STORY I,  
THE STOLEN HEART

• Dusk  
• Yorotrusk  
• 120 min

REVISED STORY FROM NIGHTMARE TALES (AFFLICTION MAP)

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STORY INTRODUCTION

The caravan trudged along the road at a leisurely pace, Spirit pulling the wagon with her steady gait. Samuel was no stranger to life on the road, having been a member of the trader’s guild for nigh on 20 years, but his nerves were on edge. He heard the rumors. Hell, all the traders from here to Waylin Point had, but this opportunity was too good to pass up. Ostelink was short on supplies, dangerously so, and the guild was offering a double share of the normal profits due to everyone’s unwillingness to brave the road of late, due to the disappearances.

Samuel, lost in thought, didn’t hear it at first, but Spirit sure did. And true to her name, she bolted, her strong black form dragging the wagon with her. Contrary to what Samuel’s associates believed, Spirit did not spook easily, which is one of the reasons he used her as his go-to transport animal. Samuel cursed and began to take chase after his cargo, but came to a full standstill at the sight before him. Color drained from his face in terror as he saw his doom come for him...

A TRADER’S LAMENT

You partake a hearty meal and cold ale at the Golden Goat Inn, as you await the arrival of the local trade guild’s representative, who requested a meeting with you. Reflecting upon the recent calamities that have plagued Kremel, you worry over the rapid rise of danger threatening the land, and signs that the veil to the world of spirits may be weakening. Even within the safety of the city, its inhabitants carry an air of anxiety.

“Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I have an urgent matter that needs attention, and your reputation at solving, uh, problems, within these parts is well-known. We have received reports that several of our caravans carrying supplies to Ostelink have not arrived, well past the time they were expected. Winter is approaching, and Ostelink desperately needs these goods. More importantly, we are worried about the whereabouts of our people. The roads have been so dangerous of late, but we take precautions to protect our traders against highwaymen. If you could investigate the situation, we will award your efforts well. Lydia, one of our traders that made it to Ostelink safely is still there. I was told she witnessed something strange during her travels. Perhaps her information can help you.”

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER SKIRMISH TABLE

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<th>DIE ROLL (D10)</th>
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A TRADER’S LAMENT

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You head towards Ostelink, anxious to speak with Lydia. Halfway there, you...
catch sight of a torn piece of bleached canvas hanging from the trees off the road. Curious, you move to inspect it and find a large wagon hidden within the trees. The bit of canvas dangling from the branches comes from the wagon's cover, which has been ripped in several places, revealing goods scattered about in disarray. A brief inventory check shows that most of the contents are still present, except the food supplies, which have been torn open and devoured. At the head of the wagon lies a dead black pack horse still tethered to the wagon, its legs raw with exposed flesh and several bite marks marred its smooth coat. There is no sign of the caravan's escort.

Based on the condition of the horse and contents of the wagon, it seems obvious that the caravan was subjected to a wolf attack. However on closer inspection, you realize there are no wolf tracks on the road, just within the trees. Also, with all the animal tracks shown in the soft dirt, the trader's footprints are not among them. Perhaps something other than wolves caused the caravan to halt its progress.

**A MISSING TRADER**

You follow the tracks for over an hour, their visibility becoming clearer as your search progresses. Ahead of you, a solitary figure sits slumped on a large boulder amidst a sparsely wooded grove. You approach cautiously, calling out to the individual in concern. The man before you is thin and haggard, with several days of growth filling in his sunken cheeks. Prolonged sun exposure and dehydration has blistered his forehead and left his lips chapped and peeling. The man is unresponsive as you urge him to attention, and just looks ahead as if you were not even present.

**STORY SKILL CHECK**

**AWARENESS OR NATURE 7** - All Characters

(One Success Needed)

You look around the road for a sign of the missing trader’s whereabouts.

**SUCCESS:** You see what appears to be the trader’s footprints head off the road in the opposite direction of the caravan. Any character who successfully made this check becomes PERCEPTIVE. Skip to “A Missing Trader” on page 2.

**FAILURE:** The area has many footprints seeming to belong to the trader, but their trail ends cold. A howl suddenly sounds from within the trees, followed by several. A pack of wolves emerge, eying you with ravenous hunger. Skirmish with a Rabid Wolf. Continue the story.

**PRIMARY GOALS**

- Defeat all foes by fighting or pacifying them.
- See the Encounter dialog box.
- Immediately after the combat, read “After The Fight” on pg 3.

**OPTIONAL GOALS**

- Investigate the Search locations.
- Available only during combat.

**ENCOUNTER**

Encounter 2 Restless Spirits.
You attempt to pacify the spirit, forcing them through the veil back into the spirit world.

- **Success:** The Restless Spirit fades from existence and the character gains 8 Lore. Remove the spirit from the map.
- **Failure:** The character becomes CURSED 3.

**USE TOWN SERVICES**

Use Forested Woodlands tile FE05B.

**ATTENTION!**

You must escort the trader to Ostelink.

The current Leader must take him as a Mission Companion. If both of their Companion slots are full, they must discard one of them to accommodate the trader. The Leader receives the YELLOW Story Marker.

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**AFTER THE FIGHT**

The spirits are now gone, but the trader still resides on the stone, unmoving. Perhaps the physician in town will be able to help him come around.

**ATTENTION!**

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**UNFULFILLED ANSWERS**

You arrive in Ostelink, weary from your stressful trek westward. Now that you have reached the safety of town, it is time to find out what you can from the trader, Lydia. You decide to begin your search at the local trader’s guild.

- **If you have the YELLOW Story Marker, read Story Moment 1 on pg 8.**
- **If you have the RED Story Marker, read Story Moment 9 on pg 8.**

You find Lydia speaking in hushed whispers with several of her fellow traders. Their brows furrow in concern as they listen to her tale. When you approach, the group falls silent and eyes you suspiciously. You explain your business and ask Lydia for any details she can share regarding her recent travels. “I reached here safely, but—by the stars—I say I was lucky, especially with the others gone missing. Night was approaching. The journey to Ostelink was only a few hours, but the day had been long, so I decided to stop for the night, and continue at daybreak. As I was eating my evening fare, I heard the most horrific scream of my life. It was unnatural, not from any man, woman, or animal that I know of. And it did not stop, but came closer. I was frozen in terror until I saw it. Then nothing could have stopped me from running. To describe what I saw...it was some sort of ghost, something that seemed to suck the light from the stars themselves. I ran until well after that eerie scream stopped. In daylight, I doubled back, not wanting to lose my payday. There was no sign of that thing, but I decided to retrieve my belongs and leave with haste.”

Could spirits truly be at work here? You were already concerned about the state of the veil in these parts. Perhaps its fragile condition is causing the dead to haunt the area. The closest burial grounds of any substantial size are the Goran Tombs. They might be worth investigating.
UNWELCOME GREETINGS

Clouds heavily blanket the darkening sky with night’s approach. A slow drizzle has followed you along the way turning you and your belongings into a sodden mess. You experience a sense of unease as you survey your surroundings, as if something waits to jump out at you from behind a gravestone or crumbling statue. Not sure where to begin your search of the massive burial ground, you decide it would be a good idea to look around for clues.

STORY SKILL CHECK
AWARENESS 8 - All Characters
(One Success Needed)

You search the darkening graveyard for clues that will lead you to the source of whatever is causing the spirits of the area to be stirring.
SUCCESS: Read Story Moment 6 on pg 8.
FAILURE: Read Story Moment 2 on pg 8.

To your surprise, you discover an old man with wisps of graying hair barely covering a mostly bald pate. A large hound lies lazily at his feet, clearly miserable in the cold rain. The dog notices your approach well before the man, giving a menacing warning grow. The old man, who was busily shoveling a pile of loose soil into a grave while cursing all the while, looks up with an angry stare. “More gravediggers come to undo my work?!? Well, I’ll have none of that. It’s time I teach you robbers a lesson.” The undertaker’s hound rises to its feet with a snarl on its now foaming mouth, awaiting permission to attack.

STORY SKILL CHECK
SPEECH 7 - The Leader

Can you convince the undertaker that your intentions are pure and you had no part in the recent grave robbing?
SUCCESS: Read Story Moment 10 on pg 8.
FAILURE: Read Story Moment 4 on pg 8.

With tensions eased, the undertaker tells you of the grave robberies that have plagued the Goran Tombs over the past weeks. “Every night, a half-dozen graves get dug up, the treasured possessions kept with their dead...stolen. And more recently, several of the larger tombs have been broken into. I’ve not even finished repairing the damage to the grounds. I know they are here—I chased them off, but I could not keep up with these old legs. Do me a favor and get them for me, teach them a lesson in manners...unpleasantly. If I was any sort of fortune teller, I would wager on them being what you need to find anyhow.”

Continue to “Tomb Hunt”.

TOMB HUNT

You follow the directions the undertaker gives you of the graverobber’s suspected location, where the ancient tombs of Kremel’s ancestry lie in slumber. Sure enough, it does not take you long to discover recent tracks of a half-dozen individuals leading to a large tomb entrance. The door has been forcibly open, the old rusty lock twisted almost in half. It is beyond dark inside, with the smell of decay heavy in the air. The darkness almost seems to push out of the doorway, causing your skin to crawl with tension.

STORY SKILL CHECK
NERVE 6 - All Characters

The darkness ahead tests your courage. Are you brave enough to enter the tombs and face what dangers await?
SUCCESS: Become BRAVE.
FAILURE: Become SPOOKED.

Deeper you go, into the heart of the tomb. A thick layer of dust coats every surface, but a clear sign of human footprints can be seen, leading you forward. You ignore the intricate twists, turns, and intersections of the place, guided by your unwitnessing prey. Your dogged pace slows as you enter a large room containing rows of coffins. While moving towards the far exit, a guttural snarl echoes around you. Barely visible in the darkness, figures lurk toward you, hunger gleaming in eyes that penetrate the blackness.

PRIMARY GOALS

- Defeat all foes. See the Encounter dialog box.
- Immediately after the combat, read After The Fight.

OPTIONAL GOALS

- Investigate the Search locations. Available only during combat.

These levers raise and lower the portcullises of the small chamber. A character may spend their ACT to raise or lower a portcullis in the opening closest to the lever. The starting position for each lever has the portcullis in a raised position. If the lever is lowered, place a portcullis standee in the appropriate opening of the chamber. If raised, remove the standee.

ENCOUNTER

Encounter 2 Decaying Dead and 2 Flesh Eating Ghouls.
**MAP SETUP**
Use Tomb tile FC07B.

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**CHAPTER TWO**

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<tr>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>Poltergeist</td>
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**SPIRIT’S VENGEANCE**

You emerge into an black-sooted crematorium, the sweltering temperature a result of the burning furnaces which fill most of the room. The highwaymen you have been hunting are locked in combat with translucent beings who fade in and out of reality. With shrieks of fury, they tear into their mortal victims. Several of the grave robbers already lie dead on the floor, the life drained from their bodies. Before you can act, the grave robbers are able to dispatch the last of the wailing spirits.

Panting heavily, the leader says, “Looks like we have more company. Finally, a mortal enemy to fight. We do not intend to share our bounty, so this can only end one way.” Drawing swords, the remaining highwaymen attack.

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**AFTER THE FIGHT**

With the immediate threat of the undead resolved, you survey the area more closely. Several of the coffins have been looted, which must have caused the dead here to stir. A trail of blood leads out of the room...the victims of these grave robbers must have extracted vengeance upon them, perhaps slowing them enough for you to catch them in flight.

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**ATTENTION!**

The group may choose to rest at this point if they have not yet rested this chapter.

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Continue on to “Chapter Two”.

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**PRIMARY GOALS**

- Defeat all foes. See the Encounter dialog box.
- Immediately after the combat, read After The Fight.

**OPTIONAL GOALS**

- Investigate the Search locations. Available only during combat.

Flip the dead body tokens over: These are highwaymen that have fallen victim to the attacks of the Banshee’s. Perhaps there is something useful in their possession. Flip these tokens over to see what you find. If you find a Snare, read Story Moment 8 on pg 8.

Roll the red d10’s: There is a large red button on each of the cremation furnaces. What does it do? Any character may press the button by spending their Act, and then read Story Moment 3 on pg 8.

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**ENCOUNTER**

Encounter 3 Highwaymen.
AFTER THE FIGHT

With the grave robbers thoroughly trounced, you sag in relief. You approach the leader of these men, whom you kept alive for questioning. He sits dejectedly on the ground nursing his many wounds. Knowing that his evils are shadowed by the greater threat, you ask him of his whereabouts over the last week. He explains that five days past, he stumbled upon a ruin in the middle of the Goran Tombs. Within the decrepit structure, he found a gleaming silver pendant of obvious value. When he took it, he felt the ground tremor and the sky darken. He did not think much of it at the time, so pleased as he was with his find, but ever since, he and his crew have been plagued by the dead. It began as an inconvenience, but has now turned into a deadly affair. He shows you the artifact he found, a silver-wrought heart talisman inscribed with prayers by its owner's beloved. You can feel power in the necklace just by a slight touch. When this artifact of love and power was taken from its resting place, it must have angered a powerful spirit, who has sent the dead in search of it.

You release this man, but not before threatening him harsh retribution if he should ever return to banditry. You must return this heart amulet to its resting place, and hope that it appeases the enraged entity.

Continue to “The Heart’s Homecoming” on page 6.

THE HEART’S HOMECOMING

Following the directions the bandit leader provided, you search for the resting place of the silver heart. In the center of the burial grounds, you come upon a collapsed structure matching the description given to you. At one time, it must have been magnificent, with tall marble pillars and a broad metal door, but not much remains of its historical beauty. In the center lies a raised platform with a jagged crevice in its floor, exposing the resting place of the heart. It is now your opportunity to correct the wrongdoing. But this artifact clearly has power that could help shift the balance of light and darkness in the favor of humankind.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH

The heart talisman is clearly an artifact of significant power and value. It could benefit humankind if it was used against the powers of darkness.

- **CHOICE 1:** You decided to keep the talisman. It is no use to anyone buried in the ground. The Leader receives the YELLOW Story Marker.
- **CHOICE 2:** You decide to return the talisman to its resting place. It does not belong to you. This may be the only way to appease the angered spirits.

As you begin to leave, the ground trembles and a disembodied voice laments, “My heart, stolen. Mortals be cursed. All you do is extend my anguish beyond endurance. I must have vengeance. You must give your lives in payment for your crimes against me and my beloved.”

PRIMARY GOALS

- Defeat all foes. See the Affliction Encounter dialog box.
- Immediately after the combat, read “Story Closing” on page 7.

OPTIONAL GOALS

Flip the leaf tokens over: You think you saw something within the underbrush? Perhaps there is something that could be useful. Flip these tokens over to see what you find. If you find a Snare, read Story Moment 7 on pg 8.

AFFLICTION ENCOUNTER

Encounter the Wraith and 2 Flesh Eating Ghouls.
• If the YELLOW Story Marker is in play, the character possessing it (and the Heart Talisman) becomes CURSED and DERANGED as the Wraith howls with anger. You may not trade the talisman with another character during this combat.
• The character possessing the GREEN Story Marker receives a +5 Defense and +5 Might against the Wraith in this encounter.

MAP SETUP
Use Bone Isle - Graveyard Showdown tile FE03B.

STORY CLOSING
IF YOU WON THE BATTLE
The Wraith screams in fury as the last wisps of its substance dissipates, its essence returning through the veil. The disquiet that you felt has faded, giving you some assurance that the imminent spiritual threat has ended. Both Ostelink and Yorotrusk will be relieved to have the roads between them safe once more...or as safe as anything can be these days.
• Characters receive a 10% discount at the market and tinker in both Yorotrusk and Ostelink during the next story.
• If the group possesses the RED Story Marker, each character receives an additional 40 coins from Ostelink in thanks.
• If a character possesses the YELLOW Story Marker, they receive the following:

NEW ARTIFACT
Talisman of the Devoted Heart
(+1 FAITH, +1 NERVE)

Exhaust until the start of the next story to attempt to activate the Boundless Faith Prayer, as with the Prayer card of the same name [Enhancement]

CONGRATULATIONS!
IF YOU LOST THE BATTLE
You awaken at the Gypsy Encampment on the outskirts of Ostelink, confused and disoriented (see Rulebook “On Death and Dying” on page 32 and follow the instructions for Total Group Death). You were found by the undertaker, who was able to cart you to the gypsies in Ostelink. When you ask about the Wraith and the Heart Talisman, he tells you there was no sign of either. Perhaps the spirit was appeased by being reunited with the talisman. Something deep in the pit of your stomach worries otherwise.

The cost of items and services within the market and tinker in Ostelink and Yorotrusk increase by 20% during the next story with the increased cost of transporting goods between the two towns due to continued spiritual attacks on the road.

THE END
1. The trader you found during your travels remains unresponsive, but when asked his name, he mutters “Samuel”. The guild is relieved to see that Samuel is alive and immediately sends for a physician. After some time, he regains his senses, but has no recollection of the events prior to him leaving Yorotrusk. In thanks, he offers to accompany you, hoping to help you get to the bottom of this mystery.

The character with the YELLOW Story Marker gains the Townsman Companion. Return the YELLOW Story Marker to the game box.

2. You listen carefully for the traditional sounds of moaning that usually accompany the restless dead, but all you hear is the low howl of the wind rushing past the many headstones. Hours go by and the air grows colder as darkness engulfs the area, causing your wet possessions to become an even greater burden. If you don’t find shelter from the cold rain soon, it could mean your death.

All characters become SICKENED 5.

But then your ear catches something out of place, an angry muttering that sounds too visceral for something of supernatural origins. You follow the sound a short way before discovering the source.

3. When you press the button, the furnace begins to whine. It does not take long for the fires within to become white hot. The temperature surrounding the monstrous oven become unbearable.

Roll the d10. On a d10:6+, the furnace ejects 2 Flame tokens into random spaces within the green highlighted area of the appropriate furnace. For the remainder of combat, all squares adjacent to the furnace cause 1 Damage to anyone occupying them at the start each round. Remove the red dice from the map.

4. Startled by the man’s venomous fury, you stammer out an apology which seems to infuriate the undertaker even more. “School’s in session, younglings. You’re gonna think twice about messing with my charges again. Get ‘em boy!”

Skirmish with the Vicious Hound.

After the fight, he comments wryly, “You don’t fight like the normal mangy, filthy, rotten-stench filled graverobbers I expected you to be. Explain yourselves.” You carefully explain the purpose of your search of Goran Tombs, explaining that a supernatural threat is stirring here.

5. Although he seems to be suffering from shock due to his trials, he looks up vaguely in your direction and whispers, “The spirits, they whisper to me. Hunting for what is lost, what was taken.” Then he grabs he head with both hands and lets out a loud, anguished moan, “I don’t have it! Leave me be.”

Gain the GREEN Story Marker.

6. You listen carefully for the traditional sounds of moaning that usually accompany the restless dead, but all you hear is the low howl of the wind rushing past the many headstones. But then your ear catches something out of place, an angry muttering that sounds too visceral for something of supernatural origins.

You follow the sound a short way before discovering the source.

All characters who successfully made the AWARENESS skill check receive 15 Lore.

7. You dig through the underbrush in hopes of finding a useful treasure, however you are instead rewarded with a bite from an angry snake, who then slithers off.

Lose 2 Vita and become WEAKENED (2 Tracking tokens).

8. You turn the recently dead body over for inspection, hoping to find something useful. Suddenly you are pushed back by a strange force as the highwayman’s spirit joins the battle against you.

If you are occupying the same space as the token, you are PUSHED 1 towards the Start Zone, even if you normally resist the affect.

Replace the token with a Restless Spirit mini.

9. The guild is ecstatic to get the missing supplies as they are sorely needed. In thanks, each character is given a Bandage token.

10. You carefully articulate the purpose of your search of Goran Tombs, explaining that a supernatural threat is stirring here. His anger gradually diminishes, but his eyes are still hard as diamonds. His hound, sensing that hostilities are unlikely to occur, settles back down to rest at his master’s feet.

Gain 8 Lore and become RESPECTED.

11. The man does not respond to your attempts to shake him out of his stupor. Suddenly, he looks up and lets out an anguished howl that freezes your soul.

All characters become SPOOKED 4.