



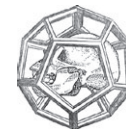
# PLAYER'S GUIDE TO LESSERTON

*"The Adventurer's Paradise!"*

by Joel Sparks and Jeff Sparks

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The referee must have the complete *Lesserton & Mor* supplement to run this game.



# PLAYER'S GUIDE TO LESSERTON

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*Player's Guide to Lesserton*

by Joel Sparks and Jeff Sparks

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## Introduction to the Town

Founded by refugees from the fall of Mor, Lesserton began as little more than a camp, clinging to an island of rock in a vast wetland. Surviving soldiers took charge, organizing parties to gather edible swamp grasses, hunt frogs and birds, and cut timber in the Alpine forest. From the first, people drifted back to the smoking rubble of Mor, searching for lost loved ones or forgotten treasures. Few returned. However, occasional groups dodged the humanoid bands and magical aftershocks to haul back items of great value: tools, weapons, treasures. Retrieval missions rapidly became outright raids. A rule of finders keepers evolved: if someone were brave and lucky enough to retrieve a treasure from Mor, it became his property. Any surviving former owner had no further claim, as he had proved unwilling to fetch the loot himself.

Cautious folk decided that the best way to participate in the unearthed wealth was to support raiding parties from within Lesserton's new stockade. The savviest started businesses, buying up such desiderata as shovels and picks, selling them to hopeful explorers. Mor was vast, its onetime vaults deep and various, its great wealth scattered and buried in ruin. A new way of life evolved: adventurers, merchants to equip them, and entertainments for those who returned with loot to spend.

Over many years, riches flowed into town. Certain merchants became very wealthy, diversifying into trade with other towns near and far. Rich folk of Lesserton had the capital for speculation and investment; some went broke, some became richer still. Luxuries began to show up in town that otherwise went only to the great cities. With the Dukes of Morland dead, and the noble houses destroyed by war, Lesserton became ruled by the merchant class. The Lessers instituted a novel democratic government, heavily influenced by wealth of course. By the time the Grand Duke at Dolmway thought to reclaim the Morlands, the town was able to buy him off, becoming an independent entity with a favorable schedule of annual tithes. Every five years, every Lesser gets to vote on candidates for Mayor and for the Chief of the Watch. These men, and they are always human males, appoint other functionaries based on patronage and profit, but an eye on the next election keeps them from promoting unpopular abusers of office.

Today, over 7,000 people inhabit Lesserton. The surrounding swamp is useless for further expansion, so the town itself stays small, but nearby agricultural villages like Swampton have grown along with their rich neighbor.

## First Impressions

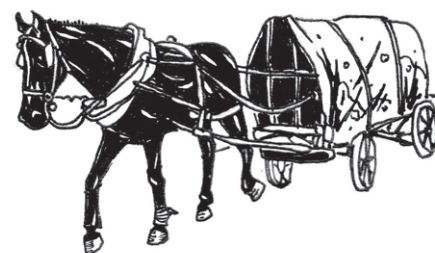
Lesserton sits atop a low, rocky promontory with swamp all around. The mud-and-gravel Glory Road approaches from the east, raised on a berm of rubble. The broad, grassy moors begin right under the walls and stretch in all directions, filling the damp air with all manner of interesting smells. Stinging insects plague the warm months, while in winter, frequent mists roll in, bringing a miasmatic tinge to every breath. Far to the north, bare hills rise, but the town's stony hummock appears the only solid ground to build on for miles around, and Lesserton clings to every inch of it like a lichen. A high wooden palisade surrounds the town, and a wooden bell-tower watches over the incongruously massive metal gate.

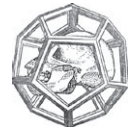
Inside town, the buildings crowd onto narrow streets. Rubble from Mor makes up the cobbles and, with wood from the Alpine, dominates the rough construction. Horses and other mounts seldom venture past the Market Square, and the crooked lanes meander, narrow and broaden, or suddenly stop.

Lesserton feels bigger than it should. The close-packed buildings and the number of visitors make the streets teem with life. A good look around clearly shows that this is no farming town. Any given street likely holds a brothel, tavern, boarding house, gambling hall, or all at once. Certain shops appear to specialize in outfitting explorers and adventurers.

Things slow down at night, perhaps only because most of the action moves indoors. Laughter, singing, brawling, and general rowdiness echo into the small hours. Folk avoid walking the streets late at night, or at least hire a linkboy to light them home. At times, eerie sounds come off the darkened swamp and weird lights flash in the sky.

The town relies on visitors, so a stranger might commonly receive an offer of a drink or some friendly advice about where to stay. Still, at some point in the conversation, the Lesser will probably try to sell something, or at least gain a gratuity for his pains. His recommendation of an inn or outfitter usually involves a kickback. Thus things go: the town exists to make the traveler happy, so long as he pays.





## Lessers: The Folk of Lesserton

The people of this town, conscious both of their once-great neighbor and their own dubious reputation, wryly call themselves Lessers. Most are humans, at least nominally. They do not speak well of elves, and greet any such with disdain or hostility. Dwarfs or gnomes might be treated better, but none are to be seen. Characters can walk the street for days and see only humans, some halflings, and a scattering of shunned folk with varied, goblin-like features: the mongrel-bred people known as orkin.

### The Orkin



Lessers call orkin blood “the Taint,” and much social standing depends on a plausibly untainted status: “clean blood.” Casting aspersions on someone’s purity reliably causes a fight. Still, a great many folk in all parts of town have a bit of an odd cast to their features.

Any half-orc character coming to town is taken for a “full orkin” and treated as such. See “Classes and Races,” p11.

## Life Experience

In Lesserton, every night is an adventure, and characters on adventures should always earn experience. The referee has rules for gaining XP by entertaining yourself and others. Think of your PC as a classic fictional hero, a bold individual who grabs life hard and squeezes the juice from it, knowing he may die in a ditch tomorrow. Such a person only diminishes himself by hiding in his rooms at night, sword near to hand, subsisting on iron rations and tepid water. Instead, you can seek out many varieties of excitement in town, including hunting rumors, looking for adventure, searching for love, gambling, celebrating, and more.

A successful carouse usually earns 1 XP for each gold piece you spent pursuing it, in addition to the XP gained from earning the money in the first place.

## Hunting Rumors

If you are researching a particular topic, the referee will decide if and when some information might turn up. If you’re merely keeping an ear open for whatever’s afoot, you’ll have to trust to luck. Either way, you’ll need to spend some time and money, buying drinks and rewarding the talkative or influential. A high Charisma helps tremendously in such endeavors. If you’re trying to find jobs, including adventure for pay and the secrets of good places to explore in the Ruins, you are instead “looking for adventure.”

## Looking for Adventure

This quest seeks situations where decisive and capable folk may turn a profit, financial or social, by aggressively using their skills. Sometimes, such assertive behavior meets with violent opposition, and things may deteriorate so far as a mere brawl. On the other hand, showing yourself ready, willing, and able can lead to the sort of work that suits adventurers best. Once again, the investments are time, money, and persuasiveness; the payoffs, varied and sometimes inconvenient. In addition to XP from money spent on the quest, trouble usually carries its own XP value, if survived.

## Searching for Love

The quest for pleasant company consumes much time and energy for certain characters. If you are of a more abstemious bent, so be it: there are many other ways to while away the evenings, and none will judge you the worse for your decision. On the other hand, if the three-legged stool of your soul cannot stand on wine and song alone, the bars hold many people with similar ideas. Some of them may even find you appealing.

“Love” may mean nothing more than a clever flirtation or a whispered conversation: Anything that affirms a mutual attraction in an enjoyable way. Charisma heavily influences the quest for love, but the squat or snagglepate need not despair. After all, others suffer similar flaws in their fleshly prisons, and two of you might come to an understanding.

To play this game, you must learn which spots to frequent, and you must spend some cash. You may encounter a variety of consequences, not always unpleasant.



## Gambling

“High risk, high gain” could qualify as a motto for Lessers and their adventurous visitors, and almost every local loves gambling. Lessers usually prove willing to wager a coin or two on almost anything. Three unique local games appear below. Educated folk also bet on chess matches; many Lessers play checkers, backgammon, and nine men’s morris, always for a coin or two at least. Races and fights can be found and bet on. The referee has more details on the games and gambling spots available, from penny tosspottle to the arthropod madness of the Myriadrome to high-class, high-stakes games in private spaces.

In general, a PC can earn 1 XP for each gold piece of net value he’s ahead or behind at the end of a night of gambling. Losses teach at least as many lessons as triumphs, but breaking even earns you nothing.



### Gambling Games of Lesserton

#### Tosspottle

Throwing a bottle blindly over your shoulder at a chalked scoreboard on the ground.

Stake: 1 sp and up; 1 cp among boys

Players: 3 to 20

Time for a round: One minute

#### Blind Painters

Cards with bluffing and multiple rounds of betting.

Stake: 1 ep to 5 gp

Players: 2 to 12

Time for a hand: One turn

#### Quist

Cards with partners and logic.

Stake: 5 gp and up

Players: 4

Time for a game: One hour

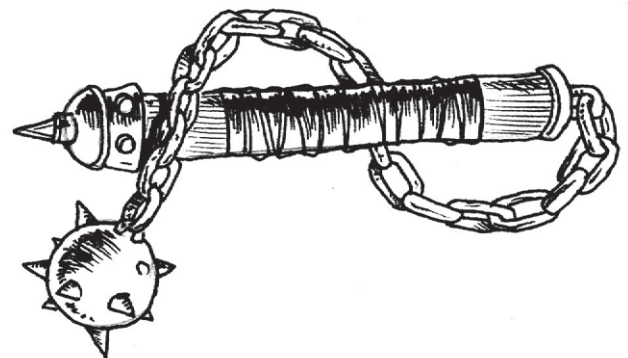
## The Law

Depending as they do on repeat business, the Lessers tolerate little out-and-out robbery or violence. Every neighborhood has its Watch Station, and many businesses have alarm gongs they can ring to summon the Watch at need. As conflicts arise, the Watch often settles them on the spot, levying fines in preference to force or imprisonment. Money talks, but the outsider who offends against a respectable Lesser can expect little sympathy; the guards tend to believe the solid, tax-paying citizen before the wandering loner. They react particularly poorly to groups of outsiders confronting a single Lesser.

Financial disputes can cost the traveler significant money. Acts of violence result in a visit to the Justice Building, with sometimes dire consequences. Typical punishments include heavy fines, total confiscation of property, time in the stocks, or even exile from town for a year or for life. Murderers incur quick judgment and public execution in a grotesque spectacle on a platform above the swamp. You should always think at least twice before actually killing someone in town.

## Going Armed

There’s no law preventing you from parading through the streets in full arms and armor. However, the Watch tends to look closely at those who are equipped for mayhem, and blame them for any trouble that crops up. Entering a business or residence in harness is very rude and cause for snubbing. Brinkley’s, the Justice Building, and the Temple of the Divine Purpose absolutely refuse entrance to armed folk. Keeping a dagger at your belt is one thing, but little need for axes, plate mail, backpacks, or rope comes up between the flophouse and the bar. The referee of a Lesserton game is not out to ambush you in the street with a big fight to the death, nor do innkeepers allow strangers to walk off with great chests of loot from your rooms. Be reasonable and save that stuff for the road and the Ruins.





## Neighborhoods

Below you can find descriptions of the five neighborhoods of Lesserton, as they might appear to a character walking through them for the first time. The text also details those institutions and businesses most likely to be sought after or noticed by PCs. You can buy supplies, find a place to stay, have a meal, and go to a bar just using the Player's Guide. The referee has more information about these and many other establishments, goods, services, and non-player characters, any of which you might discover as you more thoroughly explore the town.

### OUTSIDE LESSERTON

The Red Swamp surrounds the town on all sides.

#### Glory Road

This is the name given the muddy track that runs through swampland to the Ruins of Mor.

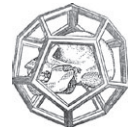
#### Walls and Gate

A tall wooden palisade encloses Lesserton, above a man-high rubble wall. At the Main Gate, a tower watches the Glory Road and the swamps around. The gate itself is a heavy door of strange, shiny metal, leading to a covered passage watched by several guards.

Entry toll: 1 gp

### GATEWAY PLAZA

Just inside the Main Gate, the white stone Justice Building and the adjacent Watch Headquarters dominate a small cobbled plaza. Stocks in the plaza await prisoners. To one side, a horse-yard contributes whinnies and the smell of manure. To the other, a welcome sight: the long, low shape of a beer-hall, with a friendly chimney at each end.



## Hengst's Horseflesh

The proprietor is a huge man with beetling brows and two long, menacing fangs protruding from his lower jaw. You're not sure if he deals in horses or just eats them.

Item	Cost
Mule	50 gp
Pony	50 gp
Draft horse	60 gp
Riding horse	120 gp
Saddle & tackle	30 gp
Horse training	500 gp
Stabling	1 gp per night

## Valnhalla

Like a second home for the dedicated carouser, with beer and cheer, meat and greetings, and vomit and acrimony, all night long. Unlike most establishments, Valnhalla doesn't complain about people who want to wear their complete adventuring gear whilst having a drink.

Fare	Cost
Strong ale, half-gallon pitcher	1 ep
Meat chunk	1 sp



### MARKET SQUARE

Good paving stones smooth this broad square with a central well. Stalls and open shops line the sides, while carts, barrels, and produce bins crowd the central space from morning till Night Bell. Among the smaller structures appear a clean-looking inn marked WENTON'S; a fenced cluster of stalls in front of a squat, windowless building marked with a golden bee; a livestock yard; a two-story tower with a cramped garden; and a large array of sturdy goods displayed under the sign of a hunting horn cut in two.

## The Exchange

This enclosure guards three fancy stalls and the door to the vault-like Brinkley's. One stall displays the sign of an iron star, one shows a flute, and one a painting of a hunting dog and a fox.



## Brinkley's Assurety Trust

This imposing building handles a lot of money under very heavy security. For a small fee, you can deposit a ransom of at least 100 gp, in case you get captured by humanoids in the Ruins. To prove you have a ransom, you get a pin showing a bumblebee. It can save your life.

## Fox and Dog Jewelers

Master Sand appraises and buys jewelry. For 5 gp or so, he will issue a certificate of value that lets you use jewels as cash anywhere in town.

## Shawm Coinery

Under the sign of an old flute, this booth sells coins to those who wish to change their cash into other denominations. For payment, they demand these exact coins, not an equivalent.

To get:	You pay:
10 cp	1 sp
96 cp	1 gp
1 sp	12 cp
8 sp	1 gp
1 ep	6 sp
1 pp	12 gp
1 gp	11 sp or 120 cp
9 gp	1 pp

## Sign of the Iron Star

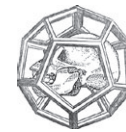
Under the titular star, the sign at this shop shows the words "Arcane MacGuffins," possibly the owner's name. Pounded lead lines the walls. Dozens of amulets dangle from racks, each marked with mysterious symbols.

Item	Cost
Amulet of Luck	1 gp
Necklace of Protection	50 gp
Special items	Varies

## Hornfixer's Emporium for the Prudent

During market hours, this shop displays barrels and bins of gear ranged under a tarp. A halfling clerk calls out offers to anyone who might be an adventurer, stating that many of the items here cannot be found elsewhere in town.

Item	Cost
Ale, 100-pint barrel	6 gp
Backpack	3 gp
Bedroll	1 ep
Beer, 100-pint barrel	4 gp
Block & tackle	10 gp
Candles, 5	1 sp
Chain, per 5'	20 gp
Flint & steel	3 gp
Grappling hook	5 gp
Ladder, 10'	1 gp
Lamp, clay	3 gp
Lantern	10 gp
Lantern, bull's eye	20 gp
Manacles, latching	20 gp
Mess-kit, tin	1 gp
Oil, pint, clay flask	2 sp
Oil, 100-pint barrel	20 gp
Pick, miner's	5 gp
Pole, 10' wooden	1 ep
Rations, trail, 1 day	1 ep
Rope, hemp, per 5'	1 sp
Rope, silk, 20'	5 gp
Sack, large	2 sp
Sack, small	1 sp
Spade, iron	3 gp
Spike, iron	1 sp
Stakes, wooden, 4	1 sp
Torch	1 sp
Twine, waxed, 50'	1 sp
Waterskin	1 gp



## Madam Pearl's Cross-Eyed Palm

Madam Pearl will tell your fortune for as little as 1 sp. For a bit more, she will break out her magic cards and answer your questions about the future.

## The Shroud of Steel

Viktor Sarkoli deals in new and used armor.

Armor	Cost	AC	Wt.
Padding	5 gp	8	10 lbs.
Hides	4 gp	8	20 lbs.
Cuir Boili	35 gp	7	20 lbs.
Brigandine	65 gp	6	40 lbs.
Chainmail	85 gp	5	30 lbs.
Target shield	15 gp	(-1)	10 lbs.
Hide shield	10 gp	(-1)	15 lbs.

## Sign of the Butt

A half-elf with a heavy accent deals in missile weapons.

Weapon	Cost
Crossbow, heavy	30 gp
Quarrels, heavy, 10	5 gp
Crossbow, light	20 gp
Quarrels, light, 10	2 gp
Longbow	50 gp
Shortbow	35 gp
Arrows, 10	5 gp
Arrow, silver	10 gp
Sling	3 gp
Sling bullets, lead, 10	10 gp

## The Thirsty Blade

Friendly smith Gladsome Muskoxy buys and sells arms.

Weapon	Cost
Axe, battle	9 gp
Axe, hand	15 gp
Dagger	4 gp
Halberd (polearm)	10 gp
Hammer, war	9 gp
Javelin	2 gp
Sap *	5 gp
Spear	4 gp
Sword, long	15 gp
Sword, short	10 gp
Sword, two-handed	25 gp

\* A sap inflicts 1d4 damage, 75% of it temporary.

## Wenton's Inn and Yard

A clean and comfortable place to lay your head.

Service	Cost
Meal	1 ep
Breakfast, quick	2 sp
Ale, pint	2 sp
Wine, cup	4 sp
Shared room	1 ep per person
Private room for one	8 sp
Stabling	1 gp per night







## CRUIKSHANKS

The bustle in these crooked alleys speaks of long occupation by large families. Buildings stagger two and three stories tall, usually with teetering upper floors of warped wooden planks. Men idle on the corners, while groups of sturdy women walk purposefully along bearing baskets and parcels. Ragamuffin children splash in rancid puddles or race among the legs of the crowds. The smell of baking bread wafts along above the odor of humanity, and from somewhere comes the roar and clang of a working smithy. A scribe idles in a tiny stall with a canvas awning.

### Burnside Armory

A burly man works with horseshoes at an anvil, under a metal sign declaring NO GEAR BOUGHTENED. Nothing appears ready for sale, but a sword and a suit of chain armor await repair.

### Closet of the Xorn

This narrow building of black brick stands apart from its neighbors. It has no windows, but an elaborate chimney, and a harsh fume surrounds the place. The sign is a large clay bottle, painted with symbols and the representation of a three-armed beast. The halfling clerk inside is reluctant to disturb his master the Alchemist, but grudgingly admits that an unusual substance could be analyzed for maybe 100 gp, in a day or two.

### Pottleby Ovens

One pound loaf of bread: 4 cp

### Tracts by Lurcke

A skinny fellow waits here for any business, reading a small book with ink-stained hands.

Service	Cost
Documents read aloud	1 sp per page
Letters written	2 sp per page
Documents copied	3 sp per page

## THE HEIGHTS

As soon as you wander into this neighborhood, you feel out of place. No more orkin appear, and the few halflings are in servant's livery. The guards have an eye on you. Fine townhouses line the cramped streets, along with a few very exclusive-looking businesses. Outside one shop stands a gold statue of a kobold in a wig. In a rare open lot, a few horses with ribbon-braided manes prance on carefully-tended grass. A fancy hotel sports the sign of a dark-silver pegasus. No businesses seem ready to welcome you, at least if you're not wearing fashionable clothes, furs, and jewelry.

## KINSWALLOW

If you'd been wondering where the really bad neighborhood might lie, you seem to have found it. So many cobbles have been pried up, apparently for use in shoring up buildings, that the streets are a jagged patchwork of mud and filth. More than one man lies in the road, passed out drunk, people stepping around him or aiming the occasional kick. A slaughterhouse reek penetrates the air, and the occasional squeal of a dying hog rises above the constant barking of large dogs penned up someplace. Orkin heritage is much in evidence, and many folk sport pointed ears, strange tufts of hair, long fangs, or a bow-legged, waddling gait. Tents and shelters built up from scrap and rubble provide sleeping quarters for those who can't claim a house or room. Muscular men of various races squat bored in a dusty lot, some drinking tea. One intact shopfront is painted blue with many strange symbols in white. Above the door of a wooden house hangs the mounted head of a bear. A few large buildings peer out over the mess: a grand white temple, a sturdy two-story building with barred windows and private guards outside, a stone fort manned by the Watch, and a big barn painted with the faded image of wriggling worms or bugs.

### The Brass Shield

The building with bars on its windows is headquarters for hiring bodyguards or security men, known as "Jimmy's Boys" after the owner, Jimmy G. The guards wear brass shield-shaped pins. They work only in Lesserton. Private guard with padded armor: 1 gp per day. If you're a fighter-type, you might even be able to get work here sometimes.



## Fidelis Fighting Dogs

Dozens of tough, short-haired dogs of all ages swarm this fenced yard, barking furiously at all who venture near. The brutish Eastminster breeds, trains, and sells the animals.

Item	Cost
Fighting dog	30 gp
Training to obey new owner (recommended)	10 gp, five days

## The Hermetic Laboratory of Doctor Eerie

The blue-painted building displays a dozen bottles of brightly-colored liquid in the window. Within, a female clerk sells such curative draughts and takes any messages for Doctor Eerie. The Doctor can analyze unusual substances or mixtures, if the customer will leave the item for one day.

Item	Cost
Purgative draught	1 gp
Restorative draught	10 gp
Analysis	50 gp, 1 day
Special items	varies

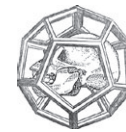
## Mama Hayborn's Home Away from Home

Space on the common sleeping floor: 1 sp per night.

## The Myriadrome

The common folk love the action in this huge barn-like structure: Centipede races! Every night, hundreds gather to wager on the squirming, foot-long vermin, who race to reach some living bait like a staked-down giant beetle or carnivorous fly. During the races, vendors sell cups of thin beer for 1 sp each, and bookies take side bets. A board gives the odds on each racer, identifying the beasts by the pattern of three stripes painted on their backs. Five centipedes run each race—bet on as many as you like.

Bets with the Myriadrome must be silver pieces in a multiple of the denominator (second number) in the odds, up to the posted maximum of 10. For example, to bet on 3:2 odds, put down 2, 4, 6, 8, or 10 sp. If the 'pede comes in on a 10 sp bet, you get a total of 15 sp back: your bet plus a 5 sp profit. A few high-rollers and their bookies even flash gold.



## Temple of the Divine Purpose

This large Lawful temple welcomes anyone who wishes to attend services and honor the civilizing influence and divine necessity of Law. Plenty of Lessers wear tiny wooden pendants or pins in the shape of the temple's symbol, a mallet. The priests even offer healing to those in need, for a suitable service of course.

## Wenton's Original

This run-down inn is like a strange, poorly-executed copy of the Wenton's at Market Square.

Item	Cost
Double room	4 sp per person
Meal	2 sp
Ale, pint	1 sp
Stabling	1 ep per night

PEDE	ODDS
YKY	5-4
BRB	4-3
RYP	3-2
OWO	5-3
WKW	3-1



# Playing Lessers

Whatever your fantasy game system, player characters from Lesserton can be made just like any others. Since the PC adventures in and around his hometown, you also get access to a few alternatives and extras. Ask your referee whether these options apply in your campaign. Page numbers with “AEC” refer to the free *Advanced Edition Companion*™ rules available from Goblinoid Games.

## 1. Classes and Races

Using the basic classes, almost any Lesser with a character class is a fighter, a thief, or a halfling. The Temple of the Divine Purpose provides an origin for a few Lawful clerics. Magic-users are very rare. A PC might be an apprentice in the Platonic Order, expected to donate magic items in exchange for new spells. Elves are right out.

Using expanded races and classes from advanced rules, such as the AEC, some Lessers are fighter/thieves, and a few are assassins. A ranger would be a swamp-roaming hunter or an aspiring professional Ruins guide. A druid would be a loner dwelling in the swamp or the elf-wood. A despised half-elf might have learned basic magic from his wood elf parent before suffering exile from the forest. Full-blood orkin can be treated as half-orcs (AEC9).

Pure elves, dwarfs, gnomes, and other races do not inhabit Lesserton, although they occasionally visit. To play such a race, or a “clean blood” human or halfling with no orkin traits, you need the referee’s permission.

### Orkin Blood

**The Tainted:** Most Lessers are humans or halflings with a just touch of orkin heritage, which they deny.

**Full Orkin:** Only full-blooded orkin have infravision, score modifiers, and other half-orc traits. Many human Lessers treat them badly. The Orkin Trait Tables provide a wider range of appearances for the full-blooded.



## Orkin Trait Tables

For an ordinary Lesser with a bit of the Taint, choose or roll 1d6 to select one chart below. Roll the lower die type listed for that Lesser’s single orkin trait. For example, a 4 on the d6 indicates the Face chart. The lower die type is d10, and a roll of 5 indicates that the character has thick, joined eyebrows. This is his only orkin trait.

For a full-blood orkin, roll 1d20 once on all six charts below and apply all results. For example, a typical orkin might have a gut, greenish skin, greasy hair, a fanged jaw, red eyes, and pointed ears. Such folk have a hard time in town and many live in the Ruins instead. The same result coming up more than once can make a trait highly exaggerated.

### 1. Body Appearance: d10 or d20

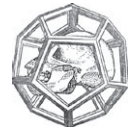
- 1–5 Average
- 6–9 Squat and broad
- 10–11 Long arms
- 12 Large feet, pointed toenails
- 13–14 Protuberant gut
- 15–16 Protuberant buttocks
- 17–18 Waddling gait
- 19–20 Roll twice more

### 2. Skin: d8 or d20

- 1 Pale, grublike white
- 2–7 Tan
- 8–9 Tan with irregular brown spots
- 10–18 Greenish tinge
- 19–20 Greenish with warts or ridges

### 3. Hair: d12 or d20

- 1–2 Very sparse, thin hair, nearly bald
- 3–8 Thin and greasy hair in normal pattern
- 9–11 Thin and greasy hair, and only on sides and back of head
- 12–13 Hair in sparse brown tufts
- 14 Stiff black bristles here and there
- 15–17 Stiff black strip of hair from eyebrows to back
- 18–19 Strip of wiry brown hair from crown to neck
- 20 Stark white



#### 4. Face: d10 or d20

- 1–3 Heavy, jutting jaw
- 4–6 Single thick eyebrow
- 7–9 Heavy whiskers
- 10–12 Sloping forehead
- 13–15 Long lower fangs protrude
- 16–18 Nose smashed upward into snoutlike shape
- 19–20 Roll twice more

#### 5. Eyes: d8 or d20

- 1–6 “Whites” are yellowish
- 7–10 Bugged out
- 11–14 Reddish iris
- 15–17 Vertical pupils
- 18 Metallic green iris
- 19 Roll twice more
- 20 Roll again and apply to only one eye

#### 6. Ears: d12 or d20

- 1–10 Somewhat pointed
- 11–13 Thick, dangling earlobes
- 14–17 Long points
- 18 Fanlike
- 19 Roll twice more
- 20 Roll again and apply to only one ear

#### CHA Contacts

- 3–5 One
- 6–12 Two
- 13–17 Three
- 18 Four

The contacts are ordinary folk, close to the character’s own social class. Each has his or her own reason for feeling well-disposed toward the PC. You can make up your own contacts, or the referee may suggest or define them.

At need, you can call on a contact for help. The referee has information on determining if your friend grants the request. A contact might also call on you for help sometimes. The response is up to you, but might affect your relations over time. During play, you might lose contacts and gain others.

#### Example Contacts:

- ✂ Grel the barkeep. You helped him out with a loudmouth drunk once and you two became friends.
- ✂ Ursula the whore. You eat at the same cheap lunch cookery, her having dinner while you have breakfast.
- ✂ Ted the wanderer. You play cards with him sometimes.
- ✂ Mundil the shopkeep is your uncle.
- ✂ Yarl the traveling merchant. You worked as a caravan guard for him once and helped fight off some goblins.
- ✂ An unknown person admires you from afar and may appear to help when you least expect it.

## 2. Contacts and Enemies

During your years in Lesserton, you’ve at least met any other Lesser PCs, and found out what you do or don’t have in common. In addition, a number of NPCs figure prominently in your life, whether as friendly contacts or mutually loathsome enemies.

### Contacts

A Lesser may know many people as acquaintances, but there are a few he can rely on. Each character has a number of contacts equal to half his maximum number of retainers, rounding up, as shown on the next table.

### Enemies

Optionally, you can add one more contact at start of play, by also taking an enemy. For example, with a Charisma of 10, you can have two contacts, or three contacts and one enemy.

This sort of enemy doesn’t pull out a sword and charge you on sight. Instead, an enemy is someone you have to live with, but he or she dislikes you, opposes you socially, and may even try to actively undermine your plans. It’s up to the referee to decide when an enemy might step up his efforts against you.



Example Enemies:

- ✦ The barkeep who is jealous of how much attention the barmaid pays to the big, strong adventurer.
- ✦ The gambler that the PC beat at cards.
- ✦ A jilted lover.
- ✦ An unknown enemy. You don't know who, or why this person hates you, and it can be hard to tell their efforts from ordinary bad luck.

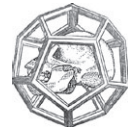
Naturally, you might make new enemies in play, but that doesn't automatically earn you another contact. Also, just as a contact's regard may cool, an enemy's hatred might fade over time. You might even convert one to a friend.

### 3. Background Skills

Characters from Lesserton often did some work or training in a mundane job before chucking it all to try for fame and fortune. The chart below, a substitute for the Secondary Skills table (AEC21), suggests appropriate types of experience for a PC Lesser, who will retain some familiarity with the tricks of that trade. No PC is a master at these skills, however. If he had made a go of it, he would not have become an adventurer.

d100	Background skill
01	Actor
02	Animal doctor
03–04	Baker
05–06	Beggar
07–08	Bird-stalker
09–10	Blacksmith
11	Boot shiner
12	Brassmaker
13	Brewer
14	Brickmaker
15	Buckle maker
16–17	Butcher
18	Candle maker
19–20	Carpenter
21	Charcoal burner
22	Chef
23	Chimney sweep
24	Clerk, bookkeeper

25–26	Clerk, shop
27–28	Cook
29–30	Cooper
31	Cryer
32	Dancer
33	Dentist/barber
34–35	Dishwasher
36	Dye worker
37	Feather gatherer
38	Fortuneteller
39–40	Fur and skin dealer
41	Glassblower
42	Graverobber
43	Hair stylist
44	Hat maker
45	Hay and feed dealer
46–47	House-servant
48–49	Laborer, outdoor
50	Laborer, warehouse
51–52	Laundress
53	Leatherworker
54	Leech
55	Luthier
56–58	Mudlark
59	Mule wrangler
60	Musician
61	Paper maker
62	Petty official
63	Plasterer
64–66	Porter
67	Potboy
68	Pure finder
69	Rag and bone man
70	Ratcatcher
71	Rope weaver
72	Rugmaker
73–74	Seamstress/Tailor
75	Seed miller
76–78	Shoemaker
79–80	Shopkeeper
81	Snitch
82	Soapmaker



d100	Background skill
83–84	Stonecutter
85	Street vendor: Beer, soup, or tea
86	Street vendor: Pans, spoons, tinware
87	Street vendor: Produce
88	Swamp gleaner
89	Teamster
90	Thatcher
91	Tinker/Sharpener
92	Tour guide
93–94	Waiter
95	Watchman
96–97	Weaver
98	Wigmaker
99	Wood hewer
00	Wool shearer

**Sneakiness!** Even non-thief Lessers can use thief skills a little bit. If your PC has a good enough Dexterity to get a Thief Skills Bonus (AEC4), you can add the bonus to 0% for a slight chance of success. Non-humans can also add any racial Thief Skill modifiers (AEC7–9). Finally, Lesserton halflings have different abilities than their country cousins. A halfling Lesser has a base 90% chance to hide in cover while in town or among intact buildings in the Ruins, but not in the wilderness. While silent and motionless, he has a 3 in 6 chance to hide in shadows in a labyrinth, but only 2 in 6 in the wilderness.

## 4. Starting Poor

Unless the referee rules otherwise, Lessers do not start play with the same riches as PCs made by the book. Instead, your character starts with money equal to his Charisma score in gold pieces, usually as a jumble of small coins. For example, a character of CHA 9 might have 12 ep, 25 sp, and 50 cp. You also have a purse, a set of clothes, a cloak or blanket, and worn sandals or canvas shoes. Wherever you've been sleeping, they don't want you to come back any more. It's time to seek your fortune.

## The Region

### The Red Swamp

Usually just called “the swamp,” the land around Lesserton sports solid patches among the soggy sand, thorn bushes, bitter grasses, and silty remnants of former streams. Bugs swarm the air and mud-patches bubble forth foul gasses. Elegant birds stalk among the reeds and stab for frogs and snakes. Some locals know the tangle of drier paths; others must slog through trickle and tussock at a fraction of their usual pace. In winter, the landscape turns to an endless expanse of icy mud, tufted with brown sticks.

### Glory Road

From the town's Main Gate, the so-called Glory Road runs roughly east across the swamps. An artificial berm elevates travelers from the marshy surroundings. The Lessers surfaced the Glory Road with gravel at some point, but much of it is now just mud. About five miles from Lesserton, the road comes to the enormous ruined city of Mor. The trip takes about three hours walking briskly or on horseback, or double that when burdened.

### Ruins of Mor

A dry, steep-sided valley surrounds great Mor like a moat, with the former bed of the River Raddle at the bottom. Huge stone walls jut up from a central, island-like mesa, enclosing the ruin: nearly two miles long, or so they say. Inside, the laws of men do not reach. Anyone in Lesserton can tell you certain basic facts about the ruins:

- ✂ Mor is no-man's land. You're on your own.
- ✂ The walls are a hundred feet high, above the several-hundred-foot depth of the river valley.
- ✂ The easiest entry is across the rope bridges. The Bridge Orkin charge a small toll. Horses won't cross the swaying spans, but mules will.
- ✂ You can also try picking your way through the overgrown river bottom and climbing the River Stair. Watch out for poisonous animals.
- ✂ It's hard but possible to climb through the one place where the old walls collapsed, at the far north end of the ruins.
- ✂ Inside, orkin clans hold a few fortified areas. Some are willing to trade; others seek prisoners for ransom; some kill to defend their turf.



## Wheaton

About twelve miles south of Mor, the road splits at a small hamlet called Wheaton. The town offers little more than a paddock, a grain buyer, and an inn with a taproom. Lesserton is reached in an easy day's travel. To the southeast, the road becomes ever safer, running toward the farms and towns of Eastern Valnwall. To the southwest, the road skirts the Red Swamp and runs about 20 miles to Swampton.

## Swampton

The folk of Swampton gather fruit and nuts, tubers, small game, and timber for trade. Wagons leave Swampton at first light and hustle to make Wheaton by nightfall. By all accounts, Swampton offers little to amuse the traveler. Its people lock their doors after dark in fear of creeping fiends, frightening their children with tales of the Swamp Witch or the Guernsey Devil. Travelers must put up in an old barn converted to a common sleeping room. The two taverns do not welcome strangers, but ale and wine can be bought by the bottle. Sometimes the Barn turns boisterous, as traveling groups make their own impromptu celebrations.

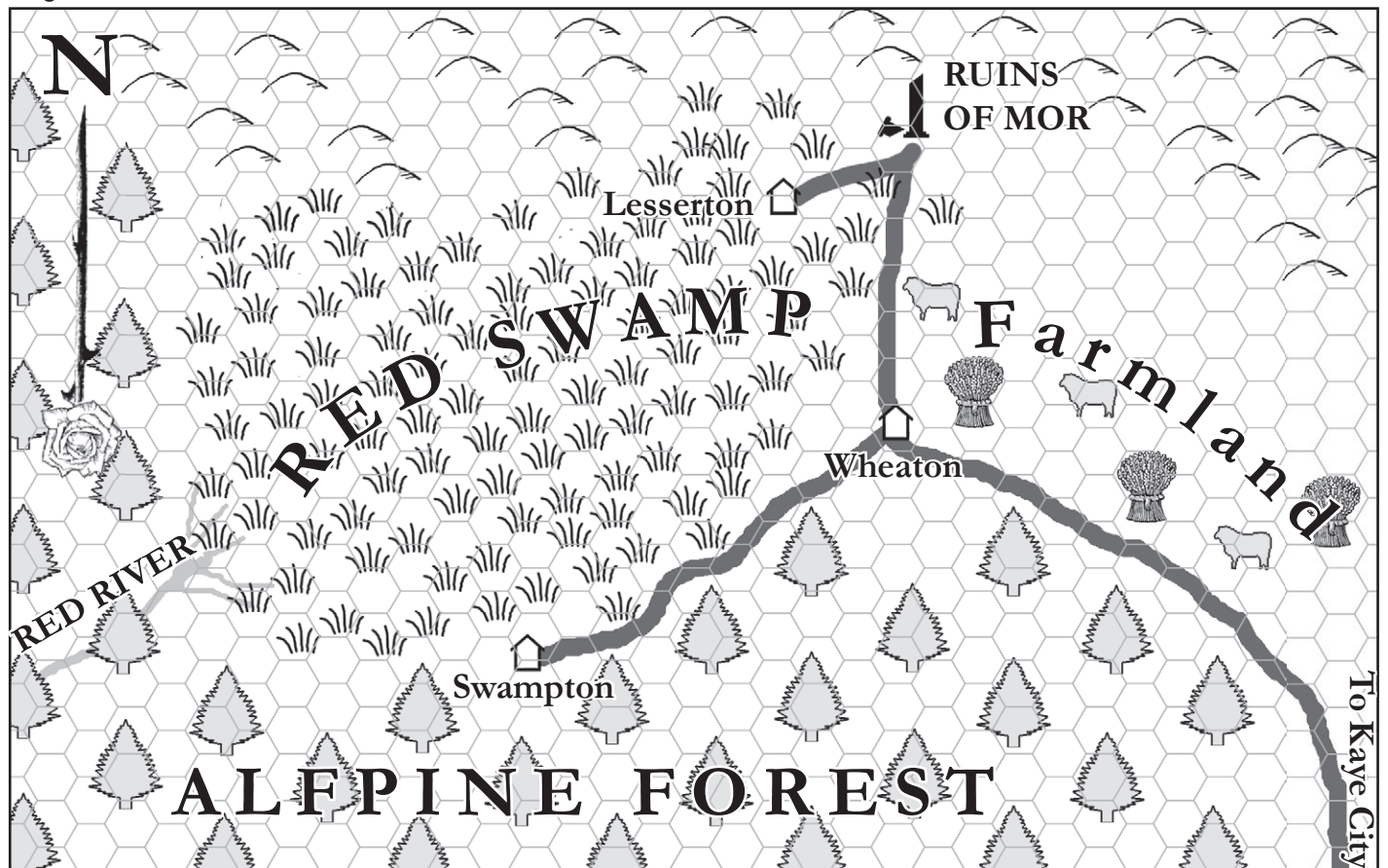
## The Alpine Forest

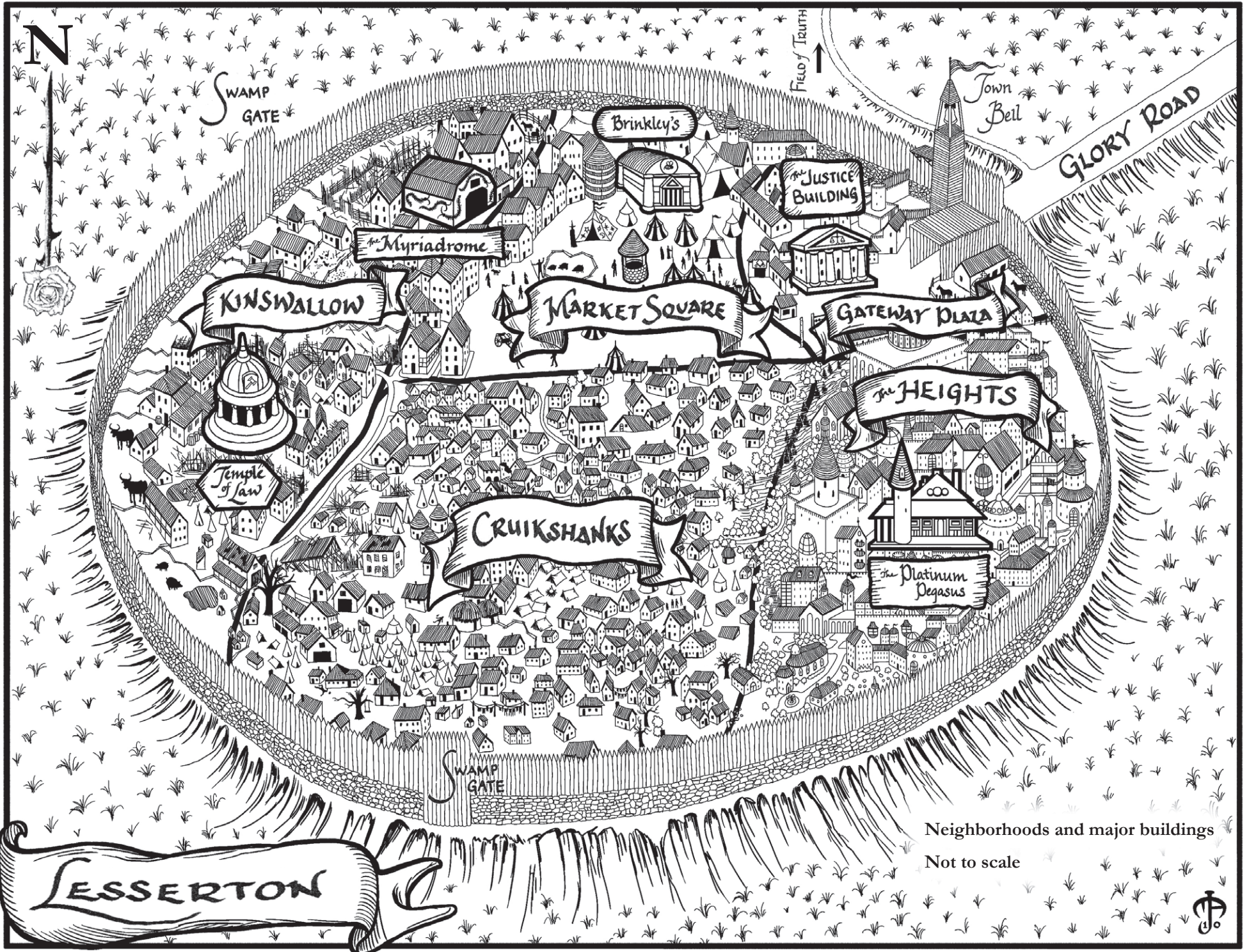
Beyond Swampton, and stretching away west and south, thousands of scrubby pine trees grow in a poor, sandy soil, the space between them covered by bracken, heather, berry bushes, and ferns. Farther into the woods, oaks tower over the smaller trees and shadows deepen among hickories and vines. Loggers tread carefully, harvesting only from the edges of the Alpine for fear of the Wood Elves, who answer only to their own King. In the dry summer months, wildfires sometimes tear through the forest. The elves protect their core homesteads with magic and let the outer trees burn, considering it a part of the cycle of nature.

## Kaye City

Kaye is the nearest true city, three days' travel from Lesserton even under the best conditions. On the way, the road passes through endless pastures, fields, and tiny villages of a few hundred humans or halflings. So far south, banditry and humanoids are rare. Merchant caravans enter and leave Kaye City frequently, and its annual Market Fest draws holiday-makers from as far away as Great Dolmvay.

Region of Lesserton and Mor. One hex = 2 miles.





Neighborhoods and major buildings

Not to scale

