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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

## MARCH 2017





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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: MARCH 2017

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*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:

- **Places of Power: Visionary's Perch** Jacob W. Michaels.
- **Village Backdrop: Woodridge** Creighton Broadhurst.

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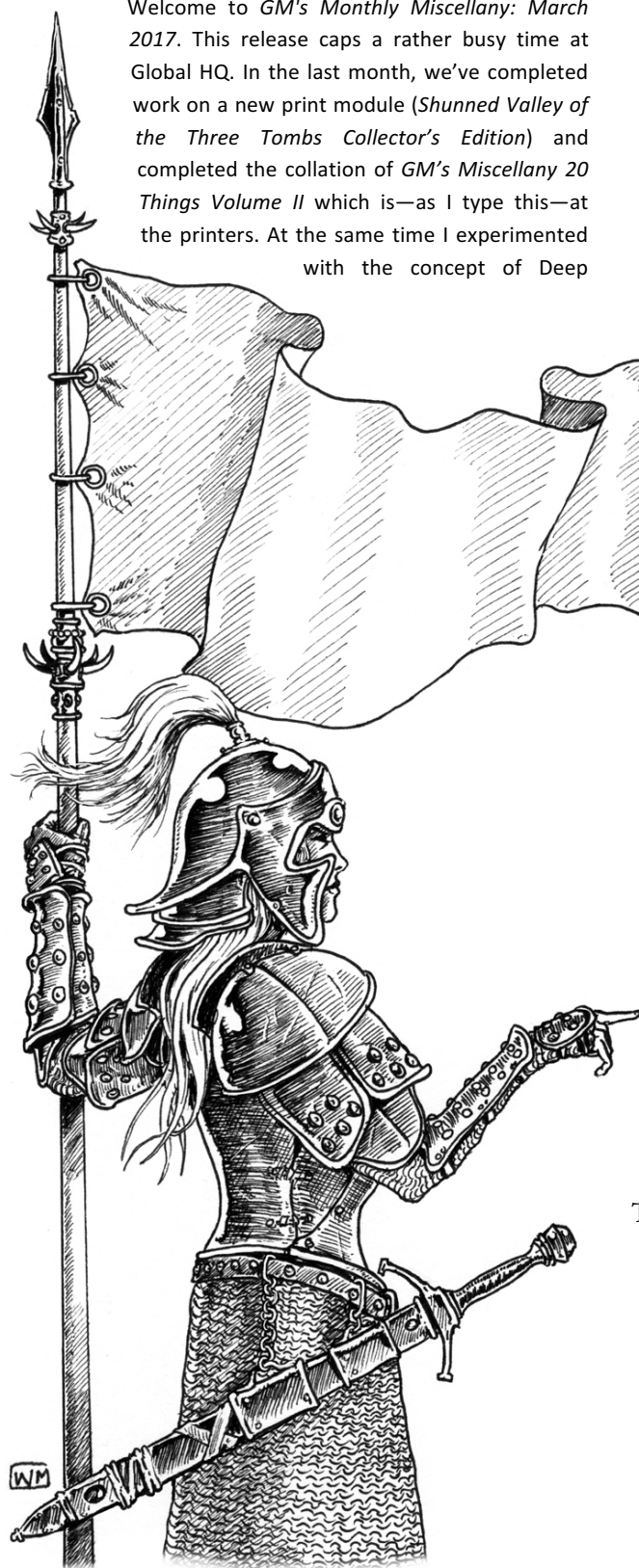
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## FOREWORD



Welcome to *GM's Monthly Miscellany: March 2017*. This release caps a rather busy time at Global HQ. In the last month, we've completed work on a new print module (*Shunned Valley of the Three Tombs Collector's Edition*) and completed the collation of *GM's Miscellany 20 Things Volume II* which is—as I type this—at the printers. At the same time I experimented with the concept of Deep

Work and wrote the first draft of a *Village Backdrop* in three days. I'm quite happy with the result, but please let me know what you think about Woodridge. I think it is safe to say, I'm looking forward to slowing things down a bit, this month!

In any event, herein you'll find excerpts from two of Raging Swan's newest products *Village Backdrop: Woodridge and Places of Power: Visionary's Perch* as well as a couple of articles we've also recently released. With these articles, I've cheated a little bit. I wrote both for my *Borderland of Adventure* campaign and hopefully I'll use them this month. The party are about to participate—hopefully—in the siege of a borderland town. Unless they choose to go somewhere else, they likely be defending the town from an undead horde. I'll use 1,000 Abnormal Skeletons to describe some of the skeletons they'll battle and 20 Things to See in a Siege to add moments of colour. I hope you get similar amounts of use out of them.

### PATREON

You might be aware Raging Swan Press is now 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 massively increased our word rate to 11 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 supporting us, check out [patreon.com/ragingswanpress](https://patreon.com/ragingswanpress) or head over to [patreon.com](https://patreon.com) and search for Raging Swan!

### THANK YOU!

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](mailto:creighton@ragingswan.com).



## 1,000 ABNORMAL SKELETONS

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It often seems skeletons end up as nothing more than generic, bland enemies. That's a shame as their appearance and accoutrements could provide clues as to their fate and inject more flavour and detail into an otherwise standard combat encounter. Use the tables below, to add some depth, flavour and—dare I say it—life to the skeletons encountered by the PCs.

A standard skeleton appears thusly:

*This animate skeleton staggers toward you, its bony, claw-like fingers reaching for your throat.*

To this basic description, apply one of the entries below:

1. Scraps of hair grow from patches of decomposing flesh yet clinging to the skeleton's skull.
2. Several bones are missing from the creature's rib cage.
3. The entire left side of the skeleton's skull is crushed and broken—no doubt the result of a massively heavy blow.
4. Dirty, torn rags cling to the skeleton's frame. Covered in matted dirt and dried blood they reek of death and the grave.
5. Ending in a jagged stump, the skeleton's right arm is missing below the elbow.
6. Incongruously, this skeleton's skull—minus its jaw—is wedged inside the creature's ribcage.
7. Clad in faded but serviceable clothes this skeleton seems more recent animated than its brethren. Its bones are clean—perhaps even polished—and lumps of ebon coal fill its eye sockets.
8. One of the skeleton's legs is horribly smashed; the lower leg hangs from the undead's kneecap.
9. This skeleton's bones are stained a mottled black. (The skeleton was immersed in oil long ago, which impregnated the bones; it burns easily—and brightly!)
10. This tall skeleton's body is tightly wrapped in strips of mouldering cloth; however, its skull has not been so wrapped. To the uninitiated, the skeleton could appear to be a mummy of some sort.

In battle, some skeletons fight differently to their brethren:

1. This skeleton is slower than its companions; reduce its speed by half.
2. This undead is faster than its companions; increase its speed by half.
3. Every time, the skeleton lands a successful hit, a few small bones fall away from its body.
4. This skeleton walks particularly loudly and the click click of its bony feet on the floor are audible from a goodly distance.
5. After the first time it misses in melee, the skeleton drops its weapon and reaches toward its foes with claw-like fingers.

6. Every time it strikes a foe in battle, the skeleton throws back its head in silent exultation.
7. With one leg badly damaged this skeleton literally hops into battle.
8. With no legs, this badly damaged skeleton crawls into battle. It doesn't use a weapon, instead trying to rip its target's feet and lower legs to shreds.
9. This skeleton has no proper weapon. Instead, it beats its enemies to death with a mouldy arm ripped from a previous victim.
10. A glimmer of sentience remains to this skeleton. A thief in life, it dimly remembers the worth of striking from behind and manoeuvres accordingly.

Sometimes, skeletons yet have some small trinket or treasure about their person. Roll on the table below, if you determine the creature has a small item of personal treasure:

1. The skeleton wears a worn and stained broad leather belt which holds up the remains of a ragged pair of trousers. The belt has a secret compartment, which holds 3 platinum coins. (Only perceptive PCs find the secret compartment).
2. In life, this skeleton was a rich person; several of its teeth have gold fillings. Extracting the gold yields 1 gp worth of scrap metal.
3. The hilt of the skeleton's weapon has a small black gem (an onyx) in its handle. The gem is worth 15 gp.
4. The skeleton yet wears a leather necklace around its neck. The beaten copper and bronze locket hanging from the necklace is hopelessly wrapped around the skeleton's rib bones.
5. Worn gold coins are wedged into the skeleton's eye sockets.
6. Eldritch symbols are etched into one of the skeleton's leg bones. The fell writings are a curse on the living, and are worth 2 gp to a collector of such macabre things.
7. An arrow is wedged in the skeleton's ribcage; it has a silver tip.
8. The skeleton wears a small silver ring on its left-hand little finger. The ring has the stylised image of a spread fisherman's net. The ring is worth 2 gp, but might belong to a well-to-do local family (and therefore be worth more to them).
9. Bizarrely, this skeleton wears a ludicrously over-sized fur hat sporting a wide brim. The hat is worn, blood-splattered and essentially worthless; however, a secret pocket in the hat holds a tightly folded *scroll of cure light wounds*.
10. This skeleton's skull contains a largish iron key wedged into its brain cavity. The key unlocks a nearby door.

## WOODRIDGE AT A GLANCE

**Ruler** Hilduin Lorsch

**Government** Overlord

**Population** 185 (172 humans, 7 half-elves, 4 half-orcs, 2 halflings)

**Alignments** LN

**Languages** Common

**Corruption** +3; **Crime** -2; **Economy** +0; **Law** +4; **Lore** +1; **Society** -2

**Qualities** Insular

**Danger** 0; **Disadvantages** Impoverished

Ruled over for centuries by the scheming, ambitious Lorsch family, Woodridge is little more than a backwater village standing on the eastern bounds of the Duchy of Ashlar. Standing astride an ancient, now little-used trade route the village is a poor, but seemingly peaceful place. Its folk tend their small fields, pay their lord his due and are content to be left in peace. But all is not as it seems. Spies lurk among the populace, and dark forces gather which would see Woodridge's lord, Hilduin Lorsch, converted to their faith or dead.

A settlement has stood on the site for centuries. First a robber baron claimed the area. After he was slain and his followers scattered, the victors raised a church to Conn, The Father, and started farming the surrounding land and hunting the nearby Briarwood. The people prospered and trade flowed through the village along the Ridgeway. But the opening of an alternate trade route bypassing Woodridge brought hard times to the village and its lord. This new route, sponsored by the ruler of the nearby town of Dulwich, sparked a rivalry between the two families—the Galls and the Lorsch—which endures to this very day. Even now, the two families struggle for control of the village of Longbridge, its strategically important bridge and its plentiful tax revenues.

Thus, while Woodridge is a peaceful place, an undefinable but palpable tension seems to hang in the air. Its people know war is likely soon for their lord is not a patient man and they dread its approach. Many of the villagers serve in the local militia and many will likely fall in the coming battles.

### VILLAGERS

**Appearance** Weather-beaten and poor, the villagers can seem dull to outsiders. In truth, they are often simply exhausted.

**Dress** The villagers wear stout peasant garb well suited for days of hard labour in the fields. Many peasants own short hunting bows and are often found in huntsman's garb in Briarwood's fringes.

**Nomenclature** *male* Aaro, Elmo, Reima, Sauli, Usko; *female* Aune, Eeva, Irja, Oirjo; *family* Eronen, Leino, Ojanen, Takala.

### MARKETPLACE

**Resources & Industry** Agriculture, hunting

**Base Value** 250 gp; **Purchase Limit** 1,250 gp; **Spellcasting** 2nd;

**Minor Items** 1d4; **Medium Items** 1d2; **Major Items** –

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

- **Potions & Oils** *potion of invisibility* (300 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *goodberry* (25 gp)
- **Wondrous** *candle of invocation* (8,400 gp)

### VILLAGE LORE

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

**DC 10:** Woodridge is an isolated village in Ashlar's eastern reaches. Hilduin Lorsch—a brooding, ambitious man—rules.

**DC 15:** Woodridge is a poor place. It straddles the Ridgeway—an old trading route now superseded by an easier trail. Lorsch dreams of adding the nearby village of Longbridge to his holdings, but his rival continues to thwart his desires.

**DC 20:** Strange things are said to live in the woods to the north of the village. Sometimes, thick fog boils forth from the forest and travellers go missing.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Woodridge 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  | Ancient ruins lie hidden deep in the Briarwood.  |
| 2  | Hilduin Lorsch is consumed with ambition and wants to better his father who did much to improve his family's fortune.  |
| 3* | Caves below the Lorsch manor hold great stores of ancient gold coins.  |
| 4  | Something strange is going on at the Travelling Man. Vesa Ahokas has occasional furtive meetings with travellers who never stay long and who seem to have no real reason to visit Woodridge. |
| 5* | Weird things live in the Briarwood. When the fog rises, they steal forth to fall upon and eat any travellers they find on the Ridgeway.  |
| 6  | Father Turkka is an ingrate who cares more for his own comfort and pleasure than his flock's well-being.   |

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE FOLK

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

**Eeva Keto** (location 5; NE female human cleric [Braal] 5) A new resident, Eeva plots to seduce Hilduin and lure him into her dark lord's embrace (or kill him).

**Father Turkka** (location 3; LN middle-aged male human cleric [Conn] 3) Priest at the Father's Sanctum, Turkka frets over the state of his lord's hall and seeks funds for its repair (while jealously guarding his own comfortable lifestyle).

**Hilduin Lorsch** (location 1; LE male human aristocrat 1/fighter 2) Lord of Woodridge, Hilduin constantly schemes to add the village of Longbridge to his possessions.

**Kanbrar Aralivar** (location 7; LG male half-elf wizard 2) Varma's apprentice, Kanbrar is a kindly soul who now performs most of her duties.

**Reima Lankinen** (location 2; LN male middle-aged human expert 1) Courteous and clever, Reima is a consummate merchant; he is always looking for a way to enrich himself.

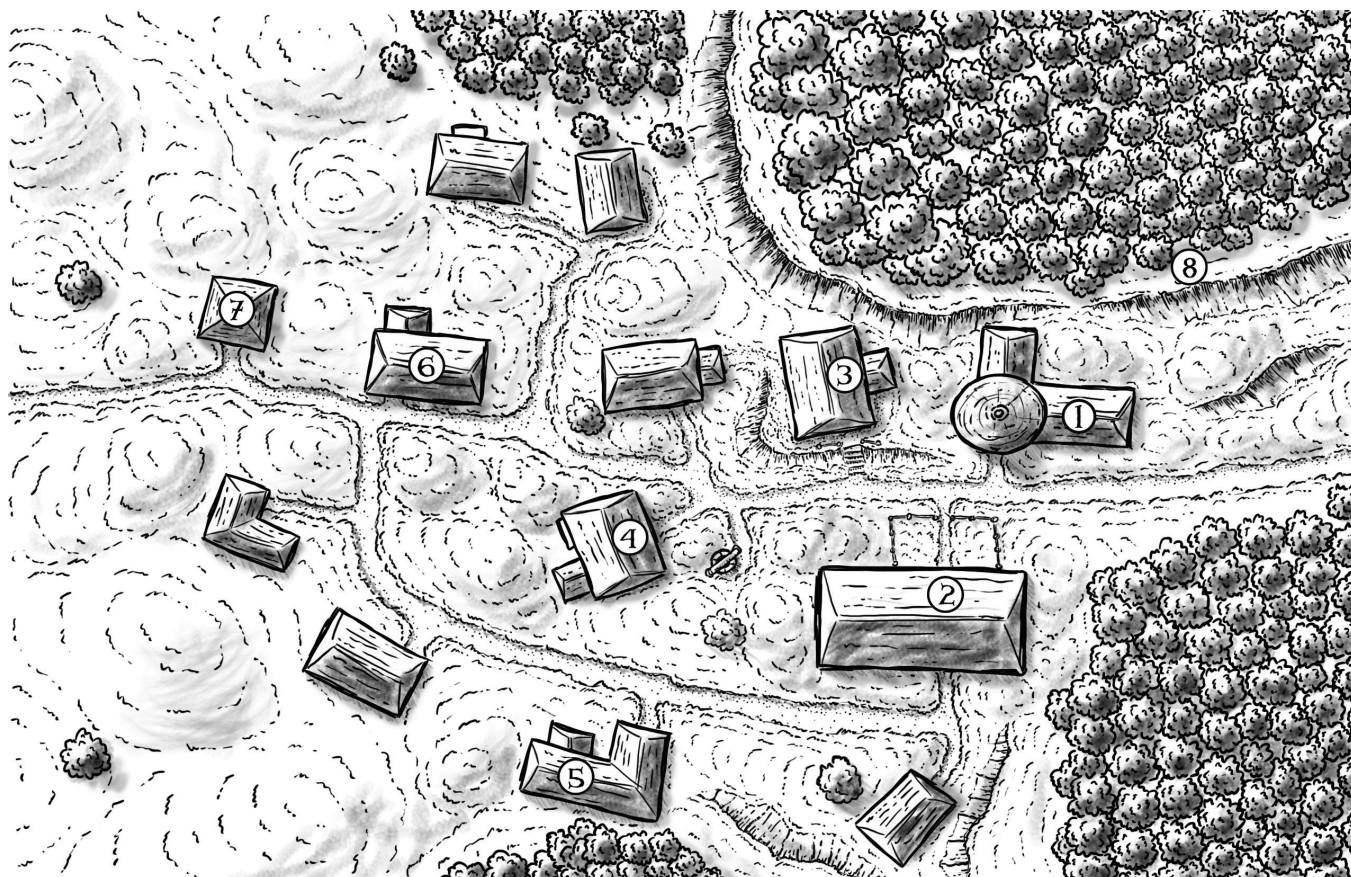
**Varma Timonen** (location 7; N old female human wizard 3) Now growing forgetful, Varma serves as Hilduin's court wizard. She rarely leaves the Smoking Tower.

**Vesa Ahokas** (location 6; N middle-aged male human expert 2) Vesa runs the Travelling Man. He secretly (and reluctantly) spies on Hilduin Lorsch and his doings.

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **Lorsch Manor:** This brooding fortified manor is the Lorsch ancestral home. Here dwells Hilduin Lorsch and his family.
2. **Lankinen's:** This large building is a general provisioners, stables and moneylenders. Reima Lankinen is the second richest man in the village.
3. **Father's Sanctum:** Dedicated to Conn, this is the oldest building in Woodridge except for parts of the Lorsch Manor. Dilapidated, it has seen better days.
4. **Priesthome:** Home to Father Turkka, this is a substantial building.
5. **Eeva's Home:** Here dwells (and plots) Eeva Keto.
6. **The Travelling Man:** Woodridge's only inn is welcoming and comfortable, but rarely busy.
7. **The Smoking Tower:** Varma Timonen dwells here, as she has for decades. She feels the cold terribly; consequently, smoke always belches from the tower's chimney.
8. **Briarwood:** These tangled, ancient woodlands are said to hold ancient ruins and to be the home of certain horrible creatures. Thick fog often blankets the area.





## VISIONARY'S PERCH AT A GLANCE

**Ruler** Eudonia

**Population** 20 (3 humans, 15 elves, 1 half-elf, 1 cyclops)

**Alignments** N, LN

**Languages** Common, Cyclops, Elven, Giant

**Resources & Industry** oracular divinations

Far from the nearest shore, this ancient cyclopean tower houses one of the world's great seers. Watched over for centuries by the elves, the cyclops seeress lacks for nothing, but the centuries grow tiresome even in a cage as gilded as hers, and she chafes at its confinement. She welcomes visitors who share news of the outside world, though she demands a price if they wish to learn of their destiny.

### LORE

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

**DC 10** Set on a remote rock in the Sapphire Sea, Visionary's Perch is home to a powerful seeress.

**DC 20** The seeress is a cyclops, the last survivor of their ancient empire, she demands a price of those who come to learn the future.

**DC 25** Elves watch over the island, though whether they serve the seeress or serve as her wardens is unclear.

### NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than ordinary individuals.

- **Appearance** The elves, lean and fit and with a military bearing, wear their dark hair tied back in utilitarian style.
- **Dress** Layers of well-made wool clothes keep residents warm; those working outside don an oilcloth outer layer.
- **Nomenclature** *male* Ahednill, Lahoal, Oleriut; *female* Danabah, Rosatildr, Talgaerel; *family* Erineri, Keroniy, Rehaneh.

Some of the inhabitants, however, are notable:

**Chelindra 'Songbird' Seawright** (location 5; NG female human bard 4) Chelindra is Eudonia's closest companion and entertainer.

**Eltheirell Bararisi** (location 2; LN male elf ranger 8) Eltheirell commands the elven forces on the island

**Eudonia** (location 5; N female cyclops oracle [lore] 8) Eudonia is the visionary last scion of an ancient cyclops empire.

**Lenalis Idihani** (location 3; LN male elf cleric 2/monk 4) Lenalis is the keeper of the tower's vault of gifts

### MARKETPLACE

The following items and services are for sale:

- **Consumables** *potions of cure light wounds* (50 gp), *potions of endure elements* (50 gp)
- **Miscellaneous** *crystal ball* (42,000 gp), *horn of goodness/evil* (6,500), *mattock of the titans* (23,348), *maul of the titans* (25,305 gp), other random but uncommon items (see below)
- **Spellcasting** 8th (primarily divinations from Eudonia)

### EVENTS

While the PCs are at Visionary's Perch, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

| D6 | EVENT   |
|----|---|
| 1  | A monstrous storm looms, turning the sky black as far as the eye can see. No ship can leave for several days.   |
| 2  | Eudonia summons the PCs to tell of a vision she's had of them, which she shares without payment.                |
| 3  | An elven holiday prompts a celebration, with a great feast, in Elvenhome. Even Eudonia attends.                 |
| 4  | An ostentatiously rich merchant, clearly shaken, asks the PCs to help avert the foretelling he's just received. |
| 5  | Three ships, with sails as black as night, are spotted on the horizon sailing directly toward the tower.        |
| 6  | An item from Eudonia's vault is discovered on the PCs' boat as they prepare to depart.                          |

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Visionary's Perch 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* | Eudonia seeks items to allow her to restore the cyclopean empire, with herself as its empress.  |
| 2  | "The elf-guard may be mostly for show these days, but that don't make them any less dangerous, you know."   |
| 3  | "Lady" Peleny, captain of the <i>Spume Princess</i> , has an arrangement with the seeress ( <i>true</i> ), using visions to lead a campaign of piracy across the region ( <i>false</i> ). |
| 4* | A sea dragon lurks near Visionary's Perch, demanding its own tribute of any ships that wish to approach.  |
| 5  | Horrific storms lash the area, driving ships with unwary captains and crews onto the cliffs.  |
| 6* | "An elf-door connects to the elven kingdom. Some people say it's lost or broken, but I don't believe that."   |

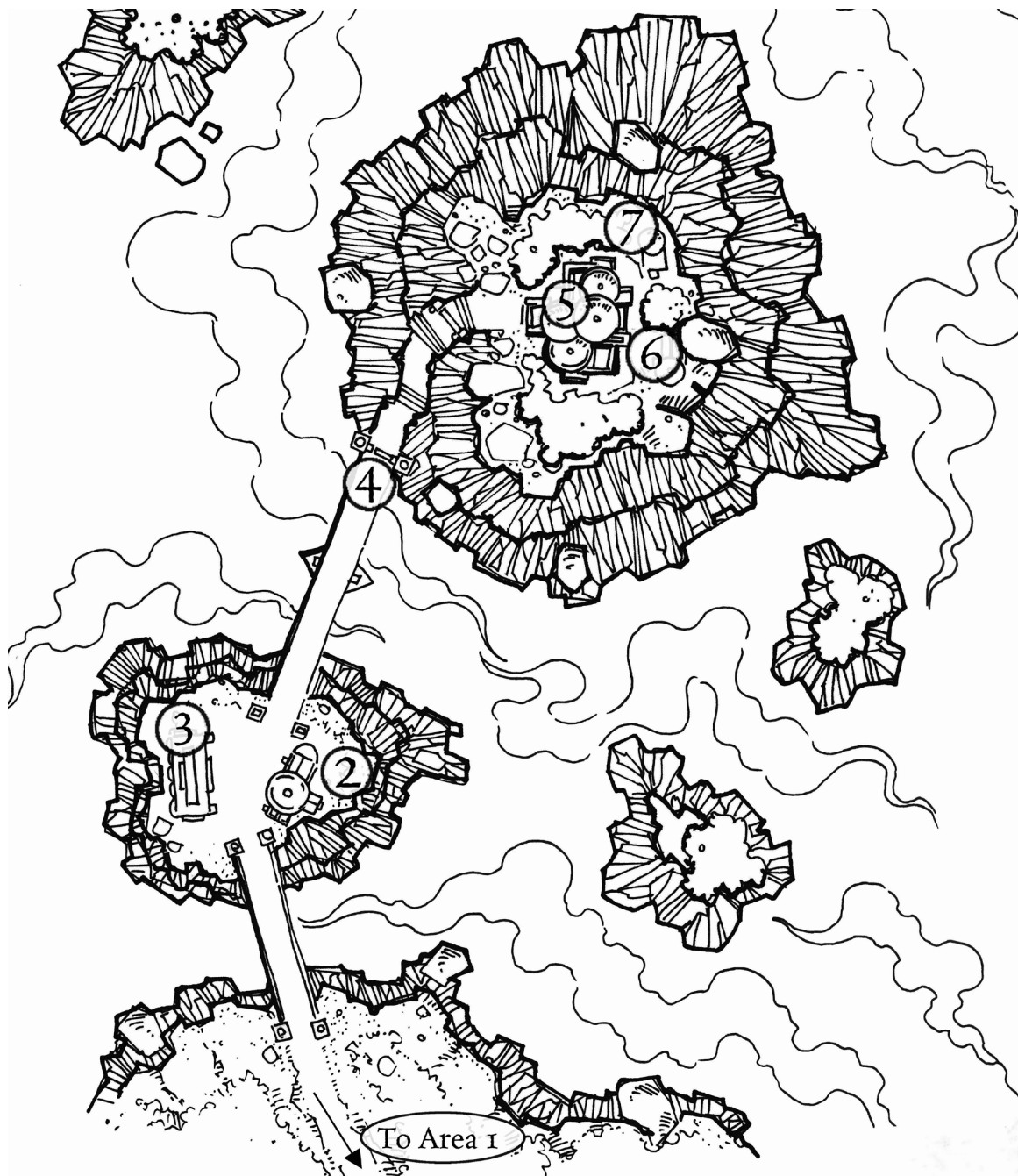
\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of Visionary's Perch comprises locations of little interest to adventurers. A few locations, however, are notable:

1. **The Beach:** The rocky beach on this nearby island provides a place for launches from anchored ships to land. It can accommodate up to three boats at a time.
2. **Elvenhome:** This stately stone building houses the elves of Visionary's Perch.

3. **The Working House:** This building houses the various industries needed by those who live on the island, from library and offices to smithy and woodshop.
4. **Gate:** This gate serves as a bottleneck the elves can use to seal the Seeress' Tower from any outside forces.
5. **The Seeress' Tower:** A massive structure, built to giant scale in the fashion of the ancient cyclops empire, houses the seeress.
6. **Greenhouse:** In this small building grows a supply of fresh fruit and vegetables.
7. **Watch Post:** This small watch post offers an expansive view of the back of the island.





## 20 THINGS TO SEE IN A SIEGE

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Walled towns, cities and castles are often besieged, during wars or border incursions. Such engagements are characterised by brief bouts of fighting punctuating long periods of watching and waiting. That doesn't mean, however, that nothing's happening...

Use the table below, to generate minor events of interest to the defenders during a siege. Remember to modify each event to better fit the general flow of events.

1. A servant rushes passed. He bears a wooden pole over his shoulders from which hang two buckets filled with water. Several pewter drinking cups also hang from the pole. As he hurries off, he slops water onto the floor.
2. A guard atop the wall leans against the parapet looking out over the battlements. (A perceptive PC notices the guard does not move; he could be asleep or dead—the victim of a spy or assassin creeping over the wall).
3. Two guards huddle atop the wall, deep in conversation. They seem to be paying almost no attention to what lies beyond the battlements.
4. Two children sit huddled against a wall. Wrapped in cut-down thick cloaks, they sob quietly. Nearby squats an obviously worried-looking man clad in ragged leather armour. He clutches a spear and has a grim look of determination on his face.
5. The jingle of armour and the tread of heavy feet heralds the approach of a four-man patrol of men-at-arms. (A perceptive PC notices the men-at-arms have worried looks on their faces). They search any obvious hiding places in the immediate vicinity, before continuing their patrol.
6. The sudden harsh clamour of blade on blade nearby shatters the relative peace. (Investigations reveal, two man-at-arms practising their swordplay—enemies are not within the walls).
7. A sudden wind picks up, blowing the stench of the enemies' camp over the fortress' walls. Snatches of sound also reaches the defender's ears.
8. Suddenly an arrow arcs over the wall. It narrowly misses a man-at-arms, who instinctively ducks as it shatters against a nearby wall.
9. A small group of peasants stand in a loose circle. An angry murmur rises above the group as one of the burlier men expounds upon some point. A single alert, man-at-arms stands nearby observing the group with a concerned look upon his face. Several of the women in the group cast dark looks in his direction.
10. With a scream, one of the guards atop the wall suddenly throws his hands into the air before falling backwards off the

walkway, an arrow in his throat. (PCs rushing to his aid discover he is already dead).

11. A young teenage boy wearing a rusting suit of chainmail and a comically over-sized helmet staggers passed. He nervously clutches a spear and looks terrified.
12. Suddenly, a wildly struck alarm bell shatters the relative calm. Immediately, defenders grab their weapons and rush to man the walls. (This could be a false alarm or the start of a proper attack).
13. Deep drumming sounds from somewhere in the enemy camp. It begins suddenly and goes on for hours.
14. Heavy rain lashes both attackers and defenders. Visibility is reduced and the ground outside the wall quickly turns to mud. Whoever can do so, seeks shelter. The rain lasts for several hours before slowly petering out.
15. A particularly large bird circles high above the walls. Several of the defenders mutter among themselves and several shoot at the bird, but to no avail. (Perceptive PCs even note one of the shots seems to hit the bird, but bounces off!)
16. Tears running down his face, a small child wanders about. He has lost his mother and cannot find her. If he—Aldorn—is returned to his mother—Shel—she is tremendously grateful as he has been missing for hours. (Later, if the enemy breach the walls, Shel seeks the party out for protection; Aldorn—at an impressionable age—begins to hero worship one of the PCs).
17. Hysterical screaming alerts everyone nearby to a terrible event. Investigations reveal a man-at-arms dead with a dagger in his back. Was the death the result of an argument, or has a spy snuck into the fortress?
18. A commotion without the walls reveals the arrival of reinforcements to bolster the attacker's force. Several covered wagons hint at the arrival of extra supplies—or perhaps even a dismantled siege engine (and its ammunition).
19. A man-at-arms, clearly drunk almost beyond words—lies slumped against a wall. The man is insensible; he is found by an officer and hauled away. The next day, he is hung from the walls as an example to others.
20. The enemy camp is suspiciously quiet all day. Suspensions rise, they are planning a major attack.

### FINAL NOTE

The events detailed above could serve as nothing more than descriptive filler to aid the GM describing the passing time between bouts of fighting. Alternatively, they could serve as springboards for interesting role-playing opportunities with the other defenders. Finally, some could serve as a hook for some minor adventure or side trek.

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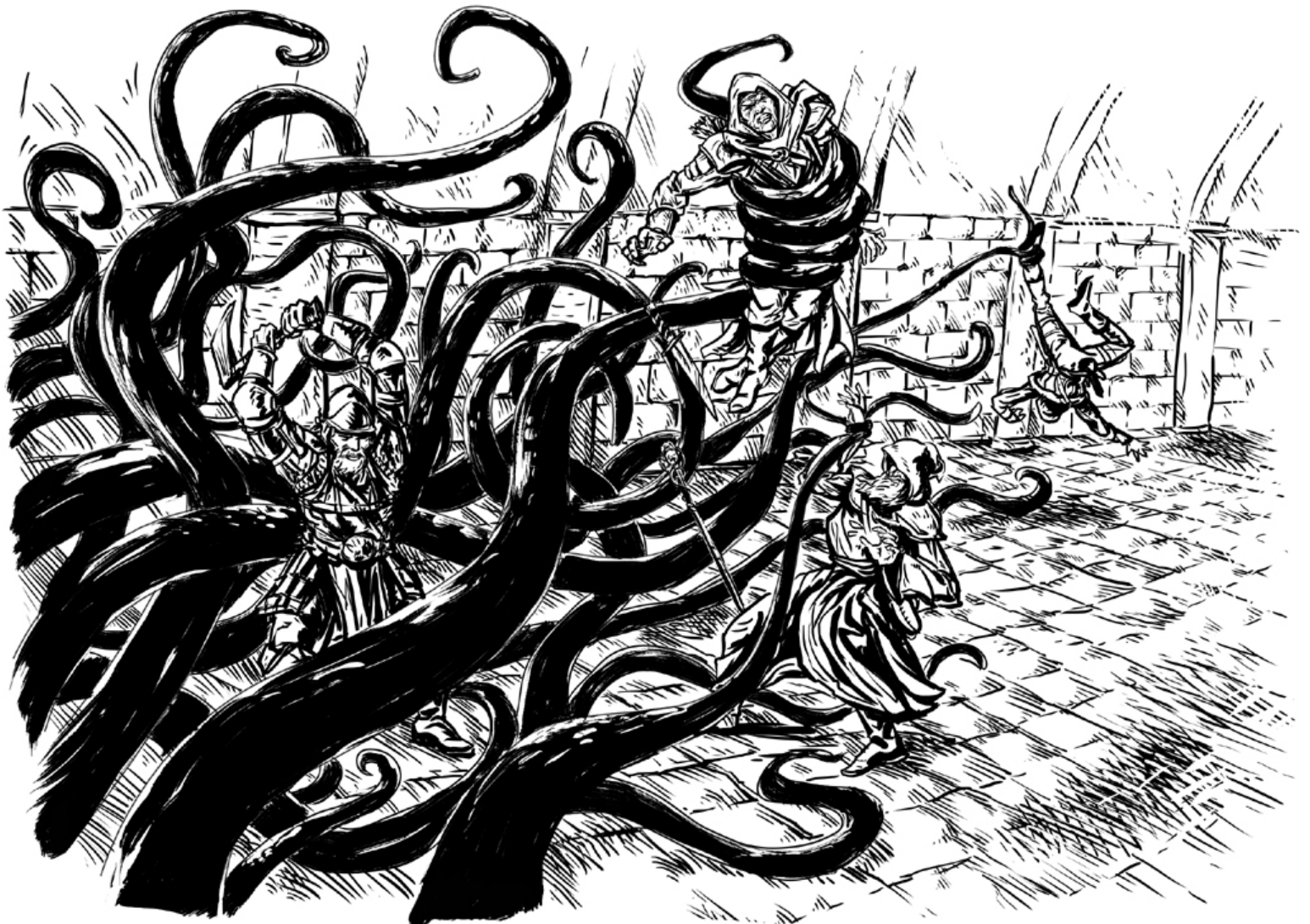
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