

NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Dungeon Planner Set 2





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THE DUNGEON PLANNER SERIES

Each **Dungeon Planner Set** contains virtually everything you need to create an exciting adventure for any fantasy role-playing system.

Each set describes and maps an Adventure Setting along with a large Play Sheet of the setting to 25mm figure scale.

The surrounding area is also mapped along with a brief history. The Area Maps in each set link together to build up an entire fantasy region for the players to adventure in and explore.

Each **Dungeon Planner Set** will save you a great deal of tedious writing and will give you your own ready-to-run adventure in a matter of hours rather than days.

We do the paperwork; you have the fun.

SET 2: NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

CONTENTS

Area Map: This maps the area around the village of Blackmarsh.

Play Sheet: This maps the village of Blackmarsh to 25mm figure scale and is for use during play. The map uses our **Dungeon Floor Plan** system so that you can show furniture, add trapdoors to secret cellars, etc by using **Dungeon Floor Plans**.

Game Master's Screen: This has a brief history of the area on the player's side for their information. The GM's side has a keyed plan of the village and *Encounter/Event Tables*. These can be used in addition to the adventure you are playing or to provide adventure ideas.

This booklet contains general details of the villagers and buildings such that you can vary the location of the villagers to suit your adventure. Space is also provided for you to note their statistics according to the game system that you are using and details relevant to your adventure.

You can use the village as you wish. It can be placed in your existing game world. The Encounters/Events can be used as stand, altered to include new characters, or replaced entirely. The Adventure Ideas and history of the area can be adapted to suit your own game world, as required.

USING THIS SET

This set details the village of Blackmarsh to the north of the vast wasteland known as the Black Marsh. The entire area is immediately to the west of Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*) and can be used separately or in conjunction with *Set 1* to form a campaign setting.

The village is for use as the setting of an adventure, either based upon one of the Adventure Ideas in this booklet or of your own devising. Once the initial adventure has been completed, you can use the village as a base for your players to embark on other adventures that you set in the area. The Orekk Mines; the Crystal Cavern; the ruins of Griffon Manse; in or below Hargon's Tower; the wilds of the Black Marsh; and even the *Caverns of the Dead* in *Set 1* are all locations where you can site your own, or ready-made scenarios. Naturally, other adventures might well occur in the village while the players are based there. The village of Blackmarsh will provide you with a living backdrop to your adventures.

Alternatively, you can use it as a standard village in any adventure, or simply as the location for a one-off bar-room/quayside/market brawl.

USEFUL PLAY AIDS

The play sheet is designed for use with 25mm scale figures so that all the action can be played out. We recommend **Citadel Miniatures** for use in play.

You will also find our **Dungeon Floor Plans 3** useful as this contains a sheet of boats should you players wish to use one to venture into the Black Marsh or to gain access to the rear of a waterside building. They can also be used just to set the scene. If you do not want your players to be aware of the room layout within buildings, you can cut out a rooftop for each building from the Roofing sheet in **Dungeon Floor Plans 3** and place them on the buildings on the play sheet. When the players enter a building, you can then remove the roof to reveal the rooms.

VILLAGE BACKGROUND

Prince Hargon built the look-out tower to overlook the Black Marsh and raise the warning should the vanquished Orcs survive its terrors and one day return. However, the Orcs have never returned and the watch is continued more as ritual than necessity. The road between Blackmarsh and Elbridge is often rendered impassable during rainy spells where the Black Marsh encroaches north of the river Ormsflo. Travellers were often forced to make camp by the troop encampment manning the watch-tower. It was from these humble camps that the village of Blackmarsh evolved as a convenient stopping place for travellers by road or river.

The village sits on a huge slab of hard, impervious rock which forces an acute bend in the river. The villagers cull their livelihood from the river and the Black Marsh. Using flat-bottomed punts, the villagers catch many types of fish, but predominately bream, lamprey, eel, catfish, and freshwater crayfish. However, the village is famed for its freshwater oysters which flourish in many beds in the Black Marsh.

On rare occasions, these oysters contain a Black Pearl, built up over years from the dark sediment brought to the Marsh by the slow-moving river Blackwater from the Ravenscrag Peaks far to the south. This also gives the marsh its black hue. The Black Pearls are much prized and sought after both for their value as gems and their alleged magical powers. A Royal Charter proclaims all Black Pearls to be Crown property. Any that are found must be registered with the Registrar in Blackmarsh from where they are dispatched to the Royal Courts at Arkand, the capital. The finder of a pearl is rewarded with the statutory sum laid down by the charter of 50gp, a fraction of its true value.

To the north of Blackmarsh lies the farmland which produces most of the area's crops, mostly farmed by the folk of Elbridge who trade with the villagers of Blackmarsh.

The largest and grandest building in Blackmarsh is the Royal House, built as a station for Royal Funeral processions on their way to the Royal Tombs in Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*). The Royal House is also sometimes used as a field HQ by the Scarlet Plumes, an elite brigade of Royal troops with a riving commission to keep law in the land. They sometimes come to the area to deal with odd band of brigands who sometimes use the Tagor Hills as a base for raiding travellers on the Royal Way.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

The *Dungeon Planner Series* is designed to provide ready-made settings for adventures. You may prepare your own or use one of the following ideas as a starting point for adventures set in and around the village of Blackmarsh.

Once you have decided upon the plot of your scenario, note the statistics for the villagers and creatures in the spaces provided in the relevant sections.

I: Nightmare in Blackmarsh

A strange mist swirls across the Black Marsh. Slowly, but inexorably, it moves north towards the village. Soon visibility is virtually nil. The villagers are used to the marsh-fogs, but this is different. There are things moving in the mist: mysterious, half-seen shapes shambling through the village slaying all they encounter. Is it a band of Orcs finally returning? Has some evil wizard raised the long-dead bodies of the Orcs from the mire to form a nightmare army? Or is it some primeval horror, rising from the murky wastes to wreak its dreadful vengeance on mankind? Could this be the long-promised threat to Koss that will be met by the return of Orm from the dead? And should the players fight their way out and ride, or go by boat, to the *Caverns of the Dead (Set 1)* in an attempt to find the lost tomb of the legendary Orm?

II: The Coming of Mordar

A band of brigands led by Mordar the cursed, has been hiding in the Tagor Hills and preying on lone travellers on the Royal Way. They have finally summoned the courage, and numbers, to mount a full-scale attack on Blackmarsh. They will make the attempt either when most of the boats are out fishing, or at night. Their tactics may be those of stealth, or, if you are using mass-combat rules such as *Warhammer*, a full-scale attack.

III: To Catch a Thief

The Thieves Guild in Arkand City has hired the party to track down a rather large item of treasure that went 'missing' when their last Guild Master suddenly and mysteriously retired. Since this person is still influential in the city's underworld, the party must be discreet in their enquiries, and must operate without the help of the Guild. Should it turn out that the man, who is believed to be living in partial retirement in Blackmarsh, does have the item in question, the party are not to attempt to recover it, but to report back to the Guild in Arkand.

IV: The Black Orb

A rumour is abroad that a Black Pearl has been found by an oysterman of Blackmarsh; and what's more it is apparently the largest ever found. However, no Black Pearl has yet been lodged with the Royal

Registrar in the village.

The players are hired to investigate the rumours, and, if possible, to acquire the Pearl for their patron. There will no doubt be other interested parties, each desperate to gain the Pearl for their master. Once the rumour has reached the King's ear in Arkand, a squad of Scarlet Plumes will doubtless also descend on Blackmarsh, so the party must act quickly.

But is there a pearl? And if there is, who has it? Maybe it is not even a Black Pearl at all, but some arcane Magic Item with dark powers.

V: Blood on the Streets

The Royal Way is flooded between Blackmarsh and Elbridge and the party must put up for the night in the village. During the night, a sudden death occurs: a child is silently taken from one of the houses and is found in the street, a shocking, grisly mess. The next night, an old farmer wending his drunken way home from the Fennock Inn meets the same fate. Despite a reinforced village watch, there are similar deaths on following nights. As the death toll mounts, there are whispers of a bestial figure in the night and of lycanthropy.

Since the grisly deaths began when the strangers arrived, they are natural suspects. To stay ahead of a lynch mob, they may have to find the real culprit quickly.

VI: The Corpse that Walked

A Royal Funeral procession is at the Royal House on their way to the Royal Tombs in Eastern Koss (*Caverns of the Dead: Set 1*). At dawn on the day the entourage is due to depart, there is pandemonium. Horns are sounded. There are Royal Guards rushing everywhere. The village is roused and assembled in the square. The Royal Casket is empty and the body is missing! Has somebody stolen it for some reason (would anyone be crazy enough to hold a corpse for ransom?), or has it been raised from the dead, and is at that very moment alive and kicking in the village somewhere?

The tortuous internal politics of the courtiers could hold the key, but the immediate attention is on the village, and, in particular, some certain strangers...

VII: Fenhawk Hunt

A naturalist from Arkand arrives in the village. He seeks to capture a live Fenhawk for his studies. He will need an escort into the Black Marsh to try and find a suitable specimen. Being just a lowly scholar, he cannot afford to pay much, but any expedition into the marshes will be very interesting, and, of course, there is always a chance of stumbling on an oyster-bed and possibly a Black Pearl.

VIII: Empty Vessels

One of the fisherman's boats is spotted, drifting in the river. Some villagers row

out and tow the boat to the wharf. There is blood, mingled with a sticky, green (poisonous) substance, on the side of the boat, there are clear signs of a struggle. There is no trace of the crew.

This is not the first such disappearance, but the third over the last few weeks. The villagers are now growing very concerned.

The party are hired to venture into the Black Marsh in an attempt to find and slay whatever is responsible. Few of the villagers will want to accompany the expedition, but Griff the Bane (V5) may be persuaded to act as guide.

Of course, the slime may be a decoy to conceal the real source of the trouble which could be someone in the village bent on some plot of their own.

IX: A Crime of Passion

Whilst staying at the Fennock Inn, the party are witness to an act of revenge. A rough, uncouth man dressed in shabby leathers, and dusty from riding on the Royal Way, barges into the bar, demands a flagon of ale and quaffs it in one gulp. The few locals in the bar at the time begin edging for the door, but one stops to whisper 'Look out, for it is Karanor of Windrush'. Once the man in question has stomped out, Staffyr (V10) will tell of Karanor's rivalry with Takhos the Headman (V11) over the latter's wife, Jemia.

While he is relating the tale of their famous duel for her hand in marriage, a villager rushes in and breathlessly informs everyone that Karanor has just killed Takhos and has carried off Jemia, fleeing in the direction of Windrush (*Set 1*). A posse of locals is soon made up, but they will need the experience of the party to help them find and tackle Karanor, especially if he had some of his friends waiting for him beyond the village.

X: Black Death

The party arrive to discover that the village has been blighted by a mysterious disease. (It would be best if they have already passed through the village on their way elsewhere, so that they would have seen the place healthy.) The symptoms of the strange illness are a grey pallor to the skin, loss of hair, and a dreadful fever.

The old people whisper of the Black Marsh. Some are convinced that someone, or something, is poisoning the Ormsflo. Others believe that it is some form of plague carried by the wind off the Black Marsh. All are convinced of its origins though, and speak of the need for an expedition to uncover the source of the evil disease and attempt to destroy it.

But are they right? Is there some evil force within the village, gradually taking over the villagers, of which the disease is only the first symptom? Have those who have recovered, or were never seen to be ill, already been taken over? Is it the work of Elenar (V15)? And will any of the party succumb?

GENERAL NOTES

Most buildings are timber framed with a thatched roof of rushes from the Black Marsh. Furniture is mostly made from local wood and most matting, baskets and oyster-panniers are woven from rushes.

The main water supply is the well in the Royal Court (B). All homes will have a bucket or barrel of water from the well.

Sanitation is primitive. All homes will have a bucket or chamber pot which will be emptied as necessary into the river. Occasionally, the contents may be thrown from a window into the street, usually with prior warning.

OPEN SPACES

Blackmarsh sits on a large slab of hard, impervious rock which juts into the river causing a sharp bend. The village's open spaces are paved with smooth slabs of local stone. The many cracks and holes are patched up with bits of stone cobbles and chips of loose rock. Most of the lanes and alleys are covered with a thin layer of dust which degenerates into slimy mud near the riverside. The following basic descriptions of the village byways, squares and wharves may be amended to add details specific to your adventure, or just to set the scene.

A: The Village Gate

These strong wooden doors face the rutted, muddy track to the Royal Way, the main riverside route from Arkand to Windrush (in *Set 1*) and beyond. Although they are thick and strong, they are rarely used because the gatekeeper isn't strong enough to close them by himself and there is seldom any danger. It is only on stormy, portentous nights that any effort is made to shut them.

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B: The Royal Court

The rather fancy name for the village, or market, square is due to the Royal House which fronts it. The square is often used by visiting traders who set up shop alongside the local vegetable farmers from Elbridge, cattle herders, and fish stalls. At other times, entertainers and showmen set up their shows in the square, for the amusement of the locals.

When the Royal House is in use, a fair number of the Royal Guard will be camped in tents in the square; the majority of them, however, will be camped outside the village on the grasslands beyond the stockade where the villagers occasionally mass for a game of Bruntball, a violent sport that is something of a cross between hurling and rugby.

The main features of the Royal Court are the shady beech tree which overhangs the chapel roof and the well of natural spring water, much purer than the waters of the brackish Ormsflo, which has been bored down through the solid rock.

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C: Tower Lane

A short, often muddy, lane leading from the Royal Court to the Tower Slip. It is nevertheless well-used for the village shop (3) is located in it.

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D: Tower Slip

This small slipway beside the old Watchtower (2) is the oldest slipway in the village as it was built to off-load supplies to the troops manning the Watchtower many years before the village even existed. Now it is mostly used for off-loading goods for the village shop (3), whose storeroom backs onto it. The slip itself is formed of two-large, solid slabs of stone that slide quite sharply into the river, which is quite deep and fast-flowing at this point. Occasionally, if the Fennock Wharf is full, a boat will be hauled up the

slipway for minor repairs.
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E: Back Lane

This narrow, covered passage is a back alley to the side gate of the Royal House (1) and to the Watchtower (2). It also has gates at both ends. The gate to Tower Lane (C) is 7' tall and is usually locked. Both the Registrar, Takhos (V11), and Brekk the Watchkeep (V1) have keys. The other gate conceals the privy (1/9).

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F: Chapel Steps

This narrow lane ends at a set of rotting and very precarious wooden steps that lead up to the village stockade.

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polished, white marble box. The lid is easily removable, though heavy. It is used to store perishable foods, keeping them cool to prolong their freshness.

1/7: Kitchen

This kitchen is furnished with some of the more convenient utensils: a large cooking range and a variety of copper pans which hang on hooks from the rafters. There are various other implements, large spoons, etc, hanging on hooks from shelving around the walls. Considering its lack of use, the kitchen is spotless. The surfaces might need a dust, but underneath they are fine marble, lovingly cleaned and polished. The work surface is below the east window, and drawers of polished oak beneath it hold numerous knives and other items of cutlery. The walls are painted with distemper, keeping the kitchen white and reassuring to visitors who might be concerned over the standards of food preparation in the house.

1/8: Office

This office-cum-tradesman's entrance has a large window opening that extends virtually to floor level. It is barred by an iron gate. The room contains a rather old bureau and some chests. It is used by Takhos (V11) in his role as Registrar. Both the door and the gate have locks, Takhos having a key to both. When the Royal House is in official use, the office is used by the master of the guard so that guards and traders can report to him without disturbing the occupants of the house.

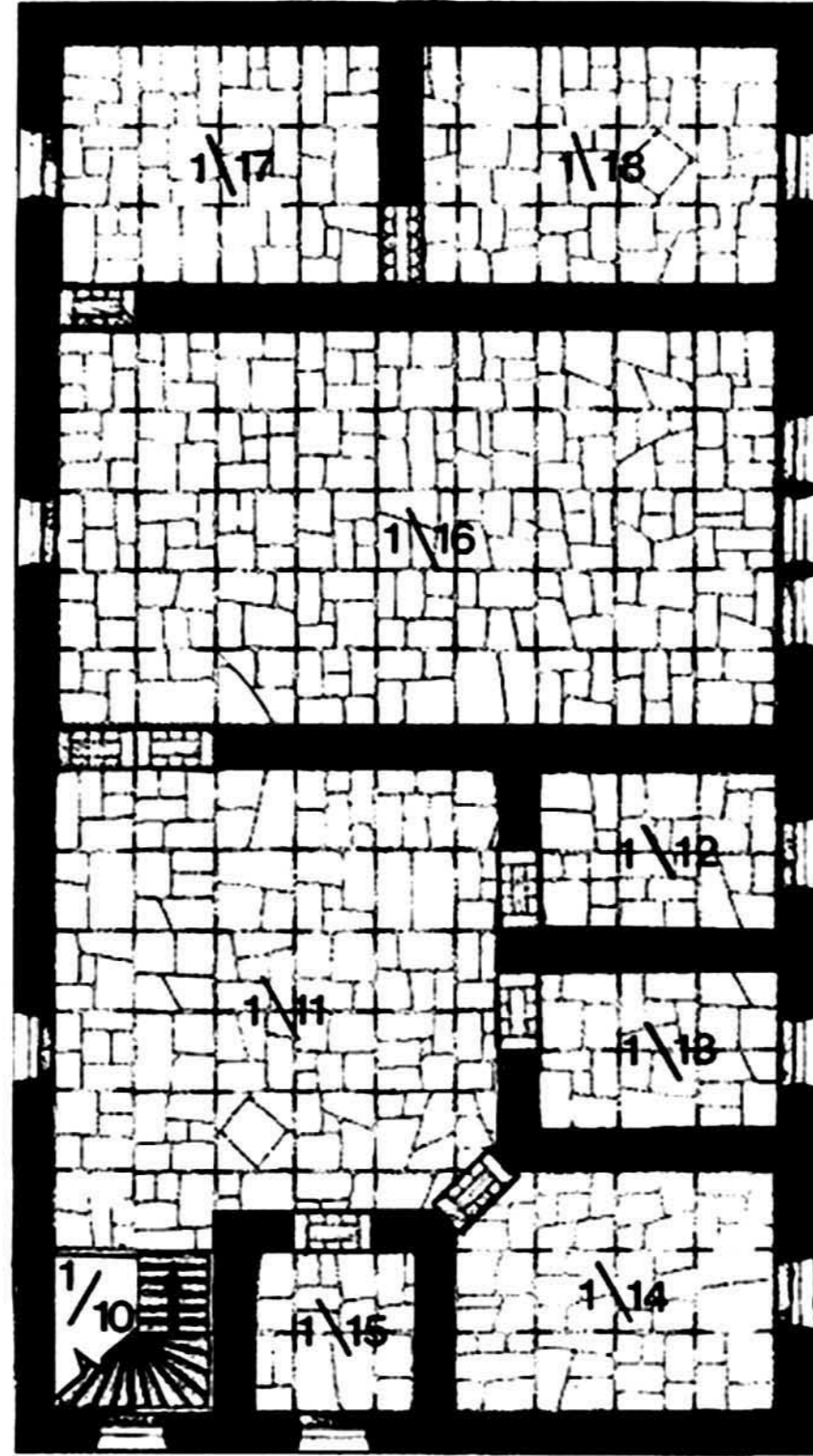
1/9: Privy

This privy is for the use of guards, servants and retainers and discharges directly into the river. It is also used for refuse disposal when the house is in use.

1/10: Stairway

The ornately carved timber stairs lead to the first floor. The walls are lined with portraits of various members of the royal family, past and present, but are not of particularly impressive quality. The largest and finest, which is given pride of place, is of the warrior Prince Hargon.

UPPER FLOOR



1/11: Ante-Chamber

This large hall is plushly furnished with couches, chaise-longues, floor cushions and decorative rugs. Several ornate tapestries hang from the walls. This room is a relaxation area where the courtege can rest after their travels. More often than not, several of the guests usually end up sleeping in this area, either on the couches or in bed-rolls.

1/12: Guest Bedroom

This clean room has white painted walls with a decorative frieze of dolphins and ornate water plants picked out in a pale green. There is plain, well made bed with a plain white cambric cover. There is also a sturdy table bearing a wash-bowl and ewer decorated with the same motif as the walls.

1/13: Guest Bedroom

This room is exactly identical to 1/12.

1/14: Guest Bedroom

This room is larger than 1/12 and 13 but is in practically all other respect identical. The only difference is that the cambric bed cover is also decorated with the frieze motif of dolphins and plants. This room would be used by favoured courtiers or members of the Royal Family.

1/15: Storeroom

Spare bed-rolls, mattresses, bed-linen, pillows, chamber-pots, ewers, wash-bowls, etc, are kept here. All are plain and are used for the needs of the guests who will be sleeping in 1/11 as well as for making up the beds in the other guest bedrooms.

1/16: Dining Hall

Panelled in oak and decorated with the crests of the regents of Koss, this is an impressive room to present to any visitor. Along one wall is a large dresser which contains a large, ornate china dinner service and a number of table cloths. In the centre of the room is a huge table which carries the marks of decades of use. There are many chairs around the table or stacked in the corners by the window. They are above what you might expect to find in many homes in terms of craftsmanship, but are not especially notable pieces of work. The floor is covered by rush mats which are fragile to the touch because of disuse and age. Ordinarily, they would be replaced with fresh ones should the Royal House be used for any purpose of state.



3/7: Master Bedroom

This is the room of Albran and his wife. The contents are the same as the other two rooms, but are of a finer quality. The room is spotless and has several knick-knacks and ornaments decorating the room. None are too valuable, but are rather exotic items that Albran has acquired in trading in Arkand and with caravans as presents for Karys.

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4: REGISTRAR'S HOUSE

Recommended Occupants: V11

There is a noticeable difference between this and the other village dwellings. It is constructed of the same fine white imported stone as the Royal House, with similar carved panels in the fascia, except that these depict scenes of the village's way of life - fishing boats, marsh scenes, punts working the oyster beds, etc. The thatching on the roof is ornately worked, with bird-designs featuring along the roof ridge. The house was originally built as an annex to the Royal House but now goes with the office of Registrar of Pearls. By tradition, the village Headman is appointed Registrar since the Headman is usually the most popular and trustworthy villager. This does not mean to say that they were, for many have been corrupt, attempting to keep the odd Black Pearl for themselves. Consequently, there has often been keen rivalry for the post of Headman, with plenty of scheming and skulduggery going on. The present incumbent is Takhos, who is widely reckoned to be the most honest and trustworthy person in the village. He is very popular.

4/1: Living Room

The wealth promised by the exterior of this building is continued inside. This room is floored with glazed tiles in the part allocated to cooking and food preparation. The rest of the room is also tiled, though in a slightly different shade, and covered with a selection of small but decorative rugs. There is also an elegant wooden table and comfortable chairs. Takhos and Jemia's children sleep here, in bed-rolls stored under the bed in 4/2.

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4/2: Bedroom

There is a simple, comfortable four-poster bed in here, with the children's bed-rolls stored underneath. Takhos also keeps a lockable chest under the bed which contains the village records and such like. The room also contains an ottoman, and a wash-stand with ewer and wash-bowl. The room has a tiled floor, covered with an enormously luxurious fur rug.

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5: HOVEL

Recommended Occupant: V6

This, along with 10, is the last building ever built within the village. Fennock Walk was at one time a wide space used for boat and tackle storage and repairs. Due to pressures of space and population, this ramshackle hovel was wedged in. It is no more than a crude, timber-framed lean-to propped up against the Fennock Inn. It has an ill-kept thatch roof and the walls are in terrible disrepair. The interior is something of a mystery even to the other villagers. There are heavy drapes across the inside of the door and across the window at all times to bar the inside from prying eyes. Maythen, the occupant, is a secretive and solitary individual. He is the village miser, though the locals are not particularly aware of this. They know him to be mean, but assume this to be due to poverty. The inside of the hovel is almost beyond description. Accumulated dust and filth cover most surfaces. The furniture is rudimentary and ill-kept: the bed is no more than a pile of rush matting on the floor. The place reflects abject poverty. This is because Maythen has scrupulously hoarded every penny that ever came into his possession though, and many a thief might like to know of the contents of the loft, as it contains a veritable treasure trove of items - all collected in painstaking secrecy over the years. A concealed hatch in the ceiling leads up to the loft, and a small ladder concealed in the dirt below Maythen's bedding provides the access.

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6: THE FENNOCK INN

Recommended Occupants: V10

Every village has its meeting-place; in Blackmarsh it is the bar of the Fennock Inn, a large, stone building overlooking the wharf and river. The battered sign outside pictures a Fenhawk, the rare marsh bird of which fennock is a local corruption. The innkeeper, Staffyr, runs the place, helped by his wife Sardis, his son Pamir, who doubles as bouncer, and Grettan, Sardis' father, who is the pot-boy and general lackey.

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6/1: Bar

This large room has a number of tables, chairs, benches and stools scattered around it. All are of tough, servicable design. Behind the counter are shelves full of bottles and flagons which predominantly contain spirits; mostly 'Wort Water', a highly potent and rough local licquor made from a common marsh-plant. Barrels under the bar contain ale and wine. Of an evening, the bar will fill up with villagers, most of whom decry the use of tables and benches, standing in groups around the bar, normally chatting and joking with Staffyr. There may be one or two travellers staying at the inn, as well as peasant farmers from the surrounding area, though these tend to keep to themselves rather than mix with the local fishermen. House rules are posted on the wall, and they include bans on spitting, fighting, juggling with the crockery, and abusing the good name of the landlord's wife. Pamir, a short, stocky fellow, manages to enforce these quite well, especially considering the drunken state into which most customers get themselves. Meals are also served in the bar: usually a fish stew brewed up by Grettan from whatever fish were landed that day. The bar also doubles as the landlord's living room, where they sit and dine when the tavern is not open. However, it is open more often than not, in which case they eat in the kitchen or at a table in the bar, depending on how crowded it is.

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11/2: Bedroom

This contains a single bed - Bannyr's. The twins sleeping in bed-rolls on the floor.

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11/3: Workshop

This is taller than the rest of the building and has a makeshift timber loft which is used for storage. The building is full of tools, stocks of wood, pitch, ropes and other materials. There is a large work-bench furnished with a crude vice, and an ever-bubbling cauldron of thick, black pitch on a fire in the corner. There is also a small forge and anvil for preparing the metal fittings for the boats, and a small pile of bronze ingots with a rack of metal-beating tools beside it. The workshop is usually in apparent disorder, with bits of wood and equipment strewn around, but Bannyr is in fact an extremely efficient and methodical worker. It is simply that there is usually so much work that little time is spent in keeping the place in order. At any one time, there will be at least a couple of jobs in progress. Boats are built and repaired on the wharfside outside the workshop. New boats are slid down the slipway into the wharf as soon as the hull has been completed, and finished off in the water. There will often be a partly built boat on the wharfside. Minor repairs to boats are usually carried out by their owners in the wharf.

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12: VILLAGE CHAPEL

The small chapel is relatively impressive in that it is built of brick, a rare material in these parts. It has a thatched roof and a small bell-tower over the south-west corner. The bell is sounded to summon the villagers to services and the children to school which, Tamalin the cleric conducts in the chapel. Neither the services nor the lessons are particularly well-attended unless it is for a special festival or occasion. The interior walls are covered with many instructive murals, detailing the deeds of local deities, but the most recurrent figure is that of Forlos, the river god, worshipped by most of the locals. There is a small wooden altar at the eastern end of the chapel on which stands a green-veined, marble statue of Forlos, flanked on each side by an ever-lit candle in a gilt candleholder. There are no benches in the chapel, but there is a pile of small cushions in a pile by the door, and everyone takes one as they enter. The usual congregation mostly consists of the older fishermen and their families, and some of the younger women. The whole village usually turns out for the river and boat blessing ceremonies, as well as for the harvest and other festivals. These ceremonies are therefore conducted in

the Royal Court. There are short services each day, one hour before sunset, and an extra one at dawn and noon once a week on the deity's Holy Day. There is a chest which contains the school equipment: slates, chalks, a few picture scrolls, even fewer books and some very well-used toys and knick-knacks. The school is run every day, except the Holy Day, from after the boats go out to noon. Depending on the number of children, Tamalin sometimes conducts lessons in his living room (13/1).

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13: THE PRIESTHOUSE

Recommended Occupants: V13

This is built of the same brick as the chapel and has a thatched roof. When Tamalin came to the village, he found both this and the chapel abandoned by the people. He has single handedly rebuilt both them and the village's faith. Tamalin's boundless energy and love of life means that he is here only rarely during the hours of daylight.

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13/1: Living Room

Apart from the usual table, chairs and cooking range, Tamalin has a stack of small stools that he has made from log sections. These are used whenever he conducts lessons here. The room is gaily painted with religious scenes, as well as children's pictures, including a picture alphabet (in an attempt to have a few villagers who can actually read and write their own language!). There are bed-rolls tucked away on which the orphans sleep.

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13/2: Bedroom

The room is typical of Blackmarsh with its reed-matting floor, low bed covered with rugs and wash-stand. There is also a large, usually locked, chest which holds Tamalin's ceremonial vestments, and the chapel's one real treasure, a silver chalice in the form of a stylised fish, standing on its tail, with mouth wide open and small jet black eyes. Not even Tamalin knows it, but both eyes are in fact small Black Pearls set within the metal. Only a small part of them is visible though.

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14, 15, 16, 17 & 18: COTTAGES

These are some of the original cottages of the village, clustered hard against the stockade. All are of traditional style with mud bricks packed between timber frames and stiffened with plaster and whitewash, and with a thatched roof. Each of them has two rooms and is considered quite spacious. The front room of each is the living area, and will have the all-purpose fire-place and chimney pipe, a low table and some roughly made stools. There will rarely be any decoration on the walls, although there may be the odd tapestry, or wall-hanging, if someone in the family can weave. Since these are fishermen's cottages, there may well be tools, nets and crayfish pots scattered around, in the process of repair. These are mostly stored in the loft space though. There will inevitable be a large fish-kettle hanging over the fire.

The rear room will be the bedroom with either low beds or piles of rugs to sleep on. Children would normally sleep on the living room floor, as would other adults in the household, depending on numbers. numbers.

14: COTTAGE

Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V12, V14 or V15

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15: COTTAGE

Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15

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16: COTTAGE

Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15

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17: COTTAGE

Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15

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18: COTTAGE

Recommended Occupants: V4, V7, V8, V9, V12, V14 or V15

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VILLAGE LIFE & INHABITANTS

The villagers are detailed in this section along with rumours and an outline of the village life.

VILLAGE LIFE

Within the village, life is very close-knit, and pretty-well everyone will know most of the community news and gossip. This would be freely available to newcomers once they have been accepted by the villagers and have lost their 'stranger' status, which may take some time in this slow-moving place. However, there will usually be some individual who, for his or her own reasons, will inform the party of some rumour or other. The villagers rarely talk of the strange happenings that seem to spring out of nowhere, now and again. They have lived too close to the Black Marsh for too long to be outwardly disturbed by anything that happens. No matter what, the Black Marsh is their provider and they have the utmost respect for this watery wilderness.

The general trend amongst the villagers and farmers in the surrounding area is to have quite large families, for all hands are needed in the strenuous work of fishing and farming, and also to compensate for the inevitable, though occasional, fatalities that arise from working in the Black Marsh.

During the day, only the youngest will be excused any work for any length of time, for even the clumsiest 10-year old can sweep fish heads into a pile. In general, everyone will help get the boats out at dawn. The women of the village will then often spend the morning doing their washing. This is usually done on a spot on the riverbank just upstream (east) from the village. At the same time, some of the children may spend a few hours in the village school run by Tamalin (V13) in the chapel (12). They will then return about noon to help their mothers on the quay-side or in the market-place (B), until the boats return later in the day. The catch is usually on sale late in the afternoon, with the stalls manned by the women and children while the men ready the boats for the next day. Evenings are usually spent with the family around the fire, mending nets and crayfish pots; but the older men-folk are quite likely to be found in the Fennock Inn (6), though not all revel as often as some.

Farmers from the outlying areas also come into the Fennock in the evening, but there is some local rivalry between the fishermen and the farmers, with each considering themselves to be better than the others. There is not that much intermingling, and if a brawl starts, no matter what the original reason, it will usually end up as fishermen versus farmers. However, if either group are threatened by an outside agency, then the other group will unhesitatingly come to their aid.

Practically all the families in Black-

marsh have one or more boats. Ordinary dinghies and sail-boats are used for working the river, while rush coracles and flat-bottomed punts are used for working the Black Marsh. The oyster-beds are found in the Marsh itself, and each family works a different oyster-bed. Some take out a mule in their punt, laden with panniers, to help with the culling of the oyster-beds. Each family jealously guards the location of its oyster-beds, and there is some rivalry and in-fighting between villagers for the rights to the various beds as some seem to have a higher yield in Black Pearls - though they are still very rare. The fishing stretches on the river are not held in secret but by mutual agreement. However, this does not stop some of the long-running feuds between families over the rights to fish the various river stretches. By tradition, the best stretch is allocated to the Headman, at present Takhos.

All the boats are generally moored in or off Fennock Wharf. A few are moored at the Tower Slip (D).

Most families have several cats. These can usually be seen prowling around the village at all hours. However, when the boats come in, practically all the cats will converge on the wharf to scavenge scraps.

Funerals are quite ceremonious affairs. The corpse is taken in its coffin on a boat and a whole fleet will escort it to the special burial ground in the Black Marsh where it will be slid into the mire to sink to its watery resting place.

VILLAGE CUSTOMS

The main annual festival is the Fish Fair detailed on the *Encounter Tables*.

There are other harvest and thanksgiving ceremonies of a more religious as well as the odd village fete and boat-launching ceremony, etc.

Often, when a large group of travelling entertainers sets up, or one of the trading river-boats from Arkand calls in, there may be a spontaneous day of festivities. These occur at semi-regular intervals.

Once a month, there will be a full-scale market in the Royal Court with a smaller one weekly, usually just local produce and farm goods from Elbridge. Most days, though, there is usually a stall selling oysters, crayfish and fish.

The village council meets once a week in the Fennock Inn, though sometimes a week is skipped, and other times an additional meeting may be called in unusual circumstances. The meeting is chaired by the Headman, Takhos (V9). Others usually in attendance will be Tamalin (V11), Albran, Brekk and Fyros (V1), Zelwyn and Norden (V15), Triston (V2), Regnar and Urmic (V8), Burgis (V4), Staffyr (V10) and, keeping a low profile, Sartor (V12). Others will attend irregularly depending on whether there is something of interest to them on the schedule of items to be discussed.

RUMOURS

The rumours given here are 'major' ones and should be worked carefully into your adventure. They should not all be readily available, but should be sought out, one at a time, as the occasion demands. Whether they are true or not is up to you to determine according to your adventure.

They should be mixed in with ordinary day-to-day ones such as: there is a petty thief in the village - small items have disappeared from homes, boats, and market stalls; so-and-so is carrying on with someone, etc.

There are spaces provided in the rumours section for you to note down any special rumours that you may require and some day-to-day ones.

Griff (V5) is not an orphan, but the son of Allania (V2) and Takhos (V11). The rumour, though given little credence and voiced by very few, is based on these facts: Allania was absent from the village for some months, apparently in Arkand, prior to and during the time that Griff was orphaned; she returned shortly afterwards; a ramshackle hut was later found in the Black Marsh with evidence that someone had spent some time living there; and that Takhos found the boat containing the orphaned Griff. The 'story' built around these facts is that Takhos hid Allania in the hut during her pregnancy. When Merthen, Holwen and their newborn child (V14) met with their horrific death in the Black Marsh, Takhos and Allania discovered them first, and put their child into the boat as though it had survived. Takhos then brought the boat back to the village and all presumed the child to be that of Merthen and Holwen. Allania then returned to the village with no-one the wiser. Most villagers have little time for this rumour, believing it to be an attempt to blacken the name of Takhos who is highly respected. The few who circulate the rumour point out the above facts and that Takhos seems uncommonly fond and tolerant of the large oaf.

Staffyr (V10) did not gain his wealth (by village standards) by working the remains of the mines in the Glimmer Heights, but was really in Arkand at the time.

There are many rumours concerning Sartor (V9). They are all basically that he 'is up to something'. Some of the more liberal villagers such as Takhos (V11) and Tamalin (V13) discount them as malicious gossip because Sartor is still not considered a 'local' by most of the villagers and keeps himself to himself. The rumourmongers, however, point out that though he is rarely seen around the village, he is even more notably scarce whenever the Scarlet Plumes have been stationed in the village. The current rumour is that he is something to do with some bandits in the Tagor Hills.

stretch and that of Hoilessa's parents were promptly claimed by Zelwyn for his sons causing much resentment and speculation at the time. Hoilessa is a sprightly young girl with a slight limp that she has had since birth. She loves helping out around the village, usually for Alika (V15) who gives her a small payment. Her sister Wennecca is a quiet young girl who spends most of her time looking after the stray dogs and cats that Tamalin allows to wander in and out of his home.

whenever a certain marsh plant grew in abundance near an oyster-bed, those oysters often seemed to contain the odd Black Pearl or two. Wimgin has exploited this, still roaming the marsh with Calops finding new oyster-beds and more than their share of Black Pearls. He has shared his secret with Calops, but no-one else. He is a tall, arrogant man with a fairly intolerant nature. He is proud of his wealth and family and consequently has disowned his grandson Griff (V5) who he refuses to believe is of his blood. On some occasions when he is the worse for drink, he is prone to voice his belief that Griff is the illicit offspring of Takhos (V11) and Allania (V2), though most locals pay little heed to this. Some tongues do wag, however, on the 'no smoke without fire' line and that Wimgin may know what he's talking about since if anyone knows why Merthen and Holwen went into the marsh with their son, Wimgin does.

Viona is the moderating influence in the house. She is a friendly, apologetic sort who has learnt long ago to live with her husband's arrogance. She mixes happily with the other women of the village. She eschews the fine clothes that Wimgin often brings her from Arkand, feeling that this would divorce her from the other women in the village.

Calops is very much like his father, tall and lean, he looks down his nose at most others in the village. He and his father do little fishing, preferring to work the oyster-beds. Since they have spent much time in the marsh, and faced many of its perils, Calops has developed into a fine warrior and swordsman. He is particularly proud of this, and often performs feats of swordsmanship at the Fish Fair and other local festivals.

Emmalina is a social climber. Wimgin took her into his house as an orphan, and to begin with, she was treated little better than a slave. However, as she grew older, a bond developed between her and Calops, whereupon, at Calops insistence, she was treated as an equal member of the family. Eventually, they married. Emmalina now considers herself to be better than the other fish-wives and enjoys wearing the finest clothes. The other women consider her 'stuck up', and 'hoity-toity'.

Jesmon is a constant worry to Emmalina. Though she dresses him in fine clothes, he always slips off to play with Petram (V11) and Tinmos (V7) much to her disapproval and comes back covered in mud and worse. Emmalina is often seen walking about calling for him, while he does his best to avoid her.

Gresha and Liliana are proper little madams. Always dressed cleanly and prettily, they play between themselves rarely mixing with the other children who they think of as urchins.

V14: Wimgin and family

Recommended Location: 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18

Wimgin (58) and his wife Viona (56) share their luxurious (by village standards) home with their son Calops (38), his wife, Emmalina (32) and their son Jesmon (15) and two daughters, Gresha (12) and Liliana (8). Wimgin's other son was Merthen, the father of Griff (V5) who died an horrific death in the marshes. The other member of the household is Stantor (21), Griff's brother. He was raised by Wimgin after his parents death but left the village some four years ago to seek his fortune. It is rumoured that he is apprenticed to some worker of magics in Arkand. He rarely visits the village.

Wimgin is possibly the wealthiest of the village inhabitants. He has an uncanny knack of finding Black Pearls. He claims to have his method, as he calls it. In reality, Wimgin's father noticed that

V15: Zelwyn and family

Recommended Location: 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 or 18

Zelwyn (55) is the head of the family with possibly the worst reputation in the village. In the cottage with Zelwyn live his wife Alika (52), their sons Norden (33), Palon (32) and Anders (28) as well as Norden's wife Bethecca (30) and their sons Koram (14) and Alaman (13) and daughter Elanar (11).

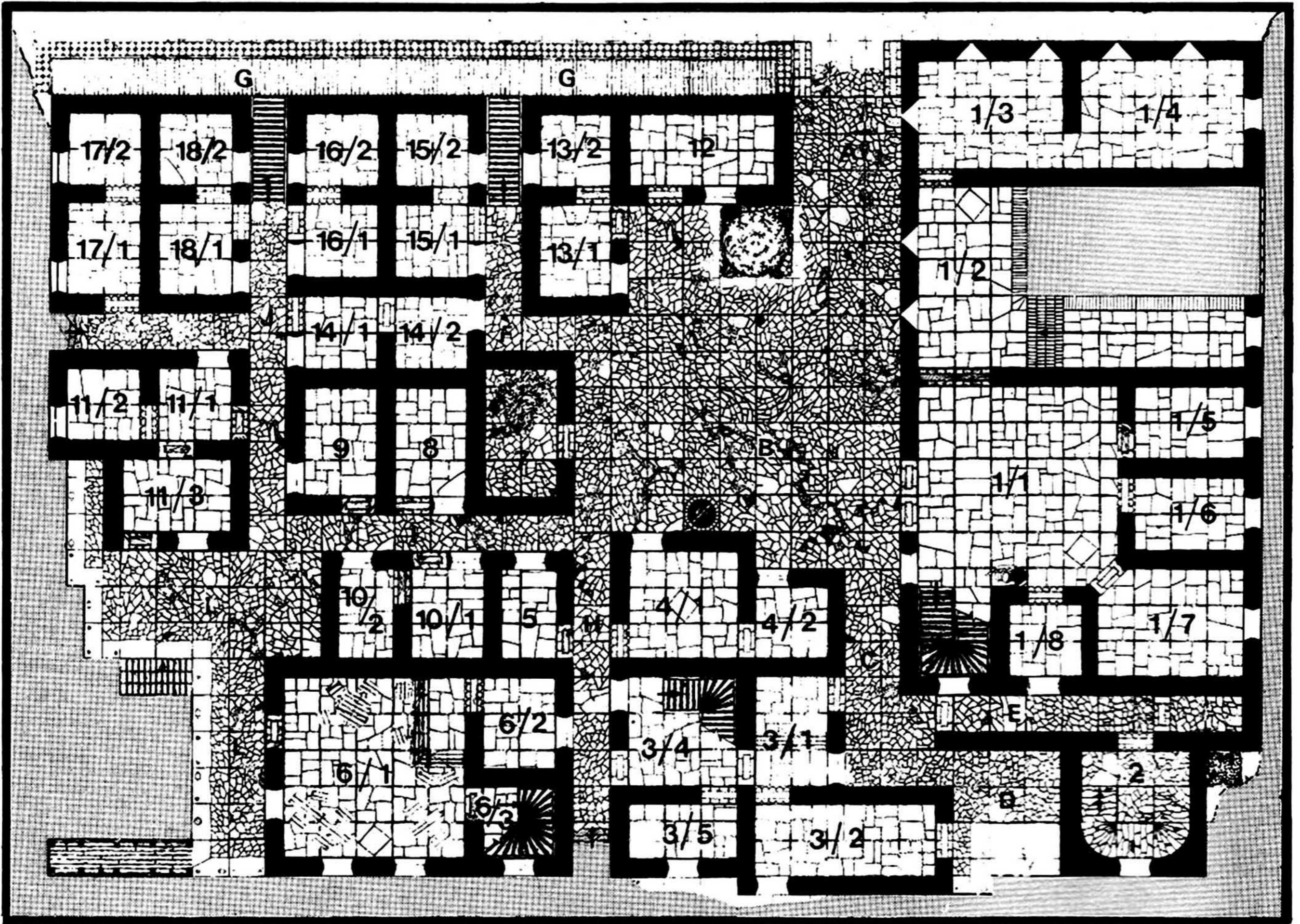
Zelwyn is the brother of Tilda (V4). He is a dark, swarthy, saturnine man with a powerful build and a sharp devious mind. He became Headman, through his own machinations and the default of Wimgin (V14) who had no desire for the best fishing stretch as he preferred to search the marshes for Black Pearls and the chores of the Headman would also have deprived him of the time for this. Zelwyn's reign as Headman was quite eventful. There was the only lynching in living memory, after which Zelwyn acquired two additional stretches of river for his sons, and a scandal when Zelwyn was removed from office as Registrar by Royal command. He was consequently also forced to relenquish the post of Headman since the two posts have always, by tradition, gone hand in hand. Takhos (V11) was elected the new Headman and Zelwyn lost the rights to the best river stretch which went with the post. Much to Zelwyn's annoyance, he received no replacement stretch, as the family had the rights to the two other stretches already.



The Village of BLACKMARSH



Scale: 1 square represents 5 feet (1.5 metres).



GM'S ADDITIONS

The village map above is for you to record any secret doors, trapdoors to cellars and passages between buildings, etc. This page is for you to note the details, descriptions and contents of these additions.

A large rectangular area filled with a grid of small dots, intended for the Game Master to write down details of secret doors, trapdoors, and passages.



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NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Dungeon Planner Set 2



ENCOUNTER TABLES

The *Encounter Tables* can be used to generate scenes of interest in the village. *Daytime Encounters* come in two parts; *Table 2A* details ordinary run-of-the-mill events and *Table 2B*, the more unusual happenings. With the special encounters from *Table 2B* in particular, you should roll up any events in advance so that preparatory work, such as the particular villagers involved, can be done without impeding play. The *Night-time Encounters* are provided should the party be out after dark. They are, of course, a little more sinister than daytime events. There are also *Tavern Encounters* since the players will invariably head towards the nearest source of refreshment.

The encounters can be used to introduce the players to some of the characters and rivalries of the village. Using the brief details provided, whole adventures can be constructed, either using a single event, or possibly linking a number of them together or with one of the *Adventure Ideas*.

Where an unspecified villager is mentioned, determine the villager at random from the *Villagers* section in the booklet, or select the most appropriate to suit the circumstances of your adventure.

NIGHT-TIME ENCOUNTERS

Table 1
Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	A piercing scream rings out from one of the cottages in the fields outside the stockade...
2	The party stumble into a noxious trail of sticky green slime that leads to the quayside and into the water.
3	1d4+2 drunken fishermen are battering a stranger in a dark corner of the Royal Court. They will be displeased if interrupted, but the stranger could do with some help.
4	A small monkey drops onto a character's shoulder from a tree or overhanging roof. It will try to steal something valuable before scampering off to a tavern, where it will leap into an open window and disappear.
5	A formidable fish-wife struggles past, dragging a guilty-looking (and trouserless) husband by the ear. She is mouthing all sorts of obscenities and curses, while he crotchily mutters 'Yes, dear', to all she says.
6	The party finds the body of a young girl in the shadows, apparently lifeless and drained of blood. <i>Healing</i> spells (from the local cleric if necessary) will eventually bring the "corpse" to life. She will be very weak, and talk only of "He in black who called me". She can remember no more, since the last she knew, she was in bed at home.
7	A knife flies out from the shadows and embeds itself in the wall opposite. Footsteps are heard running off. The knife is of a strange design and very crudely made. There is no trace of the mysterious assailant.
8	Two drunken fishermen are arguing loudly in the street, apparently about the respective sizes of their catches. There is much shouting, cursing and arm-waving. The two seem close to coming to blows.
9	Two figures slip through the shadows to the well. They glance furtively around before throwing in something wrapped in a bundle of rags. If challenged, they will explain that their daughter's kitten has died. (Not wishing to upset her, they have just disposed of it. A moron might guess they are lying as they could use the river rather than risk polluting the village's water supply!)
10	Tamalin, the cleric, hails the party as he returns from a call to a sick child. He is determined to tell them about it, the chapel roof restoration fund, the orphan's fund, why the party haven't been to chapel recently, and so on...
11	3d6 peasant farmers, obviously the worse for wear after an evening in the tavern, are making their way home to the fields outside the village. They are very belligerent, shoving any and everybody out of their way.
12	A bestial shape leaps from a low rooftop and runs off into the shadows, heading either towards the stockade or the waterside leaving damp, webbed footprints.
13	A very drunk dwarf is desperately trying to clamber onto a very tall warhorse which is tethered outside the stable. Unfortunately, in his present state, he has forgotten that he came on a small mule (in the stable). He won't take kindly to being laughed at; nor will the large warrior in the tavern whose horse it is take kindly to its loss.
14	A very distressed man stands in the middle of the street. He has just been relieved of all his belongings by foot-pads; not just his money and weapons, but also his cloak and the rest of his clothes. He can promise a good reward to those who help him get back to his room at the tavern with minimal embarrassment.
15	A dark, mysterious, cloaked stranger slips past in the shadows on the other side of the street. He disappears from sight in the twinkling of an eye.
16	Brekki, the night-watch, comes down the street in all his glory carrying a lantern and longsword. Though short and stout, he is a lot more agile and skilled in combat than he appears. Every two hours or so, he makes a 20 minute circuit of the village. The party will need a good excuse (depending on the hour) for being out at night. Any attacks will simply result in the blowing of the very large and loud horn that he carries around his neck.
17	On an odd occasion when the village gates are closed for the night, there is suddenly someone banging on them desperately and screaming for help. They are obviously scared witless. Before the gates can be opened, there is a scuffling sound, muffled cries, and then silence. When the gates are opened, there is only fresh blood on the walls and lots of large footprints to be seen.
18	With a sudden clamour of squeaks and squeals, a flock of small black bats flaps around the roof of the chapel. They are not dangerous, but are very noisy and rather scary.
19	A small rat dashes into a dark alley, followed by a manny, tabby cat. Suddenly, there is a rather surprised miaow: the terrified cat tears back out, closely followed by...?
20	With a blast of horns, a small raiding party of marsh orcs bursts through the gates. Simultaneously, another group lands in boats at the wharf. They aim to burn and loot, but will kill those who get in their way. There are 3d6+2 orcs, but this should be adjusted depending on the strength of those in the village at the time.

DAYTIME ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1d6. On a 1-4 use *Table 2A*, a 5-6, *Table 2B*.

Table 2A - Routine Daytime Encounters

Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	1d4 fishermen are sitting on the quayside, sewing nets, drinking and talking. They know all the local rumours and are not averse to discussing them.
2	3d4 ragged local children pester the party, demanding money and/or sweets. A few well-aimed kicks will disperse them. However, the villagers might not take too kindly to strangers roughing up their children.
3	2d4 fishwives are gossiping furiously across the way from the party. They know many local rumours but mostly trivial ones. It is near impossible to get any useful information out of them.
4	Griff, the village simpleton, prances up and skips around the party whooping disconcertingly.
5	Some travelling entertainers are performing in the Royal Court. A crowd of locals stands gawping at the spectacle. It is an excellent opportunity for the light-fingered (in conjunction with, or separate from, the troubadors) to practice their skills or for other nefarious activities.
6	A cat grabs a fish from a market stall and runs off, hotly pursued by a loudly cursing fishwife.
7	An indistinct shout from above is closely followed by the contents of a large pail. One of the party is soaked in foul-smelling gunge. The people will avoid this person and their friends until the befouled individual has a bath (or a dip in the river) and gets a fresh change of clothes.
8	It is the local harvest festival (or another celebration if this is unsuitable for your campaign). A procession to the chapel is followed by a thanksgiving service in the Royal Court. It will be attended by the locals and farming families from outlying farmsteads and Elbridge whose carts are already blocking the gates. The Fennock Inn and quayside will be crowded with drunken revellers tonight and there will be a number of strangers in the village.
9	A large, mangy dog suddenly gives a party member quite a savage nip and races off. A nearby villager seems to recall that it was foaming at the mouth.
10	A travelling quack sets up in the Royal Court and hawks an amazing 'Cure-All' lotion (a rather nasty mix of apple juice and creosote). Anyone gullible enough to drink it will be laid low for 1d4+2 days. If the quack is found again, he will swear it must be rubbed in, not consumed.
11	2d6 drunken peasants brandishing particularly nasty agricultural implements, barge sullenly through the party.
12	Tamalin, the local cleric, greets the party, as newcomers to his parish, entreating them to attend chapel as soon as they are able and to give generously to the chapel roof repair fund...to the poor and starving orphans fund...to the home for sick animals fund...and so on.
13	An entertainer in the Royal Court is taking the hat round for his dancing-bear act when the bear suddenly snaps its chains, and goes wild. The bear heads off towards the stockade. Pursuers of it will have to be careful if they start clambering about on the rickety old structure.
14	A cart has lost a wheel in the gateway and shed its load of cabbages all over the place. While its owner is arguing with Brekki the gatekeeper, local women and children are helping themselves to free cabbages. It will be hours before the mess is sorted out and the gateway cleared.
15	1d4+2 fishermen, laden with nets and fishing tackle, are heading for the wharf to take their boat out.
16	A game of Bruntball, a sort of cross between rugby and hurling, against a team from Elbridge is due to take place on the grassland outside the stockade in half an hour's time. The party is invited to join in. (The game usually degenerates into a brawl within minutes.)
17	A very large peasant farmer is unknowingly kicked by a donkey tethered by the wayside. Turning to find the culprit, he spots the party. He's had a bad day and will take some persuading that it was the donkey. (A drink might soothe matters.)
18	A finely dressed traveller tosses a few coins to some local children, and is promptly mobbed by villagers: polishing his shoes, carrying his bags, minding his horse, etc. He looks as if he would gladly befriend someone nearer his own social class who could rid him of these 'peasants'.
19	A local fishing boat has just berthed in Fennock Wharf. Its catch is being gutted on the quayside to the delight of the scrawny local cats who are avidly fighting over the scraps. The noise is terrific, and is only surpassed by the smell, which is quite overpowering to non-locals.
20	Amid much shouting and screaming, some children are diving recklessly from the jetty at Fennock Wharf. If they notice the party of strangers, one will immediately pretend to be drowning, and his friends will entreat the party to dive in and help. The children will look too shocked and worried to do anything themselves.

Table 2B - Special Daytime Encounters

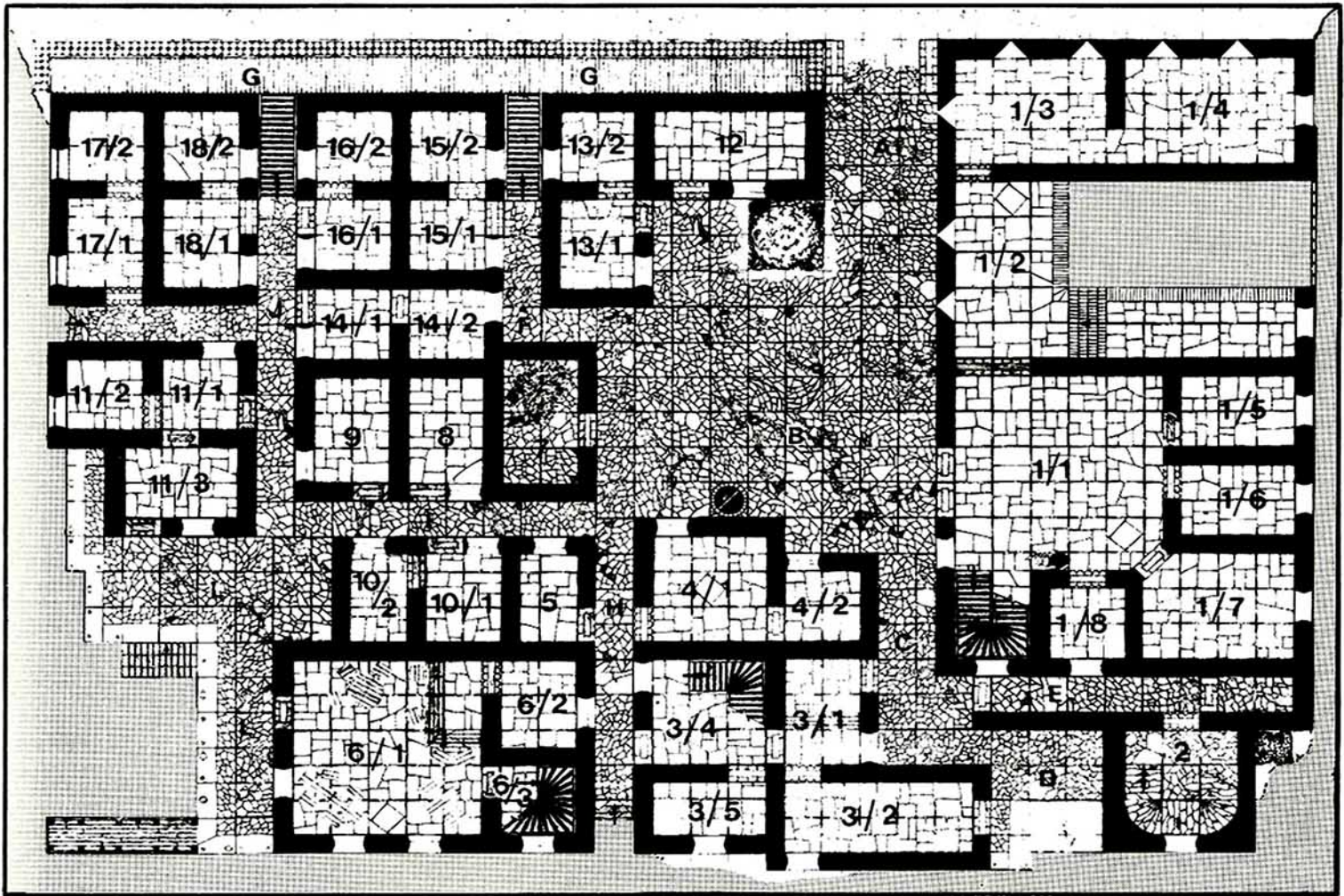
Roll 1d20 or choose an event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	A boat pulls into Fennock Wharf amid much commotion. A fisherman has been injured by something with tentacles that attacked them in the Black Marsh. Some locals want to investigate, but others consider it too dangerous.
2	A small girl is sobbing loudly. Her cat is up the tree by the chapel, and can't (or won't) come down. If the party helps, they will discover that the cat is quite vicious; the little girl is not at all grateful afterwards; and that the chapel roof is not particularly strong or sound.
3	A herald announces the approach of a royal funeral procession. It will stay overnight in the Royal House and move on at dawn. The news is met with frenzied activity: the gateposts are painted, the Royal Court swept, stray animals rounded up, the royal larder stocked, and so on. The villagers will dress in their best clothes. Though a solemn occasion, it will be treated much like a holiday. Villagers will pay their respects as the procession arrives at the Royal House and an overnight vigil will be kept in the chapel. There will be guards camped in the Royal Court and outside the stockade.
4	A villager crawls from an alley, clutching a chest wound. He is another victim in the long-running dispute over the rights to the best fishing stretches and oyster beds.
5	The village simpleton, Griff, runs up and hysterically pokes one of the group in the ribs. He then giggles and mutters 'You're it!' before running speedily away.
6	A boat is to be launched. Tamalin the cleric will bless it before it is pushed down the small slipway at the wharf. It is a good excuse for celebration in the tavern tonight.
7	A large, menacing bird of prey alights on the chapel roof. It is a rare Fenhawk. There are rumours that these birds have, in the past, carried off babies. Much to everyone's horror, it appears to be building a nest.
8	Some travelling jugglers are performing in the Royal Court. Given half a chance, they'll 'borrow' items from the party (usually helms, swords and daggers), and juggle with them to the amazement of the locals, and to the chagrin of the party when they are not returned.
9	Torrential rain has flooded the Royal Way in several places, effectively cutting the village off. The river is in full spate: close to flooding the village itself and too dangerous for boats to venture out. After a few days, a party will need to reach Elbridge for some supplies.
10	A very large and plain fishwife makes amorous advances to the smallest member of the party. She is very overbearing and will take a lot of persuasion to let up. After a while, her sheepish-looking husband will turn up to drag her off, apologising profusely while she berates him.
11	A random building catches fire. A human chain is formed from the river to the building to put it out. Once the fire is doused, questions will be raised as to how it started. If it is a prominent building, such as the chapel, suspicion may well fall on any strangers in the village!
12	A fishing boat pulls into the wharf. The fishermen have caught a particularly large catfish, and a rumour soon spreads that a Black Pearl has been found in its gut.
13	A scream comes from the river. A little girl has fallen in and she cannot swim. If she is rescued, she will point to the nearest stranger, bawling that they pushed her in.
14	A strange warrior arrives in the village. His armour, equipment and clothes are all of the finest materials, yet it is obvious that they come from numerous sources. He is a professional duellist, and will challenge any brave young blade to a fight (to first blood only), for a bag of gold pieces. If the duellist wins, he will demand an item of his own choosing as a forfeit from the loser.
15	A renowned (and rich) merchant arrives with his gaudy caravan selling the rarer, more exotic items not usually available in the village, but up to five times the normal price! He may want a few bodyguards to join his caravan on a trip upriver, and it is said that he pays well.
16	A fishing boat pulls in towing another boat found adrift in the marshes with everything in order, but no trace of the crew. It is one that failed to return the previous night. One of the men who found it swears he saw something skulking in the undergrowth as they recovered the boat.
17	An eastern prophet is preaching in the Royal Court of the Holy Wars being fought in distant lands. He will decry the local gods, stating that the true deities are those he serves. Tamalin, the local cleric, will not take kindly to this, and at the very least a verbal battle will occur between them, possibly leading to much more.
18	The tinker pays his monthly call. The villagers will be eager to buy new items and get their knives sharpened and pots and fish-kettles mended. The queue will spread around the Royal Court for most of the day. He is a good source of news, but holds his tongue until his work is over. He then retires to the tavern to regale the locals with news and rumours in return for a supply of ale.
19	A fishing boat pulls into the wharf. Along with the usual catch, the fisherman dumps the body of a lizard-man on the quayside. Quite a crowd is attracted, for although there have been rumours of a settlement somewhere in the marsh, none have actually been seen for years.
20	It is the annual Fish Fair. Stalls are set up in the Royal Court, Fennock Wharf, and in the fields outside the stockade where there will also be games and ale-tents. Boats will be decked with bunting, coloured flags and ribbons. Farming families will arrive from Elbridge and the surrounding area for this annual festival. The events will include a lucky dip in a barrel of fish, a fish throwing contest, fish juggling, guess the weight of the fish, a fish fancy dress contest, fish-slapping dances, and many more. The party might even be coaxed into partaking of the local speciality served solely on the occasion: a dish of small live fish that are swallowed whole, one at a time, with each one being chased down by a swig of a rather coarse local liquor. The locals make rather a sport of this, competing in speed and quantities. It is the one time of the year that virtually everyone gets together, lets their hair down and has a whale of a time! There will be ample opportunity for a good drunken brawl and for the light-fingered to chance their arm. Practical jokes also abound.

The Village of BLACKMARSH



Scale: 1 square represents 5 feet (1.5 metres).



TAVERN ENCOUNTERS

There will always be 2d6 assorted customers in the Fennoch Inn, mostly fishermen and peasant farmers from the farmlands outside the village, as well as Staffyr, the innkeeper, Sardis, his wife, and their eldest son, Pamir, who doubles as the bouncer. The following table is for special encounters and events to occasionally liven up the evening.

Table 3
Roll 1d20 or choose an appropriate event to suit the situation.

Die Roll	Encounter
1	As a practical joke on strangers to the village, Staffyr has sawn halfway through the legs of one of the tables and its benches. Anyone leaning heavily on them will cause a collapse, sending drinks and people flying.
2	A travelling bard begins to sing, strumming his lute in accompaniment. His songs are mostly old legends set to music, but if requested (together with some ale), he will sing of more local subjects, such as Hargon's battle with the orcs. (His songs are a good way to introduce some of the local history to newcomers.)
3	A wrinkled old man who wears some of the finery of a merchant sits at a table. He has a small monkey with him which he is feeding with tidbits. It is very cute, and will playfully try to steal small items (which the old man returns to their owners). It is only at the end of the evening, when he has retired to his room, that it is noticed that other items are missing. Should the party try to recover them, they may well discover that the old man is a wizard, and a rather skilled one at that...
4	Griff, the village simpleton, rushes in, points at one of the party and in a very accusing tone splurts out a load of gibberish. He then bursts into tears and rushes out again. What it was all about, no-one will ever know, but the locals will be rather abrasive with anyone who has upset Griff, who is one of them, after all.
5	As the evening progresses, the beer gradually becomes more and more watered down. Staffyr refers to it as his "Special Brew" (reserved for strangers). By the end of the evening, the party might notice that their drinks are getting lighter and lighter in colour, and that they have consumed rather a lot without getting very drunk.
6	Some locals are playing knucklebones, and they will invite newcomers to try and beat them, with a small wager on the outcome. They are highly skilled, and will win five times out of six unless their opponent has an extremely high dexterity. It is virtually impossible to cheat at the game.

- 7 An adventurer staying at the inn comes downstairs and complains in a loud voice that some money has been stolen from his room. Staffyr explains that there has been no crime in the Fennoch Inn for many years and will personally vouch for all the locals in the place. As for any strangers, however,...
- 8 A stray dog wanders in and soon attaches itself to one of the party. It will be identified as their dog ever after, and won't stop following them. Unfortunately, the dog is prone to emitting obnoxious fumes and the contents of its bladder at the most inconvenient moments.
- 9 Tamalin the cleric enters and rattles a collection box under everyone's noses. He loudly proclaims the evils of excessive drinking, and points out that it would be more worthy to donate the money to a good cause, such as the chapel roof restoration fund, the orphan's fund, the sick animals home, and so on.
- 10 A bedraggled child runs in screaming that her younger brother has fallen in the river and he can't swim. If the party joins the rush outside to help, they will see a small shape splashing about among the moored boats. If they dive in, they will find nothing; the shape apparently disappearing among the boats. On returning to the inn, they will discover that their drinks have also disappeared and the locals chuckling, 'Works every time!'
- 11 Grammon, the local whinger comes and sits at the same table as the party, if only because no-one else will talk to him. He will try and make them feel sorry enough for him to buy him a drink or two. Then he will whine on and on about all his monetary problems; then his health; then his wife; and then... The locals know and avoid him, but will be very amused by his antics.
- 12 It is a fisherman's birthday and everyone is expected to contribute a flagon of ale to him. Then the ancient local birthday ritual is carried out: the birthday boy's breeches are filled with minnows and he is pelted with larger fish by his friends and anyone else who has one handy. It often turns into a good-hearted fish fight with fish being thrown at all and sundry to much merriment.
- 13 While Staffyr is out getting another barrel of ale, one of the locals juggles with some mugs and plates, and then challenges any of the party to do better. Should they try, they will find that the mugs and the plates that they are given have been greased. Staffyr will be none too happy with anyone damaging his crockery.
- 14 For some unknown reason, one fisherman stands up and throws his drink in the face of another. A fight ensues. The fight can be restricted to these two, or can blossom out into a full scale brawl. If the latter occurs, those staying in the inn will be expected to recompense the landlord for some of the damage done.
- 15 The door of an upstairs room is flung open and a rather ugly little man is thrown out backwards. Unfortunately for him, his trousers are around his ankles. He tumbles down the stairs and crashes through the door into the bar. A rather rosey-looking lady appears on the stairs, throws a bundle of clothes and equipment at him and shouts 'And stay out!', before stomping back upstairs.
- 16 A local fisherman, dressed in his tatty working clothes, comes in looking rather flushed and pleased with himself. He buys a round for everyone in the bar. When questioned by his friends, he says only that he has had some good fortune and is sharing it with them. He adds, rather testily, that if they don't like free drinks, then they needn't finish them or drink with him again. The truth is that he has found a Black Pearl and has just handed it to the Registrar in return for the 50gp. He is trying to keep quiet about the affair, but is not doing very well.
- 17 Late in the evening, a tremendous storm breaks. All the locals rush out and there is a flurry of activity in the dark and rain as they check that all equipment is lashed down and the boats are securely moored in the lee of the village. This might involve moving the boats upstream, depending on the direction of the wind. They will greatly appreciate any help that the party might offer, but there is a good chance of an accident since the waters are very rough. Once the storm has passed, boats and equipment will be checked and repaired. A good storm will be the talking point for the next few days, with great debate as to whether it was worse than the one five years back, etc.
- 18 The party somehow manage to overhear snatches of a conversation between two nearby traders (not strangers but still rare visitors) drifting over the general noise of the bar: 'Tomorrow' ... 'skinned alive' ... 'lot of gold' ... 'steal' ... 'a killing' ... 'a proper fool' ... 'need to find a priest afterwards!' They are only talking about getting a good deal on some cassocks that they are buying from the chapel, but they appear very mysterious.
- 19 The tavern cat, for reasons best known to itself, decides to sharpen its claws. The first thing it sees is the leg of a party member. They might find out, though, that the creature is the beloved pet of Sardis, the landlord's wife.
- 20 It is Staffyr the innkeeper's birthday and a special entertainer has been hired from Arkand for a celebratory evening in the tavern. For days there have been rumours of noble girls doing the dance of the 23 veils (the same as the dance of 7 veils, but more suspenseful). The bar is packed on the night. Many will be violently disappointed, however, when Enarico's 'Birds of Paradise' turn out to be some seedy parrots who do impressions of the Royal family. Fish will be thrown, and all hell could break loose. It will be a night to remember!

A GENERAL HISTORY OF BLACKMARSH AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

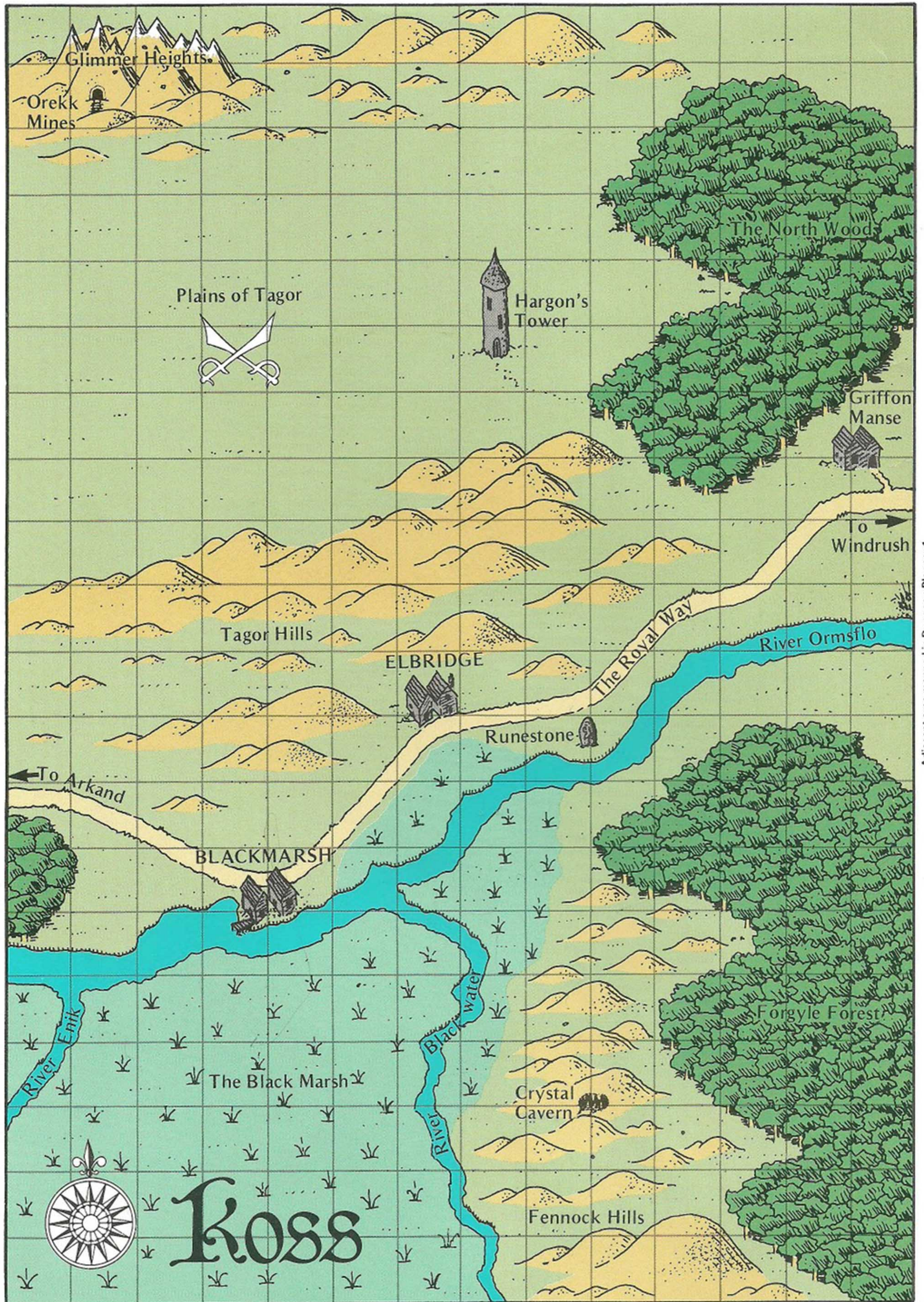
Over 150 years ago, Prince Hargon and his forces routed an army of invading Orcs on the barren Plains of Tagor. The surviving Orcs fled through the Tagor Hills and into the mysterious Black Marsh. Uncertain whether the Orcs would perish or somehow survive and return, Hargon built a look-out tower on a large, flat, rock outcrop in the river Ormsflo. Over the years, the village of Blackmarsh grew around the tower. A more ornate tower was built on the plains to commemorate Hargon's victory.

Some 50 years later, the Plains were the main route for fortune hunters during the Gold Rush to the Glimmer Heights where rich deposits of gold and platinum had been found. The dwarven Orekk Mines were the most reknowned and productive but greed and overworking left them exhausted and derelict along with the other mines and boomtowns that sprung up at the time.

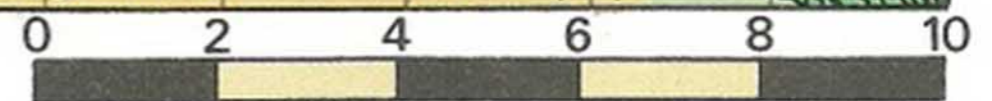
The Crystal Cavern, one of many natural caverns in the Fennock Hills, is one of the wonders of the area. Its walls, encrusted with profuse deposits of a valueless, glittering crystal, are of breathtaking beauty when illuminated by torchlight.

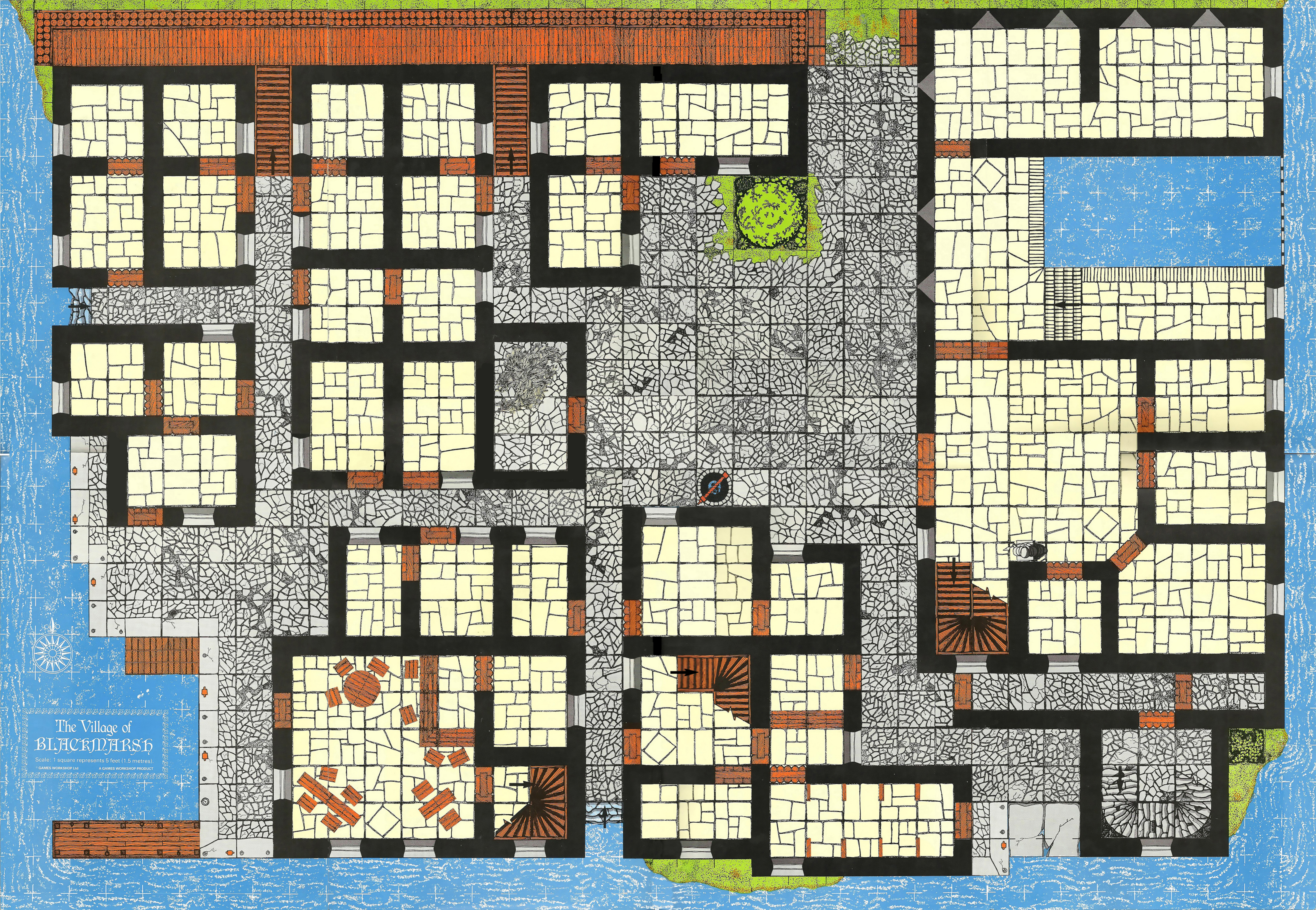
The fishing community of Blackmarsh is the principle village of the area. It is the natural stopping point for Royal funeral processions en route, by road or river, to the Royal Tombs (*Caverns of the Dead: Dungeon Planner Set 1*). The villagers work the river as well as venturing into the Black Marsh itself where freshwater oyster beds are to be found. On rare occasions, some of the oysters contain a fabled Black Pearl, built up over the years from the sediment brought to the marsh by the Stygian river Blackwater from the Ravenscrag Peaks far to the south. However, the Black Pearls are both so prized and rare that a Royal Charter decrees them crown property. All pearls found must be registered and sent to the king at Arkand.

The Black Marsh is still a dark, dangerous place though. Rumours persist of strange creatures and Orc settlements in its tangled depths. And when the thick, grey mists roll out over the village, it is not hard to imagine that fell creatures of the marsh are prowling the sleeping streets of Blackmarsh.



Adjacent area mapped in Dungeon Planner 1





The Village of
BLACKMARSH

Scale: 1 square represents 5 feet (1.5 metres).

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NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Dungeon Planner Set 2



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DUNGEON PLANNER SET 2: NIGHTMARE IN BLACKMARSH

Designers: Albie Fiore &
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