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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: NOVEMBER 2017





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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: NOVEMBER 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:

- **20 Things #20: Fort on the Borderland** Creighton Broadhurst.
- **Places of Power: Dead Man's Run** Jacob W. Michaels.
- **Village Backdrop: Echo Harbour** Amber Underwood.

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It seems it was just last month I was writing a lot has happened recently. Well, I've got to write the same thing again! Just after I'd finished compiling last month's issue, Raging Swan Press's heroic patrons crushed our next milestone goal—which means I've started plotting and planning the Master Your Campaign podcast—a podcast dedicated to all things GM. I don't know if I'll have the first episodes out by the time you read this, but I hope if I don't they won't be far away!

On another subject, do you enjoy the GM's Monthly Miscellanies? I'm looking at 2018's release schedule and I'm thinking of discontinuing the line. While the line has been a success—I think—for Raging Swan compiling them is taking time away from things I could be focusing on (like the podcast). If you have an opinion one way or another, please let me know via the email address below!

### 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.

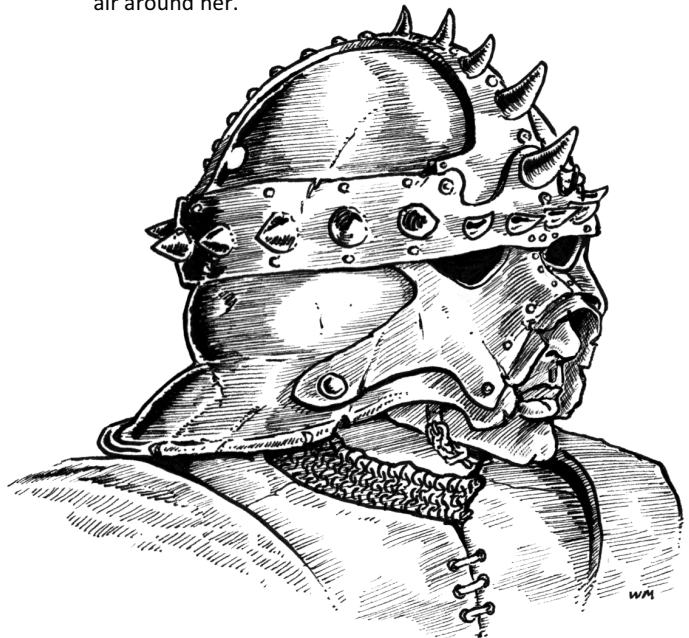
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Borderland forts are often dangerous places, and the wise nobleman strongly garrisons it with redoubtable men-at-arms. Such soldiers should not be merely carbon copies of one another. Among any garrison exceptional—or interesting—individuals will always emerge.

Use the table below, to generate the details of particularly interesting or exceptional men-at-arms the party encounters.

1. **Aevar** (LG male human fighter 1) Overly burly, and bald, Aevar cuts a menacing image. His dangerous mien is further enhanced by a badly done tattoo of a skull covering his entire head except for his face. For all that, Aevar is loyal to his lord, if not a little bit too enthusiastic in combat.
2. **Turkka Hirvonen** (N male human fighter 1) Turkka doesn't want to be soldier; he only become one to escape a life of crushing poverty and constant hunger. He is loyal—to an extent—to his lord, but is always on the lookout for a way to turn a profit. Turkka is always hungry, and rarely encountered without food in his hand (or hidden in his pouch).
3. **Aila Leino** (NG female human fighter 3) Aila's slender frame belies a strength far greater than most men. Friendly and gregarious, Aila is popular with her fellows, although secretly she hates their coarse, unsubtle humour. She is a skilled warrior and braver than most veterans. With dark grey eyes and short-cropped red hair, Aila stands out from her drab fellows. If she can escape this backwater fort, a great destiny lies in her future for Aila is not entirely human...
4. **Gar Blood-Eye** (CN male half-orc fighter 2) A renegade from an orcish tribe lurking in the nearby wilderland, Gar is not completely trusted by his fellows. Half of them see the tall and broad-shouldered green-skinned warrior as little more than a savage while most of the rest believe him to be a spy. Consequently, Gar has few friends and has become used to expecting the worst from those he meets.
5. **Myev Widow-maker** (NG female half-orc fighter 2) A terror on the battlefield, Myers has a way of looking at people that suggests she is plotting their brutal and swift evisceration. She uses a large double-blade axe—her “Widow-maker”—in lieu of any other weapon. For all that, she is popular with her fellows who have got over her strange ways. She—in turn—is incredibly protective of them.
6. **Arnallae Uthliavar** (CG female half-elf fighter 3) Arnallae is a restless soul who has served here for a decade or so because she wants to experience the borderland and its perils. She is erratic, but brave. While Arnallae would never put the lives of her fellows in jeopardy, she is easily distracted.
7. **Eohric Llitwin** (CN old male human fighter 2) Stocky and grey-haired, Eohric is clearly older than his fellows—who jokingly refer to him as “grandfather”. Eohric is immensely experienced, but now tires easily. He dreams of retiring and living out his days in a tavern, but Eohric is an inveterate gambler. Disastrously, he is also gullible and heavily in debt to certain individuals who want access to his lord's private chambers. Thus far, Eohric has resisted their advances but as his debts mount he is becoming increasingly desperate.
8. **Valto Sianio** (N male human fighter 1) Valto suffers from chronic toothache. With a perpetual grimace on his face, he appears miserable much of the time. Valto's woes started when he was punched in the face during a training bout. The blow shattered his front teeth and infection soon set in. Now all that remain are blackened stumps.
9. **Gerold Corbie** (NE male human thief 3) Ostensibly Gerold is a new recruit to the garrison, but he has a secret. In reality, he is a spy for a rival lord (or perhaps a band of humanoid planning to attack the fort). Unfortunately for Gerold, one of the PCs fits the description of his contact (who he has never met before) and he tries to make contact one night in the tavern. Confusion ensues and if he can talk his way out of his encounter with the PCs, he abandons his mission and flees.
10. **Frida Gall** (NG female human fighter 1) Constantly on the edge of exhaustion, Frida has deep bags under her eyes. Bedevilled by nightmares, she rarely sleeps a whole night through and often wakes up screaming. She is not a popular bunk mate, consequently. Desperate for sleep, she has tried all manner of herbal remedies and the faint smell of such often hang in the air around her.



## ECHO HARBOUR AT A GLANCE

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**Ruler:** The Recognised

**Government:** Council

**Alignments:** NG, LN, N

**Population:** 199 (57 humans, 18 half-orcs, 65 merfolk, 59 orcs)

**Notable Folk:** Caller Deepway (Echo Harbour), Crower Ouwei (Kelp Farms), Spellwright Lightguide (Treeshell Shipyard), Trademaster Broadsail (Silver Scale), Zephyr Broadsail (Broadsail Outfitters)

**Languages:** Aquan, Common, Draconic, Orc

**Qualities:** Prosperous, strategic location

**Corruption:** -1; **Crime:** -1; **Economy:** +1; **Law:** -3; **Lore:** -3;

**Society:** +3

**Danger:** 0

### MARKETPLACE

**Resources & Industry:** Mariculture, pearl diving, shipbuilding

**Base Value:** 700 gp; **Purchase Limit:** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting:** 3rd (Grower Ouwei at location 3, Spellwright Lightguide at location 7); **Minor Items:** 2d4; **Medium Items:** 1d4; **Major Items** –

Echo Harbour teems with people: sailors dock their ships in the harbour and load them with supplies and trade goods, merchants haggle with merfolk on the foreshore and men in market stalls, workers toil in the busy shipyards and travellers crowd the taverns, making boasts and bets as they play games to pass the time. Over the bustle and chatter sound the shouts and songs of the orcs as they direct ships and caravans to their proper places.

In the not too distant past, Echo Harbour didn't exist. Only merfolk lived in the bay, quietly tending their farms beneath the waves. Few merchants dared to brave the region's pirates and bandits, even for the rare pearls the merfolk gathered.

The change began when Bonesong, a battle-scarred dragon turtle with an attendant tribe of orcs, entered the bay. Exhausted and injured from fighting and weary for their nomadic lifestyle, Bonesong and her followers struck a deal with the merfolk: they would protect the bay and its trade routes, and in exchange, they would call it their home. Their presence deterred outlaws and as the area became safer, trade became increasingly common; a few human merchants even settled there, sensing opportunity. Over time the different cultures blended and the community leaders banded together into a single ruling council: The Recognised.

Recently, though, Bonesong vanished. Echo Harbour has grown prosperous under her protection, but it remains to be seen if it has the strength to stand on its own. Only time will tell if she will return, or if the villagers must find another way to safeguard their future.

### VILLAGE LORE

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

**DC 10:** Echo Harbour is a prosperous port with abundant food supplies and valuable trade goods. It is a good starting place for an ocean voyage and a safe harbour.

**DC 15:** An old dragon turtle, Bonesong, dwells near Echo Harbour and is allied with the villagers. She leaves most vessels alone, but savages pirate ships.

**DC 20:** A sizable portion of Echo Harbour is underwater; much of its wealth stems from vast aquatic farms maintained by its merfolk citizens.

### VILLAGERS

**Appearance:** The villagers are a diverse lot, but tanned skin, dark hair and dark eyes are common. Humans are slender and short, the orcs have a faint green tint to their skin and broad chests, and the merfolk are pale and have distinctive turquoise hair.

**Dress:** Sturdy trousers of canvas or leather are favoured in Echo Harbour, accompanied by woven sandals. Most villagers eschew shirts and other garments. Jewellery of bone, obsidian and pearls is common, especially in the form of piercings

**Nomenclature:** *family* Broadsail, Deepway, Lightguide, Ouwei; *personal* most villagers use a title rather than a personal name, though children and young adults are named after animals, plants and weather until they earn their adult title.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

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

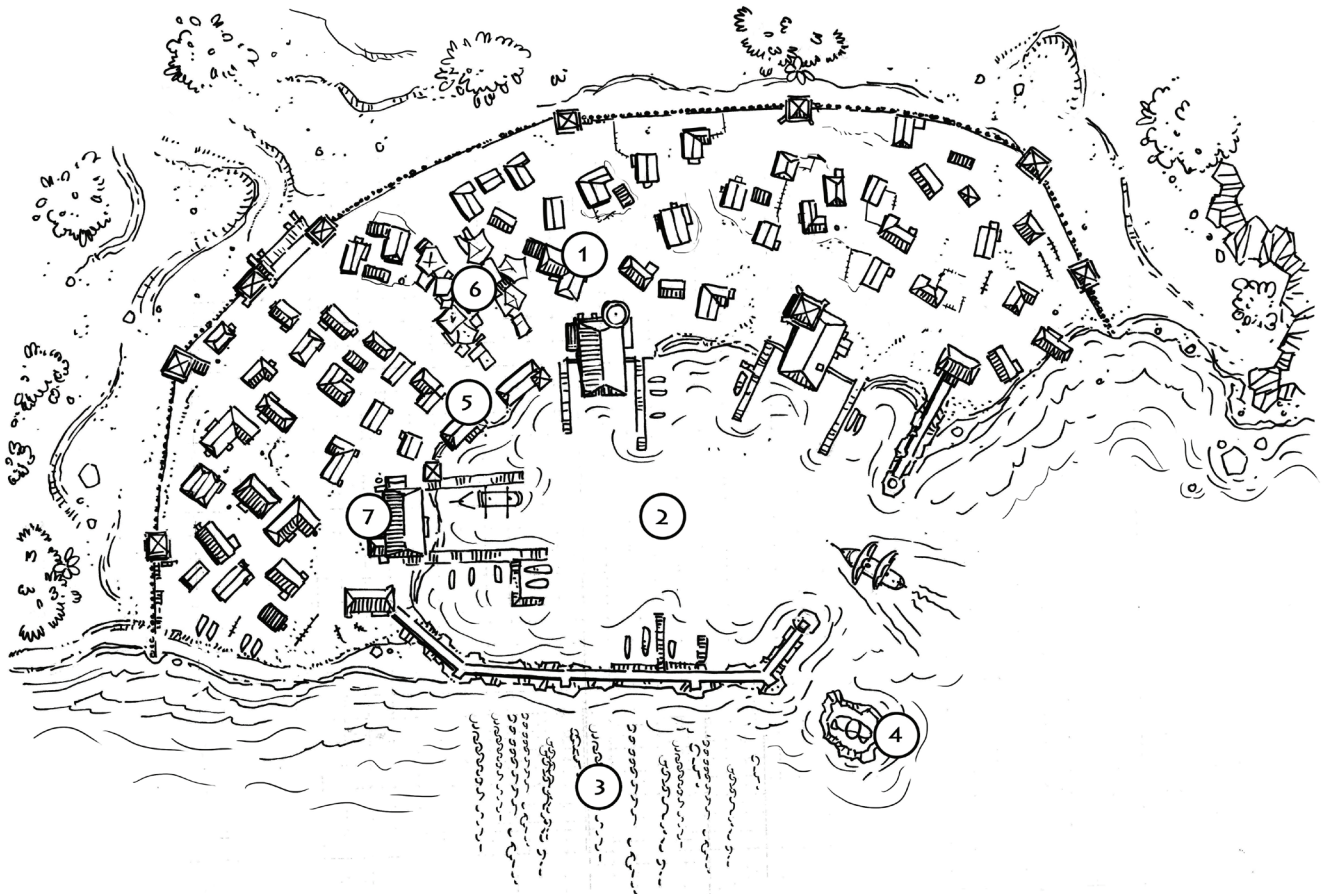
D6	RUMOUR
1	The dragon turtle that protects the harbour hasn't been seen in a while, and might be gone (or dead).
2*	A well-hidden and protected sea cave contains a secret treasure hoard! This hoard is the real source of Echo Harbour's wealth.
3	Shouts from the village bard and his workers resound easily in the harbour and are the source of its name.
4	A pirate with a vicious history hides in the village.
5	Merchants from remote lands stop and sell rare and exotic goods in the marketplace.
6*	The local shipbuilder has acquired a broken underwater craft, and has been trying to fix it.

\*False rumour

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

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

1. **Broadsail Outfitters:** The Broadsail family shop sells quality supplies to sailors and adventurers. Zephyr Broadsail runs the shop and frequently offers bounties on rare sea creatures.
2. **Echo Harbour:** The village takes its name from this busy harbour. It has several long docks, two warehouses for handling cargo and protective concrete walls that shelter it from the open ocean. Caller Deepway is normally on the docks, telling stories and managing workers.
3. **Kelp Farms:** Outside the harbour walls are the village farms, which comprise giant kelp forests and organised rows of cultivated oysters. The merfolk farmers also catch schools of fish. All together the bounty allows them to provide for the entire village and still have surplus to trade. Grower Ouwei tends to the farms during daylight hours.
4. **Origin Cave:** Icy blue light radiates from a vaguely humanoid statue sculpted from a rocky outcrop off the coast. The light guides ships safely into the harbour, but unknown to most it also marks the entrance to an underwater sea cave. The cave is sacred to the village. In addition to the rites they perform there they use it as an ossuary.
5. **Silver Scale:** A popular tavern, the Silver Scale appeals to its customers with games of chance and skill as well as its menu. It is a common gathering place for villagers, and the Recognised even use it for council meetings. Trademaster Broadsail has permanently reserved a quiet table here, and occupies it near constantly.
6. **Sun Market:** Nothing is ever the same twice in the Sun Market. Stalls and canvas canopies can be rented for a small fee, and countless merchants, adventurers and wandering mystics set up shop here for a day or two before moving on.
7. **Treeshell Shipyard:** At least one boat is being built in the shipyard at any given time, and it is a good place to make repairs. Spellwright Lightguide toils here, overseeing her numerous apprentices.



## DEAD MAN'S RUN AT A GLANCE

**Ruler** None

**Population** 11 (5 humans, 4 elves, 2 half-elves)

**Alignments** LG, LN

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Resources & Industry** Ferry services

This remote border between an elven kingdom and human realm may have never been settled had a human baron not seen it as a perfect spot to sneak troops into his neighbour's land for an invasion. The plan worked for a time, but the baron's forces were eventually repulsed, leading to several years of constant fighting that turned the Brimbrook's gently flowing waters crimson. In time, this stalemate led to a truce, and the truce eventually became a tenuous peace. Two villages grew, one on each side of the river, their growing friendship symbolized by the stone bridge erected to link them.

Dead Man's Run spans the graves of those two villages and almost all their inhabitants.

No one knows what caused it, but a single night of chaos ten years ago wiped the villages from the face of the earth. Nature itself seemed to turn against the inhabitants: the earth shook, the ground rising and cracking; lightning struck from the sky, igniting the fort and burning it to the ground; and the gentle creek became a rampaging river, sweeping homes from their foundations. When morning finally came, the villages were gone, and almost all their inhabitants with them.

Most of the few survivors fled the disaster, but a remnant of that remnant stayed to tend to the watery graves of friends and family. They bridged the divide, ferrying first themselves and later travellers across the river. With each passage, they offer tribute, a pair of gold coins, to the dead and the water in hopes that neither rise up again.

### MARKETPLACE

The following items are for sale:

- **Weapons & Armour** Miscellaneous items have been scavenged from the area: Much of it is masterwork or even magical—lesser weapons didn't survive their exposure to the elements—but most such items are in need of repair.

Additionally, the following services are available:

- **Spellcasting** 3rd-level cleric

### LORE

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

**DC 10:** The ferry service at Dead Man's Run offers the only route across the Brimbrook for miles in either direction.

**DC 15:** The origins of the crossing's name come from a night of horror ten years ago, when the then-gentle Brimbrook's course was changed in a series of earthquakes, which turned it into a wide, rushing river that destroyed the two villages standing on its banks.

**DC 20:** A few of the survivors of the tragedy known as Nature's Night operate the ferry service, though they remain primarily to tend to the watery graves of their friends and family.

### NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the residents of the villages died or fled, but a few remain at Dead Man's Run.

- **Appearance** Even after ten years, most of the residents of Dead Man's Run bear a haunted look, faces marked by deep lines, sunken eyes and pinched lips.
- **Dress** The residents of Dead Man's Run wear simple, utilitarian wool clothing, with straw hats to protect them from the sun.

### WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Dead Man's Run 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 ferry charges an exorbitant fee: the silver piece per person or animal isn't too bad, but they also demand two gold coins for every passage across the water.
2	The ferryman always throws two gold pieces into the water before each trip.
3*	Anyone who tries to cross Dead Man's Run without paying tribute faces death themselves, tossed by a sudden wall of water into the river to be smashed into the rapids downstream.
4	The lower levels of the fort that once guarded the area are inaccessible after it burned down. Who knows what secrets they hold?
5*	The river is full of gold coins, but anyone who tries to recover them is hauled down by the grasping hands of the dead sleeping on the river bed.
6	A powerful nymph resides in the area; she may have been responsible for Nature's Night, but now helps keep the surrounding area mostly peaceful.

\*False rumour



## NOTABLE LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

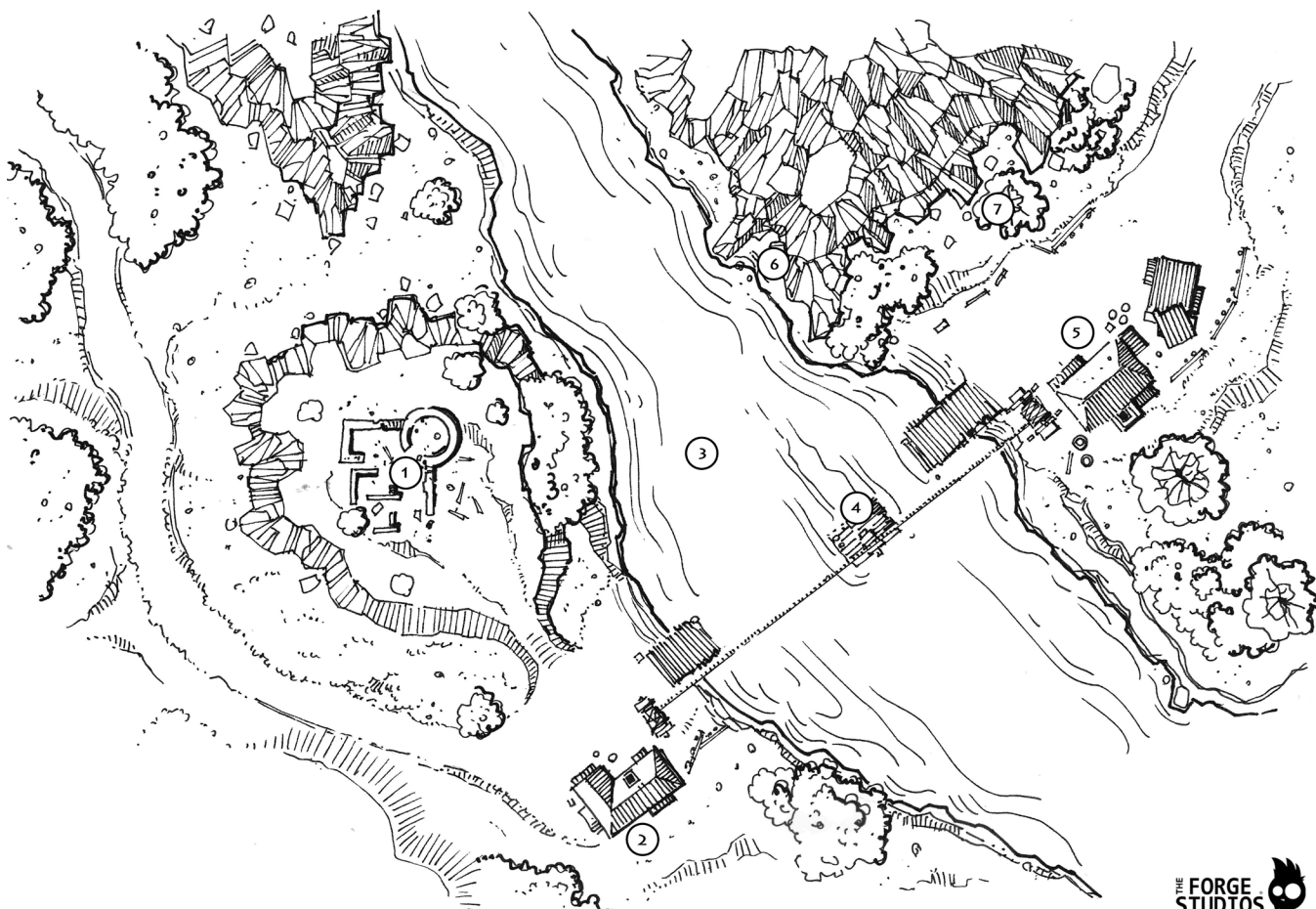
Dead Man's Run is a small community, which makes the most of the space it has:

1. **Fort Essayas:** The remaining residents of Dead Man's Run avoid the crumbling ruins of this fort, believing that whatever caused Nature's Night stemmed from activities here and that it's cursed by its past use. The fort's cellars and dungeon have remained unexplored since it burned down.
2. **The Manorhall:** Once the centre of the village's local government, the Manorhall is now home to a young family: the widower farmer-turned-ferryman, Vyncis Potte, and the elf Adoleid Potte, who found comfort in each other's arms. Their two children are the light of most of the survivors' lives. They share their home with Oror Highbird, though the elf spends much of his time hunting.
3. **The Brimbrook:** Once a gentle stream, the wide river now rushes over the sunken graves of most of the villagers. On clear days, the remains of homes and bodies of residents can be seen on the muddy bottom. The nymph druid Millenaphi dwells downstream, but is rarely seen.

4. **Brimbrook Ferry:** The primary source of income for the remaining survivors, the cable ferry is typically operated by either Irennen Fairarrow or Vyncis Potte, though the former refuses to cross at night.
5. **Lumber House:** This building doubles as a home and a mill, used to ensure spare ferries are available. In addition to Irennan Fairarrow, husband and wife Exard and Dottry Lysalt call the building home, as do Cedia Borne and Wyan Sabil.

## IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Dead Man's Run can be placed in almost any hilly or mountainous region where a river provides an obstacle to travel. It should be fairly remote, but can serve as a quick interlude to break up a cross-country journey; an interesting place to rest and possibly resupply; or a potential adventure spot in its own right. The border aspect of the two kingdoms can be played down if you wish, as the end of the conflict returned the area around Dead Man's Run to a backwater of little interest to either side. If having bordering kingdoms of different races doesn't fit in your campaign world, the conflict can also be changed to make both sides belong to the same race and simply be between competing rulers.





## 10 BORDERLAND FORT WHISPERS & RUMOURS

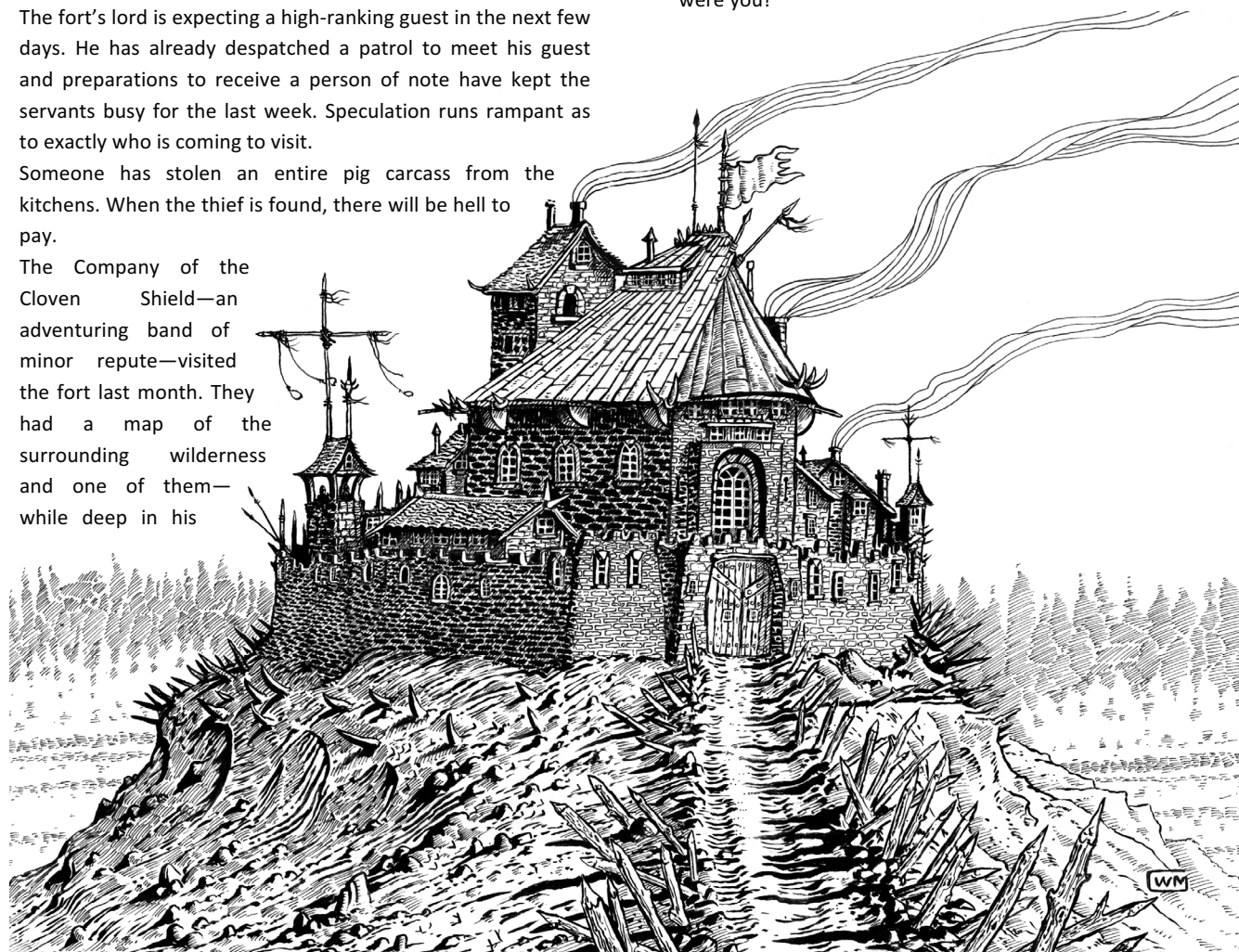
Like any small community, a borderland fort is often rife with rumours. Whether its folk swap stories about various adventurers passing through, the dalliances of prominent individuals or the depredations of nearby humanoids news—both true and false—circulates wherever people gather.

Use the table below, to determine the minor rumours the party hears while at the borderland fort. (Obviously, some of the rumours might require minor adjustment to better fit with your locale).

1. Strange things are going on at the chapel. A hooded figure has been seen entering the building late at night. (The priest is having an affair with a married women).
2. The fire at the blacksmith's last month was not accidental. Had it not been for his apprentice's quick thinking, the whole building would have gone up in flames.
3. Bandits have once again been seen in the fort's vicinity. Rumour has it the Captain of the Guard is preparing an expedition to put them to the sword.
4. The fort's lord is expecting a high-ranking guest in the next few days. He has already despatched a patrol to meet his guest and preparations to receive a person of note have kept the servants busy for the last week. Speculation runs rampant as to exactly who is coming to visit.
5. Someone has stolen an entire pig carcass from the kitchens. When the thief is found, there will be hell to pay.
6. The Company of the Cloven Shield—an adventuring band of minor repute—visited the fort last month. They had a map of the surrounding wilderness and one of them—while deep in his

cups—boasted the map showed the site of a lost treasure. The company haven't been seen since they left the fort three weeks ago. Most people think they have perished.

7. The castle is haunted. A couple of years ago, an evil necromancer was burned at the stake in the courtyard. With his dying screams, he cursed all those present to never rest easily in the grave. Since then, several graves have been disturbed and the corpses removed (or did they escape under their own power?)
8. The well providing drinking water for the fort is old—far older than the fort itself. Writings attributed to the original settlers of the area speak of caverns accessible from the well shaft. However, no such access now exists; one of the previous lords had the whole well re-bricked blocking any such entrances.
9. Strange tracks have been found by hunters in the surrounding area. Judging by the size of the tracks, whatever made them was roughly the size of a horse, and—worryingly—it has claws!
10. The tavern is infested with bedbugs—I wouldn't stay there if I were you!



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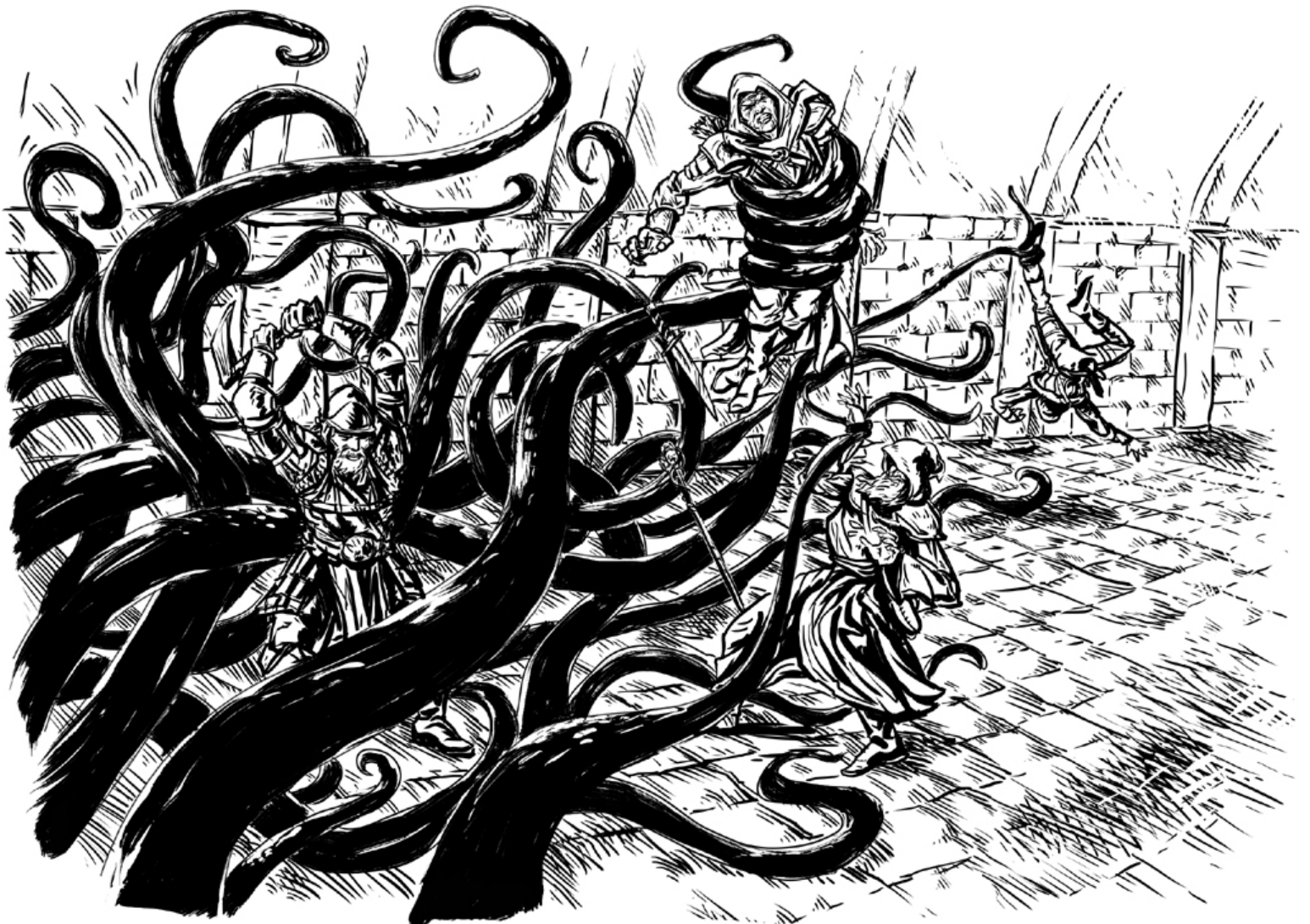
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