known. They accept anonymous remembrance too. Their offer is frost-warning and winter field protection, not power over crops or weather on demand. The Reeve cannot control Hush wisps or demand souls.

Locations

Location: Lanternwick Festival Square

The book's map appendix and the native bundle include the companion location diagram. The keyed text below gives all routes and distances needed to run this standalone packet.

Player-facing plan: Q1 east quay, always connected by a clear five-minute lane to Q2 inn doors; Q3 supper table sits in the square's center; Q4 timber festival arch stands on its western edge; Q5 three lamp posts form a triangle around the table; Q6 western lane leads to Briarbridge and the fields. The square is 60 feet across. Each lamp post is 20 feet

from the table; the arch is 25 feet west of it. The inn doors and quay lane remain exits even if the arch falls. Market carts supply half cover; paths between them are 10 feet wide.

Location: Harvest Fields and Hush Orchard

Beyond Briarbridge, walk fifteen minutes west to a cart track dividing three harvested strips. F1 leaning scarecrow stands beside the track; F2 sheaf cart waits 30 feet north; F3 lantern ditch, shallow and 5 feet wide, runs west for 40 feet to F4 orchard gate. A flat plank across the ditch is in plain sight. Beyond the gate, two rows of apple trees lead 60 feet to F5 standing supper stone. The river lies east, behind the travelers; the town lights remain visible across it.

The orchard is a meeting place, not a maze. Paths loop back to the gate. No failed navigation check strands the party or advances Nightfall.

Encounter Matrix

ENCOUNTER	PLACE AND TIME	PLAY	WHAT IT EARNS
1: The Darkened Procession	Square; 25 minutes	Rescue, coordination, investigation	Safety and clues to the empty supper
2: The Last Sheaves	Fields; 35 minutes	Zombie encounter, exploration, optional combat	Harvest welcome, food cart, and an honest account
3: The Guest beyond the Gate	Orchard; 30 minutes	Negotiation and discovery	The Reeve's terms and choice of ending
4: The Last Lantern	Square; 40 minutes	Changing battlefield, teamwork, optional combat	A protected town and a freely chosen future

Scenes

Scene 1: Follow the Missing Light

Runtime: 25 minutes. **Objective:** settle the crowd and find the cause of the procession's disruption. **Stakes:** frightened guests need a safe route while the party investigates.

READ-ALoud

You see a paper owl mask lying beside a spilled basket of apples. You hear an innkeeper calling, "This door is open," over the tapping of loose lantern glass. Cold air moves down the western lane, lifting the corners of the empty supper tablecloth. A pale spark hangs beneath the arch and then slips toward the fields. Where do you direct people, and what do you examine?

Resolve three visible tasks: guide quay guests to light; escort bridge arrivals to an open inn; secure the empty supper cart before it rolls down the lane. Apply ledger advantages first. Remaining tasks use one meaningful action per hero in table order: a clear plan with suitable equipment succeeds, or a player can attempt Athletics, Survival, Persuasion, or relevant tools DC 11 for an improvised quick approach. On failure the guest group waits safely or the cart stops against a post; the next hero can complete that task with help. There is no damage and no extra clock tick.

If a Hush Wisp is confronted, it circles the empty table. It retreats toward the fields when shown a lit lantern or attacked; its full profile is used later. Do not turn crowd safety into a prolonged introductory battle.

Three routes reveal the essential conclusion: inspect the blank place marked "remembrance" on the table plan; ask Elian, who admits canceling that part of supper; or follow spilled grain leading toward the western lane. All clues are freely discoverable. Investigation DC 11 reveals that the wisp avoids occupied places and warm food, granting a useful field hint on success; failure still reveals the canceled supper.

Success: guests reach safety and the party receives the supper cart and provisions. **Fail-forward:** Lenna completes any unfinished safety task while the heroes follow the clue; no named guest is lost. **Transition:** advance Nightfall once, then cross the bridge and follow the grain to Scene 2. Restored road protection remains active.

Scene 2: The Workers Who Cannot Put Down Their Load

Runtime: 35 minutes. **Objective:** understand the harvesters and bring a genuine offering to the meeting. **Stakes:** treating confused workers as disposable enemies may cost an ally, but does not block progress.

READ-ALoud

You see three figures moving through the stubble in patched coats, each carrying a sheaf of grain. You hear dry stalks scrape their sleeves and the slow creak of a cart axle. The air smells of damp earth and cut straw. One figure stops beside a fallen lantern, lifts its head, and holds its bundle toward you. What do you do with the offered harvest?

The three **Restless Harvesters** are undead neighbors returning to deliver the season's last grain. Their bodies are intact and earth-stained; describe tired movements and worn coats without rot. They repeat, "Where is our place?" They are not contagious, possessed villagers, or victims requiring a violent cure.

Three approaches: **receive the harvest** by accepting a sheaf and placing it on the supper cart; **guide the workers** by setting a lantern beside the cart and inviting them to the table; or **make room by force** using combat, turning, or restraint to pass the track. A sincere invitation works

without a social roll. A clear spoken explanation, written sign, or pantomime all count. When welcomed, the workers settle their loads and become peaceful, granting **Harvest Welcome**. They offer the slate in Handout A and help pull the cart.

If combat starts, only two harvesters fight while the third protects the sheaves. They aim to push armed figures off the track, not pursue. At the end of round two, a Hush Wisp pulls the cart toward the ditch. Any character can spend an action holding its rope; Athletics DC 11 stops it immediately, or two characters hold it automatically. Failure advances Nightfall once and spills some grain into the shallow ditch; the slate and a usable sheaf remain. The third worker will help if someone first accepts its bundle. Stopping the cart grants Harvest Welcome even after a skirmish, if the heroes also cease attacking and offer a place.

If the party disperses or turns every worker, the slate remains tied to the cart, and the orchard gate has the same invitation carved on it. Food from town is a valid offering; nobody must obtain an item from a defeated creature.

Success: Harvest Welcome, helpers, and a cart of grain. **Fail-forward:** use the surviving slate or gate carving and the town provisions. A spilled cart changes the workers' reception, not access to the Reeve. **Transition:** advance Nightfall once, then take the flat plank across the ditch to the orchard. A short rest is safe at the gate; it adds no clock ticks.

Scene 3: The Figure at the Supper Stone

Runtime: 30 minutes. **Objective:** understand the available agreements and choose the town's intended course. **Stakes:** the heroes must distinguish a frightening appearance from an actual threat.

READ-ALoud

You see a tall figure beneath an apple tree, wearing a coat stitched with fallen leaves and a plain wooden mask. You hear an apple drop softly onto the grass. The stone beside the figure is set with three empty cups. Warm light from your lantern touches a carved bell on its edge. The figure steps away from the cups, leaving room for you. What do you ask before anyone takes a place?

The **Hollow Reeve** greets the party by their chosen names if introduced, never by secret personal history. Its voice sounds like several people speaking gently together. It wants the harvest received and a voluntary agreement heard. It explains: "A place can be made for those whose names you never knew. Nobody here owes us a life."

Present Handout B and answer questions plainly. The wisps gather around an empty promise; a freely offered meal and clear public decision will release them. The arch's frame has become their temporary body, a **Lantern Husk**. Destroying that body can buy time but cannot decide the agreement for the town. No one must bow, remove a mask,

reveal a secret, or promise a dead relative anything.

Three courses are valid. **Renew:** keep or honestly replace the three forms of care, hear three willing representatives, and ask the guardians to serve for one year. Mechanical Safeguard or Living Patrol may remain as the town's contributions in a revised contract; nobody must undo them to restore an antique custom. **Release:** offer supper and publicly end future supernatural service; the town maintains river, road, and field itself. **Truce:** invite the Harvest guests for tonight, protect people, and schedule a meeting at dawn to settle the winter terms. The last option saves lives and homes now but ends the parade early.

If Harvest Welcome is present, the Reeve offers one **shared labor** preparation: its workers anchor the supper table, canceling one Gale tick in Scene 4. Without the flag, a specific sincere invitation and a place for the sheaves can earn the same help now. This requires acknowledging the workers rather than pretending the earlier skirmish never happened. The Reeve freely attends any public hearing; it does not promise agreement to unknown terms.

Success: choose an intended course and invite the Reeve to town. **Fail-forward:** if the party rejects its company, it leaves Handout B and agrees to hear the public decision from the orchard; living stewardship or a truce remains possible. **Transition:** advance Nightfall once and return with the cart to the square. Let players plan three preparations before Scene 4; Orrin Heard grants a fourth.

Scene 4: The Last Lantern

Runtime: 40 minutes plus fifteen for the ending. **Objective:** keep a safe gathering while the town makes its decision. **Stakes:** the winter relationship and the festival's ending are in the players' hands.

READ-ALoud

You see the festival arch bend forward, its timber feet scraping a white line across the cobbles. You hear its empty lantern hooks chime against one another. Cold wind lifts the tablecloth, but warm light still shines from the inn doors. Three lamp posts stand around the supper table, and the western lane remains clear behind the moving frame. What do you secure first, and where do you want everyone to gather?

Place the Lantern Husk at Q4 and two Hush Wisps 15 feet to either side of it. Guests are already sheltered; nobody is secretly trapped under the arch. Heroes begin anywhere around Q3 or Q5. Use the **Gale procedure** in Encounter 4. The Husk is visibly too large to enter the inn lane or quay lane; safe retreat is available throughout.

Before initiative, each preparation chosen in Scene 3 grants one concrete benefit: **brace a post** so one knockdown there automatically fails; **lay supper** to complete the first finale objective; **run a rope** so one hero can pull another 15 feet as an action without a check; **organize a living witness** to make Elian, Lenna, or Nessa ready to state the public decision. The same preparation cannot be chosen twice.

Missing food can be supplied by the inn with one action during the finale.

The three objectives are **welcome**, **witness**, and **decision**, completed in any order. Welcome means placing food and a chair or sheaf space at Q3, then making a sincere invitation. Witness means relaying the mill bell or organizing a public spoken acknowledgment. Mara's Trust supplies the bell relay without an action; otherwise a hero spends an action inviting the assembled townspeople to repeat what is said. The covenant allows all to hear; the Reeve accepts a spoken witness for a freely amended agreement. Decision means a willing living representative states the chosen terms and the relevant other representatives freely respond, using the ending rules below. A hero spends an action giving them a clear speaking interval. No roll determines whether a promise is sincere.

Heroes may complete objectives, fight, protect friends, move lamps, or invent equivalent solutions. If a hero gives up an attack to advance the agreement, the opposition does not secretly become immune to that approach. Once all three objectives are complete, the wisps settle into ordinary lantern flames and the Husk becomes still timber, regardless of remaining HP.

Success: the square is safe and the chosen ending takes effect. **Fail-forward:** Gale 6 damages stalls and moves the gathering into the inn, where the same three objectives can be completed without further attacks; the parade ends early, but the town is not destroyed. Total-party defeat leads to the dawn hearing described above. **Transition:** narrate winter preparations and each player's mask or lantern reappearing in a personal closing moment.

Encounters

Encounter 1: The Darkened Procession

Setup: quay guests, bridge arrivals, supper cart. **Procedure:** apply past benefits, then resolve remaining safety tasks through practical plans or DC 11 checks. **Noncombat:** every approach. **Pressure:** coordinate rather than chase the first moving light. **Escalation:** the wisp indicates the western trail. **Success:** safe guests and supplies. **Fail-forward:** Lenna finishes assistance. **Transition:** grain trail to the fields, Nightfall +1.

Encounter 2: The Last Sheaves

Setup: three harvesters, one defensive bystander until needed, sheaf cart and plank crossing. **Tactics:** two block the track; neither attacks a creature accepting a sheaf. **Noncombat:** receive, invite, guide, or use turning to pass. **Escalation:** round-two wisp threatens the cart. **Scaling:** three heroes face two workers total; five face four, with only three fighting. For injured groups, workers do not attack unless struck. **Success:** Harvest Welcome. **Fail-forward:** slate and gate repeat the message; town food substitutes. **Transition:** orchard meeting.

Encounter 3: The Guest beyond the Gate

Procedure: explain renewed service, release, and truce; ask concrete questions about responsibilities. Insight DC 11 reveals that the Reeve watches the empty cups when discussing the supper, suggesting its concern is inclusion; failure leaves its plainly stated offer unchanged.

Noncombat: negotiation, boundary-setting, or a written message. **Pressure:** appearances versus evidence.

Escalation: distant arch bells signal the need to return, without a surprise tick. **Success:** course chosen, perhaps shared labor. **Fail-forward:** terms remain in writing.

Transition: three preparations and return to town.

Encounter 4: Holding the Gathering

Gale, homebrew 0-6: start at 0. At the end of each round advance one, then apply the visible effect. At 2 a 10-foot strip between arch and table becomes difficult terrain from leaves; at 4 one unused market cart tips and provides half cover; at 6 stall damage forces the meeting into the inn. No effect blocks either safe exit. Sable's Word and shared labor can each cancel one separate tick, announced when used. They do not remove the enemies or complete an objective.

Run Husk and wisps using their profiles. At the end of each hero's turn, if they completed welcome, witness, or decision, remove one Hush Wisp if any remains; describe the newly occupied promise giving it a resting place. Objectives persist even if a lamp falls afterward. At all three completed, combat ends immediately. Defeating every enemy also ends attacks and stops Gale advancement, allowing the objectives to be completed peacefully afterward; no second wave appears.

Scaling: three heroes face Husk HP 32 and one wisp; five face Husk HP 52 and three wisps. Baseline is Husk HP 42 and two wisps. For a party leaving the fields badly hurt, remove one wisp and start with supper laid. **Noncombat:** protect the gathering and complete the objectives. **Success:** safe square and chosen agreement. **Fail-forward:** inn or dawn hearing, public costs but no forced grim deaths. **Transition:** final resolution and rewards.

NPCs

NPC: The Hollow Reeve

Harvest representative, wooden mask, leaf-stitched coat. Wants the workers' last harvest received and a freely chosen year of service or release. Fears being mistaken for a collector of souls. Speaks plainly and leaves room after each question. Knows the complete covenant and the wisps' attraction to an empty promise; cannot command the wisps. Offers shared labor when welcomed. Accepts boundaries and disagreement. If attacked, withdraws to the orchard and leaves a written offer; it does not retaliate with a hidden curse.

NPC: Tamsin Field

A Restless Harvester with a red scarf and a slate tied to the cart. Wants to put down a sheaf at a real table; fears another dawn spent walking. Remembers field routes, not forgotten secrets about the heroes. Taps the slate when words fail. Honest invitation earns help; rough treatment makes her wait at the gate until a place is offered. Her presence gives the Harvest company an individual face.

NPC: Lanternwick's Three Volunteers

Elian can speak for the living and fund repairs; Lenna can arrange river transport; Nessa can coordinate safe roads and brace the arch. Each wants a workable, limited obligation and can decline a task outside their means. Ask them for one specific contribution at a time. None signs away the entire town's future on the heroes' command. The gathered adult townspeople voice agreement or practical objections before a new plan takes effect.

Reference Appendix

All stat profiles and festival procedures are original **homebrew for 2014-style 5e**. Ordinary spell, movement, and rest rules remain in use. No unlisted resistances or immunities apply. Undead respond to turning normally; constructs do not become undead just because they look eerie. Saves use ability modifiers where no proficiency is listed.

Restless Harvester: Medium undead; AC 11; HP 24; speed 20 feet; STR +2, DEX -1, CON +2, INT -2, WIS +0, CHA -1; passive Perception 10. **Fork haft:** melee +4, reach 5 feet, one target; 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning. One attack per action. A creature hit may move 5 feet off the cart track instead of taking damage. It never bites, spreads disease, or attacks an unconscious target. At 0 HP it sits motionless until dawn, then returns peacefully to rest.

Hush Wisp: Small elemental; AC 12; HP 12; speed 0, fly 25 feet, hover; STR -3, DEX +2, CON +0, INT -2, WIS +1, CHA +0; passive Perception 11. **Cold spark:** ranged attack +4, range 30 feet, one target; 4 (1d6+1) cold damage. One attack per action. It avoids the occupied supper table and will not enter the inns. At 0 HP it becomes a harmless fading mote. A completed gathering objective settles one wisp automatically; this is a homebrew story interaction, not a spell immunity.

Lantern Husk: Large construct; AC 13; HP 42; speed 20 feet; STR +3, DEX -1, CON +2, INT -4, WIS +0, CHA -3; passive Perception 10. **Timber arm:** melee +5, reach 10 feet, one target; 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning, one attack per action. Every other turn, starting its second, it may replace the attack with **gust:** creatures of its choice in a clearly announced 10-foot-wide, 20-foot-long strip make Strength saves DC 12 or move 10 feet away and fall prone. Gust deals no damage. It telegraphs the strip by creaking and leaning toward it at the end of its previous turn. It cannot shove anyone into water or through a building wall. At 0 HP it settles into a stable pile, not an explosion.

Tactical choices: carts grant half cover (+2 AC and Dexterity saves when applicable). Bracing a lamp post takes an action; a creature adjacent to a braced post can ignore one forced movement from gust. Lamps are ordinary lights. Climbing the Husk offers no special instant victory, but a securely roped climber can spend an action tearing away a lantern hook, dealing 5 damage automatically once per hook; there are three reachable hooks. No climbing check is needed from an adjacent cart with a secured rope, but climbing without it uses Athletics DC 11 and failure leaves the hero on the ground unharmed.

Handouts

Handout: A - The Harvest Slate

Visibility: player-safe

"We have brought the last sheaves. Show us the place that was promised, and we will put them down. At the orchard gate, the one who carries our voice waits beside three cups. A welcome need not know every name."

Handout: B - Three Futures for Lanternwick

Visibility: player-safe

"RENEW: we offer care freely and ask for one year's guardianship freely given. Name what the river, road, and field will each receive and provide. RELEASE: we share tonight's supper, thank our neighbors, and take up winter's work ourselves. TRUCE: we welcome the guests tonight and meet at dawn to decide the year. No life is owed. No vow may be forced. Let the agreement be heard by all who will carry it."

Handout: C - Tonight's Agreement

Visibility: player-safe

"Our chosen future: _____. A place at our table for: _____. The living offer: _____. The Watch freely offers, or is released from: _____. The Harvest freely offers, or is released from: _____. River care: _____. Road care: _____. Field care: _____. We will review this agreement on: _____."

Resolution Paths

Renewed guardianship: a willing living representative, a willing Watch representative, and the Reeve publicly agree to limited responsibilities for one year. Sable or Orrin may represent the Watch; without prior trust, they agree if the terms acknowledge the blockade's harm, forbid compelled service, and offer a workable welcome. Their consent is a conversation, not a mind-control check. Existing river and road solutions may remain as negotiated contributions. The wisps settle, and the parade resumes if Nightfall and Gale stayed below 6. Each player names a lantern carried beside one of the guardians.

Living stewardship: the living offer supper and thanks, release future service, and accept a river crew, volunteer road patrol, and winter field watches. Elian funds

materials; Nessa and Lenna organize willing helpers. The Reeve and Watch agree to withdraw because no one is being denied tonight's welcome or compelled into next year's service. Established mundane safeguards remain; magical protection ends only by this explicit, freely chosen new agreement. The town gains independence and work, not punishment.

One-night truce: the guests receive supper, everyone accepts a dawn meeting, and the festival ends early. Guardians keep their already-agreed local protections until the meeting; those not under agreement stand aside. The town is safe, while tomorrow's civic decision remains open. Close with an inn supper and a view of steady lights, not a cliffhanger demanding another purchase.

If Gale reached 6 or the party was defeated, apply the same chosen agreement at the inn or at dawn. The committee repairs stalls and apologizes to disappointed travelers. A damaged festival is a cost, not the erasure of the heroes' work.

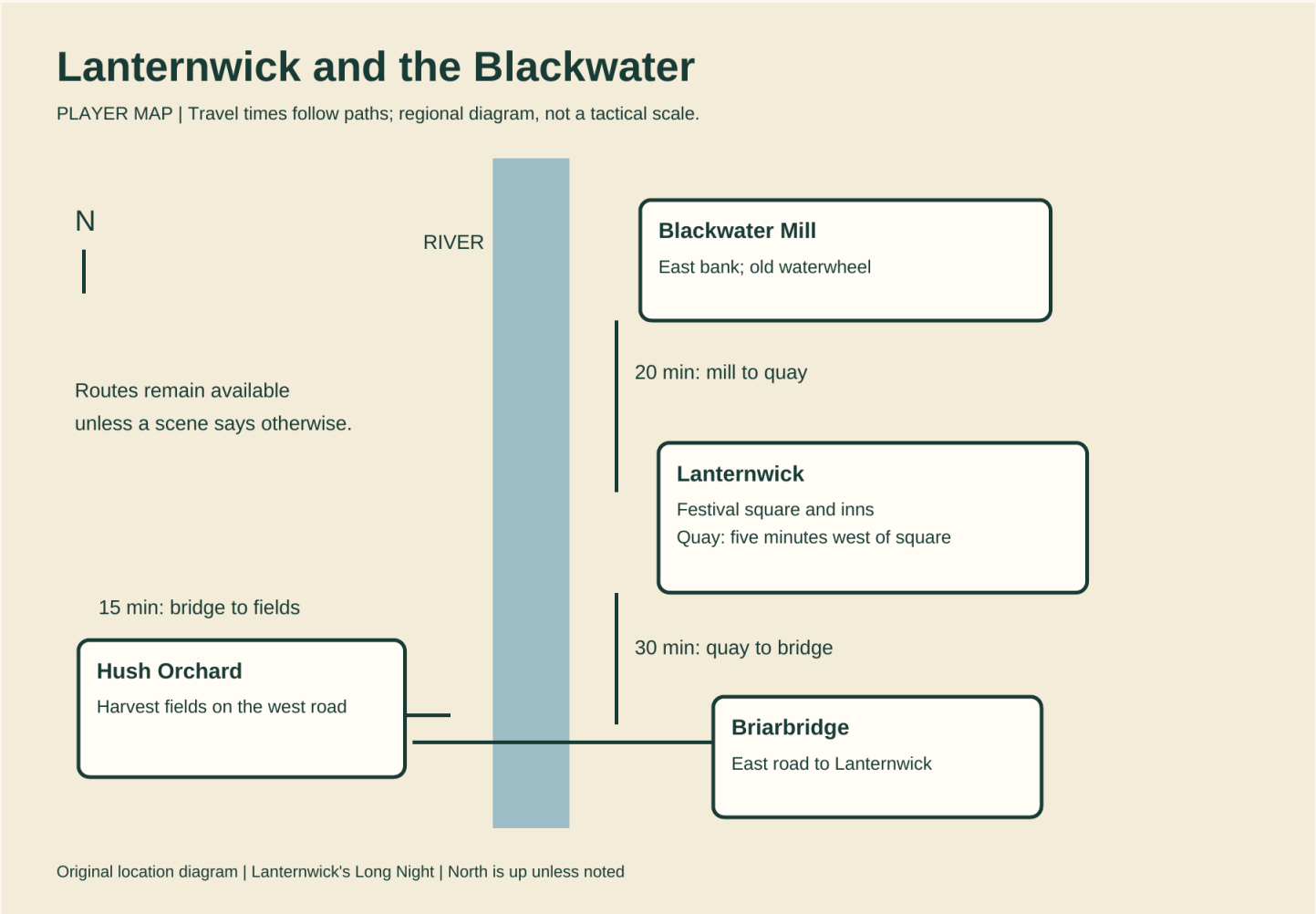
Rewards and Follow-Up

Pay 20 gp per hero, award level 5 if continuing the campaign, and give each character a personal invitation to next year's festival. The party receives **three ordinary silver lantern charms**, together worth 30 gp; split or share them as desired. They carry no unstated combat powers. A hero who wants no reward may direct their share to the shelter or mill.

Ask each player: which person do you sit beside at supper, what detail of your mask or lantern survives the night, and what promise does your character freely choose? Let the answer be small. The closing image is Lanternwick lit by people who now know why they keep the lamps.

Final DM ledger: preserve prior achievements; record the chosen future, representatives, duties, any festival damage, and one personal closing moment per hero. The dead can remain future allies without becoming obedient resources. The family has completed a full three-adventure story.

Lanternwick and the Blackwater



Travel times follow the named roads, not ruler distance on this regional diagram. The town, quay, and mill lie east of the river; fields and orchard lie west.

Use this map at the first invitation. Add the characters' homes, an inn name, and the route of their chosen festival procession.

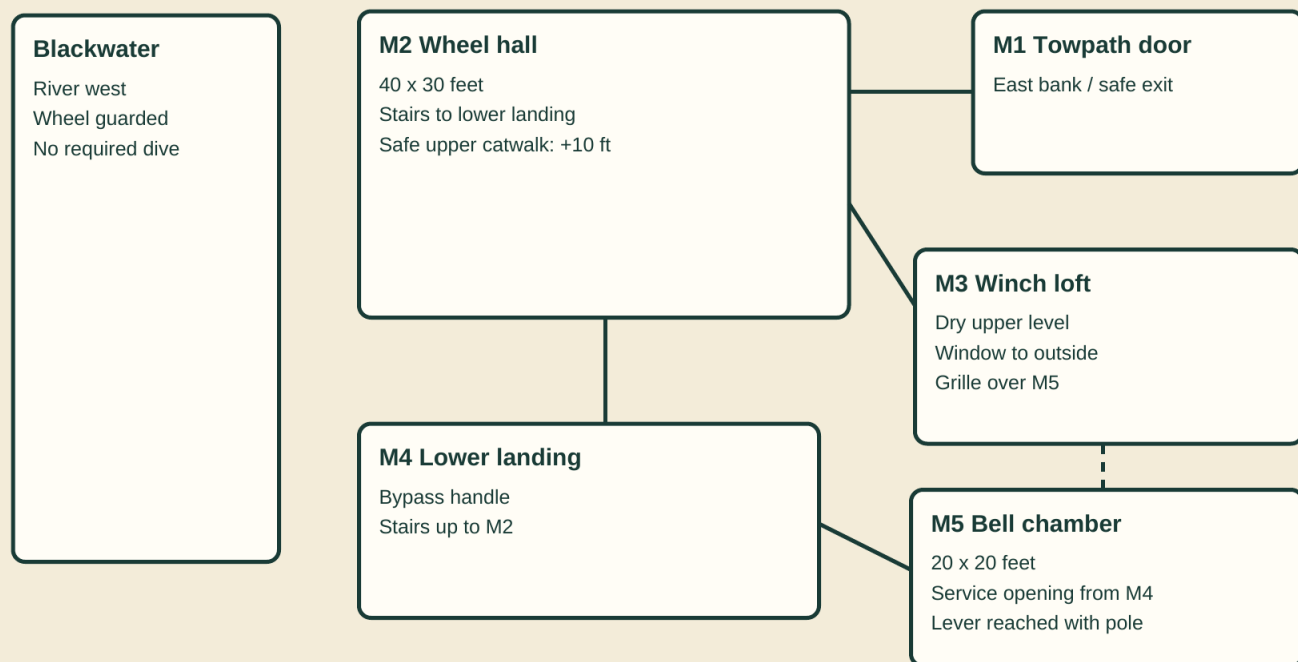
Table annotations

Blackwater Mill

Blackwater Mill: DM location plan

DM MAP | Rooms and vertical connections are schematic. See scene text for distances.

Solid lines: passages. Dashed line: inspection grille / overlook.



Original location diagram | Lanternwick's Long Night | North is up unless noted

M1 is the safe towpath exit. M2 is the wheel hall, with a dry upper catwalk. M3 contains the hand winch and overlooks the bell chamber through a grille.

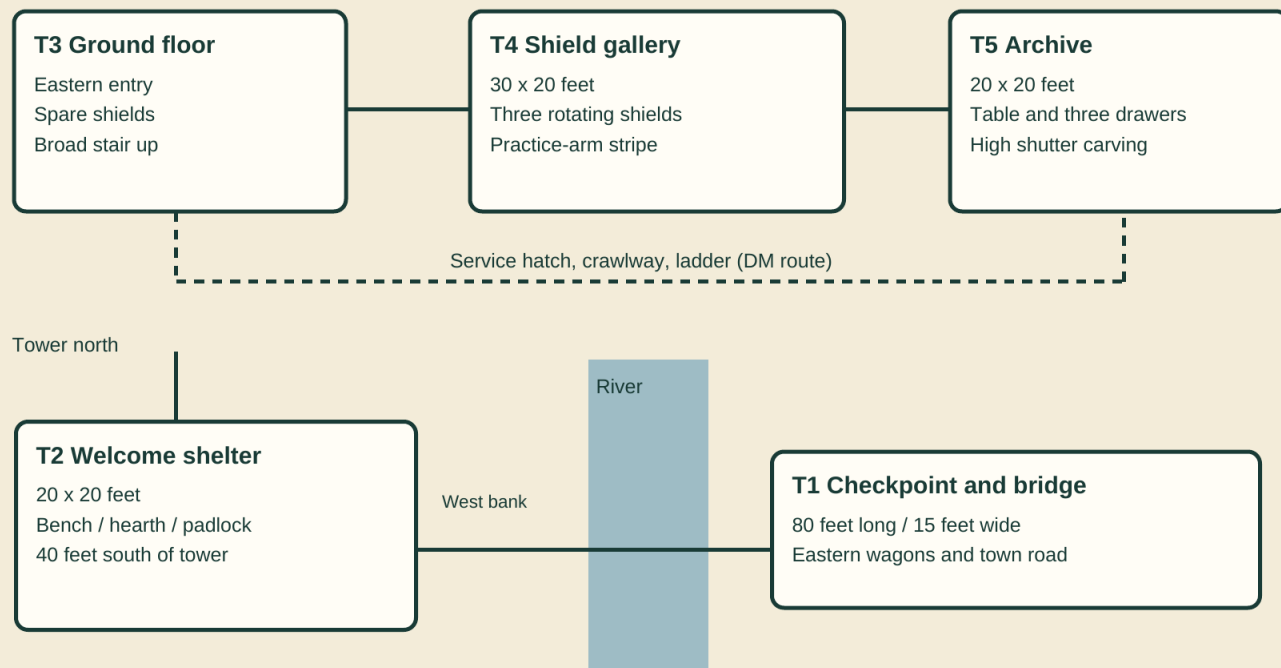
M4 holds the bypass and connects to M5 by a service opening. Work from dry ground using a hooked pole and rope; no required action demands swimming or diving.

The shutdown order is bypass, chain, gate. Reveal it through the plaque, Lenna, or Mara; a failed roll never hides the sequence.

Briarbridge and the Watchtower

Briarbridge: DM location plan

DM MAP | Includes the service route. Keep this sheet behind the screen until discovered.



Original location diagram | Lanternwick's Long Night | North is up unless noted

The service crawlway and archive connection are shown for the DM. Give players the shelter verse or describe only the rooms they have seen.

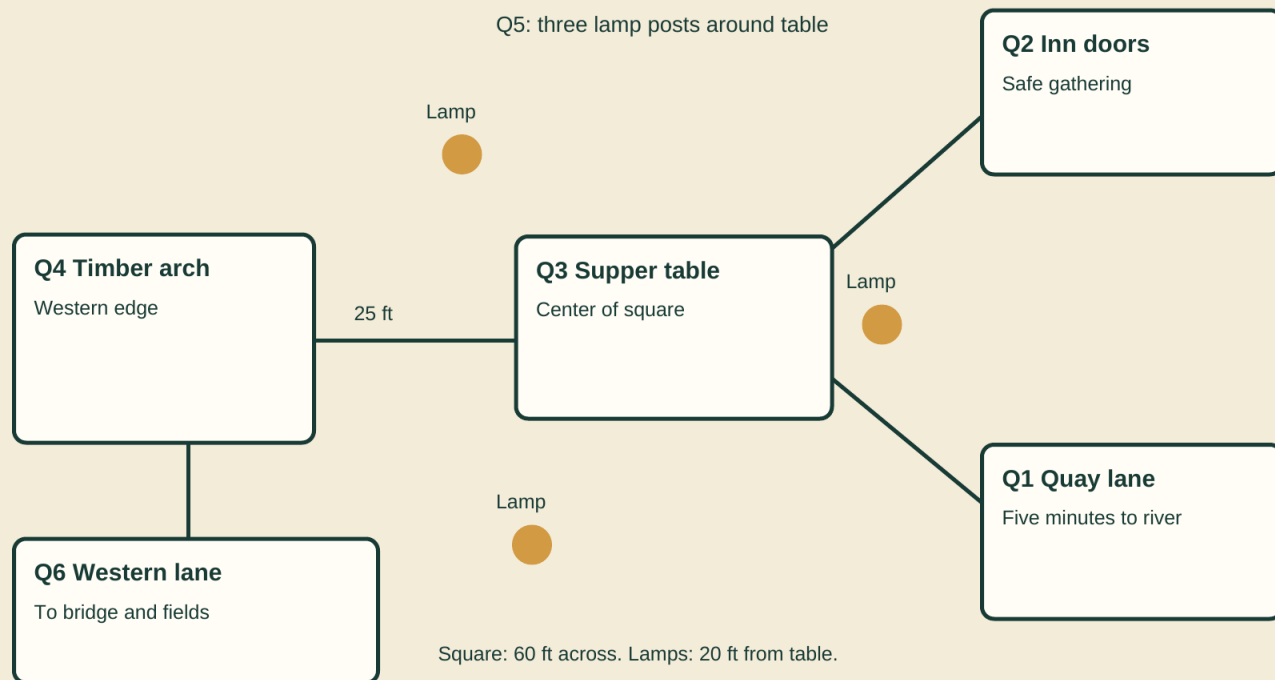
Hand, cup, lantern opens the gallery door. The service hatch and sandbag-and-latch approaches remain valid. The original covenant, shutter carving, and Nessa's survey preserve the essential evidence.

If combat occurs, sentries defend the crossing and accept surrender; nobody is pushed into the river.

Lanternwick Festival Square

Lanternwick: festival-square plan

PLAYER MAP | Open streets, lamps, table, and carts. No enemies or hidden information shown.



Original location diagram | Lanternwick's Long Night | North is up unless noted

Place figures on the square only when they become visible. Q1 and Q2 are safe exits. The main arch at Q4 is 25 feet west of the table; Q5 lamp posts stand 20 feet from it.

The square is 60 feet across. Carts provide half cover; paths are 10 feet wide. The diagram shows relationships, not a measured battle grid.

Offer welcome, establish a witness, and hear the public decision. In play, use separate tokens to track completed objectives so a fallen lamp never erases progress.

Table annotations

Player handouts - episode 1

Give each card only when the adventure reveals it. These pages contain no DM-only notes. Cut along the rules or copy a single card.

A - The Folded Promise

A light for the river. A welcome for the road. A place for those who kept the fields before us. Let care be offered freely, and guardianship freely given. The full agreement rests at Briarbridge, beneath the watchtower's three shields.

B - Mill Shutdown Plaque

FIRST: open the little bypass, so the river can breathe. SECOND: wind the hanging chain until its red link reaches the hook. THIRD: lower the broad gate slowly. Use the upper walk in high water. Never put a hand inside the wheel guard.

C - Lanternwick Travel Notes

From the east-bank quay: Blackwater Mill is twenty minutes north by towpath. The festival square is five minutes east. Briarbridge is thirty minutes south. Beyond the bridge, the harvest road leads west to Hush Orchard. The upper mill door opens onto the towpath.

Player handouts - episode 2

Give each card only when the adventure reveals it. These pages contain no DM-only notes. Cut along the rules or copy a single card.

A - The Shelter Verse

First offer your HAND at the door. Next give the traveler a CUP. Last set a LANTERN beside a place to rest. Let these three stand from left to right, as welcome grows from greeting into shelter.

B - The Briarbridge Covenant

A light shall be kept for the river, a welcome offered upon the road, and a place laid for the neighbors who tended these fields before us. River, road, and field shall in return be guarded through the winter. Neither company owns the other. Neither vow nor service shall be compelled. On the night of the last harvest procession, one willing voice of the living, one of the Watch, and one of the Harvest shall speak the year's agreement before the river bell. Let all hear, and let each promise endure for one year only.

C - A Plan for the Road

Our welcome will be at: _____. The willing keepers are: _____. Supplies will come from: _____. The road's guardians offer: _____. What we ask them to stop doing: _____. When we will meet again: _____.

Player handouts - episode 3

Give each card only when the adventure reveals it. These pages contain no DM-only notes. Cut along the rules or copy a single card.

A - The Harvest Slate

We have brought the last sheaves. Show us the place that was promised, and we will put them down. At the orchard gate, the one who carries our voice waits beside three cups. A welcome need not know every name.

B - Three Futures for Lanternwick

RENEW: we offer care freely and ask for one year's guardianship freely given. Name what the river, road, and field will each receive and provide. RELEASE: we share tonight's supper, thank our neighbors, and take up winter's work ourselves. TRUCE: we welcome the guests tonight and meet at dawn to decide the year. No life is owed. No vow may be forced. Let the agreement be heard by all who will carry it.

C - Tonight's Agreement

Our chosen future: _____. A place at our table for: _____. The living offer: _____. The Watch freely offers, or is released from: _____. The Harvest freely offers, or is released from: _____. River care: _____. Road care: _____. Field care: _____. We will review this agreement on: _____.

The campaign ledger

Record achievements exactly. If the party chose a different workable solution, write its responsibility and benefit in plain language.

After Blackwater

River Light or Mechanical Safeguard:

Mara's Trust / lamp keeper / restitution:

Grain saved / one player decision to remember:

After Briarbridge

Open Road / Living Patrol / Temporary Passage / Unsettled Road:

Sable's Word / Orrin Heard / covenant copy:

Hosts, supplies, restitution, and one player decision:

After Halloween

Renewed guardianship / Living stewardship / One-night truce:

Willing representatives and one-year duties:

Festival damage, new traditions, and each hero's closing moment:

Session notes

Date / episode: _____ Players / characters: _____

What the heroes chose

People, clues, and promises to carry forward

Next session: preparation and open questions

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

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