



The Dark Eye

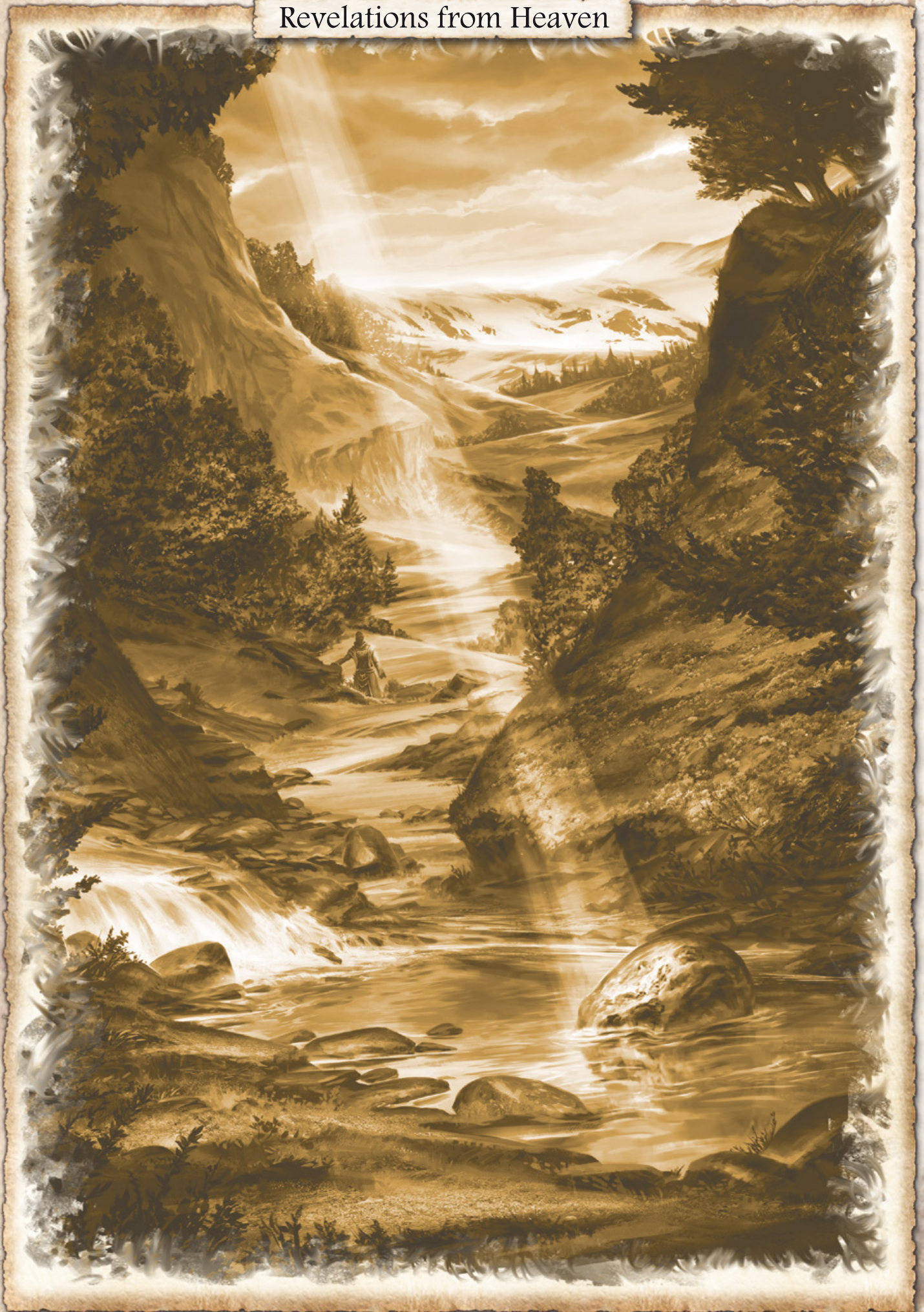
REVELATIONS FROM
HEAVEN



- 1 Mill
- 2 Tavern
- 3 Smithy
- 4 Grocer's
- 5 Shrine of Praios
- 6 Boron yard



Revelations from Heaven



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I thank my husband Ben Maier for his enthusiasm for this project and his unending creative input. Ben, without you, there would be no Revelations From Heaven! I also thank my wonderful playtesters: Kathrin Schäfer, Michael Becker, Cheran Stäbe, and Ben Maier, for constructive criticism and their love for the Kosh, Florian Mülberty for a careful eye, and our rules lawyer, Philipp Neitzel.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to Aventuria.



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Preface for the GM

Greetings to the Twelve! You hold in your hands the first adventure for the English edition of the fantasy role playing game **The Dark Eye**. The events that players and heroes experience in this adventure are harbingers of the Starfall, which ushers in a new Age of Heroes in Aventuria.

In **Revelations From Heaven**, heroes explore the idyllic scenery of a mountain village in Kosh, the mysterious disappearance of a Blessed One, and an explosive finale that exposes secret machinations of the Nameless One. Will the heroes manage to strengthen the order of the Twelvegods and wrest Oldenbridge from the grasp of the evil entity known as the Thirteenth God?

Conduct an investigation in an isolated village where everybody acts suspiciously and nobody seems to have seen anything. Plunge the heroes into the chaos of a panicked community and let them be what every champion wants to be—lifesaver, problem solver, and fighter for all that is good!

While traveling through Kosh, the heroes save a shepherdess from the sharp claws of a bear, and the people in her home village of Oldenbridge toast their bravery in the tavern. The next day, the taking of the tithe occurs at the village shrine. With dread, the local Blessed One realizes that the tithe chest has been stolen. This theft ties in with several other recent crimes, and the heroes take up the investigation. Suspicions abound. The sighting of an acquisitive tree dragon leads to a dramatic dragon hunt, but the stolen goods are not recovered. Shortly before the portentous Nameless Days at year's end, the village's Blessed One disappears without a trace, causing much fear. The village smith reveals a terrible secret, launching the heroes on a desperate race against time. Can they free the Blessed One from the clutches of an evil cult and prevent the consecration of an artifact that threatens all of creation? Will the heroes secure the 14th Nameless Doxology and a valuable piece of meteoritic iron and deliver them safely to the temple of Praios in Angbar? Let's find out!

• These boxes contain important information about the scenario!



More Difficult Symbol: to make a scene more difficult for the heroes, use the suggestions in this paragraph.



Easier Symbol: to make a scene less difficult for the heroes, use the suggestions in this paragraph.

- **Rumors:** When the heroes try to gather information, they might hear gossip and hearsay. Rumors are marked with a + (true), a - (false) or a +/- (partly true, partly false).
- **Reading Texts:** You can read these texts to your players at the table. They contain no GM-only information.
- **GM Information:** This information is for the GM and is not meant for the heroes. It is sometimes just background information for the GM.
- **Regarding NPC Stat Blocks:** The stats given for NPCs contain all information relevant for play but might not be complete, as every skill rating higher than 0 is not necessarily included. This is especially true for NPCs with a large number of skills, such as spellcasters and Blessed Ones (for example, the stats for a demon summoner NPC might not include a SR in *Prepare Food*).

Quality, Price, and Beds

Taverns and Inns are rated by levels that indicate (Q)uality, (P)rice, and (B)eds. Quality is the quality of the establishment, price modifies the price of rooms listed in the **Core Rules** by the given percentage, and beds is the maximum number of beds offered by the tavern.

Level	Quality	Price
1	Miserable hovel	Very cheap (50% of normal price)
2	Dirty dive	Cheap (75% of normal price)
3	Simple inn	Normal (normal price)
4	Good middle-class tavern	Expensive (150% of normal price)
5	Exquisite hotel	Very expensive (200% of normal price)
6	Luxurious hotel	Extremely expensive (400% of normal price)

Introduction

The Story So Far...

One day, a shooting star falls from the sky, in, of all places, idyllic Kosh. A small iron meteor, enough to make a Dark Eye, falls into a mountain stream in Kosh near the village of Oldenbridge, the setting for this adventure. A short time later, Oldenbridge's power-hungry innkeeper, Gunelde Speltgrain, receives a vision from the Nameless One. Over the following weeks, she is corrupted utterly and receives her consecration. Filled with visions of what the dark god has in store for Aventuria, she first plots to strengthen her influence in the village.

But the Twelvegods have not abandoned Oldenbridge! Led by a ray of sunlight, the local Blessed One of Praios finds the meteorite in the river and senses that it is inherently magical. Since her god opposes magic, she locks the artifact in a chest lined with magic-dampening Kosh basalt. The chest also holds the villagers' tithes, temple donations, and some valuable temple relics.

Gunelde Speltgrain founds a cult to strengthen the power of the Nameless One. She taints the food and drink of potential cultists with rat fungus, a poison that makes minds more suggestible. She targets single men and women because any change in personality caused by the rat fungus can go unnoticed for longer, and the cult grows and prospers in secret.

As time goes on, cult members receive an increasing number of visions from the Nameless One. They plan to honor the evil god with a golden statue and a dark ritual. Gunelde devises a plan to sacrifice the village's Blessed One during the ritual, to make the statue a very powerful artifact of the Nameless One.

But where can the cultists find that much gold? A few thieving attempts do not provide enough of the precious metal. Out of need, the innkeeper steals the Blessed One's Kosh basalt-lined chest, which is known to hold coins and liturgical items made of pure gold. Her unexpected find of the meteorite with its magical powers proves very helpful. Later, Gunelde again tries to obtain more golden trinkets by stealing from the villagers. Casting the statue proves difficult—she cannot simply ask the village smith to create a statue of the Nameless God, so she tries to break his will.

Despite regular doses of rat fungus in the stew Robosh eats every evening, the robust hill dwarf's faith in his god Angrosh stays strong. By day, his mind remains his own, unsullied by the insinuations of the Nameless One. Only at nights can Gunelde make any progress, and she leads the smith in a trance to her secret ritual space where he works on the golden statue with all his dwarven precision. During the day he is haunted by incomplete memories of his nocturnal forced labor. He grows very tired, nervous, and unfocused due to his lack of sleep. The smith worries that he is dreaming (dwarves don't normally dream), and he looks frantically for a solution to his problems. With increasing frequency, he drops his tools, fails to finish commissions on time, and even injures himself while working.

Adventure Summary

The heroes are traveling through Kosh when, at midday, they hear the panicked shouts of a shepherdess running from a bear. The shepherdess' flock has scattered, so the heroes must not only save the maiden from certain death, but also catch the runaway sheep. As true heroes should, they accompany the bemused shepherdess to her home village of Oldenbridge, where they are invited by villagers to celebrate their deeds in a tavern called the Grain Room.

That evening in the tavern, they learn about the recent thefts. The villagers are anxious. Some ducats might even disappear from the heroes' travel funds. When the village's Blessed One of Praios sets out to collect the tithe the next day, she realizes with horror that the chest with the money and the temple treasures has disappeared, too.

A feverish search for the thief begins. The villagers ask the heroes for help, as only they can shine light into the darkness. Soon they find their first suspects. One is a reclusive huntress who is thought to be a dangerous witch by some. Another is a weird elf who feels more at home among the trees than among people and has no understanding of the concept of property. And then there is the smith, who is sometimes seen walking in the village late at night and who is extremely tired during the day.

Suddenly the Blessed One of Praios vanishes in the middle of the investigation. The cultists timed this abduction to occur right before the onset of the Nameless Days. Without their spiritual leader, the villagers begin to panic.

Pressure on the heroes increases further when the innkeeper disappears—as head of the cult, she needs time to prepare the ritual—but they find obvious signs of Nameless deeds in her living quarters. The smith’s memory returns, and he gradually recalls crafting a faceless, golden statue. He cannot remember where he was taken at night, but he can at least get the heroes closer to the ritual site of the worshipers of the Nameless One.

Following the clues, the heroes enter a cave and fight a horde of dangerous cave spiders and vicious wolf rats before hearing the monotone ritual chanting of cultists. They reach the altar room just as the hooded leader (the innkeeper, of course) is about to sacrifice the bound Blessed One of Praios to her dark god. The heroes must defeat the cultists and put an end to their evil plans. Otherwise, Oldenbridge is doomed.

Adventure Structure

This adventure is mainly linear but does offer some optional modules that the GM can include if the heroes want to stay in Kosh for a while longer, or even just to fit the group’s playing style. Optional scenes are clearly marked as to which are important for the story and which may be left out.



Choosing Heroes

This adventure is designed for beginning heroes. With a few adjustments (number of enemies, stats, and so on), you can make the challenge level fit an Experienced group. This adventure accommodates any profession from the **Core Rules**. It is especially suited for Blessed Ones of the Twelvegods who have dedicated themselves to fighting the Nameless One, or for magical heroes with a strong interest in researching meteoritic iron, although arcane or karmic powers are not necessary for success. Heroes who think and act in a practical manner can shine in **Revelations From Heaven**. Down-to-earth heroes such as craftsmen or hunters may contribute to group success as much as fighter types. They need only have their hearts in the right place and act with courage and skill when the lives and spiritual sanctity of innocents are in danger.

Timeline

The timeline includes the optional scenes for a better overview and an easier opportunity to use them in the story. They are marked as optional in the adventure, for you to include or not, as desired.

A Different Location

You may set this adventure anywhere in Aventuria, if you like, as the Nameless deeds of the innkeeper Gunelde Speltgrain can easily take place wherever the group of heroes happens to be traveling. This adventure is best suited to regions in the Middenrealm, such as the tradition-bound Dukedom of Weiden, the Margravate of Griffonsford (mainly due to its strong faith in Praios), or Garetia, the breadbasket of the Realm. It’s important to pick a village that is far from other large settlements and has little divine assistance like Blessed Ones or temples—that way, the Nameless One has less trouble gaining a foothold and working his dark machinations. The adventure also doesn’t have to take place shortly before the Nameless Days since Nameless cults make trouble in Aventuria every day and are not restricted to a few opportunities each year. You could even set this adventure in winter.

Kosh: A Most Inviting Place

Kosh is a land of tradition, hard work, geniality, craft skills, and dwarven lifestyle and steadfastness.

The inhabitants of this mountainous region of the Principality of Kosh lead simple, modest lives as shepherds, craftsmen, and hunters. They enjoy good food and drink, and like to spend their evenings socializing in taverns. True Koshans love their home and do not want to live anywhere else. In their minds, no other place can be as beautiful.

Timeline

- **(X-3 months)** An iron meteorite, a potential Dark Eye, falls from the sky.
- **(X-1 month)** The innkeeper Gunelde receives her first Nameless vision and founds a cult.
- **(X-2 weeks)** Praionde, the Blessed One of Praios, finds the meteorite by divine guidance and locks it in the tithe chest. The innkeeper begins stealing golden trinkets from the villagers.
- **(X-1 week)** The cult steals the tithe chest from the temple, to obtain gold for their statue. The theft goes unnoticed for now. The innkeeper commits more thefts with help from the meteorite. Robosh the smith works on the statue at night without his knowledge.
- **(X) *Start of the Adventure: the heroes save a young shepherdess from a bear. Oldenbridge celebrates their heroic act.***
- **(X+1, morning)** The counting of the tithe is delayed because the tithe chest is missing. Start of the investigation in the village.
- **(X+2)** Investigation of the victims. The main suspects are Robosh the dwarven smith, Eilidiel the shy elf, and Jadwine the reclusive huntress.
- **(X+3) (Optional)** The heroes lead a dragon hunt, and receive some help from the local huntress. They find some treasures, but not the villagers' missing items, in the dragon's nest.
- **(X+3)** Praionde, the Blessed One, is abducted, soon to be sacrificed to the Thirteenth God, a.k.a. the Nameless One.
- **(X+4, morning)** If it has not already been noticed, someone discovers that the Blessed One is missing. The huntress is a suspect because villagers last saw the Blessed One with her. The huntress is revealed as a witch.
- **(X+4, noon)** The innkeeper disappears as well, and panic starts to spread through the community. In her rooms, the heroes find blasphemous writings, a recipe to prepare rat fungus, and stores of rat excrement.
- **(X+4, noon)** Robosh's memory returns and he guides the heroes to the cult's ritual place.
- **(X+4, evening)** Combat against Nameless cave spiders and wolf rats that guard the ritual place. The heroes interrupt the Nameless ritual. Can they defeat the cultists?
- **(X+5)** The Blessed One is safe (maybe?), the cult is shattered, and the potential Dark Eye has been secured. The villagers hold a celebration to honor the heroes.
- **(X+6)** At the behest of the Blessed One, the heroes travel to Angbar to deliver the meteoritic iron to the clergy of Praios. End of the adventure.

The Principality of Kosh

Area: Kosh is bordered by the ranges of the Kosh Mountains and the Forge Mountains, the Great River, and the rivers Ange and Rakula.

Landscape: Softly rising hills, blooming meadows with many fruit-bearing trees, and light forests make up the image of Kosh, even though the Kosh Mountains are gray, jagged, and often capped by snow. The steep range of the Forge Mountains is made of granite and covered by conifer forests. The largest lowland area is known as Shetzen Ewe. Meadows surround the Great River, and in the north lays the barren region known as the Harsh Heath. Angbar Lake is a mysterious body of water, even though a great deal of traffic crosses its surface.

Important towns: Angbar (5,000), Ferdok (3,000), Ironsmelt (900), Koshvalley (1,000), Nadoret (900), Rhôndur (850), Salmingen (850), Stonebridge (850)

Population: About 80,000, one quarter of them dwarves (mostly forge and hill dwarves)

Political Affiliation: Province of the Raulian Empire (a.k.a. the Middenrealm), Principality

Governance: Feudal governance, with an aristocracy that is comparatively mild and works closely with the people; ruled by the prudent Lord Blasius of Boarstem. Also, the dwarven mountain kingdoms of Koshim and Forestguard.

Religion: Twelvegods (mainly Ingerimm and Travia). Also, dwarven veneration of Angrosh.

Trade Goods: Bright Ferdok beer, steel, metal goods, and anti-magical Kosh basalt.

Kosh in Play: Kosh is a calm, solid province in which change comes slowly. Nevertheless, the people must cope with the legacy of history. They see themselves as allies of the dwarves in the fight against dragons and other threats.

Small Glossary of Kosh

High mountain ranges and deep green forests make up the landscape of the central province of the Middenrealm. Rural Kosh is a showcase of the peaceful coexistence of humans and dwarves. Its inhabitants honor tradition and value comfort. Here is a list of some important regional terms to give encounters a true Koshan flair.

Algarimm: the firebird, defeated in the Battle of Angbar.

Oldenbridge: Sendhold in the County of Wengenholt, in Kosh; the mountain village that is the setting for this adventure.

Angrosh: often Father Angrosh; the dwarven god of creation, worshiped by the humans as Ingerimm.

Angroshim: The race of dwarves, plural. Singular feminine Angroshna. Singular masculine Angrosho.

Baumel: Mountain stream in the County of Wengenholt, deep in the Kosh Mountains

Baumelvalley Cheese: nutty-flavored raw cheese from the Baumel Valley.

Ferdoker Style: Architectural style with a stone ground level and upper levels made from planks and strong timber frames. Most also have cellars.

Hairy mountain cow: Gray to black mountain cattle, source of milk and meat, also used as beasts of burden.

Year's End Day: Festival of Light held on the 30th of Rahja

Kosh Bunting tongue: tongue of a bird, a famous delicacy.

Kosh basalt: Rare gray rock that hinders magic.

Clobberbold: Koshan term for a peddler who carries goods on a wooden frame.

Bagpipes: Musical instrument that is popular in Kosh.

Squeezebag: leather musical instrument that makes sounds when squeezed.

Ruckusman: a figure in Wengenholt myth.

Sendhold: A village or town in the County of Wengenholt, united in the renewed Oath League of Wengenholt (1027 FB); a sendhold's leader is called a sendholder.

About 20 percent of the population of Kosh is dwarves, most of whom live in the independent mountain kingdom of Koshim, home of several thousand inhabitants led by the Mountain King, Gilemon, Son of Gillim. Dwarves are a common sight in other places in Kosh, too, and humans and Angroshim coexist peacefully and profit from each others' skills and knowledge. Lineage (especially noble blood) is valued in Kosh, and simple burghers can usually recite their ancestral line up to 10 generations back. Presumption has no place here. For example, it is common for even a baron's daughter to undertake an apprenticeship in a local cheese dairy, or for the baron's son to assist a hunter in catching fine game.

Generally, the rural population of Kosh—including nobles—is rather poor. For this reason, Koshans complain very passionately—especially in the evening, over good mugs of beer—about their tough lives and the miserable fate the gods have in store for them.

Koshans take religion very seriously. They pray mainly to Ingerimm (or Angrosh, as their dwarven neighbors refer to the Lord of the Forge).

Benign Travia, the goddess of fidelity and hospitality, and Peraine, the gentle patroness of agriculture and healing, also enjoy great veneration in these mountain regions.

What Do the Heroes Know About Kosh?

Weave the preceding information into the game as general knowledge or hand it out to heroes with suitable backgrounds. Koshans know it, of course, and characters from neighboring regions should have access to at least the basic information. Use the hero's Area Knowledge as a guideline. When in doubt, roll some dice, especially if nobody in the party has connections to Kosh.

Check using *Religions (Ingerimm)* with a bonus of 2

1 QL - Koshans mainly worship Ingerimm, Travia, and Peraine.

2 QL - The coexistence of humans and dwarves has led to an intermingling of their religions. Many Koshans refer to Ingerimm by his dwarven name, Angrosh; the hill dwarves are aware of the humans' gods.

3 QL - Humans adopted their belief in Ingerimm from the dwarves of Kosh. To this day, the main temple of the god resides in Angbar, capital of the province, and both humans and dwarves see to its upkeep

Check using *Geography (Kosh)* with a bonus of 2

1 QL - Kosh is a province of the Middenrealm.

2 QL - The province lies west of Gareth, near the Kosh Mountains, for which it is named. There you can find the town of Ferdok on the Great River (home of the famous Ferdok Ale). The capital of Kosh is called Angbar.

3 QL - Kosh is nestled between Garetia, Almada, Northmarches, Andergast, and Griffonsford.

Check using *Geography (Mountain Kingdoms of the Dwarves)*

1 QL - Humans and dwarves coexist peacefully in Kosh.

2 QL - The hill dwarves live in their pleasant earthen homes along the valleys. Traditional dwarves live in their mines in the mountains.

3 QL - Dwarves make up about 20% of the population. The home of the hill dwarves is called the Hill Lands. Their Chief Judge, Nirwulf son of Negrimon, is a counselor to the lord of Kosh. The mountain king, Gilemon son of Gillim, rules the forge dwarf kingdom of Koshim, which is independent of the Middenrealm.

Check using *Etiquette (Gossip)* with a bonus of 2

1 QL - Kosh is a principality of the Middenrealm. Its lord rules it on behalf of the Empress.

2 QL - The Lord of Kosh is named Blasius of Boarstem. He is jovial and popular with his subjects. The realm's Counts owe fealty to him.

3 QL - The County of Wengenholt is ruled by Count Jallik of Wengenholt. It is organized into 40 smaller sendholds that have made pledges of mutual assistance.

CHAPTER 1: A MAID IN DANGER

“Some time ago, on my way through the woods, I had to fight a gruesome beast. I had been warned in the tavern just the night before. “There are many bears in the forest,” they said, “each larger and more brutal than the last.” Well, I thought, this doesn’t scare me! Those who play their part in war and courtly love and live a virtuous life have nothing to fear from a bear. Merrily I set off for the town of Ferdok.

I had ridden through woods and fields for only two miles before my loyal steed, Praiosmin, was spooked on the road. In the dim light that filtered through the treetops, I could see a threatening shape looming above me. I can still hear that beast’s furious roars. Quickly I jumped off Praiosmin, drew my trusty sword, and bravely entered combat. I gave the bear worse than I got, and me with just one eye!

After silencing his final roar with the tip of my sword, I took his pelt. Now his head hangs here in my trophy hall, and every day I rejoice in my triumph over the giant black bear from Kosh!”

– Sir Kunibald of Whitemoor, Knight, 1025 after the Fall of Bosparan

In Chapter 1, the heroes must rescue a shepherdess named Irmi from a wild bear and then round up her scattered sheep. In gratitude, she invites the heroes to her home village, Oldenbridge, nearby. The group is greeted with hospitality. A party is held in their honor in the Grain Room Tavern. You must decide why the heroes are traveling through Kosh. Perhaps they are on their way to Ridgerock, known for its sulfur springs and alchemical products, or maybe they just came from the famous Angbar Market, which takes place in the month of Ingerimm. It’s important that they aren’t in too much of a hurry, so that they can enjoy the atmosphere of the mountain village.





Attack of the Bear

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You are making your way through picturesque Kosh, past lush meadows with contently grazing cows, and along narrow mountain paths lined with many herbs. You haven't seen other travelers for quite a while. Your only companions are a multitude of annoying gnats, which seem to prefer you over the local hairy mountain cows.

The warming light of Praios' disc pierces the lush trees of the forest as you step out into a glade. You catch a whiff of the smell of blueberries.

- But something is disturbing the peaceful atmosphere—what is it you've been hearing? A bleating sheep dashes past you, followed by another. Do you hear a bird screeching? No, it is someone screaming for her life, and now you see the unlucky person. A young maiden stumbles down the slope, a small lamb pressed to her bosom. Blood stains her rough linen dress dark in places. Behind her, you see a giant bear burst out of the forest. Its loud roar echoes from the mountainsides.

Bear

Size 6 to 8 feet long; 5 feet at the shoulder

Weight: 220 to 300 pounds

COU 14 **SGC** 12 (a) **INT** 12 **CHA** 12

DEX 11 **AGI** 11 **CON** 20 **STR** 21 **LP** 60* **INI** 13+1D6 **DO** 6* **PRO** 1 **SPI** 0 **TOU** 5 **MOV** 10

Paws: AT 13* **DP** 1D6+6* **RE** medium

Bite: AT 11* **DP** 2D6+2* **RE** short

Actions: 2

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I (Bite, Paws), Grapple, Takedown (Paws)

Skills: Body Control 4, Climbing 7, Feat of Strength 12, Intimidation 2, Perception 10, Self-Control 12, Stealth 2, Willpower 4

Number: 1

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 100 rations (meat), pelt (30 silverthalers), trophy (teeth and claws, 5 silverthalers, pelt, 30 silverthalers)

Combat behavior: When provoked or attacked, the bear stands on its hind legs and swipes with its claws. It tries to grab enemies and bite them.

Escape: Loss of 50% LP, except when in *frenzy* (see below), in which case the bear fights to the death.

Animal Lore

- ◆ **QL 1:** Bears can run faster than humans.
- ◆ **QL 2:** Bears are curious and have a good sense of smell. They can detect food and prey from afar. You can avoid trouble with bears by staying downwind of them.
- ◆ **QL 3+:** Bears can *frenzy* when injured or if their cubs are in danger.

Special Rules

- *) **Frenzy:** When a bear suffers a level of *Pain*, or when its cubs are threatened, it must make a *Willpower* check. If it fails, it gains the state of *frenzy*. Starting with the next combat round, it receives a bonus of 4 to close combat attacks and deals +2 DP, but it cannot defend. *Frenzy* lasts for 2D20 combat rounds. The bear can end its *frenzy* early if it succeeds at a *Willpower* check (once per combat). After the *frenzy* is over, the bear suffers two levels of the condition *Stupor*.

Pain +1 at: 45 LP, 30 LP, 15 LP, and 5 LP and less.



◆ This is a good time for a *Perception (Notice)* check, with a bonus of 4. The hero with the best skill can make the check for the group, or each hero can attempt it separately.

To save the shepherdess' life, the heroes must act fast. Of course they can try to defeat the bear with weapons alone, but they can also try magic (a good choice would be the witch's spell *Placidity*).

After they deal with the bear, the heroes must tend to the young shepherdess, Irmi, who is injured badly. The black bear opened a gaping wound with a swipe of its claws. The heroes need to staunch the bleeding, as Irmi is already quite pale (she has only 12 of her 28 LP left and is suffering from *Pain II*).

With a successful check using *Treat Wounds*, Irmi recovers sufficiently to make her way back to the village, and she can ignore one level of *Pain* per QL until her next *Regeneration Phase*. This treatment takes 15 minutes, and bandages are necessary. Torn clothes can substitute for bandages, but the check suffers a penalty of 2. The spell *Balsam* or a *Blessing of Healing* can help Irmi, too. Depending on the treatment, the shepherdess might continue to suffer intense pain. Treatment with magic or liturgical chants leaves her feeling much better, but she remains shaky and in shock. However, her sheep dispersed into the forest or across the meadows to escape the bear, and they must be rounded up again.

Bringing the Sheep Home

Hopefully the heroes offer to help poor Irmi gather her sheep, like heroes are supposed to (at nighttime, sheep are defenseless against hungry wolves and bears, and the death of so many sheep would be a tremendous loss for Irmi's family and the village). The flock consists of 18 animals that are scattered everywhere. To catch the sheep, the heroes must make skill checks using *Body Control (Running)* or *Animal Lore (Domesticated Animals)*. They must accumulate 1 QL per sheep to bring them safely back to the shepherdess, but they must hurry, for dusk is setting in. In 50 minutes, it will be too dark to search for the animals, though the heroes will still be able to get to Oldenbridge if Irmi leads them there. Even if Irmi was healed with magic or divine help, she cannot round up the sheep herself, but she can assist, using *Animal Lore* (11/11/10) with a SR of 7.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Eyes filled with gratitude, the young woman looks up at you. She has lost a lot of blood, but she will live. "I thank you all, noble strangers! Saving a simple shepherdess like me from a bloodthirsty bear is a true heroic deed.

I thought I was dead when the bear's paw smashed down on me. If you hadn't arrived... I do not want to think what would have happened. But alas, my sheep have all run away, and I don't even know if the bear has killed any of them. What can I do? I cannot return to the village and leave them unattended..."

The shepherdess looks around, sadly. You can see sheep scattered around the meadow, munching on the lush grass. The tiny lamb that Irmi saved now stands nearby, as does its anxious-looking mother. "Oh, Irmi, how unlucky you are," she says to herself. "It will be the middle of the night before you can gather up the flock."



If the heroes do not manage to catch all the sheep within 50 minutes, there is little hope that the remaining animals can survive the night—a search the next morning turns up only a scared lamb that hid in a mountain cave and survived because it fell into a crevice that was too small for predators. All that remains of the other animals are tufts of wool and some drops of blood on the grass. The heroes' help is needed—every sheep counts!

How to Make a Cumulative Check

Cumulative checks represent actions that take longer to perform or perhaps require more than one participant (what we call a group check). All participants in a cumulative check combine the QL for their skill checks, and continue making checks until they reach a target QL set by the GM, or else until the allotted time runs out. Make skill checks for cumulative checks the usual way—by rolling 3D20 against the appropriate attributes. For more information on cumulative checks, see **Core Rules**, page 26. For the chase, make a check every 5 minutes.

In this case, the check does not end when the group accumulates 10 QL. Instead, it ends when all of the sheep are safe. If you do not want to play out the scene in detail, have the players roll until their total reaches QL 10. Note: with a total QL of 6 they can still save enough sheep to sustain the flock.



Make the pursuit of the terrified sheep as exciting for the heroes as you can. Maybe the group must follow sheep into a thorn thicket or balance on fallen tree trunks to cross narrow ice crevices. If desired, add extra trouble in the form of a curious mountain lion.

The heroes should have fun chasing these cute balls of wool, but you should also take this opportunity to illustrate the dangers and pitfalls of the mountain landscape. Nobody should be seriously hurt—enough blood has been shed today. For these obstacles, ask for additional skill checks with appropriate skills like *Body Control* or *Climbing*.



If the heroes have too much trouble catching the sheep, reduce the number of animals. This way, the heroes don't need as many QL to gather them all up. Another option is to reduce the severity of Irmi's injuries so that she can help with the chase.



If the heroes easily catch one sheep after the other, introduce a hungry wolf pack to make their work more difficult. For stats for wolves, see page 34.

Oldenbridge at Night

Once the heroes have gathered the flock, Irmi returns to her home village of Oldenbridge with renewed spirit but still visibly weakened. Don't introduce any more events at this point, as everybody has earned a break. Describe a picturesque walk through the valley, being sure to mention how the setting sun bathes the peaks in warm light, and how the soft call of an owl adds to the peaceful mood at dusk in the Kosh Mountains.



After a few miles of walking along the river, the heroes reach the peaceful village of Oldenbridge. The shepherdess takes her sheep to the nearby stables and makes sure that they are tended for the night before leading the heroes to the village tavern, the Grain Room. Innkeeper Gunelde Speltgrain serves strong stew, spicy cheese, and fine ale, and likes to chat with customers.

Before jumping straight to the exuberant celebration in the tavern, study the following descriptions of buildings and meeting places in Oldenbridge to get a good feel for life in this quiet mountain community. For details on the village's key inhabitants, see *Village Structure*, below. The adventure continues in *A Cheer for the Heroes!* on page 17.

A numbered map of the village of Oldenbridge appears at the beginning of this book. You can give your players a copy of this map to help them understand the layout of the village. You can download a copy at www.ulisses-us.com.



Village Structure

The traditional village of Oldenbridge is split by a small mountain stream called *Baumel*. A narrow, wooden bridge crosses the stream and connects the village's two halves—**Oldenbridge**, site of the original settlement, and **Overbridge**, the newer half of town. Villagers like to refer to anyone who lives across the bridge as “those on the other side,” even though one can easily jump over the stream in some places. The village **mill (1)**, known as the Maahlzniger, sits on the shore in Oldenbridge. Further on is the **shrine of Praios (5)**, which is tended by a Blessed One named Praionde. Next to it is a shelter that is sometimes used for public gatherings. The **Boron yard (6)**, located a short distance from the village, contains the bones of Oldenbridgers who lived in less eventful times.

Chickens cluck and scratch around some houses at the edge of town, and meadows for sheep and goats stretch away up the slope. Closer to town, several orchards spread out in ordered rows.

If you cross to Overbridge, you reach a small village square bordered by the **Grain Room Tavern (2)** (Q3/P3/B10), the **grocer's (4)**, and Robosh's **smithy (3)**.

This area includes a few huts, among which some children play happily, as well as stables owned by Irmi and her family. 120 people live in the village at present. They work hard during the day, but in the evening they like to gather in the tavern, the temple, or the village square to gossip in the light of a crackling fire. The forest nearby is the site of the **home of the elf** Eilidiel and the **hunting lodge** of Jadwine Harefright.

The Grain Room Tavern (2)

This tavern, owned by *Gunelde Speltgrain* (52, stout optimist, extremely curious, knows everybody and everything in the village; for a full description, see page 16) is the center of village life. Many villagers eat their grain soup here in the morning before starting the day's work. At noon, they return for a warming stew, and in the evening, they enjoy hearty servings of game and mugs of cool ale. The upper floor of this beautiful, half-timbered house sports a balcony decorated with flowers. Guests of the inn find it relaxing. Travelers stay on the upper floor in either a dormitory, which has six simple but comfortable straw beds, or in one of two double rooms, which have sturdy beds (the industrious innkeeper likes to rent these as single rooms—for the same price, of course).

The innkeeper's room is on the ground floor next to the kitchen, behind the Common Room. The Common Room is heated by an old tiled stove Gunelde uses to bake bread or cakes to serve to guests. People sit together at massive, oaken tables to tell stories and laugh. The waitress, *Ulmia* (23, long blond hair, pouty lips), moves with surprising grace and agility through the rows of tables despite the weight of the many tankards she carries, and she has several suitors among the regulars of the *Grain Room*.

• Gunelde always keeps this room locked (for good reason!), because this is where she keeps her supply of rat fungus, her detailed ritual plans, and her diary revealing her Nameless machinations. The heroes should find this room only at the end of the adventure, so as not to reveal the secret of Oldenbridge too soon.

Gunelde is always found standing behind the bar drawing fresh Bridge Brew, a bright, wheat beer. Her cook, *Franka daughter of Jandrasha* (88, hill dwarf, large, motherly) prepares the food together with the innkeeper. She happily adds a big side of meat (usually rabbit) to the stew if you tip her a few halers.

Looking for the Evildoer

When describing the innkeeper Gunelde to the players for the first time, mention that she wears a bandage on her hand. Don't draw too much attention to it, but make sure the heroes notice it. You could even show them the image of Gunelde on page 16. These bandages, or rather what hides beneath, are a clue and a sign of the innkeeper's dark machinations—she cut off her little finger as a sacrifice to the Nameless One, but claims it was a “kitchen accident.” Of course the heroes cannot yet know what this injury really means, but the realization will be all the greater when they later discover what is really happening in Oldenbridge.



Food & Drink

Item	Price
Wheat Soup	2 kreutzers
Vegetable Stew	3 halers
Chasseur Sausage	1 haler
Baumelvalley Cheese	1 haler
Fresh Rye Bread	5 halers
Stew with Meat	1 silverthaler
Venison on Vegetables	6 silverthalers
Roast Rabbit with Dumpling	3 silverthalers
Partridge	4 silverthalers
Buttermilk	8 kreutzers
Bridge Brew	12 kreutzers
Angbar Dwarf Bock	2 halers
Fruit Liqueur	2 halers
Fruit Schnapps	3 halers
Kosh Water*	4 halers
Buying a Round	1 haler per person

Accommodation (per person)

in the Dormitory	4 halers
in the Double Room	5 silverthalers

*Despite its harmless-sounding name, Kosh Water is actually a strong schnapps.

Robosh's Smithy (3)

Rhythmical hammering can be heard across the village square. Smoke rises from the forge of this small smithy run by the grumpy hill dwarf *Robosh son of Barumox* (128, reddish brown beard, thick neck, muscular, very tired at the moment; for a full description, see page 28).

The dwarven smith is a versatile master of his craft. He knows how to make and repair weapons, hinges, horseshoes, and agricultural equipment. Sometimes he must try his hand with even finer smith work, because there is nobody else in Oldenbridge who can do it. Like all important buildings, the smithy is located on the big village square in Overbridge. The smithy itself takes up a majority of the building. Robosh needs little space for himself. During the day, he spends most of his time smithing with anvil and fire. He earns a living, but also finds true fulfillment. The smithy's equipment is simple but of high quality. A large furnace produces the heat required to melt metals. The building has no windows other than some air vents. A large, wooden double door serves as a portal to the outside world. During the day, it is always open, but if the smoke gets to be too much for Robosh's eyes, he simply opens the back door, which is normally kept barred.

Prices & Services

Item	Price
Shoe a horse	5 halers per hoof
Plowshare	15 silverthalers
Pitchfork	10 silverthalers
Lumberjack ax	80 silverthalers
Arrowhead	3 halers
Repair a weapon	10% of the weapon cost
◦ Create a weapon*	See price list on page 366 of the Core Rules

Ettel's Grocery (4)

The small shop of the grocer *Ettel Algerein* (47, always lifting his head, gaunt, greedy; for a full description, see page 55) takes up one half of an attractive wooden house.

Ettel has his salesroom in the front of the building.

The room's many shelves are full of all the items that Oldenbridgers might need one day.

The store stocks few consumables besides alcohol. Ettel mainly sells necessities for everyday use, such as one would find on the panniers of a clobberbold.

* Such a weapon is a great bargain for the heroes. Depending on the adventure's outcome, Robosh might even owe them his soul. He is especially skilled at crafting axes and swords, which he diligently covers with dwarvish runes.

Some shelves hold files, hairpins, items for everyday hygiene, bars of soap, cheap perfume, weapon cleaning kits, spare parts for agricultural tools, and some bijoux such as amulets or music boxes imported from the Horasian Empire. Other items include herbs, ointments, and tinctures for treating wounds and minor ailments.

In addition to exceedingly expensive Valposella, customers can choose from an extensive selection of local spirits and liquors, especially the strongest beer in Aventuria, the Angbar Dwarf Bock, the always popular Kosh Water (spicy schnapps), and many other fruit liqueurs and schnapps. Grocer Algerein lives with his perky wife, *Winelda* (42, smells of booze, crude, practical) and his cute daughter, *Ulmia* (the waitress in the *Grain Room*) in the back room of the house. While Ulmia is flirting with the customers in the tavern, the old couple tends to the shop and sells as many things as possible to the humans and dwarves of the village.

Chosen Goods

Item	Price
Hairpins (10)	2 silverthalers
Needle and Thread	5 silverthalers
Sowing thread	5 halers
Amulet (silver)	3 silverthalers
Rabbit fur cap	6 silverthalers
Curd soap	15 halers
Violet soap	2 silverthalers
Perfume	130 silverthalers
Music box	50 ducats
Angbar Dwarf Bock (keg of 1 urn [2 gallons])	5 silverthalers
Kosh Water (bottle of 1 mass [2 pints])	13 silverthalers
Fruit liqueur (bottle of 1 mass)	7 silverthalers
Fruit Schnapps (bottle of 1 mass)	10 silverthalers
Valposella (bottle of 1 mass)	5 ducats
Ointment	4 silverthalers
Bandages	14 silverthalers
Corn ointment	4 silverthalers

Ettel's Ointment

This ointment, made from wirsel leaf, restores 1 LP per use during the next Regeneration Phase (maximum three uses per Regeneration Phase). For more information, see page 346 in the **Core Rules**. Bandages are necessary to treat wounds and can be used at once if none were available when Irmi was found.

The Shrine of Praios (5)

The shrine borders a small, stone-paved public square with a large, covered, wooden shelter with some benches and a massive wooden table. The village community gathers here to listen to sermons or judgments from the Blessed One of Praios. The shrine itself consists of a solid, rather roomy chapel of the god Praios. Believers are greeted by a hand-crafted wooden statue of the god edged by beautiful rays of sunlight and affixed above the arched entryway to the shrine. The short cloister is lined with paintings of some important saints of Praios, to set the right mood for pilgrims. The altar room is always bathed in light, and its large, lead glass windows reveal richly decorated, brightly colored ornaments. Heavy, wooden benches invite believers to sit in silent contemplation. The altar itself is made from artfully-carved Kosh root wood, and bears an impressive griffon statue. The chapel's small side room holds a place of worship for the god Ingerimm, who is also important to the Koshans. A metal bowl holds incense that Praionde the Blessed One (38, bowl-cut hair, practical, deeply religious; for full description, see page 25) uses in ceremonies to bring Praios' sanctity to her community. Some candles always remain lit on the altar. Praionde's small living quarters, which include an office and sleeping room, are set off the chapel. Here she keeps the relics (locked in the tithe chest) as well as the few books owned by the shrine.

The Boron Yard (6)

The village's cemetery has Boron wheels for villagers who died here and also for some adventurers who, while traveling, lost their lives to the region's hostile environment (an avalanche that occurred some years ago). The heroes can find graves here that are several hundred years old. Wibald Pickax (54, gray curly hair, bulb nose, has a perpetual cold) is the gardener who lovingly tends the Boron yard. The graves are lined with strong, old spruces, and gentians and cornflowers bloom along the paths. On the south side of the cemetery is the morgue, which is actually little more than a preparation room that doubles as Wibald's sleeping chamber (he doesn't simply tend to his green darlings, he also prepares the dead for burial).



Hunting Lodge (off the map)

Outside the district of Overbridge and hidden in the forest of fir trees lies the lodge of Jadwine the huntress (mid-twenties, solitary, uses hunting language, always raises one eyebrow; for a full description, see page 41). She is rarely home—the passionate huntress is often out lurking somewhere in the forest. Her small house, with its well-tended herb garden, is made from solid stone and has a nice roof of straw and timber.

A fire burns in the fireplace in the living room, which also serves as the lodge's kitchen. Skinned hares and partridges hang from the ceiling, being smoked above the fire. A large kettle, in which Jadwine cooks her stews, soups, and herbal tinctures, stands next to the fireplace. The huntress keeps all her work tools on a rough-hewn shelf. In addition to game in varying stages of preparation, the shelf holds healing herbs laid out to dry, beautiful pelts, and cured leathers. Some worn-out books on the subject of plant lore sit in a chest. Jadwine's sleeping area, a simple mattress on the floor, is in the attic.

A gap in the timbers lets light and air into the attic. If the weather is bad, this window can be closed with a wooden hatch. For more information about the lodge and its inhabitant, see *Investigating Jadwine Hareflight* on page 40.

Gunelde Speltgrain

COU 13 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 13
DEX 12 AGI 10 CON 13 STR 12
LP 31 AE - KP 24 MOV 7
INI 12 SPI 2 TOU 1 DO 5
FtP 3 PRO/ENC 0/0

Social Status: Free

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge
(Oldenbridge), Tradition (Nameless),

Languages: Garethi III, Rogolan I

Literacy: Kusliker Signs

Advantages: Blessed One, Pragmatic,
Trustworthy

Disadvantages: Fat, Slow, Personality Flaw
(Arrogance), Principles I (Moral Code: Nameless)

Combat Techniques: Daggers 8 (9/4), Impact
Weapons 11 (12/7)

Club AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6+3 RE medium

Basilisk's Tongue: AT 9 PA 3 DP 1D6+2 RE short
Skills:

Physical: Body Control 6, Carousing 8, Climbing
4, Feat of Strength 5, Perception 6, Pickpocket
4, Self-Control 5, Stealth 7

Social: Empathy 10, Etiquette 3, Fast-Talk 12,
Intimidation 5, Persuasion 10, Seduction
5, Willpower 10

Nature: Ropes 4

Knowledge: Gambling 8, Magical Lore 4, Myths &
Legends 6, Religions 7

Craft: Artistic Ability 5, Commerce 5, Pick Locks
8, Prepare Food 10

Liturgical Chants: Call the Horde of the Rat
Child 7, Nameless Doubt 7, Nameless Oblivion
5, Pervasive Sphere Song of the One 5

Equipment: Tavern, Cultist robes, Basilisk's
tongue dagger, Club, Psychostabilis amulet

Combat Behavior: Uses the blessings of her
god to protect her cult, then fights like a
Fury (though without much skill).

Escape: If she sees no chance to win, she flees
as quickly as she can. When cornered, she
fights to the death.

Pain +1 at: 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, 5 LP and less.



1 Gunelde Speltgrain, Innkeeper

Short Description: Experienced innkeeper and cultist; 52; stout; cheerful soul; has the curiosity of an inquisitor; knows everybody and everything in the village; outwardly the good soul of the village; curious and well-informed; secretly the leader of a cult of the Nameless One.

Motivation: Curious; craves influence and power over others—as leader of the Nameless cult, she can make this fantasy become reality.

Agenda: Serve her god, strengthen his power, and play an important role in his new world order. She does not want to cause immediate harm to people from the village, but her religious fanaticism makes her accept it when necessary.

Function: friendly host; trustworthy; well-informed; heart of the community; founder of the Nameless cult and the heroes' principle antagonist.

Background: Gunelde inherited the tavern from her father and has been the heart of the community for over 20 years. She never started her own family. She lives for her work and the village's well-being. Much gossip is told in her tavern, so she probably knows more about the villagers than they suspect. She was enlightened by the Nameless One only a short while and now serves as his Blessed One and founder of a secret cult.



Home of the Elf (off the map)

In a small clearing in the dense forest, there lives the reclusive glade elf Eilidiel. He only rarely visits Oldenbridge. He has created a roofed shelter in the treetops and lives in harmony with nature, protected by the forest. For more information about Eilidiel, see the optional event *It Was the Elf!* on page 31.

Presentation in the Game: friendly, practical, and very determined. Asks many questions. Information is important to Gunelde, because she like to size people up. When she speaks, she has a somewhat rough accent (note that this is not well represented in the “read aloud” texts). If you like, give her language its own feel and make it unique. However, never use this accent when she recites liturgies.

Special: Possesses the potential Dark Eye (see page 58), which allows her to see into the future, see through walls, and even to find gold.

Fate: Gunelde does not appear in future official Aventuria products. Her fate lies in the hands of the heroes and the GM.

“Greetings of Travia! What can I bring you good people today? A nice ale?”

“Praise the Golden One. HIS strength we praise. HIS message tells about the glory of his return, when he will walk on Dere to fulfill his heritage.”

Gunelde is a Blessed One of the Nameless One and can call upon dark miracles. For a list of the liturgical chants she knows, see the Appendix, on page 61.



A Cheer for the Heroes!

After all the trouble of this exhausting day, the heroes have earned themselves a respite. Too bad that everybody in Oldenbridge wants to hear the tale of how they saved Irmi from the ferocious bear’s terrifying claws. People listen with rapt attention and slap the heroes on the shoulder when it ends. Even Praionde, the Blessed One of Praios, attends the celebration. She seems fun-loving and close to the people. There is true cause for celebration in the village tonight—not only have the heroes saved a fair maiden and a large flock of sheep, but the village has made new friends from far away who certainly must have seen half of Aventuria.

Here in the mountains, there isn’t much new to see. Villagers rarely go forth into the world, and often remain gone for several years when they do, so there is great demand for tales of heroic adventure. Between full tankards of cool beer and spoonfuls of steaming soup, the Oldenbridgers in turn reveal details about their lives and their hard work in the fields.



This scene presents the inhabitants of Oldenbridge to the heroes and lets them tell their stories. Be sure to include all the heroes in the celebration, and use the hints for presenting important NPCs—make each one special via language, expression, and gestures.

You can mention that there have been recent thefts, but the heroes should not suspect what is happening in the village right away. Perhaps the grocer simply lost his purse and now must take responsibility for his carelessness? The farmer has a reputation for being forgetful—maybe she put moved the family heirloom while tidying up and just forgot where she put it.

Important clue: Some of the villagers belong to the secret cult of the Nameless One. This can be an important consideration when presenting them in the game. For more information about the cultists, see page 52.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The stout innkeeper smiles and asks, “What would you like?” as she places a foaming mug of beer in front of each of you.

“I know,” she says, “I have just the thing. A nice roast. You’ll like it.” She winks at you as she turns around and heads for the kitchen. You are surrounded by a crowd of Oldenbridgers who want to hear all about your heroic deeds. People clap you on the shoulder respectfully and raise their mugs in agreement. One person plays a tune on a squeezebag while another assembles some bagpipes, preparing to entertain you with the folk instrument’s unique sounds. Before you know what is happening, you are paraded on heavy chairs all through the tavern, and people praise you in song. A muscular dwarf, the village’s smith, tells you that a shepherd was attacked by a bear some months ago. He wasn’t as lucky as Irmi—his bones are buried in the Boron yard outside the village. You quickly realize that bears are terrible dangers to the villagers. Not everyone in Aventuria is as experienced at fighting as you, and you thank the gods that you were in the right place at the right time.



The villagers listen to the heroes’ stories with glee, and then start telling their own stories. They speak of figures from Kosh legend, customs in the mountains, and the peaceful coexistence with their dwarven neighbors out here in the midst of nature. Of course, the celebration ends eventually. Gunelde refuses the heroes’ money and offers to let them stay the night for free.

A Selection of Koshan Names

If you need to invent villagers on the fly, use the following suggestions for typical names.

- ◆ **Female:** Algarte, Angunde, Balbine, Birsell, Elida, Firuna, Iralda, Jette, Lorine, Madane, Maline, Mechtessa, Morena, Neralda, Niam, Padora, Rena, Selissa, Travine, Vana
- ◆ **Male:** Alerich, Angwart, Balinor, Bolzer, Eberhalm, Eulrich, Garubald, Gobrom, Grambold, Grantel, Helkor, Knurrbold, Leumar, Metzel, Pergrin, Polter, Rumpel, Tarosch, Tradan, Wilbur

Last names usually consist of two words. Combine any *beginning* word with any *ending* from the following lists, in any manner you choose. Note that you may also reverse this method and place an *ending* word before a *beginning* word to create a legitimate name.
Beginning: Appel, Bag, Bock, Bos(en), Butter, Halm, Hill, Kauz(en), Lov(en), Moor, Oak(en), Pflog, Pot, Sack, Sour, Pig, Sweet(en), Tree, Turnip, Wacker
Ending: -anger, -bold, -brodt, -bush, -erich, -inger, -klos, -ler, -saum, -stone, or similar strange syllables.
Examples: Knurrbold Bosenbush (m), Algarte Butterklos (f)

She even insists on preparing a tub of hot water for the next morning, so that the heroes do not have to bathe in the icy, crystal-clear mountain stream.

The celebration lasts until the wee hours of the morning. Whenever the heroes try to go up to their rooms, somebody pays for another round of beer. After downing their second tankard of Bridge Brew at the latest, the heroes must make a check using *Carousing (Avoid Drug Intoxication)*. The first check receives a bonus of 5. Each subsequent check, made after drinking each tankard, receives a cumulative penalty of -2. For each failed check, the drinker suffers a level of *Stupor*. At level IV, the drinker is finally defeated and falls asleep, head on the table.



The Villagers' Questions

It is rare that so many strangers come to the village, and all the Oldenbridgers in the tavern are curious about the exciting things they have to tell. Pose these villagers' questions to the heroes, if needed, to stimulate conversation.

- ◆ "Where do you all come from?"
- ◆ "How did you chase away the bear? Tell us everything."
- ◆ "Have you been to Angbar, my lord/lady? I have heard it is beautiful there!/I have heard it is ghastly there!"
- ◆ "Is the city of Gareth really as big as all of Kosh?"
- ◆ "Have you ever seen the Empress?"
- ◆ "What do you drink where you come from? Do you have such fine fruit schnapps, too?"
- ◆ "Is there really a land of sand in the south?"
- ◆ "That's a large weapon! Do you use it often, Sir Knight/Lady Knight?"

Facts & Rumors

Weave the following information into the heroes' conversations with the villagers. True statements are marked with a +, false statements with a -.

- ◆ "Gunelde is late with her tithe this year. Hasn't wrapped up the paperwork. But she has been very busy recently." (+)
- ◆ "The waitress Ulmia is really stacked, harharhar." (+)
- ◆ "Bridge Brew is the best beer in all of Kosh!" (Who knows?)
- ◆ "The grocer, Ettel Algerein, sells everything you might need." (depends)
- ◆ "Jadwine the huntress rarely comes into town, but she's the reason that we have meat in the stew." (+)
- ◆ "Ettel Algerein says he is missing his purse. (+) Bah, he probably just doesn't want to pay his bill." (-)
- ◆ "Ettel Algerein is cheap (+). He doesn't care that his wife is drunk all the time." (maybe)
- ◆ "Algerein's wife said that she has seen a dragon. (+) That's probably the booze speaking. We don't have anything like that around here." (-)
- ◆ "Her Grace Praionde has twisted her ankle and couldn't come to the Oath Binding Day. (+) That's why we're so late with our tithe this year." (+)
- ◆ "Everybody knows Gunelde the innkeeper!" (+)
- ◆ "Irmi is secretly in love with Farmer Ange's oldest son." (-)
- ◆ "Farmer Ange's oldest son is secretly in love with Irmi." (+)

- ❖ *"I have to go home now. Have to prepare the tithe for tomorrow."* (+)
- ❖ *"The stew in the Grain Room has been especially good recently. Enjoy!"* (+)
- ❖ *"I wouldn't take anything to Robosh the smith if I were you. His work has been bad recently."* (+)



Conclusion

By the end of this chapter, the heroes should have discovered the following information:

- ❖ Life in the Kosh Mountains is hard and has many dangers you must be prepared for—otherwise you might pay with your life.
- ❖ Oldenbridge is a cozy hamlet on the mountain stream Baumel.
- ❖ It's a short time before the Nameless Days. The villagers strongly believe in the power of the Year's End Celebration and the candle walks (carrying Praios' light to every house).
- ❖ People in Kosh like their food hearty—everybody likes a good stew and cool beer, even more so when listening to tales of adventure.
- ❖ Some villagers are late with their tithe this year. Luckily, that isn't much of a problem because the Blessed One, Praionde, hurt her foot and could not arrange for the counting of the tithe on time.
- ❖ It is peaceful in Oldenbridge, but in the last few weeks, some precious items (mainly gold) have disappeared.
- ❖ Gunelde Speltgrain is the heart of the community. Together with Praionde, she is the authority in Oldenbridge.

Everything is Different

As GM, you can introduce the adventure in a completely different way. You do not have to use the attack on Irmi and the celebration. The heroes might just be traveling through. The only important thing is that the heroes arrive in Oldenbridge, get to know some villagers, and are present for the taking of the tithe the next day. This way, they can be asked to investigate the theft of the tithe chest. To place the village of Oldenbridge somewhere else in Aventuria, just change the appropriate details of geography, nationality, and so on.



About Myth and Customs in Kosh

This section presents some folk stories and special customs of the region, for you to embellish or otherwise use as you see fit for enhancing the heroes' stay in the town of Oldenbridge. Feel free to repeat yourself at times, because the villagers love to tell stories.

The Ruckusman

The Ruckusman is a myth about a giant creature known to inhabit the region of Wengenhalm. In the past, kobolds annoyed him with their spells so much that he drank a whole pond and walked into the forest to find the small fiends, his belly gurgling with water. When he arrived, he emptied his bladder on the kobolds' magic tree, and they all drowned. If you believe the legends, the Ruckusman is the reason that kobolds are exceedingly rare in Kosh. This saga is told mostly after a few pints of beer have been downed, and it is always accompanied by laughter and dirty jokes.

Year's End Day

Around the end of the last moon of Rahja, Koshans celebrate to build up their courage during the Nameless Days that follow, to drive away evil spirits. During a festive service, countless candles are lit and carried everywhere in the village, accompanied by cheerful singing, so that Praios' light can pierce the darkness. This adventure occurs a few days before Year's End Day in Oldenbridge. The villagers invite the heroes to help celebrate this quaint custom, to protect them from Nameless evil.

The Alagrimm

For centuries, the magnificent firebird Alagrimm was a symbol of the glorious victory of the dwarves, who had banished the pawn of the divine dragon deep beneath their mountain kingdom, Koshim. But a few years ago (1027 FB), the creature escaped. In a destructive raid, it took revenge for its captivity, but it was defeated during the Battle of Angbar. Even though Koshans and dwarves fought against the danger together, many souls passed over the Nethersea. Many Koshans knew people who lost their lives during the battle. For that reason, stories about the Alagrimm are always tinged with sadness but they also convey a burning pride in the heroic victory over the beast.

Gentle Lena

A wanderer facing danger in the Kosh Mountains need only ask Gentle Lena for help. The Koshans honor this figure of legend with small figurines in the corners of their houses. When Koshans travel, people offer wishes that Gentle Lena might stay by their side. The legend says that Gentle Lena is the ghost of a young woman who, sadly, fell into a crevice and died hundreds of years ago on the way to her binding to Travia. Since that day, she searches for her beloved in the woods. She helps those in need because she does not want any more people to suffer the same sad fate.

Games, Challenges, and Entertainment

Koshans love to celebrate and revel. They love playful contests in which the winner gets free beer. It is all about the fun in being together. Popular games, both in the tavern and at home, include keg lifting, boulder tossing, and eating contests in which the participants sometimes eat up to 40 sausages.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The Two Brothers

In Twarvenhold, there lived a man and his two sons. He favored the older son, so the younger son had to go out into the forest to gather wood. There he found a gate in the rock, deep in a valley, encrusted with gold and jewels. Next to this gate, there was a door made of simple planks. The young man entered through the plain door because he was no lord. Behind the door he found a room full of cobwebs and dust. He cleaned the room, swept away the dust, and washed the curtains. When he was done, a dwarf appeared, with big nose and long beard. Because the boy was so good and hardworking, the dwarf gave him a shirt of gold and brocade that shone and glittered like the Angbar Lake. So he ran back home. When his brother heard the story, he too went into the forest because he envied his brother's fine shirt. He found the door and the gate, and because he deemed himself fine and noble, he opened the door. Behind it, he found a palace with a splendid table. Friendly dwarves appeared and served him food the likes of which even the dear Empress has never seen. After he had eaten, another dwarf appeared, with a big nose and long beard. And because the boy had been lazy and arrogant, the dwarf scolded him, pulled his hair, and beat him terribly. And so he ran back home, beaten black and blue. Moral: If you are good and hard-working, you will be rewarded in the end. If you are lazy and arrogant, the end will be full of pain.

The Story of the Angry Dwarf

There once was a dwarf called Xolodosh. He was not a good man. He was angry, and moody, and had no friends. And because he had no friends, and because nobody wanted to drink with him, he grew angrier and moodier.

One day while he broke stone, deep in the mine, a mouse appeared and pulled on his beard. The dwarf turned red with anger and shouted and stomped so much that the whole mountain shook. When he had calmed down, there came a spider. It climbed down on the dwarf and pulled his beard. Xolodosh roared and flailed and screamed as only dwarves can, and the whole Kosh shook. Even the spruces on the slopes began to shake. Some hours later, the dwarf had calmed down. Then came a beetle, black and round, landed on Xolodosh's beard, and as if it was nothing, pulled it. The dwarf turned red like a coxcomb and puffed himself up until his cheeks were completely round. And then, with a loud bang, the dwarf burst, and the sound could be heard even in Gareth. For that reason, as all children learn, you should never lead dwarves by the beard.

CHAPTER 2: FIND THE THIEF!

“Take as a pleasing gift the tenth part of your believers’ earnings. Sacrifice this both as a donation and to acknowledge the divine aid HE grants. Give the gold with love and dignity and do not be envious about what you donate. You are a servant of your LORD on Dere and owe it to your god to deliver the tithe to the temple. It shall help the weak, help the Church grow, and honor Praios, to shine the light of truth and justice on all countries and continents. Do not judge the size of the tithe. Everyone in your flock gives what they can, that is how Praios the Just wants it to be. It is not his goal to bleed the peoples of the world, but to gain their honor and respect. Use the gold for things pleasing unto the LORD. It is blasphemy against HIS divine power to grow rich on the tithe. If you do, Praios will bring you to justice and punish you! Do not forget—there is nothing HIS holy eye does not see.”

— From the Manual dero Ministrorum Deum, 980 FB

The Next Morning

Some of the heroes might wake up with pounding heads after a night of drinking and prefer to lie down again. But Gunelde enters their room with a large bowl of hot water, so that they can freshen up and wash away the exertions of the last few days. The breakfast the innkeeper serves is impressive. Guests of honor should receive only the best, but Gunelde is busily at work. Today at noon, Praionde will conduct the taking of the tithe—much later in the year than usual. Praionde gathers all villagers in the chapel. The innkeeper must sort her money and calculate the correct tithe, the tenth part of her earnings, and bring a listing of all the money she took in.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You enter the warm common room somewhat sluggishly. A few villagers are sitting together, eating their porridge before a hard day of work begins. Robosh, the smith, mumbles something, and the others nod at you encouragingly and respectfully. You have shown that you can not only fight, but also drink. The big-boned innkeeper, Gunelde, directs you to a round table near the bar. You cannot believe your eyes—in addition to fresh rye bread, the table is set with a nice assortment of tasty things. You can see spicy mountain cheese, hard-cured boar sausage, gently smoked ham, and a sweet, warm porridge that smells delicious. The innkeeper winks at you and says, “You know, it is tithe-day today. We all must do our part for our lord Praios. I’m a little late this year, so I still have some work to do. Praionde asks us to arrive at noon. Would you like to join? We have a service then, and it’s important to honor the gods, I tell you!”



Our Travel Chest Has Disappeared!

After Gunelde first mentions the taking of the tithe, and perhaps as late as the gathering of the villagers the next day, the heroes might notice that some of their money has been stolen. Silver coins and halers remain, but any golden ducats are gone. It looks as if the thief thought himself too good for silver and copper. If the heroes do not carry ducats, a precious amulet, a ring, or some other gold item was taken instead (all that matters is that it was made of gold). The heroes may not even care too much about the loss, but this should change soon.

Even if the heroes are suspicious enough to post guards in the night, Gunelde has more than ample opportunity to steal from them. For purposes of this scenario, the theft need only affect one hero. If the heroes volunteer quickly to investigate the theft of the tithe chest, ignore this minor event. If any players mention that their characters are particularly careful to watch possessions, leave their money untouched. The players shouldn’t feel bullied.



If the group searches their own rooms, ask for a *Perception (Search)* check with a penalty of 1. If they succeed with 2 QL or more, they find a bone button with the head of a mountain goat carved into its face (value: 2 silverthalers).

Apart from that, they find only dust and some hair from previous guests, not the missing gold (to find even these items, they must search thoroughly because Gunelde takes tidiness very seriously).

The heroes must decide what to do. It might be best to wait for the taking of the tithe, because all possible suspects will be gathered in one place. They could certainly use the hours up until then to investigate, but be flexible—if the heroes want to search the kitchen, you should role play an amusing chat with the dwarven cook, Franka. The heroes could even watch the waitress, Ulmia, at work, but this does not reveal much (at least not about the theft). Franka and Ulmia know nothing about it, and Gunelde is an excellent liar. She pretends to be shocked about the theft and views it as a personal insult to her hospitality. She even suggests taking news of the crime to Praionde, the Blessed One of Praios.

Help, the Heroes Broke the Story!

An especially suspicious mage in the group might know spells like *Penetrizzel*, *Odem Arcanum* (which would reveal the magical powers of the meteoritic iron) or *Respondami*, and might come close to solving the mystery too early in the adventure. This is not necessarily a problem. Gunelde owns a very powerful *Psychostabilis* amulet (see page 59). The meteoritic iron is safely stashed in a small chest lined with Kosh basalt. *Penetrizzel* only shows that Gunelde's room is very tidy (she has hidden all compromising items in a small wardrobe that is impenetrable to that spell). Successful *Empathy* checks can lead to some doubts about several of Gunelde's statements. Her high *Fast Talk* skill should give the heroes some trouble here.

They should not hold more than a vague suspicion as long as they do not find any solid evidence of her Nameless deeds. Nevertheless, it is important not to frustrate the heroes! Even if they do not solve the mystery, their efforts should not be in vain. If they search their surroundings, have them find valuable healing herbs. If they question the grocer, place an item there that the heroes might need later in the adventure, such as fireproof gloves made of Iryan leather, a map of the surroundings, high quality oil for cleaning weapons, and so on. If the heroes come close to discovering important information that they should not yet have, simply interrupt them by announcing that the tithe chest has been stolen.

What If They Try to Break In Anyway?

As long as the heroes have no reason to believe that Gunelde is involved in dark machinations, they would have to be extremely curious and insolent to

break into her room. If they try nevertheless, you have several options:

When they go to break into Gunelde's chamber, distract them with another event. For example, this would be a good time to have someone begin yelling that the tithe chest has been stolen. If their attempt comes after this event, try kicking off the events from *Dragon Hunt in Oldenbridge* (see page 33).

With no reason to doubt Gunelde's honesty, the heroes risk much by breaking into her rooms. Gunelde would take extreme offense, and the other villagers (especially Praionde) would hold it against them. This is a high price to pay if the heroes aren't sure that they will find anything. If this still doesn't deter them, you could introduce an event that forces them to abort the break-in. Maybe they get caught by the waitress (Ulmia) or the cook (Franka). Whoever catches them warns that next time, Gunelde and/or Praionde will be informed. The heroes are free to go for now, but only because they saved Irmi's life.

If the investigation stalls and the heroes need a clue (and if Gunelde is conveniently away from the house, perhaps out kidnapping Praionde), then let them break in. In this case, in addition to the items mentioned in *The Innkeeper is Gone!* (page 44), they might find other clues, like the name of a cult member (see page 55) the heroes could investigate (and who might tell them the location of the cave), or a note that reads, "Ask Praionde for a chance to talk," which might give the heroes a really bad feeling if neither the innkeeper nor the Blessed One are anywhere to be found.

You should discretely prevent the heroes from searching the innkeeper's room. If need be, announce that the taking of the tithe is starting early. After Gunelde's invitation, no hero who believes in the Twelve gods can avoid it. Also, the taking of the tithe is the perfect opportunity to mention the case to Praionde, anyway.

Taking In the Tithe

All Oldenbridgers gather in the small chapel of Praios' shrine by noon. Praionde's sermon about the importance of the yearly tithe is very inspiring, and she explains the ways that tithing allows the Church to carry the splendor of Praios to the darkest corners of Dere.

She thanks the Oldenbridgers for their hard work and their righteousness, and praises the spirit of cooperation within the village community. After a final communal prayer, the Blessed One takes her place at the judge's table outside in the gathering place and opens her tithe book to make note of the remaining tithe payments.

The tardy villagers have their payments ready, but Praionde excuses herself to go get the large tithe chest from her room. A short while later, a shrill cry issues from the shrine, and the Blessed One rushes out to speak to the villagers, her face very pale.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

With a terrified look, Praionde the Blessed One stands before you. A vein pulses visibly on her brow and she is breathing heavily. “By Praios! Will blasphemies never end? The tithe chest has been stolen, along with everything in it. All the tithes you good people have paid this year are gone. A great evil moves through Oldenbridge!”

“The thefts of the last few weeks were only harbingers for the machinations at work here! May Praios show mercy! There is a blasphemer in our midst, and we must ask ourselves if we are guilty, each and every one of us! I will bring the thief to justice. This evil deed will not go unpunished.”

A shocked groan runs through the crowd. The villagers look around abashedly, and you realize the true scale of the disaster. This isn’t just about some golden coins. Divine order is in peril! Whoever steals from the Count and the temple donations hurts the world order pleasing unto Praios and commits a blasphemy greater than mere theft.



The Oldenbridgers are surprised and scared. Those standing in front of the Blessed One with payments hold them even tighter and look around suspiciously. As if to emphasize the situation, a heavy summer rain settles in over the village. The villagers draw closer under the roof and wait for Praionde’s decision. If the heroes have also been the victims of theft, this would be a good time to mention it.

Delayed Payment

In her task as sendholder of Oldenbridge, Praionde must take the collected yearly tithe of the Oldenbridgers to the Count of Wengenholt. Usually she delivers the tithe on Oath Binding Day at the beginning of Ingerimm, when all sendholds dispatch their single envoy to the capital.

This year, her luck has been terrible. She twisted her ankle shortly before she planned to set off. This rendered the exhausting journey impossible, and no villager was prepared to go in her stead due to the inauspicious start. Some villagers were relieved, because this meant they gained more time to pay their tithe.

Praionde’s ankle has since healed, and she now plans to travel to the main temple at the start of the new year. Finding the mysterious meteorite has only made her more determined to head out. She thinks that this potential Dark Eye would be much safer at a large temple of her god. This won’t come to pass, at least not yet, because the tithe chest and all its contents (including the meteorite) are missing.



Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The Blessed One of Praios appraises you with stern eyes. “Well, we do have outsiders in the village, but they have already saved one of our own from certain death. I believe they are not involved with the thefts, for they only arrived in Oldenbridge yesterday. By my authority, I declare that these heroes are the right people to solve the blasphemous crimes plaguing this community. Are you willing to fight for truth under Praios’ shining aegis of justice? Are you willing to investigate with an open mind, follow every lead, and tell me what you discover?”

Praionde gazes at you expectantly, the look in her eyes the only indication of her level of outrage over the blasphemy. The gathered Oldenbridgers wait for your answer.



The Blessed One of Praios, the highest authority in the village, has asked for the heroes’ assistance. This should be motivation enough, regardless of whether or not they were victims of theft themselves.

If the heroes hesitate, Praionde offers her personal blessing (this could take the form of a *Blessing of Luck* or *Wisdom*, or even an *Object blessing*) and a reward of 3 ducats each, in addition to the community’s

eternal thanks. She even asks Gunelde to grant them free accommodations for the duration of their stay.

This chapter of the adventure focuses on searching for the thief. It is broken down into scenes, most of which can be played in any order, and the heroes may explore and question suspects as they wish. Keep track of the time that heroes spend pursuing leads, and mark their progress on the *Timeline* (see page 7) to ensure that important events, like the abduction of the Blessed One, occur on schedule.

1 Praionde, Blessed One of Praios, Sendholder of Oldenbridge

Short Description: Village headwoman and average Blessed One of Praios; 38; bowl-cut, blond hair; dynamic; truth-loving; law-abiding and just; heroes' employer at first, then victim of the cult later.

Motivation: Believes in the teachings of her god and lives by them; desires to share the warmth and justice of Praios with others.

Agenda: Represent Praios' justice in Oldenbridge, assist the villagers, educate them on truth and order, and fulfill the duties of sendholder

Function: Employer of the heroes; an authority figure in the village (in her role as sendholder); tried to protect the potential Dark Eye; victim of the Nameless Cult

Background: Praionde was born in this area and was happy to return home after her education in the temple in Angbar. She will not receive higher blessings due to this decision, but she draws great strength from the fact that she is here to serve the common folk. She helped build the shrine of Praios and performs the duties of a village priest in the name of her god. She blesses the fields, performs marriages, and buries the dead.

Presentation in Play: loves the truth; up-front; slips into long-winded sermons about the nature of her god. At the start of the adventure, she is shocked about the thefts in the village and is unaware of the Nameless conspiracy.

If Praionde does not want to talk about something, she won't lie, but she may keep silent. She is suspicious of magic but not hostile towards it.

Fate: Praionde does not appear in future official Aventuria products, but it would be nice if the heroes could prevent her sacrifice by the Nameless cult.

Special: -

"The choice is yours: commit to truth, or choose lies and doom your soul. Praios sees everything!"

Praionde

COU 12 SGC 13 INT 11 CHA 13
DEX 10 AGI 10 CON 11 STR 10
LP 27 AE - KP 28 MOV 8
INI 11 SPI 1 TOU 0 DO 5
FtP - PRO/ENC 0/0

Social Status: Free (Blessed One)

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (Oldenbridge), Skill Specialization Religions (Praios), Tradition (Praios)

Languages: Garethi III, Bosporano I, Rogolan I

Literacy: Kusliker Signs

Advantages: Blessed One, Natural Orator

Disadvantages: Decreased Karma Power V, Obligations II (Shrine in Oldenbridge, Oath League of Wengenholt), Principles II (Moral Code: Church of Praios)

Combat Techniques: Impact Weapons 8 (9/4)

Sun-scepter: AT 9 PA 3 DP 1D6+3 RE medium

Skills:

Physical: Climbing 3, Perception 4, Self-Control 4

Social: Empathy 4, Etiquette 6, Persuasion 6, Willpower 6

Nature: Animal Lore 3, Orienting 3, Survival 3

Knowledge: Astronomy 2, Geography 3,

History 3, Law 6, Magical Lore 3, Math 3,

Myths & Legends 4, Religion 7, Sphere Lore 2

Craft: Woodworking 2

Blessings: 12 Blessings

Liturgical Chants: Banish Darkness 4, Bless Object 7, Protection from Magic 6, Truth 3

Equipment: Regalia, sun-scepter

Combat behavior: Praionde is experienced, but relies on her faith in Praios for defense when attacked. She uses her liturgical chants to root out plots of the enemies of the gods.

Escape: upon receiving *Pain I*.

Pain +1 at: 20 LP, 14 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP and less.



Praionde Consults With the Heroes

If the heroes ask about the recent thefts and the tithe chest, Praionde sends the bemused villagers back to work and tells the heroes to step into her private rooms, where they may talk freely. The Blessed One answers as thoroughly as she can. Refer to the following sample questions and answers for guidelines on what she knows. The Blessed One tells the truth and has no secrets, so *Empathy* checks are not necessary, but you can still allow the players to roll for them, of course. This conversation takes some time and, depending on when it starts, may not leave much time for questioning other villagers that day.

Praionde's Answers

What has been stolen in Oldenbridge so far, and from whom?

"There were three thefts in the past two weeks. Praios be my witness, I have thoroughly questioned all villagers, but I could not find any clues. Maybe it will help if you look at my notes."

Allow the players to read the excerpt from the **Oldenbridge Chronicles**, found on page 57.

Where was the tithe chest before it was stolen?

"I keep the tithe chest in my office, in a heavy wardrobe where I hang my liturgical gowns. I last wore those gowns one week ago for services. I am sure that the chest was still there. I would have noticed if it was missing."

What was in the chest?

"I made a thorough list of its contents. You can take a look, maybe it will help you."

Give the players the handout titled **Praionde's Inventory**, found in the appendix on page 57. Basically, the tithe chest contained a figurine of Saint Arras de Mott (patron of divine enlightenment), two gold-bound prayer books, the paid tithes of the villagers (about 180 ducats) and the meteoritic iron found in the river. Praionde can make a list of payments made in kind, but those goods have not been stolen. A large part of the villagers' tithe is paid in goods and is used for the benefit of the community. Money and gold are rare in small villages, so the sum is not as large as one might expect.

What exactly is this stone from the sky?

"A sign from my lord led me to find it. I was walking through the forest when a ray of sunlight pierced the clouds, and something glittered. There it was, in the waters of the Baumel. I fished it out and carried the heavy thing home. Nobody saw me, and—Praios forgive me—I told nobody about the find. Instead, because it felt weird, I locked it away in the chest lined with Kosh basalt. The surface of the stone kept changing. Sometimes it was smooth, at other times it was dark. Lord Praios does not love things like that, for they are a cause of disorder. So I shut it away in the tithe chest, which is lined with Kosh basalt, as I said."

- Kosh basalt blocks magic. • I wanted to take the stone along when I deliver the tithe to the main temple in Angbar."

Why do you need help solving this crime? As a Blessed One of Praios, don't you know who lies and who tells the truth?

"Praios save me from the day that I can no longer tell truth from lies. But I am afraid I cannot see the forest for the trees. I have been living here for so long that I have

Looking for Clues

If the heroes investigate the scene of the crime, they find no evidence of a break-in, neither in the study wardrobe nor at the door. With a successful *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* check, they find the trail of a handcart on the beaten path leading from the shrine to the center of the village, but they lose it in the well-trodden market place among tracks of people, animals, and other carts. • ○

trouble asking the right questions, and I cannot ask for an oath from everybody. You have a fresh and unprejudiced view. Maybe you see things that I do not notice. You have proven your worth to the community. I trust you and hope for your assistance."

Do you have any suspects, Your Grace?

"Praios be with me, I do not want to make false accusations. I have known most people in the village for years, even though I went away for a long time to receive my consecration. Two are not really part of our community—maybe they are connected somehow. One is the huntress Jadwine, who lives in a lodge in the forest, and then there's the elf Eilidiel, who also lives outside the village. He is not around much, but you might want to talk with both of them."

Did you notice anything strange in Oldenbridge, Your Grace?

Praionde thinks and is silent for quite a while before she answers. *"Robosh has been behaving oddly recently. He's the smith. He can barely keep his eyes open. I'm afraid he's not getting much sleep, though it's no wonder, with all the work he does. Some time ago I asked him to mend the incense vessel for the procession. He didn't finish it, even though he had two days. He always delivered work on time before."*

• When the village gathered in the Grain Room a few days ago, Gunelde took the opportunity to enter the shrine without being noticed. While she was picking the lock, her guests were looked after by the clueless Ulmia and Franka, who didn't even notice the innkeeper's absence.

Gunelde is strong and moved the heavy chest on a handcart, which she covered with a tarp and hid behind the tavern before returning to her guests. Gunelde brought the chest to the cult's cave in the middle of the night, when the village was sleeping.

• Praionde thinks that the stone is magical, but she has no idea that the meteorite is a potential Dark Eye.

Avenues of Investigation

The Victims of Theft

- ❖ **The Harebreath Family:** *Binsbart* (38, farmer, friendly, good-natured, modest) lives in a typical Kosh mountain home (a Ferdok-style building) with his wife *Travine* (34, seamstress, fat, excellent cook, impulsive), his mother *Josmene* (63, grizzled, bent, loves to tell stories), his daughter *Janne* (14, farmer, funny, pretty) and his twin boys, *Enno* and *Tarosh* (8, true rascals). Binsbart works several fields in which he grows rye. The family owns three hairy mountain cows that give enough milk to make cheese and curds. Ten days ago, while shopping at the grocery of *Ettel Algerein*, Janne noticed that the single, badly needed gold ducat was missing from the family's purse. It was meant to pay for a plow, as the old one was broken and Robosh could not repair it. Of course the family told *Praionde* about the theft at once, but so far, no thief has been found.
- ❖ **Ettel Algerein:** For a full description of the grocer and his family, see page 14. Ettel complains about the loss three days ago of a precious piece of jewelry, a signet ring his family has owned for generations. He carefully set the ring next to him on the wooden nightstand when he went to bed that night. The next morning, the ring was nowhere to be found—the family searched the whole house, but to no avail.

Optional Scenes in the Village

Optional Content

- ❖ In the evening, there is a brawl in the common room: Several drunken villagers, among them Robosh the smith, accuse each other of the thefts. If the heroes want to prevent serious injuries, they must act.
- ❖ Some pious women pray at the shrine of *Praios*, asking the just god for assistance in these difficult times.
- ❖ Some villagers think the events are connected with the approaching *Nameless Days*—and they would be correct.
- ❖ The heroes see the huntress *Jadwine* lurking near the shrine of *Praios*. Later she is seen talking to *Praionde*. If asked, the Blessed One says that *Jadwine* asked for divine assistance and has arranged for a prayer in the forest. They do meet, and *Praionde* returns to the village unharmed—this time....
- ❖ *Ettel Algerein* talks to the elf *Eilidiel* in the market place and tries to persuade him to sell his elven flute. *Eilidiel* is indignant. He would never sell a symbol of elven tradition, much less his personal musical instrument. He says he is not that *badoc* (Elvish for worldly or “estranged from being an elf”). The heroes must mediate if they don't want to risk an argument.



Ettel even had to close his shop for a while. He is very sad about the loss because the ring is an heirloom. Ettel, who admits he sleeps very soundly, cannot explain the theft. With a successful *Empathy* (*Discern Motivation*) check, the heroes notice that Ettel's wife, Winelda, seems to be hiding something. When questioned about this, she admits seeing a mysterious shadow in the bedroom that night. The heroes must decide whether to believe the drunk woman's story (she actually witnessed Gunelde stealing the ring, but she cannot remember any details, and she contradicts herself often).

- **The Oakenbush Family:** *Hamwiede* (25, ugly, braided hair, beautiful voice), usually called *Hamme*, owns a small cheese dairy with her husband *Hamgod* (27, former rake, charming). Together they make large cheese wheels of spicy *Baumelvalley* cheese. Their young daughter *Lana* (5, brown doe-eyes, sulky) already helps with their work. The Oakenbushs had wanted to renew the blessing on their family's talisman, a golden *Praios* figurine, at the service a week ago, but when they went to retrieve it from its place on the mantle, they realized with dread that it was gone. There was no trace of the perpetrator. Young *Lana* does not really want to talk to the heroes. She saw something recently that she didn't tell her parents about, and she seems somewhat scared. With a successful check using *Treat Soul* (*Suppress Fear*), she reveals that she woke up from a sound sleep sometime last week (she cannot say when, because she does not know the names of days). When she looked out of her window, she saw "uncle Robosh" walking behind the house with wide-open eyes and a stumbling gait. The little girl was frightened since the otherwise friendly dwarf suddenly seemed very scary to her.

Feel free to invent other victims of theft, if desired. All missing items are made out of gold, at least in part. This is the only material that the thief (cult leader *Gunelde Speltgrain*) is interested in.



Robosh's Smithy

The conversation with *Praionde* might lead the heroes to want to visit the hill dwarf smith at work. If they have already visited the *Oakenbush* family and heard *Lana*'s story about the dwarf's nightly wanderings, they might even already suspect him. If the heroes have not spoken with *Lana*, other villagers might mention the nightly activity of the smith. Maybe the heroes even catch him while he is out walking around.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You enter Robosh's smithy through the open double door. The heat of the furnace greets you inside. Robosh son of Barumox is working a fierce-looking blade of glowing metal on his anvil, and at first he does not notice you. If you address the dwarf, he puts away his work and asks you to join him in the other room for a private conversation. Even though you've only just met Robosh, you can tell he looks like a shadow of his former self. He has deep circles under his eyes, which look perpetually bloodshot. You notice that he is shaking, and beads of sweat are visible on his brow.

"Ka roboshan hortiman Angroshin!" he says. "Glad that you are dealing with this. I will eat my beard if there is nothing strange going on. I say to you, this is the fault of dragon spawn! Everywhere, they are everywhere! If only I weren't so tired all the time. Always tired. I cannot sleep. It's as if I was dreaming..."



1 Robosh son of Barumox, Dwarf Smith

Short Description: Competent and industrious blacksmith; dreams of forging legendary weapons; 128 years old, reddish-brown beard; bull neck; muscular; wants to lead a long life and hopes to court one of the rare dwarf women one day. Currently he is exhausted and wants to know what is wrong with him.

Motivation: Lead a long life pleasing unto *Angrosh* and leave a legacy to his children

Agenda: Make a name as a weaponsmith, so he can find a wife and start a family. At the moment, Robosh only wants to know why he is not feeling well.

Function: Suspect in the case of the thefts; later, the key to solving the case.

Background: Robosh came to the village as a traveling journeyman 50 years ago and stayed on, taking over the smithy. Since then he tends to all smithing problems small and large that the villagers might have. He always tries to improve his skills as a smith in the hopes of impressing one of the rare dwarf women. He usually has no trouble talking for hours on the topics of smithing

Robosh son of Barumox

COU 12 SGC 10 INT 13 CHA 10

DEX 14 AGI 10 CON 13 STR 15

LP 18 of 34 AE - KP - MOV 6

INI 11 SPI 2 TOU 3 DO 5

FtP - PRO/ENC 0/0

Social Status: Free

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I, Master of Improvisation

Languages: Rogolan III, Garethi III

Literacy: Rogolan Runes, Kusliker Signs

Advantages: Darksight I, Immunity to Tulmadron, Resistant to Heat

Disadvantages: Bad Habit (mutters to himself), Incompetence (Swimming)

Combat Techniques: Crossbow 9 (11), Impact Weapons 10 (11/7)

Battle axe: AT 11 PA 6 DP 1D6+5 RE medium

Light Crossbow: RC 11 RT 8 actions DP 1D6+6 RA 10/50/80

Skills:

Physical: Body Control 6, Carousing 6, Dancing 1, Feat of Strength 8, Singing 1, Stealth 2

Social: Fast-Talk 6, Willpower 5

Nature: Fishing 1

Knowledge: Mechanics 4

Craft: Artistic Ability 4, Commerce 6, Driving 2, Earthencraft 4, Metalworking 10, Prepare Food 2, Woodworking 6

Equipment: Smithy, Tools

Combat behavior: As a smith, Robosh knows how to inflict Forceful Blows. Although not a fighter, he trusts in his strength and the quality of his weapons. If children are in danger, Robosh risks all to protect them.

Escape: When he gains *Pain II*

Conditions: Robosh suffers from *Stupor III* and therefore suffers -3 to most skill checks. In addition, he suffers *Pain I* from the 16 DP he has received from the Nameless ritual. He is also under the influence of rat fungus (see page 45).

Pain +1 at: 26 LP, 17 LP, 9 LP, and 5 LP and less.



significant, but Robosh is only dreaming because Gunelde is secretly poisoning him with rat fungus. He has been sleepwalking and creating a statue of the Nameless One for the cult while in a trance.

“Garoshem, Ettell! I’ll take 15 steel ingots, as ordered.”

Following Robosh

If the heroes stay out all night watching for burglars or decide to spy on the dwarf, they might catch him apparently sleepwalking and subsequently discover the location of the cave sooner than expected. For methods of dealing with this possibility, see *Alternative Solutions* on page 39.



Help for Robosh?

Robosh is in a very bad state. He can barely stay awake during the day and always feels exhausted. He has no idea what is happening to him. He has no memories of his nights spent at the ritual space. Sometimes, twisted fragments of memory surface in his mind—images of gold being cast, the forest in the light of the moon (the symbol of Mada), the terrified face of a little girl. • He is weak and tired due to the liturgical chants NAMELESS DOUBT and PERVASIVE SPHERE SONG OF THE ONE, and the ingestion of rat fungus. In addition, the cult sacrifices a little of his blood every night while he works on the statue (it will be finished in 3 days). Robosh loses 4 life points every night, the only sign of this being a scabbed-over cut on his arm. He thinks he must have hurt himself while working. He has already taken part in this ritual four times, meaning he has lost 16 life points during the past week. He cannot regenerate due to the terrible lack of sleep, and he suffers the condition *Pain I*.

• Take care when revealing these fragments of memory. Robosh’s secret (which he does not even know himself) should remain secret for a while yet. He feels as if two hearts are beating in his chest and trying to swallow each other.

He is not wrong—the Nameless One is trying to gain control of the stubborn smith, but luckily his faith in Angrosh is too strong to let all confidence in the Twelvegods be driven from him.

His lack of sleep also gives him the condition of *Stupor*. The players can make checks using the skills *Treat Wounds* and *Treat Soul* to get a feel for the smith’s condition. With the right equipment, it is possible to help relieve his exhaustion or heal his life points with magic or liturgical chants, but the thing Robosh needs most is sleep. Magic only helps a little.

or a special weapon, but at the moment, he is too tired even for everyday tasks.

Presentation in Play: Be grumpy, yawn, mumble into your (imaginary) beard, talk to yourself, be kind to children, express belief in Angrosh, always suspect dragons are behind all evils in the world, and use words from the Rogolan glossary.

Fate: Robosh does not appear in future official Aventuria products, but it would be nice if the heroes could free him from his Nameless compulsion.

Special: Dwarves sleep like rocks and dream only rarely. When they do, they consider their dreams to be very

A magical examination with ODEM ARCANUM only reveals that he is as non-magical as a slab of Kosh basalt and that he has not been enchanted.

If the heroes suspect poisoning, a check using *Treat Poison* (Plant Poison) with a penalty of 3 grants further information. The players need an exceptional success to learn anything about rat fungus, but any successful check gives further evidence that Robosh has been poisoned. The liturgical chant BANISH POISON helps relieve the poison's effects, but only until he ingests rat fungus again.

Robosh's Answers

You were seen walking near the house of a family that was the target a night-time theft. Do you have any explanation?

"By Angrosh's beard, I know nothing about that. We Angroshim... sleep like stones. Maybe I have been walking around because I could not sleep? Lana, the dear girl. But Drakorabrodrom, I cannot remember... I am sorry if I scared her. But she is a child, with a strong imagination... You do not think I am the thief, do you?"

Why are you so tired? It's not like you're doing your work reliably anymore.

"That... is right. I've been preoccupied lately, as if Angrosh had cursed my hammer. I have even hit my fingers, and once I dropped my hammer on my foot. Couldn't work... Couldn't sleep... And then I fell asleep, just as I was casting the form. I am sorry to have disappointed the largelings. They trust me, you know? If I just knew what was wrong with me..."

What is happening at night? Can you remember anything?

"It's the dragon spawn! It's always their fault... this is not natural. Can you see if I have been enchanted? Rotten dragon spawn..."

Rogolan: Dwarvish for Beginners

Ka roboshan hortiman Angroshin:

By the long beard of Angrosh!

Garoshem: Greetings!

Drax radash(-o/-na): He/she has been corrupted by dragon spawn!

Baroshem: To your health!

Kangrosha: Good dwarven work! (general statement of agreement)

Zrom: Cave

Bunferatosh: Elf

Drakorabrodrom: Corrupt power of dragons; everything that is evil on Dere.

Dorakkash: Enemy



Robosh thinks that his problem is caused by an evil conspiracy of dragon spawn. There is no magic at work.

You have hurt your arm? What happened?

"By Angrosh's beard! I've had that for a while... must have slipped. It doesn't want to heal properly. A real Angrosho... won't die from a little cut."

You can draw out up to three memory fragments from the dwarf with checks using *Treat Soul*. You can make one check every 12 hours.

Robosh Remembers...

Failure	Nothing. After 12 hours the heroes can try again with <i>Treat Soul</i> but start with a QL of 0.
QL 1	Having seen Lana and scared her. He does not know why he was out at night.
QL 2	Waking up in the forest. He cannot find the spot again, even though he has been looking for it.
QL 3	Smelting gold. He has only done so once in this village, and that was 20 years ago.

False Trail

Optional Content

The following optional encounters are red herrings. They are not necessary for the adventure but are intended to add some fun side-encounters.

It Was the Elf!

Several villagers accuse the elf Eilidiel of committing the thefts. Everybody knows that elves have no understanding of property. Eilidiel is grumpy, reclusive, and only comes into Oldenbridge if he has no other choice. Astute heroes should notice that while Koshans are hospitable, joyful people, they also have prejudices concerning strangers who seem *too strange*. Even though these prejudices are somewhat justified where Eilidiel is concerned, the elf would certainly act friendlier to the villagers if they were a bit more tolerant.

Eilidiel Left-by-Forest, Elf Ranger

Short Description: Competent ranger; around 50; white-blond hair; human-like glade elf who wants to return into his family's Salasandra; uncooperative suspect and scapegoat to the villagers.

Motivation: wants to return to his family's Salasandra

Agenda: has isolated himself in the forest to live in harmony with nature and avoid becoming too worldly; is searching for the meaning of life

Function: Uncooperative suspect

Background: Eilidiel is only 50 years old and comes from a family of glade elves who live in isolation by the Great River. He was cast out by his family for becoming too human and bringing disharmony to the Salasandra. He now lives between worlds and moves every few years. He fears getting too close to humans, but he feels lonely without company. He has lived in the sendhold Oldenbridge, in a small fir grove, for about three years. Sometimes he goes hunting, but he derives little joy from his successes. He only feels happy when playing his elf flute, which reminds him of peaceful, harmonious times with his family.

Presentation in Play: Talk slowly and melodiously, use soft consonants, and try to appear all-knowing and grumpy at the same time. Use nature comparisons that nobody understands.

Fate: open-ended

Special: -

"Without Salasandra, there is no life. I seek harmony, but harmony flees from me on outstretched wings. You disturb my connection to the world. Go, now!"



Eilidiel

COU 10 SGC 10 INT 15 CHA 14

DEX 14 AGI 15 CON 13 STR 9

LP 28 AE 35 KP - MOV 8

INI 15+1D6 SPI 2 TOU 0 DO 8

FtP -

PRO/ENC 0/0

Social Status: Free

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (home village), Skill Specialization Tracking, Song of Friendship 5, Song of Peace 8, Special Ability Tradition (Elf)

Languages: Isdira III, Garethi II

Literacy: Isdira Signs

Advantages: Beautiful Voice, Resistant to Aging, Darksight I, Good Looks I, Needs No Sleep, Spellcaster, Two-Voiced Singing

Disadvantages: Afraid of... (Being Too Worldly) I, Incompetent (Carousing), Personality Flaw (Arrogance, Unworldly with Property, Money, and Gods), Sensitive Nose

Combat Techniques: Bows 14 (16), Daggers 12 (12/8)

Dagger: AT 12 PA 8 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Elf Bow: RC 16 RT 1 DP 1D6+5 RA 50/100/200

Skills:

Physical: Body Control 7, Climbing 6, Perception 9, Self-Control 4, Singing 8

Social: Empathy 1, Willpower 8

Nature: Animal Lore 10, Orienting 8, Survival 12

Knowledge: Magical Lore 5, Myths and Legends 4, Religions 1

Craft: Music 12, Woodworking 8

Cantrips: Siren Call

Spells: Armatrutz 6, Axxeleratus 8, Balsam 7, Bannbaladin 5, Breathe Water 3, Eagle Eye 8, Fulminictus 8,

Hawk Eye 10, Odem 5, Silentium 6, Somnigravis 7, Visibili 7

Equipment: Dagger, Elf Bow, Quiver, Ammunition (12 arrows)

Combat Behavior: Eilidiel only fights when attacked. He fights as efficiently as possible and attacks opponents from afar with arrows until they flee or give up. If forced into close combat, he uses his *Fulminictus* first, then his dagger. He flees if given the chance. If there is no opportunity to flee, the elf fights like a cornered animal.

Escape: Eilidiel flees at the first sign of trouble. If cornered, he fights to the death.

Pain +1 at: 21 LP, 14 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP and less.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You move through dense foliage and enter a clearing surrounded by large firs. On the other side of the glade, between two impressive conifers, you see a tent made of sheets and leaves suspended high up in the air. A gaunt-looking elf sits on a tree branch. His long white hair blows in the wind. As you approach, he jumps from the branch and lands in front of you, arms folded. A finely carved flute dangles from a cord around his neck. The elf looks at you with bright eyes. For a moment you all stand there in silence. Then one of you begins to talk.



If the heroes question Eilidiel, he answers only in short sentences. Sometimes he does not even understand what the heroes want from him. He has no connection to the thefts, but does not deem it necessary to mention this fact. He feels that it is obvious he has not stolen any gold. After all, what would he do with it? Of course, he thinks that the heroes should realize this, too.

The group doesn't get anywhere with Eilidiel because nothing of any worth escapes his mouth. This makes him even more mysterious, but if the heroes are suspicious by nature, this might make him a stronger suspect. If a member of his race is present in the group, he is willing to have a conversation (see below). For half-elves, however, Eilidiel holds only an arrogant blend of pity and disgust.

Eilidiel's Reactions

- When the heroes ask the elf a question, he begins to answer but then stops when he sees a black beetle land on a hero's shoulder. As if it was the most natural thing to do, Eilidiel steps very close to the hero and gently takes the insect from the hero's shoulder. He watches it intently and then lets it fly to freedom.
- While being questioned, Eilidiel does not look at the heroes directly. Instead, he watches the trees around them, takes a deep breath, and then says in a loud voice, *"The interplay of light and shadow is extraordinary today. The sun is very deep already."*
- When asked *"Do you have anything to do with the thefts?"* Eilidiel looks at the hero in confusion, tilts his narrow head, turns around, and plucks an apple from a nearby tree.
- If heroes reveal a strong knowledge of elvish culture (they speak fluent Isdira or understand the elvish worldview) or are very close to

nature, they can make a check using *Fast-Talk* (*Sweet-Talk*) with a bonus of 2. If successful, the elf assures them that he has nothing to do with the thefts. He cannot really understand the concept of theft anyway—gold comes from the ground, so it obviously belongs to nobody.

- If he meets another elf, Eilidiel naturally casts the spell *BANNBALADIN* (12/15/13, SR 5) as an introduction and then speaks Isdira with the elf. He says truthfully that he is not interested in the doings of the humans who live nearby. Of course he has not taken anything from them, especially nothing golden.

This Elf is Annoying!

If you do not want to frustrate the heroes, Eilidiel can give them two useful clues without meaning to:

- "The human wyldrinner does not live in harmony with the forest. Her arrows kill too often, and near her home she grows plants from other lands. The wind carries her songs to me. I can feel the disharmony."* Basically, this reveals why he avoids Jadwine's hunting lodge, and the heroes gain a clue that some strange plants grow there.
- "Humans do not listen to the call of the wind. They do not hear his rustling split by dragon wings."* By this, Eilidiel reveals that he knows there is a tree dragon in the area, and also where it keeps its hoard. This information is useful for the optional event, *Dragon Hunt in Oldenbridge*.



Dragon Hunt in Oldenbridge

You can play this adventure without the dragon hunt, but since it offers a fast-paced, fantastical component for your game, we recommend that you include it. The intermezzo with the tree dragon is especially fun for heroes who like to fight.

Heroes with good social skills can have fun trying to keep the angry mob of Oldenbridgers from marching foolishly into the forest armed only with farm implements, to kill the “wild, fiery beast, the nasty thief.”

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You are walking across the village square on the banks of the Baumel when you hear the shouts of an agitated crowd. About two dozen villagers have armed themselves with hoes and pitchforks and are firing themselves up, urged on by Travine Harebreath. You can hear shouts like “Evil dragon spawn! Burn the beast!” and “Down with the dragon thief!” Among the ranks of bellowing Oldenbridgers stands a little girl who looks vulnerable and lost. As you draw closer to the gathering, Travine says, “Ah, here we have the ones we need! Honorable saviors of Oldenbridge, we have found the thief! Little Angundl here saw a mighty dragon beast steal a silver fork from the supper table of the lumberjacks in the forest. It flew away towards the Muggisridge. We are headed there to kill the beast and recover our things! Join us, we need your strength!”



The crowd is highly agitated and seems capable of anything. It is very obvious that the inexperienced villagers are more likely to put out an eye or set a companion ablaze with a torch if the heroes do not try to calm them down. If the heroes soothe Travine with a *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation* or *Sweet-Talk*) check, they can take command and lead the mob into the forest in an orderly fashion.

After talking to the eye-witness, Angunde, the heroes might remember that the thief only steals gold items, not things made of silver. If they use this fact to try to calm the mob, let the players try a *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation* or *Sweet-Talk*) check with a penalty of 5. If they fail this check, the heroes miss their chance to influence the scared but motivated mob of Oldenbridgers and have no choice but to organize and lead a dragon hunt that is as safe for everyone as possible. Who knows, maybe the dragon is connected to the thefts somehow...

Set Pieces

Use the scenes presented here to create a dragon hunt that you think your player will enjoy.

- If the heroes ask the girl Angunde (called Angundl) where and what she has seen, she answers, “I was out in the wood with daddy. He is a lumberjack and I brought him his lunch. I sat down with the lumberjacks, and I saw it. A giant, large dragon beast, coming near. My daddy grabbed me and we ran into the forest. The serpent came down quickly and grabbed the silver fork. Then it flew back up into the sky. Flew away, towards the Muggisridge.”
- Before the mob marches into the forest, the heroes can give them basic lessons in weapon use. For that the players must make checks using *Warfare* (*Partisan Tactics*) and *Body Control* (*Combat Maneuvers*).
- The huntress Jadwine Harefright offers to lead the band through the forest and track the scaly monster. Its trail is hard to find, because the dragon flew through the air. For that reason, Jadwine tries her best to follow the directions given by the lumberjack’s daughter and choose a safe path through the forest.
- The mob of villagers keeps shouting battle cries, and they agitate each other even more. If the heroes want to avoid giving the dragon (or any other wild animals) hours of advanced warning of their approach, they can try *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation* or *Sweet-Talk*), *Persuasion* (*Oratory*) or *Intimidate* (*Threats*), to calm the agitators. If successful, they choose the right words and can walk in silence, at least for a while.
- On the way to the Muggisridge, a pack of wolves chooses to defend its territory aggressively against the human intruders. Initially, the heroes face 1D6+2 of the beasts in combat. They should try to handle it themselves, to prevent something from happening to one of the villagers. Roll 1D20 for every combat round in which the heroes do not keep every wolf occupied. On a result of 15-19, one of the villagers is injured (1D6 DP, no PRO). On a result of 20, the villager is injured badly (2D6 DP, no PRO).
- There are rocks and stones everywhere in the Kosh mountain forest, and low-hanging branches of spruces get in the way. The players must make checks using *Body Control* (*Balance* or *Running*) or *Climbing* (*Mountain*), with penalties or bonuses depending on the situation. If not successful, the heroes take 1D3 DP from scrapes and scratches.

- The omnipresent buzzing of gnats follows the would-be dragon hunters. Given a chance, they bite painfully on unarmored spots. Roll 1D20 for each hero. On a result of 18-20, the bloodthirsty gnats begin to bite. All characters thus affected suffer 1 DP (no PRO). Heroes covered head to toe in clothes remain unaffected—but this kind of cover is very uncomfortable during these, the warmest days of the Kosh summer.



Wolf

Size: up to 3' at the shoulder, 4 feet in length

Weight: 100 pounds

COU 13 **SGC** 14 (a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 12

DEX 14 **AGI** 13 **CON** 13 **STR** 13

LP 18 **INI** 14 **DO** 7

PRO 0 **SPI** -1 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 12

Bite: AT 14 DP 1D6+3* RE short

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: Body Control 7, Feat of Strength 5, Perception 7, Self-Control 4, Stealth 7, Intimidation 7, Willpower 4

Number: 1D6+2

Size Category: small

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 15 rations (meat, tough), trophy (pelt, 5 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Grey or grim wolves are not very confrontational and usually attack only when driven by hunger or if their territory is threatened.

Escape: Loss of 50% LP

Animal Lore

- **QL 1:** Wolves avoid fire (to close and attack, the wolf must make a *Self-Control* check)
- **QL 2:** Wolves can spread diseases.
- **QL 3+:** You can identify the alpha. If you kill the alpha wolf, the rest of the pack flees.

Special Rules

***) Disease:** For each 5 DP suffered, the target has a 5% chance (1 on 1D20) of catching Rapid Mania (see **Core Rules**, page 343). Not all wolves are infected. To determine this randomly, the chance is 5%.

Pain +1 at: 14 LP, 10 LP, 6 LP, and 5 LP and less.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

After climbing several miles up through the dense mountain forest, you get close to a glade high above which two glaciers meet. This is called the Muggisridge. You can see an old alder tree on a rock ledge about 45 feet above your heads. It barely has any leaves, and on a forked branch you can see a large nest made of brushwood and fir boughs. Far above that, a majestic dragon creature circles in the sky. It snarls loudly when it sees you. The dragon's scaly wings glisten in the sun and reflect dancing points of light onto the grass of the meadow upon which you stand. The men and women behind you start cheering and shouting and gouging the forest floor with their hoes and flails. Jadwine is obviously shocked—she didn't expect to find a reptile of any kind, let alone one almost 3 yards long!

Hesitantly, she takes one step away from the mob and draws an arrow from her quiver. The dragon, however, is unimpressed by your appearance. Somehow you must get its attention if you want to give the villagers a shot at vengeance.



Heroes with a Conscience?

Players who want to learn more about the nature and behavior of the dragon creature should make an *Animal Lore (Monsters)* check. See the dragon's stat box for ideas on what is gleaned, such as the fact that it is a tree dragon. The dragon does not attack unless the heroes carry brightly polished weapons or jewelry, or wear polished armor.

Villagers armed with rusting farm tools do not attract his interest at all, even with their shouting. They are too far away from his hoard to be seen as a threat. The heroes must goad the reptile into attacking if they want to fight it. They can achieve this in one of the following ways.

- The heroes and villagers can throw rocks at the dragon. After six hits, or when the damage pierces his scales, the dragon decides he's had enough and attacks. Every throw suffers a penalty of 2 for

the range and inflicts 1 DP less. If all villagers take part, the hail of stones provokes the dragon sooner or later, even without any hits.

- A flying hero can get close to the dragon hoard, or some villagers can start climbing towards his nest.
- A hero with a bow, or Jadwine, can shoot at the dragon or his hoard. RC checks suffer no penalty or bonus for the dragon's size and movement, but the range of 15 yards and the weapon choice might make a difference. For more info on ranged combat, see page 241 in the **Core Rules**.

All of this trouble might make the dragon feel threatened and drive it to attack, despite the large number of opponents. Even if the dragon isn't involved in the thefts, the villagers see him as a threat to their community. Kind-hearted heroes can drive him away by destroying his nest (by felling the tree, for example). Otherwise they must try to defeat the beast in combat (without any of the villagers losing their lives, if possible).

The Rules of the Hunt

If the heroes manage to draw the tree dragon's attention, he attacks the group. Due to the sheer number of opponents, he makes only two attacks before trying to escape (by flying away, of course). The heroes must rekindle the dragon's wrath if they wish to defeat him in combat.



The best way to achieve this is to attack his nest, which is perched 15 yards above them and can only be reached by climbing. All climbers must make a *Climbing (Mountains)* check for every 5 yards. The first check has a bonus of 2, but subsequent checks become 1 point more difficult per 5 yards climbed. The first hero (or villager) to reach the ledge receives all of the tree dragon's attention and must deal with an extremely dangerous enemy.

If the heroes try to keep the dragon engaged in combat by any other means, they must make an Animal Lore (Monsters) check every time the creature wants to escape. Success means they do something that the dragon hates, and he keeps fighting. Once the dragon suffers damage, these checks suffer a cumulative penalty of 1 for each new provocation.

If your players enjoy playing strategically, let them control some villagers and coordinate their attacks. For villagers' stats, use the stats for average cultists on page 52.



If the heroes seem to be defeating the dragon too easily, its mate appears and joins the fight.



After a few attacks, the dragon retreats and the heroes get away safely. They are not dragon slayers, but—with the exception of several very angry villagers—most hail them as protectors of the community.

Ending the Dragon Hunt

The conclusion of the dragon hunt depends on what the heroes did in the scene. If they gave the dragon a good chase and dealt it great harm, it doesn't survive, and the mob can climb up to the rocky ledge and search the nest. If the heroes managed to drive the dragon away, they must deal with grumpy villagers who, in their blind fury, wanted to see the dragon killed. If the heroes avoided combat altogether, perhaps by using a distraction (it is easy to distract the dragon with shiny objects), they can quickly (and safely) gain access to his hoard.

Tree Dragon

Size: 3 to 4 feet tall; 4 to 5 feet long (minus the tail); 8 to 10 feet (with tail); wingspan about 9 feet

Weight: 100 to 150 pounds

COU 13 **SGC** 12 (a) **INT** 13 **CHA** 11

DEX 10 **AGI** 14 **CON** 15 **STR** 14

LP 25 **INI** 16 **DO** 7

PRO 3 **SPI** -2 **TOU** -2 **MOV** 6/20 (ground/air)

Bite: AT 12 DP 1D6+4 RE short

Claws: AT 15 DP 1D6+3 RE short

Fire Breath*: RC 18 DP 1D6 RA 5 yards

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Forceful Blow I, Takedown (Claws or Bite)

Skills: Body Control 10, Climbing 10, Feat of Strength 7, Flying 10, Perception 10, Self-Control 4, Stealth 7, Intimidation 4, Willpower 4

Number: 1

Size Category: medium

Type: Dragon, non-humanoid

Loot: 35 rations (meat, inedible); hoard of various shiny objects, like coins, cutlery, or rings (worth 1D6x1D6 silverthalers); trophy (teeth and claws, 3 silverthalers; dragon scales, 10 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Tree dragons ignore humans unless they threaten their hoards or carry visibly shiny items. They attack from the air to try to get the jump on their opponents, and then knock them to the ground using *Takedown*...

Escape: Loss of 50% LP

Animal Lore


- **QL 1:** Tree dragons become aggressive when their nests are threatened. They like shiny objects.
- **QL 2:** You can lure them with shiny items (competitive check using *Fast-Talk (Hard Sell)* vs. *Willpower*; if you win, the dragon tries to snatch the bauble).
- **QL 3+:** You can avoid the fire breath by ducking and weaving in a specific manner (*Dodge* +4).

Special Rules

***) Fire Breath:** Tree dragons can use their fire breath only once every five combat rounds, and no more than four times per day, total. Flammable targets can be set ablaze by their breath.

Pain +1 at: 19 LP, 13 LP, 6 LP, and 5 LP and less.





Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You have fought hard to reach the dragon's hoard. Now you stand in front of the tree that was home to the scaly beast. One of you climbs the trunk to secure the items lying in the nest, and can tell right away that the stolen goods are not here. Most of the hoard is worthless, but something that looks valuable does glisten there! Next to a rusty arrowhead and a piece of broken glass you find a gold ducat, a fine silver chain with a pendant made from rose quartz, and a small phial filled with a clear liquid. Now you must explain to the villagers that the dragon was not guilty of the thefts.



The heroes should present their insights to the villagers in the most diplomatic way possible. Some villagers are disappointed, others react with fear because the true thief still hasn't been found. Many peoples' faces betray their guilt and shame about their eagerness, especially if somebody from the community was hurt. The long walk home to Oldenbridge is much quieter than the energetic march out to the Muggisridge. Once back in town, the villagers return to work. If the dragon hunt was somewhat successful, the participants celebrate with several rounds in the Grain Room Tavern.

False Trail

End of optional content



Informing the Blessed One

Three days after their arrival in the village (at the latest), and after the dragon hunt, if you ran that optional scene, Gunelde Speltgrain informs the heroes that Praionde would like to meet with them. The Blessed One awaits them in the shrine's chapel. She is praying contemplatively when they arrive.

Praionde now locks the chapel to give the thief no further chances to blaspheme against Praios' holy order, and it takes her a few moments to unlock the door. As the heroes file in, she asks them to step into her office for a quiet discussion about what they've learned so far. Praionde expects a thorough report on the current state of the investigation. She then invites the heroes to attend services the following morning, explaining that it will help bolster the community's faith, especially since the Nameless Days will soon be here.

The Abduction of the Blessed One

This scene is important—use Praionde's questions as a means to help the heroes remember all of the important clues. It is also useful for recounting events, especially if you cannot finish the adventure in a single session. This short and hopefully friendly meeting should help make Praionde's disappearance that much more personal for the heroes.

This scene also serves to show the heroes that Praionde is well (the secret abduction by Gunelde and Jadwine takes place sometime after the heroes leave the shrine). This short and hopefully friendly meeting should make Praionde's disappearance both more obvious and more terrible for the heroes.

After the heroes leave the shrine, the Blessed One goes into the twilight forest to meet Jadwine Harefright. The huntress asked the Blessed One if they could speak privately, but her true motivation is different, for Jadwine is a member of the Nameless cult. She is plotting with Gunelde to abduct Praionde and sacrifice her during the Nameless Days.

Jadwine and Gunelde easily overpower the unarmed Blessed One and tie her up. Under cover of night, they carry Praionde to their ritual space in a hidden mountain cave and then return to the village quickly, so as not to raise any suspicions. If the heroes and villagers are celebrating in the Grain Room after a successful dragon hunt, someone might notice that the innkeeper disappears for a short while, but this should be no cause for suspicion.

Our Blessed One Has Been Taken!

The following morning, the heroes gather with the villagers at the shrine for services to honor lord Praios. Of course, Praionde locked the door the evening before, and the villagers wait outside. They tolerate the wait for a short while, but it makes them anxious. The past few days have been terrible, and the Oldenbridgers grow nervous. They look at the heroes expectantly. Worry is driving them to a difficult decision: should they break into a temple of the Twelvegods, to see if mischief has been done?

Option A

Break Into the Temple? No Problem!

After a period of fretful waiting, the heroes decide to break open the door of the shrine (or open it with magic, or simply pick the lock). Ask for either a check using *Feat of Strength (Breaking and Smashing)*, with tools (*Lifitng*), or, if they lean more towards Phex, *Pick Lock (Bit Locks)*. The lock is *simple*.

The heroes search through the shrine and find no signs of violence, but it is certain that Praionde is missing. She went out to meet with Jadwine last night and locked the temple. With a successful *Perception (Search)* check, the heroes find only a single haler and some rat droppings on the ground in front of the wardrobe that holds ceremonial gowns (and formerly the tithe chest). The heroes might think nothing of rat droppings, but they are a clue to Gunelde's presence (she stole the tithe chest about a week ago). Whether or not the heroes reveal their findings to the villagers, the situation grows increasingly tense. If the heroes question the villagers, the lumberjack, Ardo, reveals what he saw last night.



Option B

Break Into the Temple? Never!

Maybe the group does not dare to break into the shrine, either due to their deep religious beliefs or the presence of the villagers. In this case, they do not find the rat droppings and do not discover that Praionde is missing, at least right away. If they peer through windows or key holes, they see no movement in the building.

Because the door is locked, they cannot tell whether Praionde is in the building or not. The last time the heroes visited her in the shrine, the door was locked when they arrived, but Ardo the lumberjack saw her leave the building, and he may be able to provide a clue.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

One of the lumberjacks steps forward from the crowd of intimidated villagers. He is a stout man of about 40 years, with broad shoulders. He addresses you almost sheepishly, and you sense how uncomfortable he must feel speaking in front of the villagers. "Didn't think it was important. Yesterday evening, when I was done with my work, I saw her in the forest. On the path to the village, headed towards Jadwine's lodge. They'd been talking. Cannot say what about, went on quickly."

The villagers look shocked after Ardo has spoken. They start to babble. Has something happened to Praionde? There is so little time left before the Nameless Days. This must be a bad omen! Making matters worse, threatening black clouds gather in the sky, and you hear thunder in the distance. Beleman is blowing forcefully from the west. A storm is coming. "Let's everyone go over to the Grain Room," says Gunelde the innkeeper. "No one should be alone at a time like this."

Do Not Be Afraid!

The heroes might feel it is their responsibility to calm the villagers in this unusual situation. The Koshans, who are otherwise so calm, clearly fear the developing situation. After the recent bear attack on the shepherdess Irmi (and perhaps the optional encounters with the wolf pack and the tree dragon), they worry that something has happened to Praionde. The heroes have earned enough influence to calm the villagers a bit, and they probably want to investigate Jadwine's lodge themselves, to make sure the inexperienced villagers do not destroy clues.

Alternative Solutions

With Praionde's kidnapping, the heroes enter the last stretch of the adventure. If everything goes as expected, the heroes reach the cave of the Nameless worshipers just as the Blessed One of Praios is about to be sacrificed. Of course it is possible that the heroes find the cave much sooner, maybe because Lana Oakenbush's story about Robosh sneaking through the village at night inspires the heroes to hide and watch nightly goings-on in the village.

What they find out depends on how much they already know. If you think it is too soon to have them find the answer, set them on a false trail. For example, you could kick off the events of *Dragon Hunt in Oldenbridge*, to make the heroes forget what they were doing. Just be careful not to frustrate them. Your players should believe that they found the answer themselves, even if the adventure takes an unexpected turn. If things remain on track, the events in *Robosh Remembers* (page 46) should only take place after the heroes find the answer themselves, or if they really do not have any clues and are beginning to feel discouraged.

Things to See at Night

Oldenbridge is not as peaceful at night as the heroes might suspect. If you need to distract the heroes, perhaps because you need to stage Praionde's kidnapping, you can make things more difficult for

them. Have one player roll 1D6 on the following chart for every 2 hours the heroes spend hiding, and apply the results.

In case of duplicates, reroll or choose another event (especially if you think a result does not fit the situation). There can be at most three events per nights, and they could serve to distract the heroes from what is really happening (cultists leaving the village).

- 1: Winelda Algerein (42, boisterous, crude, practical) stumbles toward the forest, either coming from the tavern or from her home. If the heroes follow, they

can catch up to the grocer's wife just inside the tree line, where she stumbles around without knowing her way. She babbles and tells the heroes that her husband has spoken about a cave in his sleep. She is sure that he has a secret, and she wants to learn it. The heroes might have heard that Winelda is a drinker who often imagines things, and they might not believe her. She has no information about the location of the cave.

- 2: Ettel Algerein sneaks from his home. Roll another 1D6: 1-2 He follows his wife to bring her back. 3-4 His wife's snoring drove him from the house. 5-6 He is sneaking to a cult meeting in the cave. With competitive *Stealth (Sneaking)* checks against *Perception (Spot)*, SR 4 (11/13/13), the heroes can try to pursue Ettel to the cave. If the time is right, they could reach the cave just as Gunelde tries to sacrifice Praionde (see the events under *Site of the Nameless Ritual*, page 48). If the heroes arrive too early, they might see Robosh forging the statue in a trance.

- 3: The gardener Wibald Pickax (54, curly gray hair, pug nose, snuffy) sneaks into the forest, headed for Jadwine Harefright's hunting lodge. The heroes can follow him with a competitive check using *Stealth (Hide)* against *Perception (Spot)*, SR 5 (9/12/12). If they confront him, he admits to buying remedies to strengthen his virility. If desired, Wibald can be a member of the cult, too. Depending on how the heroes question him, he might admit it. He is remorseful and can lead the heroes to the cultists.

- 4: With a check using *Perception (Spot)* -1, the heroes hear muffled screams and thuds. If they follow the sounds (more *Perception (Spot)* checks) they come to the home of the Turnsheeps, where Wilfing (30, broad shoulders, short temper) is beating up his wife Maline (26, small, blond, petite). Why? She burned the food, he explains to the heroes. If the heroes interfere, use cultists' stats for Wilfing (see page 52). Later, the heroes might even find Maline among the cultists, seeking an escape from her mistreatment.

- 5: An argument breaks out between several drunks in the tavern. Maybe they blame each other for the series of thefts (see events on page 27), or for cheating in a card game.

- 6: Robosh leaves his forge. His eyes are glazed over, his movements look rehearsed. He heads straight towards the mountains. If the heroes follow, ask for *Perception (Spot)* checks to keep an eye on him (or, to make it more exciting, *Stealth (Sneaking)* checks). Robosh does not notice them.

The growing desperation of the villagers plays right into the innkeeper's hands. She uses the situation to her advantage by inviting everyone to the Grain Room's common room. Desperate villagers are more open to promises of the Nameless One (and the heroes can't interfere as long as they are out searching for Praionde). She secretly hopes that the heroes suffer terrible misfortune, and she prays for them to die in the storm. Even though the heroes probably do not yet realize there is a Nameless threat, they can give the villagers hope and try to protect them from evil influences.

If they lose the dwarf, call for a check using *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)*. The dwarf leads them to the cult's cave, where he is due to continue forging the statue. In addition to Gunelde and Jadwine, 1D6+1 cultists are present. Robosh's arm is hurt once again, his blood staining the hammer he uses to forge the statue. If the heroes aren't too clumsy, they might gain the advantage of surprise.

- The heroes might also watch Gunelde leave the tavern during the night.

One way to keep the villagers occupied and feeling like they are helping is to organize a search of the village surroundings. Small search teams can cover more ground and keep more villagers occupied.

It is important to give the villagers a sense of security. By taking responsibility and promising to search for Praionde, the heroes are a big help.

By announcing their plans, the heroes can ease the Oldenbridgers' fears and prevent a panic. Calming or encouraging words in the form of an improvised oration or a sermon performed by a faithful layman (or even a Blessed One, if one is present in the group) can work wonders, too. If desired, a hero can attempt to use *Persuasion (Oration)*, with the following possible results.

The Villagers...

Failure	...react with panic and fear the worst. Many lock themselves inside their houses or in the Grain Room. A feeling of doom spreads. Some villagers pray. Some begin to feel abandoned by the gods. Some act without thinking and run off to search for the Blessed One themselves.
1 QL	...are unsure and worried. The heroes' words calm them down, but as soon as the heroes leave to search for Praionde, they are slowly overcome by desperation.
2 QL	...hope that the heroes will make everything well. Some worriers still see a black future. Most Oldenbridgers have enough faith in the gods to get through this difficult time.
3 QL	...trust in the heroes' bravery and believe that everything will turn out well. They include the heroes in their prayers.

If the heroes aren't in the mood for thunder and lightning and getting soaked, they can choose to wait until after the storm passes to begin looking for Praionde. If this happens, skip the investigation at Jadwine's lodge and resume the adventure at the point where Gunelde's disappearance becomes obvious.

Investigating Jadwine Harefright

By the time the heroes get to Jadwine's lodge, a strong wind is already blowing and rain is beginning to pour down on the area. If the heroes want to find clues, they must hurry. A check using *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* with a penalty of 2 (rain can wash away tracks) reveals footprints that were probably made by Praionde. These footprints only lead towards Jadwine's hunting lodge, not back to the village.



Don't worry if the heroes fail their checks. They already know that Praionde was seen near Jadwine's lodge. It's enough if the heroes simply go there.



The heroes might also find the tracks of Ardo the lumberjack heading towards the village. With another *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* check with a penalty of 2, alert heroes notice that the muscular lumberjack leaves much larger, deeper prints.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You move towards the small hunting lodge through the wind-swept branches of the mighty firs. The wind tears mercilessly at the straw-covered roof of the house. The one-storey building is made of solid stone but has a timbered roof in which you can see a small window. Next to the wooden door, under a small shelter, you see a stout hunting bow and a simple broom. With a determined expression you walk towards the lodge and knock on the entrance. A moment later, Jadwine answers the door. Her black hair flutters in the storm. You see a crackling fire in the fireplace. The huntress gazes at you with a hint of disbelief but invites you in.



The Heroes Arrived Too Early!

If the heroes try to visit Jadwine earlier in the adventure, she is out somewhere in the forest. They find her lodge but must wait several hours for her to return from a hunt.

If they search her lodge anyway, the Nameless substances mentioned in the section *Suspicious Items in the Hunting Lodge* are not present, because Jadwine doesn't prepare them until shortly before the ritual. She already has adult plants in her garden. When she returns, she answers any questions about the thefts in a monosyllabic way and tries to dismiss the heroes and get back to her work as quickly as possible. For a list of her suggested answers to the heroes' questions, see page 43.

1 Jadwine Hareflight, Huntress

Short Description: competent huntress and (secretly) witch; mid-20s; brown hair; eccentric; uncommunicative; uses many hunting terms; always raises an eyebrow; hates the Church of Praios; secretly sympathizes with the cult of the Nameless God.

Motivation: wants to be left in peace; desires to protect her sisterhood; hates the Church of Praios with a passion, due to its history of persecuting witches in centuries past.

Agenda: Support the cult and assist the innkeeper in getting rid of the Blessed One of Praios

Function: Suspect for the thefts; antagonist to the heroes; secretly a witch (Silent Sister)

Background: In truth, Jadwine is a young witch of the Coven of the Silent Sisters. By masquerading as a simple huntress, she has been able to live in the forest near Oldenbridge for years without trouble. The Blessed One, Praionde, has been a thorn in her side for years.

Jadwine's teacher, the witch Altrude, was imprisoned by the Banishing Rays (a fanatical layman's order of Praios that hates all magic) and died after months of torture. Since then, Jadwine fears and hates the Church of the lord of the gods and avoids it wherever she can. She cares little for the ideals of the Nameless cult, but the innkeeper has managed to use Jadwine's hatred to her own advantage. Now the witch is more tightly bound to the Nameless One than she thinks.



Presentation in Play: Speak with as few words as possible, to show the heroes how very much you do not want to talk to them. Use hunting terms, if you know any, and give others the feeling that they will be prey if they do not leave you in peace.

Fate: Jadwine does not appear in future official Aventuria products. Her fate lies in the heroes' hands.

Special: As a witch, Jadwine owns a witch's broom that she uses for flying. She does not have a familiar.

"No, that is red deer." [long pause] "You do not smoke it, you hang it to dry."

The Silent Sisters

The witches of the Silent Sisters live mainly in northern Aventuria. They view themselves as protectors of all witches and deem their secrecy as most important. These Daughters of Saturia often choose owls or birds of prey as familiars. They devote themselves to fighting against witch hunters and the persecution of witches. Many Silent Sisters are known as loners in their covens.

Jadwine Harefright

COU 13 SGC 11 INT 14 CHA 9
DEX 15 AGI 15 CON 12 STR 12
LP 29 AE 29 KP - MOV 8
INI 14 SPI 1 TOU 1 DO 7
FtP 1 PRO/ENC 0/0

Social Status: Free

Special Abilities: Area Knowledge (Oldenbridge Forest), Bind Familiar, Flying Balm, Forest Knowledge, Hide Aura, Hunter, Precise Shot/Throw I, Tradition (Witch)

Languages: Native tongue Garethi III

Literacy: Kusliker Signs

Advantages: Hidden Aura, Range Sense, Spellcaster

Disadvantages: Bad Habit (Taciturn), Negative Trait (Short Temper, Vengeance)

Combat Techniques: Bow 12 (14), Brawling 10 (11/7), Dagger 9 (10/7), Polearms 8 (9/6)

Heavy Dagger: AT 10 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Short Bow: RC 14 RT 1 DP 1D6+4 RA 10/50/80

Skills:

Physical: Body Control 8, Climbing 4, Flying 8, Perception 8, Self-Control 4, Stealth 8, Swimming 2

Social: Fast-Talk 7, Intimidate 4, Willpower 4

Nature: Animal Lore 7, Fishing 2, Orienting 5, Plant Lore 8, Survival 7, Tracking 7

Knowledge: Magical Lore 4, Religions 2

Craft: Leatherworking 4, Prepare Food 2, Treat Poison 2, Woodworking 4

Cantrips: Siren Call, Stay Dry

Spells: Armatrutz 5, Docility 5, Harmless

Shape 6, Fighting Stick 3, Spider Walk 7, Toad Jump 7, Witch's Claws 7

Rituals: Spellblade 3

Witch Curses: Prey! 7, Paralyze Tongue 3

Equipment: Dagger, Witch's Broom, Short Bow, Quiver, Ammunition (20 arrows), Wilderness Package

Combat Behavior: When fighting for her life, Jadwine tries to keep opponents at a distance with spells. She kills opponents with bow and arrow as if hunting dangerous animals. *Fighting Stick*, *Spider Walk*, and *Toad Jump* offer great possibilities for this tactic.

When trying to maintain her disguise as a huntress, Jadwine stays at a distance and uses her bow and the surroundings to her advantage. She is in no hurry and sees no need to fight fairly.

Escape: She withdraws from close combat as quickly as possible. Jadwine flees only after suffering *Pain III*, if possible by flying (which, along with her magic, makes her hard to catch).

Pain +1 at: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP and less.



Suspicious Items in the Hunting Lodge

Jadwine is not ready for the heroes' visit (she was certain that the bad weather would prevent them from coming out to her lodge). Gunelde has instructed her to deny any knowledge of Praionde's whereabouts. • ○

For a description of the lodge, see page 15. Many items here can betray the huntress' connection with the Nameless One. For example, Gunelde asked her to cultivate some Nameless cursed plants, and she has even planted a young blood beech. If the heroes ask Jadwine about these plants, she admits that plant lore is a hobby of hers and that she owns rare specimens for research, which she keeps in her many herbariums. With checks against *Religions* (Nameless) and *Plant Lore* (Poisonous Plants), the heroes can gain the following information.

Result of a Plant Lore (Poisonous Plants) Check

Failure	Many plants you have never seen before are growing in the garden. You identify an impressive selection of kitchen herbs.
1 QL	Jadwine is drying leaves of Bittersweet Nightshade in her lodge. It is a poisonous plant.
2 QL	Some of the plants are Demonclaw, Morningthorn, and Purple Poppy—very rare plants. It is forbidden to own some of these species.
3 QL	A glass jar in Jadwine's lodge contains a brown powder. From the smell and texture, you would say that it is rat fungus.

Results of a Religions (Nameless) Check

1 QL	The Morningthorn bush is cursed by the gods.
2 QL	Some of the suspicious plants have a connection to the Nameless One.
3 QL	Blessed Ones of the Nameless One use rat fungus in their rituals to sow Nameless Doubt. This fungus causes hallucinations, madness, and memory loss.

• ○ If the heroes have no knowledge of plants, they can refer to one of Jadwine's books. If the witch is at home, she allows the heroes to consult the books if they show enough interest, whether real or feigned. Ask for a simple check using *Fast-Talk* (Sweet-Talk).

• If your heroes played through the dragon hunt (see page 33), they probably met Jadwine and have already asked her about the thefts in the village. Their first meeting influences Jadwine's future behavior towards the heroes.

Jadwine's Answers
There have been recent thefts in the village. Do you know anything about them?

"No, not much. Drop off game and some herbs, that's it."

The tithe chest has been stolen and the villagers suspect you have something to do with it. What do you have to say?

"Suspicious bunch." [Long pause] "I have nothing to do with it! What use do I have for gold?" "I have paid my tithe. In goods. Shot a young buck. Will bring the rest at Year's End Day."

Have you seen anything suspicious that might help us?

"The smith walks around at night, have seen him. Maybe you should question him."

Was Praionde with you last night? What was the visit about?

"Yes." [Long pause] "She was here. We talked about animals. She wanted me to shoot something for the Year's End Day meal. Redtufts, partridges, maybe a wild sow..."

Are you involved with the disappearance of the Blessed One?

"Disappearance? You're saying she's gone? I don't believe that."

"I know nothing about that. Didn't even know she was gone."

The heroes can try a competitive check [*Empathy (Sense Deception)*] vs. Jadwine's *Fast-Talk (Subterfuge)*] to learn that she is hiding something.

Competitive Checks

Both parties make their checks and compare QL. The difference between the results is an indication of the degree of success.

If the result is a draw, or if both sides fail their checks, the targeted participant wins. If the heroes win, they know that Jadwine is lying about something.

Why do you have so many healing herbs, a large kettle, and a broom? Aren't you a huntress?

"I am not accountable to you! Keep out of my business!"
 "Of course I am a huntress, what else? Occasionally I sell the villagers something for their ailments." [Long pause]
 "And I do sometimes like to clean up!"

Don't you know that some of the plants in your garden are poisonous or even outlawed? Explain yourself!

"So you caught me. I like plants. Even have some books about them, see? Besides, some of these plants are not just poisonous—they are helpful, too. And they don't talk so much."

Unless one of the heroes is a witch, they may not even think of asking some of these questions unless they suspect Jadwine of being a witch, too. She is a Silent Sister, but only admits this to another witch. If the heroes try to scrutinize her with magic, they must do so secretly. Otherwise, Jadwine uses the advantage Hidden Aura to conceal her magical talent, especially if she suspects the heroes are close to discovering her true nature or if there is an obvious spellcaster in the group.

Possible Outcomes

- The heroes end the interrogation because they are getting nowhere, and return to the village. Continue with **The Innkeeper is Gone!** on page 44.
- If Jadwine feels cornered, she tries to escape. She casts a spell or curse to delay the heroes, and tries to flee on her broom, if possible. If she gets away, she walks on foot to the ritual cave to warn the other cultists. The heroes now have less time to investigate, for the cultists might conduct the ritual of sacrifice earlier than scheduled.
- If she escapes, Jadwine tries to ensure that nobody can follow her trail. The heroes must act quickly and stealthily to follow her unnoticed.
- Have the heroes make a competitive check [*Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)*] vs. Jadwine's *Tracking (Hide Tracks)*]. If successful, the heroes encounter a few snags along the way but do manage to reach the ritual cave. Jump directly to the final scene, **Site of the Nameless Ritual**, on page 48.
- If the heroes use violence or magic to discover Jadwine's role in the abduction, continue with the scene, **The Innkeeper is Gone!** If the heroes force Jadwine to reveal the location of the cave, skip to the final scene, **Site of the Nameless Ritual**, on page 48.

- It is possible that the heroes don't get Jadwine to talk and begin keeping an eye on her. A successful competitive check using *Stealth (Hide)* against Jadwine's *Perception (Spot)* (-1, SR 8, 11/14/14) leads to an interesting find: during the night, the witch sits on her broom and flies towards the mountains (during the day, unless she can't avoid it, she travels to the cave on foot to maintain her disguise for casual observers). Jadwine throws caution to the wind and flies during the day if she suspects that the heroes already know the location of the cave. Of course, flight-capable heroes could follow the witch to the ritual place.

The Innkeeper is Gone!

The heroes return to Oldenbridge after questioning Jadwine. Despite the raging storm, the heroes notice activity in the village. Gunelde has disappeared! Run the following encounters as dramatically as possible. The heroes soon learn the truth, and no truth is more bitter to the villagers—some of their neighbors secretly belong to a cult that feeds the growing power of the unholy Nameless One!

The villagers in the tavern are in turmoil. Gunelde went to retrieve some bottles of fruit schnapps from the storage cellar because she was running low, and she never returned. The villagers wanted to look for her, but the storm grew so violent that they dared not leave the tavern for a time. Most eventually went home and barred their doors. The few that remain in the common room all hold hands, fearing that they could be the next ones to disappear.

Their desperation grows if the heroes mention that they couldn't find the Blessed One (the young shepherdess, Irmi, begins to cry, and the smith Robosh stares into space, mumbling into his beard). If the heroes' investigation is going as expected, this scene takes place the day before the Year's End Day celebration. But how could that take place without Praionde's prayers, especially since, on the day after that, the gods' reign ends for the year?

If you want to make the final scene more dramatic, the Nameless Days might even start the next day. The heroes search but don't find the innkeeper in the storage cellar, which is reached via a trapdoor in the kitchen. The time has come for the heroes to search Gunelde's private rooms. If the heroes do not think of this themselves, one of the villagers suggests it in the hopes that it might lead to some clues.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

The door to the innkeeper's room opens with a creak. The small room holds only a small bed and a carved desk made of light spruce wood. Wind whips through the open window, sending rain-soaked sheets of paper flying from the desk. On closer inspection, the paper is covered with strange writing scrawled between disturbing images drawn in coal and ink.

What you find drawn on one of the sheets hanging from a bedpost chills you the most. The ink is smudged, but you recognize the image of a man with arms outspread. Chains lie at his feet, and there is nothing but night-black darkness where his face should be. It is as if somebody poured too much ink on the drawing, and it ran as the sheet became soaked. This is not the only image of a man without a face. He stares at you from countless sheets scattered around the room....

Heroes from appropriate backgrounds have no trouble recognizing the man without a face. He is the Twelvegods' enemy who is called by many names and yet has none (a.k.a. the Nameless One, the Thirteenth God, or the Golden God). If the players do not recognize his image from the description, have them make checks using *Religions (Nameless)* with a bonus of 1.

With a successful *Perception (Search)* check, the heroes find the following items in the room of the innkeeper turned cult leader.



Items You Can find

1 QL	The wet parchment reveals not only drawings of the Nameless One, but also sketches of a small figurine and a recipe for the preparation of a mushroom called rat fungus.
2 QL	There is a large amount of rat droppings on the floor. A check using <i>Animal Lore</i> (<i>Wild Animals</i>) with a bonus of 1 reveals that this clue points to the breed of rodents that are said to be connected to the Nameless One and are often found near his worshippers.
3 QL	A loose, wooden wall board behind the desk conceals a chest that contains Gunelde's diary. The diary describes her plan for carrying out the Nameless One's machinations.

Rat Fungus

Rat fungus, a small mushroom that is holy to the Nameless One, grows everywhere in Aventuria. It is grayish brown in color and has off-white lamellas with purple spots that emit soft, bluish light. It holds a mysterious fascination for mushroom hunters, who seek its promise of divine flavor. However, when ingested, it causes lasting Nameless Doubt, bad nightmares, and hallucinations. Imbibers begin to rail against the world and the gods, and some even convert to the faith of the 13th god.

Rat fungus is especially dangerous to Blessed Ones of the Twelvegods, as even simply touching it can lead to an infection with deadly zorgan pox (see **Core Rules**, page 344). Blessed Ones of the Nameless One value rat fungus because it helps them corrupt the faith of pious believers of the Twelvegods and convert them to the Nameless One.

If a hero gets exposed to rat fungus, the GM makes a poison level check (stats of 13/13/13, and a level of 3) with a penalty equal to the hero's Spirit. If successful, the character inhales enough spores to be seized by doubt or even feel compelled to eat the fungus outright.



Rat Fungus

This mushroom grows readily all over Aventuria during times without frost (mainly between the months of Rahja and Praios). Rat fungus can be distilled to create *rat fungus poison* (see below).

Search Difficulty: -4

Identification Difficulty: -3

Uses: 1/1/2/2/3/3

Cost: None (cannot be traded openly)

Special Rule: This fungus is especially dangerous to travelers.

The GM makes a check using Poison Level 3 (13/13/13) with a penalty equal to the victim's SPI. If successful, the character inhales spores or eats the fungus accidentally and begins to suffer doubt. If a Blessed One of the Twelvegods touches or eats the fungus, the GM checks to see if the character also catches zorgan pox (see page 344). The chance of infection is 50% (1-10 on 1D20). A Blessed One that does not suffer infection nevertheless is still overcome by Nameless Doubt.

Rat Fungus Poison Poison level: 3 (13/13/13)

Type: Fungus (plant) / Inhalation (spores) or Ingestion

Resistance: Spirit

Effect: victims gain the state *enslavement* unless they are Blessed Ones with Tradition (Nameless One). This state cannot be reduced for the duration of the poisoning. Victims that do not already worship the Rat Child suffer tempting visions. Victims can try to resist these seductive visions by making a *Willpower* (*Resist Persuasion*) check. Victims begin to experience doubt but do not suffer the state of *enslavement*.

Start: 5 minutes

Duration: 7 days / 13 hours

Special Rule: If Blessed characters are exposed to rat fungus, the GM checks for infection with Zorgan Pox (instead of applying the poison's normal effect). For more about Zorgan Pox, see page 344 in the **Core Rules**. The chance of infection is 50% (1-10 on a D20).

• Zorgan Pox is a very infectious and deadly disease with few known treatments. Heroes should not leave rat fungus lying around if there are Blessed Ones in the group. You can make the infection check in secret, if you wish, but you should steel yourself for tears if you want to leave the heroes' fate to a roll of the dice.



Robosh Remembers

Robosh the smith rushes into the room just as the heroes are making these horrific discoveries. The dwarf is agitated, and appears to be in even worse shape than before. The heroes last saw him in the common room, slumped over and mumbling to himself. But now, for the first time in weeks, his mind is clearing—and he is starting to remember. • ○

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Robosh the smith enters the room, swaying. His blood-shot eyes are wide open and staring, and his face is as pale as chalk. He doubles over as if about to be sick. "By my beard!" he says. "Can it be? I remember what I have been doing all these nights! Father forgive me! But it wasn't me... It was Gunelde, it was her all the time, she poisoned me! She used me, the wretched cur! She collected me every night and took me up into the mountains, to a cave. There were others there. Hooded shapes, all dark, standing around me, forcing me to... How could I? I made them an idol of pure gold. Faceless, like the people in the hoods, but it was wrong. Strong, free, without chains! If I had only... I wish I had taken my hammer and killed all those dorrakkashim! I should have bashed in my own head to end it! I bet my beard that these scum, these corrupters, have taken Praionde.

We must stop them, by my name of Robosh son of Barumox!"



Heroes familiar with the Nameless One might have grown suspicious when they visited Jadwine, or maybe even earlier. Robosh's story is the last piece of the puzzle, and confirms their worst fears. Even hardened heroes should be shocked, as the innkeeper is probably not the only one corrupted by the Nameless One. If what Robosh says is true, the heroes can no longer trust the villagers.

• Due to the heroes' unexpected interruption of her daily routine, Gunelde has neglected to give Robosh his daily dose of rat fungus. This probably saved the weakened dwarf's life. As the poison begins to clear his system, his memory slowly returns. Give the heroes as many clues as they need to discover the cultists' secret. If they already discovered everything themselves, use Robosh's memories to emphasize the importance of timely action, as the innkeeper's evil plans are already well advanced.



Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, the heroes should have the following information:

- Thefts have been occurring in the village for quite a while. Shortly after the arrival of the heroes, somebody stole the tithe chest from the shrine.
- Only gold items have been stolen.
- The Blessed One of Praios, Praionde, is missing. She was last seen with Jadwine the huntress. The Nameless cult is probably behind her abduction.
- Jadwine the huntress has nothing to do with the thefts, but is probably involved with the disappearance of Praionde. Her herbal garden points to a connection with the Nameless cult. The heroes might have found out that Jadwine is a witch.
- The innkeeper Gunelde Speltgrain has disappeared. Her private room holds definite clues that she serves the Nameless One. Robosh thinks that she is most likely one of the driving forces behind the cult.
- Robosh remembers being abducted by the innkeeper Gunelde at night to craft a golden statue in a dark ritual place.
- The golden statue symbolizes the Nameless One freeing himself from his chains. There are several cultists in the village, and they cloak themselves during their gatherings.
- It is likely that the cultists are behind the abduction of the Blessed One, Praionde.

CHAPTER 3: HORROR WITHOUT A NAME

"It is best to avoid the time called The Nameless Days, which occur at the end of the sun month of Rahja. [...]"

When the Disc of Praios darkens, terrible things happen on Dere. They call the first of these unholy days Isyahadin, the second Aphetadil, the third Rahastes. If you pray piously through the first three days, and if you stay alive, you've won half the battle. The fourth day is called Madaraestra. The worst day is the last, the one called Shihayazad. When it passes, the light of Praios' Disc returns to illuminate the darkest corners of the world, bringing an end to the pain. So I warn all pious and righteous folk—on these days, the Nameless One walks among us. Heed the advice of ancient wisdom. Lock yourself indoors and pray! Pray for the force of light to sustain you in the face of impending doom."

— from Chronicles of the Year in Praios' Graces, Praiodan Leomar of Duckingheath, 850 FB

If the heroes don't think of going with Robosh to the ritual space to save Praionde, the dwarf makes the suggestion. Robosh does not know exactly where the ritual space is located because Gunelde kept him blindfolded for much of the trip, but he can get the heroes closer to their destination. The ritual space is the scene of the final battle against the cultists. Make sure that the heroes do not just stumble to their doom.

Suggest that they take one last opportunity to find equipment or treat any injuries before heading out of the village. The grocer has more healing herbs and ointment on his shelves, if needed.

Through the Kosh in the Storm

Despite the storm, the heroes set out to look for the Nameless ritual space. Robosh remembers part of the trip and leads the heroes deep into the forest. A simple successful *Orienteering* check tells the hero that they are near the site of the dragon encounter (if they played that scene).



Due to the length of the march, have the players make checks with *Body Control (Balancing)* or *Climbing (Mountains)* when you think it is appropriate. A failed check means that character gains one level of *Stupor* for half an hour. The heroes pick their way through the undergrowth, slog along muddy mountain paths, and climb over fallen trees as flashes of lightning illuminate the cloudy sky with increasing intensity. As the party nears the mountains, Robosh announces that he no longer feels confident about which route to take. The ground rises steeply about a mile ahead of the party. Robosh says this seems familiar, but he can't be sure.

The soil is too wet to find tracks, but the heroes can still try to find other traces of Gunelde's path. Luckily, she left visible tracks in the undergrowth that they can spot even in poor light, but they must search a large area. To find the innkeeper's tracks, the heroes must make a cumulative check using *Tracking (Humanoid Tracks)* with a bonus of 1. They can make a check every 5 minutes. Once they collect 6 QL, they find Gunelde's tracks, which lead straight towards the mountains.

When they reach 10 QL, they arrive at the base of the mountain near a craggy cave entrance.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

You cannot tell how late it is when you finally reach the base of the mountain. The Sign of Mada shines through the thinning cloud cover and the wind tosses your hair, whipping rain in your face. You find a gaping hole in the mountainside that looks almost like a sneering maw with sharp, ragged teeth. Robosh is so exhausted that he can barely keep his eyes open. He wheezes like a teapot, but then nods in excitement as he studies the rock formation. He believes this must be the entrance to the ritual space. There, at the entrance, you find Gunelde's footprints, nearly obscured by rain but still recognizable in the dirt.



Site of the Nameless Ritual

The adventure is nearing its conclusion, and the heroes are about to enter caves full of danger. When describing this creepy and hostile location, be sure to invoke applicable disadvantages, such as *Fear of... (Cramped Spaces)*, *Fear of... (the Dark)*, *Fear of... (Spiders)*, and anything else that preys upon common primal fears (see *Afraid of...* on page 170 in the **Core Rules**). The heroes should find it difficult (but not

too difficult) to prevent Praionde's sacrifice by the cultists. The following sections describe the various rooms and locations within the caves, including occupants, traps, and other hazards.

Remember that large portions of the cave are completely lightless, in case the heroes didn't bring along torches (or if their torches have become soaked by the rain). Remember also that checks sometimes suffer penalties due to poor visibility. For more about visibility penalties, see page 348 in the **Core Rules**.

A numbered map of the site of the ritual appears at the end of this book. You may give this map to the players to aid their understanding of the location. To make the scene more thrilling, do not hand out the entire map all at once—instead, cover the parts that have not yet been explored, and only reveal the map piece by piece. For convenience, you may download the map at www.ulisses-us.com.



1 The Nest of the Cave Spiders

The heroes enter the cave system through a narrow corridor with a high ceiling and damp walls. Soon they reach a grotto hewn from living rock, where some cave spiders have made their nest. These man-sized spiders were drawn here by the power of the Nameless One and now serve as guardians of the ritual space. Their web stretches across the grotto. The heroes even spot a wrapped corpse that the beasts are storing for a future meal. The cave spiders attack the heroes as soon as they sense them, because cave spiders can never have enough food (if you want to grow, you must eat...). The party faces a number of full-grown cave spiders equal to their own number.



If the heroes have been weakened, or if the group is not especially powerful, reduce the number of encounters before the final battle, and pit the heroes against fewer cave spiders and wolf rats.

Cave Spider

Size: 1 to 2 feet tall; 5 to 6 feet long

Weight: 60 to 80 pounds

COU 11 **SGC** 9 (a) **INT** 14 **CHA** 8

DEX 12 **AGI** 15 **CON** 12 **STR** 14

LP 22 **INI** 7+2D6 **DO** 5

PRO 2 **SPI** -2 **TOU** 0 **MOV** 7

Bite: AT 14 DP 1D6+2* RE short

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: Grapple

Skills: Body Control 12, Climbing 14, Feat of Strength 7, Intimidate 7, Perception** 7, Self-Control 10, Stealth 14, Willpower 5

Number: 1 or 1D3+2 (spider nest)

Size Category: medium

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Loot: 25 rations (guts, inedible), poison (basis for Arax, 70 silverthalers)

Combat Behavior: Cave Spiders wait until something touches their web, then they attack their prey and follow it until it gets too far away from the nest (about 50 yards). Sometimes cave spiders hunt outside their territory. They perceive any creature up to human size as prey.

Escape: Loss of 50% LP

Animal Lore

- **QL 1:** Knowledge about cave spider poison.
- **QL 2:** Knowledge about the size of their territory (50 yards).
- **QL 3+:** Cave spiders do not like leechfright. They suffer an Attack penalty of 2 when facing opponents who are coated with leechfright ointment.

Special Rules

*) **Cave Spider Poison:** Level: 4; Type: Weapon Poison, venom; Start: 3 CR; Duration: 24 hours; Effect: one level of Paralysis/no effect
Cave spiders can use their poison more than once. The effect is cumulative.

** **Darksight:** Cave spiders have Darksight I

Pain +1 at: 17 LP, 11 LP, 6 LP, and 5 LP and less.



You can extend the caves as much as you like, if you think that the players would prefer a more difficult challenge. Send more cave spiders, or use (number of heroes x 2) nestlings. Nestlings possess stats that are half those of the grown-up animals, but their sheer numbers should still prove troublesome for the heroes.

If the heroes like physical challenges, let them find a half-buried side passage that circles around and comes out behind the cultists. If the heroes are in the mood for a daring climb and a crawl through narrow spaces that pushes their endurance to the limit, they can surprise their enemies in the final fight.

2 Lair of the Wolf Rats

Rats are often called servants of the Nameless One. People say that evil works attract them. It is not surprising, then, that these particular vermin have made themselves at home in the cave. They share the rest of the grotto with some (optional) additional cave spiders. With a successful *Perception* (*Spot*) check, the heroes hear the rats' high-pitched squeaking before they enter the cave. This foreknowledge may not be of much help, as the rodents use many small cracks and crevices to move quickly through the cave. You can set (heroes x 3) wolf rats against the heroes at any time.



The heroes may make *Stealth* (*Sneak*) checks to avoid their enemies, but this does not help against the rats. If successful, send (heroes x 2) additional wolf rats against them.



In an attempt at redemption, Robosh furiously attacks anything that moves, despite his exhaustion. His loud actions draw attention, and might even cause the cultists to notice the heroes' presence sooner.



Wolf Rat

Size: 1 to 2 feet long (without tail); 2 to 3 feet long (including tail); 8 to 10 inches high

Weight: 1 to 3 pounds

COU 10 **SGC** 10 (a) **INT** 14 **CHA** 11

DEX 11 **AGI** 13 **CON** 6 **STR** 5

LP 5 **INI** 12+1D6 **DO** 7

PRO 0 **SPI** 1 **TOU** 2 **MOV** 6

Bite: AT 10 DP 1D3* RE short

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: Body Control 4, Climbing 10, Perception** 10, Self-Control 4, Stealth 7, Willpower 2

Number: 2D6+6 (rat colony)

Size Category: tiny

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Combat Behavior: Wolf rats mainly flee from humans, but they sometimes attack from ambush and go for exposed areas of skin.

Escape: Loss of 50% LP

Animal Lore

- ◆ **QL 1:** These are creatures of the Nameless One.
- ◆ **QL 2:** They usually flee from combat (1-4 on a D6) when threatened with fire.
- ◆ **QL 3+:** Wolf rats can spread diseases like Lutanias.

Special Rules

*) **Disease:** If a wolf rat bites you, roll 1D20 minus TOU at the end of combat. 1-12 *no infection*, 13-15 *infection with Lutanias*, 16-18 *infection with swamp fever*, 19-20 *infection with zorgan pox* (see **Core Rules**, page 344).

) **Darksight: Wolf rats have Darksight II.

Pain +1 at: 4 LP, 3 LP, 2 LP, and 1 LP.



If the heroes search the room, they find the following.

- ◆ **Shelf:** The shelf holds various books and documents, including cult records, a collection of recipes for preparing rat fungus, some books of myths, and even texts from the Churches of the Twelvegods. The Church texts have been revised amateurishly. Passages are blackened, removed, or annotated with disparaging comments praising the Nameless One. The most dangerous book, certainly, is the incomplete edition of the *13 Doxologies of the Nameless One*, which directly challenges the faith of believers in the Twelvegods. It is rumored that reading even a few pages of this book shakes the soul and converts the reader to the faith of the Thirteenth God. For a full description of this book, see page 59.
- ◆ **Tithe chest:** This chest contains the missing piece of meteoritic iron, which is the size of a child's head and shimmers darkly. It comprises the bulk of the weight of the tithe chest. In addition, the chest holds a silver amulet shaped like a gentian flower, and some other gilded ritual items. The amulet is a recharging Psychostabilis amulet—for a description, see page 59.
- ◆ **Wardrobe:** This heavy, double wardrobe contains pickled and dried rat fungi, as well as some herbs that can be mixed to create incense. It also contains 1D6+2 dark tabards with hoods. The heroes may think that not all of the cultists are present, but the truth is simply that the cult of the Nameless One plans to indoctrinate further members.

3 Preparation Room

To reach this part of the cave system, the heroes must traverse a low, narrow, 30-yard long corridor that ends in the cult's preparation room. The heroes will likely enter the ritual room first, as they can see its light from the main corridor (and Praionde is being sacrificed there). The large, bronze-shod tithe chest the cult has stolen sits in the preparation room, which also holds a large oaken desk, a shelf with books and notes, a large wardrobe, and a number of wolf rats.



• **Desk:** Besides stationery, the desk holds a large collection of cult records. The writing is awkward and unclear—much is crossed out, and sections of the text run across the sheets as if scrawled hastily and blindly. On one sheet, large letters read, “The 14th Doxology.” This new chapter of the *13 Doxologies of the Nameless One*, recently penned by Gunelde, praises the new age of the Nameless One’s reign.

- The piece of meteoritic iron is the size of a child’s head and shimmers darkly. It accounts for most of the weight of the tithe chest.
- The amulet is a recharging Psychostabilis amulet (see page 59).
- The *13 Doxologies of the Nameless One* is a wicked book and a dangerous challenge to the faith of every believer in the Twelvegods.
- The 14th Doxology is a new chapter of the book, penned recently by Gunelde, that praises the new age of the Nameless One’s reign.
- For detailed descriptions of these items and a handout of the 14th Doxology to give your players, see the Appendix.



4 The Ritual Room

Once they pass the second grotto, the heroes begin to hear droning chants. Candlelight casts restless, flickering shadows on the walls. The ritual room lies ahead. Within, hooded shapes surround an altar, and sweet incense wafts through the air.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

13 hooded shapes stand around a stone altar. Each holds a burning candle, as if celebrating a twisted version of the Festival of Lights. Two large torches illuminate the altar. At the far end of the chamber, you see a socket hewn into the stone wall. A golden statue of the Nameless One stands within. One cultist steps away from the altar, lifts the figurine reverently on high, and returns to the center of the room, accompanied by ritual chanting. The others take one step back, letting you see the altar clearly. Praionde lies bound and gagged on the cold stone.

The golden statue of the faceless god looms above her. The light of the candles paints blood-red patterns on the walls. A corpulent shape in a cowl stands behind Priande. This must be the innkeeper, Gunelde Speltgrain—the leader of the cult! Her plump fingers raise a richly decorated dagger over Praionde’s chest. The chanting grows louder and Gunelde begins to pray out loud, saying,

“We praise YOUR glory. Free YOURSELF from your chains. Fill us with YOUR name, forgotten for eons. Take this sacrifice...”



The Finale

The heroes shouldn’t waste time listening to Gunelde’s litany, because she is about to sacrifice Praionde’s body and soul to her dark god.

The ritual timeline (see below) indicates what happens if the ritual proceeds without interruption, and does not take the heroes’ actions into account. Plan for what might occur differently if the heroes arrive at the ritual space much earlier than expected.

This scene works best if the heroes feel the crush of time. To simulate this, set a D20 at 20 and reduce the number by 1 for each combat round that passes, checking the timeline to see what happens next.

As indicated on the timeline, specific events occur at specific times. Feel free to adjust the timeline for dramatic reasons or change the situation entirely, depending on the heroes’ actions.

Ritual Timeline (counting backwards from 20)

- | | |
|----|--|
| 20 | The heroes reach the ritual space and witness the start of the ritual. |
| 15 | The leader of the Nameless cult, Gunelde Speltgrain, cuts the Blessed One with the first dagger thrust (8 DP, <i>Pain I</i>). All cultists receive a bonus of +1 to Courage. |
| 13 | The consecration of the golden statue begins with the 13 Dagger Strokes of the Nameless One. As if in a trance, Gunelde strikes at the air with the dagger again and again, taking care not to kill Praionde accidentally. |
| 10 | The Blessed One suffers a bleeding wound to the chest (20 DP, <i>Pain III</i>). All the cultists receive a bonus of +1 to Attack. |
| 5 | Gunelde inflicts a gaping wound on Praionde with a strong blow. The Blessed One falls unconscious due to blood loss (24 DP, <i>Pain IV</i>). All the cultists receive +1 SP to any successful Willpower checks. |
| 0 | The Blessed One dies, the statue of the Golden God becomes consecrated, the power of the Nameless One grows, and the cultists receive an additional bonus to all stats mentioned above. |

Gunelde measures her dagger thrusts so as not to kill the Blessed One until the final blow. She uses her action each combat round to stab Praionde and then lets the blood on the blade drip over the golden statue. Only a few of her blows cause full damage—most cause only 1 DP, but the Blessed One is slowly bleeding to death.



Fill the room with as many cultists as you wish! These followers of the Nameless One are just late due to the storm.



Some cultists hesitate, or flee from the heroes. They are simple villagers with little fighting experience. They defend themselves but do not attack the heroes.

If this is not enough to save the heroes' skins, Robosh throws himself at the cultists in righteous anger and does his best to keep them busy. If that is still insufficient, and the ritual is about to end, refrain

from giving the cultists any bonuses to Courage, Attack, and Willpower, as mentioned in the ritual timeline.

Ideally the heroes should put an end to the ritual before Gunelde kills Praionde and consecrates the statue, but they must deal with up to 13 opponents (the other cult members). Gunelde continues the ritual so as not to interrupt the consecration. If the heroes attack Gunelde, the other cultists defend her. It is not easy to get to the leader because the heroes must deal with the cultists first. However, they should not have to fight more than (heroes +3) cultists in any given combat round.

The heroes have several options, as discussed below. In summary, **Option A** involves direct combat. **Options B** and **C** cover alternative actions. Successful implementation of Options B or C grants the heroes more time to save Praionde and stop the cultists. **Option D** involves the heroes sending for help from the village, but is only possible if they arrive long before the ritual starts.

Cult Leader Gunelde, Empowered by the Nameless One

For a complete description of Gunelde, see page 16.

COU 15 SGC 14 INT 13 CHA 13
DEX 12 AGI 10 CON 13 STR 12
LP 31 KP 24 INI 12

PRO: 0 SPI 3 TOU 2 DO 5 MOV 7

Basilisk-Tongue: AT 13 PA 5 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Special Abilities: Tradition (Nameless)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Blessed One, Pragmatic, Trustworthy / Fat, Personality Flaw (Arrogance), Principles (Nameless Moral Code), Slow

Skills: Body Control 6, Feat of Strength 5, Intimidation 5, Perception 6, Self Control 5, Willpower 10

Liturgical Chants: Call the Horde of the Rat Child 7, Nameless Doubt 7, Nameless Oblivion 5, Pervasive Sphere Song of the One 5

Combat Behavior: She tries to finish the ritual while being protected by her cult. She only acts in an emergency, in which case she fights like a Fury but without much skill. She is willing to die for her new god.

Escape: Gunelde does not flee. Her only path out of the cave leads over the heroes' corpses.

Pain +1 at: 23 LP, 16 LP, 8 LP, and 5 LP and less.



Cultist

COU 14 SGC 11 INT 13 CHA 12
DEX 13 AGI 12 CON 12 STR 12
LP 29 INI 13 DO 6

PRO 0 SPI 0 TOU 0 MOV 8

Unarmed: AT 8 PA 4 DP 1D6 RE short

Basilisk-Tongue: AT 12 PA 6 DP 1D6+2 RE short

Club: AT 12 PA 5 DP 1D6+2 RE medium

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: Body Control 3, Feat of Strength 3, Perception 3, Self-Control 4, Stealth 6, Willpower 3

Size Category: medium

Type: Intelligent Creature, humanoid

Loot: depends on the cultist; random find of 2D6 thalers

Combat Behavior: The cultists attack heroes with superior numbers and like to employ *Feints* with their basilisk tongue daggers.

Escape: Roll 1D6: Cultists either fight to the death (1-3) or flee when they lose 50% of their LP (4-6). As long as their leader is alive and has not fled, they usually do not run away.

Pain +1 at: 22 LP, 15 LP, 7 LP, and 5 LP and less.



- A successful attempt to distract individual cultists does not buy the heroes more time but things go a bit easier on them, as distracted cultists do not join the fight this round.
- The heroes may try to distract Gunelde, but can make only one such attempt per time interval. The players must decide which hero makes the attempt. If successful, the ritual is delayed—set the counter one higher.

Option A

Let Them Have It!

The heroes try to save Praionde's life by attacking the cultists with everything they've got. This creates many opportunities for drama. If your heroes have no trouble dealing with the cultists and defeat them quickly, more cave spiders or wolf rats show up to keep them busy. Reward creative ideas: if one or more heroes want to draw Gunelde into combat to free Praionde from the altar, tell the players which cultists they need to defeat so they can try.

Option B

Divine Assistance and a Quick Tongue

Blessed Ones in the group try to stop the ritual with chants, or particularly eloquent heroes try to use their powers of persuasion to make Gunelde and the cultists pause. This is the toughest of the options. All cult members are under the influence of rat fungus, which basically renders them immune to reason. Gunelde, a Blessed One of the Nameless One, is focused squarely on the ritual and can barely be reached with words. Checks for liturgical chants

Mercy for the Cultists

The villagers in Gunelde's cult devoted themselves to the Nameless One, so the heroes should have no qualms against fighting them. But this does not mean they have to be cruel about it. Cultists are not monstrous opponents, they are simple villagers. Gunelde poisoned many of them with rat fungus to make them more responsive to the teachings of the Nameless One, and maybe there is still hope for their souls. The heroes might even have taken a real liking to some of them. If your group enjoys exploring ethical dilemmas, one of the most likable villagers turns out to be a cultist.



suffer a penalty of 1, as do checks using *Fast-Talk* (*Persuasion* (*Oratory*) or *Seduction* (*Flirting*)). The heroes could try *Protect the Defenseless*, or even competitive checks using *Fast-Talk* (*Manipulation*) vs. *Willpower* (*Resist Fast-Talk*) to try to irritate Gunelde or draw her into conversation, thus delaying the ritual a bit.

Option C

Magical Intervention

Spellcasters can try something other than spells that cause damage. They do not have time to cast complicated spells or rituals, but illusions can serve as excellent distractions. Mind control can lure or force cultists from the fight. Even a simple *Paralysis* spell can work wonders.

Option D

Reinforcements from the Village

If the heroes feel they won't survive the combat without help, they can send to Oldenbridge for reinforcements. This option is only permissible if the heroes arrive at the ritual space much sooner than expected. Once the ritual begins, it is impossible (even with distractions) to delay the sacrifice until reinforcements arrive, even if word reaches the village within minutes via magical means.

The villagers do not want to be out during the Nameless Days, but if a messenger arrives and describes the heroes' dire situation, they do not hesitate to help. 4D6+4 very brave villagers armed with pitchforks and torches rush to the cave to save the Blessed One. An agitated mob of villagers is a danger to cultists just from sheer numbers alone, and the heroes can deal with fewer enemies. But the heroes have placed innocent villagers' lives at risk and must be extra careful, as it can be hard to distinguish friend from foe in the dark caves... Gunelde proves difficult to distract from the ritual, even when surrounded by fighting peasants.

The End

However the heroes do it, we hope that, in the end, they triumph over the Nameless cult.

If they are very successful, Praionde survives and can be moved after her wounds are treated.

If Praionde dies, the heroes can do little beyond bury her in the village's Boron yard.

If the heroes didn't have an opportunity to search the Preparation Room (see page 50) before the fight, they may do so now.

Treating Praionde

Depending on the Blessed One's condition when the heroes get to the altar, it might be necessary to rescue her from the brink of death. For detailed rules on treating wounds, see the **Core Rules**, page 340.

The heroes may wind up with a group of captives to bring back to the village—the exact count depends on how many cultists survived the battle—and can now learn the cultists' identities. The hooded figures all turn out to be inhabitants of Oldenbridge, some of whom the heroes have come to know and perhaps even like. If your players enjoy role playing feelings of remorse, refer to *Mercy for the Cultists* on page 53.

With the exception of Praionde, you can pick whomever else you want as members of the cult. When the effects of the rat fungus fade, some of them could (with divine assistance) become useful members of the community again. The one exception is Gunelde, whose soul is lost permanently due to her consecration to the Nameless One.



Sample Cultists

• **Ettel Algerein:** The grocer is a member of the Nameless cult. He pretended to be a victim of theft as part of his disguise. When the heroes first question him, he does not know that Gunelde is behind the thefts, nor does he know about Gunelde's plans to create a golden statue. His family has no clue about his activities and thinks he is just with friends or drinking in the tavern when he is away. His wife is often so drunk that she does not even notice when he sneaks away to the gatherings.

Ettel Algerein mainly craves wealth (he does not receive enough of it by selling his wares). His greed prevents him from sacrificing too much of his private fortune to the cult. He is the one who obtained many of the books and unusual cult items for Gunelde, as well as the magical amulet.

• **Jadwine Harefricht:** The witch joined the cult mainly because one of its goals is to shatter Praios' influence in Oldenbridge and prepare for the return of the Golden God. As a Hidden Sister, Jadwine has devoted her life to hunting enemies of witches, and she tried to use the cult as a tool. By ingesting rat fungus, she was pulled deeper than she intended into the figurative swamp of the worship of the Nameless One.

• **Seppo Graininger:** This widower has lost his faith. What true god would take his beloved wife from him? What divine power could explain why he destroys everything he touches ever since his wife died? Seppo was an easy victim for Gunelde. He readily joined the cult to find true faith and happiness in his life.

• **Maline Turnsheep:** Maline is being subjugated by her husband. He beats her and treats her with disdain. She never left him because she still loved the man he was, but the rat fungus quickly had its effect on her. Now she is consumed by a secret wish for vengeance and hungers for power to rebel against her tyrannical husband. She sees the abuse and pain she must suffer as her sacrifice to the Thirteenth God, and offers it willingly until her day of vengeance arrives.

• **Gunelde Speltgrain:** Gunelde is the leader of the Nameless cult. She was the first in town to receive visions of the power of the Thirteenth God and his glorious future. The innkeeper strives for more power and influence than her current status in the village community allows. Her goal is to spread the true faith (the faith

of the Nameless One, that is) across all of Dere and take her place in his hierarchy, maybe as a prophet. Gunelde is deluded and has given her body and soul to the service of her god.

What To Do With the Statue?

Whether or not it was successfully consecrated to the Nameless One, the gold statue is a threat to divine order. Ask the heroes to describe what they do with it. Do they destroy it at once? Do they ask Robosh to melt it in his forge? Do they give the unholy object to Praionde, or deliver it to the main temple in the capital? Or do they hush up its discovery in order to keep the gold (a value of almost 200 ducats)?

Back to the Village

Depending on whether the villagers know about the plots of the Nameless One, they await the heroes with either fear or exuberance. If the heroes save Praionde (the desired result), the villagers' joy is even greater. The heroes must explain many things, and of course they must tell the story of their heroism several times. The Year's End Day festival takes place with only a minor delay, driving away most of the Oldenbridgers' remaining worries.

As their wounds heal, the heroes may enjoy the hospitality of the villagers through the Nameless Days and beyond. On the first day of Praios, the villagers invite the heroes to the now-ownerless Grain Room Tavern for a celebration in their honor, the likes of which Oldenbridge has not seen for many a long year!

Shortly after the heroes return to town, Praionde asks for a moment of their time in private.

Read Aloud or Paraphrase

Still injured, the Blessed One receives you in the chapel of Lord Praios, which feels particularly safe today. "Brave heroes, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Without your brave actions I would not be walking around today. You have done Oldenbridge and me a great service, and we are forever in your debt. Not only have you saved the lives of the good villagers, you have also saved their eternal souls. May the Twelve, first among them Praios, reward you."

I have one further question I would like to ask regarding the piece of iron you found in the tithe chest. I recovered it from the Baumes some weeks ago and locked it away safely for Lord Praios. I do not really know what this artifact is, but it is full of powerful magic, of the kind Lord Praios shuns. I do not dare to leave the village so soon after all this trouble. The villagers need the encouragement and protection that only I can give in the name of the just god. The Count will have to wait on the tithe a little longer—he can live with that. But this artifact worries me, especially since it was in the possession of... that person for so long.

I ask you to bring it to the Temple of Praios in Angbar, the Iron City, site of my consecration. The artifact will be much safer there rather than here. I trust you to do this. You have proven yourselves worthy and of firm belief. Go with the blessing of Praios."



Praionde allows the heroes to examine the meteorite before they leave, if they wish, but doesn't want to know what they learn. "Tell it to the Blessed Ones in Angbar," she says. For more about the meteorite, see the Appendix on page 58.

If the heroes developed a liking for Kosh and the mountains, the journey to the temple in the capital of the Principality of Kosh, with all its attendant dangers, would make a fine adventure.

The Reward for All This Trouble

The heroes are the saviors of the sendhold Oldenbridge and have earned a reward. Think of something fitting for the villagers to present to them, as their way of saying goodbye. It can even be something of symbolic value, like a hand-made talisman, a bottle of their best moonshine fruit schnapps, or a jar of tasty jam. If Robosh survived the finale, he offers to customize a weapon from his stock for them, or even to fashion a new, personalized weapon. Either way, Praionde offers to bless them before they leave.

If the heroes agreed to deliver the iron meteorite to Angbar, she casts *Sanctify Object* on the tithe chest to seal the artifact inside for the journey. She also gives them a sealed letter addressed to her home temple. They receive 12 ducats each upon delivery. Each hero receives 25 AP to use as desired, plus 5 more specifically to improve knowledge of Kosh (useable on skills like *Geography* or *Religions*). If they successfully navigated the *Dragon Hunt* optional event, they get another 3 AP. Congratulations on restoring the peace and freeing Kosh from the Nameless threat!



APPENDIX

Praionde's Inventory

Inventory of the Tithe Chest

- Protective figurine of St. Arras de Mott, gilded.
- Two books, filled with prayers to the lord Praios, bound with gold
- Tithe received: 87 ducats, 678 silverthalers, 2,442 halers, 780 kreutzers in sum
- Tithe payments in kind are used for the good of the village community and are listed separately
- Temple intercession on behalf of the families Hillbridge and Goosebrink
- Temple tax: 18 ducats, 74 silverthalers, 186 halers, 58 kreutzers in sum
- Lump of metal fallen from the sky, probably magical, found recently in the Baumel via Praios' guidance

Oldenbridge, 10th of Rahja,
in the year 1038 after the Fall of Bosparan

Chronicles of Oldenbridge

Chronicles of Oldenbridge in the year 1038 FB, Rahja Moon

On the 3rd day of the moon, young Ulide Pearinger left us to seek her fortune as a crafter's apprentice in the city. Praios be with her.

On the 9th day of the moon, the collection produced 4 silverthalers, 12 halers, and 3 kreutzers. Be they sent to Praios.

On the 14th day of the moon, the Harebreat family mentioned the loss (theft?) of a golden ducat from the family's belongings.

On the 14th day of the moon, the collection produced 3 silverthalers, 10 halers, and 8 kreutzers. Be they sent to Praios.

On the 20th day of the moon, family Oakenbush complained about the theft of a family heirloom. It is a golden amulet of Praios of great personal and material worth.

It is the 25th day of the moon. There has been another theft. The golden signet ring of the grocer Ettel Algerein has been taken.

It is a treasured heirloom of his father and forefathers.

What, by Praios, is happening in Oldenbridge?

The Iron Meteorite

Potential Dark Eye

"A Dark Eye is a powerful artifact. It has abilities beyond our imagination and can show us strange places, the future, or even the past. Who created them, and why, is a mystery that remains to be solved. That was what the good mage said, and he knows best. I saw a Dark Eye once, in the Orc Hoard, the legendary treasure of Phex, but I didn't look into it. Left that to others. I do not need to know my future, let alone anybody else's..."

—from the memories of Koshan adventurer Firutin Mooryard, modern

The stone that fell in the clear Kosh mountain stream Baumel is meteoritic iron, the substance Dark Eyes are made of.

Not every piece can be used, but the most powerful ones exhibit magic even in their unshaped form. The stone that landed in Oldenbridge is in fact a potential Dark Eye, but the secret of creating these artifacts is believed long forgotten. If anybody does still know the process, it would be the extremely powerful Cloaked Masters.

Appearance: The stone is the size of a child's head and is made of mainly black metal veined with shining lines and particles that shimmer in the light. It weighs about 60 pounds.

Magical Analysis: A master of clairvoyant magic or a wise Blessed One could have other ways to study the potential Dark Eye. Heroes using the spells *Odem* and *Analyze*, the liturgical chant *See Magic*, and above all the skill *Magical Lore (Artifacts)*, could learn something about the object's mystical abilities. Any hero can use the rules for magical analysis (see **Core Rules**, page 268) to try to learn more about the material. Even though immense arcane power sleeps in the meteoritic iron, it is hard to analyze. Its arcane flows are too chaotic and unshaped, and spells and liturgical chants suffer a penalty of 3.

All heroes can try a magical analysis only once (no retries), after which they can discuss their respective results, but only the highest check matters (the heroes cannot make a cumulative group check using *Magical Lore (Artifacts)*).

1 QL – Magic is present and extremely strong. It's impossible to determine the number of AP it contains, as it is a pure, raw, magical material that contains no guided spellcraft.

2 QL – The inherent magic is rough and shapeless. It's impossible to determine a duration. It looks as if it has lost no power for a long period of time. The heroes are holding one of the very rare, permanent magical items.

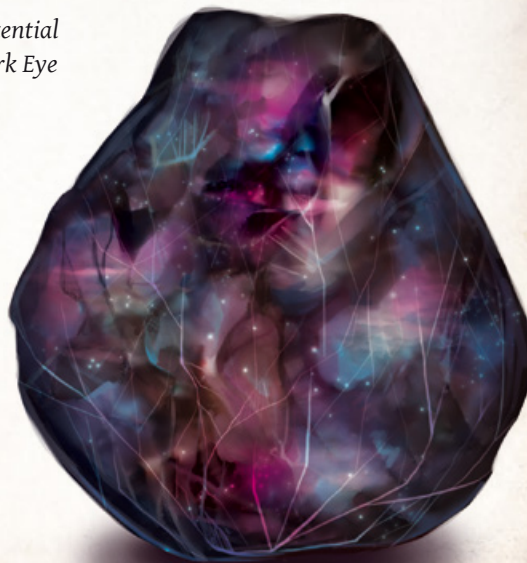
3 QL – The magical pattern infusing the item is unstructured. Irregular discharges of energy reveal aspects of elemental or clairvoyant magic. The item has all the properties usually ascribed to the legendary Dark Eyes.

4 QL – According to legends, Dark Eyes are made from fallen stars. The magic in this item is unshaped, but with the right magical rituals, it could be guided. The item's strongest aspect is clairvoyance magic. Other effects, like drawing magical energy or the manifestation of minor spirits or energy discharges, seem to be side effects of the object's chaotic structure.

5 QL – The analysis shows that the material could be the basis of a Dark Eye. Patterns in the chaotic matrix become visible, presenting the first foundation for an artifact thesis you could use to give the object shape. The meteoritic iron itself would have to be worked for this to succeed.

6 QL – You gain enough information to write down and study, but not enough to begin enchanting. You must find other ways to study it, but a potential Dark Eye rests in your hands!

Potential
Dark Eye



Powers: Most of the time, the stone is kept in the tithe chest, which is lined with Kosh basalt that prevents it from developing magical powers. Free of this influence, the nascent artifact would begin to exhibit abilities. For now, using the stone in a controlled fashion is almost impossible. Gunelde Speltgrain alone can make some use of the artifact by praying to the Nameless One, and results appear randomly 1D3 times per 24 hours. Roll 1D20 on the following chart to determine effects. If the heroes try to use the artifact, generate effects as you wish.

1D20	Effect
1	Gaze into the Past: The artifact darkens until its surface looks completely smooth. Then it shows images of events that occurred in the immediate past (2D6 days, max.) up to a distance of 6 miles away.
2-4	Minor Spirits: 1D6 elemental minor spirits (mostly of the element Ore) spontaneously manifest around the artifact and then disappear again after 1D6x5 minutes.
7-10	Magical Maelstrom: The artifact absorbs magic from its surroundings. Spellcasters near the artifact (up to 7 yards) lose 1D3 AE (1D6 AE if touching it).
11-12	Arcane Sight: The surface of the artifact shows its immediate surroundings as if viewed by the spell <i>Odem Arcanum</i> cast with a QL of 3.
13	Energy Burst: The artifact releases a burst of magical energy that causes 1D3 DP (no PRO) to all those nearby.
14-19	Clairvoyance: The artifact darkens until its surface looks completely smooth. Then, live images of events (occurring up to 6 miles away) appear on its surface.
20	Extended Clairvoyance: The artifact darkens until its surface looks completely smooth. Then it reveals images of events in a random location. These might be live, or at any distance in the past or the (possible) future. Roll 1D20; on a result of 18-20, the images are so fleeting and bewildering that viewers suffer a level of the condition <i>Confusion</i> .

Gunelde's Psychostabilis Amulet

Gunelde's family has possessed this powerful magical artifact for generations. The filigreed moonsilver pendant is shaped like a gentian flower and contains a recharging PSYCHOSTABILIS spell. To activate the spell, one rubs the pendant's obverse side. The heroes might notice the talisman in the innkeeper's possession, or find it in the ritual cave. If Gunelde uses it to protect herself from magical examination or influence during the adventure, the charge is used up. It takes about a month to recharge.

Psychostabilis Amulet

Description: A moonsilver pendant shaped like a filigreed gentian flower.

Effect: Spirit +2; recharging artifact (once per month)

Spells: PSYCHOSTABILIS (QL: 4, Duration: 30 minutes)

Usable: Once per month

Trigger: Rubbing the back of the amulet

Cost: 130 AE, 13 additional permanent AE

Cost: 2,800 silverthalers

The 13 Doxologies of the Nameless One

"But if HE was the first, born before all other gods, must he not be the most powerful? Is it not right that HE should rule the world and the Spheres? Must we not think that the others have stolen his rightful place through rebellion?"
 – from the XIII Doxologies of the Nameless One, excerpt from the 5th Doxology, from a new copy found in Oldenbridge, 1038 FB

The book, bound in plain leather, presents an alternative creation myth and mythology in detail. It describes the Nameless One as the abused and ostracized heir of the throne of the world. The Twelvegods play a dishonorable role and are presented as extremely selfish and power hungry. The book relies on half-truths and speculation, but its arguments are so compelling that few readers can read even one chapter without suffering a mighty blow to their worldview. The doubts it creates lead to the reader's acceptance of the omnipotence of the Thirteenth God. The heroes should be careful to deliver the book to somebody they trust, or maybe even destroy the blasphemous book themselves.

Reading the 13 Doxologies endangers the reader's very soul. As with rat fungus (see page 45), for each chapter you read, you receive one level of *Rapture* of the Nameless One and must make a *Willpower* (Resist Persuasion) check with a penalty equal to your *Rapture* level.

If this check fails, the reader's soul becomes filled with doubt, and the reader continues to read uncontrollably until there is no hope of salvation.

Heroes can gain information about the book without having to open it by making a *Religions (Nameless)* check.

- ◆ **QL 1:** The 13 Doxologies is a forbidden book that is holy to the cult of the Nameless One. Reading it is said to be extremely dangerous.
- ◆ **QL 2:** Readers of the book are said to lose their free will and join the god's evil cult. The Churches of the Twelvegods destroy it without reading it, or else lock it in lead vaults.
- ◆ **QL 3:** The book's words are infused with the power of the Nameless One, which even iron-willed people have trouble resisting. The more you read, the more you doubt the order of the

Twelvegods. If you read all 13 chapters, you succumb permanently to evil.

The 14th Doxology

The writings of the innkeeper Gunelde Speltgrain appear to arise from the madness of a fanatical worshiper of the Nameless One. The following are examples of things she recorded from the visions she experienced both before and after her consecration. How much is true, and how much is based on hallucinations caused by rat fungus (or even her own wishes), the heroes cannot tell. Gunelde's desire to pen the 14th Doxology stems not only from her growing megalomania, but from an undercurrent that threatens all of Aventuria at the dawn of the new Age of Heroes. The heroes of this adventure might be the first to perceive dark hints of events to come, even though they might not yet be able to understand them.

The Nameless God

"The world and all the gods will tremble with fear when the rises! Their eyes will burst in their sockets when He shows them His face."

—excerpt from the First Doxology of the Nameless One, around 307 BFB, author unknown

Aspects: Power, dominion, hatred, destruction, lies

Symbols/Signs: Golden masks/idols, rat fungus, the starless sky

Holy Animal: Rats (spiders among Tulamydes)

The great enemy of the Twelvegods is the Nameless One, whom it is said introduced demons from beyond the Seventh Sphere into the world because he was not granted sole rulership of Creation. The gods punished his treason, erasing his name syllable by syllable from memory and chaining him within the Star Breach, the hole he himself had smashed out of the Star Wall to give demons access to this world.

This empty spot in the starry sky rises highest during the five so-called Nameless Days, the days between the years. These ominous and cursed days are said to belong to the Nameless One, for they represent the time he tore a hole between Rahja's passion and Praios' law at the spot where the Twelvecircle of constellations was most vulnerable.

Mystics say the Nameless One is no friend of chaos, but he would rather destroy Creation if he can't control it. He is the very essence of

power, dominance, success at any price, egotism, vengeance, temptation, lies, treason, cunning, hatred, destruction, and even self-mutilation.

It is perhaps telling that no other god has been given as many names and descriptions as he. His true name was forgotten eons ago. *Faceless One* and *Thirteenth God* they call him, and also *Rat Child* and *Nameless One*. The Tulamydes call him *Iblis*, the Net Weaver. The Nivese fear a being they call the *One-Too-Many*. Maraskan curses often mention the *Brotherless* or the *One Without Siblings*. The Forest Folk speak of *Burdaq* whose tapam (soul) has been stolen, and the elves whisper of *dhaza* (Isdira for *He Who Fights Creation*). The dwarves, who dig for all eternity, blame an entity called the *Golden Dragon* for all the world's evils.

The Nameless One's countless worshipers refer to him as the *Promised One*, the *Purple God*, *He-Who-Rests*, or *Ruler of Rulers*. Some speak the name *Golden God* or *Golden One* with awe in their voices, claiming to know that he is the Elder of Eons, the first god and primal ruler of the world, whose legacy was stolen.

The Nameless God has been manipulating events from his prison for eons, working to free himself one day. Lies and seduction are his strengths. He is often depicted as a faceless golden man accompanied by rats, crows, and thirteen-legged spiders. According to legends, the Nameless God is served by countless creatures, monsters, and intelligent beings.

His followers and Blessed Ones hide behind masks of righteousness but secretly pray for the end of the existing order and hope to play important roles in his new kingdom. Dark chapels that sustain the cult of the Nameless God are said to hide everywhere in Aventuria, their altars running with blood sacrifices.

It is said that his Blessed Ones must mutilate themselves to gain access to the deeper mysteries of the cult. Whether they be decadent nobles, ruthless grand burghers, hate-filled mercenaries, or oppressed serfs who know they deserve something better, many people succumb to the Nameless God's dark teachings and promises of endless power to be granted during the coming 13th Age under his rule.

The priests of the Nameless God are infamous for their powers of persuasion and manipulation. Many are excellent liars who have used intrigue, murder, and dark miracles to undermine or topple faith groups, temples, rulers, and even entire realms.

Few believers in the Twelvegods comprehend the power the Thirteenth grants to his servants. The most powerful among them are supposedly called the *Tongue of the Nameless One* and his 13 Eyes. The liturgical chants of the Twelvegods have no effect on them, and their words command even demons.

It is not very reassuring that the myths and legends of many peoples agree that one day, the Nameless God will conquer all of his enemies in an epic battle. It is possible that these prophecies hold a kernel of truth.



Liturgical Chants of the Nameless One

The innkeeper Gunelde can use the following liturgical chants, which do not appear in the **Core Rules**. These chants are very powerful, and Gunelde only uses them against the heroes when they directly threaten her cult or her life.

New State: Enslavement

The following rules describe the new state of *enslavement*. For general rules about states, see **Core Rules**, page 34.

Characters suffering from *enslavement* are easier to manipulate by the person responsible for the state. The enslaved character supports the master's cause, even when treated badly, suffering financial losses, or risking life and limb. However, characters with this state do not kill themselves, directly or

indirectly, and the effect ends immediately if they are asked to do so. Attempts to use Social skills to influence the enslaved character to act against their master's wishes suffer a penalty of 3.

The state's elimination depends on the cause. It might be as simple as reaching the end of the duration, as with spells and liturgical chants. At most, the state ends after six months.

Pervasive Sphere Song of the One

Check: INT/CHA/CHA

Effect: This liturgical chant creates images in the targets' mind and makes them hear seductive melodies. Targets suffer the state of *enslavement* and fall under the Blessed One's control. They even attack friends when the Blessed One commands.

Victims can make a *Willpower (Resist Threats)* check with a penalty equal to the chant's QL every five minutes to free themselves from its influence. Checks can begin after the state takes affect.

Liturgical Time: 1 action

KP Cost: 8 KP

Range: 8 yards

Duration: QL x 3 minutes

Target Category: Intelligent Creatures

Tradition: Nameless

Call the Horde of the Rat Child

Check: COU/INT/CHA

Effect: This liturgical chant summons rats, animals that are servants of the Nameless One. The Blessed One gains absolute control over these animals and can command them. The chant summons QLx10 rats.

Liturgical Time: 1 action

KP Cost: 8 KP

Range: 32 yards

Duration: QL x 3 days

Target Category: Animal (Rats)

Tradition: Nameless

Nameless Oblivion

Check: SGC/INT/CHA

Effect: This liturgical chant can suppress all memories of the target's former life. The Blessed One can implant certain goals in the target, and persuade the target that the Blessed One is on the target's side.

Liturgical Time: 2 actions

KP Cost: 8 KP

Range: Touch

Duration: QL x 3 days

Target Category: Intelligent Creatures

Tradition: Nameless

Nameless Doubt

Check: COU/INT/CHA

Effect: Affected persons question their own moral views and lose faith in their gods or their principles. For the duration of this liturgical chant, disadvantages like Principles and Obligations are ignored or turned on their heads—staunch vegetarians eat meat, honorable warriors stage cowardly ambushes, and Novadi ignore all of the 99 Laws.

Liturgical Time: 4 actions

KP Cost: 16 KP

Range: 16 yards

Duration: QL x 3 days

Target Category: Intelligent Creatures

Tradition: Nameless

Special Ability: Tradition (Nameless One)

- Nameless Terror: The Blessed One can use KP and AE to summon Nameless demons.
- Blessed Ones can sacrifice parts of their own bodies to attain greater rank and power.
- Blessed Ones are immune to Nameless effects, such as those caused by rat fungus.
- When applying the modification Force for liturgical chants and ceremonies, Blessed Ones receive a bonus of 2 instead of 1.
- **Favored Skills:** *Disguise, Empathy, Fast-Talk, Law, Myths & Legends, Persuasion, Religions, Self-Control, Stealth*
- The primary attribute of the Tradition is Courage.

Prerequisites: Advantage Blessed One, Sacrifice of the 1st Level

AP Value: 170 AP



The 14th Doxology

We praise the glory of #IS might that will flood the face of Dere and herald the return of the true order of the world. The Golden One will break free from his chains, leave the slavery of false idols behind, and rule with power and splendor, for #E is the true god, the savior who leads us to wealth and influence. And we are #IS servants on Dere, ready to rule by #IS side. For that, we sacrifice. For that, we pray. For that, we praise the power and might of our one and only god and renounce the false idols who have stolen his power. A new age dawns, and #E will reward #IS servants, who spread #IS message every day. Praise the Golden One, as #E is our salvation.

#IS return is near, and the chains that bind #IM are weak and will grow weaker as the power of the false idols fades.

The 14th Doxology

The signs of his return shall be,

Stars falling from the skies. The walls of Alveran will shake, when the dragon blood sleeps, the great feat that is blasphemy.

The way is ready when the sleep of eons is past, the Turn of Ages will be the beginning of the end, the end will be the new beginning of HIS rule.

The lioness will bleed, the sword will lose its blade when the terror from the deep, a horror of eons past, against rebel against HIS chains.

The island in the west will drown in ash, fire, and tidal wave, but it is the wrath of the eyed that will bring them doom, as they do not recognize HIS power.

The dead will penetrate the Spheres, when the ravens fight for the blood of the world, the heirs of the stars will drink the blood of the world, when they sway in rage and blood in

eat. Slowly he swallows the others, until none of them sits enthroned above us, who are HIS chosen.

HE will demand tribute, as in the past, when they gave him part of their power as a sign of fealty. But before that the spheres will smother the evidence of the old alliance, thinking of their power will make HIS grow.

The breach he has created will tear the spheres asunder, and the world will be made anew, made better, in HIS will. And only the worthy, those who accept HIS rule, shall live.



Revelations From Heaven

by Sarah Maier,
with additional material by Eevie Demirtel and Jens Ullrich

Looking forward to a well-deserved rest, the heroes travel to the Principality of Kosh, known for its unspoiled and breathtaking landscapes and the hospitality of its people. But in **Revelations from Heaven**, things don't always go as planned, and the heroes soon discover that something is rotten in the idyllic village of Oldenbridge. Not everyone who lives here acts in a way that is pleasing unto the gods. Only your characters can shine a light on the hidden darkness and solve a monstrous crime!

This adventure for **The Dark Eye** is especially well suited for beginning heroes and GMs. It contains detailed descriptions of locations, NPCs, and the plots and challenges your heroes must face, and also includes maps and useful handouts.



Revelations from Heaven is a group adventure for 3-5 helpful heroes.

Genre: Detective Story, Regional Story

Prerequisites: none

Location: a small village in the Kosh Mountains, or relocate it to suit your campaign.

Date: Rahja, 1038 FB or earlier

Complexity (Players/GM): Low/Low

Suggested Character Experience Level:
Inexperienced to Competent

Useful Skills

Social Skills

Combat

Nature Skills

Living History



The **The Dark Eye Core Rules** are required for playing this adventure. Any further information, like stat boxes, maps, and handouts, is contained in this volume.



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