

The Ælven Agenda

A 1st level adventure set in the world of Rhune: Dawn of Twilight

By Christopher Clark, Ben McFarland, Jaye Sonia, & Brian Suskind



RHUNE
DAWN OF TWILIGHT

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ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

The Elven Agenda

By Brian Suskind, Ben McFarland, & Jaye Sonia
(Additional design Christopher Clark)

An adventure for 1st level characters set in **Rhune: Dawn of Twilight**

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Running the Adventure

This adventure starts out differently and is presented as an alternative starting point for the *Beyond the Glittering Fane* adventure arc. It is intended for players who want to create characters from beyond the City-States of Vallinar, specifically groups that contain ælven characters. Ideally, these groups could also contain a mix of aryandai, glitterfane, and human sympathizers, heroes who realize Ragnarök is approaching, but who haven't embraced the technological ways of the City-States of Vallinar. This adventure gives players a chance to embrace ælven ideas and ideologies, playing as individuals who would likely be killed - on sight - in the City-States of Vallinar.

Unlike *Into the Pale Tower*, this adventure deals primarily with maintaining ælven borders and ælven interests, and thus, forbids the use of (or spread of) technology in all of its forms. Thus, characters starting this adventure should either be from Ælveheim or should be one of its few allies. Automata, clockwork elves, and dwarves (as well as any class that uses technology) all make very bad character choices for this adventure and should be dissuaded. The point of this adventure is to give player characters to a chance to see 'the other side' of things, to approach problems from a nature-centric perspective; druids, hunters, oracles, rangers, and slayers will all excel in this adventure.

At the start this adventure, all of the characters should be from Wulfsil (or should have just recently moved to the ælven sil as its guardians). PCs should understand that Wulfsil maintains a good relationship with Lakeside to the south, using it as a location from which to gather information about its borders, as well as to dispatch information or its agents. Moreover, PCs should understand that while Ælveheim isn't on friendly terms with Drakengard, Ealdheim, Solhagen, and Westholm, none of these small settlements have done anything to provoke it to take violent action against them - yet.

Understanding and presenting the ælven narrative is incredibly important to running this adventure and GMs are encouraged to review *Ælves – Children of the Divine Dream* (see Chapter 2 of the *Rhune: Dawn of Twilight Campaign Guide*), and *Ælveheim, the Dreaming Kingdom* (see Chapter 4 of the *Rhune: Dawn of Twilight Campaign Guide*).

A final word on running this adventure; while there are ample opportunities for PCs playing as ælves to unsheathe their swords and cry havoc (all while justifiably killing a lot of humans), this adventure is designed to encourage subterfuge, cunning, as well as Diplomacy, which is why the PCs begin play with *Aodain Shrouds* – magical items that allow them to disguise themselves as other races. This allows the PCs to venture into human settlements without inviting confrontation, at least immediately. PCs who elect not to use these items are more likely to have a hard time toward the end of the adventure.

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Background

The denizens of Ælveheim have long abhorred eastern expansion, looking to the City-States of Vallinar with contempt, and in some instances, outright hate. Their isolation, however, has enabled them to defend their borders with relative ease; few easterners are willing to traverse the long, dangerous routes west that lead into ælven lands. Still, some continue to make the challenging trek west, settling in lands that are dangerously close to ælven borders. While many of these settlers are sympathetic to ælven ideas and ways, some are not. It is these dangerous individuals that the ælves, when they discover them, eliminate with ruthless efficiency. This ruthless efficiency has left entire villages little more than smoldering piles of ash.

Similarly, for long years, various humans in the City-States of Vallinar have looked to the verdant forests of Ælveheim with avarice but all attempts to move in that direction have been thwarted by ælven blades and spells. Now, however, House Scrae and the Black Hand have entered into a horrid pact with the Fane of Winter, a vampiric cult in the frozen plane of Niflaeheim, in a bid for power and dominion.

House Scrae would trade fresh corpses to the Fane of Winter, to be animated as workers so that the vampires

can free the sleeping demon-lord Drittsekk from his prison of ice. Once the demon-lord conquers Midgard, House Scrae would be granted dominion over Vallinar. In return, the Fane of Winter has provided a terrible poison that mimics rage-fever among humans and poisons the trees of Ælveheim itself.

The plots of House Scrae are never a single path. Using the resources of the Black Hand, agents have slowly infiltrated the western towns, gaining secret influence in places like Drakengard, Ealdheim, Lakeside, Solhagen, and Westholm. At the same time, Scrae alchemists imbued seemingly common snowcap moths with Odr Poison so that the insects can spread the poison to both human settlements and the beloved forests of the ælves. As people fall ill, and are either killed outright by their friends and family to prevent the spread of rage-fever or were secretly slain by the lo-

cal Black Hand agents, whispers spread that the ælves unleashed rage-fever upon the human lands. Small conflicts rippled up and down the forest border and tensions between the human settlements and Ælveheim have soared.

From the towns to the south, the Black Hand transports bodies “collected” by their agents to a makeshift town called Aberwyth on the shores of Oracle Lake. There the corpses are traded for cages of infected white moths to be distributed to Black Hand agents across the region. Meanwhile, mercenaries and angry townsfolk pour into Aberwyth to invade the Ælveheim itself. The Black Hand commanders know that while the invasion will probably not succeed, it will weaken the ælves still further and provide more bodies for their profane trade agreement.

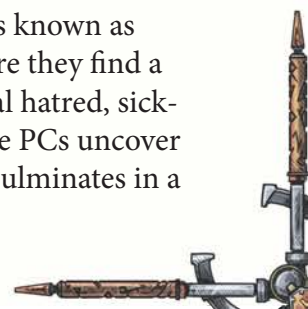
In Lakeside, the town healer Kerrigan Harwicke, a secret Black Hand agent and alchemist, works to prepare his final wagonload of bodies. An ambitious man, Kerrigan has his own plans. Using a hidden lab in an ancient barrow, the site of a failed ælven planar gate, he works to reanimate an imprisoned Stygian Elder in a bid to join House Scrae. This creature, now much diminished, has been alchemically enslaved to Kerrigan’s will. He only needs a few more days to finish his work before approaching House Scrae in triumph.

Now machinations of the Black Hand and House Scrae enter their final stages. The forest dies, the last shipments of bodies arrive, the ælves seem ignorant of the true threat, and an army of angry townsfolk, mercenaries and opportunists prepare for their invasion of Ælveheim. Only the PCs stand in their way.

Adventure Summary

In Act 1, the PCs are tasked with investigating the sickness that plagues the Ælveheim by patrolling the eastern border of the forest. As they explore, they begin to discover a series of strange and revealing fact - clues that eventually lead them to the human settlement of Lakeside.

In Act 2, the PCs use magical disguises known as *Aodain Shrouds* to enter Lakeside. There they find a once peaceful town galvanized by racial hatred, sickness and fear. Tracing various leads, the PCs uncover a plot between several townsfolk that culminates in a



confrontation with the alchemist Kerrigan Hawicke in an ancient ælven barrow. In the aftermath of that battle, the PCs learn of the impending invasion force gathering at Aberwyth and hurry to stop it.

In Act 3, the PCs approach the invasion camp and sneak into new settlement. With only a day or so before the invasion begins, they must sabotage the war effort, kill the human leaders, and hobble the invasion force as much as possible. Soon after a small army of ælves arrive to mop up the now failed invasion force, the PCs mount dire bats to take all of the information they have gathered to the Glitterfane where, hopefully, a cure for the Ælveheim can be found.

Additional Elements

Two core elements of *The Aelven Agenda* deserve additional scrutiny. First is the House Scræ poison that mimics rage fever.

Odr Poison

A concentrated distillation of rage fever itself, this insidious elixir combines elements of a curse, a disease and a poison. Created through the joint cabal of the Fane of Winter and House Scræ, Odr poison mimics rage fever but it is not as deadly nor is it as easy to contract. Though the poison is specifically designed to target humanoids, it does have alternate effects on other creatures and plants.

Humanoids When Odr poison enters the bloodstream of a humanoid either through contact, ingestion or injury, the victim must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become poisoned. Other than the specific antidote developed by House Scræ, there is no mundane cure for Odr. A caster must make a DC 25 caster level check to affect it with a *neutralize poison* effect; a *wish* or *miracle* spell cure it with no check.

Those who successfully save cannot contract rage-tough from the same vector for 24 hours, though they can still fall victim to it if transmitted via another medium. A DC 25 Heal check is required to realize the signs of Odr poisoning are different than normal rage fever.

First Stage: For 1d4 days after failing the first save, the poison mimics the early signs of rage fever: high tem-

perature, hemorrhagic bleeding of the mucus membranes and eyes, and general malaise.

Second Stage: During the next 2d6 days, the victim experiences an altered mental state similar to a *confusion* spell. Each day, a victim must make a DC 16 Will save or suffer as if affected by a *confusion* spell for 1 minute per the amount they failed the save by every hour for the 24 hour period. For example, if a human failed his save by 5, he would be confused for 5 minutes each hour. Those who succeed at their save may act normally for 24 hours unless they engage in combat (see below).

During this time, each time a victim makes an action he must roll on the table below:

Table 1: Odr Confusion

d100	Victim's Actions
1-15	Fall into a catatonic state
16-30	Act normally
31-50	Do nothing but babble about eating people
51-75	Attempt to eat himself, suffering 1d4 points of damage each round.
76-100	Attack nearest creature.

Combat: Violence exacerbates the poison. At the start of combat, an Odr poisoned victim must make another DC 16 Will save as described above regardless if he previously made or failed his one save per day.

At the end of second stage, the symptoms of most Odr poisoned victims recede to stage one for an additional 1d4 days before the poison is expelled from the body. However, there is a 25% chance that a stage two victim will instead progress to a third stage of the poison.

Third Stage: Those who reach this stage of Odr poisoning must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude Save or become, as with real rage fever, psychotic and cannibalistic killing machines that live for only a few days before expiring from the strain this madness places upon their overtaxed physique. Third stage victims are not infectious and cannot pass on any symptoms of their conditions. Third stage victims who succeed at their save instead perish immediately.

Non-Humanoids Though designed specifically for humans, ælves, and dwarves, Odr



poison does affect other living creatures albeit differently than it does with humans. Living being (excluding plant creatures) who come into contact with the poison must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be affected by Odr depending on their intelligence. Other than the specific antidote developed by House Scræ, there is no cure for odr short of a *wish* or *miracle* spell.

Creatures with an intelligence score above 11 develop a high temperature, hemorrhagic bleeding of the mucus membranes and eyes, and general malaise. They are also subject to the *confusion* effect described in the human's second stage for a period of 7 days plus 1 day per HD. At the end of this time, the creature must make

a new Fortitude save with a DC equal to 15 plus 1 per the number of confusion saves failed.

Those who succeed manage to shake off the poison.

Those who fail this final save or who have an intelligence score below 11, instantly gain the **Odr-Touched Template** (see below).

If the PCs are poisoned...

It may happen that one or more of the PCs are poisoned. While they are unlikely to find a high enough cleric to cure them there are several opportunities to loot the antidote from Black Hand agents. GMs can add a dose of the antidote to any encounter they wish if it better fits their campaign.



Odr-Touched Template

An Odr-Touched creature is a living creature that has been infected with Odr, a poisonous variant of rage fever. At first glance, a Odr-touched creature looks similar to its uninfected cousin. Upon closer inspection, however, the creature's feral, maddened aspect becomes clear. Its eyes are bloodshot and streaked with black blood; filth matts its coat; its claws and fangs grow brittle and break, becoming razor sharp.

"Odr-Touched" is an acquired template that can be added to any monstrous humanoid, magical beast, normal or dire animal (hereafter referred to as the base creature). It retains all of the base creature's senses, statistics, and special abilities except as noted below.

CR Varies If the base creature has fewer than 3 HD, the CR does not increase (CR +0). If the base creature has 4 or more HD, the CR increases by +1.

Alignment A Odr-touched creature is always chaotic evil.

Size and Type The creature's type remains animal, but it gains the augmented subtype. Its size remains unchanged, as does its base attack bonus, saving throws, and skill points. **AC** The creature's natural armor improves by +1. If the creature has 4+ HD, its natural armor improves by +4.

Bleeding Strikes A Odr-touched creature gains the ability to deal bleed damage with its natural attacks, provided those attacks would pierce the skin (such as from a claw or bite). If the creature has less than 3 HD, its bleed attack is bleed 1. If the creature has 4+ HD, its bleed attack increases to bleed 3.

Rage (Ex) A Odr-touched creature with 4 or more HD gains the ability to enter a rage, just like a barbarian. It may rage a number of rounds per day equal to its HD +4 + its Con modifier.

Organization solitary, gang (2–5), or pack (6–11).

Plants After exposure via tainted water, pollen or sap, plants develop reddish tendrils beneath the bark or dermal tissue. Gradually, the poisoned plant withers and dies. Smaller specimens die faster than larger ones. A typical mature tree withers over the course of two to three months.



The Aodain Shroud

Each of these magical items developed by the ælves of Ælveheim allows the wielder to assume the form and appearance of a specific humanoid. This has become integral for the guardians of the forest to infiltrate human settlements.

Aura minor transmutation and evocation; **CL** 10th
Slot neck, wrist, headband or slotless (see text); **Price** 8000 gp (16,000gp for unlocked Shrouds); **Weight** 1 lbs.

Description

Affixed as a piece of jewelry, hung about the neck, worn on the wrists or as a headband, an aodain shroud appears as nothing more than a coil of tiny vines preserved and etched with tiny runes and flecks of gemstones. When activated the shroud instantly grows into an organic, hand to foot mantle that changes the wielder's appearance to resemble a specific humanoid.

The nature of the imitated humanoid is encoded into each shroud at the time of creation. So a shroud keyed to become a male dwarf can only mimic the appearance of that same male dwarf. Characters wearing an aodain shroud receive a +10 bonus to Disguise Checks to maintain their disguises. A aodain shroud can be created to mimic any medium sized humanoid.

The shroud is a living item, a plant, and thus is subject to effects that specifically target plants. Frost or fire damage suffered by the wielder of an activated aodain shroud has a 15% chance of causing the shroud to deactivate for 1d4 rounds.

As an organic item, shrouds function during the day and regenerate during the night. Wielders can activate it, deactivate it, or use it continually during daylight hours but when the sun sets the organic mantle crumbles away. Shrouds are nonfunctional during the night.

Most shrouds are designed to only be used by ælves or their allies and do not function for others. Unlocked *aodain shrouds* are worth twice the normal price.

Construction Requirements

craft wondrous items, *disguise self*, *plant shape 1*;
Cost 4,000gp (8,000gp for unlocked shrouds)

Character Hooks and Connections

One of the integral aspects of Rhune as a campaign setting is that players need to *choose* sides. Thus, in *The Elven Agenda*, the PCs are assumed to be ælves,

aryandai, glitterfane or humans allied to the ælvish cause. Other races such as dwarves and automata have ideologies incompatible with this adventure.

Starting the Adventure

The story begins in the southern regions of Ælveheim at the fortified garrison of Rath Eileabor...

Ælveheim seems to tremble with dread anticipation. The wise study the omens while warriors ready for battle and message hawks dart among the trees bringing word from the borders.

One such missive has brought you to Hulsil, the most Northern of the sils along the eastern border. Three soaring Ælven towers connected by skybridges encircle the ancient standing stones that form the heart of this sil. After being escorted through halls filled with preparing warriors, tradesmen hurrying in with stacked supplies and arcanists peering into glowing crystal confabulations, you are shown into this sparse but comfortable sitting room. You do not have long to wait before Silmaster E'lidar arrives. The weathered Ælf stands before a large wall-map and gestures toward the northern end of Ælveheim.

"Blessing of the leaves to you, operatives. Though newly tempered, you have learned the ways of the bow and blade as well as the shadow-arts of stealth and shroud. Now you are called upon to put your training to the test. You may have heard that while we deal with threats from the Northwest, an unusual number of human trappers, hunters and other unaligned interlopers have begun crossing into our lands from other directions. Now, I have received word that a hideous contamination has invaded Ælveheim at various points along our Northeastern border. The malady drives beasts mad and leeches the life from the trees. I need not remind you that as the Moonwalde dies so do we. Our greatest druids, clerics and mages work tirelessly to combat this scourge but though they have slowed the infection slightly, no cure seems forthcoming. While we cannot rule out the possibility that this is a natural disease or some sign of the approaching Ragnarok, I suspect a foreign hand at work. I have already sent a number of teams to other outbreak sites. Thus, we come to you.



You shall patrol along the edge of the Ælveheim from here to the shore of Oracle Lake and to the borders of human village of Lakeside.”

The Silmaster pauses for a moment. “We have long had an...understanding with the humans of Lakeside. They respect our laws and we allow them to dwell on the fringe of the forest and partake of the Moonwalde’s bounty, within reason. Certainly some of the humans venturing into the woods are Lakesiders but many appear to be from elsewhere. Are these intruders the source of the poison? We simply do not know.

If you encounter intruders within our forest you may do with them as you see fit, however, your primary task is to seek out signs of this malady. For perhaps if we know just what has been done or who is responsible we can discern a way to stop it. Deal with the results of the outbreaks as you encounter them, but keep the security and sanctity of the Ælveheim above all else. If the trail takes you beyond our borders, make use of your Aodain Shrouds to disguise yourselves. Perhaps some of these human have knowledge concerning this scourge. Regardless, your path is set. Go and root out the filth that seeks to blacken the Moonwalde.”

The Silmaster provides each PC with an aodain shroud. Among the available disguises are two male humans, two female humans, two male dwarves, and two female dwarves.

Once chosen the shroud becomes locked to that character and can only be used by that individual until the Silmaster resets it.

ACT 1 Unwelcome Incursions

In Act One of *The Ælven Agenda*, the PCs begin their quest to cure the poisoning of the forest by investigating a string of incidents at the Northeastern edge of Ælveheim. While traveling vaguely toward the village of Lakeside, they discover invading trappers, poisoned animals, dying trees and other signs of the malady.

A. Darkening Paths and Tremulous Trails
Rather than forcing the plot down specific routes, the forest encounters in Act One are presented in a two-part sandbox style bracketed by set encounters. This allows GMs to give their players the illusion of choice. Act One opens with *A Scurry of Squirrels*, then presents a group of non-combat encounters (A2) and a group of combat encounters (A3).

GMs should run 1d2 encounters mixed between the A2 and A3 before the midpoint encounter (*Plague Wagon*). Then run another 1d2 mixed encounters before presenting the “conclusion” encounter.

How long the journey through the forest takes is up to individual GMs, though it is suggested that the structure of the adventure follow **Table 2** (below):

Table 2: Sandbox Encounters

Opening Encounter	<i>A Scurry of Squirrels</i>
Sandbox Part One	1d2 Encounters mixed between the combat and non-combat encounters presented in A2 and A3
Midpoint Encounter	<i>Plague Wagon</i>
Sandbox Part Two	1d2 Encounters mixed between the combat and non-combat encounters presented in A2 and A3
Conclusion Encounter	<i>Attack at the Waystation</i>

If the players have a leap of logic and decide to head to Lakeside on their own, GMs are encouraged to allow it. On the route to Lakeside, they could stumble across the *Attack at the Waystation*.

Development and Clues

As they progress, PCs have the opportunity to learn clues and draw conclusions (both correct and erroneous) about the poisoning of the forest. The “Development” header in each encounter contains a suggested method of “winning” the encounter as well as the information listed under the Clues section of the encounter. The clues should guide the PCs toward the town of Lakeside.

A1. A Scurry of Squirrels

As the adventure opens, the PCs set forth from Hulsil and travel several hours before they run across their first exposure to the effects of the poison. GMs wishing to extend the feeling of travel can, of course, explore these first hours in detail (the departure from Hulsil, random encounters...etc). For this adventure, the first real encounter comes with the PCs are ambushed by some infected wildlife.

A few hours outside of Hulsil, the Ælveheim grows thick, with towering evergreens, oaks and willows overhanging the moss and leaf strewn ground. A great number of white moths flutter among the branches spurred on by the season. Here and there dying trees dot the otherwise lush Moonwalde; your first signs of the malady plaguing the forest.

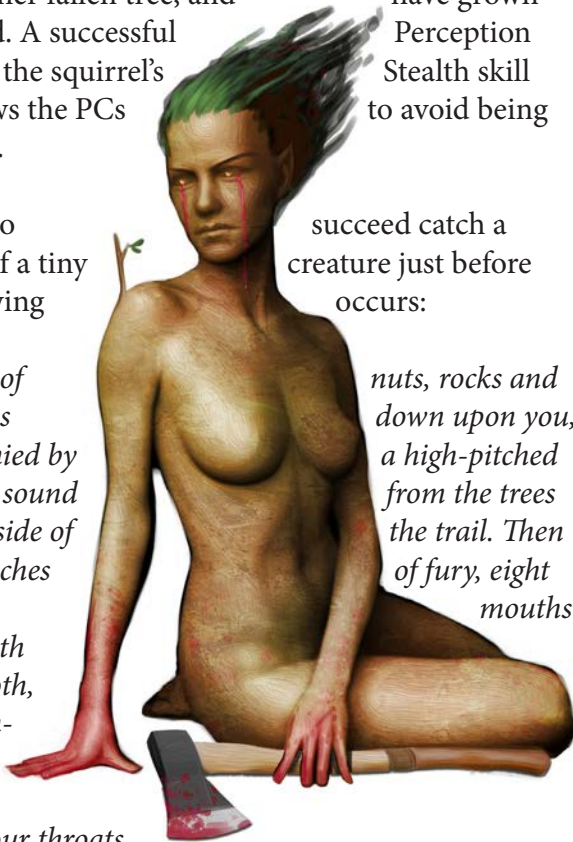
As soon as the PCs enter the area they notice the following:

A Dryad, her face marked by bloody tears, lies dead upon the fallen trunk of her tree. Her sap-stained hands still hold the axe she used to fell the tree. Before you can give her comfort, she collapses.

The Dryad, however, is not the true threat here. A scurry of infected squirrels have been feeding on the sap from her fallen tree, and quite mad. A successful Perception checks vs the squirrel's (+4) allows the PCs surprised.

Those who glimpse of a tiny the following

A shower of twigs rains accompanied by chittering sound on either side of with screeches squirrels, flecked with bloody froth, fling themselves out of the trees at your throats.



have grown Perception Stealth skill to avoid being

succeed catch a creature just before occurs:

nuts, rocks and down upon you, a high-pitched from the trees the trail. Then of fury, eight mouths

Odr-Touched Squirrel (8)

CR 1/8

XP 50 (each)

CE Diminutive animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +4 size, -2 template)

hp 3 (1d8-1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1 plus bleed)

Special Attacks Bleed (1 point)

Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

TACTICS

Driven insane by the poison, the squirrels want nothing more than to slay and consume their foes. They fight in pairs, inflicting bleed damage and fighting to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 2, **Dex** 19, **Con** 9, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 6 (10 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +16

A layman's examination of the squirrel's remains reveals that there is certainly something very wrong with the animals, but it takes a DC 10 Heal check to identify the signs of rage fever (a successful DC 25 Heal check reveals that the signs of rage fever appear to come from a poison rather than a true illness). Where they gathered the humanoid body parts is a mystery.

The squirrels have no treasure.

Signs of Sickness in the Moonwalde

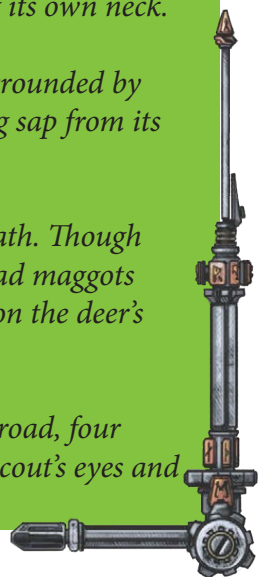
GMs may choose to use these colorful descriptive elements to keep the players focused on the plight of the forest.

A bird suddenly flies into tree, breaking its own neck.

To one side of the path a dying tree, surrounded by fallen leaves, oozes reddish foul smelling sap from its splitting trunk.

The body of deer lies in the middle of path. Though dead some time, it is surrounded by dead maggots - apparently slain while trying to feast on the deer's flesh.

A body of an ælven scout lies upon the road, four ælven messenger hawks feed upon the scout's eyes and face.



A2. Non-Combat Encounters

These encounters are intended to be primarily non-combat related. This may not stop ambitious groups from starting a fight, but doing so may result in failing the encounter and/or killing the entire party. Typically there should be a few hours of travel between each encounter as the PCs journey along the border.

A2a. Pit Trap Trouble

In this puzzle encounter, PCs are faced with an interesting dilemma; how to free a bear.

Part way along the heavily forested trail, a desperate growling and thrashing echoes from a large square pit at the foot of an overhanging tree.

Looking into the pit reveals the following: *Scrabbling at the walls of the pit is a bear with greenish-black fur and an ælven harness slung around its torso. When you come into view, the bear sits on its haunches, cocking its head at you and whines plaintively.*

The pit itself is 15 feet square and 25 feet deep. A tall oak tree overhangs the pit, the nearest branches of which are 10 feet above the ground.

Creatures The black bear is **Bollag**, the animal companion of **Coilear Aardair**, a local ælven druid operating out of the Waystation (**Area A6b**). Noticing the movement of many humans in the woods, Aardair sent Bollag to fetch aid. The loyal bear hurried south but tumbled into this pit and has been trapped here for 16 hours. Though frantic to return to his master, Bollag grew up with ælves and instinctively trusts them. He will not attack unless provoked. He is about 5 feet long and weighs 250 lbs.

Bollag

XP 800

black bear (Pathfinder Bestiary)

hp 32

CR 3

Harness A successful DC 10 Intelligence, Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (local) check reveals that some of the druids of Ælveheim use harnesses like the one on the bear for their animal companions.

PCs attempting to make use of speak with animal can only learn that Bollag desperately wants out of the pit. He is too frantic while trapped to communicate more.

PCs peering down into the pit can attempt a DC 18 Perception check to notice the crushed and mauled remains of a human, mostly buried beneath deadfall at the bottom. To search the body, a PC will have to descend into the pit itself but due to the size of the bear, the animal will have to be removed first.

Development There is no preset solution. Instead, the area around the pit trap is littered with objects that could be used by canny players. GMs should allow any creative ideas to succeed with a few skill checks to allow for happenstance. Some examples of possible solutions include knocking or cutting down a tree and lowering it into the pit so the bear can climb out, digging out the sides of the pit to make a ramp, or lashing a rope together out of vines to pull bear from the pit.

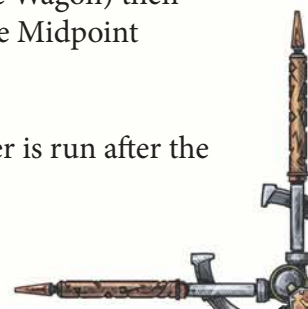
Characters searching the area around the pit can find a diverse assortment of objects with an easy DC 10 Perception check. Rather than just list these nearby objects, GMs might instead ask the player making the check what sort of things they are looking for. Then their results could be one or two of the objects, not the whole list.

In the immediate area PCs can find various trees, vines, sticks, a dying oak tree, saplings, and rocks of various sizes including three boulders (100 lbs each). At their discretion, GMs can include other objects to this list that could be commonly found in the forest.

PCs fail this encounter if they kill Bollag or do not help it out of the pit.

Clues If the PCs aid Bollag and this encounter is run before the Midpoint encounter (Plague Wagon) then he will attempt to lead them toward the Midpoint encounter in A4.

If the PCs aid Bollag and this encounter is run after the Midpoint encounter (Plague Wagon)



then he will attempt to lead them toward the Attack on the Waystation at A5.

As long as the PCs head in the direction he wants, Bollag will accompany them like a friendly pet. Should they deviate or drive him away, he will proceed alone.

Once free, Bollag can be communicated with via speak with animals to learn the following:

Who are you?	<i>Bollag is bear. Strong!</i>
What are you wearing? (Harness)	<i>Master give Bollag. It nice!</i>
Who is your Master?	<i>NoFur sharpear friend. Danger! Must help! Must!</i>
Do you know about the sick trees?	<i>Sharpear nofur friend hunt bad water and bad beasts.</i>

A direct creature, Bollag doesn't know much more than that about the poisoning. He is very worried and determined to follow the orders of his druid companion and find help.

The body in the pit is of a human male. A DC 10 Heal check reveals that he broke his leg falling into the pit and then had his skull broken when a large bear landed on him. A crushed scroll tube contains a crude map of streams and pools near Lakeside and a black coin emblazoned with a hand symbol.

If the PCs kill Bollag or just abandon him they do not gain any information from the pit. The body (should they figure out a method of accessing it without freeing the bear) has been crushed into unrecognizable pulp.

Treasure On the body, amazingly intact, is a *potion of cure light wounds*.

Story Award If the PCs free Bollag, award them 150xp

A2b. The Green Automata

This encounter presents the PCs with a moral choice.

A successful DC 10 Perception check reveals the following:

A few yards away you find an area of disturbed ground as if someone fought there. There is a splash of some sort of liquid, and a trail of drips of similar liquid leading off to the Northeast.

The trail is easy to follow (DC 10 Survival check) and after about an hour, the PCs find themselves at the edge of a small clearing.

At the far side of the clearing, pressed up against a stone outcropping a sturdy hut has been constructed out of fallen branches, mud and other plant material.



Creature This cabin is the home of a somewhat deluded automata who is attempting to become a druid - and failing. Wounded after a brief confrontation with humans (Kerrigan's thugs from Lakeside), he crawled to his hut.

When the PCs enter the hut read the following:

The single room of the hut is festooned with dried herbs, containers of dried flowers, nuts and potted plants. The simple tables, chairs and cabinets are wonderfully carved with idyllic woodland scenes. Against one wall is a carver's workbench complete with chisels, scrapers and other tools of the craft. A fine mesh cage holds a number of the white moths that seem to be everywhere this year. The trail of liquid leads to an automata collapsed against the rear wall of the hut. A large crescent shaped gear frames a humanoid head. Decorated with swirls of woad, the automata's armored plates are cracked and leaking fluid. The construct presses one hand fruitlessly against its wounds, the other is held out toward you.

"Please," it says in Sylvan.

This is **Tilman**, an automata, originally from Union City. The automata has an impossible dream; he wants to become a druid. Five months ago, he moved here to the forest to be closer to nature. Thus far he has failed to exhibit any signs of druidic magic or abilities. Tilman keeps to himself, which has coincidentally allowed him to avoid detection from ælven scouts. The recent events in the Moonwalde brought him out of his isolation, but he quickly ran afoul of a group of humans.

Tilman the Carver

CR 1/3

XP 135

Automata (Skuld) Expert 1

N Medium construct (automata)

hp 14 (1d8+6), currently only 1 hp; Honor 9

Wounded and unable to fight, Tilman begs for his life in his usual florid style.

"Honored Ælves. Guardians of the Green. This one begs you for its life. This one has harmed none beneath the branches nor any within the verdant expanse of the wood. All honors does this one give to the Sils and Alnara's Blessing. It is this one's greatest dream to be a forest warden. Will you spare this one?"

If the PCs are wearing their shroud disguises, Tilman speaks in low common believing them to be humans: *"If you be friends, then this one requests aid. If you are not, then this one is surely doomed."*

Development The PCs must decide what to do about this dying automata. As ælves, Tilman represents everything they should hate, and yet the construct seems to honor nature and attempts to follow the ælven way.

Clues If the PCs decide to question Tilman, they can learn the following information:

- *"This one was wounded while observing some humans carrying empty cages. They noticed this one and reacted...violently."*
- *"For the past few months, this one has noticed odd behavior from local animals and has seen the dying trees. There are unique differences between the Snowcap Moths of previous years and the specimens this one has noticed this season."*
- *"This one wants to be a druid but thus far has failed."*
- *"This one hopes to gain an animal companion. Perhaps a hedgehog."*
- *"This one used to work in the factories of Union City, but after awakening, this one moved here to be one with nature."*
- *"This one has observed human poachers in the Northeast."*
- *"This one watched a cloaked individual pouring something into one of the forest pools near Lakeside but this one could not see who it was."*

GMs Note: If not healed or stabilized, Tilman will die quite soon. As a general rule, GMs should allow a non-healed Tilman to answer three questions before he dies.

Treasure A search of the hut (DC 15 Perception check) uncovers five deer horn scrimshaw pieces (worth 25 gp each), 88gp in a pouch and an empty potion vial marked with a Lakeside maker's mark.

Story Award If the Players play to their character's ælven traditions and kill Tilman for being an abomination, award them 150xp. If they spare him they only receive 75xp but gain a point of Honor for their merciful deed.

A3. Combat Encounters

These encounters are intended to be primarily combat related. Canny players can resolve the conflict without fighting and, if so, GMs should not attempt to force combat, though the appropriate skills checks should be required to determine the success or failure of the PCs plans.

A3a. The Charge of the Light Fey CR 1

While traveling down one of the forest trails the PCs encounter the following: You round the bend in the path and see ahead of you a small fey knight, clad in a silver tabard mounted upon a young deer. The knight raises his pennant strewn lance and calls out in a high, lilting voice, "Die Invaders!" Then he charges!

Creatures This is Sir Eileirg, a gathlain warrior with a romanticised view of knights and chivalry, and his trusty mount Lord Brunndail. Usually the mischievous fey is the soul of decorum toward other inhabitants of the Ælveheim but he recently stole what he thought was a draught of wine from a human. The wine turned out to be a vial of Odr poison. Now deep in the grip of the insanity-inducing poison, Eileirg believes the forest is being invaded and it is up to him to save everyone.

Sir Eileirg CR 1/2

XP 200

Gathlain Fighter 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4)

CN Small fey

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** -1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex, +1 size, +1 natural)

hp 11 (1d10+1)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** -3

Weakness rage-touched confusion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor)

Melee lance +2 (1d6+1/x3) or lance (mounted) +2 (2d6+1/x3) or rapier +4 (1d4+1/18-20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1/day - *entangle* (DC 14), *feather step* (DC 14)

TACTICS

Sir Eileirg begins with a mounted attack against the toughest looking foe using his lance so that it deals double damage. If unmounted, he will switch to rapier and buckler. Due to the poisoning, Eileirg must roll for confusion each round after the first. **Morale** - Sir Eileirg fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Mounted Combat, Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly -1, Ride +5, Survival +3

Languages Common (Low), Sylvan; **Honor** 3

Combat Gear studded leather, buckler, lance, rapier, 130 gp

Rage-Touched Confusion (Ex) Deep in the throes of Odr poison, Sir Eileirg views the PCs as invading foes. He must make a DC 16 Will save each round to act normally or else roll on the following table.

Table 3: Sir Eileirg's Actions

Percentage Roll	Action
1-25	Catatonic
26-50	Does nothing but babble about eating nearby people
51-76	Deals 1d4+1 points of damage to himself by eating his own flesh
76-100	Attacks the nearest foe

Lord Brunndail (a deer) CR 1/4

XP 100

hp 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 1)

TACTICS

If the knight becomes confused and gives no orders in any given round, Lord Brunndail simply runs around attempting to avoid direct combat until the knight gives a new order. If Eileirg is unhorsed, Lord Brunndail will attack anyone attempting to harm the fey.

Morale - Lord Brunndail fights until reduced to 5 hp or less, then attempts to flee.

Development If the PCs manage to incapacitate the fey without killing him they achieve victory. If Eileirg dies, they fail. Once he is captured, they must decide what to do with him. Any XP awards for their solution to this dilemma is up to the GM.

Clues Deep in the grip of Odr poison, Eileirg continues to be hampered by his confusion (see table above) even if captured and questioned. However, if he makes his



save he will babble a few valuable tidbits among the ramblings about intruders, tasty flesh, and murder. *"...I liberated the draught! Wine is too good for them. Wine would make human taste good, I think."*

"Look at all the moths. Like snow in the summer!"

"...he was throwing them away in pools and streams! Waste of wine, I say!"

"...humans among the trees. Not the same. Many agendas! Do their eyes taste delicious?"

"...Some hunt along the Ystwyth! Some despoil! Now I hunt them!"

"I'll stain the moths with the blood of the invaders!"

"...They gather by the river's mouth. Red mud! Soon I'll make it redder with their blood!"

Treasure Besides the combat gear that Sir Eileirig carries, he also possess a potion of cure light wounds bearing the mark of a nearby ælven waystation [a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals this].
Story Award If the PCs manage to subdue Eilerig and get information from him, award them 150xp.

A3b. The Eating Tree is Hungry CR 2

The poisoning of the forest has killed trees and altered animals but it has also given birth to an immature tendriculos.

You spot a small arrangement of stone and twigs set into a specific pattern; an old ælven trail sign. An ælven scout must have passed this way recently.

PCs can follow the trail with a DC 10 Survival check. If the PCs do so, they will run into the immature tendriculos after about an hour of travel.

While traveling through a heavily wooded area, read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead you spot what looks like a body resting in the tall weeds at the base of a small, mushroom-studded tree capped by a crown of wide leaves and hanging vines.

A DC 15 Perception check reveals that the body is that of a ælf, dressed in scout leathers.

A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) identifies the tree as an immature tendriculos.

Creature Ravenously hungry, the tendriculos killed the first creature to come its way; the hapless ælf now half-eaten in the weeds at the creature's base. The second creatures to come along are the PCs.

Immature Tendriculos

CR 2

XP 600

N Small plant

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, **touch** 9, **flat-footed** 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)
hp 22 (9d8-18), fast heal 3

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4;

Immune acid, plant traits; Weakness fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d4-3), 2 tentacles -1 (1d3-1 plus Paralysis)

Space 5 ft. Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks paralysis (1 round, DC 12)

TACTICS

The tendriculos will wait motionless until the PCs get within range of its attacks and then it will lash out at the nearest foe. If attacked from a distance, it will move to get within range of multiple targets to make use of its many attacks. Morale - Not intelligent enough to flee, it fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 4, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 3, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 3;

Base Atk +6; **CMB** 6; **CMD** 21

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +19; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in undergrowth

Languages Sylvan (cannot speak); **Honor** -

Paralysis (Su) Though very young, the immature tendriculos has the ability to coat its tentacles with a paralytic poison. Those struck by the tentacles must make a DC 12 Fort save or be paralyzed for 1 round.

Development Some PCs may not wish to harm a plant creature, but a successful DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that this creature is a mutated specimen, a symptom of the forest's illness. The PCs can achieve victory by destroying the plant.

Clue On the body is a note in ælven that reads: The druid at the Northern waystation reports more humans interlopers at the Northern waystation. He requests aid.

Additionally, a crude map of the region in a obviously



human-made pouch seems to indicate an encampment marked by a “X”, in the Northeast near Lakeside. This pouch does not appear to belong the aelf and must have been found by the scout before his death.

Treasure The body of the ælven scout has masterwork leather armor, backpack, daggers (3), arrows (20), shortbow, shortsword, 50 ft. elven rope, 12 sp.

Story Award If the PCs recognize that the tendriculos is a corruption of nature and kill it, award them 100xp.

A4. Midpoint Encounter: The Plague Wagon

This encounter signifies the middle of the PCs journey toward Lakeside and should occur after 1-2 encounters or at the GM’s discretion.

As the PCs travel through a particularly thick area of woods, they come upon the end of a skirmish between an ælven patrol and a group of humans in a wagon. A DC 15 Perception check is required to hear the sounds of battle before spotting the fighting.

Somewhere up ahead and close by, you hear the distinctive sounds of battle; the clash of metal, whirr of arrows, and cries of pain and rage.

When the PCs approach, read the following:

As you emerge from the trees onto a wide, dirt trail winding through the forest you see an ælven patrol just finishing off a group of humans. A few paces away, a wagon rests on its side with slain horses still tangled up in the traces. Axes, shovels and large, oblong packages wrapped in layers of canvas lay scattered about. One of the ælves turns to you as he shoves the last human off of his blade. “If we’d known you were coming, brothers, we would have saved some humans for you to kill.”

This ælven patrol is a six member band out of Hulsil led by **Elisedd Dalais** (CN, male ælf ranger 3). A week ago, Dalais led his group west to the Ystwyth River and then back east looking for a few patrols who have gone missing. While they have not found find the missing patrollers, they did stumble upon this wagon of humans.

The other members of the patrol are as follows:

Alian (CN male ælf ranger 1)

Keevan (LN male ælf fighter 1)

Beleni (CN female ælf ranger 1)

Rionach (CN female ælf cleric of Ardwynn 2)

Carbry (CN male ælf fighter 1 / sorcerer 1)

If asked, Dalais has no qualms about telling fellow ælves about the skirmish. His patrol spotted the humans about three hours ago approaching from the Southeast, following one of the old trails. They set up an ambush and slaughtered the human interlopers. For Dalais it is as simple as that. PCs who question his methods will make the usually cordial ælf quite cross (requiring a DC 15 Diplomacy check to return his mood to friendly).

The other ælves busy themselves with wrapping any wounds and caring for their gear, leaving the PCs ample time to investigate the scene.

GM Note If the PCs arrive in the company of Bollag, the bear from **Area A2a**, Dalais takes charge of the animal. He promises to care for the bear and investigate the Waystation once they finish their patrol.

The Humans Now quite dead, the humans appear to be commoners, judging by their homespun attire. A close inspection can produce additional information. A DC 15 Perception check reveals that each human carries 1gp and 25sp in a black leather pouch along with a black coin emblazoned with the image of a hand.

A DC 20 Perception check uncovers a painted jug of corn whiskey smashed beneath one of the bodies. Putting the pieces together forms a crude label:

Marsol’s Finest. The Lazy Oak Tavern, Westholm.

The Cargo When the PCs choose to investigate the strange objects that have spilled from the wagon, read the following:

These dozen or so strange objects range from four to six feet in length. Each is tightly wrapped in cerecloth (waxed linen or canvas) and are roughly oblong in shape. The pungent odor of vinegar, rosemary and camphor exudes from the objects.

A DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (religion) check is enough to identify the odors and cerecloth as methods

of preserving the dead.

If the PCs choose to unwrap the corpses, read this:

Beneath the waxed cloth the corpse was carefully soaked in vinegar and dressed with dried tansy flowers for preservation. The human is marked by black-bluish veins spidering around his face, purple swollen gums revealing broken teeth and weeping sores on the neck. The tell-tale signs of rage fever.

The other ælves step back hurriedly, exclaiming in fear and horror, covering their mouths and noses with their arms or hoods.

Should the PCs decide not to unwrap any of the corpses, Dalais orders his cleric Rionach to do so. GMs should paraphrase the description above. Regardless, all of the other ælves react with horror and fear at the signs of rage-fever.

While examining the bodies, a DC 10 Heal check will identify the signs of rage fever (DC 25 Heal check instead accurately diagnoses the illness to be some form of poisoning). Additionally, a DC 15 Perception check uncovers a few snowcap moths stuck between the layers of waxed linen and canvas. They could only have gotten there when the bodies were wrapped.

When the PCs are finished examining the bodies Dalais orders his patrol to burn the bodies. As they set to work, he turns to the PCs:

“Finally we have proof. The humans are behind the sickness. The Moonwalde sickens because the humans are burying their infected dead in the forest. I will see them all dead for this. Go, friends. Continue your patrol. We will take word of this to Hulsil after we burn the dead.”

It is suggested that GMs run 1-2 more encounters after the Plague Wagon, mixed between combat and non-combat encounters.

Story Award For successfully examining the bodies, award the PCs 300xp

A5. Attack on the Waystation

Clues in each encounter lead the PCs toward Lakeside, but before they reach the town a situation draws their attention.

This encounter occurs around an ælven Waystation nestled in the middle of a grove of ancient oaks. The Waystation itself is basically a small hut built to provide scouts a place to rest and resupply. The ælven druid, **Coilear A'ardair** keeps watch over this particular Waystation and sent his bear companion (See A2a) to fetch aid when he noticed the increase in human poachers. Unfortunately for the druid, the poachers succumbed to Odr poison and have been assaulting the Waystation for the past two days. When the PCs arrive on the scene, the druid is severely wounded, out of magic and has only minutes to live

Sounds of fighting and strange, almost bestial, voices screaming with fury echo through the trees. Up ahead, you spot a group of dirty, feral humans hacking their way through a wall of brambles surrounding a scorched ælven Waystation in the center of a stand of ancient oaks. Slumped against the wall of the Waystation, a gravely wounded ælf lies in a pool of his own blood, his glowing, trembling hand struggling to keep the circle of thorns between himself and the raving humans.

Creatures The human poachers are deep in the grip of Odr poison. Their superstitious hatred of ælves, enhanced by the poison, has driven them into a fury.

Odr-Touched Poachers (4) CR 1/2

XP 200 (each)

Human Warrior 2

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 13, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 15 (2d10+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +3 (1d8+1/19–20) or sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged longbow +3 (1d8/×3)

TACTICS

Unless distracted by the PCs, the poachers hack through the brambles and kill the druid within three rounds. If attacked by a PC, a poacher will attack the nearest foe.

Morale The poachers fight to the death unless incapacitated or captured.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Intimidate +4, Stealth +6

Languages Common (Low); **Honor** 2

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, masterwork arrows (5); **Other Gear** leather armor, longbow with 20 arrows, longsword, sap, 48 gp

Development The PCs succeed at this encounter if they manage to save the druid. They have three rounds before the poachers cut their way through the thorns. At the beginning of the fourth round, the druid falls unconscious (releasing the spell and causing the brambles to collapse). At the beginning of round six, the druid will die unless the PCs succeed at a DC 15 Heal check or provides magical healing. The PCs fail this encounter if the druid dies.

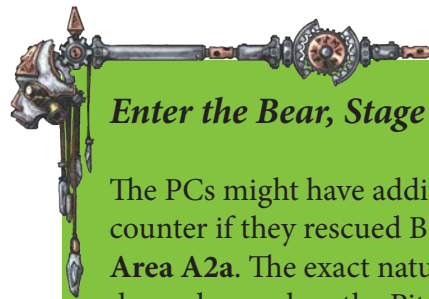
Clues If rescued and healed, **Coilear A'ardair** can tell the PCs that he has been tracking sick animals and



the illness seems to be spreading from the direction of Lakeside. He believe that this is obviously part of a human attack on the forest and the ælves.

If the druid dies before the PCs can rescue him they can find notes among his belongings that indicate that the druid was tracking the sickness in the forest. He seemed to believe that it was spreading from the nearby town of Lakeside. A'ardair believed that the sickness in the forest was obviously part of a human attack on the forest and the ælves.

On the bodies of one of the poachers the PCs can also find a blood-stained journal. Most of the information listed within concerns hunting and skinning animals. However, the final entry described below also contains a clue.



Enter the Bear, Stage Left

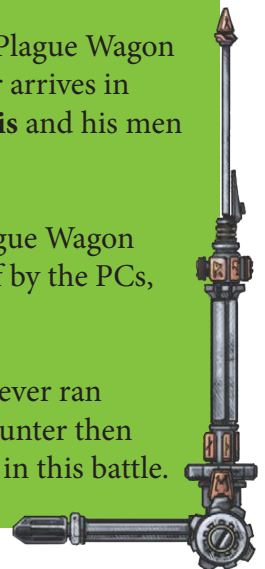
The PCs might have additional aid in this encounter if they rescued Bollag from his pit in **Area A2a**. The exact nature of the extra help depends on when the Pit Trap Trouble encounter occurred, as indicated below.

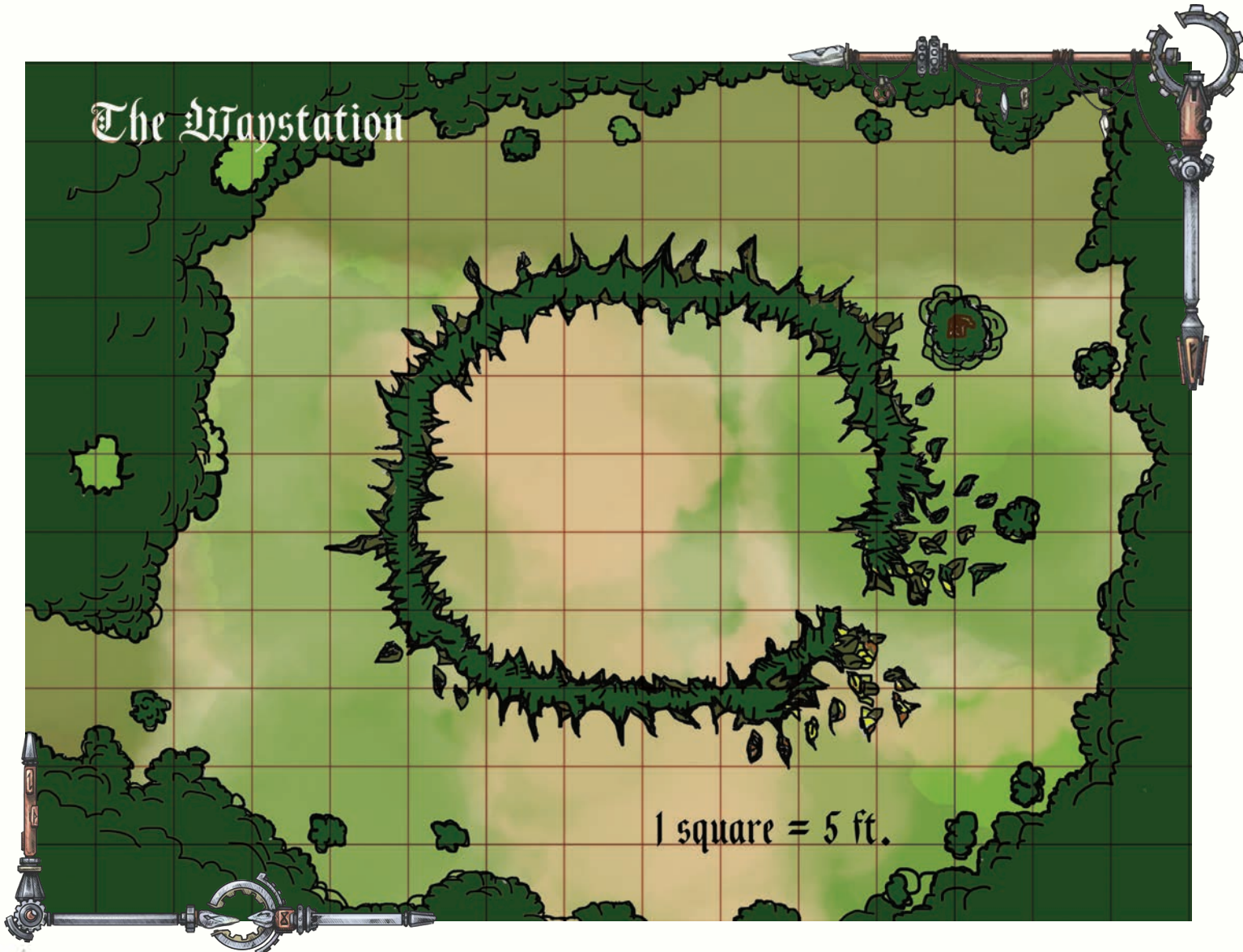
Should Bollag be travelling with the PCs, then he attacks the poachers in round one and keeps fighting until they are all dead or incapacitated.

If Bollag was rescued prior to the Plague Wagon Midpoint adventure, then the bear arrives in round 2 followed by **Elisedd Dalais** and his men in round 4.

If Bollag was rescued after the Plague Wagon Midpoint encounter but driven off by the PCs, then the bear arrives in round 2.

GMs should note that if the PCs never ran through the Pit Trap Trouble encounter then Bollag does not arrive to aid them in this battle.





Journal Entry *[A thick blood stain mars most of the page]...Culled several deer, a boar and a dozen hares. All show signs of the illness. Is it water maddness? [i.e. rabies] Or is it really rage fever, like Boas keeps saying? Never heard of citters getting rage fever. Add that to the dying trees and all these months, the boys are getting twitchy. Folks in town say the ælves are doing this, but they've left us alone all these years and we've never broken the compact so why would they bother? I think those fellows we ran off the other day have something to do with all of this. They scurried back toward Lakeside like thieves.*

After learning this information, the PCs should want to proceed toward Lakeside itself. If the players become stuck, GMs can ask for Intelligence or skill checks (DC 15) to put the clues together. Since the sandbox nature of Act One makes randomized the clues, GMs should use the evidence gathered in the encounters they used to aim the PCs toward Lakeside.

Treasure In addition to the poacher's combat gear, the Waystation contains 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, 1 vial of antitoxin, and enough nonmagical bolts/arrows to resupply each PC. The Waystation itself is well stocked with standard supplies (rope, tents, packs...etc). PCs searching for specific items have a 60% chance of finding any stock non-magical items, provided they are neither weapons nor armor.

Story Award If the PCs rescue the druid award each PC 400xp and 2 points of honor.

ACT 2

Dark Plots, Green Shores

B. Approaching Lakeside

Following the clues in the forest, the PCs approach the sleepy town of Lakeside. Unbeknownst to them, the Black Hand Agents have all but completed the release of the last of the Odr-poisoned moths and the final wagonload of bodies is preparing to depart to the invasion staging ground to the West.

B1. The Poisoned Pond

As the PCs approach Lakeside, they come upon a most peculiar scene.

Littered by dead insects, a small pond lies just within the forest's edge. Dying trees in the surrounding clearing, their bark peeling from their trunks, reach up from the ground like charred bones to overshadow the calm waters below. The body of a human woman, dressed in simple homespun linen, lies at the pond's edge. The pool of blood beneath her dribbles into the water as a crimson cloud.

This morning, four of Kerrigan's ruffians arrived at this pond to release a new batch of the poison-bearing Snowcap moths. However, upon arriving they surprised a Lakesider named Soma Mjolsdottir who was examining the water.

Her family having long respected ælven ways, Soma distrusted the anti-aelf sentiment in Lakeside and was suspicious about the activities of certain people in town. Unfortunately, she kept these feelings to herself. Knowing that this pond was one of the first places to develop dying trees, she came to see what she could find, a decision that led to her meeting with Kerrigan's men. Acting rashly, the rogues murdered the young woman. During the scuffle, the cage holding the moths was smashed. Though they hastily took their doses of the antidote, the rogues decided to let the moths disperse and departed to find a sizable enough stone to

weigh down the corpse, which they then threw into the pond.

When this scene begins, Kerrigan's men are on their way back with a weathered piece from a nearby crumbling runestone so the PCs have only a short time before they arrive.

The Body Only 19 years old, **Soma** was a young, pretty woman with her long brown hair tied into braids. Now however, she lies on her back in a pool of blood, with one hand trailing into the pond itself. Two wounds, one to the back of her legs and the other to her throat, makes obvious the cause of her death. A successful DC 15 Heal check reveals that these injuries are only an hour or so old.

The Cage Examining Soma's body, or moving it, reveals an odd assortment of cloth, thin metal rods and wire, smashed beneath her. Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Knowledge (clockwork or engineering) or a DC 20 Disable Device check can intuit that this was once a small, intricate cage of some sort with very small, and closely spaced bars.

The remains of four snowcap moths are stuck to the cloth that once covered this cage. Characters handling the pieces of the cage have a 10% chance of becoming poisoned by Odr Poison (see page 3).

Though her body has been stripped of valuables, a DC 15 Perception check uncovers an iron house key tucked into her wide leather belt.

Development If the PCs linger to examine the corpse, bury the body, or examine the pool at length, the four ruffians return.

As Kerrigan's men approach allow the PCs an opposed Perception check vs the rogue's stealth (+5).

If the rogues detect the presence of the PCs, they will quietly lay down the stone they carry and break into pairs. Each pair will move apart until there is 30 feet between them and then attack the PCs making use of surprise to deal maximum damage.

If the PCs detect the approach of the rogues they hear the following:



The sound of arguing, frustrated voices echoes through the dying trees, becoming clearer as they grow closer.

"I still says we should have reported this," says one voice.

Another replies, "Bollocks. It's the last one anyway. What he don't know, don't hurt us."

"Just hurry up," a third voice grumbles. "This damned thing is heavy!"

Presently, four humans wearing leathers trudge down the trail leading toward the pond. They wear short swords on their belts and each holds a corner of a large stone.

Creatures When combat begins, the rogues will attack without caring if their foes are human, ælves, or anyone else - their activities must be kept a secret.

KERRIGAN'S ROGUES (4) CR 1/2

XP 200 (each)

Human rogue 1

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +3 (1d6+2/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Overconfident and loyal to Kerrigan, these humans will fight as a team using flanking tactics to grant sneak attack damage. However, they are not very wise.

Morale When there is only one rogue left, he will attempt to flee (and warn Kerrigan)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Deceitful, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +6, Intimidate +4, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +5

Languages Common (Low), Dwarven (Low); **Honor** 3

SQ trapfinding +1

Other Gear lamellar (leather) armor, shortsword, backpack, belt pouch, flint and steel, mess kit, thieves' tools, trail rations (5), empty glass vials, waterskin; 2 gp, 10 sp

Bigots and fully indoctrinated in the anti-ælf movement, the ruffians are desperate to conceal their crime and will be extra violent toward any non-humans they encounter. If they are captured they will do their best not to reveal any information to their captors.

A successful DC 10 Intimidation (or DC 22 Diplomacy check) convinces the rogues to reveal what they know.

If the captives realize that the PCs are ælves, add +5 to the DCs of these checks.

Some obvious questions include:

Question "Why did you kill this woman?" or "Why did you attack us?"

Answer "She/you saw too much."

Question "Who are you working for?"

Answer "Gaven Norling promised us revenge against the evil ælves." A DC 10 Knowledge (local) skill check reveals that Gaven Norling is from Lakeside.

Question "Why do you hate ælves?"

Answer "For spreading rage fever."

Question "What were you hired to do?"

Answer "We were paid a gold to release these bugs, which Gaven said would keep the ælves away, who fear them."

Question "What is the significance of the moths?"

Answer "I'm not sure, but Gaven said ælves don't like them. They're supposed to keep them/you away."

Question "How many time have you done this?"

Answer "We've been releasing these moths once or twice a week for months now."

Question "Are you going to release more bugs?"

Answer "No, Gaven said this is the last batch. Pity the lass had such bad timing."

Question "Is Gaven working with anyone else?"

Answer "The coin's been too good to ask too many questions. Ain't got no use for ælves, so it's fine by us."

Question “Where do you meet with Gaven?” or “Where do the bugs come from?”

Answer “Gaven meets us at the Meadhall, once, sometimes twice a week. No idea about the bugs, he’s always just ready for us.”

Question “Where can we find Gaven?”

Answer “Depends. When he’s not working the docks or meeting us at the Meadhall, can’t really say.”

Gm Note If all of the rogues are slain, the PCs will obviously have no one to interrogate. Should this happen, include a scrap of parchment in one of the rogue’s gear that contains the following message...

Here is the last one. Do the usual. We’ll meet by the stone at the Crossroads tomorrow night for your payment.

-G

This somewhat cryptic missive gives the PCs two avenues to follow; the mysterious “G” and the planned meeting at the Crossroads (**Area D1**)

A DC 15 Linguistics or DC 20 Perception check reveals that the ink on this message, while dry, is no more than 6 or 7 hours old.

Clue Included in each of the ruffians’ gear is an empty glass vial. These are the containers of Odr Poison antidote that they consumed after murdering Soma. The antidote itself is a unique liquid and difficult to identify specifically (without resorting to the use of high level divination spells), although someone trained in alchemy might learn additional information. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) reveals that residue inside the empty vials has the viscosity and characteristic properties of some sort of curative or antitoxin. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Perception check also reveals this information.

If asked with a DC 10 Intimidation or DC 22 Diplomacy check, one of the rogues says that the “bugs can give a man the heaves”. The liquid is medicine in case of accidental contact.

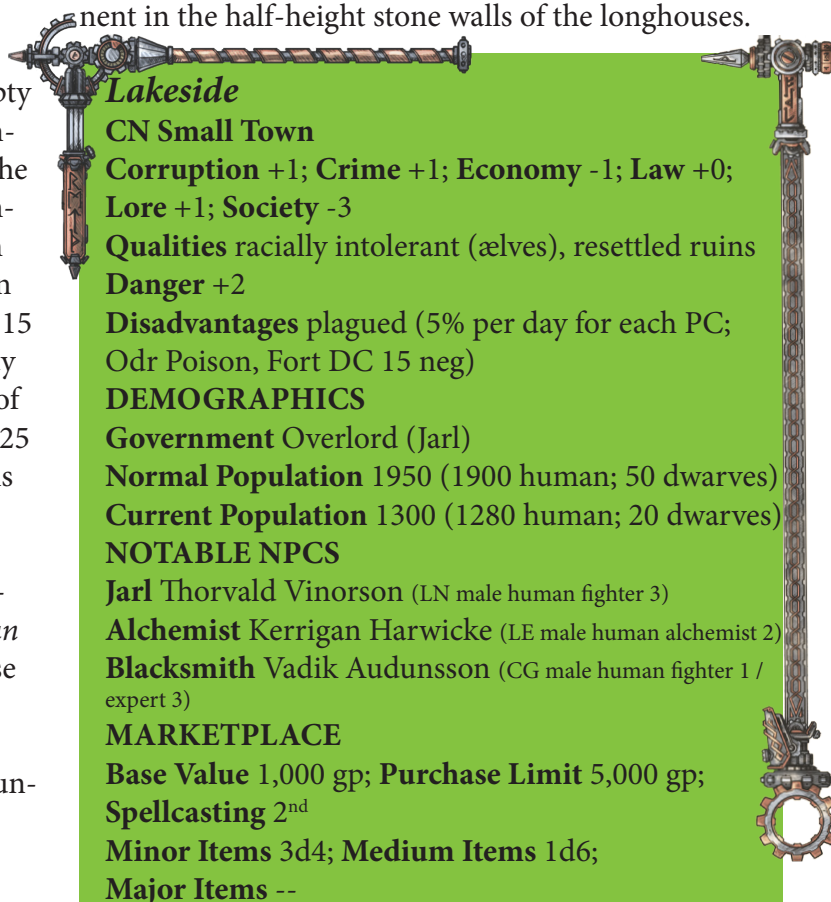
Story Award For successfully completing this encounter the PCs each receive 75xp.

C. Lakeside

Normally a sleepy community relying on fishing and forestry for their livelihood, Lakeside is currently a town rife with racial tension, plagued by rage fever deaths, and uncertain as to its future. When the PCs get within sight of the town, read or paraphrase the following:

Beneath an almost visible stench of drying fish and woodsmoke, Lakeside’s sod-roof buildings huddle around five large longhouses. Scattered in and around the town, weathered stone blocks and tell-tale markings on the ground speak of older structures harvested for building material by the current Lakesiders. Fields thick with barley, wheat and oats stretch from the palisade-topped rampart of earth at the town’s boundary to the edge of the forest.

Lakeside was built over older ælven ruins and deeded to the first Jarl by the ælves as part of a buffer zone of similar communities on the borders of their realm. The buildings are mostly constructed of wood with sod or thatch roofs and streets are swept, hard-packed dirt. Here and there the Lakesiders have made use of stones taken from the ælven ruins. This is especially prominent in the half-height stone walls of the longhouses.



Lakeside
CN Small Town
Corruption +1; Crime +1; Economy -1; Law +0; Lore +1; Society -3
Qualities racially intolerant (ælves), resettled ruins
Danger +2
Disadvantages plagued (5% per day for each PC; Odr Poison, Fort DC 15 neg)
DEMOGRAPHICS
Government Overlord (Jarl)
Normal Population 1950 (1900 human; 50 dwarves)
Current Population 1300 (1280 human; 20 dwarves)
NOTABLE NPCS
Jarl Thorvald Vinorson (LN male human fighter 3)
Alchemist Kerrigan Harwicke (LE male human alchemist 2)
Blacksmith Vadik Audunsson (CG male human fighter 1 / expert 3)
MARKETPLACE
Base Value 1,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp;
Spellcasting 2nd
Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;
Major Items --



- C7 - Sleepy Foam Meadhall
- C8 - Audun's Emporium
- C9 - Docks
- C10 - Sona's House
- C11 - Quarantine Area
- C12 - Hospice
- C13 - Stables

- C1 - Farms and Fields
- C2 - Ramparts
- C3 - Town Square
- C4 - Jarl's Longhouse
- C5 - Community Longhouse
- C6 - Temple to Dae'gr



0 75 150 300
Scale (in feet)

The Town of Lakeside

Gm Notes PCs employing their shroud disguises are treated as humans (or dwarves) unless their actions raise suspicions. Should that happen, NPCs get the usual perception vs disguise checks to piece the shroud. PCs seen in their natural forms suffer a -4 penalty to all social skill checks while in Lakeside and must pay 150% of the normal price for goods and services.

C1. Farms and Fields

Carefully cultivated rows of barley, wheat and oats and a handful of farmhouses lay before the tall ramparts of Lakeside. The farmhands going about their daily routines frequently cast frightened and suspicious glances at the nearby forest's edge.

The farmhands are reluctant to speak to outsiders and possess an initial attitude of unfriendly. However, if their attitude can be improved they complain of fellow farmhands heading west to “strike back against the traitorous ælves”.

Initial Approach The first time the PCs travel through this area, they can hear the sound of the mob gathered at the Town Square (**Area C3**). Read or paraphrase the following:

From somewhere near the center of the town ahead you can hear the faint echo of a extolling voice followed by shouts and cries of many others.

C2. Ramparts

Fifteen foot tall earthwork mounds topped with a thick palisade of hewn oak trunks encircle Lakeside. Clever, swinging 10-foot high fences forms makeshift gates at three points where the ramparts have been cut away. While the walls and the crude gates suffice to keep unwanted animals out of the town, their value as actual protection is more psychological than any real deterrent to attackers.

A Fearful Guard Though Lakeside has no formal gate guards, three young friends have taken it upon themselves to protect the town against “ælvén aggression”.

When the PCs approach any of the three fence-gates, read or paraphrase the the following:

As you approach, a man in an ill-fitting, rusting hauberk steps into the middle of the path wielding a hunting spear. “Halt,” he says, holding up one hand to enforce his order. “What’s your business in Lakeside? We’ve had rage fever here too, so if you’re fleeing from one of the other towns we don’t need any more refugees.”

The three gate-guards are **Georg** (CN male human commoner 1), **Oluf** (NG male dwarven commoner 1),

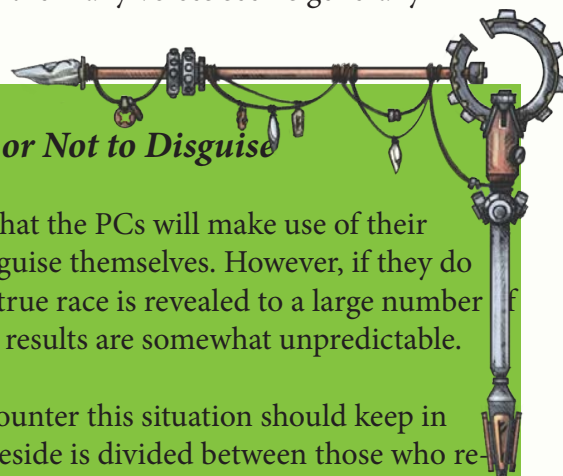
and **Gunda** (NG female human commoner 2).

How the PCs answer this challenge is up to them, but, as long as they are disguised, any plausible excuse is enough to gain them entry to the town. However, if the PCs choose not to use their disguises, the guards will flee deeper into town crying that the “ælves are attacking!”

Initial Approach The first time the PCs travel through this area, they can hear the sound of the mob gathered at the Town Square (**Area C3**). Read or paraphrase the following:

The shouts and cries of many voices grow louder as you near the ramparts. While the words themselves are still mostly unintelligible at this distance, the angry sounds of a mob are easily interpreted.

A DC 15 Perception check reveals that the single voice appears to be shouting anti-ælvén sentiments and the responds from the many voices seems generally in agreement.



To Disguise or Not to Disguise

It is assumed that the PCs will make use of their shrouds to disguise themselves. However, if they do not or if their true race is revealed to a large number of townsfolk, the results are somewhat unpredictable.

GMs who encounter this situation should keep in mind that Lakeside is divided between those who respect the ælves and those who have succumbed to mob mentality and fear-mongering. If only a few Lakesiders learn the truth, simply knocking them out and tying them up in some hidden location would give the PCs enough time to finish the events in town. PCs who choose to kill humans in order to maintain their false identities should not be penalized (overmuch), as this would be a perfectly logical thing for ælvén agents to do.



C3. Town Square

A stylized wooden eagle statue tops the portico above the well at the center of square bordered by five tall long-houses.

Lakeside's town square is the social and economic heart of the community. It is here that the Jarl addresses his people on formal occasions. The rest of the year, the square is a market and place to socialize. As such, the square is a useful place for the PCs to gather some information.

The Recruiter When the PCs first approach this area they come upon a Mercenary Captain recruiting for the forces gathering in Aberwyth. A crowd, mostly travelers from their look, has gathered around him.

Read or paraphrase the following:

A shouting mob at least two dozen strong rings the well where a tall human in chain armor extols them with ringing phrases.

"We all saw the signs. First it struck the animals we eat and then the foresters who hunted them. Then it was among us, sending those we love into pain, misery and death. We've lost so many friends, wives, husbands and children. Will we stand by and let this crime go unpunished?"

The crowd roars their denial.

"It's the ælves! The ælves, curse their demon-hearts! They have done this to us! We must respond. We must act before there is nothing left of Lakeside but lonely graves."

The mob responds with curses and shouts vilifying the ælves.

"Good people! Even now the last of our men gather to the West. If you have the courage to avenge your murdered kin, do not forsake this final chance to see my man Simms in the Meadhall and make your mark. Come with us and we'll make the forest run with ælven blood!"

The speaker jumps down amid cheers and yells as the mob surges toward the nearby meadhall.

If the PCs join the throng heading into the meadhall, give them a +5 bonus to maintain their disguises.

Gathering Information There are always a number of citizens about, frequenting the few market stalls still in operation, drawing water from the well, or pausing to share the latest gossip. Normally the people of Lakeside are friendly, however, tensions over rage fever and perceived ælven aggression (spurred on by Kendrick and his men) have made them suspicious of outsiders and each other.

Lakesiders in the Town Square have an initial starting attitude of unfriendly.

C4. Jarl's Longhouse

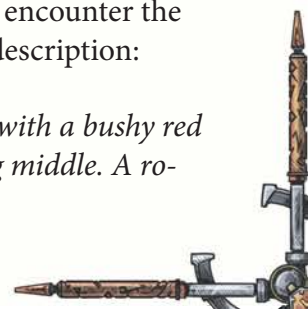
With walls of smooth stone and a wood-columned portico encircling the exterior, the Jarl's Longhouse is the pride of Lakeside. Stone blocks make up the first 10 feet of the walls with timber planks above it. The entrance leads to a main hall lined with tables and fur-covered benches, and hung with hunting trophies and colorful woven tapestries. Archways at either end lead to a kitchen and the Jarl's sleeping chamber.

Here, **Jarl Thorvald Vinorson** (CN male human fighter 3) holds court while the town elders gather in whispering groups to discuss the needs of the town. Thorvald can usually be found in the Longhouse along with 1d4 other townsfolk.

The Jarl is a worried man. Not only has he been dealing with the outbreak of rage fever and the deaths of many of his people, but he is also terrified that the anti-ælven sentiment brewing in town is going to bring destruction upon Lakeside. This last point is especially problematic since he has been taking bribes from an unknown source to not do anything to quash the racial hatred.

Talking to the Jarl When the PCs first encounter the Jarl, read or paraphrase the following description:

Jarl Thorvald Vinorson is older human with a bushy red beard that hangs down to his thickening middle. A ro-



bust man, he appears tired, worry lines creasing his face. Spotting you, he sighs. "Well, what's this then? Another blade for hire out to punish the ælves or a profiteer seeking to take advantage of our grieving and our sick? Spare me the flowery speeches, just tell me why you've come so I can refuse and send you away."

Treat the Jarl's initial attitude as unfriendly. A DC 21 Diplomacy check is enough for the PCs to improve his attitude while maintaining their disguise. Although the Jarl will respond to an Intimidate skill check (DC 12), he remembers that PC and holds a grudge. PCs who intimidate the Jarl gain ½ honor while in Lakeside.

Some obvious questions include:

Question "What sickness is in town?"

Answer "It's rage fever. May the Old Gods protect us." [OPINION]

Question "When did it start?"

Answer "About three months past? Maybe more? We've lost so many..." [TRUTH]

Question "What have you done about it?"

Answer "One-eye's beard, it's rage fever! What can we do? Some take their own lives or are culled by their families when they show the signs. We've locked the others up on the Western side of town. Quarantine, Kerrigan says it's called. Got the streets blocked so the only way in is past the Healer's." [TRUTH]

Question "Who is Kerrigan/Healer?"

Answer "He's our alchemist. Closest thing we have to an actual healer. He's actually managed to save a few folk with his potions and unguents. Those who only had a touch of the rage fever. A handful compared to the hundreds we've lost." [TRUTH]

Question "Why do people suddenly hate ælves?"

Answer "You can't blame the people. They are scared of the rage fever so they are lashing out. Blaming the ælves for the sickness is foolishness but fear often dominates logic, I'm sorry to say." [TRUTH]

Question "Have you done anything to stop the anti-ælvén sentiment?"

Answer "I've got more than enough on my plate dealing with the sickness. I've done all I can do to convince folks that ælves aren't to blame." [LIE]

Question "What is the significance of the moths?"

Answer "They're just bugs. They come every year around now. A bit more than usual this year - and early, now that you mention em - but I've noticed nothing strange about them." [TRUTH]

Question "Why are people traveling West?"

Answer "Some fool is gathering those too full of anger or sorrow to think straight. They claim to be joining an army to attack the ælves in their forest. As if facing the bear in his den is anything a right-minded person does. I sent a runner to the ælves weeks ago to let them know it was happening, but the ælves never responded." [TRUTH - the runner was killed by scouts from Aberwyth]

If the PCs manage to befriend the Jarl, he will offer them a few bunks in the common longhouse (Area C5) for free or they can pay for rooms at the meadhall.

Revealing themselves as ælves, changes the Jarl's demeanor instantly. If this should happen read or paraphrase the following:

The Jarl gasps, his face grown suddenly ashen and he takes an involuntary step backward. "You! But,

didn't... My apologies, n-noble guests. You've come to Lakeside during troubled times. Can I offer you food or drink? Come, tell me what I can do for you."



The Jarl is very apologetic toward any ælf. He maintains that he continues to honor the ancient agreement between Lakeside and the forest and practically begs the PCs not to unleash the fury of the ælves upon his people.

A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that the Jarl becomes very nervous if the PCs ask him about the anti-ælfen sentiment in town. Beating this check by 5 or more allows a PC to catch the Jarl glancing toward the hidden chest in his quarters.

If the PCs revealed themselves while other townsfolk are in the room, the townsfolk's reaction is a mixture between anger and fear. At least one person immediately runs out the door to “warn the village”. For every 15 minutes the PCs remain in the Longhouse after that, 3 townsfolk arrive outside, armed and ready to protect their Jarl from the ælves. This mob will confront any PC who leaves by the front door unless the Jarl accompanies them.

Captive Rogues If the PCs present any prisoners taken from the Poisoned Pond encounter (**Area B1**), the Jarl is quick to thank them and promptly orders his guards to lock up the rogues (in his root cellar that doubles as the town's only jail) until their trial.

Unfortunately, any trial must wait until the sickness clears, since the Jarl is far too occupied with it to worry about such matters. The prisoners play no further role in this adventure unless GMs wish add a further wrinkle to the plot by having them escape or be murdered in their cell. The Jarl offers the PCs a reward of 25 gp for each prisoner as a sign of Lakeside's thanks.

Treasure In the Jarl's bedroom, beneath a hidden trapdoor (DC 25 Perception) are two lockboxes; one containing the town treasury, and the other holding Thorvald's personal possessions. Each is locked (average, DC 25) and trapped with a clever acid trap on the locks themselves.

Acid Spraying Lock

CR 1

XP 400

Type physical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect alchemical spray (alchemist's fire per person within a 5 ft burst centered on the lockbox; +5 ranged touch; 1d6 fire damage)

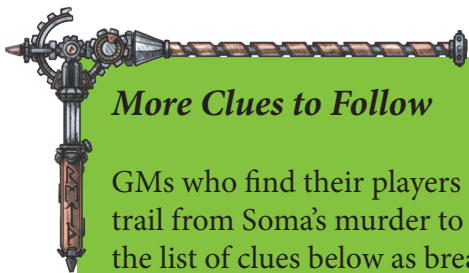
The town treasury lockbox contains 1,240 gp worth of assorted coins (and several silver trade bars), several deeds (to the meadhall, docks and Jarl's longhouse), and a copy of the treaty between the ælves and the first Lakesiders signed when the town was founded (some eighty years ago).

Thorvald's lockbox contains 920 gp, a collection of mixed gems worth 1,500 gp and his ancestral sword *Spineripper* (a +1 cunning shortsword worth 8,315 gp).

Additionally, the lockbox holds several letters confirming payments to the Jarl in exchange for not doing anything to stop the anti-ælfen sentiment in Lakeside. These letters are unsigned. If confronted about these letters, the Jarl will maintain his innocence to the PCs, and be quite angry that they broke into his lockbox. On the other hand, he will confess immediately if confronted by any revealed ælf and beg for mercy.

Story Award If the PCs manage to convince Thorvald that their investigations in town are for the benefit of Lakeside they gain a staunch ally. Award them with an additional 250xp and each character gains a painted medallion on a leather thong bearing the symbol of the Jarl. This token grants them a +4 Diplomacy check while in town.





More Clues to Follow

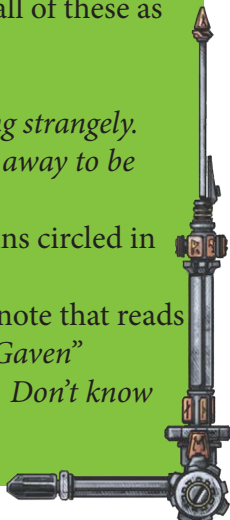
GMs who find their players stumbling to follow the trail from Soma's murder to Kerrigan's Vault can use the list of clues below as bread crumbs to drop in the path. Some of these take the form of rumors or information while others are physical clues that the PCs can find. GMs can use some or all of these as needed.

[Rumor] *"That Gaven has been acting strangely. Must be all those bodies he is hauling away to be burned."*

[Clue] A map with the crossroad ruins circled in red.

[Clue] A scrap of parchment with a note that reads *"Open these cages at the usual spot. -Gaven"*

[Rumor] *"No one can cure rage fever. Don't know how Kerrigan does it."*



+5 bonus to Diplomacy or Intimidation skill checks.

Treasure Gaven's footlocker is locked with a simple lock (DC 20 Disable Device) and trapped.

Low Quality Poisoned Needle Trap CR 1/2 XP 200

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; Disable Device DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect Atk +5 melee (spring-loaded needle; 1d2 plus Greenblood oil (injury; Fort DC 13; 1/round for 4 rounds; **Effect** 1 Con damage; **Cure** 1 save)

Inside Gaven's chest are two change of clothes, including a set of black traveling leathers and four doses of greenblood oil.

C6. Temple to Dægr

The front of this long building displays the sunburst symbol of the Lord of the First Light. Beyond the varnished doors is a long, high-peaked chamber. Colorful banners illustrated with woven scenes from The Grand Galdr hang from the walls above a bare wooden floor. At the far end of the temple, an altar rests below a large wooden sunburst sculpture painted bright yellow.

This is the domain of **Godi Haskel Karreson** (NG male human (venerable) cleric 3) the doddering, mostly senile priest of Lakeside. Once possessing of a sharp wit and a boisterous spirit, old age has reduced him to a friendly, forgetful man who means well but lacks the fire of his youth.

Godi Haskel has been helpless to prevent, cure or predict the recent outbreak of rage fever; a fact he blames on his own lack of faith (when he can remember it is happening at all). Surprisingly, the townsfolk don't blame the Godi or the Old Gods for the sickness and take turns bringing the old man food and making sure he remembers to eat.

PCs who speak to Godi Haskel mostly get meandering memories of the past for their trouble. However, characters who succeed at a DC 22 Diplomacy check receive a short rambling speech about the local ælven ruins (a reference to the Vault in **Area D3**). GMs can read or paraphrase the following:

C5. Community Longhouse

This longhouse is smaller than the Jarl's, but not by much. Smelling of woodsmoke, sweat and dirt, the interior of the building consists of a main hall lined with bunks, each with a chest and a curtain for privacy, and a smaller common room filled with scarred wooden tables and chairs.

These two locations house the unmarried men and women of the town. Modesty and privacy being rare commodities in a longhouse, the place has a rough and tumble air. During the day when the citizens are hard at work at their various jobs, the longhouse is mostly empty. But at night the bunks are filled. There is usually 1d4 townsfolk loitering around the common room playing at dice, mending gear or just passing the time.

Gaven's Bunk In one of the community longhouses (GM's choice), Gaven has his own personal bunk. If the PCs ask about it with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check, they can be directed to the correct bunk by any townsfolk present.

Hidden within the rushes of his bed (DC 20 Perception), Gaven has hidden his Black Hand medallion. Confronting him with the medallion grants the PCs a

“And there are ruins about. Oh yes. Many of them older than myself, if you young folks can believe it! Built by the ælves they were. I explored some when I was a lad though my father forbade it. He was afraid it would bring ælven wrath down upon us but it never came. I remember long underground hallways and rooms with metal gears and bits strewn all about. Easy to get lost down there. Scared us it did. Never went back.”

Godi Haskel does not remember where the entrances to ruins were and asking further questions results in Godi Haskel either misunderstanding the question or answering it with a complete non sequitur about another subject.

C7. Sleepy Foam Meadhall

The combination of spilt ale, woodsmoke, roasting meat, and sweat thicken this room, assaulting your nose as soon as you enter. A roaring firepit casts a ruddy glow upon the shields and banners hung upon the pillars holding up the high-peaked roof. Benches and tables are strewn somewhat haphazardly around the chamber, many of which are filled with drinking Lakesiders. A long bar dominates the western side of the hall flanked by two massive casks from which the matronly barkeep draws foamy topped draughts for her customers.

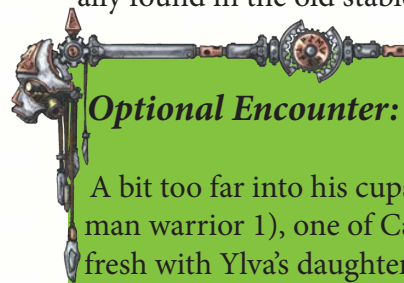
The Sleepy Foam is owned by the town but has been operated by **Ylva Karisdottor** (NG female human expert 4) for the past 25 years. Blunt and gruff with little patience for stupidity, Ylva runs the meadhall with an iron fist.

The rage fever has taken her husband and two of her three daughters. She is very overprotective of her last child, Eira Ylvasdottor (NG female human commoner 1) and watches like a hawk as the pretty 16 year old barmaid delivers food and drink. If she spies anyone being improper to her “precious child” Ylva does not hesitate to lash out with the club she keeps behind the bar. The locals have long since learned to leave the girl alone.

Talking to Ylva PCs who try to converse with the Ylva find that she is quite closed-mouthed to outsiders. However, a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check will make her feel comfortable enough to open up a bit.

Conversely, GMs can throw in the optional Protective Barmaid encounter (see sidebar). PCs who succeed at either of these can learn the following information aside from the normal town gossip:

- Though she knows it is unfair, Ylva blames Kerri-gan the Alchemist for not saving her husband and daughters from rage fever.
- The soldiers recruiting in town seem to her to be nothing more than a gang of thugs.
- If the PCs ask about Gaven, Ylva replies that he is a quiet but friendly man who works on the dock normally. Since the rage fever struck he has been in charge of taking the bodies out to burn. He’s usually found in the old stable in the Quarantine area.



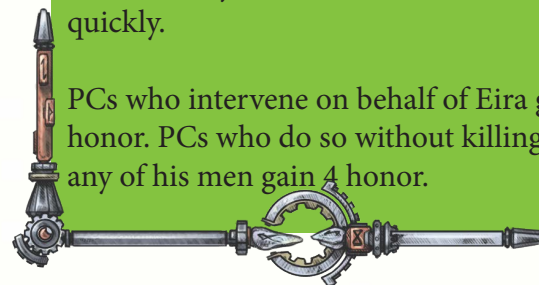
Optional Encounter: Protective Barmaid

A bit too far into his cups, Ragnat (NE male human warrior 1), one of Captain Olin’s men, gets fresh with Ylva’s daughter Eira. The first the PCs know of the issue is when Ragnat grabs the girl into his arms for an unwelcome hug. Olin’s other men laugh at the antics, but the girl is clearly frightened.

If the PCs step in to confront Ragnat he reacts angrily and the four other warriors at his table get to their feet to back him up. How exactly this plays out is up to the PCs but if combat occurs, Olin’s men do not draw weapons unless the PCs do. Any fighting is stopped by Olin and Simms at the end of three rounds.

If the PCs do nothing, Ylva intervenes within 2 rounds, threatening Ragnat with her club and calling on Olin to control his men. Simms steps in and does just that. The commotion ends quickly.

PCs who intervene on behalf of Eira gain 2 honor. PCs who do so without killing Ragnat or any of his men gain 4 honor.



The Recruiter At the far end of the meadhall, **Captain Olin** (CN male human fighter 1) and his assistant **Sergeant Simms** (NG male human warrior 1) sit behind a table with a ledger and bag of coins in front of them. A small squad of five of Olin's men (human warrior 1) loiter at a table nearby. A small mob of people wait for their turn to record their name and get their signing bonus (1 sp).

PCs who ask Olin questions about his recruiting get little more than paraphrased snippets from his speech in the town square. He is under orders to gather men and women who want revenge against the ælves, but not to discuss the overall plans (for fear of news getting to the ælves).

If pressed on the matter (DC 20 Intimidation check) he will admit that this is the last of the recruitment drives. Many more have come before not just in Laketown but in other communities as well. The recruits from those drives were already sent to the gathering point to the west.

C8. Audun's Emporium

This large building houses the town's only store as well as its blacksmith. Half of the building is nothing more than a open walled roof above the forge and anvil. The other section is a more traditional shop. The sign above the door depicts an anvil and a open chest full of items bisected by a green slash.

A family business, the shop and forge are operated by **Vadik Audunsson** (CG male human fighter 1 / expert 3), a retired soldier turned blacksmith. Vadik loathes the ælves whom he blames for the deaths of his wife and grandson. Since their passing, he has become angry and bitter, and brooks no challenge to his authority within the domain of his shop. He is very proud of his son (Dag, See **Area F18**) who left to "get some revenge on those ælven bastards". Vadik typically works the forge and lets his daughter-in-law run the shop unsupervised.

The other occupant of the house is Vadik's long-suffering daughter-in-law, **Hertha** (NG female human expert 1). A once pretty young woman, recent events have taken their toll on her. A week after Hertha's husband, Dag, left to fight the ælves, their only child perished from what they believe was rage fever, only a day after her husband's mother. Despite all of that,

Hertha has never believed that the ælves are to blame for the rage fever; an opinion she conceals from Vadik. If approached carefully, Hertha is eager to help anyone prove that the ælves are innocent.

Hertha is also the best friend of **Soma** and if told of her murder she will collapse to weeping uncontrollably.

A Letter to Deliver If the PCs manage to gain Hertha's trust she will beg them to take a letter to her husband, Dag. He signed up with Captain Olin at the Meadhall a week ago and left to wherever they are gathering to the West. If the PCs promise to take the letter to Dag, Hertha will give them a 20% discount in the store.

Equipment Audun's Emporium is well stocked with common equipment. Arms and armor are available but costs 10% more than the base price due to limited supply. Hertha even has 3 *potions of cure light wounds* that she will sell if asked for healing items, although these are marked up 150% of their normal price. If the PCs agree to take her letter to Dag, she will give them one of the potions.



C9. Docks

Gulls wheel and dive above the long dock that stinks of rotting fish and brackish water. Two old longships decay while tied to one pier while the other is lined with a scattering of smaller fishing boats.

The majority of Lakeside's population either works the fishing boats or helps maintain them. The direct result of this is that on any given day half of the town is out on the lake. The old sailors and boatwrights who remain are busy repairing nets, patching up gear or constructing new boats.

Asking about Gaven PCs who try to gather information about Gaven on the docks don't even need to make a roll provided they are willing to grease the way with a bottle of ale or a few copper.

The dockhands say that Gaven is a hard worker who moved to town about a year ago. He came from a small fishing village to the north whose name they can't recall (because Gaven never told them). Since the outbreak of rage fever he has been helping out in the Quarantine Area. As one dockhand puts it: "He lost a sister or some such to the fever so he's got a soft spot for those who fell ill. The damn fool."

Other Rumors If the PCs dig for general rumors they may learn an important clue about the Black Hand's operation in the area. Those who succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check when asking about events on the lake learn some of the fishing boats report seeing a few black hulled longships plying the waters to the West.

Succeeding at the check by more than 5 also reveals that after a recent storm local fishermen found shroud wrapped bodies floating along with the remains of a wooden crate. The same sailors swear they saw a similar crate on the deck of one of the black longships.

C10. Soma's House

A simple but well-kept home on the eastern side of Lakeside. Inside there is a bed with a yellow quilt along one wall with a table and chairs set in the middle of the room upon a bright green rug. Opposite the bed, a neatly organized kitchen is tucked into one corner to make way for a large horizontal loom a basket full of skeins of colorful thread.

Here is where Soma lived and worked before her life was cut short at the pond. The room is typical of most Lakeside homes apart from the loom and thread.

The Journal If the PCs take the time to search the home a DC 15 Perception check uncovers a leather journal tucked into the rushes on the bed frame. Most of the entries are innocuous town gossip and Soma's at times anguished confession of the short affair she had with her best friend's father (**Vadik**). However, interspersed among the other entries are a few lines related to Soma's suspicions about the growing anti-ælvén sentiment in town

What is wrong with everyone? I know the fever has taken so many but why blame the ælves?

Mother always said that the ælves were protectors, I can't believe what the others are saying about them.

Almost out of brown dye so I went out to find walnuts. Ran across that dockman. Gabin? Gavas? Anyway he had a wagon full of bodies - poor Gyda was in there somewhere, must remember to get flowers for her sister.

Am I the only one who still has faith in the ælves?

Lots of strangers in town recently. They're either signing up with that mercenary captain or have already joined up and are moving through to the west.

I am so tired of people blaming the ælves for everything! They are suffering too. The trees are dying! Doesn't anyone else know what that means for them? When a tree dies, so does an ælf!

What if it isn't just grief talking? I saw some of the men from down at the Meadhall hauling little cages into the woods. What's that all about?

Tomorrow I am going out to the pond. I think the trees there were the first to start dying. Maybe I can find something. We'll see.

Treasure Hidden in the bottom of the basket of thread is Soma's life savings - a leather pouch containing 15gp, 10sp.

C11. Quarantine Area

A stout wooden barricade, the height of a man, segregates a section of the town's northwest corner. Strung between boarded up homes, this crude fence bears the blue and silver star symbol of Alnara upon its wooden surface every few yards. A single opening stands along the fence's eastern side with two guards standing beside it, their faces covered with leather, beak-nosed masks.

This area of Lakeside has been used to house and care for the rage fever victims. More often than not, it has also been where the dead have been prepared for disposal. Several homes in the interior of the Quarantine Area have been torn down to build the actual fence.

The Guards The guard's (each human warriors 1) main focus is to keep people away, not that many would willingly venture into an area known to be full of rage fever victims. They are also under orders from the Jarl to attack anyone leaving the Quarantine Area who does not have a token from Healer Kerrigan ensuring that the bearer is free of contagion.

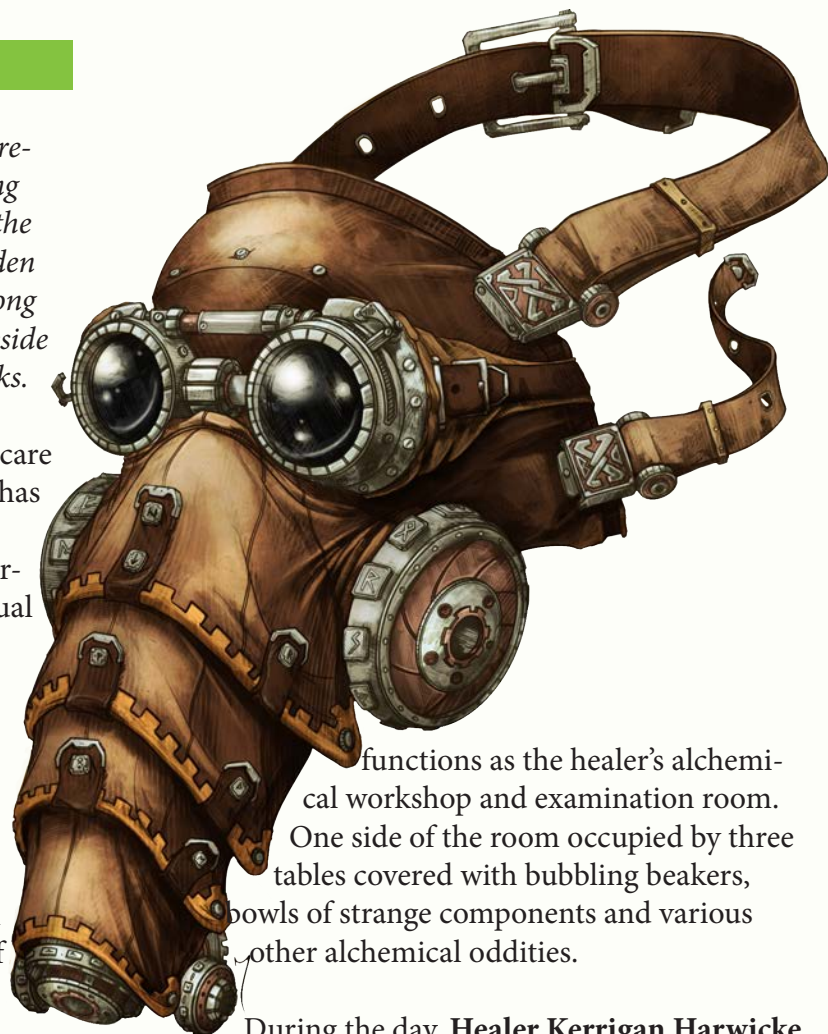
While loyal to the Jarl and town to a point, these men also serve Kerrigan directly. While they will do their best to convince the PC to stay away, they will not resort to combat. Instead, they will suggest that the PCs go see "Healer Kerrigan". After the PCs depart, one of them will run ahead to warn Kerrigan. Their masks, while ominous, are more symbolic than functional.

C12. Hospice

This single longhouse, marked with blue symbol's of Alnara's grace dominates the nearby homes. Inside, the entry room of the hospice is well-kept with herbs and roots hanging from the low ceiling. A door to the south leads to a sick room lined with curtained beds, and another beyond that leads to those healing.

The building has served as the heart of Lakeside's fight against the rage fever outbreak since it began months ago. The townspeople are quite proud of their healer, especially since his alchemical concoctions have actually managed to "heal" a few of the afflicted.

Workroom The entry chamber of the hospice



functions as the healer's alchemical workshop and examination room. One side of the room occupied by three tables covered with bubbling beakers, bowls of strange components and various other alchemical oddities.

During the day, **Healer Kerrigan Harwicke** (LE male human alchemist 2) can usually be found here, brewing potions and tending to the afflicted. On the surface he appears to be a friendly, middle-aged man who deeply cares for the town and its inhabitants.

However, this is a facade. As one of the elite agents of the Black Hand, Kerrigan has been masquerading as a simple healer since the cult began its plan to poison the ælven forest and collect bodies. Nonetheless, Kerrigan's time in town has come to an end. Gaven ships out the last wagon of bodies later in the day and Kerrigan himself will slip away tomorrow.

Though he has a respectable Bluff skill (+6), he is very careful to answer questions so that he is never actually lying. If he needs to avoid any inquiries he can always apologize and say he must attend to his "remedies" (alchemical equipment).

If the PCs ask about Gaven, Kerrigan realizes that his henchman has been compro-



mised. He is more than happy to direct them toward Gaven's location (the Stable in **Area C14**). Kerrigan even confesses that "*Gaven has been a bit moody and secretive recently. I had assumed that it was due to the unpleasant task of disposing of the bodies of the departed.*"

Once the PCs leave, Kerrigan will hurry to his Vault (via the secret passage in his quarters) to finish work on his reanimated creation before departing for Aberwyth.

The Sick Rooms These chambers are filled with beds separated by curtains hung on freestanding frames. At the moment only two of the 8 beds in the western room are occupied. The remaining ill townsfolk are too dangerous to be trusted and are sequestered in the room furthest to the south (contact with these individuals increases chances of 'catching' rage fever by as much as 55%).

The two patients have been "cured" and are slowly recovering their strength. Kerrigan dosed these people with the cure in order to enhance his own position in town. All of them express nothing but praise for Healer Kerrigan and owe them their lives.

Anundr (LN male human commoner 1), a gruff farmer of barley and oats. He just wants to return to his fields more to get away from Koli's incessant chatter than to get the crops in.

Tofa (NG female human expert 1), a rather sad woman who has lost her entire extended family during the rage fever outbreak. She is reluctant to speak to strangers (DC 15 Diplomacy) but if befriended with kind words and condolences she has a tidbit of important information. Offhand, she mentions that after falling ill she saw Gaven taking a wagon of bodies away to be burned but returned in a completely different wagon. Healer Kerrigan suggested her illness made her misremember.

Healer's Quarters This chamber appears to be a simple living quarters with a bed, desk and wardrobe. A small bookcase holds about a dozen volumes about healing, alchemy and plant lore.

A cleverly hidden trapdoor rests beneath a secret compartment in the wardrobe. Crafted to blend in with the wood of the wardrobe the compartment itself requires

a DC 25 Perception check to detect. Opening it (DC 15 Disable Device) reveals two *potions of cure moderate wounds* and a pouch containing 20 pp.

Once the compartment is opened, a DC 15 Perception check allows the PCs to detect a set of boot prints in the dust covering the floor of the wardrobe.

However, the treasure is there only to deceive thieves. Entering the wardrobe and closing the door reveals a hidden keyhole masked by the moving hinges of the door. Using Kerrigan's key (or a DC 20 Disable Device check) causes the secret compartment below to slide aside uncovering stairs leading to the tunnels beneath Lakeside.

Treasure Kerrigan is careful not to keep anything directly incriminating in his quarters. However, a DC 20 Perception check uncovers a thin book fallen behind the bookcase with the title of "*A Treatise on the Gates of the Ælfheim*".

One of a number of books Kerrigan used to locate his vault, this tome was misplaced some weeks ago and its loss has yet to be noticed. A study of the book takes 4 hours due to its archaic writing style, but completing such a task grants the reader a +5 bonus to all skill checks regarding finding the hidden vault. It is worth 150 gp to a historian or rare book collector.



C13. Stable

The windows of this large carriage house are obscured with burlap sacking and several painted signs read “Danger. Fever Bodies Within. Only Enter With Permission”. The wide double-doors of the stable are currently closed. Tied to a rail to one side of the entrance, two old horses nap in the sun.

The carriage house is 50 ft. by 50 ft. long. Four empty wagon stalls (10 ft. by 15 ft.) line each side of the building leaving a 20 ft. long central aisle between them. The rear of the stable is devoted to storage and supplies.

As far as the Lakesiders are aware, the carriage house



has been converted to store and prepare the bodies of the dead rage fever victims for transport to where they will be burned. However, the truth is much more grim.

When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The foul yet somehow sweet stench of ripening bodies assaults your senses as you step into the shadowy carriage house. A wagon, half-loaded with canvas shrouded objects rests in the center aisle. A pock-marked man with a cloth tied around his face pushes a wheelbarrow holding a similar object toward the wagon from the far end of the carriage house. When he sees you he freezes

in surprise and then yells, “Are you mad? Get gone from here before you catch the fever!”

Gaven (NE male human rogue 1) will attempt to get the PCs out of the carriage house by playing up the dangers of rage fever. He is nominally working for the Jarl who has hired him to dispose of the fever victim’s bodies by burning them outside of town. This is true, up to a point. However, he is not much of a combatant and if shown evidence from Soma’s murder (or via a successful DC 15 Intimidation check) he quickly offers up what he knows.

Question “What are you doing with these bodies?”

Answer “I’m taking them to the burn site to the West of town to burn them.” (Sense Motive DC 15 reveals he is lying)

Question “What do you really do with them?”

Answer (If Gaven



has been turned by a successful Intimidation or Diplomacy check he says): *“Fine. You win. I burn fakes. The real bodies I take toward the West where I meet up with another wagon. That driver and I switch wagons and I come back.”*

Question *“Where do the bodies go?”*

Answer *“I dunno. But the only thing to the West is that Aberwyth place where all the ælf-haters are going. Maybe there?”*

Question *“What’s in the other wagon?”*

Answer *“Bugs. Moths, I think. Besides moving the bodies, I get paid to hire men to release the little buggers in the forest. I don’t get paid to ask questions.”*

Question *“What do the bugs do?”*

Answer *“He said they’d hurt the trees, make the ælves pay.”*

Question *“Who do you work for?”*

Answer *“I don’t really know. When I find a red painted rock by the stable door I know I need to go to the crossroads East of town at midnight. A man there in a hood and mask gives me my orders and a bag of coin. After I get done with each job I set up a meeting and he gives me another bag of coin.”*

Question *“Why are you doing this?”*

Answer *“For the coin! It’s good money. The boss also gave us these potions that protect me and the boys I hire from the rage fever. It’s the only reason I’ve stuck around. This is supposed to be the last shipment, and now you lot have to come and mess things up.”*

Question *“How do you contact the masked man?”*

Answer *“I leave a red painted rock on a shelf in the waystone by the crossroads east of town. That lets him know I want a meeting. Then I go back there at midnight of the same day and there he is..”*

Question *“Can you set up a meeting?”*

Answer *“I could, but what’s in it for me? Let’s deal. I can take you to the crossroads and put the painted rock in place. If I do that, you let me go.”*

While Gaven has not lied about most things, he has left out a crucial detail. He has been told that a red stone will signal that someone is onto them and that an armed response is needed. Since Gaven is telling the truth about the “rock” the PCs may be unable to

determine the specifics of the lie.

Gaven is eager to be loyal since his employer has promised a place in the larger “game”. A successful DC 22 Sense Motive check should make the PCs suspicious. If they manage to force Gaven to reveal the truth they learn that a black rock indicates a safe meeting while a red one reveals the need for an ambush.

The Stalls In the wagon stalls on either side of the carriage house are 12 bodies wrapped in blankets or covered in stained bedsheets. PCs who search these corpses or physically interact with them for more than a few moments have a 15% chance to be poisoned by the Odr Poison.

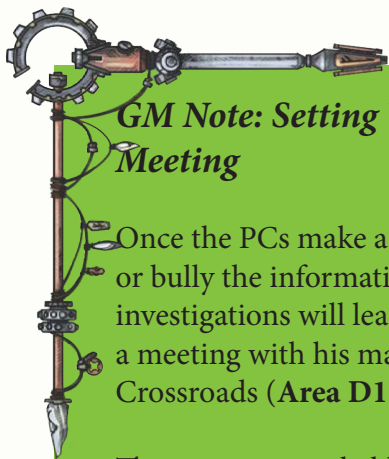
The Wagon About 10 fake bodies are piled up in the wagon, wrapped with canvas to make them look real. If examined, the PCs quickly discover bundles of dried wood tied together with old linen and wax.

Hidden Storage A DC 15 Perception check reveals a hidden workspace behind the stacks of supplies meant to prepare the bodies (canvas, wax, linen, barrels of dried herbs). Here, Gaven creates the false bodies he takes out to burn.

In addition, he uses this space to wrap and preserve the bodies of the dead with *Alnara’s Final Mercy* - an alchemical oil provided by his unknown employer that mimics the effects of *gentle repose*. There are a dozen small vials of the oil left, enough for the remaining bodies in the carriage house. Each is worth about 50 gp.

Dealing with Gaven If the PCs hand Gaven over to the Jarl with evidence of a crime he will be held in the cellar below the Jarl’s house. It is important to note that other than Gaven’s words there really isn’t much here to implicate him in a crime. If the PCs befriended the Jarl earlier, however, and can convince him to accompany them to the stalls, he’ll want to question Kerrigan and Gaven about the false bodies.

If the Jarl goes to the stables with the PCs and Kerrigan is still in Lakeside, one of Kerrigan’s guards notifies him and he immediately departs for the Vault (again, via his secret passage).

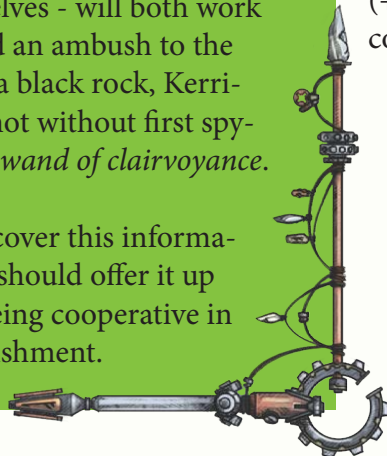


GM Note: Setting Up the Crossroads Meeting

Once the PCs make a bargain with Gaven or bully the information out of him, their investigations will lead them to setting up a meeting with his masked employer at the Crossroads (Area D1).

The two most probably methods for this - forcing Gaven to aid them and delivering the painted rock themselves - will both work to alert Kerrigan to send an ambush to the meeting. If the PCs use a black rock, Kerrigan comes himself but not without first spying on the area with his *wand of clairvoyance*.

If the players do not uncover this information themselves, Gaven should offer it up under the pretense of being cooperative in order to reduce his punishment.



The Waystone This old henge was once an old ælven monument but the ages have rendered it unrecognizable as such. A crude shelf carved out of the surface of the waystone runs along the side that faces the southeast corner of the crossroads.

Watchful Eyes Kerrigan has memorized a location within sight of the shelf on the Waystone to use with his *wand of clairaudience/clairvoyance*. The alchemist surveys the area twice a day. If the PCs have hidden themselves in preparation to ambush Gaven's employer, roll opposed hide checks vs Kerrigan's Perception (+6). PCs who fail suffer a -5 penalty vs surprise when combat begins.

Hidden Tunnel The large piles of rubble at the southeast and northwest corners of the crossroads hide entrances to the underground passages that Kerrigan and his men use. Finding the cleverly hidden entrances requires the PCs to specifically search the rubble and succeed at a DC 25 Perception check. The doors are barred from the inside and cannot be opened. However, they can be broken down (6 inch thick stone; hardness 8, 90 hit points, break DC 25)

The Ambush This encounter can begin in a number of ways depending on how the PCs approached this situation. Two versions are presented below though GMs are encouraged to be flexible.

Red Stone If the PCs placed a red rock on the Waystone, Kerrigan knows that someone is hunting him. He uses his wand of clairaudience/clairvoyance to observe the area (he takes a 10, giving him a +16 bonus to Perception checks), noting any PCs that he spots. Then he sends his men to attack. They will rush out of the hidden tunnel entrances attacking any spotted PCs first. PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Perception check are not surprised.

Black Stone If the PCs placed a black rock on the Waystone, Kerrigan uses his wand to observe (he rolls normally, taking his +6 bonus) the area just before emerging from the hidden tunnel. If he spots any of the PCs he orders his waiting men to attack (follow the red stone outline above).



D. Lakeside Environs

There are a few locations outside of Lakeside that play a role in *The Aelven Agenda*. PCs will most likely go to the Crossroads first and then proceed into the Tunnels before arriving at the Vault.

D1. Waystone at the Crossroads

The road leading east out of Lakeside crosses an older route about a mile from town. The northeast corner of the intersection is marked by an old waystone, moss-covered and leaning slightly under its own ponderous weight. A jumble of other stones, some easily six feet high, lay scattered at the other three corners of the crossroads, a mute reminder of some ancient structure now reduced to rubble.

Other than the waystone and the stone ruins, this location appears fairly unremarkable. A fact that made it perfect for Kerrigan's secret meetings with Gaven. In reality however, the waystone marks the terminus of one of the underground tunnels that leads to Kerrigan's Vault.

If he believes the area is safe, he dons a full-face covering black mask and emerges from the tunnel, using stealth to approach the Waystone. He will attempt to retreat into the tunnels at the first sign of trouble.

Creatures Kerrigan's men are similar to the rogues found in **Area B1**, however, these men are Black Hand fanatics and will fight to the death.

BLACK HAND ROGUES (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 (each)

Human rogue 1 (see **Area B1**)

hp 10

KERRIGAN CR 2

XP 600

Human alchemist (vivisectionist) 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 22 (3d8+6)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; +2 bonus vs. poison

Resist poison resistance

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks bombs (6/day: +7 ranged touch, 2d6+3 fire damage, Reflex DC 14 half), sneak attack +2d6, +1 with Thrown Splash Weapons

Alchemist (Vivisectionist) Extracts Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

1st—*cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, longshot, shield*

TACTICS

Kerrigan will attempt to escape back into the tunnels immediately. If prevented from that, he will engage from range. He will fight until reduced to 5 or less HP, then he will attempt to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 13

Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Brew Potion, Deceitful, Ricochet Splash Weapon, Throw Anything, Weapon Focus (bomb).

Feats Brew Potion, Deceitful, Ricochet Splash Weapon, Throw Anything, Weapon Focus (bomb)

Skills Bluff +6, Craft (alchemy) +9 (+12 to create alchemical items), Disguise +4, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +3, Spellcraft +7, Use Magic Device +7

Languages Common (Low), Dwarven (Low), Elven (Low); Honor 6

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +3), discovery (spontaneous healing), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 30 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear *vial of mutagen, potion of barkskin* +2, *potion of blur, potion of cure light wounds* (3), acid vial, alchemist's fire (3), antitoxin, flash powder, greenblood oil, tanglefoot bag

Other Gear +1 *studded leather, a wand of clairaudience/clairvoyance* (15 charges), dagger, mwk light crossbow, alchemy crafting kit, alchemical glue, alchemical solvent, arsenic, black adder venom, invisible ink (average), 150 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

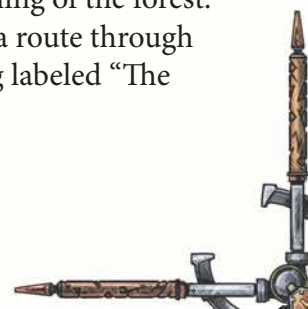
Mutagen (Su) Mutagen adds +4 to one physical attribute and -2 to a mental attribute as well as +2 natural armor for 30 minutes. Kerrigan has one dose of his mutagen prepared.

Ricochet Splash Weapon If Kerrigan misses with a thrown splash weapon and it lands in an occupied square he may make a second attack roll (at -5) to hit that foe for full damage.

Spontaneous Healing Once per day as a free action, he can heal 5 hit points as if he had the fast healing ability.

Development If Kerrigan is captured, he proves very difficult to interrogate (gaining a +5 bonus to resist due to his Black Hand training). However, he offers to trade valuable evidence for his life. If the PCs seem willing to strike a deal he will reveal that he is a Black Hand agent but that the poisoning of the forest is but a small part of the movement against the ælves. He promises them to reveal more but only in his hidden vault as he is too frightened of "watching eyes." Kerrigan will do his best to get the PCs down into the vault where he can use his nearly awakened creature to dispose of them.

If Kerrigan is killed, a search of his body reveals nothing that might shed light on the poisoning of the forest. However, a piece of parchment shows a route through the underground tunnels to something labeled "The Vault".



D2. Ancient Ælven Tunnels

With their ceilings tall and pointed, these carved stone tunnels bear the unmistakable hand of ælven crafters upon them. Carvings upon the walls evoke images of roots twisting into decorative knotwork shapes, some with animals visible peeking out from behind them. Magical stones set at intervals provide a dim illumination.

The tunnel network was once much larger but age and destruction of the gate in the Vault has reduced the complex greatly. Most tunnels lead to dead-ends of collapsed rubble. However, one route through the tunnels leads to the Vault. The only exits from the tunnels are the Crossroads and the hidden door in the Hospice.

GM's Note There is nothing dangerous in the tunnels. Kerrigan removed any lingering creatures and traps when he began exploring them. However, if the PCs did not encounter the Black Hand Rogues in **Area D1**, they may attack the PCs here at the GM's discretion.

D3. The Clockwork Vault

The tunnel opens into a grand, cathedral-like chamber. Towering columns, carved into the likeness of mighty trees holds up a domed ceiling which, still bears the faded painting of the night sky. On prominent dais at the far end of the room, a marble stairs leading nowhere is surrounded by rusting heaps of rune-inscribed gears, curving metal pieces and broken crystals.

Resting in a perfectly carved niche in a shaft of solid ice directly in front of the dais is a large humanoid figure. Alchemical equipment, worktables and other occult paraphernalia, including a strange frost-covered zombie strapped to a table are arrayed around the ice creature. A chill breeze seems to coil around the vault, sending the temperature plummeting and causing the breath to steam.

This vault, the site of one of the fabled ælven clockwork gates, was abandoned in order to trap and contain a stygian elder that stumbled through the gate from Niflæheim. The creature was imprisoned within a shaft of its own ice and the ælves destroyed their own gate in order to protect the mortal realm. The stygian elder has slowly weakened over the centuries until Kerrigan

began experimenting on it. The alchemist succeeded on awakening it and enslaving the creature with drugs and poisons, but is only partially through restoring the stygian elder to its full power. Unfortunately for Kerrigan, his time has run out.

Entering the Vault When the PCs step at least 15 feet into the room, the stygian elder attacks them but after the following description, the parameters of this encounter depends on Kerrigan's location.

The temperature within the chamber drops further when, with the bone-breaking sound of cracking ice, the creature within the frozen prison lurches upright. Jutting crystal spikes cover its angular ice body. Shards of similar crystal extend from its head like a crown and its glowing blue eyes burn with a freezing cold. The temperature of the chamber drops further.

Option 1 If Kerrigan is already present when the PCs arrive, he will emerge from behind one of the columns on the far side of the room and make the following speech.

Option 2 If the PCs brought Kerrigan with them after capturing him at the crossroads, he will make the following pronouncement and then do his best to get clear of the PCs and join the battle if he can.

"Behold the might of Salzathal! Imprisoned by the ælves in ages past after they torn him from his own realm with one of their accursed clockwork gates. They destroyed their own creation in order to trap him in mystic ice and there he has languished. Until I found him. I freed him. And I enslaved his will. He will prove my worth to House Scrae. But first he will deal with you."

A Demolished Gate The rubble on the dais was once a planar transportation gate. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (planes) check reveals this information.



Frigus Zombie Strapped to a partially angled worktable is an odd undead creature - a frigus zombie. The chest and head of this pitiful creature have been opened up, and several of its organs removed.

Creatures In this encounter, the PCs will face the weakened stygian elder and perhaps Kerrigan. How the alchemist comes into play depends greatly on the events at the crossroads. He could have been killed, escaped, escorted to this chamber as a captive or so on. GMs will have to adjust the scene to account for how their own particular game has played out.

KERRIGAN

CR 2

XP 600

Human alchemist (vivisectionist) 3
(see Area D1 above)
hp 22

STYGIAN ELDER (WEAKENED,

ALCHEMICALLY ENSLAVED)

CR 3

XP 800

LE Large outsider (cold)
Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 8, **flat-footed** 17 (-1 Dex, +8 natural, +1 dodge, -1 size)
hp 34 (4d10+8)
Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2;
DR 2/magic; **Immune** cold;
SR 12
Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.
Melee slam +7 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 cold)
Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks breath weapon (20-ft. cone, 2d6 cold damage, Reflex DC 14 for half, usable twice per day), cold (1d6)

TACTICS

The stygian elder will unleash his cold breath first, targeting as many PCs as possible. Then he will engage the closest foe. He fights to the death.

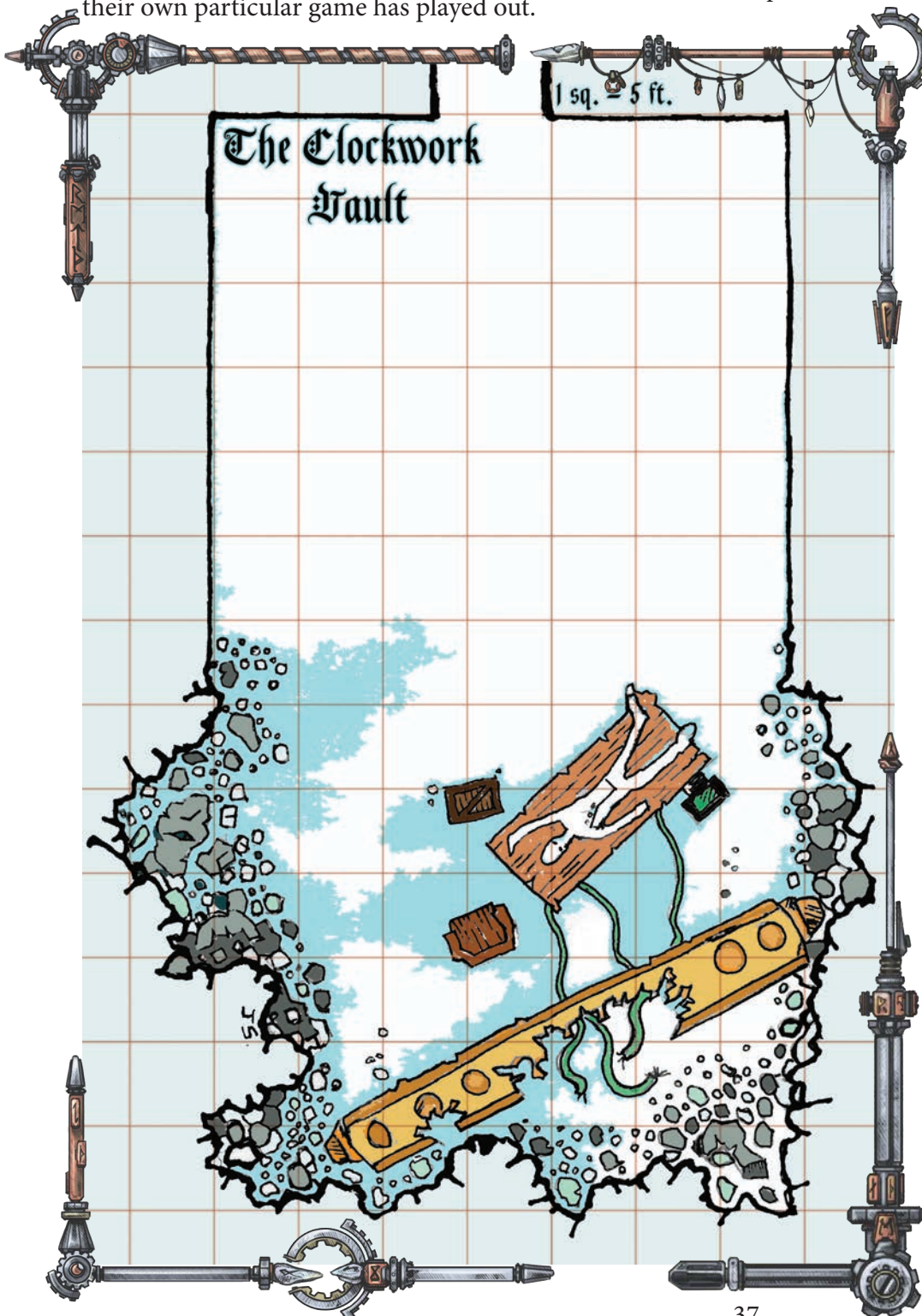
STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 9, **Con** 15, **Int** 4, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11;
Base Atk +4; **CMB** 11; **CMD** 20
Feats Dodge, Toughness
Skills Perception +2 (other skills suppressed due to alchemical enslavement)
Languages Jötun; **Honor** -

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Cold (Ex) A stygian elder's body generates intense cold, dealing 1d6 points of damage with its touch. Creatures attacking a stygian elder unarmed or with natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hit.



Deliberate (Ex) Due to Kerrigan's alchemical enslavement, the stygian elder moves slowly and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. He can move up to his base speed and make a single attack but may not otherwise use a full attack.

Development In the aftermath of the battle, the PCs can uncover crucial information with a simple search of the alchemist's lab. Kerrigan's notes which reveal not only that he was an agent of the Black Hand but that he was involved in the plot to poison the forest, and gather bodies under the guise of a (fake) rage fever outbreak. The background section of this adventure describes this plot in detail. Kerrigan was especially proud of using moths to spread the Odr poison - an appropriate use of alchemy, in his view.

Above all, however, is the information that the bodies gathered from the towns and villages in the area have been taken to a camp on the shore of Oracle Lake called Aberwyth. This camp is the also the location where Kerrigan received shipments of the poisoned moths. Finally, and most worrying of all, Aberwyth is the place where the preparations for an invasion of the ælven kingdom is but days away from completion.

If Kerrigan survives the battle he can be made to reveal the information above with a successful DC 15 Intimidation check. Should the PCs feel no inclination toward heading to Aberwyth, GMs should provide pointed hints in that direction.

Treasure Kerrigan's alchemical supplies weigh 100 lbs and could be sold for 500 gp if an appropriate buyer could be found (none exist in Lakeside). A search among the assorted supplies and reagents in the room (DC 15 Perception) reveals the following items:

Two *potions of cure serious wounds*, three vials of alchemists fire, two doses of black adder venom, and a small coffer containing 425 gp. Additionally, there are enough doses of the antidote to Odr poison for any PC who has been effected.

Story Award For eliminating Kerrigan and uncovering the larger plot against the ælves, award the PCs 750xp and one point of honor (for defeating the Stygian Elder).

ACT 3 Black Sails on the River

In Act 3, after learning that the alchemist in Lakeside is but part of a larger plot and that an invasion force gathers on the shores of Oracle Lake, the PCs travel west encountering patrols of ælf-hating soldiers, men hurrying to join the invasion, and even an ælven patrol in jeopardy. At Aberwyth, the PCs find a makeshift town at the mouth of the Ystwyth River that the Black Hand and their allies use as a launching point for an invasion of the Moonwalde itself.

E. Race Along the Shore

As the PCs hurry to stop the invasion, they must still contend with the fact that they travel through hostile territory. With the Black Hand's preparations nearing completion, the influx of mercenaries and bigoted townsfolk has slowed but late arrivals may still pose a risk. If GMs wish to throw in additional random encounters to reflect this, they can use the table below.

Table 4: Random Forest Encounters

d%	Encounter	Description	CR
1-25	Armed Patrol	Four 1 st level human warriors	1
26-50	Scavengers	Three starving wolves	3
51-75	Ælf-hunters	Two 1 st level fighters and one 2 nd level sorcerer	2
76-100	Corrupted plant	One Yellow Musk Creeper	2

GM's Note Of the three encounters presented in Part E, the only one crucial to the adventure as a whole is CR3 - **A Patrol in Peril**.

E1. Vengeance of the Discarded

A walking corpse stumbles onto the trail ahead of you. Beneath torn shreds of soiled canvas, it's rotting flesh hangs from its bones as it turns toward you, arms outstretched.

Creature A dung-collector in Westholm, poor Canute never had much luck in life. The very last person to be infected by the moths in that community, after his death he was wrapped in canvas and shipped out only to have his body fall out of the wagon unnoticed. Such was his spirit's dissatisfaction that Canute arose as a Plague Zombie but this undead's already corrupted body has been mutated by the effects of the Odr poison.

Advanced Plague Zombie

CR 3

XP 800

NE Medium undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4

DEFENSE

AC 20, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 16 (+6 natural, +4 Dex)

hp 20 (2d8+11)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +8 (1d6+8 plus disease)

Space 5 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks death burst

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18;

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Toughness

SQ staggered

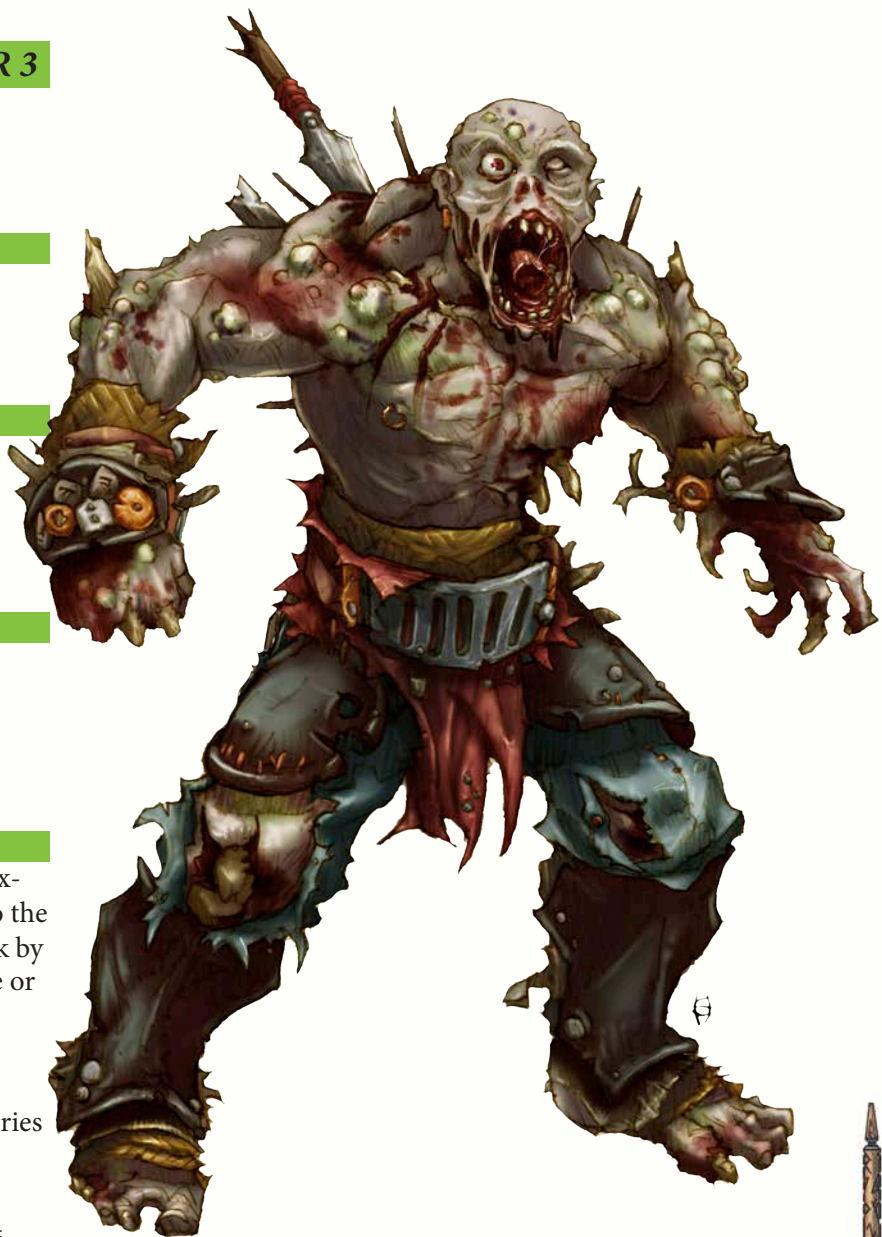
Death Burst (Ex) When a plague zombie dies, it explodes in a burst of decay. All creatures adjacent to the plague zombie are exposed to its plague as if struck by a slam attack and must make a Fortitude save or contract zombie rot.

Disease (Su) The slam attack - as well as any other natural attacks - of a plague zombie carries the zombie rot disease.

Zombie rot slam; save Fort DC 15; onset 1d4 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d2 Con, this

damage cannot be healed while the creature is infected; cure 2 consecutive saves. Anyone who dies while infected rises as a plague zombie in 2d6 hours.

Staggered (Ex) Zombies have poor reflexes and can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.



E2. The Dazed Denizen

Surrounded by fluttering white moths, a large ursine form sits in the middle of a flower-filled clearing ahead of you. A strange mixture of fur and feathers, this half-bear, half-owl monstrosity sluggishly snaps at a moth, chewing the morsel before snatching another out of the air.

Creature Deep in the grips of Odr poison, this young owlbear is even more temperamental than normal for a ferocious species but (luckily for the PCs) its movement and actions have also been hampered.

PCs can attempt to sneak away or around the owlbear with a successful opposed check Stealth vs Perception (+12). Once it notices the PCs, the owlbear will immediately attack.

Odr-Touched Owlbear CR 4 XP 1,200

CE Large magical beast

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 16, **touch** 9, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size, -2 rage)

hp 43 (4d10+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0;

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 1 claw +8 (1d4 plus bleed) or bite +8 (1d4 plus bleed)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks Bleeding Strike (bleed 3)

TACTICS

The owlbear does not have much of a mind left so it simply charges the nearest foe and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10;

Base Atk +5; **CMB** 7; **CMD** 20

Feats Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +12

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Rage (Ex) Like the barbarian ability, the owlbear can rage for 11 rounds. The abilities above have already been adjusted for rage.

Bleeding Strike (Ex) As an Odr-touched creature, the owlbear gains bleed damage with its natural attacks.

Staggered (Ex) This owlbear can only perform a single move action or standard action each round. It can move up to its speed and attack in the same round as a charge action.

Treasure Among the grass and flowers of the clearing is the corpse of a human traveler, a previous victims of the owlbear. An easy DC 10 Perception check reveals the body and what is left of its possessions: a quiver of masterwork arrows (12), a *potion of cat's grace*, 12 gp and a broken bow.

E3. The Imperiled Patrol

In this encounter the PCs run across the same ælven patrol they met in Act 1, but this time the ælves are on the losing side of things.

A successful DC 15 Perception Check reveals the sounds of fighting to the West. Read or paraphrase the following: The clash of steel, screams of pain and bellows of fury filter through the trees to the west.

The scene of the battle is a trail bordered on both sides by tall trees. The PCs may rush forward or be stealthy, but no matter how they approach, when they do read or paraphrase the following:

On a forest trail, a black wagon with a familiar cargo of canvas wrapped corpses leans to one side, a wheel crushed and its horses missing.

Arrayed around the wagon are the bodies of several humans pierced with ælven arrows. A second band of six humans stands around a single ælf.

It is **Elisedd Dalais!** Bleeding from several wounds he desperately tries to hold off the attacks of his foes as three of his companions



lay dead at his feet. The humans laugh and mock the ranger, toying with the last of their victims.

Creatures This is indeed the leader of the patrol the PCs encountered in the **Midpoint Encounter of Act 1**. Elisedd has been scouting the invasion preparations in Aberwyth when two of his companions (**Keevan** and **Belini**) were captured. While hurrying to rescue them, Elisedd and the remainder of his team ambushed a corpse wagon only to be ambushed in turn by a patrol from Aberwyth. With his companions dead, the situation is dire and Elisedd will surely perish without aid.

ABERWYTH SOLDIERS (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 (each)

Human fighter 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 18, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 14 (1d10+4)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +4 (1d8+3/19-20) or dagger +3 (1d4+3/19-20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19-20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

TACTICS

If attacked, two of the soldiers will attack with crossbows while the others engage with swords.

Morale - When reduced to 3 hp or less, a soldier will attempt to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 11, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Perception +2, Profession (soldier) +2, Survival +4

Languages Common (low); **Honor** 3

Combat Gear breastplate, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, longsword, bedroll, tindertwigs (2), 4 gp.

Development Elisedd is too weak to help with combat and if the soldiers turn away to engage the PCs, he collapses. Once the humans are dealt with, Elisedd can tell the PCs what happened.

Wagon The cargo wagon contains the last shipment of corpses from the town of Westholm. The dead driver wears a tabard emblazoned with the arms of that town. Otherwise it is identical to the wagon found in **Area A4**.

Development If he is rescued, Elisedd implores the PCs to aid him. According to what he overheard, the invasion is only a day or so away from being launched! Elisedd will use his last scroll to take word of the impending invasion to the nearest Sil. In the meantime, he instructs the PCs to disrupt the invasion preparations in Aberwyth as much as possible. He does not know if Keevan and Belini still live but he fears the worst. The most important thing is for the PCs to damage the invasion. If the PCs need advice, Elisedd reminds them that they are trained for this sort of espionage and sabotage.

Should it come to pass that Elisedd is slain in this encounter, the PCs can find an entry in his journal detailing his plan to send one member to warn the Sil while the others sabotage the invasion camp.

Once the PCs agree to the sabotage, Elisedd unfurls a scroll and casts a spell. He transforms into an eagle and flies off toward the north.

Treasure In addition to the human's gear, a DC 15 Perception checks reveals two *potions of cure light wounds*, a +1 arrow and a *cloak of the elvenkind* among the gear of the slain ælves.

Story Award For agreeing to aid Elisedd, award the PCs 200xp each.



F. The Invasion Camp of Aberwyth

This part of the adventure gives the PCs a chance to be the terror the ælves are rumored to be. With the invasion set to begin in two days, they do not have much time. Some parties may choose to launch raids against the town or insert themselves inside to disrupt from within. Whichever route they choose, the PCs must delay the construction and preparations long enough for reinforcements from the Sils to arrive.

Running the Sabotage

The PCs have two main goals in this section. The most obvious is to disrupt the invasion preparations, but GMs should also remind them that their original assignment is to uncover evidence or information about the poisoning of the forest.

The design of *The Ælven Agenda* assumes the PCs will choose to infiltrate the encampment in disguise (to maximize the amount of damage they do to their enemies). GMs are encouraged to reward creative PCs who come up with alternate methods of disrupting the overall progress of the camp with similar XP awards.

Possible Approaches

While most groups will come up with their own plans, the following skill checks should cover most entry points to Aberwyth. In all of the following scenarios, any NPC witnessing a PC obviously sabotaging the camp (or outside of their disguise) immediately raises the alarm.

Stealthy Assault

The easiest method of gaining entry to Aberwyth in this scenario is to await the cover of darkness and then scale one of the walls (DC 15 Climb check) or drift in on the river (a DC 15 Swim check). Once inside, the PCs must make successive Stealth checks (DC 15) against the guards on patrol, as well as once a minute while inside. The PCs can engage in any manner of activities (the **Plethora of Targets** sidebar has some suggestions) to curtail the invasion.

Joining Up

In this scenario, the PCs present themselves as recruits. Convincing the guards to admit them requires a successful DC 10 Bluff or Diplomacy check (bribing the guards grants a +1 bonus for each 10 gp used). Once through the gates, the PCs will be ushered with a large group of other recruits to hear the commander speak. They will be issued cheap weapons if they do not have better and given a tent in **Area G18**. After that, they have the run of the camp. Sabotaging and disrupting things then become a matter of stealth.

Wagon Delivery

In this scenario, the PCs attempt to convince the guards they are delivering bodies (or other goods) to the camp. If the PCs succeed on a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Profession (driver) skill check against the guards (DC 15), they will be directed to the warehouses near the Eastern Dock where the PCs will be expected to help unload the cargo. After that is complete, they are to take the wagon and horses to the stable before taking their ease in the camp. Should the PCs successfully impersonate wagon drivers, they will have the run of the camp.

Blending In

This approach calls for the PCs to use their shrouds to disguise themselves as humans, while using the uniforms from the soldiers in **Area E3** to gain entry to the compound. Bluffing their way through the gates requires a DC 15 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Profession (soldier) skill check.

Raising the Alarm

While the inhabitants of Aberwyth are not expecting ælven infiltrators, they are on guard and GMs should treat all soldiers on duty as if they were actively “taking a 10” on their Perception skill checks. Other NPCs will not be actively looking for the PCs, but may still investigate noises or anything obviously out of place. Should the PC’s exploits set off an alarm, however, the PCs will have a limited amount of time before they are overwhelmed by the humans. To represent this, GMs should add an increasing number of guards (human warrior 1) to each location the PCs enter once the



A Plethora of Targets

When deciding how to disrupt and sabotage the invasion preparations, the PCs have many options to choose from. Listed here are but a few of them:

- Burning the rafts in their construction slips
- Poisoning the wells/food supplies
- Scuttling the dragonships in the dock
- Destroy the ballistas
- Setting fire to the tents
- Assassinating Alfuar and his officers
- Sowing unrest among the troops
- Steal the key to the armory
- Disable the catapults

For information about the poisoning, there are three critical locations:

- The secret room in Alfuar's Headquarters, which contains notes about the Black Hand and their operation.
- The Alchemist's Quarters, which contains notes on the Odr Poison.
- The Eastern Warehouse, which contains a sample of the Odr Poison.

Approaching Aberwyth

Spanning both banks of the Ystwyth River and surrounded by 50 yards of severed tree stumps, Aberwyth sits like a cancer at the northern edge of the Moonwalde. The river divides the compound; the eastern half being slightly smaller than the western. A tall, wooden palisade defends both sides and long docks extend out into Oracle Lake.

Seen from a distance, the walled compound of Aberwyth appears formidable, but a closer inspection reveals the makeshift nature of this temporary community. Closer inspection reveals gaps in the palisade, canvas roofs on the buildings, the rickety docks, all suggesting Aberwyth was thrown together rapidly.

The eastern half contains the support buildings, armories, warehouses and barracks. The tents of the enlisted men and the construction slips (where the invasion barges are being built) dominate the larger, western half.

The 100 yards from the tree line to the walls provide Aberwyth's defenders a clear view of the surrounding countryside during the day. At night, this visibility is reduced significantly.

F1. Guarded Gates

Squat wooden towers flank a set of thick iron-banded doors wide enough for a wagon to drive through. Two ælven heads stuck on spears stare out with dead, clouded eyes.

Rotating five-guard squads man the gates day and night. They have orders to stop and question anyone approaching the compound. Each shift features an officer (human warrior 2) watching over four guards (human warrior 1).

PCs who bluff their way inside (as new recruits) are escorted to the courtyard of the headquarters (**Area G1**) by the duty officer to hear **Commander Alfuar** speak.

If the alarm sounds, the three recruits man the ballista while the officer retreats inside the walls to shut and bar the doors. If faced with a serious threat (more than a single ælf), the recruits follow the officer inside instead.

compound is alerted. Treat the location where the PCs triggered the alarm as their starting point and add foes to each subsequent location, as follows: Add one additional guard (human warrior 1) to the 2nd and 3rd locations the PCs enter, two additional guards (human warrior 1) to the 3rd and 4th locations, three additional guards (human warrior 1) to the 5th and 6th locations, and so on. Additionally, increase the DC for all Stealth checks by +2. PCs identified and driven out into the open potentially face a hundred (or more) warriors – spelling the doom for most groups.

Various sabotages and actions performed by the PCs can slow or even reduce the number of foes. These modifiers are detailed in the individual locations.

Once the PCs make their escape from Aberwyth, GMs should go to **Act 4: Vengeance and New Threats**.

Scared as they are about ælven attacks, the guards keep a watchful eye on the environs. PCs attempting to sneak up on the gate or the wall undetected must succeed on a DC 12 Stealth check (the guards take a 10). PCs attempting this during the day suffer a -5 penalty. The wooden palisade is 20 feet high, but includes some handholds. Scaling the walls requires a DC 15 Climb check.

The doors themselves are somewhat hastily constructed and, while secure from the outside, are prone to tampering from the inside. Succeeding on a DC 15 Disable Device or DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check is enough to exploit obvious weaknesses.

Sabotage Value Weakening the Gates (1 SP)

F2. Eastern Courtyard

The eastern side of Aberwyth is clean, organized and orderly. A collection of clapboard buildings lines the lakeshore on one side of the courtyard with a larger, well-built structure on the other. A bridge crosses the river to the west.

The eastern courtyard is officer country. Alfuar's headquarters and officer barracks dominate the south of the area. The riverside is lined with warehouses, armories and storage areas, not to mention the docks themselves. A large alchemist's workshop lies to the east near the wide bridge crossing the river.

The Speech When the PCs first enter the area (especially if they are escorted by the officer from **Area F1**), they catch the tail end of Alfuar's speech – read or paraphrase the following:

"... the cowardly ælves have used their foul magic to unleash rage fever upon us, spreading sickness and death. We've been forced to put down our own herds, our dogs and horses. We've had to deal with infected friends and family. Even our children aren't safe from the ælven plague.

"We will not stand by any longer! We will not let them drive us from our homes! We will not let them kill our wives and children! They have broken the peace for the last time. Go with the sergeant, arm yourselves and de-



vote yourselves to your training. In two days we will put a stop to their dark plague, once and for all."

The gathered men cheer and clap as Alfuar walks back into the building. A burly soldier steps forward. "I'm Halvar, one of Alfuar's trusted men. Fall in recruits. Let's get you to equipped and encamped. Follow me."

PCs disguised as recruits are directed to join this group, armed with basic weapons (unless they have better), and then assigned to a tent in **Area F18**. PCs who succeed on a Diplomacy skill check to gather information (DC 18) learn that Alfuar was once a ranking officer in Union City, but settled locally after retiring. Many of his men, after he retired, followed him here.

Patrols During the day, this area buzzes with activity. Wagons trundle to and from the warehouses, noxious fumes cloud around an alchemist's workshop near the riverside and watchful soldiers guard the locked doors of the armory.

At night, however, the courtyard is quieter. From sunset to sunrise, three two-man teams patrol the area in three-hour shifts. Each pair of soldiers (human warrior 1) spends about 5 minutes at each location, starting at the Commander's HQ in **Area F3** and moving in a

clockwise rotation. For twenty minutes each hour they loiter in **Area 1**, talking with the guards at the gate.

If the alarm is raised, any guard not assigned to a location gathers in front of the Commander's Headquarters to await orders. It takes most guards roughly a minute to don their armor and weapons. Alfuar sends out runners 1d4 rounds after the alarm is raised.

Sabotage Value There is nothing here that can be sabotaged, but bodies might be hidden here to cause a distraction.

F3. Commander Alfuar's Headquarters

This large, timber structure dominates the eastern shore. It has a wide porch on the first floor extending out into the courtyard, and a smaller second floor with a semi-circular balcony on the eastern side of the building. The peaked roof has a small observation belfry, with black pennants fluttering in the breeze overhead.

See **Part G** below

F4. Officer's Barracks

These small wooden apartments are modest two-story affairs, their slate shingled rooftops stand just below the crest of the thick palisade to the south. A small staircase follows the outside of the northern wall of each building, leading to the door on the second floor.

Each barracks features two 20 ft. by 40 ft. floors.

The bottom floors are for the junior officers. They have doors at either end and are lined with twelve curtained beds. Footlockers accompany each bed. Most are locked with simple locks (DC 20) and contain 1d20gp worth of personal items. A large covered water barrel occupies one corner with a ladle hanging on a wooden peg.

Senior officers reside in the upper floors. Six large curtained areas contain beds, chests and small desks. The locked chests are locked with average locks (DC 25) and contain 2d20gp worth of personal items. A table along one wall holds fine rations, bottles of wine and savories.

During the day, four officers can be found in

each barracks, but at night, nineteen of the beds are occupied.

Sabotage Value Ruthless (and potentially evil) PCs may decide to assassinate the officers while they sleep, moving from bed to bed as they do so. Doing this requires 1 minute per bed and requires a DC 15 Stealth check, which increases by +1 for each officer they kill. Failure of any check indicates one of the officers awakes and sounds the alarm. PCs earn 1 SP per officer they kill, but assassinating sleeping officers is an evil and dishonorable act. PCs who poison the officers' provisions earn 2 SP.

A5. Armory

A stout building of cut stone, this structure has small windows covered with wrought-iron bars. Its roof is covered in dark slate tiles, and the door is bound in thick, black iron bands. Inside the structure, racks hold row upon row of armor, weapons and ammunition.

Four soldiers (human warriors 1) guard this building both day and night, although only one of them has the key. At night the doors are locked with good locks (DC 30 Disable Device) and the area is guarded by the rotating patrol as described above.

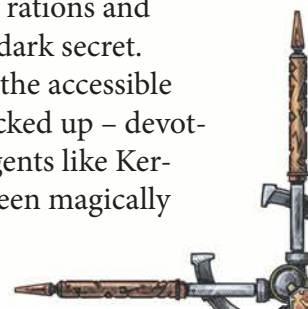
Equipment Although PCs might find any type of weapon or armor here (20% chance), the armory is filled with the basics: leather armor, padded armor, chain shirts, clubs, short swords, axes, spears, daggers, short bows, and quivers of arrows.

Sabotage Value PCs may sabotage the armory, but doing so requires a steady hour of work and requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) skill check.

F6. Dock Warehouses

This long, open building has half-dozen sets of double doors opening out to face the boardwalk down to the docks. Inside, crates and bales of all sizes line the walls.

A repository for common supplies like rations and tools, these warehouses also contain a dark secret. While normal provisions are stored in the accessible areas, one side of each warehouse is locked up – devoted to storing the bodies collected by agents like Ker-rigan in Lakeside. These bodies have been magically



preserved and stuffed into crates so as to hide them from the men and women in the camp. Only Commander Alfuar and his trusted officers know the truth.

Moth Cage Storage One small locked room (a DC 20 Disable Device check opens this simple lock) contains two dozen empty moth cages and a single vial of Odr Poison, which lies wedged between an old crate and the wall. PCs who succeed on a DC 20 Perception check discover the vial, but risk disturbing a handful of moths that hatched here, potentially (15% chance) exposing them directly to Odr Poison (see page 4).

Sabotage Value This structure may be set on fire, but this triggers the alarm (1 SP).

F7. Alchemist's Quarters

Constructed of loose river stones and mortar in wooden frames, this house sports three round, smoking chimneys. Its windows are small and caged with wrought iron, and a heavy, triple-reinforced oaken door seems meant to keep events inside as much as keep uninvited visitors out. A small fenced-in yard grows eight rows of various herbs.

This is the domain of **Kjell** (CN human male alchemist 1/expert 3), the camp healer. This Black Hand agent is a greedy opportunist who cares more for the coins that grease his palms than for any cause or anti-ælfen sentiment. While he spends most of his time in this hut, pouring over his notes and looking for ways to improve the Odr Poison (and, hopefully, advance his position in the Black Hand in the process). Like many of the men in this Aberwyth, Kjell enjoys his drink, although he frequently over does it. PCs who break into his lab (which is locked with a simple lock) discover him passed out and easy to avoid. Obvious loud noises or touching him directly will wake him, but he otherwise sleeps through most things. PCs who succeed on a DC 10 Perception skill check easily find his notes, as well as 2d4 vials of alchemist fire.

Sabotage Value The alchemist's lab may be set on fire, which causes it to explode and ignite the warehouse and two other random, adjacent locations. Anyone within 30 ft. of this lab when it explodes suffers 6d6 points of fire damage, but a DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage. This triggers the alarm, drawing the

guards to this location (4 SP). Destroying the alchemist's quarters reduces the number of reinforcements during subsequent alarms by -1 per location, as these soldiers fight the fire.

F8. Eastern Dock

Two long, narrow piers stretch out into the river. A rope railing offers scant protection along the edge, and heavy posts appear reserved for boats to lash themselves to. A few long boards, coils of rope, and wooden ladders lie scattered about, waiting for crew or porters in need.

Several longships are moored here either being unloaded or awaiting the crates (of bodies) stored in the warehouses. During the day, the docks are packed with workers and soldiers, making stealth all but impossible, although PCs approaching from the lake that make a successful Swim check (DC 15), followed by a Stealth check (DC 15) may sneak beneath the dock. At night, two sentries guard the piers, patrolling each one together (PCs need only make a DC 15 Stealth check to avoid them).

Sabotage Value PCs succeeding on a Sleight of Hand check (DC 18) may damage the mooring ropes, causing the longships to drift out into the lake (1 SP for both ships), which takes approximately 10 minutes. PCs who take more drastic action (like setting the ships on fire or otherwise sinking them) earn more sabotage points (1 SP per ship), but immediately raise the alarm.

F9. Wagon Yard and Stable

A half dozen unhitched wagons sit idle here in two rows of three, their tongues facing each other and a heavy, black chain wrapped through them. The ground has been worn down to bare, dark earth here, compacted by innumerable boots. Further east, a stable and hayloft stand outside the palisade.

Due to the crowded environs here, PCs lurking in this area gain a +5 competence bonus to Stealth checks.

Sabotage Value PCs who succeed on a Disable Device check (DC 15) may sabotage a wagon (which takes approximately 5 minutes per wagon), but doing so requires either a DC 15 Bluff or Stealth check to avoid the guards' direct attention. Failure



indicates a soldier takes notice and raises the alarm (1 SP per 2 wagons, max 3 SP total).

F10. Bridges

Wide enough for a wagon to cross in either direction at the same time, these bridges connect to a small island and cross the Ystwyth river at its mouth. They are uncovered, and have a two-foot railing on either side. Their thick pilings are sunk deep into the mud of both shores.

Guards never stand watch at the bridges, as these are internal structures. However, any obvious construction (or sabotage) done during daylight hours attracts their immediate attention, which requires either a work order from one of the head carpenters or the Commander himself. PCs without a note need to succeed on a Bluff or Diplomacy skill check (DC 20) to avoid being taken directly before the Commander.

Sabotage Value Undermining or sabotaging the bridge requires a DC 15 Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) check and 30 minutes of work. Success reduces the number of reinforcements during a raised alarm by -1 per location. (2 SP)

F11. Western Courtyard

A wide space of compacted dirt, it's evident a regular bonfire is held in the blackened center of this area. A sea of canvas tents stretch along the western and southern side of the wall. To the north, smoke rises from a large smithy. Small, squat segments of tree trunks line the edges, marking the courtyard's boundary and offering seats to groups of conversing men.

Sabotage Value Although there is nothing of value in this location, setting fire to the tents causes chaos and immediately raises the alarm (1 SP).

F12. Siege Engines

Three small catapults rise above crates of ammunition, parts and other equipment used to maintain the siege engines. The catapults themselves are lashed and partially disassembled for travel.

Two guards (human warrior 1) are posted here at all times.

Sabotage Value PCs who succeed on a Disable Device, Knowledge (engineering), or Profession (carpenter) skill check (DC 15) easily sabotage one of the siege engines, but doing so requires thirty minutes of dedicated work per siege engine. PCs who try to hide their efforts suffer a -5 penalty to these checks. (Each siege engine is worth 1 SP point; 3 SP maximum).

F13. Carpenters and Forges

The longer, taller portion of this structure is open along the southwestern wall, allowing craftsmen to work together bringing very large projects in and out of the workshop space. There are areas for weaponsmithing, carpentry, metalworking, leatherworking, and simple repairs. The office and tool storage stands attached to the northern half of the building, with several windows looking out into the surrounding areas.

Tarben Stigsson (LN human male expert 5) runs this smithy with a keen eye and a quick backhand for any apprentice who lags behind his work. He is unwavering in his loathing of ælves; a result of an unfortunate unrequited love affair in his youth.

Tarben can usually be found here crafting, repairing weapons and constructing the parts needed for the invasion barges in **Area F15**. Twice a day he personally oversees delivery of arms and armor to the armory in the eastern courtyard.

Sabotage Value This workspace is only occupied by Tarben at night. The tools, fuel, and workspaces can be easily sabotaged with one hour of effort, requiring either a Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) skill check (DC 20). Tarben is a light sleeper, however, and gets up frequently to check on his shop. (2 SP)

F14. Prisoner's Pit

A lattice of wooden bars, secured with an iron padlock, covers the stone capped lip of an old well shaft. The rotting bodies of an eagle and a fox hang from a pole at the edge of the pit. From the darkness below, a noxious odor rises.

This abandoned well, 5 ft. wide and 10 ft. deep, has been converted to house two ælven prisoners, **Keevan** and **Beleni**. They have been subjected to repeated beatings and invasive questionings. As added insults, their

slain animal companions hang nearby. Some of the humans of Aberwyth enjoy dumping waste and refuse into the pit to torment the prisoners. As such, the ælves are in bad shape.

Attempting to converse with the prisoners for more than a brief moment attracts the attention of three nearby guards (human warrior 1) loitering in the shade of the carpenter building to the north. However, the guards will tolerate verbally haranguing the prisoners and/or throwing garbage down the pit as long as it doesn't get out of control.

The lock on the bars is a simple padlock, requiring a DC 20 Disable Device check to open. Covered in slime and waste, the sides of the pit are treacherous to climb unaided (DC 25 Climb) though a rope or similar item reduces this to a DC 15 Climb check.

Beleni (NG Female ælven ranger 1) is by far the most ill. She suffers from filth fever, dehydration and malnutrition. These ailments are reflected as the sickened condition in the stat block below.

Keevan (CE male ælven ranger 1) presents a trickier situation. His physical condition is identical to Beleni's, but mentally he is far worse. Broken by the torments of his captors and the plight of his companion, he has slipped into a homicidal psychosis. Recognizing the signs of his damaged mental condition before freeing Keevan requires a DC 25 Perception check to hear his whispered muttering about killing humans. Characters who converse with him face to face can attempt a DC 15 Heal or Sense Motive check to discern Keevan's intentions.

KEEVAN AND BELENI

CR 1

XP 400 (each)

male and female ælven rangers 1

CE Medium humanoid (ælf) - Keevan

CN Medium humanoid (ælf) - Beleni

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 13, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 10 (+3 Dex)

hp 8 (1d10+1; both currently wounded)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +2 vs. enchantments

Weakness *sickness*

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee piece of wood +4 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2)

Ælven Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1/day— *create water*, *detect animals or plants*, *entangle* (DC 12), and *know direction*.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 11, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +6, Escape Artist +4, Perception +7, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Languages Ælven, Common (Low), and Glittertongue;

Honor 2

SQ Sil bound, track +1, wild empathy +0

Other Gear piece of wood

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sickened (Ex) Both ælves have been ill used by the humans and suffer from the *sickened* condition.

Development If the PCs release their ælven allies at night, they need only hide or disguise them from the guard and roving patrols, although guards who discover them immediately raise the alarm. Releasing their ælven allies during the day is possible, but instantly raises the alarm unless extraordinary precautions are taken.

Sabotage Value Freeing their ælven allies (1 SP).

Allowing Keevan to go on a murder spree (2 SP).

F15. Barge Construction Slips

Like the hands of great, wooden giants reaching up out of the sand along the beach, a dozen shipyard slips hold barges in the final stages of construction.

These twelve barges stand nearly ready to transport the invasion force deep into the forest. During the day, the area swarms with workmen, shipwrights and craftsmen putting the final touches on the barges. At night the area is quite empty. Though too much noise may attract the attention of the men sleeping above the forge in **Area F13**.

Sabotage Value PCs who succeed on a Disable Device, Knowledge (engineering), or Profession (carpenter), Profession (sailor) skill check (DC 15) easily sabotage one of the barges, but doing so requires twenty minutes of dedicated work per barge. PCs who try to hide their efforts suffer a -5 penalty to these checks. (Each barge is worth 1 SP; 6 SP maximum). Setting fire to the

barges immediately raises the alarm, but reduces the number of reinforcements during subsequent alarms by -1 per location, as these men are redirected to fight the fires.

F16. Ballistas and Supply Depot

This area consists of about 400 square feet of lumber, crates, and metal rod stock covered with oilskins and piled under a large, open tent. Nearby, three wicked looking ballistas line the side of the Carpenter's building along with crates of bolts, spare gut strings and other parts.

These ballistas stand ready and could be easily fired into nearby structures or groups of foes. Canny PCs may decide to fire the ballista into the Pitch Vats in **Area A19**. Doing so causes a massive explosion setting fire to the Docks (**F20**), Forges (**F13**) and Barges (**F15**). This also triggers the alarm.

Sabotage Value PCs who succeed on a Disable Device, Knowledge (engineering), or Profession (carpenter) skill check (DC 15) easily sabotage one of the siege engines, but doing so requires 15 minutes of dedicated work per siege engine. PCs who try to hide their efforts suffer a -5 penalty to these checks. (Each siege engine is worth 1 SP; 3 SP maximum).

F17. Training Yards and Cook Tents

Long tables and benches are stacked about the perimeter of these spaces, allowing the men to train in a somewhat enclosed space. During meals, the tables and benches fill the area, and a long line snakes its way around the square. The two cook tents each attach to a wooden stall, allowing food preparation and service to stay close together.

Sabotage Value PCs with poison may easily taint the camp's food supply, but the doing so requires a successful Profession (cook), Sleight of Hand, or Stealth check (DC 15) and 10 minutes of dedicated work. Identifying and concocting an appropriate poison from the supplies available doubles the time and requires a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (nature) skill check. (2 SP)

A18. Tents

A sea of dirty canvas tents make up the living quarters for most of the men on this side of the river. The air is heavy here with the smell of smoke, sweat, and rough curses.

Letter to Dag If the PCs wish to deliver the letter they acquired from **Hertha** in Lakeside they must first succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy check to locate Dag. Upon reading the letter, Dag will become visibly upset at what's been happening at home. He asks the PCs about his wife and the other inhabitants of the town. If they succeed at a DC 15 Bluff check and embellish the problems in Lakeside, Dag will gather up two dozen men and immediately leaves for home.

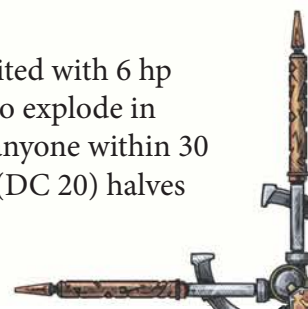
Sabotage Value Bloodthirsty PCs may decide to assassinate the soldiers tent by tent in the middle of the night. Doing so requires 1 minute per tent, but requires a DC 15 Stealth check, which increases by +1 for each soldier they kill. An additional check at the highest DC is required to leave the area unnoticed. Failure of any check indicates the PCs are spotted and the alarm is immediately raised. PCs earn 1 SP per two soldiers they assassinate, but assassinating sleeping soldiers is an evil and dishonorable act. Using the letter to convince Dag and the others to leave is worth 1 SP.

F19. Pitch Vats

Five tall, barrel-like vats, bound in sheets of copper, sit on heavy, iron racks, giving the charcoal fires beneath them room to breathe. The scent of pitch and tar is thick in the air, and the bubbling liquid occasionally releases a foul burst of sulfur and burning splatter. A walkway shields these containers from sight on the river, allowing some poor soul to take turns stirring the simmering mixture.

These dangerous bubbling pots have been separated from the rest of the camp, but due to the constraints of the geography, not far enough. A DC 15 Intelligence check identifies the pitch as a flammable substance, capable of possibly exploding.

Sabotage Value These vats may be ignited with 6 hp of fire damage. Doing so causes them to explode in 1d4+1 rounds, causing 6d6 per vat to anyone within 30 feet, although a successful Reflex save (DC 20) halves



the damage. An exploding vat ignites other unlit vats, causes fires to quickly spread to the **Docks (F20)**, **Forges (F13)** and **Barges (F15)**, as well as raising the alarm (worth 4 SP).

F20. Western Dock

Much larger than the eastern docks, this set of five piers serves as the workhorse of the two, with a decently sized warehouse and harbormaster's office set up at the northern end of the largest portion. Well-kept and maintained, these docks service a larger number of varying sized craft from caravels to fishing skiffs.

Sabotage Value PCs succeeding on a Sleight of Hand check (DC 18) may damage the mooring ropes, causing the longships to drift out into the lake (1 SP for both ships), which takes approximately 10 minutes. PCs who take more drastic action (like setting the ships on fire or otherwise sinking them) earn more sabotage points (1 SP per ship), but immediately raise the alarm.

G. Commander Alfuar's Headquarters

This large, timber structure dominates the eastern shore. It has a wide porch on the first floor extending out into the courtyard, and a smaller second floor with a semi-circular balcony on the eastern side of the building. The peaked roof has a small observation belfry, with black pennants fluttering in the breeze overhead.

At some point the PCs may decide to sneak into Alfuar's headquarters, either to assassinate him or to uncover evidence about the poisoning of the forest (or both). Where the many of the other structures of the community are little more than clapboard and canvas (the armory being the other obvious exception), the headquarters were built from thick timbers and stone, making it one of the few sturdy buildings in Aberwyth.

Locations where sabotage might be possible or useful have been indicated.

First Floor The first floor is the most fortified of the three stories above. Though open during the day, the lower level's windows are covered with thick wooden shutters (hardness 2, 20 hit points) at night and secured from the inside. Opening a window shutter from the outside requires a successful DC 15 Disable Device check (failing by 5 or more creates a lot of noise and

permanently jams the shutters into a closed and locked position).

Unless otherwise noted, officers, guards and soldiers pass in and out of the first floor during the day. PCs will surely be questioned by anyone they encounter. At night, however, the first floor is mostly deserted apart from the guards stationed at **G2** and the adjunct in **G6**.

If the PCs decide to go in through one of the less secured upper stories, scaling the exterior walls requires a successful DC 15 Climb check.

G1. Courtyard

The wide dirt area below the ground floor balcony of the headquarters bears the tracks of many feet. Fist-sized white stones mark the eastern and western sides of the courtyard and form paths toward the stairs leading to the doors of the building.

G2. Stairs

On both sides of the balcony an armed guard stands in front of a wide double door at the top of a short flight of wooden steps.

These doors are open during the day and heavily secured at night with good locks (DC 30).

The guards on duty at the doors operate in rotating shifts of four hours each. It is considered to be a great honor to man this post during the day, so usually only the best soldiers (human fighter 2) are assigned here. Only a single soldier stands watch at night.

G3. Balcony

A wide empty balcony bordered by a simple fence. A set of double doors to the south leads into the building.

Afuar uses this area to address his troops, keeping morale and anti-ælf sentiment as high as possible. When the balcony is not in use, a simple lock (DC 20) keeps the door locked tight.

G4. Entry Hall

The main parlor has rough hewed wooden floors and walls covered with a mismatch of



colorful rugs. A large table covered with stacks of papers, records, and plans occupy the center of room. The walls of the southeast corner are hung with maps of the area. A hallway extends to the east.

During the day, this spacious room becomes the command post of the camp and is a hive of activity. Officers pour over maps, assign duties, and generally keep Aberwyth running while planning the invasion. PCs entering the area will be stopped and questioned by the nearest officer and unless they provide a valid reason for being there. PCs unable to convince the officers there will be immediately apprehended (and the alarm will be sounded).

At night, however, the room is deserted. A few small oil lanterns provide a dim light. The rough floors creak alarmingly in the silence. PCs must succeed at DC 10 Stealth checks or risk alerting the guards in **Area G2** and the Adjunct in **Area G6** to their presence.

Sabotage Value Destroying the maps, plans and records (2 SP)

G5. Kitchen

This small kitchen features a compact hearth in the south wall with a steaming pot hanging from a chain above it. Bundles of herbs, onions, cords of sausage and trimmed and preserved haunches of boar and venison hang from the stout beams overhead. Crates of fine wines and ingredients are stacked in the corners. Preparation tables against the western and eastern walls are strewn with jars of spices, bottles of oils, knives, cleavers and other cooking implements.

This is the domain of Alfuar's personal cook, **Radin Stalson** (LN human male expert 3). During the day, Stalson is here preparing meals and he brooks no interference in his small kingdom. If confronted, he will yell for help while attacking with anything nearby. At night, he bunks in the officer's barracks (**area G4**).

DC 20 Perception checks reveal a large number of empty wine bottles hidden in a barrel marked as "dried herring". A secret drunk, this where Stalson hides the wine he regularly consumes out of the Alfuar's private supply. Because of his usually inebriated condition, Stalson is unlikely to notice if his food has been altered or contaminated.

Sabotage Value Poisoning the Commander's food or wine (2 SP)

G6. Adjunct's Quarters

This chamber looks to be a comfortable, if rather simply furnished office converted into a narrow bedroom. A narrow bed covered in a soft bedspread and fur blankets, a desk filled with papers, inks, quills and other scribal equipment.

This room is the bedchamber of the commander's overworked adjunct **Ivar Rask** (NG male human expert 2 / rogue 1).

During the day, Ivar can be found either in this room working on paperwork, in the Entry Hall (**Area G4**), or in the Dock Warehouses (**Area F6**). At night, he works at his desk until late before retiring for the night.

Shoe and Journal Upon Ivar's desk is a wooden coffer. Guarded by a clever trap (see below), the coffer holds a bloodstained child's shoe, obviously of ælven design, wrapped in a garland of dried flowers and a leather journal.

The lid of the coffer is locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 23, Disable Device 20) and trapped so that opening the coffer incorrectly triggers an envenomed blade. Breaking open the coffer bypasses the trap, but the noise alerts anyone in **Areas G2** and **G4**.

POISON BLADE TRAP

CR 1

XP 400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

Effects

Trigger touch; Reset manual

Effect Atk +10 melee (1d4+1/19-20 plus greenblood oil)

PCs who read the journal realize that Ivar hates the whole idea of this invasion, although this is a recent development. His change of heart came about after he witnessed Commander Alfuar and his officers murder a family of ælves they happened upon. Ivar kept the shoe of one of the victims as a reminder to stop this affair if possible. However, he is oathbound to Alfuar and dares not directly oppose him.

Negotiating with Ivar A somewhat selfish man, Ivar joined the invasion for the promise of quick coin, but has realized that he wants no part of a war between humans and ælves. If he can be convinced to trust the PCs he leaps at the chance to stop the invasion. A successful DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidation check brings Ivar around.

He is willing to give up the following information in return for their pledge that they will kill Alfuar. Converting Ivar to their cause earns the PCs 2 SP.

- Best time to take out the commander
- Reveals presence of ælven prisoners
- He suspects that the Commander knows something about why the forest is dying and the animals are getting sick.
- The location of the Commander's hidden Vault

G7. Stairs

This staircase winds upward, leading to the second floor.

A creaky step halfway up the stairs might alert Alfuar or guards at night, but the inhabitants of the building are used to the sound and it raises few suspicions during the day.

G8. Rear Door

A short flight of steps leads up to this elegant glass door, shrouded with curtains from the inside.

The door has a good Lock (DC 30), but the glass is easily broken, allowing the PCs a simple way to unlock the door. PCs who fail to conceal the sound of the breaking glass wake Ivarv (at night) or alert the guards (during the day).

G9. Second Floor Landing

A rich mosaic rug runs the length of this narrow wooden corridor. Several windows overlook the environs and a second set of stairs leads to the third floor belfry.

PCs crossing this hallway must succeed at a DC 15 Stealth check or alert Alfuar (if he's currently in **Area G12**) to their presence. A successful Perception check (DC 20) notices the noisy board, granting the PCs a +2 bonus to their Stealth check.

G10. Belfry Stairs

Narrow, winding stairs curl up into the topmost floor of the house.

These stairs lead up the Belfry (**Area G14**).

G11. Commander's Balcony

Two folding chairs are propped against the wall and a whitewashed low rail rings the outer edge.

The low rail allows characters to hide here, unseen from below, if they lie prone.

G12. Commander's Quarters

A small cot, a desk, and table dominate this room. A footlocker occupies the floor by the cot, and an armor stand sits in the corner.

The commander lives here in a rather spartan manner, taking meals, handling correspondence, and reviewing intelligence. The footlocker contains spare clothes and uniforms, and the clothing horse holds Alfuar's armor and weapons while he sleeps. The desk has several pieces of mundane mail on it.

PCs succeeding on a Perception check (DC 15) discover a false panel, which hides the entrance to the



Commander Alfuar

COMMANDER'S HEADQUARTERS

G13. Secret Vault

Maps pinned to the wall of this small chamber reveal troop movement plans as well as caravan routes to and from the villages and towns in the areas surrounding the forest. A table in the corner holds two small coffer.

Maps The information contained in these maps is enough to reveal the communities from which the Black Hand has been gathering bodies and delivering the poisoned moths. One of the maps shows the Western coastline, where the isle of Glitterfane has been circled in red ink.

Coffers These locked (DC 15 Disable Device) coffer contain the funds Alfuar uses to pay the local Black Hand agents. Each chest holds 250gp.

G14. Belfry

The stairs leads up to a wide balcony overlooking the entire camp. An alarm bell hangs here from a metal hook.

If the PCs reach this area after the alarm is raised, the PCs may use the bell to sound out an old ælven call for help, although this requires either a Performance (percussion) or Knowledge (history) skill check (DC 18). PCs who succeed attract the attention of a nearby ælven bat patrol, but that patrol takes two minutes to arrive. After sounding the bell, guards begin to arrive, one each round, starting on the third round. Because the stair leading up to the belfry is small and hard to navigate, only a maximum of five guards can assault the belfry at one time. Alternately, PCs who succeed on a Disable Device skill check (DC 15) can disable the bell, which takes the guards 2d4 minutes to repair.

Sabotage Value Disabling the bell prevents the inhabitants of the building from raising the alarm for an extra 2d4 minutes (1 SP).

1. Courtyard
2. Stairs
3. Balcony
4. Entry Hall
5. Kitchen
6. Adjunct's Quarters
7. Stairs
8. Rear Door
9. Second Floor Landing
10. Belfry Stairs
11. Commander's Balcony
12. Commander's Quarters
13. Secret Vault
14. Belfry

commander's vault. The vault is locked with an average lock (DC 25), but the key is normally kept in the commander's drawer while he sleeps (or on him, while he's awake). The door can be forced open, but doing so requires a DC 23 Strength check to break, alerting anyone in the building as well as the officers in **Area F4**

Exceptionally brave PCs may decide to assassinate Alfuar while he sleeps. Doing so is a full round action, but immediately wakes Alfuar if the PCs fail (see *Coup de Grace*). Worse, Alfuar is a light sleeper, so PCs need to make a successful Stealth check (DC 20) to avoid waking him.

Sabotage Value Killing Alfuar is worth 5 SP. Unless the PCs dispose of his body, guards discover his body in the morning and immediately raise the alarm.

Conclusion

With the shouts of humans and the alarm bells ringing, the PCs flee beyond the walls of Aberwyth. No matter what direction they head, it is only about ten minutes before the soldiers come after them.

Read or paraphrase the following:

What feelings of success and accomplishment you have are quickly replaced by alarm as you spot squads of human soldiers streaming out of Aberwyth in pursuit. Though confident that you can lose a small group once you make the edge of the forest, the safety of the trees is still far off. It is clear that the mounted humans will quickly catch up and attempt to delay you so that the footsoldiers close in for the kill.

With the clash of hooves close behind you and the forest's edge still a hundred yards, the end appears near. Suddenly, an ælven horn rings out. Diving down at you from above, you see the night-black forms of huge dire bats!

Recognizing the unmistakable forms of ælven batriders on the back of each creature you remember your training and reach skyward. As the human riders charge into range, swinging their blades, the bats snatch you up into the air!

There are enough bats for each of the PCs. What occurs next depends on how many sabotage points the PCs managed to collect.

Less than 10 Sabotage Points

Frowning at you from the back of another dire bat, Elisedd shakes his head. "What happened down there? I thought you were ready for this challenge! Although you did some damage, it's clear we'll have to gather our forces deeper inside the borders and meet this invasion head on. At least we got you out of there."

Though beyond the scope of this adventure, the PCs may be tasked to join the ælven army when it gathers to defend the forest against the human invasion.

10-15 Sabotage Points

Giving you a nod from the back of another dire bat, Elisedd shakes his head. "Good job down there. Looks like they won't be launching any invasion for a while. Gives us time to gather more troops and show them what we do to interlopers. The fight's not done yet, my friends. It's just begun."

Though beyond the scope of this adventure, the PCs may be tasked to join in the assault of Aberwyth once the ælven reinforcements arrive.

15+ Sabotage Points

Grimacing at you from the back of another dire bat, Elisedd laughs in triumph. "'Hail, my friends. I see that you drew out the humans to make our sport easier. They are running about like ants. Now, see what your actions have wrought!"

Below you, a large host of ælves charges out of the forest riding armored stags as squads of archers on dire bats soar overhead. Ælven battlecries echo across the clearing. As your dire bat mounts flap up into the sky, the ælven host cuts wide swaths through fleeing humans and Aberwyth burns.

Though beyond the scope of this adventure, the PCs may be ordered to help clean up the aftermath of the battle.

Aftermath

If the PCs were successful in sabotaging the camp, the ælves successfully burn down Aberwyth (sooner or later) and kill every human they catch. The bodies of the unlucky, the ones killed or captured, are mounted on posts lining the shore of Oracle Lake as a warning



to any others who would dare attempt to invade the forest.

Story Award For earning 10 sabotage points, award each PC 400xp. For every sabotage point beyond 10, award an additional 50xp for each PC.

Connecting to *The Rune of Hope*

If you are continuing on to run the second part of this adventure path, *The Rune of Hope*, read or paraphrase the following:

The dire bats land in a clearing a few miles from Aberwyth. Once on the ground again, Elisedd approaches you. "Rest yourselves for a moment and give me your report."

It is assumed that what the PCs tell Elisedd includes the information in the Commander's Vault. If not, Elisedd can supply the information, having learned it from "other sources".

Elisedd nods, a look of concern etched on his face. "This is a dire matter. The forest continues to sicken and the humans are to blame. It appears that now our only hope is to turn to our allies on the Glittering Isle. It is said that they possess a relic that can cure any illness. Perhaps with their aid we can still save the Moonwalde."

He signals and six dire bats swoop down. "I must stay here to oversee the extermination of this nest of vermin. You have proven yourselves to the Sils. Because of this, the Silmaster bade me to instruct you to take these mounts to the Gillterfane and secure the cure to this poison."

How the PCs get to the Glittering Isle is left up to the GM, but the journey itself could easily take a number of weeks by foot, although by bat, this is reduced considerably. The Glittering Isle and the glitterfane are discussed in more detail in the *Rhune: Dawn of Twilight Campaign Guide* (on pages 60 and 167, respectively). More information about The Glittering Isle appears in the following adventure, *The Rune of Hope*.

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- C7 - Sleepy Foam Mead hall
- C8 - Audun's Emporium
- C9 - Docks
- C10 - Soma's House
- C11 - Quarantine Area
- C12 - Hospice
- C13 - Stables

- C1 - Farms and Fields
- C2 - Ramparts
- C3 - Town Square
- C4 - Jarl's Longhouse
- C5 - Community Longhouse
- C6 - Temple to Dae gr

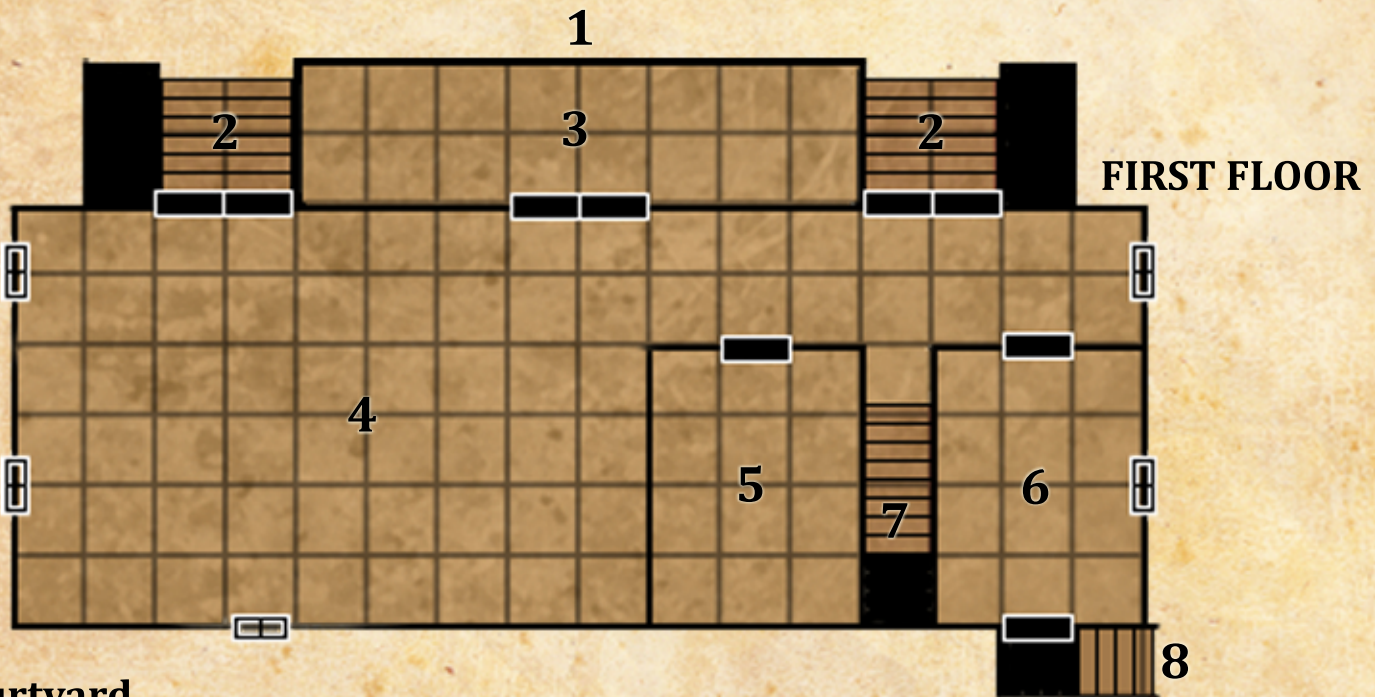


0 75 150 300
Scale (in feet)



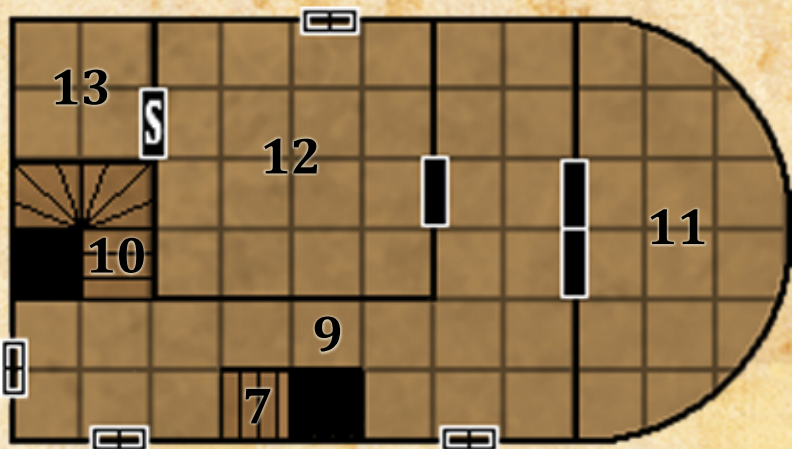
The Town of Lakeside

COMMANDER'S HEADQUARTERS



FIRST FLOOR

- 1. Courtyard
- 2. Stairs
- 3. Balcony
- 4. Entry Hall
- 5. Kitchen
- 6. Adjunct's Quarters
- 7. Stairs
- 8. Rear Door
- 9. Second Floor Landing
- 10. Belfry Stairs
- 11. Commander's Balcony
- 12. Commander's Quarters
- 13. Secret Vault
- 14. Belfry



SECOND FLOOR



BELFRY



The Ælven Agenda...

...is a different kind of adventure, one in which PCs get the opportunity to go on the offensive, hunting down their human enemies in hopes of saving their beloved forest, itself infected by an unknown disease. PCs must use stealth, smarts, and on occasion, violence, to save their beloved Moonwalde before their human enemies despoil it further.

While blame is easy enough to lay, the PCs quickly learn that more is going on than they initially realized, and with that, a greater part of Midgard may be in danger. Can the ælves – infamous and deadly – turn their swords and spells toward the correct enemy, or will they destroy all who lay in their path? Will they save Lakeside or burn it to the ground? And will they discover their real enemies before it's too late?



The Ælven Agenda is an adventure for 1st level player characters set in the world of Rhune: Dawn of Twilight. Although this adventure is designed exclusively for this campaign setting, it can easily be adapted to your favorite *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* campaign setting!