# RAGING SWAN PRESS GM'S MISCELLANY: VILLAGE BACKDROPS



A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible Adventure for 7th-level characters by Creighton Broadhurst and Marc Radle

Only a few miles from a small seaside village, the mysterious underwater edifice known as the Sunken Pyramid lies hidden beneath the waves. The handful of sages and scholars with any knowledge of this massive stone structure debate whether it is a completely natural rock formation, a natural site that has been intentionally modified or something built long ago by human, or inhuman, hands.

Locals and ship's crews alike report signs of increased sahuagin activity in the waters around the Sunken Pyramid. Is the recent rash of disappearances and abductions which have plagued the area connected in any way? Can these abductions be stopped before even more people are taken? Can those already abducted be found and rescued? And what of the strange and often conflicting rumours which whisper of something far more terrible lurking far beneath the Sunken Pyramid?

"All in all, we get one awesome, first class underwater module...you'll never find an underwater module as easy to run as this one while still remaining engaging, concise and just smart - even beginner's DMs should have a nice time running this..." —Endzeitgeist (five stars and seal of approval)

"I recommend this product as highly as I can...written by clearly experienced Gms who have gone to great lengths to make your play experience as enjoyable as possible. This has my highest recommendation." –Strangepork (five stars)

> "...this adventure has everything you need to run it successfully. Very well done." —DM Jeff (five stars)

#### Available in print and PDF

#### www.ragingswan.com/sahuagin



# GM'S MISCELLANY: VILLAGE BACKDROPS

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GM's RESOURCE supplement by loads of talented designers

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

This GM's Miscellany collects together the first twelve Village Backdrops, along with bonus, never seen before material, together in one place.



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Thank you for purchasing *GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrops;* we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

# CONTACT US

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#### ERRATA

We like to think *GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrops* is completely error free, but we are realists. So in that spirit, we shall post errata three months after release on ragingswan.com. We aren't going to be correcting typos and spelling errors, but we will correct any game mechanic or balance issues that come to light.

# WEB ENHANCEMENTS

Tagged and untagged versions of all the village maps featured in *GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrops* are available at ragingswan.com. Both versions are perfect as player handouts to facilitate play in the relevant village.

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Published by Raging Swan Press 1st printing, October 2013 ISBN: 978-0-9575570-4-8 John Bennett makes his lair in the tree-cloaked hills of New Hampshire. He enjoys heavy metal, beer and cigars as much as he enjoys playing RPGs. John has been writing since the age of 6 when he would narrate stories about dinosaurs and robots to his mother. He has a degree in film production and a pile of reject letters to go with his scripts. Currently, he is pursuing his Master's degree in Organizational Leadership. He is also striving to achieve at least one skill rank in Perform (guitar) but too little avail. Coerced into playing 1st edition D&D by an older (and bigger) kid in the neighbourhood at the age of 8, he would like to take a moment to thank his friend, Danny, for introducing him to the world of gaming many long years ago. While his friends and players know what he is talking about, John has been unsuccessful in explaining what bugbears are to his family and co-workers, the latter fleeing his office when he begins rambling.

**Creighton Broadhurst** is very modest due to space considerations.

**Eric Hindley** is a proud weaver of many paths and an expert in every field (or at least a jack of all trades). He began his RPG career in the early 1990s, badgering his friends to let him have the 17 Cha he needed to play 2nd edition paladins at every chance. He migrated to 3rd edition in 2000 because the book was shiny and new out front of a Coles bookstore on some kind of cardboard display. Pathfinder caught his interest almost immediately after being announced, and he has been a firm believer ever since.

He began GMing primarily to force other people to play with him while at university in Toronto. After honing his skills picking off characters in the far-flung town of Banff, Alberta, Canada, he is currently exploring new campaign worlds with a variety of groups. Most of the rest of his time is spent painting toy soldiers for Warhammer (both fantasy and 40k) and Warmachine, working in the entertainment industry as a technician or tormenting an assortment of cats (and occasionally his wife, Kalyna).

Eric was a competitor in Paizo's RPG Superstar competition in 2010 and 2011, and won Open Design's Tin Crown in 2012.

**Ben Kent** has memories of seeing "bigger kids" playing RPGs in the hallways of his Elementary school. After overhearing the destruction of skeletons beyond number at the hands of a skilled cleric, he immediately settled upon such games as the sort of thing he'd enjoy.

Living with his wondrous and encouraging life-partner Tiffinie and their two beautiful young daughters in Ontario, Canada, Ben continues to find role-playing games the sort of thing he enjoys. He is eagerly looking forward to the day his daughters are both grown up enough to roll the dice instead of eat them, so they can join their parents at the table (and thus ease the difficulty in finding babysitters on gaming days). Ben's eventual objective is complete dominion over the earth, but there's a lot of competition in that field. He's presently working as a customer service agent by day and superhero/game designer/bug squasher/father figure by night. Now that he's been published, he's honestly not sure his life could get much cooler.

Greg Marks is an evil mastermind directing his criminal army of precocious felines from the birthplace of gaming: Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He and his cat minions have worked on products for multiple editions of Dungeons and Dragons including Complete Scoundrel, City of Stormreach, Dragon Magic, and Dungeon Delve. They have written numerous adventures for the RPGA along with administering many of their organized play campaigns with Living Forgotten Realms being the most recent. Greg and his cats have also contributed repeatedly to all incarnations of Dragon and Dungeon Magazine, and co-authored several products for Fantasy Flight Games' Midnight setting including: Star and Shadow, Hammer and Shadow, Legends of Shadow, and Honor and Shadow. He has previous worked for Raging Swan Press on So What's the Zombie Like, Anyway?, Dungeon Dressing: Secret Doors, Dungeon Dressing: Thrones, Wilderness Dressing: Travellers and Dungeon Dressing: Gates & Portals.

**Marc Radle** is a professional graphic artist by trade. He is married and has three kids (one teenage son and two very spoiled cats).

He started playing D&D in the late 70's – good old First Edition AD&D! He also played many other RPGs back then... Marvel Superheroes, Champions, Elfquest, FASA's Star Trek, Star Frontiers, the list goes on and on ...but it always came back to AD&D!

Marc faded out of gaming sometime after 2nd Edition came out – partially because 2nd Edition just didn't quite do it for him but also because his gaming friends turned into grownups, got real lives and moved away when he wasn't looking!

Third Edition D&D really pulled Marc back into the hobby and he has since become a HUGE fan of the Pathfinder RPG! He is absolutely thrilled with what Paizo has done for gamers everywhere and is even more thrilled that he can still enjoy playing (and contributing to) the game he loves. Thanks Paizo!!!

Marc has written, illustrated and designed for a number of great game companies, including Kobold Press, Super Genius Games, Rite Publishing, Last Unicorn Games (back in the day), Jon Brazer Enterprises, Frog God Games, Tricky Owlbear Publishing, Purple Duck Games and Raging Swan Press. He has contributed to more than 40 published RPG projects and is also currently Art Director & Graphic Designer for Kobold Press

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# STAT BLOCKS BY CR

CR			VILLAGE	PAGE
1/3	Fisherman	N human commoner 1	White Moon Cove	
1/3	Half-orc Villager	CN half-orc commoner 1	Roake	
1/3	Human Villager	LN human commoner 1	Roake <sup>1</sup>	
1/3	Miner	N human commoner 1	Golden Valley	
1/3	Villager	N human commoner 1	Ashford	
1/2	Thug	LE male human warrior 2	Bossin	
1	Bailiff Seran Heral	LG male human fighter 2	Golden Valley	
1	Gyric Walwin	N male half-elf wizard (diviner) 2	Thornhill	
2	Dunn Frewin	CE male ghoul cleric 2	Ashford	
2	Honeybee Swarm	N fine vermin (swarm)	Apia	
2	Odda Kerrich	NE male human half-orc rogue 2/cleric 1	Thornhill	
2	Waldere Elvery	LN male human cleric (Darlen) 3	Ashford	
3	Bartrel Ebon Axe	NE male half-goblin fighter 4	Oakhurst	
3	Boss Corl	LE male human ranger 2/rogue 2	Golden Valley	
3	Pio Varrin	NG male human rogue (investigator) 4	Hosford	
3	Rilla Omer	LN female human bard (court bard) 4	Longbridge	
3	Sneev	NE male half-goblin rogue (spy ) 4	Bossin	
3	Zissren	NG female advanced lizardfolk adept 2	Thornhill	
4	Caja Weare	NE female natural werebat human rogue 3	Oakhurst	
4	Donatus Trond	LE male human rogue (investigator) 3/cleric 2	Longbridge	
4	Jacca Lander	LE male human fighter 2/rogue 3	Bossin	
4	Janaela Fisfelond	N female half-elf wizard (abjurer) 4	Ashford	
4	Sly Jaak	NE female human rogue 5	Golden Valley	
5	Einhard Kochel	NG male human fighter (shielded fighter) 4/cleric 2	Longbridge	
5	M'yxtix	N(E) female old advanced ettercap expert 2	Apia	
5	Yaknath	NE Large aberration	Hard Bay	
7	Dag Tunner	N male old human druid 8	Hosford	
7	Keira Reston	NG female human oracle (life) 8	Denton's End	

1: With minor changes, this stat block can be used for a villager in any village



# READING STAT BLOCKS

*GM's Miscellany: Village Backdrops* includes all necessary stat blocks; these notes explain how to read them. Unless otherwise noted, all listed scores include all the creature's normal modifiers. Stat block appear in four sections: basic, defensive, offensive and supplemental.

#### BASIC

- Name, CR and XP: The monster's name appears first followed by its CR and how many experience points it is worth. If more than one creature is encountered, a bracketed number lists how many appear.
- **Appearance**: The GM can read aloud or paraphrase this section. If a picture depicts the creature, this section may be omitted.
- Sex, Race, Class and Level: If the monster has class levels these appear here along with its race and sex. The first noted class is the creature's favoured class.
- Alignment and Type: The creature's abbreviated alignment and its type (including applicable subtypes).
- **Init and Senses**: This creature's initiative modifier appears before any special senses (such as scent or darkvision) and the creature's Perception and Sense Motive scores. If the creature has special Perception-based abilities, such as trapfinding or stonecunning, these appear here.
- **Speed**: The creature's modified land speed appears first along with any other relevant speeds (such as climb or fly). If the creature's base land speed is different to its modified speed this is also listed.
- ACP and Movement Skills: ACP presents the creature's normal armour check penalty modifier. If the creature's Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Stealth or Swim modifier differs from the relevant ability modifier minus its armour check penalty, these skills appear here.

#### DEFENSIVE

- **AC**: The creature's normal, touch and flat-footed AC along with its CMD; additionally this section lists any defensive powers or abilities that affects the creature's AC.
- **Immune, Resist and Weaknesses:** If the creature has immunity, resistance or a vulnerability to an effect or condition it appears here.
- **Fort, Ref and Will**: The creature's saving throw modifiers along with any conditional modifiers and defensive powers (such as evasion) and spell resistance appear here.
- HP: The creature's full, normal hit points along with the number

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities appear in the section to which they are best suited. Thus, offensive abilities appear with a creature's attacks while defensive ones appear with its other defences. Full writeups of irrelevant powers (such as those that could not affect combat) are omitted. The effects of abilities that factor into a creature's normal attacks or defences have already been included in the relevant calculations. of hit dice it possesses. A bracketed hit point total indicates that the creature is injured. If the creature has damage reduction or hardness it appears here.

#### OFFENSIVE

- Space, Base Atk and CMB: The creature's space, base attack bonus and CMB.
- **Melee**: This section lists a creature's melee attacks. If the attack has a reach that is not 5 ft. it is listed here. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for example Power Attack), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.
- **Ranged**: This section lists the creature's ranged attacks. It always includes the attack's range. Each attack includes attack bonus and damage information. This line also lists any specific feats a creature can use with the attack (for example Point Blank Shot), but the effects of these feats are not included in the attack's statistics. If the attack has the default critical hit characteristics (20/x2) this information is omitted.
- Atk Options: This section lists any abilities or feats that can affect more than one of the creature's attacks, unless it has already been presented with the creature's specific attacks. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in depth.
- **Special Actions**: This section lists any useful abilities that a creature could use in battle. Subsequent listings describe all but the most basic abilities in more depth.
- **Spells and Spell-Like Abilities**: The creature's caster level, along with its concentration modifier and domains appears in brackets before the main spell listing. If one or more of the creature's spells require a touch attack, the relevant attack bonus is included. Spells available appear in reverse order from highest to lowest level. Spells denoted <sup>D</sup> are domain spells. If applicable, a spell's DC is also provided.
- **Combat Gear**: This section lists any combat-related equipment the creature possesses.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL

Abilities and Special Qualities: These sections list the creature's ability scores and any special qualities that do not appear anywhere else in its stat block.

Feats: An alphabetical listing of all the creature's feats.

- Skills and Languages: These sections list any skills the creature possesses that have not already appeared in the stat block and all languages spoken or understood. Any language-based special abilities also appear here.
- **Gear**: This section lists any gear not already listed in the creature's stat block. This section hardly ever contains weapons or armour as they usually appear in the relevant sections above.
- **Spellbook**: The contents of the creature's spellbook and its opposition schools.



# USING VILLAGE BACKDROPS WITH ULTIMATE CAMPAIGN

PCs may encounter the villages in this book while on their adventures but as they gain in power, it is possible they'll return as conquering heroes, whether for good or ill. *Ultimate Campaign* presents rules for PCs wishing to build kingdoms. Each of the villages in this book could serve as either a starting point on the PCs' path to conquest or become incorporated into an already existing kingdom.

Each of the villages herein has its own unique character, history and structure that can be easily utilized as part of the kingdom building rules. Additionally, it provides unique roleplaying opportunities for PCs expanding the small village. Either the PCs have had interactions with it before, having unravelled its mysteries, or the GM can use the roleplaying opportunities in each village to challenge PCs who seek to add it to their kingdom.

Each of the villages listed in this book is presented with suitable buildings, terrain improvements and other considerations that capture the appropriate flavour or defining feature of that settlement. GMs should feel to swap a building out for another if he thinks it is more appropriate, such as if the PCs developed a relationship with the village smith instead of the innkeeper.

As noted in the kingdom building rules, one lot equals a population of 250 people, so even one house is larger than any village. Therefore, the GM should consider the listings below as bonus buildings, terrain improvements and so on that are incorporated into the new and larger city once the PCs establish the first building. All prerequisites still apply so if the building is required to be adjacent to a house, the PCs must build a house before gaining the appropriate bonus building. Terrain improvements and resources are available as soon as the PCs incorporate the village into their existing kingdom or start their kingdom from one of the following villages.

See *Ultimate Campaign* for the complete rules for incorporating or creating new settlements.

#### APIA

A quiet village known for its honey, Apia sits near the ruins of an old, unexplored castle.

- Terrain Improvements (Apiary [Farm]) Apia is renowned for its large colonies of honey bees.
- Special Terrain (River) A river flows through Apia. Each section of the waterway occupies one lot. PCs and GMs should determine where and when the waterway starts and ends on the district map.
- **Ruins (Castle)** The ruins of a former castle near Apia halve the cost of building a castle in this settlement.

Building (Tavern) Bee's Knees Tavern (tavern); Apia's local inn and tavern.

#### ASHFORD

Plague ridden Ashford has little to offer except to the most enterprising (or most desperate) of rulers.

- **Ruins (Castle)** If Janaela Fisfelfond is evicted (either forcibly or by her own choice), the Burning Tower halves the cost of a castle built in this settlement.
- **Building (Abandoned/Burnt-Out Homes [Tenements])** The plague drove many from their homes in Ashford which have now fallen into a state of decay.
- **Building (Ashford Manor [Mansion])** Baron Aelfgard Stannard abandoned his home at the onset of the plague that swept through Ashford.
- **Special Terrain (Plague Pits [Dump])** A dumping spot for those killed by the plague, these are little more than a scavenging ground for wild animals.

# Bossin

Bossin sits nestled in a dell behind the cliffs hugging the Lonely Coast.

- **Terrain Improvement (Farm)** Most of Bossin's villagers make a living farming the rich soil around the village.
- **Building (Hovels [Tenements])** Bossin's poorest villagers live at the bottom of the dell, a mud choked collection of shacks prone to flooding during rain storms.
- Building (Jacca Lander's Manor [Mansion]) Bossin's cruel reeve, Jacca Lander, built himself a manor house to lord over the citizens of Bossin.
- Building (Bossin Watchtower [Watchtower]) An old watchtower, it is used to warn Caer Syllan of attacks.

#### DENTON'S END

The village of Denton's End practices a peculiar form of ancestor worship that often unsettles newcomers.

- **Terrain Improvements (Farm)** Farming and herding provide sustenance to most of the villagers in Denton's End.
- Building (Denton's End Cemetery [Graveyard]) A large graveyard sprawls across a central hill in Denton's End; catacombs honeycomb the interior.
- **Building (Denton's Rest [Shrine])** This well-built stone house serves as the home to each of Denton's End's oracle rulers.
- **Building (Witch's Hut [Herbalist])** Ashia Crooktongue lives here, tempting the men of Denton's End and tending her herbs.

# GOLDEN VALLEY

Once known as Sunset Valley, the lure of gold has drawn many to this once sleepy village.

- Terrain Improvement (Mine) Golden Valley got its name from the rich deposits of gold in the nearby mines.
- Special Terrain (Resource [Gold]) Golden Valley's Boss Corl hit it rich when he discovered gold in the mines.
- Buildings (General Store [Shop]) Golden Valley's general store is well stocked but expensive due to the inflation caused by the wealth that once flooded the village.
- Building (Golden Valley Bank [Bank]) Boss Corl stores the gold from the mines in this bank.

#### HARD BAY

The seaside village of Hard Bay harbours dark secrets and foul religious practices.

Terrain Improvement (Fishery) Hard Bay's folk earn their living from fishing.

Building (Blufont Manor [Mansion]) Blufont manor houses the Cult of the Deep and the invidious Blufont family.

Building (Docks [Pier]) Most of Hard Bay's commercial activity is centred around the docks.

- Building (The Driftwood [Shop]) Curios and other books of strange knowledge can be found here.
- Other Considerations Hard Bay has a water border in its southernmost district.

#### HOSFORD

Situated along the Cliffway in the Lonely Coast, Hosford maintains the region's largest mine.

- Terrain Improvement (Fishery) Small fishing boats ply the waters from a small cove.
- Terrain Improvement (Mine) The cliffs along the Lonely Coast provide valuable ores and other gems.
- Special Terrain (Resources [Ores, Gems]) Hosford ekes out semiprecious ores and gems from the nearby cliffs.
- Building (Artisan Market [Exotic Artisan]) Hosford's artisans occupy this quarter of town, plying their wares.
- Building (Hosford Cove [Pier]) Years ago, a section of the cliff collapsed, creating a small cove from which the villagers launch their fishing boats.
- Other Considerations Hosford has a water border in its southernmost district.



#### LONGBRIDGE

A massive bridge spans the river; two rival lords struggle for control of the surrounding village.

- Terrain Improvement (Farm) Rich farmlands surround Longbridge.
- **Special Terrain (River)** A wide, swiftly moving river splits Longbridge in half.
- **Building (Longbridge [Bridge])** This massive stone bridges, a hotly contested neutral area, connects the two halves of Longbridge and their warring lords.
- Building (North and South Towers [Watchtower]) Two watchtowers, one on each end, guard Longbridge.
- Special Terrain (River [Waterway]) A river flows through Longbridge. Each section of the waterway occupies one lot. PCs and GMs should determine where and when the waterway starts and ends on the district map.

#### OAKHURST

Lonely Coast's most isolated village, Oakhurst has a reputation for unfriendliness and strange practices.

- **Special Terrain (River)** A tributary of the Kilian flows through the black heart of Oakhurst. a river flows through Oakhurst. Each section of the waterway occupies one lot. PCs and GMs should determine where and when the waterway starts and ends on the district map.
- **Building (Ruins [Mansion])** A ruined manor house in Oakhurst halves the cost of a mansion built in this settlement.
- **Building (The Bloody Ear [Black Market])** This inn is really a front for Bartrel Ebonaxe's illegal activities.
- Building (Oakhurst Jail [Jail]) Oakhurst possesses a well-built jail, which is currently a site of horror and torture.

#### Roake

The quaint village of Roake still harbours the memories of a darker time.

- Terrain Improvement (Road) Roake serves as a popular stop for travelers in the region.
- **Special Terrain (River)** A river flows through Roake. Each section of the waterway occupies one lot. PCs and GMs should determine where and when the waterway starts and ends on the district map.
- **Building (General Store [Shop])** Deyrn and Farya Oak, along with their half-orc son Kurn, run this small store.
- **Building (The Prince and Pauper [Inn])** An expensive inn to travellers, its proprietor lowers prices for the villagers.

#### THORNHILL

Muck covered Thornhill festers in a noisome fen, its villagers living a hard life.

- Terrain Improvement (Fishery) Thornhill's villagers ply the surrounding fen for fish.
- Building (The Drunken Lizard [Inn]) Odda Kerrich runs this poor excuse of an inn.
- Building (Thornhill Houses [Tenements]) Mud covered shacks best describes most of the homes in Thornhill.
- Special Terrain (Fenwater [Waterway]) A waterway flows around Thornhill. Each section of the waterway occupies one lot. PCs and GMs should determine where and when the waterway starts and ends on the district map.

#### WHITE MOON COVE

A well-to-do but isolated fishing village, White Moon Cove is about to be beset by dark forces.

- Terrain Improvements (Fishery) An abundance of fish live in the nearby waters.
- Building (Docks [Pier]) Extensive docks reach out into the nearby water.
- Building Marketplace [Shop]) Stalls and animal pens fill the village's bustling marketplace.
- Building (The White Chapel [Shrine]) White Moon Cove's most impressive building and its religious centre.
- **Other Considerations** White Moon Cove has a water district on its northernmost border. Sahuagin lair nearby in the Sunken Pyramid.

# DESIGNING VILLAGES

Villages are a vital component of almost any campaign – adventurers tend to congregate on the borderlands of kingdoms as that is where many of the adventures they crave so much take place. Such places are replete with many small villages clustered along rivers or around crossroads, fortifications or other natural resources.

Whether the PCs are planning to rest for a while or just passing through, a well-designed settlement gives them a believable place to gather information, craft magic items and so on. Providing a flavoursome locale adds depth and verisimilitude to the campaign. A well designed village can even host minor adventures of its own and is an excellent investment in a GM's time. Villages can also serve as a temporary home base for the PCs from which they can strike out into the wilderness.

The other great thing about villages is they are much more manageable than a town or city. Many GMs shy away from running urban adventures set in large settlements as the PCs can literally go anywhere and it is very difficult to be prepared enough to cope with every eventually. The same is not true of a village, as there are a small, finite number of shops, services and other places of interest available to the PCs.

#### GAMEMASTERY GUIDE

Chapter 7 of the *GamesMastery Guide* presents a suite of rules for designing settlements. The tables in this chapter have been designed to work without those rules, but they are easily applicable to any village a GM designs using the material herein.

Once a GM has generated his village, he can quickly take a look at the settlement qualities and disadvantages listed in the *GamesMastery Guide* and apply any that seem relevant (taking into account the results he gained). Each quality and disadvantage provides specific bonuses and penalties to the village to which it is applied.

A village should have two qualities, while there is no limit to the number of disadvantages a village can possess. These qualities and disadvantages are:

- Qualities: Academic, holy site, insular, magically attuned, notorious, pious, prosperous, racially intolerant, rumourmongering citizens, strategic location, superstitious and tourist attraction.
- Disadvantages: Anarchy, cursed, hunted, impoverished and plagued.

Finally, a GM can easily design other qualities and disadvantages based on the specific needs of the settlements in his campaign.

#### VILLAGE DESIGN TIPS

When designing a settlement, a GM should consider the following basic factors:

- Conflict: A village should have both internal and external conflicts with which to deal. If it doesn't, it's going to be a boring place for the PCs to visit. This doesn't necessarily mean the populace is fighting in the streets; instead there might be tension or bad feeling between certain folk or segments of society. Some of these the PCs may come across and some they may not uncover, but their presence shapes both the village's physical and social landscapes. Without conflict of some sort, a settlement is a pretty boring (and unrealistic) place for adventurers.
- Flavour: Do the villagers have certain strange religious practises or do they wildly celebrate certain festivals? Have the buildings been constructed in a certain style or does everyone dress in a particular fashion? Including local flavour helps differentiate a place from its neighbours.
- History: A settlement should have a defined, vibrant and relevant history. This should be evident both in the layout and condition of the place. It's always cool if a village has one or more secrets in its past perceptive or diligent PCs can discover.
- Industry: Above all, the trades folk, industries and shops present should make sense in the overall context of the village.
   For example, unless there is a good reason for their existence, there are no magic shops or highly skilled weaponsmiths there "just in case" adventurers should visit.
- Nearby Adventures: Have a nearby site of adventure which the PCs can explore if they wish. A ruin, a haunted forest or old burial mound are all excellent locales to place nearby.
- NPCs: Describe key NPCs in evocative fashion, so they are memorable to the PCs. Just as importantly, many NPCs have their own goals, aspirations, foibles and relationships which further build on the feeling the village is a real place and that its folk are not just waiting for adventurers to turn up before springing into life.
- Reason For Existence: Every settlement has a reason to exist. Perhaps the village has sprung up around a small castle or it sprawls either side of the only ford for dozens of miles in either direction. The settlement's reason for existence often heavily influences its physical makeup and populace.

**Final Note**: When designing a village, remember its inhabitants need food and water to survive. Every village should be located near a source of fresh water and they should ideally be able to provide (at least in part) their own food.

# VILLAGE FEATURES

The tables in this chapter provide the busy GM with the tools necessary to quickly and easily generate the basic details of a village the PCs are about to visit. (The tables herein can also – at a push – be used to design small towns, but the GM will probably have to tweak some of the results somewhat).

When using these tables, the GM should keep in mind the surrounding terrain (and parent kingdom, if applicable) as such factors will undoubtedly influence the village's social and physical composition.

A GM should move through the tables in the order presented noting the results of his work as he progresses. A GM should ignore or change any result rendered illogical or undesirable by other rolls. Alternatively, a GM can simply use these tables as inspiration.

#### Government

Every village has a government type. Most are ruled by an overlord – normally a hereditary local ruler who may or may not dwell in the village. If the ruler does not dwell in the village, one of his representatives will undoubtedly do so.

D20	GOVERNMENT
1-5	Autocracy
6-10	Council
11	Magical
12-19	Overlord
20 <sup>1</sup>	Secret syndicate

1 If the settlement is ruled by a secret syndicate, roll again to determine the type of government that it controls. Ignore subsequent rolls of 20.

# ALIGNMENT

Determining the alignment of a settlement enables the GM to get a feel for the overall ethos of the place. Of course, not everyone in the settlement is the same alignment, but most encountered NPCs should be of this alignment (as should the village's ruler).

ALIGNMENT
As parent kingdom
Lawful good
Neutral good
Chaotic good
Lawful neutral
Neutral
Chaotic neutral
Lawful evil
Neutral evil
Chaotic evil



# PROMINENT FEATURES

A village should always have a reason to exist. For example, a fishing village may spring up in a sheltered bay, while another might stand near the only ford crossing a mighty river for dozens of miles in any direction. Others can grow up around castles, monasteries or other sites of interest. Use the table below to determine what prominent feature lies in or nearby the village. A prominent feature may suggest an industry – if this is the case simply pick an appropriate one.

D%	FEATURE
1-3	Burial mound(s)
4-6	Ancient monument
7-9	Battlefield
10-14	Lake
15-19	Ponds
20-24	High hill/vantage point
21-22	Sinkhole
23-25	Caves/caverns
26-28	Well
29-31	Spring
32-36	Orchard/fruit trees
37-38	Mine
39-42	Major road
43-48	Crossroads
49-50	Natural harbour
51-53	River
54-56	Valley
57-59	Waterfall
60-62	Giant/old tree(s)
63-70	Fertile soil
71	Barren soil
72-73	Prone to flooding
74-77	Old/ancient ruins
78-81	Adventure site (roll
78-81	again)
82-87	Dense forest
88-91	Marshland
92-93	Rift/chasm
94-95	Escarpment
96-97	Extensive graveyard
98	Strange weather
99	Planar gate
	Site of reputed magical
100	properties (roll again to
	determine feature)

# INDUSTRY

The below table does not present an exhaustive list of fantasy medieval industries. Rather, it focuses on industries most likely to be found in a village.

Of course, depending on a village's location some industries (such as shipbuilding) may make no sense whatsoever. A GM should reroll such results.

D%	Industry
1-30	Farming (crops)
31-50	Farming (livestock)
51-60	Hunting or trapping
61-65	Fishing
66-70	Trading post
71-72	Lumber/charcoal
/1-/2	makers
73-74	Hospitality
75-76	Weapon or armour
75-70	crafting
77-78	Pottery
79-80	Leatherworking or
79-80	tanning
81-82	Brewing
83-84	Clothes
85-86	Metalwork
87-88	Animal training
	Supporting nearby
89-91	nobles, castle, church
	etc.
92-93	Shipbuilding or cart
92-93	building
94-95	Religion
96-97	Finished food stuffs
	(honey, salted meat
	etc.)
98-99	Mining
	Supporting adventurers
100	exploring nearby
100	dungeon or wilderness
	area

Most villages have one main industry, but at the GM's discretion may have one or more secondary industries. Such activities will also leave their mark on the social and physical landscape of the village.

#### POPULATION

A village is so much more than a collection of houses and businesses. Some villages are little more than hamlet while others verge on the size of a small town.

To determine the population of a village roll 2d8x10+40.

The population of a village determines how many notable buildings the place has:

POPULATION	NOTABLE BUILDINGS
60-80	1
81-120	2
121-140	3
141-170	4
180-200	5

Most villagers will be normal, unremarkable peasants (commoner 1 or expert 1). Roughly 10% of the total will differ from the norm. Individuals with levels in NPC classes should rarely be above 3rd-level, but villagers with levels in a core class are typically up to 5thlevel! (Of course, NPCs can be more powerful than this, but such folk should be specifically placed by the GM).

# SPELLCASTERS FOR HIRE

Wandering adventurers often need spellcasting services – perhaps while trying to recover from a disease or when discerning the properties of a magical item. Most villages can offer some sort of spellcasting service, although often its spellcasters are not particularly powerful.

#### Highest-Level Spell: 3rd.

**Cost:** Caster level x spell level x 10 gp (plus any additional costs noted in the relevant spell's description).

# NOTABLE BUILDINGS

Very few villages are nothing more than a collection of hovels. Even the most dreary settlement has some kind of notable building, whether it be a tavern, inn or church. A notable building isn't necessarily architecturally significant; instead it may offer travellers special services or a notable NPC may dwell within. In many cases, a village's prominent features and main industry provide a GM with guidance on which notable buildings to place in the village. If they do not, use the table below and discard any odd or nonsensical results.

D20	Building
1	Church, shrine or
	monastery
2	Bridge or ford
3	Tavern or inn
4	Manor house
5	Wizard's tower
6	Castle/keep
7	Mill
8	Village hall
9	Trading post
10	Shop
11	Skilled craftsman
12	Prison or asylum
13	School/university
14	Fortified building
15	Noble's retreat
16	Adventurer's home
17	Retired adventurer's
	home
18	Hovels
19	Industrial site
20	Ruins (roll again)

A notable building is a perfect locale for interesting NPCs – be they retired adventurers, skilled craftsmen or the like. They are also excellent places for adventurers to access spellcasting services and buy and sell magic items (pages 18 – 21). Not all individuals dwelling within, however, will be pleased to deal with meddling, self-centred adventurers.

# Conflicts

The potential for conflict exists in every settlement. While these factors may not be immediately obvious to visitors, their effect should become apparent to anyone spending any decent amount of time in the village.

D20	POTENTIAL CONFLICT
1	Nearby humanoids
2	Adventure site
3	Monstrous
	inhabitants(s)
4	Competing religions
5	Secret cult
6	Oppressive ruler
7	Nearby rival settlement
8	Family blood feud or
	vendetta
9	Land claims
10	Rival nobles
11	Segregated society
12	No ruler
13	Impoverished
14	Impending war or raid
15	Competing guilds or
	powerful merchants
16	Progressive political
	ideas
17	Endemic thievery
18	Recent natural disaster
19	Ineffective or uncaring
	ruler
20	Impending natural
	disaster

Most villages should only have one major source of conflict, although particularly dangerous places may have two or even three!

#### SECRETS

Secrets lurk within every village. Some may have no effect on the adventurers at all, while others could spawn whole adventures or side treks.

D20	Secret
1	Evil cult
2	Hiding adventurer
3	Hiding/plotting villain
4	Secret treasure trove
5	Unknown burial ground
6	Thieves' or bandit lair
7	Smugglers' den
8	Monstrous inhabitant
9	Dungeon or caves
10	Curse
11	Illegitimate lord's child
12	Secret society
13	Slavers
14	Hidden lore
15	Undead inhabitant
16	Secret government
17	Guarding/protecting
	something
18	Allied with local
	humanoids
19	Disease
20	Wholesale tax evasion

Most villages should only have one secret of note, otherwise the place could get too confusing and unfocused. While certain individuals may have other, minor secrets these are unlikely to affect passing adventurers (but they could provide interesting role-playing opportunities).

# SECRETS & CONFLICTS

At first glance, secrets and conflicts are two sides of the same coin, with one perhaps spawning the other. Of course, this is perfectly acceptable: a village allied with nearby humanoids may have an oppressive ruler or even be built over the dungeon in which the humanoids live! In other instances, the two may be wholly separate; rival nobles may both seek control of the village – while being completely unaware an evil cult lurks among the populace.

There is no magic formula to determine how, or if, a village's conflict and secret are related; a GM should use his creativity and reject any results from either table that do not seem to work. As always, the goal of a village's secrets and conflicts is to make the place an interesting place to visit.

# SAMPLE VILLAGE NAMES

Villages can be named in any number of ways. Some of the most common include:

- Named For the Founder: A village founded by an important or famous personage often commemorates that fact in its name. For example, Denton's Rest was founded by the renowned adventurer turned sage, Denton Algier.
- Named For a Local Feature: The village of Ashford stands near a ford surrounded by ash trees while Longbridge is named for its most prominent building.
- Named For An Event: Some villages stand on the site of a famous event. The village of Slaughterford, for example, may stand near the site of a terrible battle between raiding orcs and the king's bodyguard.
- Named For Another Settlement: Sometimes a settlement springs up near an old one and has a name based on the other settlement. For example, "Little Orten" or "West Chiveley." Such names do not appear in the following table as they are relatively easy to develop.

The table presents 100 ready to go village names.



D%	
1	Abbotswell
2	Avbury
3	Barrowhill
4	Bilbrook
5	Black Tower
6	Blackhill
7	Bodwen
8	Bonehill
9	Bowbridge
10	Burn
11	Caldwell
12	Caverswell
13	Clash
14	Colepool
15	Cornhill
16	Cresswell
17	Duntish
18	Elmridge
19	Erak's Stand
20	Fallholt
21	Fenhill
22	Five Roads
23	Fogmarsh
24	Foleshill
25	Four Trees
26	Greytower
27	Hare Green
28	Horncliff
29	Jer's Rest
30	Kingsbridge
31	Kingsfell
32	Little Hampton
33	Livermere
34	Lofthouse
35	Longdrop
36	Longford
37	Middlemoor
38	Midford
39	Midlee
40	Milham
41	Miller's Hill
42	Minehead
43	Monkton
44	Newport
45	Ogwell
46	Orehill
47	Orton
48	Owlbrook
49	Pitoaks
50	Pool
51	Pyreford
52	Radyr

53	Ravenshead
54	Rayne
55	Redcastle
56	Rimswell
57	Riseley
58	Rockview
59	Ryall
60	Ryle's Wood
61	Salthill
62	Seabrook
63	Seaton
64	Shirebrook
65	Six Ashes
66	Skelton
67	Slaughterford
68	Smalley
69	Smerral
70	Smithsby
71	Somer's Hill
72	Stonehouse
73	Swallowfeld
74	Swinefleet
75	Talkin
76	Tercott
77	Thornwood
78	Tonwell
79	Tor Abbey
80	Tovil
81	Treetop
82	Tulloch
83	Two Bridges
84	Ubley
85	Ughill
86	Ulf's Dell
87	Vowchurch
88	Waterside
89	Wellswood
90	Westerdell
91	White Chapel
92	Wildmoor
93	Witchford
94	Wolfhill
95	Wolverton
96	Woodend
97	Wragby
98	Wyken
99	Yeoford
100	Zeal

# E V $\in$ N T S

A good way of breathing life into a village is to determine what notable event occurred just before the PCs arrived. When they arrive, the GM can describe the event's aftermath. Alternatively, knowing what is about to happen enables a GM to prepare a short interlude or side adventure to bring the locale to life.

D20	Events
1	Marriage
2	Murder or sudden death
3	Festival or celebration
4	Raid by humanoids, bandits etc.
5	Fire
6	Strangers arrive
7	Noble visits
8	Animal attack
9	Disappearance
10	Natural event (flood, earth tremor etc.)
11	Odd weather
12	Disease or plague
13	Adventurers arrive
14	Theft
15	Omen (good or bad)
16	Trader or merchant arrives
17	Accident
18	Visiting preacher or pilgrims
19	Madness
20	Treasure found

# $T\, \text{RADITIONS}$

Many villages have interesting, quaint or atypical traditions and festivals. Some may be annual events, while others take place much more frequently. Use this table to determine such events, adding such details as necessary to bring them to life.

D20	Events
1	Running races.
2	Other races (involving horses, carts, boats or other means of travel).
3	Strange races (chasing large cheese wheels down a steep hill etc.)
4	Storytelling competitions in which competitors vie to tell the most fanciful tale.
5	Ritual dancing; the villagers dress in strange costumes and prance about for a whole day.
6	Themed chase (the villagers catch someone dressed up as prominent local villain such as a witch).
7	Feats of skill (archery, wrestling, boat racing and so on).
8	At the time of every new moon, the villagers process around the village in the dead of night. They carry torches and chant hymns to banish ghosts and other foul spirits from the village.

9	Outside each house grows a luscious rose bush. They are the villagers' pride and joy. Each year, a competition is held to judge the best bush;
	rivalry is fierce.
10	Whenever a storm batters the village, the villagers build a huge bonfire to ward off evil storm spirits.
11	Marriages, births and deaths are a community affair. A joint celebration is held each month to mark all such occasions; everyone in the village attends.
12	The villagers have an odd ritual to bless their children. Infants are laid down in a row and the local priest jumps over them while reciting a blessing.
13	The villagers believe in the deep, everlasting power of nature. Once a year, when the local river floods they coat themselves in the mud from its banks in the belief this imbues them with nature's strength. An all night revel ensues.
14	These villagers enjoy watching (and betting on) animal fighting. They could use foxes, weasels, chickens or other small beasts. More families participate, although a vocal minority deride the practise.
15	The villagers enjoy wood carving and hold regular competitions. Many of the trees, shrubs and wooden buildings are festooned with intricate carvings.
16	The villagers are renown for their skill in growing large fruit and vegetables. Every year, at harvest time the villagers display their best crop before enjoying a communal night-long revel.
17	Every year, the villagers enact a battle or skirmish crucial to the village's existence. Every year, the heroics of the villagers and the treachery of the attackers becomes more and more exaggerated.
18	The villagers believe a ghost haunts a certain part of the village. Every year, on the anniversary of the person's death, they leave offers to placate the unfortunate's restless spirit.
19	At the end of the summer, the villagers enter the nearby woods and gather as many nettles as possible. They then make all manner of nettle- related food and drink which they consume in thanks for nature's bounty.
20	On the longest night of the year, the villagers race burning barrels coated in tar through the village. Many of the participants are more than a little drunk and a plethora of minor burns and injuries results.

Such events, traditions and rituals are excellent role-playing opportunities and can offer a welcome break from the normal campaign fare.

# WHAT'S FOR SALE

Inevitably, when the PCs arrive in a new village they'll wonder what magical items are for sale. Use the below table and subsequent lists to generate such items, probably placing them in the local church, trading station or with an NPC of note.

D%	VILLAGE SET	Notes
01-03	Village 1	
04-06	Village 2	
08-09	Village 3	
10-12	Village 4	
13-15	Village 5	
16-18	Village 6	
19-21	Village 7	
22-24	Village 8	
25-27	Village 9	
28-30	Village 10	
31-33	Village 11	
34-36	Village 12	
37-39	Village 13	
40-42	Village 14	
43-45	Village 15	
46-48	Village 16	
49-51	Village 17	
52-54	Village 18	
55-57	Village 19	
58-60	Village 20	
61-63	Village 21	
64-66	Village 22	
67-69	Village 23	Cursed item
70-72	Village 24	Cursed item
73-75	Village 25	Cursed item
76-78	Village 26	
79-81	Village 27	
82-84	Village 28	Cursed item
85-87	Village 29	
88-90	Village 30	
91-93	Village 31	Cursed item
94-96	Village 32	Cursed item
97-98	Nothing for sale	
99-100	Roll twice	Double the normal amount for sale

Page 21 presents ten sample sellers who can be used as wandering travellers, merchants and so on. Rarely, if ever, should a normal peasant have magic items for sale; such wondrous objects should remain the providence of the great and the good of a village.

For some of the more powerful items (for example, the *belt* of giant strength +4 in village 6), the GM should invent a brief backstory as to how the item came to be in the village; such details adds verisimilitude and depth to the campaign.

# VILLAGE 1

- Potions & Oils bull's strength (300 gp), magic fang (50 gp), shillelagh (50 gp)
- Wand dispel magic (10 charges, 2,250 gp), mirror image (17 charges, 1,530 gp), shillelagh (50 charges, 750 gp)

Wondrous Item eversmoking bottle (5,400 gp), maul of the titans (25,305 gp), stone of alarm (2,700 gp)

#### VILLAGE 2

Potions & Oils animate rope (25 gp), cure moderate wounds (300 gp), shatter (300 gp)

Rod cancellation (11,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) eagle's splendour and hypnotism (175 gp), flaming sphere (150 gp), whispering wind (150 gp)
 Scrolls (Divine) doom (25 gp), goodberry (25 gp)

Weapon +2 warhammer (8,312 gp)

#### VILLAGE 3

Armour +2 buckler (4,165 gp) Scroll (Arcane) minor image (150 gp) Wand deathwatch (46 charges, 690 gp)

# VILLAGE 4

Armour +1 shadow half-plate (5,500 gp)
Potions & Oils jump (50 gp), light (25 gp)
Scrolls (Arcane) detect secret doors (25 gp), mount (25 gp), protection from good (25 gp)
Wand web (31 charges, 2,790 gp)

Wondrous Items bracers of armour +1 (1,000 gp), horn of blasting (20,000 gp)

# VILLAGE 5

Potion cure moderate wounds (300 gp)
Scrolls (Arcane) rope trick (150 gp), hypnotic pattern (150 gp)
Scrolls (Divine) doom (25 gp), enthrall (150 gp)
Rod lesser metamagic quicken spell (35,000 gp)
Wands doom (21 charges, 315 gp), reduce animal (45 charges, 4,050 gp)
Weapon +2 light hammer (8,301 gp)
Wondrous Items efficient quiver (1,800 gp), rope of climbing

#### VILLAGE 6

Oil shillelagh (50 gp)

(3,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) elemental body I (700 gp), spider climb (150 gp) Wand bear's endurance (10 charges, 900 gp)

Wondrous Items belt of giant strength +4 (16,000 gp), silver lions figurines of wondrous power (16,500 gp)

# VILLAGE 7

Potions & Oils continual flame (350 gp), darkness (300 gp), delay poison (300 gp), resist sonic energy (300 gp)

Rod greater metamagic silent spell (24,500 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) whispering wind (150 gp), detect magic and rope trick (162 gp, 5 sp)

Scrolls (Divine) cure moderate wounds and entangle (175 gp) Wand continual flame (1 charge, 70 gp) Wondrous Item lyre of building (13,000 gp)

#### VILLAGE 8

Potion cure light wounds (50 gp)

Ring x-ray vision (25,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) alarm (25 gp), alter self and ghoul touch (300 gp), detect secret doors (25 gp)

Wand remove disease (31 charge, 6,975 gp), whispering wind (21 charge, 1,890 gp)

Wondrous Item crown of blasting, minor (6,480 gp)

#### VILLAGE 9

Potions & Oils invisibility (300 gp), light (25 gp)
Scrolls (Arcane) eagle's splendour (150 gp), reduce person (25 gp)
Scroll (Divine) barkskin (25 gp)
Staff healing (29,600 gp)
Wand delay poison (29 charge, 2,610 gp)

#### VILLAGE 10

Potions & Oils continual flame (350 gp), cure moderate wounds (300 gp), hide from undead (50 gp), reduce animal (300 gp), shield of faith (50 gp)

Rod cancellation (11,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) comprehend languages (25 gp), summon

monster I (25 gp)

**Staff** *frost* (41,400 gp) **Weapon** +1 *shortbow* (2,330 gp)

Wondrous Item gem of brightness (13,000 gp)

#### VILLAGE 11

Potions & Oils cure moderate wounds (300 gp), gentle repose (50 gp)

Scroll (Arcane) enlarge person (25 gp)

Scrolls (Divine) shield of faith (25 gp), summon nature's ally I (25 gp)

Staff healing (29,600 gp)

Wondrous Item bracers of armour +1 (1,000 gp), horseshoes of speed (3,000 gp), robe of blending (8,400 gp)

#### VILLAGE 12

Armour +2 tower shield (4,180 gp)

Potions & Oils hide from animals (50 gp), resistance (25 gp), spider climb (300 gp), shatter (300 gp)

Rings improved jumping (10,000 gp), ram (4 charges, 688 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) command undead, mage armour and ray of enfeeblement (200 gp)

Wand animal messenger (34 charges, 3,060 gp)

#### VILLAGE 13

Rod cancellation (11,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) blindness/deafness, dancing light, and detect thoughts (312 gp, 5 sp), mass enlarge person (700 gp), resilient sphere (700 gp)

Scrolls (Divine) animal trance (150 gp), detect chaos (25 gp), hold person (150 gp)

Weapon +2 spiked chain (8,325 gp), +3 two-bladed sword (18,700 gp)

Wondrous Item lesser bracers of archery (5,000 gp)

# VILLAGE 14

**Potions & Oils** arcane mark (25 gp), mage armour (50 gp), protection from law (50 gp), rope trick (300 gp), shatter (300 gp)

**Scroll (Arcane)** fox's cunning, message and rage (537 gp, 5 sp)

# VILLAGE 15

Potions & Oils magic stone (50 gp), spider climb (300 gp) Scroll (Divine) enthral and speak with plants (525 gp) Scrolls (Arcane) command undead (150 gp), eagle's splendour (150 gp), summon monster III (375 gp) Weapon +1 darkwood longbow (2,405 gp)

#### VILLAGE 16

Potions & Oils continual flame (350 gp) Ring climbing (2,500 gp) Scroll (Arcane) mirror image (150 gp) Scroll (Divine) lesser restoration (150 gp) Staff charming (17,600 gp) Wondrous Item bracers of armour +4 (16,000 gp)

#### VILLAGE 17

Armour +1 tower shield (1,180 gp) Potions & Oils enlarge person (50 gp), status (300 gp) Scroll (Arcane) ventriloquism (25 gp) Scroll (Divine) summon monster III (375 gp) Wondrous Item feather token (whip) (500 gp)

## VILLAGE 18

Potion reduce person (50 gp)
Ring feather falling (2,200 gp)
Scroll (Divine) flame blade (150 gp)
Scrolls (Arcane) colour spray (25 gp), disrupt undead (12 gp, 5 sp)
Staff fire (18,950 gp)
Wand entangle (34 charges, 525 gp)
Weapon adamantine dagger (3,002 gp)

# VILLAGE 19

Armour +3 arrow catching light steel shield (16,159 gp) Scroll (Arcane) protection from law (25 gp) Wondrous Item rope of climbing (3,000 gp) Wand wall of fire (40 charges, 16,800 gp) Weapon +1 repeating heavy crossbow (2,700 gp) Wondrous Item portable hole (20,000 gp)

#### VILLAGE 20

**Rod** metamagic silent spell (11,000 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) erase (25 gp), fox's cunning and mirror image (300 gp), hypnotism (25 gp), knock (150 gp), levitate (150 gp), magic circle against law (375 gp)

#### Scroll (Divine) detect good (25 gp)

Wondrous Items incandescent blue sphere ioun stone (8,000 gp), iron bands of binding (26,000 gp), tome of clear thought +1 (27,500 gp)

# VILLAGE 21

Potion delay poison (150 gp), stabilise (25 gp) Scroll (Arcane) invisibility sphere (375 gp) Scroll (Divine) detect law (25 gp) Wand summon nature's ally (40 charges, 600 gp), ventriloquism (5 charges, 75 gp)

# VILLAGE 22

Oil arcane mark (25 gp)
Wand arcane lock (6 charges, 690 gp)
Wondrous Items pipes of the sewers (1,150 gp), universal solvent (50 gp)
Weapon trident of fish command (18,650 gp)

# VILLAGE 23

Armour adamantine breastplate (10,200 gp)
 Potions & Oils cat's grace (300 gp), fox's cunning (300 gp), invisibility (300 gp)
 Scrolls (Arcane) burning hands (25 gp), glitterdust (150 gp)<sup>5</sup>
 Weapon +1 light crossbow (2,335 gp)

#### VILLAGE 24

Potions & Oils cat's grace (300 gp), remove fear (50 gp), status (300 gp) Scrolls (Arcane) disguise self (25 gp), shield (25 gp) Scroll (Divine) consecrate (175 gp)

Wand protection from good (17 charges, 255 gp)<sup>6</sup>

Weapons +1 quarterstaff (2,600 gp), +1 scythe (2,318 gp), +3 flaming composite longbow (+4 Str) (32,800 gp)

Wondrous Item clay golem manual (12,000 gp)

# VILLAGE 25

**Armour** +1 light wooden shield (1,153 gp), +3 mithral studded leather armour (10,025 gp)

Potions & Oils bull's strength (300 gp), protection from chaos (50 gp), tongues (750 gp)

Scroll (Arcane) hypnotism (25 gp)<sup>7</sup>

Scrolls (Divine) bane and cure moderate wounds (175 gp), silence (150 gp)

Weapons +1 composite longbow (+2 Str) (2,600 gp), +3 shock sap (32,301 gp)

# VILLAGE 26

Potions & Oils rope trick (300 gp), spider climb (300 gp) Scroll (Arcane) obscuring mist (25 gp) Weapon +2 sling (8,300 gp) Wondrous Item stone of good luck (luckstone) (20,000 gp)

#### VILLAGE 27

Potions & Oils delay poison (300 gp), goodberry (50 gp), pass without trace (50 gp), remove fear (50 gp), virtue (25 gp)
Ring invisibility (20,000 gp)
Rod lesser metamagic maximise spell (14,000 gp)
Scroll (Arcane) reduce person (25 gp)
Scroll (Divine) summon monster I (25 gp)

# VILLAGE 28

Armour +4 heavy wooden shield (16,157 gp)
Potions & Oils cure moderate wounds (300 gp), fly (750 gp)<sup>8</sup>
Ring protection +1 (2,000 gp)
Staff healing (29,600 gp)
Wand cure moderate wounds (41 charges, 3,690 gp)
Wondrous Items cloak of resistance +5 (25,000 gp), efficient quiver (1,800 gp)

# VILLAGE 29

Wand mage armour (34 charges, 510 gp), tree shape (31 charges, 2,790 gp)

Weapon +3 longspear (18,305 gp)

Wondrous Items boots of elvenkind (2,500 gp), phylactery of faithfulness (1,000 gp)

# VILLAGE 30

Ring protection +1 (2,000 gp)

Scroll (Arcane) protection from arrows (150 gp)

Scrolls (Divine) resist energy (150 gp), charm animal, longstrider and summon nature's ally II (200 gp)

Weapon +1 construct bane undead bane ghost touch longsword (32,315 gp)

**Wondrous Items** *belt of mighty constitution* +4 (16,000 gp), *eyes of the eagle* (2,500 gp)

#### VILLAGE 31

Armour mithral shirt (1,100 gp)

Potions & Oils bull's strength (300 gp), eagle's splendour (300 gp), light (25 gp), remove paralysis (300 gp)<sup>9</sup>

**Rod** metal and mineral detection (10,500 gp)

Scroll (Arcane) true strike (25 gp)

Wondrous Item onyx dog figurine of wondrous power (15,500 gp)

# VILLAGE 32

Potions & Oils grease (50 gp), hide from undead (50 gp), hold portal (50 gp), magic stone (50 gp), resist sonic (10) energy (50 gp)

**Ring** *protection* +2 (8,000 gp)

- Scroll (Arcane) knock (150 gp), knock and levitate (300 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) spiritual weapon (150 gp)
- Wand inflict moderate wounds (35 charges, 3,150 gp)<sup>10</sup>

**Wondrous Items** amulet of proof against detection and location; 35,000 gp)<sup>11</sup>, belt of dwarvenkind (14,900 gp)

# Curses

Some of the items for sale are cursed – for their real natures refer to the list below. All of the curses are unknown to the seller.

- 1. *Scroll of glitterdust* (V 23; Unknown) Opposite target: effected centred on caster.
- 2. Wand of protection from good (V 24; Unknown) Delusion.
- Scroll of hypnotism (V 25; Unknown) Intermittent functioning: can only be used within 10 feet of a divine spellcaster.
- 4. **Potion of fly** (V 28; Unknown) Completely different effect: instead functions as a *potion of gaseous form.*
- Potion of remove paralysis (V 31; Unknown) Intermittent functioning: can only be used within 10 feet of a divine spellcaster.
- 6. Wand of inflict moderate wounds (V 32; Unknown) Delusion.
- 7. Amulet of proof against detection and location (V 32; Unknown) Substitute; amulet of inescapable location.

# SAMPLE SELLERS

Use the table below, to determine a seller's identity.

D10	Seller <sup>1</sup>
1	Aeldar Selninmah (LG male half-elf paladin 1): Aeldar is selling items to help a local family pay for clerics to cure a sick relative. He also (very unsubtly) asks for additional donations to aid his cause. Unaware of his incredible good looks, he has a naive, trusting soul.
2	<b>Eausflan Honourcloak</b> (LG female gnome cleric 3): Selling the proceeds of a successful adventure, Eausflan only sells to "good folk." Sincere and rather motherly, she provides lots of wise advice.
3	<b>Erf Moonleaf</b> (NG male halfling fighter 1): Giving up on the adventuring life, Erf has no need for expensive magical trinkets. Chatty and friendly, Erf tries to tag along with adventurers heading to a nearby town or city.
4	Jarrow Strongjaw (NE female half-orc ranger 1): Jarrow is raising funds for an expedition to assault a nearby ogre lair. She has bright red, unruly hair and is very touchy about it. She has a crude sense of humour.
5	Jukka Tanskanen (NG male human rogue 4): Jukka is being blackmailed by a former comrade who knows she left several friends to die during her first adventure. Skeletally thin and pale of skin, Jukka looks generally, but non-specifically, unwell.
6	<b>Pirjo Itkonen</b> (CN female human fighter 5): Deeply in debt to a local gambler, Pirjo must sell the item(s) to pay off her debts. She reeks of desperation and accepts any offer above 75% of the item's market value.
7	<b>Sauli Vanhala</b> (NG male human rogue 5): An incorrigible flirt and ladies man, Sauli doesn't want the item(s) – he would prefer to get drunk and chase women. He refers to any nearby woman as a "delightful creature" or "dear lady."
8	<b>Sini Jalava</b> (LE female human rogue 1): This rogue is selling stolen item(s). She masquerades as a merchant and offers to "source" specific additional items for her customers for only a 10% surcharge.
9	<b>Tuija Rajala</b> (NE female human sorcerer 3): Tuija is selling the proceeds of a recent adventure; she constantly gloats at her good fortune and offers unwanted advice. Beautiful, she is haughty and dismissive of others.
10	<b>Ylermi Kuusisto</b> (NG male human bard 5): Obsessed with a lost book said to contain early versions of several ancient saga-tales, Ylermi is raising funds to continue his quest to acquire the work. He is deeply tanned and his nose has obviously been broken several times
1 · Skill Ra	nks 5+ level for class skills: non class skills +1

1: Skill Ranks 5+ level for class skills; non class skills +1.



# APIA

Along the shores of the Illgen river hard against the ruins of a once-mighty castle lies the village of Apia. Apia marks a convenient spot to cross the river, but more than that offers a pleasant place to slake a thirst or enjoy a sumptuous meal. The canny know to order Sanna's golden mead during their stay at the Bee's Knees Inn while others might notice a certain sweetness to the local food, or a strange hum in the air, but only a few note the higher than average number of bees buzzing about the village. Few bother to investigate the old and dilapidated castle anymore, after being cautioned by the locals that the structure is both already well-explored and dangerously unsafe – which is true, but avoids mentioning that the old ruins are not entirely abandoned...

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

# APIA AT A GLANCE

Apia is built on the ruins of Actia – a town successful and important enough to have warranted the construction of both a stone castle and bridge. Actia straddled a major trade route, for lumber, ore and food. Unfortunately, this also made the town valuable. As is often the case, battles were fought over which petty tyrant could rule the area; Actia fell in the third such battle, when hill giants broke through Castle Actia's walls, crippled the bridge and razed most of the town. Worse, the war shifted the trade routes and, coupled with the loss of the bridge, Actia's position as a trading centre was gone forever.

Trade is one thing, but people are creatures of habit, and the ruins of Actia still lay on a convenient, established road. Travellers still used Actia's ruins as a waystation and adventurers often stayed in the rubble of the town while exploring the castle. Eventually, the makeshift camps became a semi-permanent settlement, which grew into an inn and a shop clustered around a small apple orchard that had escaped the devastation; from there, the small village of Arca grew from Actia's ashes.

Nearly three decades ago, Arca's fortunes changed again. One night, seven-year-old Marsa Daigle went missing from her family home. As the villagers hunted through the woods, Marsa's father, Loiker, happened upon a bloated, violet humanoid clutching his child. As Loiker prepared to fight, the terrible monster set his child down and hissed in guttural Common, "Needs honey." The creature's strange response was enough to give Loiker a moment's pause; studying the large purplish creature, he slowly and carefully reached out and began examining Marsa. A cursory examination revealed burn wounds, covering his daughter's lower arms. Looking at the creature for an explanation, it merely repeated, "Needs honey."

Over the next few weeks, the ettercap, M'yxtix, helped Loiker treat his daughter's burns, and was a guest in the burgeoning community. The villagers quickly became used to their strange guest and she adapted rapidly to "village life." Loiker Daigle and other townspeople asked M'yxtix countless questions about insects, drawing on the forest-dweller's exceptional store of information about insects and arthropods. It was over repeated conversations that Loiker came to understand how exceptional honey is, and how easy it would be to gather with the ettercap's help.

Over the next few years, the village of Arca added an apiary and began raising bees and selling the honey, rapidly finding a wide untapped market for the sweet substance. Recognizing the economic momentum behind their beekeeping, and in recognition of M'yxtix's assistance, Arca renamed itself Apia.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Marsa Daigle (NG female human expert 3) Government Autocracy Population 177 (138 humans, 34 halflings, 3 elves, 2 half-elves) Alignments NG Languages Common, Halfling Corruption 0; Crime -3; Economy +1; Law +0; Lore -1; Society +0 Qualities insular Danger -15; Disadvantages none

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Casia Lornton** (location 1; NG female human expert 2) Apia's lead beekeeper.
- Marsa Daigle (location 2; NG female human expert 2) Tavern owner and informal mayor of Apia.
- **M'yxtix** (location 4; NE female advanced old ettercap expert 2) A forest creature that dwells in Castle Actia and aids the village.
- **Toldreth Morl** (location 5; NG male human expert [apothecary] 1/wizard [transmuter] 2) The owner of Apia's only shop.
- Loiker Daigle (location 6; NG male human expert 3) Retired beekeeper and lifelong friend of M'yxtix

# NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. There are, however, a few locations of note:

- 1. Beekeeper's Home & Studio: Here, Casia tends Apia's bees, and harvests their honey.
- 2. Bee's Knees Tavern: The local inn and tavern.
- 3. Bridge & Docks: Here, children dive and swim in the river.
- 4. Castle Actia: An old ruined castle; M'yxtix's home.
- General Store: The only shop in the village; here travellers can buy a wide range of honey-based products including Apia's famous alchemical honey.
- 6. Loiker's House: Home of the village's former beekeeper.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry light farming, light forestry Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils obscuring mist (25 gp), neutralize poison (700 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) fog cloud (150 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) lesser restoration (150 gp)

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about Apia. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Apia is moderately well known as a significant producer of honey.

**DC 15**: Apia was the site of an ancient battle that saw the ruination of the town of Actia, its castle and stone bridge.

DC 20: Apia was, until about 25 years ago, known as Arca.

# VILLAGERS

**Appearance**: The people of Apia have, on the whole, notably smooth and clear skin and bright eyes, but are perhaps a few pounds heavier than in neighbouring villages.

**Dress**: Nearly everyone in Apia dresses in light colours; both men and women tend to wear long-sleeved shirts and pants made from light clothes, particularly in the late summer.

**Nomenclature**: *male*: Augar, Baldak, Emark, Halok, Neror, Rennar; *female*: Carrina, Dandria, Gallae, Isila, Rennae; *family*: Amberale, Bottlecast, Gallinson, Multengrue, Portercast



# 1: BEEKEEPER'S HOME & STUDIO

These two buildings are painted a light blue, as if to match the sky. They have open windows and their doors stand ajar. The scent of the place is almost unpleasantly sweet.

The two buildings that sit alongside the beekeeping fields are kept by Casia Lornton (NG female human expert 2), the current beekeeper of Apia. Casia studied under Loiker Daigle (Area 6), before he retired, and M'yxtix the ettercap. She uses one of the buildings as her home, and the other for the processing of honey. In the early morning, Casia can always be found hard at work, gathering honeycomb, collecting and bottling honey and replacing any damaged panels or portions of the apiaries.

Characters with questions about beekeeping are directed to Casia, who answers questions patiently and pleasantly. She is also happy to show interested parties the apiaries (provided they don't seem untrustworthy and are genuinely interested).

Casia is a dark-haired, bright-eyed woman who looks to be in her early 30s. She always wears light-coloured, long, snug clothing, and nearly always wears a beekeeper's hat and carries a smoker – a modified lantern that generates smoke to soothe bees. Casia moves and speaks slowly and with great deliberation, even when dealing with people. Occasionally, she talks to her bees as a parent talks to their children.

Loiker (Area 6) can still be found here, helping out a few times a week. While he's here, he often sneaks off a quantity of honey for himself to aid in perfecting the method of creating a Mellified Man (see "Mellified Man" for more information).

# 2: THE BEE'S KNEES

The sign above the door features a cartoonish bee with a bright red and swollen stinger, clutching a tankard and smiling widely. Within, you hear music and laugher and smell wonderful scents.

Marsa Daigle (NG female human expert 2), a plump and smiling woman, serves the drinks and food at the Bee's Knees with a laugh and wink. The large ground floor of the tavern is heated and lit by a large hearth and surrounded by cosy booths of dark wood and soft, red leather.

Much of the food and drink at The Bee's Knees includes honey, which also provides travellers with otherwise uncommon delicacies such as honey-glazed hams, honey-roasted peanuts, honey oat bread, and honey mead.

The Bee's Knees has a simple fireside stage, suitable for a bard or minstrel to perform. Most evenings some local volunteers do their best on a lute or harp, and at least a few nights a week Marsa gives an admirable performance with her singing (generally, the bawdiest tavern-song that comes to her mind at the time).

Price
5 sp
2 sp
5 ср
5 sp

# 3: THE BRIDGE & DOCKS

The bridge that spanned the Illgen river fell long ago, broken to gain a temporary respite in an ancient battle. The children of Apia now use the broken bridge as a diving platform, and sunken stones from the bridge are visible in the river. Those sailing on the river stay to the deepest part of the channel when passing the bridge's ruin.

Curious characters looking into the construction of the bridge can make a DC 10 Craft (stonemason) check or a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check to determine that what's left of the bridge (on either side) is stable and solidly constructed. Beating either DC by 5 or more reveals the bridge is almost 500 years old and that it was obviously collapsed deliberately.

Crossing the river now requires a boat (or DC 10 Swim checks, for characters who don't mind getting wet). The villagers own a half-dozen or so boats and will carry travellers across the river for a few coppers. Transporting animals or heavy goods is somewhat trickier and more time-consuming; the water is deep enough to make leading a horse across both difficult and dangerous. Marsa, at the Bee's Knees, owns a moderately large boat that can carry one horse or a small cart, although she'll expect some compensation in return.

# ALCHEMICAL HONEY

Conventional bee honey has many noteworthy properties, in addition to making even bland meals more palatable. It can been used to treat gastric disturbances, ulcers, sore throats, coughs, wounds and burns, being both an antiseptic and antibiotic. Using honey in this way is part of a normal Heal check, although an ample supply of honey provides a +2 competence bonus on such checks. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check or a DC 10 Heal check confirms these delightful properties, which are fairly common knowledge to woodsmen, herbalists and alchemists.

With alchemical treatment, though, honey can significantly magnify its healing properties. If this alchemical honey is ingested by a character afflicted by poison or disease, or spread on a poisoned wound or a diseased area, the alchemical honey bestows a +5 alchemical bonus to the next saving throw made within 1 hour to resist the poison's or disease's effects. A dose of alchemical honey costs 100 gp, and weighs half a pound.

# 4: CASTLE ACTIA

The outer walls of this sprawling ancient castle have halfcollapsed. Lichens and mosses are well established on the ruins and a strange, foreboding silence hangs over the place.

The ruin of Castle Actia sits atop a small hill. There is a simple road up to the castle's (now fallen) gate, although it's become somewhat overgrown from disuse. A DC 20 Perception check, or a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check, notes a higher than typical number of spiders dwelling in the castle's immediate surrounds.

The history of Castle Actia is now largely unknown to Apia's inhabitants, although its fall is noted in histories of the area. Most villagers don't visit the castle anymore, which they describe to travellers as a dull, boring place that decades of looting have stripped of anything interesting or valuable. This is partly true although the ruins – with stones slick from moisture and heavy walls that eliminate outside noise but produce eerie echoes – are ominous. Although bereft of valuables, however, the castle is far from abandoned.

M'yxtix (N[E] female advanced old ettercap expert 2 [page 29]), a particularly strong, clever and resourceful ettercap, took up residence in the ruins some 23 years ago with the villagers' approval and blessing. M'yxtix helped the villagers learn how to keep bees and harvest the honey and is a valued, if reclusive, member of the community.

A few adults – often including Casia and Loiker – visit M'yxtix every week or so, to speak with her about bees and the surrounding woods. Outsiders are not welcome at these meetings, unless Casia or Loiker vouches for them.

# Mellified Man

Stories tell that, a humanoid near the end of its life, can mummify itself with honey. Supposedly, the stories say, the subject must stop eating other food or drink, consuming only honey, even going so far as to bathe in the amber liquid. After a short while on this treatment, the subject's waste, tears and eventually even blood run golden and viscous. When this diet eventually proves fatal, if the body is sealed in a stone sarcophagus filled with honey, after ten years, the body's transformation into a mellified man is complete.

According to legend, a piece of a mellified man ingested by a character afflicted by poison or disease cures the ailment, as though from a successful *neutralize poison* or *remove disease* spell (as appropriate).

Creating a mellified man requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) checks, a total of 250 lbs (150 gp worth) of honey, and a stone sarcophagus worth 500 gp. A complete mellified man would contain enough material for 25 uses each worth 1,125 gp (or 28,125 gp for a whole body).

#### 5: GENERAL STORE

A pleasant sweet and syrupy aroma wafts from this small shop.

Toldreth Morl (NG male human expert [apothecary] 1/wizard [transmuter] 2), the owner of Apia's only shop, runs an organized and well-stocked establishment. While there's only a limited selection of adventuring gear, there's everything anyone could need for village living.

The shop also has a selection of honeyed products available, including honey candies, honey on the comb and jars of honey. Toldreth is pleased by any opportunity to talk up the curative properties of the golden liquid, peddling it as something of a miracle cure for everything from minor skin irritations to lifethreatening injury, as well as its amazing preservative properties.

Toldreth is also something of a retired wizard; he makes much more of his very brief adventuring career than it really deserves. He has parlayed his minor talent for spellcraft into the manufacture of some alchemical items for sale in his shop, including alchemical honey (see "Alchemical Honey").

Ітем	WEIGHT	PRICE
Alchemical honey	1/2 lb.	100 gp
Honey candy	—	1 ср
Honey (jar)	1/2 lb.	3 sp
Honey on the comb	—	2 ср

#### 6: LOIKER'S HOUSE

This tiny house is little more than a cottage.

Loiker Daigle, father to Marsa and original beekeeper of Apia, lives in this simple cottage, close to his lifelong friend, M'yxtix. When his duties as beekeeper became too much for him, Loiker handed his duties over to Casia and steadied himself to face the long night of death. Long, late night conversations with M'yxtix have, however, recently given him pause to reconsider his options. In conversations with M'yxtix about death, the ettercap revealed that there is an alternative to passing uselessly into death, in which honey plays a vital role: she spoke of transformation into a mellified man. Loiker sees this as an opportunity to continue and extend his useful and productive "life" in the community. Knowing that many of his peers would be shocked at his plans, he has quietly begun working toward his goal and has begun stealing the requisite honey from Casia.

# LIFE IN APIA

Life in Apia is much like life in any other small village, with the addition of several thousand honeybees.

The presence of the bees has a distinct effect on the residents' clothing; villagers dress in light clothing that covers much of body, leaving minimal exposed skin, and tend to move about slowly, giving the bees time to get used to their movements. Even young children are cautious about running or roughhousing around the fields of flowers and the apiaries.

Further, along with the bees has come an abundance of honey. Honey is an excellent source of a number of things people need, as well as providing a more readily available treatment for illness and some types of injury. People in Apia tend to have better complexions, less scarring and be healthier than those from other similarly sized communities, although they are perhaps somewhat rounder in the midsection.

While harming the bees of Apia isn't against any laws, it's certainly frowned upon; the bees are allowed to fly anywhere in the village. Visitors using spells or abilities likely to harm a large number of bees find the residents of Apia become more cautious, reserved and hesitant due to their concern for the bees' welfare.

Honeybee Swarm: Honeybees are essentially docile creatures; getting them to swarm is actually somewhat difficult; spraying the hives with water or grease, setting fire to several apiaries, kicking the apiaries over and so on creates a swarm.

#### EVENTS

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

D6	Event
1	<b>Dance</b> : For dances in Apia, the ladies invite the gentlemen. Characters are welcome to attend, even without escorts. Attractive male characters are likely to be invited, and it would be rude to decline!
2	<b>Weddings</b> : Weddings in Apia are nearly always held out of doors, often with clouds of smoked (and thus docile) bees around as a living decoration or accompaniment. It's considered exceptionally good fortune in the town if a bee should "feed" from the bridal bouquet.
3	<b>Bee Cleaning</b> : Every ten days or so, Casia pulls the apiaries apart for examination. Obviously, this irritates the bees to no end, so there's often a large amount of smoke rising from her fields, and most villagers avoid the fields and try to stay indoors as much as possible; they suggest as much to visitors, if asked.
4	<b>Crabapple Harvest</b> : The local crabapple trees are well tended by Apia's bees. Several times a year, the villagers head into the woods to gather crabapples. A weeks-long flurry of pie eating and apple-cider making follows.

5	<b>Baking Contest:</b> Baking contests are one of the highlights of life in Apia. Any outsiders are likely to be asked to serve as "neutral" judges, particularly those with an air of sophistication or fairness. The food is delicious, and virtually all includes honey in some capacity.
6	<b>Wild Beasts</b> : Every so often, an animal gets the scent of the apiaries and decide it's worth coming close enough to investigate. Depending on the size and strength of the animal, their escapades in Apia range from amusing to terrifying. The villagers band together to hunt such animals, and might offer some (small) bounty on their

#### Whispers & Rumours

capture to tempt outsiders to help.

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Apia and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D4 RUMOUR

1	"Casia has a real way with the bees! There are some folks that think she's able to talk to them. I dunno
	where they'd get that crazy idea."
	"Did you know that there are only a few males in a bee
2	colony? Females do all the work. I think there's a lesson
	in that somewhere."
3	"Maybe it's just me, but I think there's less honey
	coming out of the bees these days. Not a lot less, sure,
	but less; ever since Casia took over."
4*	"Castle Actia? Teenagers sneak off there, from time to
	time, for a little privacy. Nothing much else there,
	nowadays."
*False rumour	

#### **HONEYBEE SWARM** CR 2 (XP 600) A cloud of black-and-yellow fat, buzzing insects descends upon vou.

N Fine vermin (swarm) Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9 Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); ACP 0; Fly +13 AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; CMD -(+3 Dex, +4 size) Immune critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting effects, spells targeting a specific target, weapon damage; Weakness vulnerable to spells or effects with an area (+50% damage) Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +4 **hp** 31 (7 HD); immune to weapon damage Space 10 ft.; Base Atk +5; CMB -Melee swarm (2d4 plus distraction [nauseated 1 rd. {DC 11 Fort negates}] and poison [DC 11 Fort {1 save}; freq. 1 rd./4 rd.; effect 1 Dex damage])

Abilities Str 1, Dex 17, Con 6, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 9

# M'YXTIX

A remarkably social creature for one of her kind, albeit one with a monstrous mien. M'yxtix is well-loved in Apia.

M'yxtix has dwelled in Apia for over two decades, in the ruins of Castle Actia.

Background: M'yxtix is a gifted member of her species, having killed her fellow broodmates (and her mother who tried to chase her from the nest). M'yxtix dwelled in the woods in comparative peace for years, before the fateful night when young Marsia Daigle ran into the night to play with fire. When M'yxtix came upon the injured child, she recognized that Marsia was immature, and that, if she were harmed, the other humans would hunt down her killer. Instead, M'yxtix made what seemed the obvious decision; to save the child. The decision that Loiker and the townspeople came to see as an inspired act of a kind soul was, in actuality, an act of self-interest. Since then, M'yxtix has learned much about humans and has come to value her friendships with the villagers.

Personality: M'yxtix is similar to most ettercaps; an introvert, generally preferring solitude to the company of others. However, for an ettercap, M'yxtix is positively gregarious; other ettercaps would find her almost obnoxiously extroverted in tolerating interaction and conversation with others as often as every week.

M'yxtix may be a social creature, but she's still savage and nearly as instinctual as she is intelligent. When frustrated or upset, M'yxtix struggles to control her primal, feral nature. Politeness and civility are crucial to M'yxtix; she requires a certain amount of routine when guests visit; first tea, small talk, whatever business there is to be done (over food), and then some brief parting pleasantries. She enjoys learning about human culture and habits, often asking highly specific and detailed questions about seemingly mundane details.

Mannerisms: M'yxtix is reaching the end of her life. Like an elderly human, she often moves slowly and reacts to things with caution instead of spontaneity. While talking, she makes quiet, clicking noises that sound not unlike a pair of knitting needles.

M'yxtix is constantly attended by several pet spiders the size of dinner plates. She speaks to her pets (in Common, in front of guests) and compliments them on their behaviour, tolerating and reprimanding their actions (including climbing on guests) just as though they were more "common" pets.

Distinguishing Features: M'yxtix's hue has dimmed considerably with age; her body is now lilac in colour. Her rounded, black eyes and mandibles effect a sinister appearance.

Hooks: Characters encountering M'yxtix might attack the strange creature. Such characters will no doubt be surprised to see villagers running to her aid!

M'YXTIX CR 5 (XP 1,600)		
This bloated, lilac-coloured creature has elongated limbs ending		
in wicked curved claws. It moves slowly and deliberately.		
Female old advanced ettercap expert 2		
N(E) Medium aberration		
Init +9; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception		
+12, Sense Motive +10		
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +10, Stealth +13		
AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; CMD 20		
(+5 Dex, +2 natural)		
Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +12		
hp 53 (6 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +6		
Melee bite +6 (1d6+2 plus poison [DC 17 Fort {2 cures}; freq. 1		
rd./10 rds.; <i>effect</i> 1d2 Dex]) and		
2 claws +6 (1d4+2)		
Special Actions traps, web		
Web (Ex [Standard, 8/day]) M'yxtix can use webs to support		
herself and up to one additional Medium creature. In		
addition, she can throw a webs at targets up to Large size		
up to 50 ft. (+8 ranged, range increment 10 ft.) in a similar		
fashion to a net. An entangled creature can escape with a		
DC 18 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a DC 18		
Strength check. Attempts to burst a web by those caught in		

it take a -4 penalty. M'yxtix can create sheets of sticky

webbing up to three times her size. She usually positions

these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must make a DC 20

Perception check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble

into it and become trapped as though by a successful web

attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5

bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or

grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot-square section of web

has 4 hp and DR -/5. M'yxtix can easily move across her own web and can pinpoint any creature touching its web.

Abilities Str 15, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 21, Cha 14 SQ spider empathy (+9), traps

- Spider Empathy (Ex) This ability functions as the druid's wild empathy, but only works on spiders. M'yxtix gains a +4 racial bonus on this check. Spiders are mindless, but this empathic communication imparts on them a modicum of implanted intelligence, allowing M'yxtix to train giant spiders and use them as guardians.
- Traps (Ex) M'yxtix is skilled at crafting cunning traps with her webs, and doesn't require gold to build the traps, merely time. She does not use lethal traps, in her lair.
- Ettercap Noose: CR 1; Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; Trigger location; Reset repair; Effect +15 CMB check (grapple).

Feats Ability Focus (web), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative Skills as above plus Craft (traps) +9, Knowledge (nature) +7,

Profession (beekeeper) +14, Survival +11 Languages Common, Halfling, Sylvan



# Ashford

Once a prosperous village, Ashford now stands as a decayed shadow of its former self. A year ago, it was a busy place; its streets and gardens echoing with the sounds of life, love and commerce. Then the stranger came and death followed upon his heels. Plague had come to Ashford. In his wake, he left the hacking coughs and pain-filled moans of the dying and the wails of the survivors mourning their dead. Over half the population died, and many of the survivors packed and fled.

A few folk yet dwell in Ashford among the abandoned, deserted homes of their friends and neighbours, but it is now a quiet, mournful place. Weeds choke its abandoned gardens and untilled fields. Wolves, foxes and other less natural predators gnaw at the weathered bones filling the village's open plague pit. The surviving villagers are distrustful of strangers, shunning them whenever possible, and few find welcome, cheer or solace in Ashford.

# ASHFORD AT A GLANCE

Once a prosperous village, Ashford now stands as a decayed shadow of its former self. A year ago, it was a busy place; its streets and gardens echoing with the sounds of life, love and commerce. Then the stranger came and death followed upon his heels. The stranger – a well-travelled bard – stayed at the Jolly Farmer and regaled the assembled guests with many tales and songs as he walked among them. The next morning, he awoke with a high fever and coughed up blood over his bed-partner, one of the tavern's serving wenches. Plague had come to Ashford.

Within a week the bard was dead and the serving wench lay dying. Within a month, the sound of hacking coughs, the painfilled moans of the dying and the wails of the survivors mourning their dead echoed through the village. Before the winter snows began to fall, over half the population was dead, and many of the survivors had fled.

A few folk yet dwell in Ashford among the abandoned, deserted homes of their friends and neighbours, but it is now a quiet, mournful place. Weeds choke abandoned gardens and untilled fields while wolves, foxes and other less natural predators gnaw at the weathered bones filling the village's open plague pits. The surviving villagers are distrustful of strangers, shunning them whenever possible, and few find welcome, cheer or solace in Ashford.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Baron Aelfgar Stannard Government Overlord (anarchy) Population 75 (68 humans, 4 half-elves, 3 half-orcs) Alignments Neutral Languages Common. Elven. Orc Corruption +3; Crime +1; Economy -5; Law -6; Lore +0; Society -8 Qualities Strategic location

Danger +18; Disadvantages Impoverished, plagued

- Lingering Plague Every day a traveller spends in Ashford, there is a 5% chance he is exposed to plague. This chance rises to 20% if the character explores any abandoned building containing the corpses of plague victims. Such folk must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or contract the plague:
- Bubonic Plague: DC 17 Fortitude [2 consecutive saves]; onset 1 day; freq. 1/day; effect 1d4 Con damage and 1 Cha damage and target is fatigued.

#### **NOTABLE FOLK**

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

Baron Aelfgar Stannard (location 1; LN male human warrior 1/aristocrat 2) Ashford's liege lord, Aelfgar has not been seen in the village since the plague struck.

- Dunn Frewin (location 6; CE male ghoul cleric 2) Once one of Ashford's priests, Dunn has returned from the grave to revenge himself upon Waldere.
- Waldere Elvery (location 3; LN male human cleric 3) Radicalised by Ashford's horrific fate, Waldere is a raging alcoholic.
- Janaela Fisfelond (location 5; N female half-elf wizard [abjurer] 5) Consumed with her magical research – and little empathy with the common folk - Janaela rarely emerges from her tower.
- Praen Alston (location 2; N male human expert 1) The village miller, Praen hates Waldere - blaming him for his family's painful death - and stymies him whenever possible
- Ailred Lewin (location 4; LN female human expert 2) Landlady of The Jolly Farmer, she is never seen without a vinegar-soaked mask about her face.

#### **NOTABLE LOCATIONS**

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

- 1. Ashford Manor: Abandoned by its lord, Ashford Manor is thought unoccupied by the villagers. Unbeknownst to them, three plague survivors lurk within.
- Mill: Although the mill's wheel still turns, Praen Alston spends 2. most of his time looking after, and protecting, his young daughter.
- 3. The Wailing Hall: The village church is rarely visited now, except by a few fanatical worshippers who are led in their devotions by Waldere Elvery.
- 4. The Jolly Farmer: Little cheer is to be found at the village's inn. Guests are served in their rooms and almost no villagers now drink there.
- 5. The Burning Tower: Home to the enchantress Janaela Fisfelond, the tower stands amid the shattered ruins of a castle thrown down after its lord rebelled against his liege.
- 6. Plague Pits: While the plague savaged Ashford, the villagers dug two plague pits and dumped the dead within. Feral dogs, woodland predators and Dunn Frewin have uncovered these grizzly reminders of Ashford's fate.

#### MARKETPLACE

**Resources & Industry** Farming, fishing

Base Value 220 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 1d4; Medium Items 1d2; Major Items -

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

- Scroll (Arcane) arcane sight (375 gp)
- Wands call lightning (12 chgs.; 2,700 gp); find traps (37 chgs.; 1,665 gp)
- Weapon +2 hand crossbow (8,400 gp)

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about Ashford. A successful check reveals all information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Ashford was a prosperous village until last year when the plague struck. Now most travellers avoid the village.

**DC 15**: A handful of folk still live in the village. The few travellers to visit Ashford have spoken of quiet, distrustful folk and strange religious practises.

**DC 20**: At the height of the plague, terrible deeds were wrought. Some families were burnt alive in their homes in a desperate attempt to halt the contagion's progress.

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**Appearance** Of sullen countenance, most villagers have long, dark brown or black hair and either brown or grey eyes.

**Dress** The villagers wear old, muddy clothes. Most wear thick fur cloaks, believing such garments ward off the plague.

**Nomenclature** *male* Ahlred, Ceol, Daela, Gyric, Praen; *female* Bebbe, Hild, Oshild, Saeith; *family* Burch, Eanith, Isgar, Sirett.

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Ashford and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1	Janaela Fisfelond (a local wizard) slew several villagers with her magic when they tried to break into her tower.
2*	The village was cursed by a witch!
3	The local priest, Waldere Elvery, survived the plague – although most of his congregation died. He is a drunk.
4	The old burnt-out Eanith home is haunted by the vengeful spirits of those that died within.
5	Something unnatural has been disturbing the plague pits.
6*	A necromancer lich desires some ancient treasure buried deep beneath the village. He sent the plague to kill everyone, so he could search for it undisturbed.

\*False rumour



# 1: ASHFORD MANOR

When the plague came to Ashford, its lordling (Baron Aelfgar Stannard [LN male human warrior 1/aristocrat 2]) panicked. Having lived here for only a decade or so, he felt no compulsion to stay and help his people. Packing up his wealth and jewels he fled along with his family, men-at-arms and trusted family servants to a secluded hunting lodge. He has not returned, and none of the villagers have bothered to learn his fate.

Ashford Manor thus stands abandoned and has remained unlooted simply because the villagers assume Stannard will one day return. Unbeknownst to them, three villagers who escaped their burning homes (and subsequently survived the plague) skulk in the manor.

#### 2: MILL

The mill wheel stills turns, but little grain is ground here anymore. The miller, Praen Alston (N female human expert 1), lost his wife and all but one of his children to the pestilence. He dwells here with his young daughter Saeith (N male human commoner 1) because he has nowhere else to go. Saeith is only ten-years-old, but worries about the anger consuming her father. He blames Waldere Elvery (Area 3) for his loved ones' deaths, and doesn't understand why anyone would still believe that misguided charlatan. He stirs up trouble for the priest

# ABANDONED HOUSES

Many of Ashford's buildings stand empty and abandoned, their owners having either died of plague or fled the village. Some homes yet contain the decomposing corpses of the plague's victims. The surviving villagers do not enter these buildings believing certain death lingers within. Common belief holds the spirits of many of the dead yet live in their homes and infect or drive mad any venturing into their "tomb."

An aura of neglect and decay hangs over these homes. Weeds choke the gardens and yards; no smoke issues from their chimneys. Feral dogs use some of the buildings as shelters, but the apathetic villagers have not bothered to root them out.

#### BURNT OUT HOMES

At the height of the plague, as hysteria gripped the populace and the pestilence raged through the village, hotheads desperate to contain the contagion took to burning down the homes of the infected with their inhabitants within). Although this practise only lasted a week, it has left an indelible scar on the village. Although most of the perpetrators subsequently died of plague, several murders resulted from this practice as the relatives of those burnt alive exacted their bloody revenge. whenever he gets the chance. Praen is out of his depth bringing up a young daughter and worries about everything. He is overprotective of Saeith; she is not allowed to meet strangers and is rarely seen playing with other children. She loves swimming, though, and often plays in the river.

CR 2 (XP 600)

#### **DUNN FREWIN**

This humanoid's hairless skin is pallid and drawn tightly over its almost skeletal frame. Black, boil-like splotches oozing puss cover its neck. It has long, sharp teeth, an unnaturally long tongue and madness-filled red-hued eyes.

Male ghoul cleric 2

CE Medium undead

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10, Sense Motive
+3

Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +5, Climb +9, Stealth +10, Swim +6

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; CMD 20 (+3 Dex,+1 dodge [Dodge], +2 natural)

**Immune** mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless)

Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +9 (+11 vs. channelling)

hp 36 (4 HD)

#### Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +6

Melee bite +6 (1d6+4 plus bubonic plague [DC 15 Fortitude {2 consecutive saves}; onset 1 day; freq. 1/day; effect 1d4 Con damage and 1 Cha damage plus target is fatigued] and paralysis [DC 15 {elves are immune}; 1d4+1 rounds]) and 2 claws +6 (1d6+4 plus paralysis [DC 13 {elves are immune}; 1d4+1 rounds]) or

Melee Touch bleeding touch (6/day) +6 (1d6 bleed [1 round]) Atk Options Combat Reflexes

- Special Actions channel negative energy (7/day; 1d6; DC 15), copycat
- **Copycat (Sp [move; 6/day])** Dunn can create an illusionary double of himself (as a single *mirror image*); duration 1 round (or until destroyed).
- **Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +5; spontaneous casting [*inflict* spells]; death, trickery
- $1st-cause fear^{D}$  (2; DC 14), obscuring mist, shield of faith

0—bleed (DC 13), detect magic, purify food and drink, stabilize

Abilities Str 18, Dex 17, Con –, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 18

SQ evil aura (moderate)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge

- Skills as above plus Knowledge (religion) +6
- Languages Celestial, Common
- **CR Note**: Due to his lack of equipment, Dunn's CR has been adjusted by -1.
- Variant Ghoul: Because Dunn was "reborn" in a plague pit his bite inflicts bubonic plague and not ghoul fever.
# 3: THE WAILING HALL

Once known as the Chapel of Song, this church was at the centre of the villagers' attempts to save themselves from the plague. Here, at Waldere Elvery's (LN male human cleric [Darlen] 3) urging, the populace gathered daily to sing praises to Darlen so that he might cast out the plague. The effects of this were predictable and plague swept through the congregation, killing over half. The survivors of this insane practise renamed the church for the laments of those who mourned their dead within.

Before the plague, the church had two priests. One, Dunn Frewin, died of the plague. Ignoring his last request to be buried in the church, Waldere cast Dunn's body into one of the plague pits. This betrayal will cost Waldere dearly; Dunn Frewin has returned as a ghoul (Area 6).

CR 4 (XP 1,200)

#### **JANAELA FISFELOND**

This tall slender half-elven woman has pale skin the colour of parchment and deep bags under her eyes. Female half-elf wizard (abjurer) 5 N Medium humanoid (elf, human) Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9, Sense Motive +1 Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0 AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; CMD 14 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge]) Immune sleep; Resist fire 5 Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; +2 vs. enchantments hp 35 (5 HD) Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +2 Melee dagger +2 (1d4/19-20) Special Actions protective ward Protective Wards (Su [standard; 7/day]) Janaela creates a 10 ft. radius field of protection centred on herself (duration 4 rounds). Janaela and all allies in the area gain a +2 deflection bonus to AC. Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +9; arcane bond [ring]) 3rd-displacement, fireball (DC 17), fly 2nd-false life, fox's cunning, glitterdust (DC 16), protection from arrows 1st-alarm, hold portal, mage armour, magic missile, shield 0-acid splash, detect magic, read magic, resistance Combat Gear scroll of resist energy (2), scroll of stoneskin, wand of fireball (5 chgs.) Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 8 SQ resistance (5) Feats Alertness, Craft Wondrous Item<sup>B</sup>, Dodge, Scribe Scroll<sup>B</sup>, Skill Focus (Perception)<sup>B</sup>, Toughness Skills as above plus Appraise +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Spellcraft +12 Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan Gear as above plus 15 gp, traveller's robes, spell component

pouch **Spellbook** (enchantment, illusion) as above plus GM determined Most no longer visit the church, but Waldere yet holds sway over a small, but fanatical, congregation. The dozen members, led by an inebriated Waldere, parade daily through the village singing hymns to ward away the plague.

# 4: THE JOLLY FARMER

Ashford's inn was once a happy place. Although the landlady, Ailred Lewin (LN female human expert 2) still accepts paying customers she has closed the common room and serves guests (meagre and bland) food and drink in their rooms. Whenever meeting newcomers, she wears a rudimentary mask over her face soaked in vinegar for protection.

# 5: THE BURNING TOWER

The so-called Burning Tower is the only intact portion of the castle that once protected Ashford. The demesne of a rebellious lord the castle was sacked two decades ago. The villagers carried off much of the stone to use in rebuilding their own homes and the castle's shattered ruin remained uninhabited until the wizardess Janaela Fisfelond (N female half-elf wizard [abjurer] 5) claimed it as her own. A skilled but aloof practiser of magic, when the plague ravaged Ashford, Janaela simply locked herself in her tower and made no effort to aid her neighbours. As they died by the score, and their moans and hacking coughs echoed through the village, Janaela became wholly obsessed with her research and paid their suffering no mind.

At the plague's height, a few villagers tried to storm the tower – convinced her research had brought the pestilence to Ashford; she incinerated them with a *fireball* before returning to her work. Their blackened bones still lie nearby amid the tangled weeds choking the castle's ruined courtyard.

# 6: PLAGUE PITS

At first, the plague's victims were buried like normal in the church graveyard, but as death swept through the village, it became impossible to honour the dead in the proper way.

Two burial pits were dug and filled with plague-ridden corpses but were not properly filled in. Feral dogs and other predators promptly dug up the graves and no one as yet has the inclination, courage or strength to re-bury them. Thus, the long grass and incongruous wild flowers growing about the pits hide the plague's grizzly flotsam.

**Dunn Frewin**: One of Ashford's priests, Dunn Frewin (CE male ghoul cleric 2) died of the plague and was betrayed in death by his friend and colleague Waldere (Area 3). He has risen as a ghoul and now lurks in the southernmost pit, in a cramped burrow among the suppurating corpses of his dead congregation. As yet, he does not trouble the villagers or his former friend; plenty of meat yet remains to be had from the plague's decomposing victims before he dines on Waldere's succulent, warm flesh.

# LIFE IN ASHFORD

Life in Ashford bears little resemblance to that of the more prosperous (and plague free) neighbouring villages.

# TRADE & INDUSTRY

Trade and industry have virtually ceased. Few people travel to Ashford and those that do rarely stay long. The villagers do enough to keep body and soul together, mainly by tending their gardens and scattered plots in the fields surrounding the village, but little else.

#### WALDERE ELVERY

CR 2 (XP 600)

This dishevelled man has long, tousled hair and a beer belly. He wears stained white vestments.

Male human cleric (Darlen) 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

- Init -1; Senses Perception +3, Sense Motive +9
- Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; ACP -3; Acrobatics -4 (-8 jumping)

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; CMD 12

(+7 armour [+1 breastplate], -1 Dex, +1 shield [mwk light steel])

Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +7

hp 23 (3 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +3

Melee mwk longsword +4 (1d8+1/19-20)

- **Special Actions** channel positive energy (6/day; DC 12 2d6), spontaneous casting (*cure* spells), resistant touch, touch of law
- **Resistant Touch (Sp [standard; 6/day])** Waldere touches an ally to grant it a +1 resistance bonus for 1 minute. When he uses this ability, he loses his resistance bonus for 1 minute.
- Touch of Law (Sp [standard; 6/day]) By touching a creature, Waldere enables it to treat all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks and saving throws as if rolled a natural 11 on a d20 for 1 round.
- Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +6; law, protection)

2nd—augury lesser restoration, shield other<sup>D</sup>

1st-bless, protection from evil, remove fear, sanctuary<sup>D</sup>

0—detect magic, guidance, light, resistance

**Combat Gear** scroll of eagle's splendour, scroll of lesser restoration, silversheen

Abilities Str 12, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 13

SQ lawful aura (moderate)

- **Feats** Extra Channel, Persuasive<sup>3</sup>, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword)<sup>B</sup>
- Skills as above plus Diplomacy +9, Heal +9, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +8

Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal

Gear as above plus silver holy symbol (Darlen), cleric's vestments, spell component pouch, 3 gp, 15 sp

# LAW & ORDER

With the (rapid) departure of Baron Stannard, law and order broke down in Ashford. Luckily, most of the villagers are too apathetic to commit any serious crime. Waldere Elvery sees himself as the moral guardian of the village and his congregation is the only organised group left in Ashford. Thus, issues of law and order now fall to him.

#### EVENTS

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

#### D6 EVENT

1	A villager suddenly starts to cough and hacks up a great globule of phlegm. Other nearby villagers draw away, fear etched on their faces.
2	A sudden wailing from one of the houses shatters the quiet. (A villager has just discovered the signs of plague upon her body).
3	Two feral dogs bark at the party from an overgrown field. Once holds a human leg bone in its mouth.
4	Two villagers are loudly talking about "the hungry man." Apparently, he was seen again last night gnawing on the bones of the dead.
5	With a wet thump, an abandoned building's roof collapses.
6	Waldere Elvery and his deranged congregation parade through the village, singing. If they see the PCs, they march toward them as their singing grows ever louder and more frenzied.

VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Human commoner 1	
N Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Moti	ve +1
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5	
AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 11	
(+1 armour [padded])	
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 6 (1 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1	
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or	
Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3)	
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1)	
Combat Gear bullets (10)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, W	is 8, Cha 9
Feats Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (farmer or sir	nilar)
Skills as above plus Profession (farmer or	similar) +6
Languages Common	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, pe	easant's outfit

# BOSSIN

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

# BOSSIN AT A GLANCE

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

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

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Jacca Lander [LE male human fighter 2/rogue 3]

Government Overlord

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

Alignments LE, LN, NG, LG

- Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven
- Corruption +1; Crime -3; Economy -1; Law +0; Lore -1; Society -4 Qualities Racially intolerant (half-goblins), rumourmongering citizens, strategic location

Danger 0; Disadvantages none

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Brisila Toldan** (location 4; NG female human druid 4) Brisila serves Bossin as its resident herbalist, healer and midwife. She despises Jacca Lander who has made his intentions to marry her well known.
- Holwin Half-Breed (location 6; NG male half-elf ranger 3) The taciturn Holwin lives on the outskirts of Bossin. A hunter by trade, he sometimes serves as a guide to those wishing to explore further into the Tangled Wood.
- Jacca Lander (location 7; LE male human fighter 2/rogue 3) A corrupt village reeve, Jacca extorts the villagers for his own gain.
- Keirnen Lokmor (location 3; LG male human fighter 3/expert 2) Keirnen retired from adventuring after a poisoned halfgoblin arrow crippled his left leg. He runs the village's shop.

- Sneev (location 9; NE male half-goblin rogue [spy] 4) Sneev serves as Jacca's spy and informant. He wears a hat of disguise to hide himself as a dirty human. Only Jacca knows his true identity.
- **Turgon Goldrock** (location 5; LN male dwarf expert 3) Turgon heads the Goldrock clan living in Bossin. A miner by trade, he is beginning to chaff under Jacca's ever increasing protection fees.
- Wartham Briston (location 8; NE male half-orc barbarian 2/rogue 2) Jacca's chief enforcer, Wartham's unique skill set allows him to bash heads or rig accidents equally well. Surprisingly, due to his upbringing, he is a skilled musician.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

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

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Farming, hunting, mining Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 2nd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils barkskin (300 gp), endure elements (50 gp).
- Scrolls (Arcane) protection from arrows (150 gp).
- Scroll (Divine) soften earth and stone (150 gp), magic fang (25 gp), goodberry (25 gp).

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Bossin. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: The village of Bossin is well situated amidst rich farmland and a few small nearby mines.

**DC 15**: A famous retired adventurer, Kiernan Lokmor who single-handedly held of a tribe of half-goblins while his party escaped, calls Bossin home.

**DC 20**: Jacca Landers extorts the villagers for protection money. His gang of thugs bully the villagers, keeping them quiet so word of his misdeeds do not reach Caer Syllan.

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

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

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

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Bossin and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

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

\*False rumour



# 1: The Pit

This decrepit, dry well roughly 12 ft. around, has slick, smooth walls. It descend nearly 100 ft. before opening into a small, natural cavern only 20 ft. wide. A thick rope rests above ground and is used to haul prisoners in and out of the well. (Scaling the Pit's walls requires a DC 30 Climb check).

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

## 2: HOVELS

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

## 3: GENERAL STORE

A well-fashioned building built from stone and wood houses Bossin's general store. Attached to the main building is a tidy stable and another small building housing a smithy rests nearby. Kiernan Lokmor (LG male human fighter 3/expert 2) is the owner and proprietor. A former adventurer, he suffered a grievous leg wound while holding off a half-goblin hunting party pursuing his companions. Unable to continue his career, he used what he had earned to set up shop in Bossin. While he hates paying Jacca's protection fee, he feels unable to fight back because of his lame leg. Kiernan is particularly affable with clients who are known adventurers. Most basic goods as well as a variety of common weapons and armour are sold here. Since Kiernan employs a smith, he can also take orders for masterwork quality items.

## 4: BRISILA'S HOME

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

## 5: GOLDROCK COMPOUND

The Goldrock clan built a collection of stone buildings abutting the nearby cliff that house the dwarves and their mining equipment. A 10 ft. high stone wall surrounds the compound on the upper storey where the dwarves live and keep their equipment. The dwarves use the building on the ground floor to conduct business with visitors. The Goldrock clan is beginning to chafe paying Jacca's hefty fees especially after a recent string of accidents in one of their mines hurt not only their pocketbook, but their pride as well. Trouble will result.

## 6: HUNTERS' HUTS

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

Languages Common, Dwarven, Goblin

Gear as above plus mwk thieves' tools and 813 gp

# 7: JACCA LANDER'S MANOR

Jacca (LE male human fighter 2/rogue 3) recently built this twostorey stone manor house. Despite its large size, Jacca lives there alone except for a few servants and his most frequent visitor is an out of town wizard he pays once a month to cast warding spells. However, Jacca is quite proud of his home, a testament to the power he holds over the villagers.

# 8: Bell O'Dell

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

#### SNEEV

This dirty, scrawny humanoid wears filthy rags caked with dirt and an oversized hat.
Male half-goblin rogue (spy) 4
NE Medium humanoid (goblinoid, human)
Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8, Sense Motive +8
Speed 35 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +11, Escape Artist +11, Ride +5, Stealth +13
AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15; CMD 19; Mobility, +1 vs. traps (+4 armour [+1 studded leather], +4 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge])

CR 3 (XP 800)

Fort +1, Ref +8 (+9 vs. traps; evasion), Will +2 hp 21 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +4

Melee mwk short sword +4 (1d6+1/19-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +8 (1d8/19-20)

Atk Options poison use, sneak attack (+2d6), surprise attack

Surprise Attack (Ex) During a surprise round, Sneev's opponents are always considered flat-footed toward him (even if they have already acted).

Special Actions resilience (4 hp)

Combat Gear bolts (10), dagger Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8

**SQ** rogue talents (resilience, surprise attack), trap sense (+1)

Feats Dodge, Fleet<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Mobility

Skills as above plus Bluff +6 (+8 to deceive) (skilled lair), Disable Device +11, Disguise +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Sleight of Hand +11, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Goblin

Gear as above plus hat of disguise, mwk thieves' tools, 15 gp

## 9: PRISON

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

## 10: WATCHTOWER

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

# THE SURROUNDING AREA

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

<b>THUG</b> CR 1/2 (XP 200) This brutish human wears dirty leathers, a well-used sword hangs naked at his side.
Male human warrior 2 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Motive -1 Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0
AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; CMD 14 (+3 armour [mwk studded leather]) Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0 hp 16 (2 HD)
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +4 Melee longsword +5 (1d8+2/19-20) Ranged light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +2 (1d8/19-20) Combat Gear bolts (10), dagger, potions of cure light wounds (2)
Abilities Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9 Feats Toughness <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Focus (longsword) Skills as above plus Intimidate +1 Languages Common Gear as above plus 53 gp

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

# LAW & ORDER

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

# TRADE & INDUSTRY

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

## PCS IN BOSSIN

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

# MOUNTING TENSION IN BOSSIN

Jacca Lander's hold on Bossin is nearly absolute. Fear and intimidation keep the villagers in line and from speaking out. As far as Caer Syllan is concerned, Jacca is a hard man but he produces results. However, the one thing Jacca has not been able to extort is the love of local herbalist Brisila. Her haughty attitude and open defiance of Jacca incites his passion for her even more. Jacca is a jealous suitor and those he suspects of getting too friendly with Brisila often disappear. So far, he does not know that Brisila has started a relationship with Kiernan Lokmor. While Kiernan hates paying Jacca, he wants to live quietly in peace. Yet, lately, Brisila has been urging Kiernan to take action against Jacca, organize the villagers and fight back. Brisila also beseeches PCs frequenting Kiernan's store for their help. However, if Jacca finds out about the two lovers, it will likely mean Kiernan's death.

# EVENTS

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

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

VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Human commoner 1	
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense M	otive +1
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5	
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; CMD 1	1
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 6 (1 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1	
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10,	Wis 8, Cha 9
Feats Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (farmer or similar)	
Skills as above plus Profession (farmer or similar) +6	
Languages Common	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp,	peasant's outfit
Prepared for battle, a villager has	the following altered

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 11
(+1 armour [padded])
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or
Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3)
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1)
Combat Gear bullets (10)

statistics:

# Denton's End

As twilight bleeds red in the sky, gaily dressed villagers lay out the yellowed bones of their departed loved ones. Teeth clacking, mouldering skulls crowned in garlands of fresh flowers greet the rising moon with cold, hollow voices. Creaking skeletons lurch forward with shuffling steps, arms reaching out eagerly towards the awaiting villagers. With warm smiles, the villagers fall into their embrace, holding them close as the creatures caress them with bony fingers. Then, the dancing begins.

Welcome to Denton's End, a village where the dead never truly die.

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

# DENTON'S END AT A GLANCE

Nestled amongst featureless barrow mounds in a swath of stunted foothills, the first thing travellers notice as they approach Denton's End is a large hill crowned with gravestones and crypts looming at its north end. The macabre sight gives rise to rumours of necromancy and grotesque rituals that keep most visitors away.

These rumours are partly true.

Renowned adventurer turned sage, Denton Algier, with his disciples, founded the village as a place to meditate in peace. Algier taught his disciples the necessary spells to contact him in the afterlife allowing him to guide the village long after death. Centuries later, the villagers have affected a strange culture and unique customs relating to their dead. Once a month, the villagers, led by an oracle and her adept assistants, hold a feast. Using magic, they animate the skeletal bodies of their ancestors to participate. Some chose their forebears, others seek the company of a recently departed loved one. The dead are daily consulted on important decisions through *speak with dead* spells. The villagers take pride that even in death, they continue to provide guidance and take part in the day-to-day activities of village life.

It's said in Denton's End that the dead never truly die.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Keira Reston (NG female human oracle [life] 8) Government magical Population 173 (164 humans, 5 halflings, 3 dwarves, 1 half-elf) Alignments CG, LG, NG, LN, LE Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven Corruption -3; Crime -2; Economy -1; Law 0; Lore +1; Society -2 Qualities holy site, insular Danger 0; Disadvantages none

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- Ashia Crooktongue (location 9; LE female half-elf witch 5) An herbalist not completely trusted by the villagers.
- Denock Grindstone (location 8; LG male dwarf expert 2/fighter2) A former mercenary now turned blacksmith, Denock finds the village's customs odd but keeps his views quiet.
- **Edon Torth** (location 4 or 10; NG male human oracle [life] 1) As Keira's disciple, he is responsible for the village's future. A good lad, he is a bit naive and prone to hero worship.
- Jollela Kempen (location 3; NG female human adept 5) Owner of Jollela's Charms and Wards; works closely with Keira.
- Keira Reston (location 4; NG female human oracle [life] 8) Denton's End's leader, she oversees the rituals required to animate the village's dead.

- **Nolton Mumples** (location 1; CG male halfling rogue 3) A retired treasure hunter, Nolton enjoys regaling the villagers with his exploits at his pub, the King's Ransom.
- Sif Endleson (location 3 or 7; NG female human ranger 3) A former outsider, Sif is not only the village reeve, but assists Keira in patrolling Denton's End's cemetery and crypt.
- Ygraine Braxton (location 6; NG female human aristocrat 2) In addition to helping Keira with the town's Dead Lottery (Area 5), Ygraine and her family run a well to do funeral home.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- The King's Ransom: Nolton Mumples runs this typical cosy halfling-style inn, with his wife, two sons and daughter.
- 2. Village Jail: One of the few completely stone buildings in the village, the jail sees little use.
- Jollela's Charms and Wards: This cluttered mess of fetishes, preserved animal parts, and other curios is where Jollela fashions and sells her indispensable charms.
- Denton's Rest: Once home to the village founder, Keira lives here now with her disciple, Edon.
- Commons: The monthly feast takes place here on a well tended swath of grass.
- 6. **Braxton House**: The Braxtons run their funerary business from this well-appointed house.
- Sif Endleson's House: When not patrolling the village, Sif is often here drilling militia members.
- The Grindstone: Denock Grindstone lives with his wife and son, practicing his trade out of his stone and thatch longhouse.
- Witch's Hut: This strangely shaped house is where Ashia, in addition to cultivating herbs, offers dubious magical services.
- 10. **Cemetery and Crypt**: An expansive crypt tunnels through the hill while gravestones wind along the hillside.

## MARKETPLACE

- **Resources & Industry** charms, farming, funerary items and services
- Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 4th; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in Denton's End, the following items are for sale:

- Potions & Oils hide from undead (50 gp), shield of faith (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) false life (150 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) gentle repose (150 gp), speak with dead (375 gp)

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Denton's End. A successful check reveals all information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: In addition to an excellent funeral house, Denton's End is known for its unique charms to ward off evil spirits.

**DC 15**: The villagers of Denton's End participate in monthly ceremonies where they cavort with the dead.

**DC 20**: Some of the cemetery's crypts have been found empty. Within, lie gnawed bones with human teeth marks.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance** The fair skinned villagers wear their dark hair long and unbound. Their eyes are typically various shades of blue.

**Dress** The villagers dress in dark clothing as if in mourning, adorning themselves with charms, fetishes and bits of bone jewellery. On feast days, they change into brightly patterned clothing festooned with garlands of flowers.

**Nomenclature** *male* Aldor, Edon, Kenton, Talric; *female* Elna, Helma, Naydi, Soully; *family* Craston, Dunnel, Munt, Urden.

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Denton's End and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1*	The witch, Ashia, makes people sign their names in a black book before she deals with them.
2	Nolton Mumples has been putting locks on some of the mausoleum. Is he trying to keep something in (or out)?
3*	Denock Grindstone was a beautiful prince until a witch cursed him the stunted body of a dwarf.
4	Sif's short-tempered lately. She spends most of the night prowling the cemetery with a few deputies.
5	Never play cards with old man Turney Braxton, he's a liar and a cheat. Even being dead for over a hundred years has not changed him.
6	Strange creatures have been seen outside caves in the nearby hills that connect to the Ebon Realms.

\*False rumour



# 1: THE KING'S RANSOM

Wild flowers grow along the inn's sod roof, weighing down heavily on the thick wooden walls. The scent of flowers mixes pleasantly with the smells of fresh baked bread and home cooking. Colourful shutters frame small, glass windows. Over the door, a painted sign depicts a crown resting crookedly on a pile of golden treasure.

Nolton Mumples (CG male halfling rogue 3) runs this cosy inn with his family, providing a spark of colour in contrast to the gloomy cemetery outside. Some question why Nolton would settle here, speculating that he is in hiding.

# 2: VILLAGE JAIL

A stone jail sits near the village's entrance, ivy crawling along its walls. Though it sees little use, Sif Endleson (Area 7) ensures the locks on the cells are kept well-oiled, though most cells are normally used only for storage.

# 3: JOLLELA'S CHARMS AND WARDS

Matronly Jollela (NG female human adept 5) runs this shop of curios which is the second most frequented place by visitors in the village after the King's Ransom. Inside, dusty shelves hold the pickled remains of strange creatures while mothballed stuffed animals leer from every angle. Strange fetishes hung from hooks add to the cluttered, mysterious feel of the place.

Yet despite its appearance, Jollela is a gregarious owner who seems to know just what a person needs and where to find it amidst the junk. She specializes in crafting a low-value type of magic item called a charm, trinkets endowed with minor magical effects (see "Jollela's Charms").

## 4: DENTON'S REST

Carefully carved and mortared stone announces the importance of this stone house. Well tended gardens encircle the house once belonging to the village's founder.

The village's current oracle and leader, Keira Reston (NG female human oracle [life] 8), resides here with her apprentice (and successor) Edon Torth (NG male human oracle [life] 1). Anyone encountering Keira sees that she is distracted by something. A DC 19 Diplomacy check reveals that she worries that the village's prior oracle, Emton Veder, delving too deep in necromancy, has returned as a ghoul. Emton was her lover and she is torn what to do. Edon suffers a bit of hero worship and likely tries to tag along with any adventurers that come around.

# JOLLELA'S CHARMS

Jollela keeps a wide assortment of charms (a type of cheap, low-level magic item). Not very powerful, they are ideal for a neophyte adventurer who is low on funds. Jolella typically tries to pass off her charms as being more powerful than they actually are. When designing additional charms, remember that Jollela's knowledge is mainly focused on the dead and undead.

#### JOLELLA'S LUCKY CHARM

- This desiccated animal's foot hangs on a chain of cheap imitation silver.
- Aura faint (abjuration; DC 16 Knowledge [arcana]) Identify DC 17 Spellcraft
- Lore (DC 10 Survival) The foot belonged to a rat.
- **Lore** (DC 15 Knowledge [local]) It is said that the feet of certain animals impart good luck to their bearer.
- Abilities The charm grants the wearer a +1 luck bonus against undead creatures with 3 HD or fewer. Once a week, as a standard action, the wearer can use it to cast *hide from undead*.

Activation use activated; CL 2nd

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, *hide from undead*; Cost 250 gp; Price 500 gp

#### JOLLELA'S CHARM AGAINST DEATH

- Slivers of bone rest in the padded bottom of a small reliquary box suspended on a chain.
- Aura faint (conjuration; DC 17 Knowledge [arcana]) Identify DC 19 Spellcraft
- Lore (DC 10 Heal) The bone slivers are hundreds of years old.
- **Lore** (DC 10 Knowledge [religion]) The bones of powerful holy men are said to be endowed with magical power.
- **Abilities** The bone slivers come from the femur bone of Denton Algier, the village's founder. Once a week, the wearer can reroll one failed save made to resist the special attack of an undead creature with a +4 sacred bonus.

Activation use activated; CL 4th

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser restoration*; Cost 325 gp; Price 650 gp

#### JOLELLA'S BLASTING CHARM

- Feathers and bits of bone surround a cheap red gemstone on this gold flaked brooch.
- Aura faint (necromancy; DC 15 Knowledge [arcana]) Identify DC 15 Spellcraft
- Lore (DC 10 Knowledge [nature]) The feathers and bones belong to a chicken, not a cockatrice as Jollela claims.

Lore (DC 10 Appraise) The red gem is merely coloured glass.

**Abilities** As a standard action, the wearer can cast *disrupt undead* 3/day.

Activation command word; CL 1st

Requirements: Craft Wondrous Item; Cost 125 gp; Price 250 gp

# 5: COMMONS

A swath of grass bordered on all four sides by a wooden fence marks the village's commons. The villagers celebrate their monthly rituals here in an elaborate ceremony where the bones of the dead are brought out from the cemetery and crypts. Because there is not enough magic to animate skeletons for everyone, the villagers participate in the Dead Lottery, handled by Ygraine Braxton (NG female human aristocrat 2), which allows each villager to choose their dead guest at some point throughout the year. Sif keeps guards when outsiders are visiting to ensure no one gets the wrong idea and tries to spoil the festivities.

# 6: BRAXTON HOUSE

The largest house in the village, this spacious wooden building serves as both home to the Braxtons and a funeral home where the village's dead are prepared for burial. The Braxtons possess great skill in fashioning coffins. The front of the house serves as a parlour room where grieving services are held.

# 7: SIF ENDLESON'S HOUSE

A large practice yard distinguishes this modest wooden home from others in the village. Sif Endleson (NG female human ranger 3) lives here with her dogs. A childhood friend of Keira, Sif left Denton's End to see the outside world.

When Sif's adventuring party was all but wiped out in a nearby cavern leading into the Ebon Realms, a delirious Sif stumbled back home. Nursed back to health by Keira, Sif decided to repay her kindness by accepting the open position of reeve. Like Keira, Sif appears to be distracted of late. Keira's closest confidant, she worries that Keira won't do what is necessary to put down the problem plaguing the village.

## 8:THE GRINDSTONE

An almost constant ringing of hammer on steel echoes from a small workshop next to a stone and thatch longhouse.

Once an outsider, Denock (LG male dwarf expert 2/fighter 2) has lived in Denton's End longer than many of the current residents. Denock eyes outsiders with distrust and is only willing to sell simple farming tools. If made friendly with a DC 11 Diplomacy check, Denock is skilled enough to craft nearly any

type of masterwork weapon, a fact that he has kept secret. Some say he came to Denton's End to hide from his violent past.

## 9: WITCH'S HUT

A copse of trees hides an unusual eight-sided hut surrounded by various animal skulls on poles. Its owner, the seductive Ashia (LE female half-elf witch 5), lives here. If it were not for her skills with herbs, the women of Denton's End would have driven her off long ago. Ashia has formed an uneasy truce with Keira, as each possesses magical knowledge unknown to the other. Ashia

hopes to learn more about the magic used in the village's ritual before moving on. Ashia can provide adventurers with nearly any 1st- or 2nd-level magic scroll or potion from the witch's spell list.

# 10: CEMETERY AND CRYPT

A large, wide hill looms over 40 ft. in height, dominating the centre of the village. Numerous tombstones crawl like grave worms along its side, broken up here and there by towering mausoleums.

A stone door at the base of the hill leads into a sprawling, cramped crypt

that burrows deep underground. It is this hill where the dead of Denton's End are buried and their collective knowledge is stored in lovingly tended and well kept graves. Occasionally, visitors come to Denton's End seeking the wisdom of one of the interred dead. These requests are generally accepted for a small donation. Lately, though, visitors notice thick chains on many of the mausoleums and the

watchful eyes of the reeve, Sif Endleson, on them.

# THE SURROUNDING AREA

Denton's End rests in a series of gently rolling foothills. Local legends claim that on certain nights when the moon casts its light on grassy hillsides that silvery doors to strange fey realms appear. Less conjecture and more factual are the rocky cave entrances in the nearby hills that lead to tunnels burrowing deep into the Ebon Realms. Foolhardy explorers, lured by the promise of treasure, often make use of these tunnels. Some of them connect to an abandoned dwarven stronghold.

Other adventurers choose to pick through the numerous barrow mounds that litter the landscape. This practice is deeply frowned upon by the villagers of Denton's End who have nothing to do with known graverobbers.

# LIFE IN DENTON'S END

Life in Denton's End tends to be relatively peaceful. Its undeserved reputation for black magic keeps most visitors away. That same reputation also makes it the ideal place to hide for those who have pasts they would rather forget.

# LAW & ORDER

The greatest punishment dealt in Denton's End is to be cremated upon death. The idea of being permanently severed from the community deters most crimes.

Sif's main job is to keep overzealous clerics and paladins away from the cemetery and from stopping them meddling in any of the village's rites.

Ashia's presence is a source of contention, but so far she has behaved herself, more or less, although some villagers suspect her of having an ulterior motive for moving to the village.

# TRADE & INDUSTRY

Most of the villagers in Denton's End are simple farmers tending small plots of land. They raise sheep on the hills and sell the wool to nearby villages. The Braxton House does a brisk business selling ornate, high quality coffins to rich noble families and is Denton's End most famous export. Occasionally, scholars and sages pay to consult a deceased villager known to possess particular knowledge on a subject. Adventurers make Denton's End a stopping point before exploring the nearby hills containing tunnels into the Ebon Realms.

### EVENTS

- -

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

D6	EVENT
1	A small mob has formed on the commons. Cows are not producing milk and Ashia is (falsely) suspected.
2	A righteous paladin, Reginard Woorick (LG human paladin 4) believes the villagers are beset by evil. Camping just outside the city, he is planning a foray into the cemetery to put the souls of the villagers to rest. He tries to enlist the PCs to his cause.
3	One night at the King's Ransom, a battle-hardened stranger appears. He claims he has unfinished business with a dwarf named Denock Grindstone.
4	Villagers complain to Sif that something has been preying on their sheep, possibly a creature come up from the Ebon Realms, but Sif has little time to investigate and so she asks the PCs to look into the matter.
5	Onna Gimmason went to speak with her dead husband but his body is missing from its crypt. She is desperate to recover his remains and suspects Ashia of complicity in his disappearance.

Skeletons caper in the town commons as the monthly festival begins. The skeletons are non-violent and only
fight to defend themselves. PCs attacking them are quickly verbally assaulted by a gathering mob of angry villagers.

#### KEIRA RESTON

CR 7 (XP 3,200)

This regal looking woman wears an ancient elaborate breastplate. Her black hair, faintly touched by gray, falls loose around her shoulders.

Female human oracle [life] 8

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses; Perception +8, Sense Motive +11

Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; ACP -5; Acrobatics -5 (-9 jumping)

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; CMD 15

(+7 armour [+1 breastplate], +2 shield [+1 light steel])

Fort +3 (delay affliction), Ref +2, Will +8

Delay Affliction (Su [immediate; 2/day]) Whenever Keira fails a saving throw against a disease or poison, she may ignore its effects for 8 hours.

hp 47 (8 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +6; CMB +5

**Melee** +1 club +6/+1 (1d6)

- Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +6/+1 (1d4-1/19-20)
- Special Actions channel positive energy
- Channel Positive Energy (Su [standard; 7/day]) Keira can channel positive energy (4d6, DC 16 Will halves) like a cleric.

Oracle Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +12; spirit boost)

4th (4/day)—cure critical wounds

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3rd (6/day)—animate dead, speak with dead
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- 2nd (7/day)—cure moderate wounds, gentle repose, lesser restoration
- 1st (7/day)—cure light wounds, detect evil, detect undead, hide from undead (DC 15), protection from evil
- 0—create water, detect magic, detect poison, ghost sound (DC 14), guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic
- **Spirit Boost (Su)** Whenever Keira's healing spells heal a target up to its maximum hit points, any excess points persist for 8 rounds as temporary hit points (up to a maximum of 8 hp).

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18

- **SQ** oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (channel, delay affliction, spirit boost)
- Haunted (Ex) Keira is haunted by malevolent spirits. Retrieving stored gear requires a standard action. Any item she drops lands 10 ft. away in a random direction.
- Feats Alertness, Extra Channel<sup>8</sup>, Selective Channel, Self-Sufficient, Scribe Scroll
- Skills as above plus Diplomacy +15, Heal +15, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (religion) +15, Spellcraft +13, Survival +15

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

**Gear** as above plus *wand of animate dead* (33 charges), spell component pouch, holy symbol, 20 gp

# Golden Valley

A decade ago, the thorp of Sunset Valley was a quiet, sleepy place. The discovery of gold in the surrounding hills changed all that, however, and made its finder rich overnight. But Boss Corl, as he is now known, is a greedy man and ruthlessly controls the flow of gold into and out of the now re-named village, Golden Valley. Such sudden wealth brought an influx of miners, adventurers and treasure hunters into the village and prices skyrocketed. Now, new miners must work for years just to pay off the cost of their equipment and prices for even the most basic of commodities are extortionate.

Recently, it has become apparent to Boss Corl that the gold supply is fast running out. Desperate for more, Corl has pushed his workers to even greater efforts and accidents and deaths are becoming commonplace. Rumours have even started to circulate of foul, sightless things living in the deepest caverns that haul off lone miners to gruesome fates.

Up until about a decade ago, the small thorp of Sunset Valley was just a sleepy place nestled in the foothills, barely showing up on most maps. That all changed when a local coal miner struck a vein of gold. The miner, Corl, was quick to stake his claim, and rumour spread there was a major score to be found in the nearby mountains.

Sunset Valley's populace exploded with adventurers and prospectors, and Boss Corl (as he started calling himself) was quick to hire the best and the brightest (as well as a bit of muscle) for his rapidly expanding operation. Other prospectors found a few small deposits, but nothing rivalling Corl's find; consequently he soon had a monopoly on the flow of gold, and thus control of the village.

As gold poured from the mountains, the village was renamed Golden Valley, a nickname the mayor formally adopted three years after the first find. As the miners were paid a small percentage of the gold they found, prices in the village's businesses soon shot up, created a divisive class system.

Visitors and new arrivals soon found the prices for local goods to be so exorbitant that Corl initiated a program to allow new workers to work off the cost of the gear. Over the years, this buy in became so corrupt it now takes months for new workers to pay back the expense of their basic equipment.

Recently, it has become apparent Corl has expanded his operation too quickly. The gold supply has dwindled to a mere trickle, causing the Boss to push his workers even harder. They have been uncovering more hazards, such as cave-ins and sour air. Rumours have even started among the miners of creatures living in the deepest caverns hauling off lone miners to gruesome fates.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Boss Corl (LE male human rogue 2/ranger 2) Government Secret syndicate Population 186 (151 humans, 16 dwarves, 8 gnomes, 6 elves, 2 half-elves, 2 half-orcs, 1 halfling) Alignments LN, LE, N Languages Common Corruption +2; Crime +1; Economy +3; Law -5; Lore +0; Society +0 Qualities Insular, prosperous Danger 0; Disadvantages none

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Bailiff Seran Heral** (location 7; LG male human fighter 2) With no real authority, Seran is reduced to incarcerating drunks.
- **Boss Corl** (location 5; LE male human rogue 2/ranger 2) The corrupt, greedy leader of the local mining operation.

- Jasmyn (location 2; CN female half-elf bard 2) The beautiful proprietor of the Golden Tap.
- **Olbert Krenn** (location 1; LN male human expert 2) Proprietor of the well stocked, but expensive, general store.
- Pastor Clynt (location 8; LG male human cleric 3) Spiritual leader of the village and resident priest of the Chapel of St. Berabra.
- **Pvete Stonehelm** (location 3; LN male dwarf ranger 3) This crippled ex-miner is the proprietor of the Welcome Inn.
- Sly Jaak (location 5; NE female human rogue 5) Boss Corl's chief advisor and enforcer.
- Wiljem Stustle (location 4; N male human wizard 3) Bookish owner and operator of Stubbs o' the Candle.
- Yacki Fitz (location 6; LN female human expert 3) Titular Mayor of Golden Valley.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- General Store: This shop is well stocked for adventurers and miners, although expensive.
- Golden Tap: This well appointed inn and tavern is the nicest place in to stay in Golden Valley.
- 3. Welcome Inn: Though less luxurious than the Golden Tap, this inn is much more accommodating to visitors.
- Stubbs O' the Candle: This small bookshop sees little business since the gold rush.
- 5. **Boss Corl's Estate**: This large estate on the edge of the village is home to Boss Corl and his cronies.
- Village Hall: This large central building is used for meetings and other public functions.
- Jailhouse: This small office and its three cells are the base of Sheriff Heral's operations.
- 8. Chapel of Saint Berabra: This small chapel is dedicated to the local patron saint of miners.
- Golden Valley Bank: This large stone building houses the vaults that store Boss Corl's gold before resale.
- 10. **Corl's Mines**: Located about a mile and a half outside the village, this is the heart of Golden Valley's prosperity.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Mining (coal, gold)

Base Value 650 gp; Purchase Limit 3,750 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils darkvision (300 gp), comprehend languages (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) whispering wind (150 gp), identify (50 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) shatter (150 gp), deathwatch (50 gp)

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Golden Valley. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Golden Valley was originally called Sunset Valley, and was renamed when Boss Corl discovered gold nearby.

**DC 15**: Boss Corl and his thugs control most of the village's business. They ensure newcomers either pay outrageous prices or incur debts to the Boss. Old Pvete runs the Welcome Inn, one of the few places still with reasonable prices.

**DC 20**: The gold has nearly run out, but Boss Corl, Sly Jaak and Mayor Fitz have conspired to keep people from discovering this secret, in fear of what would happen to their profitable enterprises if the truth was known.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance** Most of the folk are solidly built with dust-stained dark hair and empty grey or brown eyes.

**Dress** Locals favour rugged vests and pants of sturdy leather; mining helmets are a common sight.

Nomenclature male Clynt, Jaan, Slym, Lee, Chip; female Scarlett, Megg, Patty, Brys; family O'Bannyn, Clatt, Westwood, Blakk, Fitz

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1	Any dissenters with Boss Corl or Sly Jaak tend to meet with unfortunate accidents; these are too frequent to be mere coincidence.
2	The flow of gold from Corl's mines has slowed to a trickle, prompting the Boss to cut corners and push ever deeper.
3*	Derro lurk in the deepest tunnels; occasionally they drag lone miners away to a horrible fate.
4*	The Boss recently discovered precious gemstones in his new tunnels.
5	Boss Corl is looking to marry Jasmyn
6*	Something happened to the Stustle boy in the mines, though nobody seems to know what. Some say the mines are haunted, ghostly lights have been seen some nights. (Partly true: young Stubbs is missing, but the mines aren't haunted)

\*False rumour



# 1: GENERAL STORE

This well made large wooden building is flush with prosperity. The general store is very well stocked when it comes to mining gear and adventuring equipment. Even when the village was still called Sunset Valley, it was frequently used as a base for groups headed into the nearby mountains. However, the prosperity of Golden Valley has corrupted Olbert Krenn (LN male human expert 2), one of Boss Corl's oldest friends. Anything in the store costs at least two to three its normal price; luxury items cost as much as ten times base value. The general store also offers credit on mining kits, providing new arrivals with a helmet, pick and lantern with oil. However, paying this back costs ten times the normal purchase price, which sometimes takes a new worker months or even years.

# 2: THE GOLDEN TAP

The beautiful raven-haired Jasmyn (CN female human expert 3) runs this expensive alehouse and tavern. The bar itself is made from fine imported hardwood, and the taps are highly burnished brass, gleaming with a near-golden finish that gives the tavern its name.

In addition to its glamorous barroom, Jasmyn also keeps a few ladies of ill-repute in her employ, discretely offering services for those who know how to ask. Boss Corl and his cronies often spend the evening at the Golden Tap, and encourage their workers to spend their money here. The Boss has frequently displayed amorous intentions toward Jasmyn, but so far she has rebuked his advances. Prices for food, drink and lodging are three times higher than usual, but the rooms and cuisine are sufficiently opulent that most visitors who can afford it don't mind the extra expense.

# 3: Welcome Inn

This simple alehouse and inn features local construction materials, primarily stone and pine. Cheap ale, whiskey and basic food are all available at reasonable prices, in stark contrast to most of Golden Valley. Grizzled, one-eyed dwarven ex-miner Pvete Stonehelm (LN male dwarf ranger 3), affectionately called Old Pvete among the miners, came here when Corl first discovered gold. The dwarf's experience helped the new mine expand faster than Corl's limited knowledge would have allowed. Once the mine became established, Pvete grew bitter at the Boss's treatment of his workers and the two fell out. Shortly afterward, Pvete had an accident with a horse and cart, leaving him lame. He blames this on Sly Jaak, and opened the Welcome Inn as a place to spread the word against Boss Corl and provide respite for travellers and miners alike.

# 4: STUBBS O' THE CANDLE

This chaotically overstocked bookshop is a bit of an anomaly in the labourer-oriented village. Long predating Boss Corl's gold claims, widower Wiljem Stustle's (N male human wizard [diviner] 3) small wooden shop has managed to eke out a meagre existence selling magical scrolls to anyone daring enough to venture into the nearby mountains. Stubbs apprenticed as a wizard in his youth, but was never the adventurous sort, and so founded this small bookshop as a way to cover expenses for his love of reading, history and magic. The shop has suffered recently, its wooden beams starting to sag with age. The local populace, primarily desperate miners looking for a source of income, have little interest or time for reading. Things have gotten bad enough that Stubbs' teenage son Marris has gone to work in the mines, despite his father's protests.

# 5: BOSS CORL'S ESTATE

These large grounds feature decorative topiary features and a grand central fountain, but are dominated by an enormous columned manor house. Despite it's obvious recent construction, the large house harkens back to an older, more extravagant age – a decadent palace more at home in an aging city than a small mining village. Boss Corl (LE male human rogue 2/ranger 2) lives here along with his associate, advisor and rumoured assassin Jaak Van der Brykk (NE female human rogue 5). Also known locally as Sly Jaak she leads the half-dozen thugs and heavies also living here. Most locals believe Jaak, an outsider thought to have belonged to a "big city thieves' guild" is responsible for Corl's gradual descent into tyranny; a slow, but pervasive change from mild-mannered miner to overbearing tyrant boss.

# 6: VILLAGE HALL

This large timber building serves as the home for Golden Valley's nominal government. It is a simple structure, converted from a barn long ago. Most days it stands empty, save for the small outbuilding occupied by the mayor, Yacki Fitz (LN female human expert 3). The mayor stills rules the village in theory, but in practice no law passes without Boss Corl's approval, a frustration that has lead the mayor to spend most of her nights alone in the main meeting hall, drinking cheap whiskey. The hall is also occasionally used to house elaborate celebrations when Corl needs to boost morale. These festivities close the mines, sometimes for days, while the Boss lets his whiskey flow freely.

# 7: JAILHOUSE

In stark contrast to the mainly wooden buildings standing nearby, this small stone structure houses a single office and a half-dozen cramped cells. Designed hold criminals briefly before they are sent to a nearby city, it lacks many of the facilities of a larger prison. Bailiff Seran Heral (LG male human fighter 2) dislikes Boss Corl and his thugs, but lacks the manpower to exercise any kind of authority. As such, he is generally relegated to breaking up drunken fist-fights and incarcerating people Boss Corl wants punished.

A set of gallows set in the courtyard are kept in perfect working order (despite their lack of use) as a consequence of one of Boss Corl's "suggestions."

# 8: CHAPEL OF ST. BERABRA

This simple wooden chapel is painted with bright colours, chipped and faded in a few places, is in very good shape overall. The chapel is maintained by Pastor Clynt (LG male human cleric 3), an enthusiastic young priest with bright eyes and a penchant for charity. He is often willing to lend a hand when accidents injure miners or other mishaps occur. The chapel is dedicated to a local martyr, who supposedly called down a miraculous bolt of lightning to free a group of miners trapped in the mines, hundreds of years before Golden Valley's current affluence. Villagers speculate whether the pastor is actually ignorant of the

#### **SLY JAAK**

CR 4 (XP 1,200)

This slim woman's eyes are in constant motion, darting about as if she expects something untoward to happen.
Female human rogue 5
NE Medium humanoid (human)
<b>Init</b> +4; <b>Senses</b> Perception +8 (+10 vs. traps), Sense Motive +8
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.; Acrobatics +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +14,
Stealth +14
AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; CMD 17
(+4 armour [+1 studded leather], +4 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge])
<b>Fort</b> +5, <b>Ref</b> +9 (+10 vs. traps; evasion), <b>Will</b> +4
hp 36 (5 HD)
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +2
<b>Melee</b> mwk dagger +8 (1d4-1/19-20)
<b>Ranged</b> dagger (range 10 ft.) +7 (1d4-1/19-20)
Atk Options sneak attack (+3d6)
<b>Combat Gear</b> daggers (2), potion of cure light wounds, potion of eagle's splendour, potion of invisibility, elixir of hiding
Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14
<b>SQ</b> rogue talents (fast stealth, finesse rogue), trapfinding (+2), trap sense (+1)
Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse
Skills as above plus Appraise +7, Bluff +10, Craft (traps) +8,
Disable Device +16, Disguise +10
Languages Common, Goblin
<b>Gear</b> as above plus <i>cloak of resistance +1</i> , masterwork thieves' tool, artisan's tools (Craft [traps])

nature of the village's most prominent accidents, or if he is simply scared of Boss Corl.

# 9: GOLDEN VALLEY BANK

This sprawling stone building's main feature is a large locked and trapped vault. Its halls have evolved over the years and now resemble nothing more than a labyrinth, each corridor laden with the most devious traps Sly Jaak could devise. The fact Jaak charges the Boss for these traps, while simultaneously feeding Corl's paranoia, has made the bank a lucrative side-business for Jaak.

The bank itself is nominally run by Hayavel Pyloninn (LN male elf expert 2), a serious and sombre man who seems almost emotionless while conducting business. He knows he owes his prosperity to Boss Corl's enterprises, but that doesn't stop Pyloninn from making the Boss follow the same rules as all his other customers.

# 10: CORL'S MINES

The largest mines in the nearby mountains belong to Boss Corl and sport his moniker as an uninspired title. A long established coal mine provided much of the village's wealth before Boss Corl's gold strike. Now the mines are a deep, sprawling complex reinforced with heavy timber, and usually tall and broad enough for two men to walk side-by-side.

The expertise of Old Pvete taught Corl the best way to efficiently expand his early mines. Newer branches built after the two fell out are narrower and more unstable than the established mine, as Corl has pushed for faster and deeper expansion chasing the dwindling gold veins.

MINER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Human commoner 1	
N Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +0; Senses Perception -1, Sense Moti	ve -1
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.; <b>ACP</b> 0; Climb +5, Swim +5	
AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 11	
(+1 armour [padded])	
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 9 (1 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1	
Melee heavy pick +1 (1d6+1/x4) or	
dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, W	'is 8, Cha 9
Feats Skill Focus (miner), Toughness <sup>B</sup>	
Skills as above plus Profession (miner) +6	
Languages Common	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, pe	easant's outfit

# LIFE IN GOLDEN VALLEY

The majority of villagers in Golden Valley work for Boss Corl.

# TRADE & INDUSTRY

The mines are the source of Golden Valley's prosperity. They still produce a substantial volume of coal, but more importantly the mines are the source of Boss Corl's gold. Working conditions in the mines have deteriorated in recent years, making them a miserable, dangerous environment to work in. Most miners, however, have no other skills.

# LAW & ORDER

Nominally, Bailiff Heral has a small jailhouse and is the arm of the law in Golden Valley. The truth is he rarely has any need to do anything. Most of the locals owe allegiance to Boss Corl, and wouldn't dream of doing anything that might draw the ire of the Boss (or Sly Jaak). Thus, petty crime is limited. The chance of meeting with an accident and losing their livelihood is enough to keep all but the dimmest or drunkest in line.

Mayor Fitz finds herself in a similar position. Although she is responsible for the village's prosperity, anything she could do to impede the Boss would likely result in him withholding taxes, which would rapidly plunge the village into financial ruin.

This powerfully built man has salt-and-pepper hair and cold, steely eyes. Male human ranger 2/rogue 2
Male human ranger 2/rogue 2
LE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +2; Senses Perception +6 (+7 vs. traps, +8 vs. humans;
trapfinding), Sense Motive +8 (+10 vs. humans)
Speed 30 ft.; ACP -1; Escape Artist +8, Stealth +8
AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; CMD 18
(+5 armour [+1 chain shirt], +2 Dex)
Fort +5, Ref +8 (evasion), Will -1
<b>hp</b> 34 (4 HD)
<ul> <li>Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +6</li> <li>Melee mwk heavy pick (Power Attack [-1/+3] +7 (1d6+4/x4)</li> <li>Atk Options Catch Off-Guard, Combat Reflexes, favoured enemy (humans [+2]), sneak attack (+1d6)</li> <li>Combat Gear elixir of truth, oil of magic weapon, potion of cure light wounds</li> </ul>
Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
<b>SQ</b> combat style (two-handed weapon), rogue talent (honeyed words), track (+1), trapfinding (+1), wild empathy (+3)
<b>Feats</b> Alertness, Catch Off-Guard, Combat Reflexes, Power
Attack
Skills as above plus Bluff +8 (+10 vs. humans), Intimidate +8,
Profession (miner) +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Survival +6 (+7
tracking, +8 vs. humans)
Languages Common
Gear as above plus 37 gp, 12 sp

# EVENTS

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

#### D6 EVENT

1	A runaway horse barrels toward a miner who just the other day had been overheard bemoaning conditions in the mines.
2	A handful of thugs are behind the Golden Tap roughing up a man who got a little too friendly with Jasmyn. The man is taking a good beating and – strangely – not resisting.
3	A group of ragged miners return to the village discussing another cave-in at the mines. The miners are angry at Boss Corl's blatant ignorance of basic safety measures.
4	A small fire at the Welcome Inn is quickly doused by Old Pvete and a volunteer fire brigade. Arson is suspected, but no witnesses or evidence are found.
5	Ghostly lights are seen near the mines, causing a mild panic among those who have to work there the next day. (These are caused by Wiljem Stubbs searching for his missing son.)
6	An enthusiastic man comes into the village brandishing an emerald he claims was found in the mines – though the stone looks to have been expertly cut.

BAILIFF SEARN HERAL CR 1 (XP 400)
Tall and well muscled, an aura of defeat and dejection hangs
about this obvious warrior.
Male human fighter 2
LG Medium humanoid (human)
Init +4; Senses Perception +3, Sense Motive +3
Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; ACP -9; Acrobatics -9 (-13
jumping)
AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21; CMD 15
(+8 armour [half-plate], +3 shield [heavy steel; Shield Focus])
Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1 (+2 vs. fear)
hp 21 (2 HD)
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +5
Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+3/19-20)
Ranged light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +2 (1d8/19-20)
Combat Gear bolts (10), potion of darkvision
Abilities Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ bravery (+1)
<b>Feats</b> Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Improved Initiative, Shield Focus <sup>B</sup> , Weapon
Focus (longsword) <sup>B</sup>
Skills as above plus Intimidate +6, Knowledge (engineering) +4
Languages Common
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 12 gp, 14 sp, flint & steel

# HARD BAY

Hard Bay's fate has ever been tied to the sea. Although blessed with a natural, protected harbour and plentiful fishing, foul weather and a dangerous, unwholesome reputation have conspired to keep the village nothing more than a dreary, isolated place. A vein of smuggling and thievery ran deep through the village until the Sharkrazor pirates were crushed four decades ago. Now administered by three minor noble families, a darker horror than mere piracy lurks within the place. Rumours speak of strange fires set amid a circle of ancient, weathered stones atop a nearby shunned hill when the moon is new and of strange, abhorrent fishmen lurking in the abandoned, half-drowned smuggler tunnels beneath the ramshackle village.

# HARD BAY AT A GLANCE

Hard Bay's fate has ever been tied to the sea. The village boasts a protected harbour, plentiful fishing and a natural place for offloading exotic goods while avoid the taxes of larger cities. Such advantages suggest Hard Bay should be larger than the village it has become, but the foul coastal weather and a dangerous reputation have conspired to prevent it from becoming more populous and affluent.

Nearly a century ago, Hard Bay was founded by the Sharkrazors, a group of pirates and thieves who sought to use the protected harbour to smuggle goods. At its height, the village boasted nearly a dozen taverns and half as many brothels, along with dockside warehouses crammed full of plundered goods.

It all came to an end four decades ago when the authorities came in force with an army and a flotilla of armed ships. Their vessels sunk and their crews rounded up and executed, the Sharkrazors' hold was broken. Hard Bay, damaged and burned, was given over to a consortium of three minor noble families, each with a storied and impressive name but with nearly no fortune to speak of. Little did anyone know, the coming of the families would bring darker horrors to the village than piracy.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler High Councillor Afric Blufount

**Government** Aristocratic council (council made up of one representative from each of the three families)

Population 138 (80 humans, 5 dwarves, 12 half-elves, 41 other) Alignments NE

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

Corruption +0; Crime -1; Economy -5; Law -6; Lore -3; Society -1 Qualities Insular, notorious

Danger +30; Disadvantages Hunted

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- Aldal Stronghammer (location 4; NG male dwarf expert 3/fighter 2) Forgemaster of Stronghammer Metalworks, Aldal goes out of his way to gruffly encourage visitors to town not to stay past sunset. He is rarely seen without his overly large flask.
- **Councillor Ellagana Moisan** (location 2; NE female tainted one human bard 6) Ellagana is the beautiful and hedonistic leader of the wealthy Moisan family. Through her family, she controls the docks and most of the trade.
- **Councillor Reynard Gerou** (location 3; N male human aristocrat 4) Reynard smoothly plays a dangerous game, paying lip service to the Cult of the Deep. He has wandered from the cult and now seeks only to further his family's position.
- Fancy Tomnal Staggers (location 9; CN male human rogue 5) Sent by the Sharkrazor pirates who once held Hard Bay,

Fancy Tomnal is spying on the village to see how the buccaneers might regain control. He isn't sure what, but he has noticed that something is not quite right in Hard Bay. Unfortunately for him, the cult has already marked him as the sacrifice for the new moon.

- **High Councillor Affric Blufont** (location 1; NE male tainted one human sorcerer [aquatic] 8) Patriarch of the Blufont family, Afrric is the senior member of the ruling council and the most powerful, ruthless member in the Cult of the Deep.
- **Old Moreg** (location 7; CN male human sorcerer [abyssal] 4) The crazed Moreg tends the lighthouse with his summoned "friends."

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. **Blufont Manor**: Family home of the Blufonts, much of the business of the Cult of the Deep is conducted within. Tunnels have been dug in its basement that lead into the Depths.
- Moisan Manor: Formerly a large brothel, Moisan Manor is the most renovated building in the village and drips with excess. Most nights, it hosts raucous ball.
- 3. **Gerou Manor**: Small home of the Gerou family, it is notable for its roof mounted telescope.
- Stronghammer Metalworks: The smithy is run by a family of dwarves that try to protect visitors to Hard Bay.
- The Driftwood: The curio shop is owned by the Blufont family. Trading in unusual items and lore is always possible here.
- Docks: The docks are the focus of trade in Hard Bay. The warehouses are in varying states of disrepair.
- 7. **Lighthouse**: Lookout Point is capped by a lighthouse that guards the bay and is reachable by a dangerous causeway.
- 8. The Evening Mist: The public house has rooms for let.
- Maritime Hill: Topped by an altar and standing stones, the hill is clearly used for some fell purpose.
- 10. **The Depths**: In these secret tunnels the Cult of the Deep meet to worship their piscine gods.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, pearls, smuggling.

Base Value 550 gp; Purchase Limit 3,750 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in Hard Bay, the following items are for sale at the Driftwood (Area 5):

- Potions & Oils water breathing (750 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) darkvision (150 gp), magic weapon (25 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) water walking (375 gp)
- Ring sustenance (actually a cursed cannibal ring) 2,000 gp

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Hard Bay. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Once a smuggler's port that grew to a village, when the Sharkrazor pirates of Hard Bay were crushed Hard Bay was given to three noble families to administer.

**DC 15**: The village has ample fishing and is still used as a trading port by some. Most notable are the unusual pearls recovered and worked into coral jewellery by the locals.

**DC 20**: Rumours persist the pirates still have an interest in Hard Bay, and indeed its locals remain an independent and unfriendly lot with their own customs and religious practices.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance** Shaggy and wild dark hair is typical for both men and women, though the three families often tame theirs with a length of ribbon. Large eyes and thin lips are common among the tainted one populace.

**Dress** Utilitarian fishing gear such as thick gloves, aprons and boots are common. Due to the frequent inclement weather and thick mists, the villagers often wear layers.

**Nomenclature** *male* Aribert, Deverell, Varriel; *female* Anasielle, Coulette, Flouressa; *family* Bayne, Bellrose, Sanquon.



## 1: BLUFONT MANOR

This manor shows signs of age and decay, despite the Blufont's wealth. Affric (NE male tainted one human sorcerer [aquatic] 8), his wife Alisonda (NE female tainted one human wizard [diviner] 6) and brother Clarne (NE male tainted one human wizard [universalist] 4) are currently the only family in residence. Many of the manor's rooms have been closed off and given over to dust and rats. Only the library, kitchen, dining hall and the residents' bedrooms see any use. In a dusty second floor gallery, hang portraits of the family through the generations. Several depict "family members" who, though long since dead, are disturbing similar in appearance to Affric, Alisonda and Clarne.

The manor is the focus of the Cult of the Deep. The Blufonts always delved into the unspeakable, but coming to Hard Bay, Affric located secret smuggling passages leading into the Depths (Area 10). In these water filled caves, he encounter the Yaknath who worship the unspeakable horrors he had only read about in blasphemous tomes. Joining with them, his entire family has undergone rituals to become tainted ones. Now Affric controls the cult and provides sacrifices to the Yaknath in return for the bounty of sea. The concealed passage to the Depths hides behind a secret door (DC 25 Perception locates) in the cellar.

# 2: MOISAN MANOR

The smooth and graceful Ellagana Moisan (NE female tainted one human bard 6) and her large brood dwell in the largest home in Hard Bay. Ellagana has had more than a dozen husbands, all who sadly disappeared, died or otherwise met a foul end (all were sacrificed to the Yaknath). However, these poor souls have blessed Ellagana with many capable tainted one children that run the docks and warehouses and generate significant amounts of coin she uses to fund her extravagant lifestyle.

As dusk falls each night, except the three nights of the new moon, the manor is filled with light and music as the family throw debauchery-filled parties for the aristocracy, upcoming gentry or those the family wishes to intoxicate before sacrificing the poor insensate fool to their unholy masters.

## 3: GEROU MANOR

Reynard Gerou (N male human aristocrat 4) and the rest of his family have never fully committed to the Cult of the Deep. Paying lip service, and participating in the rituals to maintain their position, they stay as aloof as possible from the works of the blasphemous religion, instead focusing on their jewellery business. Of the three families, the Gerou boast the fewest number who have undergone the tainted one rituals. Their home is notable for its second storey, where the family works pearls and coral into jewellery, under a skylight that lets them watch the stars. On clear nights, Reynard is often on the walk surrounding the manor roof, gazing at the stars through a great telescope mounted atop the manor.

# 4: STRONGHAMMER METALWORKS

This stout, box-like stone building boasts a grand sign declaring it as the Stronghammer Metalworks and the sounds of hammering amid belching smoke emanate from within during daylight hours. Aldal Stronghammer (NG male dwarf expert 3/fighter 2), his wife Agleif, sons Sigbert and Hilbert and daughter Hethena (all dwarf expert 2) work the forge here.

Aldal adventured for a short time before settling down, and the dangers he witnessed scarred him enough that he rarely move beyond arm's reach of strong drink. Aldal is afraid the nightmares have followed him to Hard Bay, having noticed the odd behaviour of his neighbours, new moon lights on Maritime Hill and the many unexplained disappearances. The dwarves have become very insular and cautious as a result; afraid to venture from their walls except in the bright of day. However, still good at heart, Aldal might offer travellers a slurred, gruff warning to leave Hard Bay before it's too late.

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Hard Bay and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

00	KUIVIOUR
1	More than one voice is often heard coming from the
	Lookout Point lighthouse, but only one sounds human.
2	There are caves in the cliffs below the tide line once
	used by pirates to hide their contraband.
	The Maisons have a fascination with elves. Visitors with
3*	elvish blood can get invited to the parties at Moisan
	Manor and have a night they will never forget.
	Many visitors to Hard Bay disappear leaving behind no
	clues as to where they have gone. Sometimes their
4	loved ones come looking for them, and it is not
	uncommon for them to disappear as well.
	The lights seen during the new moon on Maritime Hill
5*	are caused by the spirits of the fey slain there by pirates
	in days long gone.
	Something is wrong in Hard Bay and the three families
6	have something to do with it. Many family members
	look especially odd, with large eyes or thin lips.
*False	rumour

# 5: The Driftwood

The Driftwood seems wildly out of place for a small fishing village. A small, dark shop filled with books and strange curios, one never knows what oddities might be found within. Staffed by Clarne Blufont (NE male tainted one human wizard [universalist] 4), the shop is the only place in the village where one might buy or sell magic items or tomes of lore.

# 6: DOCKS

The docks and the surrounding warehouses are Hard Bay's heart and see the most activity. Small ships offload there cargo here, hoping to get a better price by avoiding the heavier taxes of the cities. While fisherfolk cast their nets and salt their catch, divers, many of whom are tainted ones able to breathe water, gather pearls and coral for sale to the jewellers.

At the top of the bluffs stand two large warehouses and a collection of smaller buildings where the goods are stored and assessed. Illian Moisan (NE male tainted one human rogue 6), eldest son of Ellagana, is the dockmaster and works from one of the smaller building. He is a deeply handsome man with dark eyes and a wry sense of humour, though rumours persist he and his mother have an unnaturally close relationship.

The eastern warehouse has suffered over the years and has not been repaired. It leaks badly in storms and is easy to sneak into, should someone be so inclined. On more than one occasion Fancy Tomnal has met privately here with visiting members of the Sharkrazors to plot ways to take over Hard Bay.

## 7: LIGHTHOUSE

The Lookout Point Lighthouse is avoided by all Hard Bay's residents. Not only is the causeway difficult to negotiate in the best of weather (DC 15 Acrobatics to avoid falling to the wavelashed sharp rocks below), but it is home to Old Moreg (CN male human sorcerer [abyssal] 8), who's sense of sanity has long since fled. Moreg tends the light and it has never failed, but villagers have often noted shadows playing against the light that are not entirely natural.

Their fears are well founded. Moreg has a significant personal library of things best left unremembered, and he spends his time summoning creatures he finds described in those books. The things he has witnessed have driven the old man beyond the bounds of sanity and left him shattered and thoroughly unpleasant. He attempts to drive anyone that bothers him into the sea or back across the slick causeway.

Moreg is aware of the Yathnak and the tainted ones and he does not trust anyone that seeks his knowledge. Should he be won over, he is a powerful ally against the three families and their unspeakable allies.

## 8: THE EVENING MIST

A weathered sign depicting a mist-shrouded lighthouse over the Evening Mist's front door creaks in the wind. The inn's clientele almost exclusively comprises superstitious humans. The tainted ones are more likely to spend their evenings at Moisan Manor or in the Depths and the dwarves are too afraid to venture from their home. While technically owned by Affric Blufont, the inn is rented by a large half-elven family, the Starweathers.

The inn's most notorious resident is Fancy Tomnal Staggers (CN male human rogue 5), a hard drinking gambler who always seems to have enough coin, despite a lack of an obvious source. Unknown to the villagers, he is in Hard Bay at the behest of the Sharkrazor pirates, looking for an opening for the pirates to gain less overt control over the village than they held in the past. So far Fancy Tomnal has concentrated on gathering information and eventually plans to buy one or two houses and to set up some criminal enterprise under the cover of a gambling parlour. He is unlikely to get the chance, however, as his questions have aroused the attention of the three families and they have marked him for the next sacrifice atop Maritime Hill when the new moon comes.

# 9: MARITIME HILL

The stones atop the lightly forested Maritime Hill are avoided by all sane folk. Popular myth says it is a ruined faerie hold which explains the lights and fires seen there during the new moon. Most members of the three families claim it is an ancient monument to lost mariners, with no features of interest.

Those climbing the hill find a circle of standing stones around an altar of strange black stone whose sides are carved with tentacles, fins, eyes and fangs. The top is scarred with hundreds of blade marks and is deeply stained by old blood.

On the night of every new moon, the Cult of the Deep climbs the hill to pay homage to the Yaknath, often with a representative of that fell race in attendance. They dance, chant and sacrifice in the name of the giant fishmen and their dark gods. In turn, the most faithful are rewarded with the chance to couple with the fish folk and become one of the tainted ones.

# 10: THE DEPTHS

Caverns, some inundated, run through the bluffs under the village. The main entrance is just below the water line to the east of the causeway leading to Lookout Point (DC 15 Perception to spot from the water). They can also be accessed via a secret entrance in Blufont Manor's cellar (Area 1). Here the cult meet to celebrate their twisted beliefs or converse with the Yaknath.

Near the secret entrance is a large cavern where the cult stores robes, torches and cages for sacrificial victims. Yaknath are often in this chamber, as the creatures frequently visit to drop off pearls or other things recovered from the sea.

# LIFE IN HARD BAY

Life seems normal on the surface, but it is clear to perceptive observers Hard Bay suffers from some deeper rot. Most of the architecture remains a ramshackle mesh of whatever the smugglers built, with only the aristocracy having made any efforts to repair or improve their homes.

## TRADE & INDUSTRY

The village survives almost entirely on the trade centred on the docks, supplemented by revenue brought in by the Stronghammer smith and Gerou family jewellers. Fishing is everything to almost everyone in the village.

# TAINTED ONE

"Tainted One " is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid creature. A tainted one retains all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here

**CR:** Same as the base creature +1.

Alignment: Any evil.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to aberration. Do not recalculate BAB, saves or skill ranks. The creature gains the aquatic subtype.

Senses: A tainted one gains darkvision 90 ft.

**Armour Class:** A tainted one has a +2 natural armour bonus or the base creature's natural armour bonus, whichever is better.

**Hit Dice:** Change all of the creature's racial hit dice to d8s. All hit dice derived from class levels remain unchanged.

**Defensive Abilities:** A tainted one gains DR slashing and magic /5 and immunity to cold and electricity.

**Speed:** If the base creature does not have a swim speed, it gains one equal to its speed. If the base creature already has a swim speed, the tainted one increases its speed by 10 ft.

Special Attack: A tainted one gains the following:

*Croak (Su):* A tainted one releases a terrifying, unnatural croak. Any non-aberration within 50 feet must make a Will saving throw or be shaken for 1d4 rounds. Once a creature succeeds on a Will saving throw, they are immune to that particular tainted one's *croak* for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Special Qualities: A tainted one gains the following:

Ageless (Su): The tainted one does not age or accrues penalties to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution due to age. Bonuses to Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma are still gained.

Ability Scores: Str +2, Dex +2, Wis -2, Cha +2.

**Skills:** Tainted ones gain a +8 racial bonus on Perception and Swim checks.

# LAW & ORDER

Hard Bay largely polices itself. The oldest sons of the three families enforce their parents' will with a few stout clubs. Since the three families own nearly all the land and employ all the citizens, the threat of eviction keeps most folk in line.

# EVENTS

While the PCs are in Hard Bay, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly what happens:

#### D4 EVENT

1	On the night of the new moon, a bonfire illuminates robed figures and very large humanoid figures atop Maritime Hill. A guttural, blubbery chant can be heard intermingled with screams of pain and fear.
Aldal Stronghammer tries to entice the PCs into	
2	family's shop. Any who enter are promptly encouraged
	to flee before nightfall, lest they disappear.
	The Driftwood has a strange coral decorated goblet for
	sale (300 gp). It radiates conjuration magic and has
3	strange symbols covering it. Anyone carrying it for more
	than an hour must make a DC 13 Will save or walk into
	the sea where the Yaknath wait for them.
	A strong storm comes in off the sea, lashing the village
4	with high winds and pouring rain. Oddly, a thick mist fills
	those streets and yards protected from the wind.

#### ΥΑΚΝΑΤΗ

CR 5 (XP 1600)

This giant-sized fish man has a single large eye above its fanged maw. A pair of tentacles sprout from its sides, below long, scaled arms that end in huge claws.

NE Large aberration (aquatic)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +8, Sense Motive -2 Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5

AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17; CMD 21

Immunity cold, disease, electricity, poison

Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +3

hp 49 (7 HD); DR slashing and magic/5

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; Base Atk +5; CMB +12 (+16 grapple)

Melee claw +9 (3d8+6) and

tentacle +9 (2d8+3 plus grab)

Special Actions terrifying gaze

Terrifying Gaze (Su 1/day]) A Yaknath directs its eye toward all creatures within a 30-ft. cone. Such creatures must make a DC 16 Will saving throw or flee in fear for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Abilities Str 22, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 8

Feats Ability Focus (Terrifying Gaze), Body Shield<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Multiattack, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (Arcana) +6, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Perception +8, Stealth +5, Swim +18

Languages Aklo, Aquan

# HOSFORD

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

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

# HOSFORD AT A GLANCE

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

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

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Pio Varrin (NG male human rogue [investigator] 4)
Government Overlord
Population 178 (168 humans, 5 halflings, 3 dwarves, 2 halfelves)
Alignments LG, NG, LN, LE, CE
Languages Common, Dwarven
Corruption 1; Crime -3; Economy 0; Law 2; Lore 0; Society -3
Qualities Pious, strategic location

Danger 0; Disadvantages none

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- Kandin Bellick (location 9; N male human expert 2) Wizened old Kandin is known for his tall tales, like the one about the sea serpent he claims to have seen.
- Hilsa Devvon (location 7; LN female human expert 3) Short, stout Hilsa is often mistaken for one of the halflings she employs.
- **Renald Halman** (location 5; LN male human cleric 5) Renald leads the faithful of Hosford, and is using the current crisis to fill seats at the church.
- Aeglis Hammerstone (location 4; LN male dwarf expert 2/rogue2) A distant relative of the Goldrock clan of Bossin, Aeglis specializes in crafting jewellery and gemcutting.
- Jarrin Penn (location 2; LG male human warrior 4) Hosford's bailiff, the aging Jarrin spends as much time fishing the Hoslo as he does doing his job.

- **Dag Tunner** (location 10; N male human druid 8) Long a harmless, old hermit, Dag suffers from dementia and believes a sea drake to be a god.
- **Pio Varrin** (location 3; NG male human rogue [investigator] 4) Book smart and capable, Pio Varrin serves as village reeve, but his true purpose in Hosford is to uncover the truth behind the recent disappearances plaguing the village.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

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

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry fishing, mining Base Value 550 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils owl's wisdom (300 gp), sanctuary (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) water breathing (375), comprehend languages (25 gp).
- Scroll (Divine) calm emotions (150 gp), zone of truth (150 gp)

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Hosford. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Seventy years ago, a section of the mine collapsed taking a large section of the nearby cliffs with it. As a result, a small cove was formed that the villagers were quick to exploit.

**DC 15**: Pio Varrin's only here to do the work the soldiers from Caer Syllan should be doing – uncovering the truth behind the disappearances plaguing the village.

**DC 20**: One of the old mine tunnels led to an underground cave, but it was sealed up when the mine collapsed.

# $V {\tt I} {\tt L} {\tt L} {\tt A} {\tt G} {\tt E} {\tt R} {\tt S}$

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

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

Nomenclature male: Digory, Jacca, Margh, Peder; female:

Caja, Hedra, Kerra, Wenna; *family*: Ahearn, Jewell, Mayne, Tangye.

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Hosford and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1*	Half-goblins from the Tangled Woods have been
	kidnapping people!
2*	Hisla ran out of fresh meat for her stew so she's been
	kidnapping villagers and cooking them!
3	Kandin says he's seen a sea serpent. Crazy old cotter!
4	The new reeve spends a lot of time talking to people,
	asking all kinds of questions.
5*	Father Halman says the disappearances are a
	punishment from Darlen. Repent, he says!
6	I haven't seen crazy old Dag Tunner in ages. I bet he's
	gone missing too.

\*False rumour



# 1: HOSFORD JAIL

These low, squat buildings of quarried stone have seen a lot use lately. The recent disappearances in Hosford have stirred up a lot of old grudges between neighbours who have begun accusing one another of being the perpetrator, often on flimsy pretences. Unfortunately, Pio Varrin (NG male human rogue [investigator] 4) wants to investigate any such accusation so he has commanded Jarrin Penn's men to round up any accused villagers for questioning. Jarrin Penn (LG male human warrior 4), an old man now, for his part spends most of his day fishing the Hoslo and trying to stay out of everyone's way.

# 2: UNGER MANOR

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

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

### 3: DAYSTAR CHURCH

A small, well built church dedicated to Darlen sits on the banks of the Hoslo, near the ford. A small bell tower rings a flat, monotonous tone hourly. Father Renald Halman (LN male human cleric 5) leads the faithful of Hosford. A shrewd man, he sees the recent disappearances as an opportunity to increase his congregation. His sermons of late talk of Darlen's punishment visiting the village because of their unfaithfulness. Many villagers are beginning to believe the good father.

## 4: THE FORD

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

#### 5: ARTISAN MARKET

Hosford does not boast a general store. Instead, Hosford's resident craftspeople (including a blacksmith, potter and a weaver) live and work here. Its most famous resident is Aeglis Hammerstone (LN male dwarf expert 2/rogue 2). A distant relative of the Goldrock clan, Aeglis is known throughout the Lonely Coast for his gemcutting skill. Adventurers looking to unload gems or other precious stones would be well-advised to seek Aeglis out as he offers a fair price.

# 6: FISH MARKET

Hosford's fisherfolk bring their daily catches here to be sold in small stalls, while other merchants prepare salted fish for sale throughout the Lonely Coast. In addition, spicy bowls of fish stew can be bought for 3 cp. Children often earn a 1 cp a week helping to carry large vats of stew to the miners.

# 7: Hoslo's Rest

Thick stone walls support the sagging eaves of this inn. One wall of the inn features a series of large doors facing the Hoslo that can be opened on warm days. The proprietor, Hilsa Devvon (LN female human expert 3) employs a family of halfings to help run the place. A short, stout lady, Hilsa is often mistaken for a halfling herself. Prone to gossip, she speaks of a number of conspiracy theories about the recent disappearances to anyone who will listen. None of them are true, but they do contain a lot of dirty secrets about certain villagers that fuels the rampant accusations sweeping the populace.

# 8: M in es

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

## 9: HOSFORD COVE

A large tunnel opens up onto a sandy cove flanked by towering cliffs. A growing number of villagers are leaving the darkness of the mines for the open sea, skirting the coastline in small boats. However, large rocks just below the surface mean certain destruction to any large vessels docking at Hosford. Rickety wooden docks reach out into the sea while behind them rests a small number of salt-stained cottages and businesses that cater to the fishermen's needs. Local fisherman, Kandin Bellick (N male human expert 2) has spent more time on the seas than anyone in Hosford. A teller of tall tales, he claims to have seen a giant sea serpent.

## 10: SEA CAVE

The Hoslo empties out into a large sea cavern. A mine tunnel, once sealed off (but now cleverly disguised [DC 25 Perception]), opens onto a small ledge on the cave's western side. A few large rocks rise out of the water, creating slick platforms. A crude tent, Dag Tunner's (N male human druid 8) home, rests on one such platform. Nearing the end of his life, the old druid suffers from senility, honestly believing a sea drake to be a nature god. An aloof hermit, he has managed to escape detection so far. An exit on the south end, under water, leads out to sea. It is this passage that the sea drake has been using. A stupid beast, it realizes the dirty old human brings it fresh food to eat, the kind that wiggles

DAG TUNNER	CR 6 (XP 2,400)
This man wears a thick patchwork	c jerkin made from seal and
shark skin. His lank white hair is	in disarray.
Male old human druid 8	
N Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +5; Senses Perception +13, Sense	se Motive +5
Speed 30 ft., trackless step, woodla	
Swim +5	
AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; CM	<b>D</b> 16
(+5 armour [+1 hide], +1 Dex, +2	
armour +1])	
Resist cold 10	
Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +11; +4 vs. spe	ells and supernatural abilities
of fey and spells that utilize or a	iffect plants
<b>hp</b> 47 (8 HD); Diehard	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +6; CMB +5	
<b>Melee</b> +1 sickle +6/+1 (1d6)	
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) +7/+2 (1	d4-1) or
Ranged Touch icicle (30 ft.; 8/day) +	
Special Actions wild shape	
Wild Shape (Su [standard; 3/day])	) Dag can assume an animal
form as beast shape III, an el	lemental form as elemental
form II or a plant for as plant sh	ape I up to 8 hours a day.
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 8th; cor	centration +13 [+17 casting
defensively or grappling);	nature's bond [water],
spontaneous casting [summon r	nature's ally spells])
4th—control water <sup>D</sup> , cure serious	wounds, ice storm (DC 18),
scrying (DC 18)	
3rd-cure moderate wounds, dom	ninate animal (DC 17), sleet
storm (DC 17), snare (DC 17)	
2nd—barkskin, fog cloud <sup>D</sup> , gust of	wind (DC 17), spider climb,
summon swarm, water breathin	ng <sup>D</sup>
1st-charm animal (DC 16), cure	
16), longstrider, obscuring mist <sup>E</sup>	<sup>2</sup> , pass without trace
0-create water, detect magic, flo	are (DC 15), mending, read
magic	
Combat Gear bullets (20), elixir of h	iding, horn of fog
Abilities Str 9, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 1	2, Wis 20, Cha 10
SQ nature senses, resist nature's lu	re, wild empathy (+8 [+4 vs.
magical beasts])	
Feats Combat Casting <sup>B</sup> , Dieha	rd, Endurance, Improved
Initiative, Weapon Focus (sickle	)
Skills as above plus Craft (trap) +9,	
Knowledge (geography) +9,	Knowledge (nature) +11,
Spellcraft +8, Survival +15	
Languages Common, Draconic, Drui	idic, Goblin, Sylvan
Gear as above plus 78 gp	

and screams, thus it does not willing attack Dag. Unbeknownst to the villagers, Dag's sacrifices keep the sea drake from preying on Hosford's small fishing boats.

# THE SURROUNDING AREA

Hosford rests almost equidistant between Swallowfeld to the west and Wolverton to the east. North of Hosford lies the mysterious depths of the Tangled Woods. Home to tribes of half-goblins and other vicious monsters, the ruins of an ancient people lie scattered about, luring adventurers in with tales of treasure. To the south, lies nothing but the sea, however, grizzled fishermen love to relate stories of strange creatures dwelling in sea caves along the cliffs and mysterious islands that appear only at night and vanish with the dawn.

## **PIO VARRIN**

This clean-cut human wears a long leather coat with many pockets.

CR 3 (XP 800)

Male human rogue (investigator) 4

- NG Medium humanoid (human)
- Init +2; Senses Perception +11 (+12 vs. traps; follow clues), Sense Motive +11
- Follow Clues (Ex) Pio can use Perception to follow tracks as the Survival skill.
- **Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +8, Escape Artist +8, Stealth +8
- AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; CMD 15; +1 vs. traps, uncanny dodge

(+3 armour [+1 leather], +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

- Fort +2, Ref +6 (+7 vs. traps; evasion), Will +3
- hp 25 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +2

- Melee mwk rapier +3 (1d6-1/18-20)
- Ranged mwk hand crossbow (range 30 ft.) +6 (1d4/19-20)

Atk Options Catch Off Guard, sneak attack (+1d6)

**Combat Gear** bolts (10), thunderstone (3)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ follow up, rogue talent (coax information, follow clues), trap sense (+1)

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Catch-Off Guard, Dodge

- Skills as above plus Appraise +9, Bluff +7 (coax information), Diplomacy +7 (coax information, follow up), Disable Device +8, Disguise +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Linguistics +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Use Magic Device +6
- **Coax Information (Ex)** Pio can use Bluff or Diplomacy in place of Intimidate to force an opponent to act friendly toward him.
- **Follow Up (Ex)** Pio rolls twice for Diplomacy checks made to gather information, and receives the information for both results. This takes the same amount of time as one check. If the lesser of the two checks reveals false information, Pio is aware of it unless those questioned do not know it is false.
- Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Halfling, Orc, Undercommon

**Gear** as above plus disguise kit, magnify lens, masterwork manacle, masterwork thieves' tools, 129 gp

# LIFE IN HOSFORD

The relatively quiet life in Hosford has been shattered by the recent disappearances. Its villagers turn on one another, each to his own advantage. Even if the disappearances stop, it will take some time for the village to heal.

# LAW & ORDER

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

# TRADE & INDUSTRY

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

# THE DISAPPEARANCES IN HOSFORD

When word reached Caer Syllan of Cardin Unger's sudden disappearance, Lord Locher dispatched Pio Varrin to serve as the new reeve and get to the bottom of the mystery. Pio Varrin, however, is a bit over his head between the sullen villagers and a bailiff trying to stay out of the trouble. While new faces in the village immediately draw the suspicion of the locals, Pio Varrin tries to enlist their aid if they seem capable of handling themselves. Alternatively, if the GM plans on having the PCs visit Hosford regularly, the first time the players visit, things are relatively quiet, with the frequency of disappearances rising on each subsequent visit until the village is in an uproar.



## EVENTS

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

#### D6 EVENT

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

VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Human commoner 1	
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Motive +1	
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5	
<b>AC</b> 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; <b>CMD</b> 11	
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 6 (1 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1	
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wi	s 8, Cha 9
Feats Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (farmer or sin	nilar)
Skills as above plus Profession (farmer or	similar) +6
Languages Common	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, pe	asant's outfit
Prepared for battle, a villager has t statistics:	he following altered

# LONGBRIDGE

A hotbed of intrigue and deception, Longbridge is claimed by not one but two noble lords. Sprawled across both banks of a wide, swiftly flowing river forming the boundary between the rivals' lands, the village grew up at either end of a fortified stone bridge of ancient dwarven artifice. A no man's land of sorts, the bridge itself is huge; scores of travellers cross it every day and several businesses have established themselves upon its span to service their needs. Informally led by Einhard Kochel these free traders do not pay tax or offer fealty to either lord and fiercely resist both nobles' overtures.

Longbridge is in turmoil. Rumourmongers whisper that bloody war will soon swirl across the span as one noble or the other seeks to settle the matter of its ownership once and for all. Others whisper of hidden stairs in the bridge's pilings plunging deep below the riverbed to hidden, noisome catacombs of great antiquity and of the foul, ageless creatures lurking within.

# LONGBRIDGE AT A GLANCE

A hotbed of intrigue and deception, Longbridge is claimed by two rival nobles, Wido Gall and Hilduin Lorsch. Sprawled across the banks of a wide, swiftly flowing river forming the boundary between the lords' lands, the village grew up at either end of a fortified stone bridge of ancient dwarven artifice.

Longbridge is a volatile place. Two noblemen means two bailiffs and two sets of taxes, laws and so on. Many travellers grow angry at paying tolls and taxes twice; heated arguments are commonplace. A no man's land of sorts, the bridge itself is huge; scores of travellers cross it every day and several businesses have established themselves upon its span to service their needs. Informally led by Einhard Kochel, these free traders do not pay tax or offer fealty to either lord. Einhard plots to wrest control of the village and set himself up as its new lord.

The village is in turmoil. Rumourmongers whisper that bloody war will soon swirl across the span as either Hilduin Lorsch or Wido Gall settle the matter of ownership once and for all. Other folk whisper of secret stairs hidden in the bridge's pilings plunging deep below the riverbed to hidden, noisome caverns of great antiquity and of the foul, ageless creatures lurking within.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Baron Wido Gall (LN male human aristocrat 2) and Hilduin Lorsch (LE male human aristocrat 1/fighter 2)

Government Contested

Population 193 (173 humans, 12 dwarves, 4 half-elves, 3 halforcs, 1 halfling)

Alignments N

Languages Common

Corruption +1; Crime -2; Economy +3; Law +2; Lore +1; Society +3

Qualities Strategic location, tourist attraction

Danger +5; Disadvantages None

## NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Rideth Sehiatyn** (location 3; N female half-elf wizard 5/rogue 3) Rideth dwells on the bridge and is widely regarded as an expert on the structure.
- **Donatus Trond** (location 6; LE male human rogue [investigator] 3/cleric 2) Serving baron Hilduin Lorsch, Donatus is unpopular throughout Longbridge.
- **Einhard Kochel** (location 2; NG male human fighter [shielded fighter] 4/cleric 2): Rumoured to be fabulously wealthy the owner of the Welcoming Hearth plots to claim Longbridge as his own.
- **Rilla Omer** (location 7; LN female bard [court bard] 4) The bailiff overseeing Wido Gall's interests, Rilla controls the southern portion of the village.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. **The Longbridge**: This massive structure dominates the village's landscape and economy. Of ancient dwarven artifice is a vital component of the region's trade network.
- The Welcoming Hearth: Set upon the bridge, this fortified inn offers comfort, security and welcome. Einhard Kochel (its owner) is a charming, well-mannered host.
- Rideth's House: This three-storey building leans precariously over the river. From her shop on the ground floor, Rideth offers advice, knowledge and spellcasting services.
- Thread & Ball: Here the fugitive tailor Dricolen Thornhill (LN male halfling expert 1) mends travellers' clothes while dreaming of again tailoring fine clothes for persons of note.
- 5. **Maldrec's**: This general shop has suspiciously low prices.
- North Tower: From the north tower, Donatus Trond watches over his lord's domain.
- 7. **South Tower**: Warding the bridge's southern approaches, it is here Rilla Omer has her seat.
- 8. **The Merry Traveller**: This raucous tavern is popular with travellers and common folk. It is open very late.
- The Iron Fist: Owned by a retired mercenary, the Iron First is popular with off-duty men-at-arms. The owner (Fruen Deadeye [LE female half-orc fighter {unbreakable} 4]) is secretly in Hilduin Lorsch's employ.

### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Farming Base Value 650 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils hold portal (50 gp), displacement (750 gp)
- Ring protection +2 (8,000 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) burning hands (25 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) magic stone (25 gp)
- Weapons +1 light crossbow (2,335 gp), +1 shortspear (2,301 gp), +2 composite (+2 strength bonus) shortbow (8,775 gp), +3 throwing axe (16,308 gp)
- Wondrous Items unguent of timelessness (150 gp)

# GOVERNMENT TYPE: CONTESTED

A contested settlement has more than one ruler. These rulers compete among themselves for control of the settlement. (*Corruption +2; Law +1*).

# VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Longbridge. A successful check reveals all information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Longbridge is a divided community; two lords claim the village; soon the matter will be decided – probably by force.

**DC 15**: Named for its most impressive structure, the village is clustered about a bridge of ancient dwarven artifice. Apparently, hidden stairways lead to caverns below the river itself.

**DC 20**: Although two nobles argue over Longbridge, a third person – Einhard Kochel – secretly plots to turn Longbridge into his own demesne.

# VILLAGERS

**Appearance** Dark-haired and dark-eyed, the folk of Longbridge are a stocky people. Many of the men are hirsute; some whisper dwarven blood flows in their veins.

**Dress** Normally clad in serviceable work clothes, the folk of Longbridge are cleaner than most peasants.

**Nomenclature** *male*: Arnulf, Drogo, Emmon, Grifo, Lothair, Unroch; *female*: Ada, Della, Idelle, Rica, Velda; *family*: Barisis, Dol, Gall, Omer, Rebais.

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Longbridge and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

## D6 RUMOUR

1*	Rideth Sehiatyn is Einhard's lover and a powerful enchantress. She often robs travellers after befuddling them with her magic.
2*	Something lurks in the river and occasionally creeps forth to feast on swimmers.
3	Hidden staircases set in the bridge's pilings lead to sunken caverns deep under the river.
4	Bloody war will soon come to Longbridge; one or other of the nobles claiming the place is bound to press his claim through force of arms.
5	The folk dwelling on the bridge plot the independence of the village from both local lords. Einhard Kochel leads them.
6	Many of the men working at the Iron First tavern have the air of warriors about them; all are tight-lipped.

\*False rumour



# 1: THE LONGBRIDGE

This vast dwarven stone bridge stands at the heart of the village. A great stone tower guards either end of the bridge and another rises from its central span. Several shops and businesses stand upon the Longbridge.

The bridge is ancient, but the dwarf-craft stonework has endured and is in excellent condition. The dwarves hid several stairways in the bridge's structure that lead down to a network of mostly forgotten passages and chambers that radiate throughout the surrounding area. Some are partially flooded – the river finally having broken through, but others are dry. The dwarves used them for storage, covert travel and even linked some to yet deeper passages. Ancient dwarven stories hold it was possible to walk to the nearest dwarven hold through those passages without ever seeing the sun. None living can confidently confirm or refute these stories.

# 2: THE WELCOME HEARTH

Comprising Span Gate tower, the Welcome Hearth is said to always have a fire burning in the common room. Local legend has it the current fire has been burning for over twenty years. The inn (fittingly) contains a small shrine to the god of travellers. The tavern's owner – Einhard Kochel (NG male human fighter [shielded fighter] 4/cleric 2) – worships that worthy power and plots of wresting control from the neighbouring, rival lords and transforming the whole bridge into a temple dedicated to his patron.

# 3: RIDETH'S HOUSE

This three-storey building leans precariously over the river. Standing next to the Welcoming Hearth, it appears as if it is about to tumble into the waters below. Rideth Sehiatyn (N female half-elf wizard 5/rogue 3) uses the ground floor as her consulting chambers wherein she dispenses advice and information on many subjects to her clients.

Rideth has a great interest in the bridge itself. She knows the rumours of hidden stairs below the Longbridge to be true and has dared to explore small portions of the network below.

## 4: THREAD & BALL

A sign depicting a needle and thread hangs above this small building's front door. The owner, Dricolen Thornhill (LN male halfling expert 1), is a fine craftsman, but normally ends up repairing traveller's clothes (much to his chagrin). He remembers fondly the days of crafting fine clothing in a nearby city and bemoans his fate – forced to flee here when his brother got into too much debt and the moneylender decided his family should honour his debt.

# **DONATUS TROND** CR 4 (XP 1,200) This thin, handsome man wears fine robes. Male human rogue (investigator) 3/cleric 2 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +4; Senses Perception +9, Sense Motive +9 (silver-tongued haggler) Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Acrobatics +7, Climb +4, Stealth +7, Swim +4 AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; CMD 17; +1 vs. traps (+4 armour [mithral shirt], +3 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge]) Fort +4, Ref +6 (+7 vs. traps; evasion), Will +5 hp 29 (5 HD) Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +3 Melee mwk dagger +7 (1d4/19-20) Ranged mwk dagger (range 10 ft.) +7 (1d4/19-20) Atk Options sneak attack (+2d6) Special Actions channel negative energy (5/day; 1d6; DC 13), copycat Copycat (Sp [move; 4/day]) Donatus can create an illusory double of himself that functions as a single *mirror image* (duration 2 rounds or until the duplicate is dispelled or destroyed). He can have no more than one image at a time. This ability does not stack with mirror image.

- Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +3; travel [trade], trickery; spontaneous casting [*inflict* spells])
- 1st—comprehend languages, cure light wounds, floating disc<sup>D</sup>, shield of faith
- 0-detect magic, guidance, light, read magic
- **Combat Gear** mwk dagger (4), potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of hide from undead, oil of magic weapon
- Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14
- SQ evil aura (moderate), rogue talent (coax information), trap sense (+1)
- Feats Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Finesse
- Skills as above plus Appraise +10, Bluff +10 (silver-tongued haggler), Diplomacy +13 (coax information, follow up, silvertongued haggler), Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +7
- **Coax Information (Ex)** Donatus can use Bluff or Diplomacy to force an opponent to act friendly toward him.
- **Follow Up (Ex)** Donatus can roll twice on any Diplomacy check made to gather information and gain the information for both results. If the lesser check reveals false information, Donatus is aware of it (if the person revealing the information knows it to be false).
- Silver-Tongued Haggler (Su [free; 4/day]) When using Bluff, Diplomacy or Sense Motive Donatus can give himself a +1 bonus on the roll.

Languages Common, Dwarven

Gear as above plus noble's outfit, holy symbol, spell component pouch, belt pouch, scales, ledger book, quill, ink, 19 gp, 26 sp
## 5: MALDREC'S

Tarl Maldrec (N male half-elf rogue 3) owns this large building. At first glance the shop seems gloriously unorganised, but Tarl knows exactly where everything is stored. He has an impressive collection of traveller's gear for sale: tents, bedrolls, iron rations – everything a traveller needs to journey in comfort.

On moonless nights he "imports" goods through a large trapdoor in the floor, thus avoiding paying tax on his wares. His prices are suspiciously low.

This beautiful woman wears fine clothes and has a haughty expression on her face.

CR 3 (XP 800)

Female human bard (court bard) 4

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +8, Sense Motive +13

Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Stealth +8

- AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; CMD 13 (+4 armour [mithral shirt], +1 Dex)
- Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, sonic and language-dependant effects

hp 29 (4 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +3; CMB +2

Melee mwk rapier +3 (1d6-1/18-20)

- Special Actions bardic performance (19 rds.; countersong, distraction, fascinate, mockery [-2], satire) [-1])
- **Mockery (Su)** Rilla use subtle ridicule and mockery to defame an individual. Her target suffers a -2 penalty on Charisma checks and Charisma-related skills.
- Satire (Su) Rilla's performance undermines her enemies' confidence, causing them to take a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls and saves vs. fear.

Bard Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +7)

#### 2nd (2/day)—eagle's splendour, suggestion (DC 15)

- 1st (4/day)—charm person (DC 14), comprehend languages, cure light wounds, unseen servant
- 0-detect magic, ghost sound, light, message, read magic, resistance

## **Combat Gear** potion of invisibility, wand of sound burst (7 chgs.)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16

SQ bardic performance (+2), versatile performance (oratory), well-versed

Feats Extra Performance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perform)<sup>B</sup>

- Skills as above plus Appraise +9, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +9, Perform (oratory) +13
- Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Orc

## 6: The North Tower

Controlled by Domatus Trond (LE male human rogue [investigator] 3/cleric 2) the north tower wards the approach to Hilduin Lorsch's lands. It is heavily fortified – he has installed several ballista atop its battlements – and strongly garrisoned. It is a grim place and although Domatus is outwardly charming his heart is as cold as the gold he covets so much.

## 7: THE SOUTH TOWER

The twin of the North Tower, the South Tower is under the control of Wido Gall's bailiff, Rilla Omer (LN female bard [court bard] 4). Rill is very aware of how vital the bridge is for trade (and her lord's finances) and wrings every last coin she can legally extract from travellers. She is scrupulously honest, if a little lacking in imagination, and does not see Domatus' true nature.

## 8: THE MERRY TRAVELLER

This raucous tavern is popular with travellers and common folk. It is open very late and often travellers staying here end up lingering here longer than planned as they recover from last night's epic drunk. The landlord (Kuno Segnii [CN male human expert 2/warrior 1]) is a heavy drinker who loves his job. He loves sharing a drink (or four) with his customers and never closes until the last have left (or collapsed into dribbling unconsciousness). His wife – the long suffering Gunda (N female human expert 2) – despairs of her husband's drinking; arguments between the two are common.

#### 9: THE IRON FIST

Owned by Fruen Deadeye (LE female half-orc fighter [unbreakable] 4), an ostensibly retired mercenary captain, the Iron Fist is popular with off-duty men-at-arms, travelling warriors and others who enjoy a rough and ready atmosphere. Brawls here are relatively common, but rarely result in anything more than a broken nose and spilt drinks. Fruen is strict, however, and charges anyone involved a "breakages tax" after such incidents.

Fruen is secretly in league with Hilduin Lorsch. The nobleman has paid her handsomely to spy on the southern part of the village and she has hired some of her old company to act as tavern guards and enforcers. Hilduin has promised her more gold if she uses her warriors to cause chaos and confusion when his men storm across the bridge to claim the whole village for their lord.

**Gear** as above plus noble's outfit, spell component pouch, belt pouch, signet ring, 13 gp, 12 sp

## LIFE IN LONGBRIDGE

Excepting the tension between lords Gall and Lorsch (and their followers) life in Longbridge is relatively peaceful.

## TRADE & INDUSTRY

Farmland surrounds the village. Many villagers make their living servicing the needs of travellers passing through Longbridge. Some villagers fish the river, using coracles or other small craft to ply its waters. A few of these individuals – for the right price – transport goods and travellers across the river at night; thus avoiding the tolls and taxes levied on such movement.

## LAW & ORDER

Each nobleman has appointed a bailiff to control his portion of the village, overseeing law and order, levying taxes and so on. Travellers are less than delighted to pay such tariffs more than once and arguments often flare.

## EVENTS

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

## D6 EVENT

1	An outraged traveller refuses to pay a toll at both towers.	
	An argument quickly develops.	
	Einhard Kochel stands at the Welcoming Hearth's	
2	threshold loudly (and charmingly) inviting travellers to	
	rest within.	
3	A dwarf wanders the bridge, closely examining its	
5	stonework, as if searching for something.	
	A fisherman sits in his craft in the shadow of the bridge.	
4	He suddenly shouts that "something big" is in the water	
	below his boat.	
	As one of the bailiffs inspects the bridge, a bucket of	
5	excrement is "accidentally" dropped from the rival's	
	tower and narrowly misses its target.	
	A brawl erupts at the Iron Fist as rival, off-duty men-at-	
6	arms come to blows.	

## TRAVELLERS

While the PCs are in Longbridge, many folk use the bridge. Choose or determine randomly who the PCs encounter:

#### D4 TRAVELLER

- Boram Bigbelly (CN male halfling expert 2), a peddler by trade, tries to sneak through one of the gates while the guards are occupied with other travellers. They spot him, and give chase across the bridge.
- 2 Kanbrar Natityrr (NG male half-elf cleric 2) is a devout follower of the god of travelling. He has come here to

	visit Einhard Kochel and loudly protests the need to pay a	
	toll to do so. He is otherwise pleasant and happy to share	
	stories with fellow travellers.	
	Baggi the Rash (N female half-orc barbarian 2) is a	
	wandering adventurer. She is drunk, impetuous and in a	
3	silly mood. She is trying to talk the guards into letting her	
	cross the bridge for free. When she sees the PCs, she	
	mistakes one for an old friend and greets them warmly.	
	Adalbern Njars (LG male human expert 1) – a carter – is	
	trying to cross the bridge with a load of hay. His horse is	
4	in a foul mood and the cart has become wedged in one	
	of the gates. Guards and other travellers are shouting at	

## **EINHARD KOCHEL**

#### CR 5 (XP 1,600)

This handsome man wears a fine tunic emblazoned with the symbol of the god of travellers upon its breast.

Male human fighter (shielded fighter) 4/cleric 2

him to get out of the way.

NG Medium humanoid (human)

- Init -1; Senses Perception +6, Sense Motive +6
- Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft., agile feet; ACP -4; Acrobatics -5 (-9 jumping), Climb +4, Ride +2, Swim +4
- Agile Feet (Su [free; 5/day]) For 1 round, Einhard ignores all difficult terrain and does not take penalties for moving through it.

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; CMD 17; active defence +1

- (+7 armour [+1 breastplate], -1 Dex, +3 shield [mwk heavy steel; Shield Focus])
- Active Defence (Ex) When using a shield and fighting defensively or using Combat Expertise or total defence Einhard gains a +1 dodge bonus. As a swift action, he shares this bonus with one adjacent ally.

Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +6 (+7 vs. fear)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +5; CMB +8

Melee +1 bastard sword +10 (1d10+6/19-20)

- **Ranged Touch** weather burst (range 30 ft.; 5/day) +4 (1d6+1 nonlethal cold plus -2 on attacks [1 round])
- Special Actions channel positive energy (4/day; 1d6; DC 12)
- Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +4; travel, weather; spontaneous casting [cure spells])
- 1st—bless, longstrider<sup>D</sup>, obscuring mist, shield of faith
- 0-detect magic, light, purify food and water, stabilise

Combat Gear potion of levitate, scroll of cure moderate wounds,

- Abilities Str 16, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13
- **SQ** bravery (+1), good aura (moderate)
- **Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)<sup>B</sup>, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialisation (bastard sword)<sup>B</sup>

Skills as above plus Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Profession (innkeeper) +8

## Languages Common

Gear as above plus spell component pouch, silver holy symbol, belt pouch, 14 sp, 17 gp

hp 57 (6 HD)

## OAKHURST

The village of Oakhurst squats deep in the gnarled boughs of the Tangled Woods. The Lonely Coast's smallest and most isolated village, only the most daring or the most desperate call it home, surrounded as it is on all sides by monstrous denizens and half-goblin tribes. Its dilapidated buildings sink into the squalor of the streets, presenting a loathsome and unwelcoming appearance. Oakhurst's villagers are no better. Mostly trappers and hunters, the grim folk of Oakhurst distrust outsiders and keep to strange ways and customs. Visitors are strongly discouraged from overstaying their welcome.

Yet, Oakhurst's darkest secret lies in a cave situated in a nearby cliff. On full moons, the villagers lock their doors and shutter their windows, pretending they do not hear the incessant flapping of wings in the sky overhead. Oakhurst's oldest family, the Wearnes, long ago made a pact with a fell god, gaining the power of lycanthropy. Years of inbreeding to keep the line pure have driven the family of werebats to the brink of madness. High in the cave, the Wearnes participate in vile rites to their dark god, offering worship to one of its hideous servants. As the family slips further into insanity and their devotions more heinous, Oakhurst has become more dangerous for the unwary than it ever has before.

## OAKHURST AT A GLANCE

Deep within the dark depths of the Tangled Wood squats the malodorous village of Oakhurst. The decayed eaves of its houses sag under the weight of mildewed thatch while its roads are little more than trails of muck and grime traversing the forest floor under the oak trees that give the village its name.

The Lonely Coast's most isolated and distant village, Oakhurst attracts people of the basest sort. Trappers and hunters mingle with thieves, outcasts and murderers, all conducting their business in grim silence. Visitors to Oakhurst receive cold looks if not outright hostility. Its insular folk keep to their own.

A tributary of the Kilian River flows through Oakhurst, dividing the village into eastern and western sections. Trade and industry, often illicit, takes place in the rundown and sagging shops in the eastern section. Yet the true horror of Oakhurst lies across the river to the west, where a network of mazelike game trails scurrying through the trees leads to the homes of the Wearne clan, a family of werebats. The true rulers of Oakhurst, years of inbreeding to keep their condition pure has finally brought them to the brink of madness. In a high cave in a nearby cliff, they conduct their hideous rites, offering their prayers to a dark god believed to have granted their ancestors their gift long ago. When a red glow emanates from the cave at night, most villagers lock their doors and shutter their windows, ignoring the ominous chanting voices carried upon the wind.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Talek Wearne (NE male human werebat oracle 6) Government Secret syndicate Population 121 (112 humans, 4 half-orcs 3 half-elves, 1 gnome, 1 half-goblin) Alignments N, CN, CE, NE Languages Common, Elven, Orc Corruption -1; Crime +1; Economy +1; Law -7; Lore -1; Society -1 Qualities Insular, notorious Danger 10; Disadvantages None

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Colan Boden** (location 3; N male human warrior 5) The appointed reeve of Oakhurst. Balancing two masters, the Wearnes of Oakhurst and the Lochers of Caer Syllan, has greatly aged the retired soldier.
- Kensa Boden (location 3; N female human commoner 2) Often drunk, the reeve's wife runs the village's general store.
- **Daveth Cass** (location 4; CN male human expert 3) A sullen man, Daveth operates the village's ferry. For a small price, he is willing to sail up or down river.

- Bartrel Ebon Axe (location 1; NE male half-goblin fighter 4) An outcast, and outwardly appearing human, Bartel runs his gang of thieves out of his inn, the Bloody Ear.
- Rasala Neblor (location 5; CN female gnome rogue 3) This shy gnome operates a shop making and repairing bear traps.
- **Caja Wearne** (location 2; CE female human werebat rogue 3) Insane, Caja operates the village jail (which is mostly now just a torture chamber).
- Talek Wearne (location 7; NE male human werebat oracle 6) The patriarch of the Wearne family, Talek speaks for the dark god that lives in Oakhurst.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- The Bloody Ear: One of the more sturdy buildings in Oakhurst, a collection of dismembered ears decorates the wall behind the bar.
- Oakhurst Jail: The smell of death and decay waft from this large wood and stone building.
- 3. **General Store**: A faded sign hangs in front of this worn, dilapidated building.
- Daveth Cass's House: From this long shack, Daveth operates his ferry business.
- Rasala's Bear Trap Emporium: An unusually well-kept building, Rasala crafts and sells well made bear traps from her home.
- The Witching Rock: A large boulder thrusts out of the river, splitting it in two.
- Wearne Farmstead: The ancestral home of the Wearne family is nothing more than a shabby collection of huts and shacks stuck together.
- Ruined Manor: The burnt remains of a stone manor rest in deep, cloying shadows under the trees.
- 9. **The Cliff**: A rocky cliff, 40 ft. high, rises suddenly out of the forest. A cave entrance near its top faces east.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, hunting, trapping Base Value 650 gp; Purchase Limit 3,750 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils oil of magic weapon (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) obscure object (150 gp), disguise self (25 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) zone of truth (150 gp), lesser restoration (150 gp), bane (25 gp)

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Oakhurst. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Oakhurst is the Lonely Coast's most distant and isolated village, located deep in the Tangled Wood.

**DC 15**: Consisting primarily of trappers and hunters, the villagers are a grim and dour lot, distrustful of strangers. Outcasts from other parts of the Lonely Coast often make their way there as the villagers ask few, if any, questions.

**DC 20**: Rumours of inbreeding and strange religious practises have plagued Oakhurst for generations.

## $V {\tt I} {\tt L} {\tt L} {\tt A} {\tt G} {\tt E} {\tt R} {\tt S}$

**Appearance** Men sport thick, shaggy beards and the women grow their greasy hair past their waist, believing it taboo to cut it. Dirt cakes their nails.

**Dress** The villagers wear a rag tag collection of animal pelts. Bones interspersed with pieces of glass serves as jewellery.

**Nomenclature** *male* Anen, Cofan, Ferlin, Myrghal, Talek; *female* Corwenna, Henna, Jeni, Tyrwenna; *family* Cass, Dorwain, Nettle, Wearne

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Oakhurst and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1	Strange lights and faces are sometimes seen in the windows of the old ruined manor house.
2	Bartrel once adventured with Jacca Landers, the reeve of Bossin. He helped Jacca turn against his companions for a bit of profit.
3	On full moons, fires can be seen burning in the cave high up in the nearby cliff. Those who are wise stay inside and don't interfere with those who practice the old ways.
4	Less children are being born alive to the strange, old Wearne clan. It's driven some of them mad, like Caja Wearne, old Talek's favourite cousin.
5*	The Wearnes know black magic and are really vampires!
6*	The Witching Rock blocks a tunnel leading to Hell.
*Ealco	rumour

\*False rumour



## 1: THE BLOODY EAR

From this sturdy inn of mud bricks and stone, Bartrel Ebon-Axe (NE male half-goblin fighter 4) bullies more than leads a small gang of thieves. A former adventuring companion of Bossin's reeve, Jacca Landers, Bartrel built the Bloody Ear with his adventuring loot. He offers free drinks to anyone bringing in a severed ear (which he displays on a wall behind the bar). He looks more human than goblin, and the wise do not bring up his heritage. Outsiders seek Bartrel out to fence stolen or illegal goods and often mistake him for Oakhurst's true power. Bartrel knows the Wearne's secret and serves them faithfully. His wish is to prove himself worthy to be inducted into the family.

## 2: OAKHURST'S JAIL

Ivy and moss cling to nearly every surface of this stone building, built in Oakhurst's better days. Three small cells protrude from the back of the jail, set deep into the riverbank. Cramped enough that a prisoner can only stand, when the river is swollen a grate floods the cell, drowning the occupant. In olden days, it was used to force confessions from criminals, now it is just one of many torture tools of the decayed Caja Wearne (CE female human werebat rogue 3). Talek Wearne's favourite cousin, years of miscarriages have driven her insane. She takes out her frustrations on unlucky individuals caught in the Tangled Wood or villagers who become too nosy about Wearne business.

## 3: GENERAL STORE

The store's roof sags so much that with its darkened windows, the store front appears to be scowling. A worn sign sticks out like a wart, above the front door. The wife of the village reeve, Kensa Boden (N female human commoner 2), runs the place, drinking while lamenting the "promotion" that brought her and her husband to Oakhurst. When sober, Kensa goes about her business sullenly, the disarrayed shelves and dust covered items testament to her work ethic. When drunk, she is prone to gossip about Oakhurst's citizens who she considers nothing but heathens and barbarians. Her husband, the village reeve, Colan Boden (N male human warrior 5), knows the truth about the Wearnes but is wise enough to keep his mouth shut, even to his wife. The stress of placating the Wearnes and Lord Lorcher of Caer Syllan has given him a permanently dour look and premature white hair.

## 4: DAVETH CASS'S HOUSE

A long rambling building of wood and animal hides rests near the river. A small pier juts out into the water where Daveth Cass (CN male human expert 3) docks a small, well worn river barge. Daveth Cass serves as the village's ferryman, carrying folk from the village proper to the western side of the river. For a fee, Daveth is willing to sail up or down the river. He knows the Kilian well, especially where the half-goblins like to set up ambushes. Villagers that have to travel the river know to pay him well so he does not lead them into such an area. Rumours persist he has a half-goblin family upriver somewhere.

## 5: RASALA'S BEAR TRAP EMPORIUM

Tucked away behind a copse of trees near the main road into town sits a small, well built, wooden building with an attached workshop belonging to Rasala Neblor (CG female gnome rogue 3). A crafter and sometime smith, Rasala did not fit in with the few gnomes that dwell deep in the Tangled Wood. Here in Oakhurst, she can work in peace and has made a name for herself selling excellent, homemade bear traps (10 gp, Disable Device DC 22). While her relations with the villagers are good, she is no fool and keeps a crossbow under the counter loaded with a silver bolt and has two silver daggers hidden on her person. If befriended, Rasala is willing to forge simple silver items – bolts, arrow heads and daggers. She keeps three bottles of *silversheen* in her workshop.

## 6: THE WITCHING ROCK

A huge granite boulder thrusts up from the tributary of the Kilian, splitting the river into two around it. Rising ten feet above the water, it is strangely flat, looking as if some giant blade had cut clean through it. Named the Witching Rock, the villagers believe the ancient Tuath once conducted ceremonies atop the boulder. Scholars have come here to transcribe and study the ancient symbols carved into a circle on the boulder's top surface. Talek Wearne used to be seen for hours pacing back and forth, examining the symbols while consulting a massive tome. He has not done so recently, however.

## 7: WEARNE FARMSTEAD

Though many intermingled lines of the Wearne family live throughout Oakhurst, this two-storey wood and brick house with accompanying barn and shacks is considered the Wearne ancestral home. Animal skulls (and some humanoid) mark the path up to a rickety porch attached to a worm-eaten house that looks like it would fall over in a strong wind. Here, the current Wearne patriarch, Talek Wearne (NE male human werebat oracle 6), lives with his wife (actually sister), sons and daughters. Most Oakhurst residents, even many of the Wearnes, give the farmstead a wide berth, believing Talek to be a wizard. A basement leads to a small, heavily trapped cavern network where Talek keeps the family collection of crumbling, ancient tomes of magic and religion.

## 8: RUINED MANOR

When the Lochers settled the Lonely Coast and established the village of Oakhurst, the first reeve constructed an elegant twostorey, stone manor house. Not long after, a mysterious fire swept quickly through the home, killing the reeve and his family. Local legend claims the reeve tried to outlaw the strange religious practices of the Wearne family, and the Wearnes used evil magic to eliminate him.

Whatever the case, those who come across the manor house claim to see glowing lights moving passed blackened windows and the ghostly cries of screams coming from inside. Those who explore the manor house do not come back and so the villagers have let the woods reclaim the ruin.

## THE WEREBATS OF OAKHURST

The Wearne family settled in the area that would become Oakhurst generations before the Lochers arrived and laid claim to the Lonely Coast. A family of trappers, the Wearne patriarch, Fallon Wearne, discovered an ancient religious site in a high cave situated in a cliff that was once used by the ancient Tuath. Though abandoned, an evil presence still lingered deep in the cave, corrupting Fallon and blessing him with lycanthropy. Wishing to keep their bloodline pure, the Wearnes intermarried, soon became wholly devoted to this dark power.

The Wearne werebats differ from the common werebat in that the claws at the tip of their bat wings are too feeble to use in battle. The dark power granting their lycanthropy craves blood, and thus they share characteristics with the vampire bat. This grants them the ability to suck their victims dry of blood and some locals mistake them for vampires. The Wearnes guard their secret closely, mostly preying on the numerous halfgoblins in the Tangled Wood and the occasional lone hunter, trapper or traveller. However, the dark power that gifted them lycanthropy recently sent the Wearnes one of its hideous servants. Thus to appease this herald of their god, the Wearnes have become increasingly aggressive in their hunting, especially as years of inbreeding have induced a madness amongst most of the family.

The Wearne werebats utilize the same rules for creating lycanthropes presented in the *Bestiary*. However, in their hybrid and animal forms, they lose the use of their hands as weapons, but gain a bite attack with the grab ability from the universal monster rules. In addition, they have the following ability while in their hybrid and animal forms:

**Blood Drain (Ex)** When the werebat maintains a grapple on an opponent and makes a successful bite attack, it deals 1 Constitution damage to the grappled creature instead of normal bite damage.

## 9: THE CLIFF

A 40 ft. high sheer granite cliff rises suddenly out of the woods. A wide cave entrance lies just below its eastern summit, but its near vertical sides make reaching it nearly impossible (DC 30 Climb).

The cave entrance widens to a deep natural cavern filled with thick stalagmites and stalactites. A manmade stair winds down from a ledge to the cavern's floor. Here, the stone has been worked to create a smooth floor inlaid with strange runes similar to those on the Witching Rock. An altar carved with giant bats rests on a pedestal at the far end of the floor. A circular pit 20 ft. in radius leads downward 50 ft. through unnatural, inky blackness that consumes even magical light. When the moon is full, the Wearne clan fly in to nestle amongst the numerous stalactites while Talek performs rituals to the strange dark god they worship. A servant of the god, a monstrous beast, dwells within the pit and rises forth to accept homage and sacrifices.

## THE SURROUNDING AREA

As the Lonely Coast's only point of civilization within the Tangled Wood, Oakhurst is a natural stopping point for those looking to explore ancient ruins or adventure further north in the Twisted Gorge. While not friendly, most of Oakhurst's citizens are not aggressively hostile. However, wise travellers conduct their business quickly and move on. Surrounded on all sides by the dangers of the Tangled Wood that shelter many tribes of half-goblins, a bit of coin can loosen the lips of the villagers as to where dangers might lie just outside the village environs.

BARTREL EBON AXE	CR 3 (XP 800)
This squat, brutish man has slightly rounde a goblin.	ed ears reminiscent of
Male half-goblin fighter 4	
NE Medium humanoid (goblinoid, human)	
Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception	n -1, Sense Motive +1
Speed 25 ft.; ACP -4; Climb +5, Ride +3, Ste	ealth -3
AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; CMD 18	
(+7 armour [mwk banded mail])	
Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1 (+2 vs. fear)	
<b>hp</b> 38 (4 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +8	
Melee mwk greataxe (Power Attack [-2/+6	]) +10 (1d12+8/x3)
Ranged mwk light crossbow (range 80 ft.)	+5 (1d6/19-20)
Atk Options Cleave	
Combat Gear bolts (20), potion of cure mo	derate wounds
Abilities Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis	8, Cha 12
SQ armour training (1), bravery (+1)	
Feats Cleave <sup>B</sup> , Fleet <sup>B</sup> , Intimidating Prov	vess, Power Attack <sup>B</sup> ,
Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Spe	ecialization <sup>B</sup>
Skills as above plus Intimidate +13, Surviva	ıl +4,
Languages Common, Goblin, Orc	
Gear as above plus cloak of resistance +1, 4	43 gp

## LIFE IN OAKHURST

Life in Oakhurst is hard and joyless.

## TRADE & INDUSTRY

The majority of Oakhurst's industry lies in trapping and hunting. The villagers who brave the Tangled Woods for their livelihood quickly learn how to avoid the half-goblins and shadow wolves lurking amongst the trees. Animal pelts and meat are sent down river to Swallowfeld or by wagon to Wolverton. Bartrel does a brisk business fencing and selling illicit goods from his inn.

## LAW & ORDER

Though the reeve, Colan Boden, represents the Lochers, he has very little real power. The Wearne clan acts as the de facto leaders of Oakhurst. However, the Wearnes are more concerned with their strange religion than actually ruling and so most villagers try to avoid them. When a crime is committed, it falls to the aggrieved party to seek their own restitution. Occasionally, soldiers from Caer Syllan appear and round up some ne'er dowells as a pretence of keeping the peace in Oakhurst.

## CAJA WEARNE (HUMAN FORM) CR 4 (XP 1,200)

This slender, dirty woman has sharp features and oversized ears.

Female natural werebat human rogue 3

- NE Medium humanoid (augmented humanoid, human, shape changer)
- Init +6; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +7 (+8 vs. traps), Sense Motive +7
- Speed 30 ft. ACP 0; Acrobatics +8 (+12 jumping), Escape Artist +8, Stealth +8
- AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; CMD 16 (17 vs. traps)
- (+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge])
- Fort +2, Ref +5 (+6 vs. traps; evasion), Will +2

**hp** 20 (3 HD)

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +3

Melee mwk rapier +4 (1d6+1/18-20)

Ranged hand crossbow (range 30 ft.) +4 (1d4/19-20)

- Atk Options bleeding attack, sneak attack (+2d6)
- **Special Actions** change shape ([move action] human, hybrid, and bat; *polymorph*)
- **Combat Gear** bolts (10), *elixir of hiding, potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of burning hands* (13 chgs.)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 6

SQ lycanthropic empathy (bats), rogue talent (bleeding attack), trapfinding (+1), trap sense (+1)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills as above plus Bluff +4, Diplomacy -2 (+2 vs. bats), Disable Device +9, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Use Magic Device +4

Languages Abyssal, Common, Goblin

Gear as above plus mwk thieves' tools, 8 gp

## EVENTS

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

#### D4 EVENT

1	Dark robed figures have a fire lit on the Witching Rock. A
1	strange chanting can be heard.
	Daveth Cass fishes a dead body out the river. A DC 10
2	Heal check reveals the desiccated corpse had its blood
	sucked out.
3	The villagers have strung up a half-goblin in front of the
5	Bloody Ear. They are about to start target practice.
4	Kensa Boden stumbles out of her shop, a bottle of liquor
4	in her hand, screaming about giant bats.

#### CAJA WEARNE (HYBRID FORM) CR 4 (XP 1,200)

This creature has vaguely human features; her thin, almost frail arms distorted into wings, connected to her sides with tissue.

Female natural werebat human rogue 3

- NE Medium humanoid (augmented humanoid, human, shape changer)
- Init +6; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +7 (+8 vs. traps), Sense Motive +7
- Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average) ACP 0; Acrobatics +8, Escape Artist +8, Stealth +8
- AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; CMD 17 (18 vs. traps)
- (+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge], +2 natural)
- Fort +3, Ref +5 (+6 vs. traps; evasion), Will +2
- hp 23 (3 HD); DR silver/10

Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +3 (+7 grapple)

- Melee bite +4 (1d4+1 plus curse of lycanthropy [DC 15] and grab)
- Atk Options blood drain, bleeding attack, grab, sneak attack (+2d6)
- **Blood Drain (Ex)** If Caja makes a successful bite attack while maintaining a grapple, she drains 1 Con damage from her victim instead of dealing bite damage
- Special Actions change shape ([move action] human, hybrid, and bat; polymorph)
- **Combat Gear** *elixir of hiding, potion of cure moderate wounds, wand of burning hands* (13 chgs.)

Abilities Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 6

**SQ** lycanthropic empathy (bats), rogue talent (bleeding attack), trapfinding (+1), trap sense (+1)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills as above plus Bluff +4, Diplomacy -2 (+2 vs. bats), Disable Device +9, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Use Magic Device +4

Languages Abyssal, Common, Goblin

**Gear** as above plus mwk thieves' tools, hand crossbow, bolts (10), 8 gp

## ROAKE

Set along the mouth of the river Saran, Roake is a pleasant, prosperous village, famed for the animal husbandry talents of Liaka Frost, a local ranger. Wealthy visitors frequent the village, coming to either purchase her tamed beasts or visit their estates dotted throughout the surrounding area. Adventurers also regularly pass through the village, stopping at the Prince & Pauper to rest their weary legs and quench their thirst.

Behind its above average prosperity, however, Roake conceals a troubled past that yet hangs over the village. As the villagers' decade-old deception begins to wear thin, the village youth have begun to question their true origins, much to the dismay of their parents...

## ROAKE AT A GLANCE

As the river Saran widens into a lake, one comes upon the village of Roake, where the houses are large and well maintained, the people are smartly dressed in colourful clothes, and the bustle of activity fills the place.

A century ago, Raedwald Oak built a large home at the mouth of the river as a place to retire. Over the years, the family's holdings expanded and the community's original name, "Raedwald Oak's Rest" was shortened to Roake. As the road through Roake became more travelled, businesses opened, including an inn in the Oak's first home. A smithy and a small church followed; Roake became a popular traveller's way station.

Years later, however, a nomadic tribe of raiding orcs put an end to Roake's peace. They sacked the village, burnt down most of the buildings and captured or killed many of its inhabitants. Those captured were dragged away to nearby caves to be used as slaves and playthings; their captivity only ended when a group of heroes freed the villagers. One of those heroes, Laika Frost, knew the village needed help to re-establish itself. She built a home here and used her wealth to rebuild Roake.

As Laika feared, nine months later many of Roake's women birthed half-orcs babies. A meeting was held, where it was agreed that nobody would reveal the village's history to the children; the past would be buried, letting everyone live their lives in peace. Fourteen years later, the silence has become habitual, and memories of the past too painful to unearth. Yet the question on the lips of the children is one of the most basic of all – where do I come from?

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Chanders Westlake (NG male human expert 3)

Government Autocracy

Population 186 (152 humans, 27 half-orcs, 6 halflings, 1 half-elf) Alignments NG

Languages Common, Orc

Corruption -1 Crime -4; Economy +2; Law +1; Lore -1; Society +0 Qualities Insular, Prosperous

Danger -15; Disadvantages none

## NOTABLE FOLK

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

- Amber Thorne (location 1; CG female half-elf sorcerer 1/wizard5) A former adventurer and friend of Laika.
- **Branan** (location 3 or 10; NE male half-orc warrior 2) A young half-orc who resents the villagers' silence about his past.
- Chanders Westlake (location 2; NG male human expert 3) Roake's burgomaster Chanders is pleasant to a fault.

- Laika Frost (location 4; CG female human ranger 6) Trainer of beasts and the source of much of Roake's prosperity.
- Nala (location 6; NG female half-orc commoner 1) A welladjusted, happy young half-orc.
- Surnak Appleby (location 9; NG male halfling cleric 5) Surnak loves Roake's sedate pace of life and has lived here for 10 years.
- **Theris Tenhammer** (Location 3; NG male human expert 4) The village innkeep, barkeep and gossipmonger.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. **Amber Thorne's Home**: Here dwells the wizard and one-time adventurer Amber Thorne.
- 2. Burgomaster's Home: The home of Roake' burgomaster.
- 3. The Prince & Pauper: This expensive, but well run, inn reduces its prices for locals and regulars.
- General Store: Sells everything needed in a rural community; stocks only a few simple weapon and suits of light armour.
- 5. Laika's Home: Here, Laika rears and trains the animals which have made Roake famous.
- 6. Graveyard: This seldom visited graveyard holds Roake's dead.

#### OTHER LOCALES

- Mill: The mill at Roake grinds flour for several nearby communities. The miller, Addorn Elm [LN male human expert 1), is wealthy as a result.
- 8. **Nala's Home**: The half-orc Nala (page 83) dwells here with her aged grandparents.
- Smithy: The blacksmith (Dorn Smith [LN male human expert 2]) can repair most items, but does not have the time or inclination to craft armour or weapons.
- 10. Hall of Hearth & Home: The priest Surnak Appleby officiates at this small, simple temple.

### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry animal training, fishing, farming. Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

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

- Potions & Oils cure light wounds (2) (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) comprehend languages (25 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) animal aspect (125 gp), animal trance (125 gp), call animal (25 gp), negate aroma (25 gp)

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about the village. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Roake is a small village, with a reputation for breeding monsters; a skilled trainer of wild beasts lives and works in the village.

**DC 15**: Roake is regularly visited by the wealthy from nearby cities, who fish on the lake and hunt in the surrounding woods. Their wealth has make Roake prosperous.

**DC 20:** While it's a prosperous community today, fourteen years ago, Roake was burnt to the ground by raiding orcs. The survivors rebuilt the village with the orcs' booty (donated by the kind-hearted adventurers who rescued the villagers).

## $V {\tt I} {\tt L} {\tt L} {\tt A} {\tt G} {\tt E} {\tt R} {\tt S}$

Appearance The villagers have fair skin and blonde or red hair.

- **Dress** The villagers dress colourfully; fashions are brought to Roake by wealthy visitors.
- Nomenclature male: Abborn, Deyrn, Mollun, Kurn; *female*: Deyra, Farya, Oyla, Sara; *family*: Elm, Oak, Smith, Tanner, Pine.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Roake and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1	Amber Thorn is a wizard. She sells scrolls and buys magical items.	
2	Chanders hide a considerable sum of gold in his home; he puts a lot of faith in an old lock made by his father!	
3	Laika Frost keeps all manner of beasts at her home; she's even kept tigers there!	
4	Branan has been seen with a bone knife. Nobody knows where he would have found such a thing.	
5*	Livestock has begun to vanish from the farms around Roake, taken at night. Laika's been keeping it quiet to keep people from panicking.	
6*	A few years back, Laika brought several owlbear eggs. Nobody found out, but one of the hatchlings escaped into the woods, and has been lurking nearby ever since.	

\*False rumour



## 1: Amber Thorne's House

Here dwells the willowy, silver-haired half-elf Amber Thorne. The most accomplished wizard in Roake, she is viewed by the villagers as the local authority on all matters magical. Travellers are directed to Amber if they inquire about purchasing arcane scrolls or are trying to sell magic items. Amber purchases any interesting or unique magical items costing less than 2,000 gp. She can scribe scrolls of nearly any 1st- or 2nd-level spell.

## AMBER THORNE

This willowy half-elf with silver hair and piercing violet eyes has an irritated scowl on her face.

Amber became an adventurer as it afforded her ample opportunity to test and improve her magical skills (and rapidly increase her wealth).

**Personality:** Amber has an icy, somewhat dour demeanour. With a quickly burning temper, she is unpredictable and although respected by the villagers is not loved in the same way as Laika. This angers her.

**Mannerisms:** Amber stares quite forcefully in conversation, often making others uncomfortable with her relentless gaze.

**Roake's History:** If asked about Roake's history, Amber states she's agreed not to talk about such things; however a DC 27 Diplomacy check convinces her to reveal Roake's history.

## 2: BURGOMASTER'S HOME

This two-storey home has bright red window and door frames and bears a brass seal on the door, marking it as the Burgomaster's residence. Inside the house, Chandler maintains a modest office, that features many paintings of Roake. Chandler keeps a locked box in his office (containing 1,450 gp; DC 25 Disable Device). The money is actually Laika's, given to Chandler to use for things he believes the community needs.

## BUYING EXOTIC ANIMALS

Prices for Laika's exotic animals vary immensely. Exotic birds (birds of paradise, toucans etc.) sell for 5 gp - 100 gp, bears sell for 150 gp and lions or tigers fetch 1,500 gp. Generally, an animal costs roughly 150 gp per point of CR (but exotic animals command premium prices).

Before selling any exotic animal, Laika ensures that prospective owners will tend to the animal's care. She refuses requests to train anything but dogs or horses to be used as mounts in warfare. Laika also buys animals from travellers and adventurers, for a third (for adults) to half (for eggs or young) their eventual sale price.

## 3: THE PRINCE & PAUPER

A sign depicting a crown set into a beggar's bowl beside a frothy mug of ale marks this large building as a tavern. Most villagers visit weekly, but some drink here daily and thus the tavern is the backbone of the village's rumour mill and its social centre.

A massive polished oak bar dominates a large common room the air of which is often heavily laden with the pleasant smell of hickory and roasting vegetables. The staff are attentive and tend to new arrivals quickly. Travellers find the Prince & Pauper surprisingly pricey for a village tavern (use "good" prices), but the gregarious owner, Theris Tenhammers, reduces his prices (to "common" rates) for locals or regular visitors.

### 4: GENERAL STORE

This clean, tidy and impeccably organised shop is run by the aging Deyrn and Farya Oak and their surly, black-tempered halforc son, Kurn. While Deyrn and Farya are scrupulously honest, Kurn tries to charge wealthy travellers extra (hoping they won't notice a few extra gold added onto their bill).

## 5: LAIKA'S HOME

This elaborate house has high, arched doorways. Several animal pens sit outside, and a nearby large paddock always contains a half-dozen or so warhorses (at various stages of training). It is here Liaka trains the many animals for which Roake is famed. A dozen or so dogs, nearly a score of cats and 1d4+1 more exotic creatures are also normally found here. Laika has trained everything from foxes and mink to bears and tigers, to even hippogriffs and owlbears; she also hand-raises several varieties of exotic birds. Characters approaching Laika's are usually approached by a pack of friendly, barking dogs.

## BREAKING THE SILENCE

If the PCs uncover the truth about Roake's half-orc children some will inevitably want to reveal the secret.

Branan (page 83) and most of the other half-orcs, react to the news without surprise; for them, this only confirms what they already believed: they are the child of monsters. Unless someone persuades them otherwise and gives them purpose, they leave within 2d6 days, to seek revenge (or perhaps a proper home more suitable to their proclivities).

For Nala (page 83), the news is a shock; she was raised in a loving home, and never truly considered the depths of evil that spawned her conception. She's moved to tears, both at the horror of what her mother went through, and that the whole of Roake concealed the truth for so long. Her sunny disposition is damped for several weeks, and returns only gradually.

### LAIKA FROST

Wearing a well-worn chain shirt, this curvy human woman has bright red hair, glittering emerald eyes and a bright smile.

Laika has her father's affinity for animals and the outdoors. She's proud and responsible, but doesn't let those traits stop her from having fun. Laika, instrumental in defeating the orc raiders who devastated Roake, is seen as the village's saviour. While Chandler may be the burgomaster, most of the villagers see Laika as their leader, a role she undertakes with modesty.

**Personality**: Laika is a pleasant woman with boundless energy, spending nearly every waking moment tending to either her animals or Roake itself. She feels responsible for the plight of the village's half-orc population and worries about the confusion and anger many manifest.

**Mannerisms:** Laika's love of animals insinuates its way into her every conversation.

**Roake's History:** Laika doesn't readily discuss Roake's history; a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check drags out the scantest of overviews, but a failure by 5 or more indicates she is seriously offended by the effort.

## 6: GRAVEYARD

This overgrown, forlorn place holds painful memories of the orc raid 14 years ago. A DC 15 Perception check reveals many of the wooden grave markers bear the same date.

## CAVERNS

An unpleasant, eerie feeling hangs over the mouth of these grey limestone caves that lie several miles to the north of Roake. With fourteen chambers and nearly a mile of twisting passageways, these were the caverns that the orcs used to hold the people of Roake during their captivity. Branan discovered these caverns eighteen months ago, and their cool darkness appealed to him. If the adults of Roake discovered that Branan and the other half-orcs now use the cave as a den, they would be furious. A DC 15 Perception or Survival check reveals that about 6-8 individuals (Branan and his fellows) regularly use the outer chambers for gatherings and camping.

## SAMPLE HALF-ORC: NALA

## SAMPLE HALF-ORC: BRANAN

This half-orc belligerently sneers at you from behind yellowed tusks. He reeks of alcohol.

Roake's half-orcs live difficult lives, many were rejected by their birth mothers, and raised by stern parents who exercised harsh discipline. Branan has absorbed the worst lessons this upbringing can teach, and is hardened and callous as a result.

**Locations**: Branan might be found nearly anywhere, but is most often in the caverns or in the Prince & Pauper (location 3).

**Personality:** Branan, as a consequence of the rejection and resentment he's been exposed to for years, is angry pretty much of the time. Even at his young age, he has become a mean drunk. He works on farms in the area for meagre coin that he converts immediately into food and alcohol. Most of the village leaves him alone, which only increases his sense of abandonment and resentment.

**Mannerisms:** Even when sober, Branan mostly communicates through grunts and snarls.

**Hooks:** PCs might encounter Branan as he drinks himself into a stupor, or as he wanders around the village, irascible and spoiling for a fight.

**Roake's History:** Branan has no idea of Roake's history, but has found a cave system outside of village and a bone dagger carved from a human femur. He feels that these discoveries hint at a violent past that nobody will talk about.

This smiling, green-eyed, blonde half-orc greets you pleasantly. Her voluptuous figure is complimented by a low-cut Empirewaist dress.

Nala was raised by her loving grandparents who adopted her after her mother died in childbirth; while they were angry at the child at first, they could not help but see their daughter in Nala's face, and were delighted to find she'd inherited her mother's infectious giggle.

**Location**: Nala is most often working at the mill (location 7) or her home (location 8). Alternatively, she often relaxes at the Prince & Pauper.

**Personality:** Nala has an optimistic, cheerful and sunny demeanour. She's eager to lend a hand with anything that needs doing, enjoying the boon of great strength her mixed heritage provides. Nala feels terrible for Branan, but isn't sure what she can do to help him.

**Mannerisms:** Nala often ends sentences with, "...right?", seeking approval and consensus from those she's speaking with.

**Hooks:** PCs might encounter Nala working at the mill, or at any festival or celebration, where she's often right in the middle of the party, laughing, dancing and enjoying herself.

**Roake's History:** Nala realizes something awful happened to Roake a decade and a half ago, but also realizes that she'll only really find out when someone's ready to tell her. She's interested in the story, but doesn't intend to make anyone uncomfortable by asking.

## LIFE IN ROAKE

Everyday life in Roake proceeds peacefully from one day to the next. Most adventurers would find the pace of life in the village relentlessly dull.

## LAW & ORDER

Between Laika, Surnak and Amber, the maintenance of law and order is not a serious issue in Roake. Branan is the closest thing the village has to a career criminal, and has occasionally spent nights sleeping off drunken fights or property destruction in one of Laika's animal cages.

## TRADE & INDUSTRY

Unlike many other villages, Roake was not built around an existing natural resource; thus the villagers tend to grow just enough to survive. Much of Roake's wealth flows into the village from outside; Laika's trained animals command large sums of money, the road through the village is well-travelled, and several nobles have country retreats in the nearby area.

A steady flow of outside money into the village has created an inflationary pressure in Roake that's most obviously displayed at the Prince & Pauper, where food and drink are extremely expensive. Most local businesses operate a two-tier pricing structure, with significantly lower prices for locals.

HUMAN VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Human commoner 1	
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Me	otive +1
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5	
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; CMD 1	1
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 6 (1 HD)	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1	
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10,	
<b>Feats</b> Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (farmer or	similar)
Skills as above plus Profession (farmer	or similar) +6
Languages Common	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp,	peasant's outfit
Prepared for battle, a human villager l statistics:	has the following altered
AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 1	1

(+1 armour [padded]) Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or Melee spear -3 (1d8+1/x3)

## Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1) Combat Gear bullets (10)

## EVENTS

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

#### D4 EVENT

- 1 **Festivity:** Surnak Appleby is a strong believer in the ability of a good party to bring people together. It's rare a month passes without some kind of festivity at the church such as baking contests or dances. Outsiders are welcome to attend and encouraged to compete.
- 2 **Village Event:** Most of the populace gathers for events like weddings, births or barn-raisings. Food and drink is communally provided; outsiders are welcome to attend.
- 3 **New Creature:** Periodically, Laika begins training a new kind of creature. Word spreads quickly through the village, and nearly everyone stops by to see her new addition.
- 4 **Visiting Nobility:** Only the very wealthy can afford to buy one of Laika's beasts, and they occasionally come to make their purchase in person. At such times, villagers wear their finest clothes and are on their best behaviour, but often find excuses to at least steal a moment to see the visitor.

HALF-ORC VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)
Half-orc commoner 1	
CN Medium humanoid (human, orc)	
Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1, Sense Motive -1	
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Swim +5	
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; CMD 1	12
Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1	
<b>hp</b> 8 (1 HD); ferocity	
Ferocity (Ex [1/day]) A half-orc villa	ger can fight on for one
round when reduced to below 0 hi	it points.
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +2	
Melee dagger +2 (1d4+2/19-20)	
Abilities Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10,	, Wis 8, Cha 9
SQ weapon familiarity	
Feats Toughness	
Skills as above plus Intimidate +1, Pro	fession (farmer or similar)
+3	
Languages Common, Orc	
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp	, peasant's outfit
Prepared for battle, a half-orc vil altered statistics:	lager has the following

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 armour [padded]) Melee dagger +2 (1d4+2/19-20) or Melee spear -2 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+2) Combat Gear bullets (10)

## THORNHILL

Standing on the fringes of a vast and noisome swamp, Thornhill is a miserable, hard place of cloying mud, grasping thorns and insular, superstitious folk. There is a little cheer to be had in Thornhill; the few visitors describing it as dull and dreary as the surrounding swamps. For all that, though, a steady trickle of adventurers visit Thornhill for the half-buried and drowned ruins of several tombs said to lie forgotten in the surrounding marshland and the villagers have friends among the nearby degenerate lizardfolk who make excellent guides in the trackless, far reaches of the swamp.

## THORNHILL AT A GLANCE

Standing on the fringes of a vast and noisome fen, Thornhill is a miserable, hard place. The folk are insular and superstitious, keeping to the old ways and worshipping the spirits of the marsh. Surviving on a mixture of hunting, fishing and desultory trade with nearby tribes of lizardfolk, the folk here care little for the world beyond their dismal domain.

Thornhill stands atop a large island in the centre of the deep, but sluggish waters of the Fenwater. A once formidable stockade of aged, sodden timbers surrounds the place. Stands of sickly, dense thorn bushes grow over much of the island and the villagers have deliberately let the bushes grow wild to form an almost impenetrable barrier around the island's periphery.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Aelfgar Wymer (LN male human expert 2/warrior 2) Government autocracy

**Population** 157 (127 humans, 15 half-orcs, 12 half-elves, 2 halflings, 1 elf)

Alignments N, LN, CN, NE

Languages Common, Draconic

Corruption +0; Crime -5; Economy -1; Law +2; Lore -1; Society +1

Qualities insular, superstitious

Danger 0; Disadvantages impoverished

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- Aedwen Sirett (location 5; NG female human cleric 2) Kind hearted, Aedwen is well-liked by the villagers. She often preaches to villagers and travellers alike.
- Aelfgar Wymer (location 5; LN male human expert 2/warrior 2) This sullen, boring man is the village reeve.
- **Gyric Walwin** (location 6; N male half-elf wizard [diviner] 2) The longest lived of Thornhill's residence, Gyric cares little for his neighbours, most of whom he labels as inbred idiots.
- **Odda Kerrich** (location 2; NE male half-orc cleric 1/rogue 2) Beset by a perpetual hacking cough, Odda is overly friendly to travellers staying at the Drunken Lizard.
- **Ricola Wymer** (location 5; LN female human aristocrat 1) Spiteful and deliberately rude to her fellows, Ricola is universally seen as ill-mannered and stuck up.
- Sithric Siggers (location 2; NE male human warrior 1/expert 2) A boorish, oft-drunk fisherman normally found at the Drunken Lizard. He has a reputation as a troublemaker and brawler.
- **Wulfric Isgar** (location 8; N male human expert 2) This sour faced poet chants dirges and elegies while at his forge.

**Zissren** (location 10; NG female lizardfolk adept 3) A tall, cunning lizardfolk of exceptional intellect, Zissren works to mollify her fellows' more savage instincts.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. **Mud Bridge** This often muddy, stout wooden bridge is the only way to easily reach Thornhill.
- The Drunken Lizard Thornhill's only tavern is a dank, shadowed place. The food and drink are adequate at best.
- Wennell's Thornhill's trading station is run by the family of the same name. Densely packed with all manner of mundane things, there is little of obvious interest here for adventurers.
- Aelfgar Wymer's House Here dwells the reeve and his spiteful, shrewish wife, Ricola Wymer. The house is well maintained.
- 5. **Hall of the Sun** Dedicated to Darlen, elaborate carvings of the rising sun decorate this otherwise humble hall.
- Gyric Walwin's Home An elderly sage, Gyric Walwin, dwells in this ramshackle old building. Vines and ivy grow over much of his home, crowding out most of the light from the building's narrow windows.
- Osred's House Home to Ymma Winbow, this stone building is the oldest and largest in the village. The windows on the third floor command sweeping views over the locality.
- Blacksmith This large building features a workshop at the front containing not only the normal accoutrements of the blacksmith's trade but also a small pool.
- Yonwin's The stench of this place permeates the whole village. Here the villagers sell their excess catch to Yonwin, a crippled halfling merchant.
- 10. Isle of the Lizards A single hut stands upon this island, which the lizardfolk claim as a holy place; Most nights, Zissren leads her fellows in worship to their primitive gods.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry fishing, hunting

Base Value 250 gp; Purchase Limit 1,250 gp; Spellcasting 1st; Minor Items 1d4; Medium Items 1d2; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in Thornhill, these items are for sale:

- Potions & Oils invisibility (300 gp), light (25 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) misdirection (150 gp), reduce person (25 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) remove curse and spiritual weapon (525 gp)
- Wands alarm (30 charges, 450 gp)

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about the village. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: Thornhill is a muddy, cheerless place. Its folk survive by fishing and hunting in the surrounding marshes. Occasionally, lizardfolk trade with the villagers.

**DC 15**: The villagers are insular, superstitious folk. They keep to the old ways. They are poor and have little of value. Most of their houses are ramshackle wooden affairs.

**DC 20**: An ancient stone house stands at the highest part of the village. It is said to predate the village and to once have been the home of a powerful, exiled (and blackhearted) adventurer.

#### VILLAGERS

- **Appearance** Dark of hair with grey or brown eyes, the folk of Thornhill are often dirty; their clothes normally streaked with mud.
- **Dress** Villagers' clothes are sturdy, of boring earthy colours and invariably muddy. Most wear well worn knee-high boots.
- Nomenclature male: Aelfgar, Brid, Eadgar, Gyric, Liofa, Osgar, Sithric, Ulf, Wulfric; *female*: Aebbe, Bebbe, Ealhild, Heiu, Inga, Ricola, Saeith, Ymma; *family*: Almer, Elvery, Isgar, Kerrich, Osmer, Siggers, Walwin, Woolgar, Wymer.

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Thornhill and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D6 RUMOUR

1*	Sithric Siggers has friends among the lizardfolk of the marsh. They lead him to many of the sunken tombs hidden in the swamp
2	A huge snake has recently been seen swimming in the lake. Recently, several chickens have gone missing.
3	The lizardfolk living nearby are angry about something and shun travellers.
4	Lights have been seen burning late at Gyric Walwin's house; the sage has started taking a much more serious interest in travellers visiting the village.
5	Osred's House has a hidden, deep cellar said to lead to a partially flooded cavern.
6	Ricola Wymer is the third daughter of a minor noble house. Caught in a youthful indiscretion she was married off to Aelfgar against her wishes.

\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

## 1: MUD BRIDGE

So named because it is often covered in mud, this stout, aged wooden bridge is the only dry way to reach Thornhill. The bridge stands 10 ft. above the Fenwater and has no parapets; travellers must be careful not to slip and fall into the waters below during bad weather (or at night).

## 2: THE DRUNKEN LIZARD

The only inn in the village, the Drunken Lizard is a dank, shadowed place. A second storey features a half-dozen littleused and very basic bedchambers available for travellers. The landlord, Odda Kerrich (NE male half-orc cleric 1/rogue 2) an overly friendly kleptomaniac dwells beneath the tavern in a small network of low cellars cut into the hill. Excavated by successive landlords, many of the tunnels are crammed full of little more than rubbish – discarded things of little value, but hoarded nonetheless.

The food, drink and accommodation at the Drunken Lizard are all of poor quality. Entertainment is sparse to nonexistent.

### 3: WENNELL'S

This stout building is one of the best maintained in the village. Its affable, red-haired owner, Brid Wennell (LN male human expert 1), is a skilled woodworker and is often tinkering about the property or adding to the carvings at the Hall of the Sun. His gossip-wife, Ealhild (NG female human expert 1), runs the shop and prepares all the foodstuffs found within. Her comparative wealth puts her at the centre of Thornhill's social scene (such as it is) and she tries to ingratiate herself with visiting adventurers to enhance her status with her friends. She dislikes Aedwen Sirett and suspects there is more to the priestess than meets the eye. In Thornhill's social scene, she is a rival of Ricola Wymer.

## THE SURROUNDING AREA

Thornhill stands amid a small lake, the Fenwater. The lake's murky waters are placid (DC 10 Swim check) but deep. Several fishing boats ply its waters and those of the nearby major waterways. Dense fens surround the lake, making reaching Thornhill difficult. Few tracks wend their way through the murk, but several wide, sluggish rivers flow into the Fenwater.

Tribes of lizardfolk lair in the fens. Most are indifferent to the humans of Thornhill, but a few of the more primitive tribes – whipped into a religious frenzy by their shaman – are violently opposed to the encroach of humanity. Occasionally, fishermen and hunters go missing – their disappearances are blamed on such lizardfolk, but their guilt remains impossible to prove as no remains are ever recovered.

## 4: Aelfgar Wymer's House

This large building houses Aelfgar's extended family, which includes his wife (Ricola), four children and his half-blind mother. The Wymers have held the position of village reeve for over a century and are an arrogant, prideful family. They are not well liked by their fellows.

## 5: HALL OF THE SUN

Elaborate carvings decorate this simple house of worship. Here dwells the kind-hearted Aedwen Sirett (NG female human cleric 2) although few worshippers join her services – most of the village keeps to the old ways. Aedwen is not a native of Thornhill, rather moving to the village several years ago. Tight-lipped about her past, she is in the third daughter of a minor noble who fled to this dismal place to escape the drudgery and misery of an arranged marriage with a man three decades her elder. She knows little of the surrounding fens, but gladly helps adventurers in return for small donations toward the upkeep of her church. She dwells in a small, snug attic above the main hall and actively dislikes Odda Kerrich (location 2).

## 6: GYRIC WALWIN'S HOUSE

Vines, creepers and a riot of ivy cling to this ramshackle, old building giving it a ruined, shadowed appearance. The elderly, curmudgeonly sage Gyric Walwin (N male half-elf wizard [diviner] 2) dwells here alone among a large, dusty (and in some cases) rotting library of old books. Fiercely intelligent, Gyric is dismissive of those of lesser intellect (which is basically everyone else in the village).

## GENERAL VILLAGE FEATURES

With the exception of Osred's House (location 7) and the Drunken Lizard (location 2) all the village's buildings are single storey and of wooden construction. They are low, rambling affairs and often in poor repair. As well as their human occupants, most buildings also house livestock – mainly pigs and chickens – which during the day roam about the village.

Worn wooden causeways snake their way through the village. In places, planks are missing or rotten and unwary travellers can find themselves unceremoniously dropped into the mud beneath.

A wooden palisade surrounds the village; between 6 ft. and 10 ft. high it would not stop a serious assault (hardness 5, hp 60; DC 20 Break; DC 20 Climb) but the thick masses of bramble bushes growing up against it give even the hardiest of interlopers pause.

## 7:OSRED'S HOUSE

The horribly scarred Ymma Winbrow (N female human expert 2/adept 2) dwells in this old and stout three-storey stone building that has begun to subside into the hill. Friendly, but quiet, Ymma dwells on the upper floors and allows well behaved travellers to sleep on the ground floor (3 sp per night). A single iron-bound, triple locked door provides access to the house's extensive cellars; Ymma never opens the door and perceptive PCs may realise she is terrified of whatever lies beyond.

## 8: BLACKSMITH

Here works Wulfric Isgar (N male human expert 2) a sour-faced, deep of voice poet whose chanted dirges and elegies echo through his forge. He owes Aelfgar Wymer a large of sum of money and is desperate to pay off the debt.

ODDA KERRICH CR 2 (XP 600	ונ
Lank black hair crowns this slovenly-looking half-orc's head.	.,
Male half-orc rogue 2/cleric (god of thieves) 1	
NE Medium humanoid (human, orc)	
<b>Init</b> +2; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9 (+10 vs. trap	s),
Sense Motive +9	
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +6, Stealth +7 (fast stealth), Swim +	6
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; CMD 14	
(+2 armour [mwk leather], +2 Dex)	
Fort +3, Ref +5 (evasion), Will +4	
hp 25 (3 HD); orc ferocity	
Orc Ferocity (Ex [1/day]) When brought below 0 hp (but n	ot
killed), Odda can fight on for one round as if disabled.	
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB +2	
<b>Melee</b> mwk dagger +3 (1d4+1/19-20) or	
Melee Touch touch of darkness (5/day) +2 (concealment [20	%;
1 round])	
Ranged mwk light crossbow (range 80 ft.) +4 (1d8/19-20)	
Atk Options sneak attack (+1d6) Special Actions channel negative energy (3/day; 1d6; DC 1:	1)
copycat	±),
Copycat (Sp [move; 5/day]) Odda creates an illusionary doub	ble
of himself (as mirror image; 1 round duration)	
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3; Darknet	ss,
Trickery; spontaneous casting [ <i>inflict</i> spells])	
1st—cause fear (DC 13), disguise self <sup>D</sup> , shield of faith	
0—create water, detect magic, guidance	
Combat Gear bolts (10), potion of invisibility	
Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10	
SQ evil aura (faint), rogue talent (fast stealth), trapfinding (+	1),
weapon familiarity	
Feats Alertness, Toughness	
<b>Skills</b> as above plus Appraise +5, Disable Device +10, Intimida	
+2, Knowledge (religion) +4, Profession (innkeeper) +	-6,
Sleight of Hand +7	
Languages Common, Orc	
Gear as above plus masterwork thieves' tools, belt pouch, 12	gp
15 sp	

## 9: YONWIN'S

The stench of fish emanates from this large building and smoke constantly rises from several battered chimneys; here Yonwin (CN male halfling expert 2) prepares his renowned smoked fish for sale. The lizardfolk of the fens love the taste of them (which they view as a delicacy) and Yonwin (a half-crippled drunk) cannot keep up with their demand.

## 10: ISLE OF THE LIZARDS

This small, muddy island lies to the south of Thornhill. Here dwells the lizardfolk shaman Zissren (NG female advanced lizardfolk adept; page 90). Lizardfolk often visit Zissren to pray alongside the respected and well-loved shaman. Misunderstood by the villagers who see her as a crackpot, drug-addled figure, Zissren works tirelessly to keep the fragile peace (page 90) between the humans and lizardfolk intact.

GYRIC WALWIN CR 1 (XP 400)
This frail, elderly half-elf wears worn robes of red and gold.
Male half-elf wizard (diviner) 2
N Medium humanoid (elf, human)
Init +1 (forewarned); Senses low-light vision; Perception +7,
Sense Motive +5
Forewarned (Su) Gyric can always act in a surprise round.
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.; <b>ACP</b> 0
AC 14, touch 110, flat-footed 14; CMD 9
(+4 armour [ <i>mage armour</i> ])
Immune sleep
Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +6; +2 vs. enchantments
<b>hp</b> 9 (2 HD)
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB -1
Melee mwk dagger +0 (1d4-2/19-20)
Special Actions diviner's fortune
Diviner's Fortune (Sp [standard; 7/day]) With a touch, Gyric
bestows a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls, skill checks,
ability checks and saving throws for 1 round.
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +6; arcane bond
[amulet])
1st-colour spray (DC 15), comprehend languages, identify,
mage armour
0 (at-will)—detect magic, message, prestidigitation, read magic
Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, scroll of invisibility
Abilities Str 7, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 10
SQ multitalented (bard, wizard)
<b>Feats</b> Alertness, Scribe Scroll <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (Intimidate) <sup>B</sup>
Skills as above plus Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +9,
Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +9,
Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +8, Spellcraft +9
Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Sylvan
Gear as above plus
Spellbook (opposition schools: evocation, necromancy) as
above plus 1st-expeditious retreat; 0-all except opposed
schools

## LIFE IN THORNHILL

Life in Thornhill is hard. Isolated from other villages, the folk here have become insular, inbred and fearful of their lizardfolk neighbours. Tensions over the looting of ancient tombs hidden deep within the fens with the degenerate Red Jaws and Jagged Claw tribes have been steadily rising over the last few decades. The lizardfolk are suspected (correctly) of several unsolved murders.

## TRADE & INDUSTRY

Thornhill's main (and indeed only) industry is fishing. Most of the fishermen in the village sell their excess catch to Yonwin, who exports his smoked fish to nearby villages and several lizardfolk tribes who view them as a delicacy. Occasionally, adventurers use the village as a base from which to explore the fens – such folk are a source of great wealth to the impoverished villagers.

## LAW & ORDER

Thornhill is a rough and ready place and there is no watch to speak of. Theoretically, Aelfgar Wymer is in charge of law and order, but in practise the villagers sort out their own problems and do not view meddling outsiders kindly.

ZISSREN	CR 3 (XP 800)	
This tall, muscled lizardfolk femal	, ,	
features. She carries a fine wooden shield and morningstar.		
Female advanced lizardfolk adept 2		
NG Medium humanoid (reptilian)		
Init +2; Senses Perception +4, Sense Motive +2		
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; <b>ACP</b> -1; AC		
AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; CMI		
(+2 Dex, +7 natural, +2 shield [+1 /	neavy wooden])	
Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +5		
hp 28 (5 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +5		
Melee mwk morningstar +6 (1d8+3)	,	
claw +4 (1d4+1) and		
bite +4 (1d4+1)		
Ranged javelin (range 30 ft.) +4 (1d6	5+3)	
Adept Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +4)		
1st—bless, cure light wounds		
0—ghost sound, guidance, purify for	od and drink	
Combat Gear mwk javelins (2), wa	nd of cure light wounds (20	
chgs.)	, <u>,</u>	
Abilities Str 17, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 1	3. Wis 14. Cha 14	
<b>SQ</b> hold breath (68 rounds), summo		
Feats Multiattack, Self Sufficient, Ski		
Skills as above plus Diplomacy		
(geography) +5, Knowledge		
(religion) +6, Survival +9	(	
Languages Common, Draconic		
Gear as above plus		

## EVENTS

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

#### D6 EVENT

1	A small group of lizardfolk are seen swimming to the Isle of the Lizards. That night, their weird chanting echoes throughout the village.
2	A travelling pedlar or impoverished merchant arrives at Thornhill. Likely, he is selling rather than buying but he may bring interesting rumours from the outside world.
3	Thornhill's fishermen return with a bumper (50%) or terrible (50%) catch.
4	Heavy rain lashes the settlement for much of the day. Mud covers much of the island and the Fenwater rises noticeably.
5	An argument quickly escalates into violence. At the GM's discretion, this could lead to a wider brawl, grievous bodily harm or murder. Petty crime or an old rivalry could be to blame for the incidence.
6	Screams echo across the lake as a giant constrictor snake (CR 3) attacks a fisherman. Unless the PCs intervene, the snake kills the man and carries him deep into the lake to consume his body in peace.

VILLAGER	CR 1/3 (XP 135)	
Human commoner 1		
N Medium humanoid (human)		
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Motive +1		
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.; <b>ACP</b> 0; Climb +5, Swim +5		
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; CMD 11	1	
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1		
<b>hp</b> 6 (1 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1		
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)		
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9		
<b>Feats</b> Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (fisherman or similar)		
Skills as above plus Profession (fisherman or similar) +6		
Languages Common		
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp,	peasant's outfit	
Prepared for battle, a villager has statistics:	the following altered	
AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 11	1	
(+1 armour [padded])		

Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3) Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1) Combat Gear bullets (10)

# WHITE MOON COVE

White Moon Cove is a respectable fishing town located in a cove which acts as an excellent, natural harbour. The inhabitants of this tightly-knit community are sober, hardworking and amiable fishermen, traders and other sturdy folk making their living from the sea.

Despite being a fairly peaceful and law-abiding place, White Moon Cove still hold many opportunities for adventure, from rumours of secret smuggler activity to an ancient and possibly haunted lighthouse. Yet, perhaps the most famous reason for White Moon Cove's notoriety is the mysterious underwater edifice known as the Sunken Pyramid which lies hidden far beneath the waves a few miles out to sea. The handful of sages and scholars possessing any knowledge of this massive stone structure debate whether it is a completely natural rock formation, a natural site that has somehow been intentionally modified, or something built long ago by human, or inhuman, hands.

## WHITE MOON COVE AT A GLANCE

White Moon Cove is a small, respectable fishing village located in a cove which acts as an excellent, natural harbour. The inhabitants of this tightly-knit community are relatively sober, hardworking and amiable fishermen, traders and other sturdy folk who make their living primarily from the sea. While fishing is the village's main industry, there are also a few small farms in the neighbouring countryside. The village holds a weekly market which attracts folk from many nearby smaller settlements.

The village is a peaceful and law abiding place, despite its somewhat isolated location. If anything, this isolation has made its citizens self-reliant and fiercely loyal to one another.

During the day, fishing and other activities connected to the sea's many bounties occupy the villagers' time. After a long day of work, most people retire to their homes for the evening. Before heading home, many stop by the Sleeping Triton, for fellowship, laughter and a hearty meal.

White Moon Cove is a busy hub for trade. Because of this, the people of White Moon Cove live relatively well, despite their simple and generally rugged way of life.

The dock area is small and well ordered, with a single, long pier which extends out into the water. A hodgepodge of rowboats and various other small vessels are typically tied to the pier, along with the occasional larger ocean-going vessel. Businesses and shops cluster around White Moon's marketplace.

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Barro Godwyn

Government Council

**Population** 328 (including surrounding area; 287 humans, 26 halflings, 6 gnomes, 4 elves, 2 dwarves, 2 half-orcs, 1 half-elves)

Alignments NG

Languages Common

Corruption +0; Crime -1; Economy +1; Law -1; Lore -2; Society +4

Qualities Insular, populous

Danger 0; Disadvantages None

#### NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Barro Godwyn** (location 5; NG male human expert 4) Head of the village council, Barro is a stern fellow.
- **Corwyn Redcrow** (location 3; N male human wizard [transmuter] 7) A reclusive wizard often found at the Sleeping Triton.
- **Dorna** (location 6; N female half orc rogue 4) Operates White Moon Cove's fishmonger shop (and brothel).
- Edric (location 1; N male human bard 2/rogue 2) This charming, charismatic man owns Seafoam Trade Goods.
- Galen Nrek (location 5; LN male human fighter [polearm master] 4) White Moon Cove's gruff, but capable, constable.

- **Kandra** (location 4; NG female human cleric 5) The quiet and kind priestess officiating at the White Chapel.
- Old Grif Serann (location 3; LG male human ex-paladin 1/expert 3) The one-armed, sahuagin-hating village drunkard.
- **Orin Gwyn** (location 2; LG male human expert 3/fighter 1) This bald, brawny man operates Gwyn's Smithy.
- **Perrin** (location 3; CG female halfling expert 3) This middle-aged halfling is the proprietor of the Sleeping Triton.

#### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. Seafoam Trade Goods: Edric's Trading Shop is almost always busy with sailors, merchants and local residents alike.
- Gwyn's Smithy: This large building is owned and operated by Orin Gwyn. Items available include sword blades, farming implements, eating utensils and ship's tools.
- Sleeping Triton: The Sleeping Triton comprises a spacious tavern with two dozen cosy rooms. It is easily one of the most popular places in White Moon Cove.
- White Chapel: White Moon Cove's temple is one of the most impressive buildings in the village. Recently constructed, the temple's high-domed roof gleams in the sunlight.
- Village Hall: This building comprises a large central meeting room and a number of smaller chambers and offices. It is well-guarded during the day and securely locked at night.
- Dorna's Fishmonger's Shop: This large building, located near both the marketplace and the docks, is a popular destination of sailors and fisherman alike.
- The Cyclops: Known to locals as "The Cyclops," this old stone lighthouse sits at the mouth of the cove. It is by far the oldest structure in the village.
- Marketplace: During the weekly market, numerous stalls and animal pens fill the area in a semi-organized jumble.

#### MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing

Base Value 500 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in White Moon Cove, the following items are for sale:

- Armour mithral shirt (1,100 gp)
- Potion levitate (300 gp)
- Scroll (Divine) remove fear and bless (50 gp)
- Weapons +1 dagger (4,302 gp), +2 starknife (8,320 gp), adamantine dagger (3,002 gp)
- Wondrous Items feather token (tree) (400 gp), gloves of arrow snaring (4,000 gp)

## VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or (local) check may know some information about the village. A successful check reveals all information revealed by a lesser check.

**DC 10**: White Moon Cove is a large, prosperous and fairly law-abiding fishing village.

**DC 15**: The village drunkard, an elderly ex-paladin, is said to be quite knowledgeable about sahuagin.

**DC 20**: The only fishmonger shop in the village is a front of sorts for a brothel (and possibly more sinister practises).

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance** The residents of White Moon Cove tend to have tanned, weather beaten skin.

**Dress** The villagers typically dress in comfortable, layered clothing – fewer layers for the warm work days; more layers in the evening to ward off the cool, salt air breeze.

**Nomenclature** *male*: Atheric, Bosa, Eohric, Liofa, Ulf; *female*: Aebbe, Bebbe, Inga, Saeith; *family*: Alston, Elvey, Isgar, Sirett

## WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

#### D4 RUMOUR

1	A member of the village council is secretly involved with one of "Dorna's Girls" and has gotten her pregnant. He is very keen to keep this from his wife and four children.
2	Something, or someone, ancient and terrible lurks deep beneath the Sunken Pyramid
3	The increased sahuagin activity in the waters around the Sunken Pyramid is connected to the recent disappearances plaguing nearby villages.
4	In addition to being a front for her brothel business, there's something more sinister going on at Dorna's Fishmonger Shop.



## 1: SEAFOAM TRADE GOODS

Located by the docks near the marketplace, Edric's Trading Shop is almost always busy. Sailors and merchants come to sell or trade goods brought in from other coastal settlements. If one is looking for something out of the ordinary, Edric's shop has the highest likelihood of having it (or being able to get it).

Edric (N male human bard 2/rogue 2) is a friendly, easy-going young man. He spent many years travelling as a minstrel with a large merchant caravan before eventually settling in White Moon Cove. He is charming, good looking and rarely lacks for female companionship.

In fact, one of the few women to routinely rebuff his amorous advances is Markessa, the beautiful captain of the *Mermaid's Mistress*. Although not an actual resident of White Moon Cove, Merkessa arrives at the village every week with a ship's hold full of goods to sell or trade at Edric's shop. Despite Edric's most honeyed words, Markessa simply shakes her head, chuckles and tells the bard "Sorry, not interested – you're just not my type." Of course, this only makes Edric desire the fiery Markessa more, and so the delicate dance continues.

Edric is rumoured to have something of a shady past – there are a few who even whisper he spent time in the dungeons of some distant city years ago. Edric always deftly laughs these rumours off with a quick smile and a few charming words. Truth be told, Edric has worked extremely hard to gain the trust of White Moon Cove's residents and is very fond of his life here.

## 2: GWYN'S SMITHY

This large building is owned by Orin Gwyn (LG male human expert 3/fighter 1). The main work area is dirty but reasonably well organized – everything from sword blades to farm tools and eating utensils to ship building implements can be found here, hanging from hooks overhead or sitting on the numerous shelves that line the walls.

Orin is a skilled smith and metal worker, capable of creating and repairing everything from eating utensils to armour to anchors and other metal objects for ships. He is a short, burly man with immense forearms, a bulbous nose and a balding head. When not working long hours in his smithy, he can usually

## THE SUNKEN PYRAMID

Only a few miles out to sea, a mysterious underwater edifice known as the Sunken Pyramid lies hidden beneath the waves. The handful of sages and scholars possessing any knowledge of this massive stone structure debate whether it is a completely natural rock formation, a natural site that has been intentionally modified or something built long ago by human, or perhaps inhuman, hands. be found at the *Sleeping Triton* having a few pints of ale – or, as is more often the case, many pints of ale.

Along with the different mundane items he is working on at any given moment, Orin also steals a few moments here and there to work on a beautiful bastard sword and shield of exquisite craftsmanship and quality. When asked who he is crafting these items for, Orin only grins and mutters "that ain't any o' your business."

## 3: SLEEPING TRITON

The Sleeping Triton is easily one of the most popular places in all of White Moon Cove. Almost everyone in the village can be found here at some point during the day. The tavern is only a short walk from the marketplace. It has been expanded and added onto many times over the years and is now one of the largest buildings in the village.

A clean, spacious tavern room with well-worn tables and comfortable chairs takes up much of the main building. One wing of the building serves as a wayfarer's inn with more than two dozen cosy rooms. The smaller wing is the private residence of Perrin (CG female halfling expert 3), the Sleeping Triton's proprietor.

A plump, jovial woman with an infectious smile, Perrin is easily one of the most beloved people in all of White Moon Cove. She is also something of a gossip – very little which goes on in or around the village occurs without Perrin hearing about it. The kindly halfling has been the proprietor of the *Sleeping Triton* for many decades and takes great pride in the food served there. In fact, Perrin is renowned for her wonderful cooking and still makes much of the food herself. Her fish stews and spiced crabs are particularly delicious. The Sleeping Triton charges common prices for board and lodgings, but the food is of good quality due to Perrin's skill and love of cooking.

## MARKESSA & MERMAID'S MISTRESS

A small, sleek merchant ship, *The Mermaid's Mistress*, puts into White Moon Cove's port about once a week to offload cargo, purchase supplies and procure rest and relaxation for her crew.

The ship's captain, Markessa (NG female human fighter [mobile fighter] 6), is a beautiful woman with long, flowing red hair and a fiery temper to match. Markessa's highly skilled, rowdy crew is fiercely loyal to their captain and her first mate, Allyseth (NG female human rogue [swashbuckler] 5).

Markessa has sailed the waters around White Moon Cove for many years and knows a great deal about the region.

## 4: THE WHITE CHAPEL

White Moon Cove's temple is one of the village's most impressive buildings. Only recently constructed, the temple's high-domed roof gleams in the sunlight. No single deity is favoured here. Instead, all non-evil gods are honoured equally and the temple's doors are open to all wishing to worship within. A shoulder-high stone wall encloses the temple, along with a tranquil courtyard and smaller building where Kandra (NG female human cleric 5) lives.

Kandra is a quiet, kind and extremely beautiful young woman. Trained as a cleric in a large city hundreds of miles inland she was sent to White Moon Cove to administer to the people's religious needs. At first, Kandra resented leaving the city and it's more sophisticated, cosmopolitan lifestyle. Over time, however, she has come to love White Moon Cove and its people. Ironically, the one thing Kandra has not been able to embrace is the sea itself – she cannot swim and is terrified of the water.

## 5: VILLAGE HALL

White Moon Cove's village hall comprises a large open meeting room and several smaller chambers and offices dedicated to the running of the village. It is well-guarded during the day and securely locked at night.

Barro Godwyn (NG male human expert 4) is the council's leader and has served as such for the past nine years. He is a skilled negotiator and a stern, no-nonsense decision maker. With a friendly and out-going style of leadership, Barro holds the deep and abiding respect of almost everyone living in or near White Moon Cove.

Galen Nrek (LN male human fighter [polearm master] 4) is the village constable. He is a large, intimidating man with a gruff, abrupt personality. He is honest to a fault and takes his responsibilities as constable very seriously. Galen is a capable warrior, particularly when wielding any type of spear or pole arm. Gossip says he has taken a fancy to Kandra (location 4).

## CORWYN REDCROW

Corwyn (N male human wizard [transmuter] 7) is a quiet, reserved man of indeterminate age. He can occasionally be found drinking herbal tea alone at the Sleeping Triton. Although Corwyn was born and raised in White Moon Cove, he left when he was a young man to find fortune and adventure. He returned recently, after many years, saying only that a life of adventure no longer suited him. If pressed for details, Corwyn becomes sullen and refuses to elaborate. He spends much of his time carving small seagulls from driftwood or scribing magical scrolls which he then sells or trades. Corwyn is very reclusive and extremely reluctant to get involved in any situation involving even the slightest hint of danger. Although Galen only glowers when he hears such talk, he does seem to spend a large amount of time with Kandra, even though few would consider him to be a particularly religious man.

## 6: DORNA'S FISHMONGER'S SHOP

This large building, located near both the marketplace and the docks, is a popular destination for sailors and fisherman alike. Dorna (N female half-orc rogue 4), the rotund half-orc proprietor, runs her busy shop with confidence and a strong helping of boisterous bravado.

To those in the know, the shop is also an unofficial brothel of sorts. Various women, known sometimes as "Dorna's girls," circulate among the sailors and fisherman in the main room, serving up flirtatious smiles and complimentary ale. For the right amount of coin pressed into Dorna's grimy palms, the girls take the willing into one of the many back rooms for additional "services." Curiously, both the council and the watch appear to turn a blind eye to such activities.

Boisterous, off-colour jokes and bawdy stories are rarely in short supply here. Although Dorna closes up shop each day shortly after sun-down, people can still occasionally be spotted stealthily entering or leaving the shop late into the night.

### 7: THE CYCLOPS

Known to locals as "The Cyclops," this old stone lighthouse sits at the mouth of the cove. The lighthouse is by far the oldest structure in the village – in fact, it is believed to have been built centuries before White Moon Cove even existed. Many say the stone tower was originally constructed for a wizard who used the structure as a laboratory and base of operations.

Winfrid (LN male human expert 2), the lighthouse keeper, lives in the cottage attached to the lighthouse. Lately he has been telling folks of strange moans and other unnatural sounds coming from somewhere below the old stone tower. To the best of anyone's knowledge, Winfrid included, the lighthouse has no basement or underground rooms – a fact which has lead more than a few villagers to wonder if the Cyclops might be haunted.

## 8: MARKETPLACE

This large area of packed dirt and sand lies at the heart of White Moon Cove. Numerous stalls and animal pens litter the area in a semi-organized jumble. A small but ever-changing array of goods and bounty from land and sea are sold here daily. Once a week, the market swells to almost three times its normal size and becomes packed with people from all over the region.

## LIFE IN WHITE MOON COVE

Everyday life in White Moon Cove is generally peaceful.

### TRADE & INDUSTRY

Fishing is the most important industry in White Moon Cove. Virtually everyone earns their livelihood in one way or another from the sea. The village boasts a large weekly market which attracts numerous people from the surrounding area.

## LAW & ORDER

The village has adequate facilities for justice and lawenforcement-debtors and disruptors of the peace are dealt with particularly harshly. Galen Nrek, the village constable, is a capable warrior who leads a well-organized watch.

The council is responsible for the creation and implementation of laws in White Moon Cove, a duty which Barro Godwyn, as village council's leader, takes very seriously.

Bells located in the village hall's tall bell tower are used to signal important events throughout the day. In times of crisis, they can also be used to sound an alarm.

## OLD GRIF SERANN

Grif (LG male human ex-paladin 1/expert 3) is an old one-armed man who has lived in White Moon Cove longer than most people can remember. He is well-liked by everyone, although most folks also pity him.

He can usually be found sitting alone near the water, staring out at the waves or in the Sleeping Triton, downing large amounts of ale and regaling fellow drinkers with tales from his long and exciting adventuring days. Grif greatly exaggerates (or in most cases entirely fabricates) these tales of his derring-do, however. The sad truth is that long ago, Grif was a member of an adventuring group intent on clearing out a nest of sahuagin. Soon after entering their lair, they were ambushed and most of the party was slaughtered. A massive shark ripped off Grif's arm and left him for dead. This horrific encounter, the sudden and violent death of his friends and the loss of his arm deeply affected the young paladin. His courage and faith profoundly shaken, Grif began to spend more time in taverns and less time in temples. Although he spent many years learning everything he could about the sahuagin in hopes of someday exacting his revenge on the cruel creatures, he never went on another adventure and eventually became a sad, drunken shell of the man he might have been. Grif prefers not to speak of those terrible, long-ago events. He still hates sahuagin, however, and could be of immense value to anyone seeking information about the shark men.

#### EVENTS

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

#### D4 **EVENT**

- Galen Nrek, the large and intimidating village constable, 1 tosses old Grif out of the Sleeping Triton after the drunkard makes a scene. Patrons inside the tavern say Old Grif became highly agitated when someone insinuated his flamboyant story of a past adventure sounded like pure hogwash. 2 A ruckus is caused when someone (perhaps even one of the PCs) is accused of stealing from a vendor during the busy, weekly market. A sudden and nasty brawl between sailors and fishermen З at Dorna's Fishmonger Shop threatens to get out of hand. Dorna herself erupts from a back room and breaks up the fight with her bare hands. One of the fishermen is badly hurt in the commotion. Thankfully Kandra quickly
- A group of villagers are gathered together, speaking in 4 loud, animated voices. One of those gathered just received a letter from a friend in a nearby village saying the village was raided in the middle of the night by a band of sahuagin. Three people were killed in the attack and at least seven were dragged, still alive, into the sea!

arrives to administer healing.

FISHERMAN	CR 1/3 (XP 135)	
Human commoner 1		
LN Medium humanoid (human)		
Init +0; Senses Perception +1, Sense Motive +1		
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +5, Swim +5		
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; CMD 11		
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1		
hp 6 (1 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +1		
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20)		
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, W	/is 8, Cha 9	
<b>Feats</b> Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Skill Focus (fisherman)		
Skills as above plus Profession (fisherman	n) +6	
Languages Common		
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp, tr	raveler's outfit	

#### Prepared for battle, a fisherman has the following altered statistics:

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11; CMD 11
(+1 armour [padded])
Melee dagger +1 (1d4+1/19-20) or
Melee spear -3 (1d8/x3)
Ranged sling (range 50 ft.) -4 (1d4+1)
Combat Gear bullets (10)



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