

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

14 Gear

“He who dies with the most toys, wins.”
~Author Unknown

Following is a list of some of the gear you might find or need to survive adventure in the Written World. These items can only be purchased in game, not brought to game. Geoffrey Hamille is the Cottington town merchant, and he or one of his staff will usually be around. All items may be purchased with in-game coins.

This list is far from complete.

Bottled Lightning

Men of Science always have a use for these items.

Spell Foci

There are usually a few magical foci at the shop.

Collectables

Because one man's trash is another man's treasure, Geoffrey always has a collection of trinkets that have no obvious worth.

Contracts

Folks are always looking for work. Geoffrey holds many contracts that can be purchased and used to perform some Between Event Reactions.

Feather Dye

Other than the occasional brer, no one really has a use for these things.

Grapple

A grapple is a hook that ties to the end of a rope, and is used to anchor the rope. Without a grapple, a rope cannot be secured, and upwards climbing is impossible without the use of climbing colds.

Healer's Bag

This bag is stocked with every bit of gear designed to make a healer's life easier. A healer with a healer's bag automatically drops 10 seconds from the time it takes to perform first aid from a target. The bag must be replaced or restocked each event.

Healer's Bag Restock

For slightly less than the cost of a complete healer's bag, the restock replaces just the bits that are missing. Purchasing the restock

Lists

If you have the Appraisal Skill, this is where you'd go to pick up your list

Plot of Land

Occasionally, bits of cleared land become vacant and free to purchase. These bits of land will allow some occupations to increase in level without having to spend CP.

Rope

Lengths of rope can typically be purchased at the market. The length is about twenty feet. Ropes are useful for climbing and for binding prisoners.

Well Fed

Eating a hearty meal will grant you +1 Body for the duration of the event.

Wire and Pliers

These are certainly not for making lock picks, because lock picks are illegal.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

15.1 Adventuring Notes: Climbing

"Just a reminder — a guidebook is no substitute for skill, experience, judgment and lots of tension."
—Charlie Fowler

Climbing requires the use Climbing Holds. A rope can be substituted for Holds. For a downward climb, the rope or holds are all that is needed. For an upward climb, a grapple is also necessary. In any case, because a climb requires the rope to be secured at the top (with a grapple or a tight knot), after a downward climb a rope is often lost.

How to Climb

Climbing requires that the character have three points of contact on the surface being climbed. That means only one hand or foot may be moved at a time. Securing the contact requires that the character leave the hand or foot in contact with the surface for three seconds before moving again.

Use of the **Climbing Skill** (See Chapter 12. 2) allows you to climb faster. Instead of leaving a hand or foot in contact with the surface for three seconds, the character only has to make contact before moving again.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

15.2 Adventuring Notes: Swimming

The water is your friend. You don't have to fight with water,
just share the same spirit as the water, and it will help you move.

- Aleksandr Popov

Swimming is difficult, and progress while swimming is much slower than normal.

How to Swim

Swimming is represented using a Slow Walk, which requires that the character take a step, make a three second count, then take another step. Use of the **Swim Skill** (See Chapter 12. 2) allows you to move at a normal WALKING pace. Again, this is not a fast walking pace, just a normal one.

Fighting in Water

Fighting in water is also difficult. If you are under water, you may not flurry at all. The small weapon double attack may still be used, with the idea being that the attacker is stabbing and not slicing his target. The use of the Swim skill does not allow for faster combat.

Casting spells and using abilities while in water is very difficult. If the spell requires a verbal incant, it cannot be cast unless the character also has some way of breathing (and speaking while doing so).

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

15.3 Adventuring Notes: Locks

“I have six locks on my door all in a row. When I go out, I lock every other one. I figure no matter how long somebody stands there picking the locks, they are always locking three.”
--Elayne Boosler

Expect the use of locks to be slightly more involved in Cottington Woods than in other games you might have played. Rogues should familiarize themselves with the following section.

Key Tags

Since locks will never be attached to a box in such a way as to actually keep the box closed (there are many skills to bypass the lock without using a key or picking it), we do not need to have hundreds of keys lying around to match them.

Keys will be represented using small rectangular tags. These tags will have a number on them, and that number, in theory, will match a lock that exists somewhere in the Written World.

Lock Tags

Many locks will have associated tags. If no tag is present, go about picking the lock as you normally would. Tags will typically indicate important information, so if a tag is present, be careful to read it. If the tag obstructs the lock, feel free to move it, but be aware that others rogues may also need that information. Please, if possible, put it back when you are done.

Lock Number: If the number on the lock matches the number on a key, then the lock can be opened without it having to be picked. If you don't have a matching set, the lock will have to be picked normally.

Normal Locks

A normal lock will sometimes have a tag that reads: “Normal Lock”, followed by a number. A normal lock can be opened with the proper key. If the proper key does not exist, then the lock can be opened with any normal key, however the normal key will break the lock and be jammed inside.

Expect that most locks in most modules will be normal locks.

Normal Key

A normal key will be a tag that reads: “Normal Key”, followed by a number. It will also state, “This key will open any normal lock, but will break inside and be useless. Once broken, the key cannot, by any means, be repaired.”

Normal keys might be found as treasure, and in rare cases spare keys can be purchased in game. Some normal keys will not have numbers on them, or will be numbered “00000” to indicate that they do not match a lock. These are, effectively, one shot items that the player may feel free to use without worry that the matching lock will later be found.

Difficult Lock

A difficult lock will ALWAYS have a tag, indicating that it is a difficult lock and followed by a number. A difficult lock can only be opened using the key that matches it, or by being picked. A key other than the one that matches the lock is unable to fit inside the lock, and cannot be used to force the lock, thus there is no danger of the lock or the key being lost or broken.

Difficult Key

A difficult key will only open the lock it was built for.

Magical Locks

Extremely uncommon, magical locks will always have a tag. They can only be opened with the matching key. A rogue cannot pick a magical lock with normal picks. Keep in mind that to use any lockpick, the rogue still must actually pick the lock. Unless they have the skill “Pick a Lock” they cannot roleplay the lock open.

Lockpicks

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Lockpicks can be used to pick any common or uncommon lock. They cannot pick magical locks. While lockpicks cannot legally be sold in the houselands, the tools and materials to create them are often lying around or can be purchased in game.

Enchanted Lockpicks

Magical lockpicks can be used to pick any magical or nonmagical lock. The creation of magical lockpicks is against the King's Law. These tools are very illegal and highly sought after. They cannot be purchased openly.

Magical lockpicks will often expire or will have a limited number of uses per event, so rogues often seek to find as many of these valuable tools as they can carry with them.

Enchanted Keys

An enchanted key can open any lock as if the user had a single use of the skill: Pick a Lock.

Further Complications

It is possible that distant places will not have locks compatible with keys found in the Houselands. If this is the case, the numbers will not match. It is likewise possible that keys from distant places will not match common locks found in the houselands. Tags will be present to indicate if this is the case, and Out of Game clarifications will be made.

Special Notes

There are two types of locks that not every rogue is ever equipped to handle. These are magical wards, created by magical ritual, and Wave Locks, created by Men of Science.

First, do not expect to be able to bypass these locks. They are made of different stuff, and you are not expected to be able to handle them.

Second, a good rogue will always find a way. ;-)

Cottingham Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.1 Glossary of Terms

"Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits, for they become character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."
--Unknown

Aaron Farraway The current High King of Farraway and the Houselands.

Adept, Sandman A sandman who specializes in manipulating his own abilities while in the Slumberland.

Anathema Home of demonkind. It is a hostile place where nothing of the Written World can survive.

Archer A fighting man who specializes in attacking from a distance.

Architect, Sandman A Sandman who exerts control over the Slumberland.

Asylum A town within the woods, near the Collamoore border. Asylum is a hospital for the mentally unstable and is the headquarters for the Sandmen.

Barumbi Basin A region of tropical jungle west of the Dust Lands, separated from it by a great escarpment. The House Lands have several settlements on the north and west edges of the basin, but most of the basin remains unexplored.

Bracken A goblin town on the border of UnderMarsh in Cottingham Woods. Bracken is at least partially underwater, making travel there difficult for non-goblins.

Brawler A fighting man who specializes in fighting bare handed. Usually a precursor to being dead or becoming an unarmed monk.

Brer An animal that walks and sometimes talks like a man. Brer, in every other way, are animals.

Briardown The capitol of the Heart Lands.

Canyon Lands The region east and south of the House Lands, described by a series of great canyons.

Carroway Fortress A ruin dating back to the time of the Robber Barons. It is expansive, built over a thousand years by baron after baron.

Church of the Word The institution dedicated to the study of the Written World and the works of the First Patron.

Club Lands One of the four House Lands in the Kingdom of Farraway. Also known as Collamoore or the House of Clubs.

Codex A publication assembled by the Grimm Brotherhood. The codex is part bible, part adventurer's journal.

Collamoore See the Club Lands. Also the capitol of the Club Lands.

Cottingham Woods A fairy enchanted woodland in the upper middle of the four House Lands.

Craft The talent that witches have to control the natural world around them.

Curren, Lord The first known Robber Baron. Credited with the invention of currency. Lord Curren is believed to have a tomb hidden somewhere in Carroway Fortress.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Death At the end of your life, you die. A person can sometimes die a number of times before true Death claims him. The dead sometimes come back as undead. If not, they will often be drawn to a graveyard.

Death, True A person who dies and does not come back. This may occur any time a person dies.

Demon A creature from Anathema. Demons are unquestionably evil, and seek to undo the Written World.

Diamond Lands One of the four House Lands in the Kingdom of Farraway. Also known as Westall or the House of Diamonds.

Dust Lands A vast desert south of the House Lands.

Elf A humanlike fairy-esque race native to Greencloud.

Empath, Sandman A Sandman who specializes in aiding others to gain control over their own dreams.

Fairy A being from the Fairy Lands.

Fairy Lands An otherworldly place that is connected to the Written World by the Mists.

Farraway The seat of the high King and capitol of the House Lands.

First Patron The author of the Written World.

Frostwroth The land over the waters to the north. Also the people who live in that land. The Frostwroth remain a constant threat to the people of Collamoor, and by extension to the House Lands.

Gant A giant ant, of course.

Gobaleen Mountains The range of Mountains northwest of the House Lands.

Goblin A humanlike race native to the Gobaleen Mountains. Goblins have green skin and are amphibious, but otherwise appear as humans.

Golem A man created through artificial means.

Graveyard The place you go when you die, and often, if you do not give up the ghost, the place you come to life again.

Greencloud The mysterious land of the elves. No non-elf has ever seen Greencloud.

Greencloud Mountains An impassable mountain range that surrounds the elven land.

Grimm Abbey Home of the Grimm Brotherhood. Also, the place where the Codex is compiled and published.

Gypsy (also Wanderkin) Any of a number of groups originating from the Dust Lands, but without a permanent home, who move about the Written World.

Halfway Once a way station for the Red-Castle railway, now the Halfway is an Inn on the south side of Cottington Woods.

Harrier A fighting man who strikes hard and fast in combat, often from behind the target and with surprise.

Healer One who heals the injured. Also a priest who specializes in healing through the power of Faith.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Hearth Witch A witch who specializes in controlling her environment, especially a home. Hearth Witches are unparalleled healers.

Heart Lands One of the four House Lands in the Kingdom of Faraway. Also known as the Heartlands or the House of Hearts.

Herbalist A person who studies herbs and their uses, and can create potions using herbs.

House Down Under The name assumed by the colonists of Lakupaparoo.

Houselander A person native to the Houselands.

House Lands The combined area under the control of the House of Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts and Spades.

House of Cards The neutral forum used by the four House Land governments. The House of Cards existed from 1500 to 1700.

Invasion of Dreams The name given to an attempted invasion by demons of Anathema around two hundred years ago.

Jack An agent in service to the King of Faraway.

Kingdom of Gold A great kingdom that fell about a thousand years ago. It existed around a series of rivers in the middle of the Dust Lands.

Laketown A town in the Spade Lands.

Lakupaparoo A land far to the west over the sea, colonized by the Houselands. The colonists have established the House Down Under.

Lands The various regions around the Written World. The word land is sometimes used alone and sometimes used as a prefix.

Example: House Lands and Houselands are both considered correct.

Magic Loopholes in the way the world works. Generally considered by the Priests of the Word to exist between the lines of the First Patron's works.

Magic The exceptions to the way things should normally work.

Magician One who studies and uses magic.

Man of Science One who studies the Laws of Science.

Midcastle The capitol of the Diamond Lands.

Mind Illuminated An organization of Men of Science responsible for toppling the House of Cards.

Mists (in particular the **Fairy Mists, sometimes called the Change Winds**) An often invisible force or phenomena thought to be fairy in nature that causes "odd effects" to occur. Typically this effects the time it takes to travel from place to place, but the mists have been known to effect other things as well.

Mount OverMarsh A mountainous ruin north of UnderMarsh in Cottington Woods. Once home to many goblins, Mount Overmarsh is now abandoned.

Oldwood The deepest part of Cottington Wood. Not much is known of Oldwood.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Paladin A warrior who fights with the power of Faith. Paladins are very effective when fighting demons or undead.

Patron A powerful entity. Patrons write events as they occur around the Written World.

Point, also **Silver Point** or **Gold Point** A single unit of currency. Ten silver points equals one gold point. Also, paper money has been issued by the Church of the Word.

Priest of the Word a student of the Written World. See also Healer, Paladin, and Scholar.

Redbridge A town in the Spade Lands.

Red-Castle Railway A series of railways crossing the three southern House Lands.

Redfeather Canyon The greatest of the canyons in the Canyon Lands. Also the name of the town that exists in that canyon. Redfeather Canyon is the cultural center of the Canyon Lands.

Riding Hood A patroller and warden of the forest. Once an organization backed by the king of Faraway, now the Riding Hoods act on their own. The officers of the Riding Hoods wear red hoods to mark their station.

Ritualist A type of magician who specializes in the slow use of magic and the creation of magical items.

Robber Barons A term used to define the hundreds of kingdoms that rose and fell across the land from the beginning of recorded history until about 1500.

Rollinghill See the Spade Lands.

Sandman One who is able to remain lucid while dreaming, and gain control over his dreams.

Scholar One who studies. Also, a priest who specializes in collecting, verifying and studying written works.

Science, the Laws of Science The rules, rituals and patterns that make sense of the world. Science is out of favor today.

Skinchanger A man able to wear the skin of an animal and become that animal. Skinchangers are generally feared.

Slumberland The Place of Dreams. The Slumberland, on the surface, are the sum off of every dreamers Dreamscape.

Spade Lands One of the four House Lands in the Kingdom of Faraway. Also known as Rollinghill or the House of Spades.

Taiden Sheh A kingdom east of the Canyon Lands and Greencloud. Also called the Petal Kingdom.

Thornwall An elven place in eastern Cottington Woods. Thornwall is on an island, and is as far into the elven land of Greencloud as any non-elf has ever gone.

Trace The Capitol of the Spade Lands.

Troglodyte A humanoid creature that dwells deep beneath the ground. Troglodytes are also called Troggs.

Undead A once living thing that is stuck in an animated or not quite dead state, generally harmful and twisted to pursue some horrible goal.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

UnderMarsh A boggy wetland in northwest Cottington Woods, just this side of the Gobaleen Mountains.

Virtue Farraway The daughter of the current high king.

Very Bad Bargain A term used to describe a bargain between Queen Equiline Farraway and a fairy, which resulted in the loss of every horse in the House Lands.

Warrior A fighting man who specializes in close combat.

Westall See the Diamond Lands.

Witch A person who is attuned to the force of nature, and usually is in harmony with his environment. See also Hearthwitch and Woodwitch.

Word, The The teachings of the First Patron. The term "word" is synonymous with "Knowledge" or "Truth".

Wolf A type of animal that is common to Cottington Woods. Also, the first written word.

Woodwitch A witch who is especially in tune with the natural world around her.

Written World The world on which our game takes place.

Zombie A common form of undead.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.2 Once Upon a Time, A Brief History of the World

*"If a thing is not written, it never happened."
-unknown Patron*

Wolf

Before the Robber Barons and the rise of man, wolves roamed and ruled the wild places of Cottington Woods. The first word was written. The word was wolf, and it was carved into stone as a warning to travelers who walked within the woods. That stone sits in the center of Cottington Woods.

0: The Robber Barons

The first tales of men did not discuss towns or armies. Men did not dress in finery, and the words they used were simple words. They were set apart from the animals by their ability to read and write. They were smarter, and they learned that when they gathered in numbers they were stronger. The time of the Robber Barons began. Of course they were not all robbers, and the first among them were not called barons, but, perhaps learning from the wolves, the stronger did command the weaker and took what they needed to survive.

Over the fifteen hundred years of their rule in and around Cottington Woods the Robber Barons made and lost hundreds of tiny kingdoms, and created the foundation of what would later become the four Houselands.

Battling the Things that Go Bump in the Night

Men were afraid of the things in the dark. Often those things were other men, but just as often they were other things, terrible things like creatures of fairy or demons or the dead. To fight the darkness, men assembled a collection of rules, rituals and patterns that, when put together, caused effects to come to pass, every time, in the exact same way. The name they gave to these rules, rituals and patterns was the Laws of Science.

Lord Curren and the Love of Money

Lord Curren was the first known Robber Baron. A volatile man, he was also well known for the fairness with which he treated his men. Curren had five lieutenants, each as greedy as himself. It occurred that they acquired a small fortune in gold, and there came the question of how to split it equally among them. Lord Curren melted it down and fashioned it into a measureable form. The only mold he had on hand was one to fashion arrowheads, so what resulted was a pile of golden points. They had no markings on them, no crest or date. They were simple, but they were uniform, and that's what Curren needed. He divided them equally between the men, keeping the greater share for himself, and sent them on their way.

The lieutenants didn't make it to the forest's edge before four turned against one. They killed him and divided his share. They fought until one remained, and the last turned his greedy eyes toward the baron. Curren killed the man, and reclaimed all the points for himself.

Now, if Lord Curren were the sort of man to learn a lesson, the tale might have ended there. Instead, he hoarded the points and used them, in small allotments, to reward others. As he was the most powerful man of the time, points became the universal form of barter, and currency was introduced to the land.

A single triangular coin is called an arrowhead, or, more commonly, a point.

Frostwroth

The Frostwroth are an aggressive people, and frequently crossed the waters from the north to raid against the Robber Barons. They built the walled town of Collamoor to serve as a staging ground to press into the woods and beyond. For many generations they were an almost constant scourge. Eventually the Robber Barons were forced either to unite or to fall completely to the barbarians.

The Frostwroth typically raided during the early winter, after crops had been taken in and sheds were full. On this occasion when they struck the first settlement, the barbarians found it empty. The harvest had been brought in early, and neither the livestock nor the people were to be found. The barbarians raided farther afield to find the same, over and over, until finally they had to return to Collamoor. When they did return they discovered their own town turned against them.

Days before, the barons had taken everything and waited until the Frostwroth set off from Collamoor. They then entered the town and slaughtered the few defenders who had been left behind. They brought in all the harvest's bounty and every piece of livestock that would fit, and they prepared for a siege. But the Frostwroth were outside the walls with no food and few supplies. To no avail the barbarians threw themselves against their own walls.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Ultimately, outmaneuvered, they were defeated. Some surrendered to the barons. Other fashioned boats from the wilderness to attempt a return home across the bay.

Collamoor remained in the hands of the barons. Eventually it became the seat of the House of Clubs and later the birthplace of the first High King of Faraway.

The Day of the Dead

Though there had always been tales of the restless dead, it was at one time the expected norm that a body would stay beneath the ground once it had died and was buried. Prior to this time, tales of ghosts were not uncommon, but it was never the case that the dead would arise with any control over their bodies. This changed at a time late in the history of the Robber Barons, when to the surprise of all, the dead rose with the motivation to consume the flesh of the living.

Many thought it was the end of the world, and it might have been except for the presence of the Priests of the Word. Though less organized than the church of today, the priests were still the only organization that spanned the entire known world and acted with a single set of motivations. These new undead, these walking bodies, they were new to the world and were an abomination, much like the demons of Anathema. The priests employed the very same tools of their faith against the undead that they used against the demons, and those tools worked just as well. Battles raged all across the land, and what took what seemed a single night to begin took almost a year to resolve, but the Robber Barons were able to control the restless dead and put them down.

Not all dead now rise. Some do. Graveyards typically are surrounded by sturdy walls, not to keep folks out, but to keep them in. There are several rituals now to keep the dead from rising, and every priest of the Word is trained to know them. Every year the Day of the Dead is observed to remind the people of the world of how it almost all came to an end. Now, so many years later, the day has more the feel of a celebration. To the priests of the Word it is always a serious affair, but they have a hard time helping other remember that.

The Rules of Science and Magic

As time passed and the hold of men on the Written World grew stronger, they learned to trust in themselves. The need for the Laws of Science became less. Study of the Word had revealed spaces between the lines, loopholes in the way of things that could be manipulated. Men discovered magic. While the Laws of Science still exist and are studied around the world, magic is the science of the day. Once it was understood, magic was just easier than any scientific method.

1500: The Four Houses and the House of Cards

Around five hundred years ago the Robber Barons ruled the four nations of Collamoor, Rollinghill, Westall and the Heartlands. They took the titles of kings and queens. As was customary by that time, each house had an associated symbol. Collamoor was the House of Clubs, Westall was the House of Diamonds, Rollinghill was the House of Spades, and the Heartlands was the House of Hearts. The tales then did mention towns, and even cities. There were armies. Men dressed in finery and their words were far less simple. Though less so than in the time of the wolf, it was still a violent time. Borders changed frequently and armed conflict was not uncommon. But there remained the House of Clubs in Collamoor, the House of Diamonds in Westall, the House of Spades in Rollinghill, and the House of Hearts in the Heartlands.

Prompted by the House of Diamonds, the four nations formed a body known as the House of Cards, a council where the four houses could discuss and resolve difficulties without resorting to warfare. And for nearly two hundred years, the House of Cards and the four nations stood.

1700: The Mind Illuminated, The Fall of the House of Cards

For almost two hundred years, the House of Cards kept peace by giving the four Houselands a forum to discuss conflict rationally and without bloodshed. More recently, and with alarming frequency, conflicts were exploding into open hostility. In particular, Spades and the Heartlands were in a constant struggle, and the Midland River was unsafe for fear of abuse from one side or the other. The House of Cards shook. The epicenter of this conflict was Faraway, wherein the House of Cards met, and where each House had a small force of men. Clubs had the strongest presence, and was closely allied with Diamonds at the time. Together they traced every event to a single organization and uncovered the plot behind the conflict.

There existed a group of like minded men and women who believed in the importance of the Laws of Science. They called themselves the Mind Illuminated. Their ranks were filled with higher ranking members of society, many only a few short steps away from the thrones of each of the four Houselands. On the surface, the Mind

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Illuminated seemed to be a school of enlightened thought, but for two decades they had been maneuvering behind the scenes to steal control of the Households for themselves.

The Mind Illuminated succeeded in toppling the House of Cards. Before they could assume control, however, the houses of Clubs and Diamonds exposed them and brought their plans to an end.

High King Faraway

The same king of Clubs and queen of Diamonds who foiled the plot of the Mind Illuminated took control of the ruined House of Cards and united the four Households under the throne of a High King. They relinquished control of their individual houses to their successors and settled in the city of Faraway. Each of the four Households swore fealty to the new High King, and such is the way it has remained for the last three hundred years.

Cottington Woods

Stretching north over the Border Hills to just south of Collamoor is the enchanted Cottington Woods. During the early years of the Robber Barons the forest covered much of what is now the four Households. Over time the forest has seen over three quarters of its acreage removed. The forest seems to have a mind of its own, and it now resists the passage of men.

Legend tells of a force of three hundred Frostwroth that travelled south along the coast to invade Collamoor. Normally this would not be a treacherous journey, except the path brought the men through Cottington Woods. The force was never heard from, and the Frostwroth have never again attempted to send men to raid the coast except by sea.

The Riding Hoods were assembled by one of the later kings of Faraway. Woodsmen all, it was their job to patrol the forest and to protect the Households. They were very proud and highly dedicated men and women.

1800: Anathema and the Invasion of Dreams

Demons from Anathema crossed to the Written World through the dreams of the inmates of Asylum. The countryside of Westall saw violence on a scale like nothing this side of total war as invaders attacked without warning and retreated, using patients as living gateways to and from the Slumberland. There was little anyone could do to defend themselves. Even the Priests of the Word could not act fast enough to fend the creatures off. It was the inmates of the Asylum themselves who managed to face the demons, sealing the gates that were created. Asylum was moved from Westall to its current home on the side of the Black Mountains, where it remains as the training ground and headquarters of the Sandmen.

The Red-Castle Railway

The Red-Castle Railway was a joint venture by the Diamond and Spadelands to build a lightning powered railway to connect the lands. Tracks were laid between Redbridge and Midcastle, with stops in central Faraway, the Faraway Warehouse district, and the Heartland city of Briardown. The loud screeching cry and the earth shaking vibrations it created as it went by, combined with most people's lack of trust for anything built using the Laws of Science, saw the railway in constant disfavor.

Still, the building of the way continued, and plans were even made to run a track through Cottington Woods from Faraway all the way to Collamoor. The Halfway station was built on the north side of the Border Hills and construction on the tracks began. With the tracks laid down only a few miles into the woods, construction stopped, and the project was shelved indefinitely. The way stations were decommissioned, and in most cases the bodies of the lightning powered cars were left where they were.

1850: Colonizing Lakuparoo

A fleet of settlers from Faraway traveled west to colonize Lakuparoo. Originally made up of members from the various Households, the settlers eventually established the House Down Under.

1950: Queen Equiline Faraway and her Very Bad Bargain

The mother of the father of the current King Aaron Faraway was Queen Equiline Faraway. Her love of horses was well known, but her reign as High Queen would forever be remembered because of her Very Bad Bargain.

Equiline took the throne when she was very young, the Queen before her falling to an illness the Priests of the Word could not cure. While out riding one day the young queen encountered an old woman on the road. Being short of sight, the woman did not move out of the way. The queen insisted, and when she did the woman asked, "Who are you, young thing, to tell me to get off the road?"

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Equiline told her, "I am Equiline Faraway, and I am the Queen. Because I am queen, all these roads belong to me, and I can do what I want."

The old woman regarded her. She said nothing more, and she moved herself laboriously out of the queen's way.

Many years later the queen was married and she bore in turn four children, all sons. When the boys were older, it came to pass that the oldest son, the heir to the throne of Faraway became ill, and it was realized that he was ill with the same sickness that took the queen's mother. The Priests of the Word still knew of no cure to save him.

The queen called before her the three younger sons. In turn she told them, "Your brother is ill, and there is no known cure for his illness. Yet you are princes of the land, and as such you can do what no other can. I want you to travel the land and find for your brother a cure." The boys set out in different directions. Many months passed and the oldest brother grew worse.

When the youngest brother returned he found his mother. "I have failed to find for my brother a cure." Queen Equiline was disappointed.

When the second youngest brother returned, he also found his mother. "I have failed to find for my brother a cure." Queen Equiline was disappointed and distraught, for there was only one brother left.

But when the final brother returned, he was not alone. With him was a woman, a witch from the woods. "It is as you asked, mother," the son told the queen. "I have found for my brother a cure."

The witch told the queen, "I can cure your boy, and I will do so, but only for a price."

Equiline said, "Do you know who I am? I am Equiline Faraway, and I am the Queen."

The witch said, "Be that as it may."

Equiline grew stern, but the witch would not change her mind. Finally, because her son's life was at stake, she said, "Very well, what is the price?"

The witch said, "Your horse."

The queen's love for her horse was well known. She thought to refuse, but she saw the witch would not be moved. Besides, she planned to back out of the bargain as soon as her son was cured. She was the queen, and could do what she wanted. She told the woman, "Fine. One horse, a dozen horses, it doesn't matter to me. Just cure my son."

The witch did, and when she did she said to the queen. "I have upheld my part of the bargain, Queen Faraway. Now it is time for you to uphold yours. I would have the horse."

The queen told the witch, "You will leave with nothing."

"Are you sure?" the witch asked. The queen did not respond, so the witch said, "That is twice you have shown me rudeness, Queen Equiline Faraway. Do you remember?" The witch revealed herself to be the same old woman that the queen encountered years before on the road.

The queen remembered. She grew angry. "Get out," she told the witch.

The witch said, "I shall take the horse."

The queen called her guards.

The witch told her, "That is thrice, and that is unforgivable." She did not grow, but her presence suddenly filled the room.

The queen grew very afraid. "You are no witch. You are a fairy."

The witch said, "I would have taken your horse and left with it, and the scales would be balanced. But you were rude, and now I shall take them all."

The queen was rash, but she was wise enough not to argue. "Yes, of course. I'll show you to the stables myself."

The witch told her, "You don't understand. You are Equiline Faraway, and you are the Queen. Because you are the queen, all the horses belong to you. I will take them all."

Equiline blanched. "You cannot."

The witch smiled cruelly. "I am fairy. I can do what I want."

That is why there are no horses to be found in the Households.

For Want of a Horse

The loss of every horse in the Households was felt across the land.

The Riding Hoods were without steeds to ride. The queen, feeling the riders were now ineffective, disbanded them. But the Riding Hoods were loyal to their cause. Most were very proud and many, after all, had no place else to go. They regrouped and reformed under their own banner, private patrollers and protectors of the woodland and

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

of the people who live there. They still wear the riding hoods of their former office, and still attempt to carry out their duties on foot. The leader of each band of Riding Hoods wears a red hood as a badge of office.

There was renewed interest in the Red-Castle Railway. Many of the way stations were reopened, and one train was refurbished and readied for active service. However, damage to the tracks that crossed the land was extensive, and, while interest was renewed, there were not enough funds raised to breathe life into the project again.

The Halfway Station was among those that were reopened. Without a functioning railway, however, it served no purpose. It was sold to a private owner and refitted to serve as an Inn for travelers about to set off into Cottington Woods.

1980: The Beanstalk and the Jacks

There was a boy in the land of Diamonds who traded a cow for a handful of magic beans. Needless to say, the boy was punished severely when he returned home to his mother, who in turn took the seeds and threw them out the window. In the morning, both mother and boy were found crushed to death with a beanstalk reaching into the sky where their house had been, and bits of cottage scattered all over the Diamondlands.

The King of Diamonds regarded the beanstalk, saw that it reached into the sky and out of sight, had no idea what to do about it, and so left it well enough alone. The next day his guards were found flat beneath footprints that led off into Cottington Woods. The tracks disappeared in the UnderMarsh, but it was clear as day where they had come from.

It was also clear that exploring a sky-high beanstalk was not a job for normal soldiers, so the King of Diamonds asked for aid from the High King of Faraway, and the High King sent the jacks. Three jacks spent hours climbing the stalk, resting often on leaves as wide as houses. Though the day was clear, after nearly half a day the Jacks began to climb through clouds, and when they finally emerged it was to a mist enshrouded landscape of floating mountains.

The jacks saw the enormous beings that inhabited this land above the clouds. Exploring, they came to a modest home, equal in proportion to the giant men, and they entered it. They split up, for there were many rooms.

The first jack came to a room filled with bags of coins. Each golden point was as large as a warrior's shield, and hefting one was about all he could manage. The second found a kitchen and a counter, and a nest on which sat a goose that laid eggs of gold. The third found a magical harp with the face of a maiden that begged him to secure its freedom. The three jacks met back at the cottage door. The harp warned them that the giant master of the house would be back soon, and they must hurry and be away. Sensing the wisdom in her words, the jacks hastened toward the stalk and their way home.

The third jack carried the harp upon his back, and so the thing could see the cottage as they left it. It saw the giant return even when the giant did not see the jacks. The harp let out a shriek of terror and cried out for the jacks to run. The giant heard the cry, and gave chase.

The three jacks ran faster, but they were no match for the long legs of the giant, and he was almost on them when they reached the top of the long climb to the ground. The first jack was burdened with the heavy gold point and was last in line, and the giant picked him up and hurled him out into the sky, where he fell past the stalk and tumbled a very long way to the ground far below. The second jack was soon overtaken, and hid himself in the vines of the stalk where the giant was hard pressed to reach him. The third jack continued with great haste down the stalk. The harp continued to cry out, and he was tempted to toss it if it did not shut up, but he did not. When the second jack sailed by him and the stalk began to shake, he looked up to see the giant on its way down.

By then the king's men below saw the giant. The golden coin had long since fallen to the ground and had narrowly missed striking the Diamondland king. The jack who carried it, however, landed atop the monarch and crushed him dead. Now the king's men watched in horror as the second jack struck the earth. Not seeing the third jack and fearing he had met his fate high above, they set upon the stalk with swords and axes. As the giant grew closer they forwent the sharp instruments, and set the stalk ablaze. They fled, and it was then that the third jack and the harp reached the safety of the ground. They also fled while the stalk shook and wavered and the giant came down after them. The monster reached the ground and gave chase, and at that moment the stalk, weakened by the damage at its base, by the fire and by the weight of the giant, broke. It fell upon the giant, the jack, the harp and the fleeing king's men, crushing them and killing them all.

To this day the remains of that great stalk still lay along the northeast border of the Diamondlands, attracting herbalists and wood witches who seek its various strange growths.

1990: Mount Overmarsh Closes its Doors

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

At the best of times, goblins do not make good neighbors. They frequently get into things and take things that don't belong to them. Typically, upstanding people do not seek them out. But goblins are great burrowers, and from their warrens they pull the greatest supplies of precious metals in the world. So despite their role as society's estranged, it was very clear when, about twenty years ago, they faced a crisis. Mount OverMarsh, considered the capitol of things goblin, sealed its doors, cutting off the goblins outside from those within.

For a society whose magicians specialize in making doors to almost instantly transport themselves from one place to another, the event was also very curious. The goblins have no answers.

2012: The Cotting House

Vigo Cotting announced the opening of the Cotting House, an Inn near the center of Cottington Woods, just about halfway between the cities of Faraway and Collamoor. Gathers commenced wherein the settlers around the woodland agreed to meet at the Cotting House at regular intervals to conduct business. Vigo initiated plans to construct outbuildings nearby to house the large numbers of travelers to the area.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.3 The Kings Laws

The King's Laws are followed throughout the Houselands, and in every Houselands city around the world. Misinterpreting the laws is difficult, but becomes easier as you get into the details. The farther you enter the wilderness, the harder it is for agents of the King to establish order, the more often the laws break down.

Cottington is under the direct control of none of the Houselands, but they still follow the laws. The woodlanders appreciate their pseudo-independence, and should try and seek an end to any legal issues without asking for outside help. Attracting too much attention in this way might result in the High King or the King of Clubs seeking to take a more active role in Cottington's affairs. (Right now, the woodlanders do not pay taxes...)

Listing the complete Kings laws and their clauses would fill a library. Here are a few of the major laws, and some thoughts behind them.

1. Do Not Cause Harm to Come to Others.

You should not assault others, directly or indirectly.

If someone assaults you in someone else's name, either for pay or not, the penalty is the same for both the attacker and the originator.

2. Do Not Stand Idle and Allow Harm to Come to Others.

A clause to the first law, this is harder to enforce. For instance, you are exempt from this law if trying to aid another would put you in direct harm. You are also exempt from this law if you THINK aiding them would put you in direct harm. Then there's the definition of direct, to consider.

Very strict law abiding folks attempt to follow this law, but it is almost never enforced.

3. Do Not Compel Others to Act Against Their Will.

Taking Away another person's freedom of choice is an option only for those with authority, and that authority must come from the High King (directly or down the chain of command). Certain effects and items that have those effects (love potions, for instance), are illegal.

There is some question as to what is the legal age of consent, wherein a parent is no longer able to make decisions for their child. Typically this is judged on a case by case basis, and either is fairly cut and dry, or take so long that the child grows up, and the case is no longer an issue.

4. Do Not Take That Which Belongs To Others.

This law is the easiest to understand. Don't steal. Ownership claims may cloud the issue. After a period, the dead lose the right to claim ownership of their belongings, and those belongings should fall to any rightful heir. Ancient robber baron tombs and caches, however, muddy the issue further. While information found in those places should go to the church, the church has no need for the items of treasure that may be found within.

5. Do Not Act Against The Good Of The Houselands.

You should not harbor enemies of the Houselands. You should immediately alert any figure of authority if such an enemy is discovered. You should not act in any way as to endanger the nation, to steal from it, or to abuse it.

The King of Faraway is an Extension of the Houselands.

This includes the royalty of the four houselands and their families. Acting against them is treason, and in direct violation of the Fifth Law. The Second Law is strongly enforced where the high families are concerned.

Again, these are loose interpretations of the Laws and some issues surrounding them. Most woodlanders seek to avoid breaking them, and when that does happen, they try and sort things out for themselves. That said, they cannot lawfully ignore the laws, and they know that doing so would bring down a large ration of trouble on them.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.4 The Patrons

The First Patron wrote the Written Word, creating the world and all the things on it. He created the realms of fairy, the mists, the Slumberlands and even Anathema, home of demons. He is the author of all things.

Other Patrons followed.

Patrons were once men and women, but are now something both more and less. They can sometimes be seen walking the world, but they do not interact with the world, and nothing at all seems to affect them. Only on some far away level do they seem to hear or see the world around them.

On rare occasions, wisdom may be gleaned from a patron's words, but this is tricky because the patrons never speak directly to the people around them.

It is usually best to leave the patrons alone, when experiencing them or not. It is most likely true that they can sense the world without being present, and to that end people will try to direct their attention, either to them or away. Patrons are often known to embody the kinds of stories that they write. At the same time, it isn't absolutely certain if the patrons write the events of the world and so those events occur, or if the events occur and are then written down.

As with fairies, it is sometimes best to leave patrons well enough alone.

The Greater Patrons

There are countless patrons who roam the world, ghost-like with their eyes glued to the pages of their tomes. Below is a list of some of the better known patrons, and how they are associated.

Mother Goose

The Mother is considered by many to be the second patron. Some believe she is called the Mother because to her, all others are like children, and others believe it is because she favors tales for children or about them. Her tales are the oldest of any other Patron, and although there have been no new ones discovered recently, most suspect she is still around. Mother Goose rides an enchanted goose through the sky, and some believe that she lives in a comfortable cottage on the side of the moon.

Longstride, The Wanderer

The Wanderer is thought to have been to every place on the Written World. His tales typically involve much travel, or take place over a very long time. More often than not, they end without a satisfying conclusion, and it is very clear that the journey, to him at least, is what is important. He is well known for his attention to detail, and his pages often begin with a detailed map of his protagonist's route. He left markers called the Footprints of the Wanderer to announce his passing, or maybe just to remind himself of where he has been. Historians pay handsomely for the location of these places.

The Harrow

The Harrow is a patron to be avoided. He is attracted to the macabre, or perhaps he just writes that way. His characters typically meet unsavory ends. When a death is very painful or drawn out, most believe that Harrow penned it. Soldiers might ask that he sharpen their blade before battle, but even then they fear the same blade will be turned against them. Harrow is believed to be a scarecrow-thin individual, cloaked in shadows and accompanied by ravens.

Noss (the Curious)

Noss is not an exciting patron, which, in a patron, is often a good thing. Those who catch his attention often lead unexciting yet still fulfilled lives. He tends to write stories that explain things -- how they work and why. There's little action in a Noss tale, and ultimately, sometimes with persistence, the focus of his tales discover what they are after, and often end with a deeper understanding of the quieter dramas that unfold in the subtext of their lives.

Cupid

Cupid writes loves tales with a child-like innocence, and prefers stories of love and deep, throbbing emotion. Sadly, he seems to lack much understanding of how men and women act when thought is not involved, and his characters get themselves in a great deal of trouble that, ultimately, could have been avoided. The wise tend to want to avoid Cupid's notice, while the foolish or young at heart try very hard to seek him out.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

Johanna the Warrior

Johanna is a free spirit. Her stories typically are of high adventure and derring-do. Those she writes about typically have no cause to be bored, and to that end, she is another patron that most would rather avoid. That said, her stories are filled with reward, and those who embark on adventure on purpose could do worse than to have her write their tale.

Humphrey

It is a matter of some speculation as to how Humphrey found his way to become a patron. While his tales tend to cover a wide range of topics, they tend to ramble, and more often than not they end abruptly without any resolution. It cannot even be said that, as with the Wanderer, it is the journey that matters to Humphrey, because even those tend to be rambling and introspective without a process. Those who would embark on projects would do well to avoid the notice of Humphry, or face the more than likely possibility that that project will never see fruition.

Other Patrons

There are hundreds, maybe thousands of other patrons. Their names are not all known, even to the Church of the Word. Many of these have the same level of fame or infamy as the patrons listed here, but most are far less well known.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

16.5 Currency

"For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

--*Timothy*

10 silver points = 1 gold point

Briardown

Modern coins are minted in the Heartlands, in a well protected castle just outside the city of Briardown.

The Shape of the Coin

There is some controversy over the shape of the point. Ages ago the coins were fashioned after arrow heads, and that shape has been largely maintained. But there is no denying that the current silver and gold points bear as much resemblance to the symbol of the Heartlands as they do to the arrowheads of old. There is some movement by the other houselands, especially the House of Diamonds, to move the production of coins to a less partial location. Naturally they recommend themselves.

Types of Coins

Curren Gold Points

Around two thousand years old a couple hundred of these were minted. Most have been melted down or lost. They are larger than the common gold point, but because the gold content is less pure, they are still worth a single gold point. Collectors will often pay a great deal more to obtain these relics.

Common Silver Point

These small coins are the foundation of the economy of the Written World. One silver point is the lowest coin value possible.

Common Gold Point

The gold point is about four times the size of the silver point. Ten silver points is equal to one gold point.

Paper Bills

Conceived of by the Church of the Word, paper bills are the new thing in currency. They are maybe two generations old. They are legal and recognized by all the houses. They are available in several denominations, and valued on the bill in points (never stars), although the reference is understood when the bills are used.

Currently, there exists the 5 point bill, the ten point bill, and the fifty point bill.

Other Coins

It is possible to find coins from places around the world. The Petal Kingdom and the Dustlands have their own form of currency. The natives of the deep Barumbi Basin and the Wikapapuji Islands, and the tribes of the Canyonlands each barter for trade, but some understand the value of points, and will sometimes trade for them. The Houseland cities, even as far as Lakuparoo and the Barumbi coast all rely on points.

Cottingham Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

17 Appendix 1: Ethical Concerns

The following is copied directly from the Endgame web site with permission from Mac Brown, the Campaign Director. I decided not to repurpose the text because, frankly, I could not say this any better. Please read it, and understand that while our content will be different from that of Endgame, our concerns regarding good and bad, both in game and out, are the same.

Ethical Concerns

The people of Endgame Earth have gone through, and are continuing to experience, massive change and suffering. They are desperate, and in this sort of situation, custom and morality tend to drop far down a person's list of priorities.

That said, the players of Endgame are intended to be a cut above normal people. They are heroes, and they may be humanity's best hope of survival. The Endgame campaign will be the story of their efforts to do what's right.

Now, this is not to say that our staff will force anyone to create a "good" character, or control anyone's actions. It does mean that the majority of our staff's efforts will be put toward writing a story in which people can be heroic. Anyone not willing to work for the good of humanity, or at least go along for the ride with those who are, might not enjoy the game very much. We make no apologies for this, and are doing it quite intentionally. It's difficult enough to create an engaging world and series of storylines for heroes, without trying to accommodate villains as well. People who want to fight other players, or enjoy sabotaging the efforts of the majority, might find a different LARP more to their liking. If any player character is caught betraying humanity or acting against the players, staff will not mitigate the consequences, and they should not expect to be able to continue playing as that character merely because they are paying to play.

Fun and Sportsmanship

The purpose of this game is for the participants to have fun, including not only the players, but staff as well. This may not always be realistic, but it's what we're aiming for.

Endgame staff will attempt to accomplish this by telling an engaging, entertaining story that the players can participate in and influence. This story and its fun value are the most important part of Endgame.

It is the responsibility of all people involved in the game, staff and players alike, to make a reasonable effort to see that other people are able to enjoy themselves. If you are staffing an event, please remember that you are there to entertain the players. If you are playing, please keep in mind that the staff are volunteering their services to make the event possible and fun for you, and give them due consideration for this. Players who consistently cause problems or friction to the detriment of other people's fun, whether they are breaking the letter of the rules or not, may be asked to leave.

Cottington Woods Player's Guide Part Three: Adventuring

18 Appendix 2: Character Points, CP Earning and CP Cap by Event

Character Points (CP)

All new players will begin play with **100 points** to purchase skills.

Earning Character Points

The total amount of Character Points can be increased each event, as such:

Weekend Event CP

For attending any part of the event:	10 CP
For Submitting a Post Event Letter (PEL):	10 CP
For aiding in set up or clean up during an event:	5 CP
For staying and helping until the "bitter end"	5 CP

One Day Event CP

For attending any part of the event:	5 CP
For Submitting a Post Event Letter (PEL):	5 CP
For aiding in set up or clean up during an event:	5 CP
For staying and helping until the "bitter end"	5 CP

Additional character points may be earned by helping us run and maintain the game.

Loading and Unloading the truck	5 CP
Donations/Other	vary

The CP reward for donations varies. Donations are always welcome, but permission for submitting them must be received ahead of time. Please respect this. We cannot award CP for items we do not need, and it would be unfortunate for you to send us something and get nothing in return.

Character Point Cap by Event

The CP cap is raised by fifty for each weekend event and thirty points for each one day event. Additional CP, including "bitter end", those points earned by attending a one day event, by helping to load or unload the truck or by making donations to the game will add to your total, but do not add to your cap.

If you earn over the cap, those extra points are held until after the next event, when the cap is raised.

Starting CP:	100
CP cap after The Wood Speaks Event	180
CP cap after the 1 st Season One Event	230
CP cap after the 2 nd Season One Event	280
CP cap after the 3 rd Season One Event	330
CP cap after the 4 th Season One Event	380

Cottington Woods Player's Guide

Part Three: Adventuring

The Cotting House sits in the middle of enchanted Cottington Woods. The House and fledgling town nearby are a meeting place and the center of commerce for landholders throughout the woods. Cotting Town, or Cottington, would be a strategic holding for whoever controls it. Neither the High King in Faraway nor his reluctant vassal, the King of Clubs have laid claim to the tiny town, but it's young yet, and hasn't attracted much attention. One thing is sure, however -- the surrounding woods are home not only to goblins and to elves, but to the Fair Folk. And while it's wise to avoid fairies at all costs, in Cottington Woods it's just not possible.

The characters of Cottington Woods are those settlers whose will it is to make the tiny town thrive, and to do so they will have to overcome many obstacles, not the least of which is the Spirit of the Woods itself. Our players will explore fairy tales and fables in their darkest form. Wait, fairy tales? Don't for a second think that Cottington Woods is a game for children. The earliest stories were written as warnings of things to avoid.

Herein, there be dragons!