

Broos!

By [Roger Nolan](#)

Note! This is a fan contribution. The information may be contradicted by official material.

Narrator Information

Benchmark: This episode is designed for characters whose best skill is 5w.

The episode is designed for an Orlanthe hero band on good terms with a Heortling clan - possibly their own - but could easily be adapted to other theist cultures.

The episode is intended as an introduction to Glorantha and specifically to broos.

Players who are not familiar with broo lifecycle and habits will gain most enjoyment.

Premise: There are many rumors around about a broo war band in the area.

These rumors come to a head when a traveling minstrel comes to town and confirms them. The heroes must defend the village against the broos and eventually deal with spiritual attack on members of the village and livestock acting as host mothers for broo offspring.

Relationships: Jorst Galdtang is a traveling devotee of Donandar. He has recently traveled through the land to the East of the village where some people had already been attacked by broo war bands. Barabain Speaks-With-Thunder is the tribe's chief. He's getting old and prefers not to enter battle himself. Brouthar Graybroad is the village god talker; he's well liked but like his chief isn't getting any younger. He's a devotee of Lankhor Mhy and will gladly offer the Heroes any information he knows about broos or fighting them - note that this information is slow in forthcoming, very theoretical and possibly not right (also see [Secret](#) below).

Brouthar Graybroad

Brouthar was born in the village but studied for most of his life as a junior researcher at the Boldhome library and temple to Lankhor Mhy. He returned to his village of birth about 8 years ago to take over as their god-speaker. Despite this he never feels he never lived up to his promise and longs to make a big discovery before he finally goes to join

Lankhor Mhy.

Keywords: Devotee of Lankhor Mhy (2w), Old 1w

Relationships: Village 2w, Boldhome Lankhor Mhy Temple 6w

Physical skills: Chant for Hours 4w, Dance Orlanthi Dances 18, Grow Beard 5w, Craft Writing supplies 19, Close combat 12

Mental skills: Lead Worship 5w, Orlanthi Philosophy 2w2, Prepare sacrifice 17, Know Trivia 18, Mythology of Lankhor Mhy 10w, Lightbringer Mythology 2w, Read Heortling 5w, Write Heortling 18, Sense Gods nearby 16, Sense Spirits nearby 16, Heortling Customs 3w, Dragon Pass Geography 18

Affinities:

Knowledge 18 (Clairvoyance, Find Obscure Fact, Read Mind, See Past Events, Interpret Spoken Language)

Law: 4w (Force Truth, Impress Jurors, Invoke Law, Recite Precedent)

Literacy: 5w (Reconstruct document, Search Library, Translate written language)

Feats: Search Library 2w2

Armour & Weapons: None

Other Equipment of Note: Brouthar has an exceptional library (17) considering his current status. Most of the items are on "loan" from Boldhome. The library in the usual state of disarray for the collections of Lankhor Mhy worshippers and difficult for anyone other than devotees of Lankhor Mhy to use.

Secret: The broos are indeed scouts for a larger party (but only about 20 strong) but they not randomly on the rampage. They are seeking a sacred relic from their Tribe: Goth's Hide. Goth was a great broo hero and devotee of Thed. On his death, his hide was made into a fetish that allows anyone to channel his spirit. The hide also confers the wearer with a move undetected feat which even allows the wearer to evade Uroxi's detect Chaos feat. The hide was lost by Goth's descendents recently in a skirmish with some Lunars who, because of it's magical properties, didn't realise what it was. From there a trader got it and it passed about a few lunar collectors before somehow ending up in Brouthar's possession. The other members of the village know nothing about Brouthar's ownership of such a foul artifact. For his part, Brouthar means to send the artifact to a major Lankhor Mhy library for some proper research but he just needs that one great discovery before he dies... This desire has prompted him to investigate and attempt to understand the hide himself.

Goth's Hide

Keywords: Minor Artifact, Goth Tradition, Broo Animist

Talent: Move undetected 2w2, 1/Day

This ability to evade detection even works against Uroxi and Storm Bull chaos-sensing powers (which must overcome the spirit's resistance). If a non-broo uses the move-undetected skill, their gait becomes distinctly broo like and they appear to take on broo like physical characteristics.

The spirit incorporated into Goth's Hide is that of the broo hero Goth himself. This also means that anyone wearing Goth's Hide can channel Goth (or be possessed by him) without having to fulfill the normal requirements (page 50 Hero Wars Narrator's Book).

People possessed by Goth's spirit immediately gain the feat "Impregnate with Broo 5w2" and the urge to practice this feat. They will also, starting quickly and continuing over a period of months, develop more and more broo like characteristics (incredibly bad personal hygiene, boorishness, resistance to disease and poison, quick temper, cruelty) eventually developing some physical characteristics which persist even when not using the Move undetected skill (broo like gait, matted fur and perhaps horns).

Scene 1: Jorst Arrives

Key Points: For a few days' rumors of broo activity have been discussed, finally a traveling player who has seen real broos nearby confirms these rumors.

Setting

The long house or a drinking house. Jorst Galdtang arrives and soon picks up on the rumors. He spends the evening confirming and expanding on them. Finally, the village decides to act on the information.

Action

Jorst cannot resist weaving a good tale and will exaggerate what little he does know. The truth is that he has met people who have had to fight off lightly armed broo scouts and he too has heard rumors about a broo war band sacking villages.

Jorst will take great pleasure in describing how the broo war party is looking for animals to "use in their foul ways" and "make more of their filthy kind". Later in the evening, especially if ale and mead are flowing, he'll also want to describe the giant 3-meter tall fire breathing broo that leads this war band. If pressed, he'll describe the war band as being about 40 strong. Jorst is also fairly sure that the broos are heading this way.

Barabain, calls for calm and asks for volunteers to go out and find the broo scouts and kill them before they can report back to the main war band. Hopefully the heroes step forward (they are heroes after all) with another 2-3 times as many other volunteers.

Many of the villagers will scorn this turn out and suggest that runners are sent to the nearest Urox temple to recruit chaos killers. None of the villagers know exactly where this team of Chaos killers is to be found, how quickly they can be recruited or, much else. (Local Geography against resistance 14 will confirm that there is no Urox temple within two day's travel Brouthar will also confirm this.)

Brouthar the village Priest is very keen that the broos do get near. His stated reason for this is the local temple contains a shrine to Lankhor Mhy that contains some rare documents; it is vital above all else to protect the temple. He does not believe Jorst's stories about the war party but thinks the broos are coming to steal these documents. Using the right skills (fast talk, persuasive, relationship to Brouthar) the heroes will extract a promise to see these documents, once the broos are dead. As proof, Brouthar will require to see the broos heads. Of course, the heroes may not be able to read.

Brouthar advises the party to set out and attempt tracking the broos and to kill them before they approach the village.

If the Heroes have no tracking skills, Brouthar will offer his 11-year-old grandson Hoert as a tracker, Hoert has no other useful skills but he is a gifted tracker (17).

If the Heroes consult Jorst, he will reveal that he last heard of the broos 5 days travel away towards the north.

Is Jorst telling the truth?: Anyone who questions Jorst, even a little, will realize that he's basically telling the truth but embellishing the facts a little - just like any good storyteller.

Is Brouthar telling the truth?: Empathy or similar (know tribe members, local people) will reveal that Brouthar is very nervous about all of this. He's

old and seen a lot in his life and generally danger doesn't phase him but this seems different, he's really scared - and trying to hide it.

Broo Lore (or other general knowledge with suitable modifiers) reveals that it unusual for broos to be able to read and very unusual for them to have much use of any written matter.

Scene 2 Hunting Broos

Key points: The Heroes track broos uneventfully for a day. On the second day, they find broo tracks (or the broos find them) and a fight ensues.

Setting - a glade about a day's walk away from the village

After a day and a half of tracking or looking for tracks, the Heroes will encounter the broos. The manner of this encounter should be determined by the outcome of a simple contest between the heroes' tracking skill and the broo's leave no trace skill:

Tracking the Broo Scouts

Complete or Major Defeat:	The broos notice that there are people following them, circle back and attack the Heroes from behind.
Defeat:	The Heroes stumble on the broo scouts who have noticed that they were being tracked and laid false trails and an ambush.
Victory:	The Heroes are able to locate the broos without the broos being aware of them.
Complete or Major Victory:	The Heroes are able to locate the broos and infer where they are traveling to in order to lay an ambush.

If the heroes state before they begin tracking that they are moving as quietly as possible then a successful skill test against the broos acute hearing will allow a one bump on the tracking roll, Failure has no effect, defeat or Complete defeat each give the broos one bump.

There will be roughly as many broos as there are heroes to a maximum of four. Remember that the heroes must also take care of Hoert. Hoert cannot lend any APs to the fight but he does make a good vehicle for explaining any fumbles.

Broo Scouts

Keywords: Scout 15, Follower of the Goth Tradition 15

Mental Skills: Slightly brighter than the average broo 15

Physical skills: Set trap 16, Close Combat 18, Acute hearing 18, Run quickly 18, Infest with disease 18, Impregnate victim 5w, Tough 15, Track 17

Magic: Move silently fetish (might 12 1/day). Softfoot spirit integrated (Leave no trace 15)

Weapons: Spear and shield ^3, Head butt ^1, Sling ^2

Armour: Tough hide ^1 (^2 if caked in mud)

Tactics: The broo scouts aren't really used to fighting and, like all broos, they are essentially cowards (although, being scouts, these are braver than most). If the broos are aware of the party, they'll try to set up some traps that immobilize their adversaries and then escape (possibly using their move silently fetish). If they're forced to fight and they have time, they'll prepare by caking their fur in mud and applying their disease carrying feces to their spears (random physical disease. Treat as a lethal lingering poison with might 18). Otherwise, the broos will take every chance to break combat and flee, if they do this, the heroes should give chase.

Aftermath

This encounter shouldn't kill the heroes; the broos will at worst injure them and then retreat.

If the heroes capture a broo, and can overcome its toughness by beating it, torturing it (although this is not something Orlanthi should do) or tricking it they will be told about Goth's skin. The broos will maintain that Goth's skin is of no use to humans.

Surviving broos can be tracked and hunted down if the heroes wish. There is some chance that the heroes will not capture the scouts before they rejoin the hunting party, what happens in this case is left for the narrator to decide.

Remember that searching or looting broo dead is a bad idea that will have similar effects to being wounded by their weapons - most heroes would know this and can be reminded if they try.

After their encounter with the broo scouts, the Heroes will probably feel they should return to the village. If not, they can continue searching and will have a roughly similar encounter (but with less broos) again.

Scene 3

Setting - back at the village

Key points: The other broo hunters have been about as successful or done better than the Heroes. Everyone is in high spirits. A broo spirit has possessed Brouthar.

Action

The other hunting parties were all successful, encountering and killing broo scouts. If the heroes failed, they will gain a fault "ridiculed by tribe 12" until they can prove themselves - possibly by going out again hunting broos although, if the broos are warned it will be more difficult to find them.

All seems well and the chief declares a feast. At the feast, Jorst entertains and everyone is in high spirits. Wine and mead flow. If the Heroes were successful at their broo hunting, everyone will congratulate them and serve them drinks, hoping to hear a little about their story. If they were less successful, there will be plenty of good-humored ribbing especially from the more successful hunters.

If anyone particularly seeks him out, Brouthar cannot be found at the feast. If anyone leaves the celebrations to find him they will encounter him somewhere near the village shrine wandering around in a daze. He claims to have been sick and seems very confused. He quickly excuses himself back to the shrine where he retires to his bed.

If anyone is posted to watch him, Brouthar's sickness will become worse and worse during the night.

In the morning whilst everyone is waking up with a hangover there is a cry of alarm. Several cows and sheep have been killed, clubbed to death; several more have been clubbed unconscious. Successful tracking rolls reveal that no one from outside the village has been in the pens and the only footprints around are human and cow or sheep - although Jorst is quick to point out that broos leave hoof prints.

Secret: Brouthar correctly believed that the broos are trying to search out Goth's hide. When he heard about the broo war band he immediately upped his level of investigations into the artifact. Unfortunately, he went too far and is now possessed by Goth's spirit. Brouthar/Goth is responsible for the deaths of the livestock and has impregnated several of them.

Aftermath

The villagers will, in true Heortling style blame any outsiders for the deaths - particularly Jorst but also the heroes if they are not local - it shouldn't be too difficult for the heroes or Jorst to prove that they were at the feast all night and couldn't be responsible for the deaths. They will also immediately set up extra guards for the livestock pens (which the heroes should volunteer for or be volunteered for after proving that they didn't kill the livestock in the first place).

Scene 4 - guarding the livestock

Key points: The night of the Heroes guard duty on the Brouthar/Goth will attack the livestock again.

Setting - the village, near the livestock pens

The villagers have tried to fortify the livestock pens and are keeping guards on them every night. The Heroes should be allowed to make a plan for the defense against the attackers.

Action

During guard duty, unless the Heroes specifically stated they were preparing for guard duty by trying to sleep or rest during the previous day, they should make rolls against suitable skills (alert, needs little sleep) to avoid nodding off or otherwise neglecting their duties. Any Heroes who are awake can then attempt to

spot intruders by pitting relevant skills (keen eyes, good hearing etc.) against those of people trying to sneak into the livestock pens. Specifically, they must overcome Brouthar/Goth's Move undetected 2w2. Anyone who states they are watching the village rather than the outer edges of the pens gets +5 on their ability.

Brouthar tries to get into the livestock pen at the dead of night. If they do spot him, the heroes can immediately challenge or attack. Brouthar should be described as broo like but with human features he also seems to flick in and out of shadows and blend in with the background. Even once he's been spotted, he's very difficult to keep in sight. He walks like a broo, seems to have goats horns but his face is flat and he's wearing Heortling clothing. In the dark and at a distance, they can't make out his face.

If attacked or challenged, Brouthar/Goth will try to flee back to the temple and return to his sick bed.

If Brouthar/Goth is physically captured he reverts to his normal appearance although he will be wearing Goth's hide under his robes and will be possessed by Goth's spirit completely.

If the Heroes do not spot Brouthar/Goth in the night, there will be more dead sheep in the morning (and more impregnated ones). By dawn, his work impregnating sheeps done, Brouthar/Goth will have fled the village to the surrounding hills.

Brouthar/Goth

Keywords: Ex-devotee of Lankhor Mhy (2w), Possessed by Goth 2w2

Physical skills: Close combat 19, Ranged Combat 17

Mental skills: Broo Goth tradition 18w3, Spirit Combat 2w2, Craft Fetish 18, Draw Summoning Circle 4w, Running 18

Talents: Move undetected 2w2, Impregnate with Broo 5w2

Weapons: improvised club ^0

Armour: none

Brouthar used to be a god talker and devotee of Lankhor Mhy however he has now become possessed by the spirit of Goth, a long dead broo hero. Brouthar is now completely governed by the broo spirit; his own mind lost amid the riling hate filled thoughts of the long dead broo. Note that these skills and keywords are not

representative of Goth hero channeling through a full blood broo, they are those of him possessing an old god speaker from a small village in Dragon Pass. Many of the skills (physical and mental) will increase quite rapidly over time if the possession is left unchecked.

Aftermath

If Brouthar/Goth succeeds in his aims he will have impregnated enough of the villages' livestock and he will attempt to flee the village. He will either do this in the morning whilst the heroes attempt to explain the newly dead livestock to the other villagers or, if the heroes didn't spot him, immediately. The heroes may now realise that the livestock is probably carrying broo offspring. They may elect to immediately contact healers and try to cure this. Play should immediately proceed to [Scene 5](#). If not the Episode is effectively on hold for several weeks (Glorantha time, whilst the broos gestate). This time can either be played out (perhaps by starting a new episode - see denouement) or it can be skipped and play can proceed to scene 4.

Scene 4

Setting in the village - several weeks later

Key Points: Brouthar managed to impregnate about 40 of the villages livestock in two batches, the first are being 'born' now, the second batch will be born in a few days.

Action

Another cry goes up: the sheep and livestock are exploding! Actually they are giving 'birth' to broo kids. Ahh, aren't they sweet... The birth process is very nasty - rather like the alien erupting from John Hurt's chest in the film Alien. The Heroes must try and kill any broo kids before they escape and then perhaps do something about the other pregnant livestock.

The broo kids will be of various kinds depending upon the parent animal. A broo kid emerging from a cow or sheep is "sickening 16", heroes must overcome this every time they see it in order to act without penalty.

Newly born Broo Kid

Important skills: Vicious 12, Quick 15, Small 19, Slippery 19 (one use only), Bite 12, Unpleasant Scream 12.

Tactics: The broo kids are not interested in combat, just getting to safety as quickly as possible. Try to play out the horror of exploding livestock and chaos caused by tens of broo kids screaming through the village.

Aftermath

The heroes and the rest of the village won't manage to kill all of the broo kids. Any which they capture alive should be put to death and their remains disposed of - far from the village. The village farmers will also want to be sure that this won't happen again - perhaps an Ernalda or Chalana Arroy god talker should be brought in. Of course, if nothing happens, scene 4 will replay in a few days.

Scene 5 - Purification

Key Points: The Heroes must help to cleanse the remaining livestock of the broo larvae. This involves bringing the Ernalda priestess from a nearby stead and taking part in a ritual.

Action

Purifying animals who have been impregnated by broos is a very specialized piece of ritual magic (feat) known to a few Devotees of Ernalda the Healer.

Feat: Purify herd. Ritual - to get rid of Broo impregnations in animals.

Getting rid of the broo infection is a simple contest between the feat skill and the impregnate skill of the broo father +1 per day after the initial impregnation. The ritual takes 12 hours to perform and can be repeated once every 24 hours. The members of the village will give extraordinary support to this ritual.

The following bonuses are available:

A mask in the likeness of Thed for someone who stands in for Thed	+1
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A sack filled with broo bones	+2
A fire lit from fallen oak wood gathered during earth day	+1
A skin of goat filled with water gathered from a fresh stream	+1
A sheep that isn't impregnated	+3
A lamp, a copper bell and the axe of a devotee of Urox	+3
Singing	+2
Dancing	+1
Perform on Ernalda holy day	+2
Perform on Ernalda high holy day	+5
Perform in the sacred time	+2
Perform at a place holy to Ernalda	+6

Aftermath

If the ritual fails, the village will have to put their herd to death. Detect Chaos affinities can be used to sort the infected livestock from those bearing broos.

Denouement

Did Brouthar/Goth get away? Unless his possession is cured, he will gradually turn more and more broo like.

If he is free something must be done - perhaps a hunting party or an expedition to seek advice from elsewhere. If he did get away and the heroes actually had direct interaction with Brouthar/Goth, the heroes (and the village) will have a new relationship "Hated by Brouthar 14". Brouthar will rest for a while as his new body gains strength and then begin recruiting a broo tribe of his own from any baby broos that escaped from the village or any other broos he can find nearby. He will set himself up as a god king of this new broo tribe and then move on to setting up a shrine to Thed. Brouthar should be given a couple of hero points for his part in the episode.

If the heroes subdued Brouthar, they should try and rid Brouthar of Goth's spirit (this means finding a shaman). Reverting any physical changes that have overcome Brouthar will probably require a minor hero quest. There is also the question of Brouthar's sanity after such a terrible mental ordeal.

Even if Brouthar was captured, there will probably be several broo kids who get away and will quickly grow into adult broos. They should be hunted down as quickly as possible.

Finally, the tribe has possibly just lost upward of 30 of their livestock - this is reasonably serious depending upon the season.

The heroes should be given 1-4 hero points for their part in the episode and an additional hero point which must either be used to increase their "broo lifecycle knowledge" by one point (or gain this skill at 12) or affect their relationship with the village.

Resources

Goth Magic Keyword

Goth was an ancient broo hero who fought battles against the Uroxi chaos haters throughout Dragon Pass before the dragonkill war. Although he was ultimately unsuccessful in his attempts to destroy even a single temple, he does have one important claim to fame. He developed a heroquest that followed the devil's fight with Urox's but attempted to distract Urox at a key point allowing the devil to strike the Storm Bull when he wasn't ready. After this quest, Goth was able to evade the Urox detect Chaos feat. On his death, Goth had his own spirit incorporated into a fetish made from his own hide and encouraged his followers to worship him as a god. Goth is now largely forgotten and isn't worshipped outside a few small broo tribes. Goth is still worshipped by a small band of broos in the Dragon Pass area.

Entry Requirements: None, all are accepted although only a few broos follow the tradition.

Mental Abilities: Goth Traditional Knowledge, Spirit combat

Physical Abilities: Hunting, Sneak

Spirit Allies: Disease spirits, Softfoot (Leave no trace 15), Screamer (Distract 17)

Fetch: Chaos spirits.

Fetishes: Goth shamans craft fetishes from many things but there is always a piece of

broo hide in the fetish.

Secret: Move without detection (this even allows the shaman to evade detection from such things as Uroxi's detect Chaos ability).

Broo life cycle

Investigation into the Broo Lifecycle from "Studies in Chaos: Understand in order to kill" by Jithurain Grost

We all know that of all the creature of Glorantha one of the most vile and low is the broo. These terrible chaos creatures can sire their offspring on living organisms from other species. We have noted before that generally they prefer to use herd animals it is believed that this is not because Broos cannot mate with higher creatures but because it is much safer and easier to impregnate many animals at the same time.

Many painful experiences tell us that a larval broo takes about 4 weeks to incubate after which it is 'born'. This is a very unpleasant event and always kills the host animal. As we know that larval broos are relatively harmless it seemed that an investigation into broo reproduction was a safe sphere of enquiry.

...after 3 days with the sheep, the feral creature could control himself no more and had intercourse with every one of the poor animals. He killed one of them in his foul act and one had a broken leg. From then he showed little interest in his offspring and, as his part in our studies were over I killed him. This went some way to pacifying my superiors who...

...After two days, we eviscerated the first unfortunate animal. Although we detected strong chaos magics (sic) in the entrails, there was no sign of anything physically untoward...

...seven days later, we opened the second ewe. Inside it we found a mewling creature no bigger than the hand of a warrior. Disturbingly the creature though only a week old survived this ordeal. The foul little thing made the most frightful screeching noise - unlike that of its mother or infernal father. We knew not what to feed the creature (even if we had wanted to) and gladly it died of starvation three days later. Physically, the thing had the head of a sheep, the body of a worm but with tiny arms and legbuds beginning to show.

We slaughtered one the sheep every earth day for the following weeks and all the larval broo survived. The rate of growth was phenomenal as was the development of the limbs. This frightening growth did not show in the outward appearance of the poor mothers.

Although the offspring grew quickly this seemed to be at the expense of the mother who showed an equal (but inverse) wasting in their internal organs - presumably both to feed and to make room for the growing broo.

At this stage our experiment was cut short by the untimely intrusion of one of the local Uroxi. (Ever the bane of this type of experiment!) We tried to explain the purpose of our studies - to observe and thus better combat these foul creatures but as always, the finer points of logic were lost and, under fear of my own life and that of my assistants, I watched his henchmen slaughter the last two sheep and their children. They then performed a ritual over the bodies that I have not witnessed before and may prove worthy of future study. Bearing in mind the leaders state of mind, I refrained from asking him about the ritual at this juncture...

Despite this abrupt end, I believe the experiment was a success and propose in future to monitor the full life cycle of larval broo to adult - our current best knowledge is that this growth takes somewhere between 6 months and 3 years. Clearly we have much to learn here. There is also much scope for learning in the areas of reverting the infection with broo offspring. Many times, those comforting rituals of the Earth mothers are not available for the poor folk whose whole livelihood can be ruined in a single night by the broo.