**The Valley, Outside the Valley, and First Adventures**

**Morkontee Valley**

Your characters are very familiar with the Morkontee Valley as a whole. That being said, you are all still relatively young (age 25 and under, with possible exception being synthetic characters – if any). Which means you have not traveled extensively – at least not yet. You have journeyed north as far as Mona Green (which is a slightly larger and slightly more impressive town than yours), and as south as the South Gate and Echo. And the villages in between. At least once. You understand some of the local politics and local personalities and leadership. You know enough about the local settlement customs to have dialog and exchange information without issue (or having to make rolls). However, each settlement is unique unto itself, so you will not readily know more of the intimate or deeper secrets of the other settlements.

Of course, the place you are most familiar with is your home village of Morgrants Grove. You know it like the back of your hand. And the surrounding few miles. In your younger days (or perhaps more recently for those of you who are still in their younger days) you have walked-about and explored nearby forests, hills, farmlands. But – as with many settlements in the valley – you have been warned from a very early age that travel too far outside of settlements comes with dangers; and travel away from roads can be very dangerous. Despite the relatively peaceful nature of the valley, there are still hidden dangers and roaming beasts that are unfriendly. If you avoid them, they will typically avoid you. But if you venture out too far into the wilderness by yourself/yourselves, you can expect to come face to face with something unpleasant.

**What are you going to do?**

Which brings us to the present – what are your characters going to do, now that they have been created and raised to 2nd level. What this essentially means is that your group has shown high potential among their peers. And while it is generally accepted that staying put (in a settlement) is the safest place to be, few settlements can survive on their own without outside contact – trade and exchange of information most prominently. And to make outside contact, adventuring or trading expeditions are organized annually.

When an individual or group of individuals in your village “come of age” and show promise, they are typically tasked with their first official mission. Usually that mission will be either a Trading expedition (to Apprise or Mona Green typically), or a Discovery expedition. Sometimes, both. In your cases, you will be tasked with both missions.

**First Mission: Trade**

Your first mission will be a straightforward Trade mission to Mona Green. Since you can basically walk there in just a few hours (it’s only 10 miles away as the crow flies), it is not considered a long or dangerous journey. You take supplies and implements and foodstuffs, you travel in a group (with carts and beasts to pull them), you cross thru Apprise and greet the leader there (as is customary), and you reach Mona Green. Once there, you go thru the customary “hail and well met” and the formalities. Then you see what you can trade for with what you have been provided to trade with. (The GM will outfit this initial expedition, so you will know what it is you have.) You will be given the parameters for the trade – especially what it is your village hopes (or expects) you to try and obtain in return: items and things in order of preference.

**Second Mission: Discovery**

Your second mission will be a Discovery expedition. This will be a bit more complicated, and it will involve your characters – as a group – travelling outside of the Valley. The details and location(s) of the expedition remain unknown (to you) at the moment. After your Trading expedition (presuming you don’t muck it up), you will then sit with a village Councilor (or the village Leader herself, perhaps), and be given your official task. After this, you will be allowed to provision yourselves. As your village is one where personal responsibility and initiative are expected, you will outfit your expedition largely on your own – using your own Wealth. The village Councilors and Hunters are not without kindness, however. You will definitely be provided with some free stuff: a cart or two and some beasts to pull them, some canvas (to cover the carts), perhaps some basic defensive items (TBD), perhaps an interesting minor tech item or two, and most definitely a suitable food supply (enough to last a week or two or three) – so you will not need to purchase transportation or food/water on your own. At least not this time.

Details of just what it is the village expects you to “discover” will be revealed to you when the time comes to provision your expedition. But you know from talking to many other villagers (especially Hunters) that have done these expeditions themselves in their younger days, the journey can head east (20% of the time), sometimes north (10% of the time), and sometimes west (70% of the time). Never south (beyond South Gate/Echo). You have been told some stories of what was seen/discovered in each of those three directions – enough to provide you with simple working knowledge of what you might expect to encounter (on a macro level), and will be provided the appropriate map(s) as well. There have been times where adventurers do not return, or a few that return come back changed (mutations). From what you gather, the attrition rate (for death), for all expeditions in the past decade, has been around 20%. May seem high to some: 20% of all adventurers that set out on the Discovery expeditions do not come home alive. As for mutations, on average about 30% of the adventurers come back changed in some way. But you live in the Gamma Age – these dangers do not come as shocks or surprises – they are the way of life, the way things are. And you are ready.