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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: OCTOBER 2016





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: OCTOBER 2016

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own Borderland of Adventure campaign, the GM's Monthly Miscellany series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign, this instalment of GM's Monthly Miscellany presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **20 Things #7: Haunted House** Alexander Augunas, Creighton Broadhurst and Cole Kronewitter.
- **Places of Power: The Midnight Market** Eric Hindley.
- **Village Backdrop: Y'taris** Jeff Gomez.

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Welcome to sunny October! (Who am I kidding? By the time you read this, summer will be but a distant memory and I'll probably be huddled by the fire for warmth.)

Fear not, I'm sure I'll be fine. I've laid in a decent supply of red wine and whiskey for the winter.

Anyway, herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest

products including *Village Backdrop: Y'taris*, *Places of Power: The Midnight Market* and *20 Things #7: Haunted House*. I've also included the most recent article detailing a new part of Gloamhold! You can read the article—and learn more about Gloamhold—at creightonbroadhurst.com. I hope you decide to adventure there!

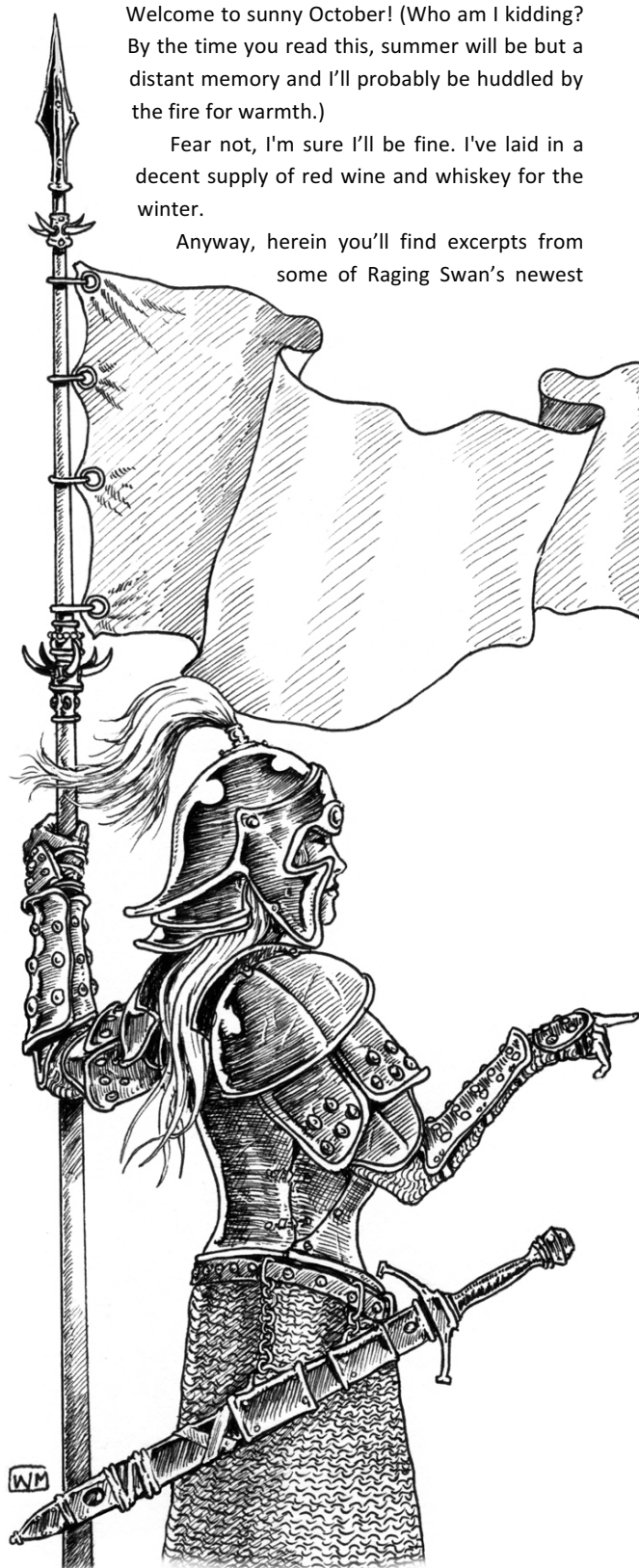
Last month, was a big month for Raging Swan Press. We launched our new range of 5e products and they have gone spectacularly well. I couldn't be happier. This month, I'm putting the finishing touches to my 2017 release schedule.

Every year, we release at least one product a week; this means we tend to put out at least 50 products a year. You'd think there'd be loads of room in the release schedule, but you'd be wrong! There is so much I want to publish, but which I just don't have the time to cram into the schedule. This means hard choices must be made, but has the knock-on effect that I've got tons of idea for 2018! (Even for me, that's pretty

organised). I'm hoping that soon I'll be able to share 2018 plans—but in the meantime if there's something you desperately want to see you can send me an email at the address below.

Finally, you might be aware that Raging Swan Press is on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April 2015, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already increased our word rate to 9 cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in taking a look at the campaign, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



10 THINGS TO SEE IN A BURNED OUT HOUSE

Fire is a potent enemy for any settlement. Wooden buildings are particularly susceptible to flames and often marauders use it to devastating effect on the borderland settlements they raid.

1. The building's blackened chimney rises from the surrounding piles of scorched and burnt wood. Debris chokes the fireplace.
2. Bizarrely one section of soot-stained wall survived the fire relatively undamaged. Someone has written graffiti—the names of the people who died here—in the soot.
3. Part of a bed's wooden headboard sticks out of a pile of burnt and scorched debris.
4. The fire that destroyed this building was clearly powerful. The building's stone foundation stones are scorched, and several cracked in the intense heat. Similarly, the branches of a tree nearest to the building are blackened and burnt.
5. Pieces of partially melted iron lie amid the ruins. One is reminiscent of a cauldron or pot, while others nearby might have once been utensils of some sort.
6. Birds now nest amid the scorched rafters of this once fine home. The rafters rang over the ruin like blackened bones reaching up into the sky. If disturbed, the birds fly up out of

the building into the air; perhaps their sudden appearance could alert nearby raiders to the PCs' presence.

7. Three crude grave markers of blackened wooden planks stick out of the muddy earth behind the house. Bunches of dying flowers lie upon each grave suggesting at least one person cares about the people who once lived here.
8. Rubble and the scorched remains of two wooden beams partially cover a hole in the ground. Investigation reveals, the hole leads down to a root cellar. The wooden stairs leading downward were badly damaged in the fire and collapse if any meaningful weight is put on them.
9. Attempts have been made to salvage useable materials from this ruin. Near what was once the front door, someone has dumped a pile of wood that survived the fire in relatively good condition; another pile of scorched and burnt offcuts lies nearby.
10. The soot-wreathed bones of one of the building's unfortunate residents lies pinned beneath an unstable pile of debris. Trying to reach the skeleton is dangerous; the pile could shift or collapse if disturbed.

10 THINGS TO SEE IN A PLAGUE-INFESTED HOUSE

When plague comes to a settlement, death and suffering travel in its wake. Inevitably, houses touched by plague are horrible places; here evidence of the its savagery is writ large. Sane individuals do not willingly enter such places, but sometimes adventurers—or looters—have little or no choice in the matter.

1. A bloody blanket lies twisted on the floor. The bloody is dried and from the pattern of the stain looks like it was coughed up.
2. The remains of a meal—a plate holding some mouldy bread and hard cheese—stands next to a fallen pewter cup.
3. The door to this room has been crudely nailed shut from the outside.
4. A terrible smell of rot pervades the house; clearly someone died here. The stench gets stronger as the PCs get closer to the body.
5. Much of the furniture lies scattered about out of place. Either someone was enraged and took out his frustrations on the furniture or someone has searched everywhere for loot.

6. Dust and grime covers most surfaces in the house. Faint footsteps lead toward a back room. A PC skilled in tracking can tell the person making the tracks was shuffling.
7. The rotting corpses of three rats lie on the ground near the body of one of the house's occupant. The body lies with one arm stretched; many small bite marks on the arm are evident.
8. The building's windows are all boarded over...from the outside. Inside, gloom fills the house and dust sifts down through the thin cracks of sunlight piercing the interior.
9. A body—wrapped in sack cloth—lies in state on a long table. Burnt down candles surround the suppurating corpse and its bloody, grimy wrappings.
10. A man hangs from a makeshift noose thrown over a rafter. Clearly dead, his neck is broken and insects swarm over his decomposing corpse. In a nearby room, the party find his family's rotting bodies laid out in state together, under a blanket.

Y'TARIS AT A GLANCE

A stone circle marks the confluence of ley lines in this bleak and broken place. Across its storied past, Y'taris has hosted spellbinding wizards and apocalyptic cultists, angelic battles and fey outcasts, abyssal legions and eldritch incursions. Among the ancient runes and onyx pillars lie secret messages, spells and powers hidden by gods and men alike.

But to the people of Y'taris, the stone circle is just a tourist destination for the rich. Every year, hundreds of mages and necromancers make the long pilgrimage to the stone circle high in the Broken Mountains. Between meditation and study, these spellcasters need a place to eat, relax and play. Y'taris provides it all for exorbitant prices. Those who are unwilling to pay may find their wallets missing all the same. And for the dark powers gathered here, the people of Y'taris offer some unusual services. Anyone is welcome, as long as they have the coin.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Rulers Ayred Guilespire, Girmark Flaskgut and Mulgin Kulon

Government Plutocracy

Population 189 (57 humans, 16 dwarves, 24 elves, 39 gnomes, 14 half-elves, 7 half-orcs, 32 halflings)

Alignments LE, NE

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

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

Qualities Magically Attuned, Notorious

Danger 10

NOTABLE FOLK

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

Ayred Guilespire (location 1; LE male elf cleric 2/expert 2) Gaunt and impossibly pale, Ayred owns nearly all the stalls in the Grey Market. He speaks for all shops and panhandlers, ensures their prices and methods are in line, and represents their interests in council meetings.

Davyn Highhall (location 5; N male human wizard 1) Davyn is like a hundred other spellcasters who travel to Y'taris each year. Born from a noble family, he seeks to enhance his pitiful magical ability by studying the Confluence. Instead, he is being cheated out of his entire inheritance.

Girmark Flaskgut (location 1; NE female dwarf expert 2/rogue 3) Girmark's years of thievery are mostly behind her. Now, she teaches and organizes the pickpockets and burglars, and represents their interests in council meetings.

Mulgin Kulon (location 5; LE male gnome expert 3) Mulgin is a disgusting, boil covered gnome who spits when he talks. He oversees operations at all taverns, inns and gambling halls, and represents their interests in council meetings.

Stockmaster (location 9; LE male gnome cleric 6) Stockmaster runs Onyx Hall, the premier provider of necromantic goods

and services in Y'taris. He is taciturn and precise and expects his customers to be the same.

Xthelis (location 3; NE female human lich wizard 11) Xthelis is one of the few individuals actually worthy of the arcane power available. She spends her time solely at the Pit, studying runes and practicing her necromancy. She showers the citizens with gold and they give her whatever she needs.

Yosrin Nimblefingers (location 1; CN male halfling bard 1/rogue 3) Yosrin is an expert pickpocket and something of a legend among his peers. He covers his good looks with dirty brown clothes, and sometimes clashes with Girmark Flaskgut over the appropriate distribution of stolen goods.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **The Grey Market:** Filled with vendors, beggars, panhandlers and pickpockets, all magical goods can be found here (at exorbitant prices).
2. **The Confluence:** The reason mages flock to Y'taris, this stone circle intensifies magical ability and enhances arcane study.
3. **The Pit:** A conduit of necromantic power, the Pit draws powerful liches and other unsavoury spellcasters from across the world.
4. **The Gibbering Stone Inn:** This inn and tavern epitomizes everything about a cheap tavern except for its prices.
5. **Raven's Reach:** Raven's Reach inn provides wealthy visitors with opulence and a reason to spend far too much gold on frivolities.
6. **Griffon's Call:** This gambling hall is the third best place to lose money in Y'taris.
7. **Mage Society:** Within the Mage Society, novices pay hefty dues in hopes of arcane revelations that never come.
8. **Trading Post:** At the trading post, the merchants of Y'taris buy alchemic ingredients from travelling salesmen.
9. **Onyx Hall:** Onyx Hall, which sells necromantic goods, is perhaps the only store in Y'taris worth the price.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Tourism

Base Value 750 gp; **Purchase Limit** 4,250 gp; **Spellcasting** 5th; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Y'taris, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *lesser restoration* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *blood biography* (150 gp), *pass without trace* (25 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *divination* (400 gp), *glyph of warding* (575 gp)
- **Wand** *detect magic* (375 gp), *purify food and drink* (375 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Y'taris. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 15: Y'taris is ruled by a council of three merchants: one for the inns, one for the shops and one for the thieves.

DC 20: Beneath the Confluence festers a pit of dark magic and great power. Only the citizens of Y'taris know the way.

DC 25: The powerful lich Xthelis has taken up near permanent residence at the Pit, and the villagers provide her with a steady stream of corpses.

VILLAGERS

Appearance The inhabitants of Y'taris are as stark as the surrounding mountains. They wax between cold annoyance and obsequious flattery, depending on if they have something to sell.

Dress Y'tarians dress in blacks and greys, and often wear cloaks or hoods. Many do not wish to be identified when performing their daily tasks, while others simply mimic the muted landscape.

Nomenclature *male* Belzor, Garhace, Hortran, Jodak, Kaswan, Panbul; *female* Arfin, Breni, Faybyn, Idalile, Yezlyn; *family* Calziver, Greyhand, Magespire, Totix, Uriwor.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Y'taris 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*	The Confluence has no true power, and is simply a means to draw visitors to the village.
2	The Onyx Hall sells corpses and human sacrifices in addition to other necromantic materials.
3	In ancient times, a powerful necromancer created the Pit to summon forth an undead army.
4	When visitors outstay their welcome, they are sometimes delivered to the necromancers.
5*	In the sky above the Confluence, an invisible celestial structure bestows divine power.
6	Raven's Reach has secret passages so the staff can more easily rid the guests of their possessions.

*False rumour



THE MIDNIGHT MARKET AT A GLANCE

After a dangerous trek through the mountains, eager adventurers can find their way to a lonely entrance to the Ebon Realm. The remoteness of this entrance helps deter the dangerous underground monsters from wreaking havoc on the local populace, but it is also a landmark that truly maintains the peace. Perched across a chasm is a strange fortress-bridge, built both above and below the level of the crossing. The insides provide a safe place for both under-dwellers and the light folk to meet and exchange goods, services, and information. Bloodshed is expressly forbidden within the Midnight Market, a rule its mistress maintains with cold ruthlessness.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Mistress Amelya Van Fersker

Population 21 (10 humans, 6 ghouls, 4 vampire spawn, 1 vampire) plus merchants and shoppers

Alignment LE

Languages Common, Undercommon

Resources & Industry Trade goods, magic items, black market goods (poisons, drugs etc.)

LORE

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

DC 10: The Midnight Market stands over the Final Chasm at the mouth of a major entrance to the Ebon Realm. It provides a neutral place for trade between those dwelling above the ground and those dwelling below.

DC 15: Access to the Midnight Market does not come cheap. At the least, a *potion of gaseous form* is required to enter the market. Any who enter are also indebted to the mysterious mistress of the Midnight Market, who is known to call in favours even years after the transactions are complete.

DC 20: To accommodate some of the more irregular visitors to the site, most of the major trading is done between dusk and dawn.

NOTABLE FOLK

When the market is in full swing, dozens of people of all races and descriptions can be found here, from armoured dwarves and green-clad elves to ghouls in tattered finery and dark-skinned duergar and drow. Some of the inhabitants, however, are particularly notable:

Mistress Amelya Van Fersker (location 7; LE female vampire enchanter 10) The beautiful seductress in charge of keeping the peace between worlds.

Anshelm Chellas (location 1; NE male ghast rogue 6) Ambassador to the Ebon Realm; bitter rival of Bertich.

Bertich (location 1; LN male human fighter 8) Chief of the Day Guard, Bertich is fanatically loyal to his lady and a rival to Anshelm Chellas.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Much of the Midnight Market is given over to storage or is used as living quarters for the Night Guard and Day Guard. A few places, however, are of interest to adventurers.

1. **Entryway:** The main entrance of the Midnight Market spans the chasm separating the world of light from the Ebon Realm.
2. **The Midnight Market:** This is the primary trade area for the Midnight Market. Here, many things are for sale.
3. **The Elite Market:** Those seeking specialized goods and illegal trade eventually seek out the elite market.
4. **Elite Storage:** Crates of contraband stored for the members of the Midnight Market's elite fill this area.
5. **Trapped Corridor:** To reach Mistress Amelya's personal chamber is never an easy task. This heavily trapped corridor is a death-trap for the unprepared.
6. **Amelya's Chamber:** This beautiful, but nearly inaccessible, chamber is home to Mistress Amelya and her entourage. Few visitors emerge from this chamber unchanged.

MARKETPLACE

Nearly any good under 25,000 gp can be found in the Midnight Market, with a bit of time and luck. When the PCs first arrive at the Midnight Market, the following good are available:

Armour +2 heavy wooden shield (4,157 gp), +3 heavy darkwood shield (9,257 gp), +4 banded mail (16,400 gp),

Potions & Oils bless weapon (50 gp), gaseous form (5; 750 gp), hide from undead (50 gp)

Scrolls (Arcane) darkness (150 gp), magic mouth (2; 160 gp each)

Wand sound burst (49 charges, 4,410 gp)

Weapon +2 repeating crossbow bolts (5; 831 gp)

Wondrous Items cloak of arachnida (14,000 gp), ivory goat figurines of wondrous power (21,000 gp)

Additionally, the following services are available:

- **Spellcasting** 5th-level arcane
- **Crafting** 10th-level or lower

EVENTS

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

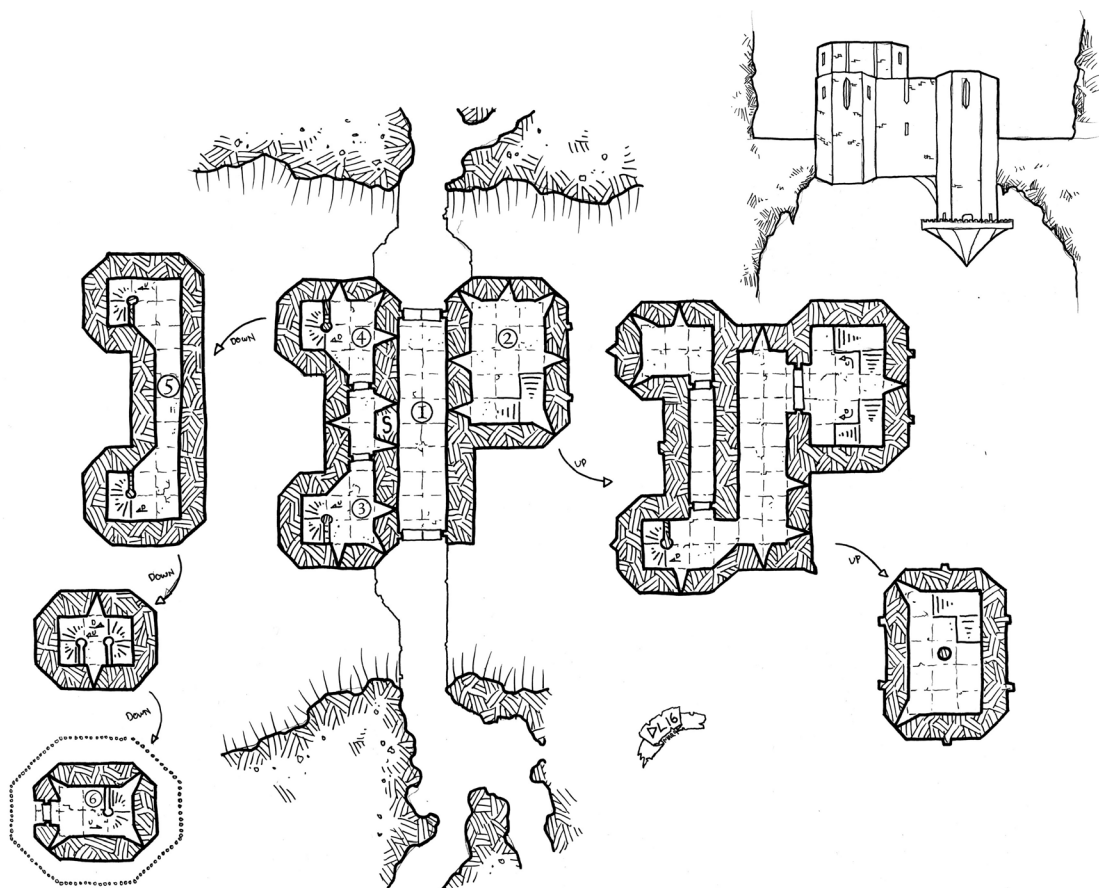
D6	EVENT
1	A group of human visitors draw weapons against a ghoulish merchant, threatening to close the market down as they accuse him of kidnapping (and eating) one of their friends.
2	A humanoid merchant wrapped head to toe in bandages offers vials of a black dust that transport the inhale to another dimension.
3	A scuffle over a table of strange reagents ends abruptly when one man gets shoved into the stall and the shattered glass vials mix disastrously, consuming the whole area in purple flames.
4	A bizarre fey creature sells phoney artefacts, for a few hours. By the time the hoax is discovered, the creature has vanished.
5	Several humans wandering the market bear puncture wounds in their necks. When asked about the wounds, none of the victims have any recollection of their origins.
6	Two dwarves engage in an arm wrestling contest over a sparkling green gem the size of an ogre's fist.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the Midnight Market 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	Lady Amelya can be bought as easily with admiration and adulation as with gold.
2	There is much tension among the members of the so-called "Elite Market", something a canny customer might turn to his advantage.
3*	In the deep reaches of the keep is a portal to an inter-planar marketplace to which only a select few are granted access.
4	There are no requirements to be mortal or even living to visit the Midnight Market.
5*	The Mistress of the Midnight Market is a powerful devil in search of souls to please her infernal masters, so tread carefully and sign nothing.
6*	Anything can be found at the Midnight Market, for a price. (In reality, the Midnight Market is simply a place for contraband to cross to and from the Ebon Realm).

*False rumour



GLOAMHOLD: THE GHOST TOWER

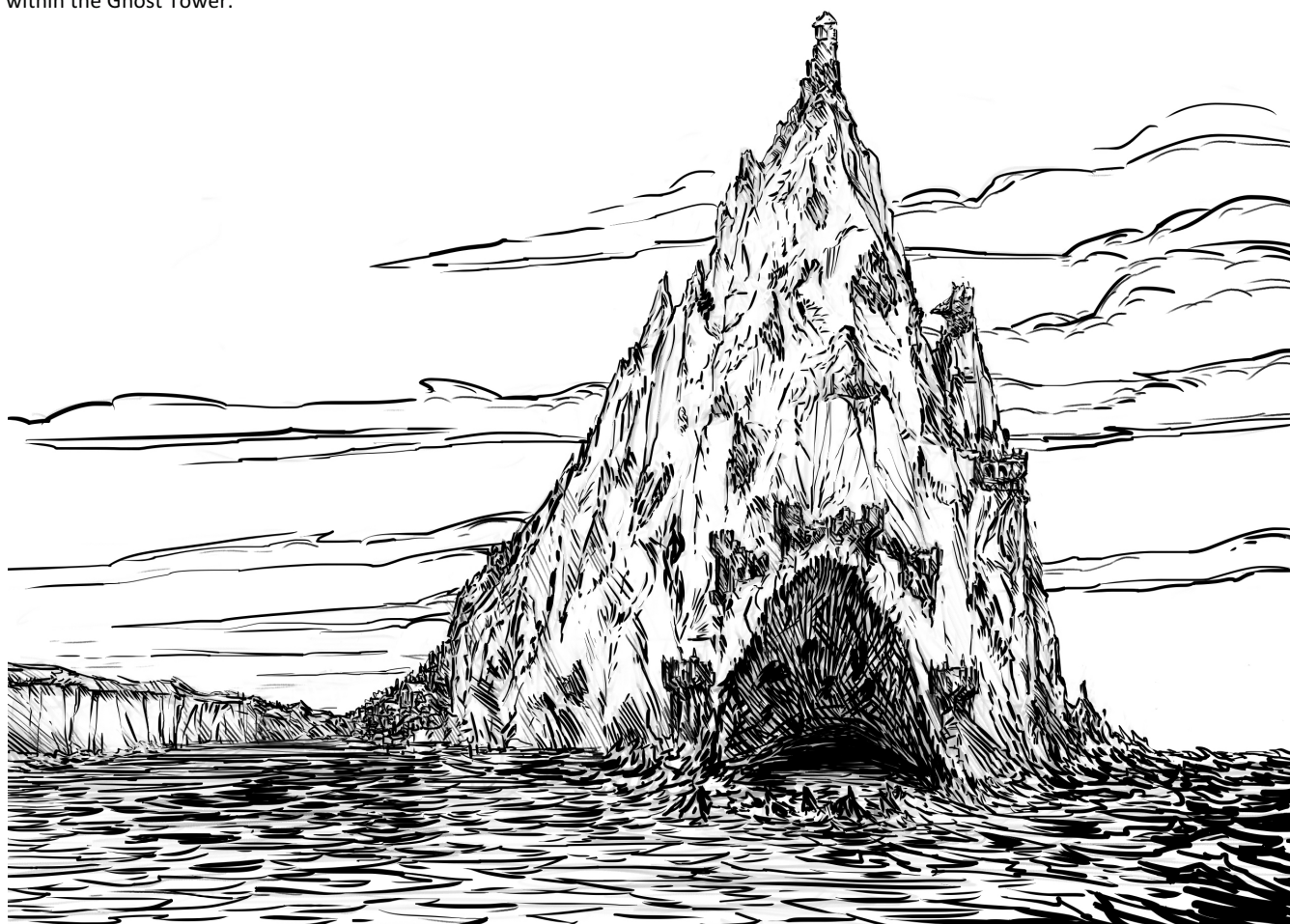
The Shard is one of the most well-known parts of Gloamhold. Visible from Languard's battlemented walls, the great ruin soars high above Greystone's ruins huddling far below. Neophyte adventurers—not ready for the terrors lurking in Gloamhold's outer halls—often dare the Shard's ruins in search of easy victories and gold.

However, persistent rumours speak of otherworldly portions of the tower that defy rationale explanation or description. They speak of a so-called Ghost Tower accessible by adventurers clever enough to decipher a fiendishly complex puzzle buried far below the Shard's ruins in a hidden, savagely trapped cellar.

The puzzles scattered throughout the Shard's cellars granting access to the Ghost Tower take many different forms. Old adventurer's lore, though, speaks of a band of adventurers who claimed to have discovered and deciphered one of the puzzles—an incredibly complicated and breathtakingly detailed mosaic of stars—in a cavernous vaulted chamber protected by merciless sentient magical traps. Since their discovery decades ago, no one is known to have replicated their feat and the survivors of the expedition seemed reticent to discuss what they discovered within the Ghost Tower.

For those who cannot find or decipher the means of entering the tower, all is not lost. Sometimes the tower's fuzzy, transparent outline, overlaid over (and soaring high above) the Shard, is visible at the height of the savage annual winter storms that lash the Mottled Spire. What otherworldly terrors lurk within the tower is a matter of wild conjecture. However, local legends whisper that at the height of the fiercest winter storms, when vicious winds tear at the ruins, bolts of lightning blast the surrounding rock and driving rain buffets the tower the barriers between this world and the other weaken. At this time, brave adventurers can enter the tower, but they must explore quickly for when the storm dies, the barriers warding the tower strengthen trapping any who yet linger within.

The Ghost Tower has other colourful names including the Tower Unseen, the Ephemeral Spire and the Citadel of the Wraith Kings. The last of these names perhaps hints at what lurks within...



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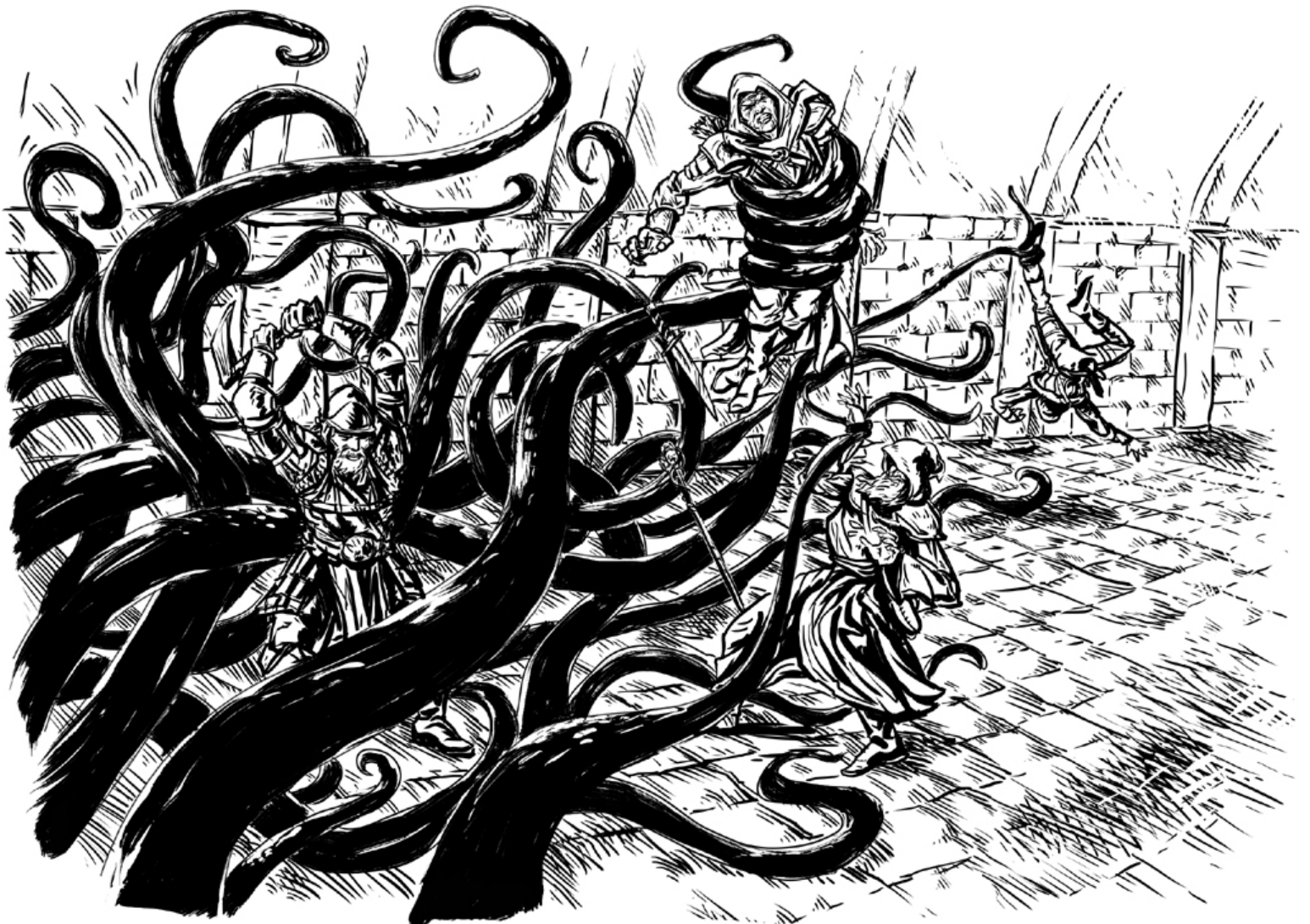
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