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PLACES OF POWER:
SOULSPUR INN





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PLACES OF POWER: SOULSPUR INN

Inns have forever been the safe havens of adventurers, providing protection and a chance to rest and recover from whatever dangers they've survived thus far. Yet Soulspur Inn presents a unique threat of its own, cloaked in the guise of the very respite adventurers seek. The inn's mistress is a fine hostess, none would deny, but some say she seems a bit too eager to help those in need—and where she gets her seemingly endless resources from, no one quite knows. It's said that one can capture more flies with honey than vinegar. But why bother with mere honey when one can offer a frothing mug of spiced ale instead?

Designed for use with the 5th edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

CREDITS

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SOULSPUR INN AT A GLANCE

Ruler Erlgamm

Population 15 (4 humans, 1 dwarf, 3 half-elves, 3 halflings, 4 undead)

Alignments LE

Languages Common

Resources & Industry Lodgings, meat pies, spiced ales

The ever-present Erlgamm is the undeniable mistress of Soulspur Inn—a benevolent innkeeper, who welcomes the weary, injured and lonesome to her hearth and refreshes their spirits while listening to their tales of wonder and woe.

Soulspur Inn has been around for well over a century, and is marked on many a map passed between adventurers, merchants and other travellers. It is renowned for both the warm welcome found within and the safety its stout walls provide. What no-one knows, however is that its owner—Erlgamm—is a powerful necromancer and would-be lich. She uses her power to hide the handful of undead she keeps around, and uses the travellers who pass through her doors as sources of information, relics and—occasionally—fresh corpses.

While brightly lit, Soulspur Inn has its shadows and dark cellars. While the inn shows the regular wear-and-tear of an establishment that serves the common rabble, everything is kept neat and tidy by the staff.

LORE

A PC may know something about Soulspur Inn, its history and surrounds. A PC making a DC 10 Intelligence check knows one or more pieces of information from the list below. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Soulspur Inn is a welcome respite on the trail. Its mistress is kind, the food plentiful and the spiced ale is a particular speciality!

DC 15: Soulspur Inn is considered neutral ground when it comes to legal or moral conflicts. Erlgamm welcomes all to her hearth, and does not brook conflicts or violence even between those of differing values or codes of conduct.

DC 20: A small cemetery is located not far off, providing a final resting place for the poor souls who perished along the road or succumbed to their wounds after they reached the inn.

MARKETPLACE

Erlgamm does not advertise her magical abilities, but has a few items for sale. If asked, she explains their previous owners couldn't afford to pay their bills and left them in exchange.

- **Consumables:** *scroll of spider climb* (150 gp), *scroll of speak with animals* (120 gp)
- **Other:** *bird feather token* (750 gp), *gloves of thievery* (500 gp)

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the folk at the inn are nothing more than ordinary travellers or locals.

- **Appearance:** A motley lot of all ages and races. Almost everyone has a road-wearied look.
- **Dress:** Common clothing—travelling cloaks, mud-caked boots and heavy leather vestments. Most folks, except for the staff, are prepared for long days on muddy and dusty roads.

Erlgamm is the sole major NPC at Soulspur Inn:

- **Erlgamm** (LE female half-elf necromancer 10) The welcoming mistress of the inn has a dark secret.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Soulspur Inn, a PC may hear one or more rumours. A PC making a DC 10 Charisma check learns one rumour from the table below. A PC exceeding this check learns an additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10.

D6	RUMOUR
1	No one knows how Erlgamm came to own the inn. She's just always been there. But who cares? Who'd want to replace her?
2	At least a dozen travellers have set out from the inn with the full intent to return—but never did. Most figure ill fortune befell them on the road, but some say they never left at all.
3*	"Erlgamm's a twin, tis true! That's why she's always a hustlin' and bustlin' with nary a wink of sleep. She and her sis just swap over soon as one gets too tired."
4	Erlgamm's got a soft spot for priests. Doesn't matter what faith they follow, a priest will always find a free meal and bed in Soulspur Inn.
5	No-one knows the inn's age; it's always been there.
6*	Every traveller leaves something behind by accident, sooner or later. The Soulspur Inn has a secret stash of such forgotten goods and relics.

*False rumour

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

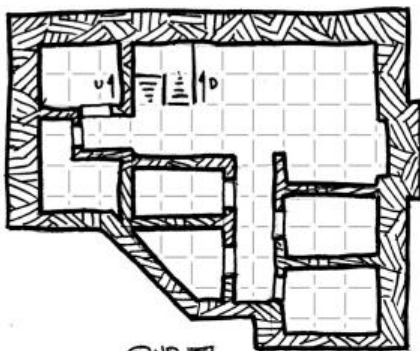
Inns are a mainstay of most campaigns, providing havens for the PCs to rest and gather news. As described, Soulspur Inn stands amid a scattering of peasant huts but could be set in almost any village, town or city. It can even stand elsewhere—perhaps at a lonely crossroads—far out in the wilds.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

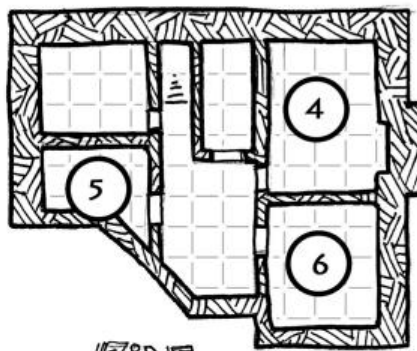
Most of Soulspur Inn comprises unremarkable locations. A few locations, however, are exceptional:

1. **The Commons:** Here guests and locals alike can rest, drink, eat and enjoy one another's company.
2. **The Spice Room:** This locked and warded room holds several vats and tubs.
3. **Bone Cellar:** Below the inn lies the Bone Cellar. Along with the inn's supplies, Erlgamm keeps several mindless undead minions here.

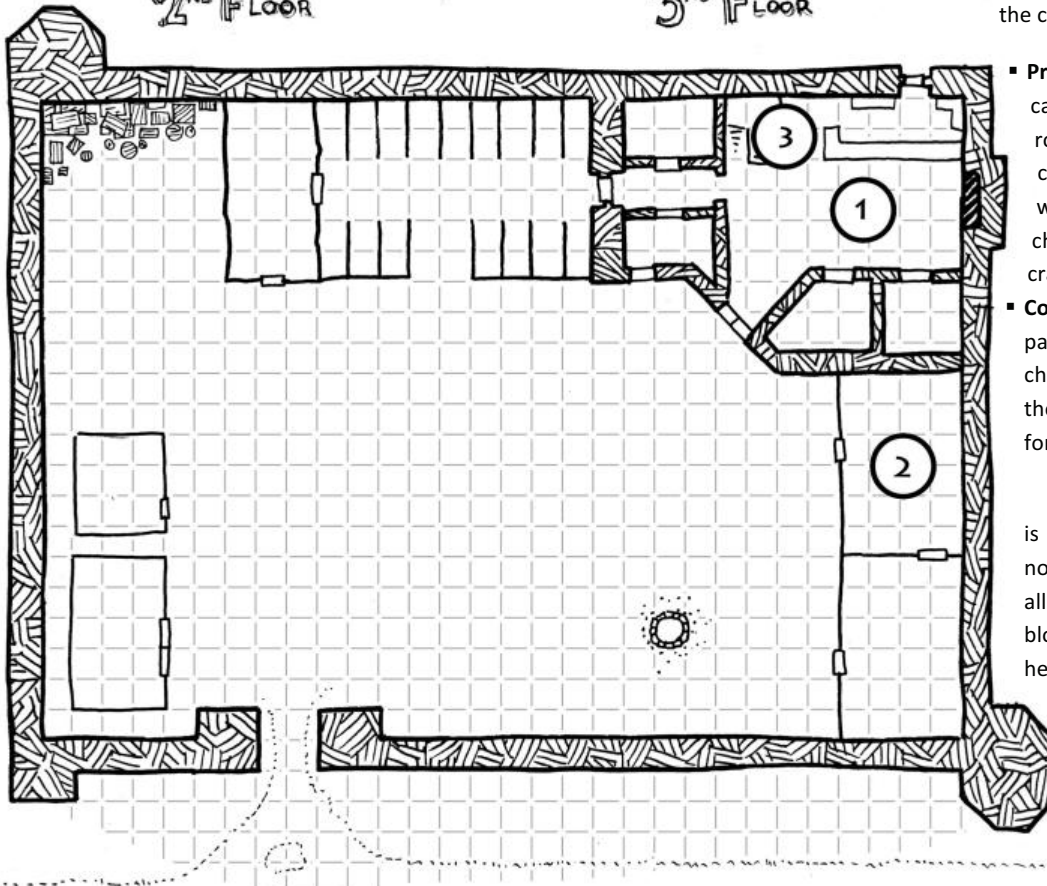
4. **Erlgamm's Laboratory:** In the rare hours where Erlgamm isn't tending to her guests, she's often here, brewing potions or tinctures to further her necromantic studies.
5. **Phylactery Den:** This small chamber is locked. The crystal vial intended to contain her soul on becoming a lich is contained within and is Erlgamm's most precious possession. A few undead servitors also lurk here.
6. **Arcane Study:** Erlgamm's office doubles as a study. Here she pores over the various tomes and scrolls she's acquired over the years.



2ND FLOOR



3RD FLOOR



UNKEYED AREAS

The map has several unkeyed areas.

Ground Floor: The inn's ground floor comprises various storerooms and a kitchen along with stables and so on.

Second Floor: The second floor is wholly given over to guests. Here guests can opt to rent their own room or sleep in the communal dormitory.

- **Private Room:** For 2 gp, a guest can hire a comfortable double room. Well-appointed with chest, table and chair along with two single beds the chamber is warm (if a little cramped).
- **Common Chamber:** 5 sp buys a patch of floor in the common chamber; guests must bring their own bedrolls and blankets for Erlgamm provides none.

Third Floor: The third floor is Erlgamm's domain. No-one—not even her (living) staff—are allowed past the heavy curtain blocking the stairs leading to her personal quarters. Here is her ordered and tidy bedroom along with various work chambers. Magical wards on the curtain alert Erlgamm to intruders in her chambers.

LIFE IN SOULSPUR INN

Soulspur Inn is always open, no matter the hour (which some locals find odd, but accept thanks to the coin the inn brings to the area). It presents the usual bustle of any other inn, with ebbs and flows of travellers, the occasional performing bard and supply deliveries. Lights burn in its windows all night, and its main doors are unlocked all day.

ATMOSPHERE

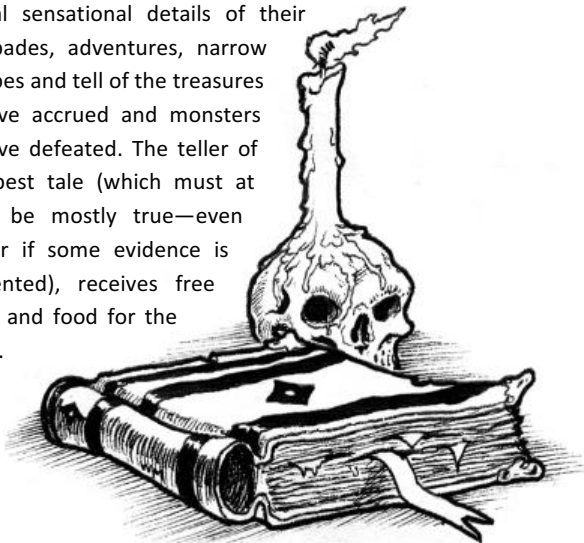
Erlgamm has gone to extraordinary lengths to make Soulspur Inn feel both homey and refined. The inn is furnished with silver and brass fixtures, a large candelabra and a cosy fire pit that adds even more warmth beyond the main hearth, which is forever ablaze. Delicious smells of exotic spices and roasted meats waft from the kitchen through the inn, and servers are always in attendance, ready to swiftly satisfy even the most demanding patron—though Erlgamm often attends the Commons herself.

LAW & ORDER

Erlgamm runs Soulspur Inn as neutral ground for all patrons. This means one might find a known criminal drinking next to a local guard, or a demon-worshipping priest debating theology with a righteous paladin. All feuds and grievances must be set aside for the sake of enjoying her abundant hospitality. How she enforces this—beyond her scolding tongue and piercing glare—is unknown, especially in the long-term. But anyone who tries to start trouble or deal violence to another inn-goer is quickly tossed out by Erlgamm’s surprisingly strong helpers, and often never seen again.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Erlgamm is voracious when it comes to hearing new stories, and she often holds evening contests, daring patrons to reveal sensational details of their escapades, adventures, narrow escapes and tell of the treasures they’ve accrued and monsters they’ve defeated. The teller of the best tale (which must at least be mostly true—even better if some evidence is presented), receives free drink and food for the night.



LOCATION DRESSING

Use this table to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Soulspur Inn.

D20	DRESSING/EVENT
1	The doors bangs shut as a newcomer shakes the rain off her cloak before heading for the fireplace.
2	Erlgamm smiles at no one and nothing in particular as she wipes down the bar with a rag.
3	A server bumps a table while sweeping, almost knocking over a few drinks and earning a harsh look from Erlgamm.
4	One of the human staff climbs a ladder to light a few of the candles on the candelabra that have gone out.
5	Two patrons grunt and curse as they struggle in an arm-wrestling match, cheered on by the crowd.
6	A bard strums her lyre by the fire pit, singing slightly off-tune of vague heroic deeds.
7	A halfling barmaid weaves her way through the crowd, carrying a platter of sizzling meat pies.
8	A group of adventurers raise a sombre toast in memory of a companion lost on their latest adventure.
9	A half-orc lies slumped over a table, snoring, having lost her bet in an impressive drinking contest. Her elven competitor continues to sip his wine.
10	A cloaked figure sits off by himself, face barely visible beneath his hood as he puffs on his pipe and studies the crowd.
11	A pair of smitten lovers head upstairs to the room they’ve rented for the night.
12	A local guard stands in one corner, glowering at the wanted thief enjoying a beer with his friends a few tables over.
13	A priest has set up a small altar on his table and is now mumbling and gesturing in subdued supplications to his deity.
14	A wounded dwarven ranger is led upstairs to get some peace and quiet.
15	Raucous laughter breaks out over a game of cards as one player’s bluff is called, costing her a huge pile of coin.
16	A chorus of horse whinnies rise from the stables, loud enough to briefly overcome the inn’s din.
17	Bawdy laughter erupts as Erlgamm finishes telling an incredibly raunchy joke to a group of labourers.
18	Ash flies up as an inn worker pokes at the large logs burning in the main hearth.
19	The main room is so full of the smell of spiced ale, it’s enough to make a person’s head swim.
20	A cart rattles by out front, carrying barrels into the courtyard.

THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

Soulspur Inn sits nestled in the foothills of a low mountain range, with several passes leading down from the peaks, almost to its very doorstep. A few mines operate in the rocky heights, staffed by humans and dwarves, but none have struck it rich, yet.

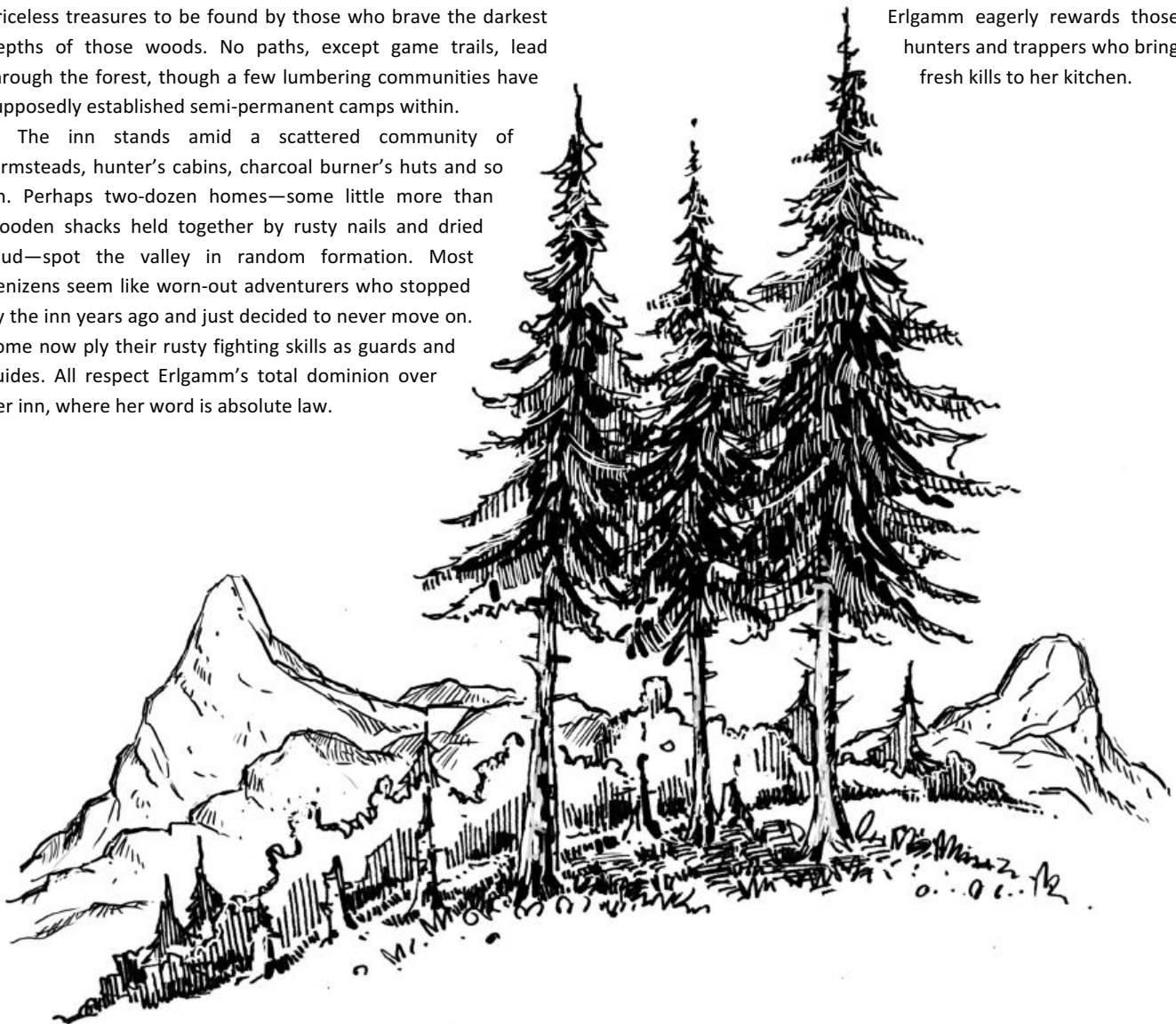
The inn is decidedly out of place when compared to the rest of the region. The road leading through the main valley and past its front doors is broad and well-travelled, with merchant caravans and marching troops alike making consistent use of it. Yet the inn isn't anywhere near a place of importance, which has perhaps spared it the ravages of the occasional war or other hostilities marring the countryside.

Beyond the main road are an expanse of grassy fields, with the occasional stretch of wildflowers. This abuts a thick forest, and many rumours abound of the wild beasts, ancient ruins and priceless treasures to be found by those who brave the darkest depths of those woods. No paths, except game trails, lead through the forest, though a few lumbering communities have supposedly established semi-permanent camps within.

The inn stands amid a scattered community of farmsteads, hunter's cabins, charcoal burner's huts and so on. Perhaps two-dozen homes—some little more than wooden shacks held together by rusty nails and dried mud—spot the valley in random formation. Most denizens seem like worn-out adventurers who stopped by the inn years ago and just decided to never move on. Some now ply their rusty fighting skills as guards and guides. All respect Erlgamm's total dominion over her inn, where her word is absolute law.

The inn is the sole commercial business in the valley and is the largest single building. The community use the inn as a meeting hall, on the rare occasion they gather to discuss matters of import. Erlgamm is an important and influential figure in the local community. She also provides employment—both directly and indirectly—for a score or so folk in various capacities. Most of the travellers moving through the area use inn's services, and every denizen knows if any ill should befall the inn, they would lose their livelihoods—making everyone highly protective of Erlgamm's establishment.

The climate is temperate much of the year, though heavy snowfalls in the deepest winter months tends to see the inn even more crowded than usual as travellers seek shelter from the icy storms that can last for days. Wild game is plentiful, and Erlgamm eagerly rewards those hunters and trappers who bring fresh kills to her kitchen.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN SOULSPUR INN

I: THE COMMONS

Cheery chatter, delicious smells and the warmth of a roaring fire fill this inn's main room, where patrons crowd around tables and servers hustle to serve food and drink.

This is the inn's common area and public front, where Erlgamm is her own self-styled queen, keeping the crowd under control with equal portions of her generous hospitality and firm hand.

- **Food:** Spiced meat pies with vegetables (2 gp), tenderised rabbit (or other unidentifiable meat) in spiced wine (3 gp), partridge stuffed with wild herbs (3 gp)
- **Drinks:** Spiced ale (4 sp/pint), white wine (10 gp/bottle), spiced red wine (10 gp/bottle), apple brandy (1 gp/glass)

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	Every torch and open flame turns blue and burns particularly brightly for a few moments before returning to normal.
2	Erlgamm suddenly blurts out an arcane-sounding incantation that turns out to be gibberish. She blushes and blames it on sneaking a few too many sips of ale.
3	Each PC feels they are being followed and watched no matter where they go or how many wards they conjure, so long as they are inside the inn.
4	One of the servers helping Erlgamm has a sudden convulsion and falls to the floor, dead. The corpse appears to be just slightly older than the person appeared to have been in life.
5	For a few minutes, if viewed at the right angle in the darkest hour of night, the logs burning in the hearth appear to actually be bones.
6	All magical items within Soulsapur Inn's walls fail to work properly, if it all, for a brief time

Meet the Mistress: On learning of the PCs' reputation as successful adventurers, Erlgamm invites them to a private meeting under the guise of honouring her distinguished guests. She may even have a job for them, such as dispensing with an undead abomination lurking in the nearby graveyard—a secret test to determine the scope of their abilities and whether they may be of use to her.

Something's Amiss: The PCs can observe eerie occurrences or behaviours that hint at darker secrets behind the inn's bright and cheery facade.

ERLGAMM

LE female half-elf necromancer 10

Slender—perhaps a little too slender—with curly black hair and welcoming eyes, this woman wears plain, functional clothes.

Erlgamm can be encountered anywhere in the inn. She always maintains her innkeeper persona unless caught in obviously egregious actions. If backed into a corner, she might bargain with the PCs, offering items from her secret stash in exchange for her life. In the end, though, she fights to the death, hoping perhaps her necromantic pursuits and experimentations will see her resurrected into the lich form she's long sought.

Mannerisms: Erlgamm is forever on the move, chasing down the slightest speck of dust with her cleaning rag, bustling between tables with a tray of fresh drinks, chatting with regulars or directing her staff to one chore or another. The only time she's seen standing still is when she retires to her little shadowed corner behind the bar to rest for a minute as she listens to the latest patron tell of their travels. While her eyes are an icy blue, they usually hold a surprisingly warm look, though they can turn as sharp as daggers when she confronts a violent drunk or other disruptive patron.

Personality: Energetic and indomitably positive, Erlgamm loves nothing more than good stories, good company and good meals. She is equally sympathetic to those in need and inspiring to those whose courage has failed. While she rarely provides the inn's services for free, she never cheats her patrons, and always demands her guests treat one another with the same respect she gives them. She is a woman of simple tastes, preferring functional clothing over finery, though she often tucks a shiny bauble or two into her curly black hair—gifts from past guests, she explains.

Background: One of several barmaids who worked at Soulsapur Inn over a century ago, Erlgamm's fortunes changed when an alcoholic wizard drowned himself in a watering trough.

While going through his belongings to see what she might pawn, Erlgamm discovered an ancient tome she found she could read. Fascinated by its forbidden necromantic secrets, she began to practice its rituals and discovered an innate talent for deathly magic. Erlgamm's ultimate goal is to unlock the secrets of lichdom and achieve true eternal power.

2: THE SPICE ROOM

This cramped room is full of vats and tubs brimming with fetid-looking liquids. An acidic reek wrestles with the heady mix of spiced ale.

The door to this room is locked and magically barred. This is where Erlgamm and her unliving minions take the remains of her victims. After Erlgamm has harvested the essentials she needs from her victim's corpse, the rest is distilled via acid baths and vile enchantments into a slurry that provides the unique spice for which her ale is famous.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A skull bobs to the surface of one of the vats.
2	A tub of slurry bubbles briefly, releasing an odour eerily like the spiced ale.
3	One of the paddles used to stir the vats falls over from where it leaned against the wall, with a loud clatter.
4	The smell of spices and slurry is briefly overpowering.
5	When inspected, one tub wobbles on its stands and topples, spilling slurry everywhere.
6	A bloodstained cloak is wadded up in a corner.



The Spice is Life: If Erlgamm has been exposed and confronted, she may claim the slurry she uses to flavour the ale is actually a long-term poison that slowly builds up in a person's body. The villagers who frequent her inn will die if they do not get regular doses of it. So, the PCs must choose between destroying her and ending her vile operations or letting dozens of people live. However, she may be bluffing...

3: THE BONE CELLAR

A well-stocked root cellar sits at the bottom of a flight of stone steps. Barrels, crates, and shelves stacked high with preserved goods and other supplies fill the space.

This one-room cellar is connected to a second room via a tunnel hidden behind a shelf of preserved goods (DC 15 Wisdom [Perception] locates). The tunnel ends in a locked door of iron bars, beyond which Erlgamm keeps her undead minions until she needs them. They are mindless and allowed to roam only when disguised and under her direct control. She does not raise more powerful minions not wanting any potential upstarts to threaten her position or research. Soulspur Inn is hers, and none other's.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A guttural moan wavers out from a dark space tucked behind one of the supply shelves.
2	The cellar door slams shut and latches behind the PCs, and a cackle is heard fading into the distance.
3	A PC spots a bone that was half-buried in the muddy floor. It doesn't look like an animal's.
4	A clanking sound echoes through the cellar, like someone rattling the bars of a cage.
5	When inspected, a crate crumbles, revealing the wood is rotted, as is all the foodstuffs that tumbles out from inside.
6	On entering the cellar, the PCs find a rather sickly looking person standing in front of a shelf, staring blankly at the items arranged on it. They are unresponsive.

Preserved Remains: The PCs could discover the presence of the undead here, which suggests all is not as it seems at the inn.

Rot in the Root: Erlgamm use of necromantic powers has begun to infuse her very touch, and much of the goods in the cellar are spoiling faster than normal. She asks the PCs to escort a wagon to the nearest town to secure new supplies.

4: ERLGAMM'S LABORATORY

A table stands laden with beakers, vials and jugs of foul liquids, some of which contain organs and other bobbing body parts. A workbench holds a random assortment of stone, metal and crystalline fragments.

This laboratory is where Erlgamm concocts various necromantic experiments, distils potions and attempts to learn how to control the occasional magical item she acquires.

The place holds a main table and bench, with vials and jars bubbling with strange fluids while fragments of broken relics lie scattered about. While odd smells and the occasional foul odour are emitted by her experiments, the heavy miasma of spiced ale and seasoned meats wafting from the Commons and kitchen easily disguise this.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A glob of yellow sludge lashes out with sticky tendrils at any PC who gets too close.
2	A piece of jagged metal on the workbench starts to vibrate.
3	A vial of bubbling blue fluid begins to froth, with foam spilling over the edge to sizzle and smoke on the table.
4	One of the eyes floating in a greenish liquid twitches and turns to look at the PCs.
5	The PCs find a half-dissected corpse on the workbench instead of the expected magical experiments.
6	As the PCs approach the main table, the many vials and jars begin to shudder before exploding, spewing noxious liquids throughout the room.

It's just a Hobby: Discovering Erlgamm laboratory can clue the PCs into her passion for arcane experimentation and reveal her more disturbing proclivities.

5: PHYLACTERY DEN

This stout door is secured with a large padlock.

Here, Erlgamm keeps the phylactery she has enspelled—a beautiful crystal vial—to contain her soul when she becomes a lich. It is highly protected through both mundane and arcane means and is Erlgamm's most treasured possession.

Erlgamm keeps several assistants that are actually disguised undead in disguise. She doesn't make use of them often, and mostly employs them as enforcers should anyone defy her rule about treating the inn as neutral ground.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A clattering sound comes from behind the door, like a set of oversized teeth chattering in the cold.
2	A bright blue light briefly glows from under the door.
3	A PC who touches the door sees a mental flash of Erlgamm's eyes, cold and hate-filled.
4	A wave of foul energy emanates from behind the door, leaving the PCs nauseous.
5	The instant a PC touches the door, Erlgamm's shriek echoes through the inn.
6	Frost begins to form on every surface in the room.

Heart of Ice: If the PCs discover Erlgamm's phylactery and discern the object's purpose, they could destroy it and ruin Erlgamm's near century-long work, which would, of course, incur her wrath.

A Lich at Last: If Erlgamm is killed during the PCs' stay, she could transform into a lich thanks to her many years of necromantic experiments. If so, her soul flees to her phylactery, where she begins to gather her strength to strike down her foes.

6: ARCANE STUDY

Though simply adorned with a desk, chairs and a few mostly bare shelves, this office feels strangely dark and crowded, as if occupied by an unseen presence.

Here Erlgamm manages the inn's operations and studies her scrolls and tomes, most of which are hidden away with other artifacts, wands and magical devices. It looks plain enough at first glance, with a desk, bookshelves and a few chairs, but many hidden cubbies and cabinets fill the space.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A breeze from an unknown source fills the room.
2	Erlgamm is present, studying, and looks up in bewilderment at the PCs' presence.
3	Whispers fill the air, words undecipherable, source unable to be pinpointed.
4	The temperature in the room plummets until one's breath can be seen.
5	The hair on the back of a PC's neck tingles.
6	Footsteps sound from the hallway.

Jotting it Down: One of the secret cubbies here holds Erlgamm's private journal, noting decades of attempts to achieve lichdom.

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