



EuLabRPG: EUropean LABoratories of Role-Play Gaming to promote school social and emotional culture

Project Number: 2023-1-IE01-KA220-SCH-000158117

The Rite of the Bell – complete adventure on empathy

Author(s): EuLabRPG Team

Date: 20/03/2025



Contents

Background	3
Main NPCs	3
The Places.....	5
Session Outline.....	8
Part 1 - Talking to the Chief.....	8
Part 2 - Investigating the Facts of Virae	8
Part 3 – Malhal	9
Epilogue.....	11
.....	12

Background

Kelen is a fertile and verdant region. Its most crucial centre is Virae, a frontier town that is an annual destination for the great Nomadic Clans that inhabit Kelen. This moment of meeting and confrontation is sealed by the completion of an ancient rite that has been taking place since the dawn of time: the Ringing of the Bell.

It consists of an imposing torchlight procession led to the central square of Virae. Here, the Clan Chiefs light a large bonfire, into which the notes containing the worries that their respective groups want to get rid of are thrown. Finally, the Chief of Virae rings the Bell, letting its ringing resonate across the expanses of Kelen, creating protection that can keep evil away from the lands of the Clans.

This cycle of events has occurred undisturbed for generations until today. A Shadow known as Malhal from the Kelt Hills managed to penetrate Kelen, travelling undisturbed among the caravans until reaching Virae when the Bell was rung. Inadvertently, the Clans renewed the protection on their lands, locking Malhal himself inside. Starting from the night of the rite, Malhal began to disturb the dreams of the Clan Chiefs, instilling doubts about the other Chiefs' good faith.

In the space of a week, the climate of communion and community gave way to suspicion, doubt, and resentment. This is linked to an ominous omen: a deep crack has opened up in the Bell, making its structure unstable. Malhal's goal is simple: to continue to stir up chaos and make the most substantial feelings explode in the community of Virae, to have enough energy to subjugate as many souls as possible to the will of his Lord, Tyr-Na-Man.

The Wanderers arrive in Virae at the height of tension, facing a community on the warpath. Two young hunters, Garreth and Gwyn, belonging to two rival clans, have taken up arms for trivial reasons and have been imprisoned. The three principal Clan Chiefs have been unable to agree on the responsibilities of the two young men, creating an unprecedented decision-making stalemate. The risk of reckless initiatives and personal revenge has never been so high.

Main NPCs

1. Malhal

Malhal's goal in Virae is simple: to stir up the Clans' actions, to heighten the conflict between them, and to let their negative emotions explode. When the negative energy in the air is strong enough, Malhal will leave his hiding place, located in the old ruins of the Mill, to sneak up to the Bell and perform the rite that will subjugate the minds of everyone present, transforming them into Tyr-Na-Man's new army.

2. Chief of Virae

His goal is to maintain peace and order in Virae, ensuring that the Rite of the Bell is performed correctly and that the Clans respect the truce within the town. He wants the Wanderers to resolve the situation as soon as possible.

3. Nadir, the Sky Eagle

Leader of the Sky Eagles Clan, Nadir is a young woman who took over the leadership of her people less than a year ago, earning her respect with difficulty. Malhal has made a dent in her soul, transforming her competitiveness into insecurity. Nadir fears losing command and that the other Clan Chieftains may overthrow her. If the Wanderers can help her regain control, Nadir will tell of a dream she had the night after the Rite of the Bell: all of Virae was illuminated by the light of the rite, but a dark shadow stained that picture of pure light. If the Wanderers cannot help her recognize her insecurities and make peace with her feelings, Nadir will be at Malhal's side during the rite, siding with the shadow.

4. Sammun, the Vermillion Elk

The Vermillion Elk Clan leader is famous for his courage and deep self-esteem. Malhal has managed to break through his soul, turning his self-esteem into conceit. Sammun fears that the other Clan Chieftains want to discredit him in front of his people, making him lose the authority he enjoys. Suppose the Wanderers help him regain control of himself. In that case, Sammun will reveal that he has never lost power in this way: he believes that what happened is related to the breaking of the Bell, but he doubts that the other Clans are responsible since no one would gain from it. If the Wanderers do not help him recognize the weight of his pride and help him accept that anyone can fail, Sammun will be at Malhal's side during the rite, fighting for the shadow.

5. Gron, the Indigo Vulture

Chief of the Indigo Vulture Clan, he is one of the few Chieftains who is not a human. Despite the years that have passed, he still feels the weight of the gaze of the other Chieftains, fearing that they may still perceive him as a stranger. Malhal has managed to break through his soul, transforming his kindness into rudeness. If the Wayfarers commit to helping him regain control of his emotions, Gron will personally help them try to calm the other two Clan Chieftains, ensuring that his men avoid the outbreak of new riots. If the Wayfarers do not help him recognize the heavy weight of his carelessness, Gron will be at Malhal's side during the Rite, assisting the Shadow with his magic.

6. Garreth and Gwyn

Garreth (Crimson Elk Clan) and Gwyn (Sky Eagle Clan) are two young and brave hunters of their respective Clans. Before the current Rite of the Bell, the two had never met, but their fates had tragically intertwined due to Malhal's machinations. The Shadow caused the two to chase the same prey, a hare, and they ended up catching it simultaneously. Instead of reasoning rationally about the matter, Malhal instilled in the two a bold ferocity, transforming reason into violence, leading them to physical confrontation and violating the rules of peace of Virae. Before they could harm each other, they were incarcerated in the Hunting Lodge, awaiting trial. All they remember from those moments of madness

is the feeling of having acted without having control of their bodies, as if someone had momentarily appropriated their actions.

7. Lenora

Lenora is an elder belonging to the faerie people. She lives permanently in Virae throughout the year, busying herself with preparing ointments and compresses for medical use. She is an excellent source of information and knows some background information about the Clan Chiefs. She may be willing to reveal this and other information about other characters, provided that the Travelers have different stories to exchange with her.

8. Baltimore

Baltimore is a tall, slender elf with sharp features and large, dark eyes. He lives permanently in Virae, where he cares for the inn and the lodgings for outsiders. He is an excellent source of information regarding the city's buildings: he can tell the Travelers the most critical points of interest, revealing some anecdotes and offering them advice if they need something. In exchange, he can ask the Travelers to take care of small tasks, mainly maintaining peaceful relations between the Clan members who live at his inn.

9. Fianna

Fianna is a young human girl who lives permanently in Virae, caring for other people's livestock for a good part of the year. When the season of the Rite comes, the girl is in charge of the Bell, as she will ring it after the great bonfire has burned the worries written by the Clan Chieftains. She is an excellent source of information regarding the Rite and knows the concerns that the Clan Chieftains wanted to be free of: the loss of control (Nadir), the loss of honour (Sammun), and feeling like an outsider (Gron). Fianna will not quickly reveal this information to the Travelers unless they prove their good faith.

The Places

1. Chief's House

The House is a sparse place with a large hall and a side room, which serves as a kitchen and bedroom. The Chief of Virae often sits in the hall's armchair.

2. At the Errant Knight

Virae's Inn. The place is run by Baltimore, who spends most of his time here. During the days of the Wanderers' stay, the tavern is crowded with members of the different Clans, and the tension between them is palpable.

3. Abandoned Mill

More isolated from the other buildings is an old windmill. The creaking, the scurrying of mice, and the hissing of the wind between the boards have led the most imaginative to spread scary stories about this role, giving it the reputation of a haunted place. Malhal has made this place his home, but it is impossible to detect his presence even by searching the area since the shadow is careful not to be found. If someone were to reach the highest floor of the mill, they might find traces of a strange bivouac: someone (Malhal) seems to have recently interacted with the environment, carving strange glyphs into the wood as if they were trying out some form of peculiar ritual. The Wayfarers cannot understand its function, but it is hurting the souls of many people in Virae.

4. Circle of Wagons

Depot of the wagons that make up the caravans that have reached the city. Many are willing to create semicircles to recreate the symmetry of the mobile villages where the individual families that make up the Clan live. The occupants try not to mix, staying together only with the families they consider their allies.

5. Hunting Lodge

On the southern side of Virae, there is a sturdy structure known as the Hunting Lodge. Today, the House has been adapted to house the equipment needed for hunting trips, but the two cells have been kept and are now House Garreth and Gwyn, respectively. A small group of city guards keeps an eye on the two young men and struggles to keep the supporters of the two prisoners at bay.

6. Market Square

The area is a crossroads of passage and a meeting place, both for the village inhabitants and for the members of the Clans who are temporarily stationed in Virae. At the herbalist's stand, it is possible to meet Lenora, who will try to approach the Wayfarers to collect their stories and tell them what she thinks she knows.

7. Rite Fields

In the centre of the expanse, you can still see the extensive remains of a bonfire, while a little further on, a wooden platform has been built, reachable thanks to a flight of stairs, on which stands a structure that supports a large brass bell. The latter's surface is crossed by a deep crack, which threatens to break the instrument if it were to be used again. The Fields were the scene of the Rite of the Bell, held a week before the arrival of the Wayfarers. The only figure that moves in its silence is the young Fianna.

8. Banks of the Annon

The Annon is a small river that runs through the region where Virae is located. On the bank, some small docks have been built, where the boats of the village fishermen and those who use the river for their trade are moored. Here, Nadir is organizing a sortie against the Hunting Lodge to free Gwyn and take Garreth hostage to gain an advantage over Sammun.

9. Seasonal Warehouses

The Wayfarers can find Sammun here in the company of a large group of his best warriors. Sammun does not trust Nadir's words and believes Gwyn has deliberately framed Garreth to discredit his Clan. Sammun is planning a retaliation against the Skyeagle Clan: he wants to attack their settlement at the Circle of Wagons, scattering them and humiliating Nadir's authority.

10. Hilltop Mausoleum

It is a secluded and silent place where the villagers rarely venture. If the Wayfarers go there, they may encounter Gron, the Indigo Vulture. The dwarf has retreated to this place alone, leaving his men to guard their respective caravans. Gron is not in the mood to talk to the Wayfarers and is not interested in doing anything, much less reasoning with Nadir and Sammun.

Session Outline

Part 1 - Talking to the Chief

The singer uses this first scene to provide the Travelers with the initial framework and immediately reveal the task that awaits them.

Regardless of what motivated the Travelers to reach Virae, the Chief is aware that his help could be decisive for the Travelers' story. However, he is deeply troubled by what is happening and needs someone who can resolve the situation before it can degenerate.

He will give a comprehensive overview of the situation: the arrival of the Nomadic Clans a week before, the fulfilment and meaning of the Rite of the Bell in the presence of the three Major Clan Chiefs (Nadir, Sammun and Gron), the discovery of the crack on its surface, the tensions of the following days and finally the incident between Garreth and Gwyn, which occurred at first light, shortly before the arrival of the Travelers.

The Chief believes that the Wanderers are sufficiently impartial and objective to deal with the situation and defuse the spiral of violence before it can explode. The Wanderers will have to maintain peace within the town, convince the three Clans to cooperate, and shed light on what led Garreth and Gwyn to attack each other.

Part 2 - Investigating the Facts of Virae

The second part of the adventure does not have a precise chain of scenes and events that must occur. The story has an open structure that will be defined as the game progresses, emerging as the Wanderers decide to act, speak to an NPC, or visit a location. The Singer is called upon to adapt to the situation less as the Wanderers continue their plan.

There is no time limit for the second part of the adventure to be completed, but the Singer can keep the tension high, reminding the group that the situation should be clarified before the sun sets. To make the passage of time more adrenaline-filled, the Singer can use a "Clock", which symbolizes the passage of time. By placing a sheet of paper on the table so that it is visible to everyone, he will have to draw a circle, dividing it into segments to have several segments varying from 6 to 8. Whenever the Wayfarers do something meaningful during the game, or when the Singer wants to raise the tension, the Singer can blacken a segment of the Clock: when all the segments are blackened, sunset has arrived and time is up. Once the last interaction that the Wayfarers were carrying out has been concluded, we move on to the third and final part of the adventure.

Part 3 – Malhal

The third part of the adventure is characterized by the final clash with the Shadow that haunts Virae. When the last lights dye the village sky red, a deep feeling of cold suddenly spreads, gripping the flesh and bones of the Wanderers. Suddenly, a strong wind rises, and a column of dark and swirling energy, fueled by extreme emotions, spirals up towards the sky: its epicentre seems to come from one of the fields outside the village, where the wooden structure that supports the Bell is located.

Once they reach the place, they find themselves in front of Malhal. While the wind rages ferociously on the plain, the Shadow is swirling around the base of the bell structure, composing a magic circle (very similar to the one found in the Abandoned Mill if the Wanderers have explored this place). If the rite were to be completed, it could have a destructive effect on the Bell.

The Wayfarers are called to defeat Malhal and interrupt the ritual before it is too late. If they manage to free Nadir, Sammun, and Gron from their fears and insecurities, they will not be present on the scene. Otherwise, they are under Malhal's unholy influence and will fight against the Wayfarers so that Malhal can complete the ritual.

Malhal

Shadow of the Kelt

Successes needed to defeat him: 5

Suggested Conditions: Dislocated Limb (Physical), Numbness (Physical), Blinded (Physical), Bleeding (Physical), Hallucinations (Mental), Disorientation (Mental), Fear (Mental), Confusion (Mental).

Suggested Contingencies: Another Kelt Shadow comes to Malhal's aid (Successes needed to defeat: 2). The wind rises strongly, hindering the characters' actions. Lightning strikes very close, starting a fire. Malhal manages to take a citizen hostage who was hiding nearby.

Nadir/Sammun/Gron

Chief

Successes needed to defeat him: 3

Suggested Conditions: Stunned (Physical), Weakened (Physical), Intimidated (Mental), Oppressed (Mental)

Suggested Contingencies: A Clan fighter comes to the aid of his leader (Successes needed to defeat him: 1). A Wanderer is disarmed, and his weapon falls far away. With a violent blow, the Chieftain

throws a Wanderer to the ground. The Chieftain manages to climb onto the back of a riotous horse and can now ferociously charge the Wanderers.

Epilogue

If the Wanderers defeat Malhal. The Shadow is defeated and disperses with a bloodcurdling scream, becoming dust. Peace returns to Virae. The dark energy disperses, freeing the minds of all those subjugated by it. It will take time to repair the damage, but for now, Virae is safe. With Garreth and Gwyn released from prison, the Chief congratulates the Wayfarers, absolving the debt he owes them.

Suppose the Wayfarers do not stop Michael. The rite is not stopped in time, and the dark energy engulfs the Bell, shattering it and stunning the Wayfarers. When they awaken, it is not easy to tell how much time has passed: Virae is in ruins, and the few remaining inhabitants seem to be acting under the control of a dark force. The Shadows of the Kelt have taken possession of the city and the surrounding lands. Tyr-Na-Man has won this battle, incorporating the Kelen into the lands under his dominion. The Wayfarers have no choice but to flee or end up prisoners of the Shadows, awaiting a grim epilogue.

