



FROG GOD GAMES ADVENTURES

BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

By Brent G. Griffin



**SWORDS &
WIZARDRY
COMPATIBLE**

BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

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ADVENTURES
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BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

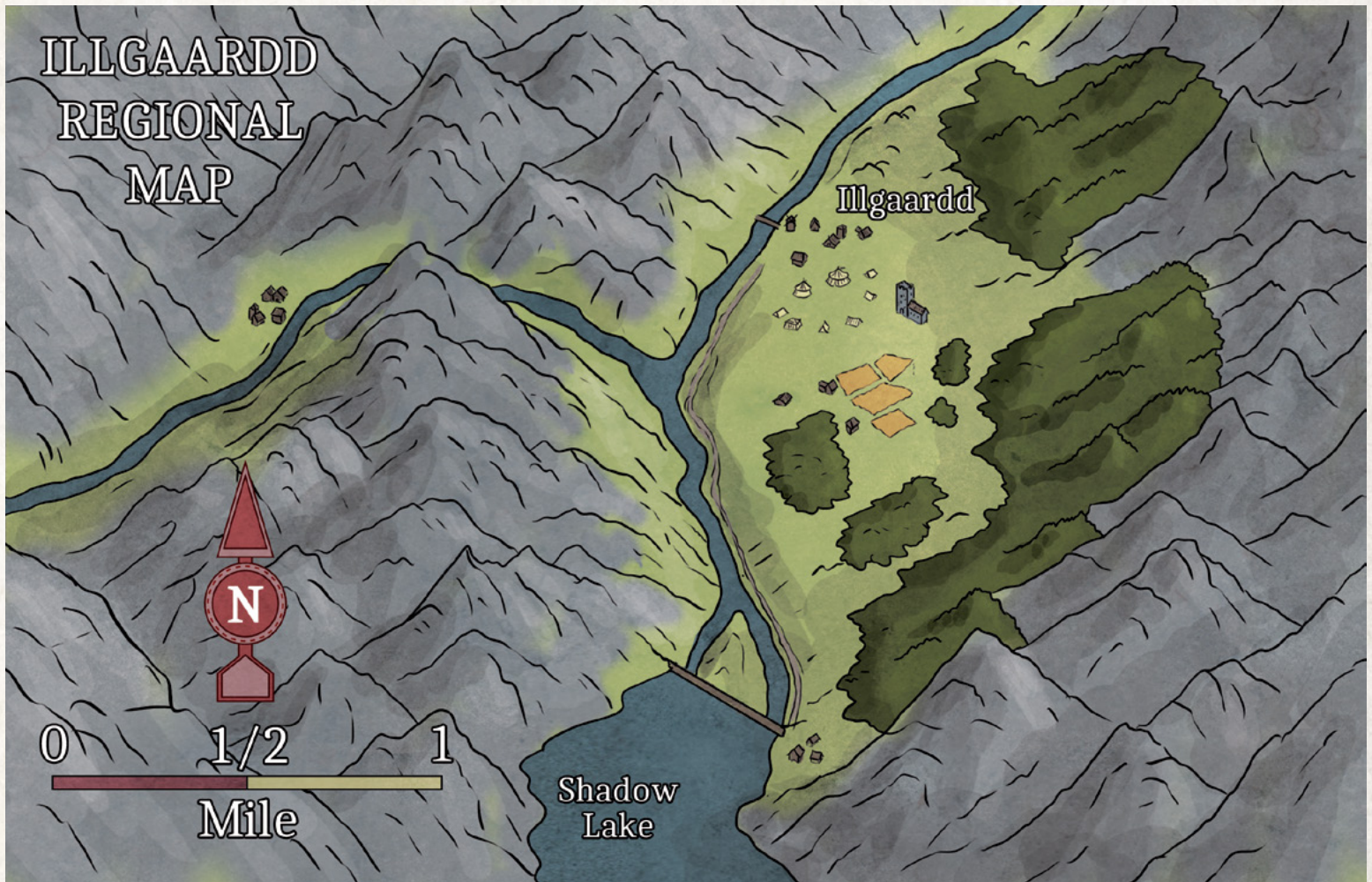
BY BRENT G. GRIFFIN

SWARDS & WIZARDRY ADVENTURE FOR 4 TO 6 CHARACTERS OF 2ND OR 3RD LEVEL.

INTRODUCTION

The characters are hired by Jax Blueskin, chief constable of the remote village of Ilgaardd to keep the peace during the village's Independence Day celebration. Once there, characters must contend with increasingly rowdy villagers only to discover a nefarious plot devised by Killoran "The Red," the village's presumed-to-be-dead former ruler who, if successful, unleashes a force so terrible that the village — and possibly the region — is likely to be destroyed. *By Dawn's Early Light* is a short *Swords & Wizardry* adventure for 4–6 characters of 2nd or 3rd level.

The Independence Day celebration in this adventure is inspired by early American Fourth of July celebrations, when, long before fireworks became traditional, villages would light massive bonfires to celebrate the country's independence from Great Britain. In the early years of the Republic, and continuing into the early 20th century, towns and villages competed with each other to build the biggest bonfires. These early celebrations drew huge crowds, especially in Salem, Massachusetts, where the largest bonfire recorded towered more than 140 feet on the top of Gallows Hill. These early celebrations were often rowdy and violent. Readers interested in this history are encouraged to learn more about America's early Independence Day celebrations and the cultural significance of bonfires.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

It is midsummer, and the village of Ilgaard is organizing its first celebration to honor the anniversary of its independence from the tyrannical rule of Lord Killoran “the Red.” While most of the villagers are happy with the new leadership and excited about the prospect of hosting a major event, some villagers remain loyal to Killoran and think the celebration is insulting. He did so much, they argue, to improve the villagers’ quality of life only to be violently ousted. The village leaders, however, believe this celebration is just what the villagers need.

The celebration begins on the 2nd of Haymond and intensifies until the big event at midnight on the 3rd — the lighting of a towering bonfire. The village has been rounding up old barrels and hogsheads for weeks to create a cathedral-like tower on the village green, sure to be the biggest bonfire the villagers have ever seen. But since the village announced its plans to proceed with the celebration, complaints have been getting louder and more aggressive. The bonfire welcomes the 4th of Haymond, the official Independence Day for the village.

By selling booths to different merchants and entertainers, the village leaders hope to encourage the people of Ilgaard and the few small, nearby villages to attend the celebration and to buy items from village merchants and shops. They are also hoping that people visiting from outside might be impressed by how well Ilgaardians work together and thus might consider setting up permanent residence in the village.

As the first day of the celebration approaches, the village leaders are becoming increasingly concerned. Skirmishes are breaking out between the few supporters of Killoran and other villagers, and some Ilgaardians are complaining vociferously about the presence of outsiders. To make matters worse, the region is experiencing an unusual heat wave. In the interest of safety, the village leaders authorized Constable Jax Blueskin to deputize additional people as needed and to pay them per day to ensure that the village stays quiet and peaceful during the celebration. While Jax Blueskin isn’t thrilled about hiring strangers, he’s more than happy to receive additional support to keep the peace.

In addition to tempers (and temperatures) heating up, and unbeknownst to anyone in the village, Killoran is planning a major assault on the village at the peak of the celebration. Having spent the year gathering his strength, he and a few of his most loyal supporters are plotting to unleash a force so destructive that no one in Ilgaard or the region is spared. Should Killoran succeed, the village is turned to ash. Perhaps, though, the newly-arrived characters can thwart that plan. Important Information

VILLAGE LEADERS PAST AND PRESENT

JAX BLUESKIN

Jax Blueskin, the chief constable of Ilgaard, is a human of medium build with a closely-shaved head and a bluish-purple, star-shaped birthmark covering the right side of his face. He loves Ilgaard with his entire being, being a seventh-generation member of a family that was central in developing Ilgaard into a place of acceptance, tolerance, and cooperation. He protects it with his life.

Jax became the constable after defeating Killoran, whom he witnessed murder his uncle, Palo Vord, on the village green. The public murder galvanized Jax and a group of villagers already resistant to Killoran’s rule, and they set about constructing a plan to overthrow the ruler. Late one summer night on the 4th of Haymond, Jax led this band to raid Killoran’s house. The battle that ensued was brutal and spilled out onto the green, where Killoran and his guards fought viciously and nearly prevailed. But Jax and his band fought back heroically. Killoran was last seen at the river’s edge, silhouetted in the light of his burning home, greatsword raised above his head, as Jax delivered a crippling blow to the side of his head with an axe handle. Villagers recall the resounding crack of the handle against Killoran’s skull and how it echoed throughout valley. And they recall seeing him cartwheel into the folds of the swift black river.

He can be seen carrying his trademark hickory-handled axe at all times, and he is swift to dole out justice to anyone who threatens the villagers or their way of life. However, while he is guided by a sense of moral certitude, Jax is a fair constable who strives to solve problems and keep the peace before using force.

LORD KILLORAN “THE RED”

Killoran “the Red” was initially quite popular with the villagers. Contemplative and persistent, though often quick to anger (hence the “Red” moniker), he oversaw the development of Ilgaard and its transformation from a small lumber camp marked by nearly endless toil and hardship into the much more prosperous village it is today. When villagers discovered gold deposits in the river, Killoran’s greed became insatiable, and he thought of nothing more than accumulating wealth. When his coffers weren’t filling quickly enough, he became increasingly incensed by what he perceived to be the villagers’ incompetence. He attributed this to their moral and intellectual degeneracy.

Life in Ilgaard became increasingly militaristic under Killoran’s rule, and protests were dealt with swiftly and violently, usually by his Crimson Legion force of guards, until Jax Blueskin purportedly killed him at the river’s edge. Killoran did not die, however. Rather, a fire cultist named Ragnis scooped his body out of the river. Ragnis had been secretly observing Killoran for some time and had determined he was a worthy recruit. After nursing Killoran back to health, Ragnis exploited Killoran’s rage and thirst for revenge. With Ragnis’ guidance, Killoran embraced the cult’s commitment to eradicating “corruption” and purifying the world of humankind’s “depravity and wickedness” through the cleansing power of fire. He has been preparing a ritual to summon a manifestation of Kerr Sem, a large fire elemental. Once called forth, it will wreak havoc first on the village of Ilgaard and then on the region, incinerating all in its path. The summoning coincides with the lighting of the bonfire during Ilgaard’s Independence Day celebration, and the summoning becomes permanent with the sacrifice of every person in the village.

THE SOULFLARE

A powerful magic item about the size of a large grapefruit, the *soulflare* sits at the heart of this adventure. It is an arcane artifact that affects the mind of anyone within 500 yards. It is located in the top level of the village’s windmill (**Area 8**), meaning everyone in the village proper is within range. It affects memory and reasoning, and, more importantly for Killoran’s plans, it makes its victims prone to violent outburst. It was created by members of the Church of Kerr Sem to aid the summoning of the fire elemental to Ilgaard on the 3rd night of Haymond. The chance of summoning Kerr Sem increases as more negative and violent energy is concentrated within the area. It is functioning perfectly, and most people in Ilgaard are now experiencing moments of unexplained annoyance. But sudden outbursts of violence are also becoming pervasive.

This enchanted glass orb is filled with swirling, greasy black smoke that swirls with flashes of heatless fire. It has 50 hit points and takes half damage from nonmagical attacks. Any character who hits the *soulflare* with a weapon attack takes half of the damage dealt. A character who touches the *soulflare* must make a saving throw with a –2 penalty. Those who fail believe it to be an important object of exquisite beauty. They refuse to believe the orb is harmful and protect it with their life! They cannot be convinced otherwise unless a *remove curse* spell is cast.

It is extremely difficult to reason with those engaged in violent action while they are under the effects of the *soulflare*. They refuse to believe they are responsible for any act of violence despite evidence to the contrary. And after a few minutes, they forget the incident entirely and care only about getting back to the festivities. As long as the *soulflare* remains in Ilgaard, the villagers quickly forget about any violent encounters they witness, even if corpses litter the village green.

If the *soulflare* is destroyed, the villagers regain their self-awareness, lose their proclivity to violence, and have no memory of any violent actions they committed, witnessed, or that were inflicted on them.

The *soulflare* does not affect Chaotic individuals or those immune to being charmed. Jax Blueskin, for example, is immune to the effects of the *soulflare*.

THE TIMELINE

This adventure is time based, with all events and encounters leading up to the final confrontation with Killoran on Day 3. Thus, each location includes information about events that occur there during the days leading up to the festival. Some locations have only slight time differences, while others have significant differences. Ideally, characters arrive at Ilgaard late on Day 1 and are offered a job by Jax Blueskin. On Day 2, they familiarize themselves with the location and find clues hinting at Killoran’s return and his plot to disrupt the celebration. By the evening of Day 3, characters become aware of the *soulflare* (see below) and also confirm Killoran’s existence and his location beneath the village green via a tunnel running below the mill. Exploring the tunnel leads them to a final confrontation with Killoran and several cultists during the pinnacle of Ilgaard’s Independence Day celebration.

Below are further details about each day of the adventure:

DAY 1 (1ST DAY OF HAYMOND)

The *soulflare* has just been placed in the mill, and the villagers are falling under its influence. Those within the town center may have shorter tempers and are likely to bicker, but people are no more prone to violence than on any other day. The characters arrive in town late on this day.

DAY 2 (2ND DAY OF HAYMOND)

The characters are not susceptible to the *soulflare*, as it takes an entire day for the *soulflare* to establish its full effect on a sentient mind.

There is a 50% chance that a fight breaks out (with or without simple weapons — your choice) at a given event or location while the characters are present. The effects of the *soulflare* end after 1 minute on this day. Fights include 1d4 + 1 villagers, and there is a 50% chance that a fighter has a simple melee weapon. Men, women, and children are equally affected.

Ilgaard Villagers (1d4+1): HD 1d6hp; AC 9[10]; Atk strike (1d2); Move 12; Save 18; AL Any; CL/XP B/10; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Spells such as *charm person* or *sleep* could also be used to end the fighting.

Onlookers may also be incited to violence. Onlookers not engaged in fighting don't try to stop the violence. A character who looks around during the fighting notices that many villagers have an almost blank look on their faces, as if they've lost all self-awareness. Others appear to be emotionally excited, their eyes lighting up each time a blow lands. If confronted, gleeful-looking

onlookers claim the fighters' actions were justified. There is a 50% chance that confronted onlookers begin arguing with each other about exactly whose actions were justified. If the characters do not intervene, another fight breaks out. Day 3 (3rd Day of Haymond)

At any given event on this day, there is a 75% chance that 1d4 villagers begin fighting. Use the description from Day 2 to determine if onlookers are also incited to violence.

Characters in the village proper who succeed on a saving throw hear a slight buzzing or crackling in the air. Call for this roll throughout the day until at least one of the characters hears it, after which, if it's pointed out, the other characters have no trouble hearing it. Hearing the *soulflare* is a highly unpleasant and agitating experience, and as it gets closer to the lighting of the bonfire, it becomes more noticeable and irritating.

Whether characters hear the *soulflare* or not, call for saving throws throughout the day, but only once per character. A character who fails the saving throw is overcome with a burning rage and immediately attacks the closest creature for 1d4 + 1 rounds, with a melee weapon if they have one; otherwise, they attack with fists and feet. Until the character has either been subdued, rendered unconscious, or until the effects wear off, the character does not stop trying to attack the target.

Like the villagers affected by the *soulflare*, characters affected do not remember their violent outburst, only the experience of "seeing red." How Jax responds to a character's violence is determined by a number of factors. He is becoming aware that something untoward is transpiring in the village, so he may be persuaded that the character was not acting on his or her own volition. However, if he has any reason to believe the character acted knowingly and maliciously toward another soul, he upgrades the character's room to the shire reeve's office jail cell, to which he, and he alone, holds the only key.



THE HEAT

At the time of the adventure, the region is experiencing an unprecedented, but natural, heat wave, with temperatures during the day exceeding 100° Fahrenheit and barely dropping below 90° Fahrenheit at night. Feel free to play up or down the effects of heat on the characters. At the very least, the excessive heat could be used for narrative color, with the intensifying heat corresponding to an increase in violent outbursts in the village. Ilgaardd

The region where Ilgaardd is located is rugged, heavily forested, and hemmed in by steep mountainsides for miles in every direction. Because of the high, steep hills of the valley and the surrounding mountain ranges, development has kept close to the riverfront areas. The valley has a large amount of runoff from rain and snowfall, which makes the region prone to flooding. The construction of the dam upriver has helped control the flooding. With approximately 400 residents, the village of Ilgaardd is one of a few small settlements in the region, all of which rely on the river for sustenance and trade. Ilgaarddians make their living trading lumber harvested from the forest and from the occasional gold nugget or rare gem panned from the river. Most of the villagers are humans, though since Killoran's ousting, a few half-elves and halflings now call the village home, too. As the celebration gets underway, merchants have closed up their shops to sell their wares on the village green. Signs on the shuttered businesses point customers to the temporary stalls.

The road to Ilgaardd is busy with travelers heading to the grand celebration. Horse-drawn carts loaded with camping gear or goods for sale roll down the road, kicking up dust in the heat. Children zigzag between carts. Horses neigh, and people cheer. The travelers you meet are a rugged-looking lot, but all appear courteous and amicable; there is palpable excitement in the air. As you and your companions make your way down into the valley toward the village, a warm breeze carries the odor of roasting meats and the pleasant sounds of harps and trumpets. Music accompanied by the hum of countless conversations and occasional bursts of laughter fills the valley. The village is alive with activity. Multicolored pennants adorn the village walls and stretch from rooftop to rooftop, fluttering in the hot summer breeze. Your eyes are drawn to the village green, the center of activity. It is ringed with booths and tents of various sizes and colors, and a large stage can be seen on the north side. Towering over the green is a mammoth stack of barrels and hogsheads, at the top of which waves a small flag in red and blue. As you approach the village's front gates, you see tents in a range of colors and sizes spreading out across the fields outside the village proper.

1. TENT CITY

Because not nearly enough rooms are in Ilgaardd to accommodate all the visitors, Mayor Caleb Finge authorized the use of the farming fields southeast of the village proper as a campground. Read or paraphrase the following:

Fanning out from the southeast of the village and extending to the edge of the forest is a sea of colorful tents, tarps, and canopies in various sizes and configurations. Travelers are setting up their camp sites. Some are just beginning to unpack their carts. Others are throwing canvases over tent poles, and others still are turning meats and vegetables over crackling campfires. You see lanterns hanging from poles and strung from tree branches at the edge of the forest, and you hear the kind of laughter that accompanies good storytelling. Flasks and jugs are passing freely among travelers.

DAY 1

The characters most likely come upon the village of Ilgaardd while traveling from remote regions. In addition, characters might see advertising for either the celebration itself or for the security help needed by Jax Blueskin. Seeing how the village leaders are hoping for a good turnout, such advertisements could be found on town or village message boards in the region. A more dramatic setup, though, could include an incident in the area. Perhaps the characters intervene in a fight between villagers, or perhaps they encounter an owlbear hunting in the dark forest near the village or one of the kobolds Killoran has hired. However you want to tailor the incident to the characters, Jax Blueskin arrives as they are finishing the encounter. When Jax sees how effectively the characters handle the threat, he offers them constabulary positions right then and there and asks them to stop by the constabulary in Ilgaardd the next day. However they get there, the characters should arrive in Ilgaardd on the first day of Haymond (Day 1), two days before the bonfire lighting is scheduled to take place, and meet Jax Blueskin at the shire reeves' office the following morning where he asks for the characters' help in keeping the peace and ensuring the celebration is safe for all visitors.

DAY 2

The tent city is more crowded, and residents are at the first stage of *soufflure* inflammation. The travelers setting up camp are jovial and garrulous. Despite the heat, spirits are high! They greet the characters cheerfully, and some shout, "Hail, Jax Blueskin!" as the characters walk by, expressing their praise of the hero. If asked about Jax Blueskin, several travelers approach the characters and express their warm approval and gratitude for his role ousting Killoran "the Red." They speak about how life in Ilgaardd and the neighboring villages has improved and the ways in which Ilgaarddians cooperate to share workloads. They speak about how all villagers receive equal portions of profits made from the trade of lumber and gold, and how the villagers manage to balance work and leisure. Ilgaarddians can choose to do whatever work they find most appealing, and all villagers, including women, are compensated equally. While most villagers spend their time harvesting lumber, hunting, or panning for gold, they set aside a little time each day for leisure. When not working, villagers enjoy music, dancing, games, drama, and sports such as axe throwing, wrestling, and archery. With Killoran's taxes lifted and the Crimson Legion gone, life in the nearby villages has improved, too. Many villagers are now looking at Ilgaardd as a model for community organization.

One of the travelers offers a different, less favorable interpretation. While other travelers are singing the praises of Jax Blueskin and Ilgaardd, a traveler nearby can be heard scoffing under his breath. If approached, the traveler introduces himself as **Shaco**. He claims he is in Ilgaardd to see firsthand how effectively the community is operating without Killoran's rule, and being an herbalist, he's also hoping to sell some of his tonics and salves. He's quick to counter the other travelers' efforts to idealize Ilgaardd. Shaco points out how Ilgaardd is not financially stable and the difficulty it has profiting from either lumber or gold mined. Shaco also points out that despite the presence of a temple in the village, Ilgaardd allows a variety of religions to be represented, though not always amicably.

While Shaco is talking, grumbling from other travelers can be heard. Shaco, though, digs in his heels despite his growing unpopularity. He questions the idealism of Ilgaardd, particularly its optimism that all members are deserving of equal shares of the community's resources. How is it fair, he asks, that one sweats all day in the mill or labors over a tin pan at the river's edge and another gazes out a window all day, yet both at night receive the same wages? Ilgaarddians live a lifestyle, he argues, that does not sacrifice enough. As a result, Ilgaarddians are naively and industriously undermining the foundation of society. Shaco acknowledges that while brutal at times, Killoran had a vision and he elevated Ilgaardd from a dull and undesirable existence into a burgeoning economy. Unfortunately, Killoran's vision was never realized because Jax Blueskin and others were unwilling to make sacrifices for the greater good. They are too ignorant and feeble-minded, he claims, to understand the mind of someone as great as Lord Killoran.

At this utterance, a roar erupts nearby as **1d4 + 2 incensed travelers** close in on Shaco with fists clenched. A shouting match ensues, and if the characters do not intervene quickly, Shaco pulls a nasty looking dagger from his waist and takes a swing at the traveler closest to him. He makes quick work of the traveler, slicing and stabbing him within an inch of his life. The rest of the mob flees the scene out of fear for their own safety, and Shaco wipes the blade on the traveler's clothes before disappearing behind the wall of tents. If the characters intervene, they can try to talk the crowd down. If they opt for getting physical, they can step in between the crowd and Shaco, easily separating the two. However, Shaco interprets this as a threat, and he's ready for a fight. He crouches into a fighting position and taunts the character that looks the toughest to "Try me." As the characters get ready to take Shaco down, a strikingly tall and stunning human female adorned in black,

boiled leather with long, black hair emerges from behind a tent and bellows, "Enough!" Her voice freezes Shaco and the mob of angry travelers in their tracks.

Penumbra stands with her left hand on the hilt of a longsword sheathed on her side. Her right hand rests on the hilt of a dagger tucked into her belt. Killoran hired her to keep nosey villagers away from the mill and to deliver "Jax the Usurper" to him on the night of the big celebration. She leads a small band of bandits, and her righthand man, Shaco, is as sneaky as he is cruel. Her band uses any means necessary to keep people from investigating the mill too closely, though they first try to be subtle and discreet, using methods of distraction and redirection. Penumbra and her bandits engage in violence only when no other options exist (see **Area 8** for details about Penumbra, the mill, and the *soulflare*).

Penumbra stands with other similarly-clad humans (**3 bandits**), all of whom look poised to strike. She orders Shaco to put away his knife. Shaco begins to open his mouth in protest, but quickly changes his mind and sheathes his dagger, albeit reluctantly. As the remaining travelers scatter, Shaco, too, turns and disappears, but not before casting a glowering gaze at the characters. Penumbra and the other three linger a moment longer, eyes fixed on the characters, before they too turn their backs and disappear into the maze of tents. Should the characters pursue Penumbra, Jax Blueskin arrives on the scene and compliments them on their ability to diffuse the situation. If the characters insist on following Penumbra, Jax attempts to persuade them against it, claiming they have more pressing business in town.

Angry Travelers (1d4+2): HD 1d6hp; AC 9[10]; **Atk** strike (1d2); **Move** 12; **Save** 18; **AL** Any; **CL/XP** B/10; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Penumbra, Female Human Assassin (Asn2): HP 10; AC 7[12]; **Atk** longsword (1d8) or dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** backstab (x2), disguise, use poison.

Equipment: leather armor, longsword, dagger, key to windmill, handwritten note, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed).

Shaco, Male Human Thief (Thf1): HP 3; AC 7[12]; **Atk** dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); **Move** 12; **Save** 15; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** +2 save bonus vs. traps and magical devices, backstab (x2), read languages, thieving skills.

Thieving Skills: Climb 85%, Tasks/Traps 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

Equipment: leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed), 12 sp.

Bandits (3): HD 1; HP 7, 5x2; AC 7[12]; **Atk** short sword (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 17; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Equipment: leather armor, short sword.

DAY 3

During the morning and early part of the day, this area is cramped and crowded, and tempers flare. At dusk, most people trek to the village green to participate in the evening's festivities, namely the parade and the lighting of the bonfire, making the area ripe for scavengers and thieves. Should the characters explore in the evening, consider staging an encounter with thieves or a wandering mountain creature or minor monster. Of course, more interesting discoveries could be made, perhaps a seed for another adventure.

2. SHIRE REEVE'S OFFICE

The north and west sides of this simple, single-story building have been repaired recently. Where the new lumber joins the old, evidence of an earlier fire can be seen. A small porch on the front of the building leads to a sturdy wooden door reinforced with iron bands. The boards of the porch creak and groan with each step. Inside, a small potbelly stove occupies the north corner. On the opposite wall is a small rack of simple melee and ranged weapons, in front of which is a worn wooden desk and chair. On the east side of the room is an empty iron-barred prison cell with a bare bed frame in one corner. There is a faint odor of wet charcoal.

DAY 1

If the characters arrive here looking for work, having seen an advertisement, or come early having met Jax following an encounter outside the village, Jax sends them to the Twilight Gleaming Inn, telling them they are expected and that they should return to the office in the morning.

DAY 2 (MORNING)

Jax Blueskin may have already contacted the characters and given them directions to his office along with instructions to meet him on this morning. Caleb Finge, the town's mayor, gave Jax the responsibility of hiring a few competent people to keep everything under control for Ilgaard's Independence Day celebration.

When the characters arrive, Jax welcomes them into the small, single room office. He's seated on the only chair. Standing at his side are **3 constables** and **Mayor Caleb Finge**. No other places to sit are in the room, so characters have to stand as Jax and Caleb explain how they'd like for them to help keep the area inside the village safe during the celebration. In exchange, they'll provide the characters rooms at the Twilight Gleaming Inn. They are expected to be on duty from daybreak until the festivities end late each night. In addition, they are expected to be available to help any time day or night should the need arise.

This is the first event of its kind in Ilgaard, and while most of the villagers are excited, some find the celebration insulting, believing Killoran to have been unjustly killed. Some have even accused Jax of murder, though this is an unpopular opinion, and as such is rarely uttered in public. Most villagers think of the constable as a hero; Jax, however, doesn't think of himself as one. He suggests that the people who are most upset about Killoran's removal are likely those who profited from his rule, though Killoran's most loyal supporters were members of his Crimson Legion, and they, too, have been driven from Ilgaard. It's unclear how many loyalists remain in the village.

Given the extreme heat, the free-flowing wine and ale, and the influx of travelers from the region, Jax believes it's only a matter of time before someone turns a minor dispute into an all-out brawl. He's worried that some drunken fools will turn a fistfight into a killing, and it's the characters' responsibility to keep this from happening. He wants them to diffuse any potentially violent situations but use force only when absolutely necessary. Anyone who refuses to heed the constables' orders can be relocated to the jail cell. It can hold six humanoids "comfortably," and 10 humanoids maximum. If the cell contains more than six humanoids at any one time, there is a 50% chance that a fight breaks out. The prison cell's door can be unlocked with thieves' tools or broken down with a successful Open Doors check.

If the characters encountered Shaco and Penumbra (**Area 1**) and ask Jax about them, he tells them that he's never seen them before, but with so many out-of-towners, the heat, and the amount of wine and ale being quaffed, he's certain it won't be the last altercation they encounter. They handled themselves well, but he reminds them that they are to use force only as a last resort.

The characters can reach out anytime to Jax or any of the guards. However, he's hiring them based on their ability to handle themselves. It's a large area with many people to protect, so he is busy. Call on him only if it's absolutely necessary. The characters' employment starts now, on the morning of the 2nd of Haymond and ends on the morning of the 4th of Haymond. Jax acknowledges it's a significant obligation, but it shouldn't be difficult work. He offers each character 25 gp per day.

If the characters accept Jax's offer, he hands each of them a badge embossed with the image of a golden-robed woman centered in an orange and blue sky. She holds a blue pileus in one outstretched hand and with the other grasps a short rod. A character wearing the badge openly has a 20% chance to stop any fights that break out simply by telling the combatants to stop (1d6 combatants stop fighting immediately and turn to listen to the character). If asked about the image, Jax tells the characters that it's the image of Ceres, goddess of healing, mercy, patience, and the millstone (Killoran placed the *soulflare* in the mill in part to further mock the village and their goddess). Jax and the guards are wearing similar badges. Jax suggests the characters get out and explore the area they're responsible for keeping safe.

Jax insists the characters treat all villagers with respect and approach all interactions as opportunities to solve problems and build trust. Fraternalizing with villagers and participating in some of the events taking place on the village green could be good, especially with the visitors Ilgaard is trying to entice.

Jax Blueskin, Male Human Chief Constable of Ilgaard
(**Ftr5**): HP 31; AC 5[14]; **Atk** longsword (1d8) or heavy crossbow x1/2 (1d6+1); **Move** 12; **Save** 10; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 5/240; **Special:** multiple attacks (5) vs. creatures with 1 or fewer HD.

Equipment: chainmail, longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, *ring of self-knowledge* (see sidebar).

Constables, Male Humans (3): HD 1; HP 7, 6x2; AC 7[12]; Atk short sword (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 17; **AL** Any; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 257)
Equipment: leather armor, short sword.

Mayor Caleb Finge, Male Human Noble: HP 16; AC 9[10]; Atk none; **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** N; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

RING OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

While you wear this ring, you are immune to *charm person* and other mind-controlling effects.

DAY 2 (ANYTIME)

Jax can typically be found in the reeve's office throughout the day, and he attempts to answer any questions or address any concerns, but he won't indulge a long, drawn-out conversation. If the characters attempt to be anything but brief, he'll demand they get back to work or risk losing the agreed upon compensation.

DAY 2 (EVENING)

By midnight, Jax finds the characters and relieves them of their duty for the evening. He instructs them to return to the reeve's office at dawn for the day's instructions.

DAY 3

The second day of the celebration ultimately proves to be worse than the first. If the characters do not arrive at Jax's office by dawn, he sends a constable named **Tithen** to look for them. The message is quite clear: Show up or turn in their badges. When the characters arrive at the shire reeve's office, Jax tears into them if he feels they were too heavy-handed yesterday with the villagers. He admits that something strange is going on and is growing increasingly concerned about the villagers' rowdiness. He asks the characters to head up to the dam to provide escort for an elf named Galyndrin whom Jax is expecting sometime this morning. Galyndrin has been trying to confirm rumors of Killoran's existence and potential return, and he's hoping for some information.

After they bring the elf back to the village, they should get back out there and do the job for which they were hired. Jax is especially concerned that the characters ensure villagers' safety on the green during the parade leading up to the lighting of the bonfire. If characters proceed in this way, throw a few more random encounters at them during the day, and perhaps give them another opportunity to participate in some of the events. The same contests are running today, so the characters could win some additional items and bragging rights.

By early evening, Jax is nowhere to be found. Should the characters search the reeve's office, they find no signs of a struggle and no one has a clue where he might be. Mayor Caleb was the last person to see Jax a little before noon at his own office. Cultists kidnapped Jax, and they plan to deliver him to Killoran later tonight. They are hiding him in a small cave in the mountains about a mile east of the village. With all the foot traffic in the village, tracking the kidnappers is impossible.

Tithen, Male Human Constable: HD 1; HP 7; AC 7[12]; Atk longsword (1d8); **Move** 12; **Save** 17; **AL** Any; **CL/XP** 1/15; **Special:** none. (*Monstrosities* 257)
Equipment: leather armor, longsword.

3. TEMPLE OF THE MORNING STAR

Originally a mud and log structure, this structure was rebuilt after Killoran's expulsion. Situated on the east side of the village, it is a solid stone structure with a vibrant, yellow-tiled roof. This eastern-facing wall is inlaid with prisms and stained glass, each of which depicts a road running toward a golden sun. Inside the temple, there is a marble altar on top of which sits a golden chalice and several small plates with various items, including small gems, herbs, and dried flowers. At dawn, when the morning sun shines through the prisms and stained glass, the altar swirls in hues of yellow and orange. The village crypt is below the temple.

The villagers of Ilgaard are free to practice a range of religions, as long as the followers of particular deities are of Neutral or Lawful alignments. The temple, though, represents the official religion of Ilgaard, which is dedicated to the worship of Ceres (Lawful), the deity of healing, mercy, and patience. Many villagers frequent the temple, though with the celebration underway, it is unlikely anyone is inside.

DAY 2

There is an 80% chance that **Priest Lumes** is present.

He welcomes the characters, but he remains unobtrusive. Lumes has closely-cropped hair of silver and wears a golden robe. He is thin and tall and bent, and shuffles across the smooth stone floors with the assistance of a crooked cane.

Lumes, Male Half-Elf Priest of Ceres (Clr4): HP 17; AC 9[10]; Atk none; **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** L; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** +2 save versus paralysis and poison, banish undead, spells (2/1).
Spells: 1st—*cure light wounds, purify food and drink*.
Equipment: golden robe, crooked staff, holy symbol of Ceres.

Should the characters talk with Lumes, they learn that he was one of the first holy people to arrive in Ilgaard, back when it was a lumber camp. He acknowledges that Killoran initially did improve the living conditions in the village but was then corrupted by greed and an insatiable desire for power. Though he tried, he was unable to get through to Killoran and help him see the error of his ways. The creation of the Crimson Legion marked the moment when Killoran was lost forever.

Under Killoran's rule, the worship of Ceres was forbidden, and the temple sat empty until Killoran's supposed death. Since the village was liberated from Killoran's tyranny, Lumes has worked tirelessly to create a new religious community. Ilgaardians are by nature curious and compassionate thinkers and doers, and together they are working to cultivate more justice and love in their lives and in the world. The means to accomplish this include cultivating a deep appreciation of art, liberty, culture, and nature. To worship in the Temple of the Morning Star signifies a commitment to bettering oneself and to uplifting others with messages of hope. Followers of Ceres are intolerant of evil and any actions that cause evil to prosper. Lumes claims it was Ceres who blessed Jax Blueskin, giving him the courage and strength to defeat Killoran at the river's edge.

The Independence Day celebration is an opportunity for villagers near and far to congregate, and, hopefully, for the temple's message to circulate. If asked about the bizarre behavior of the villagers, or if asked directly about the *soulflare*, Lumes claims, with all honesty, that he's unaware of anything unusual going on. He's completely enthralled by the effects of the *soulflare*, and he attributes violent behavior to the consequences of over-imbibing at a time when the wounds of Killoran's tyranny are not yet healed.

Lumes asks the characters if they would like to join him in offering a prayer and a gift for Ceres. If the characters join him, Lumes takes a small cocoon from the pocket of his robe and utters the following:

Similar to a butterfly, we Ilgaardians are going through a metamorphosis. We are breaking free from our dark cocoon, and freedom is as terrifying and exhausting as it is exhilarating. Our struggle, like the butterfly's, is that which gives us strength. Ceres, we call on you to give us strength and to protect us as we break free! We cherish and embrace the wings you have proffered us, and we pray to you, kind Ceres, to help us soar! We pray that you bless us on this occasion and welcome us into your light! In your light, we are free! In your light, we will become something beautiful!

And with that, Lumes places the cocoon on small plate of gold on the altar. Moments later, the cocoon begins to vibrate and twitch. Within a few seconds, a beautiful butterfly with blue, yellow, and orange wings emerges from the cocoon, stretches its wings, and takes flight. After a few graceful arcs around the temple, it lands gently on Lumes' shoulder, its wings pulsating and shimmering ever so slightly. Lumes looks quite serene. Characters who leave any token that symbolizes change, growth, or birth (e.g. a seed, caterpillar, egg, flower, butterfly, snake/snakeskin, vial of water, etc.) experience an immediate, but temporary, sense of tranquility. An inner warmth radiates from their core up through their extremities as they receive a small blessing from Ceres: +1 saving throw bonus for 12 hours. Should a character, at your discretion, make a more substantial contribution or devotion, Lumes gives the character a *staff of command* emblazoned with Ceres' holy symbol as a gift to help further the deity's pursuits. The staff obviously could be useful in stopping some of fights breaking out in the village green.

DAY 3

Lumes is present in the temple until dusk when he moves to the village green to participate in the festivities.

4. TWILIGHT GLEAMING INN

From the outside, this two-story building looks warm and inviting. Stacked boulders and thick wooden beams make up the tavern's shell, and laughter can be heard from within. As you enter the inn through the thick wooden door, you're welcomed by the smell of rich gravy and roasted vegetables. The bartender and a bustling barmaid greet you with a smile.

The interior is equally alluring. Thick wooden beams support the second floor, and a massive stone fireplace lines the eastern wall, though no fire is currently lit. The walls are adorned with paintings of natural landscapes consistent with the region's terrain. The shelves behind the bar are inlaid with an exquisitely-carved wooden sun. The tavern area itself is packed with what appears to be mostly travelers. Several long wooden tables are occupied, covered with plates and mugs of ale, and the occupants are engaged in a loud but seemingly friendly boasting competition on the subject of felling trees. Several smaller tables are occupied by patrons who are also getting deeper into their cups. Of the boasters, favorites are forming, and individual boasts are followed by a cacophony of good-humored cheering and booing. The people all appear to be having a good time. While most of the stools at the bar are occupied, a few spots are open, and the people do not seem to mind the addition of new company.

DAY 1

The innkeeper and bartender is a curvaceous human female who introduces herself as Olwette. She's been expecting the characters, and per Jax's request, she has reserved two rooms upstairs for them. Before she shows them to their rooms, however, she offers them a hot ragout or a meat pie with roasted vegetables and mug of ale. If asked about Killoran or Ilgaard's history, she dramatically retells the story of Jax's raid. It's clear she's no fan of Killoran. Before she leaves them in their rooms, she informs them that she'll have a hot breakfast ready when they wake in the morning.

Olwette, Female Human Bartender: HP 3; AC 9[10]; Atk club (1d4); Move 12; Save 18; AL L; CL/XP B/10; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

DAY 2 OR 3

Olwette asks for their assistance over breakfast in the morning or before the characters depart. She voices enthusiasm about the celebration, especially for the increase in business, but waves of travelers have been coming in since the morning, and she's worried she will run out of food. In preparation for the celebration, village hunters and gatherers procured what she believed would be enough meat, fruits, vegetables, and mushrooms. However, she's going through it way more quickly than anticipated. She has only a little salted meat left and a few dozen live quail. And with all the villagers enjoying the celebration, no one is available to help restock her pantry. If the characters can round up more provisions for her, she offers the following:

Item	Payment
Frogs	3 cp ea.
Pheasant	8 sp ea.
Salmon	8 sp ea.
Rabbit	6 cp ea.
Wolf	10 gp ea.
Wild Boar	15 gp ea.
Stag	20 gp ea.
Moose	50 gp ea.

A couple of hundred pounds of meat and a bushel or two of produce, especially mushrooms, should suffice. Plenty of game and food can be foraged in the forest beyond the village. She acknowledges that while she knows they've been hired to patrol the village to keep the celebrants safe, if the tavern runs out of food, she's worried the guests may become angry and an otherwise good time could be spoiled. Jax would agree, she says, that keeping the peace involves keeping people happy, and from her experience, hungry and thirsty people quickly become unpleasant. If the characters agree to hunt for game, she presents them with a +1 *longbow* that used to be her husband's. If asked, she tells them how her husband accompanied Jax on the night he faced Killoran. Sadly, he lost his life on the green that night. While the bow does have sentimental value to her, it also conjures too many painful memories. She's happy to see it go, especially if the characters can use it to replenish her food supply. Should the characters bring back game other than what's listed above, she negotiates as long as it's a meat she thinks she can make palatable.

5. VILLAGE GREEN

This luscious grass field in the center of the village is approximately 100 yards square and is used primarily for communal livestock grazing and as a public square. Multicolored tents and booths ring the green on the north and east sides. The bonfire waits to be lit on the west side of the green. It is the focal point of the celebration. Walking the green, the characters pass a number of stalls where merchants are selling a range of things such as perfumes, furs, wood carvings, delicious fruits, cheeses, breads, wines, meats, and even small livestock such as pigs, sheep, various birds, and a few scrawny cows.

DAY 2

Dancers, jugglers, and countless people are out enjoying themselves, many wearing pointy blue felt hats and waving pennants. People are eating small pies and roasted meats, and children chase each other across the green. Laughter erupts around some of the contests and games, while around other contests, waves of “ooohhing” and “aaaahhing” roll across the green. A large stage with costumed actors is on the north side of the green. Barkers lure festivalgoers to games and contests, and merchants push their wares. All is punctuated by the flash and bang of firecrackers being lit by kids. A bard is singing the story of Killoran’s fall and Ilgaard’s rise. Despite the summer sun blazing full on the open green, the people celebrate enthusiastically. Random violence may break out at any point.

While exploring the village, consider throwing in a minor encounter or two from the list below, and feel free to roleplay the contest barkers’ strategies of persuasion.

MINOR ENCOUNTERS

1d6 Encounter

- Animal on the loose:** Characters see one or more animals running through the village, violently attacking anything that moves. The animal could be a badger, an escaped “wrestling bear” (**Area 5**), a boar, a pack of dogs, or a domesticated animal such as a sheep, goat, or bird.
- Announcement:** A madwoman stands on the village green warning of Killoran “the Red’s” imminent return and his quest for vengeance.
- Bullies:** The characters see **1d4 + 2 bullies** harassing a traveler from another village. A bully flees after taking any amount of damage.
- Contest:** The characters are drawn into one of the contests taking place at the festival: archery, wrestling, magic, or log splitting (see below).
- Pickpocket:** A thief tries to steal from a random character.
- Runaway burning barrel:** A barrel covered in burning pitch comes rolling down a village road, ignited by a few children who run away upon seeing the danger they’ve created. Characters must roll below their dexterity on 3d6 to avoid being hit. Those who fail take 1d8 points of fire damage per round until they extinguish the flames. There is 50% chance the flaming barrel slams into a building or other structure and sets it ablaze.

Bullies (1d4+2): HD 1d6hp; AC 9[10]; Atk strike (1d2); Move 12; Save 18; AL Any; CL/XP B/10; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Thief, Male or Female Human Thief (Thf1): HP 1d4; AC 7[12]; Atk dagger (1d4); Move 12; Save 15; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: +2 save bonus vs. traps and magical devices, backstab (x2), read languages, thieving skills.

Thieving Skills: Climb 85%, Tasks/Traps 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

Equipment: leather armor, dagger, 1d4 sp.

CONTESTS

There are multiple contests and events, and the barkers try to draw in anyone passing by, including the constabulary. Given the characters’ formidable stature, some villagers surely goad the characters into taking up the challenge, as many would like to see the characters’ mettle tested. Read-out-loud boxes below are from the perspective of barkers and contest coordinators (all Lawful **villagers** with 50% chance of being half-elves). Winning a contest results in prizes, some of which can provide the characters with potentially useful items. However, if you prefer the characters not to have any items, feel free to adapt the prizes. The characters’ survival does not depend on being in possession of any of the items listed below.

Characters may be lured into one or more of the events or contests described below, though no more than two. Should they attempt to compete in a third contest on a single day, Jax arrives and takes them aside to remind them of their duties. He acknowledges that fraternizing some with the villagers helps boost the villagers’ perceptions of the constables, but he cautions the characters against allowing the games and contests to distract them from what they’ve been paid to do.

ARCHERY CONTEST

With three arrows from 50 feet away, who can get closest to the bullseye? The winner takes home six hand-fetched, high-quality arrows by Ilgaard’s own Wayland the Smith! Only 5 sp to play!

This contest costs 5 sp to enter and can accommodate multiple contestants. It takes place on the eastern edge of the village green between two merchant stalls. Each contestant makes three ranged attacks to hit the target. The successful to-hit rolls are added together to get the final score. The highest score wins the prize: six +1 arrows.

BEAR WRESTLING

Come! Test your strength! Do you have what it takes to pin Bruin to the ground? Are you the true master of muscle? Only the toughest, grittiest around has the courage to square off with this fearsome beast! Succeed and you’ll win a pair of excellent bracers, perfect for such a notable wrestler!

This contest cost 2 sp to enter. It takes place in a small ring near the southern edge of the green, and it involves a single contestant wrestling Bruin (a muzzled and declawed **black bear**). The participant and the bear make to-hit rolls for three rounds. Those who hit roll 1d6 per hit die (4d6 for the bear) each round. The winner is the combatant with the highest total at the end of the three rounds. Winning against the bear means the contestant succeeds in rolling the bear onto its back and holding its head and shoulders to the ground, and thus winning a pair of braided leather bracers (+1 strength, to a maximum of 18, usable by all but magic-users).

Should the bear win, be creative! Perhaps the bear sends contestants cartwheeling through the air or slams them into the soiled ground. Or maybe the contestant tries to slip out of the bear’s hold, but the animal rolls on top, forcing the air out of the character’s lungs.

Bruin, Black Bear: HD 4+1; HP 27; AC 7[12]; Atk None; Move 9; Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 4/120; Special: hug (additional 1d8 damage). (*Monstrosities* 36)

Note: Bruin won’t hug a wrestler unless the character does something mean-spirited during the contest.

BARREL RUN

How about you!? Can you stay on your feet in tricky situations? Think you can balance on top of a barrel? How about run on top of a barrel for 50 feet?! First across is the winner!

This contest costs 2 sp to enter and can accommodate multiple contestants. Each round, contestants must roll below their dexterity on 3d6. If successful, the character moves forward a number of feet equal to the difference between his or her dexterity and the roll (so, for example, 5 feet forward if the character rolls a 10 and has a 15 dexterity). If the roll fails, the character becomes unstable and does not move during that round. A contestant who is already unstable and then fails another check falls off the barrel and is eliminated from the race.

Each round, a contestant has a 30% chance to collide with another barrel. In the event that two barrels collide, both contestants make their checks with a +1 penalty in the next round.

The winner of the barrel race receives a small gold bracelet worth 10 gp.

PIE EATING CONTEST

Through the thin veil of the aurora, a comet blazes to herald your arrival! You, whose victory shall be penned in every known language in history, know no limits when it comes to beef and ale pies! We want you! Come! Show the world how you can eat these pies the fastest! Step up to the podium and claim what is rightfully yours: the title of pie eating champion, a true hero of Ilgaard, plus a generous gold purse and a basket of pies from Ilgaard's own master baker, Sam Choux!

This contest costs 1 gp to enter, and it takes place over three rounds, each increasingly more difficulty. Each round, contestants have their choice to take one of the following actions:

- Eat as fast as possible. This takes 6 seconds and requires a saving throw with a -6 penalty.
- Eat at a fast pace. This takes 10 seconds and requires a saving throw with a -4 penalty.
- Eat at a normal pace. This takes 14 seconds but requires no saving throw.

If at the end of the round the contestant fails a saving throw, they choke and lose an additional 10 seconds. At the end of three rounds, whoever has the lowest time (fewest number of seconds) is the winner. The winner takes home 50 gp and a basket of beef and ale pies.

WOOD-CHOPPING CONTEST

Come! Sharpen up your axe and compete in the highest-intensity competition in Ilgaard this weekend! The chopping contest! Amaze the crowd with your standing chop! Titillate them with the power of your underhand chop! The first to cut through the stump wins a fine handaxe crafted by Ilgaard's own Wayland the Smith! Only 2 sp to enter!

The tree stump has 50 hits points. Each participant is provided with a simple chopping axe, which does 1d4 damage. Each participant makes a chop with their axe each round. Each time they do full damage (4 hp), they can roll an additional die of damage (a lucky roller could thus conceivably continue rolling 4s to do massive damage). Whoever reduces the stump to 0 hit points first, wins! The winner receives a fine +1 handaxe.

TUG-OF-WAR

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, there are still a few openings for the greatest contest of strength this side of Shadow Lake! Two teams pull on the opposite ends of a massive rope stretched across the river by the mill. The team that pulls the other into the river wins! There's one pull today and another tomorrow! Each member of the winning team receives a high-quality linen shirt commemorating Ilgaard's independence, made by our very own tailor, Rosalie!

This is a teamed competition with eight contestants per side. Each team pulls on one end of the rope, trying to pull the other team into the river. Each member of the team makes two Open Doors checks (villagers succeed on a 1 or 2). Roll 1d6 for each success and record the total. The team with the highest score pulls the other team into the brisk river, becoming the Ilgaard tug-of-war champions. Each member of the winning team receives a linen shirt that has been dyed blue and white with an embroidered golden yellow sun in the middle, the colors of Ilgaard's flag.

DAY 3

The contests and events described above continue until the parade begins around dusk.

The parade begins just outside of tent city and proceeds through the village, circling the village twice before concluding on the village green. While the parade is underway, all other activities cease. This is a time for inordinate show, feasting, and pomp and circumstance. It is also a time of drunken revelry. Wine and ale are flowing! When the parade begins, read or paraphrase the following:

As the procession winds its way through the village, you are struck by the number of men and women, boys and girls dressed in both the most grotesque and fantastic costumes. At the front of the procession is a large cart, pulled by two horses, on which is erected a smaller-scale version of the bonfire waiting to be lit on the village green. Behind the miniature bonfire, as large as life, are a puppet of Jax and a representation of Killoran — complete with a pair of huge horns — holding in his hands a serrated longsword. Swirling around the cart are half a dozen dancers and a fiddler playing an assortment of jigs and reels. As the cart approaches the shops and homes along the village green, it pauses long enough for the small children beneath the platforms of the effigies of Jax and Killoran to move the puppets' heads to look around at the audience. Their small voices within chant:

The 4th of Haymond, as you well remember,
took an axe handle to shatter the plot;
I know of no reason why the tyrant's cruelty
should ever be forgot.
Here is the Killoran we've got,
the whole promoter of the plot;
We'll stick a pitchfork in his back
and throw him in the fire!

At the end of each line of verse, the crowd erupts in laughter and cheers. Villagers throw copper and occasionally silver pieces up onto the cart while small children race around trying to scoop up any fallen coins. If the characters are in need of a little action, this could be a good time to thwart a pickpocket's attempt or to break up a small fight (See **Minor Encounters** above). Otherwise, the procession ends on the village green without incident. Much to the crowd's delight, the dancers and fiddler from the parade perform on stage until Mayor Caleb makes his address to the crowd just before midnight.

6. BONFIRE

This massive tower of stacked barrels on top of stacked casks on top of stacked hogsheads looms over the village green. Nearly 20 tiers high, this tower rises to almost 60 feet. Three villagers are placing a blue and red barrel on the top of the tower, while a fourth is waiting to fling Ilgaard's flag to the breeze. On the ground, villagers are swarming in and out of what appears to be a small room at the base of the tower. Some are carrying small bundles of rags tied to lengths of hemp ropes, while others are stuffing the crevices between barrels with what appears to be straw and dried shrub branches with small dark yellow, orange, and red flowers. It is truly a magnificent sight.

DAY 2

If the characters visit this location, Tithen, one of Jax's constables, is guarding the site. Jax wants to ensure that only those authorized to stack barrels, run rags, and stuff witch hazel and hay have access to the tower. If the characters ask the guards or any of the villagers about the bonfire, they learn that while bonfires have traditionally been lit in Ilgaard to celebrate victories and civic occasions, this bonfire stands to be the largest any villager has ever seen. Hay bales will be spread around the bonfire at five ignition points, ready to be lit by five torchbearers representing the five villagers who were killed on the village green by Killoran's Crimson Legion.

If the characters ask about the plant matter, they learn that Lumes, the village priest, has requested witch hazel be added to the straw because of its medicinal properties. When burned, the oils in the plant travel in the smoke, soothing villagers' airways and their skin, which will have inevitably been kissed by the blazing sun over the past two days.

A small room at the base of the tower is framed by a six-foot-by-six-foot doorway. From the outside looking in, all the characters can see is a small space around which villagers are running bundles of rags up the tower. Others are stuffing cracks on the inside with straw and witch hazel. Should the characters want to take a look inside, they'll need to convince Constable Tithen that their presence won't disrupt the villagers' work or distract them from their own responsibilities patrolling the village. Gaining entry reveals a small space about 10 feet by 10 feet by 10 feet, with a ceiling reinforced with wooden beams. The ground is covered with heavy slate stones. It's illuminated by lanterns with heatless flames similar to those strung on the outside of the tower, and there is a strong, sickly-sweet smell that, combined with the intense summer heat trapped inside, is enough to make even the hardiest character nauseous. Standing inside the tower for any duration of time feels oppressive and physically draining. Characters have a 1-in-6 chance (3-in-6 for elves and dwarves) to notice that one of the stones in the center of the ground flexes slightly as a worker walks across it. None of the other stones moves when walked on, suggesting a depression in the ground under the stone. Should the characters take a closer look, nothing out of the ordinary presents itself. The stone is approximately 20 inches in diameter and consistent with the other stones forming the floor of the interior of the tower. If a villager or Tithen is asked, they learn that the stones were pulled from the nearby riverbed. The characters can easily remove the stone. However, nothing save a slight depression in the soil can be seen beneath it. Should the characters examine the soil, they notice it seems slightly sandier than the rest of the ground. Disrupting the soil reveals a small hole approximately six inches in diameter from which a faint breeze emanates. The air coming from the hole smells slightly moldy and earthy. Peering into the hole reveals little information. After several inches of sandy soil, the hole appears to bore through bedrock. The bottom of the hole cannot be seen unless a character has darkvision or is using a light source.

Shining a light source into the hole reveals little more. The hole is about 75 feet deep, and if characters manage to illuminate its entire length, it appears to flare out about five feet or so from the bottom. A pile of wood appears to be at the bottom. The small hole appears to have been carved or bored with some kind of tool. It doesn't appear to have been created recently. If the characters ask Tithen about the hole, he tells them he has never seen it, but doesn't express concern. He assumes it's another sinkhole, which he notes are quite common in the area. If the characters suggest the hole was carved or deliberately created, Tithen quickly dismisses the suggestion. He sees nothing

out of the ordinary. It's what most sinkholes in the area look like. If asked about other sinkholes, the characters learn of one up near the dam that opened several months ago and swallowed a villager whole. It's the most recent. The others have since been filled in.

Kobolds working with Killoran created this hole. Characters are, in fact, peering into a hollowed-out stone column located in Killoran's summoning chamber below. The widest part of the hole at the base functions as a flue, which Kerr Sem, once summoned, will use to access the village green.

Should the characters want to dig in or around the area of the hole, Tithen demands they wait for Jax and Caleb's approval. He sends a village bonfire worker off right away to find one of them. Neither Jax nor Caleb approve of disturbing the hole out of fear of destabilizing the ground on which the tower is erected. Instead, they order the hole to be filled. On the morning of Day 3, the interior of the tower will be filled with additional barrels and casks, and the doorway sealed with several hogsheads. The purpose of this initial encounter is to give perceptive characters a clue that something nefarious may be lurking below the green, which should promote the characters to further explore the area.

DAY 3 (THE LIGHTING OF THE BONFIRE)

As midnight approaches, characters notice that the crowd is getting rowdier. People are growing increasingly drunk, and a buzz in the air evokes a sense of excitement and foreboding. It's becoming increasingly difficult for the characters to discern laughter from shouting or threats from jokes. The moment their attention is pulled in one direction, a shout, an eruption of laughter, or the explosion of firecrackers pulls their attention in another direction. There is a sense that things are about to get out of control.

At midnight, the musicians stop playing as Mayor Caleb takes the stage to a mostly cheering crowd, the towering shadow of the bonfire looming behind him. The crowd presses in toward the stage. The entire village green is packed shoulder to shoulder with rowdy villagers. After gesturing for a moment or two for the crowd to quiet, Caleb addresses them jubilantly. Read the following:

Welcome to Ilgaard, all who pine for a great gathering with noise and music and banners on our Independence Day! Welcome to those who believe that mutual love and support for the people of the region is sufficient cause for this ardent celebration, which is the joy and glory of Ilgaard's natal morning. Just as the clock strikes midnight, thus adding another year to the era of Ilgaard's independence, your eyes will be drawn irresistibly to this towering monument of hogsheads and barrels and casks that raises its huge form high above the village green. Thank you for joining us in solemnizing our independence with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, bells, bonfires, and illuminations! Now, let's run the tyrant up the wire!"

With the roar of the crowd waxing, Caleb lights the effigy of Killoran from the parade cart and slowly runs it up the length of the tower by a wire pulley, igniting the straw and witch hazel that is stuffed into the cracks along the way. By the time the effigy reaches the top of the tower, the base is nearly engulfed, and the midsection is quickly catching up. Even before the bonfire is completely engulfed, the heat is intense.

When the burning effigy of Killoran reaches the top of the tower, a wave of cheering surges from the crowd. However, a voice from somewhere near one of the characters bellows over all the others, shouting defiantly, "Long live Killoran! Death to the usurper!" The crowd erupts in a fury. Any character on the village green should make a saving throw. Success results in that character seeing wine bottles hurtling through the midnight air and lets them avoid being struck. Characters who fail take 1d4 points of damage from thrown objects. Another volley of wine bottles comes from the other side of the crowd, followed by still more bottles hurled from the first side. Seconds later, bottles, rocks, pieces of wood, and all matter of objects are hurling through the air from every direction. By this point, villagers are screaming, with some dropping after being hit by projectiles, while others seem to be pummeling each other indiscriminately. Firecrackers explode from the left and right, shrouding portions of the village green in acrid smoke. Tar barrels are set on fire and sent rolling into the crowds, forcing villagers to leap out of the way. Not all are successful.

The **Evil on the Green** encounter below details other events that take place during the fight.

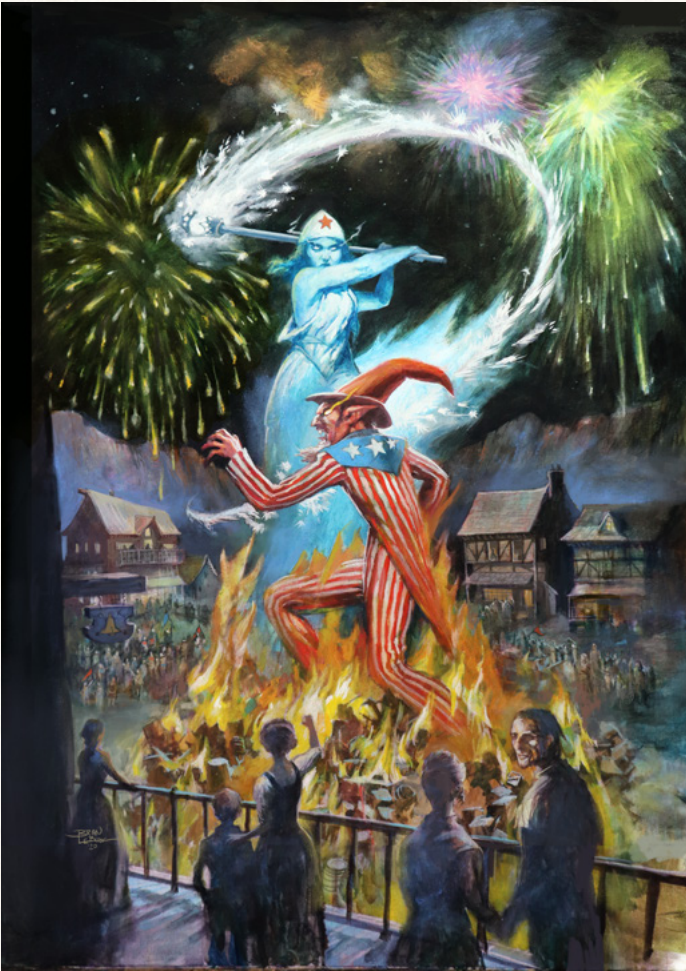
EVIL ON THE GREEN

In the thick of the mayhem, characters observe one of the following:

* If Penumbra and Shaco (or one of the other bandits) are still alive, the characters see two figures who fit their descriptions dragging an unconscious humanoid wearing a devil's mask through the crowd, striking down in a single blow any villagers who stand in their way. What catches the character's eye is the face of one figure who stops and looks around. It's Penumbra, who is leading the bandits in the direction of the mill (**Area 8**).

* If Penumbra and her bandits are dead or out of the picture, the characters see the same thing, except now two cloaked figures are dragging the unconscious humanoid. What catches the character's eye is the face of one cloaked figure who stops and looks around. He has thick red scars running down both cheeks.

The characters have to struggle across the village green to keep the mysterious figures in sight, only to lose them in the crowd and the confusion as the massive fight rages on. They have a 1-in-6 chance to spot the figures entering the windmill. They might also remember the contract found on the body of Penumbra, her bandits, or the cultist on the dam (see **Areas 7 and 8** for details on the contract). When the characters enter the mill, they find the millstone locked. They can enter by breaking the stone, dispelling magic, or reciting the password found in the contracts.



Should any character be on the village green after midnight when the ritual below starts, read or paraphrase the following:

Moments after the bonfire is lit, the flames intensify and form a whirling cyclone of fire roaring up the heights of the tower. Within a few moments, the whirlwind intensifies and begins to take shape. The swirling red flames form the essence of a snarling old man with a top hat of flames and red-hot embers for eyes. Its mouth expands to reveal a glowing furnace, and it points a gnarled finger of fire at the characters. It lets out an ear-shattering bellow: "Yoouuu!"

The flames flare red, then blue. At first, the bonfire is a fiery old man, but then a flash of intense blue flames forms into the shape of a mighty woman wearing a pileus and wielding a rod of white flame. The red and blue flames roil and clash, casting the smoke-obscured village green in a hellish light.

If characters are successful with the counter-chant in the ritual chamber, read the following to any character aboveground on the village green.

The bonfire surges one more time, splitting again into two columns. The red flames reach more than 100 feet high and take the shape of the snarling old man, blazing and malicious. The blue flames reach even higher into the night sky, forming once again into the shape of a mighty woman with pileus and rod, who roars to twice the height of the bonfire and then snaps back at the old man. When the two flame figures clash, the bonfire explodes into a shower of sparks and shooting stars. Anyone on the village green takes 3d6 points of fire damage, or half damage with a successful saving throw.

Should the characters fail to dispel Kerr Sem below the green (see **Area 9-2**), the fire elemental, in the shape of the gnarled old man, is unleashed on the village and destroys it and all the villagers if the characters do not intervene.

7. THE DAM AT SHADOW LAKE

The path from the village to the dam creeps up the steep southeastern side of the valley. The heat makes the trek arduous, causing even the hardiest character to sweat profusely. The dam is an earthen, embankment style dam that towers 70 feet above the valley floor and spans approximately 500 feet. On the southeast side, water cascades from a small floodgate. The dam is an impressive piece of engineering to anyone standing in its shadow. From the top, it affords clear, albeit distant, views of Ilgaard. The lake above is approximately 100 acres, though much of it is shadowed by the surrounding forest and steep mountain peaks on either side. The air isn't moving, and the water's surface is smooth, like glass. It would be serene if it wasn't so unnervingly quiet.

DAY 2

Nothing occurs at the dam on this day.

DAY 3

As the characters approach the dam, they become aware of a commotion about 80 feet ahead, just off the path in the trees near the floodgate. Read or paraphrase the following:

You're certain that something is moving in the gloomy fringe of the forest ahead. As you get closer, you hear the unmistakable sounds of melee before three humanoids stumble out onto the path, swords clashing and sparking as two cloaked figures appear to overwhelm a battered and bleeding elf. Heavy black hooded cloaks obscure the two aggressors' faces. The elf, whose back is to you, is quickly losing strength, and his legs buckle as he spills out onto the path. You quickly realize you're too far away to intervene. As you helplessly watch, one of the cloaked figures feigns an attack and the elf takes the bait. The other figure steps into the opening and plunges a long, cruel dagger into the soft flesh of the elf's throat, sending a crimson spray arcing through the summer sky.

As the elf crumples to the ground, his slayer looks up, his hood slipping slightly to reveal pitch-black eyes and curved horns. The creature sees you and bares menacing fangs; his features chill you to the bone. You see two thick, inflamed scars, one on each side of his face, that run from below each of his eyes to his chin. He grunts toward his companion, and they both turn to look in your direction. The first figure's cracked lips curl into a snarl, and he begins to rush toward you. His companion mutters something and attempts to grab his partner's shoulder, but to no avail. As the one figure advances on you, his partner hisses, grabs a small vial hanging from a necklace around his neck, drinks it, and vanishes instantaneously.

The two villains are cultists working with Killoran. The one who disappeared is Ragnis (see **Area 8**). The elf they killed is Galyndrin Orthan, a ranger from Ilgaard who was following leads pertaining to Killoran's return. The remaining attacker is a human **cultist** with no plans of backing down from another fight.

Cultist: HD 2; HP 10; AC 7[12]; Atk d-agger (1d4); Move 12; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** +2 to hit in berserk state. (*Monstrosities* 255)

The characters shouldn't have too much difficulty putting down this overconfident cultist. If the characters defeat him, they find a short sword, a dagger, leather armor, and a note written in Common. The same note can be found on Penumbra or her crew's bodies (see **Area 8**). If this is the first time the characters have discovered this note, read the following:

To receive the agreed upon compensation, you must bring the usurper to me alive. When the midnight sky turns red, go to the laboring Giant, who with patience stands waiting and with exactness grinds all in his granite jaws, and whisper the following: *Dod till otro*. Past its teeth and into the darkness, deliver the usurper to me, then return to the earthen wall and await my signal! The water shall not reckon twice; if not by fire, the water shall at last sweep corruption clean!

The victim is a middle-aged male elf who appears to have been outside for a long time. His clothes are soiled, and his body is somewhat gaunt. Characters searching the elf's body find a longsword, a shortbow and quiver of 12 arrows, an explorer's pack, and cartographer's tools.

Searching the cartographer's toolkit reveals a series of sketched maps of mostly natural locations similar to the surrounding terrain, though no local landmarks can be discerned. After looking at the maps for a moment, any character wearing the badge Jax gave them begins to discern Elvish letters forming from invisible ink. In total, there are about two pages of text written in shorthand that take one to two hours to read and interpret. Interpreting the text reveals evidence that Killoran is alive and working with an obscure

elemental cult whose members are identifiable by their gruesome facial scarring. The notes reference "the great anniversary" and a "pillar of fire from which the Red Lord will be received and cleanse the world of the profane." Finally, the reader identifies a portion of the text as a counter-chant to break the summoning of the "Red Lord":

Oh eques pole-tye
Cen-bime aras
Arinya kal

If the characters present this information to Mayor Caleb Finge or Jax Blueskin, both confirm the elf's identity as Galyndrin Orthan, an Ilgaardian ranger who was investigating rumors of Killoran's existence and return to the area. Both are disappointed with the characters' performance but understand there wasn't much they could do to stop the murder. Neither knows anything about the references in Galyndrin's notes, but they both trusted the elf. He was an excellent ranger they had known for several years. They presume he was murdered because his cover had been blown. Neither knows the identity of the cultist who attacked the characters or of the one who fled. Both insist that the characters return to their patrol and remain vigilant for the duration of the celebration. They should immediately report any sightings of cultists to Jax.8. Windmill

A windmill sits on the river's edge just north of the village green, behind the massive bonfire. It is a typical tower windmill used primarily for grinding grains, but it's clear that the mill is also used for powering a saw. Its sloping walls are constructed out of river stones and thick timbers, and the entire windmill stands more than 50 feet tall and is approximately 30 feet in diameter. Its cap is tiled with the same faded yellow tiles as the temple, and its traditional four-sail frame boasts blue-and-yellow sail cloth. An entrance on the ground level faces the river. A 15-foot-long ramp extends from a closed door to the river's edge. Two small open-arch windows, approximately two feet by three feet, are on the second floor, and a one-foot-by-one-foot window is on the third level. A walkway surrounds the tower at the second level.

The door on the ground level is locked. It is constructed of thick oak banded with iron. Its lock can be opened with thieves' tools, or the door itself can be broken open with a successful Open Doors check. Penumbra holds the key. Killoran paid Penumbra and her crew to guard this location to ensure that no one finds the *soulflare* or the secret door to the tunnels below the millstone. The bandits are always close by.

The door into the mill from the walkway is on the same side as the main entrance. It is barred on the inside and can be broken down with a successful Open Doors check (with a -1 penalty, minimum 1).

Should the characters investigate the windows, they may find hidden traps. The window on the west side is rigged with a flash bomb triggered by a pressure plate on the sill. Setting off the flash bomb causes an explosion of sparks and light and a deafening sound. The character triggering the trap must make a saving throw or be deafened and blinded for three rounds. This trap most certainly alerts Penumbra and her crew if they aren't already aware of the characters' presence. The window on the east side is rigged with two spring-loaded poison darts in small holes on opposite sides of the window. The darts fire if the pressure plate in the sill is pressed. A character who springs this trap must make a saving throw or be struck by the darts for 2d4 points of damage.

DAY 2

During the day, **Shaco** and **3 bandits** hide on the third level (**Area 8-3**) to protect the *soulflare*. Unless they have reason to believe the characters know about the object, they remain hidden and ready to attack should the characters attempt to access the third level or if the characters discover the lock on the millstone and attempt to unlock it. Penumbra keeps an eye on the mill from a healthy distance outside. Given the crowds, it's not difficult for her to remain unnoticed. Should characters attempt to pick the lock or gain entry to the mill through one of the windows, run the following encounter:

THE MILL 1 Square - 5 Feet

— Door

▬ Open Arch Window

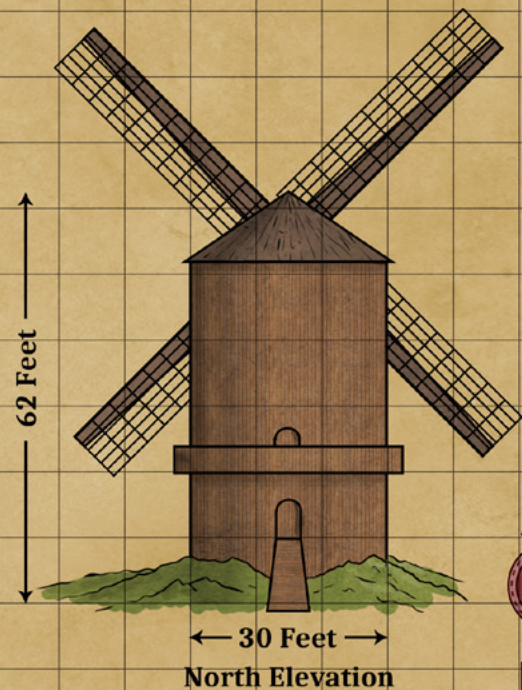
⊙ Stairs



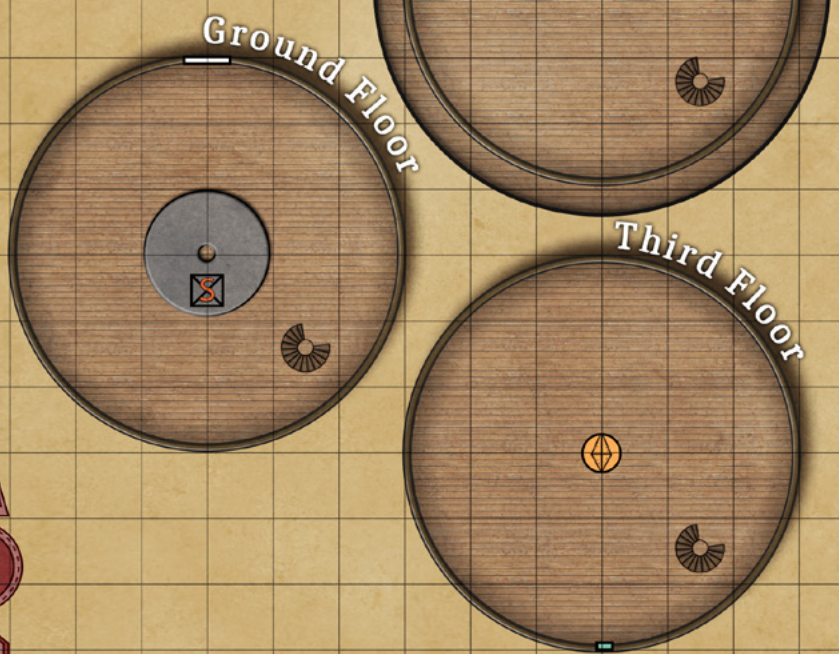
Soulflare



Millstone



North Elevation



AN EXPLOSIVE TIME

The characters hear a loud explosion followed by the screams of villagers behind them on the village green. Penumbra sets fire to a barrel of pitch and a handful of small gunpowder bombs, larger versions of the sort the children have been setting off throughout the celebration. Characters who look in the direction of the explosion see thick black smoke rising from a building near the temple. Should the characters investigate, they find a crowd of villagers, including Jax Blueskin, running around in circles, some sloshing pails of water from the well on the village green, frantically trying to extinguish a fire that is quickly engulfing the back of Sam Choux's bakery. Sam desperately pleads with the characters to put out the flames.

Sam Choux, Male Halfling Baker: HD 9; AC 9[10]; Atk dagger (1d4); Move 9; Save 16; AL L; CL/XP 2/30; Special: +1 bonus with missile weapons, +4 save vs. magic. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Should the characters ask about the explosion, there is a 30% chance that they ask the one person who recalls seeing anything. A young boy saw a tall man with long stringy black hair standing behind a barrel smeared in tar. The barrel was strung with what looked like large firecrackers. As the man rose from lighting the wicks, he looked right into the boy's eyes with a cold, chilling look, and a thin smile spread across his face. He continued looking at the boy as he kicked the barrel over with his boot, sending it careening down the short incline straight toward him! The boy believes the man tried to kill him (false) and describes how he had to jump out of the way to avoid being hit. When he looked back, the man was gone. Then the explosion ...

At this point, Jax arrives and quickly assesses the situation. Once it's clear everyone is OK, he requests that the characters hurry with him to the inn. A fight has broken out! Run the following:

The characters arrive at the inn just as a barstool crashes through the front window. The fight is between **4d6 + 2 patrons**, all of whom are under the influence of the *soulflare*. Decide whether patrons use weapons or if it's just fists and chairs. Either way, play up the flying chairs and bottles, the kicked-over tables, the crashing of a chandelier, etc. Brawlers could have immediate reactions to being hit, and missed attacks could hit someone else nearby, who then reacts by hitting someone else.

Should the characters succeed in assisting Jax in quelling the brawl, he offers to buy each a drink and suggests they give Olwette a hand cleaning up the interior.

Angry Bar Patrons, Male and Female Humans (4d6+2): HD 1d6hp; AC 9[10]; Atk strike (1d2) or weapon (1d6); Move 12; Save 18; AL Any; CL/XP B/10; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

DAY 2 (EVENING)

At midnight, **Penumbra** returns to the mill, and she and her entire crew of **3 bandits** sleep in shifts. If the bandit on watch is alerted to the characters' presence outside the mill, he wakes the others and they ambush the characters as soon as they enter. Poisoned crossbow bolts fly from the shadows. Penumbra is on the third floor and defends the *soulflare* until defeat is imminent. She then flees and attempts to alert Killoran of the breach. Ten minutes later, **Ragnis**, **Cendras**, and **Sigmas** arrive, bent on destroying the meddling characters (see *Area 9-2* if this occurs).

Bandits (as needed, 6 total): HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk short sword (1d6) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Equipment: leather armor, short sword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed).

Penumbra, Female Human Assassin (Asn2): HP 10; AC 7[12]; Atk longsword (1d8) or dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: backstab (x2), disguise, use poison.

Equipment: leather armor, longsword, dagger, key to windmill, handwritten note, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed).

Shaco, Male Human Thief (Thf1): HP 3; AC 7[12]; Atk dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 15; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: +2 save bonus vs. traps and magical devices, backstab (x2), read languages, thieving skills.

Thieving Skills: Climb 85%, Tasks/Traps 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

Equipment: leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed), 12 sp.

Should the characters survive the cultists' attack and discover the tunnel beneath the millstone, go to the ritual chamber (**Area 9-2**) and run the encounter accordingly (minus any slain cultists).

If Penumbra and her crew are defeated, the characters can freely search the inside of the mill. Should the bodies be searched, the characters find a key to the mill and a handwritten note on Penumbra's body. The same note can be found on the other cultists. Read the following aloud:

To receive the agreed upon compensation, you must bring the usurper to me alive. When the midnight sky turns red, go to the laboring Giant, who with patience stands waiting and with exactness grinds all in his granite jaws, and whisper the following: *Dod till otro*. Past its teeth and into the darkness, deliver the usurper to me, then return to the earthen wall and await my signal! The water shall not reckon twice; if not by fire, the water shall at last sweep corruption clean!

DAY 3

Nothing occurs at the mill during the day.

DAY 3 (EVENING)

If still alive, **Penumbra** and her crew of **3 bandits** are on guard inside the mill. An hour before midnight, Penumbra leaves the mill to retrieve Jax and bring him to the mill. When the bonfire is lit, characters may spot her dragging a semiconscious Jax across the village green toward the mill. See the ritual chamber (**Area 9-2**) for details on Jax's fate.

8-1. FIRST FLOOR

A long wooden spindle descends through the ceiling from the upper level, where it connects to a large gear used for turning the vertical saw blade at the end of the room. A 10-foot-long log lies on a framed carriage that extends from the door right up to the blade. A large millstone framed in wood is in the southeast corner. The gears that turn the spindle are attached to a boom arm that can be swung to connect to the saw or to the millstone. The spindle is currently disconnected from both. A few burlap sacks of grain are piled in the east corner. In the northwest corner, a set of ladder-stairs leads up to the second level. The room smells of cedar and raw earth, and the air inside is hot.

The characters should roll a saving throw every 10 minutes they spend inside the mill or suffer a -1 penalty to hit due to the stifling heat. If the characters investigate the saw blade or carriage, they find nothing out of the ordinary. The sacks contain relatively high-quality flour.

The millstone contains a secret door that leads into tunnels below. Killoran constructed the tunnel to covertly access the summoning chamber below the village green. The millstone is actually two stones: the runner stone on top, and the base stone on the bottom. Each stone is approximately four feet in diameter and weighs nearly 3,000 pounds. A small depression with a barely noticeable seam is in the center of the millstone (1-in-6 chance to notice; 4-in-6 for dwarves and elves). It also reveals that a section of the wood flooring in front of the stone is loose. Prying the flooring open reveals a small lever; the characters might logically deduce that the lever is a mechanism to open a door in the millstone. However, attempts to pull the lever are



unsuccessful; it seems incredibly stuck. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the secret door in the millstone is actually protected by a *wizard lock*. It can be opened by dispelling the spell or by whispering the password (which can be found in the notes on Penumbra and her crew or on the cultist at the dam). Characters can also break the lock to gain access. Opening the door reveals a set of roughly-hewn steps leading down into a dark tunnel. See **The Journey Below (Area 9)** for details on this area.

8-2. SECOND FLOOR

This room contains a few simple bedrolls and empty jugs of wine. It provides mill workers with access to the windshaft and pulley systems that make turning the spindles possible. Two open-arched windows are on this level, and the staircase up to the third level is in the northwest corner. With all the machinery on this level, it's quite cramped and difficult to maneuver.

Starting at the base of the stairs on the ground floor, as you ascend the stairs you are struck with a high-pitched ringing in your ears accompanied with a tremendous pressure. It comes on so suddenly that it stops you in your tracks. For a moment, you cannot hear anything but the ringing. The pressure increases, and you drop to one knee as you futilely attempt to stop the ringing by blocking your ears. After a moment, the ringing subsides as a terrible crackling sound takes over.

The characters must make a saving throw once each round against the soulflare. Any characters who fail the save lose interest in the mill and do not remember their purpose for being there until another character reminds them of the facts. A character who loses the psychic battle with the soulflare has a 50% chance of becoming violent and randomly attacking another character.

8-3. THIRD FLOOR

This is a small space where the windshaft connects to the wooden gears and machinery within the mill. A small window on the north wall lets in a little light, but without a light source it's quite dark. When you first climb up into this space, you feel slightly dizzy and wobbly. It takes a moment for you to realize that this space is turning slowly with the wind.

This small space is where Killoran placed the *soulflare* to affect the village. Characters easily notice the glass globe nestled safely atop a sack of flour in the middle of the room. The orb flashes with licks of flame that spark through a greasy pall of swirling black smoke.

However, getting the orb is not an easy task, as Penumbra's bandits are likely here to protect it. Normally, **Shaco** and **3 bandits** hide in the darkness and attempt to stop intruders. Depending on the time of day, **Penumbra** might also be found here.

Characters who touch the glass orb with bare flesh must make a saving throw with a -2 penalty to avoid losing their minds to the *soulflare*. They immediately lose interest in whatever they were doing, and have a 75% chance of taking a swing at a random character near them. See the *soulflare's* description for details. The magic item can be carried safely in a pouch or other container, although characters can still be affected by its magical properties while they possess it. Only by destroying the glass orb can they end its threat to themselves and the village below.

Bandits (as needed, 6 total): HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk short sword (1d6) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 17; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 254)

Equipment: leather armor, short sword, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed).

Penumbra, Female Human Assassin (Asn2): HP 10; AC 7[12]; Atk longsword (1d8) or dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: backstab (x2), disguise, use poison.

Equipment: leather armor, longsword, dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, key to windmill, handwritten note, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed).

Shaco, Male Human Thief (Thf1): HP 3; AC 7[12]; Atk dagger (1d4) or light crossbow (1d4+1 + poison); Move 12; Save 15; AL C; CL/XP 1/15; Special: +2 save bonus vs. traps and magical devices, backstab (x2), read languages, thieving skills.

Thieving Skills: Climb 85%, Tasks/Traps 15%, Hear 3 in 6, Hide 10%, Silent 20%, Locks 10%.

Equipment: leather armor, dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, vial of poison (save or die in 1d4+2 rounds unless healed), 12 sp.9.

THE JOURNEY BELOW

If the millstone door is unlocked and opened, the characters find a thin, narrow passage carved into stone that is barely wide enough for a single person to fit through. The characters can crawl into it. If they do, they find themselves in a small tunnel leading to a narrow set of steps that descend approximately 50 feet.

9-1. TUNNEL TO THE RITUAL CHAMBER

The steps lead down into darkness. At the base is a narrow archway carved in the subterranean rock protected by a magical, mental alarm set to ping Killoran of any intruders. Should the characters enter this tunnel before the bonfire is lit, a trip-wire alarm alerts Killoran so he can begin the ritual before the village's midnight ceremony. If the characters detect the alarm and successfully disable it, they still encounter kobolds (see below) in the tunnel. The sounds of melee alert Killoran just the same. As the characters continue down the tunnel, read the following:

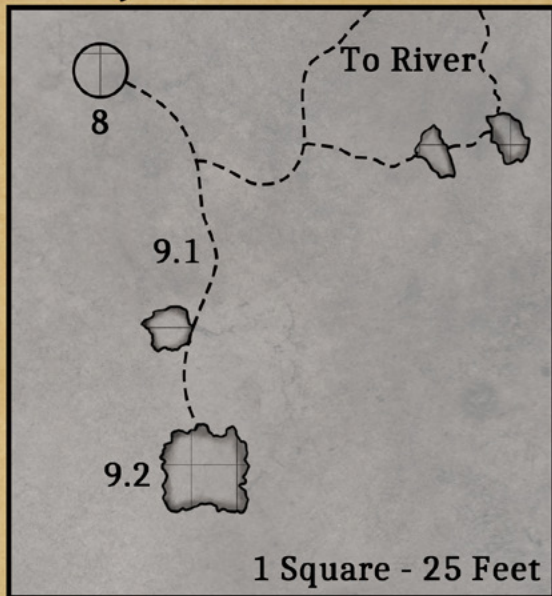
The descending subterranean tunnel is pitch black and about 10 feet in diameter. When it finally levels off, you estimate you must be at least 70 feet belowground. As you continue down the uneven, roughly-carved corridor, you hear what sounds like whispers, though it's impossible to make out the language or the direction from which they are coming. In fact, the whispers seem ominous, and you're not entirely certain they aren't in your head. The air suddenly feels alive with energy, and you are nearly overwhelmed by the oppressive scent of wet canine and stagnant water. The smell is so strong that it brings with it a tinge of nausea.

Characters see movement ahead as **6 kobolds** rush out of the darkness. The characters are free to attack, assuming they aren't surprised. The kobolds fight to the death.

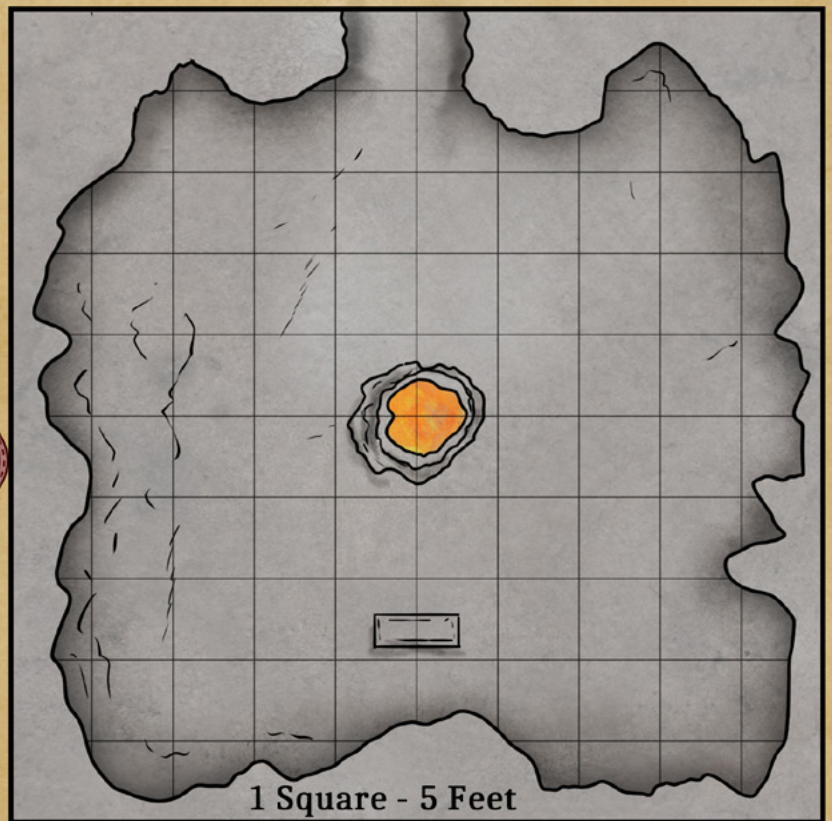
Kobolds (6): HD 1d4 hp; HP 4, 3x2, 2x2, 1; AC 7[12]; Atk short sword (1d6); Move 6; Save 18; AL C; CL/XP A/5; Special: none. (*Monstrosities* 277)

If the characters defeat the kobolds, they can proceed down the corridor. As they do, the whispers become louder and more rhythmic in a language harsh and guttural and entirely alien. A reddish-orange light can be seen at the end of the corridor. As the characters approach, the light gets brighter and the temperature grows hotter.

THE JOURNEY BELOW



- 8 The Mill
- 9.1 Tunnel
- 9.2 Ritual Chamber



9-2. THE RITUAL CHAMBER

As the characters approach the room at the end of the corridor, they hear chanting and feel the heat radiating out of the room. A terrible aroma in the air is bitter and coppery and sickeningly sweet — the smell of human flesh. When the characters enter the chamber, read the following:

You enter a large room that is approximately 50 feet in diameter and 30 feet high, crudely carved out of the subterranean rock. It feels as if you've walked into a furnace. At the center of the room is a large, hollowed-out stone column, roughly five feet in diameter at the base and tapering to about 10 inches where it meets the chamber's ceiling.

Several large holes have been punched into the column, and flames curl up the sides. Three cloaked figures stand about 10 feet from the door. Their eyes are closed, and they hold daggers in their outstretched hands. All are chanting. Each one has thick, red scars running down the lengths of their cheeks. The one closest to you also has two horns curling from its forehead. A fourth figure wearing an orange and red cape can just be seen standing behind an altar in the back of the chamber.

Jax is bound, battered, and unconscious on top of the altar. The figure at the altar is holding a shimmering longsword above his head, its point hovering inches above Jax's head. This figure's eyes, too, are closed, and his face is covered with a web of thick, red scars.

As the others continue chanting, the figure behind the altar speaks directly to you. "We've been expecting you," he says. "Kerr Sem's been expecting you." At that moment, all of the cultists open their eyes as a whirlwind of fire and ash begins to billow and swirl within the stone column.

The cultists **Ragnis**, **Cendras**, and **Sigmas**, and **Killoran** are in the process of summoning Kerr Sem, a powerful fire elemental. They fight to the death to ensure that the summoning is successful. Each cultist lose 1

hit point at the beginning of each round as Kerr Sem absorbs their essence. They first try to deal with any character who is chanting a counter-chant, and this character is always their choice of a primary target. The counter-chant is the only thing at this point that dispels Kerr Sem. The characters have four rounds to complete the counter-chant once the whirlwind of fire begins. Otherwise, Kerr Sem fully materializes and likely destroys the characters and the village of Ilgaard. Until either Kerr Sem is summoned or the counter-chant succeeds, chaos ensues aboveground as the fight on the village green grows larger with each round (see the **Evil on the Green** encounter in description of the bonfire [Area 6]).

Cendras, Female Half-Elf Priest (Clr2): HP 9; AC 7[12]; **Atk** flail (1d8); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** +2 save versus paralysis and poison, control undead, darkvision (60ft), detect secret doors (4-in-6 chance), spells (1).

Spells: 1st—*cause light wounds*.

Equipment: leather armor, flail.

Killoran "the Red," Male Human Priest (Clr4): HP 19; AC 5[14]; **Atk** +1 *flaming heavy mace* (1d6 + 1d6 fire); **Move** 12; **Save** 12; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 4/120; **Special:** +2 save versus paralysis and poison, control undead, spells (2/1).

Spells: 1st—*cause light wounds*, *detect magic*; 2nd—*hold person*.

Equipment: chainmail, +1 *flaming heavy mace*.

Ragnis, Male Elf Wizard (MU3): HP 8; AC 9[10] or 2[17] (missile) and 4[15] (melee) from *shield* spell; **Atk** staff (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 13; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 3/60; **Special:** +2 save vs. spells, staves and wands, spells (3/1).

Spells: 1st—*magic missile* (x2), *shield*; 2nd—*mirror image*.

Equipment: staff, robes.

Sigmas, Female Human Priest (Clr2): HP 7; AC 7[12]; **Atk** mace (1d6); **Move** 12; **Save** 14; **AL** C; **CL/XP** 2/30; **Special:** +2 save versus paralysis and poison, control undead, spells (1).

Spells: 1st—*cause light wounds*.

Equipment: leather armor, mace.

Each round, at least one character who knows the counter-chant must stand still and concentrate on keeping the chant going. As the characters chant, the whirlwind of fire grows larger, taking up a good portion of the chamber as it leaps out of the chimney and swirls around the column. During the second round of chanting, the whirlwind intensifies and begins to take shape in the chamber. The swirling red flames form the essence of a snarling old man with a top hat of flames and red-hot embers for eyes. Its mouth expands to reveal a glowing furnace, and it points a gnarled finger of fire at the characters. It bellows an ear-shattering, "Yoooo!" All characters must succeed on a saving throw or be knocked prone by the powerful blast of hot air as the visage becomes an amorphous ball of swirling flames. A character failing the saving throw also ceases to chant until the start of his or her next turn.

If the characters keep the chant going for two more rounds, by the end of the third round the flames split into two branches; one is a red flame, while the other is blue. The red column of fire reforms into the visage of the towering old man; the blue column forms a mighty woman wearing a pileus cap and wielding a rod. At the moment these two figures become visible, they snap together with a scorching rush. Purple and white flames flare up the column and spread across the ceiling, only to reform into a swirling inferno moments later.

At the end of the fourth round of chanting, the inferno splits again into two corporeal figures: that of the snarling old man, blazing and malicious, and that of the mighty woman with pileus cap and rod, expanding to twice her size and then whipping back into the old man, exploding him in a shower of sparks and shooting stars. Anyone on the village green witnesses this same battle take place "in" the bonfire, though on a much-larger scale. Whether aboveground on the village green or belowground in the chamber, everyone takes 3d6 points of fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful saving throw.

If Killoran is still alive at this point, he tries to escape to return to the cave where Ragnir nursed him back to health a year ago. Regardless of whether Killoran is slain or escapes, characters find little if they search the chamber. Nothing is in the altar room beyond what the slain cultists carried. Jax is wounded but alive. He tells the characters that Mayor Caleb was immolated and that his death initiated the ritual. Jax is certain he was going to be next.

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Read the following as the characters make their way out of the tunnels and back to the village green:

As you emerge from the tunnels and then from the mill, the chaos on the green is over. The villagers have stopped fighting, and many are looking toward the east. The skies have cleared, and while stars can still be seen in the dark sky, the first rays of dawn can be seen on the horizon. Jax is standing next to you, looking peaceful and serene. He gestures to the horizon. "Behold. The night turns into the morning of a new year of liberty. Thank you for helping keep us safe. Ilgaard, I believe, is finally free! You are forever welcome. Come to my office in the morning, and I'll have your payments." He clasps each of your hands before walking off the village green.



If the characters are victorious during the day on either Day 2 or Day 3, narrate the parade and the lighting of the bonfire without mentioning the brawl (the *soulflare* has no power with Killoran out of the picture). Then read the following:

As the bonfire burns well into the night, and the flames reflect off the mountain flowers on the hillside and the smiling villagers' faces, you suddenly realize Jax is standing next to you, looking peaceful and serene. He points to the horizon where the first rays of dawn can be seen. "See that?" he asks. "That's the night turning into the morning of a new year of liberty." He clasps each of your hands, smiles, hands you your coin, and leaves you on the green.

LOOSE ENDS

Should the characters think to look for Penumbra and her bandits, assuming she is still alive at the conclusion of the adventure, the contract provides clues. She is hiding near the dam, and if anyone other than Killoran arrives, she does her best to sneak away. If the characters investigate the dam, they discover that it has been rigged with several barrels of black power. Feel free to roleplay the disarmament of the powder barrels. Failure to disarm the barrels almost certainly results in the destruction of the dam, which causes a deadly flood in the region.

If Killoran escaped, insightful characters may think about spending some more time with Galyndrin's maps. If he was tracking Killoran, the maps may relate to places Killoran was seen or rumored to have been hiding out. Since the maps depict a region similar to the one the characters are in, it's possible that with a little more time, or if perhaps the right person is asked, the locations on the maps could be identified. This, at any rate, is an adventure for another day.

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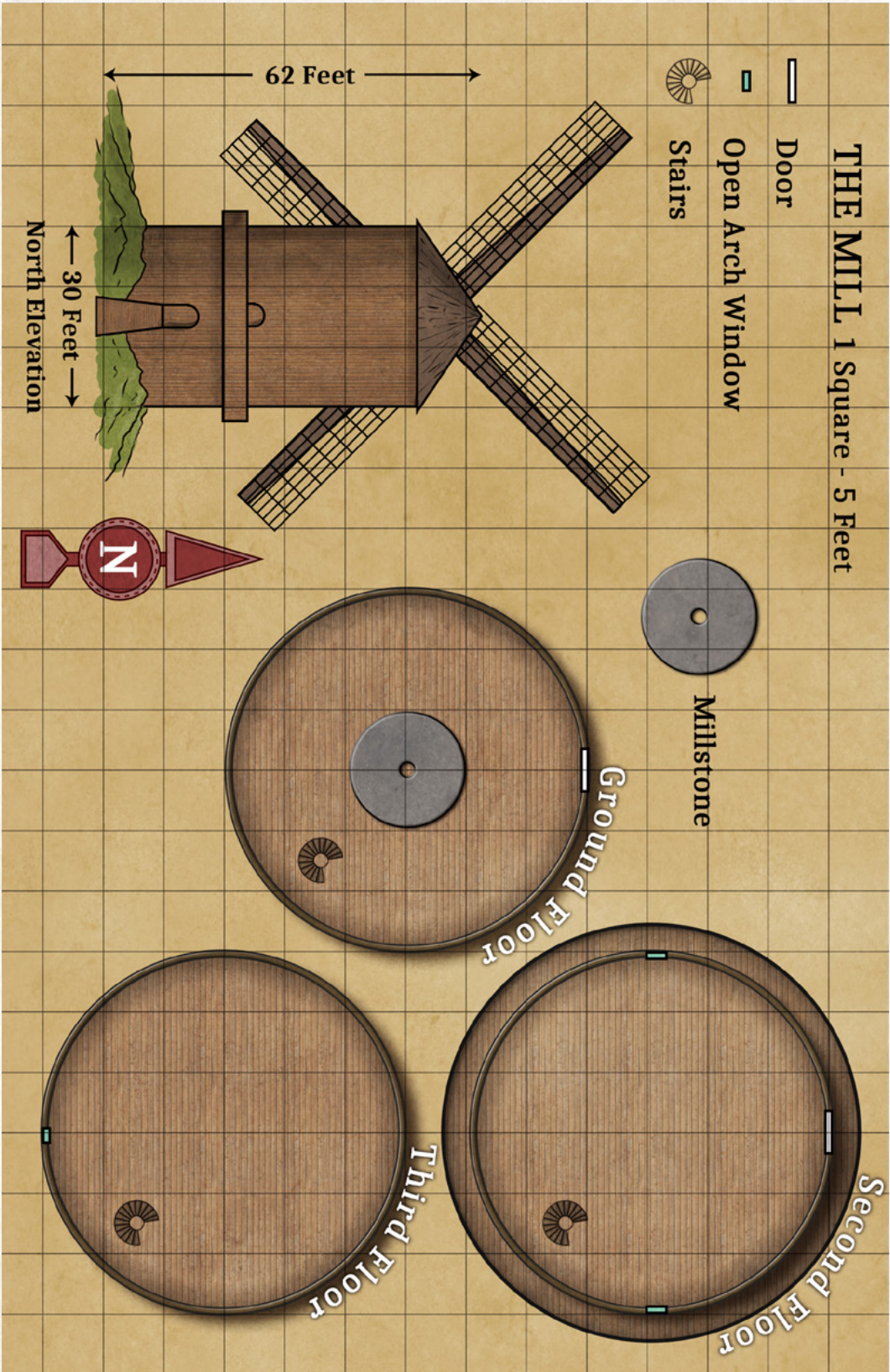
I also want to thank Steve Rakner from the Roll4 Network for permission to adapt some of the festival games he created for inclusion in this adventure.

The parade puppeteer's rhyme is based on an early 18th-century version that was frequently recited on Pope's Night, an anti-Catholic celebration in the U.S. that evolved from Britain's Guy Fawkes Day celebrations, which evolved into the Independence Day celebrations people in the U.S. are familiar with today.

Finally, "Killoran's contract" was inspired by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Windmill."



ILLGAARDD TOWN CENTER - PLAYER MAP



THE MILL - PLAYER MAP

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ADVENTURES
WORTH
WINNING

BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT

It is midsummer, and the remote mountain village of Ilgaard is preparing to throw an epic celebration to honor the year anniversary of its independence from the tyrannical rule of Killoran "the Red." While most of the villagers are happy with the new leadership and are excited about the prospect of hosting a major event, droves of raucous outsiders, bitter loyalists, and an unprecedented heat wave are causing tensions to mount. You have been hired by the local sheriff to keep the peace. While there, you must contend with rowdy villagers at each other's throats and a towering force on the cusp of raising its haunted form high above the Village Green!

Inspired by (dangerous!) early American traditions of lighting bonfires to celebrate Independence Day, the characters are the only hope that Illgaard will remain standing by dawn's early light.



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