

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MISCELLANY:  
VILLAGE BACKDROPS III





YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS

MAKE YOUR CAMPAIGN PREP. EASIER

JOIN RAGING SWAN PRESS'S PATREON CAMPAIGN

[PATREON.COM/RAGINGSWANPRESS](https://patreon.com/ragingswanpress)

# GM'S MISCELLANY: VILLAGE BACKDROP III

---

Village Backdrops are short, richly detailed supplements that each present a single village ready to insert into almost any home campaign. Perfect for use as a waystop on the road to adventure, as an adventure site themselves or as PC's home, Village Backdrop present the details so the busy GM can focus on crafting exciting, compelling adventures. This GM's Miscellany is the third in the series.

## CREDITS

---

**Design:** John Bennett, Creighton Broadhurst, Jeff Gomez, Steve Hood, Robert Manson, Jacob W. Michaels, Richard Pett, Amber Underwood and Mike Welham

**Development:** Creighton Broadhurst and Thilo Graf

**Art:** Rick Hershey, William McAusland, Matt Morrow, Dean Spencer and Maciej Zagorski (The Forge Studios). Some artwork copyright William McAusland, used with permission. Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games.

**Cartography:** Tom Fayen, Tommi Salama and Maciej Zagorski (The Forge Studios)

©Raging Swan Press 2018.

The moral right of Amber Underwood to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Raging Swan Press or as expressly permitted by law.

## SYSTEM NEUTRAL EDITION

---

Welcome to this Raging Swan Press System Neutral Edition Village Backdrop. Herein you'll find evocative, inspiring text designed to help you—the busy GM—run better, quicker and easier games.

This book is compatible with most fantasy roleplaying games. It's impossible to create a truly system neutral book, though, and some generic game terms—wizard, fighter, human, elf and so on—lurk within. These generic terms are easily modified to the GM's system of choice.

One special note about the NPCs in this supplement. While some are wizards, fighters, clerics and so on, others are simply normal folk. Because different game systems handle normal folk differently we've made no attempt to note their "class" leaving them simply as "female human" and so on.

If you enjoyed this book, please consider leaving a review.

If you didn't enjoy this book, did you know Raging Swan Press offers a money back guarantee?



## CONTENTS

---

GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrop III .....	1	Lady Cilia Orminster .....	34
Credits.....	1	Hosford.....	35
System Neutral Edition .....	1	Hosford At a Glance.....	36
Contents .....	2	Notable Locations.....	38
Foreword .....	4	Pio Varrin.....	38
Blackhill Gaol .....	5	Dag Tunner .....	39
Blackhill Gaol At A Glance.....	6	Life in Hosford .....	40
Notable Locations at a Glance .....	7	Kerwyn's Pride.....	41
Life in Blackhill Gaol.....	8	Kerwyn's Pride At A Glance .....	42
The Surrounding Locality .....	9	Notable Locations at a Glance.....	43
Notable Locations in Blackhill Gaol.....	10	Life in Kerwyn's Pride .....	44
Commander Skella Grint.....	10	The Surrounding Locality.....	45
Lady Ephael Areva .....	10	Notable Locations in Kerwyn's Pride .....	46
Yadik Smoot.....	11	Vayla Hollan.....	47
"The Drider".....	11	Callavan Leneer .....	48
"Stirge" Grifo .....	12	Lady Cross.....	49
Stomer Brand.....	12	Lady Cross At A Glance .....	50
Mother Malis .....	12	Notable Locations at a Glance.....	51
Bossin.....	13	Life in Lady Cross .....	52
Bossin At a Glance .....	14	The Surrounding Locality.....	53
Notable Locations.....	16	Notable Locations in Lady Cross.....	54
Jacca Lander.....	16	Gin & Other Drinks .....	54
Sneev .....	17	Marissa .....	54
Thug.....	17	Aldermann Jarsson Trond.....	55
Life in Bossin .....	18	Laewas.....	57
Echo Harbour .....	19	Laewas At A Glance .....	58
Echo Harbour At A Glance .....	20	Notable Locations at a Glance.....	59
Notable Locations at a Glance .....	21	Life in Laewas .....	60
Life in Echo Harbour .....	22	The Ghosts of Laewas.....	61
The Surrounding Locality .....	23	Notable Locations in Laewas .....	62
Notable Locations in Echo Harbour .....	24	Raewin Chaethyrnan .....	62
Caller Deepway.....	24	Kielbo Burrow.....	62
Zephyr Broadsail .....	24	Alyse Brage.....	63
Grower Ouwei .....	25	Helgen Chaethyrnan.....	63
Trademaster Broadsail.....	25	Maegar's Sphere .....	64
Spellwright Lightguide .....	26	Maegar the Mage.....	64
Gulls' Roost.....	27	Lanthorn.....	65
Gulls' Roost At A Glance .....	28	Lanthorn At A Glance .....	66
The Living Dolls .....	28	Notable Locations at a Glance.....	67
Notable Locations at a Glance .....	29	The Flaming Skull Goblins.....	68
Life in Gulls' Roost .....	30	The Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers.....	69
The Surrounding Locality .....	31	Life in Lanthorn .....	70
Notable Locations in Gulls' Roost .....	32	The Surrounding Locality.....	71
Dovrenir Leafsong.....	32	Notable Locations in Lanthorn .....	72
Efrix Doll.....	32		
Reyney Keep .....	33		

Masquerade.....	77	Underdell.....	99
Masquerade At A Glance .....	78	Underdell At A Glance .....	100
Notable Locations at a Glance .....	79	Notable Locations at a Glance .....	101
Life in Masquerade .....	80	Life in Underdell .....	102
Magic Aboard Masquerade .....	80	The Surrounding Locality.....	103
Notable Folk.....	81	Notable Locations in Underdell .....	104
Villagers .....	81	Father Jalo Tammi .....	105
Notable Locations in Masquerade.....	82	Kirsi Niskanen .....	105
Adventures with Masquerade .....	84	Jeela Jaakola .....	106
Oakhurst .....	85	Vihtori Ikonen.....	106
Oakhurst At a Glance .....	86	Victory Elm .....	107
Notable Locations .....	88	Victory Elm At A Glance.....	108
The Werebats of Oakhurst .....	89	Notable Locations at a Glance.....	109
Bartrel Ebon Axe.....	89	Life in Victory Elm.....	110
Life in Oakhurst.....	90	The Surrounding Locality.....	111
Caja Wearne .....	90	Notable Locations in Victory Elm.....	112
Ravens' Cradle .....	91	Cyrrun Belatros.....	113
Ravens' Cradle At A Glance.....	92	OGL V1.0A .....	115
Notable Locations at a Glance .....	93		
Life in Ravens' Cradle.....	94		
The Surrounding Locality .....	95		
Notable Locations in Ravens' Cradle .....	96		
Tornos Vanadar .....	96		
Talliana .....	96		
Cache Boards .....	97		



Well blimey and gosh. You hold in your hands Raging Swan's third (!) *GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrop* designed to be compatible with 5e! That means we've been publishing the Village Backdrop line for three years, which makes it our most enduring and successful supplement line for 5e.

I'm hoping—given you've purchased this book—you've found the various villages jolly useful and that you've managed to include them in your own

campaign world. The line was born out of my frustration with long, boring journeys when the PCs stayed in a series of boring, one-dimensional, even nameless, villages. With these villages, I've crushed the problem!

I have recently been contacted by a couple of GMs, though, who have used the villages in a slightly different way—they've used a half-dozen or so to flesh out one corner of their world in much the same way as Raging Swan Press uses the Lonely Coast or the Duchy of Ashlar as a mini-campaign setting. That's so cool!

I'd love to know how you use our Village Backdrops in your campaign. Why not drop me a line using the email address below to let me know. (And, also, if you've got specific requests for certain kinds of Village Backdrops let me know at the same address!) Your comments will help shape our upcoming release schedule so please do get in touch.

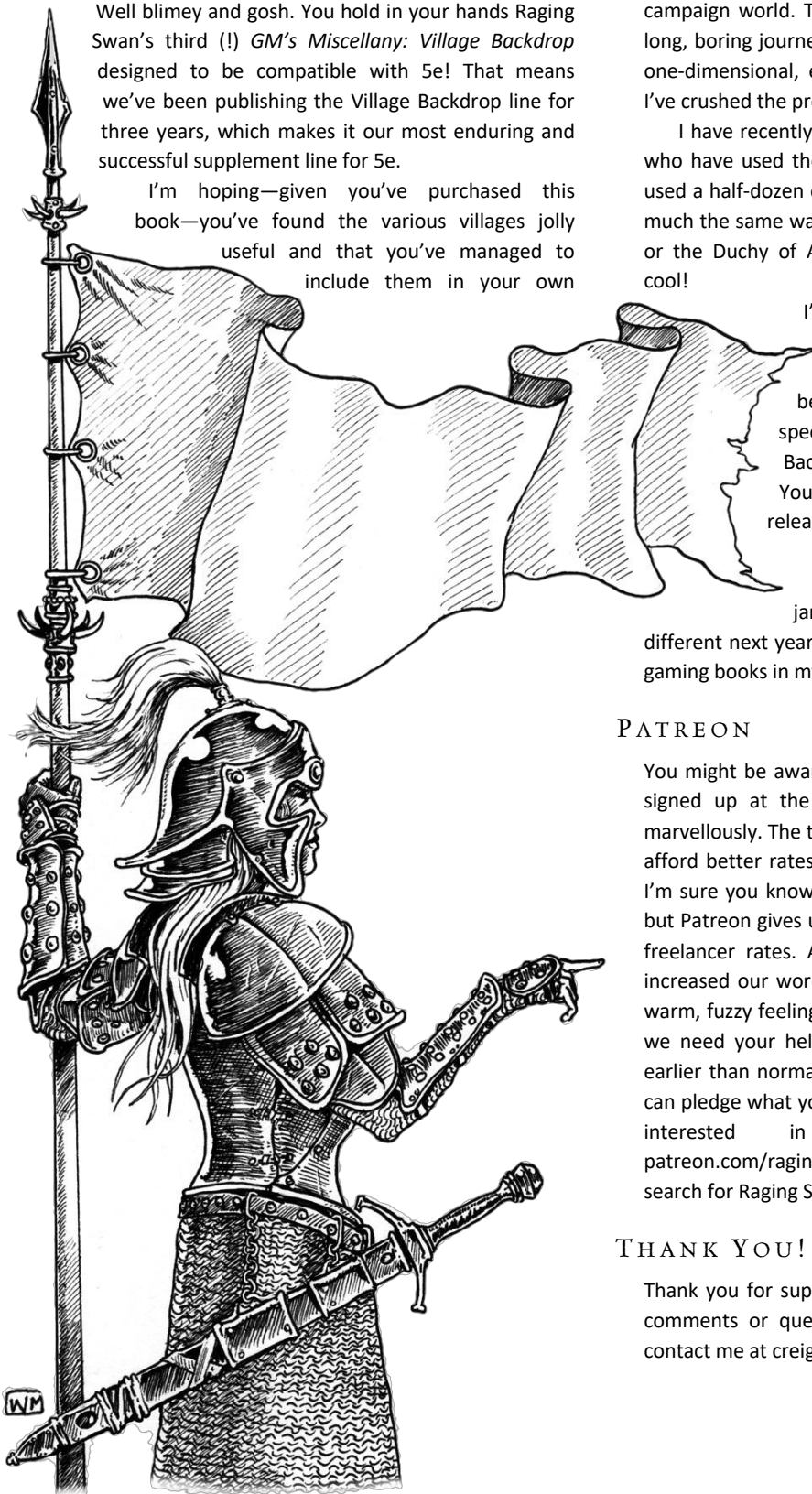
I talked last year about the possibility of a Village Backdrop hardback, but I just couldn't jam it into the schedule. I'm hoping things are different next year as there's something special about hardback gaming books in my opinion. Keep your peeled!

#### PATREON

You might be aware Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April 2015, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. 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 inside. 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](http://patreon.com/ragingswanpress) or head over to [patreon.com](http://patreon.com) and search for Raging Swan!

#### THANK YOU!

Thank you for supporting Raging Swan Press. If you've got any comments or questions, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at [creighton@ragingswan.com](mailto:creighton@ragingswan.com).



# BLACKHILL GAOL

---

**Words** Jacob W. Michaels **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*The journey to Blackhill Gaol was once only one-way, a stream of first debtors, then hardened criminals, then political prisoners brought to the remote labour camp to spend the rest of their lives in backbreaking work. Eventually, unwilling to accept their fates, the prisoners revolted. Though they earned some measure of freedom in the Uprising, life improved only a little. Now no warden watches their every move, but that means the most powerful among them—political masterminds, poison-wielding criminals and cult leaders—vie for control through guile and force. Worse, with guards outside the prison walls ready to mete out harsh reprisals should any flee, these leaders serve as de facto jailers.*

*Now the journey to Blackhill Gaol is no longer only a one-way trip for most; visitors make the difficult trek in search of forbidden lore or black-market goods, knowing that as long as they watch their step inside, they are free to leave Blackhill Gaol once their business is complete.*

## BLACKHILL GAOL AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Lady Ephael Areva

**Government:** Secret syndicate

**Alignments:** LG, CG, LN, CN, LE, CE, NE

**Population:** 118 (72 humans, 9 dwarves, 14 half-elves, 16 half-orcs, 7 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Lady Ephael Areva (Clocktower), Mother Malis (Nunnery), Yadik Smoot (Behind the Bars), Commander Skella Grint (Warden's House)

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** Drugs, poisons, secrets

The trip to Blackhill Gaol wasn't always supposed to be one-way. Many sentenced there for minor crimes were expected to work off their debt to society. But as the labour camp proved a useful source of cheap material, and its location an effective barrier against escape, more and more people were sent there, some for more serious crimes, some as political prisoners. Eventually, the inmates realized none of them would ever be released.

But the prisoners had other ideas. Led by Lady Ephael Areva, they took control of the camp through bribery, blackmail and brutality. After the Uprising, most agreed to wait behind the prison walls for the expected reprisal and then use those jailers' supplies to aid them in their escape into the harsh surroundings. But reprisal never came, just a squadron of guards with a message: The kingdom had matters of more pressing concerns—as long as the prisoners didn't break out, they would be left alone to live as they wanted. That agreement secured, the flow of new prisoners—new villagers—soon resumed.

Now Lady Ephael Areva tries to lead, vying with other former prisoners and their factions to exert influence over the village. Together, these leaders make sure any who leave to work the fields, hunt or bring in water and other materials know they must return for the good of all. Visitors, each with the opportunity to tip the balance of power, make the arduous journey to trade forbidden goods in return for the political secrets, dark lore or illegal substances available in the lawless village.



## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Blackhill Gaol, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Blackhill Gaol was originally a labour camp for debtors, hardened criminals and political prisoners who were never expected to see freedom again.
- The prisoners revolted but somehow managed to avoid direct reprisals. They remain free only so long as they don't stray far from the village.
- A thriving black market has developed in the village; poison and secrets are available for coin or trade.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Many of the villagers are dirty and worn; access to cleaning supplies is a low priority for most. Most are thin and muscular, due to prolonged hard labour, with hair and beards that clearly have been trimmed with the edge of a knife.

**Dress:** Like the villagers themselves, much of their clothing is dirty and frayed. Standard dress includes plain wool trousers and shirts, though enough better goods have been brought in since the prisoners' revolt that many also don warmer jackets or even furs. Jewellery or other signs of obvious wealth are almost never worn openly.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Rebee, Lesher, "Lurk"; *female* Niellia, Ananla, "Kestrel"; *family* Hanat, Tane, Briasaf.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Blackhill Gaol, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	One of the new guards is dirty; he'll let anyone leave as long as they have a token, no questions asked.
2	Don't drink water from the well; it's been poisoned since the Uprising.
3	"The Drider" wasn't sentenced to Blackhill Gaol. He came here for some unknown personal reason.
4*	Mother Malis kills any man who enters her Nunnery, even if they don't mean any harm.
5*	Skella Grint is just waiting until she has enough soldiers to march in and kill everyone in Blackhill Gaol.
6	Lady Ephael knows secrets that make her valuable to the king. That's why she's here, and not in a grave.

\*False rumour

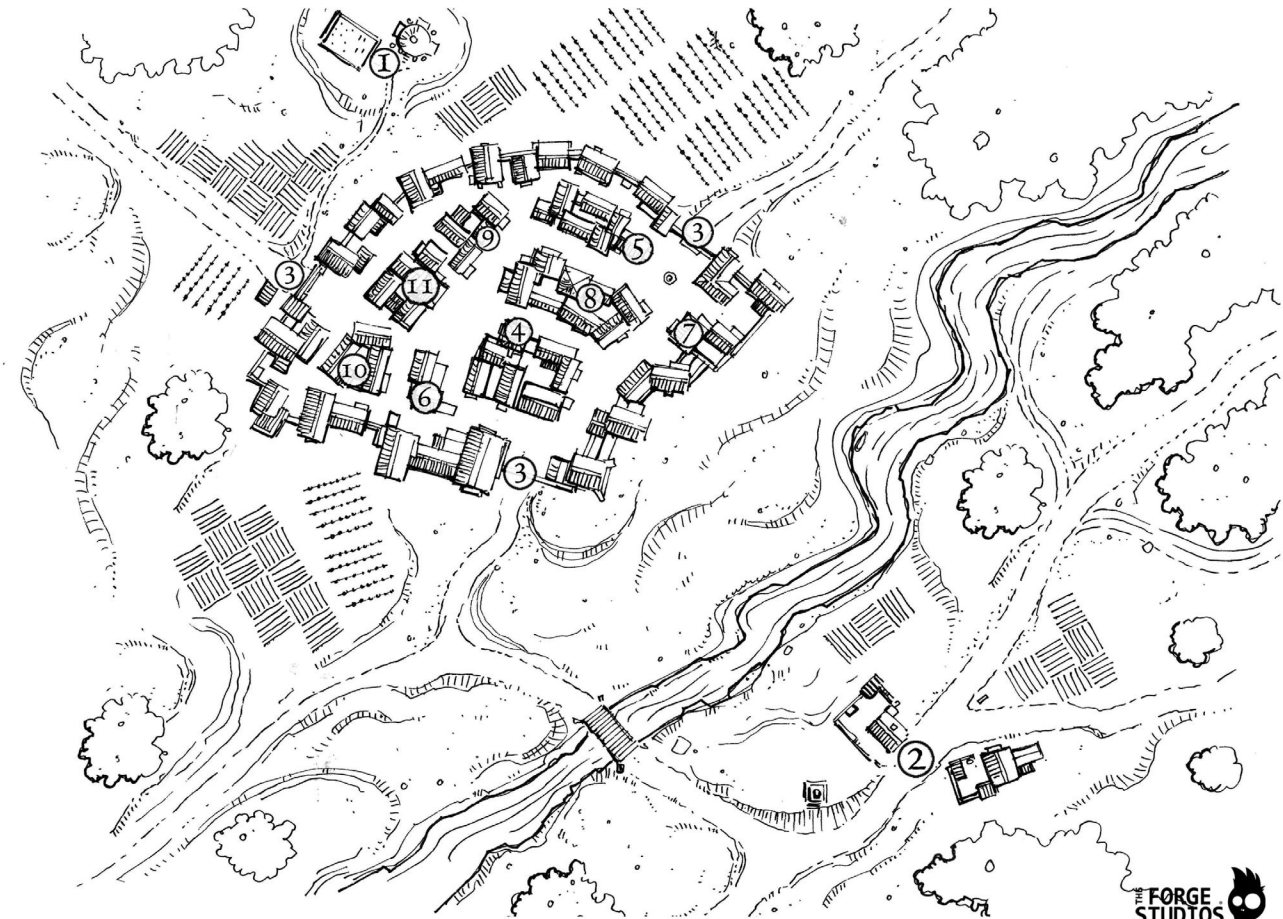


## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Rather than regular homes, most of Blackhill Gaol comprises cellblocks, joined buildings that contain numerous monastic-style cells—small, sparsely furnished rooms where residents slept as prisoners. A 20-foot-high wooden palisade, forms the walls of the former prison. Before the prisoners' revolt, each cell's door could be locked from the outside (DC 30 Open Lock opens). Most of the locks—though not all—are now broken.

A few locations in Blackhill Gaol, are of particular interest:

1. **Warden's House:** The former warden's home now houses Guard Commander Skella Grint and a squadron of her troops.
2. **Guard Shacks:** These two derisively named buildings shelter troops trusted to operate without immediate oversight.
3. **Gates:** Residents and guards keep close watch on Blackhill Gaol's entrances: River Gate (to the south), Warden's Gate (to the northwest) and Farm Gate (to the northeast).
4. **The Clocktower:** Time stands still according to the prominent clocktower in the centre of the village, which is now the demesne of Lady Ephael Areva.
5. **The Oven:** The still-used nickname for the forge where villagers were forced to maintain equipment, now used to make arms and armour when supplies permit.
6. **The Mews:** The former home of hunting falcons and messenger birds holds the avians' stuffed, mounted corpses, and the terrifying prisoner known as "the Drider."
7. **Behind the Bars:** While many of the prisoners dabble in fermentation and distillation, Yadi Smoot has been most successful, creating a small bar where drinks are often traded for favours.
8. **The Nunnery:** The largest set of cellblocks were taken over by Mother Malis, who established it as a safe place (relatively speaking) for female prisoners.
9. **The Hospit:** One surgeon—dubbed "Stirge" Grifo for his seemingly sadistic joy of bloodletting—remains of the medical staff who once kept prisoners healthy enough to work.
10. **The Stables:** Several cattle rustlers and poachers tend to the precious farm animals kept in the stables. The handlers' support is critical for any who wish to exert power over Blackhill Gaol.
11. **The Tithing House:** The village's closest thing to a temple, this holds shrines to the god of thieves, as well as lesser deities of the scorned, vengeful and—perhaps surprisingly—seekers of justice.



## LIFE IN BLACKHILL GAOL

Though no longer under strict supervision, opportunity remains slim in Blackhill Gaol and that malaise infects many of the former inmates. Many spend their days in aimless pursuits intended to do nothing but while away the time.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

Power is the most important currency in Blackhill Gaol, where favours have as much weight as gold. Whatever keeps villagers alive—whether a sword, spell or simply food—brings returns of some sort, though many resources are hard to come by. The one exception is a thriving black market in poisons, drugs and other alchemical items that can be made from plants growing in the surrounding hills.

A patrol checks all visitors to the village for contraband (such as an excessive number of weapons or armour), which must be left with the guards. They meticulously write down descriptions of each visitor and their goods, giving them a token to present upon their exit, where they are checked against the written descriptions. Anyone who doesn't match is sent back into the village to serve out their sentence.

### LAW & ORDER

The villagers resort to a rough, brutal justice, largely defined by the powerful exercising their will over the weaker. The powerbrokers rely on their supporters to enforce their own rules, primarily determining who gets to go outside each day to hunt, farm or gather water and other supplies. Most importantly, they make sure no one tries to escape, as they know that could have serious repercussions for all.

Visitors are largely safe from serious harm as long as they're careful: the inmates know if word spreads it's not safe to visit Blackhill Gaol, they'll lose their primary source of new goods. That said, petty larceny is always a potential danger and worse may come to those who cross the wrong person.



### VILLAGE DRESSING

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

#### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	The sun glares down, baking the hard, cracked clay of the village commons.
2	Two men shove a third man into the mud before sauntering off with the victim's wool jacket in hand.
3	An ox turns and glares at a herdsman as he kicks it in an effort to get it to move into its pen.
4	A pile of discarded grain rots near the door to a cellblock.
5	A group of workers outside the village walls race for the gate, screaming about an approaching landshark.
6	A rooster's morning crowing is cut off with a startled squawk.
7	A villager staggers out of Behind the Bars, clearly drunk, as the sun reaches its noonday height.
8	Several villagers practice hitting an animal skull with rocks hurled from makeshift slings.
9	A half-dozen villagers use yokes to bring in buckets of clean water from the Hillwend River.
10	A pair of mounted guards approach a village farmer, stopping for a fleeting conversation before moving on.
11	A villager throws rocks at the broken Clocktower until a pair of toughs move to stop him.
12	The sickly-sweet smell of some sort of smoking weed or tobacco wafts from an open cellblock door.
13	A barge, heavily laden with guards and a new prisoner, arrives on the Hillwend.
14	A downpour turns the commons into sticky mud, which coats everyone's feet and lower legs in reddish-brown muck.
15	The cry of some creature hunting in the hills echoes through the camp, causing many nervous looks.
16	Several large men shy away, faces paling, as the door to the Mews opens suddenly as they walk by.
17	With little illumination around to obscure them, the stars gleam brilliantly in the night sky. A comet races across the firmament.
18	A batch of burnt bread is tossed onto the ground, bouncing several times before it's snatched up by a passer-by.
19	A man yells curses as he narrowly avoids the contents of a chamber pot flung out of a second-storey cell.
20	A straight-backed woman in armour leads a patrol of guards to within bow shot of the gate, peering for a time toward the village.

## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

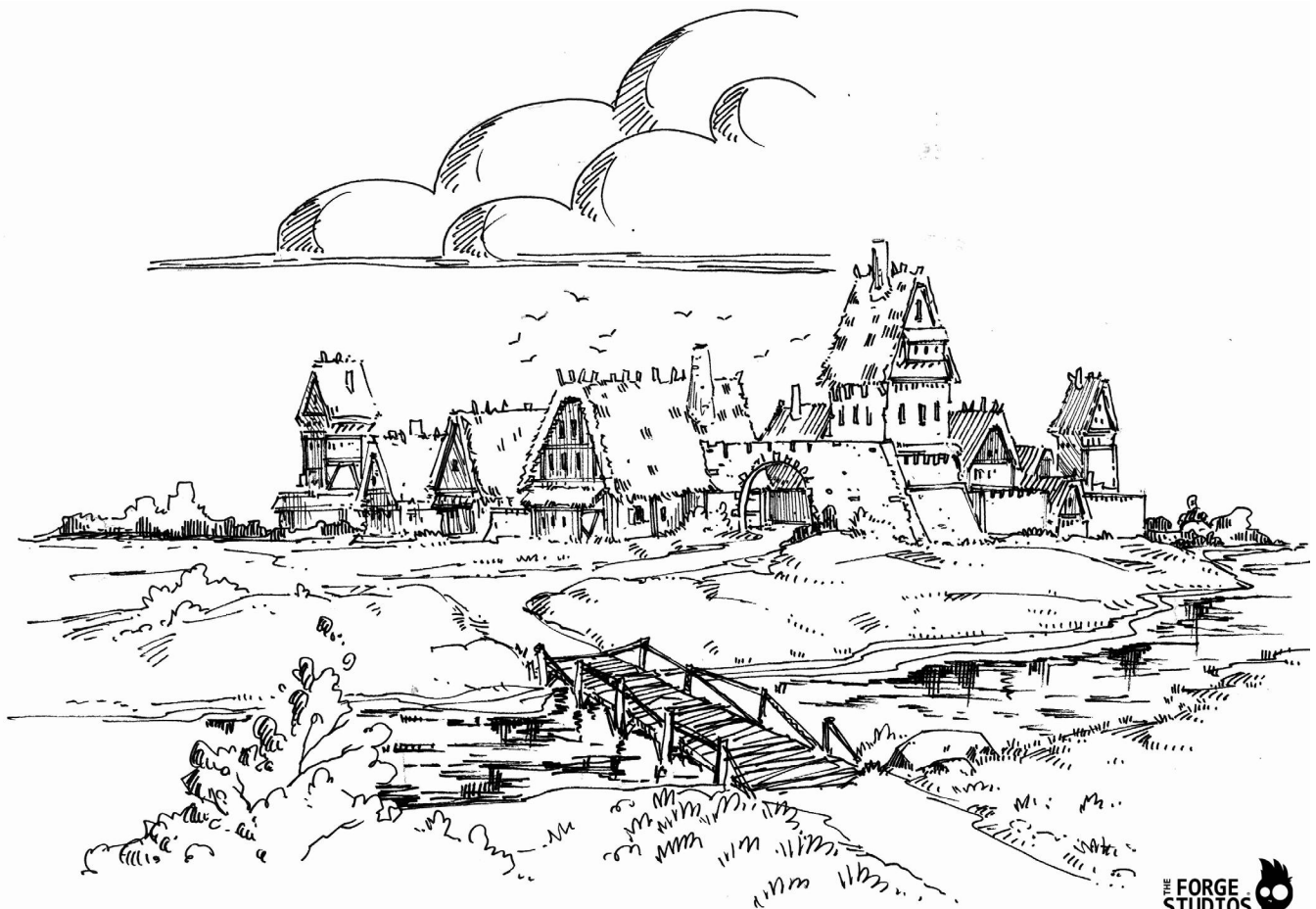
Blackhill Gaol's designers purposely built it in one of the most dangerous areas they could find, relying on its remoteness to keep inmates confined as much as any wall or guards. If it were too dangerous to try to escape, they realized, few would even try.

The barren Blackhills are a desolate, remote stretch of land, one as deadly to an unprepared visitor as any monster that inhabits it. Sandwiched between a summer of the sun beating mercilessly down and brutal winters in which the wind howls across the region like a banshee are rainy springs and autumns, which turn the region into a nearly impassable muddy morass. Little more than the dark, long, sharp grass that gives the region its name grows in the Blackhills, broken by the occasional grove of stunted trees. Hungry predators—big cats, bulettes, chimeras, gorgons and wyverns, among others—compete with bands of centaurs to prey on the herds of enormous bison and other such creatures able to subsist on the meagre offerings of the region.

Roads wend through the hills, legacies of ancient attempts to tame the land. With many of them little more than a track through the tall grass, the safest route of travel is the Hillwend.

The gentle, winding river can carry small boats up most of its length, though rapids can make the trip arduous at the wrong time of the year. More dangerous are flash floods, which can leave a boat and its contents smashed far from the Hillwend's banks. Blackhill Gaol was built along the waterway, allowing prisoners to be delivered via boats that carry armed guards who worry more about protecting themselves against the region's dangers than about escape or rescue attempts.

The remains of previous attempts to tame the Blackhills dot the landscape, crumbling ruins housing extraplanar beings who outlasted their bargains with desperate colonists seeking to survive. Adventurers and bandits arrive regularly at the Blackhills, some seeking to loot these ancient ruins, others searching for caves where they can hide ill-gained loot from the pursuit of justice. These makeshift shelters house the living, protecting them from the dangers in the area...but also sometimes the dead, some of which rise again in undead fury at their failure to endure the region's hardships.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN BLACKHILL GAOL

---

### 1: WARDEN'S QUARTERS

*On a small hill outside the village, a wooden tower, with a good view of Blackhill Gaol, rises above a sturdy-looking home.*

Commander Skella Grint uses this building, which used to be the prison warden's home, as lodging for herself and a patrol of ten guards. The tower is always manned by at least two soldiers, who keep a watch to make sure no one tries to slip away while working outside Blackhill Gaol's walls.

**Justice Prevails:** Word has come to Skella of several ritualistic murders in the village, one on each of the last three new moons. Knowing the villagers will never cooperate with her attempts to solve these crimes, she asks the PCs to go undercover and navigate the factions in the former prison to discover who's responsible and bring the killer to justice. She believes the prisoners' sentences of labour, not death, mean they deserve protection from killers. She promises a reward of a magical weapon or armour as payment.

### 2: GUARD SHACKS

*Perched on twin hills, two stark, wooden buildings flank the path, offering line of sight to much of the surrounding area.*

Two patrols of ten soldiers each live in these homes, which were built to house the earliest female inmates. Skella Grint places her most trusted soldiers here, relying on them to keep the discipline she personally enforces to the north.

---

---

#### COMMANDER SKELLA GRINT

LG female human ranger 5

*Standing erect in a brightly polished breastplate and immaculate uniform, this blonde warrior looks as though she defies the very land around her.*

**Mannerisms:** Commander Skella Grint lets her emotions, most commonly set in a disgusted sneer, run across her face.

**Personality:** Skella is a perfectionist and a stickler for detail and rules who might have been a paladin had she had a stronger faith in a deity. She runs the guard as her own personal army and it's only orders and a lack of manpower that keeps her from marching into Blackhill Gaol and restoring order.

**Background:** Skella enrolled in the army at the earliest possible age, though her forthrightness has at times hurt her career. Where some might see this posting as a punishment, she looks at it as an important duty she will not fail.

### 3: GATES

*Knotted ropes hang from heavily fortified wooden gates to allow them to be ponderously pulled open.*

The gates open slowly, requiring several people (or an oxen) to move them. Each one—River Gate (to the south), Warden's Gate (to the northwest) and Farm Gate (to the northeast)—is watched by several guards outside, as well as residents loyal to whoever is in power inside (the latter know unauthorized departures could lead to deadly reprisals).

### 4: THE CLOCKTOWER

*A four-sided clocktower rises above the village. The hands on the clock face never move.*

The builders of Blackhill Gaol thought the clocktower would add to the inmates' punishment, letting them see exactly how much time they spent in the prison. After the Uprising, almost all the mechanisms were pulled out and used for scrap. Lady Ephael Areva claimed the heights for her own, treating it as the throne room of her personal fiefdom.

**The Cost of Innocence:** An ally of the PCs has been accused of a terrible crime. Lady Ephael has evidence that could exonerate the noble. She tells the PCs where they can find it, but in return wants their help to wreak her revenge on an old foe. If

---

---

#### LADY EPHAEL AREVA

LN female human thief 4

*A fur stole hangs around the neck of this attractive blonde woman, who wears several rings and necklaces that seem too grandiose for her worn dress.*

**Mannerisms:** Lady Ephael Areva is a chameleon, playing the haughty noblewoman or helpless ingénue as she thinks best suits her audience and goals.

**Personality:** Undiminished by her circumstances, this scheming noblewoman expects any and all to defer to her wishes. Unable to leave Blackhill Gaol for the moment, she plans to rule here—and maintain influence outside—until her circumstances enable her to move on to bigger, better schemes back in the capital, where she belongs.

**Background:** Rumours abound as to the former courtesan's history, some going so far as to claim she secretly bore the king's heir and was locked away to preserve that truth, only the monarch's love for her sparing her from a "tragic accident." She arrived at the prison with many court secrets—routinely welcoming trusted aides from the capital who sought information—before going on to spur the Uprising that took control of Blackhill Gaol.

asked, she does not disclose the reasons behind her demand.

## 5: THE OVEN

*Chimneys rise from the end of this cluster of buildings, and wide-set double doors open onto a fully equipped forge.*

The forge was used to maintain the equipment prisoners were forced to use in their labour. Except in winter, when working here was seen as a welcome assignment, spending time in the forge was generally considered a punishment thanks to the brutal heat within. The forge lies cold most of the time.

## 6: MEWS

*Dozens of hunting falcons and smaller messenger birds, all shrouded in shadow, stare down from perches along the walls of this dim chamber. A faint chalky smell fills the air.*

The mews were home to the prison's birds—some used for hunting, some for sending messages—before the arrival of their current denizen, known simply as "the Drider." He lurks here in the shadows, like a spider, a figure feared by almost all the villagers. Still, the power he offers attracts the greedy and desperate, who cross his threshold to seek his favour.

## 7: BEHIND THE BARS

*Smoky lamps shed light on a mismatched collection of tables and chairs in this makeshift tavern. A jury-rigged pair of stills stand on a door set on twinned barrels to serve as a bar.*

---

---

### YADIK SMOOT

NE male human thief 4

*A wide-brimmed hat and neatly trimmed black beard shade this short man's face, providing stark contrast to his white teeth as he flashes a smile.*

**Mannerisms:** Always smiling, Yadik is never without his hat.

**Personality:** Yadik comes across as everyone's friend, a genial sort who couldn't possibly be a threat. Yadik is an accomplished liar, whose only interest is helping himself. He's perfectly content for everyone to remain in Blackhill Gaol, where he seeks to be the big fish in a little pond.

**Background:** Yadik was raised among thieves and took his place in their ranks as soon as he was able, slitting purses when he was just a lad. His play for more power in the guild—an attempt at a mass poisoning—garnered him powerful enemies, which led to his incarceration. His moonshine won him numerous friends (and his poison eliminated several enemies) while a prisoner, and he merely expanded the scope of his operations after the Uprising, making him one of the former prison's most influential powerbrokers.

Run by Yadik Smoot, Behind the Bars is Blackhill Gaol's only tavern, gambling house and brothel. It serves a rough liquor, a moonshine whose strength is the only thing that makes up for its horrific taste. Many of the inmates while away their time here, playing games of chance and betting whatever valuables they have, along with promises of favours to come.

- **Food & Drink** moonshine (1 cup), 5 sp or a minor favour, meal (bread [raw in the centre], bland vegetable stew, lizard on a stick), 1 gp or a major favour.
- **Poisons for Sale:** Ingestive A (5 gp), Ingestive B (30 gp), Insinuating A (10 gp), Insinuating B (75 gp), Insinuating C (600 gp).

## 8: THE NUNNERY

*A pair of women stand guard in front of this cellblock, which otherwise looks little different to any other dwelling.*

This large cellblock has been taken over by Mother Malis, who provides safe lodging for any woman who wants it—an offer taken up by most of Blackhill Gaol's distaff population. Men are, except in rare circumstances, not welcome here and at risk of at the very least a beating should they be found within.

**A Mother's Love:** Mother Malis wants the PCs to take one of her charges, a young woman with a newborn, to freedom. (Malis doesn't mention the woman is fully invested in her cult and would help her from outside, nor is the baby actually hers.)

---

---

### "THE DRIDER"

CE male half-elf magic-user 8

*Intense eyes stare out from sunken sockets in this gaunt man's face. Like the rest of his body, his spidery fingers seem almost too long, as if they had been stretched.*

**Mannerisms:** "The Drider" avoids bright light, staying in his shrouded rooms during the day, and emerging only at night.

**Personality:** "The Drider" cares nothing for those around him unless if they can help him or can serve as sacrifices should he need them when he succeeds in his quest to contact some greater being. He plays on their fear of him to maintain his privacy.

**Background:** Entranced by the potential power of the creatures of Hell and the Abyss, the wizard who would come to be known as "the Drider" went to Blackhill Gaol on his own, believing the misery there would be conducive to his studies.

## 9: THE HOSPIT

*Specimen jars, vials of strange concoctions, powders and pastes, and strained cloths stand on shelves above beds all around this room. An adjoining chamber features a single wooden bed with stands of medical implements nearby.*

The prison had a largely well-maintained hospital; in fact, it wasn't unheard of for prisoners to intentionally hurt themselves in ways that would land them here for a time as a chance to take a break or escape a looming confrontation. After the Uprising, all the staff, except "Stirge" Grifo, fled. Grifo remains because he finds the opportunities here make up for the difficult life.

## 10: THE STABLES

*The smell of livestock, hay and manure fill this building, where pens hold chickens, goats and oxen.*

The animals here are an important resource, providing their strength, milk and eggs to the inmates. Their handlers are one of the primary power blocs that determine who controls Blackhill Gaol. The handlers—largely cattle rustlers and former debt-ridden farmers—carefully guard the animals from predators outside the walls and fellow villagers looking for meat.

## 11: THE TITHING HOUSE

*Several crude wooden holy and unholy symbols hang from this building's lintel. Carved prayers and crude glyphs decorate its wooden doorframe.*

After the Uprising, the prison's temple to the Lady of

---

---

### MOTHER MALIS

LE female human cleric 4

*A scar runs down one cheek, from eye to mouth, of this heavysset woman. She wears a scarlet wimple.*

**Mannerisms:** Mother Malis dislikes talking to men. If she must, she addresses her words to any women present.

**Personality:** Mother Malis is a devotee of the goddess of spite and personifies that emotion. She may wait before seeking retribution, but she never lets a slight go unpunished.

**Background:** One of the primary powerbrokers in the prison, Mother Malis led a cult before her arrest and avoided execution only because none of her followers would implicate her in the murders and other crimes they committed. She's gathered much of the female population under her supposed protection and hopes to convert them to her cause before eventually leading them out of Blackhill Gaol. More fall under her sway daily without even realizing it.

Redemption became a multipurpose shrine, where the pious can pray or, less frequently, give offerings to almost any god. The largest shrine is to the god of thieves, though it only barely surpasses that of the god of justice (many of those in Blackhill Gaol feel they were wronged in their sentence and believe they deserve justice). Though no powerful clerics remain, several adepts (LN male or female human cleric 1–2) linger. These adepts are generally not considered powerful enough to shift the balance of power between contending factions.

- **For Sale:** *potion of healing* (400 gp), *potion of climbing* (500 gp).

---

---

### "STIRGE" GRIFO

CN male halfling

*Bloodstains cover the once-white coat of this halfling, whose pockets contain various blades and other implements.*

**Mannerisms:** The avuncular "Stirge" Grifo rarely seems flustered, always willing to help a stranger or treat an injured creature. He habitually wipes his hands on his dirty coat.

**Personality:** On the surface a dedicated healer, the halfling's fascination with blood and how bodies work is leading him down a dark road (if not confronted, his alignment will eventually change to CE).

**Background:** "Stirge" Grifo darker impulses were kept in check by his fellow surgeons. He chose to remain after the Uprising to continue his work, though his pursuit of increasingly barbaric scientific studies is increasing. His propensity for prescribing bloodletting (sometimes by leeches, sometimes by scalpel) earned him his nickname.

---

---

### STOMER BRAND

CN male human ranger 2/thief 2

*A large brand, a crescent moon joined at the points by a large "K" facing inward, mars this man's left cheek.*

**Mannerisms:** Stomer almost constantly whistles through a gap in his teeth, a conscious affectation he believes makes his silence while thieving throw investigators off his trail.

**Personality:** Stomer never met an easy fix he didn't like, always choosing the easier path. He would leave Blackhill Gaol in a second if the opportunity presents itself. A coward, he avoids violence if at all possible.

**Background:** Stomer Brand was a cattle rustler before being branded by an angry farmer and sent to Blackhill Gaol to work off his considerable debts. After the Uprising, he took charge of those caring for the animals.

# BOSSIN

---

**Words** John Bennett **Cartography** Tom Fayen

*Nestled in a deep dell behind the cliffs guarding the Lonely Coast, Bossin is a troubled village. The rich bounty of the nearby mines and the excellent farmland should provide the villagers with a comfortable life, even though the lower part of the village periodically floods, but instead the populace now labours under the tyranny of Jacca Lander and his hired thugs. Extortion, disappearances and "accidents" are a daily feature of life in Bossin and the villagers are desperate for salvation, but they dare not speak of their woes for fear of ending up in the Pit.*

## BOSSIN AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler** Jacca Lander

**Government** Overlord

**Population** 648 (621 humans, 15 dwarves, 8 halflings, 4 half-elves, 1 half-orc)

**Alignments** LE, LN, NG, LG

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven

**Resources & Industry** Farming, hunting, mining

The village of Bossin sits nestled in a deep dell behind the cliffs guarding the Lonely Coast. Storms periodically batter the village, flooding the lower portion where the poorest villagers dwell. Yet, the rich bounty of the nearby mines and the excellent farmland provide the villagers with a comfortable living. The routine patrols from Caer Syllan offer a measure of safety to the unfortified Bossin, deterring raids from the half-goblins and other monsters dwelling in the Tangled Woods. To the east, a series of broken cliffs and unexplored forests provide plentiful game for hunters.

Life would almost be idyllic in Bossin if it were not for the machinations of the current village reeve, the retired adventurer Jacca Lander. Seeing an easier way to accumulate wealth than risking his life exploring old ruins, Jacca quietly disposed of the previous reeve and brought in a group of thugs to consolidate his power. He and his men regularly extort money from the villagers for their “protection,” rigging accidents to dispose of those who do not cooperate. Jacca ensures none of this reaches the ears of Lord Locher in the fortress of Caer Syllan and so far he seems content to rule Bossin as his personal fiefdom.

### NOTABLE FOLK

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

**Brisila Toldan** (location 4; NG female human druid 4) Brisila serves Bossin as its resident herbalist, healer and midwife. She despises Jacca Lander who has made his intentions to marry her well known.

**Holwin Half-Breed** (location 6; NG male half-elf ranger 3) The taciturn Holwin lives on the outskirts of Bossin. A hunter by trade, he sometimes serves as a guide to those wishing to explore further into the Tangled Wood.

**Jacca Lander** (location 7; LE male human fighter 2/thief 3) The corrupt village reeve, Jacca extorts the villagers for his own gain.

**Keirnen Lokmor** (location 3; LG male human fighter 4) Keirnen retired from adventuring after a poisoned half-goblin arrow crippled his left leg. He runs the village’s shop.

**Sneev** (location 9; NE male half-goblin thief 4) Sneev serves as Jacca’s spy and informant. He has strange abilities that allow him to pass as human. Only Jacca knows his true identity.

**Turgon Goldrock** (location 5; LN male dwarf) Turgon heads the Goldrock clan living in Bossin. A miner by trade, he is beginning to chaff under Jacca’s ever increasing protection fees.

**Wartham Briston** (location 8; NE male half-orc fighter 2/thief 2) Jacca’s chief enforcer, Wartham’s unique skill set allows him to bash heads or rig accidents equally well. Surprisingly, due to his upbringing, he is a skilled musician.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Bossin comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **The Pit:** Those who displease Jacca often end up imprisoned at the bottom of this old well.
2. **Hovels:** The poorest of Bossin live here in wattle and daub shacks.
3. **General Store:** Keirnen Lokmor runs this well-appointed general store which features a stable and a small smithy.
4. **Brisila’s Home:** Brisila lives here in a cottage cluttered with racks of drying herbs.
5. **Goldrock Compound:** The Goldrock dwarven clan dwell in this walled compound.
6. **Hunters’ Huts:** A small community of hunter’s live in wooden houses and animal skin tents.
7. **Jacca Lander’s Manor:** Jacca used his riches to build this ostentatious stone manor house to lord over the village.
8. **Bell o’Dell:** Bossin’s largest inn and tavern serves as a front for Jacca’s gang.
9. **Prison:** This low stone building which sees frequent use houses its own stable. Nearby stand quarters for the soldiers from Caer Syllan to use if they have to spend any time in the village.
10. **Watchtower:** This squat stone tower has a beacon fire atop in case the village is attacked.

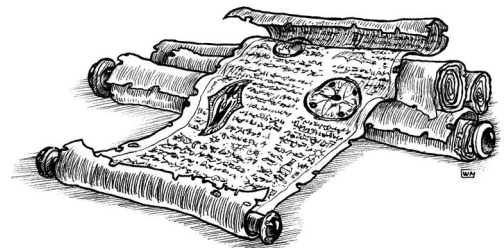
### MARKETPLACE

When the PCs arrive in Bossin, the following items are for sale:

**Potion** *growth* (300 gp)

**Scrolls (Magic-User)** *locate object* (600 gp)

**Scroll (Cleric)** *sanctuary* (300 gp)





## VILLAGE LORE

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

- The village of Bossin is well situated amidst rich farmland and a few small nearby mines.
- A famous retired adventurer, Kiernan Lokmor who single-handedly held off a tribe of half-goblins while his party escaped, calls Bossin home.
- Jacca Landers extorts the villagers for protection money. His gang of thugs bully the villagers, keeping them quiet so word of his misdeeds do not reach Caer Syllan.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Most villagers tend towards blonde to mousey brown hair with dark brown eyes that are almost black. The arrival of the Goldrock clan has started a trend in long braided beards amongst the men.

**Dress:** Bossin villagers typically wear fine serviceable leathers dyed in earth hues. Women wear simple jewellery fashioned from semi-precious metals and gems from the nearby mines.

**Nomenclature:** Male: Cierwin, Dorwell, Kellen, Panwill, Timus; Female: Dorla, Finwe, Janny, Risla, Walma; family Entmoor, Morway, Northam, Tallbrook.

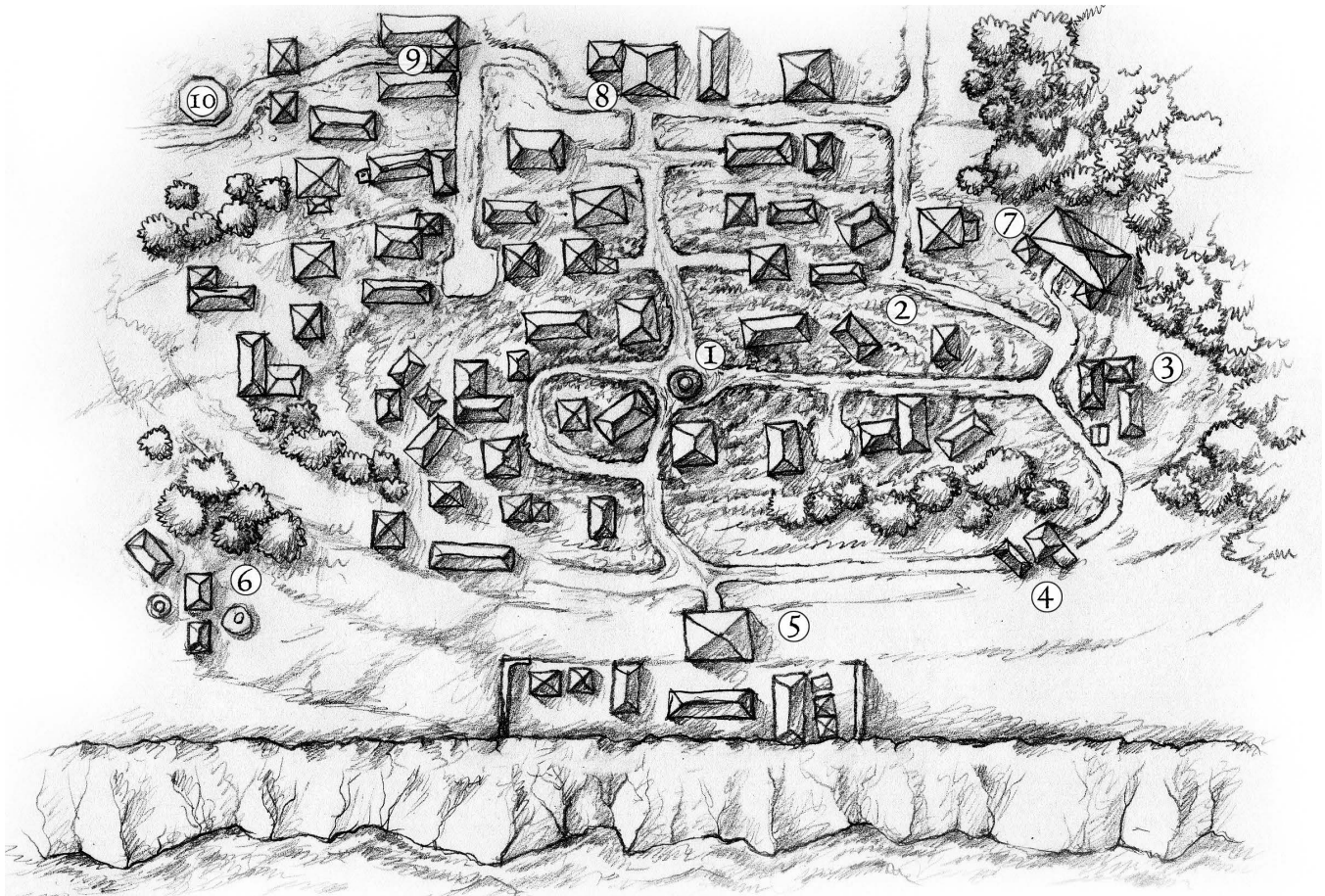
## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Bossin, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

### D6 RUMOUR

1	Jacca seeks to marry Brisila. Men who get too close to her tend to disappear.
2*	A pile of gold lies buried at the bottom of the Pit.
3	Brisila often frequents Keirnen's shop. Sometimes she's not seen leaving until early morning.
4	Jacca hides his vast wealth, in a nearby mine.
5	A half-goblin has been seen sneaking around the village.
6*	The Goldrocks seek to lure the village children to their ancient kingdom hidden in the cliffside.

\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

---

### 1: THE PIT

This decrepit, dry well roughly 12 ft. around, has slick, smooth walls. It descends nearly 100 ft. before opening into a small, natural cavern only 20 ft. wide. A thick rope rests above ground and is used to haul prisoners in and out of the well. (Scaling the Pit's walls is a very difficult proposition).

Jacca enjoys using the well to hold those who refuse to submit to his extortion, imprisoning recalcitrant villagers right before the rain comes. The fear of drowning has made many see the wisdom of obeying Jacca.

### 2: HOVELS

The poorest of Bossin's villagers live here at the deepest point of the dell. When it rains heavily, flooding often occurs and the villagers hurry to higher ground with their valuables or otherwise seek refuge on their roofs. Afterward, the ground becomes a morass of thick mud and filth. The older stone houses have half sunk in muck while newer, wooden houses sit above the ground on stilts.

### 3: GENERAL STORE

A well-fashioned building built from stone and wood houses Bossin's general store. Attached to the main building is a tidy stable and another small building housing a smithy stands nearby. Keirnen Lokmor (LG male human fighter 4) is the owner and proprietor. A former adventurer, he suffered a grievous leg wound while holding off a half-goblin hunting party pursuing his companions. Unable to continue his career, he used what he had earned to set up shop in Bossin. While he hates paying Jacca's protection fee, he feels unable to fight back because of his lame leg. Keirnen is particularly affable with clients who are known adventurers. Most basic goods as well as a variety of common weapons and armour are sold here. Since Keirnen employs a smith, he can also take orders for custom-made items.

### 4: BRISILA'S HOME

A patchwork collection of stone, wood and sod, Brisila's cottage can be mistaken for a mound of earth from a distance. Brisila (NG female human druid 4) devotes one room of the cottage as a sick room where she treats her patients with herbal remedies. Her care and treatment of Bossin's downtrodden often puts her at odds with Jacca. Yet, it is this fiery unbroken spirit that attracts Jacca to her.

### 5: GOLDROCK COMPOUND

The Goldrock clan built a collection of stone buildings abutting the nearby cliff to house the dwarves and their mining equipment. A 10 ft. high stone wall surrounds the compound. The dwarves use the building on the ground floor to conduct business with visitors. Strangely for dwarves, they dwell above ground on the upper floor.

The Goldrock clan is beginning to chafe paying Jacca's hefty fees especially after a recent string of accidents in one of their mines hurt not only their pocketbook, but their pride as well. Trouble will result.

---

---

#### JACCA LANDER

LE male human fighter 2/thief 3

*This tall man wears dark leathers. His black hair and moustache are well oiled, and his eyes are as cold and lifeless as two pieces of flint.*

**Distinguishing Features:** Jacca looks like a thug from the slums, playing dress-up in aristocratic finery. He tries to cultivate an air of distinguished manners and fails miserably at every step—whether its cutlery, chivalry.

**Mannerisms:** Jacca always talks in a loud and boisterous manner. He also likes twirling his moustache. He enjoys providing a verbal beat-down just as much as a physical one, with a particular fondness for one-liners. His one-liners include:

- "I am Jacca Lander, but you may call me: THE LAW!"
- "You. Me. To your end."
- "I have no tolerance for the talking dead."
- "Excuse me, there seems to be a misunderstanding... \*BAM\*"

**Personality:** Jacca is a bully, but unlike most bullies, he doesn't seem to be a coward. Looks can be deceiving, though: While Jacca doesn't fear the villagers (or any other mortal), he is very much afraid that his past may catch up with him—Bossin is a means to an end for him.

**Background:** Jacca's adventuring days may be long behind him, but deep in his heart, he is afraid of his erstwhile companions returning for him—he abandoned them to die in some long-forgotten hell-hole of a dungeon. He still has the map to this place as a good luck charm, believing his role as the group's cartographer for the place to be the reason he managed to escape the creature that caught his comrades.

## 6: HUNTERS' HUTS

Tanned animal skins, more tents than homes, lie just on the outskirts of Bossin proper. Holwin Half Breed (NG male half-elf ranger 3) and a motley collection of hunters and trappers forage the outskirts of the Tangled Woods, making a brisk business out of animal skins and meat. Holwin knows the southern fringes of the Tangled Woods well and can be hired to serve as a guide for 10 gp a day. He sports a recent black-eye and busted lip, a result of being a little short on his protection fee for the month.

## 7: JACCA LANDER'S MANOR

Jacca (LE male human fighter 2/thief 3) recently built this two-storey stone manor house. Despite its large size, Jacca lives there alone except for a few servants. His most frequent visitor is a magic-user from Wolverton he pays once a month to cast warding spells. Jacca is quite proud of his home, a testament to the power he holds over the villagers.

---

---

### SNEEV

NE male half-goblin thief 4

*This dirty, scrawny humanoid wears filthy rags caked with dirt and an oversized hat.*

**Distinguishing Features:** Sneev always wears a hat—the trepanning procedures have not only resulted in hairless patches on his skull, they have also left a faint, iridescent glow in the dark that is counterproductive to his vocation.

**Mannerisms:** The psychotropic spices poured into Sneev's brain have changed how the goblin perceives the world—he professes to taste sounds, hear light and see emotions as auras. Not even Sneev is sure whether these are hallucinations or genuinely supernatural abilities.

**Personality:** Sneev is a snivelling crony who actually worships Jacca. He even has a little shrine devoted to him, hidden in his quarters. (Jacca would probably be rather disturbed, if he found out). He is otherwise a sadistic and thoroughly unpleasant being, even for a goblin.

**Background:** An outcast from the Cloven Skull tribe, it is a wonder Sneev managed to live through the ordeal of trepanning and brain cannibalism, the traditional punishment for traitors to the tribe: Jacca happened to slaughter the chief, just as he was pouring psychotropic spices through the trepanning holes in Sneev's skull. To Sneev, Jacca appeared like a psychedelic vision of a god of war, a savior in blood, come to deliver him from his former tribe. While the goblin hasn't been right since, this act of unintentional kindness has rendered him fiercely loyal to Jacca.

## 8: BELL O'DELL

Formerly called "Bell of the Dell," the name was shortened when Jacca took ownership of the inn when he first arrived in Bossin. Jacca's main interest in the place is as a headquarters for his gang of thugs and he leaves the running of the actual business to others. Despite this, it serves as a gathering place for the residents of Bossin to trade news, have an ale and listen to music. Wartham Briston (NE male half-orc fighter 2/thief 2) performs almost nightly when not on Jacca's business. Despite his fearsome mien, he boasts a surprisingly rich singing voice, a product of his upbringing in a travelling troupe

## 9: PRISON

The prison comprises two long, low stone wings attached to a small building. Troublemakers and out of towners, particularly adventurers, end up here if they displease Jacca. He also likes to fill the cells with the poorest from the hovel, when the soldiers from Caer Syllan come by, to show he is keeping the peace. Sneev (NE male half-goblin thief 4) lives here in an unused cell. Jacca's spymaster, he keeps tabs on the visiting soldiers and other outsiders. The soldiers have their own quarters nearby in squat stone buildings for when weather or other business keeps them overnight.

## 10: WATCHTOWER

This 40-ft. high square tower comprises three storeys of barracks and other living quarters, though the furniture is musty from age and lack of use. At its top rests kindling for a huge bonfire. The bonfire is only to be lit to let the surrounding villages know that Bossin is under attack, though with the frequent patrols from Caer Syllan, the bonfire has not been lit in recent years.

---

---

### THUG

*This brutish human wears dirty leathers; a well-used sword hangs naked at his side.*

Jacca's brutes are cowards, deserters and bullies. They enjoy harassing the local populace and travellers alike, with threats ranging from the puerile to the life-threatening.

---

#### D6 HARASSMENT

1	Dead animal left near sleeping place.
2	Urinating/throwing faeces into the Pit, on the captives.
3	Blowing particularly vile pipeweed smoke in the PC's faces. Repeatedly.
4	Stealing the PC's ale and/or food.
5	Unprompted touching of attractive PCs.
6	Daily demand of a 1 gp "head tax". The thugs find a bag full of rats and demand that they have heads, too.

---

## LIFE IN BOSSIN

---

Bossin is the easternmost of the small villages situated along the Lonely Coast. Tall, rocky cliffs border Bossin to the south while to the north and west looms the shadowy Tangled Woods. Ancient ruins of the Old People litter the vast woodlands, promising treasure to adventurers. Yet, the numerous tribes of half-goblins and shadow wolves make the woods a dangerous place to explore. Others seek to find wealth exploring the nearby mines, some of which abandoned by humans, are now inhabited by tribes of humanoids and other fell monsters.

Life in Bossin is relatively quiet. Jacca's control of the village is absolute and the only trouble that comes is from those who get out of line. Most villagers keep their heads down, content to simply avoid Jacca's thugs.

### LAW & ORDER

Jacca's gang keeps the villagers in line. Usually travelling in groups of four or five, they extort money from the local businesses and wealthiest villagers at the beginning of every month. Jacca offers very little protection for the money he receives. Those that complain or threaten to go to Caer Syllan end up in the Pit (location 1) until they change their mind. The regular patrols from Caer Syllan deter bands of brigands and other horrors from the Tangled Woods encroaching on Bossin.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The villagers pull tin and slate from the cliffs fringing the Lonely Coast. Others work the rich earth surrounding Bossin. Few venture into the Tangled Woods for lumber due to the half-goblins and other dangers lurking among the ancient trees. Those that do are intrepid hunters and trappers, rounding out Bossin's trade goods with fresh meat and animal pelts for trade.

### PCS IN BOSSIN

PCs spending time in Bossin find that while the villagers appear friendly and outgoing, they are reticent to talk about village news. Most of them have accepted Jacca's extortion and fear his wrath if suspected of talking about it to outsiders. Generally, adventurers have little to fear from Jacca's thugs unless they make a permanent residence in Bossin or make friends with the villagers. Jacca knows outside business is good for the village, as long as outsiders keep their noses out of his affairs.

### MOUNTING TENSIONS

Jacca Lander's hold on Bossin is nearly absolute. Fear and intimidation keep the villagers in line and from speaking out. As far as Caer Syllan is concerned, Jacca is a hard man but he produces results. However, the one thing Jacca has not been

able to extort is the love of local herbalist Brisila (location 4). Her haughty attitude and open defiance of Jacca incites his passion for her even more. Jacca is a jealous suitor and those he suspects of getting too friendly with Brisila often disappear. So far, he does not know that Brisila has started a relationship with Keirnen Lokmor (location 3). While Keirnen hates paying Jacca, he wants to live quietly in peace. Yet, lately, Brisila has been urging Keirnen to take action against Jacca, organize the villagers and fight back. Brisila also beseeches PCs frequenting Keirnen's store for their help. However, if Jacca finds out about the two lovers, it will likely mean Keirnen's death.

### EVENTS

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

D6	EVENT
1	A patrol of soldiers from Caer Syllan has recently arrived. Jacca's thugs prowl the village, looking to fill the prison's cells.
2	A group of thugs hassle an old weaver in front of her shop, threatening to throw her in "the Pit" if she cannot pay her due.
3	A group of villagers stand talking in excited voices: a half-goblin was seen skulking about the village.
4	The Goldrock clan is having difficulties with a group of kobolds inhabiting a recent mine they excavated.
5	A group of villagers approach the PCs. Fed up with Jacca Lander, they are willing to pay to rid themselves of the problem.
6	A group of village children exploring the cliffs have gone missing. The parents offer a reward for their return.



# ECHO HARBOUR

---

**Words** Amber Underwood **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*Under the protection of the dragon turtle, Bonesong, Echo Harbour has flourished. The port teems with people: sailors dock their ships at the harbour and load them with supplies and trade goods, merchants haggle with merfolk on the foreshore and men in market stalls, workers toil in the busy shipyards and travellers crowd the taverns, making boasts and bets as they play games to pass the time. Over the bustle and chatter sound the shouts and songs of the orcs as they direct ships and caravans to their proper places.*

*Recently though, Bonesong vanished. Echo Harbour has prospered under her protection, but it remains to be seen if the village has the strength to stand on its own. Only time will tell if their guardian will return or if the villagers must find another way to safeguard their future*

## ECHO HARBOUR AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** The Recognised

**Government:** Council

**Alignments:** NG, LN, N

**Population:** 199 (57 humans, 18 half-orcs, 65 merfolk, 59 orcs)

**Notable Folk:** Caller Deepway (Echo Harbour), Crower Ouwei (Kelp Farms), Spellwright Lightguide (Treeshell Shipyard), Trademaster Broadsail (Silver Scale), Zephyr Broadsail (Broadsail Outfitters)

**Languages:** Common, Dragon Turtle, Merfolk, Orc

**Resources & Industry:** Mariculture, pearl diving, shipbuilding

Echo Harbour teems with people: sailors dock their ships in the harbour and load them with supplies and trade goods, merchants haggle with merfolk on the foreshore and men in market stalls, workers toil in the busy shipyards and travellers crowd the taverns, making boasts and bets as they play games to pass the time. Over the bustle and chatter sound the shouts and songs of the orcs as they direct ships and caravans to their proper places.

In the not too distant past, Echo Harbour didn't exist. Only merfolk lived in the bay, quietly tending their farms beneath the waves. Few merchants dared to brave the region's pirates and bandits, even for the rare pearls the merfolk gathered.

The change began when Bonesong, a battle-scarred dragon turtle with an attendant tribe of orcs, entered the bay. Exhausted and injured from fighting and weary for their nomadic lifestyle, Bonesong and her followers struck a deal with the merfolk: they would protect the bay and its trade routes, and in exchange, they would call it their home. Their presence deterred outlaws and as the area became safer, trade became increasingly common; a few human merchants even settled there, sensing opportunity. Over time the different cultures blended and the community leaders banded together into a single ruling council: The Recognised.

Recently, though, Bonesong vanished. Echo Harbour has grown prosperous under her protection, but it remains to be seen if it has the strength to stand on its own. Only time will tell if she will return, or if the villagers must find another way to safeguard their future.

### VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** The villagers are a diverse lot, but tanned skin, dark hair and dark eyes are common. Humans are slender and short, the orcs have a faint green tint to their skin and broad chests, and the merfolk are pale and have distinctive turquoise hair.

**Dress:** Sturdy trousers of canvas or leather are favoured in Echo Harbour, accompanied by woven sandals. Most villagers eschew shirts and other garments. Jewellery of bone, obsidian and pearls is common, especially in the form of piercings

**Nomenclature:** *family* Broadsail, Deepway, Lightguide, Ouwei; *personal* most villagers use a title rather than a personal name, though children and young adults are named after animals, plants and weather until they earn their adult title.

### VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Echo Harbour, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Echo Harbour is a prosperous port with abundant food supplies and valuable trade goods. It is a good starting place for an ocean voyage and a safe harbour.
- An old dragon turtle, Bonesong, dwells near Echo Harbour and is allied with the villagers. She leaves most vessels alone, but savages pirate ships.
- A sizable portion of Echo Harbour is underwater; much of its wealth stems from vast aquatic farms maintained by its merfolk citizens.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Echo Harbour, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	The dragon turtle that protects the harbour hasn't been seen in a while, and might be gone (or dead).
2*	A well-hidden and protected sea cave contains a secret treasure hoard! This hoard is the real source of Echo Harbour's wealth.
3	Shouts from the village bard and his workers resound easily in the harbour and are the source of its name.
4	A pirate with a vicious history hides in the village.
5	Merchants from remote lands stop and sell rare and exotic goods in the marketplace.
6*	The local shipbuilder has acquired a broken underwater craft, and has been trying to fix it.

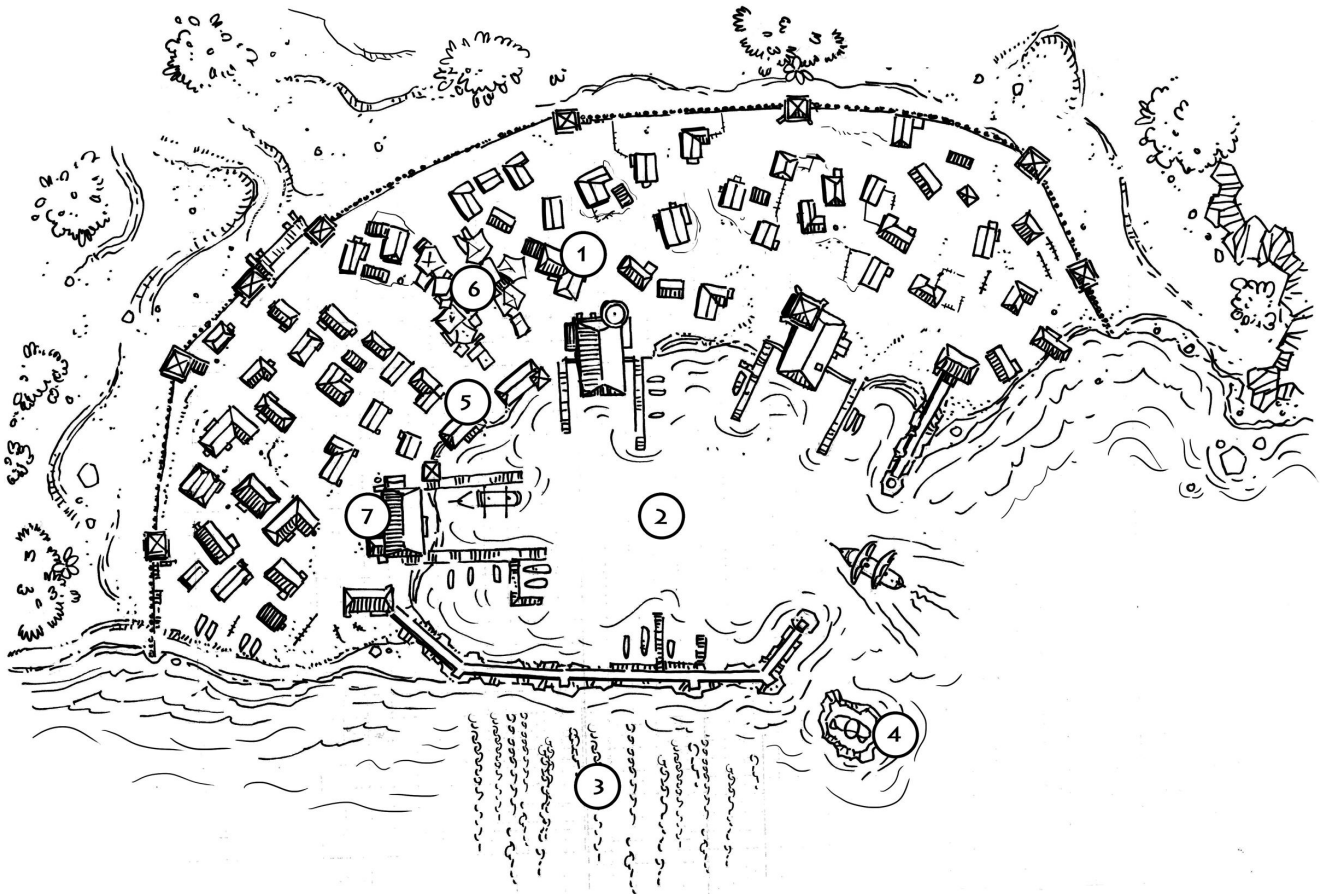
\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Broadsail Outfitters:** The Broadsail family shop sells quality supplies to sailors and adventurers. Zephyr Broadsail runs the shop and frequently offers bounties on rare sea creatures.
2. **Echo Harbour:** The village takes its name from this busy harbour. It has several long docks, two warehouses for handling cargo and protective concrete walls that shelter it from the open ocean. Caller Deepway is normally on the docks, telling stories and managing workers.
3. **Kelp Farms:** Outside the harbour walls are the village farms, which comprise giant kelp forests and organised rows of cultivated oysters. The merfolk farmers also catch schools of fish. All together the bounty allows them to provide for the entire village and still have surplus to trade. Grower Ouwei tends to the farms during daylight hours.
4. **Origin Cave:** Icy blue light radiates from a vaguely humanoid statue sculpted from a rocky outcrop off the coast. The light guides ships safely into the harbour, but unknown to most it also marks the entrance to an underwater sea cave. The cave is sacred to the village. In addition to the rites they perform there they use it as an ossuary.
5. **Silver Scale:** A popular tavern, the Silver Scale appeals to its customers with games of chance and skill as well as its menu. It is a common gathering place for villagers, and the Recognised even use it for council meetings. Trademaster Broadsail has permanently reserved a quiet table here, and occupies it near constantly.
6. **Sun Market:** Nothing is ever the same twice in the Sun Market. Stalls and canvas canopies can be rented for a small fee, and countless merchants, adventurers and wandering mystics set up shop here for a day or two before moving on.
7. **Treeshell Shipyard:** At least one boat is being built in the shipyard at any given time, and it is a good place to make repairs. Spellwright Lightguide toils here, overseeing her numerous apprentices.



## LIFE IN ECHO HARBOUR

---

Echo Harbour is vibrant and cosmopolitan, the product of three merging cultures and their interaction with travellers of all sorts. Music is everywhere, from the cadent calls of orc watchmen to the ponderous drums of the merfolk; wind chimes are scattered among the buildings and carved bone flutes are popular with the villagers. Newcomers receive friendly welcomes, directions to the taverns and shops, and enticing descriptions of mouth-watering food or desirable trade goods on offer.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

Trade is lively in the village. Merchants come to Echo Harbour for the pearls pulled from the sea by merfolk gatherers and to sell goods in the Sun Market, while seafarers of all kinds stop for supplies and repairs. Almost all merfolk in the village occupy themselves with a form of maricultural work such as ranching fish, farming kelp or raising abalones.

### LAW & ORDER

Echo Harbour is governed by the Recognised, a council of its most respected citizens. Currently the council comprises Caller, Grower and Trademaster, who meet regularly in the Silver Scale tavern to discuss business and current affairs. Caller acts as spokesman and Grower as judge and mediator while Trademaster works in the background to handle logistics and bureaucracy.

Protection and law enforcement are handled by village guards, who man the watch posts along the timber fence at the village boundary, keep the peace and patrol the surrounding ocean in catamarans. Every member of the guard learns vocal techniques from Caller, allowing them to shout commands in Draconic audible over tremendous distances.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Games and competitions are a major part of Echo Harbour's culture. Warriors spar, friends race and merchants play cards as they discuss trade deals. Travellers, merchants and adventurers alike can expect to be invited to some sort of contest to evaluate their character. This custom originated from Bonesong's attendant orc tribe, who used a rite of challenges to determine status among themselves. These days, people are measured more by their attitude and style than success, though sometimes contests of skill are used to settle disputes or assert superiority.

The quieter, sacred traditions of Echo Harbour involve the Origin Cave. Children and outsiders are brought to the cave when they formally join the village, and return later in life to receive the titles that serve as their names. When a villager dies, their bones are stored within the cave. Great lengths are taken to return the bones of deceased villager to the cave.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A sudden wind blows, heralding the arrival of a sorcerer-merchant. He rents a stall in the Sun Market to sell <i>ioun stones</i> and magical trinkets.
2	The rhythm of a drum competes with a flute's trills as two villagers engage in a musical contest.
3	A young man swims into the harbour and is helped onto the docks by Caller, who announces that the young man has earned the title "Carver."
4	Though the sun still shines in the sky, a light rain falls on the village.
5	An off-duty guard challenges one of the PCs to a friendly competition of their choosing.
6	Arcane spellcasters (including Spellwright and Zephyr) gather in one of the taverns to discuss and share their knowledge and craft.
7	Shrill screaming breaks out in a tavern, but the cause is only a traveller who severely underestimated the spice of the local Dragonfire kelp.
8	Raised voices from a disgruntled customer and a defensive merchant draw attention, and Grower steps in to mediate.
9	Recent battle scars mark a ship making its way to the shipyards for repair.
10	A palanquin carries a merfolk architect out to the village fence, where he discusses plans for a wall.
11	Clouds roll over and thunder rumbles as a heavy rainstorm arrives, driving everyone indoors.
12	Two guards engage in a sparring match. A loose circle of onlookers forms around them.
13	Merfolk farmers bring up the latest harvest of kelp and take it into one of the warehouses.
14	An orc and a merfolk play a game of chance on the docks, using pearls as stakes.
15	Guards return from a failed search at sea for Bonesong. They are grim and reluctant to speak of their errand.
16	Caller's voice sounds from the docks as he recites an old folk story to an attentive audience.
17	Four old men play a card game on a tavern porch and swap stories of local pirates, including one named Scarhands.
18	A caravan enters the village to make deliveries to the village. A thick stack of letters is handed over to Zephyr Broadsail.
19	One of the villagers brings out a set of landscape paintings to sell in the Sun Market.
20	Shouts resound as guards gather at the northern fence to scare off marauding bandits. Sighting bandits so close to the village provokes a tense discussion.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

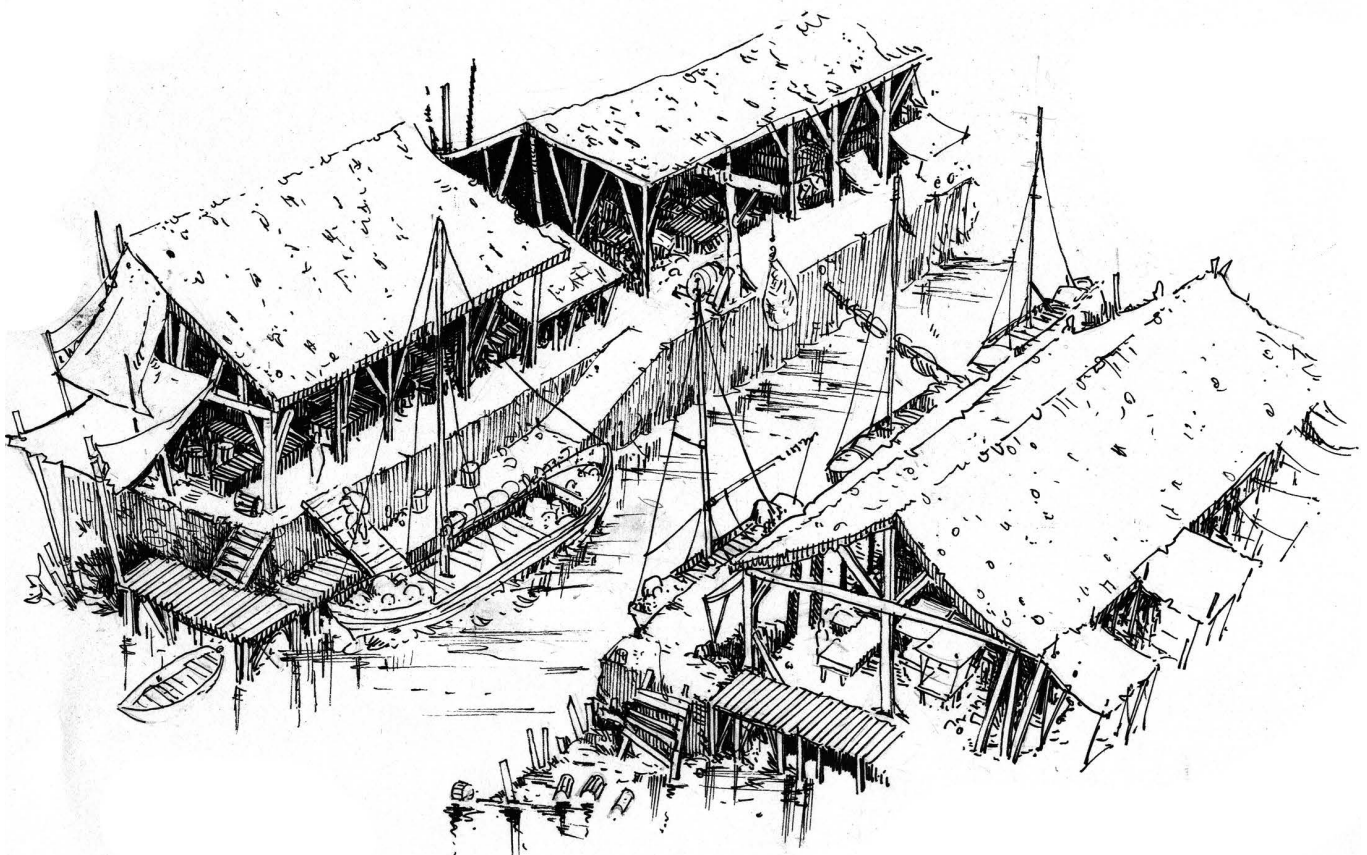
Echo Harbour stands on a tropical coastline; bright blue ocean stretches to the horizon on one side while wide swaths of dense palm tree groves sprawl across the surrounding land.

Reliable trade winds blow across the region, leading right to the village and passed it to far flung regions. An increasingly well-travelled road leads to the village, providing ample landward to the port. These burgeoning connections place Echo Harbour right along major trade routes, which has contributed greatly to the village's prosperity. Its reputation is slowly spreading through the locality, but many folk do not believe orcs, humans and merfolk can live together in peace and prosperity. This is the greatest challenge for the village—convincing traders who have not previously visited the village it is safe to do so.

Volcanic activity has shaped the land around Echo Harbour. Extinct volcanoes form rocky peaks and nearby islands, and volcanic vents and submarine volcanoes lie beneath the ocean surface. While the village is not close enough to be directly endangered by most eruptions—which are now rare—it sometimes suffers the effects of drifting volcanic fogs. Locals derive resources from the volcanoes, gathering obsidian for art and blades, or volcanic ash used to make concrete.

Beneath the warm ocean waves are massive kelp forests and coral reefs that host a wide variety of marine wildlife, such as sea otters and colourful tropical fish. The area is more known for its rare but exceptional species such as, dragon turtles, sea serpents and aquatic dragons. Dragon turtles are the dominant species, and the specimens living in the region reach exceptional sizes and enjoy extreme longevity. Prominent dragon turtles frequently stake claims to specific territories and aggressively defend them. Well established dragon turtle territories are often noted on maps so they can be avoided, but vessels sometimes stray accidentally into recent expansions or new claims and earn the ire of its territorial master. A ship can often leave unscathed by appeasing the dragon turtle with a tithe, but attempts to argue or escape usually anger them further and may even provoke (extremely one-sided) violence.

Pirates takes advantage of the area's dangers, making bases and hiding stashes in overlooked nooks between monster claimed territories and active volcanoes. They sail from their hideaways to prey on vulnerable trading vessels before slinking away. Bonesong once hunted down their hidden coves and patrolled the trade routes to discourage pirate activity, but in her absence, a few crews have returned.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN ECHO HARBOUR

---

### 1: BROADSAIL OUTFITTERS

*A clean-lined stone and timber building stands at the edge of Sun Market and the docks. Within, the shop is clean and tidy, products lining its organized shelves.*

Demand for supplies is high in Echo Harbour, and Broadsail Outfitters was founded to meet it. The shop's shelves have everything a ship or traveller might need, from standards like rope, food and fishing line to weatherproof clothing and alchemical goods. Adventurers, however, are usually drawn to the magical equipment kept locked in a glass counter up front. Even if a customer wants something the store doesn't stock, the Broadsail family is willing to import it for the right price. Trademaster Broadsail owns the store and manages it, but his daughter, Zephyr, manages its daily operation.

- **For Sale:** *cloak of the manta ray* (12,500 gp), *feather token: anchor* (2,000 gp), *feather token: bird* (2,000 gp), *feather token: fan* (3,000 gp), *feather token: swan boat* (7,000 gp), *potion of healing* (400 gp), *potion of water breathing* (900 gp), *scroll of water breathing* (900 gp)

**Bounties:** The ocean around Echo Harbour is home to numerous beasts and rarities. Bounties for dangerous monsters, requests for live specimens and similar items are listed on the store's bulletin board, provided by merchants, alchemists and researchers in contact with the Broadsail family.

---

#### CALLER DEEPWAY

LN male orc fighter 3/thief 2

*Even at a glance, this orc's importance is obvious; he stands proud, wearing authority like a cloak, and his thick arms are covered with sea serpent tattoos, ivory bracelets and golden armbands. When he speaks, the power of his voice resonates.*

**Mannerisms:** Rhythm comes naturally to Caller. His deep voice is cadent, and when he thinks his fingers drum and tap on the nearest surface.

**Personality:** Caller is intense and compelling, experienced and possessed of unshakeable certainty. He naturally takes charge and establishes order, generating the momentum he and his village need to thrive.

**Background:** A native, Caller was marked from an early age as an orc with an exceptional voice. His ascension to the Recognised surprised no-one.

**Deliveries:** Zephyr Broadsail's dream of scholarship is supported by her communication with notable researchers and wizards in out of the way locations and distant lands. Sometimes she asks for travellers heading in the right direction to deliver a letter or parcel for her in exchange for a small sum of gold or a shop discount.

### 2: ECHO HARBOUR

*Activity is constant in the harbour. Ships load and unload cargo or manoeuvre around the docks, and workers stream in and out of the warehouses, all guided by loud, sonorous chanting.*

The harbour is the heart of the village, where goods and trade flow with the rhythm of the tide. Its sturdy wooden docks normally host one or two visiting vessels, a few local ships designed to sail along the coast and the orcish catamarans used to patrol the local waters. Two substantial warehouses stand alongside the docks and extend down into the water, keeping a section flooded for goods best kept submerged (and as access for merfolk workers).

Caller Deepway (LN male orc fighter 3/thief 2) works on the docks, shouting to direct ships to their berths and to stir idle workers to action. When the harbour is calm he entertains the villagers with storytelling, and when it is busy he leads songs to help the dockworkers find their rhythm. Rarely, he silently stares off into the distance, distracted by worry.

---

#### ZEPHYR BROADSAIL

NG female human magic-user 2

*The shopkeeper of Broadsail Outfitters is a young woman with shoulder length brown hair, dark brown eyes and a friendly smile.*

**Mannerisms:** Zephyr's lack of self-confidence causes her to hedge statements and frequently use filler words such as "uh" and "um."

**Personality:** Friendly and curious, Zephyr easily engages with customers and eagerly asks them about their adventures. She aspires to scholarship, and holds experienced spellcasters in high regard.

**Background:** The only daughter of Trademaster Broadsail, Zephyr has lived in the village all her life. She still hasn't achieved her adult title, but is self-educated and in recent years has made connections with notable scholars and spellcasters, with whom she frequently exchanges ideas and assistance. She takes lessons with the Spellwright to learn magic and mathematics, but isn't formally apprenticed to her

### 3: KELP FARMS

*The merfolk farms stretch far beneath the waves, beginning with beds of oysters that run right up to the harbour walls and ending with rows of kelp. The green kelp strands rise taller than trees, vast forests through which fish and sea otters swim.*

The kelp farms are a miniature world all on their own, a carefully wrought ecosystem that feeds Echo Harbour. Giant kelp is the primary product of the farms, but it is supplemented with clams and oysters as well as ranches fish, crabs and abalones. Thin maroon strands of Dragonfire kelp, an exceptionally spicy kelp variety that deters pests and is harvested for culinary uses, grow throughout the forest. Grower Ouwei (LN female merfolk druid 5) directs the merfolk farmers and layers the farm in magic to stimulate growth. Trained sea otters hunt down sea urchins and other threats to the farm.

### 4: ORIGIN CAVE

*Just off the coast stands a glowing statue that guides ships into the harbour.*

On a rocky outcrop, not too far outside Echo Harbour, a statue is cut into the stone. Though its details are smoothed and indistinct, it appears to be a seated humanoid figure of indeterminate race, its hands pressed close to its chest. Icy blue light seeps through its fingers, a chill brilliance that illuminates the coastline even during the darkest nights.

---

---

#### GROWER OUWEI

LN female merfolk druid 5

*Scintillating green, yellow and blue scales and luxurious jade hair give this merfolk woman a naturally regal appearance. She moves with solemn grace.*

**Mannerisms:** Almost nothing can get Grower to break her carefully cultivated calm. At most, she bends from sombre to a slight smile or disapproving glare.

**Personality:** Grower is endlessly patient and contemplative, content to wait until she has everything planned before acting. She is an excellent judge of character and a mediator with years of experience. When there is a serious dispute in the village, she usually puts it to rest.

**Background:** The title "Grower" is unique in Echo Harbour. It existed when only merfolk lived in the area, and it is the only title passed from mentor to apprentice. Grower Ouwei was apprenticed to the previous Grower when she was a child, and committed all the druidic secrets, farming techniques and cultural heritage associated with the title to memory before her mentor passed. She is still young, but has held her title for over a decade now.

Well below the surface and hidden beneath wave-worn rock lies the entrance to a sea cave of great importance to the village. To them the cave is a hallowed place, a symbol of the primordial origin of the world and the cycle of life, death and rebirth. One of the labyrinthine cave passages leads to an airy cavern decorated with ancient paintings and hundreds of carved alcoves filled with the bones of dead villagers.

### 5: SILVER SCALE

*A burnished piece of copper in the shape of a fish scale serves as the sign for this busy tavern.*

This small tavern is the village's social centre, a place to share a good meal and pleasant pastimes. The building extends into the harbour itself, and has a moon pool on its lowest floor for merfolk, who take seats on the edge of the pool and meet with surface-side friends. Part of what makes the place popular is its unique menu of games, ranging from card decks (on water-resistant tiles) to chess sets, all of which are freely available to paying customers. Meals, business and talk are all done over games in the Silver Scale, and even the Recognised take up a set of tiles when they meet to discuss village affairs.

Trademaster Broadsail (N male human thief 7) is a fixture of the establishment, and he has a poolside table in one corner reserved solely for his use at which he conducts all his business.

- **Food & Drink** meal (spicy Dragonfire kelp salad, fresh bread and grilled seafood) 5 sp, coffee (one cup) 1 cp, pineapple wine (pitcher) 2 sp.

---

---

#### TRADEMASTER BROADSAIL

N male human thief 7

*This man is well attired, but he has a stiff posture and dark eyes watchful. Whenever he gestures he draws attention to his thickly scarred weathered hands.*

**Mannerisms:** Broadsail often clasps his hands together, in front of him while he sits or behind his back when he stands. He listens attentively and always keeps his back to a wall.

**Personality:** Quiet and withdrawn, the Trademaster constantly toils to grow Echo Harbour's economy. He handles countless trade deals and does the bureaucratic work few villagers care to do. When he isn't working he is with his daughter, Zephyr.

**Background:** Years ago, Broadsail was an infamous pirate and went by the name "Scarhands." His ship was wrecked during a violent storm, and after he recovered in Echo Harbour he set aside his old life and started over. He vividly remembers an inhuman eye watching him while he sank, and suspects Bonesong attacked his ship but gave him a second chance for some unfathomable reason.

## 6: SUN MARKET

*A line of canopy-covered market stalls runs all the way down to the docks, and bustles with the trade of villagers and foreign merchants alike.*

The Sun Market is a communal marketplace that rents out stalls for a few silver coins a day. Locals sell their own goods here, hawking carvings, jewellery, locally grown coffee, dried Dragonfire kelp and most importantly, pearls. Stalls near the docks are reserved for merfolk pearl gatherers, who sort their wares by size and colour and display them in gleaming piles to entice the countless traders who come to buy them. Other traders set up in the market for a time before passing on, selling more unusual products than the local staples.

### WHAT'S ON SALE?

While the PCs are here, they may find one or more of the following market stalls. Choose or determine randomly:

D6	EVENT
1	A bookseller has alchemical treatises, philosophical tomes and storybooks stacked in her stall along with a small selection of scrolls and short spellbooks.
2	An apothecary set up in a booth sells potions and fragrant alchemical reagents in glass jars.
3	Curtains shroud this market stall, and a fortune teller within offers to answer mysteries and reveal the future.

## SPELLWRIGHT LIGHTGUIDE

N female half-orc magic-user 5

*Tall, confident and well-muscled, the Spellwright stands out from other villagers. Her long, braided hair is tied together with glowing charms of wood and bone, and even more charms hang from her pierced ears.*

**Mannerisms:** "Let me show you what I mean," is the Spellwright's favourite phrase. When explaining something she always gives examples, draws diagrams or begins hands-on demonstrations.

**Personality:** The Spellwright is an excellent craftswoman, innovative and enthusiastic about her work. She does her best to encourage her interests around the village, and takes on apprentices who show promise at wizardry or shipbuilding. She is very busy.

**Background:** Born and raised in Echo Harbour, Spellwright started learning traditional orc shipbuilding at an early age. The potential of wizardry caught her imagination later, and she taught herself the craft from books and experimentation, before applying it to her work as a shipwright.

4	Metal ingots are arranged in a display by value, starting at copper and iron and ending with gold and mithral.
5	Three adventurers have purchased a stall to sell odds and ends scavenged from a ghost-infested shipwreck.
6	A bored warlock manages a barebones stall only stocked with polished stone discs. He explains each stone grants good luck on a specific task or job.

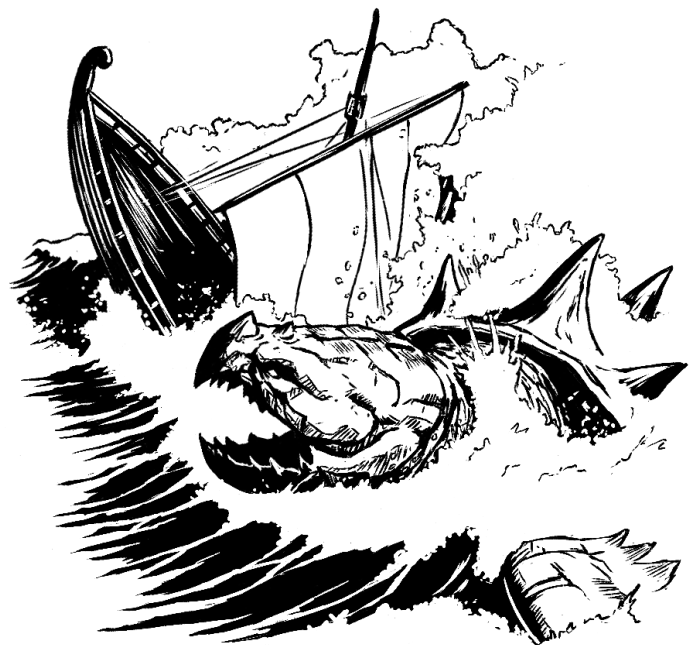
## 7: TREESHELL SHIPYARD

*The local shipyards comprise two docks and a warehouse on the far side of the harbour. Orcs and men chant as they work under the approving eye of the Spellwright.*

Work is constant in the shipyards. The Spellwright isn't shy about selling ships or offering services, so there is always a project underway, whether repairs to a merchant vessel, construction of a new fishing boat or alterations to a visiting ship. Even when jobs are scarce, the Spellwright has her apprentices prepare materials in advance and stow them in the warehouse's racks.

The docks here are built differently than the rest of the harbour, constructed of thick wooden slabs and resting on solid stone pilings. Each dock has a gradual ramp that leads directly into the water and a variety of lock and pulley systems to help secure and reposition ships, or even to bring them fully ashore.

Rumour has it that the Spellwright recovered some kind of strange underwater craft from the surrounding waters with Bonesong's help (before the dragon turtle went missing). Certainly, one part of her shipyard is now protected by high screens of woven palm fronds; rumours of what lies beyond circulate through the Sun Market.



# GULLS' ROOST

---

**Words** Jacob W. Michaels **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*Memory walks the streets of Gulls' Roost, a constant presence in a village that was all but forgotten before it was born. Envisioned as a summer retreat from crowded city life for the kingdom's elites, Gulls' Roost looks the part, a glittering jewel nestled in unspeakable beauty. But dismayed by tales of dangers during the village's costly construction, the nobles never came, and Gulls' Roost instead became a permanent home to the labourers who built it.*

*They were in time joined by elven adventurer Dovrenir Leafsong and his beloved human companion, who knew they would only have so much time together. What Dovrenir didn't know is how much he would miss her, or their children when they left home. He set his magical crafts to keeping his memories alive, creating a replica of his lost love and imbuing it with a piece of her soul. It was the first of the village's living dolls, a companion that would in time be joined by many more. And while their ceaseless ability to help first seemed a boon, soon there was little need for the living inhabitants to ply their crafts. These living memories took on a hard edge, their attempts to help simply causing more and more villagers to succumb to melancholia and forget the things they needed to live. Even as Dovrenir keeps preserving his friends in the only way he knows how, these living dolls may soon be the death of Gulls' Roost.*

## GULLS' ROOST AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Lady Cilia Orminster

**Government:** Overlord

**Alignments:** N, NG, LG

**Population:** 59 (33 humans, 4 elves, 12 half-elves, 5 half-orcs, 5 halflings) plus 73 dolls

**Notable Folk:** Dovrenir Leafsong (Leafsong Manor), Reyney Keep (Pearl Palace), Hames Doll (Stormwall), Ammek Doll (Sovereign's Spire)

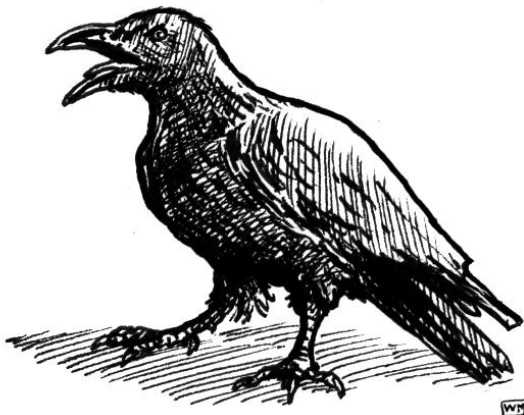
**Languages:** Common, Elven

**Resources & Industry:** Fishing, mother-of-pearl

Gulls' Roost's stunning beauty is only matched by its residents' quiet sadness. Envisioned as a seaside resort for nobles to escape the capital's stifling summer heat, no expense was spared during construction. And when the fine homes coated with glittering mother-of-pearl lured monsters and pirates, the founders poured more money into the project, adding a fort to the plans. Once completed, Gulls' Roost was the coast's glittering jewel—and the subject of far too many tragic stories for any noble to brave. Instead, it became home to the labourers who built it.

Not all were deterred, however. When adventurers Dovrenir Leafsong and Efix Holte sought to settle down, they chose Gulls' Roost. They knew they would only have so much time together, and Efix thought the village's idyllic beauty would give her husband peace after her death. She was wrong. Neither knew how much he would miss her, or their children when they left home. Bereft and alone, he created a replica of his lost love, imbuing it with a fragment of her soul. He knew it wasn't her, but it was all he had. And when he learned two of his children had died, he created two more dolls. Still, his grief only grew as his human friends followed his family in death.

Dovrenir retreated to his workshop, each loss inspiring him to make a new doll. These were no mere toys, rather almost living constructs. Now the dolls outnumber the living, their silence an eerie greeting for those who visit the village on route to the adventure-filled highlands beyond.



## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Gulls' Roost, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- A simple fishing village, Gulls' Roost's spray-drenched mother-of-pearl-covered buildings are spectacularly beautiful.
- Gulls' Roost was built as a summer seaside resort for nobles, but none settled there because of the region's dangers.
- A powerful elven wizard has filled the village with living dolls, reminders of those he's lost over the decades.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Villagers are weather-worn, bearing scars from a difficult life on the water. The dolls are eerie simulacrum whose unmoving faces make their inhumanity obvious.

**Dress:** Villagers, living and constructed, wear simple, utilitarian garb. A waterproof cowl typically draped around their neck offers protection from the waterfall's mist.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Wisym, Brarder, Anel; *female* Abet, Maly, Kather; *family* Fisher, Wright, Blade, Mason

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Gulls' Roost, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D4	RUMOUR
1	Powerful wizard Dovrenir Leafsong lives in seclusion, emerging from his home only at times of great need.
2	Lady Cilia, the last scion of Gulls' Roost's founders still ostensibly rules, but she lives a life of drunken excess.
3	Riches of old civilizations remain in the highlands, which teem with monstrous prehistoric beasts.
4*	Dovrenir is working on a spell to transform anyone who dies in Gulls' Roost into a doll, forced to endure an unending mockery of life spent in ceaseless toil.

\*False rumour

### THE LIVING DOLLS

The living dolls play a major role in Gulls' Roost's feel. They should be portrayed as somewhat alien, all the more so for their near humanity. Their expressionless faces and inflectionless voices should be a stark contrast with their otherwise normal behaviour.

Build a living doll as a normal NPC but give it some improved resistance to mundane damage.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

---

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Kingslight:** The enchanted lighthouse on this small isle magically shines day and night despite a lack of any great need.
2. **The Shorefront:** The docks jutting into Rainbow Bay hold the village's fishing vessels and any visiting jolly boats but are too small to secure a proper seafaring ship.
3. **Fishmongers' Court:** The stalls where villagers pick up fresh fish is the centre of the community, where news and gossip is exchanged more frequently than money.
4. **Leafsong Manor:** Dovrenir Leafsong's home extends back into the spur of rock it is built against; here is the workshop where he crafts the village's living dolls.
5. **The Pearl Palace:** Known simply as the Pearl to the locals, Reyney Keep offers homemade meals, strong drinks and honest games of skill and chance to locals and visitors alike. The handful of rooms for the village's rare visitors remains sumptuously appointed, though the furnishings show their age.
6. **Cascade's Bridge:** This stone span over the mouth of the Cascades waterfall serves as a more frequent locale for marriages, funerals and other such ceremonies than the nearby cathedral.
7. **The Sovereign's Spire:** Despite its stunning beauty, this cathedral dedicated to Conn is attended almost exclusively by sailors seeking to curry favour with the goddess of the sea, as villagers seek a fulltime priest to replace the living doll version of the village's long-time shepherd.
8. **The Ignoble Market:** Designed to be a one-stop shopping location for luxury goods for summering nobles, these connected buildings never saw that dream come to fruition. Now, other than the forge, they open only at need, supplying travellers from half-stocked shelves.
9. **The Stormwall:** This exterior wall serves more to protect Gulls' Roost against raging storms coming off the sea than raiders (though villagers can retreat to its protection in the event of an attack). Its towers hold the so-called Toy Soldiers, living dolls who spent much of their time watching for approaching dangers.
10. **Fort Promontory:** This fort holds living quarters for Lady Cilia and barracks for the village's small cadre of living guards. Some of the fort is unused, but the rest is decked out ostentatiously.



## LIFE IN GULLS' ROOST

---

The normal course of life in Gulls' Roost has been upended thanks to the increasing presence of the village's living dolls, an untiring workforce with no need for food or other amenities. Many of the living residents have ceded their responsibilities to their construct counterparts, leaving them time for indolence and increasingly a bleak despondency.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The village's main industry derives from the sea, where fish provide the bulk of the food and iridescent shells harvested from abalone serve as the only export. Many of the labourers need no money, so trade becomes a matter of barter when it's needed at all. Adventurers passing through on their way to or from the highlands beyond the village are the primary source of external wealth. Goods imported from afar are mostly due to funds provided by Dovrenir—who seemingly has inexhaustible resources—or less frequently by Lady Cilia.

### LAW & ORDER

Technically ruled by laws established and maintained by the Orminster family—currently represented by Lady Cilia Orminster—Gulls' Roost sees little crime, in part due to lack of opportunity or need. The guard, made up of both living and constructed soldiers, provides what little policing is needed (largely making sure residents get home safely from the Pearl) while also guarding against raids from the highlands.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Celebrations, typically for Naming Days of significant residents (Lady Cilia, Dovrenir and Efrix), take the form of communal fish fries, in which the day's catch is cooked in a massive pan with the diameter of a tall man and handed out to whoever wants them.

Death, however, carries the greatest traditions in the village. Each resident, after their body is treated and given the proper rites, lies in state in Sovereign's Spire, for neighbours to pay their respect. At some point, they are left completely alone, giving Dovrenir privacy should he choose to attempt to harvest an echo of their soul through a ritual he created. After the period of public mourning, the body is set on a raft and floated from the base of the Cascades out to sea as residents line the Cascades Bridge and the streambed cutting through the village.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Gulls' Roost.

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	The village's residents scurry home as looming dark clouds threaten a huge storm coming from the east.
2	A ship drops anchor in the bay, causing a flurry of excitement about impending arrivals.
3	A living doll emerges from the waves with a basket full of abalone he's harvested from the ocean bed.
4	A fishing boat carrying three villagers hasn't returned by nightfall, prompting a search mission.
5	Dovrenir's lesson takes the village's small group of children into the bay in a little skiff with a white sail.
6	The village's living dolls gather for a sermon at the Sovereign's Spire.
7	Eludan Wrast fires up the forge at the Ignoble Market, sending a plume of smoke into the air.
8	A large reptilian head looking down on the village is spotted at the top of the cliffs.
9	A brilliantly sunny day scatters rainbows through the mist over the Cascades Bridge.
10	Lady Cilia drunkenly berates Ammek Doll about proper obedience to the nobility.
11	Several residents play a game requiring them to toss small coloured stones at one of several targets.
12	An elderly resident slips and falls on the wet stone of the Cascades Bridge, crying out in pain.
13	A pteranodon soars over the village before swooping down to snatch fish from the ocean.
14	Luddanis Fisher snores loudly from a chair on the porch of his home as the sun reaches its noonday height.
15	A group of living doll guardsmen—the Toy Soldiers—descend from the highlands with supplies of wood.
16	Passers-by greet Efrix Doll as she tends her flower garden, singing in her strangely flat voice, in the decades-old routines first established by Dovrenir's wife.
17	Word of a singer at the inn draws much of the village to hear him sing.
18	A small rock fall sends debris tumbling from the cliffs.
19	Hames Doll leads the Toy Soldiers in a drill, yelling in an emotionless voice as they spar along the Cascades Bridge.
20	A shark's fin is spotted in Rainbow Bay, scaring residents concerned about dolls working in the water.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

Visitors to Gulls' Roost almost invariably arrive by sea, the expansive rocky coast providing a stunning vista as the mighty Cascades River plunges over the side of the cliff, tumbling down to the centre of the village. Beyond the cliffs, however, greater danger lurks.

### RAINBOW BAY

While the stretch of sea leading to Rainbow Bay typically offers smooth sailing for much of the year, in the winter, harsh storms can pound the region, whipping the waters to a black froth as westerly winds whip against the village's Stormwall.

The waters of Rainbow Bay teem with fish, much of it suitable for human consumption, while sharks, whales and other larger sea life becoming more common in the farther depths beyond the bay. Abalone, once nearly wiped out in the region as it was harvested for the mother-of-pearl that covers most of the village's buildings, has rebounded.

Though pirates lurking in nearby coves and islands once regularly threatened Gulls' Roost, after Dovrenir and Efrix settled in the village, most sought easier, more lucrative targets elsewhere. Similarly, while sahuagin have previously threatened the village, they've been repulsed enough times that they've rarely bothered it in recent times.

### THE HIGHLANDS

Beyond the cliffs towering over the village, however, has not been pacified. The empire that once ruled the highlands above the village disappeared long ago, its name barely remembered in legend, leaving behind only ruins that dot the jungle plateau. Prehistoric lizards—mammoth tyrannosaurus rex, ponderous brachiosaurus, and swooping pteranodons—roam freely, while undead and demonic forces lie in wait in many of the ancient stone structures here.

Other reptilian races dwelling in the area—lizardfolk, troglodytes, and the like—have long posed a more direct threat to the village. They regularly attacked the original inhabitants who built the structures, their predations resulting in many deaths until a garrison was sent to establish Fort Promontory and causing the nobles who were expected to flock to the village to decide it was far too dangerous. Even today, they see the village as an irritant and potential source of food and wealth, though the sheer cliff separating them provides the greatest protection for those who dwell below.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN GULLS' ROOST

---

### 1: KINGSLIGHT

*A light shines out to sea from this squat tower attached to an outbuilding on a small island in the bay. Unlike much of the village, the structure has no iridescent adornment.*

The lighthouse serves more to mark the village for passing vessels than warn against underwater hazards. The tower attaches to a keeper's building, both of simple stone with no mother-of-pearl gilding. The lamp was enhanced years ago by Dovrenir with a *continual flame* spell, making its upkeep mostly unnecessary. Despite that, Anthol Doll (LG male human [living doll]) lives on the island, fulfilling duties that he spent the entirety of his life on before his death and subsequent animation. Burly, with a sewn-on beard coated with white salt spray, Anthol takes his rowboat out to welcome arriving ships. He refuses to go aboard any such vessels, though, conscious of his construct nature and afraid of scaring off visitors.

### 2: THE SHOREFRONT

*Wooden piers, sized for the small fishing boats plying the waters, stretch into the bay. Iridescent mother-of-pearl covers the walls of the grandiose adjoining homes.*

The shorefront was built to be the village's centrepiece, homes fit for the wealthiest of aristocratic families that would let them take advantage of easy access to small pleasure craft. Once the long-ago residents realized those inhabitants would never arrive,

---

#### DOVRENIR LEAFSONG

LG male elf magic-user 12

*This tall, blond elf wears simple, well-made clothes. The smile on his face doesn't reach his sad green eyes.*

**Mannerisms:** When unaware he's being observed, Dovrenir's smile fades and he stares pensively off into space or at the construct version of his wife. He's welcoming most of the time, but the death of a friend causes him to seek seclusion, sometimes to craft a doll, but other times merely because he can't bear to be around others.

**Personality:** Dovrenir fights constantly against melancholia and depression, a battle he only sometimes wins. He is devoted to his family, which for him includes the entire village; any threat is met with extreme prejudice.

**Background:** The loss of his wife was too much for Dovrenir, who turned his magic to preserving her memory and their life together, creating the first of the village's living dolls. Further deaths, including of two of their children away on adventures, led to more dolls.

workers plying the waters for food claimed the homes for their own. Their descendants still live here, their homes a badge of honour signalling their long association with Gulls' Roost, even though many have passed on the actual work of fishing and harvesting abalone to living dolls.

### 3: FISHMONGERS' COURT

*The aroma of fresh fish pervades these simple wooden stands, which feel out of place amid the majesty of much of the rest of the village.*

An early, unplanned addition to the village, these rough stalls were used to sell each day's catch, quickly becoming a central gathering point for the villagers. That began to change as more living dolls took up fishing duties. With no need for money or food, they give their catches away to anyone who needs it, eliminating much of the good-natured bargaining that brought the community together. Still, out of habit and tradition, people gather here each night to take stock of each other, with many then adjourning to The Pearl Palace instead of cooking for themselves.

---

#### EFRIX DOLL

NG female human (living doll) ranger 8

*Made of wood and porcelain, this living doll wears a summery frock, and bears a mask with a woman's gently smiling face.*

**Mannerisms:** Efrix's expressionless visage and inflectionless voice are at odds with her otherwise warm demeanour, which leads to her greeting those she knows even slightly with outstretched arms and tight hugs.

**Personality:** Efrix Doll has much of the same personality she had when she was alive, when she comforted her husband in his darker moments. Though she tries to treat him gently, she's aware his dark moods are unhealthy and stridently tells him when he's not living up to her expectations. She tries to mother the rest of the village in gentler fashion, having known almost all the inhabitants since birth, along with their previous generations. She's hurt by Reyney Keep's attitude toward her and the other living dolls.

**Background:** Efrix met Dovrenir when the two adventured together and pushed for a relationship with the hesitant elf. She accepted her inevitable death with grace and urged him to do the same to no avail. The first of the living dolls, she is ironically the most obviously inhuman in appearance.

#### 4: LEAFSONG MANOR

*This large manor, decorated with the customary iridescent designs, abuts a knoll. Neatly tended gardens and wooden shutters give it a homey, welcoming feel.*

After years of lucrative adventures, Dovrenir Leafsong (LG male elf magic-user 12) and his wife Efix Holte settled here, where they raised several children and enjoyed each other's company until Efix's eventual death from old age. Their home is still a welcoming place, maintained by Efix (NG female human [living doll] ranger 8) much as it was when she was alive. Visitors are always welcome, and spur-of-the-moment gatherings take place in his sumptuous sitting rooms and large dining room. The workshop extends from the house into the knoll's depths.

**The Grand Design:** Efix warn the PCs Dovrenir has crafted a plan to preserve lives in a less piecemeal fashion with a ritual intended to cause in Gulls' Roost's residents to transform into a living doll upon their death—she fears it will go wrong somehow.

**Where Wife, There Wife:** Efix journeyed into the highlands to collect some fresh flowers, and Dovrenir is frantic that she hasn't yet returned. Has something happened to her?

#### 5: THE PEARL PALACE

*Spiral mother-of-pearl inlays circle the round, glass-paned windows of this impressive two-storey structure.*

The sole inn and tavern in Gulls' Roost, residents know The Pearl Palace simply as the Pearl. Run by Reyney Keep (N female half-elf), the Pearl is the village's most successful business, providing food, drink and a warm space for residents to while away the

##### REYNEY KEEP

N old female half-elf

*This stern half-elf wears her grey hair in a tight bun. A slightly stained white cloth apron covers her ample paunch.*

**Mannerisms:** Reyney finds the village's living dolls heart-breaking, as she knew and loved many of the residents they're modelled after. She does her best to avoid talking or even looking at them, refusing to acknowledge their presence. She carries a wooden spoon that she uses to "knock some sense" into villagers who don't live up to her expectation.

**Personality:** Reyney is a severe woman whose good heart tends to be hidden by her authoritarian nature. Her heart breaks at the melancholia infecting the village, making her even more determined not to give in to it herself.

**Background:** Reyney remembers the days before the living dolls. She inherited the inn from her parents and runs it exactly as they did, seeing little reason to change.

time. Unlike much of the rest of the village, living dolls aren't allowed inside. Though Reyney typically gets free fish from Fishmongers Court and free liquor imported by Dovrenir, she demands some small recompense, either in coin or trade, from her patrons—villagers pay a nominal fee, while visitors are charged full price. A half-dozen suites were originally intended for nobles and their retainers who didn't have their own home in the village. While decadence time has taken its toll on the furnishings.

- **Food & Drink** meal (fish stew, fried fish, or boiled abalone) 3 sp, caviar 25 gp, rum 1 sp, wine (pitcher or bottle) 2 sp-10 gp.
- **Accommodation** Suite 4-32 gp.

#### 6: CASCADE'S BRIDGE

*The waterfall's spray clouds this arching stone bridge in mist.*

Constantly slick from the spray of the falls, the Cascades Bridge has chest-high walls to prevent anyone from falling off the span.

**High Hopes Brought Low:** A rowboat comes flying down the waterfall, its only contents the battered body of a dwarf who may have been dead even before the plummet. A rough map is carved onto his arm.

#### 7: THE SOVEREIGN'S SPIRE

*This cathedral's majestic spire reaches for the sky, glittering faintly with inlaid mother-of-pearl. Low walls reaching out from the entrance convey the impression of welcoming arms.*

Dedicated to Conn (LN god of community, family and rulership), this cathedral was one of the early pillars of Gulls' Roost, as its attendant priests turned their focus from extolling rulership to community. Ironically, a later priest, Father Ammek's (LG male human [living doll] cleric 5), role in consoling Dovrenir after Efix's death led to his own transformation into a living doll. The change severed his link to the deity, preventing him from spellcasting, and made connection to the living residents of the village difficult. Most have abandoned church services, though living dolls continue to meet as they did in life. Lady Cilia wants to install a new cleric. She's been unsuccessful because of Dovrenir's resistance but also because she seeks someone with a greater focus on the importance of respecting rulers, which she feels is lacking in the village.

- **For Sale:** feather token (swan boat) (2,000 gp), scroll of cure light wounds (3) (300 gp), scroll of water walk (900 gp).

#### 8: THE IGNOBLE MARKET

*Shared courtyards link these shops, forming a small marketplace.*

Owned by the Orminster family and leased to artisans, this marketplace was expected to provide all the services a noble might desire. Renamed by self-deprecating villagers, the shops

now typically open by appointment only. Craftsmen labour as much for their own satisfaction, as the village residents have little need of their services. As with the Pearl, many of the raw supplies are provided by the village's two primary patrons, Dovrenir and Lady Cilia. The Ignoble Market includes:

**The Mercantile:** The village's general store, which long ago began providing every day and adventuring goods rather than luxury items. Sarry Keep (NG female half-elf), daughter of the Pearl's owner, opens when she knows adventurers are about. The shelves are only sporadically stocked.

**The Forge:** The half-orc smith Eludan Wrast (NG female half-orc) arrived in the last year; she finds life in the village frustrating but doesn't want to admit defeat and leave. She's a competent blacksmith but struggles more with finer work.

**The Sale Cloth:** Though most of the villagers have some ability to sew, learned at the very least to repair sails, Gauwyn Weaver (LG middle-aged male human) stays busier than most, his shop regularly providing new clothes and sails.

**The Garden:** Small pots of herbs grow in this shop's windows (and in the rear courtyard), while jars and vials line the shelves. Dela Brownfeather (LG female halfling), the apothecary, seeks to trade with people willing to gather ingredients from the highlands (as she fears going up the cliffs herself).

**The Carving Station:** The woodworker Thentry Carver (N middle-aged male half-orc) feels little need to work, preferring to spend his time drinking at the Pearl. When sober and motivated, he can create beautiful pieces.

**The Silvered Glass:** The jeweller's shop contains tools for silver- and goldsmith, glassblowing and other fine crafts. Ausan Doll (N female halfling [living doll]) spends most of her time maintaining the village's mother-of-pearl ornamentations.

**The Scriptorium:** This shop has not opened in months, its last occupants abandoning the village for a larger city. Inks, maps, paper and scroll cases gather dust on shelves, as do the paint supplies, canvasses and even some landscapes.

#### WHAT'S OPEN?

While the PCs are here, one or more of the shops open—use the table below—(or they can try to persuade a merchant to open; they are more likely to succeed by offering bonus compensation).

#### D12 WHAT'S OPEN

1–3	The Mercantile
4–5	The Forge
6–7	The Sale Cloth
8–9	The Garden
10	The Carving Station
11	The Silvered Glass
12	The Scriptorium

- **For Sale:** *potion of cure light wounds* (100 gp), *scroll of remove disease* (900 gp).

## 9: THE STORMWALL

*Towers line this weathered stone wall.*

Built to protect the village from pirates and other seaborne raiders as well as vicious storms, this wall rises two storeys. It houses the handful of guardsmen who have been turned into living dolls over the decades, known as the Toy Soldiers. Led by Hames Doll (LG male human [living doll] fighter 7), they keep vigilant watch. Hames Doll maintains strict discipline among his soldiers. He's ostensibly loyal to Lady Cilia, but has developed a strong superiority complex over the years.

## 10: FORT PROMONTORY

*This building dominates the eastern third of the village, its walls and structures no less imposing for its lustrous shells decoration.*

Though the need for a fortress palace has diminished in recent years, it remains a solid structure to which villagers can retreat should some monster descend from the highlands or attackers emerge from the sea. It houses Lady Cilia Orminster (LG female human) and her handful of servants, though large sections are unoccupied. Those that are used display ostentatious wealth, but much of it appears aged and out of fashion, the lingering remains of what once was a much wealthier family.

The small cadre of Lady Cilia's guards (NG male or female human fighter 2) and their captain, Piersym Blade (LN male human fighter 3), dwell here. Ostensibly in charge of the village defences, Piersym struggles to gain respect from, and exert authority over, Hames Doll and the Toy Soldiers.

**Dance Among the Ruins:** A once-a-century storm approaches; most of the villagers rush to shelter at Fort Promontory, where a drunken

### LADY CILIA ORMINSTER

LG female human

*In the prime of her life, this noblewoman's clothes seem out of date. Her eyes appear glassy, her cheeks flushed.*

**Mannerisms:** Lady Cilia is exuberant with any guests, flamboyantly addressing them, often with drink in hand.

**Personality:** A heavy drinker, Lady Cilia's hangover typically makes her waspish in the morning, until her daily cure—a stiff drink—improves her mood. She uses alcohol to drown her own sorrow and depression at the state of her village and her family's lack of prominence or respect from other nobles. She resents Dovrenir's prominent leadership role. She is a prideful woman.

**Background:** The last scion of the Orminsters, she hopes to find a consort who might bring new attention to the village and help it finally fulfil its founders' dreams.

# HOSFORD

---

**Words** John Bennett **Cartography** Tom Fayen

*The quaint village of Hosford rests along the Cliffway on the Lonely Coast. The industrious folk of Hosford diligently work the area's largest mine, digging deep into the cliffs for ores and gems. Tragically, decades ago, a large section of the mine suddenly collapsed into the sea, taking a chunk of the cliffs with it along with a handful of small homes. Out of this disaster was born opportunity as the collapse created a sheltered cove and natural harbour for small fishing boats. Thus, in addition to their mine, the citizens of Hosford ply the coastline, narrowly avoiding the sharp rocks just below the water that would doom a larger ship.*

*Yet, terror now grips Hosford. Folk have recently gone missing, including the former village reeve. A sea drake secretly stalks the coastline, fed on fresh human sacrifices by a senile old druid who believes the creature to be some sort of god. The lord of Caer Syllan, Lord Locher, has dispatched a new reeve, an ambitious, inquisitive young man to look into the disappearances but so far all he has uncovered are old grudges as neighbour accuse neighbour of these sinister disappearances.*

## HOSFORD AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler** Pio Varrin

**Government** Overlord

**Population** 178 (168 humans, 5 halflings, 3 dwarves, 2 half-elves)

**Alignments** LG, NG, LN, LE, CE

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Resources & Industry** Fishing, mining

The small village of Hosford stands on the Cliffway between Swallowfeld and the town of Wolverton. Boasting the area's largest operational mine, Hosford is also known for its fishing. Years ago, a section of the mine collapsed, dropping part of the surrounding cliff and a few cottages into the sea. However, the accident created a sheltered cove, a natural harbour for small fishing vessels to ply the coastline. Unfortunately, a large number of rocks just below the surface make the harbour too treacherous for larger vessels.

Recently, a rash of disappearances has caused concern in the small community. So far, five villagers have gone missing, including the previous village reeve, Cardin Unger. Unbeknownst to the villagers, a local hermit, Dag Tunner, recently discovered a sea serpent living in an underwater cave in the cliff. Suffering dementia in his old age, Dag believes the creature to be a god and has been kidnapping villagers to feed the beast's ravenous appetite. A new village reeve, Pio Varrin, has been appointed to replace Unger. Though young, Pio possesses a keen intellect, precisely the reason Lord Locher directed him to discover the cause behind the disappearances.

### NOTABLE FOLK

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

**Aeglis Hammerstone** (location 4; LN male dwarf thief 3) A distant relative of the Goldrock clan of Bossin, Aeglis specializes in crafting jewellery and gemcutting.

**Dag Tunner** (location 10; N male human druid 8) Long a harmless, old hermit, Dag suffers from dementia and believes a sea serpent to be a god.

**Hilisa Devvon** (location 7; LN female human) Short, stout Hilisa is often mistaken for one of the halflings she employs.

**Jarrin Penn** (location 2; LG old male human fighter 4) Hosford's bailiff, the aging Jarrin spends as much time fishing the Hoslo as he does doing his job.

**Kandin Bellick** (location 9; N male human) Wizen old Kandin is known for his tall tales, like the one about the sea serpent he claims to have seen.

**Pio Varrin** (location 3; NG male human thief 4) Book smart and capable, Pio Varrin serves as village reeve, but his true purpose in Hosford is to uncover the truth behind the recent disappearances plaguing the village.

**Renald Halman** (location 5; LN male human cleric 5) Renald leads the faithful of Hosford, and is using the current crisis to fill seats at the church.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Hosford Jail:** A collection of stone buildings that is seeing more frequent use as Hosford's residents accuse one another of the recent disappearances.
2. **Unger Manor:** This small, two-storey manor house was built by the previous village reeve, Cardin Unger.
3. **Daystar Church:** This small church features a bell tower and is the heart of the community.
4. **Ford:** A small ford crosses the small, but fast flowing, river Hoslo.
5. **Artisan Market:** Hosford's resident artisans and craft folk live here in their shops.
6. **Fish Market:** Hosford's fishermen sell their catches in market stalls here.
7. **Hoslo's Rest:** A small country inn, the Hoslo's Rest has large doors facing the river that can be opened in warm weather.
8. **Mines:** Mines riddle the cliffs; an excavated tunnel connects them to Hosford Cove.
9. **Hosford Cove:** A mine collapse created this sheltered cove 70 years ago.
10. **Sea Cave:** The Hoslo ends its journey here, diving underground through the cliff and spilling into a large cave where Dag offers up his sacrifices to the resident sea serpent.

### MARKETPLACE

When the PCs arrive in Hosford, the following items are for sale:

- **Potion** *potion of water breathing* (600 gp)
- **Scroll (Cleric)** *sanctuary* (300 gp)



## VILLAGE LORE

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

- Seventy years ago, a section of mine collapsed taking a large section of the nearby cliffs with it. As a result, a small cove was formed that the villagers were quick to exploit.
- Pio Varrin's only here to do the work the soldiers from Caer Syllan should be doing—uncovering the truth behind the disappearances plaguing the village.
- One of the old mine tunnels led to an underground cave, but it was sealed up when the mine collapsed.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** A Hosford native's skin belies his trade. Those working the mines frequently have pale skin, dark hair and a squint to their eyes from long days spent underground. The fisher-folk are deeply tanned from long hours at sea and have sun-bleached hair.

**Dress:** Most wear long, dark tunics to hide the dust and debris from the mines. The fisher-folk dress in short trousers and shirts, their garb infused with the salt from the sea.

**Nomenclature:** *male:* Digory, Jacca, Margh, Peder; *female:* Caja, Hedra, Kerra, Wenna; *family:* Ahearn, Jewell, Mayne, Tangye.

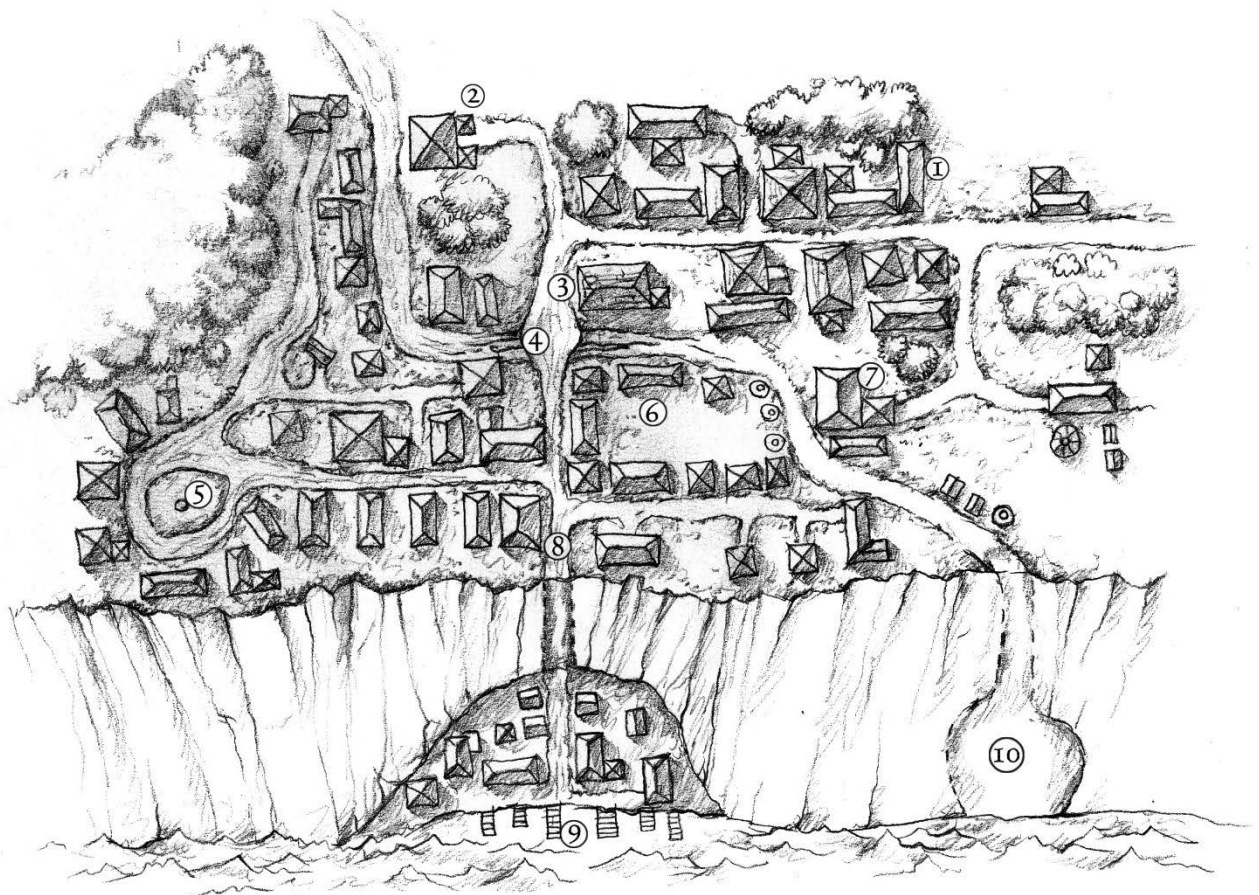
## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Hosford, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

### D6 RUMOUR

1*	Half-goblins from the Tangled Woods have been kidnapping people!
2*	Hilsa ran out of fresh meat for her stew so she's been kidnapping villagers and cooking them!
3	Kandin says he's seen a sea serpent. Crazy old cotter!
4	The new reeve spends a lot of time talking to people, asking all kinds of questions.
5*	Father Halman says the disappearances are a punishment from Darlen. Repent, he says!
6	I haven't seen crazy old Dag Tunner in ages. I bet he's gone missing too.

\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

---

### 1: HOSFORD JAIL

These low, squat buildings of quarried stone have seen a lot use lately. The recent disappearances plaguing the village have stirred up a lot of old grudges between neighbours who now use flimsy pretences to accuse each other of being the perpetrator. Unfortunately, Pio Varrin (NG male human thief 4) wants to investigate any such accusation so he has commanded Jarrin Penn's men to round up any accused villagers for questioning. Jarrin Penn (LG old male human fighter 4), an old man now, for his part spends most of his day fishing the Hoslo and trying to stay out of everyone's way.

### 2: UNGER MANOR

Built with a stone foundation and a wooden second storey, this small manor house features a crude, bird excrement stained statue of the former village reeve, Cardin Unger (who was one of the first to disappear).

Pio Varrin (NG male human thief 4) has since moved in, cluttering the small study with a large number of books on various subjects. Hailing from Wolverton, Pio possesses a keen intellectual mind that caught Lord Locher's attention. A bit odd, Pio feels more comfortable with his books than he does people and thus is open to any assistance offered in his investigations.

### 3: DAYSTAR CHURCH

A small, well-built church dedicated to Darlen sits on the banks of the Hoslo, near the ford. A small bell tower rings a flat, monotonous tone hourly.

Father Renald Halman (LN male human cleric 5) leads the faithful here. A shrewd man, he sees the recent disappearances as an opportunity to increase his congregation. His sermons of late talk of Darlen's punishment visiting the village because of their unfaithfulness. Many villagers are beginning to believe the good father.

### 4: THE FORD

This well-maintained ford straddles the Hoslo and remains passable except after severe rainstorms.

### 5: ARTISAN MARKET

Hosford does not boast a general store. Instead, its resident craftspeople (including a blacksmith, potter and a weaver) live and work here. Its most famous resident is Aeglis Hammerstone (LN male dwarf thief 3). A distant relative of the Goldrock clan, Aeglis is known throughout the Lonely Coast for his gemcutting

skill. Adventurers looking to unload gems or other precious stones would be well-advised to seek Aeglis out as he offers a fair price.

### 6: FISH MARKET

Hosford's fisherfolk bring their daily catches here to be sold in small stalls, while other merchants prepare salted fish for sale throughout the Lonely Coast.

In addition, spicy bowls of fish stew can be bought for 3 cp. Children often earn a 1 cp a week helping to carry large vats of stew to the miners.

---

---

#### PIO VARRIN

NG male human thief 4

*This clean-cut man wears a long leather coat with many pockets. He puffs on a pipe wedged firmly in his mouth while touching and fondling a small object hidden in his hands.*

**Distinguishing Features:** Pio has a tic that keeps his hands ever-busy with something, as he considers the tactile senses to be closer to his concept of reality than sight or sound. He constantly fiddles, adjusts, scratches and touches items.

Preventing him from touching and fondling things makes him first sweat and then break down like an addict in withdrawal, fearing a lack of touch-based interaction with the world may expel him from it.

**Mannerisms:** Pio loves good pipeweed. He always carries around a whole box of it, though he never can seem to recall in which of the numerous pockets of his coat he's put the box. This results inevitably in long, peppered tirades of curses as he's fiddling through them, littering obscure and often surprising objects on the floor.

He is also inordinately fond of the word, "Evidently".

**Personality:** While Pio obviously has studied and learned a lot, he tends to think in binaries and as such, he has had trouble relating to the complexities of the emotions of most folk. This results in an unfortunate tendency to disregard others as irrational or compromised in their judgment.

Tendencies like this notwithstanding, he is equipped with a keen sense of justice and his almost eidetic memory has served him well in investigating the disappearances haunting Hosford.

**Background:** An eccentric more at home with books than people, Pio is an incredibly intelligent, if somewhat scatterbrained man, who has had a top-notch education befitting of his mind, courtesy of the Lochers who saw potential in the young lad.



## 7: HOSLO'S REST

Thick stone walls support the sagging eaves of this inn. One wall of the inn features a series of large doors facing the Hoslo that can be opened on warm days. The proprietor, Hilsa Devvon (LN female human) employs a family of halflings to help run the place. A short, stout lady, Hilsa is often mistaken for a halfling herself. Prone to gossip, she speaks of a number of conspiracy

---

---

### DAG TUNNER

N male human druid 8

*This man wears a thick patchwork jerkin made from seal and shark skin. His lank white hair is in disarray.*

**Distinguishing Features:** Dag looks like a cross between an old, ship-wrecked hermit, a muscled captain and a kind grandfather. An aura of tranquility seems to surround him and gulls in particular like circling him serenely. When angered, his firm step becomes threatening and, like the sea he worships, one can almost feel the brunt of a storm's wrath blazing from his eyes. His senility has reduced him to an unconscious, almost animal cunning, which, paired with pity and his meek demeanor, makes for the perfect cover.

**Mannerisms:** Dag often hums the vaguely threatening, but also strangely soothing hymns he has heard during his travels among the raiders of the north and the inhabitants of the trackless southern jungles. His firm, stomping step acts almost as a kind of percussion, making it seem like he's accompanied by forces beyond one's ken. He stumbles a lot and his cherubic, almost innocent smile dispels any doubts as to his health. He also likes handing out delicious shellfish to the local children, "with blessings from the waves", he says, a subtle melancholy suffusing his words.

**Personality:** Dag honestly believes the sea serpent he's worshipping is the incarnation of the ocean's will. With a grim resolve, believing the needs of the many outweigh the sacrifice of the few he takes. A kind old man, his burden would have broken a lesser man, but he faces his task with singular, grim determination and a conviction that would make most fanatics pale. And yet, tears always flow when he placates the serpent he mistakes for an agent of divine providence.

**Background:** Dag's fate is a tragedy—the once mighty druid's faculties have deteriorated after a long life guarding the seas and coastal regions to high senility. He wouldn't even recognize his erstwhile companions and his capacity for long-term memory has all but vanished—but strangely, all faculties that aid him in his grim task are just as acute as they always have been. Honed to a spear's point, a life spent above and below the waves, fighting with the things below now seems like but a prelude to his final divine mission.

theories about the recent disappearances to anyone who will listen. None of them are true, but they do contain a lot of dirty secrets about certain villagers that fuels the rampant accusations sweeping the village.

## 8: MINES

Hosford boasts the area's largest mine, rivalling the output of the smaller mines scattered about nearby Bossin. Numerous entrances riddle the cliffs—a result of the villagers' quest for semiprecious metals and gems. After a mine collapse 70 years ago that caused a sizable chunk of the cliffs to collapse, the villagers have become more cautious about where they tunnel. After that incident, a large tunnel was dug through the cliff to connect Hosford proper with the cove. The villagers keep their mining equipment in long stone and wood buildings at the edge of Hosford.

## 9: HOSFORD COVE

A large tunnel opens up onto a sandy cove flanked by towering cliffs. A growing number of villagers are leaving the darkness of the mines for the open sea, skirting the coastline in small boats. However, large rocks just below the surface mean certain destruction to any large vessels docking at Hosford. Rickety wooden docks reach out into the sea while behind them rests a small number of salt-stained cottages and businesses catering to the fishermen's needs. Local fisherman, Kandin Bellick (N male human) has spent more time on the seas than anyone in Hosford. A teller of tall tales, he claims to have once seen a giant sea serpent.

## 10: SEA CAVE

The Hoslo empties out into a large sea cavern. A mine tunnel, once sealed off (but now cleverly disguised, requiring careful inspection opens onto a small ledge on the cave's western side). A few large rocks rise out of the water, creating slick platforms. A crude tent, Dag Tunner's (N male human druid 8) home, rests on one such platform. Nearing the end of his life, the old druid suffers from senility, honestly believing a sea serpent to be a nature god. An aloof hermit, he has managed to escape detection so far. An exit on the south end, under water, leads out to sea. It is this passage the sea serpent has been using. A stupid beast, it realizes the dirty old human brings it fresh food to eat, the kind that wiggles and screams, thus it does not willingly attack Dag. Unbeknownst to the villagers, Dag's sacrifices keep the sea serpent from preying on Hosford's small fishing boats.

## LIFE IN HOSFORD

Hosford rests almost equidistant between Swallowfeld to the west and Wolverton to the east. The relatively quiet life in Hosford has been shattered by the recent disappearances as its folk turn on one another. Even if the disappearances stop, it will take some time for the village to heal.

North of Hosford lies the mysterious depths of the Tangled Woods. Home to tribes of half-goblins and other vicious monsters, the ruins of an ancient people lie scattered about, luring adventurers in with tales of treasure.

To the south, lies the sea, however, grizzled fishermen love to relate stories of strange creatures dwelling in sea caves along the cliffs and mysterious islands that appear only at night and vanish with the dawn.

### LAW & ORDER

Bailiff Jarrin Penn kept the peace in Hosford for years. An old man now, Jarrin feels he is out of his league investigating the disappearances. This shame leads him to distance himself from others. As such he spends most of his time idly fishing. Pio Varrin's talents lie more in investigating and less in rulership. The village guard spends more time bringing people in for questioning instead of solving real problems. Thus, Hosford is in danger of slipping into anarchy.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

With the area's largest mine, the majority of the villagers spend their time pulling metals and gems from the earth. An increasing number of villagers ply the coastline, bringing in hauls of fish that can be exported to the other villages and town of the Lonely Coast.

### THE DISAPPEARANCES

When word reached Caer Syllan of Cardin Unger's sudden disappearance, Lord Locher dispatched Pio Varrin as the new reeve tasking solving the mystery. Pio Varrin, however, is a bit over his head between the sullen villagers and a bailiff trying to stay out of the trouble. While new faces in the village immediately draw the suspicion of the locals, Pio Varrin tries to enlist their aid if they seem capable of handling themselves.

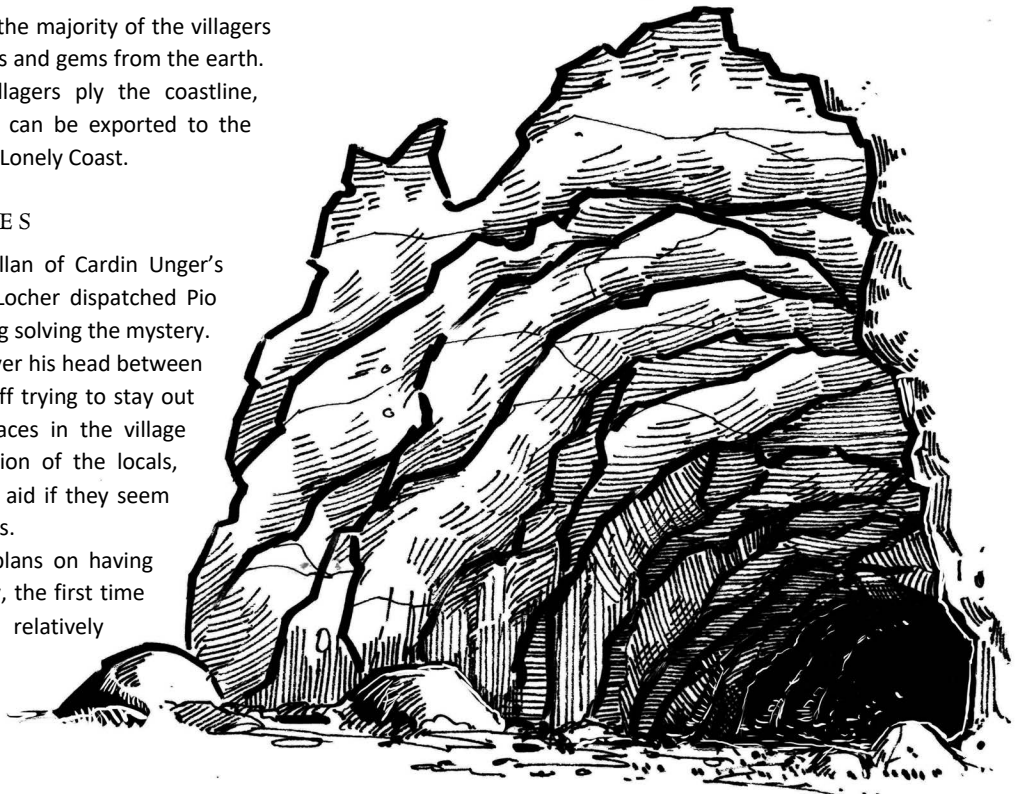
Alternatively, if the GM plans on having the PCs visit Hosford regularly, the first time the players visit, things are relatively

quiet, with the frequency of disappearances rising on each subsequent visit until the village is in an uproar.

### EVENTS

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

D6	EVENT
1	A group of villagers stands outside the church. They shout at passers-by to repent and accept Darlen's love.
2	Soldiers drag a sullen-looking man along. Suddenly, the man breaks free and runs towards the PCs.
3	Dazed miners stream out of the mine; a tunnel collapsed, trapping some of the miners inside.
4	A woman shows up at Hoslo's Rest and asks if anyone has seen her husband. His boat has not yet returned.
5	A posse of villagers is gathering supplies. They plan on marching into the Tangled Forest, looking for half-goblins to slay.
6	A large merchant vessel foolishly tried to dock at the cove during a storm the previous night and has taken substantial damage. The crew is still on board but the ship is beginning to sink.



# KERWYN'S PRIDE

---

**Words** Steve Hood **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*Built up on the ruins of a pirate fleet doomed by a savage storm, the floating village of Kerwyn's Pride now serves as a base from which to thwart piratical activity in the surrounding waters, a shipyard for damaged vessels and as the home of "reformed" pirate captain Vayla Hollan and her crew. The surrounding waters see much trade—three baronies have competing claims for the area—and Vayla acts as a neutral arbiter and toll collector for the competing nobles. Of course, contraband still flows through the village—Vayla hasn't completely given up on her old lifestyle—but Kerwyn's Pride is a relatively safe place for a weary crew to drop anchor...if it wasn't for the anarchic villagers, swarms of deadly insects infesting a nearby island, a strange buzzing sound coming from the surrounding forest and the rumours of a terrible insectile demon taking an unwholesome interest in the village...*

## KERWYN'S PRIDE AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Vayla Hollan

**Government:** Autocracy

**Alignments:** N, CN, NE, CE

**Population:** 103 (42 humans, 4 dwarves, 47 half-orcs, 10 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Callavan Leneer (Temple to Murgiss), Vayla Hollan (Hollan Manse), Brel Quinnet (Port Authority)

**Languages:** Common, Orc, Wyntongue (local Thieves' Cant)

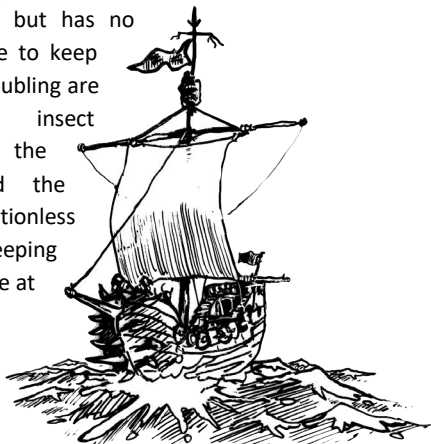
**Resources & Industry:** Trade and safe harbour

The infamous pirate Vayla Hollan met her match in a powerful storm. Aboard her vessel, *Kerwyn's Pride*, she led her fleet to Ballisco Bay to avoid the storm. The dreadful weather followed the ships into the bay, and every vessel sustained enough damage to flounder or sink altogether.

Vayla was never one to pass up an opportunity borne from disaster. She was aware of the strained political situation in the bay, as three baronies vied for control over its waters, and was intimately knowledgeable about intense pirate activity due to the chaos. She decided her seagoing days were behind her, and she offered her services to the baronies to thwart pirates who threaten the bay. She made a convincing argument to all representatives and managed to score some gold to help build her new settlement. Her first task was to convert her flagship, after which she named the village. She and her crew repaired two more ships and converted them to sturdy buildings. Wood salvaged from sunken ships fashioned the remainder of the village's structures.

Kerwyn's Pride now stands as a bastion against storms and pirates. Its officers also enforce tariffs on goods transported to the nearby baronies further inland. Finally, known only to Vayla and her closest confidants, the village is a hub for contraband and smuggling. (After all, the half-orc pirate couldn't remain completely above board.)

Beyond juggling legitimate and less-than-legal operations, the village leadership must deal with the occasional shows of force among the baronies for whom they work. Vayla has proven an adept diplomat but has no problem using force to keep the peace. More troubling are the increased insect populations in the Buzzing Bog and the ominous, directionless buzzing sound keeping many villagers awake at night.



## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Kerwyn's Pride, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- The half-orc pirate Vayla Hollan claimed Ballisco Bay and built the village after her fleet foundered in a powerful storm. She and her crew manage water traffic through the bay, on the behalf of, but independent to, three baronies contesting the area.
- The now-defunct Empire of the Eastern Sun claimed the area centuries ago. Several structures and some treasure remain from the time of the empire's rule.
- Deeper in the past, strange winged humanoids with insectile features lived here before civilization reached the bay. Idols to their forgotten deity are buried in the nearby woods.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Vayla picked up crew in all ports, so the villagers have varied appearances. Most have dark skin, even those with fair complexions, due to countless days spent working in the sun.

**Dress:** Clothing is loose and functional. Other than when Vayla wishes to impress a visitor, the villagers never wear any sort of formal clothing.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Callvan, Georg, Mal; *female* Cirin, Desdaemona, Vayla; *family* Hollan, Nirill, Voya.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Kerwyn's Pride, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

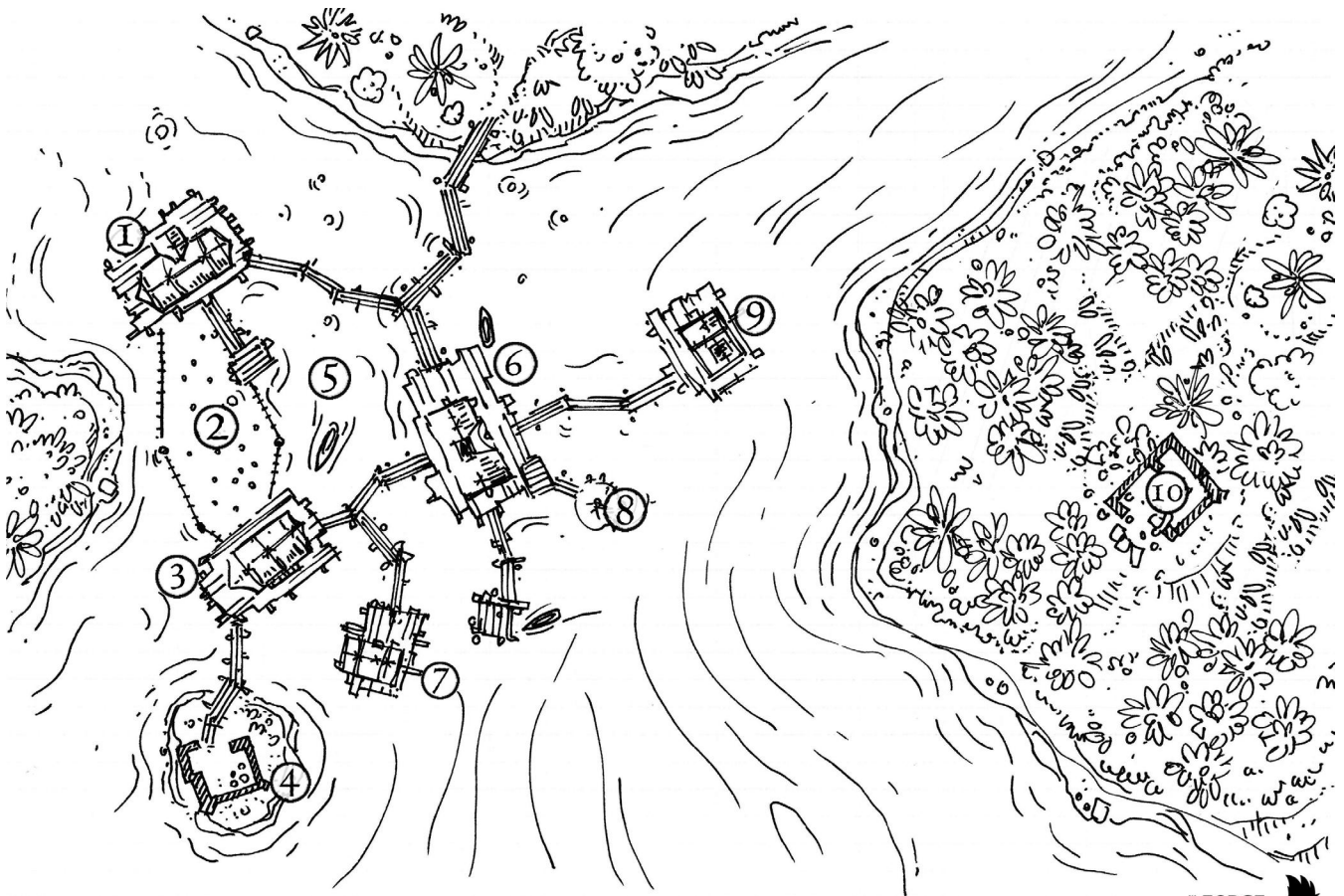
D6	RUMOUR
1	I saw a black ship sail silently past the village one night, and the watchperson didn't notice it or didn't want to hail the ship. I certainly wasn't calling attention to it.
2	A pack of wild dogs tried to cross the piers to the north. Their gaunt frames spoke of their hunger.
3	Vayla offers gold coins from her levies to the bay's waters to appease her drowned crew's spirits.
4	A dolphin beached itself and died on the shore east of the village. It had three bloodless puncture marks.
5*	During nights with a full or new moon, Vayla talks to the weird skulls adorning her home.
6	Recently, a child was born with multifaceted eyes. Callavan drowned it, and its parents fled the village.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Sea Sprite Inn:** Named for the ship whose hull comprises the main building, this inn is where locals go to unwind after a busy day. Visitors also frequent the inn while they wait out storms or their ships undergo inspection or repair.
2. **The Buzzing Bog:** This stretch of sand manages to stay above water even during high tides. Here dwell a multitude of stinging and biting insects. Those who commit egregious crimes in the village receive sentenced to walk a number of laps of the island depending on each offence's severity.
3. **Quartermaster's:** This shop serves the village and visiting ships. It becomes an overflow inn and tavern when storms force many ships to dock at the village.
4. **Fort Lookout:** This building is the only intact structure from the centuries-old occupation of a now-faded empire. The building provides shelter from the rain and allows for storage of goods that must remain dry.
5. **The Holding Pen:** Ships that require repairs, inspection or assessment for tariffs dock here. Like the floating piers in the rest of the village, the pen's walkways are moveable to allow or restrict entry. Netting below the surface prevents large aquatic predators entering this area.
6. **Temple to Murgiss:** The villagers retain their faith in the sea goddess who favours pirates. Visitors are encouraged to visit the temple and make a nominal donation to gain the goddess's goodwill during their sea voyages.
7. **Hollan Manse:** Vayla and her crew converted *Kerwyn's Pride* to become her home. She meets with ship's captains and representatives from the three baronies, here.
8. **The Crow's Nest:** The highest point in *Kerwyn's Pride* grants the village watch a vantage over the bay. The Crow's Nest is equipped similarly to a lighthouse, albeit with a less powerful light, to help guide ships at night.
9. **Port Authority:** Administration of the bay is handled here.
10. **Ruined Fort:** This is the only other obvious structure from the former empire that controlled this region. A hidden basement allows the residents to wait out severe storms and conceals contraband making its way through the village.



## LIFE IN KERWYN'S PRIDE

---

Daily life in the village keeps the inhabitants busy, as they process ships sailing through the bay and board their own ships to turn away pirates. No one gets a break during stormy weather, as they often must rescue ships caught in swells or suffering under the command of an inexperienced or incompetent captain. Children contribute from an early age and are especially adept at climbing ropes and reaching difficult locations.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

Kerwyn's Pride sees cargo with an annual worth approaching 100,000 gp. The village earns most of its gold taking a share of tariffs on goods bound for the three nearby baronies. Repairs also reap wealth for the village, since it has become a stable waypoint for vessels making longer sea voyages. Villagers also claim the majority of the plunder they take from pirates who make the mistake of targeting ships under the village's protection. With such activity lessening thanks to Kerwyn's Pride's reputation, the village no longer pulls in much from their patrols. However, their repute allows them to charge a higher percentage of the tariffs. Finally, owing to the former pirates' propensity for lawlessness, the villagers make a brisk trade in contraband and smuggling. Vayla draws the line at slavery, though. She reports ships transporting slaves or takes matters into her own hands to liberate their cargo, often later offering the freed slaves citizenship in the village.

### LAW & ORDER

Outside observers believe Kerwyn's Pride is an anarchic village and suspect the villagers would revert to their old ways if not for their leader's forceful personality. However, the village operates under a code of honour, and promises made while invoking this code must be kept. Visitors who learn about this code often use it to make sure they aren't victims of the petty theft rife in the village. Breaking this code, slavery and murder are the only punishable offences; all result in stays in the Buzzing Bog (location 2). Long visits for terrible crimes are essentially death sentences.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Founders' Week marks the anniversary of Vayla Hollan's arrival at Ballisco Bay. Her first mate suggested the festival's name before succumbing to the pneumonia he suffered after nearly drowning. Vayla scoffed at his play on words, but the pirate captain had no choice but to acquiesce to his suggestion upon his deathbed. The bay fills with ships for the occasion, partially because the villagers provide copious amounts of rum and other alcohol for the celebrations.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table, to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Kerwyn's Pride.

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Powerful southern winds carry sea spray into the village.
2	A shark fin breaks the water and circles Fort Lookout's island; it reverses course upon closing on the pier.
3	Seagulls circle the Sea Sprite Inn; occasionally one dives at someone leaving the inn, especially if that person carries food.
4	A child carries a wounded, starving puppy abandoned by its pack and asks passers-by to fix it.
5	The captain of the <i>Jetty Spray</i> refuses to drop anchor; villagers scramble to board the ship.
6	A school of bloated fish wash up on the eastern shore near the ruined fort. At the slightest touch, the fish explode in a spray of maggots.
7	The watchperson in the crow's nest excitedly yells about a whale in the water to the south. Visitors and villagers crowd about to catch a glimpse of the whale.
8	A swarm of mosquitoes escapes from Buzzing Bog; it follows a sweaty visitor, much to his dismay.
9	A fast-moving squall approaches the village, which comes alive with activity as villagers rush to batten down everything and secure the docked ships.
10	Despite there only being far off clouds, five bolts of lightning strike the water near the port and unleash deafening booms of thunder.
11	Shouts barely penetrate the sound of scraping wood as the <i>Mermaid's Drink</i> and the <i>Narwhal</i> collide.
12	High tide floods all the buildings and completely covers the land surrounding Fort Lookout.
13	A caravel floats into the bay and grounds on the sandy area to the east; no one is onboard.
14	The sweltering heat does not deter an honour guard flanking Baroness Jurena, arriving for a personal visit. Villagers stand alongside the honour guard as all windows and doors in Hollan Manse are firmly shut.
15	Ominous clouds threatening to dump rain on the village suddenly disperse, leaving behind clear blue sky.
16	The <i>Dauntless</i> lists to its port side as sailors jump overboard. The snapping of wood can be heard from below the surface.
17	A massive bed of entangling seaweed enters the bay.
18	Droning gives away a pair of fly-headed humanoids quietly watching the village from the western woods. They noisily fly away if approached.
19	A pier leading out of the village to the north slowly topples into the water. Villagers rush to repair it.
20	At dawn and dusk, howling from the north—a pack of wild dogs—pierces the quiet.

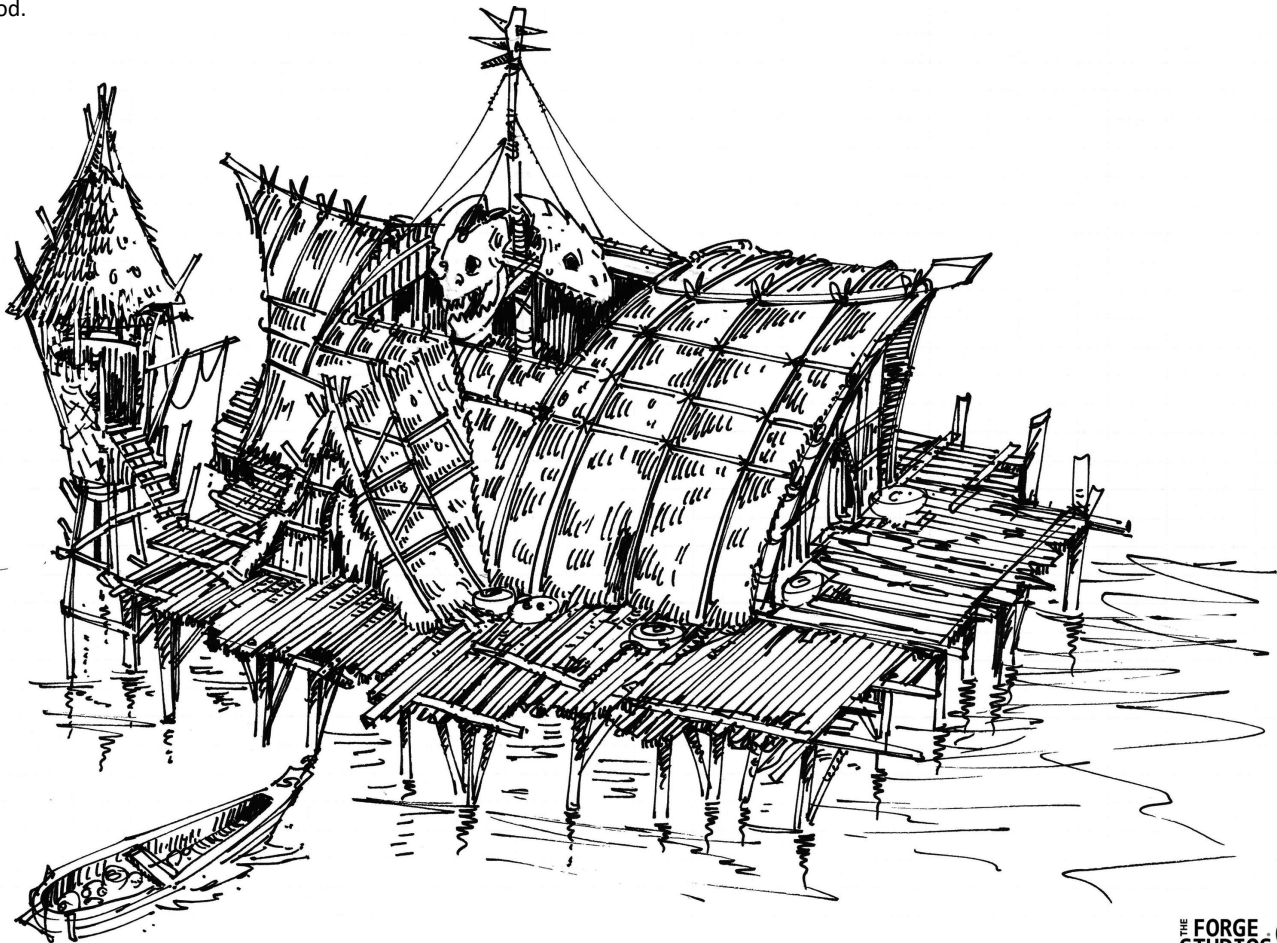
## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

The land around Ballisco Bay is essentially untamed wilderness. The Empire of the Eastern Sun was the last civilization to claim the land, and remnants of its settlements dot the resurgent forest. Vayla wishes she could spare people to delve into the woods and recover the empire's lost treasures and artefacts, but daily operation prevents her from chasing potentially fruitless dreams. Most of the fortifications and settlements built by the former inhabitants have fallen prey to the elements and attackers who preyed on the weakening empire. Each of the local baronies have tried to make inroads into the forest, but wild animals and strange calamities have thwarted their efforts. Wild dogs, descendants of pets left behind, roam in packs and present a threat to lonely travellers, but a sizeable group scares them away unless the dogs are starving. Wild boars are more dangerous but are scarcer. Occasionally, villagers hunt the boars to supplement the fish serving as their main culinary staple and to offer something more exotic at the Sea Sprite Inn. The greatest and least understood threat in the woods comes from the insect-like humanoids haunting the area. While they haven't yet encroached on the village, rumours speak of them waylaying travellers in the woods and sacrificing them to their demonic god.

## THE SURROUNDING WATERS

The nearby waters present fewer dangers than the forest. Vayla sends out regular patrols to ensure piratical activity remains dampened. Aquatic animals, such as sharks and squid, are the main creature threats, but they only really apply to those foolish or clumsy enough to fall overboard. Storm activity has increased over the years and has become the greatest threat to seagoing vessels. Relative safe harbour at the village means nothing if a ship capsizes leagues away. Vayla doesn't want to risk her people, so she pulls in her patrols when bad weather threatens, but a few foolhardy souls remain in the choppy waves and dangerous winds to rescue those lost at sea. Evidence based on relics recovered from the seabed include idols to the insect deity. Callavan reasons the sea deities attempted to wipe out the terrible creatures infesting the region as part of their war with the demonic deity. He is worried the uptick in turbulent weather is tied to the increased sightings of the strange beings, and his attempts to commune with Murgiss have given him no answers.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN KERWYN'S PRIDE

---

### 1: SEA SPRITE INN

*The upside-down hull of a ship, with a few attached wooden additions, fills most of the floating wood boardwalk. The smell of smoked fish and the sounds of many people talking emanate from within the building.*

The Sea Sprite Inn, named for the recovered *Sea Sprite*, is the main destination for villagers and visitors alike. The building is primarily composed of the hollowed-out hull of the ship. As Kerwyn's Pride has become a more popular destination, the *Sea Sprite's* former captain Mal Wyverntail (N male half-orc thief 2) expanded the inn. The southern end bordering the Buzzing Bog is sealed in a foul-smelling tar to deter the insects. Troublemakers and customers he doesn't like end up seated there.

- **Food & Drink** meal (fresh salmon, nori, and [hard] bread) 4 sp, weak rum 7 cp, wine (pitcher) 5 sp.
- **Accommodation** Two-bed chamber 20 sp; four-bed chamber 50 sp; common room 4 sp.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A snippet of overheard conversation mentions treasure in the bog before the excited speaker is quieted by his companions.
2	A powerfully built woman throws open the door and demands everyone leave the inn.
3	A cloud of gnats infiltrates the building's roof and swarms around an unfortunate customer.
4	Drunk sailors from two of the feuding baronies start a brawl; Mal asks the PCs to break up the fight and offers free accommodations for a peaceful resolution.
5	A dirty note stuck to the bottom of one of the PC's plates asks the reader to meet in the woods to the north at dusk. It is difficult to determine the note's age.
6	A starved dog swims from the north and begs for food from the PCs as they leave the inn.

### 2: THE BUZZING BOG

*As opposed to the sand composing most of the land here, marshy soil and tall reeds cover this island. Swarms of flies, gnats and mosquitoes cover the ground in shadow.*

Vayla and her crew thought they scored arable land here when they explored their new home. Based on the healthy collection of reeds, the soil seemed capable of supporting vegetables. The

villagers thought it was just a matter of removing all the insects plaguing the island. Various attempts to disperse the insects not only failed but also resulted in a doubled population, as if the insects spontaneously reproduced to spite the villagers. They could only keep the insects at bay by employing alchemically crafted candles giving off a scent repellent to the insects but undetectable to the villagers.

The bog serves as a prison of sorts used to inflict punishment for terrible crimes; its horrible reputation serves as an effective deterrent. Because of the bog's inherent dangerousness and relative stability, the villagers used this area to store important treasure they don't immediately need. Digging randomly for treasure unearths an item (or items) valuing 2d4 x 1,000 gp after four hours; knowing the location of treasure still requires an hour's worth of digging. Of course, such activity draws the villagers' attention, regardless of any precautions taken.

For each hour (or part of an hour) spent in the bog, creatures, take 1d4 damage from numerous insect bites. Many of the insects also carry disease, and visitors have a base 10% chance of contracting a disease when entering this area, plus a cumulative 10% chance for each hour spent here (*Insect-borne disease*: save vs. poison; onset 1 day; suffer 1 point each of Strength and Constitution damage a week until cured).

**Exterminators:** If the PCs devise a way to remove the insects forever (something which requires *repel vermin* or more powerful magic on a permanent basis), Vayla rewards them with gold or magic items totalling 10,000 gp.

**A Mistaken Judgment:** A woman confronts the PCs and asks them to rescue her husband, who was mistakenly punished to walk the bog. She offers a pearl-inlaid necklace worth 10 gp if they can bring him safely home.

### 3: QUARTERMASTER'S

*Nets, ropes and other nautical supplies line the walls and fill the floor of this building fashioned from a ship's hull.*

Villagers and sailors looking for supplies are directed to this building, which has a seemingly haphazard array of goods. Vayla's fleet quartermaster, Xeri Indra (CN female halfling thief 3), never embraced the sea like the others in Vayla's crew. The sea nearly repaid this rejection by drowning the halfling during the fleet's disastrous arrival, but she survived through sheer determination. This stubbornness keeps her in Kerwyn's Pride, and she enjoys the business she shares with Hanar Grollin (N male dwarf fighter 4), who devised the candles keeping the insects penned in the Buzzing Bog. Xeri sells seagoing-related supplies (nets, grappling hooks, gaffs etc.) for 10% above list price. Hanar sells alchemical items for the listed price but such items require a two-day waiting period as he makes them specially to order.



#### 4: FORT LOOKOUT

*This sandy island reaches a flat plateau standing several feet above sea level. A stone, two-storey fort fills most of the plateau.*

Vayla was dismayed but unsurprised to discover looters had taken everything of value from the fort. Before the crow's nest was built, this locale served as the village's watch station, since it stands well above sea level and had a clear view of the bay. Despite it no longer serving as a lookout post, it kept its now-incongruous name. The fort serves as dry storage and barracks for the villagers, most of whom are accustomed to quartering in tight spaces. Additionally, the fort becomes a cramped yet safe place to ride out powerful storms. The fort can accommodate up to 150 people when emptied of beds, or 200 people if it is also emptied of supplies.

The fort's service as a barracks provides plenty of protection for the supplies contained within, but Vayla feels more secure with a rotating pair of wardens (fighter 1) standing guard at night. Visitors are not allowed to enter the fort without escort, and the guards know everyone in the village, so it is difficult to fool them. Even if someone were to sneak into the fort, they would be disappointed, since the most valuable items here are foodstuffs and potable water.

#### 5: THE HOLDING PEN

*Bordered by the insect-filled, marshy island to the west, an upside-down ship to the east, and movable piers everywhere else, this enclosure contains ships of varying sizes. Lit line the western walkway leading to the Sea Sprite Inn.*

Ships detained for inspection end up here. Inspections are required to determine tariffs and to ensure ships are not carrying illegal goods. Before inspections are carried out, the

##### VAYLA HOLLAN

N female half-orc thief 5

*This tall woman is garbed in green leathers and wears a tricorne hat trimmed in bright green.*

**Mannerisms:** Vayla uses her towering height to make herself more imposing. She paces slowly while she talks as if the constant, deliberate movement helps her think.

**Personality:** The pirate captain is confident in her own abilities and extends this sense of assurance to her closest confidants. She approaches a negotiation with the impression she has the upper hand and rarely backs down.

**Background:** Vayla was born to the sea and quickly ascended to command of her own ship at the age of 15. Her brashness combined with a healthy dose of luck allowed her to command her own fleet several years later.

villagers encourage visitors to enjoy the Sea Sprite Inn (with a suitable warning to stay on this side of the candles along the walkway). Inspections take one to four hours depending on the size of the ship and the amount of cargo it carries. A bribe equal to 10% of the cargo's value expedites the process by 25%. Several villagers armed with grappling hooks and ropes stand guard along the piers lining the enclosure in case a ship's captain proves unwilling to submit to inspection.

Some ship's captains work with Vayla Hollan to import illicit goods into the area. In these cases, inspection also includes the discreet removal of such items.

The quartermaster's proximity to this location makes it easier to perform ships. These typically take one day per 10 gp worth of repair. A bribe equal to 10% of the total amount of the necessary repair improves this to one day per 15 gp.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A woman offers to sell her ship, <i>The Blessed Bounty</i> , to the PCs for an outrageously low sum. Regardless of her success, she departs hastily, never to be seen again.
2	Shortly after an inspection team enters the <i>Dour Sailfish</i> , an explosion rips open the hull and sets the ship on fire.
3	A repair team is too late to get to a ship's splintered mainmast, which cracks and falls onto a walkway.
4	A crewman from the <i>Barbarian's Blood</i> spots the PCs and quietly lets them know about slaves in a hidden hold; he fears punishment if he goes to the authorities.
5	A captain refuses to submit to inspection. Villagers subdue him and march him to the nearby bog, so he can rethink his stance.
6	Most of the crew of the <i>Noisome Crayfish</i> coughs up blood shortly after disembarking. Alarmed villagers demand the crew return to their ship and call for Callavan (location 7) to quarantine them.

#### 6: HOLLAN MANSE

*This is the largest of the three upside-down ships comprising permanent buildings in the village. A pair of skulls belonging to strange aquatic creatures jut through the building's roof.*

This building is Vayla Hollan's (N female half-orc thief 5) home and seat of governance. She apportioned the hold in the inverted ship to separate living quarters from a lavish office where she meets with dignitaries. The ship's name has been removed and repainted, so it is right side up along what is now the roof. Vayla's (fast) private launch is moored just south of the main building.

## 7: TEMPLE TO MURGISS

*A mural depicting a woman wearing an eyepatch and floating above several ships covers the front of this plain building.*

The only permanent place of worship in Kerwyn's Pride, this temple venerates the pirate deity, Murgiss. Her only priest, Callavan Leneer (CN male half-orc cleric 3), has his work cut out for him, since many villagers feel the goddess abandoned them when storms beset the fleet. He has tried to present their situation as a sacred duty bestowed upon them by the sea goddess, to little avail. He still sees brisk visitation by outsiders who take any kind of blessing for successful sea voyages.

**Bugged by the Bug God:** Callavan believes Murgiss sent him and the other villagers here to thwart the demonic being behind the insects and bizarre hybrid creatures. He asks capable PCs to find totems to the god and destroy any creatures they encounter. He pays them from a cache of offerings to Murgiss.

## 8: THE CROW'S NEST

*Four 15-foot-tall poles hold up a domed structure.*

The crow's nest from *Kerwyn's Pride* was rebuilt from its shattered remains. It retains a similar purpose: to early warning of arriving ships or approach bad weather. Two villagers work in overlapping eight-hour shifts and keep constant watch. At night, the watchpersons operate a semi-permanent light to guide approaching ships. Even when storms strike the bay, at least one person remains at this post. Xeri (location 3; CN female halfling thief 3), the quartermaster, ensured the crow's nest could withstand hurricane-force winds.

## 9: PORT AUTHORITY

*A bright blue building with colourful flags representing the three baronies inland from the bay dominates the village's approaches.*

This building commands all approaches inland from the bay. At least a dozen workers administrate traffic into and out of the bay. They are equipped to board and seize ships whose captains do not comply with their demands. Many of the villagers who work for the port authority hope they get the opportunity to legally perform such activities, revisiting the excitement of doing so at sea. They are also trained to effect emergency repairs, so ships are seaworthy enough to limp into the holding pen for proper repairs.

Breel Quinnet (N male human thief 4) handles the administrative duties for traffic through the bay. He is an affable person but easily adopts an officious attitude to those he finds insufferable. Of all Kerwyn's Pride's residents, he is the most knowledgeable about everything occurring within and outside

the village. He doesn't readily share the information he has and is expensive to bribe (demanding 100 gp for even merely innocuous material!)

## 10: RUINED FORT

*Trees and other plants have mostly reclaimed the land around a destroyed stone structure.*

The only other remnant of the Empire of the Eastern Sun is this former fort, which was destroyed in a long-forgotten battle. While the structure above ground is nearly obliterated and overgrown with vegetation, a hidden basement survived the battle and decades of disuse. The villagers use this basement to secretly store contraband passing through the village. Since the material stored here is of a sensitive nature, the entrance to the basement is trapped with poison darts (+10 to hit, 2d4 damage plus save or be paralysed for 1d4 hours). Villagers working here know the bypass mechanism for the trap. Xeri Indra resets the trap and adjusts the bypass mechanism as necessary.

**Damaging Information:** One of the feuding barons indulged in a dalliance with another baron's mistress. His major-domo is aware incriminating letters between the two have been stolen and are making their way to the second baron, who will use the evidence to instigate all-out war. The major-domo offers the PCs 500 gp if they can retrieve the letters stored here before they leave Kerwyn's Pride.

---

---

### CALLAVAN LENEER

CN male half-orc cleric 3

*This half-orc wears ocean blue robes flecked with white similar in appearance to sea foam. His bald head is deeply sunburnt.*

**Mannerisms:** Callavan speaks rapidly and turns most conversation to Murgiss and her works. He punctuates exclamatory statements by pounding surfaces with his fist.

**Personality:** The priest is exuberant in his praise of his goddess, but those who spend enough time talking to him note a certain weariness regarding the villagers' lack of faith. Insightful PCs pick up on his fear of something unknown lurking near the village.

**Background:** Murgiss was not the first deity Callavan worshipped. He was a follower of a more rustic sea god whose clergy was more concerned with fish yields than revering the sea. When Vayla made port at the hamlet, he met the fleet's priestess of Murgiss, after which he hastily decided to change faiths to the more dynamic deity and signed on as an acolyte, eventually become the village priest when the priestess died.

# LADY CROSS

---

**Words** Robert Manson **Cartography** Tommi Salama

*On what was once the lonely crossroads of two rarely used roads sits the village of Lady Cross, a tight community of stone houses surrounded by a high stone wall. Now a popular rest stop for travellers and merchants alike, Lady Cross is known for the heady spirits distilled in the village and sold at the local inn, The Lady's Rest. Unknown to most, it is a different type of spirit the villagers fear—a sinister secret wreathed in foul treachery and hysteria that speaks to the darkness and greedy lurking in men's souls.*

## LADY CROSS AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Alderman Jarsson Trond

**Government:** Autocracy

**Alignments:** NG, N, LN, NE

**Population:** 86 (74 humans, 6 dwarves, 1 gnome, 1 half-elf, 4 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Alderman Jarsson (location 1, The Lady's Rest), Markus Vorgmann (location 9, The Gates).

**Languages:** Common, Dwarven, Elven

**Resources & Industry:** Distilling, brewing and hospitality

**Spellcasting:** 3rd (Grindin Well-Read [location 4])

Several years ago, Adalbert Gall—a brewer—came to Lady Cross with his daughter, Eadith, a beautiful girl coming of age with a bewitching smile and mischievous eyes. Within a day all the young lads were vying for her attention. She, however, had eyes for only one: Pepin—the son of Jarsson the tavern owner with whom her father sought to trade spirit recipes. Late at night, while the men discussed business in the taproom, the two lovers sneaked into the cellars to conduct business of their own.

Struggles of two different kinds broke out at the same time; as the lovers fell to the floor so did the two brewers, fighting over the valuable recipes that each held. With dreams of wealth and prestige dancing before his eyes, Jarsson attacked Adalbert and struck him a fateful blow to the head with a heavy pitcher. He then dragged the heavy body down to the cellar to hide his treachery only to interrupt the youngsters in their passionate embrace.

Feigning innocence, he blamed the attack on Eadith and accused her of witchery and of beguiling his son. He dragged the screaming girl into the village square where a vengeful mob quickly formed, enraged at the attack on their friend. Eadith was tied to a large oak tree and burned whilst the frenzied mob watched. Even now, her burnt skeleton still adorns the tree, which has now gained the name “The Sorrow Tree”.

Hoping things would return to normal, Jarsson prospered using the stolen recipes whilst his son slowly descended into madness over the guilt from the deaths. One year later, as the village celebrated a successful harvest, Pepin hung himself from a tree overhanging the mill pond. Soon thereafter, whispers began to be heard in the taproom at night and guests began to complain of fitful sleep in the guest rooms and of seeing a white lady stalking the common areas late at night.

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Lady Cross, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- The village of Lady Cross is a famed centre of distillery. It is particularly known for its gins.
- Stands of juniper and elder trees power the village's distilleries. Anyone caught damaging or stealing from the trees is viewed very harshly.
- Once nothing more than a rest stop for travellers Lady Cross is now a bustling community, attracting people from far away to sample its wares.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Tall and dark haired, most villagers have tanned, leathery skin. Men are usually armed with bows and handaxes; women commonly carry long knives.

**Dress:** Villagers wear thick, windproof canvas over furs. Long scarves and coats are preferable to cloaks. Thick fur lined hats with a canvas covering have recently become popular. Women wear long trousers under open skirts and thick jackets; their hair is usually long and plaited or tied back. Blue and red patterns printed with ink made from local fruits adorn most clothing.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Jurian, Markus, Darien; *female* Bella, Mawgen; *family* Jarsson, Millsson, Morganarr, Huvlarr.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Lady Cross, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Alderman Jarsson once had a son, Pepin.
2	Sometimes a crying woman can be heard in the basement from the top of the taproom steps.
3	People shun the mill pond since the ghost of a young man was seen there.
4	Pepin, the Alderman's son wasn't right in the head and took his own life in the old mill ruins.
5*	No one enters the village after sunset. One day a lone traveller was found frozen to death with a look of sheer horror on his face just by the Sorrow Tree.
6	A network of tunnels under the inn and the ruins of the old mill hide sinister secrets.

\*False rumour

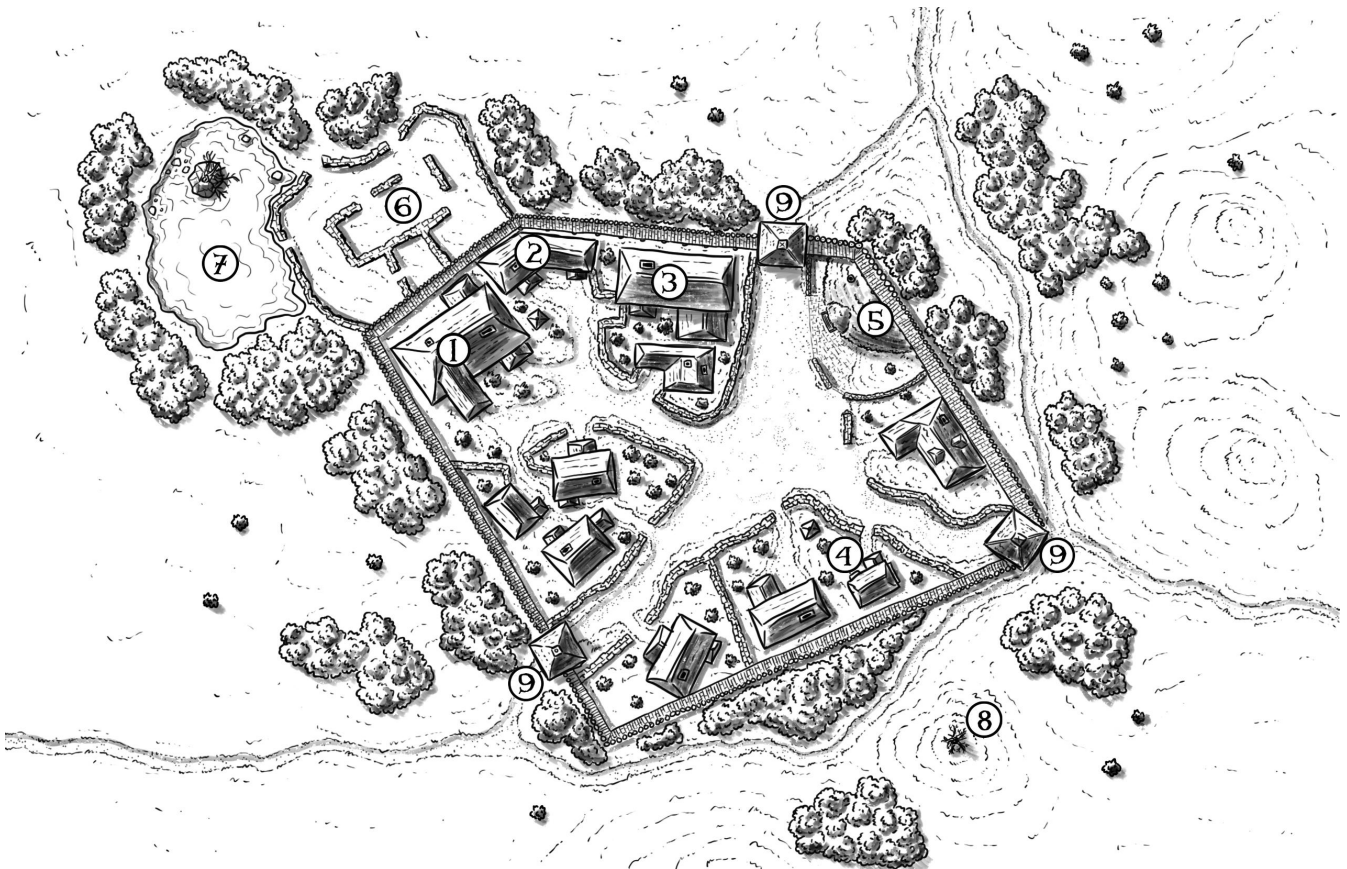
## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of Lady Cross comprises peasant homes. (Several of these are sturdy, single storey stone houses with large cellars for domestic animals to shelter in when the weather turns particularly harsh; every household has at least one cow or goat). Gardens are well tended and many have huts for chickens, rabbits or geese. Large, long haired dogs are popular as pets and guardians.

Scattered around Lady Cross are six wells which draw water from the maze of tunnels and passageways weaving below the village.

A few locations are of particular interest to adventurers:

1. **The Lady's Rest:** This squat stone, rose-covered building is the centre of village life. Bordering the village square on two sides, it, and the spirits sold here, are the reasons most people stop in Lady Cross.
2. **Harrigan's Stables and Forge:** This large open-air forge also doubles as the stables for the inn's many visitors.
3. **Stoneforge Distillery:** Built of thick black stone bricks, this typical dwarven building houses several gin stills
4. **The Book End:** Small and innocuous, like its owner Grindin Well-Read, this small shop holds many books and maps.
5. **Wundrel's Tea Shop:** Tucked away beneath tall juniper trees, this eatery provides accommodation for smaller clients as well as a larger common room and outdoor seating for all.
6. **The Ruined Mill:** Now unused, this old mill stands behind the village slowly decaying.
7. **The Mill Pond:** Hidden behind a large tangle of juniper bushes, this pond is now mostly ignored by the busy villagers.
8. **The Sorrow Tree:** Shattered by lightning in a savage storm, this burnt tree overlooks the village from a small knoll beside the road. Eadith's scorched and weathered skeleton is still chained to the tree.
9. **The Watchtowers:** Each of the three village gates are built inside a sturdy stone tower. From here, guards can use their crossbows to great effect through the arrow slits or from behind the crenelated wall.



## LIFE IN LADY CROSS

---

Despite the cold wind and the rough terrain life in Lady Cross is good. Most people have their own gardens where they grow vegetables and berries and the yearly juniper harvest provides extra, welcome, income. Most people don't seem to have any greater ambitions than a simple life.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

In addition to the booming gin production several villagers are very successful at growing vegetables and smaller berry bushes. These provide the hard workers with more interesting food. Skilled hunters bring in venison and boar, at least once a week.

Some of the local women have started weaving cloth and using the various plants in the area as dyes to make more colourful clothing. An open market takes place outside the Lady's Rest at the weekends.

The village has no general store so Jarsson has started collecting items of equipment and weapons to sell to visitors.

### LAW & ORDER

The Vorgmann brothers (location 9) are deadly serious about keeping the peace in the village, even standing up to Jarsson when it comes to defending people. They brook no trouble from anyone and do not allow troublemakers back in the village. They are incorruptible and do not take bribes.

The village gates are locked at night and many a disgruntled merchant has camped in the shadow of the walls under the guards' watchful eye.

Should the village be threatened, a militia of around 20 skilled fighters can be raised along with a cadre of skilled, crossbow-armed hunters.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

On the winter and summer equinox, the villagers gather at the Sorrow Tree to pray and give thanks for the year's harvest. Handmade gifts are exchanged and each house sets up a stall to trade the years produce to other villagers. Officially named Lady's Day by Jarsson, the event has become highly anticipated by all, with people from other villages travelling to Lady Cross for the day. Commonly seeds from the nearby trees are woven into bracelets and necklaces and given to travellers in the village at the time. Other gifts of clothing, boots or bottles of liquor are also commonly passed around.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table, to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Lady Cross.

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Marissa leaves the Lady's Rest at night with a traveller but returns alone.
2	A servant from Wundrel's shop wanders across the village with a tray of food towards The Book-End
3	A traveller insults Wundrel and the villagers leap to her defence.
4	A fight breaks out over ownership of several juniper bushes growing on the boundary between two homes.
5	A heavily armed villager nods to the party, before heading out the northern gate.
6	A traveller complains about the noise from the room next to him disturbing his sleep. The room was empty.
7	A pretty woman is seen standing by the Lady's Rest. She smiles then disappears inside. She is never seen again.
8	A traveller is dragged out of the Lady's Rest by Markus before being escorted from the village.
9	Jarsson and Markus argue over something before storming away from each other.
10	New pipes are delivered to the distillery and normal work pauses while the dwarves install them.
11	A horse bolts from Harrigan's stables and runs around the village.
12	New guards are marched around the village, to get the lay of the land, by the Vorgmann brothers.
13	A large deer is brought into the village by a hunter.
14	Pretty women walk through the village carrying baskets of berries to the distillery.
15	A traveller arrives at the gates after sunset and has to stay outside until morning.
16	Several villagers set up stalls selling finely made cloaks and other cold weather clothes outside the Lady's Rest.
17	A parent berates their child for playing near the mill-pond.
18	Strong winds create a hollow wailing sound coming from the Sorrow Tree.
19	Lights are seen in the hills outside the village. Extra guards rush to the walls and gates, just in case.
20	A pack of wolves appears on the outskirts of the village before being driven off by the militia.

## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

Set in a low, sheltered dell nestling between several hills, Lady Cross is a small walled community surrounded by trees and shrubs. Thick tangles of berry bushes and trees surround the village right up to the high stone wall. (The Vorgmann brothers want to cut and burn much of this growth back to increase the village's security, but thus far the locals have objected as the berry bushes provide much fruit in the autumn months).

The rough stony ground is less than ideal for growing traditional crops so the village has adapted to using the bounty nature provides for them there, bitter fruits, nuts and other plants form the villagers' staple diet whilst inside the village small gardens grow other vegetables and fruit.

The rugged, high moorlands surrounding the village are covered with similar bushes. Stands of conifers and thick patches of gorse fill the valleys and dells cutting through the upland. Herds of deer, goats and packs of wild boar wander the highlands while dodging packs of roaming wolves and wild dogs. Larger predators tend to stay within the thick pine woods or steep valleys near the rocky streams cutting through the thin soil and stony ground.

When the harsh, chilling northern wind blows, the moors are a horrible place. As many travellers have fallen prey to the biting wind and chilling rains as to the wild animals or the few humanoid tribes wandering the wilds. This harsh terrain is well

known to the villagers and their dress and manner indicates this well. Many a traveller has the needlework of the villagers to thank for their comfort (or even survival) on cold nights.

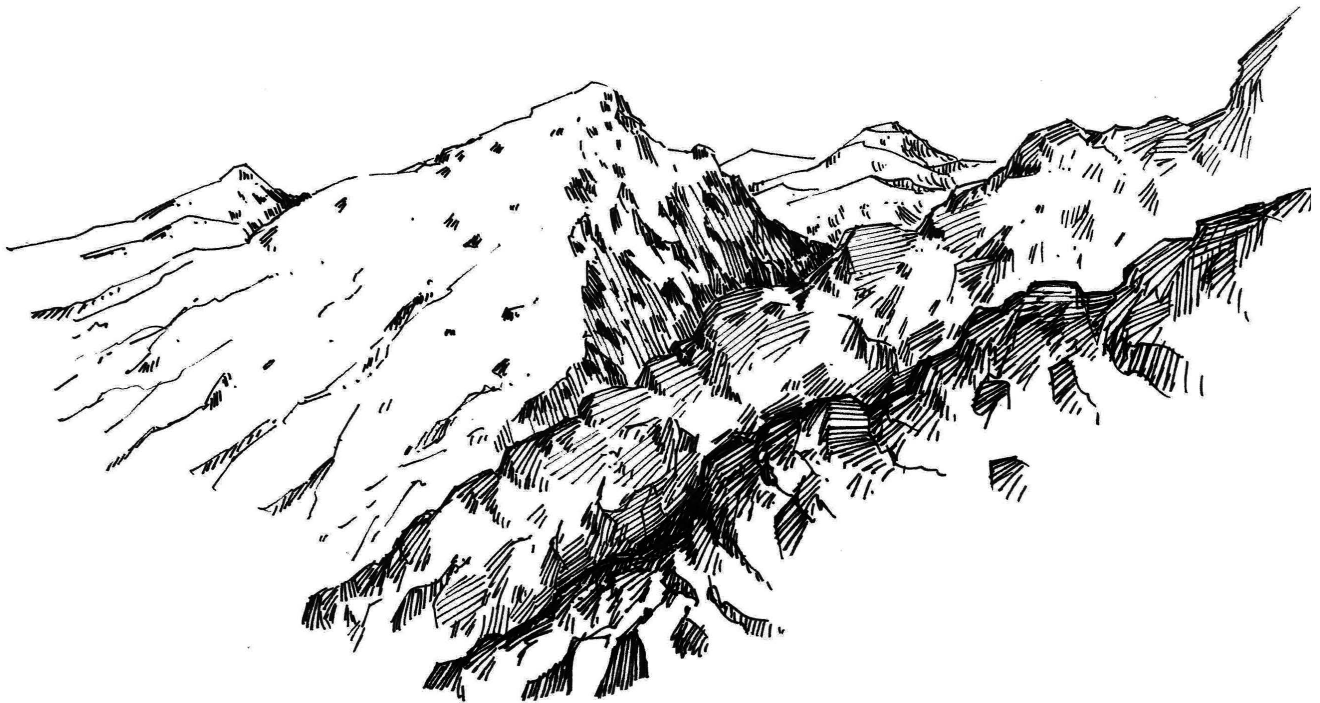
## THE TUNNELS

Natural passages formed by the meandering path of the two streams feeding the villages six wells riddles the ground below Lady Cross.

When the villagers discovered these tunnels, they added rooms and inter-connecting passages, forming a maze under the hamlet. Used to store food and fuel for the harsh winters, or to stable their beasts, the tunnels were a necessity in the early years. Recently, however, due to the village's economic boom the cellars are not being used as originally intended and many tunnels now lie empty and forgotten.

Boarded up with wooden barricades or hastily laid brickwork, the tunnels now see little traffic and are mainly forgotten by the villagers (apart from the few who use them for their own nefarious deeds). The only sounds heard in the tunnels are the whispers of ghosts or the skittering of rats and spiders that call the underground its home. Small colonies of bats linger in the caves whilst snakes feed on unwary prey.

Buried somewhere in the darkness lie the decaying bodies of Marissa's victims, leaving their legacies silent and forgotten.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN LADY CROSS

---

### 1: THE LADY'S REST

*A pretty blonde girl wearing an apron over her flowery dress waits by the door to this large inn holding a tray of drinks. Ivy and roses battle for space around the leaded windows and heavy black beams. A huge oval shaped, panelled stained glass window depicting a lady riding a massive horse overlooks the inn's door.*

The Lady's Rest is named after a noblewoman who built the inn as a stop-over on the long road. (The now crumbling statue of the lady in question stands in the centre of the inn's courtyard over one of the village's many wells). Ironically, the inn has now become the haunt of an altogether different lady.

Jarrson Trond (NE male human thief 3) is very strict in his running of the inn and the village alike. Most people staying here are showed around by Marissa (NE female half-elf thief 3) who masquerades as a human and welcomes all guests with a free drink. The food is decent, if unimaginative. The local gins usually accompany most meals.

- **Food** Thick stew 1 sp, grilled chicken or grouse 3 sp, venison or boar 5 sp.
- **Drink** Gin (see below), mixed flagon of gin and berries and fruit juices 4 sp, jugs of ale or beer 2 cp.
- **For Sale:** *ring of feather falling* (5,000 gp).

Eadith's spirit (location 8; NG female human ghost) sometimes visits the Lady's Rest. Not yet fully aware of her ghostly powers, she is content to watch those she hates. Sometimes her restless sorrow spills over into the world; hence the occasional sighting of a woman dressed in white and the complaints of strange sounds emanating from empty rooms.

---

---

#### GIN & OTHER DRINKS

The Lady's Rest sells several kinds of unique gin:

**Lady's Rest Own (1 sp/glass):** Distilled with juniper from the surrounding trees.

**Genever (12 sp/bottle):** Strong gin made with citrus peel and fennel from the local gardens.

**Red Dragon Gin (25 sp/bottle):** Distilled with fresh red berries and bark from the cassia tree this strong gin leaves a burning feeling in the drinker's throat.

**Mimic's Bane (45 sp/bottle):** Once jokingly thought of as strong enough to dissolve a mimic's glue this rare gin doesn't sell much in the village yet is popular with adventurers. Double distilled with cardamom and cassia bark each bottle contains a soaked woodworm larvae.

**Sahti (4 sp/jug):** Rye beer mixed with Lady's Rest Own, jugs of this village favourite are served with most meals.

### 2: HARRIGAN'S STABLE AND FORGE

*This two-storey building comprises a forge and stables. A loft hangs over the stables to the right whilst a forge and several anvils stand to the left. A well-built blonde man works the forge.*

Comprising several stone buildings with lofts, this place is always busy during the day. Whether making horseshoes or repairing the fittings for the village's various stills, Harrigan's (N human male) work is in much demand. Capable of producing almost anything in metal, this busy, talented smith rarely accepts commissions. His rates include:

- **Weapons and Armour Work:** 2 sp per hour.
- **Horse-shoeing:** 1 sp per hoof.
- **For Sale:** *large shield +1* (2,500 gp).

Arrowheads, swords and hammers lie on a table near his forge half-finished and a huge two-handed sword hangs above the anvil on the wall.

Harrigan, is a stocky blonde man with a bushy beard and a constant odour of sweat and smoke. He is very strong and short tempered which has led to several confrontations with Markus.

---

---

#### MARISSA

NE female half-elf thief 3

*Small, blond and pretty this girl smiles welcomingly to you.*

**Mannerisms:** She uses her youthful looks to trick people into thinking she is a child.

**Personality:** Naturally selfish and lazy she has few morals. She is not stupid and tries to get on well with capable looking adventurers in case she needs to call on them for help. Many of the villagers love Marissa and are overprotective of her.

**Background:** Marissa is an orphan who was found on the road and adopted by Jarsson.

**Hooks:** Occasionally, she lures solitary travellers to the mill pond where she kills them so she can loot their rooms (and person). As she is in charge of cleaning the rooms nobody has noticed these sudden disappearances.

Marissa know of a secret passage under the inn that leads to the mill. She has stashed a bag of belongings there in case she needs to escape. Her clothing is usually loose and contains several hidden weapons and pockets to hide things she pilfers as she goes about her work.



### 3: THE STONEFORGE DISTILLERY

*Heavy oak doors stand open allowing a view of a tangle of copper pipes and hundreds of barrels inside. Several dwarves rush around wheeling barrows full of berries or sacks of rye to the huge vats. A heady smell of alcohol wafts from the place.*

This dwarven-built building often seems cramped to taller folk. Inside, six dwarven “brothers”—Elrak, Falgar, Gillon, Kilbir, Malden and Thoric—work on the stills or preparing the next batch. Large barrels fill the extensive stone cellars beneath the main room. The dwarves sleep in the cellar on beds laid between the barrels; it seems the dwarves take their work seriously. They are always here or at the Lady’s Rest, enjoying the fruit of their labours

The “brothers” (all NG male dwarf fighter 1 except Malden [NG male dwarf fighter 4]), are actually four brothers and two cousins. They all have long hair and beards ranging from a reddish brown to black. Usually encountered unarmoured they all own fine chainmail, shields and dwarven axes. Being skilled engineers and stonemasons, they recently strengthened the tunnels under the inn and blocked off some of the unused passages stretching under the village. Jarsson swore them to secrecy after they built a strong room for him.

Malden Stoneforge is the eldest brother and he enjoys the peace of the village and distilling. He isn’t very fond of Jarsson or Harrigan. Whilst this doesn’t affect his working relationship, he does tend to favour the Vorgmann brothers in arguments between Alderman and Markus.

### 4: THE BOOK-END

*This small cottage is in fact a shop as the little sign on the gate denotes. Books and maps clutter the windows and a studded oak door bears the sign “Welcome to the Book-End.”*

---

---

#### ALDERMANN JARSSON TROND

NE male human thief 3

*This podgy man wears his hair back from his flabby face. He clutches a walking stick in one over-sized hand.*

**Mannerisms:** Having to lean heavily on a staff when walking long distances, Jarsson usually stays near the inn and sends runners to do his work. He always has a flagon of steaming coffee within easy reach.

**Personality:** Alderman Jarsson is aging badly from the stress of the previous years and it shows in his stance and short temper. His natural selfishness causes him to continue his greedy lifestyle.

**Background:** Jarsson has lived in the village all his life. He is a murderer and is consumed by guilt over his son’s suicide.

Set back in a small, overgrown garden most people don’t realise this is actually a shop. Its low thatched roof holds the bedroom and living area above a cluttered shop. Inside, hundreds of books, maps and scrolls fill solid oak shelves. Behind a desk sized for a human, perched on a massive cushion-covered chair, sits the gnome Grindin Well-Read.

- **Grindin Well-Read (NG male gnome illusionist 3):** Small, even for a gnome, Grindin has a shock of white hair that seems to defy gravity. He wears thick-lensed glasses on his nose. He doesn’t wear the typical furs of the other villagers but rather a thin grey robe under a long black cloak. Being more of a scholar than a wizard, he also doubles as a notary for the village businesses and any other documents.

Always interested in buying maps or journals he happily spends most of his time recreating these personal treasures. His prized books include spellbooks containing many low-level wizard spells and an encyclopaedia on the differing types of juniper plants and their uses. He offers several services to his customers:

- **Local Maps:** 4 gp.
- **Book Copying:** 15 gp.
- **Map Copying:** 1 gp.
- **For Sale:** *potion of herois* (500 gp), *potion of Invisibility* (500 gp).

### 5: WUNDREL’S TEA SHOP

*A scattering of tables and chairs around this building’s courtyard are filled with villagers happily eating and chatting. Halfling women weave in and out of the crowd delivering food and steaming trays of drinks. From the door, a matronly-looking halfling motions you towards an empty table.*

Standing between four tall juniper trees, this low turf-covered house sports a paved area, set about a large fire pit, and decorative stone flowerbeds. Most villagers stop here for breakfast or lunch.

Wundrel, (N female halfling) is always busy and her sisters (Cora, Isseekina and Roylla) constantly scurry about serving food. The sisters are typical halflings (N female halfling), who wear thick bonnets and long white aprons over their floral dresses. Wundrel’s hair has lost the sisters’ signature luxurious blonde and is now turning a shade of grey silver rather than gold. The sisters are also skilled weavers and make the flower garlands for Lady’s Day.

- **Food:** In addition to standard fare the following are available. Scones and berries 4 cp, pancakes, berries and cream 1 sp, eggs and cakes 3 sp. Thick cream is available for an extra 3 cp.
- **Drink:** Various herbal teas (acorn tea, nettle tea and so on) 2 cp per mug, hot wine 1 sp, strong coffee 2 sp.

## 6: THE RUINED MILL

*Tangled thorns and briars dominate this large ruin. Crumbling walls hold the remains of posts and beams and the fallen roof litters the floor with slate tiles. A warren of paths weaves through the ruins leading further into the undergrowth.*

The old mill is unused except as a playground for the village's children. The remaining walls are of sturdy river stone and clay, now overgrown with moss and lichen. Birds nest in the thick ivy and bushes. The village children play in the narrow tunnels cutting through the thick bushes, when the sun is shining.

Squeezing through a gap in the walls, explorers can reach the mill's interior. Overgrown with brambles and weeds, small animals live in the undergrowth. Hidden under several piles of collapsed walls and timber, lurk cellars connected to secret tunnels leading to the Lady's Rest's cellars.

## 7: THE MILL POND

*Choked with weeds, this large pond lies adjacent to the ruined mill. A broken and rotted water-wheel, half submerged in the brackish water lies broken and still. Flies skim over the water, chased by tiny birds. A rock breaking the surface provides home to several grey ducks.*

Shunned by the villagers this large pond is overgrown and unused. A small path leads around the southern side. A large rock breaks the pond's surface; here Pepin used to sit during his many depressions. A long-limbed willow tree hangs over the rock, its longest leaves touching the water. Hidden in the mire at the bottom of the pond are the remains of two of Marissa's previous victims.

Unknown to anyone, Pepin's ghost (N male human ghost) haunts the mill pond. Morose, and consumed with guilt over his part in Eadith's death, he doesn't bother anyone, but those attuned to nature or to undead may sense a disquieting presence at the pond. Marissa has sensed the sadness here thinks it a fitting place for murder.

## 8: THE SORROW TREE

*A twisted and charred skeleton wrapped in heavy chains and covered with soot and ash is yet attached to this tree's trunk. It adorns the lightning shattered tree like a grisly memento.*

Blackened and split, this huge oak sits on the eastern side of the main road. Here was chained and burnt

Eadith. The tree was split in two by a lightning bolt hurled to the ground from a sudden storm that appeared as she died. This was seen as proof that Eadith was a witch.

Most villagers don't go near the tree until Lady's Day when small candles are lit and twists of heather and flowers are placed around its base. Eadith's spirit (NG female human ghost) yet lingers amid her bones. Angry and upset she hates the villagers, but has yet to grasp the full potential of her ghostly powers. She is also intolerably lonely. Sometimes, she visits the Lady's Rest (location 1).

## 9: THE WATCHTOWERS

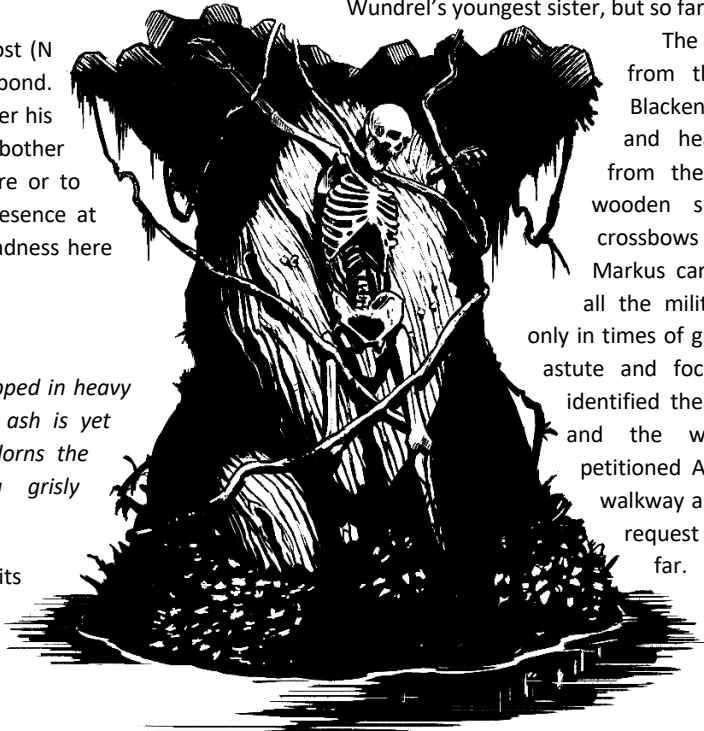
*A loft stone watchtower protects the village gate.*

Watchtowers ward each of the village's gates. Manned by guards and closed at night, inside, a small armoury contains crossbows and hundreds of bolts alongside a warning bell. Each gate has a different sounding bell which is rung a single time whenever visitors enter the village. This alerts Marissa and Jarsson that customers are on the way.

Typically, two guards watch here day and night, their fellows resting in the second-floor barracks. Twin brothers Julius and Marius Vorgmann (NG male human fighter 2), along with their older brother Markus (NG human male fighter 3) lead the guards. One of the brothers is always on duty.

Being tall, dark skinned and handsome the brothers enjoy much attention from the village women, something the other men mutter about. Julius and Marius have partners that live here, but Markus seems to avoid women. Unknown to most people he has developed a "great friendship" with Lorella, Wundrel's youngest sister, but so far has kept things quiet.

The brothers' equipment differs from the standard militia issue. Blackened plate covered by furs and heavy bastard swords hang from their belts. They carry large wooden shields and have several crossbows at each watch tower. Markus carries a signal whistle which all the militia recognise; he uses this only in times of great danger. Being tactically astute and focused on security, he has identified the blind spot the Lady's Rest and the watermill cover. He has petitioned Alderman Jarsson to build a walkway along the walls there, but his request has fallen on deaf ears so far.



# LAEWAS

---

**Words** Jeff Gomez **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*The village of Laewas is inhabited entirely by ghosts. How did the inhabitants of Laewas die? You can ask them, but even they aren't sure. From a distance, the village looks completely normal if a little ramshackle and decayed. Farmers, carpenters and housewives roam the streets, carrying baskets of apples or shepherding packs of dirty children. They laugh, gossip and greet outsiders under the heat of the sun. It's almost easy to forget everybody here is dead. But as the days roll by, the ghosts lose their memories. They are stuck in an endless loop, doomed to constantly relive their final hours. These shades are totally unaware of their current plight. They are convinced they are still living, breathing creatures in a perfectly normal farming village.*

*So, what happened? There are clues to be found, if one has the skill to look. Work orders for heavy machinery. Curious letters dissolved nearly to dust. Injured children and widowed wives. The clues all lead to the rotting manor which casts a permanent shadow over the village. And to something cold lurking within.*

**Ruler:** Farmer's Council

**Government:** Council

**Alignments:** LN, N, LE

**Population:** 65 (56 humans, 1 elf, 3 half-elves, 5 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Maegar the Mage (The Onyx Laboratory), Raewin Chaethyrnan (Raewin's Home), Jenrow Hade (The Corn Jungle), Kielbo Burrow (Burrowhall)

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** None

The village of Laewas is inhabited entirely by ghosts.

From a distance, the village looks completely normal a little ramshackle and decayed. Farmers, carpenters and housewives roam the streets, carrying baskets of apples or shepherding packs of dirty children. They laugh, gossip and greet outsiders under the heat of the sun.

In the fields, Jenrow Hade inspects his crop of corn, and murmurs of the idiocy of the younger generation. Walking home, the only elf in Laewas pulls up his collar, as if to deflect the racial prejudices of those around him. And there, playing in the street, a trio of halfling children pull endless pranks on the hapless farmers.

It's almost easy to forget everybody here is dead. But as the days roll by, the ghosts lose their memories. They are stuck in an endless loop, doomed to relive their final hours over and over again. These shades are completely unaware of their current plight. They are convinced they are still living, breathing creatures in a perfectly normal village.

So, what happened here? There are clues to be found, if one has the skill to look. Work orders for heavy machinery. Curious letters dissolved nearly to dust. Injured children and widowed wives. Missing pets and strange graves. These clues all lead to the rotting manor which casts a permanent shadow over the village. And to something cold lurking dormant within.



## VILLAGE LORE

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

- Something is deeply wrong in Laewas. The main road has been rerouted around it, and nobody travels there anymore.
- The entire population of Laewas was killed 100 years ago, but their ghosts remain.
- Laewas was once the holiday retreat of a wealthy noble house long since decayed.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Villagers are short and dirty faced, with a similarity of round features that suggests a shallow gene pool. Most possess a rough and rural beauty.

**Dress:** Villagers wear simple brown clothes woven from wool or stitched from hide. Most outfits are in some level of disrepair from real labour, but entirely functional to their needs.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Berengo, Buccin, Claudio, Eurim, Haiduc, Osso; *female* Bertrand, Kerla, Misma, Parlen, Rotrude, Tavia; *family* Blevens, Gotch, Jenkirn, Maddux, Parry, Powles, Prowell

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Laewas, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

### D6 RUMOUR

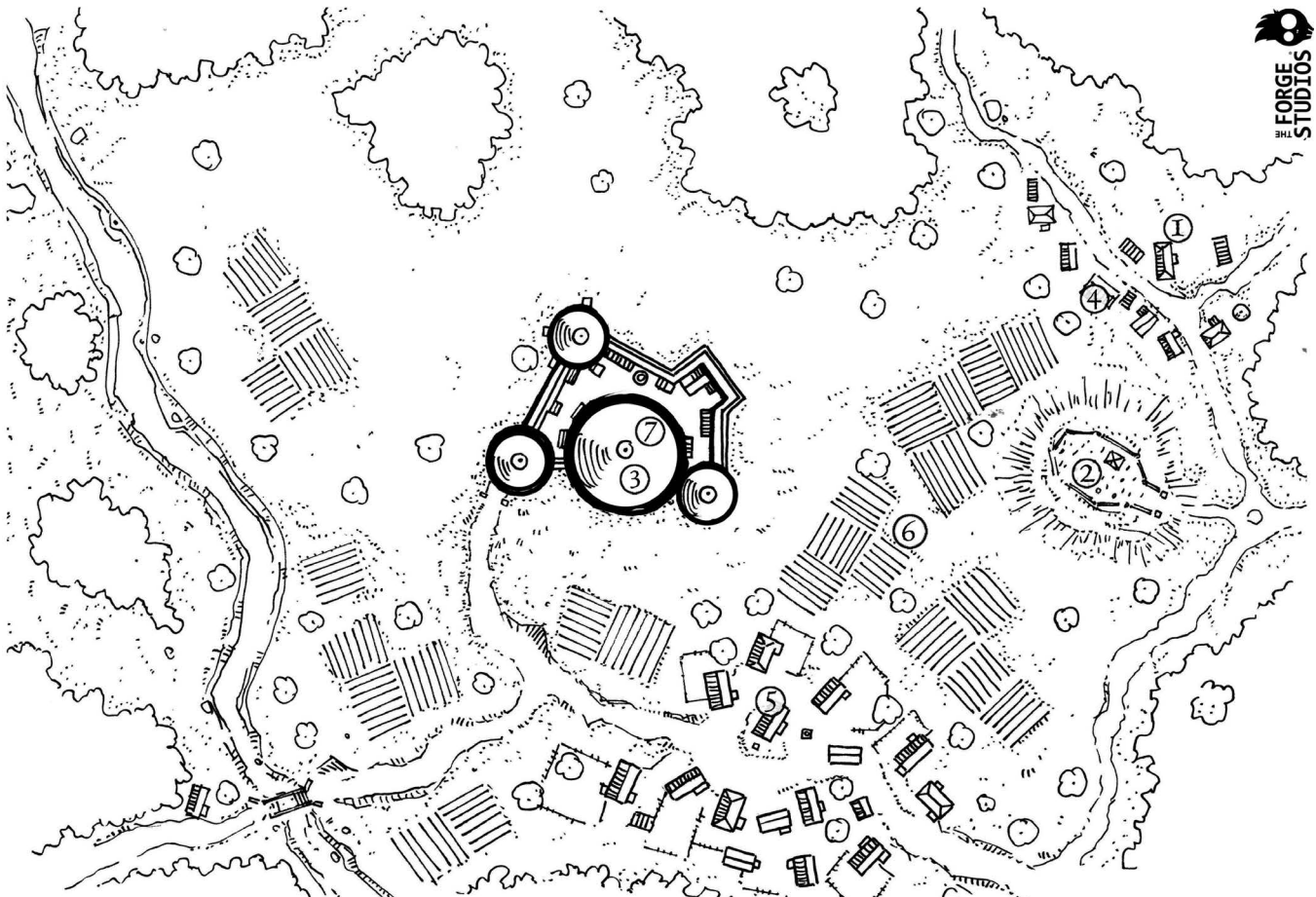
1*	The elf Raewin used some sort of love potion to marry Helgen. Why else would a fair human maid sink to interbreeding with elves?
2	The sorcerer Maegar burnt the brains out of Alyse's son when he learned too much.
3	The halfling triplets are a bunch of pickpocketing ne'er-do-wells who never should have left the city.
4	Maegar sold every scrap of his family's possessions in pursuit of some dark magic. He should be run out of Laewas before it's too late!
5*	The butcher's son, Millick consorts with fairies at night. He'll bring ruin to us all!
6	Laewas is on the rise. More city dwellers have recognized the fertile land here and seek to buy land. Humans are always welcome, as long as they leave their urban lives behind.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Burrowhall:** The halflings of Burrowhall consider Laewas to be amusingly quaint. The two plump retirees mosey about the village in fancy merchant's clothes, and let their rambunctious children run wild. Their spoiled triplets play endless pranks on a populace who doesn't know how to deal with them.
2. **Field of Wooden Graves:** The Laewas graveyard clearly displays divisions of the past. Its varied gravestones highlight the differences between the common farmer and the Balerium bloodline, as well as the slow decline of that noble house into obscurity.
3. **Fourtower:** This once gaudy estate is the ancestral home of the noble Balerium line, prison to Maegar the Mage and home to Laewas's doom. In his final months, Maegar installed arcane traps and even raised handfuls of zombies to protect him in his work. The mansion is stripped of all wealth, and now naught but a labyrinth of cold hallways and empty rooms.
4. **Raewin's Farm:** The sole elf of Laewas lives here, with his human wife Helgen and two half-elf children. Raewin is an old man, very much in love with Helgen and sensitive to the villagers' prejudices. He regrets moving to the countryside, but does his best to fit in. After all, this is where Helgen grew up.
5. **The Bog House:** Within the bog house, Alyse Brage cares for her brain-dead son. She endlessly fetches pails of water and dumps them into the long overflowing bath which contains her son's preserved corpse. This century of overwatering has turned Alyse's abode into a swamp.
6. **The Corn Jungle:** These once magnificent cornfields used to be the main export of Laewas. Now they are a mess of overlarge stalks, grown into a jungle across a century of neglect. Ghosts, unable to see their current plight, wander the ancient rows, commenting on the health of the fields as they once were.
7. **The Onyx Laboratory:** At Fourtower's heart, Maegar the Mage built something horrible. Within this cramped room, littered with arcane marks and rotting books, Maegar inspects and obsesses over the artefact he's created: *Maegar's Sphere*.



## LIFE IN LAEWAS

---

Laewas was once an active farming village, and the ghosts don't realise anything has changed. Farmers, traders and other workers go about their daily duties, stopping one another to chat or cast suspicious glances at outsiders. It's just like it's always been, except the villagers are all dead.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

When Laewas was alive, it was a farming community on the rise. Citizens grew corn, barley and apples in the rich soil, and raised pigs and chickens off the yields. A profitable trade route ran through Laewas, and merchants happily exchanged textiles, metalwork and other goods for the village's produce.

Ghostly farmers, however, are unable to yield a bountiful harvest. They walk overgrown fields, ruminating on the bounty of crops that have been dust for a hundred years. They shepherd litters of spectral pigs who stop to wallow in the mud. And they are totally unable to produce anything of value.

Now, the roads leading through the village are overgrown with disuse. No one living passes through here now. Why would they? Laewas is haunted.

Of course, the ghosts understand none of this, and still believe Laewas is a village on the rise.

### LAW & ORDER

Internal laws and customs still apply in Laewas, though it is difficult to carry out a sentence with the memory and understanding of a fleeting ghost. Any transgressions by villagers or outsiders are forgotten at sunrise.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Gossip is the villagers' favourite pastime, and, from the resident wizard to the Helgen's half-breed children, there is plenty to discuss. The full range of backwater rumours circulate. Popular topics include overt racism and a unified (if somewhat deserved) suspicion of magic.

There is no tavern or central meeting point in Laewas. Instead, during meal times entire families visit other houses. It's extremely unusual for a family to eat alone.

The youth of Laewas are promiscuous, bawdy and unabashed, resulting in a high number of out of wedlock pregnancies and rushed weddings. Most young adults wear flower necklaces of a staggering range and complexity. Each flower represents its own courting status, from single to taken to bisexual.

Unfortunately, most of Laewas's festivals and yearly customs are not observed, given the endless repeat of a somewhat unremarkable day in summer.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A child goes to pick a daisy, which promptly wilts in her hand. Undisturbed, she places it in her hair.
2	A ghostly cat won't stop following the PCs. It demands rubs and attention.
3	A ghostly merchant rides a spectral carriage filled with onyx through Laewas to Fourtower. When he reaches the gate, he reappears at the edge of Laewas to begin his journey again.
4	A ghostly traveller studies a burnt map, obviously lost. He asks the PCs for directions to Maegar's home, as the mage has requested a shipment of dwarf-forged bronze.
5	A halfling child attempts to pick a PC's pocket but is frustrated by his inability to grab anything.
6	A heavy gust of wind knocks a wall from a rotting house. The ghosts inside seem not to notice as the ceiling crashes down.
7	A man carries a basket of rotten apples straight through the ground—apparently into a cellar which has long since collapsed.
8	A pack of ghostly, semi-feral dogs stray into Laewas. They bark and growl at the PCs, but affectionately lick the villagers' hands.
9	A herd of living deer graze in the village. They are unperturbed by the ghosts.
10	A pair of men fail to cut down a tree with a spectral axe. They remark on how long it is taking.
11	A spectral robin repeatedly tries to eat a living worm.
12	A young boy with a fiddle plays a haunting tune from the bough of a nearby tree.
13	An attractive young man with a daisy necklace walks down the street proclaiming the hour. As he passes, he smiles and winks at any female PCs.
14	An elderly man passes out from too much drink. His daughter comes and helps him back inside.
15	An elderly lady sits on a rocking chair, reading a book which has rotted nearly to pieces.
16	A woman, Lilia, wanders the streets in desperation. Her baby boy has gone missing.
17	Maegar shouts in frustration from Fourtower, and nearby villagers shake their head in annoyance.
18	Three halfling children roam the street, calling for their cat "Pickles."
19	Two gossiping farmer's wives shoot angry glances at the PCs.
20	Two young lovers gossip under an apple tree. They do not respond to anything the PCs try.

## THE GHOSTS OF LAEWAS

---

The ghosts of Laewas appear alive enough. Even in conversation their deception is convincing, and it is possible to visit for days without realizing the village's true nature. But go to shake a hand or tap a farmer on the shoulder, and the illusion vanishes. These spirits are made of immaterial ectoplasm. Though they have enough power to physically manipulate small objects, their bodies are nothing but mist.

These poor spectres are semi-sentient, stuck on repeat for eternity. Many endlessly live out their final day, waking up in the morning, tending crops, chatting with friends and then returning to sleep. Overnight, the ghosts can be found resting in their beds, or what remains of the ancient furniture. Wake a ghost at midnight and he'll react like anybody else: with annoyance and confusion, demanding an explanation as to why a stranger is in his home.

Some spectres, however, are caught in a smaller loop. They endlessly repeat a single task, such as chopping down a tree or building up the courage to ask a young man to dance. These ghosts are less aware of their surroundings and return to their duties if left alone.

The ghosts of Laewas gladly interact with visitors, whom they view as normal travellers. They chat, gossip, threaten or flee as the situation merits, just as any living farmer would.

If faced with evidence of their strange situation, the ghost either ignores it entirely, rationalizes the event, or laughs it off. Should the evidence become irrefutable, the ghost's denial temporarily breaks. It disappears into mist or transforms into weak shade and attacks. In either case, it reforms the next day with no memory of what has transpired.

The ghosts are undamaged by sunlight but are injured by other attacks and abilities which hurt incorporeal undead. With only a pittance of health, they vaporize quickly if attacked. However, simple disincorporation does not free the citizens of Laewas from their earthly prison. If destroyed, the ghost returns the next day.

The question then remains: How to release these spirits? Once *Maegar's Sphere* is destroyed, many ghosts live out their final day one last time and then vanish. Those stuck in a smaller loop, however, require some degree of closure. They must experience the fruits of their endless labour in order to move on—whether that be finishing a book or kissing the cute boy from the farm next door.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN LAEWAS

---

### 1: BURROWHALL

*Burrowhall is a bit bigger than the other houses on this road, though its peeling painted is a rather upsetting shade of green. A wildly overgrown flower garden in front of the building hints at a different type of occupant.*

Laewas's only halfling family live in Burrowhall. The name is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. It is a normal, human-sized home purchased from the previous tenants a decade back. The house is filled with stools and chairs to reach the cupboards, and the ceiling is almost impossible for the short halflings to clean.

The Burrows are good natured and gregarious. Second son of a wealthy merchant, Kielbo moved his family to the pleasures of the countryside. The vague prejudices of the citizens fail to phase the Burrows, who view their neighbours as quaint.

While Kielbo and his wife Hanma (CN female halfling ghost) are portly, the Burrow triplets (CN young male halfling ghost) are active troublemakers. They constantly pull pranks on the human children, who view them with a combination of resentment and begrudging respect. No one can match the Burrow kids' rowdiness. They are consummate pickpockets, and have no compunctions about smashing prize pumpkins, stealing pies from counters or letting a flock of chickens free.

The Burrows have no knack for agriculture (except for their once stunning halfling garden out front), but they do raise the tastiest hogs in the village.

### 2: FIELD OF WOODEN GRAVES

*The Laewas cemetery is broad and disorganized, littered with hundreds of crumbling wooden graves. Down the centre of the field, a spine of gaudy obelisks stands out from the crowd.*

---

#### KIELBO BURROW

N male halfling ghost

*This round halfling wears clothes fit for a wealthy merchant. A silver flask fills his breast pocket.*

**Mannerisms:** Kielbo has a deep laugh which jiggles his plump cheeks. He drinks constantly from a silver flask filled with expensive wine.

**Personality:** Kielbo is a larger than life gentleman with expensive tastes. Constantly amused by the quaint nature of the village, Kielbo sees any racist remarks as humorous misconceptions by these poor, simple rural folk.

**Background:** Kielbo was born and raised in luxury, and has never truly worked a day in his life.

Among the villagers' simple wooden graves, two dozen black monuments loom large. These are the graves of the Balerium family, with dates stretching back 200 years before Maegar was born. The ruin of the once noble house is apparent in every carving: lifespans grow shorter, stone quality diminishes and even the ornate carvings become less skilled.

Ironically, the current ghosts of Laewas rarely visit the gravesites, only giving a tip of the hat or a wave as they pass by.

### 3: FORTOWER

*A strange, multi-domed estate of ramshackle, abandoned mien rises from the hill behind Laewas. Sculptures and ornate carvings hint at a wealthy owner, though the structure appears to be abandoned.*

Fortower is decrepit, dusty and lethal. Each of its hundred once glorious rooms have been stripped of everything valuable. A visitor wandering the labyrinthine halls may recognize kitchens, servant's quarters and children's play areas by the rotten furniture left behind. However, most of the building is empty and dark, save for shards of glass, torn books and traps designed to prevent such intrusions.

With its bronze spires and sweeping vistas, Fortower was once a holiday retreat and library for a noble house of preposterous wealth. The Baleriums spent their winters far from the commercial rush of a nearby city and retired with their sizable entourage to the quaint countryside. A small village sprouted in the wake of their decadence, a colony of servants tending to their extravagant needs. The village became Laewas.

---

#### RAEWIN CHAETHYRNAN

CG male elf ghost

*An elderly elf with a short grey beard, Raewin seems perpetually on edge. His farming clothes are clean and untorn, as if they are rarely used.*

**Mannerisms:** Raewin is still strong, but he moves slowly. When he feels nobody is looking, he hums or sings quietly to himself.

**Personality:** Back in the city, Raewin was vibrant, clever and charming. However, months of life in Laewas have taught him to be cautious. He holds back in his daily life, careful not to offend.

**Background:** Raewin's lived a long and full life, from arcane pursuits to adventuring to rural retirement. He fell in love with Helgen instantly and loves her still, even though she dragged him to this bigoted village.



As the Baleriums decayed into obscurity and headed the call of dark magic, Laewas grew into a permanent village. After eight short generations, Laewas was a farming village with no need of wealthy patrons. The last of the noble line, the mad and petty mage Maegar Balerium, sold the remainder of his family's possessions and withdrew into Fourtower for research.

Within Fourtowers' dusty halls, Maegar obsessed over a discovery to bring his family to prominence once again. He set about crafting an arcane relic, a weapon which could be used to quickly and cleanly decimate a population.

As he neared completion of the artefact, Maegar reached new heights of paranoia. He rarely left Fourtower and festooned the twisting corridors with traps and bound undead which remain to this day. But, through capricious luck or divine inspiration, Maegar created an artefact far beyond his power. On an unassuming day in summer, during a routine test, the sphere ruptured. The negative energies released instantly killed Maegar and all other living things within several miles.

#### 4: RAEWIN'S HOME

*This home's exterior is like any other, but the broken windows suggest a wealthier owner fond of adventuring trophies.*

Raewin, Helgen and their three children live in a small farm on the edge of Laewas. Despite their best efforts, they are socially isolated from the rest of Laewas, unable to make friends and often taking the brunt of vicious rumourmongering.

---

---

#### HELGEN CHAETHYRNAN

CG female human ghost

*This spectre boasts golden locks of hair and a brilliant, wild smile. Her eyes radiate an active intelligence.*

**Mannerisms:** Helgen always wears a smile, though more often than not it is the angry smile of a feral beast.

**Personality:** Helgen's wild energy is mostly focused inward these days. She is not afraid to lash out at those who insult her children or her husband. With her family, however, she is loving and larger than life.

**Background:** Helgen grew up in Laewas, and always knew she would return. She spent her teenage years in the nearby city, where she met, courted and married Raewin.

**The Onyx Pendant:** Raewin has for months attempted to contact and befriend Maegar the Mage, with whom he might be able to discuss more advanced arcane theories. Raewin knows Maegar was using onyx in his work, and so he gives the PCs a small onyx pendant to give to Maegar as a present.

The elders remember Helgen as a wild one, a blonde-haired girl with endless spirit and charm. When she moved to the city, it was a loss for the village, but not unexpected. Such a wonderful girl would be stifled in Laewas.

Helgen returned shortly before her 25th birthday. The village would have rejoiced had Helgen not introduced her new husband: the elderly elf Raewin. To make matters worse, they had two half-elf children, with a third on the way.

Ever since, the family has borne the brunt of rural racism. Helgen's parents and former peers effectively disowned her. Despite genuine attempts, Raewin has only succeeded in befriending the halfling family next door.

Regardless of their troubles, Helgen and Raewin are very much in love. They are caring and compassionate, with a mutual understanding of the way things ought to be.

#### 5: THE BOG HOUSE

*This dilapidated house sits in a swampy mire, a rotted frame in a shallow pond. Every inch of the home's wooden walls is covered in moss, and horsetail reeds sprout from the floorboards.*

Alyse's son Agin was the last of Maegar's apprentices. Continuing in an ancient tradition that had long since worn thin, Agin tended to Fourtower, fetched water, prepared meals and was paid accordingly.

When Maegar grew fond of the boy and let Agin know of his work, Agin became terrified for the village. He vowed to tell the villagers and drive the mage out once and for all. For his courage, Agin was thrown into the sphere, and the soul was burned out of him. Maegar returned the mindless husk to his mother, made vague excuses and returned to his work.

---

---

#### ALYSE BRAGE

N female human ghost

*This black-haired matron wears a mask of grief. The bags under her eyes and distant gaze speak to a life of sorrow.*

**Mannerisms:** Alyse is exhausted. She stumbles as she walks, favouring her left leg and occasionally stopping for short breaks.

**Personality:** Alyse is a devoted mother, and places her son above all else. While she accepts the gifts the other villagers leave her, she feels betrayed by their inaction in driving Maegar out.

**Background:** Alyse's life was blissful until recently. She married her childhood sweetheart and bore him three children, one of which was granted the honour of apprentice to Maegar. During one harsh winter, her husband and two daughters all died of fever. When Alyse's son returned pale and broken, Alyse had no tears left.

Now Alyse cares endlessly for her brain-dead son. She feeds him, bathes him and tells him stories. Agin, hairless and pale, stares blankly at his mother, unable to grasp her kindness.

When the sphere activated, Alyse was preparing a bath for her son, and she continues to prepare a bath to this day. The unnaturally preserved corpse of Agin sits in a wooden tub, overflowing with putrid water. Alyse hobbles to the well and back, carrying endless buckets of water to dump on the body. With every bucket, she tests the overflowing bath, mutters “just one more bucket,” and then returns to the well.

**Freeing Alyse and Agin:** If Maegar’s sphere is returned, Agin’s soul reunites with Alyse. Together, they ascend to the next world.

## 6: THE CORN JUNGLE

*These mighty fields of corn grow thick and without any apparent order, as if left untended for decades.*

Corn was the primary crop of Laewas, and most farms have a field or two. When properly tended, the stalks grew strong and proud in the rich soil. Each fall, the harvest was bountiful.

After a century of disuse, however, the fields have become ragged. The ground is littered with rotting ears of corn, and the brown stalks choke each other for sunlight. Moving through the corn is as difficult as trekking through a dense forest.

Through this rotting field, a dozen ghosts wander. They mosey down forgotten rows, inspecting long dead stalks and whistling through yellow teeth. Most spectres comment to themselves on the health of their farm, and how big the stalks have grown. Some, however, scratch their heads as they wander. If they squint, they can almost see dead and ragged stalks long neglected by the hand of a caring farmer.

---

---

### MAEGAR THE MAGE

LE male human ghost magic-user 9

*This ill-looking man is dressed in black, blood-stained robes perforated by a dozen tears. A patchy brown beard grows on his milk-white face.*

**Mannerisms:** Maegar Balerium does not have time for visitors. He’s constantly pacing or striding from one room to the next, puzzling over his creation and attempting to unravel its failures.

**Personality:** Though his noble line has long since shrivelled, Maegar acts entitled and self-important as a king. He treats visitors as distractions barely worth the breath it takes to dismiss them.

**Background:** Maegar is the last of his once-powerful line which now languishes in decadence and obscurity.

## 7: THE ONYX LABORATORY

*This windowless, airless room is dusty and dark. Books, plates and crazed scrawling cover every surface.*

The onyx laboratory houses Maegar’s sphere and Maegar’s ghost. It is the source of Laewas’s woes. Animal bones and charred fur lie in piles—the remnants of Maegar’s meals and experiments. A tiny human corpse wrapped in blue cloth is pinned to a table by a dagger: Lilia’s missing baby boy and final offering to the sphere.

Maegar’s ghost still slaves away in the laboratory, protected by Fourtower’s arcane defences. He is unaware of his situation and consumed by a frantic frustration to complete his life’s work. He endlessly repeats the final hours of his life, and his preparation for the child sacrifice.

His sphere hangs from a chain in the corner of the room.

**The Cleansing of Laewas:** Laewas’ ghosts are bound to this plane until *Maegar’s Sphere* is destroyed. A few stragglers remain, whose unfinished business must be completed before they find peace.

---

---

### MAEGAR’S SPHERE

Artifact; **Weight** 1,000 lbs.

Maegar’s sphere is an eight-foot-tall, dwarven crafted bronze sphere. Its shell is ritualistically marked by obsidian, lead and bones, all covered in rough arcane runes. A quarter of the sphere can be slid open to reveal a hollow interior.

Before it can be used, the sphere must be filled with 20 HD of incorporeal undead. The spirits must be destroyed, controlled, or otherwise defeated adjacent to the sphere for their energy to charge the weapon. Alternatively, living creatures may be killed within the sphere in a horrible enough manner to produce a ghost.

When the sphere is filled, it immediately emits a pulse of 6d6 negative energy damage drawn from the Negative Material Plane within a three-mile radius (save against death magic halves).

Each midnight, and whenever a spirit is added to the sphere, the artefact has a 5% chance of prematurely activating, dealing 3d6 negative energy damage drawn from the Negative Material Plane to all creatures within a three-mile radius (save against death magic halves).

When the sphere activates, the spirits within are utterly destroyed. Creatures slain by this negative energy have a higher than average chance of becoming ghosts who cannot move on until the sphere is destroyed.

**Destruction:** If Maegar’s spirit is caught within the sphere, it prematurely activates before disintegrating into ash.

# LANTHORN

---

**Words** Creighton Broadhurst **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*High up in the mountains, and often besieged by packs of murderous trolls, the village of Lanthorn stands as civilisation's last glimmering light in an otherwise bleak and barren mountain range. A strange alliance of wizards—the Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers—and a gaggle of (almost) civilised goblins—the Flaming Skull tribe—dwells in a bizarre atmosphere that is both scholarly and anarchic. Protected by high walls and gigantic magical lanterns imbued with potent fire magic, the wizards craft the mundane and wondrous items for which they are famed. Without the walls brave—or foolhardy—goblin “miners” search the nearby troll-haunted mines for lead and silver—some of which is reputed to have magical properties.*

## LANTHORN AT A GLANCE

**Ruler** Ishme-Dagan

**Government** Council

**Population** 183 (38 humans, 139 goblins, 6 half-orcs)

**Alignments** LN, N, NE

**Languages** Common, Giant, Goblin

**Resources & Industry** Mining, magic item crafting, hospitality

**Nomenclature (Human)** *male*: Adad, Enmul, Nergal; *female*: Irkalla, Ninki, Sabit; *family*: Isin, Larsa, Uruk, Zimbar.

**Nomenclature (Goblin)** *male*: Bak, Cri, Sij; *female*: Bel, Kark, Wid

Named for the great magical lanterns set atop its gates, and perpetually shadow-wreathed, Lanthorn clings to a cliff under a ponderous granitic overhang high up in Kuldor Pass. Here the winters are harsh and the summers brief. Sometimes cut off for weeks by driving snow or avalanche, it is an isolated place.

The heavily defended, fortified village controls traffic through Kuldor Pass and its lights mark civilisation's last glimmer before the untamed wilderness of the deep, troll-haunted mountains. Established a century ago by the Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers—a cabal of wizards obsessed with crafting items of potent power—the village is famed as a place for the wealthy to commission the creation or unique items of wondrous power.

Within its walls, an odd alliance of wizards and an atypically (almost) civilised goblin tribe work together to keep the ever-present trolls at bay. The goblins—inveterate scavengers all—also explore the many nearby abandoned mines dotted through the mountains. Such work is too taxing, dangerous and dirty for the wizards or their trusted servants, but the goblins are at home in the mines' unending darkness. Although most such workings are played out, some treasure yet lie within. Chief amongst these is lead—much in demand among the low-land folk for its magic dampening qualities. Occasionally, silver is also brought forth from the mines; some such deposits have strange

properties much coveted by Lanthorn's artificers.



## MARKETPLACE

The following items are for sale, in Lanthorn:

- **Consumables** *potion of levitation* (400 gp), *scroll of resist fire* (600 gp), *scroll of fireball* (900 gp)
- **Mundane** explosive oil (inflicts double fire damage; 2 sp/vial)
- **Wand** *fear* (26 chgs.; 3,900 gp), *fire* (37 chgs.; 9,250 gp)
- **Weapons & Armour** +2 *dagger* (3,700 gp), +1 *shield* (2,500 gp)

## LORE

A PC may know something about Lanthorn, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below.

- Lanthorn bars the troll-haunted Kuldor Pass; all those who would venture into the mountains must pass through its heavily defended gates. The village is named for the huge—reputedly magical—lantern set atop each of its two gates.
- The Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers—and their goblin allies—control Lanthorn. The goblins are surprisingly civilised and scavenge through the mountain's played-out mines.
- Strange metals are sometimes brought forth from the mines. In particular, some of the silver found has certain properties making it much in demand by artificers.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Lanthorn, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

### D6 RUMOUR

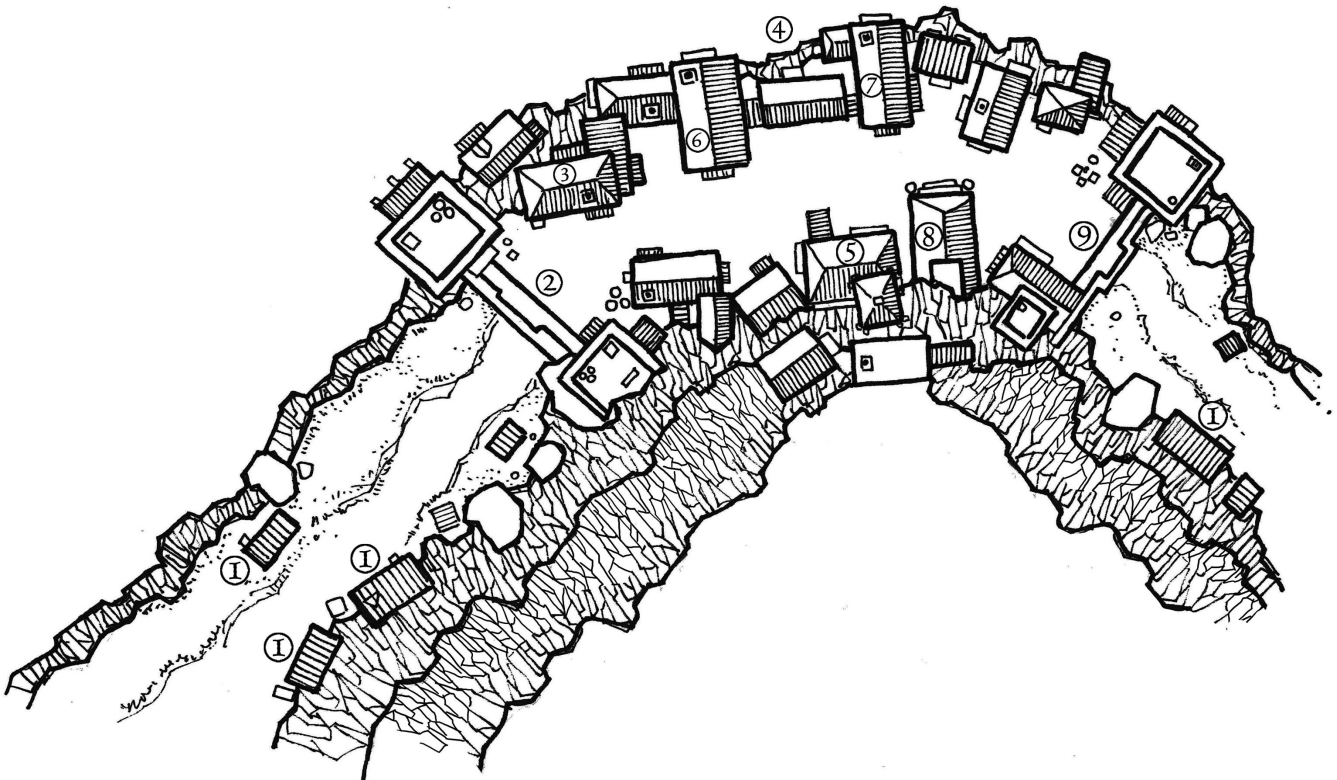
1	The goblins of Lanthorn belong to the Flaming Skull tribe. The tribe is a matriarchy and they (mainly) live in peace with their human neighbours.
2	Deep tunnels run into the mountains from Lanthorn. In their depths, the goblins collect a special kind of oil that burns so hot water cannot extinguish its flames.
3*	The Grand Conclave are searching for a lost item of power in the mountains.
4	Travellers should be especially careful if they bring dogs or horses into Lanthorn; the goblins have not lost all their depraved hereditary habits...
5*	The Flaming Skull goblins resent the Grand Conclave's control of Lanthorn. They plot the wizards' overthrow.
6*?	The trolls are too organised for normal trolls. Some powerful, fell force compels them to hurl themselves at Lanthorn's ramparts.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of Lanthorn comprises normal homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Refuge:** Lanthorn's gates close at dusk and do not open again until dawn. Those caught outside can seek shelter in one of these sturdy buildings standing without the village's walls. All are battle scarred. Unfortunately, the trolls have learnt that tasty snacks can often be found within.
2. **High Gate:** High Gate is impressively fortified. Its southern tower is the highest building in the village. It is through this gate that most visitors first enter Lanthorn.
3. **The Shadow Market:** Many goblins scrape a living running small stalls in the market. Here they sell whatever they've scavenged from the mines or stolen from unwary travellers (or each other).
4. **Caves of the Flaming Skull:** The bulk of the tribe dwells in a complex warren of cramped tunnels cut into the mountain. This convoluted cave network is perfectly sized for goblins, but many humans find them claustrophobic. Members of the Grand Conclave are rarely encountered therein.
5. **Hall of the Grand Conclave:** This rambling collection of buildings provides the Conclave with the space to carry out its works. Visitors can only enter if accompanied by a member. Only a few of the Conclave's more powerful and renowned members dwell at the hall; most others dwell in the surrounding houses.
6. **The Smouldering Troll:** An obviously magical sign depicting a smouldering troll corpse marks this place as Lanthorn's best inn. Here travellers find a warm welcome, good food and strong drinks all served by the exuberant, if occasionally larcenous, goblin staff.
7. **The Broken Blade:** Run by the retired mercenary Henk Sunnderman, this downmarket inn hosts a popular, and raucous, weekly fight night. The staff here comprise a curious mix of goblins, who work as servers and cooks, and retired half-orc warriors who watch over the goblins and their customers.
8. **Stables:** One of Lanthorn's only two non-goblin run business, all dogs and horses must be kept here until their owners leave Lanthorn. Its owner, the half-orc Oggor "the Thumper", trusts no goblin to work here and is desperate to secure suitable help.
9. **Low Gate:** Low Gate is even more fortified than High Gate. Beyond lies the mountains along with their glimmering treasures and ferocious denizens. Low Gate is assailed more often than High Gate by marauding trolls. Beyond lies nothing but troll-infested mountains.



## THE FLAMING SKULL GOBLINS

A few years after the Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers founded Lanthorn, the goblins of the Flaming Skull were almost wiped out by their hated troll enemies. The goblins and the trolls had been battling for control over the surrounding territory and the trolls had finally succeeded in finding and destroying the goblins' tribal lair.

The few desperate survivors—led by Gnesh Darkgouge—begged for shelter within Lanthorn's walls. The wizards, in need of servants—brave or stupid enough to explore the nearby abandoned mines—took them in. Thus was born an unlikely—and, at the start, uneasy—alliance.

Nine decades later, and atypically for goblins, the tribe has adopted some of civilisation's trappings. However, even now, they hate horses, loath dogs and love fire. Almost all remain stubbornly illiterate, but a few hoping to join the Grand Conclave—much to their fellows' disgust and derision—have taken their first faltering steps toward literacy.

Most of the tribe yet prefer to dwell in darkness, and deliberately design their cave home (location 4) to be difficult for larger creatures to move about in—in this way they hope if the trolls ever breach Lanthorn's defences they'll eat all the easily accessible humans first and give the goblins a chance to escape.

### GOBLIN CHARACTERS

The Flaming Skull are a semi-civilised tribe of goblins and, as such, are somewhat different to their normal brethren. They dwell in Lanthorn as (lesser) equals with the members of the Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers. Thus, campaigns set in Lanthorn and its surrounds could feature goblin PCs. While they are accepted in Lanthorn—and to a lesser degree in the nearby settlements—travelling much further afield could prove dangerous for such characters. (Even the nearby dwarves of nearby Azagirn associate with the goblins, although the dwarves struggle to throw off their innate racial antipathy for their smelly and unpredictable neighbours.)

Members of the Flaming Skull tribe have the same abilities as normal goblins. Several even speak humanity's Common tongue.

The goblins have lost their taste for gnome and elf flesh. Instead, they have developed a great many inventive recipes for barbecued, broiled, roasted and smoked troll.



### NOTABLE GOBLINS

Most of the Flaming Skull goblins are notable only for their semi-civilised ways. Goblins can be encountered almost anywhere in Lanthorn except (normally) the Hall of the Grand Conclave and the stables. A few tribal members are particularly notable for other reasons. They include:

- **Marpa** (NE male goblin magic-user 4) is the Grand Conclave's only goblin member. Tired of the Flaming Skull's matriarchy, he joined the Grand Conclave to make something of himself. He struggles to keep his base nature in check and hates trolls. He wants to learn how to make lots of *wands of fire*. He loves exploding trolls and is never happier than when he gets to blast them with the *Low Lantern's* fiery powers.
- **Tuko** (LN female goblin magic-user 8) dreams of one day leading the Flaming Skull tribe and is perhaps the single most powerful goblin in Lanthorn. She's got big future plans—mostly involving exploding trolls. She needs money to fund her dreams and is available—at the princely sum of 20 gp a day—to guide travellers through the pass. Somewhat of a liability, she refuses to hide from any trolls encountered and—depending on her mood—sometimes knowingly leads travellers into ambushes (so she can burn and explode trolls).
- **Kark Flame-tongue** (CN middle-aged female goblin ranger 5) leads the Flaming Skull goblins. She bears the tribe's badge of power—an ancient *flame tongue* sword passed down through the generations. She has the distinction of being the longest-lived chief in tribal history. She was a terror on the battlefield in her youth, and is exceptionally cunning. Sadly, age is catching up with Kark—she grows fat on her followers' tributes and now rarely ventures beyond Lanthorn's walls.

### GOBLIN HIRELINGS

While adventurers may balk at hiring goblin guides and guards, the Flaming Skull goblins are generally honest—to a point—and trustworthy if paid well. They bargain ferociously for their services, demanding a minimum 1 gp/level per day. (Higher level goblins may demand even more). Assuming the PCs are heading into the mountains they'll find the goblins enthusiastic guides and guards—particularly if the adventurers are not adverse to a spot of troll hunting (and perhaps a subsequent impromptu victory barbecue).

## THE GRAND CONCLAVE OF SUBLIME ARTIFICERS

---

The Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers, a small guild of crafters and alchemists, founded Lanthorn a century ago. Its then master knew the history of the mountains and of the many ancient dwarf lead and silver mines therein. She was also in possession of fragments of certain elder texts telling of the mines' wealth and of strange silver deposits that could yet be found if one looked hard enough.

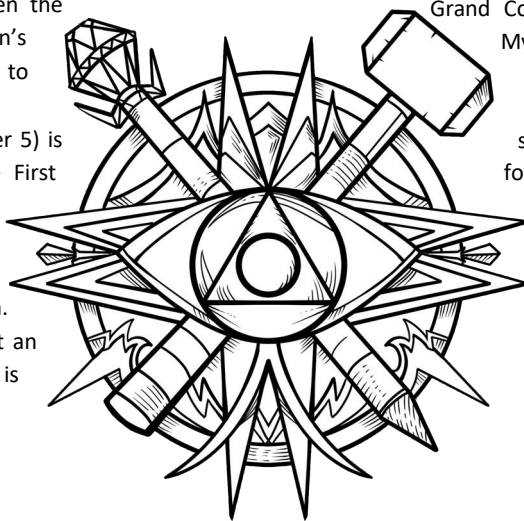
Of course, the perils of mine exploration were not lost on the first guild members and the Grand Conclave constantly struggled to find enough freeswords, freebooters and adventurers brave enough to dare the troll- and goblin-infested mountains. Thus, the arrival of the Flaming Skull goblins was met with cautious excitement among the forward-thinking Conclave members. (See "Flaming Skull Goblins" for more information).

Now 30-strong, the Conclave is sought after for its skill at crafting items both magical and alchemical. Ironically, its members are best known for crafting lead-lined strongboxes (5 gp) and chests (10 gp) designed specifically for those with magical items to hide. Some particularly cunning artificers have even learnt the secrets of crafting excellent hollow locks (300 gp) coated in lead that can be imbued with virtually undetectable magical traps.

### NOTABLE MEMBERS

The Conclave has 30 members. While most have some measure of arcane power, several members are notable for some particular reason. Such individuals include:

- **Ishme-Dagan** (LN old male human magic-user 13) is a brilliant artificer and obsessed with magical creation. He ruthlessly destroys any threat (real or perceived) to Lanthorn. He rarely leaves the Grand Conclave's hall nowadays—and certainly has no interest in traipsing around the mountains in search of raw materials for magic item creation. When the trolls press hard against Lanthorn's defences, however, he still sallies forth to defend his home.
- **Siduri Erech** (N female half-elf magic-user 5) is an energetic, go-getting Initiate of the First Mystery. She chaffs behind Lanthorn's walls and greatly desires to explore the lost dwarven mines and to recover her own supply of the silver found therein. She is friends with Marpa, and they plot an expedition in the mountain; all they need is a party of adventurers to guard them.



All members of the Conclave can be encountered at the Hall of the Grand Conclave. A few dwell in the hall while others live in the surrounding houses. None of the Conclave's members—even its lone goblin member—dwell in the Caves of the Flaming Skull. Such a locale is not conducive to serious arcane work.

### MEMBERSHIP

Wizards and the like can apply to join the Grand Conclave. All prospective members must demonstrate their ability to create magic items. Alternatively, prospective members could have additional complimentary skills necessary for crafting magic items. Examples of such skills could include the preparation of paper, books or magic inks. Alternatively, members could be skilled artificers able to craft the item's base form ready for enchantment. For example, a weaponsmith could forge perfectly balanced weapons while a master carpenter could build the strongboxes and chests for which the Conclave is renowned.

Members must dwell in Lanthorn and are charged with aiding the village's defence against the marauding trolls lurking in the surrounding mountains. (In practise, most members simply pay a trusted goblin servant or warrior to take their place on the ramparts.)

The Grand Conclave of Sublime Artificers has three membership levels:

**Initiate of the First Mystery:** To join the order, a prospective member must first master the process of scribing scrolls and brewing potions, or be able to craft the base items required by other members.

**Initiate of the Second Mystery:** To progress to the second rank of the Grand Conclave a member must have been in good standing for at least a year and demonstrated the ability to craft a permanent magical item of some form.

**Initiate of the Third Mystery:** Only three members of the Grand Conclave have progressed to the Third Mystery. These individuals benefit from private laboratories and studies as well as preferential access to the Conclave's supply of arcane raw materials. These folk are some of the finest magic item crafters in the land. Each has demonstrated the ability to design and craft a magic item of unique, and surpassing, power.

## LIFE IN LANTHORN

---

Life in Lanthorn is surprisingly ordered and peaceful. Visitors are reminded that the goblin inhabitants have the same rights and privileges as the village's more "civilised" folk. The goblins are more exuberant and care-free than their wizardly co-inhabitants. In particular, the monthly festivals the goblins insist on celebrating are raucous affairs; serious injuries and (hilarious) accidents are common at these drunken, all-night affairs.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The folk of Lanthorn engage in several different industries.

Beyond the walls, the goblins provide guides for travellers and hunt through the abandoned mines for lead and silver. In Lanthorn the goblins run all the menial, mundane businesses servicing visitors' needs (with the notable exceptions of the stables [location 8] and the Broken Blade [location 7]).

Meanwhile, the members of the Grand Conclave pursue their esoteric trades crafting not only magic items but also fine lead-lined chests, boxes, barrels and even vials for wealthy clients who wish to hide their magic from thieves' divinations.

### LAW & ORDER

Violent arguments and assaults are rare, although the goblins sometimes revert to type and brawl among themselves or engage in petty theft from visitors (and each other).

All adult, able-bodied villagers are required to join the militia and take their turn walking Lanthorn's ramparts. In practise, many wizards pay trusted goblin cohorts to take their places—something the goblins are only too happy to do as they relish the opportunity to burn trolls assailing Lanthorn's defences.

Lanthorn is ruled by the so-called Council of the Wise. Most of the seats on the council remain unfilled as Ishme-Dagan is widely recognised as the true power in Lanthorn. However, one relatively new council member—Kark Flame-tongue—has of late caused the old wizard much headache. Her anarchic, freewheeling style of debate and governance drive the aged wizard to distraction, and he fears for Lanthorn's future should he perish. Thus, he has quietly begun to research lichdom.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Lanthorn's goblins are wild and capricious. Many of their celebrations are spontaneous affairs. Held exclusively at night such events are manic, and sometimes slight dangerous. They feature brightly burning, oil-soaked bonfires, (sometimes naked) dancing and competitive fire walking along with copious quantities of strong drink. Outsiders daring the fire walking are cheered on good-naturedly (although, obviously, the goblins secretly hope the competitors burst into flames). The mood quickly turns ugly, if anyone is caught using magic to cheat.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Two goblins argue. Before long, they come to blows and a small crowd gathers to watch the fun. When the goblins' friends join in, a high-spirited brawl ensues.
2	The cloudless night is particularly cold. The goblins build a huge, oil-soaked bonfire and cavorting about it while drinking heavily. A carnival-like atmosphere develops, and an impromptu series of races and wrestling matches provides entertainment.
3	A powerful wind whines about Lanthorn's battlements like a wild, beast. Excited goblins whisper of "the troll wind" and the fun to be had that night—for such winds often presage a troll assault.
4	Shouts herald the arrival of two goblin children running from the stables. Moments later, Ogger appears shaking his fists and hurling insults.
5	Two cackling goblins, carrying several bulging oil flasks, run passed the party.
6	A clatter of rocks heralds a minor rockfall.
7	Strange sounds and smells emanate from the Hall of the Grand Conclave; none of the locals notice.
8	Nank (location 3) approaches the party and tries to sell them a treasure map.
9	Several exhausted goblins rush through the Low Gate. They are dusty and the acrid smell of burning oil hangs in the air about them.
10	A small caravan enters High Gate bringing victuals and a small coffer of rare esoteric spell components.
11	In mind to celebrate, a small pack of goblins is industriously building a bonfire outside the Smouldering Troll. As the day progresses, more and more goblins come to help.
12	Ragged, off-tone singing comes from the Broken Blade.
13	Although the sun shines strongly overhead, shadows cluster thickly about Lanthorn. Most folk go about clad in thick cloaks and suchlike.
14	A goblin waves the party over to the Shadow Market.
15	The faint smell of burning reaches the party's nostrils. The source is not immediately obvious.
16	A horse's terror-filled whiney and the clatter of hooves suggests a goblin (or two) has got into the stables.
17	It is unseasonably cold.
18	A loud roaring—troll battle cries—suddenly starts up from somewhere beyond Low Gate and goes on sporadically for hours.
19	Off-tune music emanates from the Smouldering Troll.
20	Shouts, and a general rush of enthusiastic goblins, heralds a troll's arrival—in broad daylight—at Low Gate!



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

Lantern stands astride Kuldor Pass—the only pass cutting through the mountains. Beyond, lies uncounted miles of troll-infested broken terrain, jagged peaks and abandoned dwarven mines haunted by trolls, kobolds and—perhaps—an elder evil of unspeakable avarice. Lantern is the largest settlement of note in the mountains. Its unique arcane protections, stout fortifications and enthusiastic fire-obsessed goblin defenders enable it to stand firm in the face of frequent troll raids.

Few signs of older civilisations remain in the mountains; the terrain is unspeakably harsh and the winters cruel. Only the hardiest of folk could survive here even putting aside the constant threat of marauding trolls.

Folk traveling Kuldor Pass are well advised to do so only in large, heavily armed caravans. Winter is a long season in the mountains; snow and ice choke Kuldor Pass for weeks or months at a time. Travel is normally only possible during late spring, summer and early autumn. At the best of times travel is slow; Kuldor Pass is torturously twisted and broken. In places, it is little more than a wagon-width wide. Rock falls are common resulting in delays (and often ambush).

### THE FALL

Dwarves of Clan Azacral once dwelled among and under the peaks clustering thickly about Kuldor Pass. Warring with kobold, goblin and orc tribes, as is the dwarves' wont, they searched for and mined rare deposits of silver reputed to have mystical properties often found encased in deep seams of lead.

Thus was their doom wrought, for the dwarves used the lead they quarried in all aspects of their civilisation. Slowly its pernicious influence seeped through their holds. The dwarves' birth-rate—already low—plunged even lower and they slowly gained the reputation of a cursed folk.

So it was that when waves of trolls swept forth from the deep mountains the

dwarves could not hurl back their enemies as they once did. Slowly the trolls' fecundity and ferocity told. The arrival of Atarmajeir, an elder red wyrm—and the trolls' mistress—spelled the dwarves' doom. Their holds looted, and warriors slain, the few half-mad, grief-stricken survivors fled.

While the trolls are still frequently encountered, their mistress has not been seen for a century or so giving rise to pernicious rumours of her death. Over the years, several adventuring bands have claimed to have slain Atarmajeir, but none have been able to provide conclusive proof of their heroics. Similarly, her treasure hoard is thought to remain unlooted.

Since the dwarves' fall, several tribes and peoples have fought over their civilisation's leavings. The trolls now hold sway over the bones of the dwarves' fallen kingdom.

### TROLLS & MINES

Hunting through the old dwarf mines is doubly dangerous. For along with the dangers possessed by the harsh conditions and all too frequent cave-ins a surprisingly numerous, and unsurprisingly violent, troll tribe claims the largest mines as their own. Drawn to the mines by some nameless compulsion, they prey on any they discover invading their domain.

Among the folk of Lantern, mine trolls—as they are locally known—are universally considered even madder and more unpredictable than normal trolls. Some whisper the ghosts of the dwarves' fallen civilisation have cursed the trolls in revenge for their own destruction. Some particularly learned sages instead theorise the prevalence of lead in the abandoned mines and fallen holds is to blame. Whatever the truth, "mining" expeditions are now either numerous, well-guarded and heavily equipped with oil and fire magics or small, stealthy affairs.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN LANTHORN

---

### 1: REFUGES

*Studded with small windows and protected by a stout, iron bound wooden door this sturdy, battle-scarred building huddles close to Lanthorn's gate.*

These sturdy, battle-scarred buildings are basic in the extreme. Designed for travellers who reach Lanthorn after the gates shut they offer shelter from the weather and protection from marauding trolls. Each building features a stout, barred door and a few narrow windows. None are furnished.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	Just after dusk, a small merchant caravan approaches Lanthorn. The gates are already shut; the travellers must shelter in one of the refuges overnight.
2	As #2, but this merchant caravan is followed by a troll hunting party. In the depths of night, the trolls fall on the merchants, who are all slain if no one intervenes.
3	A refuge's shutter—left unsecured—bangs loudly as the harsh mountain wind catches it.
4	A sniggering goblin emerges from a refuge and flits off toward the gate. Investigations reveal a crude flaming oil trap set inside the refuge to catch unwary trolls looking for food.
5	Shadows clustering along a refuge's wall seem suspiciously deep. Perceptive PCs spot a troll lurking there ready to attack unwary travellers.
6	An eagle swoops down and lands atop a refuge's roof. It lingers there for several hours before abruptly taking wing and flying away.

**Chasing the Light:** The party arrives after dusk. The goblin guards gleefully point the party to a nearby refuge. That night, trolls come down from the mountains to feed...

### 2: HIGH GATE

*These wooden gates bear the scorch marks of many fires. A battlemented walkway linking two guard towers surmounts the gate. An over-sized silvery lanthorn—glimmering fire burning within—stands atop one tower.*

This overly stout gatehouse watches over Lanthorn's western approaches. The gate's supernaturally hardened wood bears scorch marks and its battlemented towers loom high over the approaching trail. The Grand Conclave have set here a large—reputedly sentient—magical silvery lantern to protect the gate. It has the power to call forth magical fire to scorch attackers.

### 3: THE SHADOW MARKET

*Shelves, crammed with all sorts of odds and ends, teeter against the walls. The disorganisation is staggering. A faint, unplaceable odour hangs in the air—perhaps emanating from the grinning goblin traders who greet you with toothy grins.*

Lanthorn has no typical assortment of shops; instead many goblins operate small stalls from the cramped rooms of these buildings. Prices are wildly inflated, and haggling is rife. While the goblins—in the main—have managed to shrug off the worst of their racial heritage they are still devious and greedy. Notable stallholders include:

- **Bal** (CN male goblin cleric 1) offers basic healing services. He prefers to use traditional goblin methods—experimental surgery and cauterisation—wherever possible. He's recently become interested in trepanning and never missed an opportunity to practise his technique.
- **Nank** (NE female goblin thief 2) is a vicious piece of work. This conniving "merchant" deals in anything as long as she gets paid. She always has "treasure maps" for sale, but unfortunately, they all lead to troll lairs. She also seems to always have a good supply of "exploding oil" for sale.
- **Perg** (N male goblin fighter 1) buys and sells weapons and armour. Everything is guaranteed, but only until it's used. To his mind, the buyer should beware; it's not his problem if someone accidentally buys a defective item...even if he is selling it!

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A goblin merchant beckons the PCs over to her store. She has a particularly fine troll tooth necklace for sale and it's only 25 gp!
2	Nank approaches the party with a tatty map for sale. It purports to show the location of Atarmajeir's lost lair. It looks genuine, but is a fake.
3	A small pack of goblin children dart through the area squealing and shouting. As they run, they bash each other with light wooden weapons.
4	The air is heavy with the smell of oil.
5	Agonising screams echo through the tunnels—Bal is practising his trepanning skills.
6	Goblin pedlars surround the party, all vying for their attention. Many dirty hands paw at the party—some with larcenous intent.

#### 4: CAVES OF THE FLAMING SKULL

*Hewn from the living rock, these cramped caves feature low ceilings and smoothed floors. Here and there, graffiti and scorch marks mar the walls.*

This convoluted cave network is cramped and tortuously maze-like. With the caves' deliberately designed narrow entrances, few wizards ever visit the goblins in their homes. Here dwell the bulk of the Flaming Skull tribe, in small family groups. Although the goblins have evolved a more refined, civilised way of life than their normal brethren the caves are still a glorious riot of disorganisation, mess and nauseating smells.

In the deepest section of caves, the goblins tend a bubbling pool of particularly viscous, unstable oil. Devastatingly effective when used as a weapon, the goblins delight in using the oil to burn their trollish enemies.

- **Tuko** (LN female goblin magic-user 8) dreams of one day leading the Flaming Skull tribe. She's got big plans—mostly involving exploding trolls. She needs money to fund her dreams and is available—at the princely sum of 20 gp a day—to guide travellers through the pass. Somewhat of a liability, she refuses to hide from any trolls encountered and—depending on her mood—sometimes leads travellers into ambushes (so she can burn and explode trolls).

#### 5: HALL OF THE GRAND CONCLAVE

*Ornate scrollwork decorates this rambling stone building. An esoteric symbol—a hammer and sceptre crossed in a starburst—adorns the stonework above the building's grand iron-studded main entrance.*

Whereas the bulk of Lanthorn is turned over for travellers and goblins, the Grand Conclave work here, led by Ishme-Dagan (LN old male human magic-user 13), in semi-isolated splendour. Most goblins never pass through the Hall's doors. Within the hall, workshops and laboratories are crammed with items both magical and mundane.

The Conclave has many items for sale (see "Marketplace") and members often undertake commissions. However, payment for such services usually involve an expedition deep into the troll-infested mines to retrieve the lead and silver languishing therein.

- **Enlil Agade** (N middle-aged female human magic-user 6) craves the knowledge of crafting crystal balls and similar divination-based items. She is driven in her quest, but not suicidal and needs adventurers to seek out the required raw materials.
- **Ishme-Dagan** (LN old male human magic-user 13) is a brilliant artificer and obsessed with magical creation. He ruthlessly destroys any threat (real or perceived) to Lanthorn.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A goblin "miner" returns to Lanthorn literally bent double under a straining sack full of lead ore. As he staggers toward the Hall of the Grand Conclave to sell his haul, the sack splits and scatters ore on the ground. Within seconds, the unfortunate miner is at the centre of a writhing mass of goblins intent on stealing as much ore as possible.
2	Strange lights of unwholesome hues flash brightly and briefly in an upper window.
3	A man, clad in a dirty traveller's cloak, knocks loudly at the hall's main entrance and waits patiently for admittance. He is still waiting, ten minutes later.
4	A grinning goblin, clutching what looks like a magic wand, emerges from the Hall's main entrance and darts off toward Low Gate. (This is Marpa off to watch for marauding trolls).
5	Smokes billows into the sky from several of the hall's chimneys.
6	Raised voices—clearly an argument in progress—reaches the PCs' ears as they pass the hall.

**Into the Mountains:** Enlil Agade needs a small supply of lead and silver quarried from a specific (troll-infested) mine. She engages the PCs to secure her requirements and offers her skills as a magic item crafter in exchange.



## 6: THE SMOULDERING TROLL

*A sign enscribed to show wisps of smoke rising from a troll's scorched body marks this establishment as the Smouldering Troll.*

Widely accepted as the finest inn for 100 miles—competition for this honour isn't fierce—the Smouldering Troll offers a warm welcome to all. Here, the rooms are (relatively) clean, the drink is plentiful and the food (probably) won't give you food poisoning.

- **Food & Drink** Meal ([burnt] mutton sausages, cheese [on the turn] and [hard] bread) 3 sp, weak ale 6 cp, wine (pitcher) 3 sp.
- **Accommodation** Two-bed chamber 10 sp; four-bed chamber 20 sp; common room 2 sp.

Many travellers, except for those honoured by the Grand Conclave, stay at the Smouldering Troll. At night, the common room is a riot of drunk, singing goblins punctuated by weary travellers who accidentally took rooms here instead of at the slightly more expensive Broken Blade (location 7).

- **Gak** (NG female goblin thief 4), along with her extended family, runs the Smouldering Troll. Gregarious in the extreme—and a little over-excitable with new guests—she loves telling stories of her family's troll-baiting and troll-burning prowess. Sadly, she is not as good at running the Smouldering Troll as she is storytelling. Still at least she tries—who cares if the rooms are dirty, the food's often burnt and the home-brewed beer isn't as strong as it could be? It could be much, much worse.



- **Uurki** (N female goblin ranger 4) is an accomplished scout and knows the nearby mines better than most. She's hard-talking and hard drinking (and phenomenally brave). She drinks (a lot) at the Smouldering Troll. She is always armed to the teeth.
- **Zork** (CN male goblin fighter 2) was savaged by a troll several years ago and lost his right arm in the melee. Horribly scarred, he barely survived. Now a liability to mining parties he works here as a bartender. His dexterity is impressive, and the lack of an arm barely slows him down. He loves singing—and joins in all impromptu singalongs.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	Uurki enters the Smouldering Troll, carrying a bloody sack. She upends it on the bar to reveal a severed, scorched troll head. Gak wants it as a "nice decoration" and the two fall to haggling. Perceptive PCs may notice the troll's eyes are still moving...
2	Four goblins swig from oversized flagons, while singing lewd songs about a capacious troll maiden. The songs are not clever and speak of the goblins' "burning desire" and "flaming passion".
3	A goblin dashes outside, clutching two flagons, chased by two of his companions. Good natured(ish) shouts and screams echo through the open door.
4	Gak spots the PCs and decides this is the perfect time to tell them a convoluted story about the mage Gudea Der and his ordeal trapped in a troll-infested mine.
5	The common room is busy and there is precious little space for the party to find seats. A muscled, heavily-armed goblin—Uurki—gives the party the once over before motioning them to join her.
6	An impromptu drinking competition breaks out among the carousing goblins. The first three rounds are relatively tame—although the drunks all try to distract their fellows. The third round, however, involves drinking cups of flaming spirit. The competitors' squeals and burns are met with their rivals' laughter.

**Obsession:** A goblin regular—Hirq Hugglebelly (CN male goblin thief 1)—becomes obsessed with the PCs and wants to know all about their adventures. If the PCs sound impressive, he decides to join their party—even if they don't want him around.

**Singalong-a-Zork:** After a particularly enthusiastic singalong, which sees Zork leap onto the bar and lead the throng in a song about burning trolls, the one-armed bartender approaches the PCs. He burns for revenge against the troll that maimed him, and he has just heard the troll—a monstrous albino with but a single tusk—has been seen near Lanthorn. He wants the PCs help in wreaking his revenge.

## 7: THE BROKEN BLADE

*The jagged shard of a gigantic rusting two-handed sword hangs from a stout chain over the door to this two-storey building of stark construction.*

The Broken Blade's offering is basic, but solid. The place is an homage to war and martial pursuits; battle trophies and suchlike festoon its common room. Henk Sunnderman—an old mercenary—runs the place. He retired over a decade ago and has been here ever-since. He misses the excitement of battle, but not the blood, pain and mortal danger. He is popular with the goblins for organising weekly sparring matches held in the common room. Such events are always well attended.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	Henk berates one of his goblin servers for his filthy appearance. The goblin is probably one of the cleanest examples of his race the PCs have ever seen (except for the remains of a stew dripping down his chin).
2	Torgan slumps at the bar, flagon in hand. He is paying little attention to the common room and seems barely conscious. Nearby, a goblin creeps forward with a spoon of warm stew at the ready to dump into one of the unfortunate half-orc's ears.
3	A wickedly-curved halberd—part of one of Henk's wall displays—suddenly for no good reason falls from the wall barely missing a surprised traveller. Investigation reveals the twine holding the halberd in place is suspiciously frayed.
4	Torgan and Vrung begin to clear the tables and benches away in preparation for a sparring match. They grumble while doing so; apparently this is someone else's job.
5	The common room is quiet—actually practically empty. Several goblin servers mop the floor while singing a tribal ballad which tells of burning trolls and victorious goblins enjoying a “victory barbecue”.
6	Torgan grabs an insensible goblin and drags him outside, where he dumps him unceremoniously against the wall.

Henk employs a small staff of goblin assistants, from whom he demands such horrors as personal hygiene and discipline, as well as two bouncers—Torgan and Vrung—who served with him in the “good old days”.

- **Henk Sunnderman** (NG old male half-orc fighter 4) is old and overweight, but a warrior's heart still beats in his once-mighty chest. He loves his life and tavern; he even loves his goblin staff!

- **Torgan and Vrung** (both N male half-orc fighter 3) are Henk's bouncers. Both are obese and starved of female attention. They love drinking and—strangely—are fiercely protective of the Broken Blade's goblin staff.

Food here is basic—being little better than trail rations—but the drink is plentiful. The Broken Blade has no private rooms but has several small dormitories suitable for groups of up to ten.

- **Food & Drink** Meal (hard biscuits soaked in mutton stew) 1 sp, ale 4 cp, sour wine (pitcher) 1 sp.
- **Accommodation** Dormitory 1 gp (10 gp for the whole room).

## 8: STABLES

*The smell of dung, and the snorts of animals, emanate from this large building. A half-high door bars entry to the dim shadowy interior.*

One of the only non-goblin run business in Lanthorn, all visitors' horses and dogs must be billeted here, for their own safety. Animals escaping are often set upon by the goblins in an orgy of violence and slain. The goblins eat well that night.

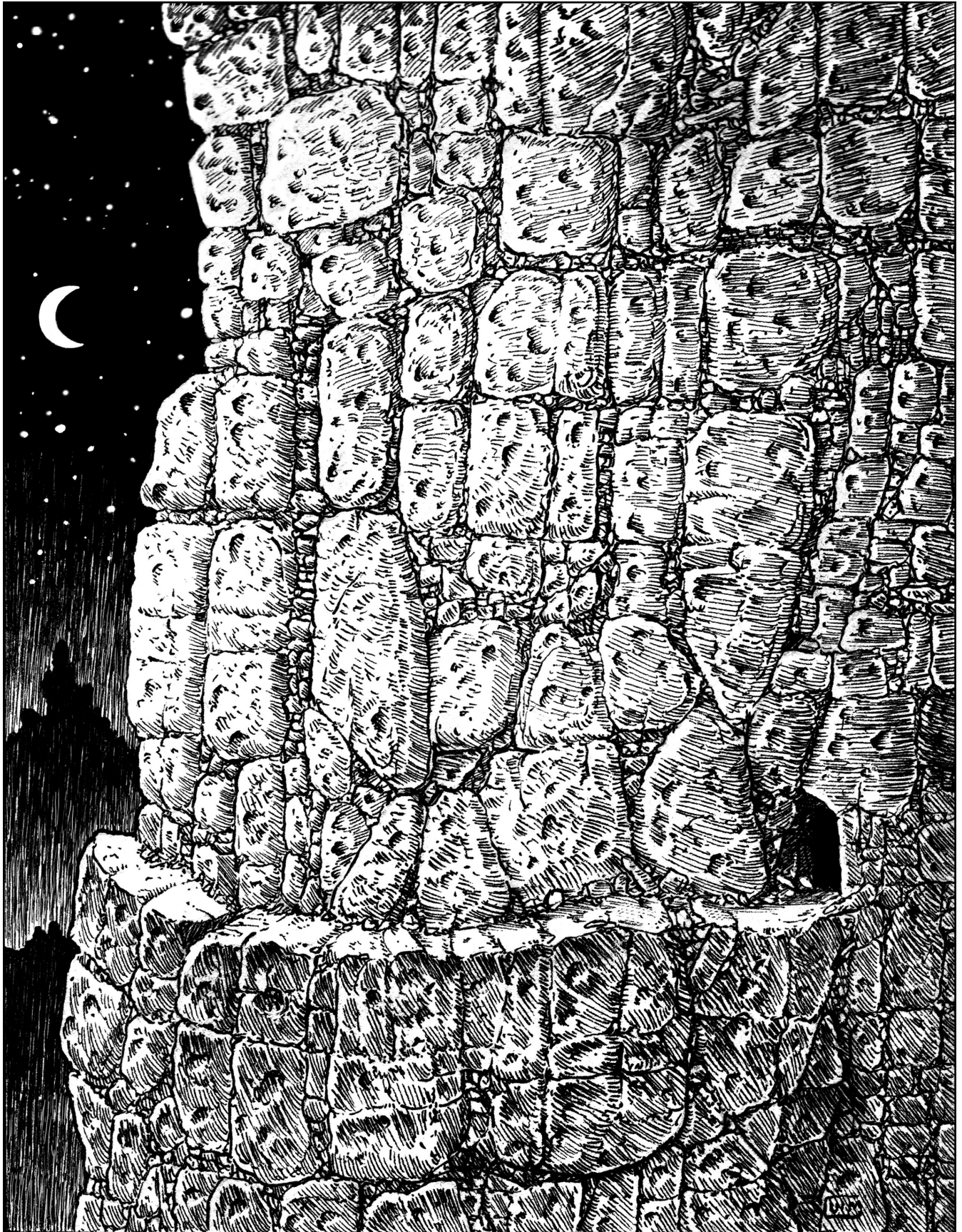
- **Oggor “the Thumper”** (NG male half-orc druid 3) dwells here and operates the stables on his own. (He'd love to take on some help—he daren't leave the stables unattended for too long in case the goblins notice his absence and get hungry. However, he trusts no goblin to serve as a stable hand and few others seem interested in settling in Lanthorn). He's called “the Thumper” because that's what he does to goblins he finds in the stables. Oggor loves the mountains' stark beauty.

## 9: LOW GATE

*These wooden gates bear the scorch marks of many fires. A battlemented walkway linking two guard towers surmounts the gate. An over-sized silvery lanthorn—glimmering fire burning within—stands atop one tower.*

Even more heavily defended than High Gate, Low Gate bears the brunt of the trolls' attacks. Its thick iron-bound gates are secured with three wooden bars at dusk. They do not open again until dawn and woe-betide any caught outside after nightfall. Another particularly large silvery lantern—twin of the one atop High Gate—imbued with fire magic stands atop the north tower.

- **Marpa** (NE male goblin magic-user 4) is tired of the Flaming Skull's matriarchy. He joined the Grand Conclave to make something of himself and is its only full goblin member to date. He struggles to keep his base nature hidden and hates trolls. He wants to learn how to make lots of *wands of fire*. He loves exploding trolls and is never happier than when blasting them with the *Low Lantern's* fiery powers.



# MASQUERADE

---

**Words** Richards Pett **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*A troupe of masked actors and comics crew the floating village-theatre of Masquerade. The village—really three rickety barges that visits both riverfront and coastal villages, hides a secret many guests would find unpalatable—most of the performers suffer from leprosy. The infected—generally those with very early stages of the illness—hide behind their masks, costumes and gaiety. Forced to keep moving to keep their terrible secret hidden the folk of Masquerade are on a perpetual pilgrimage to visit holy sites in hopes of a magical cure for their horrendous affliction. The worst afflicted are kept below, treated with kindness and cares as the village floats onwards seeking salvation. However, the true ruler of Masquerade is an even more unpalatable guest—a vampire—but no ordinary queen of the night, no simple bloodsucker is the so-called Silent Queen for an ancient vow binds her more tightly than the stoutest chain....*

## MASQUERADE AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** The Silent Queen

**Government:** Autocracy

**Population:** 112 (90 humans, 8 halflings, 6 gnomes, 8 others)

**Notable Folks:** Her Grace the Silent Queen a.k.a. the Slumbering Captain Absinthe Morell (location 10), The Jester, Queen of Masquerade, Lymphania Jade (location 4)

**Alignments:** CN, N, NE

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** Entertainment

Masquerade is a floating village—or perhaps more appropriately a floating theatre—populated mostly by people suffering from leprosy, who bear their affliction secretly behind colourful masks and costumes. These poor suffering souls were drawn in years gone by to the sanctuary offered by the visionary leadership of the Silent Queen, but frequent attacks drove them ever further from civilisation. In time, when the colony was swollen by afflicted actors and artists, the Silent Queen took them on a pilgrimage by river. To pay their way the colony put on shows, their poor corrupted bodies hidden behind festival masks, the smiles of audiences replacing the looks of horror the afflicted usually garner. Since then the troupe has sailed great rivers and coastlines, bringing joy, but sometimes—when their secret is discovered—bringing fear and forcing the troupe to hastily move on or face destruction.

In truth, the Silent Queen began her sanctuary to provide herself with ample food, her own leprous form having driven her away from her family and aristocratic friends. She became a beacon to those similarly afflicted. In time, though, she grew to pity and then love the suffering folk she brought into her “care”. After one particularly bestial attack when, bloated with hunger, she slew her lover and friend Barrus Marram she swore an oath never to consume human blood again.

That was over a century ago, but her fast has come at great personal cost—now little more than a tissue of skin atop fragile bones she perpetually lurks in her shrouded bedchamber, whispering instructions through the public leader of the colony Lymphania Jade, her only one allowed in her presence. The villagers, fear and trust the Silent Queen in equal measure; she is a night-terror, a beacon and bogymen. Although only the captain knows her secret, her hermit-like behaviour has birthed a thousand tales and stories.

When they can afford to, the troupe pays for one (or more) of their number to receive a *cure disease*. The Silent Queen

announces the next lucky recipient and great festivity ensues. Sadly, this approach has led to jealousy and, on two occasions, mysterious disappearances. There are also times where salvation becomes an obsession, with groups or individuals seeking to accelerate their fundraising to pay for cures. If cures fail, retribution is often sought.

Masquerade’s three boats become one when the show docks, the vessels joined together by ropes and boardwalks. The show—often known as the “Night Theatre”—only opens once the sun has gone down. Shadows and darkness are good to hide things in, after all.

### VILLAGE LORE

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

- Masquerade is a floating village which plies its curious trade up and down broad rivers and sheltered coasts. The curiously attired locals put on plays and comedies.
- Masquerade’s actors have great talent and their plays are not to be missed; the floating village is like some strange fairyland and only ever stays for a few days before moving on.
- Occasionally the village ups and leaves in an awful hurry for no clear reason.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Masquerade, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

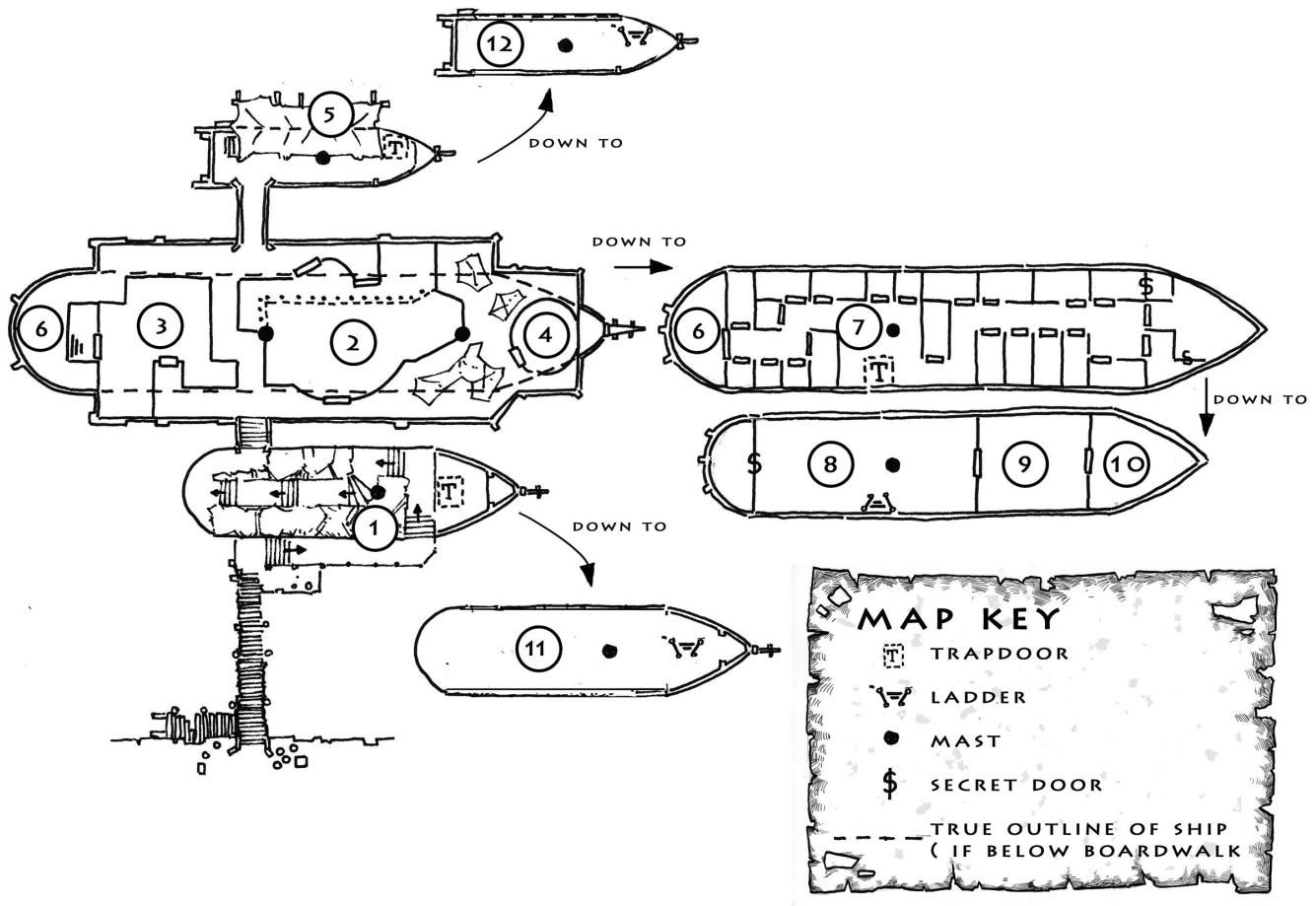
D6	RUMOUR
1-2	Bramble Hammlin, playwright and actor, was born into a noble family but was cast out by jealous relatives. He now wanders with the Masquerade in exile. He’s a difficult person, prone to tantrums.
3-4	Masquerade’s captain, the Jester, is a fierce lady known for her poisonous lashing tongue.
5-6	The locals make furtive references to “her below” and are in either awe or fear to whoever <i>her below</i> is.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Masquerade's three boats have several locations of interest to adventuring types.

1. **The Singing Crooked Bridge:** Visitors enter Masquerade by the swaying rope bridge.
2. **Great Theatre & Pit:** Garish temporary home of the main events on Masquerade, spiritual home of Bramble Hammlin.
3. **Museum & Warehouse:** Part shop, part exhibition, locals supplement their income with tat, fakes and the occasional genuine treasure here.
4. **Leaning Fore-tower & Comedia:** Tumbling clowns and acrobats play this stage for comedic value supported by peculiarly talented animals.
5. **The Port Morality Play Barge:** Lesser side-stage where newcomers ply their arts in simple morality plays.
6. **The Grinning Gargoyle Door:** The only entrance below-decks, this locked door keeps curious visitors away from the most afflicted villagers.
7. **Upper Hold & Quarters:** Village meeting place, eating and drinking commune and home to the general populace, this confusing maze of tiny homes lurks immediately below the main deck of Masquerade's largest vessel.
8. **Infirmary & Lower Hold:** Here those with more advanced leprosy are given succour by a trio of devoted nuns, themselves bearing an advanced form of the affliction.
9. **Fore Captain's Chambers:** The public captain's chamber, which leads directly to that of the Silent Queen. The elected leader of Masquerade—known as the Jester—spends what little spare time she has here.
10. **The True Captain's Penance:** Daylight never enters the true leader's cot—it would destroy her if it did. The Jester is her only visitor.
11. **Trade Barge:** Here trade goods are held—the captain has always had an eye for a bargain and trade opportunity.
12. **Storage Hold Barge:** The main hold is used to store Masquerade's sets and props between shows.



## LIFE IN MASQUERADE

---

Although those who perform are not severely afflicted, the perpetual fear of discovery makes all the locals edgy when the show is on. However, hope for a cure brings a steely resolve to most; those who cannot deal with the masquerade are encouraged to leave. However, particularly perceptive PCs note that behind the smiles and laughter lurks something perhaps sinister.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The play's the thing, the show must go on. Although she does trade and trade well, the miracle cures have to be paid for or Masquerade losses all purpose.

### LAW & ORDER

Masquerade's present and future depends upon her secret remaining just that. With an accomplished wizard and a few tough characters aboard this has usually been fairly easy to achieve; those who do glimpse something they shouldn't are targeted with *suggestion* spells or similar arcane methods such as *charm person* that enable honeyed words to smooth the odd glimpse of something unpleasant. However, the tightly knitted group are not above murder to keep their secret safe; although this happens rarely and regretfully, there have been a handful of people with big mouths whose actions have resulted in their tongues being silenced permanently. The locals do not enjoy this, it is simply sometimes necessary. If upping sticks and leaving quickly is an option, they readily take it, leaving stories a long way behind and only starting the show again when such tales are too far away to cause trouble.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

The naming of the next recipient of a cure is a solemn moment—sometimes then blossoming into pure joy as an especially loved local is announced as the next lucky person. A whole curious sub-culture has developed with various factions believing in their own reasons why the Silent Queen chooses who she does. Most popular amongst these are the Smilers, who believe the queen picks those who spread the most joy. Conversely another group, who have no particular name, believe exactly the opposite and that those who suffer the most are the next to be cured. Hard workers, legendary performances and a small fumbling mass of other reasons are given and sometimes taken up as a religion.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A trio of crimson clowns carry a wolverine wearing a swan mask in a golden bier.
2	A hooded lady wafts herself with a fan made from peacock feathers and recites haunting poetry about the moon.
3	A man wearing a gargoyle mask serenades a lady wearing an all-encompassing white bodice.
4	A figure dressed as death carries a skull and laments his lost friend Odgar.
5	A crowd gasps and a grown man walks by a few moments later sobbing like a child.
6	A lady wearing a donkey's head proclaims her love for "poor Edwardo".
7	A man wearing an executioner's hood bears flowers instead of an axe. He occasionally—and randomly—smites visitors with the flowers.
8	A man wearing a mask of sighs leads a lady in a wedding dress of tears.
9	A hooded dwarf walks by carrying a vast megaphone and drum. He alternates drumming with shouted announcements of starting events and so on.
10	Something laughing flies overhead.
11	A huge man with a great blue beard stands on a corner eulogising about the beauty of love.
12	A figure dressed as a wolf hands a PC a red rose.
13	Three masked villains rehearse their lines as they walk by. They seem to be very into their roles.
14	Two hooded dwarves move a huge piece of scenery depicting a massive pig. A clever mechanism enables the pig's mouth to open and close. It activates, as the dwarves stagger passed the PCs.
15	A woman in a mourning veil weeps and then laughs.
16	A figure dressed as a red devil with a vpumpkin head stands before the group.
17	A giant hand with a pointing finger walks past clumsily, knocking into a PC.
18	Four clowns, covered in flour, argue furiously; it soon comes to blows.
19	A man on stilts has a kite flying from the bloated head mask he wears.
20	A dog races by, dancing on its hind legs.

### MAGIC ABOARD MASQUERADE

All illusion spells cast aboard Masquerade are resolved as though the caster were a level higher, saving throws against all fear and horror effects are made at -1.

## NOTABLE FOLK

---

Many of the Masquerade's crew are notable:

**A Lament to Feeble Flesh and Age** (location 4; N old male elf magic-user 5): An elf approaching the end of his long days, he laments his lost past and wasted opportunities; regret and sorrow boil in his eyes. He sees a long, slow decline into infirmity, but finds a fascinating and terrible echo in the Silent Queen's own slow demise that in truth may never end. He waits by the Queen, never seeing her yet always aware of his companion in decay. He provides animals for the plays, his little flock of singing sheep, dancing dogs, smiling bears and tumbling ferrets following him wherever he goes.

**Abigal Teasel** (location 2; N female human): Shallow and vain Abigal's sorrowful eyes can bring tears to stone.

**Bittersweet** (location 1; N female human fighter 7): Huge and strange looking before her illness, towering Bittersweet now lurks behind a skull mask and flowing orange robes emblazoned with a scythe sigil. She's the muscle and trouble-shooter who runs the physical aspect of the show—setting up, taking down and dealing with troublemakers. A woman of few words and friends, she's secretly in love with Ivy Hann and is devoted to her ideas although she really just wants a fairer way of choosing who

gets cured. She keeps her feelings for Ivy a dark secret.

**Bramble Hammlin** (location 2; N male half-elf fighter 5/thief 7/bard 3): The greatest actor and playwright of the age, Hammlin seems to wear a new body whenever he takes on a new role. His old skin and the disease he bears had him exiled from his home city. He burns inside that his sickness has robbed him of his fame and often plots to return somehow and enjoy his rightful destiny.

**Her Grace the Silent Queen aka the Slumbering Captain Absinthe Morell** (location 10; N female human vampire fighter 8/thief 9/bard 8): Masquerade's true ruler and founding mother, lies in her dark cot-bed slumbering in hunger, her vow never to take warm human blood unbroken for years. She wears her suffering and hunger like armour but her motives are honest if a little inhuman. Somehow her sickness has clung to her in undeath, something she regards as the gods' punishment.

**Ivy Hann** (location 3; NE female human wererat thief 6): Voluptuous and scheming Ivy is a relatively new cast member and intends to make profit from it. She's obsessed about being cured and has been fermenting unrest about the way recipients of "cures" are chosen. Her primary ally is Bittersweet (who she is aware loves her and cynically uses to further her aims, considering infecting her on an almost daily basis). The two have enough allies to unleash rebellion and she has infected three of those allies with lycanthropy. She'll use her wits, looks and affliction in imaginative ways to rob rich married men of their fortunes through blackmail.

**Massive Jack, Master of Ceremonies** (location 1; CN male dwarf thief 6): Smiling through his inner pain, crippled Jack has a wonderful way with long words and oratory, as well as a kindly soul which surfaces through his introverted character.

**The Great Orb** (location 2; CN male human illusionist 7): A pretentious womanizing drunk who claims royal descent, the Great Orb (true name Maccum Whelk) runs the plays' backdrops—providing primarily sumptuous illusions which often edge towards the overtly-erotic. He sees his role as crucial and is annoyed he doesn't receive enough plaudits.

**The Jester, Queen of Masquerade, Lymphania Jade** (location 4; CN female human fighter 5/thief 6/bard 5): Masquerade's public ruler has honey in her voice, a storm in her dancing and joy in her heart. Graced with a hard head for diplomacy and a stone skin for bargains, she has won over and broken stonier hearts than her own throughout her eight-year captaincy. Her heart of gold is only physically marred by her leprosy, which has afflicted her far worse than any other—some harshly say because she spends so much time attending the Silent Queen.

---

---

### VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Leprosy affects all parts of the body, not just the face, so some actors wearing masks may have perfectly ordinary faces, but be hideous disfigured elsewhere. When locals become very ill they are treated below-decks.

**Dress:** When travelling, the actors wear normal clothes for the most part—unless rehearsing—but are vigilant when in areas even sparsely populated, aware that word can travel fast. When approaching a settlement the actors and performers prepare with partial costumes, but when nearing a stopping point they take great pains to cover their affliction. The Great Orb has a secret arcane fluid which he liberally provides the troupe; this glue affixes masks, cloth wrapped over sores and other areas the actors must hide. The glue is such that unless washed with very strong alcohol or acid, a Strength check is required to remove any such object.

Costumes and garb is always outrageous, bright and massive.

**Nomenclature:** Those who join the Masquerade take new names; encouraged by other locals to forget their past and embrace the future. These names are always suitably florid or outré to reflect thespian traditions. *Male* Adeemius, The Great Ellerorius, Maccman Egregious, *Zob*; *female* Eon, Orchid, Rowettia, Siobhan Alexis; *family* Villagers forswear their family names and choose simply Masquerade or *of the family*.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN MASQUERADE

---

The main ship, the old river freighter *Salvation*, forms the village spine, with two lesser river barges making up the remainder. Below-decks are cramped but scrupulously clean, the holds form a (deliberately) confusing maze of props, bedchambers and secret holds for occasional smuggling. Above decks, peculiarly abstract scenery and false streets impart a feeling of light confusion to visitors. Paper lanterns illuminate cramped alleys between the larger areas listed below.

### 1: THE SINGING CROOKED BRIDGE

*A precarious swaying rope bridge hangs between the harbour and the strange vessel drawn up nearby. The ship, or more correctly trio of ships, has been clothed in gaudy flags and banners, paper lanterns and footlights to illuminate the crooked madness that dances on deck. The entire place is dressed as a theatre, with oddly angled scenery, inviting narrow alleyways and a trio of peculiarly bloated buildings that provide a veneer of peculiar permanence.*

The bridge is the entrance to Masquerade, and her inhabitants take pains to ensure the place holds a strange inviting air. The Starboard Barge where visitors first enter is crammed with odd little statues, bloated paper lanterns that seem to house dancing fey and strange scents to tease customers' noses. The upper deck of the entire barge is a deliberately leading stair decorated like a fairyland with grottoes and simple illusions.

Massive Jack (CN male dwarf thief 6), discreetly watched by Bittersweet (N female human fighter 7), cajoles visitors for a gold coin. So smitten are visitors that they generally forget the peril of the entrance, which tends to sway violently when more than a dozen people cross at a time.

### 2: GREAT THEATRE & PIT

*A peculiarly temporary façade looms above you, a simple yet almost disturbing angled building which opens into a great bowl of brightly painted scenery and an audience pit gathered below a wide stage with swinging oily footlights.*

Here the main plays occur, so devoted is the playwright and lead actor Bramble Hammlin (N male half-elf fighter 5/thief 7/bard 3) that he even sleeps in a warm corner below the footlights. His conspirator and frustration, the organiser of scenery and illusion The Great Orb (CN male human illusionist 7) often sleeps nearby to annoy him with his snoring, unless he is out debauching. The stage itself glowers above the audience pit, while backstage are scores of bits of scenery, stage-paint and timber. Hammlin is deluding himself that his co-star Abigail Teasel (N female human) is in love with him, she isn't, she is passionate about the illusionist, who plays

with her affections.

Hammlin writes play of astonishing quality, far too good for any simple travelling troupe as anyone with any such theatrical background is aware. His plays focus on pathos and comedy, almost always ending with a broken heart for his poverty-stricken characters. His most notable recent works include the *Sorrow of Sawell* and the *Girl with Sad Eyes*. It is not uncommon to find audiences leaving the theatre weeping and laughing in equal measure.

### 3: MUSEUM & WAREHOUSE

*Bric-a-brac crams this lop-sided place and it's pretty clear the stuffed wolverines, heads of thieves pickled in jars, alleged saint-blessed holy wafers and a mad storm of other objects are all for sale.*

Ivy Hann (NE female human wererat thief 6) has somehow charmed her way into running the museum and often bloats it with objects she "procures". She's excellent at dressing up the mundane into something mysterious and maybe even magical. The museum also makes an ideal place to spread dissension, since the place also doubles as a shop for ordinary wares needed by the villagers.

- **For Sale:** *potion of extra healing* (800 gp), *potion of climbing* (500 gp), *feather token (fan)* (2,000 gp).



#### 4: LEANING FORE-TOWER & COMEDIA

*A plaster and timber tower rises at the fore of the impermanent village. A macabre painting of tumbling acrobats falling through the sky hangs above the entrance.*

The Comedia is where the clowns play, usually performing some amusing tumble and slapstick routine invariably involving walking dogs and smiling bears supporting a singing sheep. The clowns vary in number, and spend much of their time wandering the village performing some amusing action, the lead clown and public queen of Masquerade the Jester, Queen of Masquerade Lymphania Jade (CN female human fighter 5/thief 6/bard 5) spends her days here perfecting tricks, mime and slapstick and sleeps in a small cot built into the tower foundations.

#### 5: THE PORT MORALITY PLAY BARGE

*Painted angels and gargoyles dance below the towering hooded figure of death on this humble stage.*

Younger actors and performers, including those new to Masquerade, hone their skills in traditional morality plays on this side-stage. Here the true religious nature of the group is given strong voice and occasionally comes over as preaching.



#### 6: THE GRINNING GARGOYLE DOOR

*This great iron and walnut door is carved to resemble a gargoyle eating skeletons.*

The only door to private quarters below is invariably locked when the village is open to the public. The amazing lock only has three keys, one kept by Massive Jack, the second by the Jester and the third by the Silent Queen. When unlocked it is almost always watched by the paranoid Bittersweet or one of her followers. Visitors linger by the door are normal accosted by a bevy of clowns who work to move the curious on to elsewhere on Masquerade.

#### 7: UPPER HOLD & QUARTERS

*Crooked doorways are set into the painted resemblance of a village below-decks. There are even odd street names and a clear attempt at privacy. In the midst of this bizarre place is a meeting room and galley.*

This is where the bulk of the villagers live, a peculiar normality lurks beyond each doorway, which give access to rooms that would seem at home in any rural cottage or townhouse.

#### 8: INFIRMARY & LOWER HOLD

*A stifling embrace of caustic soap smothers this chamber, which hosts a score or so bunk beds.*

A trio of nuns (Irja, Satu and Cyma; all N female human cleric 1) tend the worst of the villagers suffering leprosy here. The nuns do all they can to ease the pain of those so horribly afflicted and sleep in this area to ensure that when their wards suffer, they are on hand to tend them. Outsiders are never allowed into this area, which make pique the interest of nosy adventurers. If visitors do penetrate the area, the nuns raise the alarm and the crew converge on the area. (See Law & Order for more information).

#### 9: FORE CAPTAIN'S CHAMBERS

Beyond a double locked door (for which the Jester has the only keys) is the Captain's Quarters, a magnificently appointed room carved from mahogany and walnut and sumptuously furnished. It's here that the true wealth of Masquerade—presently amounting to around 4,000 gp—is held in two amazing locked iron strongboxes hidden in another of the ship's smuggler's hold, itself only noticed by perceptive searchers.

## 10: THE TRUE CAPTAIN'S PENANCE

*In a cramped corner of this cramped deck lurks a small cot surrounded by heavy purple drapes.*

The true ruler of Masquerade the Silent Queen (N female human vampire fighter 8/thief 9/bard 8), dwells here, her days a mixture of dreams, decay and distant hunger. A visionary and prophet, the queen deals with weightier matters through her public intermediary, the Jester, and issues visions and the names of those she has dreamt should receive the next *cure disease*.

## 11: TRADE BARGE

This barge is used to hold trade goods purchased to sell on further afield. At any given time, it may be crammed with timber, ironware, pelts, wool or any other trade good appropriate to the villages Masquerade has recently visited. Stored amongst the goods in locked cupboards are a few more

precious trade objects such as weapons picked up on the way or other items, as well as the items listed below.

- **For Sale:** *scroll of command* (300 gp), *scroll of prayer* (900 gp), +2 *arrows* (3; 300 gp each).

## 12: STORAGE HOLD BARGE

The bulk of the façade of Masquerade is stored here during river voyages or trips around more sheltered coastal regions. It is almost empty when the vessel is in port but crammed to the rafters when Masquerade is under sail. This hold also contains a large butt of strong alcohol used by the locals to wash off their glued costumes between shows.

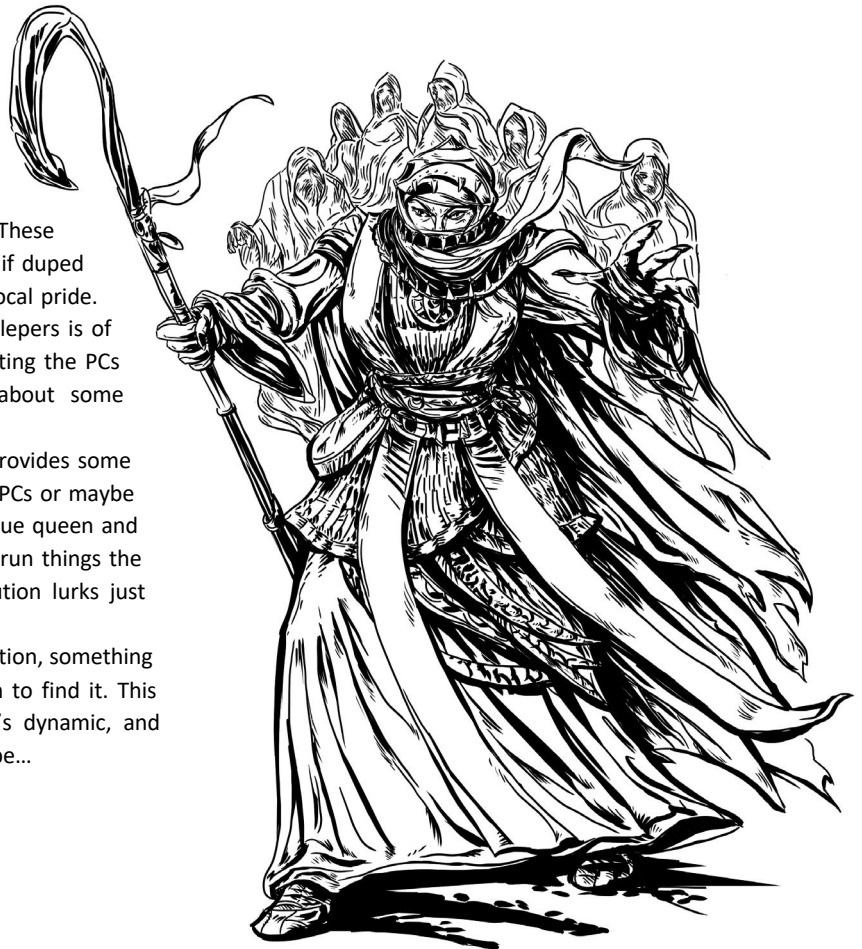
## ADVENTURES WITH MASQUERADE

---

This curious settlement comes with a number of potential angles for adventure. The first and most obvious being that someone wants to get to the bottom of what's going on—this could be someone robbed or duped by Ivy Hann or someone whose curiosity got them charmed or subject to *suggestion*—they keep having horrible dreams about what they saw below-decks that just will not go away. These individuals might be motivated by vengeance if duped or feel a sense of need through religious or local pride. News that a vampire is aboard a ship full of lepers is of course likely to bring about a crusade so putting the PCs dead centre of such a plot could bring about some interesting dilemmas.

The dynamic between the villagers also provides some options, perhaps Ivy or Bittersweet cross the PCs or maybe even approach them with an offer—kill the true queen and her Jester to allow the pair to take over and run things the way they “should” be run. Perhaps a revolution lurks just behind the masks?

The desperation of locals gives another option, something valuable is stolen and the PCs are brought in to find it. This enables you to draw the PCs into the ship's dynamic, and placed at the core of its contradictions and hope...



# OAKHURST

---

**Words** John Bennett **Cartography** Tom Fayen

*The village of Oakhurst squats deep amid the gnarled boughs of the Tangled Woods. The Lonely Coast's smallest and most isolated village, only the most daring or the most desperate call it home, surrounded as it is on all sides by monstrous denizens and half-goblin tribes. Its dilapidated buildings sink into the squalor of the streets, presenting a loathsome and unwelcoming appearance. Oakhurst's villagers are no better. Mostly trappers and hunters, the grim folk of Oakhurst distrust outsiders and keep to strange ways and customs. Visitors are strongly discouraged from overstaying their welcome.*

*Yet, Oakhurst's darkest secret lies in a cave piercing the a nearby cliff. On full moons, the villagers lock their doors and shutter their windows, pretending they do not hear the incessant flapping of wings in the sky overhead. Oakhurst's oldest family, the Wearnes, long ago made a pact with a fell god, gaining the power of lycanthropy. Years of inbreeding to keep the line pure have driven the family of werebats to the brink of madness. High in the cave, the Wearnes participate in vile rites to their dark god, offering worship to one of its hideous servants. As the family slips further into insanity and their devotions more heinous, Oakhurst has become more dangerous for the unwary than it ever has before.*

## OAKHURST AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler** Talek Wearne

**Government** Secret syndicate

**Population** 121 (112 humans, 4 half-orcs 3 half-elves, 1 gnome, 1 half-goblin)

**Alignments** N, CN, CE, NE

**Languages** Common, Elven, Orc

**Resources & Industry** Fishing, hunting and trapping

Deep within the Tangled Wood's dark depths squats the malodorous village of Oakhurst. The decayed eaves of its houses sag under the weight of mildewed thatch while its roads are little more than trails of muck and grime traversing the forest floor under the oak trees that give the village its name.

The Lonely Coast's most isolated and distant village, Oakhurst attracts people of the basest sort. Trappers and hunters mingle with thieves, outcasts and murderers, all conducting their business in grim silence. Visitors to Oakhurst receive cold looks if not outright hostility. Its insular folk keep to their own.

A tributary of the Kilian River flows through Oakhurst, dividing the village into eastern and western sections. Trade and industry, often illicit, takes place in the rundown and sagging shops in the eastern section. Yet the true horror of Oakhurst lies across the river to the west, where a network of maze-like game trails winding through the trees leads to the homes of the Wearne clan, a family of werewolves. The true rulers of Oakhurst, years of inbreeding to keep their condition pure has finally brought them to the brink of madness. In a high cave in a nearby cliff, they conduct their hideous rites, offering their prayers to a dark god believed to have granted their ancestors their gift long ago. When a red glow emanates from the cave at night, most villagers lock their doors and shutter their windows, ignoring the ominous chanting voices carried upon the wind.

### NOTABLE FOLK

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

**Bartrel Ebon Axe** (location 1; NE male half-goblin fighter 4) An outcast, and outwardly appearing human, Bartrel runs his gang of thieves out of his inn, the Bloody Ear.

**Caja Wearne** (location 2; CE female human werewolf thief 3) Insane, Caja operates the village jail (which is mostly now just a torture chamber).

**Colan Boden** (location 3; N male human fighter 4) The appointed reeve of Oakhurst. Balancing two masters, the Wearnes of Oakhurst and the Lochers of Caer Syllan, has greatly aged the retired soldier.

**Daveth Cass** (location 4; CN male human) A sullen man, Daveth operates the village's ferry. For a small price, he is willing to sail up or down river.

**Kensa Boden** (location 3; N female human) Often drunk, the reeve's wife runs the village's general store.

**Rasala Neblor** (location 5; CN female gnome thief 3) This shy gnome operates a shop making and repairing bear traps.

**Talek Wearne** (location 7; NE male human werewolf cleric 6) The patriarch of the Wearne family, Talek speaks for the dark god that lives in Oakhurst.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **The Bloody Ear:** One of the sturdier buildings in Oakhurst, a collection of dismembered ears decorates the wall behind the bar.
2. **Oakhurst Jail:** The smell of death and decay waft from this large wood and stone building.
3. **General Store:** A faded sign hangs in front of this worn, dilapidated building.
4. **Daveth Cass's House:** From this long shack, Daveth operates his ferry business.
5. **Rasala's Bear Trap Emporium:** From this unusually well-kept building, which also serves as her home, Rasala crafts and sells well-made bear traps.
6. **The Witching Rock:** A large boulder thrusts out of the river, splitting it in two.
7. **Wearne Farmstead:** The ancestral home of the Wearne family is nothing more than a shabby collection of huts and shacks stuck together.
8. **Ruined Manor:** The burnt remains of a stone manor rest in deep, cloying shadows under the trees.
9. **The Cliff:** A rocky cliff, 40-ft. high, rises suddenly out of the forest. A cave entrance near its top faces east.





## VILLAGE LORE

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

- Oakhurst is the Lonely Coast's most distant and isolated village, located deep in the Tangled Wood.
- Mainly trappers and hunters, the villagers are a grim and dour lot, distrustful of strangers. Outcasts from other parts of the Lonely Coast often make their way there as the villagers ask few, if any, questions.
- Rumours of inbreeding and strange religious practises have plagued Oakhurst for generations.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Men sport thick, shaggy beards and the women grow their greasy hair past their waist, believing it taboo to cut it. Dirt cakes their nails.

**Dress:** The villagers wear a rag tag collection of animal pelts. Bones interspersed with pieces of glass serves as jewellery.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Anen, Cofan, Ferlin, Myrghal, Talek; *female* Corwenna, Henna, Jeni, Tyrwenna; *family* Cass, Dorwain, Nettle, Wearne

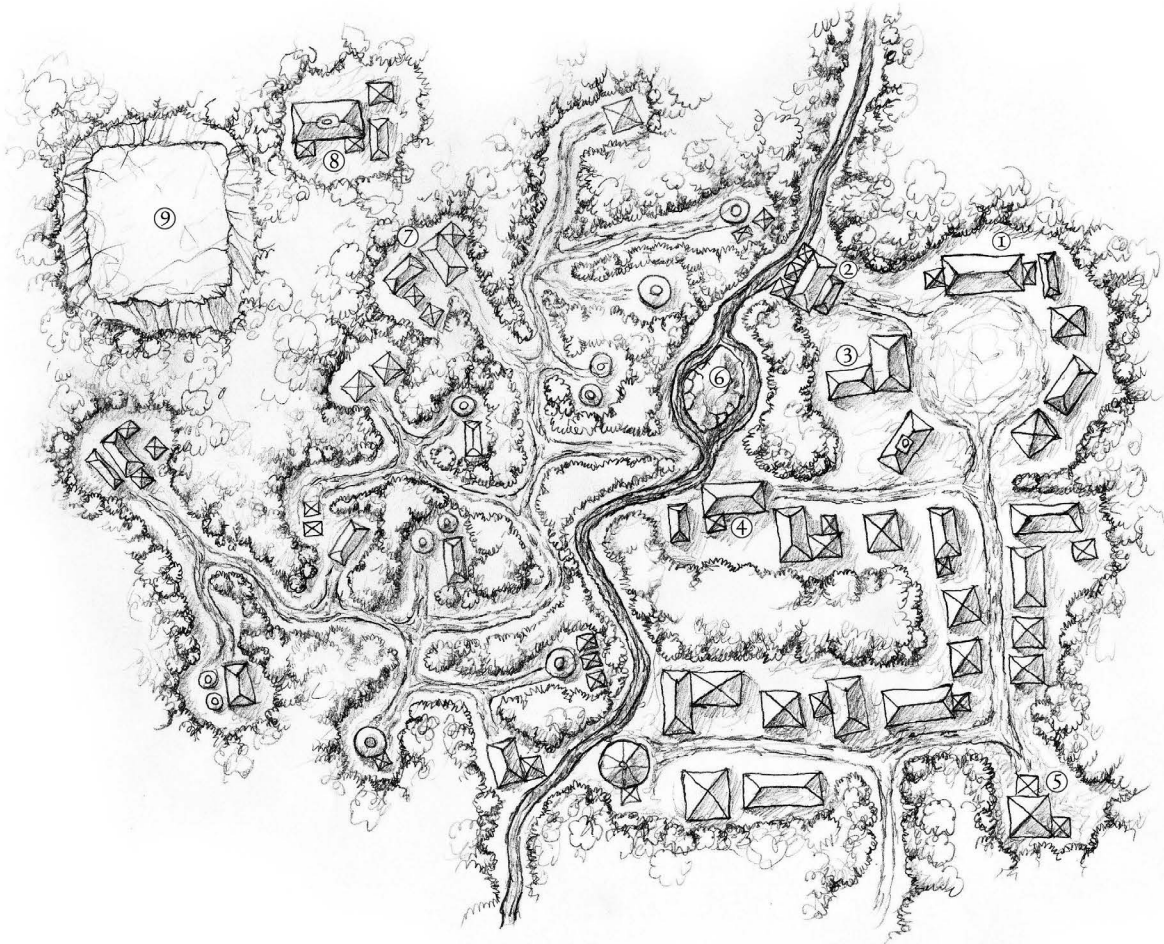
## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Oakhurst, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

### D6 RUMOUR

1	Strange lights and faces are sometimes seen in the windows of the old ruined manor house.
2	Bartrel once adventured with Jacca Landers, the reeve of Bossin. He helped Jacca turn against his companions for a bit of profit.
3	On full moons, fires can be seen burning in the cave high up in the nearby cliff. Those who are wise stay inside and don't interfere with those who practice the old ways.
4	Less children are being born alive to the strange, old Wearne clan. It's driven some of them mad, like Caja Wearne, old Talek's favourite cousin.
5*	The Wearnes know black magic and are really vampires!
6*	The Witching Rock blocks a tunnel leading to Hell.

\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

---

### 1: THE BLOODY EAR

From this sturdy inn of mud bricks and stone, Bartrel Ebon-Axe (NE male half-goblin fighter 4) bullies more than leads a small gang of thieves. A former adventuring companion of Bossin's reeve, Jacca Landers, Bartrel built the Bloody Ear with his adventuring loot. He offers free drinks to anyone bringing in a severed ear (which he displays on a wall behind the bar). He looks more human than goblin, and the wise do not bring up his heritage. Outsiders seek Bartrel out to fence stolen or illegal goods and often mistake him for Oakhurst's true power. Bartrel knows the Wearne's secret and serves them faithfully. His wish is to prove himself worthy to be inducted into the family.

### 2: OAKHURST'S JAIL

Ivy and moss cling to nearly every surface of this stone building, built in Oakhurst's better days. Three small cells protrude from the back of the jail, set deep into the riverbank. Cramped enough that a prisoner can only stand, when the river is swollen a grate floods the cell, drowning the occupant. In olden days, it was used to force confessions from criminals, now it is just one of many torture tools of the decayed Caja Wearne (CE female human werebat thief 3). Talek Wearne's favourite cousin, years of miscarriages have driven her insane. She takes out her frustrations on unlucky individuals caught in the Tangled Wood or villagers who become too nosy about Wearne business.

### 3: GENERAL STORE

The store's roof sags so much that with its darkened windows, the store front appears to be scowling. A worn sign sticks out like a wart, above the front door. The wife of the village reeve, Kensa Boden (N female human), runs the place, drinking while lamenting the "promotion" that brought her and her husband to Oakhurst. When sober, Kensa goes about her business sullenly, the disarrayed shelves and dust covered items testament to her work ethic. When drunk, she is prone to gossip about Oakhurst's citizens who she considers nothing but heathens and barbarians. Her husband, the village reeve, Colan Boden (N male human fighter 4), knows the truth about the Wearnes but is wise enough to keep his mouth shut, even to his wife. The stress of placating the Wearnes and Lord Locher of Caer Syllan has given him a permanently dour look and premature white hair.

### 4: DAVETH CASS'S HOUSE

A long rambling building of wood and animal hides rests near the river. A small pier juts out into the water where Daveth Cass (CN male human) docks a small, well-worn river barge. Daveth Cass is the village's ferryman, carrying folk from the village proper to the western side of the river. For a fee, Daveth is willing to sail up or down the river. He knows the Kilian well, especially where

the half-goblins like to set up ambushes. Villagers that have to travel the river know to pay him well so he does not lead them into such an area. Rumours persist he has a half-goblin family upriver somewhere.

### 5: RASALA'S BEAR TRAP EMPORIUM

Tucked away behind a copse of trees near the main road into town sits a small, well built, wooden building with an attached workshop belonging to Rasala Neblor (CG female gnome thief 3). A crafter and sometime smith, Rasala did not fit in with the few gnomes that dwell deep in the Tangled Wood. Here in Oakhurst, she can work in peace and has made a name for herself selling excellent, homemade bear traps (10 gp). While her relations with the villagers are good, she is no fool and keeps a crossbow under the counter loaded with a silver bolt and has two silver daggers hidden on her person. If befriended, Rasala is willing to forge simple silver items—bolts, arrow heads and daggers. She keeps three bottles of belladonna and a quiver of silver-tipped bolts in her workshop.

### 6: THE WITCHING ROCK

A huge granite boulder thrusts up from the tributary of the Kilian, splitting the river into two. Rising ten feet above the water, it is strangely flat, looking as if some giant blade had cut clean through it. Named the Witching Rock, the villagers believe the ancient Tuath once conducted ceremonies atop the boulder. Scholars have come here to transcribe and study the ancient symbols carved into a circle on the boulder's top surface. Talek Wearne used to be seen for hours pacing back and forth, examining the symbols while consulting a massive tome. He has not done so recently, however.

### 7: WEARNE FARMSTEAD

Though many intermingled lines of the Wearne family live throughout Oakhurst, this two-storey wood and brick house with accompanying barn and shacks is considered the Wearne ancestral home. Animal skulls (and some humanoid) mark the path up to a rickety porch attached to a worm-eaten house that looks like it would fall over in a strong wind. Here, the current Wearne patriarch, Talek Wearne (NE male human werebat cleric 6), lives with his wife (actually sister), sons and daughters. Most Oakhurst residents, even many of the Wearnes, give the farmstead a wide berth, believing Talek to be a magic-user. A basement leads to a small, heavily trapped cavern network where Talek keeps the family collection of crumbling, ancient tomes of magic and religion.

## 8: RUINED MANOR

When the Lochers settled the Lonely Coast, and established the village of Oakhurst, the first reeve constructed an elegant two-storey, stone manor house. Not long after, a mysterious fire swept quickly through the home, killing the reeve and his family. Local legend claims the reeve tried to outlaw the strange religious practices of the Wearne family, and the Wearnes used evil magic to eliminate him.

Whatever the case, those who come across the manor house claim to see glowing lights moving passed blackened windows and the ghostly cries of screams coming from inside. Those who explore the manor house do not come back and so the villagers have let the woods reclaim the ruin.

---

### THE WEREBATS OF OAKHURST

The Wearne family settled in the area that would become Oakhurst generations before the Lochers arrived and laid claim to the Lonely Coast. A family of trappers, the Wearne patriarch, Fallon Wearne, discovered an ancient religious site in a high cave situated in a cliff that was once used by the ancient Tuath. Though abandoned, an evil presence still lingered deep in the cave, corrupting Fallon and blessing him with lycanthropy. Wishing to keep their bloodline pure, the Wearnes intermarried, soon became wholly devoted to this dark power.

The Wearne werewolves differ from the common werewolf in that the claws at the tip of their bat wings are too feeble to use in battle. The dark power granting their lycanthropy craves blood, and thus they share characteristics with the vampire bat. This grants them the ability to suck their victims dry of blood and some locals mistake them for vampires. The Wearnes guard their secret closely, mostly preying on the numerous half-goblins in the Tangled Wood and the occasional lone hunter, trapper or traveller. However, the dark power that gifted them lycanthropy recently sent the Wearnes one of its hideous servants. Thus, to appease this herald of their god, the Wearnes have become increasingly aggressive in their hunting, especially as years of inbreeding have induced a madness amongst most of the family.

Unlike most other lycanthropes, the Wearnes retain full use of their deranged faculties while transformed—their savagery is fed by their undying devotion and they have the ability to drain blood and consume the life of mortals as though they were vampires.

Furthermore, their dark pacts have made them allies of the forces of undeath—undead never willingly attack them. A lot of the Wearnes have abilities of clerics of sinister gods or magic-users specializing in the dark arts of necromancy and in the conjuration of horribly entities.

## 9: THE CLIFF

A 40-ft. high sheer granite cliff rises suddenly out of the woods. A wide cave entrance lies just below its eastern summit, but its near vertical sides make reaching it nearly impossible to scale without both excellent skills and tools.

The cave entrance widens to a deep natural cavern filled with thick stalagmites and stalactites. A man-made stair winds down from a ledge to the cavern's floor. Here, the stone has been worked to create a smooth floor inlaid with strange runes similar to those on the Witching Rock. An altar carved with giant bats rests on a pedestal at the far end of the floor. A circular pit 20 ft. in radius leads downward 50 ft. through unnatural, inky blackness that consumes even magical light. When the moon is full, the Wearne clan fly in to nestle amongst the numerous stalactites while Talek performs rituals to the strange dark god they worship. A servant of the god, a monstrous beast, dwells within the pit and rises forth to accept homage and sacrifices.

---

### BARTREL EBON AXE

NE male half-goblin fighter 4

*This squat, brutish man has slightly rounded ears reminiscent of a goblin.*

**Distinguishing Features:** As a half-goblin, Bartrel's features and physique are almost human-like and even for his kind, he looks surprisingly human. However, he has filed his lower incisors in a misplaced (and harshly punished) act of devotion when he first beheld the Wearnes' might.

**Mannerisms:** Bartrel's enunciation is immaculate and precise, though he does inject a glottal stop after every single word he utters. A wide, predatory smile invariably steals on his face when he can see bats flying through the skies, the fanatic's gleam evident in his eyes.

**Personality:** Bartrel is a Machiavellian schemer, as far as that can be said of any half-goblin. Within the deep recesses of his black heart, he longs for the flight of the bat and its grace. His devotion to the Wearnes is unwavering.

**Background:** Bartrel is cunning for a half-goblin; a mutant often colloquially called a half-goblin that sometimes may even manage to pass as human, a fact his brethren ruthlessly exploited. However, after a brief encounter with Jacca of Bossin, he realized there had to be more—he was right. In Oakhurst, he found a worthy cause to serve, dreaming of flight and the apotheosis into the magnificent predator-form of the werewolf. He has served the village's true rulers ever since. His keen mind has made his smuggling business a successful operation, circulating the tainted blood of the Wearnes.

## LIFE IN OAKHURST

As the Lonely Coast's only point of civilization within the Tangled Wood, Oakhurst is a natural stopping point for those looking to explore ancient ruins or adventure further north in the Twisted Gorge. While not friendly, most of Oakhurst's citizens are not aggressively hostile. However, wise travellers conduct their business quickly and move on. Surrounded on all sides by the dangers of the Tangled Wood that shelter many tribes of half-goblins, a bit of coin can loosen the lips of the villagers as to where dangers might lie just outside the village environs.

Life in Oakhurst is hard and joyless.

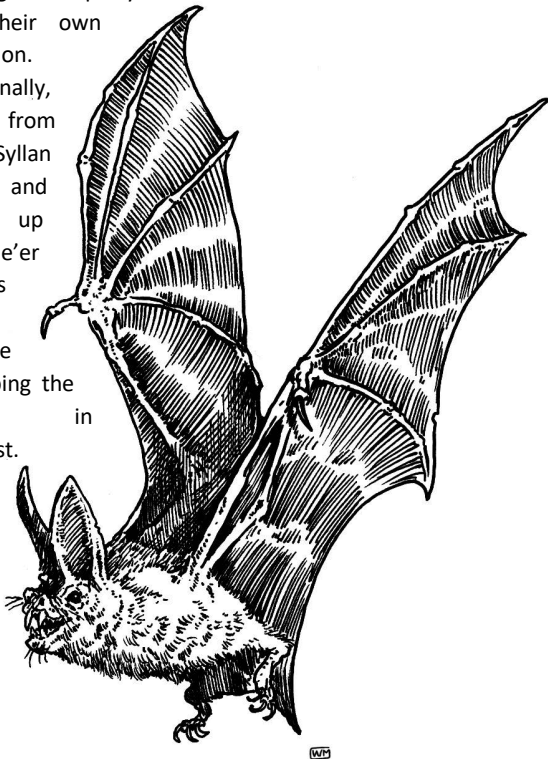
### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The majority of Oakhurst's industry lies in trapping and hunting. The villagers who brave the Tangled Woods for their livelihood quickly learn how to avoid the half-goblins and shadow wolves lurking amongst the trees. Animal pelts and meat are sent down river to Swallowfeld or by wagon to Wolverton. Bartrel does a brisk business fencing and selling illicit goods from his inn.

### LAW & ORDER

Though the reeve, Colan Boden, represents the Lochers, he has very little real power. The Wearne clan acts as the de facto leaders of Oakhurst. However, the Wearnes are more concerned with their strange religion than actually ruling and so most villagers try to avoid them. When a crime is committed, it falls to the aggrieved party to seek their own restitution.

Occasionally, soldiers from Caer Syllan appear and round up some ne'er-do-wells as a pretence of keeping the peace in Oakhurst.



### EVENTS

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

D4	EVENT
1	Dark robed figures light a fire on the Witching Rock. A strange chanting can be heard.
2	Daveth Cass fishes a dead body out the river. A healer can determine the desiccated corpse had its blood sucked out.
3	The villagers have strung up a half-goblin in front of the Bloody Ear. They are about to start target practice.
4	Kensa Boden stumbles out of her shop, a bottle of liquor in her hand, screaming about giant bats.

### CAJA WEARNE

CE female human werebat thief 3

*This dirty woman has sharp features and oversized ears.*

**Distinguishing Features:** Caja's painful life has left her belly and lower abdomen horribly scarred and mutilated: from below her breasts to her knees, she is covered in scar tissue. When she is alone, she absent-mindedly cuts herself without showing any sign of relief, the wounds carefully hidden beneath her long gowns. Much to the horror of her captives, she gives names to her torture devices and talks to them as though they were sentient beings and accomplices.

**Mannerisms:** Caja moves with the practiced grace of the socialite and predator, with no superfluous movements and a calm, quiet dignity. Behind her serene demeanour waits a cold, self-destructive fury that seeks to spread death and her own annihilation in a final burst of savagery, bloodshed and delicious despair. When she is agitated, her only tell is placing a hand over her barren womb, the void in her eyes and her mask-like face giving away nothing of the feelings she once may have had.

**Personality:** Caja is cold, calculating, reserved and her dark eyes resemble soulless, hollow voids. Even in her sadism, no glee or exaltation ever brightens her features.

**Background:** Indoctrinated from birth, born into a cursed bloodline, wed to one of her siblings—Caja Wearne's fate must seem like a horrid tragedy to outsiders. However, she is calculating, cruel and thoroughly devoted to the ideal of a pure bloodline. This gaunt woman bears the convictions of a true fanatic, untempered by the grief of countless miscarriages etched into her hollow cheeks. Most tellingly, Caja, in spite of her aristocratic bearing, dutifully carries out her vocation as Oakhurst's jailer/torturer.

# RAVENS' CRADLE

---

**Words** Steve Hood **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*Ravens' Cradle, a prosperous farming community governed by superstition and folklore, lies far off the beaten track. Mysteriously guarded by hundreds of pitch-black ravens, an ancient power haunting the surrounding forest watches over the village. Vicious bandits are found pecked to death in the nearby forests, greedy merchants trying to fleece the villagers are pursued from the village by a flock of hateful birds and sometimes travellers just disappear.*

*Behind the scenes, a coven of witches worships the ancient spirit and madmen dance in the shadows. Untouched by all, and warded only by superstition and fear—and a terrible curse—an immense diamond of magical origin and improbable size stands proudly at the village's heart. Woe betide any who would steal it.*

## RAVENS' CRADLE AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Wilhelm Siansis

**Government:** The Elders' Council

**Alignments:** NG, N, NE

**Population:** 54 (46 humans, 2 dwarves, 3 half-elves, 1 half-orcs, 2 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Tornos Vanadar (Guard Post, location 1), Talliana (The Black Feathered Hag, location 2) Mad Otzi (The Black Feathered Hag, location 2), Kera Miklos (Vintners, location 3), Vendra Blackhands (The Spiders Web, location 4), Wilhelm Siansis (Siansis Stables, location 5) Reyvan Siansis (Siansis Stables, location 5), Tellisk Vardun (The Cradle, location 6), Katla (Katla's abode, location 7)

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** Beds, carpentry, grains, wine, furs, leatherwork and vegetables.

Beset by the bullying landowner Heroness Bleak, the village of Ravens' Cradle was in dire straits. Heroness controlled a large crowd of rough hirelings who he used to bully and extort the villagers. As he slowly draining the economy to suit his selfish needs, the village descended into lawlessness and fear. The young beauty Katla attracted Bleak's notice and he sent his bullies to collect her for a night of fun at his home.

Trapped upstairs by the filthy man she screamed for help, crying out to the gods and spirits to protect her from his terrifying advances. A powerful nature spirit—the Raven Spirit—bound to the nearby woodlands answered her calls. The vengeful spirit looked into the man's heart and saw nothing but greed and anger. Focussing its will through the young woman the spirit cursed Bleak, shattered his body into coal and crushed his twisted heart into a massive diamond. Walking out of the home unhurt Katla held before her the heart—the now so-called Lost Hope—and, in an act of homage, placed it on a pedestal of rock in the centre of the village pond for all to see.

With another curse the spirit transformed Heroness' hirelings into ravens and bound them to the village—to protect its folk and keep them safe from harm. Thus was reborn Ravens' Cradle.

Now fifty years later the prosperous village is protected by the powerful spirit and its secret coven of witches. Hordes of ravens flock to the area to live and carry out the spirit's will and protect the villagers from any that would do them harm.

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Ravens' Cradle, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- The superstitious villagers never harm a raven and banish anyone that does.
- Named after the wonderful beds and cradles made in the village, many nobles orders the villagers' wares.
- Despite its location in the wilderness the village is rarely beset by beasts or humanoid tribes. This maybe something to do with the ravens said to protect it.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Earthy, hard-working people with tanned skin and dark hair. Most are cheerful and easy to get on with, especially when plied with food and drink.

**Dress:** Hemp clothing is popular for its hard-wearing properties (with wool or furs to counter the cold). The villagers decorate their clothes with polished hardwood beads, feathers and small silver charms. Roots from the nearby stream provide a dark almost black dye used on most of the clothing giving the whole place a sombre feel despite the villagers' cheerful attitude.

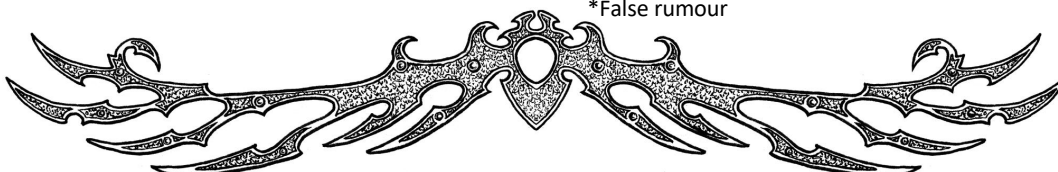
**Nomenclature:** *male* Torden, Varlun, Miklun, Raven, Shrike; *female* Liana, Reyvan, Brindle, Aliss; *family* Miklos, Siansis, Blackhands, Vardun.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Ravens' Cradle, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1*	Mad Otzi is actually Talliana's father
2	Talliana is the true power in the village.
3	Kera Miklos lost the Black Feathered Hag in a game of chance to Talliana some time ago.
4	Talliana seems to spend a lot of time with Reyvan, Wilhelm Siansis's daughter.
5*	Wearing a feather token brings favour from the birds.
6	Katla hasn't been seen for some years now.

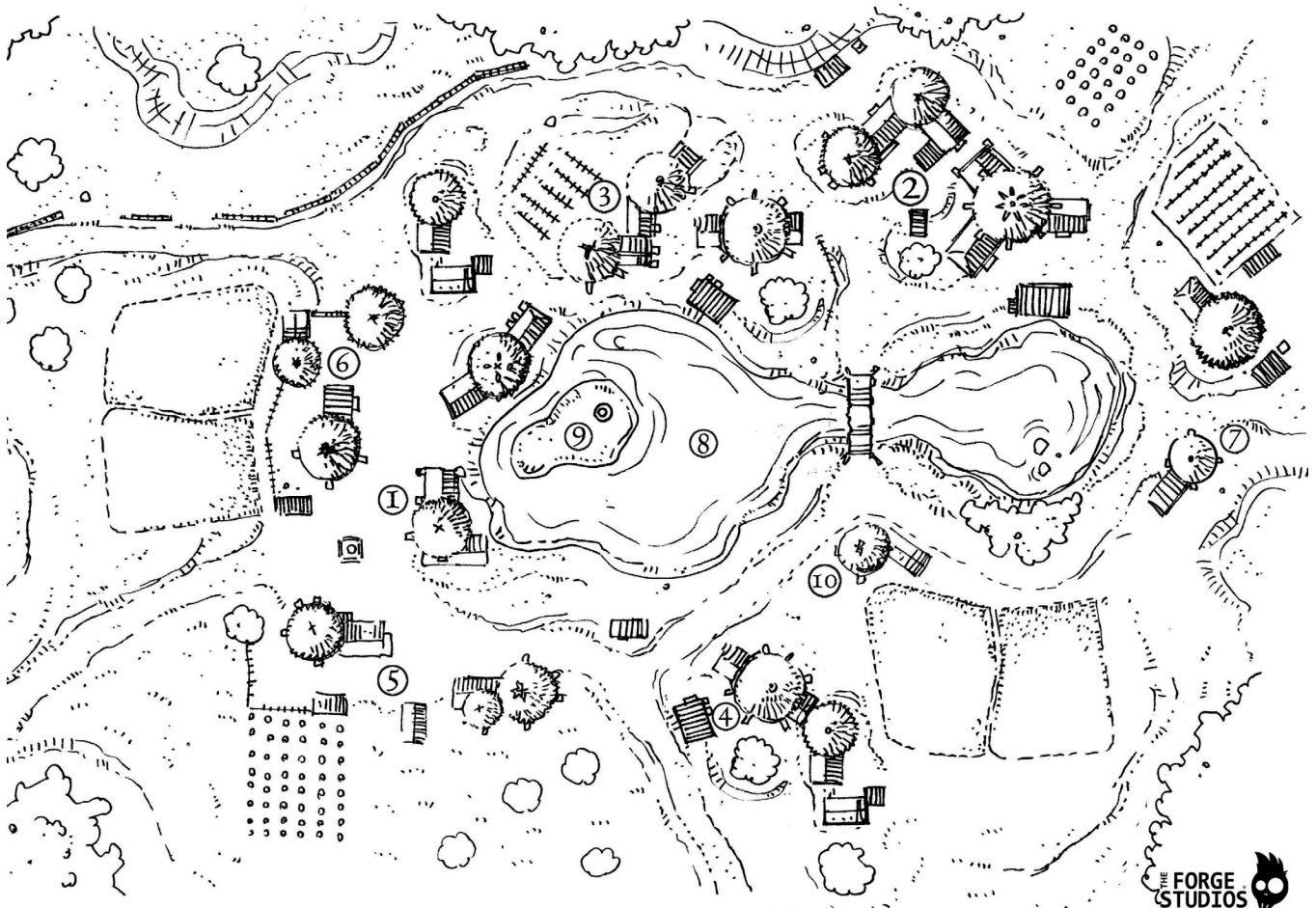
\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **The Guard Post:** Tall guards dressed in blackened chain armour and dark cloaks adorned with raven feathers keep watch here.
2. **The Black Feathered Hag:** This large inn caters for travellers and villagers alike. Talliana, a strangely beautiful middle-aged woman, runs the inn. Mad Otzi, also known as Otzi the Cold, lives underneath the inn's raised floors.
3. **Miklos's Vintners.** These fields grow grapes. Nearby stand storage sheds, used to brew local wine, a cote and out-building.
4. **The Spider's Web.** Vendra Blackhands runs this large wash house and tailors. It got its name from the web of clothes lines strung between the buildings.
5. **Siansis's Stables:** Wilhelm Siansis runs this large open stables and corral, with his daughter Reyvan. Tethered outside is a large black goat that nibbles the clothes of anyone straying too close.
6. **The Cradle.** This large house with several out-buildings is Tellisk Vardun's home. Here Tellisk and his family make straw-filled hemp mattresses to sell around the village and ship off to nearby towns. They also make duck down pillows and eiders but have recently been accused of using raven feathers.
7. **Katla's Abode:** Katla dwells in this decrepit cote.
8. **The Bleakstone Pond:** This large, deep natural pond is home to hundreds of frogs and several large orange and white carp. Strangely all the fish appear to be blind.
9. **The Bleakstone:** A large granite rock, topped with a large clear stone, stands at the highest point of the island. The stone is actually an apple-sized diamond, nicknamed Lost Hope, it inflicts a powerful curse on any touching it.
10. **The High Cote:** This old dovecote is home to hundreds of ravens for some odd reason. Locked and boarded up, this used to be Bleak's home.



## LIFE IN RAVENS' CRADLE

---

Day to day life in Ravens' Cradle is simple and easy going. Most families have their own small-holding to run and work on it each day. Overhead ravens circle, watching the work below, sometimes landing in the fields to hunt down vermin or to bring a dash of good luck to some hardworking villager.

Villagers are polite and cordial to visitors and warn them to not upset the ravens or go near the Bleakstone. Being proud of their customs they are willing to sit and tell tales after hours.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The village grows and trades wheat, barley and vegetables, as well as a small supply of fine wine. It is famed, though, for the wooden furniture—particularly beds and their accoutrements—crafted by the village's craftsmen and women.

### LAW & ORDER

There is very little need for enforced law in the village, but a small guard force provides deterrence to visiting near-do-wells. The villagers view the ravens as sacred; anyone harming, or trying to harm, a raven is immediately ejected from the village. Later, the ravens usually get their revenge in the surrounding woods.

**The Elders' Council:** Once a month, the Elders' Council meet at the Black Feathered Hag. Comprising Kera Miklos, Wilhelm Siansis, Vendra Blackhands and several of the older villagers, they discuss plans to improve village life. Even though she is not on the council, Talliana sits in on the meetings to guide the council.

**The Coven:** Talliana the Hag, Katla the Crone and Reyvan the Maiden, are part of a secret coven that worship the Raven Spirit. Formed by Katla she leads them in their rituals and foretells the village's future using her magic. Talliana is the binding force of the village bringing people together and creating a family atmosphere for everyone whereas Reyvan is the symbol of new growth, learning and abundance. Together they quietly guide the villagers down a path of peace and cooperation.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Ravens' Cradle is a superstitious place. Having no church or temple the villagers rely on old superstitions and customs to guide their lives. Day to day activities are governed by the behaviour of the ravens; a farmer can suddenly find himself deserted in his fields as his workers head to a nearby field favoured by the ravens to work.

At each equinox, women dressed as ravens dance through the village scattering feathers and tokens to the crowds before a nightlong party heralds the new day.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

Use this table to generate the minor sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about Ravens' Cradle

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Villagers stop to watch a pair of ravens perform aerobatics before the birds fly off over the fields.
2	Two ravens are playing with an object by dropping and catching it mid-air. When the object finally hits the ground, it is found to be a human finger.
3	Several ravens land atop a roof and begin impaling their prey on the nails there to store them for later.
4	Villagers stop and stare at a group of ravens circling overhead muttering about an unkindness forming.
5	A visiting merchant presents a well-made cache board made from fine oak and nails to Tellisk Vardun.
6	Several children catch frogs at the pond.
7	A small child runs up to the party and gives one a token of thread-bound raven feathers before running off.
8	Sianis's goat breaks its tether and runs about the village causing chaos, to the delight of the children.
9	Sunlight shines brightly on Lost Hope sending colourful beams across the village. A villager stops one of the party as they were about to pass through one such beam.
10	An unkindness settles on the roof of the Cradle causing Tellisk to scatter a handful of copper into the road for the ravens to claim.
11	A raven flying overhead lands on a PC's shoulder and drops a gold coin onto the ground.
12	A local woman makes eye contact with a PC before making a sign to ward off evil and scurrying away.
13	The cook at the Black Feathered Hag throws scraps out onto the roof, causing the ravens to raucously swarm around it.
14	One of the carp in the pond leaps clear out of the water.
15	A raven lands on a villager's shoulder and shares his food with him/her before flying off.
16	A group of children run in front of a cart to collect falling feathers; guards reprimanded the enraged merchant for raising his voice at them.
17	Villagers stop what they are doing to watch a feather float down from the sky and land at the PCs feet.
18	The guards stop the PCs and ask them if they have seen a merchant on the roads. He has been missing for days.
19	With a loud ruckus the ravens take flight and head into the timber woods.
20	Mad Otzi starts to dance around the Bleakstone Pond chanting under his breath.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

Scattered copses of oak and sycamore border the golden fields of wheat and barley spread around the village. Villagers hunt rabbits, boar and deer and collect berries and fruit from the tangled undergrowth. Several stands of pine stand in large dry-stone enclosures ready to be cut down and turned into the namesake beds of the village.

Beyond the fields and copses, rocky, densely forested hills rise to the horizon. Lacking in natural predators like wolves, the hills teem with deer, boar and small animals. Most of these are hunted by the villagers for food. Bears, badgers and other aggressive animals wander the furthest reaches of the region, but they stay well away from the village.

Several small caves—once lairs to small groups of humanoids—litter the hills. If any of the caves still have humanoid residents they keep to themselves (or dare not approach the village to closely for fear of the vengeful, ever-vigilant ravens protecting the settlement). The village hasn't been raided for decades.

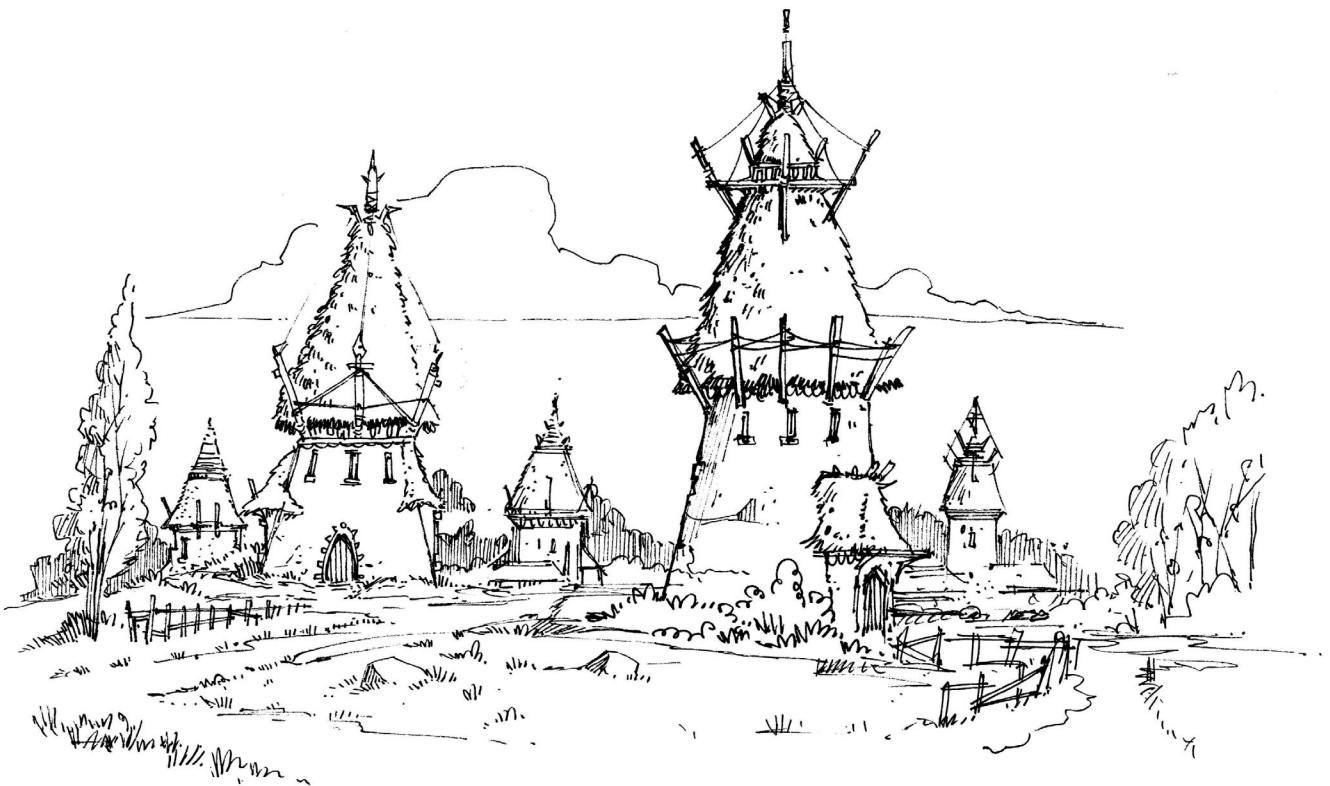
Whilst wandering the nearby woods people come across effigies of tall men with pointed beaks, commonly made of sticks and rags. These silent protectors are rumoured to chase off predators, but no-one has ever survived such an attack to confirm the truth of the matter.

## THE RAVEN SPIRIT

The real power in the village—the Raven Spirit—lives in the woods and fields surrounding the place. It protects the village and its folk. It has dwelled here for time beyond reckoning and is bound to the very fabric of the land.

The spirit can see through the eyes of his feathered servants; little occurs without its knowledge. Except for the three chosen witches of the coven—Reyvan the Maiden, Talliana the Mother and Katla the Crone, the spirit doesn't show itself to anyone apart from its servants. When it does appear, it takes the form of an immense raven whose feathers are so black they seem to absorb the surrounding light. Its eyes glimmer with intelligence, and it is merciless in its pursuit of those who wrong those it protects.

A few druids also dwell in the surrounding hills and forests—they are aware of the Raven Spirit and its deep connection to the landscape. In reverence of the spirit they often take raven companions as their own. The druids are responsible for the wood effigies sometimes found by travellers exploring the nearby woods. In deeper parts of the forest, persistent explorers can also discover weatherworn raven carvings decorating the walls of certain sacred caves.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN RAVENS' CRADLE

---

### 1: GUARD POST

*An old cote is now a sturdy tower with vantage points watching over the village. Tall guards, clad in black armour, watch you approach and raise a hand in greeting.*

Manned at all times by at least three guards this tower can house up to six guards. The Raven Guard (LN human fighter 1) are well trained fighters dedicated to protecting the village and the ravens alike. They all wear tight fitting leather armour over chainmail

### 2: THE BLACK FEATHERED HAG

*Three towering cotes stand over a set of outbuildings and a large open courtyard, the only cobbled area in the village. A painted sign over the door reads, "The Black Feathered Hag".*

The first of many buildings getting an overhaul, the inn is currently under repairs. Most days, workers scramble over scaffolds replacing boards and resetting the shingles on the cotes. A large collection of cache boards is stacked next to the front door ready to be placed on the roof.

The taproom downstairs is beautifully decorated in polished oak and white washed walls with sturdy oak furniture and beams. Fresh food is always available in the form of cold meats, small bread plaits and biscuits in addition to a surprising collection of ales and wines. A buffet table is set up most nights allowing guests to pick what they want from breads, cheeses, fruit and cakes for 5 sp. Talliana is usually here behind the bar or directing her six staff in their duties.

- **Food & Drink** buffet of breads, cheeses, fruit and cakes 5 sp, ale 6 cp, wine (pitcher) 3 sp.

---

---

#### TORNOS VANADAR

LN male human fighter 4

The guard captain is a strict disciplinarian and has the guards constantly patrolling the village or training.

**Mannerisms:** To the point and blunt, he has no problems asking visitors about themselves and their reasons for visiting the village.

**Personality:** Quiet and sometimes unnerving, Tornos likes to watch what is going on and leads his guards with few words of encouragement. Many people think he is arrogant but in reality, he is just quiet and thoughtful.

**Background:** An ex-adventurer Tornos decided to settle in the village when he had a brief relationship with Talliana. When that ended he stayed on as a valuable part of the village and key member of the Elders' Council.

- **Accommodation** Two-bed chamber 10 sp; four-bed chamber 20 sp; common room 2 sp.

Many rooms are available to rent. In the cotes above the taproom these include "The Crow's Nest", "Shrike Haunt" and "The Rook's Perch". Smaller rooms, all named after carrion birds are available in the outbuildings. Once a month the Elders' Council meet here to discuss the village and future plans.

- **Mad Otzi** (N male human fighter 1) was once an adventurer, Otzi lost his mind when his party was killed and has since lived in the pilings under the inn. Now totally mad he is tolerated by the villagers and very protective of Talliana.

Most merchants and pedlars visiting the village set up their stalls under the eaves of the Hag to sell their wares. When the PCs arrive, a merchant has the following items for sale:

- **For Sale:** *potion of healing* (400 gp), *scroll of sleep* (300 gp), *silver dagger* (50 gp), *feather token (bird [3])* 2,000 gp each), *feather token (swan boat)* 3,000 gp, *longbow +1* (3,500 gp).

---

---

#### TALLIANA

NG female human magic-user 5

Specialising in enchantment magic this tall, beautiful woman is strangely charismatic and alluring. Her long black hair is plaited at all times and decorated with beads and feathers. She favours blue and green clothing and is always well kept and clean.

Whilst keeping her magical prowess secret she is very outspoken when it comes to the continued prosperity of the village. Many people are influenced by her charms.

**Mannerisms.** Friendly and likeable she listens intently to people and is very good at drawing people into conversation. Many a person has told her things openly they would normally be restrained to reveal.

**Personality.** Always happy she tries to see everyone's part in the world and encourages them when she can. Many people confuse her intentions and develop feelings for her (something she acknowledges but does not return).

**Background.** The first child to be chosen by the Raven Spirit after Katla, Talliana learned magic at a very young age. An orphan at three-years-old she was taken in by Katla and taught the ways of witchcraft and the importance of the ravens in the area. Now she is the true power in the village, influencing the Elders council behind closed doors, all for the benefit of the village.

### 3: MIKLOS'S VINTNERS

*Storage sheds and the bitter scent of grapes surround this large building. Several labourers shuffle barrows about under the direction of a sturdy old man. A sign above the gate reads, "Miklos Vintners, No Visitors".*

Despite the sign, the workers at the vintners are friendly and direct visitors to Miklos himself. Happy to answer questions about the place, and the surrounding area, Miklos is a remarkably amiable chap until the subject of Talliana is brought up; then he seems to get distracted and leaves.

Being from a distant land to the south where surnames are used before first not many know Kera's real name. Referred to by everyone in the village as Miklos he is a respected citizen and valuable leader of the council. He lost the tavern to Talliana in a game of chance several years back but even though he says he resents it he has become very comfortable in his new life making wine. He is the recognised Elder of the village even though he defers to Talliana on most things.

- **Kera Miklos** (N male human) is a short, sturdy old man with blonde tufts of hair fleeing from a large bald spot on his head. Happy to chat to visitors he has a slight lisp and the habit of nodding constantly while people talk to him.

### 4: THE SPIDER'S WEB

*A web of tangled washing lines sprouts from this large cote linking it to smaller surrounding sheds. The sounds of women singing, and smell of coarse soaps fill the air. This appears to be the only building in the village not covered with birds.*

*Several women wheel small carts filled with water from the nearby stream to a large wooden trough by the front door even though the large pond is closer.*

Vendra Blackhands runs the Spider's Web. For a small stipend of grain and other goods from each household she provides a service for the villagers that keeps her fed and provides a vital part of the community. Most days the staff work diligently, singing along with Vendra as they wash clothes or treat and dye the various products made at the Cradle.

Vendra supervises the work and is always nearby to help out.

- **Vendra Blackhands** (N female human) has surprisingly long black hair that trails down to her knees in a single plait. Her hands are stained a dark grey from constant dyes and treatments. She has a surprisingly powerful voice and often leads the villagers in song at festivals.

### 5: SIANSIS'S STABLES

*A large black goat is tethered to the front of a sturdy wooden fence. A large sign indicates the place as "Siansis's Stables". Beyond a large cobbled courtyard several horses are being led around a paddock by a middle-aged man and a young girl.*

This area doubles as a small blacksmith's in addition to housing the village's horses and ponies. Wilhelm runs the place with his teenage daughter and occasionally a labourer from the fields. A single father he is very protective of his daughter and wants only the best for her. He is well liked around the village, despite his terrible temper when angered. His wife was killed one night by a drunken adventurer in the Hag—something that still crushes him to his core.

- **Wilhelm Siansis** (N male human) is an average sized middle-aged man with a wiry build, weather-scarred face and bow legs from too much time in the saddle.
- **Reyvan Siansis** (N human female magic-user 1) possesses alluring beauty; this buxom teenage girl is on the cusp of womanhood, something her protective father is very aware of. She takes great delight in reading, especially books about plants and nature, because of this she doesn't show any interest in typically attractive male features but is entranced by intelligence and knowledge. Unlike other villagers she wears her hair in long braids instead of a single plait. Reyvan is becoming something of a beauty, something Wilhelm doesn't like. At only 15-years-old she has the attention of a lot of the younger male villagers but refuses their advances. She spends her free time with Talliana learning to read and write and during this time also developed a yearning for magic. Talliana secretly introduced her into the coven a few years ago when she noticed the teenager's innate powers growing.
- **Muffy** (N male goat) is a constant pest, often breaking free from his bonds to rummage around the village eating things it shouldn't. The attentions of the goat, nicknamed "Muffy's Curse", are tolerated due to the likeable family's presence and awareness of the bad luck that befell them. Muffy wears a feather-embellished leather collar.

---

---

#### CACHE BOARDS

Presented to families and homeowners as gifts each solstice these intricately carved board adorn every house in the village. Made of oak and maple from the nearby forest, and embedded with spikes, the boards are affixed to the eaves of a home. The ravens then store morsels of food on the spikes for later use. A home that attracts the ravens is viewed as blessed by the villagers.

## 6: THE CRADLE

*A collection of cotes and low sheds collectively form the "Cradle" as the villagers call it. Over the gates, a large carved sign depicts a happy couple sleeping in a large wooden bed watched over by hundreds of ravens.*

The Cradle is a sturdy building, usually out of bounds to most people. Tellisk Vardun and his family make beautiful carved beds, cradles, bedding and pillows ready for market. They also make most of the cache boards placed around the village. With his two brutish looking sons he collects and stores all the wood himself from the nearby forest whilst his wife and daughter make the embroidered quilts, pillows and drapes that are in high demand throughout the region.

Recently Edduin, the eldest son, started to use raven feathers to stuff the pillows (to save time) but was caught out by Reyvan. The devout Tellisk punished his son and made reparations to the village but the incident has cast the family in a bad light, something he and his wife are trying to fix.

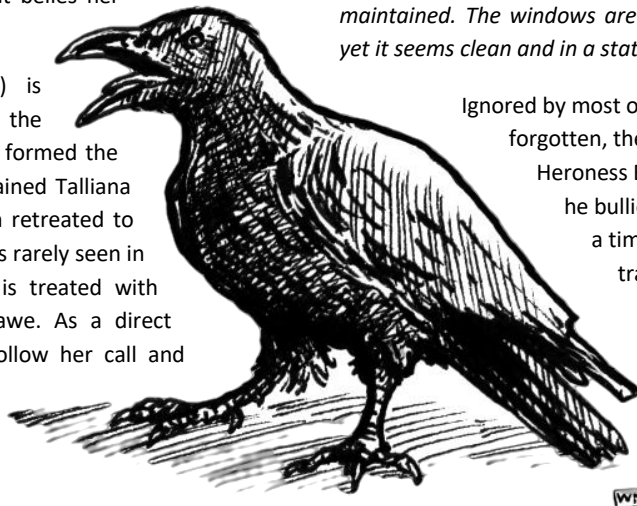
- **Tellisk Vardun** (N male human) is strong and burly. He seems over-eager to please customers (which can come across as annoying).
- **Edduin Verdun** (NE male human) is moody and silent. This young man stares at people wandering the village and scowls when engaged in conversation.

## 7: KATLA'S ABODE

*This small cote and adjoining hut are in a state of decay, something odd compared to the rest of the village. Hundreds of ravens perch here feeding from beautifully crafted caches adorning the roof and beams.*

Katla, the previous leader of the coven dwells in this ramshackle building now spending most of her time sitting outside watching the ravens swoop about the village. Despite being old and crippled she moves with a grace that belies her years when needs must.

- **Katla** (NE human magic-user 6) is approaching 80-years-old and is the daughter of the original witch that formed the bond with the Raven Spirit. She trained Talliana when she became of age and then retreated to her abode about 10 years ago. She is rarely seen in the village but when she is she is treated with respect and a slight amount of awe. As a direct servant of the spirit the ravens follow her call and protect her at all costs.



## 8: THE BLEAKSTONE POND

*Ducks frogs and insects live together on this large clear pond. A small island on the western side holds a gleaming stone atop a granite pillar.*

Sacred to the villagers the pond is never used as a water source or for bathing. Children sometimes splash around in its shallows swimming and catching frogs but no adult ever enters its waters

## 9: THE BLEAKSTONE

*An apple-sized diamond sits on a natural pedestal of granite on the island. Glimmering, enticing light reflects throughout the diamond's many facets.*

Heroness Bleak's destruction and the appearance of the diamond nicknamed Lost Hope was the beginning of a time of prosperity for Ravens' Cradle. Protected by the ravens, and a curse on those who touch it, the stone is a symbol of power to the villagers.

Touching the stone can produce a variety of effects, including:

- Itching sores cover the arms and face.
- Forgetfulness.
- A pronounced stutter that affects spellcasting and diplomacy.
- Sharp chest pains which strike at the worst possible moment.
- Animals, even pets and familiars, shy away from the cursed individual.

The effects become worse and more debilitating the further away the diamond gets from the Bleakstone. Additionally, all ravens in the vicinity can sense the Lost Hope's location and flock toward it.

## 10: THE HIGH COTE

*Despite being empty this high cote and outbuilding is well maintained. The windows are boarded up and the door barred yet it seems clean and in a state of good repair.*

Ignored by most of the villagers and its history forgotten, the High cote was once the home of Heroness Bleak. A horrible and selfish man he bullied the villagers and brought about a time of unrest and poverty. When he trapped the young Katla in his house one night he fell to her magic and was destroyed, his remains (a pile of coal) still lie in the bedroom at the top of the cote.

# UNDERDELL

---

**Words** John Bennett **Cartography** Tommi Salama

*The once quiet and quaint halfling community of Underdell rests along the Old Road near the Salt Mire. Steeped in tradition and idleness, the Underdellians found themselves unprepared to deal with the horrors of the plague outbreak in nearby Ashford. Terror gripped Underdell, tearing apart the strong bonds of family and friendship. Fear and paranoia took root in the halflings' hearts as they tried to escape sickness and death. As Underdell falls apart, a vile halfling bandit has used the chaos to take control of Underdell, enforcing a strict martial law. As neighbour turns on neighbour, a group of bandits terrorize merchant caravans traveling through Ashlar, raiding with impunity and aided by a rich noble. The Underdellians, their smiles and laughter turned to tears and hopelessness, live in fear of another plague outbreak and the harsh punishment of the bandits who insist they are protecting and enriching the village.*

## UNDERDELL AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Vihtori Ikonen

**Government:** Secret Syndicate

**Alignments:** LG, NG, N, CN, LE, NE

**Population:** 152 (12 humans, 140 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Vihtori Ikonen (location 8), Mayor Linodal Mannerheim (location 5, Mannerheim Brewery), Father Jalo Tammi (location 4, Eveninggarden)

**Languages:** Common

**Resources & Industry:** Beer, crafts, produce

Underdell resides under the shadows of a line of hills along the Old Road in the Duchy of Ashlar. A hundred years ago, halfling immigrants to the duchy settled Underdell to get away from the crowded city life of the duchy's larger towns. The halflings quickly created a small, quiet community, sending exports throughout the duchy of their ales as well as produce from their carefully tended gardens.

Life remained somewhat unremarkable in Underdell until recently when a traumatic event shattered Underdell's way of life. The black tendrils of death ensnared Underdell's nearby neighbour, Ashford, with the plague, devastating the village. At first, Underdell tried to help, taking in refugees fleeing from their hellish plight. But when the first plague victims appeared amongst the Underdellians, the halflings' generosity turned to fear and from fear to paranoia and despair. Though the plague affected Underdell far less than Ashford, the scared halflings looked to a savior, no matter who, to save them. Vihtori Ikonen, a former thug of the Shadow Masks, had recently fled to Underdell. Quickly, he formed a band of fearful halflings, killing any plague victims and enforcing marshal law on the village. Vihtori then began training his accomplices as bandits, preying on the merchant traffic in the area.

Today, Vihtori and his bandits lurk in the background, the imprisoned mayor, Linodal Mannerheim, serving as a puppet leader. Far from being hunted, Vihtori made alliance with a noble from Dulwich to harass caravans from the town's powerful merchants. The village's halflings remained cowed by Vihtori, under threat from the plague's return and the harsh protection he offers.



## VILLAGE LORE

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

- Underdell is the duchy's only halfling community, renowned for its excellent beer. Mannerheim Brewery, run by the local mayor, is their most famous brewery.
- A plague savaged Underdell a year ago. Not as virulent as in Ashford, it still claimed a number of lives.
- The once jovial halflings have become insular and unfriendly towards visitors. People visiting the village sometimes disappear.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Underdellians appear as typical, portly halflings; however, their wide smiles are gone. Most appear downcast or watch others with furtive, nervous glances.

**Dress:** The halflings prefer brightly dyed loose clothing that is easy to move in. Most wear simple jewellery. Lately, their clothes appear shabby and dirty. Many wear strange charms made by the local wizard.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Esko, Joni Ukko, Seppo; *female* Anu, Eleni, Helvi, Railii; *family* Eskola, Korpela, Mustonen.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Underdell, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Outbreaks of the plague ravaging Ashford still occur from time to time in Underdell.
2*	Lately, the mayor, Linodal Mannerheim isn't taking any visitors. Apparently, he's occupied with brewing a new batch of Mannerheim beer.
3*	The Finger of Conn was built to conceal a great vault of treasure. I bet the treasure is still there!
4	A beautiful wizard in Underdell crafts charms for the villagers to ward off the plague.
5*	There are no acolytes at the Eveninggarden, a temple of Conn. The priest worships a devil and sacrificed them all to abate the plague.
6	A band of warriors has recently been seen inhabiting the village's old watchtower but no one seems to know who placed them there or why.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Jail:** Recently built, as Underdell never had a need before, the jail lies along the road leading to the village. A small, wooden guardhouse sits across from the jail as a security checkpoint. Guards rigorously screen all visitors for signs of the plague, before allowing them entry. Anyone suspected of illness is held here before their lifeless body is dumped in the pits out back.
2. **Marketplace:** A number of small businesses stand around an open space once the heart and soul of Underdell. Weekly markets, replete with entertainment as well as festivals, took place here before fear and paranoia gripped the village.
3. **The Gallows:** Once a bit of dark humour, the local tavern and inn's name seems more fitting now. Formerly a cosy, accommodating place, its regulars now grip their mugs tightly, casting suspicious glances at everyone.
4. **Eveningarden:** A beautiful church of flowing greenery and flowers dedicated to Conn was Underdell's spiritual heart. Few now find faith in Conn, feeling betrayed by the god. Its resident priest, Father Jalo Tammi, still holds services, vainly attempting to instil hope back into the community.
5. **Mannerheim Brewery:** This large halfling home is both the mayoral residence for Linodal Mannerheim and Underdell's most famous brewery. Vihtori's bandits keep the mayor imprisoned in his own home, using him as a puppet leader.
6. **Kirsi's House:** The halflings converted this dwelling to accommodate the human wizard, Kirsi Niskanen, replete with another building to serve as her workshop. Kirsi, a former prisoner in Dulwich's dungeons, reluctantly works her magic in Vihtori's service to pay off her debts. To the outsiders, she is Underdell's eccentric wizard.
7. **Conn's Finger:** A forty-foot-high watchtower stands atop a squat hill originally built by the Knights of the Eternal Watch to safeguard the Old Road and survey the Salt Mire. Abandoned for years, it now houses a contingent of human mercenaries from Dulwich who aid Vihtori and act as a liaison between him and the mysterious noble who feeds him information on plump merchant caravans.
8. **The Compound:** Vihtori built a base hidden from view by a small, rocky hill. The compound serves as a barracks for the bandits along with pens for the riding dogs and ponies. A 10-foot-high wooden palisade surrounds the complex.



## LIFE IN UNDERDELL

---

Underdell is a shadow of what it once was. The smiling halflings with ever-open doors now shuffle about suspicious and fearful, their homes shuttered from their neighbours' prying eyes.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

The halflings of Underdell remain largely self-sufficient, producing what they need and trading with their neighbours for what they don't have. Nearly every halfling home has a well-tended garden and maybe a small animal pen with chickens. This results in a lot of produce, the surplus of which was formerly carted off to nearby Ashford or down to Kingsfell. Now the extra is jealously hoarded or used to feed the mercenaries stationed in Conn's Finger. The halflings main export of beer remains undisturbed by recent events. The Underdellians are known for their fine brew, particularly from Mannerheim Brewery. Vihtori ensures these exports go out as normal as to do otherwise could arouse suspicion of something happening in Underdell. Many other halflings practice various crafts traded their wares in the village's lively marketplace.

### LAW & ORDER

Once a peaceful halfling community, Underdell's citizens policed themselves. They looked out for their neighbours and came together to help anyone struggling. Ashford's plague shattered Underdell's ideal community, breaking the bonds of goodwill. No one could tell who might secretly be harbouring the plague and so the halflings became suspicious of each other. The arrival of Vihtori only inflamed their paranoia allowing him to seize power. Vihtori and his bandits serve as the law now, ruthlessly executing those suspected of having the plague. Anyone attempting to overthrow Vihtori is similarly dealt with. The Underdellians constantly spy on one another, eager to report to Vihtori.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

Underdell once held many monthly festivals in the marketplace, often loosely based on halfling interpretations of Conn's teachings. It did not take much to get the Underdellians to pull together for a large feast replete with dancing and games. Weddings were elaborate affairs, often lasting for two days. Even the weekend marketplace meet-ups were a cause to over eat, partake in games and drink copiously. Sadly, today, the halflings no longer celebrate or engage in any sort of festive activities. Most stick to their families, suspicious of everyone around them.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	Father Jalo performs a solo funeral service, carrying a dead halfling into Eveninggarden while he haphazardly waves a censer.
2	Four warriors on horseback thunder through the streets, heading towards the large watchtower.
3	A wagon is seen disappearing along a narrow road winding past a rocky hill.
4	A group of dirty halfling children chase an old woman down the street, hurling curses and stones at her.
5	A group of female halflings surround an elegant human woman in robes. They seem to be asking her for some sort of charm.
6	A wild-eyed woman stumbles out of the Gallows, mug in one hand and an attractive, but wriggling, male halfling slung over one shoulder.
7	Three armed halflings roughly drag someone out of one the homes and head towards the jail.
8	Eyes stare at the PCs from the windows of the halfling homes. Many of the inhabitants make signs to ward off evil or spit in the PCs' direction.
9	A legless halfling shuffles towards the PCs using his arms to move and begins begging for coin so his children can eat. If given any money, he immediately heads towards the Gallows.
10	A group of halflings in filthy robes dig through a patch of mud though it's unclear what they are collecting.
11	Two halflings quarrel over a wilted vegetable garden between their homes. It quickly comes to blows.
12	A halfling dressed in a black mourning robe howls despondently in front of a grass covered temple.
13	A halfling bursts out of a home, carrying a bundle of vegetables only to be chased down by their owner.
14	A group of halflings huddle together whispering before two well-armed halfling guards force them to disperse.
15	A halfling is flung from a catapult located on top of a large watchtower.
16	The cloying smell of incense wafts along the street.
17	A bar fight spills out from the Gallows followed by two cheering well-armed human warriors.
18	Two halfling guards on shaggy ponies patrol the street, causing a few halflings to retreat indoors.
19	A family of sullen looking halflings trudge joylessly about their business, deigning to even look at the PCs.
20	A lone halfling sells vegetables at the marketplace but most seem to be avoiding her.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

Underdell stands near the Old Road which runs east to west through the Duchy of Ashlar passing through Thornhill and curving up towards the village of Wellswood.

A line of hills runs north from Underdell, skirting the Selka River where the old town of Dunstone nestles amongst the hills. Dunstone, once serving as guardian against creatures lurking within the Mottled Spire, slips into urban decay though its current lord works hard to revitalize the town and restore it to its former glory. Dunstone has an active Brewer's Guild whose products often compete with Underdell's. Located within the Mottled Spire's stony crags rots the ruins of the village of Greystone lurking in the shadow of Gloamhold. Gloamhold remains an ancient abandoned citadel, its roots descend into a sprawling complex of caves and caverns eating into the earth, containing all manner of fell beasts. Many adventurers seek out this famed site in search of treasure and many are the lives lost in such ventures.

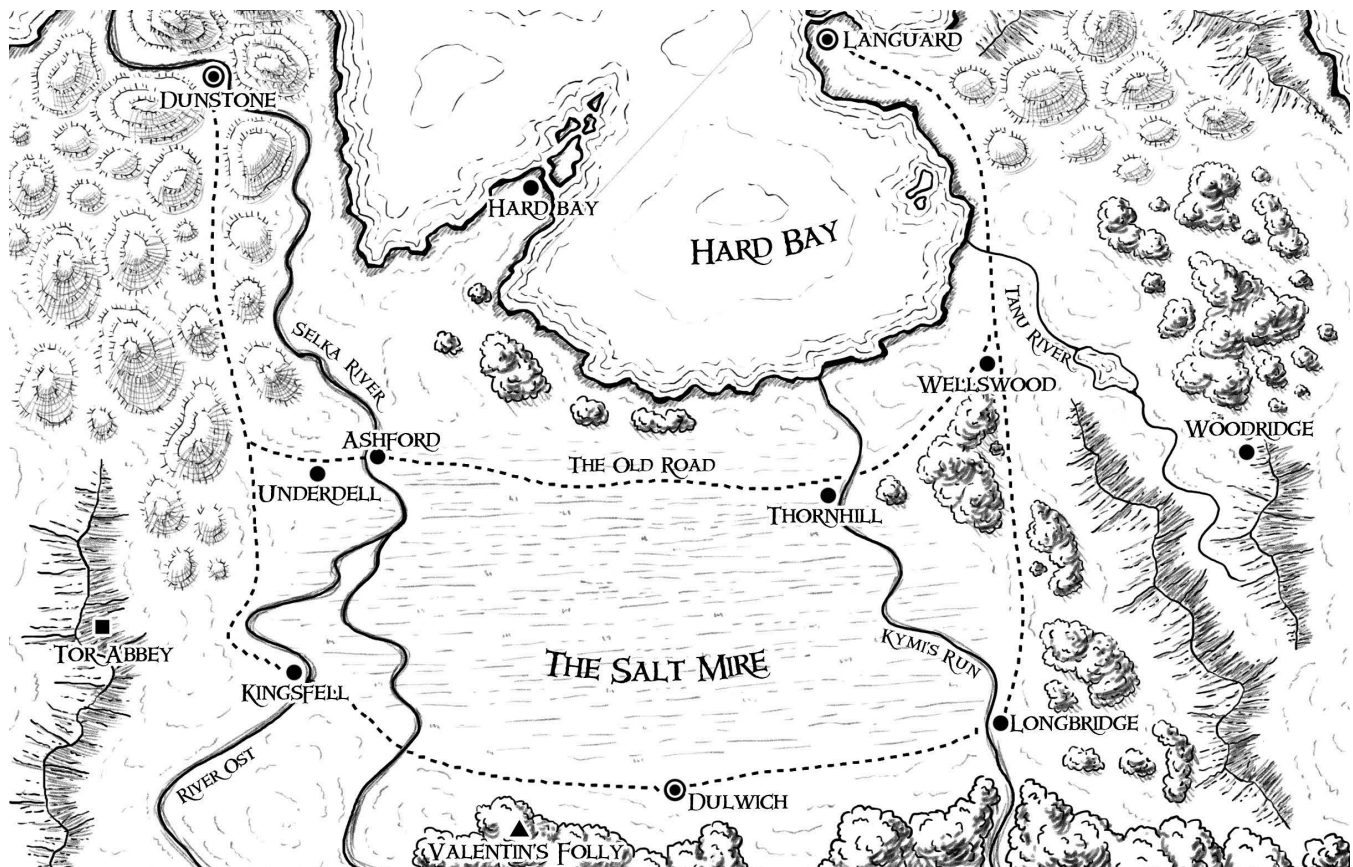
To Underdell's east stretches the vast expanse of the Great Salt Mire, a fetid, untamed swampland in the very heart of the duchy. Travel through the swamp remains dangerous due to deep bogs, merciless insects, bandits and all manner of dangerous beasts who call the swamp their home. Once one

passes the swamp, they arrive in the eastern section of Ashlar, studded by numerous small villages.

Above them all, Ashlar's capital, Languard, squats on a peninsula thrusting out into the cold waters of Hard Bay. The capital, home to almost 8,000 souls, serves as the seat of power for the Duke Armas Nenonen whose eyes constantly stray across the bay to the shadows clustering about the Mottled Spire.

Southward, a road winds towards the village of Kingsfell before turning east to arrive at the town of Dulwich. Dulwich lies in the shade of the Forest of Grey Spires. A growing merchant trade, bolstered by the revenues of a lumber guild, threaten the hold of the nobles who rule the city. Danger lurks in the depths of the forest as evidenced by the ruins of Valentin's Folly, a border castle now fallen into ruin and a hideout for bandits and goblins. Other adventure sites are rumoured to lurk beneath the shadows of the forest's menacing trees.

West of Underdell remains mostly unclaimed by the duchy as rugged hills march towards its borders. The lonely Tor Abbey, located on a thrust of stone stands as the last point of civilization with the duchy.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN UNDERDELL

### 1: UNDERDELL JAIL

*A large, grass-covered building abuts the road leading into Underdell. Directly across the way stands a wooden guard post.*

Built not long after Vihtori took control of Underdell, the jail houses those suspected of carrying the plague. A small contingent of bandits garrison the jail and guard post, ruthlessly interrogating visitors to the village. Those exhibiting signs of the plague are killed and their bodies dropped into pits behind the jail.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	Four well-armed halflings torment a ragged family seeking shelter within Underdell.
2	Two halfling guards carry a shroud-wrapped body, unceremoniously dropping it into a pit behind the jail.
3	Bored guards loiter around the jail, throwing dice. One of them coughs, spits up phlegm and causes the other guards to suddenly panic.
4	A halfling guard holds a hungry dog on a leash while a skinny, ragged human attempts to get away.
5	A man bursts out of the jail, terribly wounded. Halfling guards follow, brandishing bloodied weapons.
6	A merchant's wagon is waved through without fanfare, making its way towards a distant spire of rock.

### 2: UNDERDELL MARKETPLACE

*A number of wooden buildings surround a beaten clearing of packed earth. A few halflings listlessly roam about.*

The heart of Underdell was once a thriving marketplace of cheery halflings going about their daily business. Here, the halflings held weekend open markets, festivals and other celebrations. The shops remain open—a general store, bakery, craft store, the Gallows and a few others, but flowers droop in their window boxes and windows remain shuttered. It feels forlorn and uninviting.

- **For Sale:** +1 dagger (500 gp), Alli's sweets and baked goods (3 sp), a worn map of the Salt Mire (10 gp).



#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D4	EVENT
1	A small halfling girl in a shabby dress bumps into a PC and attempts to pick pocket one of the party.
2	A halfling wanders by, hacking and coughing before he collapses on the ground.
3	A heavily armed warrior leaves the bakery and heads towards the watchtower, eyeing the PCs.
4	A pack of underfed dogs fight over the carcass of a large, dead bird and attack anyone who gets too close.

### 3: THE GALLOWS

*A squat stone building with a grass thatched roof flanks the marketplace. A sign swinging above the double doors depicts three figures swinging from a rope.*

Once a quaint tavern and inn excelling in halfling hospitality, the Gallows was a favourite stopping point for travellers and local gathering place. Its name, a bit of dark humour poking fun at the village's peaceful life, unfortunately is now grimly apropos. Inside, a smoky hearth seems to hide dismal halflings who stare at one another with suspicion. The rooms reek of neglect and smell of mould. Outsiders are charged exorbitant prices to encourage them to leave. The inn's staff regularly reports gossip and news to Vihtori.

- **Food & Drink:** meal (baked river trout and cabbage and onion soup) 5 sp, Mannerheim ale 3 sp, wine (pitcher) 4 sp.
- **Accommodation:** One-bed human-sized chamber 5 gp; two-bed halfling chamber 10 sp.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A halfling patron starts retching uncontrollably, causing the patrons to flee the tavern.
2	Four halfling guards abruptly appear, point out a halfling patron and then proceed to drag him away.
3	Six rough looking halflings, obviously drunk, begin making jokes about the PCs' appearances.
4	A halfling sobs into his mug repeating the name "Annita" over and over again.
5	One of the servers whispers into the barkeep's ears, pointing towards the PCs.
6	A number of patrons suddenly get up and abruptly leave when the PCs are seated.

#### 4: EVENINGGARDEN

*Flowering vines flow down the walls of this large earthen building. Two small trees frame the building's entrance.*

Eveninggarden stands near the marketplace, a beautifully crafted building of interwoven trees, vines and flowers. Dedicated to Conn, Eveninggarden served as Underdell's spiritual heart. Unfortunately, hope fled the halflings and few now attend services or even acknowledge the temple's existence. The Underdellians believe Conn failed them. Its high priest toils by himself, his acolytes having moved on to more hospitable villages. Having no allies, Father Jalo Tammi fights a losing battle to restore hope to the halflings and confront the evil of Vihtori and his bandits. He provides what relief he can but feels he betrayed the village; his faith was not strong enough to cleanse the plague, allowing Vihtori to take control.

**Reclaim a Holy Object:** A high priest of Conn has determined a holy object (a magical vessel whose water causes plants to grow quickly) residing in the Eveninggarden should be returned and tasks the PCs to retrieve. Of course, Father Jalo Tammi does not want to relinquish it and beseeches the PCs to aid him instead.

#### 5: MANNERHEIM BREWERY

*The smell of brewing beer wafts from the double chimneys of a large grass-covered mound and halfling home.*

Underdell's most famous brewery also serves as the residence of Underdell's mayor, Linodal Mannerheim. The Mannerheims have been brewing the beer sold throughout the duchy since the

---

---

#### KIRSI NISKANEN

LE female human wizard 5

*A permanent scowl threatens the beauty of a robed woman, her spectacles perched on an imperious nose.*

**Mannerisms:** Kirsi can be very charming, using her looks (and magic) to her advantage when she wants something. Otherwise, she has little patience for others.

**Personality:** Vain and a bit cold, Kirsi is beginning to realize that in her current situation, she may have to be become more open and tolerant of others. She is still shocked by the kindness the halfling villagers (excluding Vihtori's bandits) have shown her.

**Background:** Kirsi grew up in Languard but moved to Dulwich to practice her spells on the town's rich nobles. After her ploys were discovered, Kirsi spent time in Dulwich's prison awaiting trial. A noble approached her, offering to broker her freedom if she would work for him. Her assignment ended up being in Underdell, using magic to assist Vihtori. She detests both Vihtori and Jeela Jaakola.

village's founding, though Linodal is the first Mannerheim to enter politics. Unfortunately, he was not equipped to deal with the hysteria of the plague and quickly lost control of Underdell to Vihtori who keeps Linodal locked inside his own house as a puppet leader. It's also important for Vihtori to keep Mannerheim Brewery in operation to avoid unwanted notice.

**Message in a Cask:** The PCs have at some point been gifted a cask of Mannerheim's best brew. Upon emptying the cask, they find a note sealed in a scroll tube. It's a plea of rescue from Linodal Mannerheim and an offer of reward.

#### 6: KIRSI'S HOUSE

*A human-sized door fronts this typical halfling home. Additionally, a small stone building with no windows stands nearby.*

Vihtori set aside a house for his wizard, Kirsi Niskanen, as well as a workshop for her use. There, she studies magic and plots new tactics to help Vihtori in his raiding. Vihtori favours spells like *enlarge*, *invisibility* and *obscuring mist* to avoid detection in battle. Most villagers believe Kirsi is an eccentric wizard who moved to Underdell to escape the hustle and bustle of the duchy's larger settlements. Kirsi fashions mostly functionless charms, selling them to the villagers, to keep up this ruse. She longs to escape from her current role and go back to swindling rich old nobles.

**Witch Hunt:** Relatives of the noble Kirsis scammed which lead to her imprisonment aren't happy at her recent disappearance. The PCs are hired to track her down and bring her back to Dulwich to face justice. Rumour has her in Underdell.

---

---

#### FATHER JALO TAMMI

LG old male halfling cleric 5

*Dark bags lurk under the eyes of this white-haired halfling who wears the garments of a priest of Conn.*

**Mannerisms:** Stress and exhaustion have taken their toll on the good priest. He walks slowly, needing frequent rests and occasionally dozes off mid-sentence.

**Personality:** While Jalo still strives to do right in the community, doubts about his own worthiness to serve Conn slowly devour him, marring his once bright and jovial attitude. He is increasingly sceptical about his own faith.

**Background:** Jalo inherited the position of high priest from his mother decades ago. A hard worker, he was a pillar of Underdell's community and was consulted in almost any matter of importance. Now, he is slowly becoming but a shell of the priest he once was.

## 7: CONN'S FINGER

*Moss and ivy crawl along a 40-foot-high tower perched on a hill. Its lofty battlements command the surrounding area for miles.*

Built originally by the Knights of the Eternal Watch, the tower offers a large view of the surrounding area, particularly the Salt Mire. Lack of resources caused the watchtower to be abandoned and the Underdellians used it for storage. Shortly after Vihtori took control, his noble sponsor sent a group of mercenaries lead by Jeela Jaakola to occupy the tower and serve as a liaison between Vihtori and himself. The mercenaries do not participate in the raids but instead ensure the noble receives his fair share of profits and information is passed along. The mercenaries also deal with outsiders sticking their nose in the village's business. The bored mercenaries often descend from the tower and bully the harried halflings, particularly when Vihtori is away.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D4	EVENT
1	Eight warriors unload a large wagon at the tower. The goods appear to comprise furs and fabrics.
2	A wild-eyed woman stuffs a hapless halfling into a barrel before rolling it down the hill. She laughs the entire time, swigging from a mug.
3	Two halfling men fan a wild looking woman relaxing in a camp chair with a large mug in her hand.
4	A wild looking woman argues loudly with a scowling, bespectacled woman in a robe before both storm off.

### JEELA JAAKOLA

CN female human fighter 4

*Scars from battles criss-cross the body of a fierce woman with wild hair and a crazed look in her eyes.*

**Mannerisms:** Jeela is very loud with any action she takes—from hearty guffaws to heavy smacks on the back for a job well done or a boot to the groin for failure.

**Personality:** Brash, bold and loud, Jeela likes to fight and drink or preferably drink and then fight. She's getting bored with her current assignment which only inflames her temper.

**Background:** A wild warrior, Jeela hails from the Lonely Coast. Her temper caused her to bounce between various mercenary companies until she ended up fleeing the Lonely Coast entirely and ended up in the Duchy of Ashlar. Lately, she takes out her boredom by harassing Kirsi, frequently interrupting her work for a drink.

## 8: THE COMPOUND

*A 10-foot-tall wooden palisade surrounds a large central building covered in grass. Numerous pens and storage buildings surround the main building.*

The bandit compound in Underdell lies hidden from the main road into the village by a partially man-made rocky hill. A wooden security checkpoint guards the road looping up towards the compound which is surrounded by a 10-foot-tall wooden palisade. Vihtori and his bandits live and plan within the grass covered central building. Nearby are various storehouses with supplies and pens containing riding dogs and small ponies. Vihtori prefers to strike hard and fast, aided by Kirsi's magic. He always has Kirsi cast *invisibility* on him before attacking.

**Vengeance:** The Shadow Masks aren't ones to forget any slight done to them. The PCs are engaged by a proxy who spins a tale of woe denouncing Vihtori and offering a reward for his elimination.

**Find the Sponsor:** Dulwich's merchants believe there is a link to the bandit raids and a noble in Dulwich. The PCs are paid to investigate Underdell and discover the noble's identity.

### VIHTORI IKONEN

NE male halfling fighter 6

*Faded tattoos cover the arms and chest of a burly, grim halfling. A flattish nose, broken and smashed from numerous fights, lies splayed across his face.*

**Mannerisms:** As a former enforcer, Vihtori knows how menacing silence can be. As such, he is a man of few words, often fixing someone with a steely glare before speaking.

**Personality:** Greed and power rule Vihtori. A base creature, he believes you need to take what you want by force or have it stolen away.

**Background:** Orphaned at young age, Vihtori was taken in by Ashlar's preeminent thieves' guild, the Shadow Masks. Abused and mistreated, Vihtori learned he had to be strong to survive. Despite his small stature, he became one of the guild's top enforcers. Feeling held back by the guild, Vihtori left (leaving a pile of corpses is a common rumour). Fortuitous for him, he arrived at Underdell during the onset of the plague in nearby Ashford. It did not take him long to take charge and engage in banditry. Shortly afterwards, one of Dulwich's more shady nobles approached him and offered to give him information on merchant caravans leaving the town in exchange for some of the profit.

# VICTORY ELM

---

**Words** Mike Welham **Cartography** Maciej Zagorski

*Victory Elm, the glorious tree giving its name to the surrounding village, is dying, and its affliction has spread to the villagers. The once welcoming village takes its name from the sole tree to withstand an invading giantish army. The Victory Elm served as a rallying point for the beleaguered humans fighting the giants who broke the enemies amid heavy fighting around the tree. After the battle, many of the survivors remained at Victory Elm and founded the village of the same name in memory of their victory and fallen companions.*

*The villagers attribute the tree's recent affliction to an infestation of pernicious termites. To make matters worse the aged druid who tends the tree has also fallen ill. The village's plan to grow another elm from the Victory Elm's seeds failed before it could even be begun when the collected seeds mysteriously disappeared. Perhaps timed with the tree's imminent demise, and unknown to the majority of the village, a heavily scarred giant has received visions from one of his ancestors telling him it is time to strike and destroy the village once and for all. Victory Elm is a village beset by threats from both within and without.*

## VICTORY ELM AT A GLANCE

---

**Ruler:** Victory Elm Council of Elders, led by Grayvin Feldspar

**Government:** Council

**Alignments:** LG, NG, N

**Population:** 150 (101 humans, 11 dwarves, 3 elves, 9 half-elves, 4 half-orcs, 22 halflings)

**Notable Folk:** Renette Millora (Millora's Vineyard), Cyrrun Belatros (Elm Keeper's Home)

**Languages:** Common, Druidic, Dwarven

**Resources & Industry:** Produce, wine, tourism

Over a century ago, the Victory Elm survived destruction at the hands of hill giants marauding the countryside to clear the way for their fire giant and frost giant leaders. When the lesser giants were unable to uproot the lone elm tree, the human armies rallied and routed the hill giants. The fire and frost giants arrived expecting an easy fight, but the humans proved resourceful and resilient. As the days wore on, the giants fell to bickering with each other—which eventually led to infighting; eventually, the now disunified force abruptly left.

The remaining humans intended to rest and return to their homes, but many of them realized the tree stood on arable land which they could petition to own. The ruling baron granted them the land, and they brought their families to the new village, named Victory Elm after the tree dominating the area. The settlers planted fruit trees and grew a variety of staple crops. Cyrrun Belatros, an elven ally, stayed to tend the tree and help manage the land. He is the only living villager who remembers the so-called Giantwar. Everyone else is at least one generation removed from the slaughter.

The village prospered over the years, but recently the Victory Elm itself developed a strange blight which has spread to the surrounding crops. Aggressive termites and wasps infested the tree, and Cyrrun fell ill before he could eradicate the infestations. With rumours surfacing about a new massing of giants in the hills, Victory Elm faces several new and recurring threats from within and without.



## VILLAGE LORE

A PC may know something about Victory Elm, its history and surrounds. Determine how knowledgeable the PCs are and then impart some (or all) of the information below:

- Victory Elm was the site of a pivotal battle in the Giantwar, where the human armies turned the tide of the war. Many of the survivors stayed and built a village around the noteworthy tree. The village serves as a reminder of the Giantwar.
- The tree has recently shown signs of blight and a persistent colony of termites infests it. The villagers are concerned about what this portends, and they have become suspicious of strangers as well as their neighbours.
- Shortly after the tree sickened, its druid protector fell ill with a mysterious malady which sapped his energy and intellect.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** Many are human and have the red hair and bright blue eyes common to the armies serving during the Giantwar. The village has welcomed countless others, so its folk now exhibit greater variety in race, complexion and hair colour.

**Dress:** Dress is utilitarian among the people who work the land, while those who receive visitors wear ceremonial armour harking back to the Giantwar.

**Nomenclature:** *male* Grayvin, Pellian, Zay; *female* Annalinda, Celise, Voondra; *family* Belatros, Feldspar, Millora, Wergar.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

While in Victory Elm, a PC may hear one or more rumours. The PC 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 PC learns.

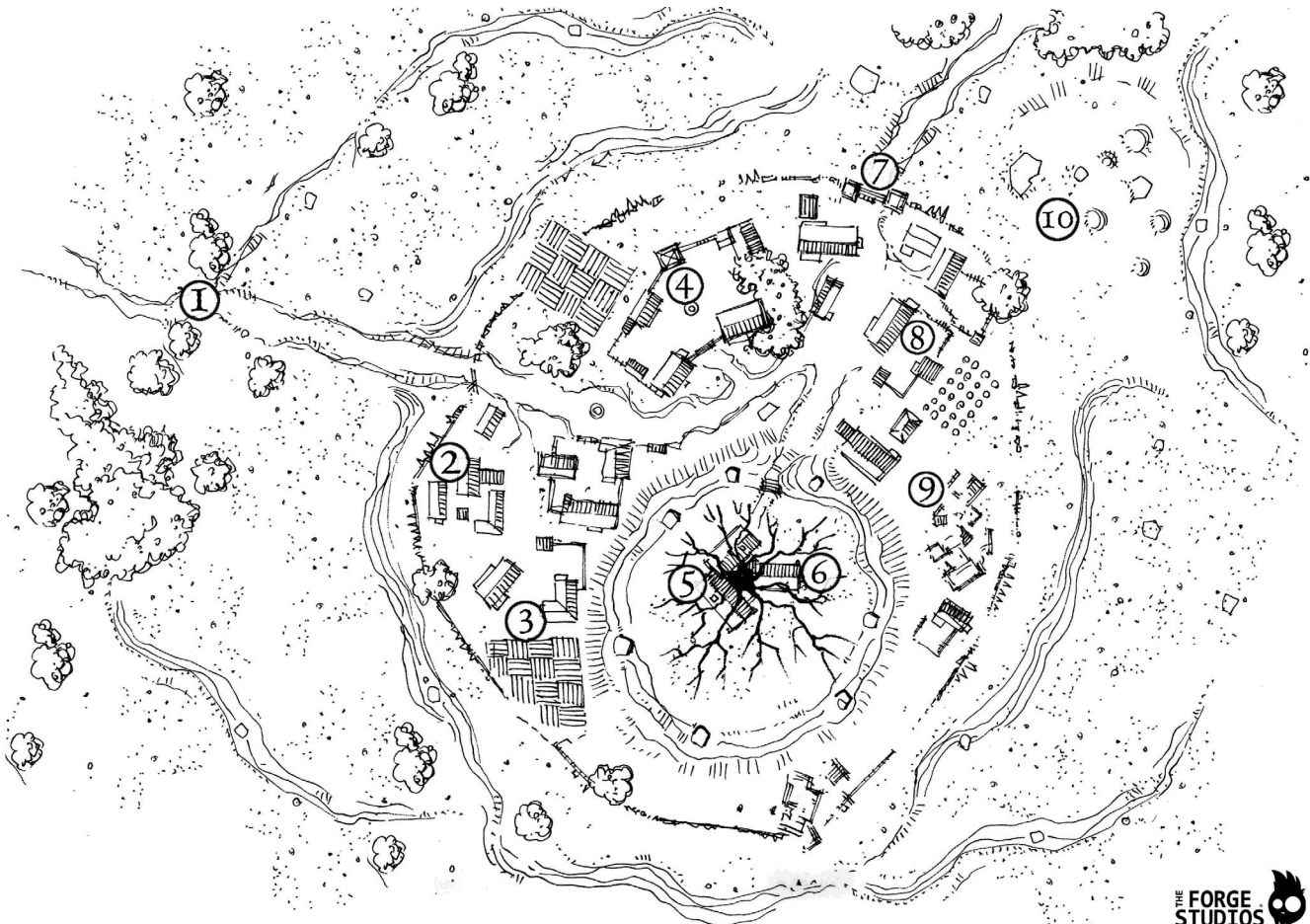
D6	RUMOUR
1	I've heard noises coming from underground. I wonder if the cause of our troubles originates there.
2	The giants must sense something is up. The other night, I saw a hill giant less than a mile from the village.
3*	Cyrrun Belatros is a doddering fool who accidentally poisoned the elm and himself along with it.
4	Many bees we rely on to pollinate our plants have disappeared. Instead, we have these damnable wasps.
5*	I couldn't sleep and stepped outside, where I witnessed the moon turn blood red for half a minute.
6	I saw Janna Wergar skulking back to her home carrying a massive sword which looked newly forged.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Arboreal Arch:** Villagers stand watch here. Prior to the recent troubles, they politely inquired as to visitors' business. Most remain polite, but some have taken their responsibilities very seriously and act belligerently toward suspicious visitors.
2. **The Boughery:** A steady stream of visitors requires food and lodging, and the Varbin halfling clan is delighted to provide these services, as well as gossip, to visitors. The common room of each lodge house hosts a well-tended tree sitting under an open roof.
3. **Millora's Vineyard:** Seizing upon Cyrrun Belatros's information regarding the soil's suitability for grape growing, the dwarven exile Pelgi Millora and her children traded in their warhammers for tools and seeds. She freely shares her wine with the village but also sells bottle and barrels to visitors.
4. **Communal Well:** One of the first structures built in the village, the communal well provides fresh water for the residents. Because the villagers hold the elm as sacred, they have turned to this relatively mundane location as a meeting place to plan celebrations, deal with mundane matters of governing and, lately, air grievances.
5. **Elm Keeper's Home:** Cyrrun Belatros built his home with the elm's growth in mind. It now stands a few feet above the ground but exists harmoniously with the tree.
6. **Giantwar Museum:** The only part of the elm's surrounding open to the public, this building contains memorabilia from the human armies as well as captured giant weapons of war.
7. **Northern Gate:** The northern approach is where the giants' threat originated. The gate closing off the village is purely symbolic, but recent worries have caused villagers to consider stationing a guard there.
8. **Seed Store:** Rickard Wergar grows staple crops at his family's house, which has a hidden cellar storing a variety of seeds, including elm tree seeds, should a replacement for the Victory Elm prove necessary.
9. **Semm's Place:** Primarily a place for herbal remedies, this small compound also has small shrines to many pastoral deities.
10. **Giantwar Memorial Graveyard:** Those who died here during the Giantwar are buried here, along with their descendants.



## LIFE IN VICTORY ELM

---

Victory Elm seems like a picture of serenity, with its residents working on their farms and gardens. However, the elm's recently developed malady and other strange events have put the villagers on alert, and visitors they formerly welcomed with open arms are now met with suspicion. New arrivals, especially non-humans or tall folk, are shadowed during their visit either by skulking watchers or "friendly" villagers who tag along in the guise of a friendly ambassador.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

At the outset, the village had no trade to offer outside its confines. Food grown and raised here went to feed the inhabitants and they had little extra to sell. The epic tale of the last stand at the elm spread beyond the village, however, and attracted curious visitors. Many people wanted to meet the heroes of the Giantwar's decisive battle and ascertain whether the elm had magical properties. Cyrrun Belatros organized a hasty collection of weapons and armour, human and giant alike, from the war to fill a ramshackle museum and charged a modest fee to visit it. As the village and museum developed a steady stream of visitors, the villagers hired a curator to organize the museum, making it more lucrative for the village. Attendance has dwindled in the recent past, even before the trouble with the elm, as the war fades from memory. Fortunately for the village, wine from Millora's vineyard has increased in popularity and the dwarf family has shared their profits with Victory Elm.

### LAW & ORDER

Victory Elm takes a light touch with punishing crime. Villagers who commit misdemeanours repay the wronged party or endure a short house arrest. The village's sole murder was deemed a crime of passion, and the murderer was exiled from the village. Disputes between villagers are resolved during the once monthly—now weekly—council meetings at the Communal Well. The villagers invite outsiders who cause trouble to leave the village. The late troubles have caused the residents to be more sensitive to bad behaviour, and they take up arms to enforce decisions to throw out mischief makers.

### CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS

As a rural village, Victory Elm has festivals for the harvest and for invoking fertility at the start of the growing season. These pale in comparison to the annual midsummer celebration commemorating the battle at the eponymous elm. For this, the villagers take three days off from their daily work, decorating the tree in bright, colourful streamers and setting up the mock battle between the giants and the elm's defenders. The final day sees weddings between villagers and concludes with a feast.

## VILLAGE DRESSING

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

### D20 DRESSING/EVENT

1	A termite swarm bursts from the elm's bole. Several alight on the PCs' wooden items.
2	A hill giant stands 100 feet from the north gate. It throws two rocks at the gate, battering it, before trudging away.
3	A flock of ravens roosts in the upper boughs of the elm. Their croaks and caws sound like dire portents.
4	Several children engage in a game of "Giants vs. Defenders" with the oldest and largest child taking on the giant role. They swing wooden weapons at each other but mostly target the weapons with their attacks.
5	A brief tremor shakes the village, breaking fragile unattended items and causing momentary panic.
6	A representative of the baroness arrives with a conscription decree demanding a dozen volunteers.
7	A thunderhead forms to the north of the village. It takes the shape of a giant wielding a oversized club. The cloud unleashes several strokes of lightning, accompanied by booming thunder, before dispersing.
8	A mangy dog trots into the village carrying a walking stick belonging to a missing villager.
9	A villager accosts a tourist demanding to know what the latter was doing by one of the elm's exposed roots.
10	A treant, showing no sign of aggression, ambles up to the village centre and asks to examine the sick elm.
11	Giggling children, one carrying a bunch of grapes, dash from the vineyard with a dwarf in pursuit.
12	A pitchfork-wielding villager stomps toward Millora's property with proof of her collusion with the giants. His "proof" is an out-of-context snippet of conversation.
13	A villager coughs into a handkerchief and inspects the spots of blood on the cloth.
14	A woman stands near the elm and plays a sombre tune on her violin.
15	A wasp swarm originating from the elm pursues a smaller swarm of bees. The wasps break off to attack villagers and visitors alike (dealing 1d4 damage). Any reasonable method turns away the stinging insects.
16	A teenage girl chases after a tan dog chasing a lamb. The dog ignores her owner's cries to heel.
17	One of the PCs looks remarkably like one of the Giantwar's heroes and draws attention from villagers.
18	A pheasant struts in the villagers' midst.
19	A visitor storms out of the village, yelling about the "obvious fakes" in the Giantwar Museum.
20	Villagers wearing worried and questioning expressions rush toward the communal well. The phrase "emergency meeting" is a common refrain.



## THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

---

Victory Elm stands amid gently rolling hills, which eventually give way to more mountainous terrain. For most of the time since the village's founding, the surrounding land was devoid of trees apart from the celebrated elm. The villagers seeded the immediate land and several years later, their efforts bore fruit and the surrounds look less barren. Peculiarly to outsiders, the villagers ensure no tree towers over the elm, out of respect for the tree.

The fields surrounding Victory Elm are pasture for the goats, sheep and cows raised by the villagers. The gentle land also attracts wild pheasant and deer, which hunters use to supplement meat from domesticated animals.

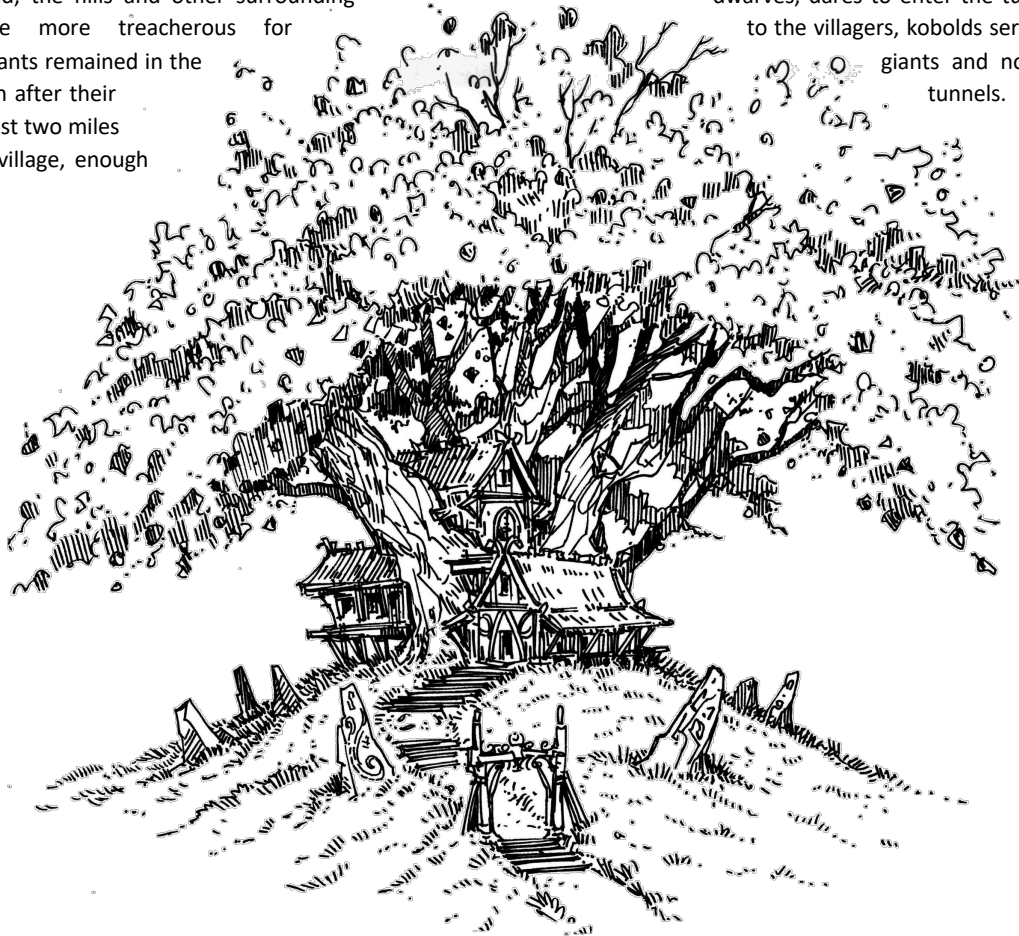
Despite the council's best efforts to entice other villages to sprout up in the liberated land, the barony saw no worthwhile investment in doing so. Apart from a handful of individual farmsteads, Victory Elm stands alone in its hilly environs. After the giant army disbanded and up until recently, though, the territory remained peaceful. The occasional bandit gang pops up to waylay travellers, but the villagers send a heavily armed group to break up such groups. The only other immediate threats outside the village are bears and wolves.

Further afield, the hills and other surrounding terrain become more treacherous for travellers. Hill giants remained in the hills to the north after their defeat but at least two miles away from the village, enough

to discourage notions of killing them or driving them off. Recent reports indicating an increase in the giants' orderliness along with rumours of frost giant sightings alarm the council. The barony which has a loose hold over the village has increased its war footing in response to the increase in giantish activity.

The only additional known threat near the village comes from a pair of hags dwelling in swampland eight miles southeast. The hags never directly affect Victory Elm, but speculation about the village's woes has turned to their possible involvement. Their reputation comes from villagers who made trips to the nearest town, a four-day round trip, disappeared for weeks, and returned with tales of the hags transforming them into harmless animals for perceived transgressions. Many residents dismiss such stories as tall tales covering debauched activity in the town, since these stories originate from villagers with a penchant for lying.

The other renowned location within a day's travel of the village, the abandoned dwarven hold, Thor-Milal, from which Pelgi Millora hails is rumoured to be haunted by the slaughtered dwarves' spirits. Great treasures are also thought to remain with the dwarven corpses, but no one from the village, including the dwarves, dares to enter the tunnels. Unknown to the villagers, kobolds serve the resurgent giants and now dwell in the tunnels.



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS IN VICTORY ELM

---

### 1: ARBOREAL ARCH

*A pair of stout oaks create an arch over the path, providing shade for the guards who stand just under the trees.*

A slight ridge surrounding most of the village makes the path through these oaks the best approach to Victory Elm. Until recently, the inhabitants gave little care to how visitors approached the village. Two guards stood under the trees, enjoying the shade while greeting travellers and directing them to the Boughery and the Giantwar Museum. With the increase in tension, however, one of the guards patrols the area surrounding the village, and guards are posted throughout the day and night, instead of just during busier hours. The twins, Celise (LG female human fighter 1) and Zay (NG male human fighter 1) Feldspar, are often posted here during the day. The pair take their duties seriously, partially to dispel ideas they received their positions through their relation to Grayvin Feldspar, who leads the village council, but mostly to ensure they are not responsible for danger approaching unnoticed and unchallenged.

### 2: THE BOUGHERY

*Trees rise from within this trio of buildings. Cheerful halflings greet visitors and villagers alike.*

The Boughery is Victory Elm's only inn and has grown to encompass three buildings to accommodate visitors to the area. However, as the Giantwar fades from the zeitgeist, fewer guests arrive, and the Varbin family faces the reality of converting one of the buildings into a residence. They are proud of the trees they cultivated and which act as the buildings' centrepieces. The trees are too large for the Varbins to consider transplanting so they hope whoever lives in the new home maintains the tree they "inherit". The halflings running the Boughery seem immune to the problems facing the village and are the friendliest faces newcomers see. They have taken to warning visitors about the troubles and attendant unfriendliness. This compassionate attitude must end when one of the council decides to eject a guest, though, and halflings who witness such removals can only offer sympathetic shrugs to those ordered to leave.

- **Food & Drink** pheasant or venison 4 sp, mutton or beef 3 sp, goat cheese 2 sp, bread 1 sp, fresh vegetables 2 sp, meal (some combination of meat, cheese, bread and vegetables) 1 gp, ale 1 sp, wine (pitcher) 5 sp.
- **Accommodation** Two-bed chamber 1 gp; four-bed chamber 2 gp; common room 5 sp; hammock 2 sp.

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

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

D6	EVENT
1	A gust of wind causes leaves to flutter to the ground.
2	A gigantic branch breaks off from a tree, dumping the person sleeping on it to the ground.
3	The PCs overhear a discussion about taking one of the giant weapons from the museum.
4	The scent of roast pheasant wafts from the kitchen
5	A villager bursts into one of the buildings demanding to search a guest's belongings.
6	A gentle rainfall catches in the leaves but does not penetrate into the common area.

### 3: MILLORA'S VINEYARD

*Rows of vines holding grapes in various stages of ripeness cover several acres of land. A pair of dwarves tend the vines.*

Fertile and limestone-rich soil supports the rows of winemaking grapes growing here. Dwarves, remnants of the Millora clan, work the land alongside humans and halflings who bolster the dwarves' numbers during harvesting and other busy times.

Pelgi Millora (LG female dwarf fighter 2) and her children relocated to Victory Elm as part of a handful of survivors who fled from their home when the last vestiges of the giant army sacked her clanhold. Provincial villagers, used to dwarves living underground, regarded Pelgi and her family as curiosities. Pelgi further astonished them when she produced her semi-popular wine which she shares with the villagers and sells to buyers who have discovered the wine's reputation.

The heightened state of suspicion aroused by the elm's current state, and lingering rumours about the dwarves' displeasure with the village for their part in the dwarves' hold falling, has caused some villagers to distrust Pelgi. She and her children have received anonymous threats, and some villagers have become emboldened enough to demand the dwarves leave.

- **Food & Drink** wine, ranging from 1 gp to 5 gp per bottle.

**Found Seeds:** To Pelgi's horror, she discovered a pile of seeds missing from the seed store. Neither she nor her kin took the seeds, but she fears the villagers' reaction if they learn of the cache. If the PCs gain her trust, she asks them to investigate the mystery. PCs searching the area find loose soil covering a tunnel connecting her house to the seed store. Additional searching uncovers another tunnel leading from the village into the hills.

#### 4: COMMUNAL WELL

*Houses and fencing surround this large courtyard whose main feature is a large well in its centre.*

A central gathering place for the villagers, the communal well serves as the location for the village's open governing during monthly council meetings. During these meetings, the council members hear complaints, resolve unsettled disputes and share plans for the village's well-being and growth. Since many villagers attend these open meetings, marriage proposals often occur after the meetings. The houses bordering the well belong to council members, allowing for quick assemblages during emergencies.

The gathering area also hosts more festive events, such as milestone birthdays. People who want smaller weddings out of season with the main Victory Elm celebration hold them here among close family and friends. This has the effect of excluding visitors to the village, but not deterring other villagers from crashing the nuptials.

The well, a 100-foot-deep shaft lined with stone, provides water for the village. Since the village has no convenient body of water nearby, the buildings and fence surrounding the well were purposely set up to protect it in case of invasion. Because of the possibility of sabotage raised by the elm's unnatural affliction, the council has considered stationing a guard here.

---

---

#### CYRRUN BELATROS

N old male elf druid 8

*Clad in green and brown robes, this aged elf appears to be covered in bark rather than skin. Berries, leaves and twigs sprout from his bushy beard.*

**Mannerisms:** When sensate, the elf refers to all humanoids he speaks to as "children." Villagers are quick to point out he means no disrespect. Now, he idly plucks plant detritus from his beard and mutters nonsense under his breath.

**Personality:** Cyrrun is amiable, but, prone to long-winded discussions about growing plants during which he often loses his train of thought and abruptly changes subjects.

**Background:** Cyrrun is the oldest living villager and the only one who fought in the Giantwar (Pelgi's clan was not part of the war but certainly felt its aftereffects). Realizing the special nature of the elm which withstood the giants' assault, he decided to stay and take care of the tree. His primary concern is the tree, but he also helps the village with their gardens and fields.

**Cursed:** Cyrrun is afflicted with a pernicious curse which saps his vitality and intellect—which could prove fatal to the Victory Elm as only he has the knowledge and magic to reverse its decline. See location 5 for more details.

#### 5: ELM KEEPER'S HOME

*Greenery covers this house intertwined with the elm's lower limbs. The house seems to exist congruously with the tree.*

The home of Victory Elm's most revered inhabitant, Cyrrun Belatros (N old male elf druid 8), this wooden structure is incorporated into the elm in a way that does not harm the tree. The tree's caretaker noticed the tree's blight when it first appeared but succumbed to a mysterious malady shortly thereafter. At first, villagers thought the elf had lost his mental faculties and inadvertently inflicted the tree with disease, but it soon became apparent the elf's malady was part of the same attack corrupting the tree. Without the druid, the elm is sure to succumb to its disease.

Derrin Volss (N male half-elf druid 2) is Cyrrun's apprentice, but his master's and the tree's afflictions are beyond his capabilities. He does what he can to keep the elf from becoming agitated in his diminished mental state and welcomes any outside assistance, offering up the magic items he has for sale as payment for those who can at least restore the elf to health. Most villagers think Derrin is a dupe and expect him to seal Victory Elm's fate by granting easy access to the tree in exchange for false promises.

- **For Sale:** *potion of water breathing* (900 gp), *scroll of plant growth* (900 gp), *scroll of speak with plants* (1,200 gp).

**Curse Breakers:** Cyrrun's condition results from a curse. If the PCs can break the curse, the elf compensates them with the above magic items. He also asks his saviours for the additional favour of finding rare items to cure the tree, promising a *staff of the serpent* in return for their help.

#### 6: GIANTWAR MUSEUM

*A bold banner proclaims the Giantwar memorabilia stored inside this building. Inside the building, cases protect relics from the war, several weapons sized for giants hang high on the walls and plaques describe each item's importance.*

This museum focus on armour and weapons used by the giants during the war. This allows many villagers to hang onto their ancestors' gear, which they proudly display in their homes. Mainly, it allows Merrin Volss (NG female half-elf) to display items which impress her visitors more than even magical human-sized items. Two of the weapons, a +2 *axe* and a +2 *club*, are magical, but Merrin has paid a king's ransom to ensure the weapons do not have detectable auras. So far, the expense has paid off, since no one has stolen or attempted to steal the weapons.

**Artefacts of War:** The nearby hills to the northeast hold a cache of weapons and armour used during the Giantwar. Villagers fear the haunted hills and refuse to go there. Merrin

sizes up PCs who visit the museum and offers them 500 gp to retrieve such items as they can from the hills. One prized item is a +2 *giant slayer longsword*, for which Merrin increases her bounty to 4,500 gp. While she prefers to keep the weapon in a display, she has no qualms about handing it over to the village if giants attack.

## 7: NORTHERN GATE

*A narrow path makes a western border for the graveyard outside the village and ends at a stout wooden gate.*

This gate had the symbolic purpose of guarding against new giant threats. It stands closed but is unlatched, allowing anyone to simply open it to enter Victory Elm from the north. Recent reports of giant activity, coupled with the village's internal problems, has put the villagers on guard. Their response has been to lock the gate and put a sentry on duty at night. The villagers view anyone who approaches from the north with suspicion and make the visit uncomfortable for the stranger.

## 8: SEED STORE

*This building has darkened windows and otherwise appears sealed shut. Several fledgling plants grow just beyond the fenced in garden bordered by the building.*

Rickard Wergar (N male human) and his family have the distinct honour of maintaining the village's seed store, including replacements seeds for the elm should the tree fall. So, it was with some level of embarrassment he informed the village council some of the seeds, including all the vital elm seeds, were missing.

**Seed Retrieval:** Rickard has little money, but he offers it all to adventurers who can locate the missing seeds. If the PCs discovered the seeds at Pelgi Millora's home, they can relay this information to Rickard. He believes the seeds' placement is a frame job, especially since Pelgi has none of the elm seeds. Despite his investigation into the theft, he has not discovered the tunnel linking his cellar to the dwarf's cellar. If he learns about the link, he obsesses over finding more tunnels (and happily helps any PCs searching the area).

## 9: SEMM'S PLACE

*Several shrubs, bushes and tubers grow on this property in a chaotic arrangement. Small shrines dot this area.*

The only enclosed building here is the village apothecary's workshop. Finglan Semm (N male human) is an alchemist who formulates treatments and medicinal draughts for the villagers. The furtive human conducts business as briskly as possible and

brooks no haggling for prices. While the villagers are put off by his aloofness, they realize he performs a valuable service and try to overlook his unpleasant personality. Oddly, and seemingly because he is a human with an ancestor who fought in the Giantwar, the villagers harbour no suspicions about his involvement with the recent developments, despite the fact he has the knowhow and available materials to harm the elm.

The property's disorder—Finglan cares little for his property beyond his plants and his workshop—had the knock-on effect of opening it up as a centre of worship for various nature deities with narrow portfolios (for example, a cow deity, a sheep deity and a wine deity). The independence thrust upon the village as a result of minimal oversight by the barony extends to the villagers eschewing popular deities for household gods and goddesses.

**A Dark Secret:** Finglan has a gambling habit which sees him take regular visits to a nearby city where he loses all the money he earns through his business. On his most recent trip, a cloaked figure promised to clear his debt and send him home with more money than he arrived with for a simple favour. The figure asked him to create a concoction which simultaneously sickens the tree and attracts destructive vermin, and then pour the concoction on the tree's roots. Perceptive PCs who question Rickard about the tree, even if they have no suspicions about the alchemist, may notice his nervousness about the subject. Further questioning reveals Rickard made no attempt to determine the figure's identity, but he describes the person to the best of his ability. He also knows most of the material composing the admixture and has a small sample of the poisoned and diseased paste he used, which he planned to study later.

## 10: GIANTWAR MEMORIAL GRAVEYARD

*Gravestones cover this plot of land. Some of the engravings have faded with time, but it is evident the graves commemorate valiant warriors who fought in the century-old Giantwar.*

This graveyard holds the bodies of the warriors who gave their lives stemming the giant tide. Descendants take responsibility for maintaining individual gravesites, keeping them clear of debris and re-etching the names of the fallen. Some of the ancient warriors have no family remaining, so their graves have begun to fall into anonymity.

**The Watchful Dead:** The graveyard erupts with skeletons and zombies which stand and face the north. The villagers are frightened by this development and stay away from the undead. If no one attacks the undead, they stand in place; otherwise, they retaliate before return to their watch. The villagers enlist the PCs to parlay with the creatures and discover their intentions.

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

**1. Definitions:** (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

**2. The License:** This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

**3. Offer and Acceptance:** By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

**4. Grant and Consideration:** In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

**5. Representation of Authority to Contribute:** If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

**6. Notice of License Copyright:** You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

**7. Use of Product Identity:** You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

**8. Identification:** If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

**9. Updating the License:** Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

**10. Copy of this License:** You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

**11. Use of Contributor Credits:** You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

**12. Inability to Comply:** If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

**13 Termination:** This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

**14 Reformation:** If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

**15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE:** Open Game License v 1.0 ©2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

**Open Game License v1.0a.** Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast Inc.

**System Reference Document:** ©2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Authors: Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

**The Lonely Coast.** ©Raging Swan Press 2013; Author: Creighton Broadhurst.

**Village Backdrop: Blackhill Gaol.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Jacob W. Michaels.

**Village Backdrop: Bossin.** ©Raging Swan Press 2013; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Bossin.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Echo Harbour.** ©Raging Swan Press 2017; Author: Amber Underwood.

**Village Backdrop: Gulls' Roost.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Jacob W. Michaels.

**Village Backdrop: Hosford.** ©Raging Swan Press 2013; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Hosford.** ©Raging Swan Press 2017; Author: Creighton Broadhurst.

**Village Backdrop: Kerwyn's Pride.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Mike Welham.

**Village Backdrop: Lady Cross.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Robert Manson.

**Village Backdrop: Laewas.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Jeff Gomez.

**Village Backdrop: Lanthorn 2.0.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Creighton Broadhurst.

**Village Backdrop: Masquerade.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Richard Pett.

**Village Backdrop: Oakhurst.** ©Raging Swan Press 2013; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Oakhurst.** ©Raging Swan Press 2017; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Ravens' Cradle.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Steve Hood.

**Village Backdrop: Underdell.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: John Bennett.

**Village Backdrop: Victory Elm.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Author: Mike Welham.

**GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrop III.** ©Raging Swan Press 2018; Authors: Amber Underwood.

**Product Identity:** All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, artefacts, places and so on), dialogue, plots, storylines, language, incidents, locations, characters, artwork and trade dress are product identity as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e) and are not Open Content.

**Open Content:** Except material designated as Product Identity, the contents of *Village Backdrop: Echo Harbour* are Open Game Content as defined in the Open Gaming License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

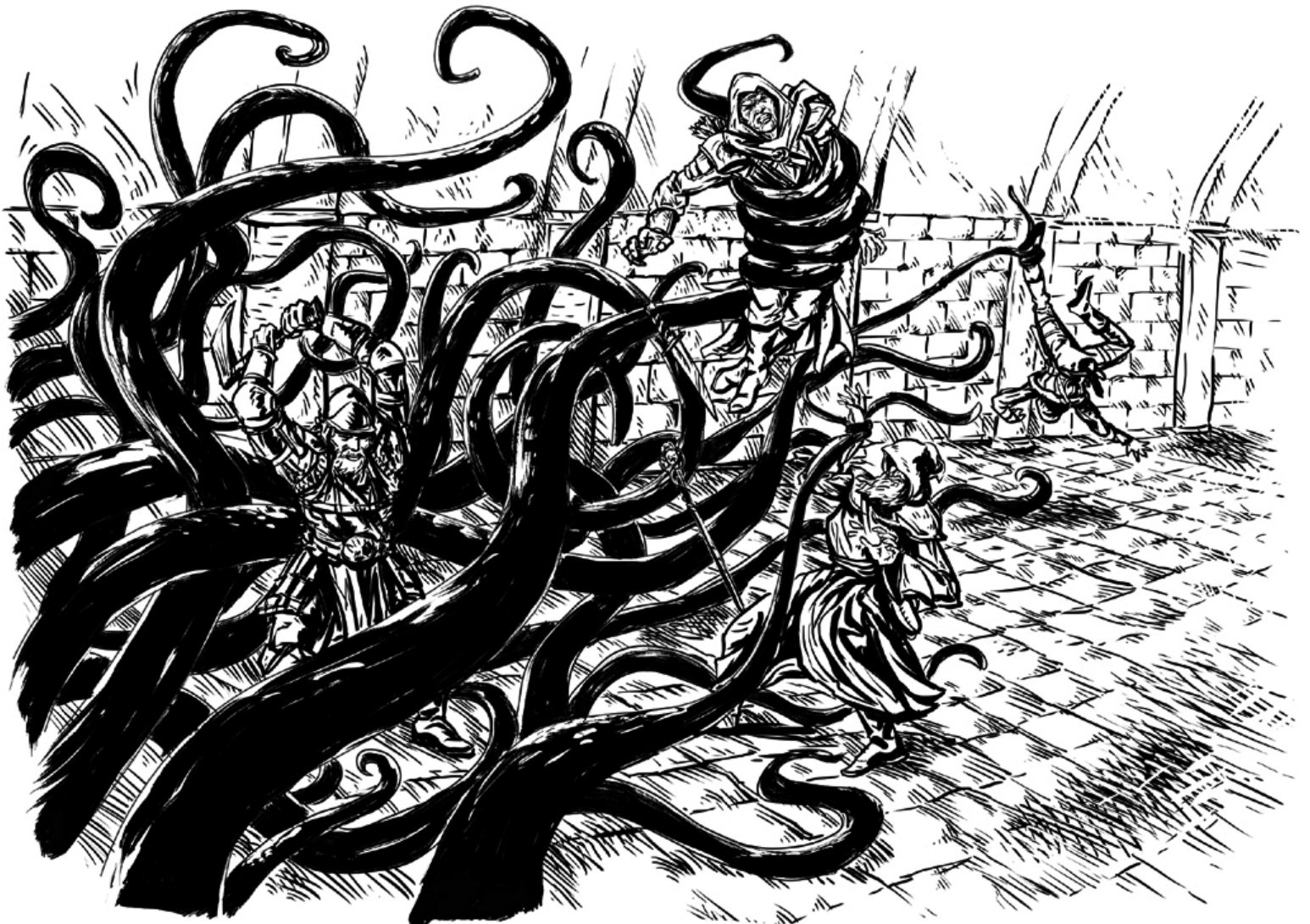
To learn more about the Open Game License, visit [wizards.com/d20](http://wizards.com/d20).



# EVERYTHING

is Better with

Tentacles



---

[ragingswan.com](http://ragingswan.com)

