

*This short document came to us by way of an explorer in the Periphery, looking to make his way to the new island. It is not the first time this holiday has been mentioned in the East, but it remains largely a tradition of the Western reaches. Interestingly, similar traditions exist within the Empire proper, though no such hunt is part of the harvest festivals.*

*-Mattias Sondstrom*

*Master of the Hall of Records, Imperial Athenaeum*

## The Harvest Festival – a Periphery Holiday

This holiday is a week-long celebration of the people's efforts of productivity throughout the year, and a reminder that winter is cruel and unforgiving. As such, the holiday week is steeped in traditional games that are played to remind all, the sacrifice needed to survive. It is common to find games like bobbing for apples, donut eating contests, or even pumpkin chucking: using siege weapons to throw the gourds as far as possible. The week includes six nights of feasting and celebrating, with many taverns and public houses holding social events. Even given all that, I find one game to be most interesting.

The game is called the Hunt. I am told this game is steeped in tradition, and takes place every year, on the last night of the festival. There is no feast that night, as the Hunt is prepared for. Locals superstitiously believe it allows for a successful winter, and a productive spring. I will attempt to summarize below.

It all starts by one person in each community being recognized as the Eld King. This is an honorary, celebrated role of the lord sending his hunting parties out in search of game. The one named Eld King is often a village elder, or someone the community wishes to prop up in hard times.

The Eld King divides participants into teams of relatively equal size. These teams then fill roles of either hunted or hunters. Each hunted then chooses an item that represents them to hold as a talisman, then hide throughout the village and surrounding area. The different hunter teams then compete to find the teams of hunted. Each time they "capture" one of the hunted, the hunted must turn over their talisman, representing their capture. The hunters collect as many talismans as they can within a given time limit. Once time has expired, the talismans of each team are counted. Of course, some of the young people in town have decided this has some sort of romantic overtones, and often set themselves up to be "captured" by the hunter of their choice so they may spend some private time together.

In the end, the hunter and hunted teams with the most talismans are declared the winners, and often win prizes, such as a cask of good ale, or baked goods donated to the game, with a portion given to the Eld King as "tribute."

In all my time adventuring, I have seen many similar harvest day holidays. However, this holiday feels different. I look forward to one day seeing it for myself.

Elis Rendall

Famous Explorer  
Charmer of Snakes  
Stealer of Hearts