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CAMPAIGN BACKDROP:
WOLFSBANE HOLLOW



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CAMPAIGN BACKDROP: WOLFSBANE HOLLOW

Shielded to the north by the Vurdfell Spine's lofty peaks and protected from the Hordelands of the east by the Greatshadow Gorge, the town of Wolfsbane Hollow has persisted in relative isolation for hundreds of years. Seemingly a simple border town, a dark shadow hangs over this hard, rough settlement. For here, the rule of law is tenuous at best, and the mayor is but a figurehead. The true power of Wolfsbane Hollow is the shadowy thieves' guild and their monstrous, bestial guildmaster who lurks in his lair carved from the fallen, mouldering bones of an ancient empire.

Campaign Backdrops give you, the busy GM, a carefully crafted mini-campaign settings ready to insert into your home campaign. This GM-friendly book presents beautiful hand-drawn maps, detailed settlements of note, a flavoursome regional gazetteer, random weather tables, exciting adventure hooks and more.

CREDITS

Design: Robert Brookes

Additional Design: Creighton Broadhurst

Development: Creighton Broadhurst

Art: Rick Hershey, William McAusland and Dean Spencer. Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission. Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey/Fat Goblin Games

Cartography: Tommi Salama

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FOREWORD

Long-time followers of Raging Swan Press may remember *Village Backdrop: Hjalward* and *Town Backdrop: Wolfsbane Hollow*. I've always wanted to bring the two together and to flesh out the surrounding territory. You hold the result in your hands, and I hope you enjoy it. This Campaign Backdrop is specifically designed to fit into the mountainous border regions in your campaign world. If you are planning an "Against the Giants" style game *Wolfsbane Hollow* is the perfect place to set it!

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Wolfsbane Hollow is easily inserted into almost any GM's campaign. Although, the history of *Wolfsbane Hollow* mentions the ancient empire (and city state) of *Aevollis*, such details are easily ignored, or modified to apply to a similar elder nation in your own campaign world. Similarly, the ancient frost giant empire of *Isgiltur* is likely so old and beyond the ken of normal folk that it should have no real effect on your campaign world.

Remember, references to the various deities worshipped in the town can be put down to minor regional powers or modified as necessary to better suit your game.

Finally, you can ignore the gazetteer information and simply place *Wolfsbane Hollow* and the village of *Hjalward* on the cusp of any mountainous region in your campaign. If it do this, you can simply rule the massive tower around which *Hjalward* has sprung up is an isolated hold of some long-dead frost giant chieftain.

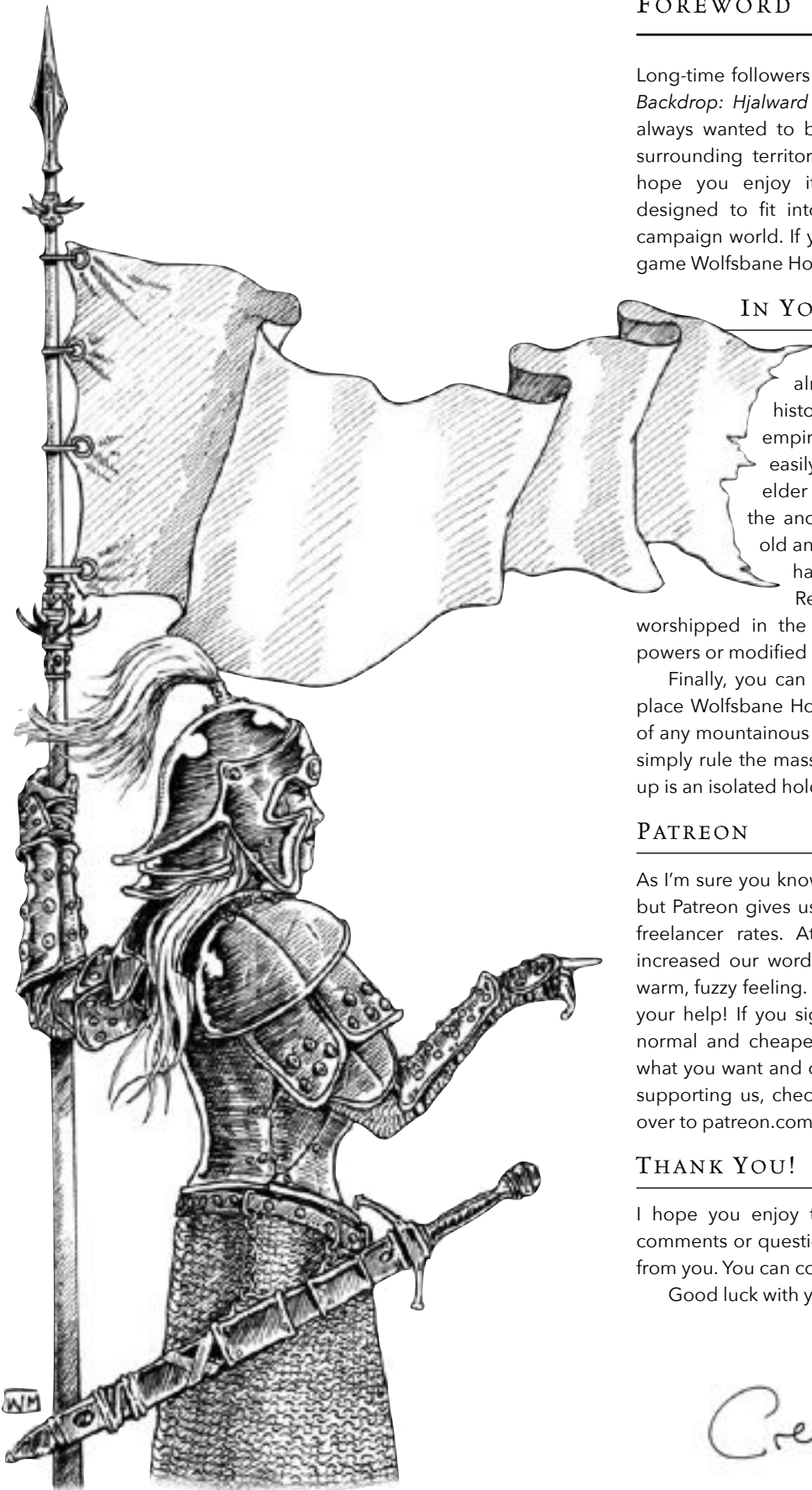
PATREON

As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already massively increased our word rate to 11 cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in supporting us, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

THANK YOU!

I hope you enjoy this Campaign Backdrop. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.

Good luck with your game,



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Four hundred and sixty-three years ago when the people of Arvöllis—then a vast kingdom—began eastward expansion, the foothills of the Vurdfell Spine were little more than frontier land rife with ruins of a long-fallen empire of giants. The first explorers who came to the region discovered a pristine woodland with a remarkable abundance of the highly poisonous aconitum, also known as wolfsbane. The explorers, seeking a route to the east, found little else in this remote part of the world and their eastward journey ended at Greatshadow Gorge. The settlers who would come in the wake of these Arvöllan explorers built their new lives at the fork of three mighty rivers fed by runoff from the Vurdfell Spine. This small frontier settlement grew into a prosperous lumber camp over the course of a decade and soon was joined by two other settlements. These small communities, dependent on the forestry trade, grew together until their borders could no longer be defined. What remained came to be known, simply, as Wolfsbane Hollow.

As decades passed, Wolfsbane Hollow steadily grew in prosperity. The discovery of iron, copper and tin in the foothills brought wealth and renown to the frontier town and attention from the western lords of Arvöllis. Soon the wealthy settlement was visited by the royal Arvöllan military and, as luck would have it, royal Arvöllan tax-collectors. The years that followed were at once prosperous and strained, as gold lined the pockets of wealthy mine owners and the Arvöllan military established an informal control of the town's council. Serving the people in name only, the Wolfsbane Hollow council were puppets to the influential soldiers stationed at the garrison. But, when tensions between the free-spirited settlers and the military were at their worst, a pyrrhic victory was near at hand.

On a foggy autumn morning seventy-three years ago, a courier from the Arvöllan capital arrived in Wolfsbane Hollow bound for the garrison. Within the day the entire compliment of city watch and military leadership stationed in the town for over fifteen years pulled up stakes and departed; war had come to Arvöllis. It would be weeks more until Wolfsbane Hollow discovered the true scope of the situation, that the eastern expansion of the Kingdom of Arvöllis had breached an unknown border: the Hordelands. While orcs were always common in the land, none knew for certain where their seat of power lay—or even if such a thing existed. The hordeland had been discovered, and taking the Arvöllan incursion as an affront to their sovereignty, the tribes of the Hordelands united to wage war. Geographically isolated, Wolfsbane Hollow saw little of the terrible war that ravaged Arvöllis for two and a half decades. Wounded survivors of great battles would find their way to the town, then deserters, then eventually nothing.

The years immediately following the war's conclusion left Wolfsbane Hollow isolated. Trade never fully recovered and many of the nearest cities to the west lay in ruin. Able to weather the storm with little conflict, the people of Wolfsbane Hollow were still impacted by their isolation and forced to struggle through several harsh winters with only themselves to rely on. The largely disliked

town council positions were dissolved during this time in favour of a strong singular leader in the form of a mayor. In the first few years after the war, many folk held the position as honeyed words and empty promises failed to placate strained and pragmatic citizens. Ultimately this weak leadership allowed a shadow growing beneath Wolfsbane Hollow to rise in power; a thieves' guild formed largely of army deserters, brigands and escaped criminals. While the thieves' guild struggled for years to get purchase on the town's leadership, all this was set to change with the coming of the town's darkest time.

The rapid deforestation of the Wolfsbane Hollow region eventually drew the attention of a pack of werewolves from the nearby mountains, who infiltrated Wolfsbane Hollow and turned the town into their personal hunting ground. These brazen attacks and fear of a lycanthropic outbreak stirred clerics from the church of Ignis—the Arvöllan goddess of fire and healing—to action. It was thirty years ago when the clerics formed an inquisition in alliance with the townsfolk to hunt down the werewolves. For months the werewolves fought a losing battle with the inquisition. The inquisition's victory would have been absolute were it not for one of the inquisitors drawn from the townsfolk, Avud Kreslik. Avud suffered an injury during one of the inquisition's hunts from a werewolf that infected him with lycanthropy. Fearful of his fate should his injury be discovered, and foolishly arrogant of his own ability to control himself, Avud undid the entire inquisition.

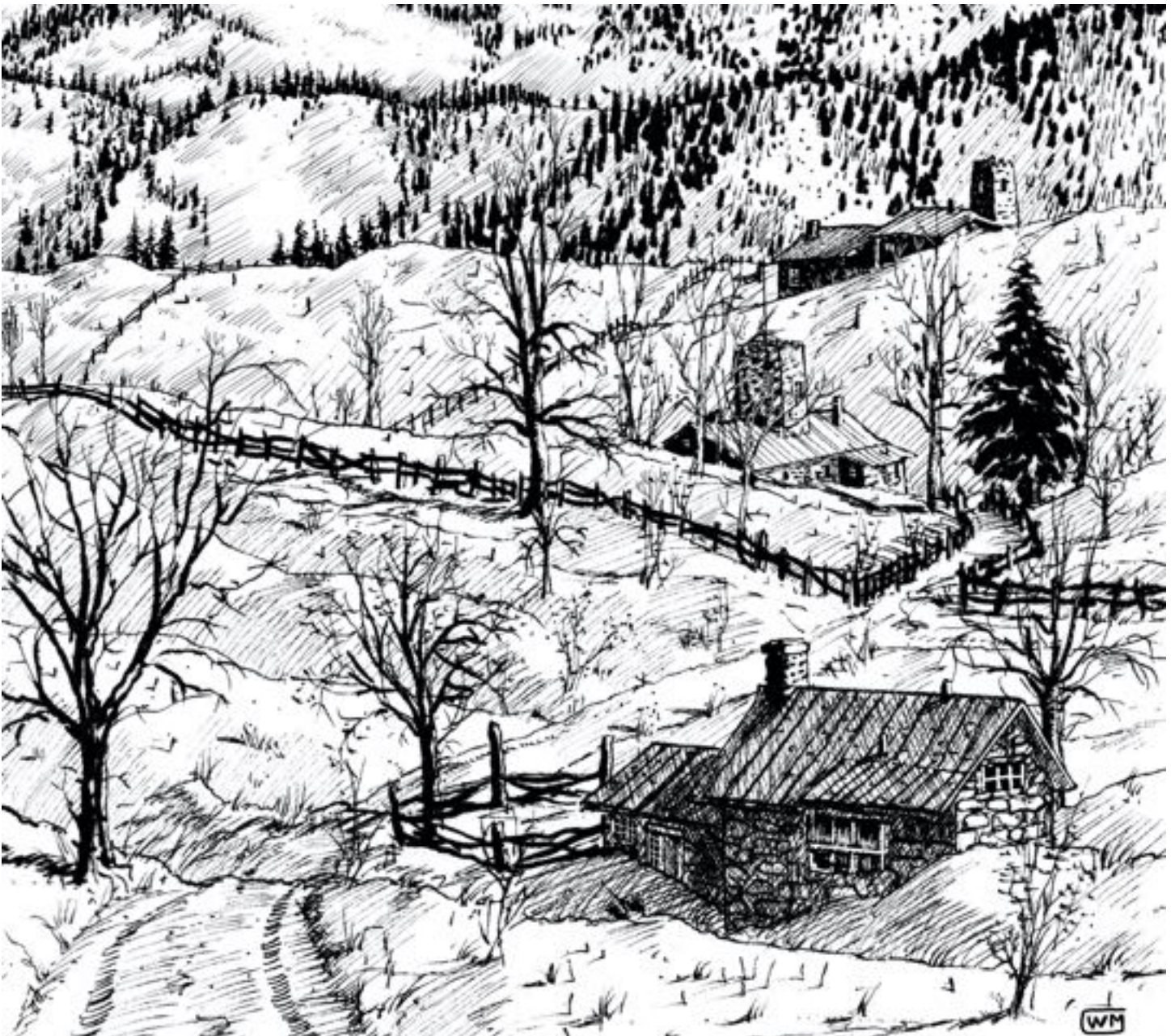
When the crusaders had cornered the last of the werewolves in his lair in the hinterlands of Wolfsbane Hollow, Avud's curse took its full effect and he transformed under the light of the moon before his companions' very eyes. When the dust settled, Kreslik was the sole survivor of the encounter. Horrified by what he had done but intoxicated by the power of his newfound lycanthropy, Kreslik returned to Wolfsbane Hollow and spun a tale of noble self-sacrifice to the locals, martyring the inquisition. While the indigenous werewolves were indeed wiped out, Kreslik lived on in secret, spending days around the full moon far from civilisation in order to hide his secret. Kreslik, a member of the thieves' guild, used his newfound cunning and strength to work his way up through their ranks, eventually killing and supplanting their leader. Kreslik worked to control his power and under his leadership the thieves' guild were finally able to sink their talons into the mayor's office and wrest control of the town, from its complacent folk.

With the thieves' guild in control, Wolfsbane Hollow struggled against its weakened yoke of western control. Arvöllis, having never fully recovered from their war with the orc hordes, was in no shape to fight a war of secession. Arvöllis, now merely a city-state, did not fight the demand for independence and contact with the west has largely been indifferent and cold ever since. While Wolfsbane Hollow gained its independence, Avud Kreslik endeavoured to find a way to gain further control over his lycanthropy. To this end, Kreslik required ancient rituals of giant magic recovered from the ruins in the Vurdfell Spine by explorers and adventurers. These rituals, requiring the blood sacrifice of dozens of townsfolk over a span of seven years, ultimately drew too much attention.

Thirty-seven years ago, fearful of a resurgent werewolf plague, the locals of Wolfsbane Hollow again banded together to hunt down this creature of the night. Nicknamed the Redclaw Reaper by local rumourmongers, this werewolf menace was blamed for every ill the people of Wolfsbane Hollow endured. However, never did they discover the truth of this lycanthropic blight, for Kreslik had outmanoeuvred them. With his newfound ability to curse others with lycanthropy, Kreslik assaulted an enemy of the thieves' guild—the alchemist Alduir Weyrud—on the eve of a full moon. When Weyrud transformed the next night and rampaged through the town, Kreslik watched as the fanatical townspeople cornered the fledgling werewolf in the Cathedral of Ignis. Barring him inside they burned the building to the ground. After sending an innocent man to a fiery death, Kreslik resumed his role as the leader of the thieves' guild and the true power in Wolfsbane Hollow.

Kreslik has gradually built an inner circle of werewolves loyal to him, living in the shadows of Wolfsbane Hollow for the last sixty years. Kreslik helps his werewolf subordinates learn how to control their power and cages them during the full moon if they are unable to depart town.

Kreslik's feels his absolute control over Wolfsbane Hollow threatened as of late. Foreign merchants have brought renewed interest in the town as well as discussions of building a bridge across Deepshadow Gorge to open up trade with the east. This, coupled with the success of the remote mining community of Hjalward to the north, has brought the eye of Arvallis back to Wolfsbane Hollow, and along with that assiduous stare a clandestine group of lycanthrope hunters who are on the verge of discovering Kreslik's secret.



REGIONAL GAZETTEER

The region surrounding the town of Wolfsbane Hollow is wild and untamed; opportunities for adventure abound.

WOLFSBANE HINTERLANDS

The Wolfsbane Hinterlands are a swath of rugged, wild terrain spread over roughly 1,300 square miles south of Mount Middenvurd in the Vurdfell Spine.

The region was once a frontier holding of the remote, western empire of Arvallis, but when the empire collapsed, the region became self-governed. Now thousands of free-minded hunters, woodsmen, farmers and panhandlers flock to the region to live their lives without interference by government bodies.

Much of the Wolfsbane Hinterlands are not fully explored or contain long-abandoned Arvollar settlements. Only Wolfsbane Hollow stands as a bastion of civilisation in this rugged frontier. Other points of interest are detailed below.

ASHENBLADE FOREST

Located along the southwestern edge of the Vurdfell Spine, the Ashenblade Forest was once home to a clan of elves called the Tuinadin (roughly: ghost-faced people, in Common.)

While the southern edge of the forest is considered safe and is the primary logging site for the Wolfsbane Hollow lumber guild, rumours persist of mortal danger dwelling deeper in the ancient wood. These stories date back to the time of Arvallis' collapse, when the elves of the Ashenblade Forest disappeared without a trace, and explorers who ventured into the woods seeking the missing elves rarely returned. Those who did return spun terrifying tales of the forest coming alive to attack their companions, nightmarish undead riddled with vegetation and strange wailing noises in the dark. An occasional treasure hunter still ventures into these woods every decade or so, lured by promises of riches remaining in the abandoned elven town of Tuinadarael at the forest's heart. None have penetrated far enough into the forest to find whatever remains of the settlement.

DRUNAU FOREST

Comprised primarily of cedar, poplar and maple trees the Drunau Forest attracts lumber workers from nearby Wolfsbane Hollow. However the southern flow of the Valyn River means any lumber taken from the Drunau Forest must be hauled on barges against the current, making forestry in the region less appealing. Small human settlements, typically single-family homesteads or cabins, dot the forest's fringes.

DANKWOOD

This forest of red maple, spruce and hemlock bristles up from the eastern banks of the Valyn River. Primarily a peat swamp, rocky areas of higher and drier land spot the rolling hills and deep, watery recesses of the forest.

Dankwood's difficult terrain has left it largely untouched by the local forestry industry and the forest's inhabitants—a circle of

druids tracing their roots back more than 1,200 years—are content to be left alone. These druids do not actively participate in the goings-on in the region, though occasionally send scouts to the Ashenblade Forest. The druids of Dankwood know full well what happened long ago to the elven town of Tuinadarael and have chosen to keep that secret for centuries. Other than the druids, Dankwood is home to stirges, swamp giants, a small clan of trolls and will-o'-wisps.

GREAT ARVOLLAN FOREST

Spanning 1,100 miles between the border of Wolfsbane's Hinterlands and the eastern edge of the Arvollar city-state, the Great Arvollar Forest is huge. The eastern-most edge of the forest cutting into the Wolfsbane Hinterlands is primarily pine and oak with some cedar and birch. The forest terrain is rocky and hilly with large granite deposits dotting the woodland, including enormous free-standing boulders brought down from the Vurdfell Spine by a glacier over 10,000 years ago.

The Great Arvollar Forest is dotted with farmlands and cabins, the density of which grows thinner the further west one travels beyond the Hinterlands. Unknown thousands of wild beasts call this forest home, from simple stags and bears to majestic drakes and giant eagles. Much of the forest's western expanse is unexplored, enticing explorers into its ancient recesses.

THE EMPIRE OF ISGILTUR

Long before the rise of human kingdoms, the empire of Isgiltur rose to monolithic heights east of the Vurdenfell Spine. Born of the power of ancient giants, this kingdom now exists as little more than crumbling ruin and speculation. Legends claim all of Isgiltur was destroyed in a single night by a great magical calamity, though the veracity of that claim is hotly disputed by explorers who believe in a slower decline caused by disease and famine. Today, Isgiltur's gigantic ruins dot the land.

One surviving remnant of Isgiltur is the Hjalward, a colossal wall of stone following the Vurdfell Spine for nearly 200 miles, crossing over the crown of Mount Kalisford. It is an engineering marvel, sixty feet thick and 200 ft. tall, supported by flying buttresses. Every ten miles a 500 ft. tall watchtower, called an augan in Giant, rises from the wall. An iron brazier that—when filled with timber and lit—could be seen by adjacent augans crowned each tower, and served as a means of swift communication in times of crisis.

Today, one-third of the Hjalward stands at its full height and only nine of its 196 augan remain intact. Thirty-seven breaches rent the wall; some created by monstrous incursions, others by time itself. Most of the intact augan stand in remote portions of the Vurdfell Spine, serving as lairs for foul monsters and the like. Adventurers—unsurprisingly—often attempt expeditions to explore these augans. The savagely harsh terrain stymies many such expeditions and yet more adventurers fall before the might of the creatures claiming the augans as their own.

GREATSHADOW GORGE

At up to 6,000 feet deep, the Greatshadow Gorge is an impressively large natural barrier dividing the eastern edge of human civilisation with the western frontier of the orc Hordelands.

The gorge's northern tip cuts into the wintry expanse of tundra beyond the Vurdfell Spine, while its southern-most point lies 170 miles south of the Wolfsbane Hinterlands at the furthest edge of the Vurdfell Spine. The gorge's sheet rock walls are primarily granite and limestone with striations of marble, shale and slate.

The bottom of the gorge is a sparsely forested, rocky place known by humans and orcs alike as the Greatshadow Underwood. This dark forest comprises fir, basswood, hemlock and white cedar trees between which snakes a rapidly flowing river fed from meltwater originating at the northern end of the gorge. Called Blackwater by humans, this river is known as the Orlo-gutang (bitter springs) by the orcs living on the eastern side of the gorge's. The river's water is heavily tainted with sulphur, giving it an eggy aroma and bitter taste.

Neither human nor orc reside close to the Greatshadow Gorge; both societies fear open conflict with one another and have wisely settled no closer than ten miles from the border. Thus, the gorge itself is home only to wandering—or savage—shadow-loving monsters. Sometimes strange aberrations emerge from certain deep caves hidden under the Greatshadow Underwood's grey boughs. Adventurers often come here to battle such foul creatures; only skilled heroes survive.

VURDFELL SPINE

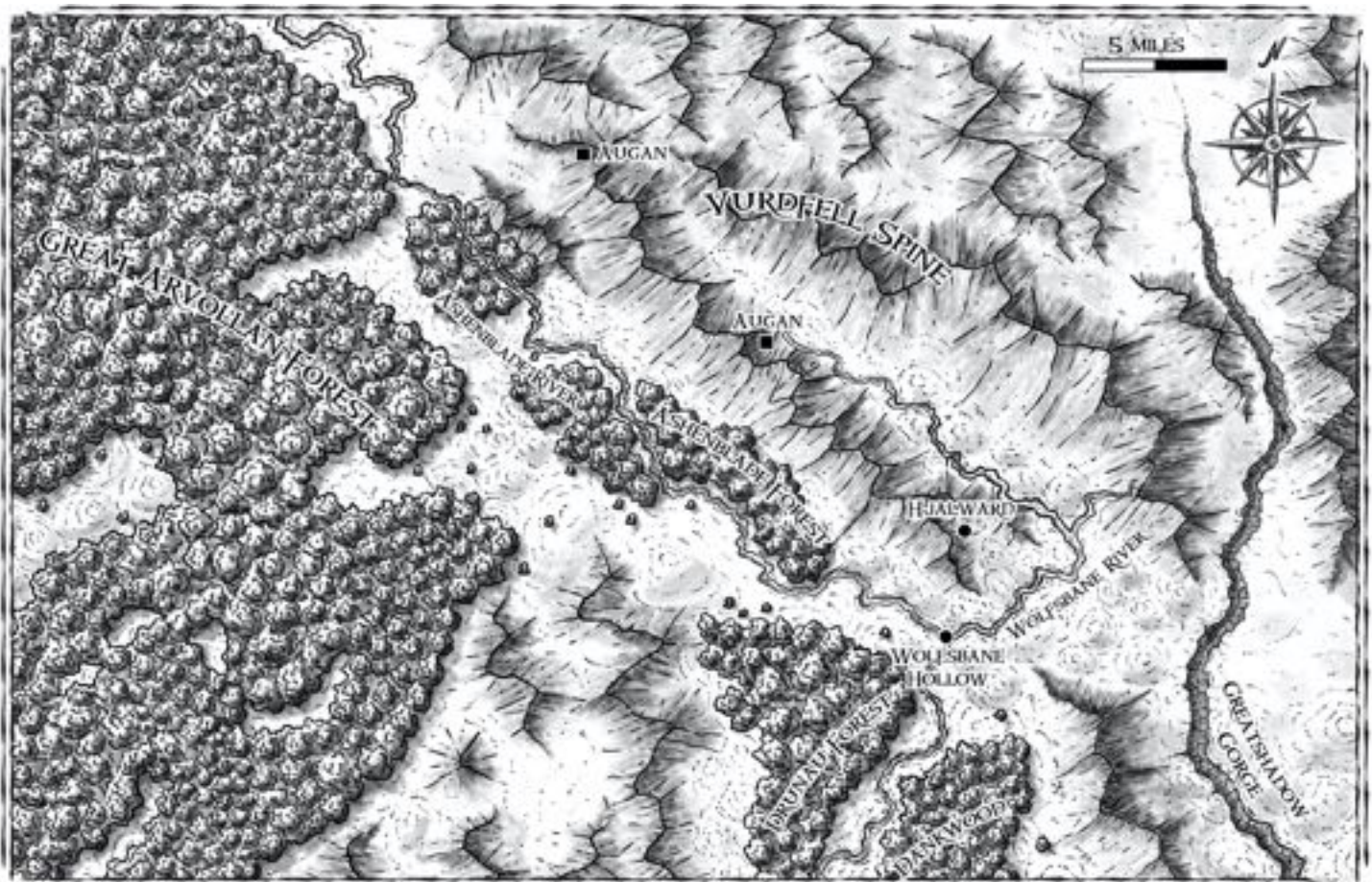
The Vurdfell Spine mountain range is a natural barrier to the Hordelands of the orcs to the east. The Spine runs for 2,500 miles and its highest peak juts nearly 28,000 feet into the sky. The range is mostly unsettled and populated by predatory dragons, giants and worse.

MOUNT KALISFORD

The highest peak of the Vurdfell Spine, Mount Kalisford is 27,850 feet tall. The Hjalward wall—an ancient construction from the long fallen giant empire of Isgiltur—cutting across the Vurdfell Spine crosses this peak, and with the added height of these ruins the mountain surpasses 28,000 feet. No explorer is ever known to have reached the ruin atop Kalisford's peak and survived to tell the tale. Its presence remains an enticing beacon for many would-be adventurers.

HJALWARD

The village of Hjalward, located on the southern slope of Mount Kalisford, is built atop snow-covered hills in the shadow of ancient, giant-crafted architecture. Nearby deposits of iron, silver and lead draw desperate or avaricious miners to this cold village, while legends of lost giant treasure ensure a steady trickle of adventurers make the long, perilous journey.



WEATHER IN WOLFSBANE HOLLOW

Use these tables to determine the weather in Wolfsbane Hollow and its surrounds. These tables are not designed to be hyper-realistic; rather they provide the tools for you to describe the weather in generalities; the exact temperature, for example, is rarely of crucial importance.

To determine the weather on any given day:

- **Temperature:** Roll d20 and consult the relevant season table.
- **Weather:** Rolling d20 and consulting the relevant temperature column of the appropriate season table.
- **Precipitation Duration:** If precipitation is indicated determine its duration on the Weather Duration table.
- **Wind Direction:** Roll d20 on the Wind Direction table, but note the wind's direction may only be relevant if the characters are on the coast or aboard ship.
- **Wind Speed:** Roll d20 and consult the Wind Speed table.

WINTER

Winters are cold and harsh; snowfall is not uncommon and storms are common. During hard winters, trade and commerce shudder to a grinding halt as peasants huddle in their homes and great drifts of snow driven by the savage wind choke tracks and trails.

In particularly brutal winters, the town of Wolfsbane Hollow and village of Hjalward can quickly get cut off by gale-force winds and driving snow.

D20	FREEZING (1-13)	COLD (14-20)
1	Heavy fog	Heavy fog
2	Heavy fog	Light fog
3-5	Light fog	Clear sky
6-7	Clear sky	Light cloud
8	Light cloud	Light cloud
9	Light cloud	Light cloud, drizzle
10	Light cloud	Light cloud, rain
11	Overcast	Light cloud, rain
12	Overcast	Overcast
13	Overcast	Overcast, drizzle
14	Overcast, sleet storm	Overcast, rain
15	Overcast, hail storm	Overcast, rain
16	Light cloud, light snow	Overcast, hail storm
17	Light cloud, light snow	Overcast, sleet
18	Overcast, light snow	Overcast, sleet
19	Overcast, heavy snow	Overcast, sleet storm
20	Overcast, heavy snow	Overcast, sleet storm

SPRING

With spring comes a general thaw sets in and although fog often blankets low-lying hollows and valleys, the winds lessen and the temperature slowly rises. Rain is common and many trails degenerate into morasses of mud, making travel slow, miserable and costly.

D20	COLD (1-8)	COOL (9-20)
1	Heavy fog	Heavy fog
2	Heavy fog	Light fog
3-5	Light fog	Light fog
6-8	Clear sky	Clear sky
9-10	Light cloud	Light cloud
11	Light cloud, drizzle	Light cloud
12	Light cloud, drizzle	Light cloud, drizzle
13	Light cloud, rain	Light cloud, drizzle
14	Overcast	Light cloud, rain
15-17	Overcast	Overcast
18	Overcast, hail	Overcast, drizzle
19	Overcast, sleet	Overcast, drizzle
20	Overcast, light snow	Overcast, rain

SUMMER

In the summer months, the clouds clear, the winds quieten and the climate becomes markedly more pleasant, although few would describe the temperature as hot. The frequency and strength of rain also drops off, but sometimes dark clouds gather over the Vurdfell Spine—thunderstorms often result, and during this time old folk often mutter about the "Old One's Vengeance".

D20	WARM (1-13)	COOL (14-20)
1-3	Light fog	Light fog
4-8	Clear sky	Clear sky
9-11	Clear sky	Light cloud
12-13	Light cloud	Light cloud
14-15	Little cloud, drizzle	Light cloud, drizzle
16	Light cloud, rain	Light cloud, rain
17	Overcast	Light cloud, rain
18	Overcast, rain	Overcast
19	Overcast, rain	Overcast, rain
20	Thunderstorm	Overcast, rain

AUTUMN

As the temperature drops, the winds begin to gust with greater power, bringing winter's first harbingers—light snows, heavy frosts and freezing fog.

D20	COLD (1-9)	COOL (10-20)
1	Heavy fog	Heavy fog
2-3	Heavy fog	Light fog
4	Light fog	Light fog
5-6	Light fog	Clear sky
7	Clear sky	Clear sky
8-9	Clear sky	Light cloud
10	Light cloud	Light cloud
11-12	Light cloud	Light cloud, drizzle
13-14	Overcast	Light cloud, rain
15	Overcast, drizzle	Overcast
16	Overcast, rain	Overcast
17-18	Overcast, sleet ¹	Overcast, drizzle
19	Overcast, sleet storm ¹	Overcast, rain
20	Overcast, light snow ¹	Overcast, rain

1. The temperature drops to freezing

WEATHER DURATION

Precipitation falls on Wolfsbane Hollow all year round, though it is less common during the summer. In winter, snow is common.

WEATHER	DURATION ¹
Drizzle	1d10 hours
Hail storm	1d4 hours
Heavy fog	2d4 hours, then 1d4 hours of light fog
Heavy rain	1d12 hours
Heavy snow	4d6 hours
Light fog	2d4 hours
Light rain	1d12 hours
Light snow	2d6 hours
Sleet storm	1d6 hours
Thunderstorm	1d4 hours

1. If the maximum value of the die or dice is rolled, roll again and add the two results together to determine how long the precipitation lasts. Do not roll a third time.

WIND DIRECTION

Except in the winter, most wind comes from the south.

D20	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
1-3	S	S	S	S
4	S	S	S	SW
5	SE	S	SE	SW
6	SE	S	SE	SE
7	SE	S	SE	SE
8	SW	SE	SW	SE
9	SW	SE	SW	E
10	SW	SE	SW	E
11	W	SW	W	E
12	W	SW	W	W
13	E	SW	E	W
14	E	W	E	NW
15	E	W	E	NW
16	NE	E	NE	NW
17	NW	E	NW	NE
18	NW	NW	NW	NE
19	NW	NE	NW	NE
20	N	N	N	N

WIND SPEED

In the winter, the wind howls about the Vurdfell Spine, dumping huge amounts of snow over the surrounding hills and forests.

D20	SPRING/ AUTUMN	SUMMER	WINTER
1-3	Light	Light	Light
4-5	Light	Light	Moderate
6	Moderate	Light	Moderate
7	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
8-9	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
10	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
11	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
12	Strong	Moderate	Strong
13-16	Strong	Moderate	Severe
17-18	Severe	Moderate	Severe
19	Severe	Severe	Windstorm
20	Windstorm	Severe	Windstorm

RELIGION IN WOLFSBANE HOLLOW

The people of Wolfsbane Hollow worship the five deities of the Arvollar region, known collectively as the Circle. The deities of the Circle are animistic elemental entities tasked with the governance of broad societal concepts. Worship of the Circle, both individually and as a pantheon, dates back tens of thousands of years to the time of the giant empire of Isgiltur when the Circle stood as the giant's pantheon. The giants, in turn, imposed this worship on the "lesser races" they enslaved, and this worship survived beyond the fall of Isgiltur.

Today, worship of the Circle is prevalent across all peoples of the region, human and otherwise. Below is a brief synopsis of the five deities of the Circle and their role in the pantheon.

AETHER, THE BALANCE



Titles: The Arbiter, the Giver, the Taker, the Shrouded God

Adjective: Aetherite

Alignment: N

Portfolio: Afterlife, birth, death, family, knowledge, planar travel

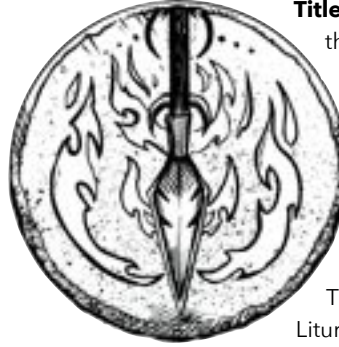
Favoured Weapon: Dagger

Symbol: A five-spoked wheel

The holy text of the Circle, called the Liturgy of Origin, speaks of the five deities of the Circle as the foundations of all creation. Their births signalled the beginning of the universe as we know it today and the end of the Age of Shapeless Forms; a time when unfathomable darkness and unspeakable horrors dominated the world. Aether is said to be the first god, neither alive nor dead, neither dead nor undead, existing in a state of "purgatorial bliss" somewhere within the Ethereal plane. Aether is depicted as a genderless ghost, always veiled, carrying a swaddled, skeletal child in its arms. In spite of Aether's genderless nature, priests still ascribe gender-specific pronouns to this deity; male when depicted as a taker of life, female when giving life.

The faithful of Aether see themselves as shepherds of life and death, acting as morticians, midwives, doctors and—sometimes—assassins. The most devout followers of Aether, known as the Dust Talkers, take a vow of silence with the living and only speak in the presence of the dead. Some Dust Talkers claim to have gained the supernatural gift to speak with the dead from this devotion. Other zealots of the faith believe they are entitled to the creation and subjugation of the undead as "gatekeepers" between the realm of living and dead. The Gatekeeper sect are seen as dangerous fanatics, at best.

IGNIS, THE FIRST SPARK



Titles: The Flame, the Even-Handed, the Purifier, the Pure

Adjective: Ignan

Alignment: NG

Portfolio: Civilisation, fire, healing, inspiration, hope, light

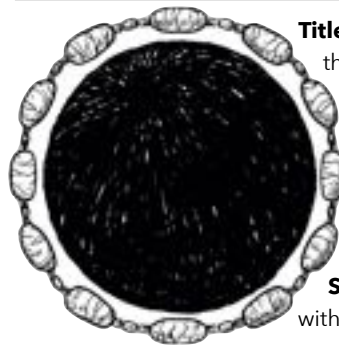
Favoured Weapon: Spear

Symbol: A flaming spear

The Canticle of Forging from the Liturgy of Origin speaks of Ignis as the first flame; a spark of creation that brought with her birth the first light that cast away the darkness of the Age of Shapeless Forms. Believed to be the second deity birthed into the new universe after Aether, Ignis is seen as a bringer of light and hope. While fire can be destructive, Ignan faithful see only uncontrolled or reckless use of fire dangerous. Ignan priests are healers of the sick, purifiers of the impure and crusaders against injustice and suffering. Ignis herself is depicted as a selfless and noble woman of indeterminate race, though sometimes an idealised member of a priest's own race. Ignis is also seen as the forbearer of civilisation, viewed as protector of cities and towns, and muse to creators and craftsmen alike.

Ignis' priests are renowned healers, even without the gift of magic. The Ignan faith trains physicians and surgeons, sending them on pilgrimages to cure disease and ease suffering wherever they can. More militant followers of Ignis interpret her will at the point of a spear, crusading against the horrors of the world: aberrations, demons, undead and their ilk. The Ignan faith has a zealous sect of inquisitors called the Pyre of Glory that root out subversive evils throughout the world, from shapeshifters, to vampires and all other manner of beast that can hide among men.

MARI, THE DEEP



Titles: The Claimer, the Drowned God, the Hungry, the Woken

Adjective: Maran

Alignment: NE

Portfolio: Drowning, darkness, evil, fear, seas, water

Favoured Weapon: Unarmed strike

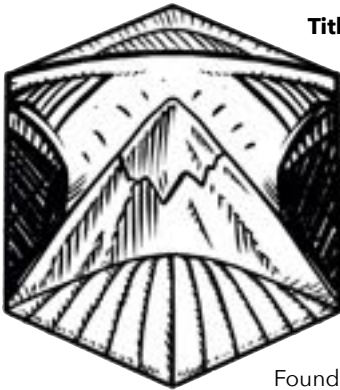
Symbol: A black sphere trimmed with turquoise

The last of the pantheon named in the Canticle of Secrets, Mari, was born from the lightless depths of the deepest oceans. Mari is the only member of the Circle to have an inhuman appearance, always depicted as some sort of amalgamation of aquatic creatures: equal parts squid, crustacean, fish, shark and worse. Mari, like Ventus, was not originally a venerated deity but a creature of nightmare that was awoken from the depths of the oceans by the meddling of the other gods. Mari's release is a cautionary tale, that there are some things in this world not even

the gods understand. Mari is as much a destructive force of nature as Ventus, but more sinister and patient, acting as the embodiment of fears of drowning, suffocation, loneliness and isolation. Early sailors invoked Mari's name in appeasement and offered sacrifices of fish from their hauls in order to stave off the deep god's destructive tendencies. Sailors lost at sea were said to have been "swallowed" by the Drowned God.

In contemporary times, Mari is worshipped by the insane and the broken. Those with nothing to live for or an abundance of hatred invoke Mari's name in the hopes of calling on his consuming power to wield against their enemies. Cults of Mari appear in coastal regions every generation or so until they are pushed back to the fringes of society or destroyed. Mari is seen as Ignis' polar opposite, while she is the birth of civilisation, Mari will be its inevitable end as he drowns the entire world in icy, suffocating waters.

TERRA, THE MAKER



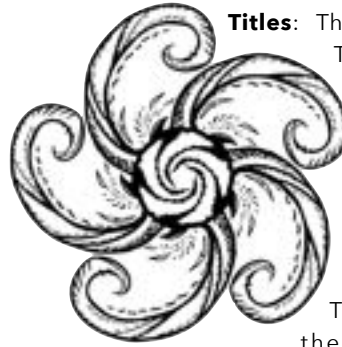
Titles: The Creator, the Mountain, the Unbreakable, the Vanguard
Adjective: Terran
Alignment: LN
Portfolio: Creation, metal, smithing, stone, strength, war
Favoured Weapon: Warhammer
Symbol: A mountain peak

First mentioned in the Canticle of Foundations, Terra is described as a woman of impossible strength made entirely from stone, whose armour is part of her body. It is from Terra that the secret of mining iron from the earth was gifted to mortals and with the spark of Ignis' inspiration and a touch of her fire, the first steel. Terra is seen as a peerless crafter, her hands seen in the making of all things. When great creations crumble it is seen as a sign of Terra's disfavour. In contrast, Terra is also seen as the embodiment of war in the most practiced and controlled sense, while the god Ventus is the patron of massacre and the wanton destruction of "uncivilised" warfare.

Terran priests take great pride in craftsmanship of any and all kinds. They are appreciative of the arts just as much as they are more practical creations. Terran priests have a strong kinship with the Ignan faith and both are seen to aid and coexist in harmony with one another. Terran priests are turned to in times of conflict for their understanding of military strategies, often serving as tacticians and counsellors, if not field-marshals or generals. Priests of Terra also see edicts of law as their responsibility, upholding and recording codices of laws and sometimes leading law-enforcement organisations in large communities.



VENTUS, THE DESTROYER



Titles: The Beautiful, the Ravager, the Tempest, the Wrathful
Adjective: Ventan
Alignment: CN
Portfolio: Air, calamity, chaos, destruction, storms, savagery
Favoured Weapon: Sling
Symbol: A five-pointed spiral

The god Ventus is first named in the Canticle of Endings as a destructive force come into the newly forged world, born of jealousy and anger. While Ventus rages against Terra out of jealousy of her creations, Ventus is not presented as an evil or malicious deity, but rather one of uncontrolled emotions. Ventus is a mirror by which the faithful view those with little or no self-control or difficulties in managing their emotions. Ventus cannot see his own self-worth and feels it necessary to diminish the accomplishments of others in order to make himself feel superior. In later canticles, Ventus is not as much a cautionary tale or reflection as a fully-fledged individual with desires his own. Ventus is seen as a representation of the unpredictable and uncontrollable forces of nature in these stories, a leaf carried on the wind, always depicted as an idealised man with a lean but muscular physique and impossibly long hair always blown in the wind. While destruction follows Ventus in his wake, he is never depicted as being responsible for the destruction, but rather an unwitting participant in it.

Worship of Ventus as a deity began late in the Circle's faith. Typically Ventus was viewed as a part of the pantheon and appeased rather than outright venerated. Latter interpretations of Ventus as a besieged and tragic figure incapable of controlling his own destructive ways made him an appealing figure of worship for like-minded individuals with tempestuous personalities. Armies opposed by the faithful of Terra began invoking Ventus as a slight to the Terran faith, but full worship of Ventus as a destroyer and warrior became traditional, especially among the lower class and oppressed. Priests of Ventus have no organised religion and tend to crop up as isolated followers or leaders of small, disorganised cults.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Adventure lurks in and around the town of Wolfsbane Hollow.

Restless Orcs: Furtive orc scouts have been seen on both sides of Greatshadow Gorge. The orcs have taken great pains not to be seen, and their appearance on the western side of the gorge might be cause for concern. Orc raids—or even an invasion—could damage (or shatter) Wolfsbane’s land-based trading links. The characters could be hired to investigate the sightings. If they investigate, Nerissa Shielendh (Wolfsbane Hollow location 22) will work against them—subtly at first through agents who fall upon the party while they travel through Wolfsbane’s hinterlands.

Ruins of Empire: The ruins of Isgiltur glimmer enticingly among the Vurdenfell Spine’s high peaks. Here are said to lie the frost giants’ forgotten, lost treasures—waiting for those strong and brave enough to dare the mountains dangers to claim them. Foul creatures—many potential threats to Hjalward and Wolfsbane Hollow—lair in the giants’ ruined towers.

Ruins Lie Beneath: Sporadic rumours place hidden ruins of epic grandeur below Wolfsbane Hollow’s cobbled streets. (See Wolfsbane Hollow location 20 for more information.) The characters could learn of these through rumours or accidentally discover them while pursuing a thief returning to the guild’s lair. Such a discovery could transform the campaign from one of wilderness and urban exploration into a megadungeon campaign

sprinkled with intrigue as the thieves’ guild works to slay the interlopers daring their subterranean lair.

Spirits of Ages Past: While in Wolfsbane Hollow, one of the characters gets the urge to investigate the ruined Cathedral of Ignis (Wolfsbane Hollow location 13). Sensitive or perceptive characters may discover the ruin is haunted and work to lay the bound spirit to rest. If they learn of guildmaster Avud Kreslik’s secret in the process, and he realises what they know, bloody war with the thieves’ guild will ensue.

Taint of the Werewolves: The Ignan faith has come to believe at least one werewolf again stalks the lands around Wolfsbane Hollow. Investigators have already been despatched to the town (see location 24 in Wolfsbane Hollow for more information), but have yet to uncover the identities of the werewolves they believe to be lurking in the town. The characters could be hired by the faithful to conduct their own investigations—even if they are unsuccessful they could provide “cover” for Inquisitor Derrah Ramm and her followers to continue their own clandestine search.

What Lurks Above: Something terrible is said to lurk in the upper chambers of the augan standing at the centre of the village of Hjalward. The place’s mayor—Olan Hammersfell—fanatically restricts access to the tower’s upper floors, giving rise to all manner of rumours about ancient terrors and hidden treasures. Cunning or unprincipled adventures may travel to the village and use magic or guile to bypass Olan’s defences.



HJALWARD

Ringed by a timber palisade, the village of Hjalward comprises wooden lodges and cabins built atop snow-covered hills in the shadow of ancient, giant-crafted architecture of a fallen elder kingdom. Looming over Hjalward like a tombstone, a crumbling stone wall fully 200 ft. high and 60 ft. thick and a yet higher sky-scraping tower remind the residents of this mining community of the follies of past civilisations, and that in time all empires crumble. Nearby deposits of iron, silver and lead draw desperate or avaricious miners to this cold, hard place while legends of lost giant treasure ensure a steady trickle of adventurers make the long, perilous journey to Hjalward.

HJALWARD AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Olan Hammersfell

Government: Autocracy

Population: 188 (182 humans, 4 dwarves, 2 half-elves)

Alignments: LN

Languages: Common, Giant

Resources & Industry: Hunting, metalworking, lead, silver, iron

Hunched amid and around a crumbled remnant of a lost empire, the village of Hjalward sprawls over Mount Middenvurd's southern slope. Its folk are hardy miners (and hardier hunters) who dwell at the very edge of civilisation on the eastern fringe of the mighty Vurdfell Spine mountain range.

Thousands of years ago, the Vurdfell Spine stood as the western bastion of the sprawling frost giant kingdom of Isgiltur. Little now remains of Isgiltur; the Spine's lonely, snow-capped peaks are famed only for their inhospitable terrain, savage weather and ferocious, monstrous inhabitants, and not for the ancient empire that once claimed them.

One of Isgiltur's surviving augan stands at the centre of the young frontier village of miners come to find fortune in the shadow of giants. Named after the monolithic ruined wall, the village has a rough history speckled with silver and blood. Founded seven years ago, it began as a prospecting camp after the retired thief Olan Hammersfall discovered silver deposits in the Wolfsbane basin at the foot of Mount Middenvurd. Trekking up the mountain, following the flow of the Wolfsbane River, Olan found not only surface deposits of silver in the higher reaches of the mountain beneath the snow and ice, but also the ruin once tended by the land's departed giant masters.

Olan claimed the place as his own and soon a trickle of miners, hunters and other hardy frontier folk joined him—eager to make their future amid the snow, ice and bones of an elder time.

Although Olan claims Hjalward as his own, the village—in reality—falls under the protection and influence of nearby Wolfsbane Hollow. However, thus far the village has avoided the attentions of Avud Kreslik and his werewolf minions.

Much of the villagers' industry takes place under Hjalward in Hammersfall Mine. Early mining efforts were sporadic and uncoordinated, and some of the tunnels get dangerously close to the surface. Consequently, sinkholes and minor collapses are relatively common events. Concern is growing, however, that it is only a matter of time before a large collapse cause serious destruction to the village above the mine.

Hjalward is relatively peaceful, and safe, for a frontier settlement. The dearth of inns and taverns, and the high prices of food, drink and lodgings for the village's many miners, conspire to keep drunkenness to a minimum. However, eternal dangers loom large in the populace's imagination. The Vurdfell Spine range is famed for its giants, dragons and other monstrous inhabitants; many of the villagers believe it is only a matter of time before some ferocious predator descends on the village.

VILLAGE LORE

A character may know something about Hjalward, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the characters are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Hjalward gets its name from the enormous ruined wall cutting through the village; it is a prosperous mining community.
- Other than silver, lead and iron the village is famous for the occasional cache of magical treasures wrested from frozen ruins discovered on Mount Middenvurd's flanks.
- The upper levels of the village's augan tower have been sealed ever since a group of adventurers all fell to their deaths while exploring them.

VILLAGERS

Appearance: Covering a wide range of ethnicities, the people of Hjalward are a stubborn and resilient bunch with skin weathered by the cold; grime from working in the mine cakes their clothes and hands.

Dress: Most villagers dress heavily for the cold in fur and leather, though mine workers often go bare-chested due to the sweltering heat in the deeper tunnels.

Nomenclature: *male* Soan, Bjern, Dali, Bomer; *female* Ael, Hrist, Lani, Wyss; *family* Coldharbour, Deepstrike, Karlslund, Moorhan.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Hjalward, a character may hear one or more rumours. The character can learn this information in several ways: perhaps by overhearing two locals gossiping, chatting with regulars over a few drinks at the local taverns and so on. Use the table below, to determine which rumours the character learns.

D6 RUMOUR

1	Mayor Olan is hiding a significant discovery regarding the vanished frost giants in the upper reaches of the augan. He's keeping their treasure all for himself.
2*	Vivia Dilacretti cursed Alvar Rurig, causing him to chop off his own hand while working one day.
3	Miners are worried some of the older surface tunnels might cause a cave-in but Olan refuses to do anything about them.
4	One of Bael's employees claims to have spotted a monstrously large winter wolf watching the village. What does it want?
5	When the wind blows hard and cold at night, you can sometimes hear voices whispering in the tongue of the fallen giants.
6	The Sundered Emporium has an exquisite magic decanter recovered from nearby ruins for sale.

*False rumour

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Hjalward comprises mining lodges and tents. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Rurig's Mill:** Great heat emanates from this large stone and wood lodge. Its barn doors are frequently left wide open.
2. **Sorting Yard:** Enormous stone furnaces and smelters surround this open air slate-roofed shelter.
3. **The Blackened Bucket:** This ramshackle two-storey wood lodge perches on the banks of Wolfsbane River.
4. **Sundered Emporium:** This enormous ruin of crumbling stone walls up to sixty feet high in places surrounds a menagerie of tents, shacks and other shelters which serve as Hjalward's bustling marketplace.
5. **Shrine of Aether:** A stone etched with the holy symbol of Aether, god of the dead, crowns this pile of rubble.
6. **Bael's Expeditions:** Decorated with mammoth bones, this large, squat wood lodge is the centre of Bael Siegeram's efforts to uncover lost giantish treasures.
7. **The Augan:** Scaffolding surrounds the bottom of this 500 ft. tall tower. Its upper reaches are in various states of ruin.
8. **Caravan Grounds:** Horse-drawn carriages and caravans park here for mutual protection.
9. **Hammersfall Mine:** Some of the tunnels in this labyrinthine mine come dangerously close to the surface.

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Alvar Rurig (location 1; N middle-aged male human) lost his right hand in a youthful accident. He was a skilled weaponsmith in his youth, but the injury hobbled his career.

Bael Siegeram (location 6; LN male dwarf thief 6) believes Hjalward sits on a vast cache of magic from the lost kingdom of the frost giants. He is an explorer and entrepreneur.

Ioder Thamm (location 7; N old male human cleric [Aether] 4) serves as Hjalward's steward and chief bureaucrat.

Olan Hammersfell (location 7; LE middle-aged male human thief 4) retired from the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild after sixteen years of service, only to find his fortune silver prospecting.

Shom Falwell (location 3; N male human fighter 4/thief 1) secretly works for the thieves' guild. He is Olan's oldest friend.

Uther Longbarrow (location 7; LN male human fighter 7) serves as Hjalward's captain of the guard. He is a major in Wolfsbane Hollow's army and follows the orders of Wolfsbane's mayor Valdur Tamm.

Vivia Dilacretti (location 8; NG middle-aged female human fighter 5/thief 6/bard 5) represents Hjalward's ethnic Valyn immigrants. She is a storyteller, merchant and fortune-teller.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

1: RURIG'S MILL

Set on the banks of the Wolfsbane River, Rurig's Mill is Hjalward's finest forge. Tended by Alvar Rurig (N middle-aged male human) the mill is Hjalward's sole source of freshly forged metal. Opened only one year ago after a rich iron deposit was discovered in the Hammersfall mine, Rurig's Mill sees daily production of pig iron and wrought iron goods that are shipped Wolfsbane Hollow. The mill is incapable of producing refined steel necessary for weapons, and Hjalward is still dependent on shipments from the lowlands for defence.

2: SORTING YARD

Enormous stone furnaces and smelters used for the cupeling of silver and lead from smelted ore surround this open air slate-roofed shelter. Workers labour daily in the intense heat of the furnaces and produce silver, lead and iron ingots stored in the augan in preparation for shipment to nearby Wolfsbane Hollow.

3: THE BLACKENED BUCKET

A ramshackle lodge on the banks of Wolfsbane River, the Blackened Bucket has the prestigious title of the first business established in Hjalward and is the village's only tavern and inn.

Maintained by mayor Hammersfall's business partner Shom Falwell (N male human fighter 4/thief 1), the Blackened Bucket is little more than an exercise in labour cost mitigation. Most miners working in Hjalward spend a portion of their stipend on the highly priced food and beverages here (prices range upwards of 10% to 20% higher than standard depending on the season) which itself is purchased at low cost from the town of Wolfsbane Hollow.

- **Food & Drink:** Meal (mutton stew or cheese [on the turn] and hard bread) (3 sp), weak ale (6 cp), wine (pitcher) (3 sp).
- **Accommodation:** Two-bed chamber (1 gp); four-bed chamber (2 gp); common room floor (2 sp).

Profits from the Blackened Bucket go directly into Olan's funding for the repairs of the augan and Shom uses his influence with the thieves' guild to hedge out other businesses that would cut into the operation, keeping other prospective tavern owners from setting up shop in the village.

Shom genuinely enjoys Olan's company and considers him a friend. Yet he sporadically reports on Olan's activity to the guild when his patience for the mayor's brusque attitude reaches boiling point.

4: SUNDERED EMPORIUM

The primary marketplace of Hjalward lies in the shadows of crumbling walls that once were a part of a frost giant garrison. These sixty-foot high walls serve as the bounds for a sprawling, open-air marketplace of tents and portable stalls tended by migrant workers looking to establish a foothold in Hjalward.

By day, the Sundered Emporium is abuzz with local and foreign languages, the cries of pack animals, currencies exchanging hands and the peppery aroma of ethnic Valyn cuisine. By night, the emporium all but disappears, with tents broken down and wheeled stalls rolled away under shelter; only the most sturdy and sizeable vendor stalls remain.

Much is for sale in the Sundered Emporium, including all a traveller would expect to see in a borderland locale. Many of the stalls sell a glorious clutter of goods—there seems little rhyme or reason to what they stock. A few stalls specialise in certain kinds of goods, however. Use this list to determine what a stall sells:

D20 STALL SELLS		D20 STALL SELLS	
1	Mining gear	11	Antiques
2	Simple, sturdy clothes	12	Meat
3	Trail rations	13	Bread
4	Hunting gear	14	Clothes, mundane
5	Simple weapons	15	Small livestock
6	Furs	16	Belts, boots & shoes
7	Household items	17	Ironware goods
8	Food staples	18	Bric-a-Brac
9	Low-grade spirits	19	Bric-a-Brac
10	Weak beer and ale	20	Guide services

Notable items for sale at the Sundered Emporium, include:

- **Magical Items:** *javelin of lightning* (3,000 gp), *ring of feather falling* (5,000 gp), *ring of protection +1* (10,000 gp).

5: SHRINE OF AETHER

Within the tumbled rubble of a breach piercing the Hjalward wall, a makeshift shrine to Aether (N god of the dead and judgment in the afterlife), rests amidst offerings of colourful mountain flowers, glass beads, vibrant feathers and other sundries. A single stone from the Hjalward, stacked free-standing atop a half-dozen others, is etched with Aether's wheel-cross holy symbol.

6: BAEL'S EXPEDITIONS

Out of all the wooden lodges dotting Hjalward, Bael's Expeditions stands out from its fellows; decorated in the bones of a half dozen mammoths the lodge glimmers in the sharp sunlight. A pair of halfling settlers found the mammoth bones during an ill-fated attempt to stake out a new claim outside of Hjalward. When the pair discovered a mammoth graveyard on the east face of Middenvurd—instead of the silver vein they expected—they were nearly laughed out of the village. Bael Siegeram (LN male dwarf thief 6) heard of the discovery and bought the halfling brothers out of their stake for an undisclosed price. The dwarf then hired workers to dig up the remains and haul them back to Hjalward.

Having spent much of his time in Hjalward studying the history of the Isgiltur kingdom, Bael believes Middenvurd was the site of not only the great wall Hjalward, but also repositories of buried frost giant treasures.

Inside the lodge an enormous wall-sized chart of the Middenvurd, divided into a grid, covers one wall. Bael uses this grid to chart explorations, allowing adventurers to stake a claim on a grid of the mountain for only a 30% claim on treasures they find. In exchange, Bael shares his extensive research of Isgiltur as well as accounts from other explorers of the dangers they may face.

Only two grid points are so far explored and to middling results. The unsatisfactory discoveries to date have led locals to question Bael's claims that frost giant treasures lie locked away below the mountain. In turn, these questions and rumours of the dwarf's dubious grasp on sanity have led to his client-base dwindling in the last few months.

7: THE AUGAN

Rising from the centre of Hjalward, the augan dominates the village's skyline. The nearly intact stone tower reaches an impressive height of 500 ft., without counting the beacon's onion-shaped iron cage crowning the structure.

The augan is not without significant structural damage, however. A framework of wooden scaffolding rises up fifty feet from the base of the augan; thereon stonemasons, architects and engineers perform costly repairs; their human-scale patchwork efforts are clearly visible among the giants' superhuman works.

Inside the tower, each floor is a cavernous 70 feet high. The ground floor serves as the barracks for Hjalward's garrison. Here are based the village watch, under the command of Uther Longbarrow (LN male human fighter 7). Uther is unaware of Olan and Shom's history with Wolfsbane Hollow's thieves' guild but is none-the-less suspicious of their activities. He is a proud man who at times acts as though he were the mayor of Hjalward; this is an error Olan does not hesitate to correct.

THE VALYN

Arriving in Hjalward two years ago, the wandering Valyn brought their distinct cultural flair for storytelling, their rich musical history and also their superstitions to the frontier village.

While the Valyn people generate divisive reactions—many of the other villagers distrust them—the Valyn have weathered fair and foul times thanks to their managing of the Sundered Emporium and willingness to cooperate with Olan Hammersfall.

Represented by Vivia Dilacratti (NG middle-aged female human fighter 5/thief 6/bard 5), the Valyn people have weathered storms of accusations their presence brings ill fortune to the mine and the village. Largely no action has been taken against the Valyn because Mayor Hammersfall refuses to lend credence to these accusations. Vivia is a kind and even-handed woman who is fiercely protective of her people.

Rumours abound Olan consults Vivia on not only the matter of the augan's reconstruction through divinations and fortune-telling, but also on financial matters.

The Valyn people are a red-haired and pale skinned folk. Their eyes are predominantly blue and grey.

The second and third floors comprise the offices of Steward Ioder Thamn (N old male human cleric [Aether] 4) and his staff. All concerns in the village are heard by Ioder; he passes on those deemed important enough to mayor Olan.

The augan's fourth and fifth floors belong solely to mayor Olan Hammersfall (LE middle-aged male human thief 4) and comprise his living quarters, study and treasury.

While the lower five of the augan's twelve floors are occupied the upper levels of the tower remain unused and unclaimed. Access to the sixth floor and above is sealed and only granted by express permission of Olan Hammersfall himself. A group of young adventurers once slipped past Olan's defences. They were found dead the following morning, dashed upon the rubble surrounding the tower. It was assumed the adventurers fell from one of the ruined openings in the tower's walls, likely due to the high winds at that altitude, although persistent rumours suggest foul play or the presence of lurking terrors in the tower's upper, unexplored levels.

8: CARAVAN GROUNDS

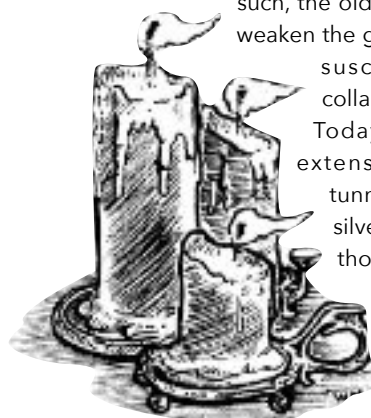
Not far from the Sundered Emporium, a gathering of caravans belonging to Valyn wanderers is a fixture of Hjalward's multi-cultural tapestry. Children often flit between the carriages while music fills the air. Few of Hjalward's normal citizens come here; many distrust the Valyn and the two groups—in the main—mingle no more than is strictly necessary.

9: HAMMERSFALL MINE

Rich mineral deposits stud the walls of this vast natural cavern. Discovered long ago by giant masons when they sunk the Hjalward's foundation, the cavern is now the site of intense mining efforts. Initially, mining within the cavern and its surrounds was stymied by a flood when the first tunnels pierced the water table. However, the mine is now outfitted with a series of reverse overshot waterwheels that push water from the mine to the surface. These waterwheels are for hushing and fire-setting in the mine, whereby the bare rock is exposed to torrents of water to expose mineral veins, then heated by fires and cooled by further water exposure, making the rock easier to break apart with picks and shovels.

The early days of mining in Hjalward were largely unplanned, due to Olan's inexperience running an operation of this size. As such, the oldest tunnels beneath the village weaken the ground above, leaving Hjalward susceptible to sinkholes and collapse.

Today, the mine comprises an extensive, rambling network of tunnels, following veins of rich silver, lead and iron. Miners move thousands of pounds of stone daily to the sorting yard and injuries are common among the inexperienced. Life here is not pleasant.



LIFE IN HJALWARD

Living in Hjalward takes a certain breed of determination and adventurous spirit that most people don't possess. It is a frontier village in a harsh and wintry climate teeming with unexplored ruins and bordering dangerous orc-held lands. Peril comes not only from outside the village, but also from within in the form of mining accidents and treacherous, sentient relics recovered from Isgiltur's ruin.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

The Hammersfall mine is Hjalward's lifeblood as the exporting of lead, silver and iron fuels the booming economy.

The village also has a fair hunting trade from those bold enough to brave the mountains and the snow. Some hunters do not return from their expeditions.

LAW & ORDER

Major Longbarrow runs a tight watch comprising locals and volunteer militia. While most people in Hjalward are not combat trained, they trust in Uther's ability to hone their skills.

Local discipline is handled by the letter of the law from Wolfsbane Hollow, though Hjalward does not have its own prison. Most crimes are punishable by a fine and tedious, lecture from Major Longbarrow. Violence, severe theft or worse warrant offenders being banished, or on rare occasion arrested and shipped off to Wolfsbane Hollow for trial and execution.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Hjalward is a young village populated by a racially and geographically diverse set of people. As such, the population as a whole do not observe any notable festivals or traditions—even those normally celebrated in nearby Wolfsbane Hollow. Many folk, however, privately observe particular festivals or traditions of their kin or religion.

The volunteer militia gather once a month for drills and training under Major Longbarrow. Much to his frustration, many of the village children turn up to watch the training, and consequently distract his troops from their task.



VILLAGE DRESSING

While the characters are in Hjalward, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D20 EVENT

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Citizens gather at the caravan grounds to accuse the Valyn wanderers of witchcraft and laying hexes on villagers, after an accident at the mine killed a worker. |
| 2 | Orcs from beyond the mountains have come on a raid to loot the mill's silver and iron ingots. |
| 3 | A terrible blizzard rushes in from the north, burying Hjalward in two feet of snow. |
| 4 | Savage gusts of freezing wind whine down from the mountains to assail the village. |
| 5 | The most perceptive character spots a flicker of movement in one of the auger's upper windows. It could be nothing more than a bird or something else. |
| 6 | Plumes of black smoke rise from the Sorting Yard; the wind blows them across the village. |
| 7 | A patrol of four watchmen marches passed the party. |
| 8 | Caught on the wind, the hubbub of trade rises from the Sundered Emporium. |
| 9 | Miners—covered in dust—at the end of their shift walk through the village on the way to the Blackened Bucket. |
| 10 | Dark clouds skid across the sky, plunging the village into deep shadow. |
| 11 | Shouts from Hammerforge Mine heralds a minor accident. |
| 12 | Wagons laden with ore rumble through the village on the way from Hammarsfall Mine to the Sorting Yard. |
| 13 | Sunlight glints on the vast profusion of bones decorating Bael's Expeditions. |
| 14 | The temperature plummets; the few folk abroad on Hjalward's streets are swathed in thick cloaks, furs and the like—making identification difficult. |
| 15 | Four hunters stagger into Hjalward carrying the corpse of an immense white-furred wolf between them. |
| 16 | An accident at the sorting yard starts a fire that consumes a nearby cabin. |
| 17 | Major Longbarrow is recruiting new militia recruits to scout for potential orc incursions, and approaches the characters to gauge their interest in joining. |
| 18 | With a clatter, a stone tumbles from the top of the augan, to shatter on the ground far below. The falling stone barely misses several folk. |
| 19 | Several laughing Valyn children run through the village; birthing scowls and mutterings in their wake. |
| 20 | A mine tunnel partially collapses but reveals an entrance to a subterranean ruin from the age of the frost giants. |
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WOLFSBANE HOLLOW

Shielded to the north by the Vurdfell Spine's lofty peaks and protected from the Hordelands of the east by the Greatshadow Gorge, the town of Wolfsbane Hollow has persisted in relative isolation for hundreds of years. Seemingly a simple border town, a dark shadow hangs over this hard, rough settlement. For here, the rule of law is tenuous at best, and the mayor is but a figurehead. The true power of Wolfsbane Hollow is the shadowy thieves' guild and their monstrous, bestial guildmaster who lurks in his lair carved from the fallen, mouldering bones of an ancient empire.

WOLFSBANE HOLLOW AT A GLANCE

Ruler: Mayor Valdur Tamm (secretly, Guildmaster Avud Kreslik)

Government: Secret Syndicate

Population: 4,670 (4,450 humans, 168 dwarves, 32 human werewolves, 20 other)

Alignments: LE

Languages: Common, Dwarven

Resources & Industry: Hunting, iron, lumber, metalworking

Shielded to the north by the Vurdfell Spine's lofty peaks and protected from the Hordelands to the east by the Greatshadow Gorge, the town of Wolfsbane Hollow has persisted in relative isolation for hundreds of years. Having won its independence from the city-state of Arvallis, Wolfsbane Hollow enjoys its isolation and security with stoic pride.

INHABITANTS

Appearance: Natives are fair skinned and hardy, tending to dark hair and stocky builds. Migrant dwarves are fair of hair and skin.

Dress: Locals wear finely crafted clothes favouring earth tones (with brocade patterning for wealthier residents). Short cloaks and capes are highly fashionable.

Nomenclature: *male* Ardi, Edgar, Rihard, Simon, Vaino; *female* Arela, Aemma, Lea, Mirjam, Sirje; *family* Broslef, Mand, Olesk, Teder, Smitter.

TOWN LORE

A character may know something about Wolfsbane Hollow, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the characters are and then impart some (or all) of this information:

- Wolfsbane Hollow was a vassal town to the remote, western city-state of Arvallis until fifty years ago.
- In spite of its proximity to the orc Hordelands to the east, Wolfsbane Hollow's borders—in the form of mountains and deep ravines—have kept orc incursions at bay.
- Thirty-seven years ago, a series of tragic murders shocked the town. When it was discovered the culprit was a werewolf—nicknamed the Redclaw Reaper—that had stalked the town for years, the townsfolk cornered the beast in the cathedral of Ignis and burnt it to the ground.

DAILY LIFE

For the townsfolk, life is the river. In the spring, the rivers swell with meltwater, filling the harbour and lowland swamps so much that Turnrudder Isle disappears entirely. Logs float downriver to the sawmills as the snow recedes and more of the Ashenblade Forest becomes accessible to loggers.

In the spring, the first of two annual barge flotillas—heavy with lumber—depart to trade in far-flung places. In the summer, traders come for the town's woods and metals, while fishermen clogging the narrows haul in nets heavy with the day's catch. In the autumn, the second annual lumber flotilla departs for distant lands while

ships that left in the springtime return home. These harvest months prepare for the long, hard winters to come when the rivers freeze over and—even with axemen chipping away at the ice—no ships may come or go from Wolfsbane Hollow. The snowdrifts come four feet high, blow back and forth across the town's frozen rivers, and the people dream of warmer days when the snow melts and the rivers swell once more.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Mining and forestry are Wolfsbane Hollow's primary trades. With abundant mines in the northern foothills and plentiful forests to the west the town is surrounded by an embarrassment of natural resources. Fishing during the warmer months also occupies a large portion of the town's industry; imported fabrics and glassware are staple commodities.

LAW & ORDER

Officers of the Wolfsbane Hollow army handle law enforcement. While it is an army in name, this group is not a standing force but more akin to a well-regulated militia. The army comprises mainly able-bodied conscripts who must serve three years when they reach the age of nineteen.

The hierarchy of the army comprises a mixture of antiquated Arvollar military titles (taxiarchia, konostaulos and so on) and also more contemporary military titles (captain, lieutenant etc.). The ethnarch commands the army. The Wolfsbane Hollow army's style of armour and dress uniforms is greatly inspired by that of the ancient Arvollar soldiers who once stood watch over the town.

All of this structure, however, is merely a façade for the true power of Wolfsbane Hollow. The roots of the thieves' guild twist deep into the army's ranks, and while even high-ranking *akolouthos* are unaware of its influence the ethnarches have always been a willing participant to the guild's machinations. The current ethnarch, Tollun Moralli (location 25), is little more than a cudgel wielded by guildmaster Kreslik (location 20).

FESTIVALS & TRADITIONS

The coming of spring is celebrated when the first grass is seen on Turnrudder Isle after the snow recedes and the rivers begin their thaw. Children wear wreaths of flowers in their hair and shed their heavy winter clothes for fairer garb. In earlier years these spring festivals meant an abundance of fresh pastries shared among neighbours as surplus stocks from the winter were turned into sweet confections, but leaner times have made those traditions nothing but memory.

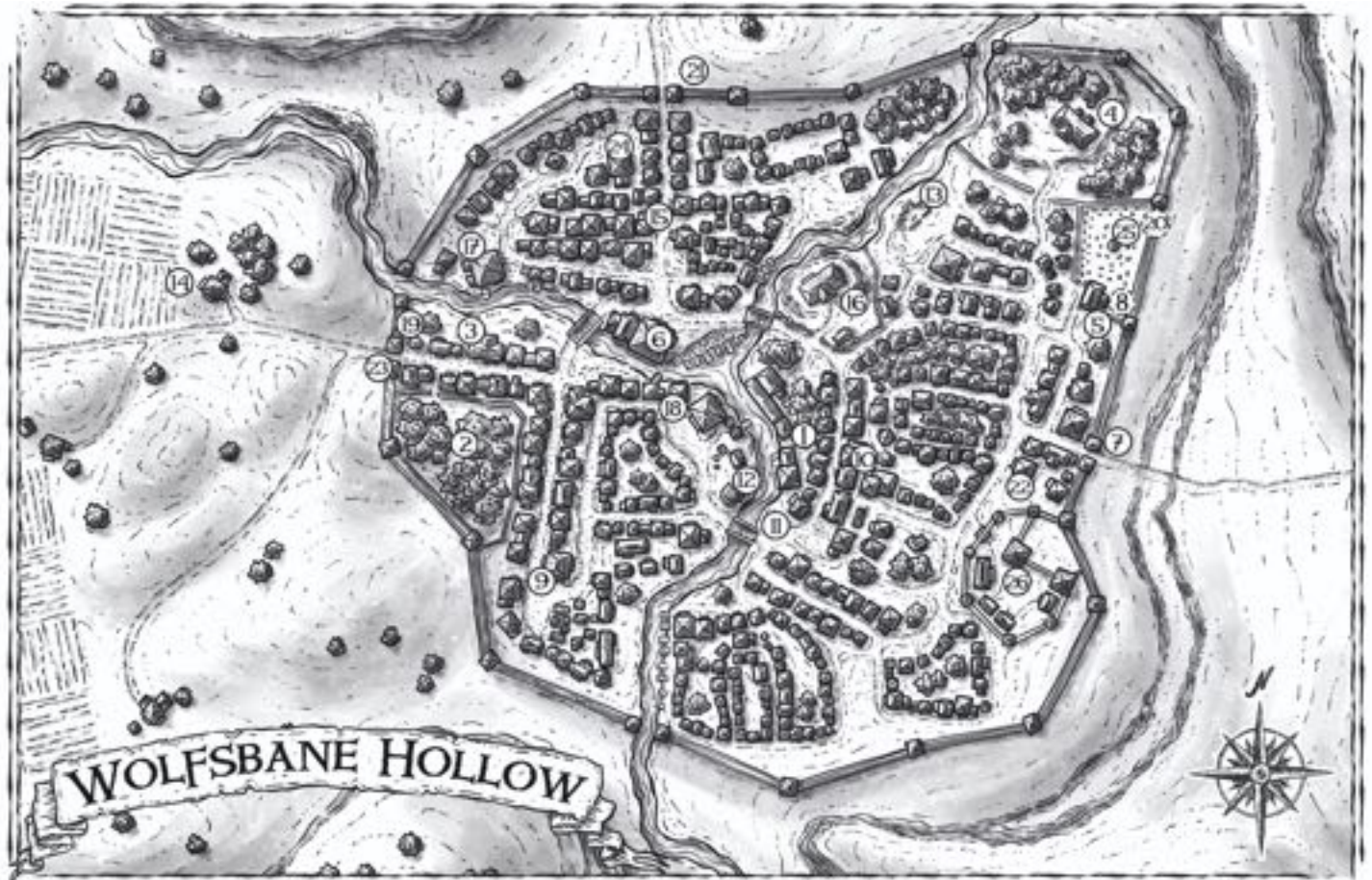
On the first day of summer the Fisherman's Festival attracts the town's best fisherfolk for a day of angling in the hopes of catching the largest fish and earning the title "Wolfsbane Angler" and a dozen gold coins.

The 11th day of autumn brings the most well-known and sombre of ceremonies, for this memorial marks the fiery end of the Redclaw Reaper's murders. This day is not a celebration, but rather a time of reflection and mourning that sees business closed and few residents in the streets.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Wolfsbane Hollow is a tightly packed community of disparate architecture. Locations of note are included below:

1. **Alethia's Home:** Here dwells retired mayor Alethia Alavarni.
2. **Argent Gardens:** These public gardens hide a secret entrance to the lair of the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild.
3. **Bits & Pieces:** This secret front for the Wolfsbane thieves' guild offers sundry goods at discount prices.
4. **Broslef Estates:** The wealthy Broslef family own this sprawling but unkempt manor house.
5. **Church of Aether:** This large, stone church is dedicated to Aether, god of the dead.
6. **Coldwater Mill:** On the banks of the Wolfsbane River this large sawmill is a front for the thieves' guild.
7. **Horde Gate:** The east gate of Wolfsbane Hollow is closed year-round save on the mayor's special order.
8. **House of Dust:** This mortuary and mausoleum is home to the cryptic Dust Talkers of Aether.
9. **Lonehammer Mining Company:** The primary offices of the largest mining operation in the region are found here.
10. **Lonely Road Livery:** This large public stable has a good reputation. The owner also breeds and sells various animals.
11. **Netter's Shack:** The local drunkard and fisherman Nedrick "Netter" Jost dwells here.
12. **Rostar's Forge:** This simple blacksmith has a secret connection to the Redclaw Reaper's murders decades ago.
13. **Ruined Cathedral:** This ruined and charred cathedral is dedicated to the deity Ignis, goddess of fire and healing.
14. **Rustford Farms:** The largest farms in Wolfsbane Hollow, provide most of the town with livestock and produce.
15. **Sunspear Armory:** Here can be had high-quality weapon and armour smithy.
16. **Tamm Manor:** Here dwells the town mayor, Valdur Tamm.
17. **The Foxhound:** The only inn in Wolfsbane Hollow is famous for displaying the skull of the Redclaw Reaper in its taproom.
18. **The Pick and Pyrite:** Also known as "Fool's Gold Tavern," this is a favourite alehouse for miners and the like.
19. **The Serpent's Path:** Here, the Valyn wanderer Resheda Anvaskin tells fortunes.
20. **The Underhollow:** The secret lair of the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild lies beneath the town's cemetery.
21. **Vurdfell Gate:** This is the town's north gate.
22. **Wayward Enterprises:** A struggling exploration business determined to build a crossing over the Greatshadow Gorge is based here.
23. **Wayward Gate:** Formerly called Arvallis Gate, this is Wolfsbane Hollow's western gate.
24. **Winterbrook Orphanage:** This home for wayward youths is secretly a meeting place for a group of lycanthrope hunters.
25. **Wolfsbane Cemetery:** These burial grounds hide a secret entrance to the lair of the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild.
26. **Wolfsbane Garrison:** The town guard watch over the town from this garrison and fortified keep complex.



NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few folk, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Ajenko Laoris (location 3; NE male human thief 2) owns Bits & Pieces and is a thieves' guild member. He is a wiry man with a long face, stringy black hair and crooked teeth.

Alethia Alavanni (location 1; LN old female human fighter 2) carries herself with determination and pride. This former mayor of Wolfsbane Hollow is grey-haired but ageing well.

Avud Kreslik (location 20; LE male middle-aged human werewolf thief 7) leads the towns thieves' guild and is alpha of the hidden clan of werewolves controlling the town. He is a tall, muscular man with coal black hair and dark brown eyes.

Barras Lonehammer (location 9; LG male dwarf fighter 5) has darkly tanned skin, coarse black hair and coal-black eyes. He is stout and barrel-chested.

Dannor Claig (location 6; NE human werewolf fighter 2) serves Avud Kreslik. This broad-shouldered and brutish man has a square jaw and calloused hands. He is Taskmaster of the Coldwater Mill.

Derrah Ramm (location 24; LN female human cleric [Ignis] 2/thief 3) poses as matron of the Winterbrook Orphanage. This statuesque woman with yellow eyes and wavy black hair is an Inquisitor of Ignis.

Iosef Pallin (location 10; N male human) owns the Lonely Road Livery and is head of the handler's guild. He is a slight man with mousy brown hair and kind eyes.

Jasvel Rustford (location 14; LN male middle-aged human) nurses nagging aches and pains. This ruddy-skinned workman is patriarch of the Rustford family and owns nearly all the farmland in Wolfsbane Hollow.

Jura Weisslen (location 5; N male old human cleric [Aether] 2) serves Aether. He is tall and rail thin and has chalk white hair and plentiful wrinkles.

Karissa Broslef (location 4; N female old human) believes a painting is speaking to her. This matronly old woman with

black hair streaked with grey, who looks as though she never sleeps, is matriarch of the Broslef family.

Kodas Thonnar (location 22; CG male dwarf fighter 3) owns Wayward Enterprises. He is thin for a dwarf, has sandy blond hair and waxes his moustache.

Maiard Luszvasik (location 12; CG male human [Valyn] fighter 2) part-owns Rostar's forge. Slightly shorter than his sister Selia, this black-haired Valyn man has a stubbly beard and loose posture. He is an inveterate wanderer.

Meriah Halls (location 15; LG female venerable human cleric [Ignis] 3) feels great guilt for the loss of her fellow faithful decades prior. A retired soldier this white-haired old woman covered in scars from battles long ago.

Nedrick "Netter" Jost (location 11; CN male old human thief 3) has a dark secret. Wild-eyed and always moving, Nedrick is skittish and disheveled. He is a drunkard fisherman.

Nerissa Shielendh (location 22; LE female elf thief 7) spies for the orc hordes and is advisor to Kodas Thonnar. Ghostly pale and taller than most men, her eyes are colourless black pools.

Norvus Olenstadt (location 18; N male human) owns the Pick & Pyrite. A portly man with receding brown hair he always looks depressed.

Paeter Logrim (location 17; N male human) owns the Foxhound inn. This smarmy and self-satisfied man has a narrow jaw and swept back coppery hair.

Resheda Anvaskin (location 19; LN female old human [Valyn] wizard 3) tells fortunes at the Serpent's Path. She is a weathered old woman with ink-black hair streaked with wisps of grey.

Selia Luszvasik (location 12; NG female human [Valyn] fighter 2) carries herself with confidence and poise. This tall and square-jawed Valyn wanderer is part owner of Rostar's forge. She has brown hair and grey eyes.

Tolun Moralli (location 26; NE male human werewolf fighter 6) serves Avud Kreslik and is the Ethnarches of the Wolfsbane Hollow army. He is a regal and dignified-looking man with fading grey at his temples.

Valdur Tamm (location 16; N male human fighter 2) serves as the mayor of Wolfsbane Hollow but is a puppet of the thieves' guild. He is a balding, grey-bearded man who wears the faded finery of lost nobility.

MINOR EVENTS

While Wolfsbane Hollow is a largely quiet community, things happen in the shadows that carry great significance. Just beneath the community's placid surface, great dangers lurk, and even greater secrets await discovery.

D%	MINOR EVENT
01-02	The watch post a bounty for the capture of a miner wanted for theft.
03-04	The thieves' guild targets a wealthy character for a minor theft (to test their capabilities). If the minor theft is successful, a more major crime will be planned.



05-06	Priests of Aether are holding a memorial service at the cemetery.	51-52	Miners bound for Hjalward are looking for protection on the road.
07-08	A bad harvest doubles the grain price in town leading to minor unrest among the poor.	53-54	A sister from the Winterbrook Orphanage inquires about one of the characters adopting a child.
09-10	A worker's strike at the Coldwater Mill threatens to cripple the local economy.	55-56	A group of superstitious locals threaten to run a caravan of Valyn merchants out of town.
11-12	The Lonehammer Mining Company is hiring adventurers to clear out a monstrous spider infestation in one of their mines.	57-58	The carcass of an eyeless, immature kraken inexplicably washes up on the riverbanks.
13-14	A thief stole a horse from Lonely Road Livery and rode out of town towards Hjalward. The owner is offering a reward for its safe return.	59-60	An outbreak of cholera claims fifteen lives.
15-16	Old man Netter is acting crazier than usual; someone should really do something.	61-62	Meria Halls from the Sunspear Armoury is looking to train an apprentice.
17-18	The twins at Rostar's Forge claim to have seen a shooting star land a few miles from town and are hiring surveyors to see if the meteorite survived.	63-64	The death of a beloved town elder brings accusations of foul play.
19-20	The anniversary of the Red Reaper's demise plunges the entire town in mourning.	65-66	The militia is recruiting.
21-22	The Rustfords thought moles were digging up their crops, but when one of their cows winds up dead they fear there's something worse at work.	67-68	Merchant barges from the south fill the harbour and comprise a floating marketplace.
23-24	Merchants from distant lands sell exotic fabrics in the market.	69-70	An early winter storm dumps a foot of snow on the town and locals struggle to adjust.
25-26	An entire household has gone missing and the watch are stumped as to their whereabouts.	71-72	A wave of arson claims seven lives and Valyn wanderers are blamed.
27-28	Someone exhumed the body of a Red Reaper victim from the cemetery.	73-74	A cave-in at one of Lonehammer's mines killed a dozen workers which he is struggling to replace.
29-30	A traveling band of Valyn musicians plans to perform all week at the Foxhound.	75-76	Wayward Enterprises is hiring cartographers and explorers to map the Greatshadow Gorge.
31-32	The owner of the Pick & Pyrite insists there's gold in an abandoned mine a few miles from town and needs adventurers to clear it out.	77-78	A group of locals want to run Resheda Anvaskin out of town, but she's already aware of their schemes and looks to the characters for aid.
33-34	Resheda Anvaskin, from the Serpent's Path, seeks out one of the characters with a dire omen.	79-80	The thieves' guild sees promise in one of the characters and tries to recruit them.
35-36	An explorer believes there are ruins from Isgiltur under the town, and the thieves' guild needs to drive him away at any cost.	81-82	Panicked woodsmen claim to have seen orcs just a few miles from town.
37-38	Exarches Moralli offers to deputize adventurers to drive out brigands from a nearby abandoned fort.	83-84	A flock of dead starlings fall from the sky, causing widespread rumour and conjecture. Quickly, the event grows in the telling.
39-40	Panicked miners from Hjalward claim they spotted a frost giant high on the Vurdfell Spine.	85-86	Ignan pilgrims on their way to Hjalward stop in town and mourn at the ruined cathedral.
41-42	A member of the Watch was murdered in his home and the search is on for the killer.	87-88	Farmers claim a wolf pack is picking off their sheep, but the watch refuses to investigate.
43-44	A rainy spring floods the rivers and much of central Wolfsbane Hollow.	89-90	A charlatan alchemist has set up shop in town selling bogus tonics and potions.
45-46	The city-state of Arvallis sent an envoy to the mayor's manor and he hasn't been seen since.	91-92	The dead have become unquiet in a local crypt.
47-48	Some children find an old cave system near town and play within. They do not all emerge.	93-94	The harvest festival is in full swing and all businesses in the market offer a 5% discount.
49-50	Smugglers accidentally carry diseased rats into the town inside their illicit wares.	95-96	The city watch is organizing a hunting party to kill a pair of drakes living in the forest.
		97-98	After a brush with death, a young woman claims to be able to speak to her dead twin sister.
		99-100	Several children were abducted from the Winterbrook Orphanage in the middle of the night and the sisters are desperate to find them.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Wolfsbane Hollow, a character may hear one or more rumours. The character can learn this information in several ways: perhaps by overhearing two locals gossiping, chatting with regulars over a few drinks at the local taverns and so on. Use the table below, to determine which rumours the character learns.

D%	WHISPERS & RUMOURS
01-02	They say the northern village of Hjalward is swimming in riches.
03-04	Hunters killed an ice troll in the mountains, last year.
05-06	A pack of wolves killed the Tanners last month; now their boy is living with the sisters at the orphanage.
07-08*	Ignis cursed Wolfsbane Hollow when we burned down her cathedral.
09-10*	There weren't ever werewolves in Wolfsbane Hollow. It was just a cover-up for an orc invasion.
11-12	The lumberjack Thomm has run off with farmer Jenner's daughter.
13-14	Exarches Moralli is losing his men's confidence.
15-16	The dwarf Barras looks like he comes from the desert kingdoms.
17-18*	There's wyverns in the forest, I've seen 'em.
19-20	I've heard we never used to have a cemetery. Don't know what we'd have done with the dead before that.
21-22	We haven't had an alchemist in town since Alduir left years ago.
23-24*	Arvallis is set to reclaim Wolfsbane Hollow by force.
25-26*	The Red Reaper's victims aren't able to find peace in death and still walk the land as ghosts.
27-28	An Arvolla barge full of gold disappeared downriver over a hundred years ago. Nobody ever found out what happened to all the treasure on board.
29-30*	A ghost walks on Turnrudder Isle at low tide on the night of a full moon.
31-32	The Livery's owner is looking to rear a drake, but he can't find anyone brave enough to get an egg.
33-34	The forest has a drake problem.
35-36	The mayor's wife died in childbirth a few years ago and neither of her twins survived the year. The mayor ain't never been the same since.
37-38*	Room 12 at the Foxhound is haunted. They say the old owner's wife committed suicide up there.
39-40*	The owner of the Foxhound hunted all the trophies in his tavern personally.
41-42	The Valyn girl who runs the smithy used to be a soldier. A good one.
43-44	The old priest Jura at the temple of Aether died when he was fifteen; somebody brought him back from the dead five years later.

45-46	Ajenko over at Bits & Pieces isn't trustworthy.
47-48*	The Greatshadow Gorge gets a foot wider every year.
49-50	Lady Broslef never leaves her manor anymore.
51-52	The last merchant barge out of town left a week late, it might not be back before the rivers freeze.
53-54	Norvus at the Pick & Pyrite thought he made it big panhandling for gold. Poor fool.
55-56	The matron at the orphanage looks like she has a mean right hook.
57-58	Our silver mines are being undercut because of the silver boom in Hjalward up north.
59-60	Back when this area was settled gryphons lived in the mountains. Nobody knows what happened to them.
61-62	I've heard weird noises coming from the burned down cathedral at night.
63-64	Farmer Holland's dog fell into a sinkhole last week, had to be over a hundred feet deep. Never found the dog.
65-66	A will-o'-wisp hunts the rivers.
67-68*	The Valyn woman that does fortune-telling is a spy for the orcs.
69-70	Wolfsbane Hollow got its name from the poisonous flowers that grow all around these parts.
71-72	On a full moon you can sometimes hear strange singing coming from the bottom of the Greatshadow Gorge.
73-74	There's never been a true dragon sighting out here.
75-76*	The town watch rooted out the thieves' guild here decades ago.
77-78	There's ruins scattered all around the area, thousands of years old.
79-80	One time, the exarches at the garrison got so mad at a subordinate that he bit his ear off.
81-82*	Those Valyn twins at the blacksmith used witchcraft to steal the business from its owner.
83-84*	They say old Netter murdered his wife, that's why he's so crazy.
85-86	Guard captain Uther Longbarrow was exiled to Hjalward for disagreeing with the exarches.
87-88	The Rustfords lost five cattle to wolves last month.
89-90	The mayor doesn't do much of anything these days.
91-92	Someone attempted to assassinate the former mayor... twice!
93-94*	The former mayor Alethia, used to be an assassin but left her order, so they tried to silence her.
95-96	I heard an architect say the garrison is sinking by an inch every year.
97-98	Lots of people are moving to Hjalward to cash in on the silver rush.
99-100*	There's gold to be found in these hills!

*False Rumour

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Wolfsbane Hollow has the appearance of a settlement far more cosmopolitan than it truly is; Arvolla architecture juxtaposes with the colourful tents and covered wagons of Valyn wanderers, cobblestone streets abruptly give way to a winding network of wharves and rafts. Archaic military banners styled after an empire hundreds of years' fallen fly over its garrison.

D%	SIGHTS & SOUNDS
01-02	Orphan children run down the street ahead of a female priest of Ignis. They dart about generally making a nuisance of themselves.
03-04	Smoke billows from chimneys, only to be quickly whipped away by the wind.
05-06	A murder of crows watches the street, from their rooftop perches.
07-08	Thick fog blows in from the river, reducing visibility and muffling the familiar sounds of the town.
09-10	A distant, faint howl of wolves hangs upon the air.
11-12	Fishing boats clog up the river, and fishermen shout and curse at each other.
13-14	The stench of boiled leather hangs in the air.
15-16	A flock of starlings swarm overhead, briefly taking on an ominous shape, before swooping away.
17-18	A group of the watch hurry past, weapons drawn and grim looks upon their faces.
19-20	A thin man sits on the step of a fire-gutted building, sobbing.
21-22	Valyn wagons line one side of the street with colourful market stalls erected around them.
23-24	A young girl runs past with a basket full of bread. As she passes the characters a loaf falls from the basket, but she doesn't notice.
25-26	Three monks in grey robes, their mouths bound in black cloth, solemnly walk by.
27-28	Cheerful fiddle music—and raucous laughter—emanate from the open windows of a tavern.
29-30	Two men, one brandishing a fish at the other, argues angrily at a pier.
31-32	A butterfly zips passed the characters and disappears into a shadowy alley. This may be nothing more than a natural occurrence or a clever illusionist could be trying to lure victims into a trap.
33-34	Several guards gallop passed on horseback, heedless of the townsfolk scattered in their wake.
35-36	A funeral procession fills the streets with grieving mourners and grey-clad priests wearing cloth wrappings over their mouths.
37-38	A gilded carriage drawn by two horses rolls past. Curtains obscure sight of who rides within.
39-40	Pungent steam rises from an iron sewer grate. Perceptive characters hear an ominous sloshing sound.
41-42	A lichen-covered gargoyle leers down at the street from the corner of a nearby roof.
43-44	A high, ivy-covered stone wall surrounds a nearby estate. Sounds of workers shouting to one another emanates from beyond the wall.
45-46	A white cat with vibrant green eyes watches intently from a nearby alley, before stalking away.
47-48	The panicked neigh of a frightened horse echoes down the street.
49-50	Onlookers crowd around the bloody body of a man run down by a carriage. The carriage did not stop, and the man is near death.
51-52	Labourers load cargo onto a heavy wagon.
53-54	A young boy hands a member of the watch a heavy coin purse before darting away into the crowd.
55-56	A pair of children draw on a wall with chalk. A man sends them fleeing, with several well-aimed kicks.
57-58	An old man stares forlornly out a window.
59-60	An enormous raven circles overhead.
61-62	A dog left tied up to a fence barks and howls angrily.
63-64	Two hooded men briskly make their way down the street, effortlessly slipping through the crowd.
65-66	Wagons laden with ore roll down the street pulled by heavy draft horses.
67-68	A Valyn man busks on the street corner for money.
69-70	Weary-looking, grime-caked miners walk into a tavern.
71-72	Two young men lazily scrub graffiti off a wall.
73-74	Three members of the watch mercilessly beat a prone man with wooden clubs, in an alley.
75-76	A dense fog rolls in off the water, reducing visibility to mere feet.
77-78	A lone child sits on a bench, staring at the ground.
79-80	Merchants hawking their wares shout over each other.
81-82	A group of well-armed mercenaries march past.
83-84	A young crier calls out important news.
85-86	A filthy man sits on the side of the street, begging.
87-88	A bouquet of roses lie in a puddle on the road.
89-90	Valyn merchants sing a traveling chant as they pack up their caravan.
91-92	A dead bird falls from the sky.
93-94	A horn blasts from one of the town gates, signalling the arrival of an important personage.
95-96	A group of merchants argue among themselves and may come to blows.
97-98	The city is hauntingly silent.
99-100	A furious mob gathers at the gallows outside the garrison in anticipation of a public execution.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

1: ALETHIA'S HOME

This old and narrow brick building rests wedged between two newer brick lumber mills. Here, former mayor Alethia Alavanni (LN female old human fighter 2) lives out the remainder of her days like a prisoner. Alethia was a popular and outspoken mayor who used her public influence, wealth and fame to maintain an office largely free of influence from the thieves' guild. Cunning and brilliant, Alethia survived two attempts on her life during her tenure as mayor and the attacks only ended when the guild believed she came into possession of sensitive information that could undo their stranglehold on Wolfsbane Hollow. Whether or not Alethia truly has damning evidence against the guild is unknown to them, but the fear of that information getting out has stayed the guild's hand and allowed her to live freely—such as it is—over a decade past her retirement.

2: ARGENT GARDENS

An acre of lush parkland rests adjacent to the west wall of Wolfsbane Hollow. Built 127 years ago, the Argent Gardens were dedicated to the fallen members of the Argent Riders, a ferocious group of Arvollar soldiers who led an incursion into the orc Hordelands to rescue captured borderland villagers. While the rescue attempt failed and all members of the Argent Brigade perished, their bravery and noble sacrifice is forever memorialised in eleven marble statues scattered around the park. At the centre of the park, a large fountain featuring a 12-foot tall granite plinth describing the actions of the Argent Riders features an elaborate mechanical trapdoor in the fountain basin that opens into a spiral staircase. This concealed entrance leads to the Underhollow, headquarters of the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild. The trapdoor mechanism is designed to only be opened from below, preventing accidental triggering. However, the mechanism inside the fountain can be discovered with a find secret doors roll, and a find/remove traps roll can force the exposed mechanism to open. Doing so prevents the fountain from properly draining before opening and sends a deluge of water down the revealed staircase, partially flooding the chamber below, and alerting the thieves to the presence of interlopers.

3: BITS & PIECES

Owned and operated by Ajenko Laoris (NE male human thief 2) and his three sons, Bits & Pieces is the largest general store and trading post in Wolfsbane Hollow. The basement of Bits & Pieces is run by the town's thieves' guild and is used as a front to produce and ship poisons and other contraband, smuggled inside crates of seemingly legitimate wares from the business above.

4: BROSLEF ESTATES

One of the oldest residences in Wolfsbane Hollow, this sprawling stone manor house and its surrounding land is owned by the Broslef family. The Broslefs, led by matriarch Karissa Broslef (N

female old human), own the majority of the lumber operations in Wolfsbane Hollow. Yet in spite of this perceived wealth the family are beholden to the thieves' guild due to a generations-old loan debt incurred by Karissa's great-grandfather Weirus. Karissa has been selling off her family's possessions piece by piece in an attempt to pay back the debt, which has turned the once beautiful estate into a shell of its former glory. The grounds of the Broslef estate are unkempt and untended, while the interior of the manor is sparse of furnishings, with what is still present shrouded in dust covers. Karissa spends most of her days worrying away in her study, pouring over ledgers and accounting documents or painting in her attic studio.

Tragically, Karissa suffers from crippling depression and paranoid delusions. She believes one of her latest paintings, entitled "the smoking jaw," speaks to her. The painting, which is as of yet unfinished, depicts a human skull grasped and pulled at by dozens of sooty hands, exhaling a breath of ash. While Karissa has not openly expressed this belief to anyone, she has spent more and more of her time trying to communicate with the fiendish entity depicted in the unfinished painting. Karissa believes this entity is a devil with power enough to restore her family's power and status. Whether there is an actual fiendish presence within "the smoking jaw" or not remains to be seen, nor does Karissa know what will happen if she finishes the macabre piece of art.

5: CHURCH OF AETHER

The sole remaining religious institution in Wolfsbane Hollow is a large, wooden lodge situated near the town's east gate. The Church of Aether was constructed 84 years ago when Wolfsbane Hollow was still under Arvollar rule. A sect of Aetherite monks were appointed stewardship of the dead in the town and have selectively trained members of the faith in order to maintain a clergy of roughly eight to ten monks at any given time. Speaker Jura Weisslen (N male old human cleric [Aether] 2) presides over the church. The Aetherite monks stay out of town business and diligently focus on their service to the dead of Wolfsbane Hollow.

6: COLDWATER MILL

The Coldwater Mill is Wolfsbane Hollow's largest sawmill and property of the Coldwater Lumber Consortium, owned by the Broslef family. The Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild uses the mill as a storage space for smuggled goods and many of its workers are guild members. Dannor Claig (NE human werewolf fighter 2) is one of Avud Kreslik's chief operatives and is in charge of daily operations.

7: HORDE GATE

The east gate of Wolfsbane Hollow, named the Hordegate for its facing towards the eastern Hordelands, is permanently closed. The gate and its road were built prior to the Arvollar war with the orc hordes, when construction of a bridge to span the Greatshadow Gorge was still planned.

8: HOUSE OF DUST

An ossuary featuring the bones of roughly 1,100 humans below the Church of Aether is largely unknown to the town populace. Built and filled before the establishment of a cemetery, the ossuary contains the skeletal remains of most of Wolfsbane Hollow's original settlers and founders, dutifully cared for by Aetherite monks called Dust Talkers. Among the bones cared for by the Dust Talkers is the charred, headless skeleton of Alduir Weyrud—known only to the monks as the Redclaw Reaper. The monks find the display of his skull at the Foxhound distasteful and disrespectful, but all requests for the establishment to turn over the skull have been ignored.

9: LONEHAMMER MINING COMPANY

This squat, brick building proudly displays a hammered bronze sigil for the Lonehammer Mining Company above its front door. Owned by Barras Lonehammer (LG male dwarf fighter 5), the Lonehammer Mining Company operates all the nearby mines. Barras is a long-time resident of Wolfsbane Hollow, having moved to the region 59 years ago where he began working as a miner until he was able to strike out on his own as a panhandler. Through hard work and determination, Barras made a small fortune and eventually purchased his own mining operation. Over several decades, he bought out all of his competition. Inevitably, rumours about his fabulous wealth—and their secure hiding place—circulate throughout the town. Various folk have broken into his building over the years, but no one has yet emerged with his wealth.

In spite of being a fixture of the community, the locals know little of Barras' past. While dwarven, Barras shares no ethnic similarities with local dwarf clans and has an obviously foreign accent reminiscent of those heard in cities bordering the remote, southern deserts. Those who have worked with Barras believe he is a retired soldier, though some locals gossip he is a deserter rather than a retired veteran. Without doubt, he is a skilled warrior and has beaten into unconsciousness several would-be thieves.

Barras' strong moral compass has put him at odds with the thieves' guild on several occasions, yet he has managed to resist their influence. However Barras is not a fool and he has never acted openly against the well-connected organisation. However, if an opportunity arose that would allow Barras to deal considerable damage to the guild, he would gladly take the opportunity.

10: LONELY ROAD LIVERY

Run by the handler's guild, the Lonely Road Livery is a sprawling, public stables where horses and other beasts of burden are tended and housed. Staffed by professional animal handlers who raise, tame and breed mounts and other domesticated animals, the livery is often crawling with cats, dogs and other small animals. Iosef Pallin (N male human) is the head of the handler's guild and runs the day-to-day affairs of the livery. Iosef is always looking to acquire new and unique animals to breed at the livery and is willing to pay handsome sums for exotic fauna.

11: NETTER'S SHACK

Nedrick Jost (CN male old human thief 3)—better known to locals simply as "Netter"—is the town drunkard by reputation and a fisherman by trade. In his youth, Jost was a highwayman who robbed travellers on the road between the border of Arvallis and Wolfsbane Hollow. However, when Nedrick underestimated the tenacity and swordsmanship of a traveller, his banditry was cut short at the expense of losing a hand. Nedrick gradually slipped into depression and drunkenness after settling in Wolfsbane Hollow as a vagrant decades ago, though he now manages to eke out an existence fishing in the warmer months and panhandling during the winter.

Jost's seemingly humble presence masks a much more significant facet of his life—Jost knows the Red Reaper was not the last of the werewolves. On the night the Red Reaper was cornered in the temple of Ignis, Jost was hiding beneath a pew in the cathedral's main hall, trying to sleep. When the crazed lycanthrope burst into the cathedral to hide, Jost overheard his mad rambling about the beast who turned him into a werewolf. When the beast was distracted by the approaching mob, Jost managed to scramble out through a back door in the rectory before the mob surrounded the cathedral and barred the exits. The truth of what happened that night has haunted Jost, but he feels no one would believe him, and every year passing since that fateful day makes it less and less likely anyone will ever believe his tale. Were Avud Kreslik ever to become aware of Jost's knowledge, the old fisherman would become a target of the guildmaster's wrath.

12: ROSTAR'S FORGE

Sweltering heat emanates from the twin foundries in this outdoor forge, while a black iron shingle hanging streetside displays the forge's name beneath the symbol of two crossed hammers. Rostar's forge has stood since the earliest days of Wolfsbane Hollow, founded by the dwarven smith Rostar Silverhand. While Rostar passed away 33 years ago, the forge still holds his name. Today, Selia Luszvasik (NG female human [Valyn] fighter 2) and her brother Maiard Luszvasik (CG male human [Valyn] fighter 2) work the forge. Both Selia and Maiard are of Valyn ethnicity and came to Wolfsbane Hollow with a caravan nine years ago. The two, both aspiring blacksmiths and skilled warriors, became fast friend with the elderly owner Olas Blackwell. When it came time for the Valyn caravan to leave, Selia and Maiard stayed behind at Olas' request and took up day-to-day operations of the forge. When Olas passed away two years ago he bequeathed them the forge.



13: RUINED CATHEDRAL

Fire-blackened stone overgrown with vegetation is all that remains of the once majestic Cathedral of Ignis. Burned to the ground decades ago during the hunt for the Red Reaper, this vacant cellar-hole is avoided by most townsfolk. Little remains of the original construction with fire damage and the elements having caused most of the ruins to collapse in on itself.

The ruins hold a dark secret in its fire-blackened stone. In the collapsed basement of the cathedral, the tortured spirit of Alduir Weyrud, the man wrongly murdered for the crimes of Avud Kreslik, still lingers. The haunt present in this basement is a mad, wrathful thing unable to fully coalesce into a true spirit due to the desecration of Alduir's remains. Were Alduir's remains reunited (his skeleton is kept by the monks at the Church of Aether, while his skull is mounted at the Foxhound) the haunt could be suppressed. However, if Alduir's remains were brought together on the night of a full moon his spirit would be able to manifest in the form of a vengeful ghost, bound to the ruined cathedral. Should this wild and tempestuous spirit be subdued and the man behind the wolf allowed to speak, Alduir Weyrud's ghost could potentially undo all of Kreslik's hard work.

14: RUSTFORD FARMS

Several large farms cover the rolling hills south and west of Wolfsbane Hollow. These farms are all owned by the Rustford family, presently headed by the family patriarch Jasvel Rustford (LN male middle-aged human). The Rustfords have lived in Wolfsbane Hollow since before the town had its name and have grown to become an influential and powerful family owning the majority of all arable land around Wolfsbane Hollow.

15: SUNSPEAR ARMOURY

This small river-stone lodge has a roof of hammered bronze plates. An inset bronze plaque above the door marks the establishment as the Sunspeaker Armoury and is owned and operated by a sole proprietor, Meria Halls (LG female venerable human cleric [Ignis] 3). Meria is the sole survivor of the town's Ignan faith and was among the many young soldiers withdrawn from Wolfsbane Hollow by the Kingdom of Arvallis during the Hordelands war. When Meria returned from the war decades later the cathedral of Ignis was burned to the ground and the remaining members of her faith long dead. Out of a sense of obligation to the town and guilt over being absent during her faith's hour of need, Meria settled in Wolfsbane Hollow and opened an armoury trading in fine weapons and armaments. Many of the weapons and armour for sale come from Rostar's Forge, while others are purchased in annual trade meets when barges come up river from the southern lands.

16: TAMM MANOR

Overlooking much of Wolfsbane Hollow from the top of Dead Tree Hill, the manor house of the Tamm family has stood for generations. Mayor Valdur Tamm (NE male old human fighter 2) resides here with a large staff of servants. His late wife Elissa is

buried in a private cemetery behind the house along with his two children, Cerilla and Kain, both of whom died at birth. Valdur has no heirs and is a man of little love or compassion. He spends most of his days dolefully watching the town from the windows of his study and allowing the thieves' guild to run roughshod over the townspeople. Valdur has no delusions of holding any real power in the town and realises he is a figurehead in service to the thieves' guild. While deep down Valdur aspires to be loved by his people, he is aware that isn't a likely outcome of his tenure as mayor and comfortable living out his days in lonely luxury.

17: THE FOXHOUND

The largest tavern and only inn in Wolfsbane Hollow has a storied history—which is obvious to those knowledgeable about architecture. The large post-and-beam structure began as a sawmill during the founding years of the settlement, then after being decommissioned became a hunter's lodge for Wolfsbane Hollow's third mayor. After that mayor's passing during a hunting accident, ownership of the lodge fell to his sons who sold it to the Logrim family who converted the lodge into an alehouse, and later an inn.

Now owned by Paeter Logrim (N male human), the Foxhound is the premiere place for entertainment in all of Wolfsbane Hollow. The inn features a large central stage in its downstairs alehall where performers regularly play to a packed crowd of locals.

The walls of the Foxhound are hung with many animal pelts and other taxidermied trophies. However, the crowning trophy is the blackened skull of the Red Reaper mounted over the Foxhound's great hearth on a wooden plaque. The macabre display is made especially grim by the fact that the lycanthrope's skull looks perfectly human due to the transition from werewolf to human form at death.

- **Food & Drink:** Meal (5 sp), ale (1 sp), wine (pitcher) (1 gp).
- **Accommodation:** Standard room (2 gp a night).

18: THE PICK AND PYRITE

Also known as "Fool's Gold Tavern," the Pick and Pyrite is the favoured alehouse of miners. Situated on the river, this modest bar serves cheap alcohol and meals for a fair price.

Norvus Olenstadt (N male human) owns the tavern which was originally called the Pick and Pail. After Norvus believed he'd struck it rich during a panhandling expedition, only to discover his haul was fool's gold (iron pyrite), the locals gave the establishment a new name that—much to Norvus' chagrin—stuck.

- **Food & Drink:** Meal (3 sp), ale (4 cp), wine (pitcher) (2 sp).
- **Accommodation:** Standard room (5 sp a night).

The tavern is a loud, rowdy place. Often busy at night, it is packed with hard men intent on drinking as much as possible before closing time. Surprisingly, fights—or at least serious fights—are rare; most of the miners know each other and must trust their lives to each other in dangerous and difficult circumstances.

19: THE SERPENT'S PATH

This circular wooden building just inside Wayward Gate is painted a rich lavender and decorated in vibrant banners of sunset hue. A wooden sign depicts a pair of serpents coiled in an elaborate knot, with "The Serpent's Path" written above in fine calligraphy.

Here, the Valyn wanderer Resheda Anvaskin (LN female old human [Valyn] wizard 3) runs a modest fortune-telling operation. Resheda performs palmistry, card reading and divinations for a price. The locals (correctly) believe Resheda is a witch and both respectfully (and fearfully) keep their distance and do their best not to cross her. That said, they have likewise come to respect and fear her ability to divine future events, and come to her in times of need. For her part, Resheda is content with her lot and does little to deter the townfolks' wild theories about the various animals living at her home.

20: THE UNDERHOLLOW

When Wolfsbane Hollow was founded, the settlers coming to the region could not possibly know the significance of the site. The presence of ancient stone architecture dating back to the lost giant empire of Isgiltur was little more than a curiosity. In truth, the marshy lands that became Wolfsbane Hollow sat atop one of the cornerstones of Isgiltur's far-reaching empire: Nathrovaskur. This sprawling, giant fortress sat at the southern end of the great fortified Hjalward wall. Whatever calamity destroyed the empire of Isgiltur likewise destroyed the Augan and the fortress Nathrovaskur. The entire fortification sank into the ground and was swallowed by swampland and rivers, largely submerged for thousands of years. The highest spires of Nathrovaskur once poked out from the hilltops but were long ago disassembled or destroyed by Arvollar architects building Wolfsbane Hollow.

The founder of the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild, a grave-digger by the name of Pethris Thans, discovered an entrance to Nathrovaskur while breaking ground for the Wolfsbane Hollow Cemetery. Pethris kept the discovery a secret and for years spent his evening hours spelunking in the cavernous ruins of the fortress, clearing chambers of subterranean monsters with the help of a close group of friends and plundering riches lost for millennia. Eventually the cleared chambers of Nathrovaskur became known as Underhollow and the expeditionary group became the Wolfsbane Hollow thieves' guild, with Pethris as its leader. Over time leadership has changed hands, most notably now to the werewolf Avud Kreslik (LE male human werewolf rogue 7) who discovered ancient arcane secrets deep within the ruins of Nathrovaskur's unexplored chambers that led him to his mastery of lycanthropy.

While the thieves' guild operates from the cleared portions of this massive, subterranean complex only a fragment of Nathrovaskur has been explored. Many chambers and passages were sealed by Pethris' original team and have remained untouched for generations. Avud believes that even greater, forgotten power of the Isgiltur Empire lies hidden away in the ruins of Nathrovaskur, but is cautious about who he sends into these chambers and how much they are told. Avud believes the deepest levels of Nathrovaskur may hold threats even he is

incapable of dealing with and has heard dreadful chanting in the tongue of giants emanating from lightless crevasses.

In the sealed upper portions of the Underhollow, the thieves' guild operates like a well-oiled machine. Dozens of spacious rooms accommodate the guild's members and their treasures, while lower chambers serve as kennels for Avud's werewolf servants during the full moon.

21: VURDFELL GATE

The north gate of Wolfsbane Hollow is named for the local mountain range, the Vurdfell Spine. This massive wooden gate sees traffic throughout much of the day as miners come and go from operations in the surrounding foothills. In the last five years this gate has seen increased traffic from traders and panhandlers going to and from the remote village of Hjalward.

22: WAYWARD ENTERPRISES

A relatively new addition to the town, Wayward Enterprises is a foreign trade organisation run out of a two-storey timber lodge. Run by Kodas Thonnar (CG male dwarf fighter 3), Wayward Enterprises seeks to build trade relations with distant kingdoms and foreign lands.

While based in the city-state of Arvallis, Kodas has come to Wolfsbane Hollow with the hopes of re-starting construction on a massive bridge designed by the Kingdom of Arvallis centuries ago to span the Greatshadow Gorge. Kodas sees this bridge as an opportunity to unite the eastern lands and bring trade from untouched markets to the west.

However, Kodas greatly underestimates the threat the nearby orc hordes present and their influence on his work. Kodas' chief advisor, Nerissa Shielendh (LE female elf thief 7) is an agent of the orc Hordelands. Nerissa came to Kodas a decade ago with knowledge of the bridge Arvallis originally intended to build and has subtly influenced all Kodas' business decisions in order to get the bridge built. Nerissa's sole desire is to have the bridge constructed which will allow her masters to march an army across the Greatshadow Gorge and sack the town.

Kodas' desire to build this bridge has drawn attention from the thieves' guild, as Avud Kreslik sees too much foreign attention as a risk to his operation, let alone the danger that could be posed by opening a through-way to the Hordelands. Kodas is trying to rally support from the locals to get the bridge built and is underplaying the orc threat, implying the war decades ago cost both sides tremendously and neither has the will to wage war again. So far this proposal has been met with tepid interest.



23: WAYWARD GATE

Wolfsbane Hollow's west gate is its primary source of traffic. This gate leads to the Arvollan countryside and the city-state of Arvallis, a hub of civilisation in the west. Traders, travellers and merchants flow through this gate during the height of summer, though traffic is noticeably thinner in autumn months and practically non-existent during the harsh winters.

A dozen or so members of the watch (LN male human fighter 1) man this gate at all times. Inevitably, some are in the pocket of the thieves' guild and all report to Tolun Moralli (location 26) the arrival of any particularly rich or obviously skilled travellers such as adventurers. Tolun is well aware such folk have a greater than average chance of uncovering the presence of the werewolves in Wolfsbane Hollow. He monitors such folk accordingly.

The gate is closed at dusk, and does not open again until dawn. Those with coin, however, can still come and go—the Watch are poorly paid and many are happy to accept small bribes.

24: WINTERBROOK ORPHANAGE

Founded by the Merciful Sisters of the Dawn—a sect of the Ignan faith—the Winterbrook Orphanage has stood for nearly 100 years. After the decimation of the Ignan faith during the inquisition, most of the Merciful Sisters left the orphanage and took the children under their care to Arvallis. The orphanage sat derelict for years. But, three years ago the passage of an Ignan pilgrim through Wolfsbane Hollow reignited the spark of inquisition decades old.

Inquisitor Derrah Ramm (LN female human cleric 2/thief 3) passed through Wolfsbane Hollow on her way to the mining town of Hjalward to participate in a hunt for a frost troll rumoured to be plaguing the settlement when she came upon tracks in the muddy road north of the town. Though she recognised them as wolf tracks, Derrah became suspicious due to the distance between their stride and followed them off the road into the nearby forest. It was there that Derrah found the dismembered carcass of a stag. On close examination she discovered the stride and paw size seemed to shift between steps, and she was able to determine that she was seeing the presence of a shapeshifter, likely a werewolf. This revelation sent Derrah back to Arvallis.

In the city-state of Arvallis, Derrah consulted with members of the Ignan faith and had divinations performed to confirm her suspicions the werewolf threat of Wolfsbane Hollow had indeed returned. Under the guise of the Merciful Sisters, Derrah returned to the town with nine female inquisitors (each LN female cleric [Ignis] 1) to re-open the orphanage. In truth, the inquisitors are quietly surveying Wolfsbane Hollow for signs of a resurgent lycanthropic threat. Derrah is convinced the locals are covering something up, as there have been no reports of werewolf activity since the death of the Red Reaper three decades ago. In spite of this suspicion, she has not yet made any credible discoveries.

On the surface, the Winterbrook Orphanage is once more in operation. Orphans from Arvallis arrived with Derrah and her inquisitors and local wayward youths were taken in along with them. The ten inquisitors are patiently observing the locals and using the orphans as unknowing spies in the hopes of ferreting

out useful rumours or information without drawing undue attention to the orphanage's true purpose.

25: WOLFSBANE CEMETERY

Old, mossy headstones dot the rolling hills of the Wolfsbane Cemetery. Tended to by the Dust Talkers of Aether, the cemetery sees little traffic during any hour of the day. The cemetery's paths are fringed with weeds and many of the older graves are overgrown. Old trees spread their wide boughs in the older parts of the graveyard, creating shadowy places perfect for discrete assignments or meetings best not carried out in public.

A mausoleum near the city wall dedicated to Pethris Tans contains a secret entrance (find secret doors roll discovers) into the headquarters of the thieves' guild, the Underhollow (location 20). The entrance is warded with several traps that sound an alarm deep in the headquarters. Thus, those infiltrating the guild this way could be in for a rude surprise.

26: WOLFSBANE GARRISON

One of the oldest structures in Wolfsbane Hollow, the garrison was built by the Kingdom of Arvallis to serve as a military outpost shortly after the founding of Wolfsbane Hollow. A fine example of late Arvollan architecture, the garrison features concrete-plastered stone walls with 30-foot high, square stone towers topped by crenelated battlements. Banners of a style harkening back to the glory days of Arvallis fly from the battlements. The entire garrison is surrounded by a 15-foot wide and 30-foot deep moat with singular access across a drawbridge. The garrison's keep can hold 1,500 men-at-arms, but much of the keep now lies hauntingly empty. Wolfsbane Hollow is a small community and a compliment of roughly 200 guards is sufficient to police the streets and guard the walls.

A grim, but necessary, facet of the garrison is the public gallows set in the centre of the plaza by the garrison's entrance. While the gallows are not commonly used, there is at least one public execution every year; typically for heinous crimes such as murder and the like. More often than not, those hung at the gallows are innocent patsies, taking the blame for the thieves' guild's handiwork. The guild has a tight grip over the army of Wolfsbane Hollow.

The garrison's commander, Ethnarch Tolun Moralli (CE middle-aged male human werewolf fighter 6), is bought and paid for by the thieves' guild and is one of Avud Kreslik's lycanthrope subordinates. Tollun has little care for the day-to-day wellbeing of Wolfsbane Hollow, and is instead grossly indulgent thanks to his considerable misbegotten wealth.

Other members of the Wolfsbane Hollow Army see Tollun as ineffectual at best and incompetent at worst. The most vocal detractor to Tollun, Commander Uther Longbarrow (LN male human fighter 7), was ejected from the garrison several years ago and sent to the frozen outpost at Hjalward in the Vurdfell Mountains as punishment. No other members of the army have since spoken up against Tollun's leadership.

NPC CODEX

AVUD KRESLIK

Avud Kreslik is the shadowy leader of Wolfsbane Hollow.

AVUD KRESLIK

Slender and strong this man dresses in rich clothes.

Lawful evil male human werewolf thief 7

Move 12"

Abilities Str 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Cha 12

Armour Class 4 (*studded leather* +1)

Hit Points 27 (7 HD)

Special Defence Avud is only injured by silver or +1 or better magic weapons

Attacks *short sword* +1 (THAC0 18, 1-6+2)

Combat Abilities backstab (+4, x3 damage)

Thieves' Abilities PP 60%, OL 52%, F/RT 50%, MS 55%, HiS 43%, HN 25%, CW 94%, RL 35%

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant, Werewolf

In werewolf form, Avud has the following altered statistics:

Move 15"

Armour Class 4 (natural)

Attack bite (THAC0 19, 2-8+1 plus lycanthropy)

Combat Abilities backstab (+4, x3 damage), surprise (1-3)

NERISSA SHIELENDH

Nerissa Shielendh spies for the orcs of the Hordelands.

NERISSA SHIELENDH

This tall, slender elven woman is impeccably dressed.

Lawful evil female elf thief 7

Move 12"

Abilities Str 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Cha 14

Armour Class 2 (*studded leather* +1)

Hit Points 25 (7 HD)

Attacks *short sword* +1 (THAC0 18, 1-6+1)

Combat Abilities backstab (+4, x3 damage)

Thieves' Abilities PP 75%, OL 62%, F/RT 55%, MS 70%, HiS 63%, HN 30%, CW 94%, RL 35%

Languages Common, Thieves' Cant

TOLUN MORALLI

Ethnarch Tolun Moralli leads Wolfsbane Hollows army and is a servant of Avud Kreslik.

TOLUN MORALLI

This tall, muscular warrior is obviously no stranger to violence. An aura of barely restrained aggression seems to hang over him like a dark cloud.

Neutral evil male human werewolf fighter 6

Move 6"

Abilities Str 16, Int 8, Wis 15, Dex 10, Con 16, Cha 10

Armour Class 2 (*plate mail* +1)

Hit Points 60 (6 HD)

Special Defence Tolun is only injured by silver or +1 or better magic weapons

Attacks *two-handed sword* +2 (THAC0 14, 1-10+3)

Languages Common, Werewolf

In werewolf form, Tolun has the following altered statistics:

Move 15"

Armour Class 5 (natural)

Attack bite (THAC0 16, 2-8+1 plus lycanthropy)

Combat Abilities surprise (1-3)



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