RAGING SWAN PRESS VILLAGE BACKDROP: PRAYER'S POINT



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VILLAGE BACKDROP: PRAYER'S POINT

The quaint village of Prayer's Point is a prosperous place. Many folk believe it is blessed by the gods, for numerous aasimar children are born to its residents and visitors alike. As if the villagers needed additional confirmation their home is touched by divinity, the nearby river of Angel's Run and the bay it feeds are famous for their waters, which shine with golden light each sunrise and sunset. Still, even such a tranquil place as Prayer's Point isn't without its problems. Whispered rumours speak of lycanthropes in the nearby forest, ghosts stalking the village's graveyard and of strange, rotting carcasses floating down Angel's Run. And looming above all hangs the horrible truth: terrible, unnatural things craving nothing more than wanton death lurk within nearby Mount Hoarfrost.

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The quaint village of Prayer's Point has always been blessed with prosperity, but in recent decades that prosperity has blossomed. Named for the favourite meditation spot of a legendary paladin of yore, Prayer's Point attracts travellers looking to find their fortunes in the lost ruins of a dwarven hold and pilgrims who believe the village's namesake, Prayer's Rock, is touched by divinity. Residents certainly believe the village is blessed, for the waters of Angel's Bay glows as pure as truegold each morning as the sun rises and children born in Prayer's Point often show traces of the divine: nowhere else in the known world has as high a concentration of locally-born aasimar children and these children are often born to families with no history of divine contact.

Still, even such a tranquil place as Prayer's Point isn't without its problems. Some villagers whisper lycanthropes in the nearby forest, Nirvanna, are the only explanation for the sudden disappearance of the forest's animal life and the strange howls echoing through the woods at nights. Drunk beggars claim ghosts walk the city's graveyard and that strange, rotting carcasses float down Angel's Run towards the bay but such claims are often dismissed by most as the ramblings of superstitious oafs. In fact, resentment between Prayer's Point's growing mercantile and aristocratic elite and the poor grows by the day as more and more folk are evicted from their homes due to inflated property taxes designed to drive them from the village. And underneath this class warfare and superstition lies the horrible truth: terrible, unnatural things that crave nothing more than wanton death lurk within Mount Hoarfrost.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Neelah Strongblood

Government Autocracy

Population 180 (98 humans, 62 aasimar, 10 halflings, 4 dwarves, 2 elves, 2 half-elves, 2 kitsune)

Alignments LG, NG, N, LN

Languages Common, Celestial, Elven, Sylvan

Corruption 0; Crime +0; Economy +1; Law +2; Lore +0; Society +0

Qualities Tourist attraction **Danger** +0

NOTABLE FOLK

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

- **Creig Broadton** (location 8; LN male human cleric 2) Prayer's Point's only residential cleric, Creigh spends most of his time tending the village's graveyard.
- **Delilah Silversheen** (location 4; NG female aasimar bard 2) Deliah's store, Silversheen Odds and Ends, is the only establishment in the village selling adventuring gear.

- **Evorn Whisperleaf** (location 7; LG male elf paladin 4) Evorn dwells in Beggar's Haunt and protects and tends its denizens.
- Hans Trueblood (location 3; LG male aasimar paladin 6) Prayer's Point's finest son, Hans has become a champion of his home.
- Kyomi Weifeng (location 2; NG female kitsune rogue 3) The owner of Prayer's Point's treasured inn, Kyomi keeps to herself in fear of prosecution from the villagers.
- Neelah Strongblood (location 3; N female aasimar aristocrat 3) Prayer's Point's mayor loathes her reliance on the coin of travellers and seeks to make the village self-sufficient.
- **Rodrick Yarlson** (location 4; LG male dwarf expert 3) The blacksmith of Prayer's Point, Rodrick was exiled from his home in youth for a crime he didn't commit.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

- 1. **Prayer's Rock**: Sitting in the village square, this stone is the subject of many legends and is the village's namesake.
- The Lass & Lady: Kyomi Breezeblessed's inn has a reputation among travellers for its quality and comfort.
- 3. Village Hall: Erected before Prayer's Rock, the town hall acts as the legal and economical heart of Prayer's Point.
- Silversheen Odds and Ends: Prayer's Point's general store is stocked with exotic goods brought to the village by pilgrims.
- 5. **Angel's Bay**: Fed by Angel's Run, the shores of this bay glisten like truegold in the morning light.
- Rainbow Bridge: Named for its iridescent dwarven panelling, this bridge glistens like its namesake in the morning sun.
- 7. **Beggar's Haunt**: Those too poor to own homes in Prayer's Point have taken to living under the Rainbow Bridge.
- 8. **Elder's Cradle**: Across Angel's Run from Prayer's Point lies Elder's Cradle, the final resting place of the village's dead.
- Nirvana: Named after a legendary celestial realm, this nearby forest boasts a high concentration of celestial animals.
- 10. **Mount Hoarfrost**: Looming above Prayer's Point, Mount Hoarfrost is a majestic mountain with a dark secret.

MARKETPLACE

- Resources & Industry Animal game (hunting and fishing), lumber, tourism
- Base Value 600 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 3rd; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in Prayer's Point, the following items are for sale:

- Potions & Oils oil of align weapon (good only), cure moderate wounds (2), protection from evil
- Scrolls (Arcane) haste
- Scroll (Divine) magic circle against evil

VILLAGE LORE

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

DC 10: Prayer's Point is a small village at the mouth of Angel's Run. Mothers who spend most of their pregnancy there reportedly have an unusually high chance of birthing an aasimar.

DC 20: Prayer's Point is named for a legendary paladin who would meditate at Prayer's Rock each day while he prepared his holy magic before climbing Mount Hoarfrost to do his god's work. The villagers believe this is the source of the unusual powers of Angel Bay's waters.

DC 30: Aether Dawnbringer, the paladin of legend, fought against horrible monsters from the depths of the Abyss dwelling within the hollow heart of Mount Hoarfrost.

VILLAGERS

Appearance The villager's are well dressed and practice excellent hygiene. Most model their appearances after aasimar, using makeup to hide blemishes and bleach to lighten their hair.

Dress The people of Prayer's Point favour bright, plain clothing reminiscent of clerical garb. Wealthy villagers trim their clothing with precious metals and jewels.

Nomenclature *male* Bar, Hans, Olaf, Sven; *female* Anna, Deliliah, Hannah, Neelah; *family* Broadton, Silversheen, Strongblood.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Prayer's Point 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*	A family of werefoxes dwells in Nirvana.	
2	Humanoid body parts sometimes float down Angel's Run	
	towards the bay.	
3	Game has become scare in Nirvanna, the nearby forest.	
4*	The cleric of Elder's Rest has been seen digging up graves	
	in the middle of the night to use in dark rituals.	
	Women who spend much of their pregnancy in Prayer's	
5	Point have an unusually high chance of birthing an	
	aasimar children.	
6	Mount Hoarfrost used to house a dwarven hold, but the	
	hold and its residents mysterious vanished centuries ago.	
*False		

*False rumour



1: PRAYER'S ROCK

Standing in the centre of the village square is a massive stone polished to egg-like smoothness over the decades. Called Prayer's Rock, the stone is believed to have been named for its role in Aether Dawnbringer's meditations: it is said each morning the legendary paladin would pray to his god while sitting upon Prayer's Rock. The villagers attribute this history with the good village's fortune and blessings, especially the high aasimar birth rate. Because of this, pregnant women and their husbands often embark on pilgrimages to Prayer's Point in hopes of securing a divine blessing for their child. Thus, room renting is a lucrative side venture for most of Prayer's Point's residents.

Superstition abounds in Prayer's Point. Common suggestions for those seeking the blessings of Prayer's Rock include bathing in Angel's Bay at sunrise and kissing Prayer's Rock each afternoon. To an outsider, these strange behaviours seem insane at best and cult-like at worse.

2: THE LASS & LADY

For nearly 12 years, the Lass & Lady Inn has stood as Prayer's Point's favoured tavern and inn. Owned and operated by Kyomi Weifeng (NG female kitsune rogue 3), many villagers remember the day Kyomi waddled into town, heavily pregnant. Sadly, Kyomi's daughter wasn't born an aasimar, but Kyomi has never displayed any regret for her daughter's humanity. In fact soon thereafter, Kyomi purchased the village inn and settled down.

Most would describe the Weifengs as a friendly duo who keeps to themselves. Kyomi is generous to poor folk and the mercantile elite alike in exchange for her privacy. Unbeknownst to the villagers, both Kyomi and her daughter are fox folk from a faraway land who are able to assume unique human identities at their leisure. Having fled from a nation overrun by cruel spirits, Kyomi came to Prayer's Point to give a simple, quiet life to her daughter, a gift 12 year-old Rynee (NG female kitsune expert 1) resents. In a village that values the uniqueness of its aasimar children, Rynee would like nothing more than to reveal her true form, naively expecting acceptance. Kyomi has much less faith in her neighbours, which seems justified in their reactions to recent "werefox" sightings in Nirvanna, which have actually been Rynee. Kyomi has forbidden her daughter from playing there, but she does so regardless when the moon is full.

3: VILLAGE HALL

The village hall serves as a courthouse, office, prison and registry for the village's legal affairs. Although the village has had many mayors since it was founded at the end of a crusade some 100 years prior, Neelah Strongblood (N female aasimar aristocrat 3) is the first to actively push for the village's social and economic growth. Strongblood's campaigning has left the village politically divided as the economy wilts; many merchants and lower class residents rally behind Mayor Strongblood but without the monetary clout of the village's privileged elite, any economic changes drastic enough to improve the village's condition will not occur fast enough to prevent ruin. Most of the village's wealthier members cling to their existing businesses and seek new ways to improve Prayer's Point's tourist industry; most wish to begin by imprisoning the snake oil merchants sullying the blessings of Prayer's Rock and evicting the squatters dwelling under the Rainbow Bridge. With tensions at an all-time high, the village hall is a bustle of irate activity.

4: SILVERSHEEN ODDS AND ENDS

Located at the outskirts of Prayer's Point, Silversheen Odds and Ends is widely regarded as the best place to acquire equipment, especially adventuring equipment. Owned and operated by the withdrawn and introverted Delilah Silversheen (NG female aasimar bard 2), Delilah opened her store not long after settling in Prayer's Point. Delilah doesn't talk much about her life before Prayer's Point. As most of the merchants living in Prayer's Point deal in wares tailored for travellers and tourists, Delilah has something of a monopoly over exotic goods and items.

5: ANGEL BAY

Prayer's Point overlooks Angel Bay. As if the villagers needed confirmation their home is touched by divinity, Angel's Run and the bay it feeds are famous for their waters, which shine with golden light each sunrise and sunset. Many superstitions surround these waters and pilgrims travel to Prayer's Point to drink, bathe and baptize themselves with the bay's waters.

Despite its holy implications, not all travellers to Prayer's Point are noble folk. A sizable minority of Prayer's Point's inhabitants found their fortune bottling the bay's waters and selling it to travellers and outsiders, making claims the water creates more potent healing options, cures diseases and grants divine blessings to those who use it for cooking, drinking or washing. This practice has lead to many outsiders doubting the legitimacy of the bay's powers, which has started to threaten the village's tourism-focused economy as fewer travellers now make the pilgrimage. What's more, many villagers believe Angel Bay's waters possess otherworldly powers, as the people of Prayer's Point are healthier than folk in other villages and live longer lives in addition to their high aasimar birth rates. Mayor Strongblood loathes the village's economic reliance on outsiders and actively encourages the village to expand its economy, though her ideas have been met with much resistance among the village's wealthier inhabitants.

6: RAINBOW BRIDGE

Built mostly for show by dwarven architect and blacksmith Roderick Yarlson (LG male dwarf expert 3), the Rainbow Bridge lies on the northern shores of Angel's Run across from Elder's Cradle and the village Godshrine; a building that houses multiple shrines to each of the gods worshiped by the people of Prayer's Point. After leaving his clan's hold some 20 years prior, Roderick was offered the chance to build the bridge by Mayor Strongblood, who saw the project as vital to the village's survival. As a result, the bridge was designed to accentuate the majestic golden glow of Angel Bay, causing it to erupt in waves of iridescent light as it catches the sun's light at dawn and dusk. It is considered a peerless work of art and one of the region's most stunning monuments.

7: BEGGAR'S HAUNT

Underneath the Rainbow Bridge lies a small island of unclaimed land. Protected from precipitation by the bridge and afforded token privacy by Angel's Run, this land has been a communal ground for ne'er-do-wells since the bridge's construction.

In recent months, however, citizens evicted from their homes because of rising property taxes and decreased tourist activity have temporarily settled under the Rainbow Bridge while they attempt to get back onto their feet. But as the poverty line climbs steadily higher, the evicted are trapped in an increasingly dire situation, their chances of escaping destitution growing ever grimmer. With their belongings gone and their bellies empty, many have taken to begging. As a result, most folk refer to the island as "Beggar's Haunt" and the euphemism, "haunting the bridge" has come to mean "down on his luck" or "without money." Such nomenclature is used by the most respectful and sympathetic of Prayer's Point's folk; crueller folk refer to the beggars as "trolls" and "squatters."

8: ELDER'S CRADLE

Across Angel's Run from the village stands Elder's Cradle, Prayer's Point's cemetery and temple. Staffed by Creigh Broadton (LN male human cleric 2), a cleric of a goddess of funeral rites, Creigh manages the cemetery grounds and a shrine dedicated sitting at the cemetery's heart. Except for several altar boys who assist him in his duties, Creigh keeps to himself.

Because Father Broadton has dwelled in Prayer's Point longer than nearly anyone else, virtually all the villagers afford him his privacy without much hassle. That said, the children of Prayer's Point whisper that some nights he hobbles about Elder's Cradle with an old oil lantern, inspecting the tombstones. The children have wildly varying theories about what he is doing in the small hours. Only the most wizen of villagers remember the horrible fire that claimed the lives of his wife and son.

9: NIRVANNA

This expansive forest is named for the unusually high number of celestial animals dwelling within. Nirvana's border with the village is rather close but the villagers are reluctant to harvest its lumber or hunt its game. Most are worried about losing public face by exploiting a forest named after one of the goodly planes. Others believe it, not Prayer's Rock, is the source of the village's divine blessings and are reluctant to exploit its resources.

Even now, in the middle of an economic crisis, most folk refuse to utilize Nirvana's resources and continue to import most of their food and lumber. Mayor Neelah Strongblood has long protested this practise as she believes cutting down a few acres of trees for lumber and farmland could be the solution to the village's economic woes, but even the desolate inhabitants of Beggar's Haunt are wary of such a brash solution.

Recently tales of werefoxes roaming the woods have riled up many of the poor folk and they refuse to even consider the proposal until the problem is resolved. Mayor Strongblood has sent men into the woods to investigate these claims; most have reported spotting something matching the description of a werefox. Even wealthy villagers are worried about the lycanthropic threat, for the hunters have found the woods deserted of wildlife save for the brutally eviscerated carcasses of celestial and half-celestial animals. Believing the werefoxes are the only thing thwarting her plan, Mayor Strongblood enlists any adventurers she can find to hunt down the lycanthropes.

10: MOUNT HOARFROST

Looming above Prayer's Point is Mount Hoarfrost, a great mountain said to have been home to a dwarven clan centuries ago. No trace of the dwarves or their civilisation remain except a broken path paved with dwarf-hewn stone leading up the mountain. This fragment, though, is enough to bring a trickle of adventurers to Prayer's Point in search of the riches the dwarves are certain to have mined from the Mount Hoarfrost.

Mayor Strongblood wants to open a quarry at the foot of Mount Hoarfrost as another source of income, but the village's mercantile elite are reluctant to fund the venture. As well as an incredibly expensive undertaking with no guarantee of success, the elite worry the presence of a mine will have a detrimental effect on the other, established industries forming the bedrock of their wealth and privilege. Although they do not realize it, their reluctance is prudent beyond belief. For more information on the lurking threat below the mountain, refer to "Hidden History" on page 6.

LIFE IN PRAYER'S POINT

Although mostly pleasant for the wealthy, most folk living in Prayer's Point realize they are living on a sinking ship and as a result the people of Prayer's Point are becoming increasingly desperate for a solution to their economic woes

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Prayer's Point is built upon the exploitation of their settlement's divine wonders as a source of tourism. Although the publicity was welcome at first, outsiders began bottling water from Angel Bay and selling it as a cure-all tonic for easy gold, destroying the village's reputation in the process. Although the mayor, Neelah Strongblood, is adamant that exploring new avenues of trade is vital to the village's economic development the local elite are reluctant to do so.

LAW & ORDER

Despite the economic upheaval in Prayer's Point, the villagers are law-abided folk who value village tradition. As village champion, Hans Trueblood's primary job is keeping the peace in Prayer's Point, which he does with humility, understanding and a fair but firm hand.

HANS TRUEBLOOD	CR 5 (XP 1,600)		
Male aasimar paladin 6			
LN Medium outsider (native)	LN Medium outsider (native)		
Init +0; Senses Perception +5, Sense Motive +5			
Speed 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; ACP -6; Acrobatics -7 (-11 jumping), Climb +5, Swim +5			
AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; CMD 1	18		
(+10 armour [+1 full plate], -1 Dex)			
Immune disease, poison			
Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +9			
hp 51 (6 HD)			
Space 5 ft., aura of courage (30 ft.); B	ase Atk +6; CMB +8		
Melee mwk greatsword (Power	Attack [-2/+6]) +10/+4		
(2d6+3/19-20)			
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6; concentration	on +9)		
At will—detect evil			
Atk Options divine bond (weapon), s +6 damage)	smite evil 2/day (+3 attack,		
Special Actions channel positive en	0, ()		
hands (6/day; 3d6 plus diseased,	0,		
Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; conc	•		
1st—bless weapon, protection from e	evil		
Abilities Str 14, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 11,	Wis 12, Cha 16		
SQ divine grace (+3), good aura (stror	0,		
Feats Persuasive, Power Attack, Wea	, ,		
Skills Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +2,			
Knowledge (religion) +5			
Languages Common, Celestial			
Gear as above plus belt pouch, silver	holy symbol, 13 gp		

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 large gathering of villagers pester new arrivals to Prayer's Point, attempting to part them from their coin.	
2	An angry crowd of poverty-stricken folk gather to protest their condition in front of the village hall.	
3	Rynee Weifong, Kyomi's daughter, is seen running off into Nirvanna at dusk on the night of the full moon.	
4	Father Broadton sends his altar boys into Prayer's Point to purchase supplies for the chapel.	
5	A local band of beggars prepares itself to march into Nirvana to hunt for its werefox inhabitants.	
6	Rats stalk Prayer's Point, watching the villagers closely and darting away into the shadows when noticed. In truth, the rats are infested with cythnigot qlipploths.	

HIDDEN HISTORY

Almost 2,000 years ago, a massive slab of twisted black stone slammed into Mount Hoarfrost, drilling into the ground, hollowing out the mountain and slaughtering the dwarves living within. This vile stone was an Abyssal fragment covered with eldritch runes carved by glippoth proto-demons. The buried stone's venomous nature poisoned the mountain and transformed nearby fauna into twisted, mutated creatures. Roughly 100 years ago, Z'neriax the Wretched, a glipploth lord of frightening power, rediscovered this forgotten artefact and created a portal between the Material Plane and his wretched lair in the forgotten bowels of the Abyss. Z'neriax set his glipploth minions upon the countryside capturing mortals and bringing them back to his realm to be dissected and tortured, their sins extracted from their souls to create a poison to use against his demonic enemies. Before he could complete the poison, legendary paladin Aethas Dawnbringer led a crusade against Z'neriax's that damaged the Abyssal Shard.

This great victory was not without cost, however. Aethas and his men, and the celestials aiding him, were captured and trapped within the Abyssal Shard, tortured by day and healed by night so their suffering could continue unabated. Though Aethas and his mortal followers have long since died, death could not spare the celestials and their suffering is so great their blood has seeped deep into the wellsprings around Prayer's Point, causing the waters to glow like gold during each sunrise and transform unborn children into agents of the divine. Now after 100 years of delays, Z'neriax's hour draws near as his minions prepare to open the gates to the Abyss once more. If you enjoyed this product, please consider leaving a review.

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